Prosperity
—
Affirmative Case, written by Benjamin McKay

**Summary**

The affirmative case relies upon three primary premises, (1) that governments are the main party considering the resolution, (2) that governments have a responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of their own people, and (3) that upholding the people’s individual right to property best ensures their individual and collective wellbeing.

This resolution relies heavily on evidence of economic principles, and so it is particularly well suited for an evidence-based negative case. Additionally, this case has the strength of arguing in very grounded and practical results rather than some other affirmatives (who for instance, would focus more on the moral justification for upholding the individual right to property).

This case, while framing the debate such that the negative is working against a free market, is not intended to label the negative side as socialist or communist. The correct application of this case and further argumentation in rebuttals ought to be that the negative side leans more towards socialist or communist practices in that the negative advocates for overruling the right to property when the government believes it can manually correct a problem better than the free market can.

Prosperity

# Introduction

We are gathered today to answer a very important question: when faced with property rights and economic interests, how do we best uphold prosperity? It is because I believe that securing individual property rights is the best method to uphold prosperity that I stand resolved: ***The Individual Right to Property Ought to be Valued Above the Economic Interest of the Community.*** Before we examine my primary arguments, we need to define some key terms so that we understand what we're debating today.

# Definitions

**Economic** is defined by Merriam Webster Dictionary as “of, relating to, or based on the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services” (“Economic”).

**Right** is defined by Collin’s Dictionary as “Your rights are what you are morally or legally entitled to do or to have” (“right”).

With the above terms defined, we can then define the larger terms in the resolution:

**The Economic Interest of the Community** can be understood as “the community’s interests as pertaining to economic concerns.”

**The Individual Right to Property** can be understood as “an individual’s rights in relation to his or her property.”

# Government Actor

With these two definitions established, we must note that the government is the actor in this resolution. The actor is the person or entity considering the two sides of the resolution and will take action to value one side over the other. We ought to consider the government the actor because it is the only entity with the authority and power to make the choice between upholding an individual’s property rights or overruling them for the sake of the community. Thus, this is a question of government action: whether the government will uphold individual property rights or whether they will opt to overrule those rights to either seize or limit private property when they believe it will result in economic benefits for society at large.

# Value

Now that we have my definitions and the actor clarified, let's consider my value, or what I believe should be the most important thing to uphold when making this decision. My value is **prosperity.** Collin’s Dictionary says “Prosperity is a condition in which a person or community is doing well financially”(“Prosperity”). This should be our value in today’s round because the government is the actor. They have an obligation to make decisions that ensure the wellbeing of their people, and in the context of property rights and economic interests, the end goal is that people are thriving, experiencing stability and financial wellbeing. Thus, the end goal in any decision between property rights and collective economic interests should be aimed at ensuring the people’s prosperity.

With our definitions, actor, and value established, let’s move on to my contentions.

# Contention 1: Protecting Property Rights Creates Prosperity

The key to creating and maintaining prosperity in any society is consistent protections for property rights. As noted by economist Daniel J. Mitchell writing for The Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), the nations that ensure the greatest protection of private property also demonstrate the highest average per capita income, while those nations that do not protect private property conversely experience the lowest average per capita income (Mitchell). This is significant, as it indicates an important factor in sustainable economic growth and the prosperity of a government’s citizens is the foundation of property rights. In addition, Adam Smith, another economist, in his book “The Wealth of Nations” argues that when individuals pursue their own self-interest in a free-market system, they end up mutually benefiting one another such that the society’s overall wealth is increased (Adam Smith, as cited in Majaski). Thus, what the evidence consistently demonstrates is that prosperity is upheld when the property rights of individuals are protected and they are allowed to freely interact in a free economy. These provide the conditions necessary for consistent competition and sustainable economic growth.

**Contention 2: Overruling Property Rights Harms Prosperity**

We have seen that the protection of property rights is the foundation of long-term prosperity. If governments instead attempt to overrule the individual right to property in an attempt to manually strengthen their society’s economy, prosperity will be harmed. It is important to repeat that The Foundation of Economic Education’s findings indicate that societies are increasingly unprosperous to the degree that they do not protect the individual right to property (Mitchell). The solution to our present economic problems is not to give government greater power to seize and regulate people’s property, but rather to protect individuals and incentivize competition and organic economic growth that is truly sustainable for long term prosperity.

**Contention 3: The Resolution Must be Affirmed**

We have seen today that when governments are faced with upholding individual property rights or overruling them for what they deem the community’s best interest, prosperity is the main concern. We have further seen that when individuals have protected property rights in place that allow them to compete for their own interest, prosperity is the natural result. We must recognize that we cannot become narrow minded to only the here and now. We cannot sacrifice the foundation of our long-term economic wellbeing for short term solutions. Instead, we must maintain economic freedom and stability such that we all can benefit. Thus, we must affirm the resolution and stand together resolved that *The Individual Right to Property Ought to be Valued Above The Economic Interest of the Community.*

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