Negative Case: National Security

By Benjamin McKay

*Resolved: The Individual Right to Property Ought to be Valued Above The Economic Interest of the Community.*

This negative case negates the resolution based on three premises: (1) the highest value is National Security, (2) National security requires economic stability, and (3) economic stability requires that we appropriately limit the right to property when it conflicts with the economic interest of the community.

This case differs from several other negative cases in that the value and criterion framework advocate for negation based on the resolution's indirect results. In other words, as opposed to using a value/criterion framework based on general welfare, prosperity, quality of life, or some other phraseology of collective benefit and flourishing (the direct results of prioritizing community economic interest), this case argues that these things are necessary means to a greater end, that being national security (a by-product of a strong economic system).

This case may strike debaters as odd as compared with other cases as national security may not seem intuitively tied to economics at first glance. However, this case presents a swarm of evidence and reasoning to create a strong link between national security and economic stability (and therefore the economic interest of the community).

While this negative demands more thorough analysis and extensive argumentation to link negation to their value, when done successfully, it presents the negative position in terms of governmental responsibility to protect, giving it a much stronger moral argument and connection to government obligation than mere prosperity or other form of flourishing.

***Thomas Jefferson*** (“Thomas Jefferson Quotes.” *BrainyQuote*, Xplore, <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/thomas_jefferson_135370>, Accessed November 17, 2022).

“The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only object of good government.”

These words from American president and founding father Thomas Jefferson remind us of a profound and timeless truth: government’s primary duty is to protect and care for the people. It is because I agree with Thomas Jefferson and because I believe that in order to protect the people we must maintain economic stability, that I negate today’s resolution, which is stated

*Resolved: The Individual Right to Property Ought to be Valued Above The Economic Interest of the Community.*

Before we address my main arguments, we must address the main terms of our resolution.

Definitions

A. Property:

***Cambridge English Dictionary*** (“Property.” *PROPERTY | Definition in the Cambridge English Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/property>, Accessed November 16, 2022).

*“Property”*

a thing or things owned by someone; a possession or possessions

Thus, when we say the individual right to property, we are referring to a person’s (or persons’) rights as pertaining to [ownership of their possessions] - *referencing the above cited definition*

**B. Economics:**

***Investopedia*** (Hayes, Adam. “Economics Defined with Types, Indicators, and Systems.” *Investopedia*, Investopedia, 4 Nov. 2022, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/economics.asp>, Accessed November 16, 2022).

***“Economics”***

Economics is a social science that focuses on the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, and analyzes the choices that individuals, businesses, governments, and nations make to allocate resources

With this understanding of economics, we therefore understand that the economic interest of the community refers to a particular society’s goals specifically within the sphere of economics.

**Resolution Analysis:**

There are two critical observations that must be made regarding our resolution.

**A. Government Actor:**

The government is the actor. By this, I mean the resolution is ultimately posing a choice between two alternatives in which the government is the entity that must choose between them. This actor must be the government, as they are the only realistic entity with the proper authority and vested interest to make a choice between collective economic interests and the rights of individuals. Thus, we must discuss this resolution from the perspective of the government, recognizing that we are asking a question of what the government ought to do in these situations.

**B. Government Purpose:**

The core purpose of government, as previously stated by Thomas Jefferson, is...

***Thomas Jefferson*** (“Thomas Jefferson Quotes.” *BrainyQuote*, Xplore, <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/thomas_jefferson_135370>, Accessed November 17, 2022).

“the care of human life and happiness...”.

Thus, the government’s decision on whether to prioritize either the individual right to property or the economic interest of the community higher ought to be made based upon which choice better upholds this duty to the people.

In accordance with this idea, our value, or the most important principle I propose for today’s round is that of...

**Value: National Security**

***Robert Longley*** (“National Security Definition and Examples.” *ThoughtCo*, ThoughtCo, 24 Sept. 2021, <https://www.thoughtco.com/national-security-definition-and-examples-5197450>. Accessed November 17, 2022. *Robert Longley is a U.S. government and history expert with a B.S. from Texas A&M University*).

***National Security***

National security is the ability of a country’s government to protect its citizens, economy, and other institutions

With national security as our value, all arguments for whether the government should uphold the individual right to property over community economic interests or not must make their case based upon what best upholds national security – that is, what best protects our “citizens, economy, and other institutions” - *quoting definition as cited above*

With our definitions, actor, and value established, there is one more point to be addressed before moving on to my main arguments...

**Criterion: Economic Stability**

In order to achieve our value of national security, I argue that we must uphold economic stability. For the purposes of this round, I define economic stability as follows, based on the aforementioned definition of economics.

***“Economic Stability”***

A state within a particular economy in which sustainable \*[“production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services”] are maintained.

\**Quoted portion of custom definition above found in source below – definition of “economics”*:

***Investopedia*** (Hayes, Adam. “Economics Defined with Types, Indicators, and Systems.” *Investopedia*, Investopedia, 4 Nov. 2022, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/economics.asp>, Accessed November 16, 2022).

This resolution is a question regarding economic interests and property, meaning that our decision has implications for the stability of the larger economy. I hope today to persuade you to negate the resolution by demonstrating that governments must limit property when it harms the community’s economic interests in order to preserve economic stability and that maintaining our nation’s economic stability is necessary to preserve our national security.

Contention 1: National Security Requires Economic Stability

It is beyond dispute that national security requires a nation to have a strong and stable economy. Simply put, we cannot expect a government to maintain a strong military defense if the nation that sustains it is economically unstable and weak. Military forces require resources, and without economic stability, a nation cannot be expected to maintain the resources pecessary to sustain its population, let alone a strong government military. As the Rand Corporation puts it,

***The Rand Corperation*** (“*RAND is a research organization that develops solutions to public policy challenges to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier and more prosperous.”* - as noted on <https://www.rand.org/about.html>. Neu, C. Richard, and Charles Wolf. “The Economic Dimensions of National Security.” *RAND Corporation*, 1 Jan. 1994, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR466.html>, Accessed November 15, 2022).

“A strong military... requires strong economic underpinnings.”

Furthermore, a government cannot be expected to maintain national security if it lacks the resources to effectively maintain basic order domestically. If a nation lacks economic stability, it will not have the resources necessary to maintain effective law enforcement and other government agencies, and additionally, individuals within an economically unstable nation arguably have greater incentive to risk breaking the law for economic gain if they are unable to support themselves through legal means. In summary then, our people and institutions are across the board exposed to greater risk when economic stability does not exist, both from foreign military threats as well as domestic threats such as crime and lack of basic order.

Reflecting the importance of the economy in national security, we see in Robert Longley’s definition of national security that he includes the protection of the economy.

***Robert Longley*** (“National Security Definition and Examples.” *ThoughtCo*, ThoughtCo, 24 Sept. 2021, <https://www.thoughtco.com/national-security-definition-and-examples-5197450>. Accessed November 17, 2022. *Robert Longley is a U.S. government and history expert with a B.S. from Texas A&M University*).

“National security is the ability of a country’s government to protect its citizens, ***economy***, and other institutions.” (Emphasis added).

Simply put, basic reasoning as well as authoritative sources agree that a nation cannot be economically unstable and simultaneously secure such that it can effectively protect itself and its people from harm.

Thus, in order to maintain strong national security, we must uphold economic stability.

Contention 2: Economic stability requires appropriately limiting property.

No dimension of freedom or rights can be without appropriate limits, and the individual right to property is no exception. The simple fact of the matter is, any right or freedom presents risks and dangers if it is not appropriately limited.

Being able to own and operate a working vehicle on our nation’s roads presents very tangible benefits. However, we implement several limitations on the freedom to drive through traffic laws, speed limits, and in some cases revocation of driver’s licenses. We do this because if these limits on driving were not in place, very real harms would occur.

In regard to property rights, just as with any other form of freedom or rights, we must implement appropriate limits such that no person’s use of property wrongfully brings harm to others. I’d like to present an example of this in my application: anti-trust laws.

Application: (Anti-trust law limitation of monopolies).

According to the Federal Trade Commission,

***Federal Trade Commission*** (Staff, the Premerger Notification Office, and DPIP and CTO Staff. “Monopolization Defined.”Federal Trade Commission, Federal Trade Commission , 4 Mar. 2022, <https://www.ftc.gov/advice-guidance/competition-guidance/guide-antitrust-laws/single-firm-conduct/monopolization-defined>, Accessed November 17, 2022).

“...antitrust laws prohibit conduct by a single firm that unreasonably restrains competition by creating or maintaining monopoly power.”

What this description refers to are laws that restrict companies that harmfully impede the normal competitive market due to establishing [“monopoly power”] - *references cited quote above*

***Federal Trade Commission*** (Staff, the Premerger Notification Office, and DPIP and CTO Staff. “Monopolization Defined.”Federal Trade Commission, Federal Trade Commission , 4 Mar. 2022, <https://www.ftc.gov/advice-guidance/competition-guidance/guide-antitrust-laws/single-firm-conduct/monopolization-defined>, Accessed November 17, 2022).

“As a first step, courts ask if the firm has "monopoly power" in any market... Then courts ask if that leading position was gained or maintained through improper conduct—that is, something other than merely having a better product, superior management or historic accident... Courts do not require a literal monopoly before applying rules for single firm conduct; that term is used as shorthand for a firm with significant and durable market power — that is, the long term ability to raise price or exclude competitors”

This is significant. Even if a group of individuals come together and decide to utilize their property rights collaboratively to form a company, they are not permitted to do whatever they want with their company and assets to achieve their own prosperity. If they are determined to have utilized “improper conduct” to obtain “the long term ability to raise price or exclude competitors”, they can be flagged and restricted by these laws - *[quoted segments taken from cited material above].*

These laws are purposed to prevent harmful use of property rights that would otherwise destroy competitive free markets. This is a perfect example of appropriately limiting property rights in order to prevent them from being used in ways that bring significant harm to others. To put it another way, we limit property when it comes into conflict with the economic interest of the community.

By appropriately limiting the right to property, we are able to maintain economic stability.

Contention 3: We must negate the resolution

We have seen today that governments must first and foremost uphold national security in order to protect their people from harms to their safety and wellbeing, and we have furthermore seen that this requires they take action to maintain economic stability. Finally, the negative team has demonstrated that appropriately limiting the right to property when it conflicts with the economic interest of the community is necessary to economic stability and thus maintain national security.

Thus, I hope you will join me today in negating the resolution.