Intellectual foundations

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Ideas to keep in front of your mind throughout the course:

- **A philosophical-moral perspective:** Core values of liberal democracy and individual liberties – as articulated by political philosophy and theory of democracy
- **An empirical reality:** The modern world depends upon pluralism and multi-racial, multi-religious, and multi-ethnic populations; how to keep these populations unified around the values of liberty, equality, and pluralism?
- **A psychological question:** A theory of political psychology and social harmony: individuals and populations who live in political societies that embody the "circumstances of justice" will come to share a high-level adherence to the values upon which their society depends. "Civic Loyalty"
- **A political dynamic:** There are powerful forces of division in modern societies – religion, economic conflict, racial antagonism, historical grievances.
- **Political entrepreneurship:** There are opportunistic politicians who build their political fortunes on mobilizing those antagonisms around "right-wing populism".
- **The goal:** How can a democratic people establish the circumstances of a resilient democracy that can withstand the forces of division and antagonism?

The pivotal situation we face

- We face an enormous conflict between the values and institutions of democracy and political movements and leaders who reject the values, attack the institutions, and mobilize support around hate and division.
- The values are fairly easy to state: the equal worth of all members of society; the fundamental value of human liberty and equality; the value of protecting rights and liberties unconditionally; the value of self-government; the rule of law; equal rights of political participation and voting for all citizens; recognition of the legitimacy of democratic institutions (voting, legislation, independent judiciary, free press, …).
- These values are crucial for the freedom and dignity of all of us.

The threat

- The threat: groups and individuals who see others in society as their enemies; who reject the idea of the moral equality of all; who wish for an authoritative leader who enacts their values and limits/destroys the political institutions of liberal democracy.
- Call it “illiberal democracy”, radical populism, hate-based mobilization, authoritarianism.
- Turkey, Hungary, Front National in France, far right anti-immigrant political organizations in Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, …
- The far right in the US refusing to accept the legitimacy of the election, turning to violence and the threat of further violence

Hatred and division

- Hatred, discrimination, and division have proven to be powerful motivators in modern society
- Religious bigotry — anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism, anti-Muslim bigotry; anti-immigrant animosity
- Motivations supporting hatred —
  - Fear, doctrine, economic competition, antagonism towards people different than oneself, …

Our task …

- To articulate and understand the importance of democratic values for all of us
- To understand the mechanisms and causes of current attacks on democracy in the name of hate, division, and rejection of democracy
- What are the social causes of the motivations of followers?
- What are the psychological / personality factors?
- How does political entrepreneurism take advantage of these factors to create powerful and threatening movements?

The liberal state

- John Stuart Mill's theory of the liberal state:
  - The state has the authority to create laws
  - Individual liberties are morally fundamental
  - The only justification for interfering with a person's liberty is to prevent harm to others
  - Freedom of religion, expression, assembly, press
- The US Constitution expresses a similar theory in the Bill of Rights
- The UDHR seeks to codify the rights of the individual for all countries (negative rights and positive rights)

What is freedom?

- Rousseau, Rawls, Sen:
  - Human beings have real material needs, and they need to be located in social and economic arrangements that permit them to realize their human potential
  - Equality is a good that goes beyond political participation; to be equal is to have equal dignity and respect.
  - A democratic government is legitimately responsible for creating conditions that permit all human beings to live decent lives, develop their talents, and exercise their freedoms.

Chapter 1

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Lecture 1

The central dilemma

- Liberalism celebrates the rights of the individual
  - Liberty of conscience
  - Liberty of speech and association
  - Freedom of thought
- Democracy denotes a system of government in which the people have ultimate political authority and legitimacy
  - Direct democracy
  - Representative democracy
- Liberal democracy
  - The rule of law, equally and impersonally applied
  - Preservation of the rights and liberties of all individuals
  - Institutions of voting, legislation, and presidency that empower citizens equally

Our central and crucial questions …

- Are these values socially compatible?
- Is a modern liberal democracy stable?
- Can institutions and democratic values serve to maintain the workings of democracy in the face of efforts to undermine or replace it?
- Can a liberal democracy based on equality and liberty maintain itself in an environment of hate?

The present challenge: Radical populism

- Democratic institutions and governments are being challenged by "radical populists" – politicians, parties, and followers who do not accept the key values of democracy.
- Hatred of immigrants, other religious groups, other racial and ethnic groups.
- Political mobilization of movements and parties around these kinds of nationalist hatreds
- Familiar in our country – the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan, anti-Catholic mobilization, anti-Semitism
- Today – immigrants, anti-Muslim bigotry, …

Rejection of key values of liberal democracy

- Populist parties in Europe and the US
  - Undermine key institutions (judiciary, voting rights)
  - Exploit intergroup animosities to energize followers
  - Tolerate violence and intimidation; armed “militias”, guns at rallies
  - Embrace racist language, white supremacy, bigotry against Jews and Muslims, …
- Disrespect for the institutions of government
  - Animosity towards elected officials — “elitists who don’t care about us”
  - Fundamental lack of respect for institutions of elections and legislation

Illiberal democracy

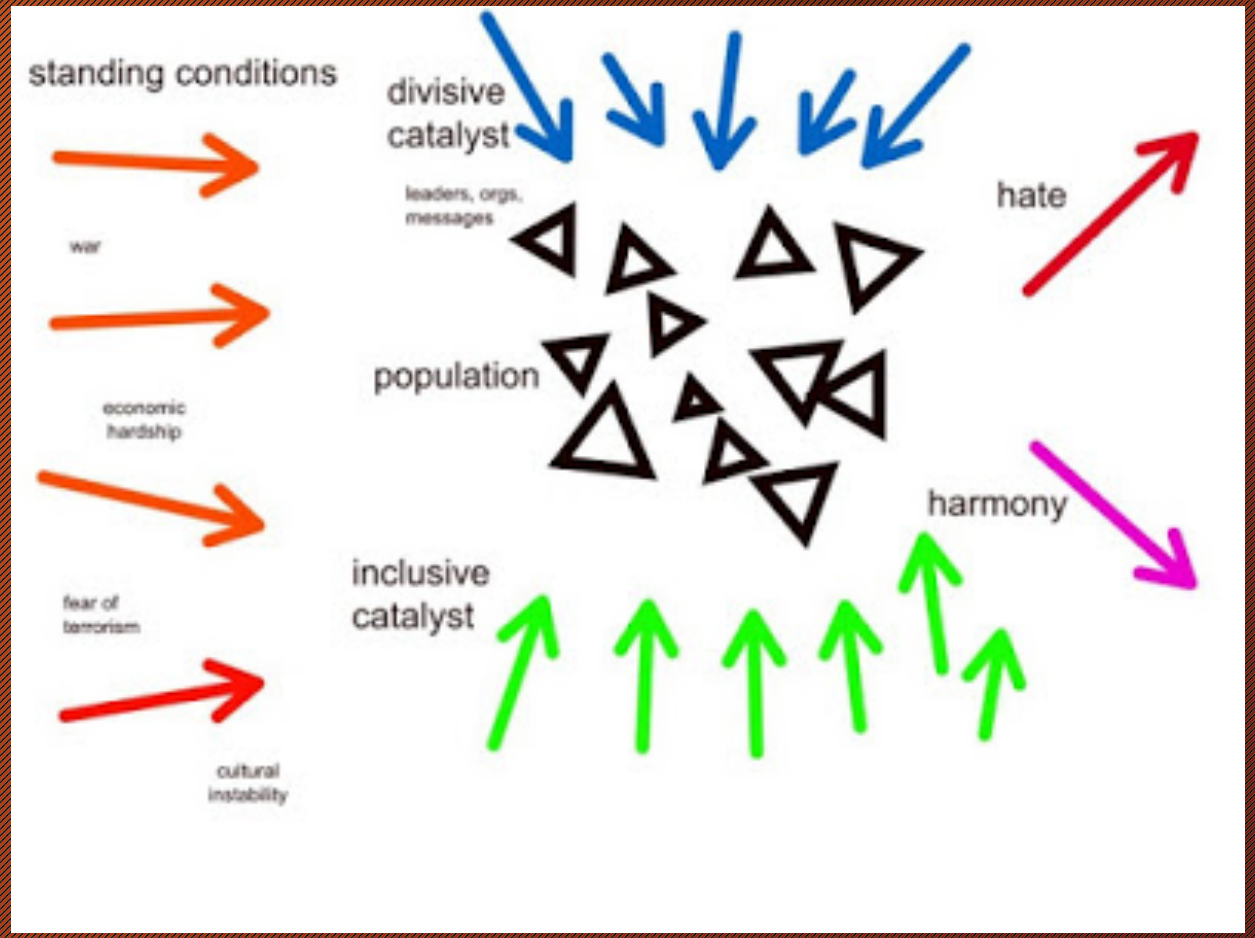
- Authoritarian rule by elected strongman (Turkey, Brazil, Russia, India)
- Disregard of the institutions of judiciary, constitution, law
- Disregard of the equality and rights of minorities
- Antagonism to the free press and independent journalists

Sources of discontent with democracy

- Severe and increasing inequality
- Lack of economic and social opportunities
- The sense that more powerful agents are making the important decisions in society
- The fear that globalization is reducing “our” life prospects and freedoms
- The perception that politicians are in it for their own advantage

Social psychology of hate

What are the social and psychological dynamics at work that have unleashed these dark forces within democracies? What roles are played in these processes by some of the likely influencers: broadcast and print media, social media, political entrepreneurs with a political interest in cultivating hate and divisiveness, social networks, civic and anti-civic organizations, slow economic growth and mobility for some groups, and the fear of Isis violence around the world?



Resilience and shocks to cohesion

- How does the idea of resilience work in application to communities -- in particular, multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and multi-religious communities? Shocks occur in all communities -- a violent crime is committed, a fiery speech is issued, a labor crisis occurs, a harvest fails. All of these incidents have the capacity to initiate a cycle of inter-group recrimination and separation. What features of community life and organization permit a multi-group community to regain its stability and inter-group harmony? What features exist that can stop the slide into escalation and eventual antagonism and violence across groups?

  Historical experience in many parts of the world shows that communities of mixed populations sometimes degenerate into antagonism and violence across groups. The histories of ethnic and religious violence in India and the current tragedy of the Rohingya in Myanmar provide clear examples. Mixed communities that have lived peacefully and harmoniously are suddenly riven by mistrust, antagonism, and hate that lead to inter-group violence.

- The existence of cross-group organizations and partnerships among organizations originating in the separate groups, seems to be a strongly stabilizing feature of a multi-group society. The presence of a group of leaders who are committed to enhancing trust and cooperation across group lines provides an important "fire break" when conflicts arise, because these leaders and organizations already have a basis of trust with each other, and a willingness to work together to reduce tensions and suspicions across groups.

  Person-to-person relationships across groups (through neighborhoods, places of work, or family relations) provide a basis for resisting the slide towards suspicion and fear across groups. If Chandar and Ismael are friends at work, they are perhaps less likely to be swayed by Hindu nationalist rhetoric or Islamic separatist rhetoric, and less likely to join in a violent mob attacking the other's home and community. Neighborhood and workplace integration ought to be retardants to the spread of inter-group hostility.

- Policing and law enforcement can be an important buffer against the escalation of ethnic or religious tensions. If a Muslim shop is burned and the police act swiftly to find and arrest the arsonist, there will be a greater level of trust in the Muslim community that their security interests are being protected by the system of law.

The separation of communities into mutually fearful and mistrustful groups defined by religion, race, or ethnicity is inherently bad, and it has the prospect of facilitating intergroup conflict and violence in the future. So discovering practical mechanisms of resilience is an enormously important task in these times of division and antagonism presented by our national political leaders.

Conditions of stability?

- A broad consensus that all members of society are treated fairly
- Confidence in a high level of equality of opportunity in social, political, and economic positions
- Confidence that government institutions and officials are reasonably honest and transparent
- Confidence that private influence does not unduly affect the content and application of laws and regulations
- An overriding conviction that we are "one society" consisting of many communities, and that the wellbeing of all depends on the contributions and fair treatment of all
- An effective interlacing of communities through cross-cutting political, social, and economic organizations

A resilient democracy?

- recognition of the legitimacy of government
- commitment to the rule of law
- commitment to rights of association, speech, religion, movement
- commitment to the equal rights and worth of all members of the community
- a compassionate regard for the lives and flourishing of members of other communities
- It is very appealing in our multi-cultural world to conceive of a mixed community — a city or a region, say — as a harmonious and stable set of relationships among groups who differ in many important ways but who recognize the basic legitimacy and rights of the other groups, and who strive towards better inter-group understanding and cooperation. And we do in fact have good examples of such communities.

What strategies can help strengthen democracy?

- Is civic engagement part of the answer?
- Are grassroot organizations part of the answer?
- Are lots of cross-community partnerships and collaborations part of the answer?
- Can we enhance social cohesion through these means – and thereby strengthen democracy?
- Do we need a new kind of civic education about the serious and important values that we espouse in our democracy?

Chapter 2

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Lecture 2

What is political philosophy?

- Political philosophy is – debate, discussion and principles (philosophy) about the nature and moral requirements of the polis (political).
- Political philosophy is concerned with “justice”, the nature of the good state, and the obligations of citizens to the whole.
- There is a distinction between the public realm and the private realm.
- Political philosophy is and was a very practical subject; it asks the general question, how should groups of individuals govern themselves?
- What constitutes a just and legitimate state?

Political society and individuals

- The value of political society (polis)
  - More than just a city or a place to live
  - A morally constituted community
  - A place where equal citizens can flourish
  - A place that has moral importance over and above the individual wants and liberties of the citizens
  - A place regulated by “justice”
  - The moral emotions of loyalty, patriotism, and civic commitment make sense in the context of the polis
- This is a central theme and question in political philosophy; traditional liberals hold that the collectivity has no moral standing, and that only the freedoms, rights, and liberties of individuals are morally significant.

Justice and the polis (Melissa Lane)

- “Justice was conceived by poets, lawgivers, and philosophers alike as the structure of civic bonds which were beneficial to all (rich and poor, powerful and weak alike) rather than an exploitation of some by others.”
- “So understood, justice defined the basis of equal citizenship and was said to be the requirement for human regimes to be acceptable to the gods. The ideal was that, with justice as a foundation, political life would enable its participants to flourish and to achieve the overarching human end of happiness (eudaimonia), expressing a civic form of virtue and pursuing happiness and success through the competitive forums of the city.”
- “Ancient Political Philosophy”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

- “Among equals, however defined, the space of the political was the space of participation in decision-making concerning public affairs and actions. That invention of the political … was the hallmark of the classical Greek world. Citizens, whether the few (usually the rich) or the many (including the poorer and perhaps the poorest free adult men), gathered together to conduct public affairs, sharing either by custom, by election, or by lot … —in holding, or holding accountable, the offices for carrying them out.”
- Melissa Lane, “Ancient Political Philosophy”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

The general will

- Several ideas are crucial in political philosophy, both ancient and modern.
  - The will of the people
  - The common good
  - The voice of the majority
- The 18th-century Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau summarizes these as –
  - The common will
  - The general will
- He emphasizes that they are not the same.

Rousseau on the general will

- Josh Cohen on Rousseau:
- “The essential point about content is that Rousseau's solution requires that individuals commit to regarding themselves as belonging to a political community whose members are committed to regarding one other as equals: acknowledging one another as political equals, with equal status in establishing the laws; recognizing one another as equally subject to the laws; and agreeing to regulate their association by reference to reasons of the common good, which gives equal weight to the good of each citizen.”

Classical liberalism

- Classical liberal philosophers (JS Mill, Adam Smith, David Hume, John Locke) put the primary moral emphasis on the individual rather than society.
- Society and government are “instrumental” in furthering the good of individuals rather than morally valuable in themselves.
- JS Mill is a classical liberal when he writes about the limits of the state and society with respect to the liberties of the individual.
- https://theihs.org/news/core-classical-liberal-principles/?gclid=CjwKCAjwkdL6BRAREiwA-kiczOAhzamYpPwIxBf5HacxIb_kl01UnBC7Fw2I1vIIukAxrGBhXXlPdhoC2V8QAvD_BwE

Rights, liberties, and equality

- The key political value is the cultivation and preservation of the rights and liberties of individuals.
- Liberal democracy always depends on the moral and political equality of its citizens (even if that equality is impaired at various times in history).
- The US Constitution embodies this idea as well (not, of course, in reaction to Mill!).
- The Universal Declaration on Human Rights embodies a broader conception of political and social value that recognizes the value of community.

Mill on the purpose of government

- Government is purely instrumental: it exists to increase the wellbeing of its citizens as individuals.
- Government itself has no intrinsic value; it is only valuable insofar as it brings about and maintains the good of its citizens as individuals.
- Government establishes a fair and neutral environment in which individuals pursue their own goods in their own ways.
- -- Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*

JS Mill, On Liberty: the liberty of the individual

- “The object of this Essay is to assert one very simple principle, as entitled to govern absolutely the dealings of society with the individual in the way of compulsion and control, whether the means used be physical force in the form of legal penalties, or the moral coercion of public opinion. That principle is, that the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant.”

Is liberal democracy stable?

- A key question for us in this course and at this time in history:
- Does a society embodying liberal values of individual liberties and democratic decision-making create sociological conditions that lead to a self-reinforcing stability over time?
- Or is a liberal democracy vulnerable to being undermined by anti-liberal groups and ideas?
- This is an empirical and sociological question, not a philosophical question.
- History is relevant to our answer to the question. Democracies die!

- Stability amounts to an answer to these questions:
  - Do the basic arrangements of society satisfy citizens that they are fair?
  - Do citizens believe they are treated equally?
  - Do basic arrangements create ample and reasonably equal opportunities for all?
  - Are there ideological issues that undermine the stability of a democracy – religious differences, disagreements about ethnicity and race, disagreement over basic institutions of the economy?

Chapter 3

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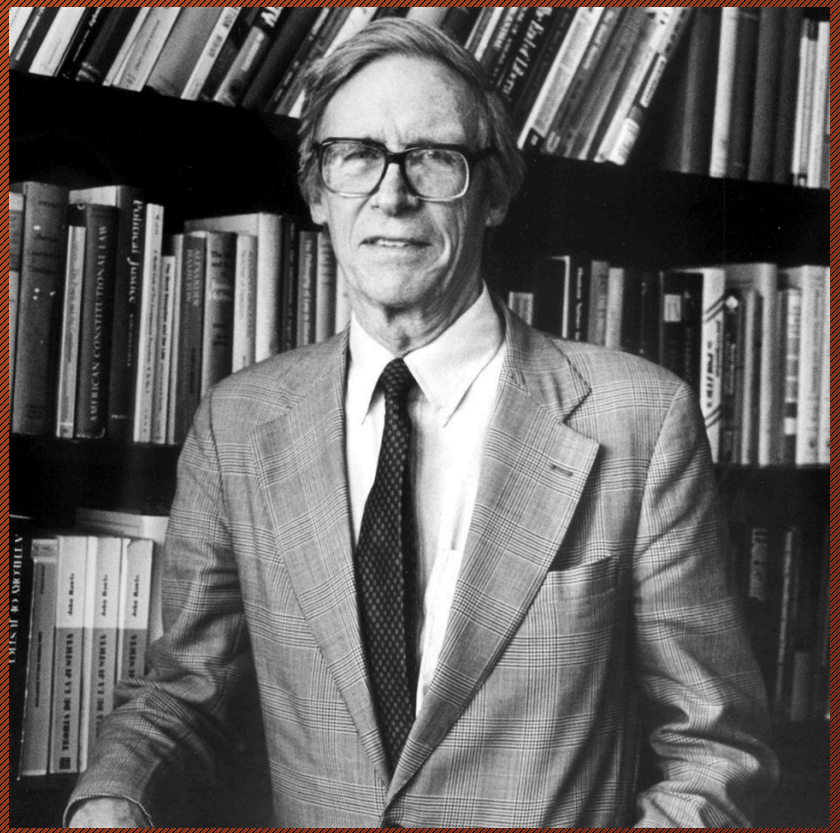
Lecture 3

Contemporary liberal political philosophy

- Political philosophy is the field that studies the moral status of political institutions, including legislation, constitution, system of government, regulation, taxation, and the moral justification for using the coercive power of the state to force citizens to comply.
- Liberal political philosophy involves several main ideas
  - The importance of the dignity, liberties, and wellbeing of each individual
  - The importance of equality among all citizens
  - The importance of democratic institutions of governance

John Rawls

- John Rawls was a Harvard philosopher who is now regarded as the most influential and important political philosopher of the 20th century.
- He was a "social contract" theorist (in the tradition of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau).
- He believed that we can answer the question, "What is justice?" by asking, "What principles and institutions would rational citizens unanimously and rationally accept as a basis for their permanent cooperation and co-residence in a country?"



A Theory of Justice (1971)

- Rawls published his major book, *A Theory of Justice*, in 1971. It was over 600 pages long and considered many aspects of the problem of a just society.
- He offered a method of philosophical argument, and he put forward a specific set of principles that he believed were supported by that method of argument.
- His method is what he calls the "Original Position," designed to explore what principles would be accepted unanimously by rational individuals.
- His conclusion is that two specific principles of justice would emerge.

A liberal conception of a just society

- Rawls provides a rich description of a just society.
- It is one in which each individual is treated as a moral equal to all others.
- It is one in which there is a plurality of “fundamental conceptions of the good”, and institutions respect those differences.
- It is one in which there is an “overlapping consensus” about the fairness and justice of the legal and constitutional institutions of the society.
- It is one in which individuals and their associations pursue their goals according to their own choices, subject to the requirements of justice.

A pluralistic society

- Rawls has a fairly developed conception of the person. A person exercises liberty in his or her actions; but what drives the actions?
- Rawls postulates that individuals have a "conception of the good" — a set of values defining the ways in which they choose to live their lives. Different individuals and groups have different conceptions of the good, and therefore choose to live and act differently.
- This is an essential feature of a democratic society: it is pluralistic, in that it is neutral between different citizens' conceptions of the good.
- The main example he offers is the differences that arise between religious groups; but we can think of other examples as well.
- People who choose to live in socialist cooperatives (as was done in the 19th century) are free to do so.

Why “justice as fairness”?

- Rawls believes that the fundamental moral basis of justice is the idea that everyone in society should be treated “fairly”.
- What does that entail?
- No one should be exploited; no one should be denied opportunities without justification; no one should be forced to accept political institutions he/she fundamentally and rationally rejects.
- How can we interpret “fair” in this context?
- “Fair” means “would be acceptable to all rational persons as a basis for social life”.
- No one is treated unfairly by arrangements he/she would have accepted voluntarily.

Reflective equilibrium

- This is another important part of Rawls's methodology for moral reasoning.
- He does not believe there is an apriori method for arriving at moral truths in philosophy.
- He recognizes that all human beings have a good number of judgments about the world around them: slavery is wrong, military conscription is right, enforcing contracts is just, … These are **considered judgments**.
- Human beings also have a set of generalizations and principles that they believe should guide their moral lives.
- These two sets of facts are often not consistent. So moral reasoners go through a process of adjusting their principles and their judgments until they are in harmony. This is reflective equilibrium.

The original position

- Rawls offers the idea of the “original position” as a way of determining what principles rational citizens would accept.
- He hypothesizes an imaginary situation in which each individual is fully rational, fully determined to secure an agreement that serves his/her interests best, but does not know his or her particular circumstances. Individuals know general facts about human life and social interactions.
- Individuals are behind the “veil of ignorance”.
- He argues that the two principles of justice would be chosen because they protect every individual against worst-case outcomes: more limited freedoms and extensive inequalities.

The basic structure of society

- This is an important concept for Rawls; it refers to the fundamental institutions and arrangements through which social, economic, and political life are managed.
- If a society is a laissez-faire market economy, its basic structure includes the system of laws regulating property, labor, and contracts.
- If a society is a social democracy (capitalist economy, extensive social-welfare system) the basic structure includes the economic arrangements and the "entitlements and rights" created by the social-welfare system.
- Question: does a given version of a basic structure ensure equality of opportunity? If not, it is unjust.

Reasoning from the least-well-off

- Because individuals are behind the veil of ignorance, and because the principles of justice they choose are the most fundamental determinants of their eventual wellbeing, they are risk averse.
- They choose to require maximum liberties.
- They choose to require that any inequalities in social and economic relations must work to benefit the least well off individuals in society.
- [This principle is chosen rather than strict equality because Rawls considers it is possible that modest inequalities increase the total output of society enough to benefit the LWO.]

The two principles of justice

- **Liberty principle.** The first principle guarantees the right of each person to have the most extensive basic liberty compatible with the liberty of others.
- **Difference principle.** The second principle states that social and economic positions are to be the least system of inequalities such that they are (a) to everyone's advantage and (b) open to all.
- Rawls argues that the liberty principle is prior to the difference principle: rational individuals would not trade off their equal liberties for economic advantage.

A political conception of the good

- This is an important but confusing idea in Rawls's theory in JF.
- It is not a "comprehensive conception of the good" — a fully detailed set of values.
- Rather, it is an abstract sketch of values and principles which individuals in different "comprehensive conceptions" can share.
- The idea that "every citizen is subject to the law; no one is above the law" corresponds to a political conception of the good.

A fair system of cooperation

- Another important concept in Rawls's political philosophy
- It denotes the idea that the basic arrangements and institutions of a society are "fair" and permit everyone to live and work on an equal basis.
- No one is exploited, no one is forced to limit his or her freedoms more than other people.
- The requirements of "equality of opportunity" are part of the idea of a fair system of cooperation. If, for example, women or rural people are prevented from certain kinds of jobs, the society is not a "fair system of cooperation".

A well-ordered society

- Rawls defines this idea simply as “a society effectively regulated by a public conception of justice” (5, 31); that is, a conception of justice that is shared across all conceptions of the good.
- Rawls believes that the two principles of justice constitute the foundation of a well-ordered society; they are the heart of a public conception of justice.
- This means that these principles ought to be acceptable to all reasonable persons.

Overlapping consensus

- An overlapping consensus is one where “the political conception is supported by the reasonable though opposing religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines that gain a significant body of adherents and endure over time from one generation to the next” (32).
- Buddhists, Muslims, and socialists disagree about many aspects of their basic values, spiritual and practical. But they can agree about the importance of the equality of all human beings and the value of equal freedoms.
- These points would be part of an “overlapping consensus”.
- “This is … the most reasonable basis of political and social unity available to citizens of a democratic society” (32).

Is a liberal democracy stable and self-reinforcing?

- This is the key question in our course. Are the principles of justice, pluralism, and liberty that Rawls describes sufficient to create a shared commitment across all groups to loyally support the just institutions of democracy?
- This can be understood as a sociological or psychological question.
- Rawls expresses an interesting view on the matter:
- “Given the actual comprehensive views existing in society, no matter what their content, there is plainly no guarantee that justice as fairness, or any reasonable conception for a democratic regime, can gain the support of an overlapping consensus and in that way underwrite the stability of its political institutions. Many doctrines are plainly incompatible with the values of democracy.” (37)

Chapter 4

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Lecture 4

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Social unity in liberal society

- “The social unity of a constitutional regime is seen to rest on such a consensus and this enables us to complete the discussion of stability … by giving a brief account of a reasonable moral psychology and of the good of political society.” (54.2)

The question of stability

- Rawls raises the question of stability directly (sect. 54).
- “In this last part we take up the question of the stability of justice as fairness and how its stability connects with the good of a political society well ordered by it.” (54.1)
- ”The second part of the argument concerns the question of the stability of justice as fairness. This is the question whether justice as fairness is able to generate sufficient support for itself. The parties are to ask whether people who grow up in a society well ordered by the two principles of justice … acquire a sufficiently strong and effective sense of justice so that they normally comply with just arrangements and are not moved to act otherwise, say, by social envy and spite, or by a will to dominate or a tendency to submit.” (54.2)

- This second statement of “stability” is key. It raises the question of socialization within a just society.
- Will citizens raised [developed, nurtured, educated] within circumstances governed by the principles of justice acquire the motivations needed to sustain the institutions in which the principles of justice are embodied?
- Rawls refers to “special attitudes” like envy or spite. But we can introduce special attitudes more specific to our current concerns: hatred, fear, mistrust, bigotry, and racism. Do ordinary human beings have these motivations? And do they undermine the stability of justice?

The social emotions of division

- The emotions of fear, hatred, mistrust of others, racial animosity, and personal superiority are the building blocks of mobilization for social movements based on division and hate.
- So the question is whether children reared within social arrangements embodying principles of justice will be vulnerable to these “divisive” social emotions – and therefore available for supporting hate-based groups.

The values of a liberal society

- The content of an “overlapping consensus” — the political conception of justice for a liberal democracy
- Equal political and civil liberty
- Fair equality of opportunity
- Economic reciprocity as well as the social bases of citizens’ self-respect. (57.1)
- How do these values work to constitute the basis for a “political framework for an overlapping consensus” across a range of comprehensive conceptions of the good?
- They depend on the idea that they are principles that “all citizens may reasonably be expected to endorse” (190).

Rawls's assumption about moral psychology

- "Citizens have a capacity for a conception of the good and a capacity to acquire conceptions of justice and to act as these conceptions require"
- "When they believe that institutions or social practices are just, or fair … citizens are ready and willing to do their part in those arrangements provided they have sufficient assurance that others will also do theirs."
- Continuing reciprocal experience of action within "just" institutions leads to rising trust and confidence. (59.1)

Different versions of “overlapping consensus”

- An overlapping consensus is a framework of thinking about political constitution and justice that is supported by multiple comprehensive conceptions of the good.
- Sometimes an overlapping consensus is purely a “modus vivendi”.
- What Rawls has in mind is an abstract set of values that are either directly endorsed by a given comprehensive conception or are appealing and compatible with the comprehensive conception.
- This is an overlapping consensus that has the likelihood of enduring. (sect. 58)

- “The possibility of a reasonably harmonious and stable pluralist and democratic society, may follow from this success of liberal institutions.” (59.2)
- “The more [citizens] see their political society as good for themselves both as a corporate body and as individuals, and the greater their appreciation of the political conception in securing the three essentials of a stable regime, the less they will be prompted by the special attitudes of envy, spite, the will to dominate, and the temptation to deprive others of justice.” (60.4)

The liberal democrat's hope …

- Rawls acknowledges that there is nothing that guarantees the social cohesion or stability of a just liberal democracy.
- But he believes that the conditions of justice — equal liberties, fair system of economic cooperation, limited inequalities that work to everyone's advantage — work to encourage a specific kind of "overlapping consensus".
- He believes that these social arrangements will be respected and adhered to because they are seen to be good for each individual and good for society.
- And he believes that this will contribute to an overlapping consensus and a social psychology of cohesion and political commitment that will make a just society with a secure liberal democracy a sociologically stable set of arrangements.

Chapter 5

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Lecture 5

- So far we have examined several aspects of Rawls's theory of a just society — his idea of a well-ordered society, the two principles of justice, the ideas of different levels of "conceptions of the good", the essential role of pluralism in a liberal democracy, and the idea that a just society may elicit a "political psychology" that reinforces and stabilizes the conditions of liberal democracy.
- We have not yet examined a crucial part of the "basic structure" of society — the social and economic institutions through which income, wealth, status, and educational opportunity are generated.

A fair “basic structure”

- Rawls describes a just society as embodying “a fair system of cooperation”.
- Recall what fairness means for Rawls — rational acceptability to all participants under specified conditions.
- The idea is, generally speaking, that a person is treated fairly in an arrangement if he/she “would have accepted this arrangement” freely and without coercion.
- Rawls formalized this conception with his idea of the original position and the veil of ignorance.
- Justice is to be deliberated by rational individuals “behind the veil of ignorance”, and they are charged to set the fundamental terms of cooperation under which they will live in the resulting society.

Five possible social systems

- Laissez-faire capitalism
- Welfare-state capitalism
- State socialism
- Property-owning democracy
- Liberal (democratic) socialism (136)
- Rawls believes the first three systems are incompatible with justice, because they make equality purely formal. They do not ensure the “equal worth of liberty”.

- “Another reason for reviewing these matters is to sketch in more detail the kind of background institutions that seem necessary when we take seriously the idea that society is a fair system of cooperation between free and equal citizens from one generation to the next.” (136)
- “Both a property-owning democracy and a liberal socialist regime set up a constitutional framework for democratic politics, guarantee the basic liberties with the fair value of the political liberties and fair equality of opportunity, and regulate economic and social inequalities by a principle of mutuality, if not by the difference principle.” (138)

The equal worth of liberty …

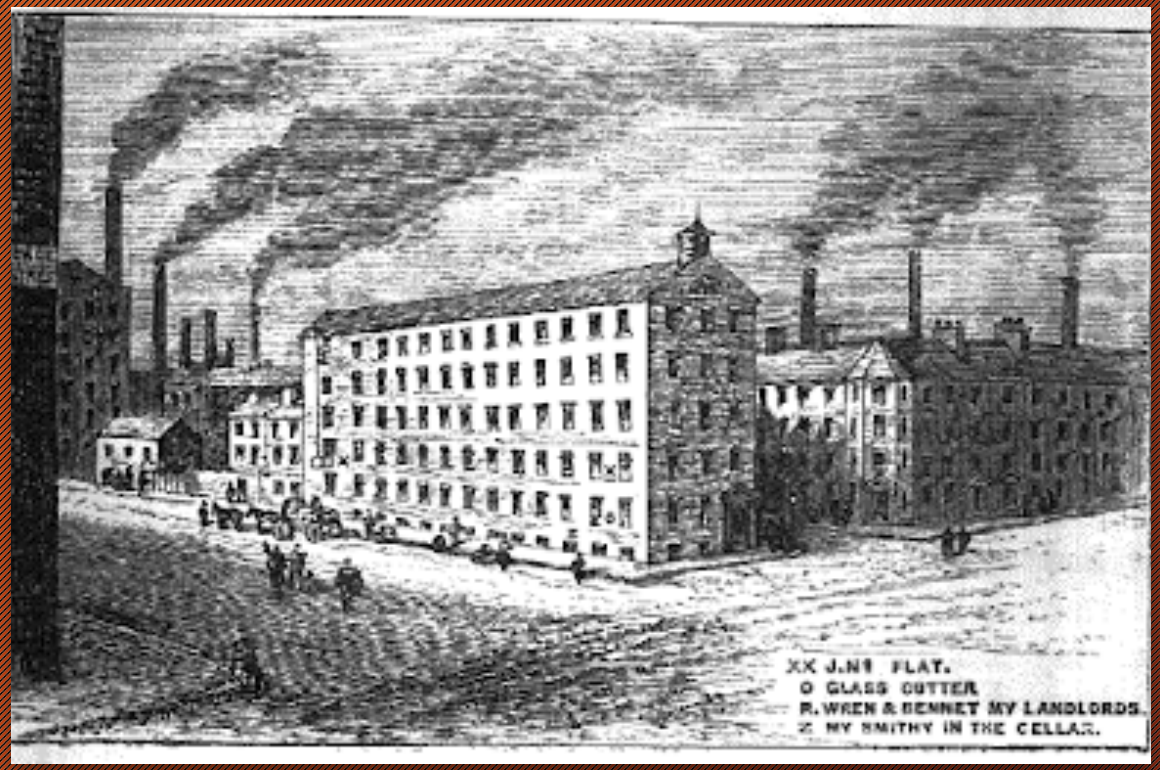
- The difference principle is plainly relevant to these choices: “inequalities should be the least system of inequalities consistent with maximizing the position of the least-well-off member of society”. So greater inequalities than necessary for this end are unjust.
- But Rawls believes that there is a more fundamental problem with extensive inequalities: the worth of liberty. He argues his first principle establishing the priority of liberty has significant implications for the extent of wealth inequality that can be tolerated in a just society.
- The requirement of the equal worth of political and personal liberties implies that extreme inequalities of wealth are unjust, because they provide a fundamentally unequal base to different groups of people for the exercise of their political and democratic liberties.

- “The first principle of justice includes a right to private personal property, but this is different from the right of private property in productive assets.” (138)

- If we look at the fundamentals of social life in the United States we are forced to recognize a number of unpalatable realities: extensive and increasing inequalities of income, wealth, education, health, and quality of life; persistent racial inequalities; a growing indifference among the affluent and powerful to the poverty and deprivation of others; and a political system that is rapidly approaching the asymptote of oligarchy.
- It is difficult to be optimistic about our political future if we are particularly concerned about equality and opportunity for all; the politics of our time seem to be taking us further and further from these ideals.

- Suppose you are a dispossessed English farmer in 1840. You have relocated from your village (where you can no longer make a living) to Manchester, a new industrial town.
- You arrive in Manchester and look for a place to stay while looking for work. You have a little money that you hope will see you through. You find a rooming house in a Manchester slum… Expensive but you'll find a job.
- You go to the Franklin and Morris cotton mill and are offered an unskilled job for 12 shillings per week. The working day is 12 hours. There are no better job offers available to you. You accept.
- Rent for your room is 4 shillings; food for the week will cost you 4 shillings; you have 4 shillings left to send home to your family in the village. Good luck to you and your little ones.

Your place of work, 13 hours a day, 6 days a week. Safety is poor, company retains the right to fire you for any reason, life is bad. Are you “free” to accept or reject this offer of employment? Is your liberty comparable to that of the owner who offers you this job?



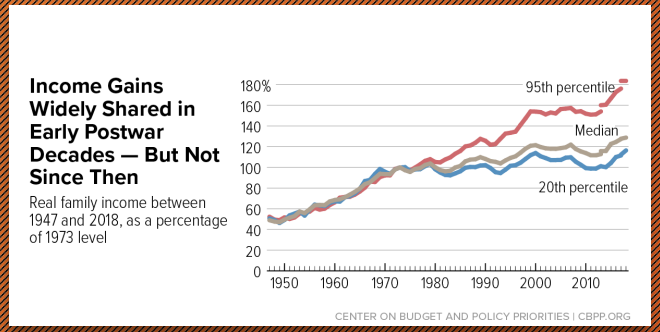
How does Rawls define a property-owning democracy?

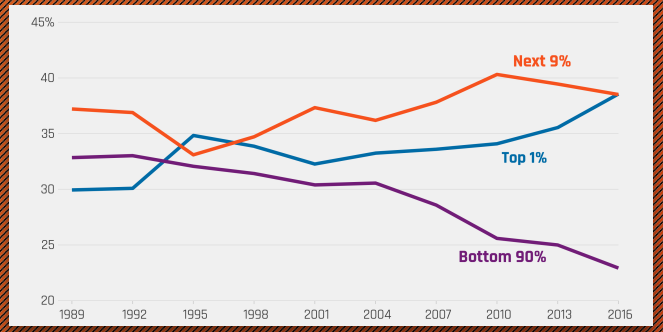
- *"In property-owning democracy, ... the aim is to realize in the basic institutions the idea of society as a fair system of cooperation between citizens regarded as free and equal. To do this, those institutions must, from the outset, put in the hands of citizens generally, and not only of a few, sufficient productive means for them to be fully cooperating members of society on a footing of equality." (140)*
- This is a very strong condition. It implies broadly distributed ownership of productive assets (companies) and limited inequalities of wealth.
- It is compatible with worker-owned enterprises.

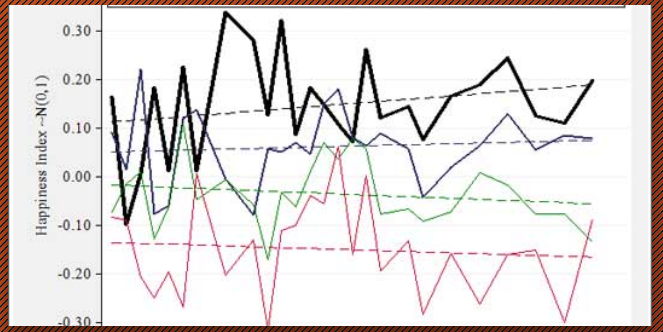
- “The basic structure is to secure citizens’ freedom and independence, and continually to moderate tendencies that lead, over time, to greater inequalities in socials status and wealth, and in the ability to exert political influence and to take advantage of available opportunities.” (159)

- “The background institutions of property-owning democracy work to disperse the ownership of wealth and capital, and thus to prevent a small part of society from controlling the economy, and indirectly, political life as well.” (139)
- “Property-owning democracy avoids this, not by the redistribution of income to those with less at the end of each period … but rather by ensuring the widespread ownership of productive assets and human capital (that is, education and trained skills) at the beginning of each period, all this against a background of fair equality of opportunity.” (139)

Rising inequalities in the US







Income

Wealth

Happiness

Our basic structure?

- It is much closer to the laissez-faire capitalist model that Rawls describes as fundamentally incompatible with justice,
  - with a small component of “welfare-state” amenities
  - and with extreme and increasing inequalities of wealth and income
- Under these circumstances Rawls takes the position that we cannot regard the basic structure as treating citizens as “free and equal” participants in a fair system of cooperation.

Civic humanism?

- It is interesting and at first surprising that Rawls rejects “civic humanism”:
- “A form of Aristotelianism [that] holds that we are social, even political, beings, whose essential nature is most fully achieved in a democratic society in which there is widespread and active participation in political life.” (142)
- “Civic humanism specifies the chief, if not the sole human good as our engaging in political life, often in the form associated historically with the city-state, taking Athens and Florence as exemplars.” (143)
- His reason: civic humanism is itself a comprehensive conception of the good.

Constitutional vs. procedural democracy

- This too is a crucial distinction for the issues of this course.
- Constitutional democracy is “liberal democracy” with a constitutional and prior stipulation of rights for citizens.
- Procedural democracy leaves all legislation up to the processes of electoral and representative democracy.
- Rawls argues that a constitutional democracy is necessary in order to comply with the priority of liberty. Maximum personal liberties must be securely embodied in the political-legal order.

A demanding and powerful defense of liberal democracy

- Rawls's theory of justice, including his defense of "property-owning democracy", sets an appealing view of liberal democracy as a home for free and equal citizens.
- It is a demanding theory, in the sense that it identifies the extreme inequalities we currently observe as being unjust because they violate the requirement of the "equal worth of liberty" for all citizens, and violate the difference principle.

Chapter 6

Lecture 6

Madeleine Albright, Fascism: A Warning

- “Fascist attitudes take hold when there are no social anchors and when the perception grows that everybody lies, steals, and cares only about him-or herself. That is when the yearning is felt for a strong hand to protect against the evil “other”—whether Jew, Muslim, black, so-called redneck, or so-called elite. Flawed though our institutions may be, they are the best that four thousand years of civilization have produced and cannot be cast aside without opening the door to something far worse. The wise response to intolerance is not more intolerance or self-righteousness; it is a coming together across the ideological spectrum of people who want to make democracies more effective. We should remember that the heroes we cherish—Lincoln, King, Gandhi, Mandela—spoke to the best within us. The crops we’ll harvest depend on the seeds we sow.” (kl 94)

- “Fascism, most of the students agreed, is an extreme form of authoritarian rule. Citizens are required to do exactly what leaders say they must do, nothing more, nothing less. The doctrine is linked to rabid nationalism. It also turns the traditional social contract upside down. Instead of citizens giving power to the state in exchange for the protection of their rights, power begins with the leader, and the people have no rights. Under Fascism, the mission of citizens is to serve; the government’s job is to rule.” (kl 261)

How Democracies Die

- Levitsky and Ziblatt are well respected professors of government (political science) at Harvard
- Their book, *How Democracies Die* (2018), is a very sobering comparative and empirical study of the decline of democratic institutions and values
- They are "comparativists": they study similar political circumstances and regimes and attempt to uncover the mechanisms and processes that recur.
- Their book identifies the mechanisms and strategies through which authoritarian leaders and parties systematically pursue and entrench power.

The slide towards authoritarianism

- Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die* (2018)
- Support for democratic values has fallen in western democracies in recent years
- "Strongmen" leaders in Hungary, Poland, India, Brazil, Turkey, and the United States have systematically undermined and delegitimized the electoral institutions of democracy
- The twentieth century saw the rise of dictatorships in Germany, Italy, Spain, and many other countries, all of which displaced existing democracies.

Political science and comparative politics

- It is very important to note that this book is not a work of journalism, editorial commentary, or blogging.
- It is an empirical study based on the methods of comparative politics.
- Regimes and political systems are regarded as historically embodied complexes of institutions, values, parties, and political interests.
- Comparative political scientists attempt to discover the dynamics and common pathways through which modern democracies function.

The value of comparison …

- “Studying other democracies in crisis allows us to better understand the challenges facing our own. For example, based on the historical experiences of other nations, we have developed a litmus test to help identify would-be autocrats before they come to power. We can learn from the mistakes that past democratic leaders have made in opening the door to would-be authoritarians—and, conversely, from the ways that other democracies have kept extremists out of power. A comparative approach also reveals how elected autocrats in different parts of the world employ remarkably similar strategies to subvert democratic institutions. As these patterns become visible, the steps toward breakdown grow less ambiguous—and easier to combat.” (6)

Their central point …

- Seizure of power by force is no longer typical of the rise of new dictatorships
- We have seen many countries in which existing democracies have been subverted by authoritarian leaders and parties
- These processes have been slow and less dramatic than the seizure of power by Hitler, Mussolini, or Franco
- But they have resulted in a great reduction in the real effectiveness of democratic systems in Turkey, Brazil, Hungary, Poland, India
- And they believe that the potential for such “death of democracy” is very real in the United States, especially since the presidency of Donald Trump.

What about the US democracy?

- *But now we find ourselves turning to our own country. Over the past two years, we have watched politicians say and do things that are unprecedented in the United States—but that we recognize as having been the precursors of democratic crisis in other places. We feel dread, as do so many other Americans, even as we try to reassure ourselves that things can't really be that bad here. After all, even though we know democracies are always fragile, the one in which we live has somehow managed to defy gravity. Our Constitution, our national creed of freedom and equality, our historically robust middle class, our high levels of wealth and education, and our large, diversified private sector—all these should inoculate us from the kind of democratic breakdown that has occurred elsewhere. (1)*

- Levitsky and Ziblatt's worries about the fate of US democracy are deeper now than ever.
- In *Tyranny of the Minority: Why American Democracy Reached the Breaking Point* they provide a sustained analysis of the mechanisms through which the erosion of democratic institutions has taken place in the United States.
- They offer several extended historical examples of weakened and collapsed democracies in the past century and a half.
- Particularly striking is their treatment of a violent uprising in Paris in 1934.

- Commenting on the January 6, 2021 violent insurrection at the US Capitol, they write:
- *But just as this new democratic experiment was beginning to take root, America experienced an authoritarian backlash so fierce that it shook the foundations of the republic, leaving our allies across the world worried about whether the country had any democratic future at all. Meaningful steps toward democratic inclusion often trigger intense—even authoritarian—reactions. But the assault on American democracy was worse than anything we anticipated in 2017, when we were writing our first book, How Democracies Die.* (6)

- The events on the streets of Paris conducted by young right-wing men against the lawful parliament of the French Republic shook the democratic institutions of France profoundly.
- *France's democracy survived the February 6, 1934, assault. But it was badly weakened. Prime Minister Édouard Daladier immediately resigned. He was replaced by Gaston Doumergue, a right-wing politician who was considered acceptable to the leagues. The goal of some of the insurrectionists had been achieved: the center-left Daladier government had been brought down by street pressure. Right-wing extremists were emboldened and mobilized. (36)*

- The lesson they draw is stark: the greatest threat to French democracy was not the uprising in the streets; it was the compliant and tolerant reaction of right-wing politicians to these events.
- *Politicians who are committed to democracy, or what the political scientist Juan Linz called loyal democrats, must always do three basic things. First, they must respect the outcome of free and fair elections, win or lose. This means consistently and unhesitatingly accepting defeat. Second, democrats must unambiguously reject violence (or the threat of violence) as a means of achieving political goals. Politicians who support military coups, organize putsches, incite insurrections, plot bombings, assassinations, and other terrorist acts, or deploy militias or thugs to beat up opponents or intimidate voters are not democrats. Indeed, any party or politician that violates either of these two basic rules should be considered a threat to democracy. But there is a third, more subtle action required of loyal democrats: they must always break with antidemocratic forces. Democracy's assassins always have accomplices—political insiders who appear to abide by democracy's rules but quietly assault them. These are what Linz called "semi-loyal" democrats.(40-41)*

- *Semi-loyal democrats, by contrast, deny or downplay their allies' violent or antidemocratic acts. They may blame violence on "false flag" operations. They may minimize the importance of antidemocratic behavior, deflect criticism by drawing attention to similar (or worse) behavior by the other side, or otherwise justify or condone the acts. Semi-loyalists frequently try to have it both ways: expressing disapproval of the perpetrators' methods while sympathizing with their goals. Or they may simply remain silent in the face of violent attacks on democracy. (43)*

USA
MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN
SWC

- *“But there is another way to break a democracy. It is less dramatic but equally destructive. Democracies may die at the hands not of generals but of elected leaders—presidents or prime ministers who subvert the very process that brought them to power. Some of these leaders dismantle democracy quickly, as Hitler did in the wake of the 1933 Reichstag fire in Germany. More often, though, democracies erode slowly, in barely visible steps.”(p. 3)*

Right wing extremists in US history

- *"We know that extremist demagogues emerge from time to time in all societies, even in healthy democracies. The United States has had its share of them, including Henry Ford, Huey Long, Joseph McCarthy, and George Wallace. An essential test for democracies is not whether such figures emerge but whether political leaders, and especially political parties, work to prevent them from gaining power in the first place—by keeping them off mainstream party tickets, refusing to endorse or align with them, and when necessary, making common cause with rivals in support of democratic candidates. Isolating popular extremists requires political courage. But when fear, opportunism, or miscalculation leads established parties to bring extremists into the mainstream, democracy is imperiled." (p. 7).*

Guardrails for democracy?

- Levitsky and Ziblatt were concerned in 2018 that the “guardrails” of American democracy were not sufficiently stable to prevent the emergence of an authoritarian leader.
- “But are constitutional safeguards, by themselves, enough to secure a democracy? We believe the answer is no. Even well-designed constitutions sometimes fail.” (97)
- Recent events seem to show how close our country came to rejection of a legitimate election through pressure on the institutions.
- The “guardrails” held, but it was a close call.

Four warning signs from history

- 1. Rejection of (or weak commitment to) democratic rules of the game
- 2. Denial of the legitimacy of political opponents
- 3. Toleration or encouragement of violence
- 4. Readiness to curtail civil liberties of opponents, including media

    - (How Democracies Die, p. 23)

Piecemeal assault on democracy

- *"How do elected authoritarians shatter the democratic institutions that are supposed to constrain them? Some do it in one fell swoop. But more often the assault on democracy begins slowly. For many citizens, it may, at first, be imperceptible. After all, elections continue to be held. Opposition politicians still sit in congress. Independent newspapers still circulate. The erosion of democracy takes place piecemeal, often in baby steps. Each individual step seems minor—none appears to truly threaten democracy. Indeed, government moves to subvert democracy frequently enjoy a veneer of legality: They are approved by parliament or ruled constitutional by the supreme court. Many of them are adopted under the guise of pursuing some legitimate—even laudable—public objective, such as combating corruption, "cleaning up" elections, improving the quality of democracy, or enhancing national security." (70)*

- *"To entrench themselves in power, however, governments must do more—they must also change the rules of the game. Authoritarians seeking to consolidate their power often reform the constitution, the electoral system, and other institutions in ways that disadvantage or weaken the opposition, in effect tilting the playing field against their rivals. These reforms are often carried out under the guise of some public good, while in reality they are stacking the deck in favor of incumbents. And because they involve legal and even constitutional changes, they may allow autocrats to lock in these advantages for years and even decades." (87-88)*

The institutions of US democracy

- The Constitution and system of law regulating elections and voting
- The judicial system
- The political parties and the selection of candidates
- The funding of elections and candidates through vast campaign funds and PACs
- Traditional media and newspapers
- Social media
- Right-wing television networks with very large audiences (Fox, …)
- The influence of corporations, wealthy individuals, and labor unions

Their final word …

- *"The egalitarianism, civility, sense of freedom, and shared purpose portrayed by E. B. White were the essence of mid-twentieth-century American democracy. Today that vision is under assault. To save our democracy, Americans need to restore the basic norms that once protected it. But we must do more than that. We must extend those norms through the whole of a diverse society. We must make them truly inclusive. America's democratic norms, at their core, have always been sound. But for much of our history, they were accompanied—indeed, sustained—by racial exclusion. Now those norms must be made to work in an age of racial equality and unprecedented ethnic diversity. Few societies in history have managed to be both multiracial and genuinely democratic. That is our challenge. It is also our opportunity. If we meet it, America will truly be exceptional."* (p. 231)

Chapter 7

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Lecture 7

Populism and right-wing extremism

- Political parties and leaders have emerged in the past 20 years in many parts of the world who fundamentally challenge the premises of liberal democracy.
- Two overlapping sets of ideas can be found in these parties.
  - A simplistic kind of populism that makes the political case that "the people" are being exploited and mistreated by "the elites"
  - A right-wing extremist ideology that depends on racism, hatred, and a propensity for violence against members of other groups.
- When these ideas converge, they pose a potent threat to liberal democracy.

Right-wing extremism

- An important strand of populist politics is right-wing extremism, embracing —
  - Anti-immigrant language and policies
  - White supremacy
  - Racist language, anti-Semitism, and anti-Muslim bigotry
  - Rejection of political and civic equality of all human beings
  - Support for the use of violence to gain “freedom”

Inventory of political beliefs of far right parties

- Marc Swyngedouw and Gilles Ivaldi provide an inventory of the core ideological beliefs of the far-right parties in Belgium and France (Vlaams Blok and Front national)
- Cultural and biological racism: Human beings are not equal; in-groups and outgroups based on race, religion, or culture (4) “The incompatibility of mores between Europeans and non-European foreigners”
  - The “ethnically committed” vanguard represented by the party
- A belief in the natural inequality of human beings within groups. “Egalitarianism is intrinsically wrong” (6)
  - The people = “working humanity”
- https://doi.org/10.1080/01402380108425450

- The “Gemeinschaft Utopia”
  - “The utopian picture offered by the FN and the VB is predominantly one of an organic community whose pillars are to be found in the long-standing traditional values that are said to have shaped the whole society throughout its formation. Such a utopia fits into a category of ‘conservatism’ or ‘traditio-communitarianism’.” (7)
  - “The family is the basic unit of this harmonious and organically structured community.” (7)
  - The state should enforce the values and moral interests of this community.

Mudde, *The Far Right Today*

- “Extreme right ideologies believe that inequalities are natural and outside of the purview of the state. They celebrate difference and hierarchy, and their core feature is elitism, which holds that some groups and individuals are superior to others and should therefore have more power.” (pp. 24-25)
- “Whether informed primarily by racism or ethnopluralism, one of the key ideological features of the far right, and the dominant feature of the contemporary populist radical right, is nativism, a combination of nationalism and xenophobia. It is an ideology that holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (the nation) and that non-native (or “alien”) elements, whether persons or ideas, are fundamentally threatening to the homogeneous nation-state. The core idea of nativism is best summarized in the slogan “Germany for the Germans, Foreigners Out,” which became infamous as a rallying cry at the often-violent anti-refugee rallies of the early 1990s.” (pp. 27-28)

- “Within nativism, antisemitism and Islamophobia play particularly important roles. Antisemitism, hostility to or prejudice against Jews, was the key prejudice of the far right in the early twentieth century, and remains central to many extreme right groups today. However, many populist radical right groups and parties, particularly in Western Europe, are not antisemitic and some have even become philosemitic (pro-Jewish), seeing Israel as the ideal ethnocracy and Jews as natural allies in the struggle against Islam. Islamophobia, an irrational fear of Islam or Muslims, has become the defining prejudice of the far right of the fourth wave. In this view, Islam is equated with Islamism, that is, an extremist political interpretation of Islam, and Muslims are seen as hostile to democracy and to all non-Muslims – Islamophobes often proudly declare themselves to be “kuffars” or “infidels.”” The Far Right Today (p. 28).

- “The far right is commonly associated with violence, be it larger populist radical right parties or smaller extreme right groups and individuals. However, those who primarily perpetrate far-right violence have traditionally not been the leaders within politically relevant organizations but (small groups of) individuals who have at best a peripheral association with the far-right movement. Nevertheless, in recent years far-right violence has become more planned, regular, and lethal, as terrorist attacks in, among others, Christchurch (New Zealand), Pittsburgh (US), and Utøya (Norway) show. And in the wake of the “refugee crisis,” more and more countries are growing increasingly concerned about the rise of far-right terrorist groups such as the German National Socialist Underground.” (89)

- “Far-right paramilitary groups are particularly prone to political violence, including outright terrorism. Most European paramilitary units are uniformed but (officially) not armed. Several were set up by far-right political parties, such as the Hungarian Guard, the banned but still operating paramilitary wing of Jobbik; the LN’s Green Shirts (camicie verdi) in Northern Italy; and the National Party’s National Guard in the Czech Republic. While these groups rarely engage in overt physical violence, their mere presence – in formation, often wearing black uniforms with black boots, carrying torches and accompanied by dogs – is aimed at terrorizing targeted populations (mostly immigrants and Roma).” (pp. 91-92)

- “In sharp contrast, most, if not all, countries have a fertile breeding ground for populist radical right ideas and organizations. Nativist, authoritarian, and populist attitudes are widespread, with often pluralities, and sometimes even majorities, expressing support for key populist radical right policies like less immigration, tougher sentences, and fewer perks for politicians.” (p. 107)

- Social conflict and “solidarism”. Solidarism was a theory offered by Mussolini’s fascism. This view recommends that workers express solidarity with their corporations rather than struggling against them for better wages.
- The (ethnic) community takes absolute precedence over the individual. Individuals have no separate existence from which they could draw universal rights; they are intrinsically and inseparably associated with one particular people through the basic family unit. Ethnic commitment is not a voluntary engagement, but a natural link.” 16
- Anti-party rhetoric — the established parties are elitist and “in it for their own advantage”.

Populism as a challenge to liberal democracy

- The National Front (FN) of France, 1972
  - Jean-Marie Le Pen; ultra-nationalist; xenophobic; anti-immigrant; anti-semitic language; minimized the Holocaust
  - Slogans of the French fascists of the 1930s; referred to as a far-right or neo-fascist organization
  - Rose to 15% of the vote in the presidential election of 1995
  - Repackaged in the 2000s by Marine Le Pen in 2011 to avoid the extreme racism of her father; gained 18% of the vote in 2012 presidential election and 25% in 2014 elections for European Parliament

The extreme right in Germany today

- Alternative for Germany (AfD) 2013
  - Populist, anti-migration, anti-foreigner, minimizing Holocaust and Germany's responsibility for mass murder; Eurosceptic; rejection of multiculturalism; nationalistic
  - Connections to Pegida movement, anti-Islam political movement
- https://www.dw.com/en/afd-what-you-need-to-know-about-germanys-far-right-party/a-37208199
- National Democratic Party (NPD) 1964
  - Far-right, extremist, small. Politically irrelevant?
- https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-constitutional-court-rules-against-banning-far-right-npd-party/a-37155332

Violence in far-right political organizations

- Three trends in far-right violence in the United States (Combating Terrorism Center)
- Racist violence — Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazi organizations, skinhead groups.
  - "The racist groups are interested in preserving or restoring what they perceive as the appropriate and natural racial and cultural hierarchy by enforcing social and political control over non-whites—such as African Americans, Jews and various immigrant communities."
- Anti-federalist trend
  - "Ideologically, anti-federalists are interested in undermining the influence, legitimacy and practical sovereignty of the federal government and its proxy organizations, such as the U.S. military or Federal Bureau of Investigation." Bundy brothers' occupation of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (2017)
- Fundamentalist trend
  - "The fundamentalist trend, which includes mainly Christian identity groups such as the Aryan Nations, merges religious fundamentalism with traditional white supremacy and racist tendencies. It promotes ideas of nativism, exclusionism, and racial superiority via a unique interpretation of religious texts that focus on division of humanity according to primordial attributes."
- https://www.ctc.usma.edu/identifying-three-trends-in-far-right-violence-in-the-united-states/

Political violence by right-wing extremists

- The hate-based murders of at least nine young people in Hanau, Germany in February 2020 brought the world's attention once again to right-wing extremism in Germany and elsewhere. The prevalence of right-wing extremist violence in Germany today is shocking, and it presents a deadly challenge to democratic institutions in modern Germany.
- "Far-right terror is the biggest threat to our democracy right now," Christine Lambrecht, the justice minister, told reporters on Friday, a day after joining the country's president at a vigil for the victims. "This is visible in the number and intensity of attacks."

Violence in the extreme right

- *"The far right is commonly associated with violence, be it larger populist radical right parties or smaller extreme right groups and individuals. However, those who primarily perpetrate far-right violence have traditionally not been the leaders within politically relevant organizations but (small groups of) individuals who have at best a peripheral association with the far-right movement. Nevertheless, in recent years far-right violence has become more planned, regular, and lethal, as terrorist attacks in, among others, Christchurch (New Zealand), Pittsburgh (US), and Utøya (Norway) show. And in the wake of the "refugee crisis," more and more countries are growing increasingly concerned about the rise of far-right terrorist groups such as the German National Socialist Underground." (89)*

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Chapter 8

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Lecture 8

What is populism?

- Cas Mudde is a well known expert on populism as a worldwide political movement.
- Mudde and Kaltwasser define populism in terms of the ideas that lie at the core of the political messages and programs of populist parties. This is an “ideational” approach.
- Other approaches emphasize “popular agency”, socioeconomic issues, charismatic leaders, and “folkloric style”.

Right-wing populism

- Cas Mudde, “The Populist Zeitgeist”:
- *I define populism as an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people. Populism, so defined, has two opposites: elitism and pluralism.*
- *Pluralism, on the other hand, rejects the homogeneity of both populism and elitism, seeing society as a heterogeneous collection of groups and individuals with often fundamentally different views and wishes. (543-544)*

Mudde-Kaltwasser definition:

- “Beyond the lack of scholarly agreement on the defining attributes of populism, agreement is general that all forms of populism include some kind of appeal to “the people” and a denunciation of “the elite.” Accordingly, it is not overly contentious to state that populism always involves a critique of the establishment and an adulation of the common people. More concretely, we define populism as a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, “the pure people” versus “the corrupt elite,” and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people”. 5

Pluralism is the enemy …

- “Pluralism is the direct opposite of the dualist perspective of both populism and elitism, instead holding that society is divided into a broad variety of partly overlapping social groups with different ideas and interests. Within pluralism diversity is seen as a strength rather than a weakness. Pluralists believe that a society should have many centers of power and that politics, through compromise and consensus, should reflect the interests and values of as many different groups as possible. Thus, the main idea is that power is supposed to be distributed throughout society in order to avoid specific groups—be they men; ethnic communities; economic, intellectual, military or political cadres, etc.—acquiring the capacity to impose their will upon the others.” (7)

Simplification of “the people”

- Populist parties and leaders glorify a mythical conception of “the people” — in opposition to “elites”.
- “It is worth noting that this meaning of the people tends to be both integrative and divisive: not only does it attempt to unite an angry and silent majority, but it also tries to mobilize this majority against a defined enemy (e.g., “the establishment”).” 11
- There is an easy figurative translation from “the people” to “people like us” to “white people”, “German people”, or “religious people”. The implication is that the “real” people of a country are defined in racial, ethnic, or religious terms.

The elite

- Elites are defined as “others” who wield power, privilege, access, prestige, status, and influence.
- They are defined in derogatory ways: they are different from “us”, they don’t care about “us”, they manipulate the system for their own advantage.
- Government, business, media, the arts, the press — influential people in all of these fields are denounced as “elites”.
- Anti-elite language sometimes slides into anti-Semitic stereotypes — for example, the right-wing war against George Soros.
- “Main Street” versus “Wall Street”

The idea of the “general will”

- Mudde and Kaltwasser argue that there is an underlying ideological theme in populist rhetoric that distinguishes between “the will of the majority” and “the general will”.
- The general will is thought to be the real underlying interests of “the people”; and majority government exercised through representative institutions fails to capture the general will.
- They argue that this idea that there is a “general will” separate from the will of the majority leads to an openness to authoritarianism: the populist leader can be trusted to act in support of the general will.

Grievance-driven politics

- Populism depends for its support on the grievances of various groups of people: anti-immigrant complaints, anti-globalization complaints, anti-affirmative action complaints, anti-big-business complaints, …
- Politically savvy leaders and advisers craft their messages so as to cultivate and deepen these grievances and mobilize support around them.

Populist mobilization

- “The quintessential form of populist mobilization is that of an individual who, largely independent of an existing party organization, campaigns and gathers support on the basis of his personal appeal. Think of Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands, Alberto Fujimori in Peru, Beppe Grillo in Italy, Ross Perot in the United States, or Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand. In all these cases most supporters felt a personal(ized) connection to the leader, who mobilized purely top-down. The leaders connect directly to the supporters, largely unmediated through a strong political or social organization. While top-down mobilization is not unique to populist leaders, they are definitely more prone to it.” (43)

- “Populists mobilize in a variety of different ways. We discussed the three main types of populist mobilization: personalist leadership, social movement, and political party. Two important questions remain unanswered, however. First: Why are some types of populist mobilization more prevalent in certain places than in others? Second: Do these different types of populist mobilization have an impact on the electoral success of populism?” 58

Populism as a scaffold for politics

- The presentation that Mudde and Kaltwasser offer for populism makes it clear that this is indeed a “thin” theory of political ideology.
- There are a variety of ways that a populist program can be filled out to fit the circumstances, grievances, and identities of a given society.
- Populism is not essentially a conservative or right-wing political ideology; Occupy Wall Street could be considered a populist social movement.
- What is clear is that it is a platform for dividing people into “us” and “them”, and preying on fears, resentments, and grievances.
- Also clear is that it is not committed to key premises of liberal democracy, including the idea of representative government.

- Populism is ambiguous about individual rights and liberties.
- It seems to have an inherent openness to authoritarian rule.
- India, Brazil, Argentina, Turkey, and Russia all represent political regimes that justify the authority of the president on the basis of claims about national identity and populist politics.

Populism as an ideology of governing

- Populism depends on a set of rhetorical appeals to followers and potential followers.
- It also has some important implications for governing.
- How does populism relate to constitutional democracy, oligarchy, authoritarianism, and strongman rule?
- There appears to be a strong tendency within populism towards a rejection of constitutional limits and a willingness to invest great power in a single, unconstrained leader / ruler who can be trusted by “the people” to act in their interest.

Populist leaders and strongmen

- The oversimplification of the ills of society into “the people” and “the corrupt elites” has a natural affinity with authoritarianism — one-person rule. “Cult of the leader”
- A charismatic leader makes the case that he or she alone understands the needs and wants of the people; he or she alone will stand against the elites; he or she alone will “speak truth to power”
- By describing politicians as “corrupt elites” the leader discredits elected politicians and the institutions of representative democracy.
- “The elected politicians won’t help you; they are in the pockets of the powerful; give me the power and I will make sure your interests are furthered.”

- “Populist leaders in general, and strongmen in particular, also use simple and even vulgar language, a so-called Stammtisch (beer table) discourse. They present themselves as “one of the boys,” a man’s man, talking sports and women rather than politics and policies. They relate to “the common man” by playing on sexist stereotypes and by using coarse language.” Mudde and Kaltwasser, Populism, 66).
- Direct connection, rallies, communications with followers, unmediated by the traditions and customs of office.
- Charismatic leadership is about a specific bond between leader and followers, which is defined at least as much by the expectations and perceptions of the followers as by the individual characteristics of the leader. (66)

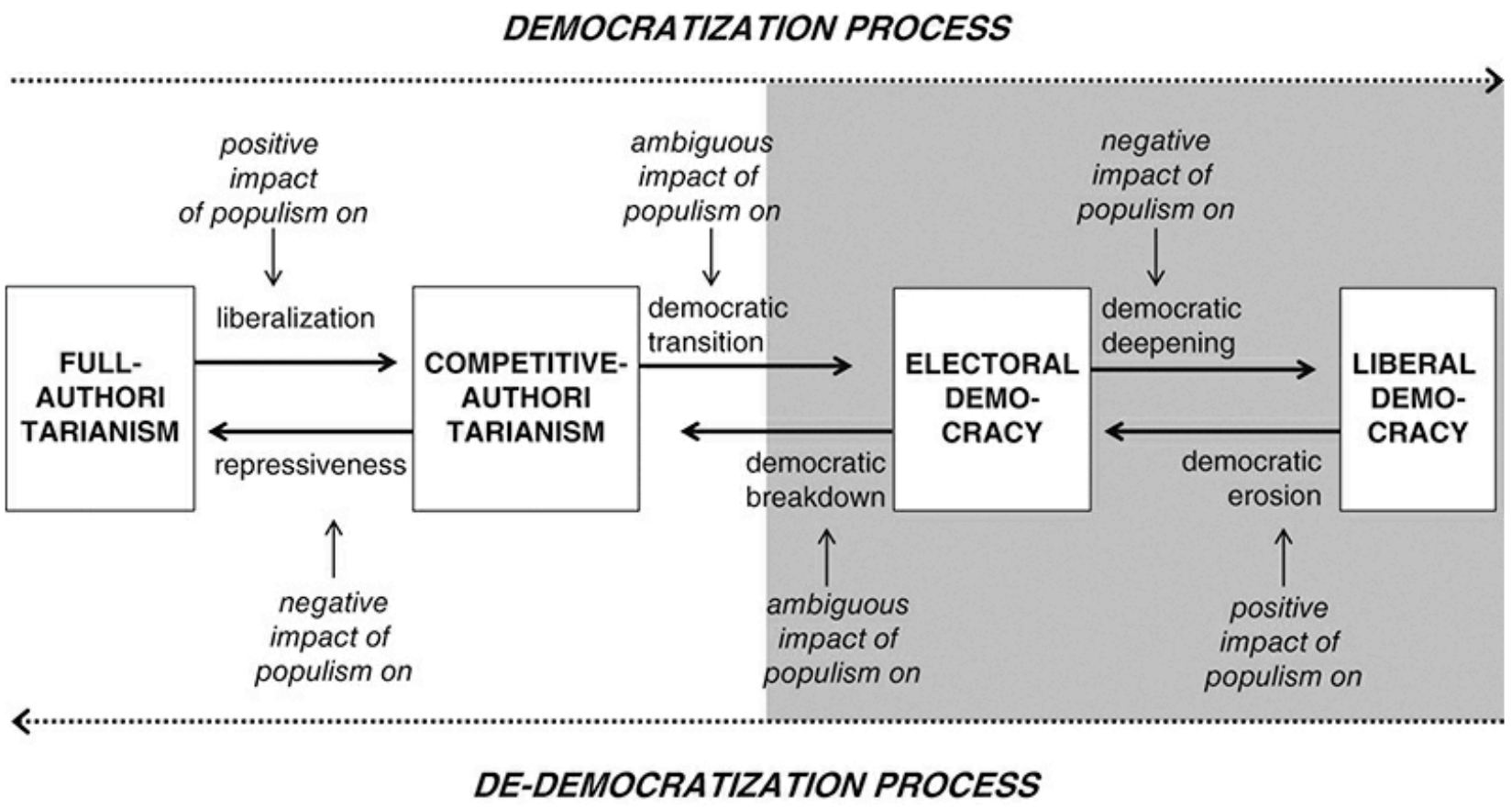
Populism and liberal constitutionalism

- *Populism exploits the tensions that are inherent to liberal democracy, which tries to find a harmonious equilibrium between majority rule and minority rights. This equilibrium is almost impossible to achieve in the real world, as the two overlap on important issues (think of antidiscrimination laws). (p. 82)*
- Advocacy of the right of the majority to decide without regard for the rights of the minority. Anti-Mill!

Institutions of democracy?

- Equal voting rights
- A free press
- An independent judiciary
- Ethical principles requiring that legislation should be neutral across citizens
- Constitutional protections of rights of thought, expression, and assembly; protest
- Acceptance of the outcome of elections

Democratization / de-democratization



- “The stage of democratic erosion includes incremental changes to undermine the autonomy of those institutions that specialize in the protection of fundamental rights, such as diminishing judiciary independency, jettisoning the rule of law, and weakening minority rights.” (p. 91)
- Illiberal democracy — elections are held, but power is concentrated and exercised by the populist leader, and limiting institutions (legislators, judiciary, press) are systematically undermined or repressed

Populism and right-wing extremism

- There is an overlap between populism and right-wing extremism, but they are not exactly the same.
- Racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia may be a basis for populist mobilization (George Wallace, “Segregation forever”); but economic issues may also serve this function. Huey Long, a chicken in every pot.
- Let’s take a look at the content and political characteristics of extreme-right groups and parties.

Toxic synergies …

- Populism is a powerful platform for mobilizing support for a prospective leader, working on cultivating resentment between “the people” and “the elites”.
- Right-wing extremism is a toxic mix of social beliefs and attitudes that embody racism, ethnic supremacy, and a willingness to use violence against a group’s “enemies”.
- Both political ideologies are deeply opposed to the values of liberal democracy.
- When right-wing extremism is brought into a populist movement or party, the resulting political movement is toxic. It depends on division, hate, and antagonism, and there is a very large toolbox of strategies available to the politicians who attach themselves to such a movement.

Who supports the populist activists?

- Lots of theories
  - Racial / ethnic resentment
  - Economic dissatisfaction and perceptions of unfair exclusion
  - Nationalist identity — “France for the French!”
  - Cultural primevalism — “Keep our culture pure!”
  - Special issues — abortion, gun ownership, affirmative action, taxes
- The role of right-wing media in promoting populism

Solution: strengthen liberal democracy!

- “The ultimate goal of all responses to the far right should be the strengthening of liberal democracy. Put simply, only fighting the far right does not necessarily strengthen liberal democracy, but strengthening liberal democracy will, by definition, weaken the far right. That the two do not always go hand in hand is not always acknowledged. Limiting free speech or the right to demonstrate not only infringes on the democratic rights of far-right activists, it undermines these rights in general, and thereby the liberal democratic regime. This is not even to speak of the tendency for repressive measures aimed at one group to be later applied to other groups, including some that are neither radical nor right.” (p. 178)
- And: Make full and legal use of police to prevent acts of violence and terrorism.

Chapter 9

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Lecture 9

The unanswered question …

- Why does the appeal to racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and anti-Muslim bigotry work in many countries and many settings?
- Is there an underlying "political emotion" of fear and potential suspicion and animosity towards the other, that is a latent basis of motivation, and that xenophobic leaders, parties, and movements can always call upon?
- Are the politics of "us" and "them" unavoidable?
- Is it possible to build a durable sense of a multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-racial democracy that engenders support from the great majority of citizens?

Racism, bigotry, and xenophobia

- As many countries have witnessed, racism, bigotry, and xenophobia have emerged as potent tools for right-wing populist mobilization.
- These themes represent the “politics of division and hate”.
- The discovery of an extremist militia plot to kidnap and harm the governor of Michigan is only the most recent piece of evidence showing how dangerous these political themes are for liberal democracy.
- What motivates men and sometimes women to fervently support violent far-right organizations?

Anti-democratic themes in current US politics

- Senator Mike Lee, Utah, tweeting during the VP debate:
- *"We're not a democracy… The word 'democracy appears nowhere in the Constitution, perhaps because our form of government is not a democracy. It's a constitutional republic…. Democracy isn't the objective; liberty, peace, and prosperity are. We want the human condition to flourish. Rank democracy can thwart that." NYT 10/8/2020*
- How can one possibly understand such a statement from a US Senator?
- https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/us/elections/mike-lee-democracy.html

McAdam and Kloos on polarization

- McAdam and Kloos are exceptional scholars of social movements.
- McAdam wrote an important book on the US Civil Rights movement, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. Along with Chuck Tilly and Sidney Tarrow he co-authored Dynamics of Contention, an important study of the mechanisms through which political and social conflict transpires.
- This book is an effort to make sense of the rising levels of polarization in Congress and elected offices.
- They argue that two important processes are crucial to understand: the rising levels of inequality that the US shows, and the persistent use of racist intolerance in the population that the right (GOP) employs to gain electoral support.

Sources of polarization

- Inequalities of income and wealth have increased dramatically since the 1960s.
- Political polarization has increased remarkably similarly.
- Does economic discontent and dissatisfaction explain the appeal of the extremes?
- How does this factor play into populism and the extreme right?

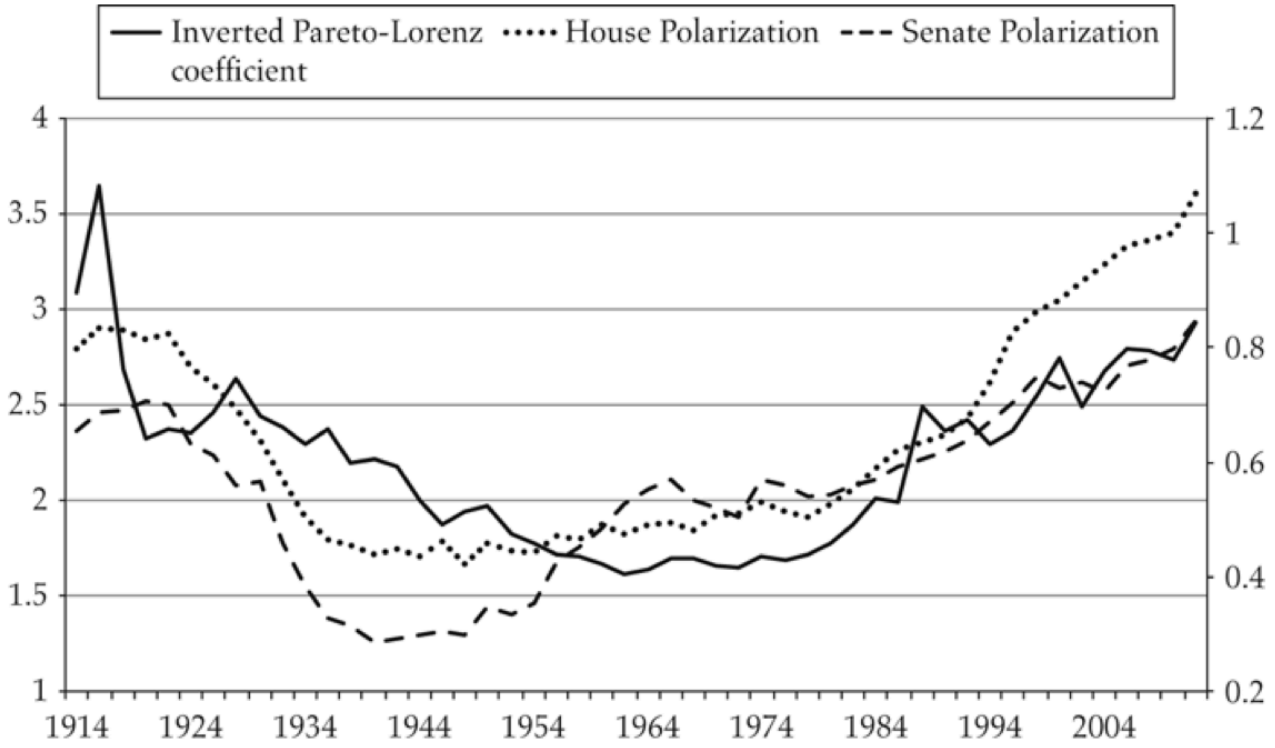


Figure 1.3 Income Inequality and Political Partisanship, 1913–2012

Sources: The World Top Incomes Database, Piketty and Saez (2007); Polarized America/ voteview

- McAdam and Kloos offer a strikingly interesting view: the increase in polarization explains rising inequality, rather than the reverse.
- Their thesis is that the affluent portion of the population has supported policies and a party that favored their interests, from public investment to taxation, and that the result was rapid increase in inequalities.

Social movements and parties

- “All of these features of contemporary US politics have been—and continue to be—powerfully shaped by the interaction of movements, parties, and governmental institutions. The best scholarly work on contemporary American politics continues to be done by political scientists, but reflecting the aforementioned disciplinary divide, political scientists tend to focus their attention exclusively on political parties and institutions and leave the study of social movements or other forms of noninstitutionalized politics to sociologists.” (Kindle Locations 171-175)
- The Civil Rights movement and the White Backlash movement contributed to a logic of increasing polarization and brought forward the politics of racial division.

Political polarization or mass polarization?

- They observe that the mass population does not appear to be polarized in the same extreme way as the political parties and elected officials.
- “If the general public does not share the extreme partisan views of the political elites and party activists and, more to the point, is increasingly dismayed and disgusted by the resulting polarization and institutional paralysis that have followed from those views, how has the GOP managed to move so far to the right without being punished by the voters? Our answer—already telegraphed above—is that over the past half century social movements have increasingly challenged, and occasionally supplanted, parties as the dominant mobilizing logic and organizing vehicle of American politics.” (Kindle Locations 304-308).
- And they argue that the social movements of the right have been much more influential on activating the extreme positions of the party they support.

Pivot points in polarization

- Revitalized Civil Rights struggle
- GOP and the Southern strategy
  - "Much to the consternation of the GOP's once dominant liberal-moderate establishment, Nixon's narrow victory clearly suggested that the party's future lay not in the 43 percent of the popular vote he received, but in the 57 percent he shared with Wallace." (Kindle Locations 456-457).
- Primary reforms 1970-72
  - Greater grassroots control of nomination process gave social movements and activists much greater influence. A small base could demand compliance from candidates by threatening defeat in the primary.

- “Our central goal in the book is to trace the political dynamics and history that have shaped the two defining features—deep partisan divisions and extreme economic inequality—of the contemporary American political economy. In most discussions of the origin of these features, no single political figure looms quite as large as Ronald Reagan. We too see Reagan’s legacy in today’s politics of division as a highly consequential one, but one that is much more complicated, at times confounding, and certainly more interesting than the standard “before Reagan,” “after Reagan” account typically allows.” (Kindle Locations 3226-3230).
- Regaining a solid electoral majority was the goal; and racialization of politics was the means.

A deliberate strategy of racial division

- “The strategy was to depict the GOP as the party of the law-abiding, tax-paying, “silent (mostly white) majority” and demonize the Democrats as the party of liberals and the undeserving (disproportionately minority) poor whose dependence on social programs was taking money out of the pockets of hard-working, overtaxed (white) Americans.” (Kindle Locations 4956-4958)
- In analyzing public opinion research on the Tea Party, M&K find evidence of consistent underlying intolerance, which they encapsulate with the social-psychological concept of “social dominance orientation”.

- “The concept of “social dominance orientation (SDO),” however, requires some explanation. Developed by the psychologist Jim Sidanius, the concept has been defined as a “preference for inequality among social groups.” SDO is essentially the opposite of egalitarianism. Those who embrace a “social dominance orientation” deny that “all men are created equal” and instead see some groups as clearly superior to, and more deserving than, others. While not exclusively racial in emphasis, the concept nonetheless has clear racial implications, especially when it occurs in combination with the two previous variables.” (Kindle Locations 5043-5044)

The appeal to racism in US politics

- “One of the highlights of Ronald Reagan’s standard stump speech during his 1976 primary challenge to Gerald Ford was an outrageous story about an unnamed “welfare queen” from Chicago who had amassed a small fortune by using multiple social security cards to fraudulently collect welfare and other government benefits. Here was Reagan’s actual description of the woman: “There’s a woman in Chicago… . She has 80 names, 30 addresses, 12 Social Security cards… . She’s got Medicaid, getting food stamps and she is collecting welfare under each of their names. Her tax-free cash income alone is over $150,000.” 21 It was a great story and one perfectly calibrated to curry the support of outraged white voters; too bad it wasn’t really true.” (Kindle Locations 4984-4990).

- McAdam and Kloos document an upsurge in “old-fashioned racism” in the GOP during the Obama administration:
- ”The question is: where did this upsurge in “old-fashioned racism” come from? Based on the best survey data on support for the Tea Party, it seems reasonable to credit the movement for at least some of the infusion of more extreme racial views and actions into American politics. We begin by considering the racial attitudes of Tea Party supporters and what that suggests about the animating racial politics of the movement wing of the Republican Party. In this, we rely on two sources of data: the multi-state surveys of support for the Tea Party conducted by Parker and Barreto in 2010 and 2011 and Abramowitz’s analysis of the October 2010 wave of the American National Election Studies.” (Kindle Locations 5015-5017)

Disenfranchisement strategies

- “Nor is the imprint of race and racism on today’s GOP only a matter of attitudes. It was also reflected in the party’s transparent efforts to disenfranchise poor and minority voters in the run-up to the 2012 election. It may well be that the country has never seen a more coordinated national effort to constrain the voting rights of particular groups than we saw in 2012. Throughout the country, Republican legislators and other officials sought to enact new laws or modify established voting procedures which, in virtually all instances, would have made it harder—in some cases, much harder—for poor and minority voters to exercise the franchise.” (Kindle Locations 5062-5066)
  - Voter suppression (polling stations, registration obstacles, …)
  - Gerrymandering of districts

Gerrymandering

Data-assisted districting permits legislatures to design "defeat-proof" districts while leaving majorities in the opposite party's strongholds.

Very strong evidence shows that these efforts in GOP-dominated legislatures have been aimed at reducing the impact of traditional voting blocks of Democrats, including especially districts representing people of color.

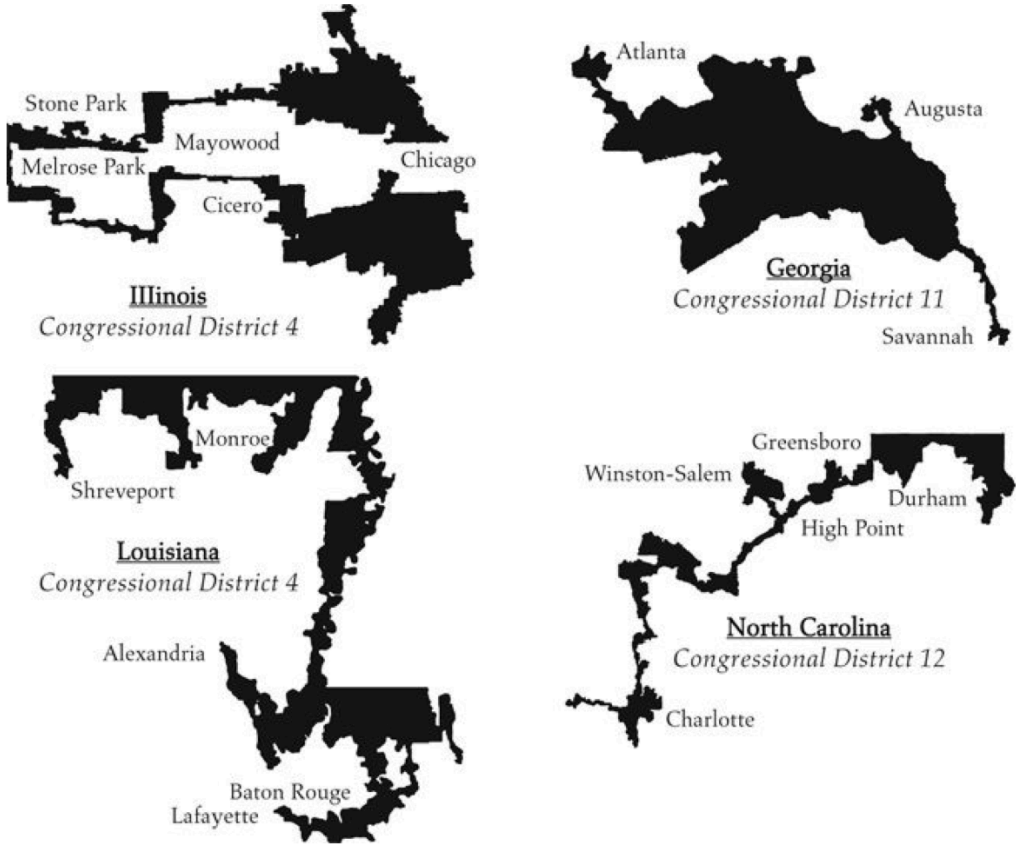
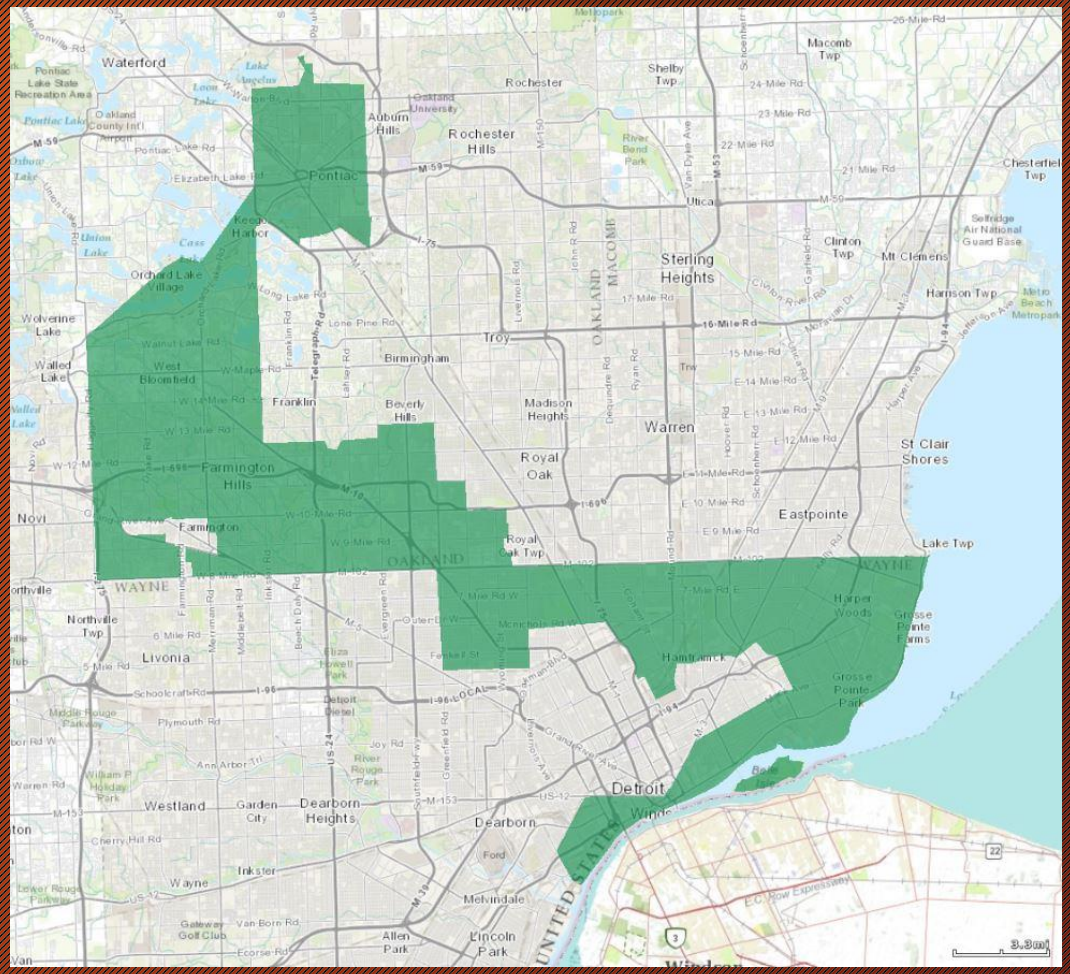


Figure 8.12 Gerrymandered Districts



Chapter 10

Lecture 10

Far-right mobilization — ethnography

- We have a working conception of the far right — nationalist, xenophobic, racist, intolerant, and authoritarian
- The far right exists in many countries — virtually every European country, UK, most Latin American countries, and the United States
- The question for today is a simple one — who are the followers, and how are they recruited and mobilized as activists?
- Are there demographic features that they have — gender, class, race, etc.?
- Are there distinctive and identifiable recruitment methods used in a variety of countries and cities?

Recruitment

- What are the mechanisms through which new adherents are recruited?
- What psychological and emotional mechanisms are in play that keep loyalists involved in the movement?
- Contributors to this volume find a highly heterogeneous set of circumstances leading to extremist activism.

Youth identity

- Jennifer Silva's *Coming Up Short: Working-Class Adulthood in an Age of Uncertainty* provides a sociological treatment of the generation born post-1970.
- Each individual has a distinctive personality and orienting set of values. How do these features take shape in the individual's development through the experiences of childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood?
- Silva studies the other half of the millennial generation -- the unemployed and underemployed young people, mostly working class, whom the past fifteen years have treated harshly.
- What she finds in the cohort born in the late 1970s and early 1980s is an insecure and precarious set of life circumstances, and new modes of transition to adulthood.

- These social and economic insecurities breed dissatisfaction, grievance, resentment, fear, and anger.
- As we will see when we read Justin Gest, this is partly about economics and material wellbeing; but it is also about identity, respect, and a place in the world.
- There is the idea that society has turned its back on us and our generation.

- *Experiences of powerlessness, confusion, and betrayal within the labor market, institutions such as education and the government, and the family teach young working-class men and women that they are completely alone, responsible for their own fates and dependent on outside help only at their peril. They are learning the hard way that being an adult means trusting no one but yourself. (9)*
- For Silva, the bleakness of this generation of young working class adults has structural causes: economic stagnation, dissolution of safety nets, loss of decent industrial-sector jobs and the rise of insecure service-sector jobs, and neoliberalism as a guiding social philosophy that systematically turns its back on under-class young people.

Blee's assessment of the far right

- "There has been a resurgence of extreme right-wing and racist movements across the globe, even in places long regarded as models of ethnic and political tolerance. Far-right parties have garnered substantial numbers of votes in local and national elections in France, Austria, Italy, and Belgium; part of a larger mobilization of far-right movements in those nations (Klandermans and Mayer 2006, 7). Neo-Nazi gangs and white power skinheads have been implicated in a rash of terroristic attacks on immigrants and Jews in Germany, Sweden, Canada, and elsewhere. And racial/ ethnic/ religious supremacists, ranging from Hindu nationalists in India to white power movements in the United States, have fomented intergroup hatred and violence in various locales." (Blee, introduction to Ethnography of the far right volume)

- Blee has done substantial research on racism and the extreme right. She argues that mobilization and indoctrination are crucial:
  - “Intense, activist racism typically does not arise on its own; it is learned in racist groups. These groups promote ideas radically different from the racist attitudes held by many whites. They teach a complex and contradictory mix of hatred for enemies, belief in conspiracies, and allegiance to an imaginary unified race of ‘Aryans.’" (3)

Two bodies of empirical research

- Sociological studies of far-right organizations and followers
- Anthropological / ethnographic studies of followers in a number of countries.

Blee and Creasap, Conservative and right-wing movements

- This article is a social-science review essay; it is intended to introduce you to the current state of the field.
- In this case the field is the sociological study of extremist right-wing movements.
- Blee and Kreasap argue that the motivations and circumstances of mobilization into right-wing organizations are substantially more heterogeneous than a simple story leading from racist attitudes to racist mobilization would suggest. They argue that antecedent racist ideology is indeed a factor, but that music, culture, social media, and continent social networks also play significant causal roles.

- Blee and Creasap point out that the far-right social phenomenon today is a network of social movements, and that social movement theory has mostly been applied to "progressive" movements.
- "Yet concepts from social movement theories have been valuable for directing attention to how rightist movements originate with movement entrepreneurs, frame their messages, respond to external political opportunities, forge collective identity, develop strategies and tactics, and serve as a source of vision and voice (however destructive) for their adherents (Stein 2001)." (Blee and Creasap, 271)
- Notice key ideas: movement entrepreneurs, messages, opportunities, collective identities, strategies, vision, and voice
- These ideas all suggest lines of empirical research.

Mobilization: Culture and media

- “Its music, family events, computer games, and amusement parks reached deep into mainstream America, bringing new social groups into politics (Diamond 1998). So did its media empire, which began with radio and extended to book publishing houses, bookstores, televangelist superstar preachers, and Internet social networking sites. Such cultural projects helped shape an identity for conservative evangelicals distinct from both mainline Protestantism and other evangelicals.” (Blee and Creasap, 272)

Gender: women in conservative movements

- Blee and Creasap document ample examples of women involved in conservative causes in the US. Anti-feminism; economic issues; evangelical themes (Moral Majority).
- Rising presence of women in extremist right-wing movements (Blee)
- Surprising because the right-wing message is heavily "masculinized".
- In the US women "generally enter right-wing movements by being recruited to work for seemingly mainstream causes such as school quality or community safety" (Blee 2002).

- “An analysis of an online skinhead community, for instance, found a widespread sentiment that true skinheads are hypermasculine, heterosexual men with shaved heads; questions in the online forum about whether or not women could be involved in skinhead scenes were dismissed because ‘only men are skinheads’.” (278)
- A disturbing finding: a significant number of young Europeans are supportive of the ideas and violent tactics of the right wing even if they are not committed participants. (280)

Factors supporting right-wing growth

- Factors that appear to influence right-wing growth: competition/ threat and opportunity
- Economic competition and threat
- Growth of “patriot and militia groups” in places losing jobs
- Increasing population of competing groups — immigrants, minority groups, Catholics, … (276)
- Political opportunities: “political realignment spurred the growth of the KKK, which could point to the decline electoral influence of white native-born Protestant men in the face of women’s enfranchisement and the surge in immigration.” (276)

Risk factors that recur across cases

- Social class
- Family environment
- Trouble in school
- Neighborhood racial conflict

Mobilization strategies: tools and settings

- Extremist music concerts, street clashes
- Gun shows, community and neighborhood issue meetings
- Prison
- Do people join extremist groups because of their prior extremist beliefs, or do they join and then gain these right-wing beliefs?
- Web sites, blogs, social media, chat rooms, online discussion boards, …
- A “ladder” of engagement from concert to new friends to deeper involvement in an organization

- Blee distinguishes between internist and externalist approaches.
- What she means by *externalist* is the idea that there are societal forces and "risk factors" that contribute to the emergence of hate and racism within a population, and that these factors can be studied in a general way.
- Blee argues that an *internalist* approach is needed to allow us to have a more nuanced understanding of the social and personal dynamics of extremist movements.
- An internalist approach aims at discovering the motives and causes of extremist engagement through study of the actors themselves, within specific social circumstances.

- The research presented in this special issue is ethnographic.
- Based on interviews, participant-observation, and life-history methods, contributors find a mix of factors leading to the choice of extremist involvement: adolescent hyper-masculinity, a desire to belong, a history of bullying and abuse, as well as social exposure to adult hate activists.
- But this work is more difficult than many other kinds of ethnographic research because of the secrecy, suspiciousness, and danger associated with these kinds of activism.

Kimmel on Sweden

- A few snippets will give some flavor of the volume. Here is Michael Kimmel's description of some of the young men and boys attracted to the neo-Nazi movement in Sweden:
  - *Insecure and lonely at twelve years old, Edward started hanging out with skinheads because he "moved to a new town, knew nobody, and needed friends." Equally lonely and utterly alienated from his distant father, Pelle met an older skinhead who took him under his wing and became a sort of mentor. Pelle was a "street hooligan" hanging out in street gangs, brawling and drinking with other gangs. "My group actually looked down on the neo-Nazis," he says, because "they weren't real fighters." "All the guys had an insecure role as a man," says Robert. "They were all asking 'who am I?'" ...*

Seghal on Hindu nationalist indoctrination

- *This article examines the discursive and embodied processes employed at Hindu nationalist paramilitary camps for women that transform traditional, middle-class Hindu women into committed, active participants in the powerful, right-wing Hindu Nationalist Movement in India. Based on ethnographic research on the Rashtra Sevika Samiti (the Samiti), a core women's organization in the movement, I argue that the Samiti effectively manufactures a feminized siege mentality. This mentality is a learned disposition in which female members of a community perceive themselves as potential prey to male members of a community of "outsiders." The discursive practices include entwined discourses of Hindu women's victimization by Muslim men and empowerment by the Samiti. The embodied practices include a paramilitary physical training program that masquerades as self-defense training but in fact manufactures a fear of sexual attacks by Muslim men in the public sphere, while deflecting from sources of violence within the private sphere.*

- *The overall atmosphere of this camp and the Samiti's camps in general was rigid and authoritarian, with a strong emphasis on discipline. ... A number of girls fell ill with diarrhea, exhaustion, and heat stroke. Every day at least five to ten girls could be seen crying, wanting to go home. They pleaded with their city's local Samiti leaders, camp instructors, and organizers to be allowed to call their parents, but were not allowed to do so. ... Neither students nor instructors were allowed to get sufficient rest or decent food.*
- The description Sehgal offers makes this clearly a form of cult-like indoctrination.

Virchow on far right recruitment in Germany

- *Festivals are excellent opportunities for far-right groups to spread the word about their successes to like-minded activists and sympathizers, since visitors come from as far away as Italy to see White Power music bands. In the festival mentioned above, a folk-dance act in the afternoon attracted only some hundred spectators, but evening performances by the U.S. band Youngland drew a large crowd that pushed to the front of the stage, leaving only limited space for burly skinheads indulging in pogo dancing. The music created a ritual closeness and attachment among the audience, shaping the emotions and aggression of the like-minded crowd, initially in a playful way, but one that switched into brutality a few moments later.*

Linden / Klandermans on Wanderers, converts, and compliants

- The research article by Linden and Klandermans is especially interesting because it offers a classification of the followers it studies.
- The research is based on “life-history interviews” of extreme right activists in the Netherlands.
- They want to understand what happened in the individual’s life that brought him or her to become an adherent to the right wing organization or group.
- Imagine how interesting it would be to conduct this research!

- Each of these essays is based on first-hand observation and interaction, and they give some insight into the psychological forces playing on the participants as well as the mobilizational strategies used by the leaders of these kinds of movements.
- The articles offer a good cross-section of how ethnographic methods can address the phenomenon of extremist right-wing activism. And because the studies are drawn from five quite different national contexts (Sweden, Germany, Netherlands, India, France), it is intriguing to see some of the same mechanisms and dynamics in play in creating and sustaining an extremist movement.
- The importance of performance and music in eliciting loyal participation from young adherents comes up in the articles about Germany, Sweden, and India.
- The importance of the emotional needs of boys as they approach manhood, and the hyper-masculine themes of violence and brutality in the neo-Nazi organizations that appeal to them, recurs in several of the essays.

Supply and demand of right-wing extremism

- Mudde refers to the “supply” and “demand” for right-wing extremism in current western societies, and suggests that these factors influence each other.
- Political entrepreneurs (potential leaders of an extremist movement or party) solicit followers based on messages, demonstrations, social media, and other efforts at communicating with potential followers.This is the “supply” side of the equation.
- A certain number of people in the population (young and old) have developed grievances and a social psychology that makes them amenable to these appeals. This is the “demand” side.
- As supply and demand of right-wing extremism reinforce each other, the movement grows.

Chapter 11

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Lecture 11

The psychology of far-right supporters

- Why do millions of ordinary people give their support to right-wing extremist parties with overtly racist and xenophobic values?
- Why are similar numbers of ordinary citizens willing to support leaders and movements that are explicitly authoritarian and anti-democratic?
- What features of individual psychology, personality, and worldview would support these political affinities?

Personality psychology

- Personality psychology is the field of empirical scientific psychology that attempts to understand very basic features of motivation and behavior.
- Personality psychology gets its origin in the observation that people are not all the same in their behavioral responses to common life situations. There are important variations across individuals with respect to their behavioral dispositions.
- Ingredients of action include beliefs, cognition, emotion, values, stereotypes, and mental frameworks.
- Unlike the tradition of behaviorism, personality psychologists are prepared to investigate mental characteristics, thoughts, and modes of reasoning.

Political behavior

- Personality psychology seems especially relevant to the field of political behavior.
  - Rational choice theory — people make rational decisions based on their beliefs and desires, and choose candidates and policies that they expect to work best to advance their goals and desires.
- But political behavior is not wholly rational. People do not always act in their self-interest.
  - Collective action, loyalty, commitment
  - Ideology and passion

Personality traits in political behavior?

- Consider the interesting 2008 article “The Secret Lives of Liberals and Conservatives”, where the authors (Carney, Jost, Gosling, and Potter) ask whether there are personality characteristics that distinguish between “liberals” and “conservatives”.
- They argue that there are “relatively stable individual differences in psychological needs, motives, and orientations toward the world” between the two political groups.
- They present evidence based on psychological experiments that demonstrate a strong association between a bundle of personality characteristics that “liberals” share, and a different bundle shared by “conservatives”.

- “We address three main questions. First, does political orientation covary with basic psychological dimensions in the ways that have been suggested …? Second, what, specifically, are the differences (as well as similarities) between liberals and conservatives in terms of personality profiles and dispositions, and how strong are they? Third, if there are indeed meaningful psychological differences between liberals and conservatives, how are they manifested in daily behavior?” (809)

- The strongest psychological evidence exists for the dimension of "open-mindedness" versus "closed-mindedness" (814).
  - "Numerous studies have shown that liberals tend to score higher than conservatives on individual difference measures of openness, cognitive flexibility, and integrative complexity" (814).
  - "Conservatives tend to possess stronger personal needs for order, structure, closure, and decisiveness in comparison with liberals" (814).
- Longitudinal studies support that these personality traits are present in nursery-school children (815).

- A comparison of personality characteristics (816)
- They focus on two characteristics, each with a scale: Openness and Conscientiousness
- (These are features included in the "Big Five" items identified by mainstream personality psychology.)

Table 1. Personality Traits (and Their "Big Five" Classifications) Theorized to be Associated with Liberal (or Left-Wing) and Conservative (or Right-Wing) Orientation, 1930–2007

Liberal/Left-Wing	Conservative/Right-Wing
Slovenly, ambiguous, indifferent[1] (C–)	Definite, persistent, tenacious[1,2,5] (C+)
Eccentric, sensitive, individualistic[1,3] (O+)	Tough, masculine, firm[1,2,3,18] (C+, A–)
Open, tolerant, flexible[2,3,9,20] (O+)	Reliable, trustworthy, faithful, loyal[1,4,5] (C+, A+)
Life-loving, free, unpredictable[7,8] (O+, C–, E+)	Stable, consistent[1,2] (C+, N–)
Creative, imaginative, curious[9,10,11,20] (O+)	Rigid, intolerant[2,3,5,7,8,15,18,20,22] (O–, A–)
Expressive, enthusiastic[9,22] (O+, E+)	Conventional, ordinary[2,3,5,18] (O–, C+)
Excited, sensation-seeking[9,10,11,20] (O+, E+)	Obedient, conformist[2,3,18] (O–, C+, A+)
Desire for novelty, diversity[9,20] (O+)	Fearful, threatened[2,15,18,20,22] (N+)
Uncontrolled, impulsive[9,12,13,22] (C–, E+)	Xenophobic, prejudiced[2,3,15,18,19] (O–, A–)
Complex, nuanced[16,17,18,20,21] (O+)	Orderly, organized[4,5,7,8,12,13,14,20] (C+)
Open-minded[20,21] (O+)	Parsimonious, thrifty, stingy[4,5] (C+)
Open to experience[10,11,20,23,24,25] (O+)	Clean, sterile[4,5,7,8] (C+)
	Obstinate, stubborn[4,5] (O–, C+, A–)
	Aggressive, angry, vengeful[2,3,4,15] (A–)
	Careful, practical, methodical[5] (O–, C+)
	Withdrawn, reserved[5,9] (E–)
	Stern, cold, mechanical[5,7,8,9] (O–, E–, A–)
	Anxious, suspicious, obsessive[5,6,15] (N+)
	Self-controlled[7,8,9,12,13,14] (C+)
	Restrained, inhibited[7,8,9,22] (O–, C+, E–)
	Concerned with rules, norms[7,8,9] (C+)
	Moralistic[9,15,18,28] (O–, C+)
	Simple, decisive[19,20,21] (O–, C+)
	Closed-minded[20,21] (O–)
	Conscientious[25,26,27] (C+)

Origins?

- Where do these personality traits come from? Are they innate individual differences? Are they the consequence of early childhood experiences or early social experiences? Do they deepen and entrench with age?

- “In the three studies employing very different methods of observation we have obtained consistent and converging evidence that personality differences between liberals and conservatives are indeed robust, replicable, and behaviorally significant” (832).

Understanding populist extremists

- Two specific theories have been introduced to explain the personality psychology of supporters of extreme right-wing populist movements.
  - Social Dominance Orientation
  - Right-Wing Authoritarianism
- Two different research communities have developed these theories over a period of several decades.
- These researchers have developed testing instruments for measuring these attributes in ordinary “subjects”

Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale

- Bob Altemeyer is a respected and accomplished academic psychologist who is one of the founders of RWA theory.
- He spent his career (in Canada) studying the emotional and motivational characteristics of authoritarian citizens, and was the author of Right-Wing Authoritarianism in 1986.
- Altemeyer developed an instrument for measuring an individual's propensity for authoritarian thoughts and actions. This is the RWA scale, and the method has received widespread adoption and use.
  - *The right-wing authoritarianism scale measures the degree to which people defer to established authorities, show aggression toward out-groups when authorities sanction that aggression, and support traditional values endorsed by authorities. (1)*

- *Right-wing authoritarianism, as currently measured by the RWA scale (Altemeyer 1981, 1988, 2006), is an individual difference variable that assesses attitudes concerning three covarying facets derived from Adorno et al.'s (1950) nine original dimensions: Authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism. In other words, RWA measures the degree to which people defer to established authorities (i.e., authoritarian submission), show aggression toward out-groups when authorities sanction that aggression (i.e., authoritarian aggression), and support traditional values, particularly those endorsed by authorities (i.e., conventionalism). (2)*

Social Dominance Orientation

- The "social dominance orientation" (SDO) scale was introduced by James Sidanius and colleagues in the 1990s, and is presented in a research article entitled "Social dominance orientation: A personality variable predicting social and political attitudes" (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, Malle, 1994; link).
- Like RWA theory, SDO theory also has experimental instruments that have been tested and validated.
- This scale identifies attitudes of group superiority and positive valuation of inequalities in society.
- It has been used to help understand the persistence of racist attitudes and behavior.

- *ABSTRACT Social dominance orientation (SDO), one's degree of preference for inequality among social groups, is introduced. On the basis of social dominance theory, it is shown that (a) men are more social dominance-oriented than women, (b) high-SDO people seek hierarchy-enhancing professional roles and low-SDO people seek hierarchy-attenuating roles, (c) SDO was related to beliefs in a large number of social and political ideologies that support group-based hierarchy (e.g., meritocracy and racism) and to support for policies that have implications for intergroup relations (e.g., war, civil rights, and social programs), including new policies. SDO was distinguished from interpersonal dominance, conservatism, and authoritarianism. SDO was negatively correlated with empathy, tolerance, communality, and altruism. The ramifications of SDO in social context are discussed.*

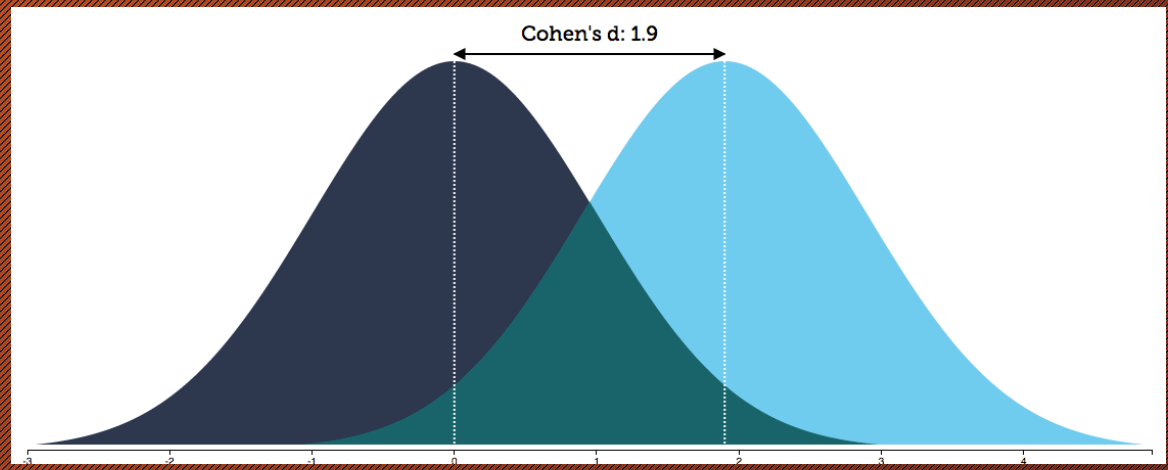
- *The theory postulates that societies minimize group conflict by creating consensus on ideologies that promote the superiority of one group over others (see also Sidanius, Pratto, Martin, & Stallworth, 1991). Ideologies that promote or maintain group inequality are the tools that legitimize discrimination. To work smoothly, these ideologies must be widely accepted within a society, appearing as self-apparent truths; hence we call them hierarchy-legitimizing myth.... For example, the ideology of anti-Black racism has been instantiated in personal acts of discrimination, but also in institutional discrimination against African-Americans by banks, public transit authorities, schools, churches, marriage laws, and the penal system . (741)*

Intercultural relevance?

- These traits of personality — social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism — appear to be comparable across cultural settings.
- The theories seem to do a reasonable job of explaining the behavior of German, French, Dutch, Indian, and American followers of right-wing extremist parties in their respective countries.

Do the groups overlap?

- Generally it is important in personality studies of difference to recognize that there is significant variance within groups, and significant overlap across groups, with regard to the characteristics that distinguish them as groups.
- Imagine two bell-curve distributions with regard to “right wing authoritarianism” and we can speculate that the curves overlap to some degree.
- The separation between the groups indicates how distinctive the attribute is of one group or the other.



- What remains to be explained is the developmental question: why do different individuals develop in such a way as to manifest important differences on each of these scales? Why do some individuals become intolerant and authoritarian adults, whereas other adults are tolerant and democratic? Are these two aspects of personality linked, or are they independent from each other? What facts of social context, family relations, education, and other social and political factors are most important for giving rise to the social psychology of social dominance and right-wing authoritarianism?

- The most plausible theory mentioned by Saunders and Ngo is a social-cognitive theory (**motivated social cognition**) derived from Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, and Sulloway: "people adopt RWA attitudes to meet psychological needs such as the reduction of fear (i.e., existential needs), uncertainty and loss (i.e., epistemic needs), as well as meeting related needs for structure and cognitive closure."
- Jost et al summarize their approach in these terms in the abstract to this article: "Analyzing political conservatism as motivated social cognition integrates theories of personality (authoritarianism, dogmatism-intolerance of ambiguity), epistemic and existential needs (for closure, regulatory focus, terror management), and ideological rationalization (social dominance, system justification)."
- On this approach, conditions of insecurity, fear, and threat are thought to encourage the personality psychology of intolerance and authoritarianism.

- These theories are useful for our purposes because they address a fundamental puzzle: why do ordinary people adopt the political values of racial superiority, disregard of the rights of minorities, and openness to authoritarian leaders?
- The precariousness of certain parts of the populations in Western Europe and North America -- terrorism, fear of shifting demographic balance, fear of the consequences of globalization -- may be all it takes to trigger this toxic and intolerant form of personality in an extensive proportion of the population of these countries.
- This suggests that the theories of authoritarian personality at the individual level and political entrepreneurship at the political level may go a long way to explaining the scope and depth of right-wing populism in liberal democracies today.

Chapter 12

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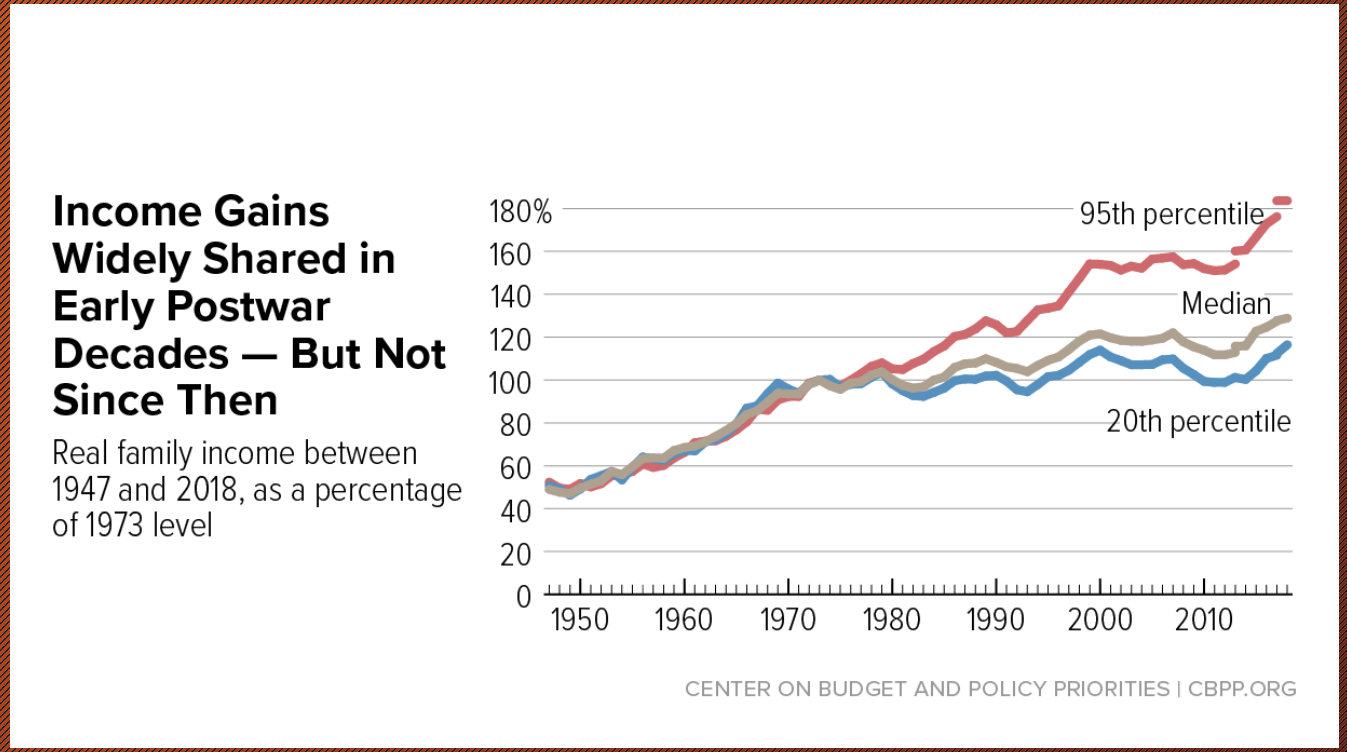
Lecture 12

Democracy and economic change

- It is often believed that economic stagnation (or depression), chronic unemployment, and lack of opportunities for social mobility breed anti-democratic politics.
- Claims like these are often offered as explanations for the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany in the 1930s and the Fascist Party in Italy in the same years.
- The Great Depression had created vast economic stagnation and unemployment all over the world.
- Germany's loss of World War I and the reparations demanded by the peace settlement made Germany's economy precarious.
- Does economic stagnation and precarity lead working-class people to embrace right-wing authoritarian populist leaders?

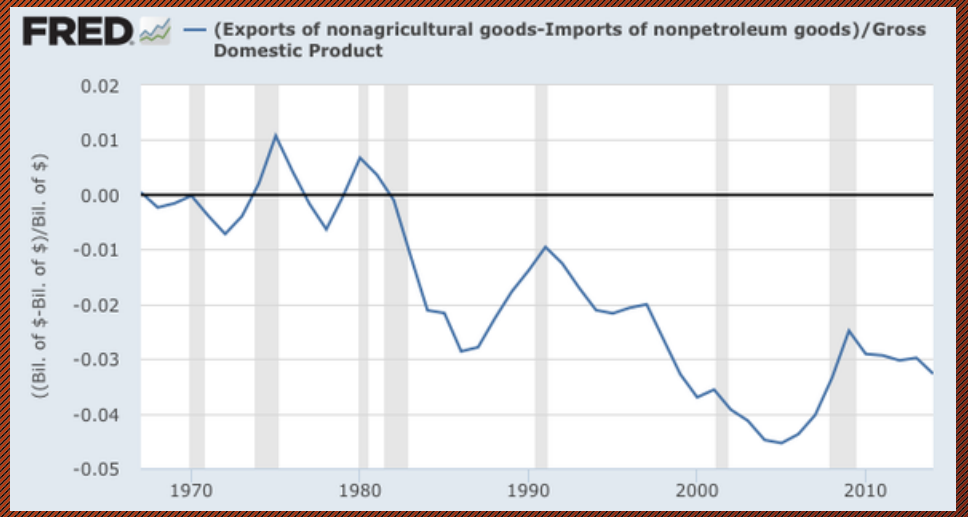
America in the 1950s

- Reasonable prosperity
- Job opportunities for high school graduates
- Gains of economic growth widely shared across income groups
- Social mobility
- Low unemployment
- Issues of racial inequality present in the industrial North



America in the 1990s

- Much more global trade
- Off-shoring of manufacturing
- Shift of the economy towards higher skill, higher education jobs
- Intense competition for low-skill jobs
- Dwindling expectations for blue-collar workers for income, retirement security, and prospects for their children
- (The chart measures “decline of manufacturing exports as % of GDP” and is an indication of declining manufacturing jobs)



- https://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/05/19/trade-and-the-decline-of-us-manufacturing-employment/

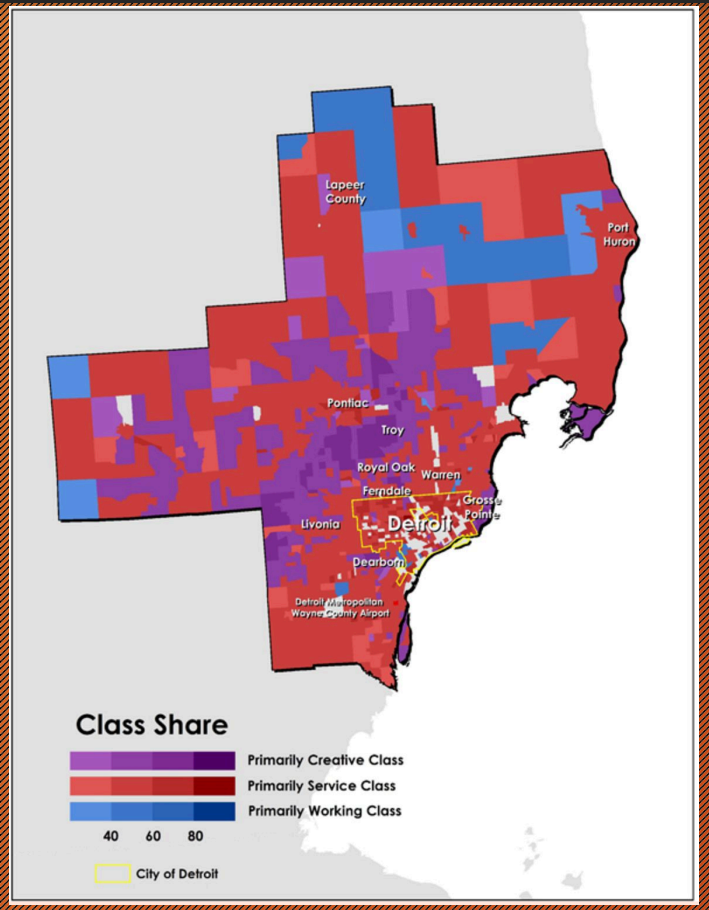
Deindustrialization and demoralization

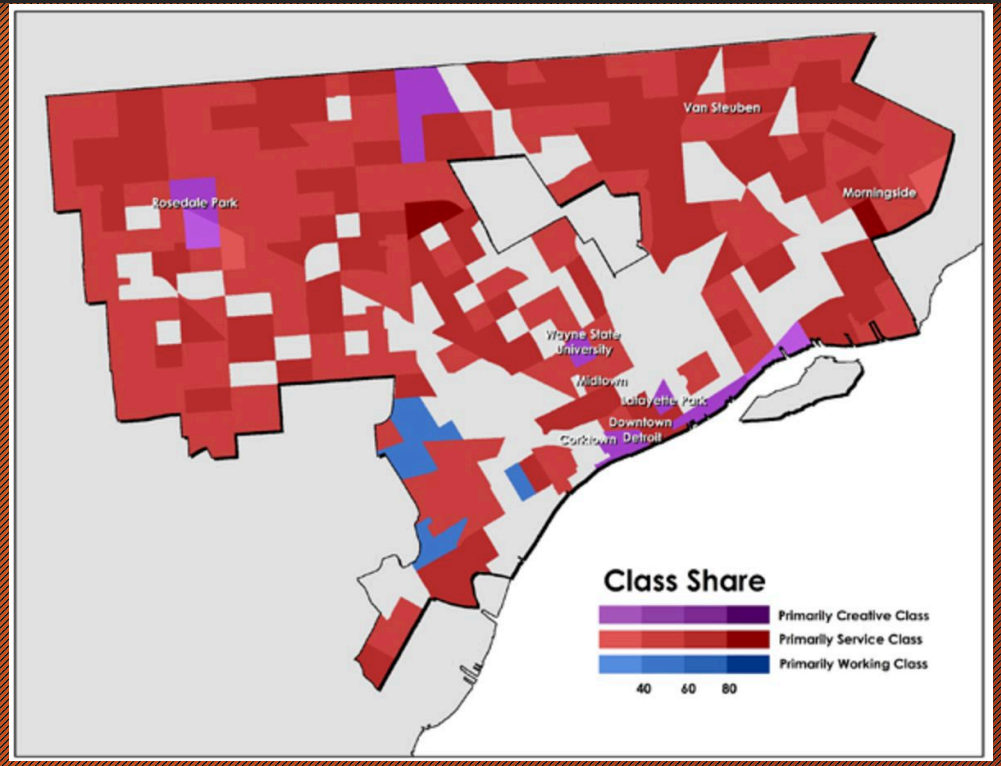
- Little economic and social mobility in the US and Great Britain: “parental income remains highly determinant of lifelong economic status” (Gest 2)
- Rustbelt cities show the greatest decline … unemployment, education levels, health disparities, indicators of social despair.
- “Many of Youngstown’s citizens occupy the space between poverty and middle-class stability—a precarious place that incentivizes families to balance their pursuit of a living wage with their maintenance of government assistance. The city’s per capita income is $14,996, while the average household earns $24,800 per year. Youngstown leads the country in concentrated poverty, with 33.8% of its households living beneath the poverty line (United States Census 2010).” (Gest, 92)

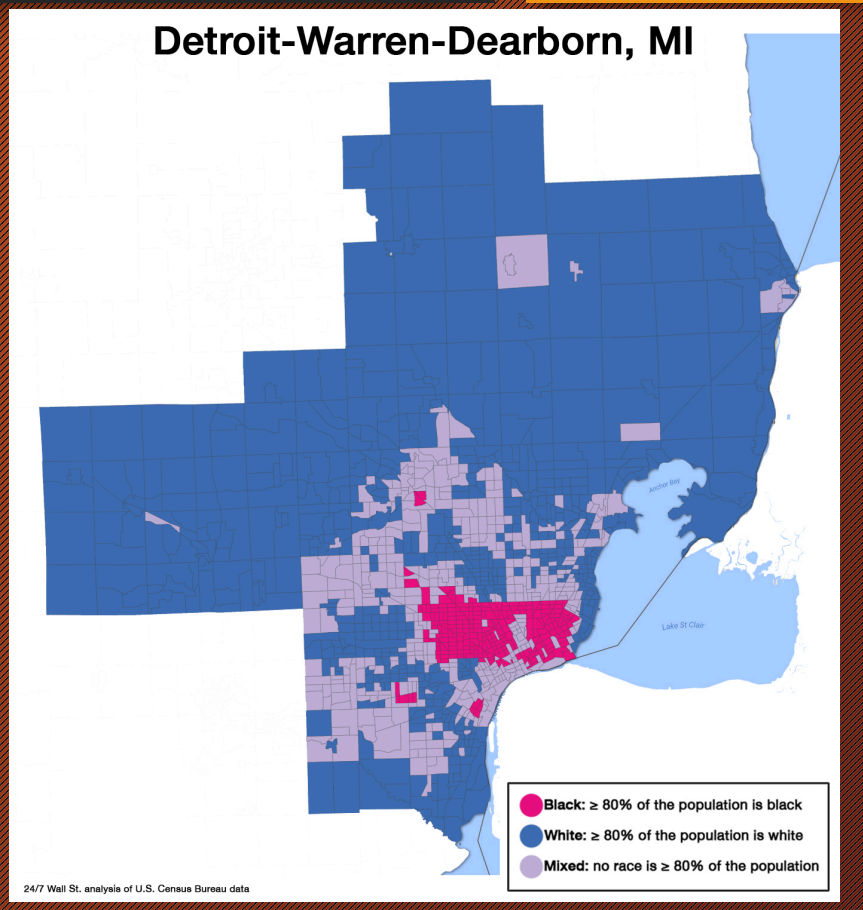
Major employment/educational groups

- Richard Florida's analysis:
  - the shrinking middle of blue-collar workers;
  - the rising ranks of the knowledge, professional, and creative class;
  - the even larger and faster-growing ranks of lower-paid service workers

Class and race in Metro Detroit







Blue collar shift to the suburbs

Top 10 Working Class Locations in the Detroit Metro

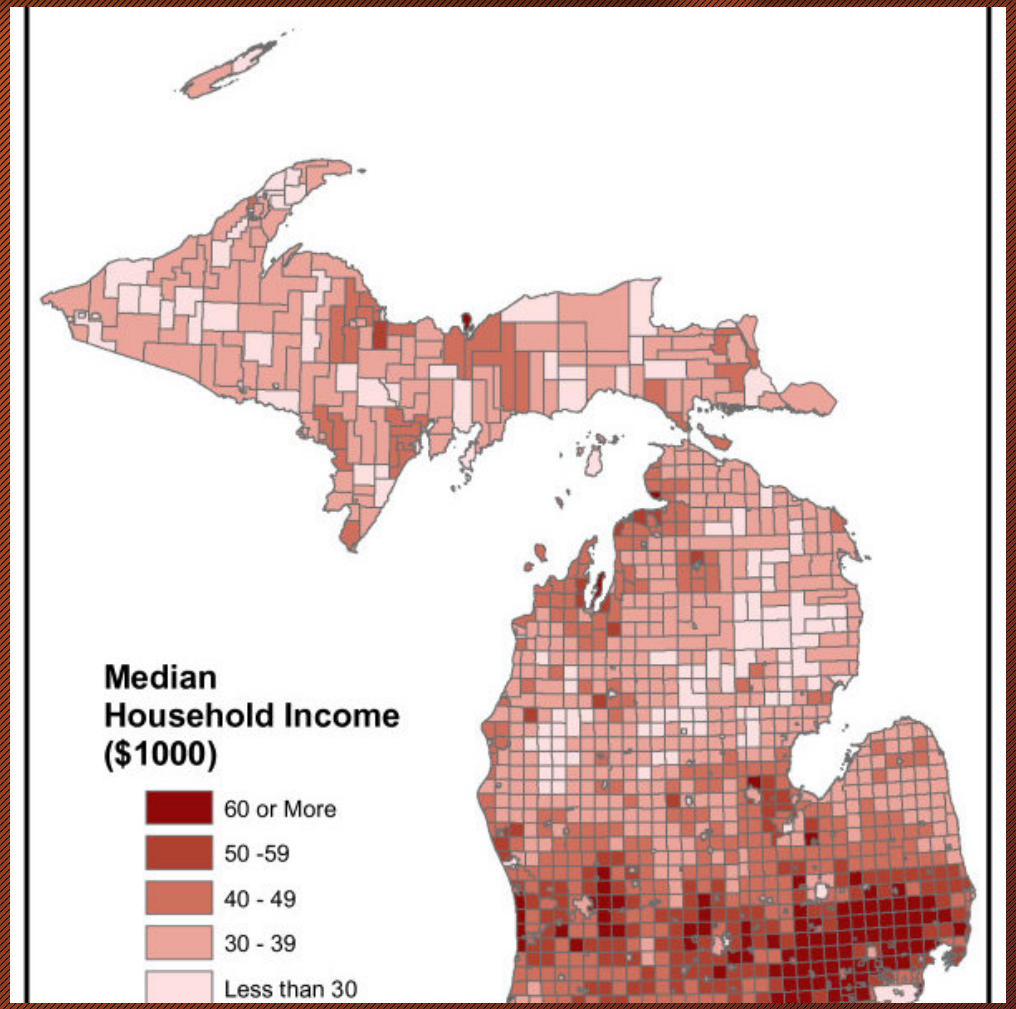
Neighborhood (Census Tract #)	*Working Class Share*
Chadsey/Condon, Detroit (5263)	57.6%
Southwest Detroit (5243)	55.3%
Chadsey/Condon, Detroit (5262)	54.9%
Detroit (5260)	51.4%
Romulus (5855)	51.3%
Lapeer County (3310)	48.0%
Dearborn (5735)	47.2%
Southwest Detroit (5233)	46.6%
Michigan-Martin, Detroit (5257)	46.4%
Pontiac (1417)	45.5%
Metro Average	**20.7%**

Top 10 Service Class Locations in the Detroit Metro

Neighborhood (Census Tract #)	*Service Class Share*
North Central, Detroit (5303)	82.5%
Morningside, Detroit (5020)	80.7%
Von Steuben, Detroit (5035)	78.6%
Detroit (5113)	78.5%
Barton-McFarland, Detroit (5351)	78.0%
North Central, Detroit (5364)	77.0%
West Central, Detroit (5378)	75.5%
North East, Detroit (5041)	75.1%
Northend/Central Detroit (5331)	74.9%
Grandale, Detroit (5453)	74.1%
Metro Average	**44.8%**

Michigan household income

- “Michigan household income. Wealth, in the form of disposable income, is concentrated in the suburban areas of the southern half of the Lower Peninsula where income due to employment wages tend to be highest. Central cities such as Detroit, Flint and Lansing do not appear visually prominent on this map but are important "holes" in the distribution.”



Demographic change and immigration

- Who is “middle class”? What does this status imply?
- Is there competition across ethnic and racial groups for access to middle class status?
- Gest’s central premise is that the “white working class” has declined precipitously as a percentage of the US workforce.
- *“Whether white people’s working class status is defined according to education-, occupation-, or income-based standards, a 30% to 50% decline in the relative size of this group from the World War II era to today in the United States has transpired (Abramowitz and Teixeira 2009: 395). Recent research (Case and Deaton 2015) suggests that these trends may be intensified by an extraordinary 22% rise in the mortality rate of white working class people since 1999—which has taken place in an era during which the death rates among all other groups decline.” (6-7)*

Post-traumatic cities

- This is a key concept in Gest's sociological analysis.
- It refers to the "Rust Belt" cities of the US and Great Britain — cities that have experienced rapid and extensive loss of manufacturing industries and jobs, and subsequent loss of middle class opportunities.
- Erie, Flint, Gary, Kenosha, Michigan City, Toledo, and Youngstown (7)
- Detroit would certainly be included as a "post-traumatic city".

The Rust Belt …

- This is where we live …
- It's also the heart of the auto manufacturing industry …
- Steel, auto manufacturing, and auto suppliers constitute a large percentage of the economic outputs of this region
- These are cities with high unemployment and under-employment; and also high levels of racial segregation

- “There [Youngstown and East London] and elsewhere, the white working class populations I consider are consumed by a nostalgia that expresses bitter resentment toward the big companies that abandoned their city, a government that did little to stop them from leaving, and a growing share of visible minorities who are altering their neighborhoods’ complexion.”

Some statistics from Gest —

- 36% of Americans are white people without college degrees holding non-salaried jobs (Jones and Cox 2012);
- 33% of American families are white households earning less than $60,000 per year (Abramowitz and Teixeira 2009);
- 43% of Americans are white people without professional or managerial jobs (ibid.);
- 48% of Americans are white people without a four-year college degree (ibid.). The New Minority (p. 7).

Political marginality

- What does Gest mean by “political marginality” for a group?
- He has in mind the idea of a “collective identity” of some sort — a population that possesses some strands of identity through neighborhood, religion, social circles, work;
- And the notion, further, that this group thinks of itself as having been left behind, unfairly treated, and perhaps fated for continuing economic and social decline.
- He thinks that groups experiencing “political marginality” are likely to engage in politics in either “rebellion” or “withdrawal” — and in either case, to be open to recruitment in populist social movements.

Gest's "sociological ethnography"

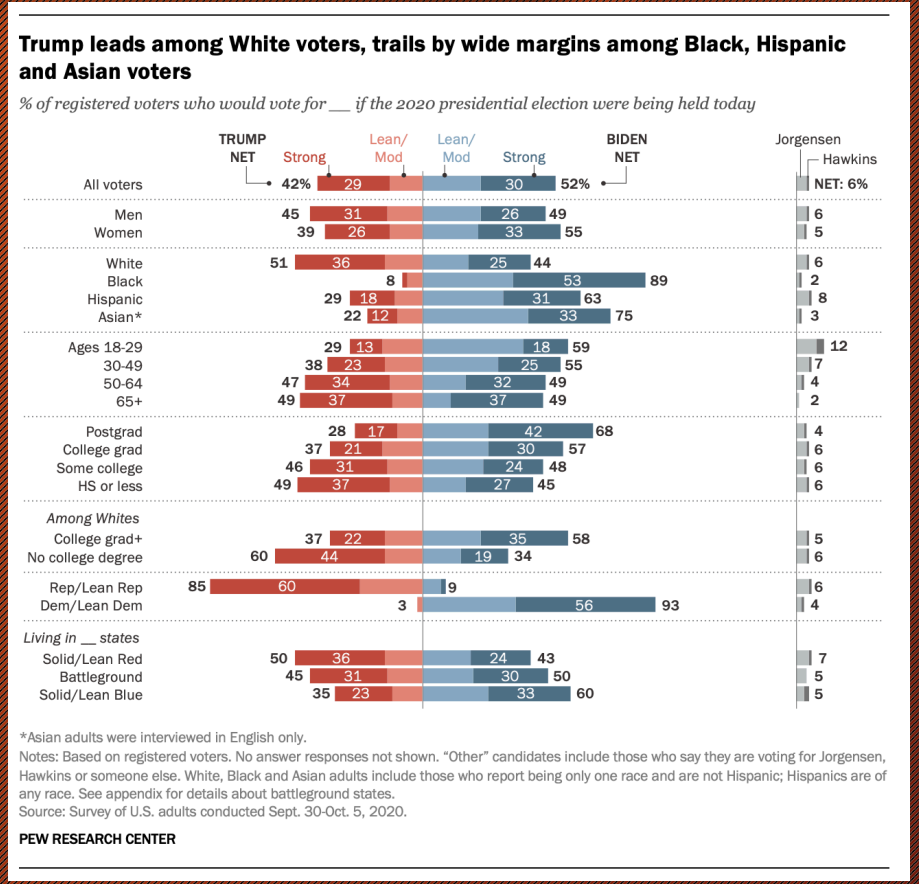
- Immersion in the communities of Youngstown and East London
- In-depth, unstructured interviews with 120 people "to understand daily life and political culture" (14)
- What are their life experiences?
- What are their political motivations?
- "White working class people sense that they have been demoted from the center of their country's consciousness to its fringe. And many feel powerless in their attempts to do something about it." (15)

The racial politics …

- “Rather, the individuals I surveyed and interviewed as part of my ethnographic fieldwork believe ethnic minorities have been given social advantages at the expense of white working class people. My respondents perceive a society that (they acknowledge) once rendered white people an inherent advantage, but now overcompensates for these missteps. In short, many white working class people feel like the victims of discrimination.” (16)
- “White working class people are consumed by their loss of social and political status in social hierarchies, particularly in relation to immigrant and minority reference groups. Their politics are motivated and pervaded by a nostalgia that reveres, and seeks to reinstate, a bygone era.” (16)

A Pew public opinion survey 10/5/20 …

- How do these groups play out in the current election?
- Do these data generally conform to Gest's hypotheses?
  - Large racial disparities — majority of White voters prefer Trump, large majority of Black, Hispanic, Asian voters prefer Biden
  - Large educational disparities — slight majority of "no-college" prefer Trump,
  - Largest advantage to Trump over Biden among Whites, no college degree (60%-34%)
- This seems to be the demographic Gest identifies



And yet …

- But available evidence seems to indicate that support for right-wing extremism (White supremacy groups, armed militia groups, potentially violent anti-government groups) is most virulent among rural populations (Berlet and Sunshine 2019).
- Question for research: do extremist right-wing organizations succeed in recruiting followers and adherents in Warren, Wixom, or Dearborn (cities with high proportions of blue-collar workers)?
- My impression is negative; but that's not based on an empirical study.
- It would be interesting to examine the locations and occupations of the men charged with conspiracy to kidnap the governor; where are they from, and what "class" do they come from?

- There is a consistent story here in Gest's analysis.
- How well does it fit our experience in Michigan?
- Does support for "right-wing populism" in our state line up with out-of-work factory workers?
- Do white working-class and service workers in Michigan support right-wing populism?
- Or is right-wing extremism more rural in our state?
- This will be an interesting question to consider as the election unfolds this week; let's look at the maps of voter turnout and support for various candidates and parties.

Chapter 13

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Session 11

March 24, 2021

Political identity and behavior

- Gest is interested in at least three aspects of the lives of white working class people in Youngstown and East London:
  - Life experience and forms of deprivation
  - Political identity and self-understanding
  - Political behavior
    - Democratic activity
    - Right-wing involvement
    - Passive inaction

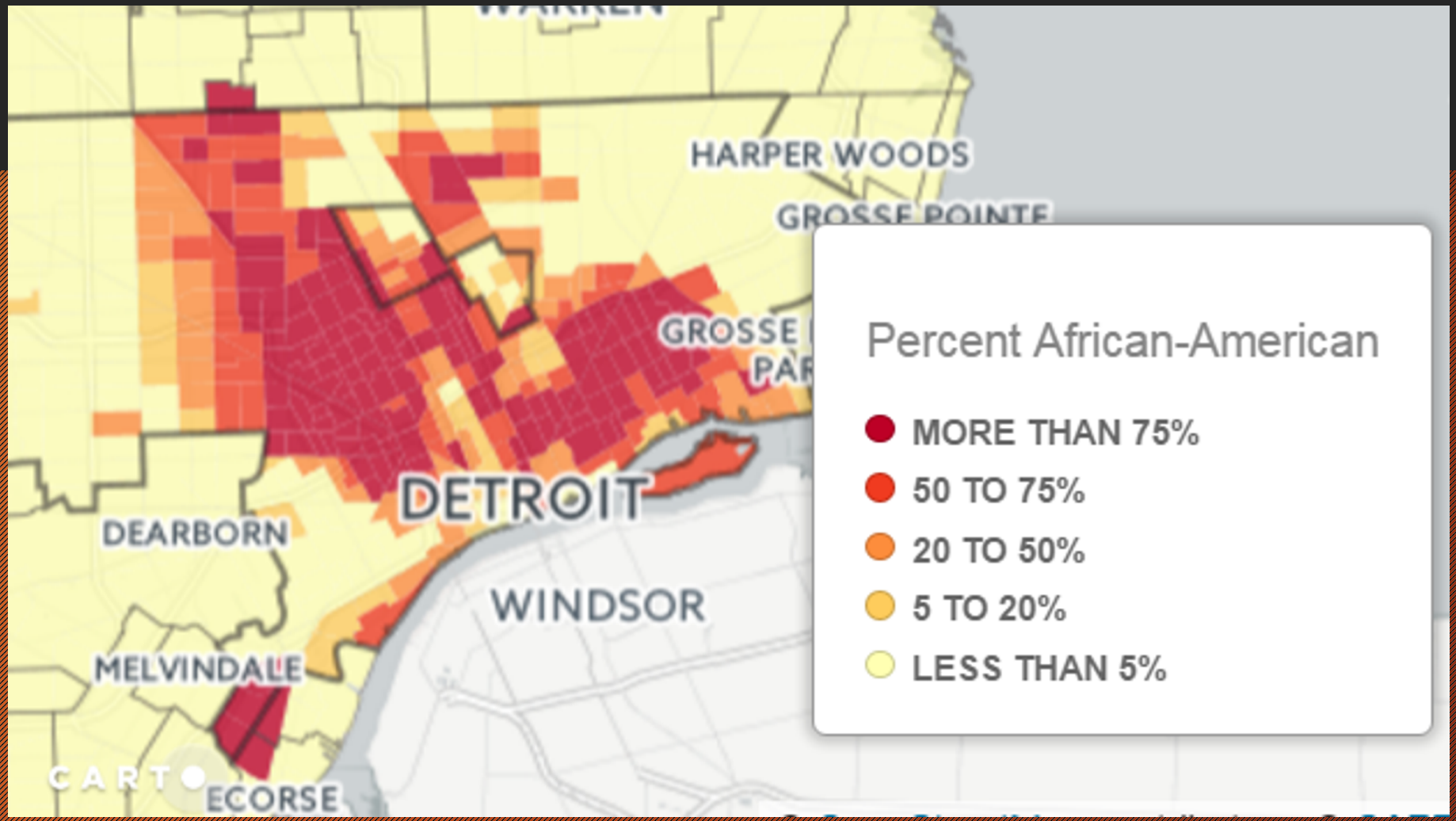
- Remember what our central question is: what are the factors that lead to widespread support for candidates, parties, and actions that challenge democratic values and institutions?
- We had a president for four years who was elected on the basis of such support, and his anti-democratic actions only led to a small decrease in his core level of support.
- We survived the Trump emergency for democracy — for now. But the conditions that led to his election and continuing support are still there.
- Democracy is still at risk.
- We need to understand the appeal of right-wing, populist, and hate-based political platforms if we are to defeat them and maintain our democracy.

Deprivation — material and subjective

- Deprivation involves several things —
  - Job opportunities / declining opportunities
  - Wages / declining pay for unskilled work / unemployment
- Perception of one's place in the world
  - The system cares for me
  - Politicians care for me
  - I'm being treated fairly
  - I'm in the middle class
- Perceptions of the social and economic environment
  - "American Dream"
  - Inequalities are permanent and inevitable
  - Inequalities have gotten a lot worse

Support for Trump in Michigan …

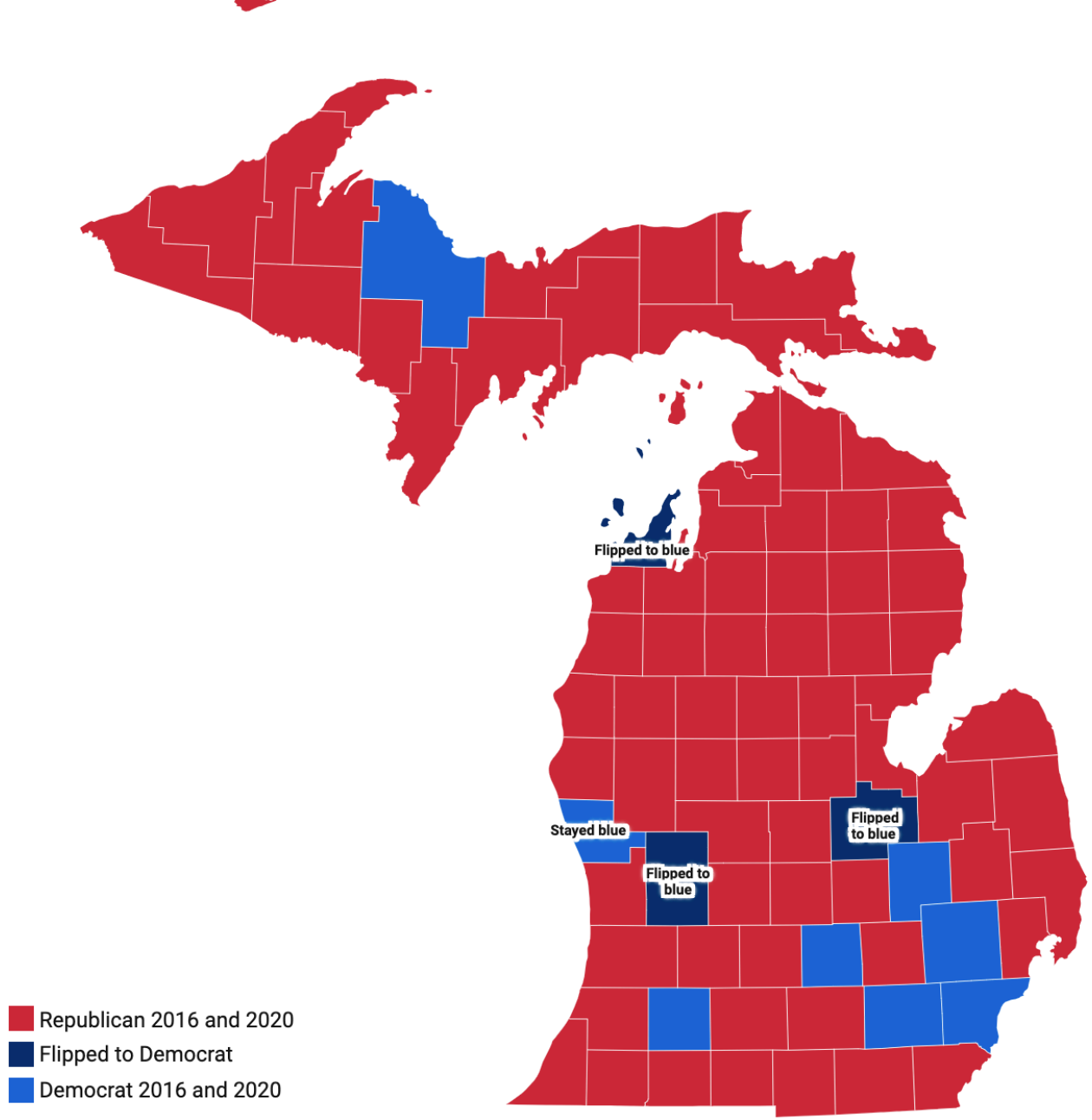
- Michigan voters played a key role in Donald Trump's election in 2016, and Trump was a strong contender in 2020. How does the Michigan electorate match Gest's analysis?
- Class, social hierarchy, and race/ethnicity seem to have played roles in the 2020 election in Michigan.
- Many cities in Michigan have shown similar patterns of "deindustrialization" to those Gest describes in Youngstown. Loss of well-paying auto industry jobs from 2008 and continuing.
- Racial and ethnic segregation in the state, with significant populations of racial and ethnic communities.


HARPER WOODS
GROSSE POINTE
GROSSE
DETROIT
DEARBORN
WINDSOR
MELVINDALE
ECORSE
Percent African-American
MORE THAN 75%
50 TO 75%
20 TO 50%
5 TO 20%
LESS THAN 5%

- How did this play out in Michigan in 2020?

Free Press article on election, Todd Spangler, 11/6/20

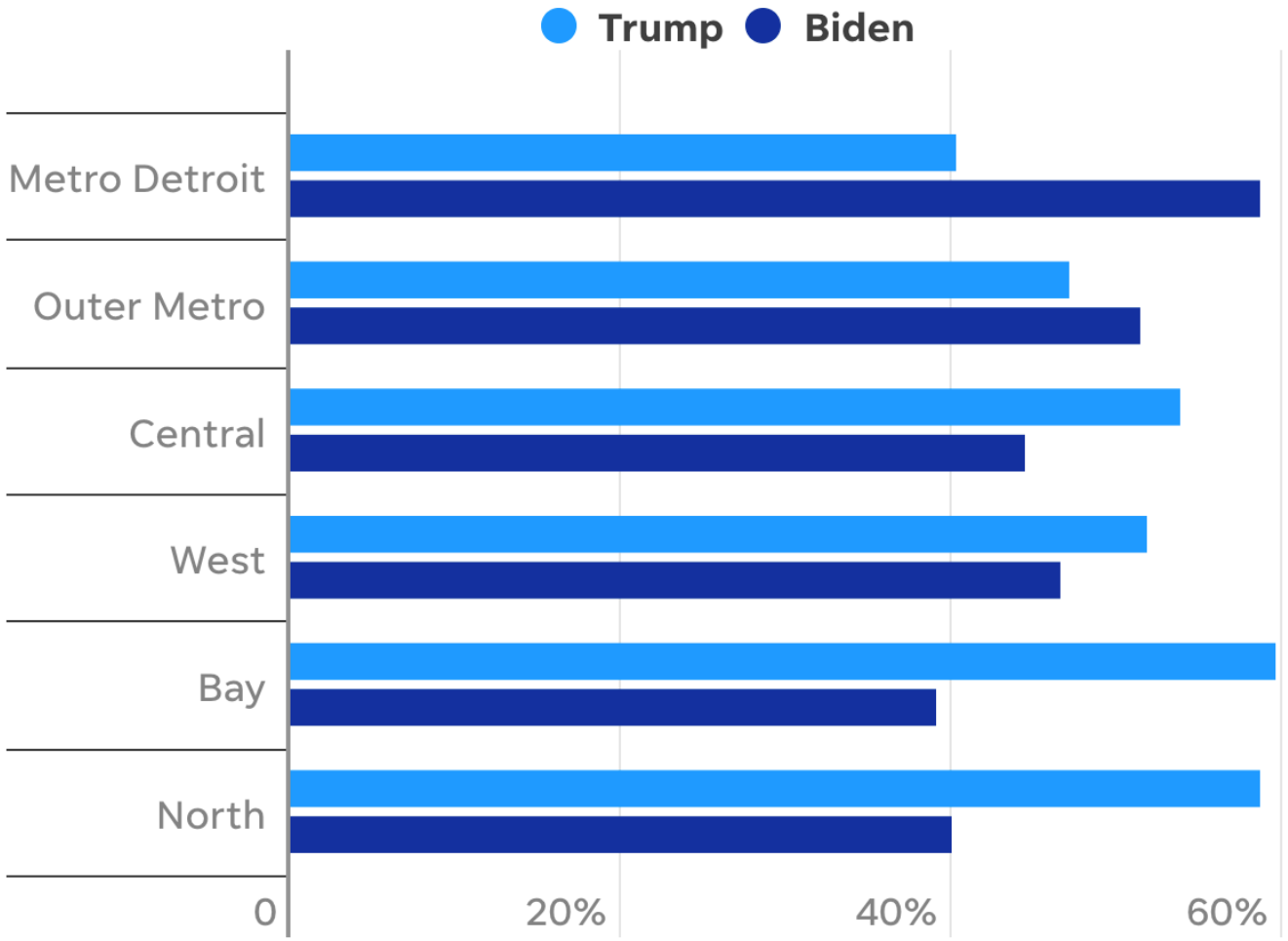
- This article provides an analysis of the demographics and geography of the Michigan presidential vote in 2020, just a few days after the election.
- The map of Michigan counties gives a misleading impression of "Red State" because a lot of the state is low population-density.
- Trump held all but three counties that he won in 2016 — but usually by smaller margins.
- Biden expanded his votes in both Democrat-leaning counties and Republican-leaning counties.
- The chart gives a strong sense of the geographical differences that exist across the state.



Unofficial election results updated on 11/6/2020

Map: Nisa Khan • Source: State of Michigan and Associated Press • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

2020 2016



SOURCE Michigan Secretary of State data, Free Press research. Regions are defined as Metro Detroit: Macomb, Oakland, Wayne counties; Outer Metro: counties immediately outside Metro Detroit; Central: counties running south from Osceola/Clare counties to Indiana-Ohio line; West: counties along Lake Michigan from Indiana line north to Mason, as well as Cass, St. Joseph, Kalamazoo, Kent, Newago and Lake counties; Bay: Mid-Michigan counties and the Thumb; North: counties north of an east-west line running along the southern borders of Manistee, Wexford, Missaukee, Roscommon, Ogemaw and Iosco counties, including the Upper Peninsula.

CREATED BY Todd Spangler, Detroit Free Press

- *According to a variety of studies that understand the white working class in different ways, the group makes up about 53% of the electorate in Michigan, 55% in Pennsylvania, 58% in Wisconsin, 62% in Ohio, 66% in Indiana, and nearly 70% in West Virginia (Judis 2007; Democratic Strategist 2011; Olsen 2010). (Gest, 190)*
- *A survey of some 3,400 voters in Michigan done by the Associated Press as part of its election coverage found whites without college degrees made up some 54% of the electorate, and they overwhelmingly supported Trump 58%-41%. His margin of support among white men without college degrees was even higher, 64%-34%. (Freep story on 2020 election)*

- *This chapter considers another prominent explanation: namely, that white working class people establish political identities in opposition to ethnic and racial minorities who might otherwise unite with white people as part of an impactful proletariat constituency. 134*
- *I argue that it is more accurate to think of white working class political divisions as a matter of social status, which integrates the overlapping divisions of race and class and converts them into narratives that structure people's experiences in the market, society, and political sphere. 135*

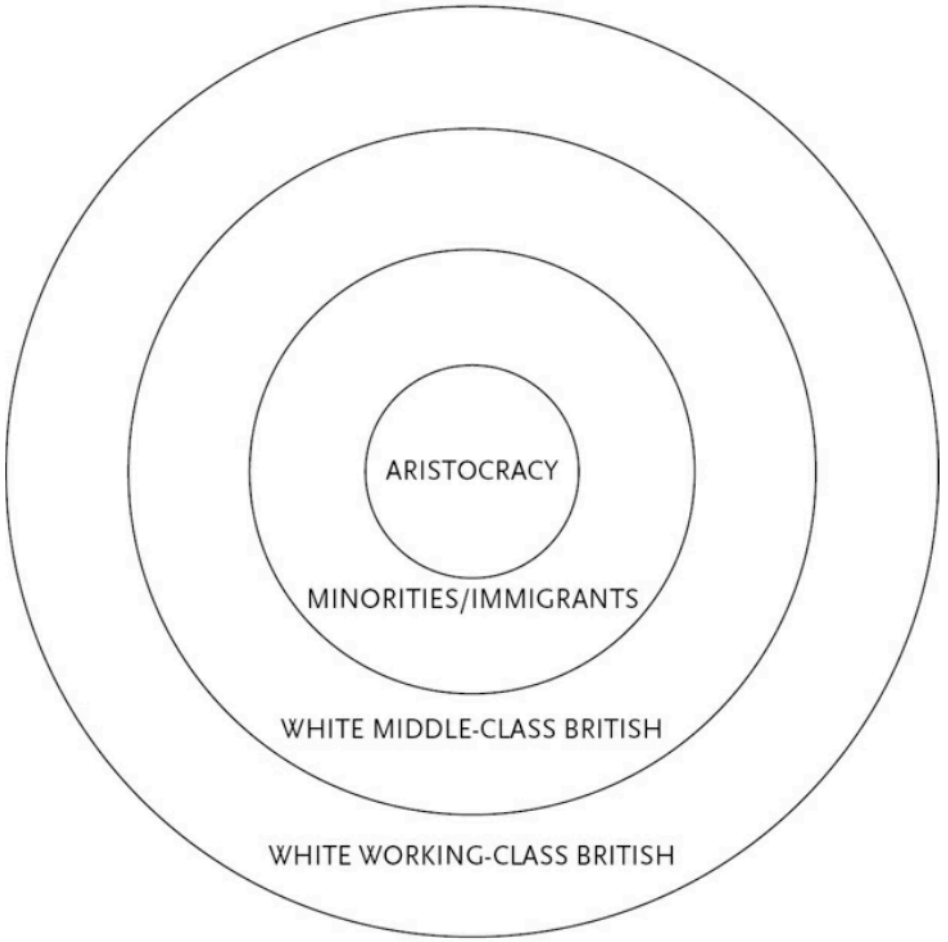
- *The debilitation of strong bridging organizations has been worsened by the propensity of white working class families to leave their communities after Youngstown's collapse and East London's demographic transformation. 141*
- This important observation signals the importance of white flight (the disintegration of traditional neighborhoods) and the decline of organizations like labor unions that provide a concrete basis of social affinity across individuals of different backgrounds and races.

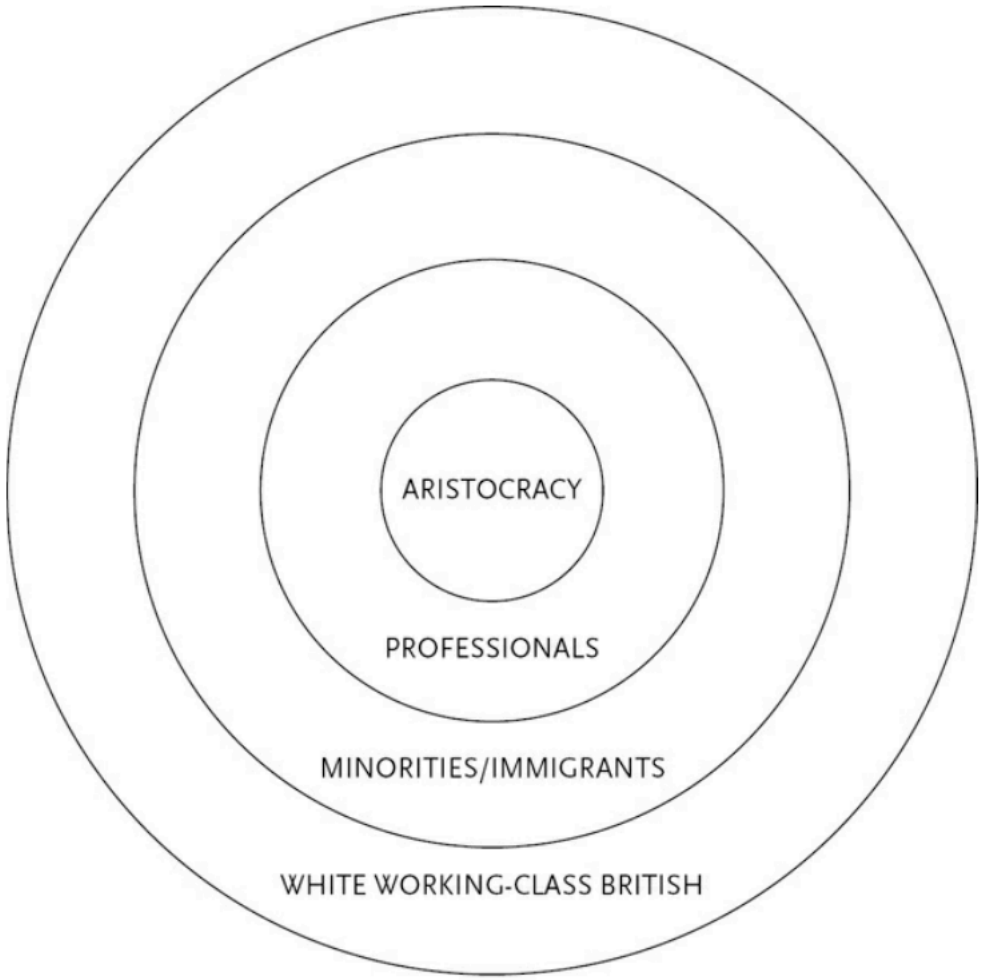
The importance of culture

- The fact of “deprivation” is a crucial part of Gest’s analysis of white working class political behavior. But “deprivation” must be processed.
- Gest is very interested in the ways in which different groups make sense of their current circumstances, including the ways in which they are disadvantaged or materially deprived.
- This has a great deal to do with the stories we tell about ourselves to others — how “our” group came to its position in society.
- This is where he brings in the idea of “symbolic repertoires”.

Perceptions of social hierarchy

- Both England and Ohio are stratified social systems, with people in "higher" and "lower" positions.
- Where do I stand — if I am a salaried engineer at a rubber plant, a unionized worker in a production factory, a construction worker dependent on day-to-day jobs, or an unemployed person?
- Where do I stand if I didn't finish high school; if I have an associates degree; or if I have a professional degree? How do these forms of distinction play out into a social hierarchy? And where do working class people find themselves in the hierarchies of Ohio or England?


ARISTOCRACY
MINORITIES/IMMIGRANTS
WHITE MIDDLE-CLASS BRITISH
WHITE WORKING-CLASS BRITISH
UNDERCLASS: ADDICTS, CRIMINALS, VAGABONDS


ARISTOCRACY
PROFESSIONALS
MINORITIES/IMMIGRANTS
WHITE WORKING-CLASS BRITISH

Gest's theory …

- Gest thinks he has discovered an important part of the dynamics of class, deprivation, and right-wing involvement.
- He offers a theory that is familiar in the literature of uprisings and rebellions, the theory of relative deprivation.
- Individuals and groups are more politically motivated by relative deprivation than absolute deprivation.
- It is comparison with the situation of other people who seem to be doing "better" for no apparent reason that motivates rebellion.

- He lays the hypothesis out in fig. 7.3.
- The figure is a 2x2 table contrasting “pro-system/anti-system” behaviors against “active/passive political behavior”
- He doesn’t have a theory about what makes a person active or passive in his/her political actions.
- But he does have a theory about what makes a person “anti-system” or rebellious:
- Anti-system activity is a common result of “a large gap between expectations and perceptions of centrality in social hierarchies”
- For example: Italian college graduates who could not find a job, and recruitment into radical-left organizations in the 1970s.

	PRO-SYSTEM	ANTI-SYSTEM
ACTIVE	ENGAGEMENT *Small or moderate gap* between expectations and perceptions of centrality in social hierarchies	REBELLION *Large gap* between expectations and perceptions of centrality in social hierarchies
PASSIVE	SITTING OUT *Small or moderate gap* between expectations and perceptions of centrality in social hierarchies	WITHDRAWAL *Very low expectations* of centrality in social hierarchies

Figure 7.3 Hypotheses Explaining Variation in Political Behavior.

- In particular, he finds a causal connection between a large disparity in expectations of political influence and status, and support for the far right.

- *Radical right respondents reported greater political deprivation as a measure of political power, greater political deprivation as a measure of politicians' care, greater economic deprivation as a measure of financial well-being, and greater social deprivation as well. These results hold whether one classifies radical right support in the American context as support for a third party, Donald Trump, or the Tea Party, and in the British context as support for the BNP, EDL, or UKIP. Across every measure of deprivation, those who support the radical right are more deprived than those who do not. 176*

Winning working class voters back …

- Gest's analysis suggests a basic strategy for attacking right-wing populism: regain the trust and support of working class voters.
- How can that be done? He has four suggestions —

- Recruit candidates from the ranks of the non-elites
- Do not conflate the working class with the helpless
- Do not assume unions are synonymous with the working class
- Challenge nostalgia with hope

- How does this seem to apply to President Biden?

Chapter 14

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Lecture 13

- The occurrence of anti-Muslim violence, arson, and murder in New Delhi last year is sometimes looked at a simply an unpredictable episode provoked by protest against the citizenship legislation enacted by the BJP and Prime Minister Modi.
- Paul Brass demonstrated several decades ago in The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India, that riots and violent episodes like this have a much deeper explanation in Indian politics.

- Brass rejects the common view that riots in India are “spontaneous” or "responsive to provocation"; instead, he argues that communal Hindu-nationalist riots are systemic and strategic. Violence derives from a discourse of Hindu-Muslim hostility and the legitimization of violence.
- Given this view that riots and anti-Muslim violence are deliberate political acts in India, Brass offers an analysis of what goes into "making of a riot".
- Rumor, provocation
- The function and utility of riots; political entrepreneurship

Brass

- BJP, RSS: Hindutva (Hindu nationalism); mass mobilization
- The decline of the Congress party
- *"It is a principal argument of this book that the whole political order in post-Independence north India and many, if not most of its leading as well as local actors—more markedly so since the death of Nehru—have become implicated in the persistence of Hindu-Muslim riots. These riots have had concrete benefits for particular political organizations as well as larger political uses." (18)*

- Brass's view is that the political ideology of Hindutva (Hindu nationalism) is used by BJP and other extremist parties to advance its own political fortunes.
- This ideology (and the political program it is designed to support) is a prime cause of continuing violence by Hindu extremists against Muslims and other non-Hindu minorities in India.

- Brass argues that riots serve a “function” in Indian politics.
- How does a framework of discourse contribute to inter-group hatred and conflict?
- *The maintenance of communal tensions, accompanied from time to time by lethal rioting at specific sites, is essential for the maintenance of militant Hindu nationalism, but also has uses for other political parties, organizations, and even the state and central governments. (9)*
- Brass asks: whose interests are served by “communal rioting”? And he believes the answer is clear: Hindu Nationalist parties
- “institutionalized riot systems”

Mechanisms of incitement

- Exposure to inciting media
- Incidents
- Organizations and leaders
- Music, comics, and video games
- The presence of a small number of "hot connectors”
- Rumor
- Provocation and incitement

Proliferation of hate

- There is a substantial degree of orchestration in most of these mechanisms -- deliberate efforts by organizations and political entrepreneurs to incite and channel the emotions of fear, hostility, and hate among their followers and potential followers. Strategies of recruitment for extremist and hate-based parties deliberately cultivate the mindset of hate among young people and disaffected older people. And the motivations seem to be a mix of ideological commitment to a worldview of hate and more prosaic self-interest -- power, income, resources, publicity, and influence.

- *Most commonly, the rhetoric is laced with words that encourage its members not to put up any longer with the attacks of the other but to retaliate against their aggression. There are also specific forms of action that are designed to provoke the other community into aggressive action, which is then met with a stronger retaliatory response. (24)*

- This deliberate provocation of violence was evident in the riots in Gujarat in 2002, according to Dexter Filkins in a brilliant piece of journalism on these issues in the *New Yorker* (link):
- *The most sinister aspect of the riots was that they appeared to have been largely planned and directed by the R.S.S. Teams of men, armed with clubs, guns, and swords, fanned out across the state's Muslim enclaves, often carrying voter rolls and other official documents that led them to Muslim homes and shops.*
- The RSS is a paramilitary group associated with the Hindu Nationalist party. Assassinations, riots, and acts of terrorism; Gandhi was assassinated in 1948 by an RSS man.

The Babri Mosque

- The greatest impetus to the political use of the politics of hate and the program of Hindu nationalism was the campaign to destroy the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, UP, in 1992.
- Hindu nationalists organized around the conflict between the status of the site as a historic Mosque and a Hindu temple, said to be the birthplace of the Hindu deity Rama.

Aligarh riots

- Aligarh riots in 1961; Scuffle at AM; Rumors spread
- Large mobs from students of Hindu colleges burned shops
- Rioting spread to the town
- “A Hindu businessman used a mob of students to raid the houses of a Muslim with whom he had a property dispute, as well as other Muslim houses. The police were present, but stood by without interfering.” 81
- A good summary (112)

- The role of the police – a long history of standing aside while violence and killing takes place against Muslims
- This is repeated in Delhi in 2020
- How control worked in Aligarh, 1978-80 to 1988-90
- Heightened visibility of armed police at crossings
- Residents credited: economic, political, administrative, and police causes for the peace (133)

- *The government of India and the state governments do virtually nothing after a riot to prosecute and convict persons suspected of promoting or participating in riots. Occasionally, but less frequently in recent years, commissions of inquiry are appointed. If the final reports are not too damaging to the government of the day or to the political supporters of that government in the Hindu or Muslim communities, the report may be published More often than not, there is a significant delay before publication. Some reports are never made public. (65)*

- Especially important in the question of civil strife and ethnic conflict in any country is the behavior and effectiveness of the police. Do the police work in an even-handed way to suppress violent acts and protect all parties neutrally? And does the justice system investigate and punish the perpetrators of violence? In India the track record is very poor, including in the riots in the early 1990s in Mumbai and in 2002 in Gujarat.

- This pattern was repeated in Delhi during the most recent period of anti-Muslim pogrom. The police stand by while Hindutva thugs attack Muslims, burn homes and shops, and murder the innocent. Conversely, when the police function as representatives of the whole of civil society rather than supporters of a party, they are able to damp down inter-religious killing quickly (as Brass documents in his examination of the period of relative peace in Aligarh between 1978-80 to 1988-90).

Chapter 15

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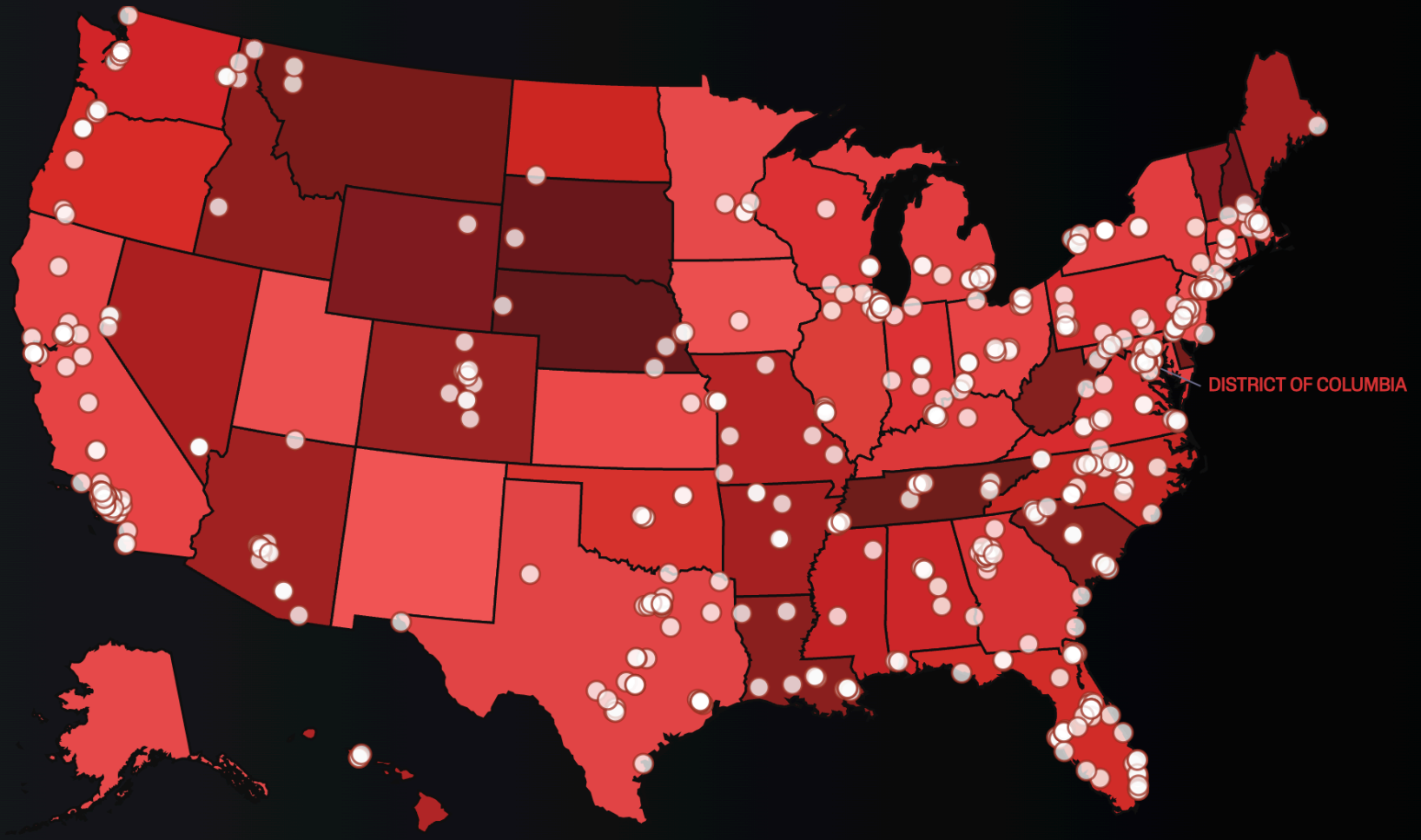
Lecture 14

IN 2021, WE TRACKED 733 HATE GROUPS ACROSS THE U.S.



270

HATE OVER TIME ?

2000 2021

HATE GROUPS PER CAPITA ?

FEWER MORE

Hate groups in the US

271

- Proud Boys
- The Base
- Oath Keepers
- Wolverine Watchmen
- Ammon Bundy and the Malheur occupation
- Timothy McVeigh, 1995 bomb attack on Oklahoma City federal building
- Charlottesville
- January 6, 2021 insurrection at the Capitol

Miller-Idriss. Hate in the Homeland

- Cynthia Miller-Idriss has done extensive research on extremist mobilization and ideology in the United States.
- Many of her findings are highly relevant to our concerns.

Accelerationist ideology

- Many of these groups advocate for actions that will accelerate open violence and “civil war” or “race war” in the United States.
- One outlet for this ideology in recent months is the outbreak of attacks on electric power transformers and substations to disable parts of the electric grid.

Accelerationist ideology

- *At the most-extreme fringe, far-right extremists not only believe that a violent apocalypse is coming, but also argue that the best and fastest way to reach the phase of rebirth is to accelerate the path to the apocalypse and eventual new world order by speeding up polarization and societal discord as a way of undermining social stability overall. Violence is foundational to this approach, because violent acts create immediate societal panic, inspire copycat actors, and encourage reciprocal or revenge terror attacks from affected groups. For this reason, each violent act of terror is viewed as heroic, celebrated in the name of the global cause, and is understood to bring white supremacists one step closer to the end-times collapse and subsequent restoration of a new white civilization. This principle—acceleration—is a key aspect motivating terrorist violence from the far right.*
- *Miller-Idriss, Cynthia. Hate in the Homeland (p. 14). Princeton University Press. Kindle Edition.*

Willingness to use violence

- Right-wing extremist groups are often willing to threaten and use violence in support of their ideologies

Racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim, anti-LGBTQ ideology

- The groups we are considering are organized around white supremacy, anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim bigotry, and anti-LGBTQ bigotry.
- The language used in social media, Youtube, and other internet-based channels is virulent and unashamed.

Anti-government activism and violence

- Armed militias are often motivated by extreme antagonism to the Federal government (and state governments)
  - The 1995 Oklahoma City bombing
  - The 2016 armed takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge by Ammon Bundy and others
  - The 2020 invasion of the Michigan Statehouse by armed men
  - The kidnapping plot against Governor Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan
  - The organized and violent invasion of the US Capitol, January 6 2021

Social spaces for mobilizing extremism

- *In this light, the efforts of organized far-right groups to engage with young people in the spaces and places described in this book—combat sports and MMA clubs, music scenes, YouTube cooking channels, college campuses, and a variety of youth-oriented online spaces like gaming chatrooms or social-media platforms—are especially important. Far-right groups have always worked to recruit young people to their movements and politicize youth spaces like concerts, festivals, youth-oriented events, and music lyrics.72 These are sometimes referred to as youth "scenes"—a word that reflects a less hierarchical and more disorganized structure than traditional social movements.*

- Miller-Idriss, Cynthia. Hate in the Homeland (pp. 23-24). Princeton University Press. Kindle Edition.

- *Decades of research on far-right youth culture has shown how particular facets of subcultures and youth scenes—like hate music—can spread intolerance and prejudice against minorities, not only in expected genres like right-wing hard rock and black metal, but also in more mainstream genres like country and pop music.53 In the same way, hate clothing can expose consumers to extremist opinions, nudging ideological views on immigration, religion, violence, and gun control toward the extremist fringe while opening the door to further engagement and more dangerous actions. Brands marketing hate offer legitimacy, signal membership, and promote ideology to far-right insiders. Far-right clothing also acts as an icebreaker for youth to strike up conversations in school, at stadiums, in bars, and at parties, when they recognize someone across the room wearing an "insider" brand.*

- Miller-Idriss, Cynthia. Hate in the Homeland (pp. 82-83). Princeton University Press. Kindle Edition.

How are young people mobilized?

- *Far-right youth today might initially encounter extremist narratives through chance encounters in mainstream spaces like the MMA, a campus auditorium, a podcast, or a YouTube video. Each of those mainstream spaces, however, can act as a channel, opening the door to dedicated far-right MMA festivals, alt-tech platforms and encrypted communication platforms, and dedicated YouTube subscriptions that mix mainstream interest in cooking or music with far-right ideology. Understanding these new spaces and places—the geography of hate—is key to comprehending the far right in its modern form.*

- Miller-Idriss, Cynthia. Hate in the Homeland (pp. 25-26). Princeton University Press. Kindle Edition.

- *MMA is a perfect incubator for the far right. It helps recruit new youth to the movement from adjacent subcultures, introducing key far-right messages about discipline, resistance to the mainstream, and apocalyptic battles. The combat-sports scene helps the far right motivate youth around ideals related to physical fitness, strength, combat, and violence. This mobilization calls on youth to train physically to defend the nation and white European civilization against the dual threats posed by immigrants and the degenerate left. At the same time, MMA and combat sports reinforce dominant ideals about masculinity and being a man—related not only to violence, risk, and danger but also to solidarity, brotherhood, and bonding.47 The MMA world also helps radicalize and mobilize youth by intensifying far-right ideals about masculinity and violence and the range of exclusionary and dehumanizing ideologies that relate to the supposed incursion of immigrants, the coming of "Eurabia," "white genocide," or the "great replacement."*

- Miller-Idriss, Cynthia. Hate in the Homeland (pp. 100-101). Princeton University Press. Kindle Edition.

Extremism on campus …

- *Propaganda, white-supremacist fliers, racist graffiti, and provocative speaking tours have brought hate to campuses across the country in new ways, exposing hundreds of thousands of students to far-right ideologies. This kind of hate intimidates and threatens members of vulnerable groups, unsettles campus climates, and creates significant anxiety around student safety and well-being. Students at Syracuse University who staged a sit-in in November 2019 following more than a dozen hate incidents at the university told journalists that they didn't feel safe on campus. "I absolutely do not feel safe here, and I think a large number of students also don't feel safe here," one student told Anderson Cooper on CNN, noting, "I personally, and I know I speak for a lot of people when I say I don't even feel safe walking back to my own residence hall."*

- Miller-Idriss, Cynthia. Hate in the Homeland (p. 120). Princeton University Press. Kindle Edition.

Lessons of violent far-right extremism

- The use of violence in political protest is inherently anti-democratic.
- It represents an effort to impede the workings of a democratic government …
- And it works to intimidate ordinary citizens.
- Charlottesville 2017 was a clear example of “citizen intimidation”.

Chapter 16

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Lecture 15

A different approach …

- Inglehart and Norris offer a different theoretical approach to the question of the rise of support for right-wing populism.
- Their approach involves the factors and dynamics that explain the creation of political identities and values over time.
- They emphasize the importance of “cohorts” — generations of people born at different points in time.
- Inglehart published an important book in 1971 called THE SILENT REVOLUTION in which he argued that there was a gradual shift in values and frameworks towards a higher level of social liberalism: racial tolerance, concern for equality, environmental concerns, anti-war concerns.
- “Post-materialist values”

The organized political response …

- Inglehart and Norris also offer a "political science" account of how political actors respond to these dynamics of shifting value systems.
- Progressive politicians and activists emerge to mobilize the votes of citizens who have the "liberal-social" values.
- Populists, xenophobes, traditionalists, and other conservative candidates and activists emerge to respond to the dissatisfaction of the "cultural backlash" population.
- Electoral competition ensures, leading to intensified ideological competition and struggle over the rules of electoral competition (voting rights, gerrymandering, …)

- This approach differs from Mudde and Gest alike, in that Mudde and Gest both take a “snapshot” approach to the rise and fall of political parties.
- They are interested in the direct causes that lead to disaffection.
- Inglehart and Norris approach the topic in a more historically extended way — a long, slow shifting of values and attitudes, stimulating a counter-reaction from other citizens.
- “Silent revolution” and “cultural backlash”

The theory …

- *The story of the cultural backlash can be broken down logically into a series of sequential steps involving: (1) long-term social structural changes in the living conditions and security which successive generations experienced during their formative years; (2) the way these developments led to the silent revolution in cultural values; (3) the conservative backlash and authoritarian reflex that this stimulated; (4) medium-term economic conditions and rapid growth in social diversity accelerating the reaction; (5) how the conservative backlash drives voting support for Authoritarian-Populist parties and leaders; (6) how votes translate into seats (and thus government offices) through electoral systems; and finally (7) the broader consequences of this phenomenon, including for the stability of established democracies and hybrid regimes, for party competition and the issue agenda, and for the civic culture. (Chapter 1)*

The “Silent Revolution” in values …

- *Long-term social structural developments in post-industrial societies – growing prosperity, rising access to college education, more egalitarian gender roles, and processes of urbanization – led to the silent revolution in socially liberal and post-materialist values, which first became evident at the societal level in the late 1960s and early 1970s. (Kl 612)*
- *The first premise in our argument concerns the silent revolution in cultural values that occurred during the second half of the twentieth century, transforming the cultures of post-industrial societies. More than 40 years ago, **The Silent Revolution** argued that the postwar era's unprecedentedly high levels of existential security led to an intergenerational value shift among Western publics. (Kl 1191)*

Tipping point in political culture change?

- *Changes in the relative size of majority and minority groups can spark a decisive shift in collective attitudes and behaviors, catalyzing a reaction when a previously dominant group perceives that their core norms and beliefs are being overwhelmed by social tides and they are losing their hegemonic status. This provides an opportunity for political elites to respond to their cultural grievances. (Kl 1419)*

- *Subsequent chapters provide new evidence demonstrating how long-term inter-generational, educational, and urbanization change have gradually shifted the balance between social liberals and social conservatives in Western societies, and how this, in turn, has triggered a cultural backlash among social conservatives with intolerant attitudes. (Kl 1524)*

- Theirs is a theory of ideological change in a diverse population of mixed cohorts over time.
- They have a theory for why social-liberal attitudes would rise among younger people since the 1950s.
- They have a theory for why social-conservative people would be increasingly hostile to the rising tide of social-liberal attitudes.
- They have a “tipping point” theory of why these gradual processes shift into direct political antagonism and mobilization.
- The “tipping point” idea is interesting but questionable. Malcolm Gladwell, Thomas Schelling, …

The theoretical framework …

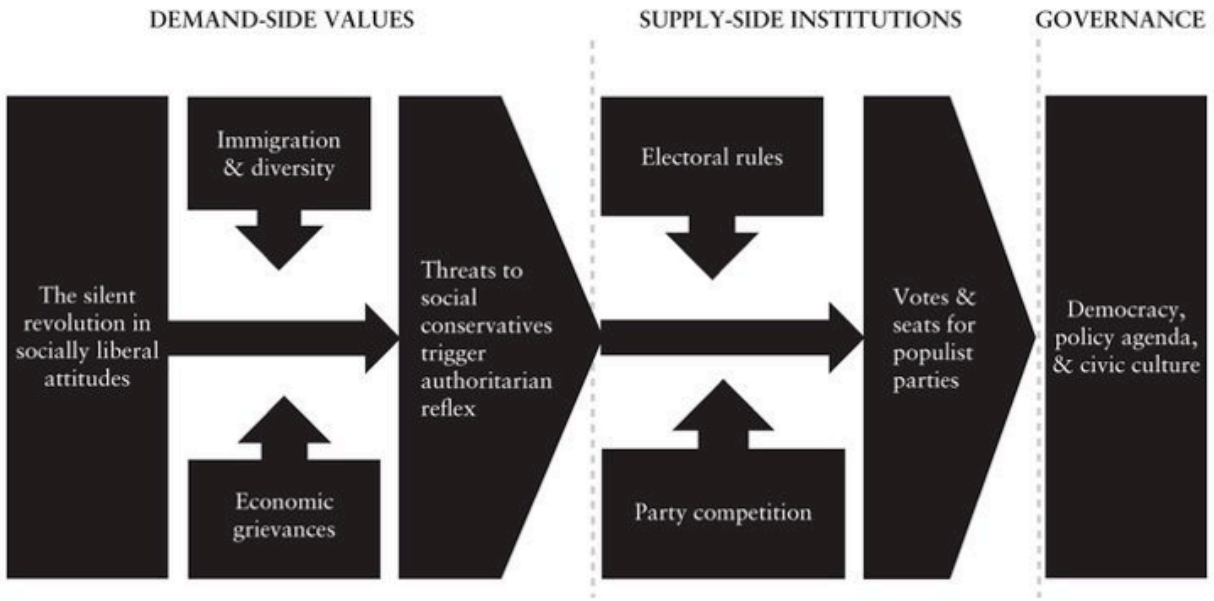


Figure 2.1 The theoretical framework

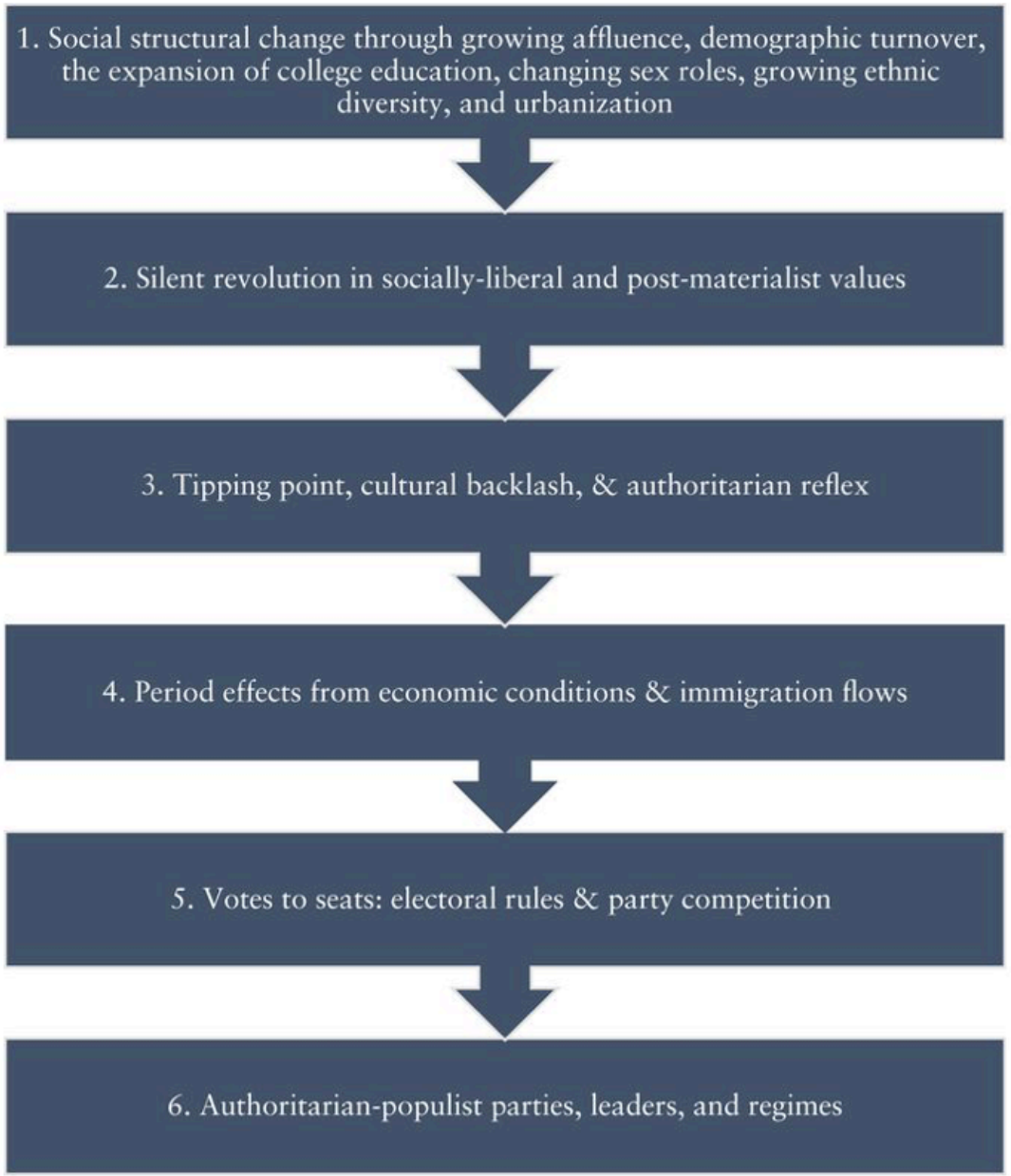


Figure 13.1 The sequence of steps in the cultural backlash theory

A values tipping point?

- *We argue that the slow process of value change arising from generational, educational, gender, and urban transformations have deepened cultural cleavages in many Western societies and changed the relative balance between liberalism and conservatism. Older social conservatives have gradually lost their hegemonic status, although remaining a large minority of society – and a bare majority of the voting public. In addition, traditional social conservatives are clustered disproportionately in declining rural communities based on manufacturing and agriculture, whereas the younger generations have moved away to cities in pursuit of college degrees and job opportunities, leaving behind aging, overwhelmingly white, and less-educated populations. (Kl 1446)*

Analyzing voters …

- The second half of the research provided by Inglehart and Norris has to do with voter behavior.
- *Authoritarian-populist forces were decisive for the outcome of the Brexit referendum on the UK's membership in the European Union in June 2016, igniting anti-immigrant and nativist sentiments and generating a deep financial, political, and constitutional crisis within the United Kingdom. In the United States, Donald Trump has overthrown numerous conventions in American politics. His aggressive rejection of ‘ political correctness, ’ his belligerent style, and his willingness to engage in cultural wars against liberal targets seems to be particularly appealing to older, religious, white men in rural communities, especially social conservatives and xenophobes. (Kl 7932)*

- They reject the “knee-jerk” theories in which a certain segment of voters reacts impulsively to immigration, shifting racial composition of their cities, or other immediate triggers of right-wing activism.
- Their “cultural backlash” theory suggests that there is an “iceberg” under the surface of citizens how have reacted against the changing social and political values of subsequent cohorts and are ready to support radical right parties.
- *The cultural backlash theory suggests that if citizens are choosing whether to vote and which parties to support based on their values, we will find a high level of congruence between authoritarian and socially conservative attitudes, and voting for parties that endorse these values in their policy platforms. (Kl 8153)*

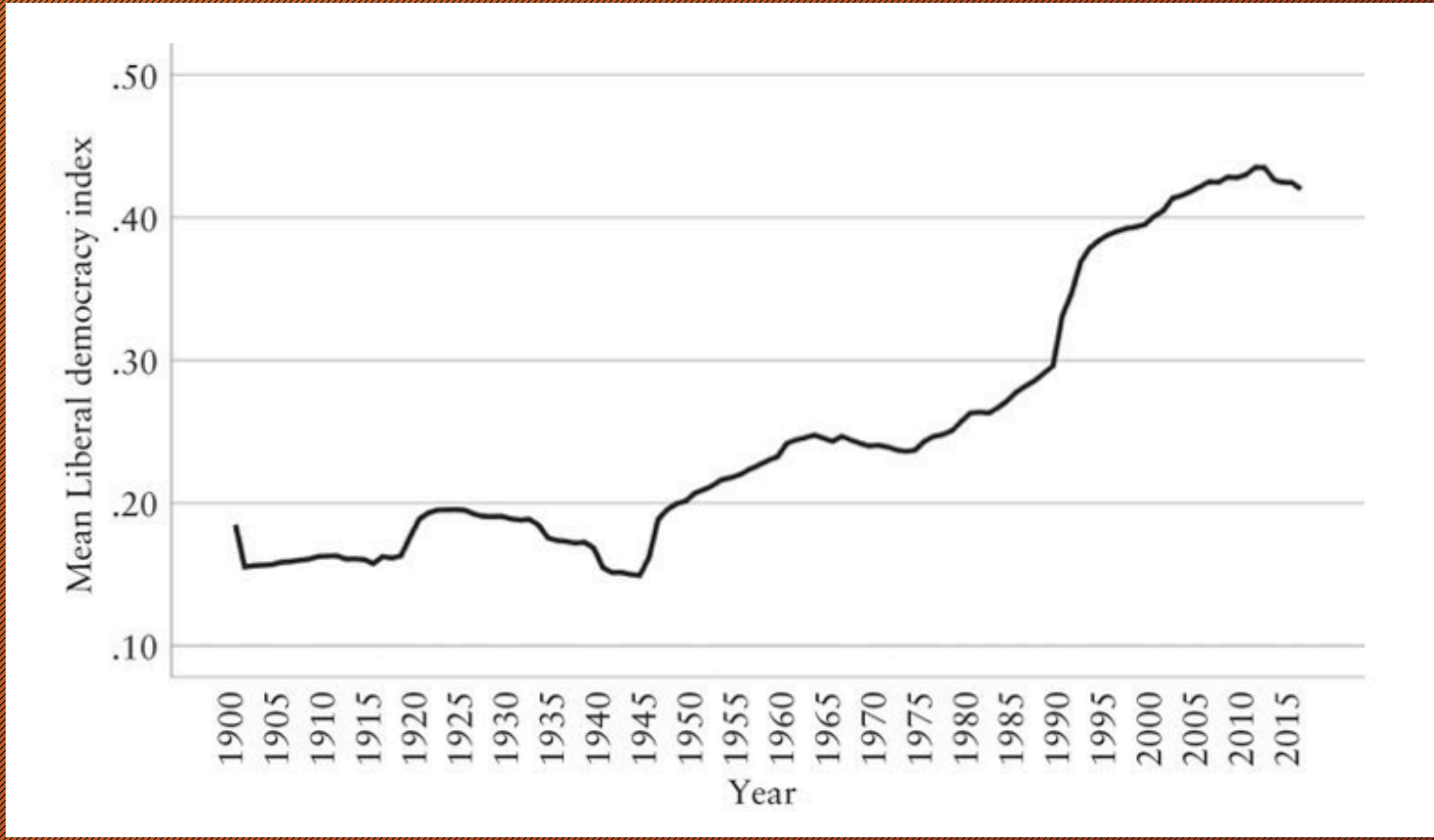
- “Wedge issues” play a key role in right-wing mobilization of voters — to vote at all and to vote for the right-wing candidate or party.
- Generational differences are large —
- *A substantial generation gap in voting participation and party choices exists. Younger cohorts are far less likely to vote – a widely observed and consistent pattern across European countries. (9131)*
- *voting for authoritarian parties in Europe is significantly stronger among the older generation, as well as among men, the less educated, the religious, and white populations living in rural areas. 9139*

The good news (according to I&N)

- *The generational gap in Western societies is likely to heighten the salience of the cultural cleavage in future politics, regardless of possible improvements in the underlying economic conditions or any slowdown in globalization. 9150*
- Inglehart and Norris seem to believe that the longterm processes they are describing favor the survival of liberal democracy.
- Favorable facators include — urbanization, widespread economic development, rising educational levels, and a shift to a knowledge economy (favoring autonomy, creative class).
- Is the following graph a “good news” graph or a bad news graph?

V-Dem survey, liberal democracy index

300



- *Cas Mudde cautions that, at least in Western democracies, fears about the impact of populism are largely overblown and he argues that the rise of the populist radical right has had far less serious political consequences than many pessimistic prophecies had long predicted. 12539*
- And how about “civic culture”?
- They believe that the populist program poses threats to civic culture, and it is important to respond to these threats.
- But they believe the medium-term and long-term situation favors a civic culture of pluralism and support for liberal democracy.

Grounds for thinking democracy is stable …

- *(1) Culturally, the overwhelming majority of people believe that democracy is the best form of government, so that any further reforms reflect these values and principles. (2) Constitutionally, all the major actors and organs of the state reflect democratic norms and practices. (3) Behaviorally, no significant groups actively seek to overthrow the regime or secede from the state. 12674*
- These premises no longer seem to be empirically true!

- *By deepening public disenchantment with the workings of political institutions, such as elections, the news media, and the courts, populism can have destabilizing effects upon the body politic. Public confidence in democracy seems vulnerable to being undermined by demagogues impugning the impartiality of the courts, alleging widespread electoral fraud, and attacking the role of the free press, as well as potentially heightening social intolerance, xenophobia, and Islamophobia. Public skepticism about democracy may tip into cynicism. 12641*

Generational change …

- *If these age-differences reflect generational differences rather than life-cycle effects (as the evidence indicates), then a gradual transformation of worldviews will tend to emerge over successive decades, as older generations with anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim prejudices are replaced by younger birth cohorts holding more cosmopolitan and tolerant attitudes. 13387*

Strategies for resilience for democracy

- *We need to understand the roots of populist sentiments. They have the potential to be a force for good in the world when grassroots reform movements help reduce corruption, strengthen responsive governance, expand the issue agenda that are debated and the electoral choices on the ballot, and reengage participation among groups alienated by mainstream party politics. 13666*
- Reducing economic inequality
- Responding to cultural anxieties

Does this theory suggest a strategy of political change?

- The ideological and value conflict described here — social-liberal values for younger cohorts, social-conservative values for older cohorts — is inherent.
- The demography favors further advance of the spread of social-liberal values.
- Inglehart and Norris have qualified optimism.
- But plainly, the longterm perspective doesn't help if the ship sinks in the short term.
- We need political / democratic strategies in the present that maintain support for democracy across all segments of population.

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Lecture 16

Navigating to a stable democracy

- We’ve come a long way in the past 8 weeks … through populism, right-wing extremism, political violence, illiberal democracy, racism and xenophobia, and working class marginalization.
- These are the currents that are visibly undermining our liberal democracy.
- Now we will come back to the ideas about liberal democracy and citizenship that we discussed in the writings of Mill and Rawls.
- Can liberal democracy sustain itself?

- There is an important aspect of the motivational relationship between an individual and the society in which he or she lives -- what we refer to as patriotism, love of country, or devotion to the constitution and political institutions of a just society. What are these motivations? How do they arise within citizens?
- What kinds of moral emotions are needed to sustain a liberal democracy? What is "democratic loyalty and patriotism", and how does it emerge as an active feature of the moral psychology of citizens within a democracy? What conditions are needed in society to lead to the cultivation and extension of these emotions? Will citizens nurtured within circumstances governed by the principles of justice acquire the motivations needed to sustain the institutions in which the principles of justice are embodied? When democracy is threatened, will its citizens come to its defense?

Affirmative civic emotions of liberal democracy

- Rawls offered some “sociological speculation” about the political psychology that may be created by a liberal democracy.
- Implicitly he assumes a rational, open-minded receptiveness to others.
- It is a psychology of pluralism, toleration, and mutual acceptance.
- It is a public recognition in all or most citizens that disagreement is part of democracy, and that we can all embrace the institutions and values of liberal democracy in spite of substantive disagreements.
- This stands in contrast to the psychology of radical right-wing populism based on “social dominance orientation” and “right-wing authoritarian” personality.

- Rawls's key idea is the notion of a public sense of justice, based on what he calls an "overlapping political consensus".
- All citizens have a "comprehensive conception of the good", and it is to be expected that there are multiple such conceptions in a liberal society.
- But we can share a political conception of the good — a conception of the value of equal freedoms and rights within a democratic order, a system of law, and a constitution that protects everyone's rights equally.

Rawls's key ideas of political psychology

- *The second part of the argument concerns the question of the stability of justice as fairness. This is the question whether justice as fairness is able to generate sufficient support for itself. The parties are to ask whether people who grow up in a society well ordered by the two principles of justice … acquire a sufficiently strong and effective sense of justice so that they normally comply with just arrangements and are not moved to act otherwise, say, by social envy and spite, or by a will to dominate or a tendency to submit. (JF 54.2)*
- *When they believe that institutions or social practices are just, or fair … citizens are ready and willing to do their part in those arrangements provided they have sufficient assurance that others will also do theirs. (59.1)*
- *A well-ordered society is stable, then, because citizens are satisfied, all things considered, with the basic structure of their society. (60.4)*

- Thus Rawls seems to advance the idea that children raised within a well-ordered society in which the requirements of justice are largely satisfied will develop into adults who have a sense of justice and a motivated and reasoned willingness to support the institutions of this society.
- Is this a plausible view? Is it partially true? Is it just wishful thinking? And is this "moral emotion" sufficient to create the level of active support that a liberal democracy needs in times of stress?
- This is an argument for the emergence of a set of moral emotions that produce actions based on ***reciprocity*** -- compliance with institutions and laws that benefit us all. This is a limited view of what is needed to stabilize democracy in the face of anti-democratic attacks, however.

- Are the political motivations that Rawls postulates strong enough to ensure the stability of democracy in the presence of militant attack by the political organizations of the extreme right?
- Do the emotions of fair reciprocity suffice to defeat the aggressive and violent groups of white supremacists we now confront in our society?
- Stability of a constitutional democracy requires a willingness of citizens to extend themselves in its defense, to act altruistically in support of principle, and to make sacrifices for its preservation during times of crisis or stress.

We need a paean to democracy …

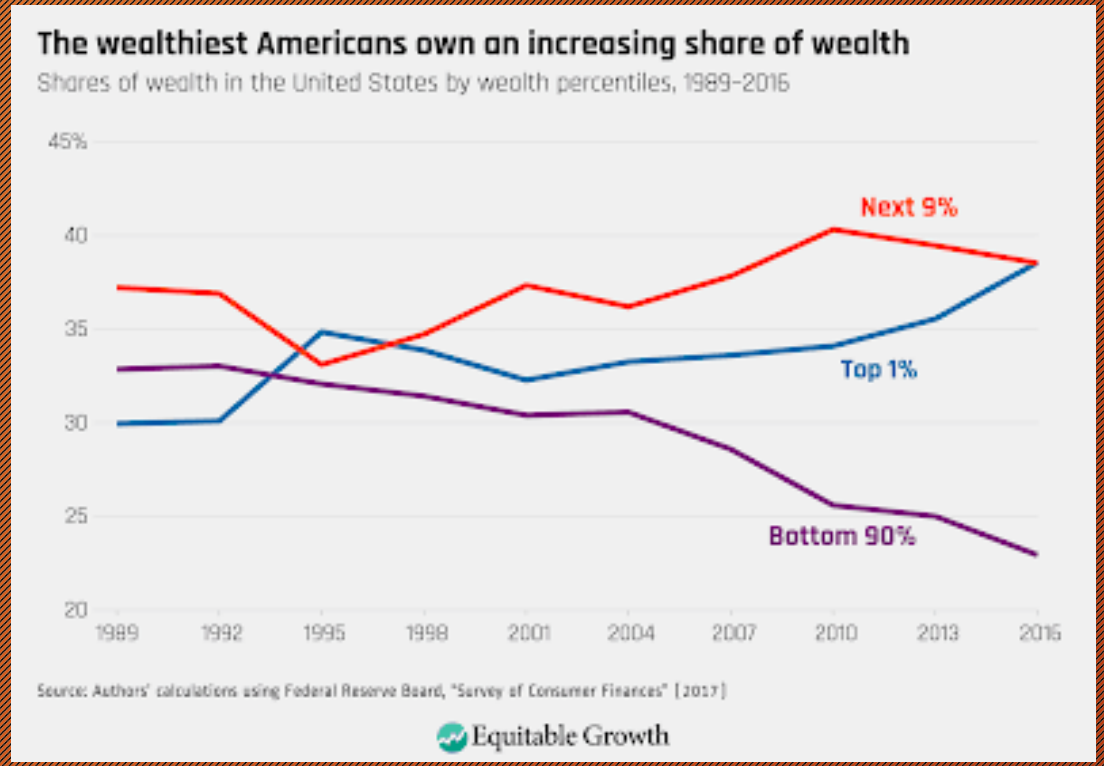
- There are quite a few very good recent books that articulate the right-wing threat to democracy.
- What is more difficult to find is a book that makes the positive case for liberal democracy: why this is a good system for free human beings to live in, why a "liberal democracy" based on equality, freedom, and mutual regard is a thing to aspire to.
- When smart, progressive writers think about "decent society for the future", they primarily turn to issues of greater prosperity, greater equality, and greater opportunity.
- They do not pay so much attention to the civic value, the moral value, of a liberal constitutional democratic order.
- And yet the strongest case for democracy is this: it can be a system in which every individual is empowered and free to fully develop his or her capabilities according to her own choices and life plan.

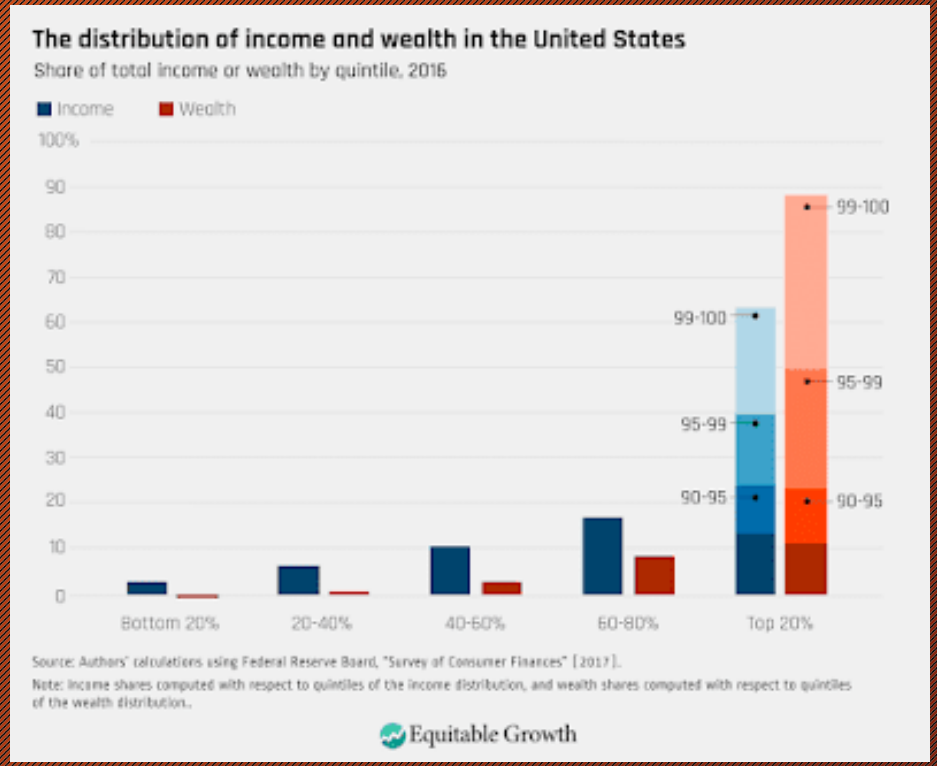
The current dysfunctions of democracy

- Existing democracies are far from the ideal.
- Critics on the right and the left are correct in saying that existing democracies are far from ideal.
  - Economic inequalities continue to grow
  - Political inequalities of voice and influence are large
  - The institutions of elections and legislation are well crafted to permit the power of the economically and politically privileged
  - Politicians all too often act in their own interest rather than the public interest.
  - Racism and invidious distinctions continue to govern the lives of many people within existing democracies

- The populist critique has some credibility — both from the right and the left.
  - "Elites don't care about ordinary citizens"
  - "Modern political and economic arrangements have left many of us behind"
  - "Wall Street does better than Main Street"
- We need a vision of a liberal democratic future that addresses these concerns.
- We need a clear conception of a modern "market liberal democracy" in which everyone can see she has full equality of opportunity and a fair share of economic wellbeing

Rising inequalities in America





A property-owning democracy

- Rawls has something else to contribute — the idea of a "property-owning democracy"
- This idea is mentioned in *A Theory of Justice* (1971) and spelled out more fully in *Justice as Fairness* (2001)
- *In property-owning democracy, ... the aim is to realize in the basic institutions the idea of society as a fair system of cooperation between citizens regarded as free and equal. To do this, those institutions must, from the outset, put in the hands of citizens generally, and not only of a few, sufficient productive means for them to be fully cooperating members of society on a footing of equality (JF 140).*
- So a POD is designed to satisfy the requirements of economic justice.

- *For example, background institutions must work to keep property and wealth evenly enough shared over time to preserve the fair value of the political liberties and fair equality of opportunities over generations. They do this by laws regulating bequest and inheritance of property, and other devices such as taxes, to prevent excessive concentrations of private power. (51)*
- *One major difference is this: the background institutions of property-owning democracy work to disperse the ownership of wealth and capital, and thus to prevent a small part of society from controlling the economy, and indirectly, political life as well. By contrast, welfare-state capitalism permits a small class to have a near monopoly of the means of production. (139)*

- This description is important because it addresses both major aspects of modern society: the institutions of government and law, and the institutions of property and economic relationships.
- “Laissez-faire” liberalism addresses only the first issues — the guarantees of the rule of law and equal liberties.
- Rawls’s description of a property-owning democracy is intended to address both aspects of modern life.
- The POD concept ensures both political justice and economic justice; it therefore also increases the perceived fairness of social arrangements.
- The second component — the economic requirements of the just society — is critical. A just society requires positive assurances of equal opportunity and bounded inequalities.

- Consider a movement based on "reasserting the values of democracy and equality" within the context of a market economy and a representative electoral democracy. This movement would demand tax policies that work to reduce wealth inequalities and support a progressive state; environmental policies that align the U.S. with the international scientific consensus on climate change; healthcare policies that ensure adequate universal insurance for everyone; immigration policy that made sensible accommodations to the realities of the current U.S. population and workforce, including humane treatment of Dreamers; and campaign funds restrictions that limit the political influence of corporations.

- The slogan might be, "Moving us all forward through social justice, economic innovation, and good government." This might be referred to as "centrist progressivism", and perhaps it is too moderate to generate the passion that a political movement needs to survive. Nonetheless, it might be a form of progressivism that aligns well with the basic pragmatism and fair-mindedness of the American public.
- This conception of a better democratic future is consistent with Rawls's ideas about a property-owning democracy.

The Real Utopias project

- Consider the "Real utopias" project — a group of social scientists and philosophers who want to provide theoretical ideas about the possible organization of society that would be substantially better for the great majority of citizens than current arrangements.
- The Real Utopias project has been going for almost twenty years now (link). And some of the most interesting thinkers writing today in social philosophy and criticism have been involved -- Erik Olin Wright, Josh Cohen, Joel Rogers, John Roemer, and Archon Fung, for example. One of the most recent titles to come out of the project is *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance* (Real Utopias Project) (v. 4), by Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright.

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- The question for our final two sessions is this: why should citizens in a liberal democracy care about the survival of the institutions and values of democracy?
- And what is needed in order to strengthen and broaden the levels of support that exist for democracy in the US (and other countries)?
- What is needed to reinvigorate “civic loyalty”?

- We can define liberal democracy as a political system in which there are strong protections for the rights and liberties of all citizens, including minority groups, and which embody effective institutions of electoral representative democracy and equal rights of political participation.
- Now the question is a relatively simple one: assuming this kind of political system is functioning as advertised, would citizens find these arrangements satisfying and fulfilling, and would they develop civic loyalty in their support? Are these institutions valued by the citizens who live in countries in which they are present?

What is needed to build civic loyalty?

- Public support for and confidence in the institutions of liberal democracy have fallen.
- A 2020 Pew Research study based on a 2019 Global Attitudes Survey across many countries showed declining levels of satisfaction with democracy among citizens in numerous countries, with 59% of US respondents "not satisfied" against 39% of US respondents "satisfied". And the "not satisfied" numbers are comparable or worse for France, Spain, Italy, UK, Bulgaria, and Greece. The highest levels of satisfaction with democracy found in the study include Sweden (72%), Netherlands (68%), Canada (66%), Poland (66%), and Germany (65%).

- “A 2017 international study by the Pew Research Center on people’s commitment to democracy revealed troubling news. Fifty-one percent of U.S. respondents described themselves as “dissatisfied” with how American democracy is working, and 46 percent said they were open to forms of government other than representative democracy, including rule by a strong leader or by groups of experts.” AAAS Democracy, 18
- “Fewer than one-third of Millennials consider it essential to live in a democracy.” (AAAS Democracy, 2)

- For the great majority of the population the arrangements of a liberal democracy sound very favorable. They ensure substantial freedoms, fair equality of opportunity, and equal rights of political participation in public decision-making.
- These circumstances of an effective liberal democracy would seem to be ideal for ordinary people to fulfill themselves and to live satisfying lives.
- However, there are individuals and groups who are not favorable to the premises of liberal democracy — those who favor dominance on racial, ethnic, or gender lines, those who believe in unconstrained inequalities, those who want the power to impose their ideological or moral beliefs on others as a matter of law.

- This seems to imply that liberal democracy does not automatically generate the political psychology it needs for stability — at least not in a super-majority of its citizens. Instead, maintaining the conditions of a liberal democracy is itself a problem of democratic politics and strategy. And very deliberate conservative, anti-liberal politicians have been making the opposite case for several decades in the United States. The undermining of confidence and faith in democratic institutions by the GOP and Fox News did not begin in 2016.
- The AAAS report on democracy offers a strategy for regaining broad public support for democratic institutions.

The AAAS strategy recommendations

- “We have identified six imperatives at the heart of this fourth founding:
  - 1) to achieve equality of voice and representation through our political institutions;
  - 2) to empower voters in a lasting way;
  - 3) to ensure the responsiveness of our political institutions;
  - 4) to dramatically expand the capacity of civil society organizations that foster “bridging” across lines of difference;
  - 5) to build civic information architecture that supports common purpose; and
  - 6) to inspire a culture of commitment to American constitutional democracy and one another.” 3

- Parties,civic organizations, politicians, and citizens who favor the institutions of liberal democracy must therefore take an active role in building political consensus around our democratic institutions.
- They must persuasively make the case to enough of the rest of the population to maintain broad and deep commitment to the values of constitutional protections of our rights and the institutional fairness of our electoral processes.
- They must build the case through mobilization, communication, and leadership in ways that inspire millions to share their cause. They must persuade other citizens to support the agenda of liberal democracy and to resist the suasion of the illiberal parties, the authoritarians, and the hate-based parties.

- Here again the AAAS study is relevant and consistent with these ideas and this sense of urgency.
- “We have no time to waste. Our constitutional democracy is only as strong and resilient as our belief in it. For love of freedom and equality, for love of country, for love of one another, and out of hope for a better future, we need to reclaim our bond. If we turn back toward one another, we can transform our institutions. We can renovate our Constitution. We can elevate our culture. We can at last achieve a true democracy.” (64)

The virtuous cycle?

- The AAAS study of democracy reiterates an idea we have seen in Rawls — the idea that a democracy can work to generate the political psychology among citizens that it needs for its stability.
- "Consequently, a healthy constitutional democracy depends on a virtuous cycle in which responsive political institutions foster a healthy civic culture of participation and responsibility, while a healthy civic culture—a combination of values, norms, and narratives—keeps our political institutions responsive and inclusive." 3

Economic fairness

- So far we have focused on the institutions of individual freedom and democratic participation. This involves liberal political institutions.
- But this is deliberately a narrow way of posing the question. It asks a question about the political institutions of a country, but is silent about the economic and social institutions.
- Political justice — constitutional protections of rights and liberties — by itself is probably insufficient to generate strong satisfaction and civic loyalty among the great majority of citizens.

Social and economic fairness

- People are concerned about economic justice and fairness as well as political rights and electoral democracy.
- Many people would judge that a society is unjust if there is such a division between rich and poor that -- as a practical matter -- the life prospects for the poor are dramatically worse than those of the rich.
- American society (and perhaps French and British society as well) has fallen behind on issues of economic justice, with rapidly rising inequalities between rich and poor, declining availability of "middle class" jobs in an increasingly globalized economy, declining opportunities for social mobility for people in the bottom 50% or more of the economic ladder, and continuing discrimination and disparity across racial, ethnic, and gender lines.

- We have seen that dissatisfaction in UK or France is based on economic or social dissatisfaction rather than frustration with the system of individual rights and majoritarian government by itself.
- So, for example, Justin Gest argues in *The New Minority* that the marginalization and disaffection of white working class men and women in Youngstown, Ohio, and East London, UK, stem from social and economic causes as well as frustration with the system of electoral politics in which they find themselves.
- This suggests that we need to consider the social and economic arrangements of a given liberal democracy if we want to understand the dynamics of citizen satisfaction.

- These are some of the factors that observers like Justin Gest have highlighted in explanation of “white working class disaffection” with the existing order, and it is hard to see how broad civic loyalty will be rekindled until there is a broader reality of social equality, equality of opportunity, and solidarity across all segments of society that would allow all members of society to believe that “democracy and wellbeing are for all of us”.
- Protecting our liberal democracy means taking concrete, meaningful measures through legislation to increase the basic economic and social fairness of our market economy.

A possible model

- a. a social-economic system that limits the extent of inequalities of wealth and income
- b. a social-economic system that succeeds in satisfying the basic human needs of all members of society -- education, healthcare, access to decent housing, …
- c. A legal system providing strong guarantees of equality of opportunity and non-discrimination
- d. a system of law and regulation that ensures public health, wellbeing, and safety
- e. a fiscal system that suffices to ensure limitations on wealth and provision of mandatory social services and benefits

A thought experiment …

- These statements address most of the dimensions of unfairness that many citizens currently experience in western democracies.
- Imagine that a given democracy — France, let us say — has undertaken social and economic reforms that follow the principles outlined here.
- Now ask our question again:
- Will most citizens develop “civic loyalty” to their political-social-economic system embodying liberal protections of their freedoms and economic assurances of fair opportunities in social and economic life?
- Would the anti-democratic opposition to modern democracies be quenched?

- And would the resulting society be a less fertile environment for right-wing extremism, radical populism, and hate-based political mobilization?
- Would this kind of political-social-economic system in fact possess the self-reinforcing characteristics of political psychology that Rawls expected when he wrote about “overlapping consensus” and the bonds of justice?

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Lecture 18

- The Presidential election of 2020 was an important crisis in US democracy..
- After a highly divisive Presidential election, after a long and unfounded attempt to overturn the results of the election based on claims of “election fraud”…
- Our democracy survived … this time.
- But it is evident that serious harm was done to public trust in our basic electoral institutions — including efforts by the president and his surrogates to ask state legislatures to annul the votes cast in their states and send a different set of representatives to the Electoral College.

- These assaults on the integrity of our electoral system have surely undermined the “civic loyalty” of large numbers of our fellow citizens.
- The questions we have spent the last two months studying and discussing are all the more important:
- What are the factors that have worked to undermine support for liberal democracy and the perceived legitimacy of our basic political institutions?
- How can we contribute to making a stronger democratic society for the future?

- We have identified several possible causes of “democratic discontent” in the past several months.
- — Deliberate efforts by populist politicians to stir up powerful emotions of xenophobia, racism, mistrust, fear, and hatred
- — An economic system that has left some segments of society behind as a result of “deindustrialization”, globalization, out-sourcing, and a “race to the bottom” with respect to wages and benefits for working people.
- — Substantial and visible inequalities of opportunity — access to education, higher education, healthcare, decent living conditions, crime-free neighborhoods. (Think of Youngstown as Gest describes it.)

- And now consider possible remedies — for the medium term and the long term.
- — Changes in income tax law requiring everyone to pay their fair share, including corporations and the very rich
- — Enhancements in the "social safety" net ensuring that working people are not ruined by economic hardship — and the current crisis created by the coronavirus
- — Cultivation of community organizations and faith-based organizations that facilitate cross-group understanding and collaboration
- — Genuine policy efforts by parties to enact reforms addressing the issues and concerns of working people

- Opportunities for genuine, impactful “grassroots” involvement in political organizations leading to meaningful influence on the national agenda for legislation and policy
- Social and political change can only occur through a small number of mechanisms
  - Gradual decay of institutions. “Nero fiddled while Rome burned.”
  - Rapid and substantial changes enacted by an authoritarian leader
  - Democratic change enacted through the involvement of citizens and their representatives in pursuing a more satisfactory social-political-economic world for all of us.

- If we don’t want an authoritarian government, either right or left — Il Duce (Mussolini) or Castro — then we must put our energy into making the democratic option work.
- Or as Benjamin Franklin said in answer to a question about the Constitution being adopted:
- "What kind of a government have you given us?" he replied, "A Republic, if you can keep it.”
- This is a fine ending for our course. The life of a democracy and a democratic people is a challenging one, and a circumstance that requires our effort, concentration, and loyalty.
- But it is worth it!