



Populism and the Politics of Resentment

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Abstract

This article argues that understanding the dangers and risks of authoritarian populism in consolidated constitutional democracies requires analysis of the forms of pluralism and status anxieties that emerge in civil and economic society, in a context of profound political, socioeconomic, and cultural change. This paper has two basic theses. The first is that when societies become deeply divided, and segmental pluralism maps onto affective party political polarization, generalized social solidarity is imperiled, as is commitment to democratic norms, social justice, and liberal democratic constitutionalism. The second, is that populist political entrepreneurs excel in fomenting social antagonisms by framing shifts in the forms of social pluralism in ways that foster deep political polarization, generalized distrust and a politics of resentment against “elites,” “the establishment,” “the oligarchy,” and “outsiders.” Why populist offers resonate requires a social theoretical analysis of status/solidarity and class issues and a direct response to them. I draw on Polanyi and Habermas to develop an explanatory approach to the current crisis and the populist responses it triggers. I navigate between two inadequate approaches: that of the Hofstadter consensus school which construes status concerns and populism as retrograde, anti-modern, paranoid and meriting no direct response; and that of the neo-Marxist tradition that acknowledges the mobilizing power of “cultural factors” and status anxieties but deems them to be epiphenomena of the deeper story of economic distributive injustice. I reject this assessment and seek to take up the status/solidarity issues in ways that take them seriously, challenge populist framing and provide alternative direct responses to them. I reject the narrative frames of left populists who foment polarization and I try to present an alternative narrative framing for a future democratic politics that draws on the best in politically liberal, constitutionalist, democratic, and socialist traditions.

Keywords Affective partisan polarization · Asymmetric polarization · Civil society · Electoral authoritarianism · Pluralism · Political polarization · Populism · Segmental pluralism · The politics of resentment

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Many analysts address the authoritarian turn of populist governments in the “post-communist” “new democracies” in Eastern Europe and Russia.¹ Researchers note democratically elected populist executives’ interest in constitutional “reform” and their efforts to undermine judicial independence and constitutional courts. As justification, these executives claim to embody the constituent and sovereign power of the people, purportedly demonstrating the superior democratic legitimacy of “illiberal democracies” over liberal democratic constitutionalism.² They weaken not only liberal and republican constitutionalist principles—the rule of law, equal basic rights, the separation of powers, the independence of courts, and the media—but also basic democratic norms of political equality, plurality, alternation, legitimacy of the opposition, compromise, and inclusion. The threat to constitutional democracy is clear, and we may have to think in terms of regime change in these contexts.³ Indeed, the term “illiberal democracy” obscures the ways in which *electoral authoritarianism* undermines the rule of law, constitutionalism and democracy itself. At issue is the expansion of executive prerogative power free of legal limits coupled with assertions of the competence to determine its own competences, making it supreme and superior to constitutional controls while other instances and spheres of life continue to operate under ordinary legal norms.

Things are not so dramatic yet in the USA or Western Europe, but there too the structural and contextual conditions that enable populist mobilization and electoral success exist. Warning signs make it clear that the old democracies are ripe for electoral authoritarian populism—leaders and parties elected on the basis of populist promises who, once in power, abandon democratic norms, liberal constitutionalism, and many of their populist campaign promises. Donald Trump’s accession to the Presidency, his attacks on courts, independent media, autonomous governmental agencies, legitimate opposition (“lock her up”), and the Republican Party’s complicity in undermining democratic norms during (and before) his presidency, are sufficient proof that this danger is real.⁴ While in the US Western Europe, it is premature to speak of a full-fledged populist government, regime change, or the emergence of a dual state,⁵ here too, the threats to democratic constitutionalism are profound. Here too, political elites’ disdain for the key constitutional democratic norms is striking. And here too, deepening social divisions are, with the help of opportunistic political entrepreneurs, turning into a form of politicized segmental pluralism that undermines both social commitment to democratic norms and generalized social solidarity in civil society.⁶ Authoritarian populism

¹ See Huq and Ginsburg, “How to lose a constitutional democracy,” for a discussion of three institutional predicates necessary for democratic engagement, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2901776; Arato (2018); Greskovitz (2015); Blokker (2013); Landau (2013), comparing Hungary, Egypt and Venezuela; Scheppele (2018). The literature on democratic backsliding under populist regimes in Latin America has become pertinent again. Linz and Stepan (1978).

² Zakaria (1997), coining the term that was then adopted by Viktor Orban, the authoritarian populist leader of Hungary. See the analysis of democratic decay through the mechanisms of “constitutional retrogression,” i.e., via slow, apparently legal and democratic means, in Huq and Ginsburg, “How to lose a constitutional democracy.”

³ Arato (2017). For a normative conception of political compromise, see Rostboll and Scavenius (2018).

⁴ Recent right-wing challenges to democratic norms can be traced to Newt Gingrich becoming Speaker of the House in 1994 when the Republican Party won its first House majority in forty years. Under his leadership, the party’s new hardball approach involved aversion to compromise, willingness to obstruct legislation, and friend/enemy rhetoric. The Tea Party radicalized this approach after the 2008 Obama election. President Trump and the Republican majority in Congress continue it. See Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018), 146–172.

⁵ Frankel (2017), first published in 1941 in German.

⁶ Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018), 8. Such norms are also important for ordinary individuals and civil society. Segmental pluralism undermines them.

entails a challenge to democratic politics even as it uses “democratic means”—elections—to gain and retain power and legal means to eviscerate the rule of law, democratic norms, and institutions. This article assumes that authoritarian populist politics are not an ephemeral transitory phenomenon, but an enduring threat to constitutional democracies both new and long consolidated. So, it behooves us to think clearly about its contemporary forms: its logic, distinctiveness, seductiveness, and mechanisms, as well as the contextual causes, features, social dynamics, and problems it apparently addresses. The danger of democratic deconsolidation exists in the USA and throughout Europe, and should be taken seriously Foa and Mounk (2016).

Political scientists increasingly focus on the institutional and constitutional mechanisms that facilitate (or block) democratic backsliding in long established democracies Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018); Foa and Mounk (2016). Researchers also analyze the role of party political elites in preventing authoritarian populists from gaining governmental power.⁷ The first approach, using a comparative perspective, appraises the institutional design of liberal democratic constitutions with respect to the pathways they provide for the democratic backsliding pursued by authoritarian populists Huq and Ginsburg (2018). At issue is not an “authoritarian reversion,”⁸ i.e., a military coup or the use of emergency powers to make rapid wholesale institutional shifts from democracy to autocracy. Instead, the focus is on the risk of “constitutional retrogression,”⁹ a gradual decay in three institutional predicates of democracy: the quality of elections, rights of political speech and association, and the administrative and adjudicative rule of law. For those following the second “behavioral” approach, it is the gatekeeping role of political parties and political leaders that matters most. They must set aside their narrow partisan goals and filter out those who pose a threat to democracy or who are otherwise unfit to hold public office Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018).¹⁰ Accordingly, political parties and elites must strongly oppose those who lack commitment to the two “master norms” of democratic political society: mutual toleration—accepting the legitimacy of the opposition—and “institutional forbearance”—refraining from legal and constitutional “hardball” by exercising restraint in deploying their institutional prerogatives.¹¹ Political parties should commit to the ethics of partisanship that entails formulating comprehensive projects that are partisan (i.e., not “neutral”), yet inclusive and accept the right of others to do so as well.¹² Democratic politics require responsible political actors who abide by the informal and formal legal and political norms that foster civility and compromise.

These two levels of analysis are important for assessing the chances of authoritarian populists to gain power and undermine liberal constitutional democracy from within. But, they are not sufficient. We must analyze two other interrelated dimensions—the socioeconomic and the sociocultural—if we are to understand the appeal of populism and the dangers of electoral authoritarianism. Clearly, it matters for democracy what socioeconomic programs and policies mainstream parties or grand coalitions pursue. Governing from the “center” may increase support for populists and erode commitment to democratic political and liberal legal

⁷ Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, 24–25.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 6, 13.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1, 35–37.

¹⁰ Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018), 41ff.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8–9. For the term “constitutional hardball,” see Mark Tushnet (2004).

¹² See Rosenblum (2010) for a vigorous defense of the virtues of parties and the ethics of partisanship. See also White and Ypi (2016).

norms if the political establishment is perceived as closed to outsiders, blind to actual socioeconomic problems of important population sectors, and deaf to the demands of those now voting for extremists.¹³ Perhaps, much of the blame for populist rejection of the “establishment” can be laid at the door of Western mainstream parties whose apparent consensus on austerity economics accompanied their pro-business and antilabor policies since the mid-1980s (Piketty (2014); Rodrik (2010); Stiglitz (2002, 2018)). In such a context, it is not hard to portray the rule of law and constitutional norms as tilted towards the corporate rich or corrupt political elites, nor to cast liberal democratic constitutionalism a misnomer for oligarchy. Today, we are experiencing severe economic inequality and dislocation together with extreme social segmentation and political polarization. This constellation tends to undermine the efficacy and belief in liberal, constitutionalist, and democratic norms.

I am convinced that a social theoretical perspective is needed. In addition to the institutional and behavioral analyses of constitutional design and of political elite behavior, an examination of social structural changes in *economic society*, and sociocultural changes in *civil society* that foster or undermine the commitment of ordinary people to liberal democracy is also crucial.¹⁴ Indeed, even though they focus their attention on political institutions and party elite behavior, researchers in both schools agree that the current moment will become especially dangerous if public support for liberal democratic norms and conventions on the part of ordinary people is absent.¹⁵ The quality of democratic institutional design and political leadership matter, but so does popular receptivity or resistance to authoritarian, exclusionary populist appeals (Arato and Cohen (2017)). This dimension has thus far been studied primarily by superb, but localized, ethnographies (Hochschild (2016); Cramer (2016); Gest (2016); Williams (2017); Eribon (2009); Szombarti (2018)).

Social theorists must analyze not only what contemporary authoritarian populism is and how it relates to democracy, but also why certain sectors of the population in consolidated democracies support it at certain times. This paper makes two basic claims. The first is that when segmental pluralism in society maps onto affective party political polarization, democratic norms in civil, and political society become eviscerated. To be sure, the mobilization necessary to protect and expand civil rights and democratic norms, and to resist authoritarianism dressed up as populism, occurs within civil society.¹⁶ But without a strong political society consisting of parties committed to constitutional democracy and to social solidarity, i.e., to articulating and aggregating the needs, interests, status and life-world concerns of all civil and economic society actors threatened by contemporary developments in inclusive ways, populist appeals will find fertile ground and electoral authoritarianism may be the result. It is thus imperative to look at developments in civil and economic, as well as political society and how these interact. The second is that anxieties about status honor and material precariousness in contexts of profound political, socioeconomic, and cultural transformation are key to understanding successful populist mobilization and electoral authoritarianism. Contemporary political entrepreneurs foment a “politics

¹³ See Mounk (2014) criticizing the centrist politics of grand coalitions. See also Mouffe (2000) blaming the hegemony of neo-liberalism and centrist consensus politics for the rise of right-wing populisms in Europe.

¹⁴ By “economic society” I mean the associations, cooperatives, unions, institutional forms of voice, local, and national organizations that emerge around labor and production. For civil society see, Cohen and Arato (1992).

¹⁵ Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018), 37, stressing the importance of the commitment of gatekeepers to democratic norms and downplaying role of the political culture. Huq and Ginsburg (2018), 76, analyzing political institutional factors but concluding without analysis that public support for the norms and conventions of democratic politics is the critical factor to democracy’s survival.

¹⁶ Arato and Cohen (2017), 283–295.

of resentment” by exploiting such anxieties.¹⁷ The politics of resentment leads people to view their insecure circumstances as the fault of guilty and less deserving social groups, and self-serving elites who coddle them, not as the product of broad social, economic, and political forces.¹⁸ The sources of social honor and social security in “economic society” and “civil society”—the forms of life, associational connections, organizations, modes of cooperation, and social capital that emerge around labor, occupation, neighborhood, and region—are as important to social identity and self-respect as material income. Indeed, anxiety about declining social status in economic society and disrespected sociocultural forms of life in civil society that once garnered social honor is intimately related to doubts about society-wide social solidarity and about the representativeness, receptivity, and responsiveness of political (and other) elites to the needs and concerns of ordinary people.

Thus, analysis of the threats to democracy must include a focus on the issues of social solidarity and status honor in economic and civil society in addition to economic inequality and distributive injustice. This is not a matter of adding the “cultural” factor to material interests.¹⁹ Nor is it a question of reviving the political culture school approach or taking sides in the political culture vs. institutions debates that informed analyses of democratic breakdowns in the past.²⁰ Rather, it involves analyzing the links between the feeling of political exclusion and loss of influence (we do not count anymore) and the sense of economic irrelevance, dislocation and declining material, and occupational security (we are peripheral). It requires an examination of the experience of disdain and contempt (no one cares or respects us) for socioeconomic groups and sociocultural forms of life that are becoming “minoritized” in conjunction with the evisceration of their sources of social honor.²¹ With the shift to post-industrial society and hyper-globalization, it is the groups suffering material and status losses (not the worst off, pace Rawls) that are susceptible to authoritarian populist messages.²² The solidarity gap undermines the “habits of the heart” that generate commitment to democracy.²³ Populist political entrepreneurs address it by mobilizing shifts in the forms of social pluralism within civil and economic society in ways that exacerbate resentments, social segmentation and foster affective political polarization, generalized distrust, and loss of commitment to democratic norms. To revive cross-cutting solidarities, mutual respect, and democratic norms, it is incumbent on progressive liberal democrats to offer *better explanations* and to create a *counter-narrative* and project.

To grasp what is at stake, we need to be clear regarding the distinctive political logic of authoritarian populism. In the first part of this paper, I thus recall and fine-tune an ideal typical concept of populism.²⁴ (I) I then briefly identify the structural factors that create the space for populism in representative democracy, modern capitalism, and cultural modernity. (II) Because context matters, it is important to look at the ambivalences of contemporary changes in the modes of political representation, economy and labor markets. Shifts in specific sociocultural life worlds of key social groups, since the late 1970s, and alterations of general cultural

¹⁷ The politics of resentment is a form of identity politics tantamount to scapegoating. Cramer (2016), 9.

¹⁸ Ibid. paraphrasing Cramer (2016).

¹⁹ Gidron and Hall (2017).

²⁰ See the discussion in Stepan and Linz, *Breakdown of democratic regimes*, 3–14.

²¹ Gest, *The new minority*, 20–38.

²² Ibid.; see also Hochschild, *Strangers in their own land*, 135–207.

²³ de Tocqueville (2000), 287.

²⁴ Arato, (2016) Chap. 6; Arato and Cohen, “Civil society, religion and populism,” 285–289; Arato, “How we got here”.

frameworks, coalescing into an epochal transformation, generate the sense of crisis and threat experienced by so many. Taken together, these transformations constitute the current conjuncture in which not only cross-sectional social solidarities disintegrate, but the voice, economic welfare and social status of important sectors of the population, now the middle and working class, deteriorate.²⁵ They generate three normative “deficits,” as Arato rightly argues, and very real resentments, including a sense of victimhood and pessimism that authoritarian populists can and do thematize and exploit.²⁶ But let me be clear, it is the inadequate political responses to these shifts that are the root of the problem to which populism is a response.

Many analysts have addressed the democracy and welfare deficits, and there is much more to be said about them.²⁷ But, in the third part of this article, I focus on the life-world issues of social solidarity/status in deficits. (III) They constitute an autonomous level of structural and conjuncture-al factors. Arato downplays this source of popular resentment because he thinks a direct response would entail appeasing demands for strengthening “traditional” status hierarchies (gendered, racial, ethnic, and religious) and restored privilege.²⁸ The loss of social status for some groups is an unavoidable consequence of every stage and mode of sociocultural modernization and, today, of hyper-globalization.²⁹ If appeasement were the only possible direct response, then indeed those of us who embrace liberal constitutional democracy, equality, inclusion, and cross-cutting pluralism could rely only upon indirect answers.

A closer analysis of status and solidarity deficits, however, reveals that the choice is not between indirect responses or the wholesale rejection of cultural modernity or its universalistic principles. We might rather target a certain version of sociocultural modernization that appears to unfairly undermine the social standing, sense of inclusion, and equal worth of those adversely affected.³⁰ I argue that direct responses to status and solidarity deficits are possible that can mitigate and compensate them without appeasing demands for restoring “traditional” status “hierarchies” and privileges. There are multiple versions of cultural modernity, and different ways to frame and handle sociocultural change as it intersects with economic, political, and technological transformations. Thus, there are alternatives to the politics of resentment that authoritarian populists foment with their backward looking rhetoric of reactionary restoration and their scapegoating of out-groups for the costs of structural and cultural transformation.

Thus, in the fourth and fifth parts of the paper, I will take up the status/solidarity issue as a matter of framing and reframing. I navigate between two inadequate approaches. The first, initiated by Richard Hofstadter and the consensus school of the 1950s, construes the status concerns of those mobilized by populists as rearguard and hypocritical insofar as its protagonists embrace the market economy, yet cling to outmoded occupations, cultural traditionalism, and retrograde social hierarchies. Accordingly, the motivating factor behind populism is

²⁵ Gest, *The new minority*; Hochschild, *Strangers in their own land*; Williams, *White working class*. These authors focus on the white working class, but in the USA, the working class (those without a college degree) are made up of people from many races and ethnicities.

²⁶ Arato, “How we got here”.

²⁷ *Ibid.*; Urbinati (2014).

²⁸ Andrew Arato, “How we got here”.

²⁹ On hyper-globalization, see Rodrik, *The globalization paradox*. Hyper-globalization undermines domestic rules protecting the environment, labor, or other features of social public policy. Globalization need not have this consequence, but without proper regulatory rules, it does.

³⁰ Those adversely affected include working people of all races although the emphasis of authoritarian populists is on the white working class.

not material interest but status anxiety and resentment, tied to a “paranoid style” of politics.³¹ The other, coming from the neo-Marxist tradition, deems “cultural issues” of status, recognition, and respect as epiphenomena of the “real,” deeper story of economic inequality, distributive injustice, and capitalist predation.³² While acknowledging the mobilizing power of cultural factors and status anxieties, both approaches focus on the “rational” dimension of material interest as the ultimate analytic and both imply that progressives should see status anxieties as inevitably bound up with a reactionary politics of resentment. But reductionist analyses of either stripe are inadequate. Using the contemporary US version of right wing populist identity politics and frames, I show how they do construct a particular part of the population—white, Christian, heterosexual, non-college educated, working class, non-urban, traditionalist republican—as a sociopolitical stacked identity whose alleged diminished standing is deemed unjust yet who are “the real people,” the part that stands for the whole. They are indeed steered towards the politics of resentment against liberal political and cultural elites and “others,” racially construed—who are supposedly unfairly “cutting in line” and wrongly favored by the elite liberal establishment.

(IV) We are indeed in an epoch of virulent and dangerously polarized, exclusionary identity politics, and their appeal must be understood and confronted head-on. Accordingly, the last part of my paper shows that populist framing of status anxieties and the politics of resentment is not the only possible response to the status/solidarity problems that people experience along with material insecurity and lack of voice. (V) The alternative explanatory frame I propose is a combined neo-Polanyian and Habermasian approach that links structural analysis to sociocultural relations and life-world issues in contexts of epochal change.³³ Polanyi focused on the deleterious effects of unfettered free market economics (embraced by political elites nationally and internationally during the “gilded age”) on social relations, on social capital, on nature and production up through, and especially in the inter-war period.³⁴ Accordingly, fascism, communism, and the New Deal, (later, social democracy) were three alternative counter-movements for the “social protection” of people, nature, and productive organization taken up and shaped by political society.³⁵ At the time, only the New Deal preserved the achievements of constitutional democracy. We are experiencing another “great transformation” in our epoch (de-industrialization, profound and rapid technological change, neo-liberal austerity politics, and hyper- globalization) and the counter-movements we are seeing target what Habermas once called the colonization of the life world by free market capitalist economic logics and by technocratic administrative rationality.³⁶ Left and right populism

³¹ Hofstadter (1964), Chap. 1; Hofstadter (1955). For an analysis of twenty-first century American populism in these terms, see Diana C. 2016, “Status threat, not economic hardship, explains the 2016 presidential vote” in www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1718155115.

³² Fraser (2017a, b). Although she grasps the importance of status and culture, Fraser remains a Marxist for whom class and socioeconomic redistribution issues are primary (Fraser 1995).

³³ Polanyi (1944); Habermas (1981). For an analysis of democratizing movements for the defense, modernization, and democratization of civil and political society and the reflexive continuation of the welfare state that drew on Polanyi and Habermas, see Cohen and Arato (1992). We did not thematize the anti-democratic, illiberal counter-movements defending traditional social hierarchies at that time.

³⁴ Polanyi, *ibid.* The gold standard was the institution that internationalized the logic of the self-regulating market in international trade.

³⁵ *Ibid.*; see also Szombati, *The revolt of the provinces*, 7–8.

³⁶ Habermas, *The theory of communicative action*, I.

today can be seen as two responses that endanger the achievements of liberal and social democracy. My hope is that a third response is possible on the part of political society that is receptive to progressive movements for the self-defense of society (and nature) and frames them in ways that further inclusion, democratization, and society-wide cross-cutting social solidarity and justice.

This requires two steps: first, an updated explanatory frame and diagnosis that looks at structural transformations and inadequate policies adopted by those in power that, along the lines of Polanyi's idea of the double movement and revolt of society, fuels populist resentment; second, development of a counter-narrative and political project that provides an alternative to populist rhetoric and articulates legitimate demands in progressive, inclusive, politically liberal, and democratic terms. Certainly, capitalist oligarchy must be challenged, and what Arato and Cohen called in their 1992 book, the "reflexive continuation of the welfare state" must be devised on national and supranational levels. It is imperative to develop regulatory mechanisms (with democratic input by stakeholders) that counter neo-liberal forms of hyper-globalization and austerity policies that have empowered the super rich, corporate, and financialized capital in ways that exacerbate inequality, and destroy life worlds while blocking responsible public social policy.³⁷ We must also defend and enhance the responsiveness, accountability, and professionalism of deteriorating representative institutions: political parties, autonomous, responsible and trustworthy public media, and civic associations, through appropriate regulations.³⁸ Constitutionalism and the rule of law must be strongly defended. But, we must also counter populist rhetoric with compelling sociocultural symbolic narratives that draw on the core values of democratic modernity—liberty, solidarity, equality, inclusion, justice—to generate commitment to and mobilize forces for twenty-first century democratic politics. We ignore this dimension at our peril. Indeed, today religious references play an increasingly central role in social polarization.³⁹ When mapped onto race, ethnicity, nativism, and rural self-consciousness, and when linked to a hegemonic discourse of the deserving authentic people vs. undeserving alien others coddled by corrupt elites, religious identity politics provides content and for the empty signifiers of "the people" and "the nation" and moral cover for authoritarian populist rhetoric. Indeed, exclusionary, anti-pluralist, racist, and politicized religious nationalism is becoming a powerfully mobilizing "host ideology" and hegemonic frame in twenty-first century populisms that tap into status anxieties and resentments.⁴⁰

Yet, there are ethical resources within both secular and religious thought can be mobilized in a narrative of social solidarity, freedom, democracy, community, and progress that can counter populist narratives of decline and scapegoating. Ours must be a politics disaggregation of the polarizing populist framing of identity and construction of alternative narrative frames that can foster commonalities, cross-cutting solidarities, and alliances in a renewed democratic project.

³⁷ Cohen and Arato (1992) discussing the national level; Rodrik, *The globalization paradox*; Piketty (2013), 471–540, discussing the international and global level.

³⁸ On mediating institution, see Urbinati (2015), Skocpol (2003), and Cohen and Arato (1992).

³⁹ Arato and Cohen, "Civil society, populism and religion".

⁴⁰ See Mudde and Kaltwasser (2017), 6–21, for the concept populism as a thin-centered ideology that links to host ideologies.

1 I. The Concept of Populism

Populism is essentially contested concept,⁴¹ with disagreement not only over how to evaluate it but also over what it is. Nevertheless, as with all such concepts, we should not throw in the towel, ignore the term, or use it colloquially. Constructing an ideal type of populism allows us to identify the normative democratic, constitutionalist, and social principles of justice that populist movements, parties, governments, and regimes invoke, reject, or contradict.⁴² Despite the semantic drift of the concept and the suspect politics behind some of its invocations,⁴³ the clarity provided by an ideal type is crucial. Populism has a ubiquitous presence today on the political, journalistic, and academic scene. Contemporary populist identity politics and political logics pose distinctive threats to liberal constitutional democracies in the form of democratic backsliding, electoral authoritarianism, and constitutional retrogression. Today populisms in power, whether on the left or on the right, tend towards authoritarianism and exhibit little commitment to democratic norms. It is this conundrum that an ideal type today must capture.

We can identify ten criteria for an ideal type of populism. These permit the placing of authoritarian populist tendencies on a spectrum, so that we can meaningfully designate a movement, party, government, or regime as more or less populist according to how many criteria obtain.⁴⁴ These criteria include as follows:

1. Appeal to “the people” and “popular sovereignty”—empty signifiers—deployed to unify heterogeneous demands and grievances
2. *Pars pro toto* logic that extracts the “authentic people” from the rest of the population via a logic of equivalences by which a set of demands are constructed into a substantive particular identity that stands for the whole
3. Discourse that pits the people against elites—the political-economic, cultural “establishment”—cast as usurpers who corrupt, ignore, or distort the “authentic” people’s will (populism as a thin-centered ideology)
4. Construction of a frontier of antagonism along the lines of a Schmittian friend/enemy conception of the political that identifies alien others who violate the people’s values and whom elites unfairly coddle
5. Unification, typically through strong identification with a leader (or more rarely a unified leadership group) claiming to embody the authentic people’s will and voice, incarnating their unity and identity
6. Focus on the symbolic and authorization dimensions of political representation
7. Performative style of leadership that mimics the habitus (dress, speech, manners) of the authentic people
8. Dramatic and rhetorical forms of argumentation linking talk about making the nation great again to discourses about the restoration of honor, centrality, and political influence to the authentic people
9. Focus on alleged crises, national decline, and an orientation to the extraordinary dimensions of politics

⁴¹ Ibid, 2; Gallie (1955–1956).

⁴² See Arato and Cohen, “Civil society, religion and populism,” 285–289, and Arato, “How we got here,” *op. cit.*

⁴³ Jaeger (2017).

⁴⁴ Arato, “Political theology”; Arato and Cohen, “Civil society, populism and religion,” 285–289.

10. Dependence on a host ideology for content and moral substance⁴⁵

Not all movements, parties or leaders that appeal to the people, invoke popular sovereignty, critique “the establishment” and the “power elite,” use rhetoric or have charismatic leaders are populist. Authoritarian party movements and regimes, e.g., fascism or Stalinism, may have elements that fit some of the criteria but fall off the map of democratic legitimacy.⁴⁶ Most social movements in civil society do not fit the populist appellation.⁴⁷ Civil society is open, plural with many different publics, counter publics, associations, and movements that come and go. Although populist movements form on its terrain, their ultimate logic is anti-pluralist. They are in but not for civil society.⁴⁸ Furthermore, while social movements may have populist elements and use populist rhetoric,⁴⁹ their complex internal composition has uncertain implications. “Realist” factions are oriented towards influencing policy to attain greater social justice and to democratize political institutions and procedures while challenging the exclusion or denigration of their members’ needs, identity, or interests. “Fundamentalists,” on the other hand, embrace populist identity politics, want to take power in the name of “the people,” merge party and movement logics, refuse to differentiate them once elected to power, reject the legitimacy of the opposition, and thus become catalysts for the emergence of authoritarian populist regimes.⁵⁰ Such movements have an ambivalent relationship with democracy, the rule of law and liberal constitutionalism. Populism in power might undermine most of the key features of constitutional democracy apart from election. If populist party-movements gain political office, they might become anti-pluralist, anti-democratic, and anti-constitutionalist. On the other hand, populist movements can be democratizing and inclusive in their form and policy goals, as was the American populist movement initially.⁵¹ When they fail to win power, other parties might coopt their more progressive goals.⁵² If they gain power, populist parties and leaders might abandon their fundamentalist dimensions and embrace pluralistic democratic politics, accept the legitimacy of the opposition, and engage in principled compromises. Alternatively, those who rise to political power through use of socially populist messaging and appeals might, once in office, enact policies that further primarily the interests of financial, corporate elites (economic and religious), not workers or the middle class, while masking their crony capitalist agenda with racist nationalist rhetoric and attacks on the independent media and constitutionalist mechanisms that might reign in their power. Finally, some populist leaders may rise to power on a liberal democratic agenda, rather than a populist one, and then turn to embrace electoral authoritarianism backed up by ethno-religious-nationalist populist rhetoric, creating an authoritarian populist regime.⁵³ Thus, it is important to differentiate among populist social movements which can have progressive effects, ambivalent populist political

⁴⁵ This ideal type is a composite of elements of various authors: Elements 1, 3, 4, and 5 are drawn from Laclau (2007). A good discussion of elements 2 and 6 can be found in Canovan (2007); Moffitt (2016) cogently discusses elements 7–9; for elements 2 and 10, see Mudde’s *Populism*, and for general discussions of how populism distorts democracy see Rosanvallón (2010) and Urbinati’s *Democracy disfigured*.

⁴⁶ Finchelstein (2017).

⁴⁷ Arato, “How we got here”.

⁴⁸ Arato and Cohen, “Civil society, populism and religion,” 285–289.

⁴⁹ Hofstadter, *The age of reform*; Hofstadter, (1964), Chap. 1. For a discussion of the pluralist/consensus school, see Anton Jaeger, “The semantic drift”.

⁵⁰ Arato and Cohen, “Civil society populism and religion,” 283–287.

⁵¹ See Judas (2016), Kazin (1995), and Postel (2007).

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ For example, Viktor Organ in Hungary.

parties or party movements with authoritarian tendencies once elected into representative bodies, populist leaders in government enamored with executive power, and populism as a regime, the latter tending towards the creation of a dual state with a thin veneer of electoral democratic legitimacy.

2 II. Structural Logics

Some recent historical work, generalizing from Latin America, construes contemporary populism as a post-Fascist phenomenon.⁵⁴ With its openly anti-democratic stance, fascism was rendered anathema after WWII and especially since the 1970s. Moreover, after the demise of communism in the USSR and its former republics, even would-be autocratic, populist political entrepreneurs, governments, and regimes embraced the mantle of democratic electoral legitimacy. But, *pace* Francis Fukuyama, and despite many countries' transition towards liberal democratic constitutionalism, no global consolidation of democracy transpired.⁵⁵ Instead, we now see democratic backsliding, even in apparently consolidated democracies. While history is invaluable for understanding the contemporary backlash against liberal constitutional democracy, the structural conditions of possibility for the emergence of populism have been there, from the beginning, in all modern democracies, capitalist economies, and sociocultural forms. It behooves us to understand this theoretically.

As many note,⁵⁶ representative democracy entails a constitutive gap between the represented and their representatives. But, *pace* Mudde, Mouffe, and others under Schmitt's influence, this gap is not ascribable to the alleged antinomy between political liberalism (or liberal constitutionalism) and democracy: it is inherent in representative democracy itself.⁵⁷ "The people" and "popular sovereignty" are empty signifiers. There can be no identity between the political and the social or between ruler and ruled. In a differentiated dis-incorporated modern civil society; no status group has the prerogative to rule. Thus, modern democracy is indeterminate and perforce representative, even if it should include a plurality of forms of direct and indirect participation and voice.⁵⁸ As a result, democratic and/or populist movements seeking to lessen the gap between the represented and their representatives, emerge periodically.⁵⁹ But, none can close the gap completely or render democracy or "the people" fully determinate. Claims to do so destroy rather than deepen democracy.⁶⁰ The gap exists not because representative democracy is insufficiently "direct" or "participatory." Rather, it exists because the construction of the *demos* (who belongs and votes), the receptivity of democratic

⁵⁴ Finchelstein (2017).

⁵⁵ Fukuyama (2002). Twenty-five years later, Fukuyama now fears for the very survival of liberal democracy (Tharoor 2017).

⁵⁶ For example, Lefort (1991), Manin (2011), Rosanvallon's *Counterdemocracy*, Pitkin (1972), and Urbinati's *Democracy disfigured*.

⁵⁷ Mouffe (2000), 1–16; Mudde and Kaltwasser, *Populism*, 81–83, arguing that populism is essentially democratic and inconsistent with democracy's liberal dimensions, i.e., limitations on the "will of the people" or democratic majorities.

⁵⁸ Cohen and Arato (1992), discussing the plurality of democracies; Urbinati (2006).

⁵⁹ Lefort, "The question of democracy and permanence of the theologico-politico?" in *Democracy and political theory*; Arato, "Political theology".

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

processes and institutions to new voices and formerly excluded strata, is never complete. It must always be seen as open-ended and fallible.⁶¹

The gap has permanently ambivalent but productive implications. While it can inspire genuinely democratic movements, representative democracy in modern society is always vulnerable to two charges. It may illegitimately exclude some sectors of the population and fail to meet the regulative ideal of popular sovereignty by being insufficiently responsive, accountable, or procedurally/institutionally democratic. The history of the democratization of democracy can be understood as reducing the gap, as including the excluded and improving voice, responsiveness, and accountability.⁶² Although liberal and republican institutions— independent courts or the separation of powers—can block inclusion and progressive reform; they also play a key role in democratizing projects. They establish and protect systems of rights and divide and delimit institutional loci of power, thereby creating counter-powers that can serve as bulwarks against dictatorship and autocracy. They can also support civil society actors seeking to democratize, defend, and expand rights. Drawing on our joint work on civil society and democracy, Arato correctly argues that the extension of the suffrage, the emergence of new political parties, the activity of civil society associations and social movements, including the labor movement, and other forms of social contestation help reduce the gap.⁶³ But, the gap remains.

It should be obvious that the structural logic of capitalism also perforce creates welfare gaps. It involves a private property and competitive market system that always generates winners and losers. There are few internal incentives to mitigate inequality, provide security, or allow workers and consumers to help structure labor, exercise voice regarding corporate governance, or respond to technological change and so on.⁶⁴ Capitalist logic on its own cannot reduce the inequalities and labor market insecurities that capitalism invariably produces and reproduces, whatever its form. Nevertheless, it is also clear that some political-economic capitalist formations, like the post-war welfare state models in Western Europe, and in the USA starting with the New Deal, do a better job than others in reducing the gaps by instituting mechanisms of voice for workers and consumers, socioeconomic solidarity, cooperation, social protection, regulation, and redistribution. The labor movement and social democratic parties, not to mention the mobilization by states of economic production during war and the perceived threat of communism, played a key role here.⁶⁵ As did the post-WWII Bretton Woods' system, at least insofar as it did not undermine domestic social policy decisions oriented towards social justice and labor rights.⁶⁶ In social democratic countries like Sweden and Germany, workers attained both political influence and workplace voice, including democratic mechanisms of collective bargaining, co-determination, and even cooperative forms of property. Political parties, helped by powerful unions, reduced the responsiveness gap between representatives and represented in political institutions by holding elected governments to account if they ignored the needs of the working population. Despite the built-in dynamism and innovation that constantly produce disruptive shifts in occupational structure, investment strategy, and technology, certain national and transnational

⁶¹ Urbinati, *Democracy disfigured*, 1–81.

⁶² Cohen and Arato, *Civil society and political theory*; Arato, “How we got here”.

⁶³ Arato, “How we got here”.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Piketty, *Capital in the twenty-first century*, 113–199.

⁶⁶ Rodrik, *The globalization paradox*; Stiglitz, *Globalization and its discontents*.

forms of political economy mitigated the extreme social welfare gaps caused by the logic of capitalist reproduction. They maintained socioeconomic solidarity mechanisms across various sectors of society throughout the high growth post-war era until the 1970s.

On the sociocultural level too, there is a structural gap between those whose life worlds and social status modernization threatens, and those who carry cultural change and/or are able and willing to benefit from it. Modernization brings transformations in family structure, gender relations, local sociocultural life worlds, modes and technology of communication in conjunction with shifts in occupational structure, and the ethnic, racial, and religious composition of communities. These transformations alter or eliminate previous social statuses, bases of self-respect and social honor, identities, social hierarchies, and traditions. Socioeconomic dislocation, disruption of forms of life, shifts in cultural frameworks, and social status hierarchies are unavoidable in our interconnected endlessly modernizing world. They intersect with transformations in economic and political domains, and affect some population sectors more adversely than others.

But, sociocultural modernization can take various forms, cultural and social change can proceed more or less disruptively, and it can involve continuity as well as discontinuities. Political entrepreneurs can exacerbate social status and perceived solidarity deficits, channeling them into an aggressive, elite-driven friend/enemy identity politics. Or an inclusive politics of social solidarity can address and defuse them by helping to reconstruct and develop new sources of social pride and status honor in productive and progressive ways. Rather than contemptuously indicting those struggling with status and solidarity deficits as anti-modern irrational reactionaries (some elements may fit this bill but not all), we might frame more inclusive and just modes of cultural and social change. By fostering social solidarity, respect and community while preserving the best in our cultural traditions (including religious and secular ones), we might directly attend to legitimate status anxieties in inclusive pluralist, egalitarian, and solidary ways. But, there will be losses, and gaps in terms of social status cannot be eliminated entirely—they are inherent in the structural logic of modernization in all its dimensions. When gaps in the social bases of respect, pride, and social honor map onto the gaps produced in conjunction with economic and political transformations, then the door is wide open to authoritarian populism and the politics of resentment.

3 III. The Contemporary Conjuncture: Diagnostics

I think we are now in such a conjuncture. Indeed, ambivalent alterations of democracy's core institutions, major and apparently irreversible changes in economic modes of production and occupational structure, and shifts in sociocultural norms and sources of social honor have come together, leading those feeling disadvantaged by these changes to seriously doubt the viability of the liberal democratic constitutional social contract. After briefly addressing the relevant changes and deficiencies in the political and economic domains, I will examine their combined influence with cultural shifts and changes in sources of social honor and their effects on the groups that have become the targets and supporters of authoritarian populism.

3.1 A. The Democratic Deficit

Transformations in representative democracy's institutions have been noticed for some time. In his 1997 book, Bernard Manin identified a shift throughout the West from forms of party

democracy to what he aptly called “audience democracy,” noting its ambivalence regarding the gap between the people and their representatives.⁶⁷ Unlike the change from parliamentary to party democracy, linked to the enfranchisement of the working class and, later, women, audience democracy has not obviously reduced this gap.⁶⁸ It entails the personalization of politics, diminishes the importance of party platforms, and turns parties into instruments of a leader, making the head of the government the representative par excellence. Moreover, the synchronization of politics to media time (mediatization) invites political entrepreneurs to communicate directly with the electorate without the mediation of the party network. Consequently, audience democracy triggers change in the type of elites elected. The emphasis is on performance on the media stage before the electorate as audience. Celebrity gains in importance over party programs or platforms, enhancing the chances of media billionaires, media savvy politicians, and celebrities of all sorts to win elections.

Recently, analysts have addressed the effects of these and other shifts on the quality and stability of democracy. Parties, they are agreed, are the mainstay of democracy. Indeed, political parties are democracy’s gatekeepers.⁶⁹ Although mass responses to extremist appeals matter, what matters more, according to some, is whether political elites, and especially parties, serve as filters.⁷⁰ Political parties’ willingness and ability to filter out extremists and would-be autocrats, while remaining open to the input, opinion, and influence of civil society and responsive to the needs of all sectors of the population, is crucial.⁷¹ These party functions are now in question. The ability of political entrepreneurs and ordinary citizens to bypass established parties in their direct political interactions, thanks in part to new technologies of communication, undermines their filtering function. Superficially, this might seem to lessen the democracy gap insofar as the multiplicity and new kinds of media enable more two-way communication and increase citizens’ voice, access, and influence.⁷² But, the increasing segmentation of civil public spheres and the citizenry in general with regard to the media they consume, media’s inundation with fake news, and the willingness of populist political entrepreneurs to exacerbate and politicize social segmentation through unfiltered media outlets, renders party mediation, moderation, and even communication all the more difficult. Far from closing the democracy deficit, audience democracy does nothing to foster informed political judgment or insight into the concerns of others. Instead, it can cultivate extremism and tribalism while undermining accountability and responsibility in political society and in government. Additionally, the shift of civil society associations from autonomous local and federated grassroots dues-paying membership groups to member-less managerial organizational models of mediatized, anonymous and centralized advocacy groups, nonprofit institutions and lobby networks expands instead of reduces the gap between citizens’ participation in public civic life and political society.⁷³ Indeed, proliferating lobby networks funded by billionaires coopt local activists and claim to speak in their name. They parallel and leverage political parties, simultaneously bypassing, coopting, and working through them while eviscerating their autonomy. They

⁶⁷ Manin, *Representative government*, 218–236.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* and Arato, “How we got here”.

⁶⁹ Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How democracies die*, 38–39, 41–43.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷² Urbinati, “The revolt against intermediary bodies,” 477–485.

⁷³ Theda Skocpol, *Diminished democracy*, 175–254.

therefore undermine rather than strengthen both the integrative and critical roles of civil and political society.⁷⁴

For example, the Koch network took up the tea party movement in the USA and with other billionaire sources of dark money and foundations, helped it together with ultra conservative evangelicals, become the powerful right wing of the Republican Party, whose elected representatives are now more beholden to outside funding than to the party's own funds and internal management.⁷⁵ Subsequently, the billionaire, Donald Trump, after his election as President, has succeeded in turning the Republican party into his vehicle. The capture and evisceration of a major party by outside billionaires who set the agenda through politicians who owe their political careers to them and are or do the bidding of ultraconservative, uncompromising particularistic, and exclusionary extremists shows how party democracy can be undermined from within.⁷⁶ This leads to *asymmetric political polarization* and, especially in a two party system, makes it hard for democracy to work for the public good. Plutocratic populism—supposedly an oxymoron—involving the alliance of right-wing neo-liberal billionaire-funded networks, lobbyists, and politicians with grass roots protectionist working class groups, has its genesis in this constellation.⁷⁷ To be sure, plutocratic populist leaders, once in power, typically do a bait and switch by pursuing economic policy that reflects the agenda of wealthy donors while engaging in rhetoric (typically nationalist, racist, ethno-religious) and empty gestures as sops to the masses. The processes are somewhat different in European multi-party systems, but Berlusconi in Italy surely foreshadowed the link between billionaire outsiders, media manipulators, tech savvy populists, and the creation of anti-establishment party movements that spurn the democratic rules of the game. The mediating institutions of civil and political society indeed being eviscerated, undermining democracy's proper functioning.⁷⁸

When considered together with the exponential increase in executive power and discretionary prerogatives in so many constitutional democracies, it is small wonder that populist politics flourish in such a context. Populists are well positioned to take advantage of these changes. They can thematize the gaps between representative and represented, invoke the popular sovereignty of the authentic people, claim to offer a more direct and democratic form of representation, and proffer leaders that seem to embody the people's real will.

None of this, however, is inexorable. Indeed, the developments described above are trends, not fate. Had political parties offered appropriate political programs and policies that demonstrated responsiveness to those feeling ignored by political elites, the lure of populism would not be as strong as it is. But, those political parties that traditionally included and addressed the needs of the working and lower middle classes (people without a college degree) ceased to do so. Led by highly educated professionals, the Democratic Party in the USA, and labor, socialist, or social democratic parties in Europe, appeal to voters whose cultural frames and interests differ from those in the non-urban working and middling classes.⁷⁹ Those sectors of the working and middle class that could not adapt to the politics, economics, and values of post-industrial society and the globalized economy feel unrepresented. The sense that they no

⁷⁴ Skocpol and Williamson (2016).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Skocpol and Hertel-Fernandez (2016). See also Mayer (2017).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ See Urbinati, "Intermediary bodies".

⁷⁹ Piketty (2018); see also Gest, *The new minority*, 198–200.

longer count leads them to resent elites in both parties and government in general, along with the other beneficiaries (real or imagined) of public policy, and global change.

3.2 B. The Welfare Deficit

Social democratic welfare states in the West have been under strain since the 1970s. Prescient analysts foresaw coming crises in light of decreasing growth, technological, and demographic trends and a globalizing economy.⁸⁰ But, instead of intelligent social policy on the national and supranational level, since the 1980s the E.U., its member states and the USA bought into economic neo-liberalism and austerity as the only appropriate response to low growth.⁸¹ The results are well-known: enormous increases in socioeconomic inequality, job insecurity, stagnant wages, and unstable working conditions. De-industrialization and the drastic decline of small cities and rural communities in what are aptly called rustbelt regions, the loss of jobs, of entire occupations, and the rise of economic insecurity was not met with much demonstration of solidarity on the part of mainstream political parties. Nor did they propose anything close to what some call the “reflexive continuation of the welfare state.” On the contrary, they exhibited a striking lack of political will to break with disastrous austerity policies and to support labor or the middle and working classes. The decline of economic society—especially unions—and thus of worker’s bargaining power due to domestic political and global forces has, together with the increased political clout of corporate managers and finance capital, led to a dramatic increase in inequality that have created the superrich and impoverished the other 99%.⁸² This has left a “welfare gap” that exacerbates the decline of public trust in government along with the credibility of traditional political parties.⁸³ The tremendous wealth and power of corporate and finance capital, the growth of the billionaire class, and of their influence in politics, aided by court decisions domestically and internationally, invites the charge of oligarchy. Coupled with massive immigration and demographic change, such a socioeconomic context is ripe for populists to enter the political arena with exclusionary anti-immigrant, religio-political/ethno-racist conceptions of the “nation” and protectionist policies aimed at supporting the “real people”, *aka*, our kind of people and not others.

The issue here is more than material inequality or “welfare” in the American sense (i.e., monetary handouts). What weighs most heavily is decline of a once centrally important set of “industrial” occupations and regions, socioeconomic dislocation, the apparent closure of future prospects for the next generation, and the evisceration of a socioeconomic form of life. Their sense of being relegated to the periphery of their society and their experience of deprivation and government and political parties’ lack of social solidarity with their plight opens the working and lower middle classes to populist politics of resentment.

3.3 C. The Status/Solidarity Deficit

Over the past 40 years, major demographic, social, religious, and cultural shifts have occurred in conjunction with economic, technological, and political developments that undermine prior bases of social respect for certain working and middle-class sectors. This constellation created

⁸⁰ Arato, “How we got here,” Offe (1976, 1984).

⁸¹ Cohen and Arato, *Civil society and political theory*. Piketty (2014).

⁸² Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the twenty-first century*.

⁸³ Arato, “How we got here”.

deep fractures along the lines of race, gender, class, generation, and geography in American and European democracies. I focus is on the former. I briefly discuss the relevant changes for two reasons. First, it is not the economically worst off, but rather the middling classes, who experience the status loss and whose feelings of exclusion populists so effectively mobilize. Second, populism's chance of success requires rhetoric that resonates with salient senses of injury, relative deprivation, and unmet demands.⁸⁴

Demographically, the USA is experiencing the most profound change since the melting pot era at the turn of the twentieth century. Nearly, 40% of the population is now nonwhite. Children of color are half of all Americans aged ten and younger, and since 2014, they comprise a majority of all K-12 public schools attendees.⁸⁵ Some of this is due to immigration. In 1965, the Congress replaced the 1920s restrictive immigration laws and immigration skyrocketed. More than a quarter of Americans are first- or second-generation immigrants. About 14% were born abroad—the highest total since WWII and triple the 5% level in 1965.⁸⁶ The effect is more racial and ethnic diversity, concentrated in urban and suburban areas.

Also noteworthy are profound and simultaneous shifts in occupational structure. In the USA, in 1940, 74% of employed workers were white and did not hold professional or managerial jobs. Nearly 85% of white adults over 25 did not hold a 4-year college degree. By 2007, these figures fell to 43 and 48%, respectively.⁸⁷ Well-paid blue-collar male-dominated jobs fell from one in three in 1965 to less than one in eight today. The respective groups no longer seem to gain from economic growth or from better education.⁸⁸ Their organizational strength in unions and civil associations and their local social capital and political influence are gone. Whether the white working class is defined according to education (lacking college degree), occupation, or income-based standards, its relative size in the USA saw a 30–50% decline since the post-WWII era.⁸⁹ Meanwhile, the expansion of the service economy in a context of relative de-industrialization has favored women or jobs coded female over traditional male-coded jobs (requiring “muscle”), exacerbating tensions over threats to gender hierarchies. Rural and rustbelt decay, insecurity and the destruction of entire life worlds surrounding lost blue-collar jobs contribute to the emergence of a nostalgic and defensive “rural consciousness.”⁹⁰ This social identity seems beleaguered, ignored, unfairly deprived of resources, overtaxed, and denied social respect and social solidarity by the rest of society—and especially by urban and coastal elites and young people.⁹¹

Cultural and generational changes play into this mix. Since the 1960s, radical challenges to “traditional” sexual mores, gender roles, and patriarchal family norms had wide cultural and legal impact. The culture wars over them continue today. Moreover, just as Court-backed desegregation rocked US schools, Supreme Court decisions ended the de facto protestant establishment in education by banishing Bible reading and compelled prayer in public schools.⁹² This, along with contemporary movements for LGBT rights, triggered the

⁸⁴ I focus on the USA, but the analysis also pertains to democracies in Western Europe.

⁸⁵ Gest, *The new minority*, 6–7.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, citing the U.S. Census Bureau, “Millennials outnumber baby boomers and are far more diverse,” *Census Bureau Reports*, <http://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-113.html>.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ See Daniel Markovitz, “The meritocracy trap” on file with the author.

⁸⁹ Gest, *The new minority*, 6–7, 21, 15–17.

⁹⁰ Cramer, *The politics of resentment*, 5–9. But for a rebuttal about rural consciousness that stress the importance of regional cultural history and divides, see Woodward (2011, 2018).

⁹¹ Cramer, *The politics of resentment*, 5–9.

⁹² Feldman (2005), 150–185.

politicization of religious justifications for gender hierarchy and “traditional family values.” These cultural shifts exacerbate status anxieties for those groups whose sense of social honor and social standing were based not only on those values, but also on their beliefs about their superiority over women and people of other races or ethnicities.⁹³ Cultural shifts that enhance the social status of the formerly denigrated (women, racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, gays) need not reduce the social standing of others.⁹⁴ But, when they map onto dwindling economic-material sources of self-respect for some (decline of lucrative “manly” working class occupations) while leaving unchanged or even raising the status of those occupations peopled by women (service sector jobs) or minorities, the tendency to feel a decline in one’s own social status is strong.⁹⁵

Simultaneously, another epochal metamorphosis has occurred: increased religious pluralism in the US and Western Europe. Although the US prides itself on its constitutional protections for religious freedom and non-establishment in a vibrant religious marketplace, a de facto protestant establishment existed until the 1960s. Those identifying as white and Christian constituted a majority (8 in 10).⁹⁶ When Clinton won his second term in 1996, two in three Americans still fit that bill. Today, white Christians’ share of the population fell to 4 in 10. Since 2007, declines among evangelical protestants, mainline protestants, and Catholics accompanied a rise in two other categories: the religiously unaffiliated (nones) and non-Christian faiths: Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Jews.⁹⁷ Meanwhile, in Europe, the number of adherents to (various versions of) Islam visibly increased, along with the number of Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs. While such pluralism is associated with immigration, by now, many second- and third-generation believers in Islam and other non-Christian religions are native born.

Race maps onto all of this. Always a salient category in the USA, race has been a source of intra-working-class conflict ever since white workers received the “wages of whiteness,” pitting them against African Americans, after radical Reconstruction.⁹⁸ To be sure, settler colonialism always entailed racial hierarchies and exclusions privileging the status of white Christians against Native Americans and African Americans and in the postcolonial context, against migrants from allegedly alien cultures.⁹⁹ Immigration has often triggered status anxieties and nativist populisms in the USA, elsewhere. But, the civil rights revolution of the second half of the twentieth century challenged the legitimacy of racism culturally, legally, and politically. Court-ordered desegregation of public accommodations and schools and the Voting Rights Act of 1964, coinciding with the rise of “legal secularism” banning prayer and Bible reading in public schools, and the legalization of contraception and abortion, triggered a major backlash.¹⁰⁰ In the 1970s, the rise of the white Christian right fed into the major party political realignment associated with the

⁹³ Noam Gidron and Peter A. Hall, “Populism as a problem of social integration,” Working Paper, 9, https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/hall/files/gidron_hallmpsa2018.pdf.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9–10.

⁹⁶ Feldman, *Divided by God*, 150–185.

⁹⁷ Pew Research Center (2014).

⁹⁸ Roediger (2007); Foner (2011); Schiller (2015).

⁹⁹ Rana (2010) and Smith (1997).

¹⁰⁰ *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954); the 1965 Voting Rights Act (<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=100>). Feldman, *Divided by God*, 150–185, on legal secularism.

Reagan presidency and Nixon’s “southern strategy,”¹⁰¹ which appealed, more or less openly, to racism and “Christian” family values to woo white southerners into the Republican Party. Southern hostility towards racial integration materialized through the sudden proliferation of “protestant academies” in the 70s. Religious private schools, formed partly in order to evade integration and not only to ensure religious education, triggered the identification of white southern evangelicals with the right wing of the Republican Party.¹⁰² Even though many white workers in the rural mid- and southwest voted for Obama twice, some analysts note the intensified racial polarization in the aftermath of his election. They point to the “birther” campaign, strengthened opposition to redistributive “welfare” policies coded as pro black, and a new willingness by citizens and politicians alike to express racist feelings and use racist rhetoric in the media.¹⁰³ Since then, it seems that there has been a racialization of partisan identity, such that the Democrats are now perceived as the party of nonwhites plus the white liberal cultural coastal elite establishment (dubbed globalists and multiculturalists). Republicans are coded as the party of the common man, *aka*, the white working and middle classes together with the (white) business elite.¹⁰⁴ Some even argue that race has become a core affective basis of politicized segmental pluralism. It apparently accounts for the deeply cathected party political polarization that blocks compromise by fostering a friend/enemy logic.¹⁰⁵ Similar developments are occurring in Europe, where mass migration from east to west and especially from former colonized regions in Africa to the old metropolises is generating ethno-religious and racialized nationalisms throughout the region. Indeed, postcolonial racial anxieties over the impending loss of white dominance should not be underestimated as a factor in the rise of illiberal autocracies and right-wing populist nativist movements.

Nevertheless, it would be misleading to reduce the status problematic to personal racism.¹⁰⁶ For that would be to ignore what Arlie Hochschild aptly labels an “honor squeeze.”¹⁰⁷ Hochschild argues that recent developments undermine five key sources of self-respect for these social categories: pride in hard “manly” work; pride in region or state; pride in locality; pride associated with strong family values (lifelong heterosexual monogamous pro-life marriage) as an honor code requiring self-control and sacrifice; and pride in religious moral integrity.¹⁰⁸ The status anxieties and solidarity deficits at issue are not exclusively about race, although race plays an important role in framing them. Additionally, the social capital of these populations is also in serious decline due to the collapse not only of their occupations and local commerce in rural and rustbelt towns, but also of the associational institutions once central to their social and civic life—unions, working man’s clubs, and other community institutions.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰¹ Feldman, *Divided by God*, 186–219, on the rise of the rise of the Evangelical Christian Right. See also Dochuk (2011).

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Dawson and Bobo (2009).

¹⁰⁴ Nicholas A. Valentino and Kirill Zhirko, “Blue is black and red is white? Racialized schemas of U.S. partisan coalitions and their consequences,” manuscript on file with the author.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 10–15.

¹⁰⁶ Skocpol and Williamson argue in *The tea party*, 70, that Tea Party supporters and activists do not fit the stereotype of unreconstructed racists.

¹⁰⁷ Hochschild, *Strangers in the land*, 215–218.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Gest, *The new minority*, 132–135.

The disintegration of their particular sociocultural, socioeconomic form of life also helps explain why their sense of alienation and marginality does not translate directly into class-consciousness. As E.P. Thompson argued long ago, “[c]lass consciousness is the way in which...experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value systems, ideas and institutional forms.”¹¹⁰ Social and cultural factors matter as much, if not more, than economic ones not only in generating a capacity to mobilize, but also in building consciousness of class injustice and class identity. By mobilizing social capital and their sense of centrality to the economic and then political system of industrial societies, workers could defend and enhance their form of life. Today, however, “[c]lass is simply less indicative of an individual’s affinities, preferences or world view and therefore must interact with a variety of other factors to be predictive of political behavior”.¹¹¹ Indeed, traditional working class groups are now characterized by relatively low economic, social, and cultural capital.¹¹² While they share the deficit with racial minorities and immigrants, the bulk of whom are also working class, their social and cultural capital is not, unlike the others’, rising or emerging.¹¹³ For them, “class” as an identity offers fewer cultural and social linkages with norms, values, and political preferences. This means that other factors, like race, religion, nationality, and gender can be invoked not only to shape and direct their intense feelings of social deprivation, but also specify conditions for “class” membership. As Gest shows, sticking with purely objective analyses of economic decline or demographic shifts misses the point.¹¹⁴

Gidron and Hall pinpoint the post-industrial shifts in cultural frameworks that undermine the secure and relatively high social status once enjoyed by non-college educated male workers.¹¹⁵ The growth of the knowledge economy valorizes a university degree and highly skilled and adaptable tech workers, locating the best jobs in a few large urban or suburban centers. Emerging cultural frameworks valorize urban lifestyles, celebrate diversity, multiculturalism, secular values, and reject social hierarchies built on racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation hierarchies.¹¹⁶ These shifts are “progressive,” tending to diminish the deficits in political influence, economic opportunity, and social status for previously excluded and denigrated population segments. But, they also can be framed as exclusionary and unjust, undermining the social status of those whose form of life, values, and occupations are increasingly marginalized, while apparently unfairly privileging racial minorities, women or immigrants at the expense of the white working class.¹¹⁷ Moreover, when the university degree leads not to upward mobility but to crushing debt, exacerbating rather than redressing inequality, the sense that both have duped them the Brahmin left and the Merchant Right along with meritocracy discourses, grows.¹¹⁸

Indeed, when long term socioeconomic and sociocultural shifts make it impossible to get the old high paying blue-collar jobs, when college education is too costly and fails to deliver rewarding jobs for many, when regions are deemed “fly over country,” when rural forms of life are dismissed as backward and poor, when family values are deemed anachronistic or worse, patriarchal, and when religiosity is seen as tantamount to ignorance, fanaticism and

¹¹⁰ Thompson (1966), 10.

¹¹¹ Gest, *The New Minority*, 16–17, 138–139.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 139.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3–7.

¹¹⁵ Gidron and Hall, “The politics of social status,” 9.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Gidron and Hall, “Populism as a problem of social integration,” 8–9.

¹¹⁸ Thomas Piketty, “Brahmin Left vs. Merchant Right”, piketty.pse.ens.fr/files/Piketty2018.pdf.

sectarianism, then the stage is set for the politics of resentment that contemporary populists excel in stoking.

4 IV. Framing Issues: Populism, Status and the Politics of Resentment

Analyzing both late nineteenth century populism and mid-twentieth century McCarthyism, Richard Hofstadter, in 1955, suggested that status anxiety is an irrational expression of anti-modern traditionalism. It perforce translates into a “paranoid style of politics,” replete with exclusionary racist, religious, anti-intellectual, nativist phobias, even when combined with progressive redistributive and “democratizing” political reform projects.¹¹⁹ Popularized in a 1964 article in Harpers Magazine entitled “The Paranoid Style in American Politics,” Hofstadter’s argument cast the original American populism as schizophrenic, tied to both modern capitalism and sociocultural traditionalism. It embraced the market economy while criticizing big business and extolling the traditional virtues of an endangered romanticized yeomanry.¹²⁰ Portraying populism as hypocritical, Hofstadter claimed that sociocultural status issues tied to anti-Semitism and racism, not real economic problems, were behind its attacks on the corporate-political establishment.¹²¹ For Hofstadter and his colleagues in the consensus school of the 1950s, status politics are ephemeral, irrational, and dangerous, with little connection to class interests. Instead, they linked status-based political movements to demagoguery, scapegoating, conspiracy theories, anti-intellectualism, anti-liberal conceptions of democracy, anti-modernism, and authoritarianism on social and political levels.¹²²

Subsequent research debunked much of this, showing that a political-economic critique of post-war corporate capitalism and the Gilded Age inequalities drove populist movements.¹²³ American populists called for regulation of corporations, finance capital and railroads, and an end to the gold standard that created tight money and credit conditions. They demanded an 8-h working day and progressive income taxes. They recognized the threat of unbridled corporate capitalism and offered alternative models of economic structuring including cooperatives and other ways to reproduce the old republican model of liberty (of the owner producer) on modern industrial terrain. Populists also demanded institutional changes consistent with the rule of law and representative democracy, including direct election of senators and civil service reform.¹²⁴ Furthermore, we know that McCarthyism was as much an anti-New Deal project of right-wing corporate capitalists and political entrepreneurs as it was a paranoid anti-communist cold war witch-hunt.¹²⁵ Arguably, it deployed religion to attack progressive New Deal regulation as anti-American atheistic communism, undermining the institutionalized successes of progressives and earlier populists.¹²⁶ While the original populists ultimately succumbed to a friend enemy logic that embraced racism, nativism, and anti-Semitism, and bought into a paranoid style of politics based on conspiracy theories and millennial, Manichean, redemptive, quasi-

¹¹⁹ Hofstadter, *The age of reform*. For a discussion of the consensus school, see Jaeger, “The semantic drift,” 313.

¹²⁰ Hofstadter, “The paranoid style,” 155.

¹²¹ Jaeger, “The semantic drift,” 313, discussing Hofstadter’s *The age of reform*.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 314–315.

¹²³ Postel, *The populist vision*, 3–22, 269–289, arguing that the populists sought an alternative, more just version of capitalism.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Rogin (1967).

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*; Herzog (2011).

religious tropes, it is not true that economic change, class interests, and class injustice were irrelevant or that the political system did not need progressive democratic restructuring.¹²⁷

My point is not to make irresponsible analogies of the present constellation to the past. Rather, it is to note that Hofstadter's influential approach unfortunately succeeded in linking the problem of status/solidarity deficits to the paranoid style of politics, scapegoating, and charges of anti-modernism.¹²⁸ It presents a particularized version of status-based identity politics produced by adept political entrepreneurs as inherent in status politics. But status anxieties and the feeling of being unjustly dispossessed could have been and should today be framed otherwise. Contemporary authoritarian populists in western democracies do effectively frame social status/solidarity, cultural, and economic issues as Hofstadter predicts. In the USA, they constructed a sociopolitical identity that cobbles together socioeconomic, cultural, and social status anxieties, distinguishing between "deserving authentic, real, and traditional" people (i.e., white, working class, Christian, heterosexual) and undeserving others coddled by political elites. This does indeed entail a friend/enemy politics of identity.¹²⁹ It also entails a politics of resentment, not dissimilar the paranoid political style Hofstadter characterized, that exacerbates segmental pluralism and affective political polarization. Absent viable alternative frames, it resonates and is taken up by its intended targets.¹³⁰ But alternatives to the paranoid, authoritarian populist framing of status anxieties and experienced solidarity deficits that take the latter seriously are possible. Moreover, status anxieties, albeit irreducible to economic-material interests, are related to them and to political concerns about voice and influence. Progressives should not leave this field to the reactionary authoritarians.

A few definitions are necessary before populist frameworks can be elucidated. I have already clarified what I mean by the populist friend/enemy theme linked to the construction of social identities. It involves *pars pro toto* logic, exclusion of the other, and a dynamic of identification with a leader claiming to embody the true people's will, and intent on occupying the place of power left empty by the democratic imaginary. Further, Lipset's path-breaking analysis made clear the difference between segmental and cross-cutting cleavages (two very different forms of pluralism) and the threats the former poses.¹³¹ "Affective polarization" refers to the radicalization of political antagonisms that result when several social characteristics overlap and are sorted into political parties.¹³² When social solidarities overlap, rather than cross-cut, partisan friend/enemy logics and affective political polarization arise.¹³³ Contemporary populist political entrepreneurs thus do their best to map socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, or religious differences, sort them into polarized political camps, and foster anti-system, anti-establishment extremist resentment politics.¹³⁴

The politics of resentment, as Katherine Cramer notes, refers to the interaction of social identities, the emotion of resentment, economic insecurity, the sense of political irrelevance,

¹²⁷ Postel, *The populist vision*, 269–289.

¹²⁸ Jaeger, "The semantic drift," 313–320.

¹²⁹ Skocpol and Williamson, *The Tea Party*, 54–74.

¹³⁰ Cramer, *The politics of resentment*.

¹³¹ Lipset (1960).

¹³² Mason (2015, 2016).

¹³³ See Berman (1997). Berman notes that in a context in which political society (parties) is unresponsive to the concerns of key social groups, social trust and generalized solidarity will disintegrate even in civil societies where associationalism is well developed but organizational belonging is highly segmented and discontent about the political system, prevalent. Such a social political structure is democracy undermining, not democracy reinforcing, and lends itself to populist mobilization.

¹³⁴ Valentino and Zhirkov, "Blue is black." See also Levitsky and Ziblatt, "How democracies die", 115–117.

and status anxieties.¹³⁵ It mobilizes propaganda and what Jason Stanley has called a particular type of “false” political ideology—negative and misleading stereotypes about denigrated minorities, women or immigrants—to create scapegoats.¹³⁶ Indeed, it focuses on social differences and status anxieties, framing them as deep antagonisms between segmented, and stacked social-political identities. Less deserving groups seem to cut ahead in line, unfairly receiving elite and government attention on socio-cultural, political and economic domains.¹³⁷ Political entrepreneurs engaging in this politics foment anxieties in ways conducive to conspiracy theories, extremism and social conflict rather than dialog, political compromise, and inclusion.¹³⁸ The idea is to undermine cross-cutting solidarities, communication, and commonalities by stacking overlapping identities on a number of axes (race, religion, origin, ethnicity) and segmenting them from other stacked identities on the other side of a crucial political divide (“frontier”). Accordingly, “affective political polarization” does not simply entail disagreement with the politics of a party political competitor, or with a party’s political project or program, but, more insidiously, hostility towards social groups that vote for and comprise it.¹³⁹ Populist politicians frame status and solidarity anxieties in these terms offering to restore past sources of social honor and status while blaming other social groups and insider elites for all that is amiss.

Every political party in a democracy aggregates interests and opinions. The populist framework aspires to more than that. It constructs an apparently congealed political identity, filling a hegemonic signifier with substantive content to which the term “the people” is ascribed.¹⁴⁰ Those excluded from this hegemonized, substantive conception of “friend”—i.e., on the other side of the “frontier” are cast as non-equivalent, other, and outside the dimensions of legitimate pluralism. The political parties representing them are not seen as legitimate opposition. Thus, one could scarcely vote for the opposition party even if disenfranchised with candidates in the friend camp. Those who differ and political rivals/competitors are turned into enemies with whom one cannot communicate, much less compromise.

Given this theoretical background, the US version of populist framing becomes clear. As already indicated, parts of the population—white, Christian, heterosexual, non-college educated, working class, non-urban, traditionalist—are constructed as a sociopolitical identity whose diminished standing is deemed unjust yet who are the real people, the part that stands for the whole. They insist on a restoration of their former status against those who are unfairly “cutting in line” and wrongly favored by the elite liberal establishment.¹⁴¹ To be sure, it is hardly news that sociocultural factors play central roles in the construction of identity. What is novel is the construal of these factors in ways that escape classic left/right divisions. They now map onto the relatively new experience of marginalization by white workers on all three axes of identity: economic, sociocultural, and political. Their experience of status decline and lack

¹³⁵ Cramer, *The politics of resentment*, 9. Cramer, however, did not link the politics of resentment to a theoretical analysis of authoritarian populism as I do.

¹³⁶ Stanley (2015).

¹³⁷ Hochschild, *Strangers in their own land*, 150–151.

¹³⁸ Hofstadter, “Paranoid style,” 82.

¹³⁹ Valentino and Zhirkov, “Blue is Black”; Mason, “I disrespectfully agree”; Mason, “A cross cutting calm.”

¹⁴⁰ Laclau in *On populist reason* argued that the populist approach is to construct a chain of equivalences that links a number disparate, conflicting demands, and disconnected local identities together through a hegemonic signifier in order to construct, via a chain of equivalences, a relatively consolidated political identity of the “friend” component of the friend/enemy frontier, fill the empty signifier of “the people” with substantive content, and make a specific part of the population stand for the whole.

¹⁴¹ Hochschild, *Strangers in their own land*, 150–151.

of social solidarity in a context of increasing inequality, immigration, and changes in cultural rankings leads such groups to attack neither the corporate rich nor the injustices of the capitalism.¹⁴² Despite the fact that new digital technologies, automation, and the explosion of executive managerial salaries (subject to relatively low tax rates) are responsible for the lion's share of de-industrialization and spatial and income inequality, the blame is laid at the door of free trade and massive immigration, and unfair rules of the game these entail.¹⁴³ Instead, their dispossession is blamed on the cultural political establishment, the “liberal left” and “minorities”—nonwhites, feminists, immigrants, LGBT groups, secularists, Muslims, etc.

Indeed, some argue that the white Christian morally traditionalist working class constitutes a “new minority,” pushed to the periphery of society and denied the recognition, clout, and social solidarity that other minorities, given their alliance with liberal elites, seem to enjoy at their expense.¹⁴⁴ They are both self-identified and constructed by populist entrepreneurs as a politicized identity, the authentic people.¹⁴⁵ The concept refers less to a numerical minority than to processes of social marginalization and political and economic alienation experienced by those seemingly divorced from upwardly mobile white co-ethnics and elite-coddled minorities.¹⁴⁶

Others conclude that today's intense polarization, driven by the Republican Party extremism, is based on a more narrowly construed, but deeply congealed, social-political identity: the white evangelical right-wing Republican. Accordingly, to account for why the vast majority of white evangelicals supported Trump in the 2016 election and continue to do so, we must realize that the coalition among fundamentalist evangelicals and political conservatives in the Republican Party is a “relation of equivalence”.¹⁴⁷ The Christian Right, emerging in the 1970s as fundamentalists and Catholics shifted from nonpartisanship to the Republican Party, allegedly changed from a strategic alliance to a consolidated identity. Identification with the right wing of the Republican Party is now a constitutive feature of what it means to be an evangelical for conservative white believers.¹⁴⁸ They voted for and continue to support Trump because for them, evangelical Christianity and conservative partisan identity have merged. We can understand this as an example of asymmetrical affective political polarization based on identity politics working in two directions: to be and vote Republican is part of a deeply affective element of what it means to be evangelical and vice versa. To be sure, the jury is still out on whether it was the deeply religious “real” evangelicals who support Trump or instead those who are not deeply religious, but for whom evangelism and republicanism is a tribal identity.¹⁴⁹ But, it is undeniable that white Republicans are nearly 20% more religious than white democrats and that most white evangelicals vote Republican, while prior to the 1970s white Republicans were no more religious than white Democrats and evangelicals were party neutral. Why? Do religious beliefs lead white evangelicals to the Republican party or does the Republican party's messaging about religiously laden issues such as abortion or gay marriage

¹⁴² Paraphrasing Gest, *The new minority*, 16.

¹⁴³ Paraphrasing Rodrik (2018); Piketty, 304–335.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Daniel Miller, “Beyond belief: political identity and evangelical support for Donald Trump,” *Constellations* (forthcoming), *13.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Gorski supports the later position (Gorski 2016). But see Michele Margolis, “Who is trying to make America great again? Evangelical support for Donald Trump”, arguing that real evangelicals, with a high number of evangelical religious beliefs, did and do support Trump and the Republican party but that the identity is not fused.

lead those who are already conservative republicans to seek out kindred spirits in Church, while Democrats who support their party's stance on these issues go elsewhere? Perhaps political choices come first and in a context of highly visible and polarized messaging about religiously laden issues such as abortion and gay marriage, religious choices come second.¹⁵⁰ If so, polarization will increase, as churches become political partisan echo chambers instead of facilitating diversity.

Nevertheless, I am not convinced that either version of the relevant sociopolitical identity is fully congealed or unassailable. Laclau is correct to argue that any chain of equivalences, and thus any sociopolitical identity, is constructed out of fragments that can make for strange bedfellows. Even if hegemonized, they can disintegrate rather quickly. The constructed sociopolitical identity (the content given to the hegemonic signifier) undergirding contemporary populist politics may at first resonate with certain social groups. But it can later fall apart, depending on the political constellation, on consequences once the populist leader is in power, and on what alternative frames are offered. In short, the apparently congealed sociopolitical identity can be disaggregated.

Let us take another look at the coalition/equivalence phenomenon regarding the identity of those supporting Trump and extremist right-wing Republican Party politics. The groups comprising the “base” are heterogeneous and their demands often conflict.¹⁵¹ Key protagonists in the culture wars, the white Christian right wants government regulation of morality in the “domain of intimacy.”¹⁵² They endorse and would even impose “Christian” family values on others, since white Christian America is the part that stands for the whole, i.e., the true American people and its values. But, others in this chain of equivalences endorse libertarian principles, demand limited government, and oppose state interference in what they see as private moral issues.¹⁵³ For them, religion and politics if it entails, government regulation of personal choices, do not mix well. Clearly, support for the Republican right is not synonymous with support for the religious right, even though both evangelicals and libertarians support Republican extremists and Donald Trump.¹⁵⁴

Noteworthy, overlaps and tensions exist along other dimensions as well. Those living in non-urban and non-suburban rural areas feel that their way of life is under threat, that rural people are overtaxed and unfairly deprived of resources and that the tax monies go to the “undeserving.” As Cramer insists, however, their “rural consciousness” is not tantamount to a political ideology. The average white rural working class person is not ideologically opposed to government regulation of corporations. They are not committed to ultra-free market principles or to limited government, nor do they even oppose taxation in principle.¹⁵⁵ Rather, they oppose taxes because they do not believe tax money goes back into their communities. The correlation is not necessarily between small towns and less government. With appropriate framing, it could be between small towns and better government, a government exhibiting solidarity with the needs of small towns. In short, the status and solidarity anxieties associated

¹⁵⁰ Magolis (2018). This could lead to change in the meaning of evangelism and drive some religious believers away from both the Republican Party and Evangelical Churches and/or evangelical churches. See Whener (2017).

¹⁵¹ Skocpol and Williamson, *The Tea Party*, 45–82; Cramer, *The politics of resentment*, 111–169; Hochschild, *Strangers in their own land*, 146–153.

¹⁵² Skocpol and Williamson, *The Tea Party*, 56–59; Skocpol and Hertel-Fernandez, “The Koch Network,” 681–699.

¹⁵³ Skocpol and Williamson, *The Tea Party*, 56–59.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Cramer, *The politics of resentment*, 13–14.

with “rural consciousness” become linked to anti-government stances via a constructed populist chain of equivalences, populist framing, and a politics of resentment.¹⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the third component in the radical Republican “equivalence chain,” i.e., big business, anti-government conservatives, and political lobbyists, vehemently oppose government regulation and taxation.¹⁵⁷ But, key actors in these groups also endorse free trade, immigration, and want to end entitlements like social security, disability insurance, and Medicare.¹⁵⁸ Yet, those exhibiting “rural consciousness” and most working class families endorse these policies while rejecting free trade.

Populist politicians, from Scott Walker in Wisconsin to Donald Trump in Washington, render these differences “equivalent” with the help of right-wing think tanks, media (Fox News), and funding by taking up real demands generated by post-industrial change in economy and society.¹⁵⁹ They frame status anxieties, ambivalence about government regulations that seem to undermine blue-collar jobs, fears about immigration, gender, racial, cultural and generational anxieties, and the perceived lack of social solidarity on the part of the cultural and power elite, as part of a deep divide between the “deserving” hard-working law abiding real (white Christian) Americans in the “heartland” and the undeserving lazy poor: “those people on welfare”.¹⁶⁰ It is true that the initial formation of grass roots tea party groups was a spontaneous reaction to the Obama presidency by older white conservatives expressing their anger about rural and industrial decline, immigration, job loss, wage stagnation, and racial, religious, and generational change. It was also partly fomented and funded by astro-turf right-wing Washingtonian lobbyists.¹⁶¹ They subsequently stoked populist nativism and economic nationalism while simultaneously cultivating the ultra-free market anti-regulatory agendas of the corporate rich. The billionaires such as the Koch Brothers, Richard Mellon Scaife, John M. Olin, and the Bradley Brothers and their networks successfully captured the Republican Party’s agenda, while Trump and Pence decisively wooed the Christian right.¹⁶² They engineered slogans about lowering taxes, shrinking government, diminishing spending on the undeserving, and ending government regulation that allegedly strangles entrepreneurship and business, i.e., a clever way to limit government without harming the interests of the corporate rich.¹⁶³ But, the grass roots nativists also embrace protectionism for blue-collar industries, “earned” entitlements like Social Security and Medicare, and call for tariffs and anti-immigration policies to protect their jobs. In conflict with some billionaire capitalists, especially the Koch Brothers, Trump also endorsed these goals.

The authoritarian populist chain of equivalences puts the deserving/underserving binary at the center, linking deregulation and lower taxes to nativist, racist, reactionary religious identity, and cultural politics. Unlike early twentieth century populists, the contemporary Republican

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 16, 164.

¹⁵⁷ Skocpol and Williamson, *The Tea Party*, 102–110.

¹⁵⁸ The recent split between the Koch Brothers who support free trade and immigration and Trump who does not is a case in point. See NY Times August 2 2018.

¹⁵⁹ Mayer, *Dark money*.

¹⁶⁰ Though this is a racialized code that has a long tradition going back at least to the 1964 Goldwater campaign, it also targets New Deal progressivism and stigmatizes not only African Americans but also “free loaders,” the lazy and the undeserving among youth of every race. Hochschild, *Strangers in their own land*, 148–151; Skocpol and Williamson, *The Tea Party*, 64–68, 81–82; Cramer, *The politics of resentment*, 167.

¹⁶¹ Skocpol and Williamson, *The Tea Party*, 84–120; Jane Myer, *Dark money*.

¹⁶² Skocpol and Williamson, *The Tea Party*, 210–215. See *Dark money* for other active billionaires funding right-wing republican candidates and policy agendas.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 200–201; Cramer, *The politics of resentment*, 167.

version in the USA does not call for more redistribution or for regulation of the new form of transnational corporate and finance capital. Today, when people feel that government is not responsive to their concerns and that policy decisions disproportionately reflect affluent preferences, their spokes persons do not seek increased taxation of the corporate rich and financed capital, nor do they seek reform of campaign finance law, or the redirection of tax monies to benefit strapped rural communities, or retraining for unemployed industrial workers. Instead, populist identity formation adopts the politics of resentment and blames the “underserving” other. It papers over the differences between ideological libertarians, the neo-liberal ultra-free market orientation of the corporate rich, the Christian right, and the rural dispossessed.

But, the differences remain. While sociocultural and political-economic trends do provide the objective context for the status/solidarity deficit for “the new minority”, *there is nothing inevitable about their translation into the politics of resentment*. Moreover, the inclusion of formerly denigrated and excluded social groups into a more egalitarian democratic society need not entail the reduction of the social standing of others, even if their subjective sense of high status once depended on beliefs in their superiority vis-à-vis women or people of color.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, the point of Gest’s analysis of “the new minority” is to prod progressives to take seriously the deficits in voice, welfare, and status experienced by the relevant groups and to address them in ways that foster cross-cutting solidarities, political depolarization, and boundary crossing alliances.¹⁶⁵ In short, we should not leave the status and solidarity issues to the authoritarian populists. A better, more inclusive, responsive, and stable democracy will depend on civic and political actors’ concerted efforts to disaggregate segmental pluralism and to defuse affective political polarization. Much will depend on counter-framing. I conclude with this issue.

5 V. Counter-Framing: Beyond the Politics of Resentment

Progressive, politically liberal, democratic constitutionalists face a puzzle: how to address the very real status anxieties, “honor squeezes” and solidarity deficits of white working class, rural and religious people without abandoning their commitments to women, minorities, and the universalist principles of inclusiveness, egalitarianism, and social justice. Put differently, how can the status resentments of the religious, white, working class traditionalists (wherever they are) be framed and addressed without sacrificing allegiance to gender and racial equality, cultural modernity, political secularism, and democratic norms in a globalized economy?

I reject two responses because they do not redress segmental pluralism or affective political polarization. The first, a counter-politics of victimhood, mirrors populist identity construction but mobilizes different groups—historically oppressed “real” minorities are as follows: racial, ethnic, gendered, sexual, and migrant. This approach embraces identity-based status politics but dismisses supporters of the opposition as “deplorables,” fails to address class issues, often insisting on a self-righteous political correctness. Despite claiming the moral high ground, the version of multiculturalism and the political alliances this approach envisions entails a left version of the populist politics of resentment. It reinforces the segmentation of civil society and the affective political polarization that rests on it. The second, “left populism” seeks to refocus attention on class, material inequality, and redistribution while linking the relevant demands to

¹⁶⁴ Gidron and Hall, “Populism as a problem of social integration,” 9.

¹⁶⁵ Gest, *The new minority*, 198–200; Williams, *White working class*, 109–127.

status and identity issues including those raised by new social movements, in a chain of equivalences that avoids the nativism and racism of “right-wing populism.”¹⁶⁶ According to Chantal Mouffe, both populisms entail a discursive strategy that appeals to popular sovereignty, constructs a collective will of a new collective subject, “the people” and a frontier between a “we” and a “they.”¹⁶⁷ Right-wing populism constructs a people that is nationalist and exclusionary (racially and of immigrants) without necessarily challenging neo-liberalism, while left populism “hegemonizes” a range of “egalitarian democratic” demands by constructing the people as the underdog that it mobilizes against a common adversary: the oligarchy.¹⁶⁸ But, despite disclaimers, left populism is no more conducive to inclusive liberal democratic constitutionalism than the right-wing versions. Indeed, despite disclaimers, Mouffe continues to rely on a Schmittean conception of political liberalism and democracy as “ultimately irreconcilable,” (what she calls the “democratic paradox”).¹⁶⁹ Rhetorically, left populism fosters affective political polarization, and also despite disclaimers, a friend/enemy politics, that is inherent in its discursive strategy of dividing society into two ultimately hostile camps, and fostering identification of “the people” by and with a charismatic leader.¹⁷⁰ It should be unsurprising that left populism too is prone to electoral authoritarianism once in power.¹⁷¹

I argue that what is needed instead of populism, is an inclusive politics of solidarity, one that recovers the best normative impulses in political liberalism, democracy, and social democracy (or liberal, democratic socialism). The task before us is to disaggregate what only appear to be seamless political identities and to devise alternative framings that take both material and status concerns seriously. We must engage in reframing on the explanatory and narrative/rhetorical level, and provide some compelling policy proposals. It is imperative to offer explanations that address real structural dynamics in a globalizing world along with analysis of past political failures. Progressive democrats must also devise coherent political projects with clear choices and remedies for the future. Only by devising effective counter-narratives and projects that address the social, political, and economic deficits people of all races, religions, ethnicities face, can we beat authoritarian populism based on scapegoating and polarization, reinforce democratic norms and further social justice. We must, in short, confront head-on the politics of resentment with inclusive frames for social identities that embrace cross-cutting pluralisms, progressive alliances, and diminish affective political polarization. The point is not to appease or construct an alternative tribalism, or to divide society into two camps, but rather to deconstruct the stacked white, Christian, heterosexual, patriarchal, nativist, and working-class identities in populist chains of equivalence that give substantive content to the supposed “authentic people.” Taking the USA as my main referent, here I can only hint at an approach that could foster cross-cutting solidarities and political realignments while defusing the polarized friend/enemy logics that poison democracy.

¹⁶⁶ See Mouffe (2000, 2018) and Fraser (2017a, b).

¹⁶⁷ Mouffe, *For a left populism*, 1–38.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 22–24.

¹⁶⁹ Mouffe, *The democratic paradox*.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 10–16, 70.

¹⁷¹ Nancy Fraser’s version of left populism relies on socialism as a host ideology and differs in some respects from that of Mouffe, but it too reinforces old orthodoxies, has an elective affinity with authoritarianism, and misplaces the blame for the class cluelessness of political parties since the 1980s onto the new social movements. See Fraser’s “From progressive neo-liberalism to Trump and beyond,” “The end of progressive neo-liberalism” *op. cit.*, and “Progressive neo-liberalism vs. reactionary populism: a Hobson’s choice” (Fraser 2017c), 40–48.

As indicated, I think that a combined Polanyi-Habermas analytic approach to the current crisis in economy, society, and polity is the right way to go.¹⁷² We are indeed experiencing epochal changes of the order of magnitude analyzed in *The Great Transformation* regarding the rise of industrial capitalism, the unfettered commodification of land, labor and capital, coupled with free-market ideology. We are again seeing the destructive effects on society, nature, and polity, of the overextension self-regulating markets, (and deregulation) this time in the context of a more radically globalized and post-industrial economy. There is no question that the trio of neo-liberal market ideology, austerity politics, and hyper-globalization that gradually undid the national welfare states and international Bretton Woods systems since the 1980s, (the positive results of the Post-WWII countermovement of society institutionalized in the West with the defeat of Fascism and Communism there) has abetted the dramatic increase in economic inequality and socioeconomic insecurity, especially, though not only, of those remaining in the old industrial heartland or in declining rural communities.¹⁷³ The colonization of the life world by global economic forces and by administrative rationality has created severe crises of social and natural reproduction along with serious legitimization crises for liberal constitutional democracies. Now too, a revolt of society and a countermovement is occurring although the choices before us are no longer between Stalinist Communism, Fascism, and the Keynesian welfare state. Instead, we face a choice between right or left populism together with electoral authoritarianism (with or without some version of neo-liberalism) vs. the creation of a new (more inclusive, more democratic, culturally progressive) version of the welfare state on domestic, regional, and international levels. Hopefully, this time, we can avoid another world war and great depression by making the right political choices.

It is not clear what narrative will be the most effective or even if the same narrative will do the trick in the USA and in Western Europe. Yet, some version of a democratic, liberal socialism/ revised social democracy committed to deepening democracy, to social solidarity, to freedom, inclusiveness, and ecology, seems to be on the agenda of those resisting right-wing extremism and electoral authoritarianism. If we understand democracy as entailing an economic framework in which workers have autonomous organizations and voice in the workplace and in the polity, in which markets and regulation for public purposes and in light of ecological goals and social justice all have a place, and in which a plurality of democracies emerges within society, economy, and polity, supplementing instead of replacing constitutional representative democracy and political liberalism, then it may be possible to parry populist narratives with a vision of a new model of development.

This requires new thinking on several fronts. Above all, the class cluelessness of progressive liberal democrats over the past four decades must be replaced with an inclusive, universalistic attentiveness to the issues that concern all working people, urban and rural in all regions.¹⁷⁴ Certainly, the problems experienced in the post-industrial wastelands by the “forgotten man” and the low wages, job insecurity, and lack of social support all workers face must be linked to a sober economic analysis of the structural and political-economic forces that benefit national and transnational corporate and finance capital at the cost of huge increases in

¹⁷² See Polanyi’s *The great transformation* and the foreword by Joseph E. Stiglitz (vii–xvii) and introduction by Fred R. Bloch (xviii–xxxviii) to the second paperback edition (Boston: Beacon Press 2001). See also Fraser (2017d).

¹⁷³ Piketty, *Capital in the 21st century*; Rodrik, *The globalization paradox*.

¹⁷⁴ “Class cluelessness” is Williams’ term in *White working class*. But recall that de-industrialization first hit the inner cities in the late 1970s, destroying the manufacturing well-paying jobs that workers of various racial and ethnic backgrounds relied on.

inequality, job losses, and wage stagnation. Redressing inequality involves more than redistributive government monetary aid. At issue, as we have seen, are the bases of self-respect and social honor, not simply material inequality. The “welfare gap” must be approached and material inequality addressed in ways that demonstrate awareness of how unstable jobs, declining wages, and benefits undermine personal dignity, social honor, social and family life of all workers.¹⁷⁵ Economic insecurity, joblessness, low wages, homelessness, and overwork in multiple low paying jobs, affect people of all races, creeds, and gender. But, so do the lack of voice and status associated with the decline of economic and civil society and the lack of representativeness or receptivity to social needs of political society.

Progressive democratic political parties must demonstrate solidarity with working people, wherever they live and whoever they are, by framing issues in concrete honest political-economic terms and devising programs that aim to restore the bases of self-respect. The contemporary “revolt of society” should be taken up and framed in comprehensive universalistic inclusive solidaristic terms and the counter-movements cropping up locally to racist sexist nationalisms should be aided by democratic politicians committed to social justice and local empowerment. This should entail government projects to develop infrastructure, local investment, transport systems, new future oriented environmentally sound industries, retraining, jobs programs, inexpensive high quality education, and other projects that enhance instead of undermine social respect. It should also support a living wage, decent benefits, and universal health care, better working hours, voice on the job through a variety of forms of workplace “democracy,” and restoring the rights to organize and strike for all workers. Put differently, economic society must be revitalized and local efforts on the ground should be taken up by political parties and supported by national programs. Part of such a response has to entail not only reflexive continuation of the welfare state but the revival of associations and organizations in economic society that give voice to working people, be they unions, workplace representation, and representation of stakeholders on corporate boards, with determination, society-wide collective bargaining, or new institutions representing stakeholders on the national level of the polity.

Most people accept that government must protect against corporate economic power and predation to ensure a fair-playing field. They also accept that it should regulate business for public purposes like environmental and consumer protection.¹⁷⁶ Few endorse the oversized influence of Wall Street and corporate capital in American political life, or transnationally.¹⁷⁷ Many citizens feel that government policy disproportionately reflects the preferences of the affluent. They are right. “Dark money” plays an outsized role in politics, undermining democracy and the public interest.¹⁷⁸ It is important to expose these billionaire-funded anti-regulatory “free market” networks and lobbyists that captured and eviscerated the US Republican Party, driving it to embrace of right-wing| extremism and affective political polarization.

Relevant demands must be framed in terms of general values and universalistic models that avoid discriminatory or derogatory substantive distinctions along the lines of race, gender, ethnicity or religion that the word “welfare” invokes. Indeed, in the USA, the successes of right-wing conservatives in popularizing negative attitudes towards government and “welfare” have long turned on the racially coded and gendered distinction between means-tested cash

¹⁷⁵ Paraphrasing Gest, *The new minority*, 199.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 195ff; Williams, *White working class*, 100ff.

¹⁷⁷ Gest, *ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ Mayer, *Dark money*.

handouts to the “lazy undeserving poor” and “earned” benefits like social security, unemployment insurance, and Medicare enjoyed by the hard-working, morally upright person.¹⁷⁹ The confusion about the role of government in providing the latter and many other benefits must be corrected. What Suzanne Mettler calls the “submerged state”—government mandated programs provided by private proxies or indirectly funded through tax relief—conceals the public source of the benefits while rendering them upwardly redistributive insofar as sophisticated and powerful stakeholders benefit at the expense of the citizenry at large.¹⁸⁰ To become well-informed active citizens, people must become aware of the public services, governmental provisions, and regulations from which they all benefit and of the political choices behind them. Future provisions, like comprehensive health care and lifelong job retraining, perhaps a basic minimal income, higher national minimum wages, sick leave, parental leave, infrastructure development including public transit in all regions, must be framed in universalistic terms and in visible government programs.¹⁸¹ Put differently, a progressive democratic identity politics aimed at reducing the welfare gap should turn on generalized principles, not on ascribed characteristics. But, they should accompany policies that address the anxieties and realities of job loss, and community disintegration when industries or corporations leave an area. They therefore should be coupled with labor market strategies that foster new local industries and offer retraining and mobility allowances.¹⁸²

This would go a long way in defusing the racialized polarization fueling the politics of resentment by providing bases of social honor and identity without reinforcing racial hierarchies. But, a universalistic approach must attend to gender and religion as well. Whatever disagreements people have over particular issues like abortion or contraception, certainly counter-framing can defuse many other aspects of the culture wars. For example, most women, whatever their class, racial or religious background, oppose violence against women. People of all strata can support pro-family policies like paid leave for parents and caregivers of the sick and elderly, universal preschool, and daycare. Everyone was once a child, everyone needs care and schooling and everyone is likely to need care as an adult at some point of their lives. Violence and harassment are hardly group specific and are not endorsed openly by any class or race. Equal pay for equal work and equality of opportunity are two universalistic principles that a wide variety of social strata can endorse. Professionalism is an important source of social honor as is the sense that one is doing needed work or improving society through one’s work. Having voice regarding work issues, aside from material compensation, is also important to self and social esteem. Indeed, contemporary labor revolts in the USA revolve as much around these concerns as they do the bottom line.¹⁸³ More subtle strategies could revalue the comparable worth of low-paid jobs coded female—in the service industry, teaching, health care—by increasing their compensation and recoding them as socially crucial and important work that both men and women do. This could help address the status anxieties of men who enter these expanding sectors.

¹⁷⁹ Skocpol and Williamson, *The tea party*, 54–82.

¹⁸⁰ Mettler (2011), 40, 121–123.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.; Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How democracies fail*, 28–29, 204–231; Williams, *White working class*, 100–126.

¹⁸² Levitsky and Ziblatt, *ibid.*, 204–231.

¹⁸³ Scheiber (2018), analyzing labor unrest by teachers, nurses, doctors, and professors whose voices and expertise have been ignored in reform projects and managerial decisions and even in hiring of untrained people to do professional jobs. This can be framed as an issue of public esteem and against economic colonization of professional calling and vocation.

As for religious identity politics, here too, there is much room for counter-framing and realignment. It may be that a discrete, older segment of the white Christian evangelical community is deeply identified with right-wing racist, patriarchal, heterosexual political identity, and the right wing of the Republican Party. Certainly, African Americans' recent flight from the white evangelical churches they joined not so long ago confirms this suspicion.¹⁸⁴ This sort of politicization may have also triggered the recent decline in the white evangelical population. The exodus of youth from the Churches can be explained by their rejection of politicized religious identity. They declare themselves as “nones,” i.e., with no religious affiliation, on recent surveys.¹⁸⁵ Many do not share their parents' and official church views regarding patriarchy, LGBTQ rights, government regulation, and welfare policies. Some view such stances as anti-Christian. Indeed, many devout religious evangelicals are uncomfortable with political litmus tests and partisan political identification with the Republican Party. They doubt that their religious beliefs comport with many of the stances of the extreme right Republican political identity, especially regarding religiously coded white anti-immigrant racist nationalism. Liberal democrats should exploit these tensions to foster new alliances among progressive religious believers. They can stress tolerant and egalitarian values in the respective religions while endorsing whatever principles they share with political secularists. Interfaith progressive coalitions have existed in the past to combat injustices, such as poverty, racism, slavery, and nativist exclusionary nationalism and to defend immigrant rights. Shared principles and values can again be framed as what is best and most true of the national identity of liberal democratic polities.

But, it is also crucial to be attentive to the international/global level. It is clear that we need a new conception of the international order that stands as a viable alternative to the exclusionary populist ethno-religious nationalism that is rushing into the void left by the crisis and decline of neo-liberal hegemony. Hyper-globalization and global austerity politics have to be replaced with the reflexive continuation or rather return to an international system that improves on the old Bretton Woods model (sans colonialism or neo-colonialism) so that varieties of welfare state capitalism or social democracy or even democratic socialism are allowed to emerge. This requires abandoning the global economic policies that enhance the power of global financiers, transnational corporate capital, and the global managerial super-rich and undermine progressive public spirited domestic tax policies, eviscerate regulatory efforts oriented to the public good (environmental and redistributive), and foster extreme inequality and a race to the bottom to attract corporate investment. Whether this would require a global tax on capital as Piketty proposes among other reforms of flows the international system, I am not equipped to say but it is clear that the legal code of global capital has to be revised if domestic projects of societal self-protection and the further democratization of liberal democracy are to succeed.¹⁸⁶

Unless, such reframing is tried and succeeds, unless the habits of the heart are cultivated in a new, inclusive civic culture that attends to the need for respect and solidarity on the part of everyone, liberal constitutional democracy may not survive the politics of resentment plaguing the first quarter of the twenty-first century.

End

¹⁸⁴ Robertson (2018).

¹⁸⁵ Pew, *Religious landscape survey*.

¹⁸⁶ Piketty, *Capital in the 21st century*, proposes a global tax. See Pistor, *The code of capital* (forthcoming, manuscript on file with the author) for a superb analysis of the role of law, domestic, international, and global in constructing capital in ways that prioritize markets over governments and the interests of firms over public-oriented social policy, along with other suggestions for reform.

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