CHANGES IN AMERICAN CIVIL SOCIETY AND
THE RISE OF POLITICAL EXTREMISM

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Exactly What Kind Of Socialist Is Bernie Sanders?

August 27, 2015  7:03 AM ET
The Puzzle of Current U.S. Politics

- America should be moving toward moderation:
  - Elected an African American President in 2008
  - Republicans and their policies are not popular
  - Good recovery from 2008-09 Great Recession
  - Historically welcoming to immigrants

- In actuality:
  - Growing rightward-tilted partisan and ideological polarization
  - Racial and ethnic tensions on the rise
  - Challenges to “politics as usual” on both the left and right
  - One of two major parties is nominating a bullying, ethno-nationalist for President – a man who took the lead in challenging President Obama’s legitimacy as an American
Three Questions for this Lecture

➢ The nature and roots of Trumpism -- and its takeover of Republican presidential politics.

➢ Why are challenges from the right more potent than from the left?

➢ Will Trumpism in the United States follow the path of Brexit in Britain?

My answers come from examining recent shifts in societal trends and civil society networks – as they interact with the U.S. federated, two-party political system.
Recent Societal Shifts Have Fueled Conservative Identities and Political Potentials

- An era of rapid immigration – sparking white nativist fears
- A changing religious landscape – encourages defensive mobilization by white Evangelicals
- Sharply rising economic inequalities (top pulling away; 80/20 gaps) fuel class tensions and give the very wealthy means and motivation to mobilize politically
Figure 1. Number and Percent of Immigrants in the U.S., 1900-2010; Plus Census Bureau Projections to 2060

Census Bureau: In 2023 the immigrant share of the U.S. population will hit its highest level in U.S. history (14.8 percent), and continue to rise.

How U.S. Nativists See the Future....

Components of U.S. Population Growth

- New immigrants above replacement level and their descendants: 571 million
- Growth from 1970 Americans and replacement-level immigration

Data: www.NumbersUSA.com and U.S. Census Bureau
Changing U.S. religious landscape

Between 2007 and 2014, the Christian share of the population fell from 78.4% to 70.6%, driven mainly by the declines among mainline Protestants and Catholics. The unaffiliated experienced the most growth, and the share of Americans who belong to non-Christian faiths also increased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faith</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mainline Protestant</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>-3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>-3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Protestant</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>+1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, other world religions and other faiths. Those who did not answer the religious identity question, as well as groups whose share of the population did not change significantly, including the historically black Protestant tradition, Mormons and others, are not shown.

SOURCE: 2014 Religious Landscape Study

Pew Research Center
Figure 1
Income Gains Widely Shared in Early Postwar Decades — But Not Since Then

Real family income between 1947 and 2012, as a percent of 1973 level

Source: CBPP calculations from U.S. Census Bureau data

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities | cbpp.org
Decomposing Top 10% into 3 Groups, 1913-2011

Source: Piketty and Saez, 2003 updated to 2011. Series based on pre-tax cash market income including realized capital gains and excluding government transfers.
Societal shifts matter, but impact depends on civic networks in the US non-parliamentary, federated, two-party political system

- Spanning many states, white Evangelical Christians have embraced a GOP identity and faithfully turn vote in all elections

- Nativist fears have spread to many states where new arrivals are a significant but not overwhelming presence

- Politicized social identities pit metropolitan areas versus rural and exurban areas

- Push-back against rising economic inequality is limited because labor unions are in sharp decline – and now concentrated coastal/urban/liberal states
% of the adult population that self-identifies as a Christian Right adherent

Source: Pew Forum, 2007; Analysis by Public Religion Research Institute, 2010
White Christians, as a proportion of the electorate

- General Elections
- Midterm Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>General Elections</th>
<th>Midterm Elections</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'92</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>'94</td>
<td>70</td>
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<td>'96</td>
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<tr>
<td>'14</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where Each U.S. State’s largest immigrant population was born......
For historical context: the pattern a century ago....

Note: Countries are defined by their modern-day boundaries, which may be different from their historical boundaries. Russia and the former USSR countries are combined in this analysis, even though the Soviet Union was only in existence between 1922 and 1991. Birthplace is self-reported by respondents. Arizona and New Mexico became states in 1912. Alaska and Hawaii became states in 1959. Sample size in North Carolina is too small to analyze in 1910.

Source: Based on Pew Research Center tabulations of 2009-2011 American Community Surveys and 1910 Census, IPUMS.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Local Tea Party Groups in the United States

Number of Tea Party groups per million people in each state, and location of largest Tea Party groups.

Data from nationwide survey of local Tea Party websites, spring 2011.
Percent of U.S. Workforce in Unions, 1973-2013

Source: Lawrence Mishel, “Unions, Inequality, and Faltering Middle-Class Wages,” Economic Policy Institute, August 2012.
As private sector union rates fall, public sector share increases.
Chart 1. Union membership rates by state, 2013 annual averages

(U.S. rate = 11.3 percent)
Wealthy elite donors as well as popular forces affect U.S. politics and policymaking – both as individuals and through new organizations.

Money and people tilt right, but billionaires and millionaires are individually and collectively active on both ends of the U.S. political spectrum.
Wealthiest One Percent of One Percent Share of All Publicly Known U.S Campaign Contributions
(= about 25,000 of 150 million registered voters)
Key Features of U.S. Donor Consortia – such as the Koch Seminars and the Democracy Alliance

- Continual giving by members
- A time horizon beyond individual election cycles
- Focus on a wide range of political endeavors and policy issues
- Focus on supporting fields of organizations, not just candidates
- A major social component
Figure 2. Donor Participation in Koch Seminars and the Democracy Alliance

0 100 200 300 400 500 600

1.5 DA Partner units
Koch seminar attendance
Figure 6. Fundraising by the Democracy Alliance and the Koch Seminars

- **Democracy Alliance donations from Partners to recommended groups**
- **Koch seminar pledges**
The Evolution of Koch Core Political Organizations
Idea, Policy Advocacy, Donor Coordination, Constituency Mobilization, Utilities

- Cato Institute
- Mercatus Center
- Charles G. Koch Foundation
- Citizens for a Sound Economy
- 60 Plus Association
- Center to Protect Patient Rights/American Encore
- American Energy Alliance
- Koch Seminars
- Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce
- Americans for Prosperity/ AFP Foundation
- Generation Opportunity
- Libre Initiative
- Concerned Veterans for America
- Themis/i360
- Aegis Strategic

(previously Citizens for a Sound Economy)
Right-wing donors – especially those operating through the Koch network – have **hollowed out the Republican Party and pulled its agendas toward the ultra-free-market right.**
Shifting Organizational Resource Allocations on the U.S. Right
2002 to 2014

2001-02 budget shares
- Republican Party committees: 53%
- Constituency organizations: 22%
- Non party funders: 6%
- Issue advocates: 12%

2013-14 budget shares
- Republican Party committees: 30%
- Constituency organizations: 26%
- Non party funders: 26%
- Issue advocates: 7%
- Think tanks: 11%
Republicans pull away from the center

Average party ideology scores in the House, 1879–2014

Source: Poole and Rosenthal
MAKING SENSE OF TRUMPISM

- Republican economic extremism is unpopular – and was not the priority of grassroots Tea Partiers.

- In 2012, unhappy right-wing voters could not coalesce, but from the summer of 2015, Trump took advantage of media celebrity to attract plurality support with anti-Mexican, anti-Muslim themes.

- GOP weakness and media dynamics opened the way.

- Trumpism = “Make America Great Again!” plus tax cuts for the wealthy, economic nationalism, hints about preserving elderly social benefits, and promises to the Christian right and the National Rifle Association.
According to various studies: Trump and Sanders coverage was overwhelmingly favorable; Clinton coverage was mostly negative.
Warmer feelings about Trump among Republicans critical of immigration, growing diversity, Islam

Among Republican and Republican leaning registered voters, # of degrees more warmly toward Donald Trump (on a 0-100 feeling thermometer) associated with each of the following positions/characteristics

Growing number of newcomers from other countries threatens U.S. values
  Islam more likely than other religions to encourage violence  8
  Bad for country that blacks, Latinos, Asians will be majority of the population  8
  Businesses make too much profit  6
  Poor people have it easy because of government benefits  4
  Economic system in U.S. unfairly favors powerful  2
  Homosexuality should be accepted  1
  Society just as well off if marriage and family aren't people's priorities  0
  Diplomacy is best way to ensure peace  0

Republican identifier  8
  Male  7
  Age 50+  7
  No college degree  4
  White, non-Hispanic  2
  Household income $75k+  1
  Conservative  0

Note: The number shown is the number of degrees more warmly (on the 0-100 feeling thermometer) an individual holding this view or characteristic feels toward Donald Trump compared with an individual who has the opposing view (or different characteristic), controlling for all of the other factors in the model. Numbers in bold indicate a statistically significant difference at the 95% confidence level. Those in grey do not reach statistical significance at the 95% level.

Source: Survey conducted April 5-May 2, 2016.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Billboard of a Trump-inspired Independent Congressional candidate in Tennessee
Divergent Fates for Two Anti-Party Insurgencies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanders Challenge</th>
<th>Trump (Temporary) Takeover</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- White college-educated, liberal and/or young voters – tilted male</td>
<td>- White older, less educated voters -- tilted male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Appeal to economic populism</td>
<td>- Appeal to ethno-nativism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advantaged by media attraction to controversy.</td>
<td>- Advantaged by media attraction to controversy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not a “revolution,” but a typical challenge in Democratic primaries</td>
<td>- Took advantage of fragmented field and Republican weaknesses in the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>primaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Used Dean/Obama model of repeat-salaried-donor fundraising</td>
<td>- Rallies and free media: worked in the primaries, but a weakness in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the general election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rallies and ads; little organizing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Impact on party agenda, but institutional challenges rebuffed</td>
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</table>
Will Trumpism prevail like Brexit?
Trumpism and Brexit

**Similarities**

- White national identity politics – based on mobilization of older, native voters angry and fearful about economic and (especially) sociocultural changes
- Immigrants c. 13% in both Britain and USA
- Splits over nativism weaken conservative parties, Tories and GOP

**Differences**

- U.S. electorate much more racially diverse – with blacks and Latinos very opposed to Trump
- Democratic Party more robust than Labour
- 2016 turnout may be high in liberal and immigrant-heavy states
- Electing a president in a federated system vs. registering views on a single national referendum
What next?

- In USA, Trump will likely be defeated and ultra-free-market elites and the Christian right will try to reestablish joint control of Republican politics.

- Both U.S. parties will remain vulnerable to populist anger as long as neither addresses rising inequalities.

- Britain may face leadership crises and UK breakup.

- Will nativist revolts spread and undo Euro institutions?

So far, the US is proving both more vulnerable to ethno-nationalist populism – and more resilient in coping with it.