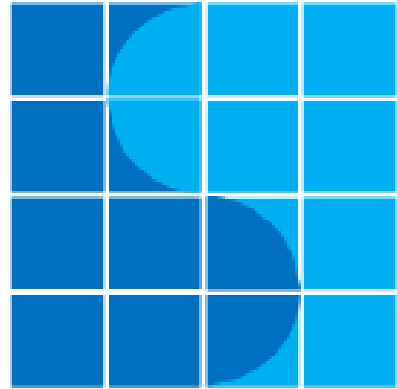


Trajectories

Newsletter of the ASA
Comparative and Historical Sociology Section
Vol 32 No 1 · Spring 2021



Chair's Introduction: Special Issue on the 2020 US Elections

Mabel Berezin
Cornell University

First, I want to acknowledge what a privilege it is to lead this section—even during these challenging times. Zoom fatigue is real and a virtual ASA in August is not quite the same as the spirited and collegial moments that in person discussion and interaction create. Yet—here we are. Our section is moving forward in multiple ways that I will outline more fully in our summer newsletter. In the meanwhile, we continue to work on increasing our membership, exploring the possibility of a section journal and program planning. I am in awe of the research, books and articles as well as public

sociology that our members produce. I encourage you to make sure that you notify us of your work. Send these notifications to our website chs.recent.pubs@gmail.com.

Second, I want to thank the editors for helping me plan and realize this special issue of *Trajectories* on the 2020 US Presidential election.

It has been a year since COVID-19 hit, followed by one extraordinary event after another—*Black Lives Matter* protests in the summer and the improbable and seemingly never-ending Presidential election of 2020. These events

SECTION OFFICERS

CHAIR

Mabel Berezin, *Cornell University*

CHAIR-ELECT

Nitsan Chorev, *Brown University*

PAST CHAIR

Anthony S. Chen, *Northwestern University*

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Marisela Martinez-Cola, *Utah State University*

COUNCIL

Cybelles Fox, *University of California, Berkeley*

Josh Pacewicz, *Brown University*

Adam Slez, *University of Virginia*

Aliza Luft, *UCLA*

Karida L. Brown, *UCLA*

Marco Garrido, *The University of Chicago*

STUDENT REP.

Simeon J. Newman, *University of Michigan*

Kristin Foringer, *University of Michigan*

WEB EDITORS

Şahan Savaş Karataşlı, *University of North Carolina*

Shani Davis, *Columbia University*

Perdana Roswally, *Northwestern University*

NEWSLETTER EDITORS

Efe Peker, *University of Ottawa*

Peter Ore, *University of Arizona*

Baş Büyükokutan, *Koç University*

Mathieu Desan, *University of Colorado, Boulder*

CONTENTS

- [Page 2](#) **Polarized Futures and the 2020 Election**
by Stephanie L. Mudge
- [Page 4](#) **Why Trump Lost and What Democrats Need to Do to Ensure 2016 was the Fluke and not 2020**
by Richard Lachmann
- [Page 7](#) **White Christian Nationalism: The Deep Story Behind the Capitol Insurrection**
by Philip Gorski
- [Page 10](#) **Cross-national Parallels and Contrasts in Democracy's Travails: America's Trumpian Experience**
by Robert M. Fishman
- [Page 14](#) **Fascism, Trump and the 2020 Presidential Election: Compared to What?**
by Mabel Berezin

will provide us as historians and comparativists grist for our research projects and writings for years to come. We have exciting panels planned for ASA that address various aspects of these events—what we can learn from the past and how we can think about the future.

The Presidential election and the challenge to our democratic institutions that it posed takes center stage for this edition of our newsletter. It is hard to list all of the challenges it posed in a brief *Chair's Letter*. For me, the refusal to accept the results of the election—even now; and the attempt at an internal coup of the government on January 6 is more than enough to categorize the 2020 election as extraordinary. And this does not include the intense polarization and disillusion in the United States that gave rise to MAGA politics; the vast increase in social inequality that continues seemingly unabated; the new legitimacy of paramilitary groups—the list goes on. I keep reminding myself that our democratic institutions did hold—even if our collective social and political problems are not solved.

For this issue of *Trajectories*, I invited comparative historical sociologists to write short essays reflecting on the election based on their research experience. The essays clocked in at over 2000 words! All are engaging and all open the door to more discussion. Stephanie Mudge reflects on polarization and how it will affect our future politics. Richard Lachmann reflects on the intersection between capitalist development and public policy. Philip Gorski discusses the White Christian Nationalism and its past, present and future effects on American politics. Robert Fishman provides a Europe/US comparison that digs into the media trope that united Trump and every rightwing event in Europe since 2016. Lastly, I address the growth spurt in fascism studies that Trump generated in the last four years.

I invite you spend some time reading and engaging with these carefully crafted essays. For this reason, I am keeping my introduction

short. In these days, time is our most precious resource.

Polarized Futures and the 2020 Election

Stephanie L. Mudge

UC Davis

If we are willing to set aside the truly horrifying circumstances surrounding the 2020 election from beginning to end—a big ask—and focus on certain selected facts, one could dare to argue that U.S. democracy is alive and kicking. After decades of alienation and demobilization up until 2008, voter turnout as a percentage of the voting-eligible population in 2020 exceeded 66%—a rate unseen since the [turn of the 20th Century](#). Voter turnout increased *in every state* in the country, according to [Pew Charitable Trusts](#). Early voting among younger-generation Latinx voters increased by [more than 300%](#) relative to 2016. Numbers aren't in on Black voter turnout, but all signs point to [unusually high figures on that front, too](#). Big tech firms began to show some glimmers, long overdue, of a [sense of democratic and civic responsibility](#)—even if it meant taking measures that work against their bottom line. The 117th Congress, record-breaking in many respects, features an all-time high of [141 women members \(26.4%\)](#) and more [racial/ethnic diversity](#) than any Congress in history. And despite an unprecedented assault on the integrity of democratic institutions led by the President himself, those institutions by and large withstood the test—for now.

Yes, I know. What about the horrors of January 6th? What about the fact that [46.8% of votes—more than 74 million](#)—were cast for a President that trafficked in racism, anti-science, xenophobia and corruption, and who may well run again in 2024? And then there are the 33 states that have, since the 2020 election, introduced a whopping [165 bills aimed at restricting the vote](#), not to mention the heart-sinking tidbits that appear on our social media feeds like [regressive and anti-democratic homeschooling](#) and images of a [militarized](#)

[Capitol](#) on-guard against deepening far-right and white supremacist threats.

Often times the term “polarization” refers to partisan rancor and the increasingly vast divide between red and blue. But I would argue that we should think about polarization in a much broader way—what we might term a *polarization of possible futures*. Depending on where we look, how we think and where we get our news, the political present may look like a regressive hellscape of racist autocratic backsliding or the emerging terrain of a new era of democratic forward progress—one in which younger generations and historically marginalized groups lead the way.

Indeed, for each of the horrors outlined above, there are important counterpoints (with the exception of January 6th, which has no silver lining). Biden is neither populist, nor charismatic, nor especially progressive, and yet he won against a populist rival with a deeply loyal base by a margin that, for some, qualifies as a “landslide victory”—one that featured impressive historical achievements, including the flipping of Georgia to the Democratic column for the [first time since 1992](#). For every bill out there aimed at restricting voting access (across 33 states), there are [at least three other bills aimed at expanding access](#) (across 37 states). For every image of homeschooling as a hotbed of anti-democratic, anti-feminist conservatism there is counter-imagery of a generation of homeschooled graduates who actively uphold [democratic and civic virtues](#). Meanwhile, as committed fiscal conservatives are increasingly marginalized in a Trumpifying Republican Party and (some) Democrats seem ready, finally, to return to an embrace of proactive spending initiatives, the age of austerity—and the obscenely winner-take-all economy that was its complement—is losing its grip. The notion that caring for a family isn’t real work worthy of pay seems to be [on its way out](#). Some corporations and foundations that have never been especially well-known for their progressive radicalism are [changing their tune](#)

on the urgency of climate change and are funding academics—even sociologists!—to [counter and reverse neoliberal logic](#).

If we take all that in, it starts to seem that the most striking thing about the 2020 election, the lead-up to it, and experience since is not that they decisively showed where we’re headed, but rather that they unveiled a range of future pathways that is more wide-open now than during any time in living memory. Historical sociologists might even conclude that we’re looking at a turning point the likes of which hasn’t been seen in generations, comparable more to the 1930s than the 1960s.

How do we know which of our polarized futures is most likely? That’s not a question I think we can answer right now. But I do think that if we take in the whole political landscape, rather than viewing it from within our political and media bubbles, the picture is not as grim as some would have it. Much depends on dynamics within the parties: how far the Trumpification of the Republican Party progresses, what that does to Republican electoral prospects in the longer term, and whether Trumpification finally drives Republicanism into the anti-democratic *cul-de-sac* that now seems to be its logical end-point; on the Democratic side, the question of whether the fragile truce between its youth-dominated “progressive” wings and the party’s more senior ranks of moderates and Clinton-era holdovers can hold is crucial, as is the question of whether Democrats’ slight—probably temporary—Congressional advantage will translate into meaningful institutional shifts toward securing voting access, reversing racial injustice, bolstering organized labor and improving the economic situations and prospects of the long-suffering U.S. working and middle classes.

On these last questions, as someone who has spent a lot of time thinking about how the ostensible late-twentieth-century victory of democratic capitalism became, in practice, a victory of capitalism over democracy—in social

democratic and center-left hands, no less—I wouldn't say recent history gives us a lot of reasons to be optimistic. The argument that I settled on, in a nutshell, was that politicians, like the rest of us, act on the world on the basis of how they understand it, and by the later twentieth century dominant factions among “progressives” and “social democrats” understood the world in terms of what markets' interests would allow, which helps to explain why the once-optimistic era of the “third way” now looks like the widespread self-sabotage of center-left parties. In the U.S. case, did this have to do with the increasingly detached, elite-dominated, money-driven world of electoral politics? Yes, surely—but the U.S. political class has always been elite-dominated, and yet there was a time when many of its members thought in very different terms. Were market-centered worldviews mere recognition of financializing economic realities? Sure, to some extent—but let's remember that political elites of many partisan stripes helped to usher that reality in; they were not merely bystanders. In other words, we could make the argument that the beliefs came first and the reality followed.

If this analysis is right, the question is how dominant figures inside Democratic networks ‘see’—and especially how they understand the horizons of the economically possible in the COVID context and (hopefully) post-COVID future. And here I am very cautiously optimistic—not because I have much faith in Democratic Party elites, but because the avenues into those networks seem to have opened up and multiplied in recent years. To the extent this continues to push out the boundaries of the possible in new progressive directions, the better our possible futures look in otherwise dark times.

Why Trump Lost and What Democrats Need to Do to Ensure 2016 was the Fluke and Not 2020

Richard Lachmann

State University of New York

There are two main explanations for Trump's 2016 victory and for his voters' enduring loyalty. One sees his support as largely racist, a reaction by white voters against having been governed by a Black man for eight years and what many of them regard as repeated insults from privileged elites. The other focuses on Obama's neoliberal policies, which led to a tepid recovery from the 2008 financial collapse and the spectacle of massive bailouts for banks but not for mortgage holders or the unemployed combined with total impunity for the rich crooks who caused the crisis. Of course, in a nation with a huge electorate, both those motives along with others animated millions of voters. And we need to recognize that voter suppression, ubiquitous rightwing media outlets, and the bias of the Electoral College have been essential to give any Republican in this century a realistic chance of being elected president. (Gerrymandering and the concentration of Democratic voters in compact urban districts benefit Republicans in races for Congress and state legislatures.)

In 2020 Trump received eleven million more votes than he had in 2016, while Biden exceeded Hillary Clinton's total by fifteen million. The depressing interpretation is that millions of new voters flocked to Trump despite his catastrophic failure to address the health or economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, his inability to ever reach 50% approval, and his ostentatious dishonesty, corruption, crudeness and debauchery. The glass half full view is that Biden's 51.3% was the highest percentage a challenger to an incumbent president has received since FDR in 1932. And Trump was the first incumbent since Herbert Hoover to lose the presidency and both houses of Congress for his party in a single term.

Both perspectives get at essential realities of US politics today. It is incredibly hard to dethrone a president, so Biden's victory reflects the electorate's acknowledgement of Trump's gross record of failure. Trump was the first president, again since Hoover, to end his term with a net loss of jobs. The GDP growth rate during Trump's term was the lowest since Hoover's. He failed to deliver on his 2016 promises of a vast infrastructure plan or to restore industrial jobs. His only significant legislative achievement, the 2017 tax cut bill, received negative approval ratings in every poll, a clear difference from the public reception of the Bush and Reagan tax cuts, and perhaps a sign of public recognition that Trump's tax cuts, even more than Reagan's and Bush's, go almost entirely to the very rich and to corporations.

And yet...we need to remember that Trump's economic failures, general ineptitude, and knack for hiring cranks and fools were compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. I think it is almost certain that without the *deus ex machina* of a pandemic the economy would have been good enough, and Trump's incompetence and callousness not blatant enough, to allow him to win an Electoral College victory even as he would have joined Bush in 2000 and himself in 2016 in winning the presidency while losing the popular vote. After all, if Trump had gotten 80,000 more votes in Georgia, Arizona, and Wisconsin, he would have tied Biden with 269 electoral votes for each, throwing the outcome to the House where Republicans hold a majority of states, and which would have given Trump the presidency. So the real question then becomes, how can we explain so many Americans' modest expectations of their presidents?

Trump's initial election and his enduring support from more than 40% of the electorate are grounded in a decades-long failure of presidents, and American government more broadly, to deliver benefits for ordinary people. Except for Obamacare, there has not been a single significant addition to social benefits

since the Johnson administration. When Bill Clinton touted the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, which provides 12 weeks of *unpaid* leave, as one of his major achievements we were deep in the realm of the pathetic.

As has been endlessly reported, median income has stagnated since the 1970s. Life expectancy and educational attainment have plateaued in contrast to every other rich country and many much poorer ones. The system for paying for medical care has become ever more baroque and open to grifting even with Obamacare. Student debt has risen over \$1 trillion in the past twenty years. At the same time, the ability of the rich to benefit from tax cuts, bailouts, subsidies, and contracts has become ever more open.

Republicans have been masterful at undermining confidence in the idea that elections can matter for anything other than packing courts and asserting the superiority of "real" Americans against the Democrats' multiracial cosmopolitan coalition. Using the filibuster and other parliamentary mechanisms, Republicans have prevented Democratic presidents from delivering on their promises no matter how modest. Rightwing judges have blocked administrative measures. The US state relies much more than other wealthy nations on regulation and provisions in the tax code to deliver social benefits and to protect citizens. Such measures inevitably become ever more complex and open to manipulation by lobbyists who, unlike ordinary citizens, have the time and expertise (or money to hire experts) to manipulate agencies, including the IRS, to lock in special benefits and undermine broadly worded laws that proclaim the intention of guarding citizens' health, safety, and ability to work and consume free from theft by their employers and the corporations from which they purchase goods and services.

Democrats in recent decades have been unambitious in their reform proposals. With the great exceptions of Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, Democratic presidential

candidates in the post-Reagan era have mimicked Republicans and devoted their efforts to explaining why they couldn't enact benefits citizens in other rich countries take for granted. Instead, they have invited voters to participate in "conversations" about race and poverty, discussions that they admit are intended to enlighten rather than to solve problems. (Biden, in response to Sanders' challenge and in contrast to Clinton in 2016, offered surprisingly expansive proposals even as he evoked nostalgia for the supposedly golden Obama years.)

Voters get almost no help from journalists in understanding the complexities of government decisions or in seeing the implications of legislation and budgetary and administrative measures. Americans have little idea how the government spends money. Among the most extreme and enduring errors is the belief, revealed in poll after poll, decade after decade, that foreign aid makes up at least 20% of the federal budget (the real number is under 1%). Democratic presidents do little to clarify matters. Obama, in perhaps his worst act of political malpractice, never articulated the difference between his Recovery Act of 2009 and Bush's bank bailout in late 2008.

All this understandably led many voters to yearn for a strongman who could "drain the swamp" (in Trump's own words) and "knock heads together" (in someone else's words). Trump issued a continuing stream of promises and boasts in his campaigns and during his presidency. Despite legacy newspapers' and television networks' escalating willingness to label Trump's claims as lies, polls and interviews suggest that the 74 million who voted for Trump in November took his violent rhetoric as evidence of his willingness and success in confronting "special interests." That term is vague enough to encompass both the billionaires that Trump claimed he knew and had the wealth and audacity to deny as well as China, immigrants, demanding minorities, and snooty coastal elites. In the absence of real

knowledge about how government works, it became easy for Trump's supporters to mistake inhuman measures against immigrants and violent rhetoric against China for real action against those and other targets.

President Biden and Congressional Democrats are giving clear indications that they have absorbed the lessons of the Clinton and Obama years. Only massive spending and dramatic reforms can cut through the miasma of misinformation and ignorance that allows so many voters to believe that the Republicans are the party of "ordinary people" or that there are no essential differences between the two parties and therefore they might as well go with the party that indulges their hatreds and puts up candidates who at least offer a good show. Warnock and Ossoff's success in campaigning on the promise to deliver \$2000 relief checks emboldened Democrats to refuse Republican "compromises" that would have reduced that amount or otherwise significantly cut the \$1.9 trillion total of the new relief bill. If that measure is followed by further achievements such as a massive infrastructure bill oriented toward green energy, a \$15 minimum wage, and strong regulatory measures that offer palpable protections to workers and consumers, then voters will be able to see clear differences between the two parties and will have the motivation to vote for Democrats at all levels in coming elections.

Democrats can't count on media, even that produced by sympathetic journalists, to explain how those measures will impact ordinary Americans. Politicians will need to tout those accomplishments themselves again and again. The 2020 election demonstrates that even the most egregious failures and grossest behavior will not cost Republicans enough votes to ensure their defeat. Democrats need to produce dramatic programmatic achievements and to publicize those relentlessly. Otherwise, we will see a repeat of the 2010-16 election cycles. Republicans will be able to distort Democrats' accomplishments, a task made easier if those

successes are meager or hidden in convoluted legislation. Unless and until voters see improvements in their lives, they will continue to blame an array of enemies that Republicans will vilify in colorful and violent language.

The dilemma Democrats face today is not unique to the US or to this moment. Left parties win support when they institute policies that deliver results that make real and legible differences in peoples' lives. The more complex the programs, especially when they are not universal and have elaborate procedures for deciding who qualifies, the harder it is for voters to see those results and the easier it is to believe that someone else is benefitting at their expense. The target of resentment differs from country to country. In the US that someone else most often is seen as Black. Thus, the lack, or progressive weakening, of universal social benefits provides fuel to sustain old and animate new prejudices.

As unions weaken in most rich countries and media become ever more concentrated and open to rightwing manipulation, voters lose access to institutions that can explain the implications of electoral and legislative choices. Biden and the current Democratic Congressional majority, like their counterparts in other countries, can overcome those limitations only with clear and ambitious programs that deliver benefits that are impossible for the broad public to ignore and therefore difficult for Republicans to distort.

For comparative historical sociologists, the post-Trump era provides an interesting case to test our theories on how policy is made and how voters understand their choices. For those of us who live in first world democracies (however limited) and who would like the next generation to have that same option, the decisions elected officials and ordinary citizens make hold much more than academic interest.

White Christian Nationalism: The Deep Story Behind the Capitol Insurrection

Philip Gorski

Yale University

At first glance, the protesters who gathered around the American Capitol on 6. January seemed to be a motley crew. One observer espied: “Preppy looking country club Republicans, well-dressed social conservatives, and white Evangelicals in Jesus caps...standing shoulder to shoulder with QAnon cultists, Second Amendment cosplay commandos, and doughy, hardcore white nationalists.” The symbolism on display also seemed like apples and oranges. One group erected a giant cross, another a wooden gallows. Someone in the crowd waved a “Jesus Saves” banner, while another sported a “Camp Auschwitz” hoodie.

On closer inspection though, the picture gets murkier, the lines harder to draw. Christians waved Trump flags. The neo-Fascist militia group known as the “Proud Boys” kneeled and prayed before plunging into the breach. Nor were such mixtures of Christian, nationalist and white supremacist symbols unusual. One man, decked out as a cosplay crusader, clutched a large leather Bible to his chest with skeleton gloves. What looked like apples and oranges turned out to be a fruit cocktail: White Christian Nationalism (WCN).

What is WCN?

WCN is, first of all, a story about America. In this story, America was “founded as a Christian nation.” It was founded by and for (white) Christians; and its laws and institutions are based on “Biblical” (i.e., Protestant) Christianity; or perhaps even breathed into the Founders' ears by God, Himself. This much is certain though: America is divinely favored. Whence its enormous wealth and power. Divine blessings lead to national obligations. America has been entrusted with a sacred mission: to spread religion, freedom and civilization – by force, if necessary. Today, that mission is endangered by the growing influence

and even the mere presence of non-Christians (also: non-whites) in America. White Christians must therefore “take back the culture” and also “the country.” Which are, after all, their rightful possessions. What White Christian Nationalists hear when Trump promises to “Make America Great Again”: “Make America Christian Again.” And, sotto voce, make it “White Again”, too.

WCN is not just a story. It is also a political vision, manifested in a set of “policy preferences.” Violence and retribution are central to that vision. As survey researchers such as Samuel Perry and Andrew Whitehead have shown, White Christian Nationalists tend to favor a strong military and capital punishment; they also strongly oppose gun control. Racial purity is also central to the vision. As Perry and Whitehead also show, WCN is strongly correlated with opposition to interracial marriage, non-white immigration and affirmative action. It’s not hard to see what’s white and nationalist about this vision. It’s more difficult to understand its roots in Christianity. Isn’t Christianity a religion of universal peace and brotherhood?

To understand how American Christianity became entangled with racism and violence, we first have to trace it back to its Scriptural roots. Those roots are threefold. WCN is not just one story, but a combination of three. The first is a Promised Land story based on the Old Testament. The New England Puritans saw themselves as the heirs of the Biblical Israelites. They imagined themselves as a “chosen people, and they came to see the “new world” as their “Promised Land.” For a while, they thought the native peoples might be one of the “lost tribes” of Israel. But as their relationship with the natives shifted from curiosity to hostility, the Puritan settlers recast the Indians as “Canaanites” or “Amalekites”, who were occupying “their” Promised Land.

The second story is an End Times story based on the Book of Revelation. For much of

Western history, most Christian theologians read that book in allegorical terms. The violent struggles it depicted between the forces of good and evil, they reasoned, actually represented the moral struggles that took place within the believer’s heart. But there were always some Christians who interpreted the text more literally, as a description of future events. Many Puritan radicals embraced such readings, and took them along to New England.

The two stories gradually fused together during the Puritans’ wars with the natives during the late 17th century. Puritan theologians such as Cotton Mather came to believe that the New World might be the central battlefield in the final struggle between good and evil foretold in Revelation. Needless to say, Mather placed himself and his Puritan brethren on the side of the good, and the Catholic French and their native allies on the side of evil. He and other Puritans likened the Indians to demons and depicted the Indian wars as blood sacrifices to an angry God. It was war -- the violent struggle between the English and the French and the Indians that some historians now refer to as the “Second Hundred Years War” – that welded Protestantism and Englishness together in the New World.

But how did Protestantism and Englishness get entangled with whiteness? To answer that question, we need to shift our focus to the south, to that other seedbed of American culture: The Colony of Virginia. There, and elsewhere, the most common justification for the enslavement of kidnapped Indians and Africans was that they were “heathens.” But this argument broke down in the late 17th century as some enslaved persons converted to Christianity and some white Christians sought to evangelize them. The problem was initially resolved by shifting the legal basis of slavery from religion to color: “Blacks” could be slaves; “whites” could not. It was then more fully resolved by creating a new theological bases for slavery. Perhaps the most influential was the “Curse of Ham.” Blacks were the

descendants of Noah's son, Ham, the argument went, and their color and enslavement were a result of the curse that Noah had called down on head. This is the third story: The Racial Curse Story.

It would be another century before WCN became American. Until the American Revolution, most colonists still considered themselves British. It was only after the Revolution, that they began to think of themselves as "American." Until that time, the term "Americans" was more often used to refer to the native peoples. So, one way that (white) Americans set themselves apart from their British "cousins" was by claiming to resemble (native) Americans. The American (man) was a little more savage, a little more violent, than his British forebears. He was, in a sense, the true heir of the Indian who was (supposedly) disappearing, and the true inhabitant of the "frontier." The white American had a trace of the red American in him.

WCN is what linguist George Lakoff calls a "frame." A frame is sort of like a bare-bones movie script. It "has roles (like a cast of characters), relations between the roles, and scenarios carried out by those playing the roles." Like a movie, it can be made and remade, with new actors and modified scenarios. The "frontiersman" becomes an "Indian fighter" and then a "cowboy." The scene shifts from Appalachia to Kentucky to Wyoming.

Or to Texas and California. There, new actors entered the scene. Some did so involuntarily. Former citizens of Mexico did not choose to become Americans. Others came freely. Though immigrants from China and Japan did not find the freedom they were promised. Instead, they were cast into roles they did not audition for: "savages" and "heathens" unfit for "freedom" or even "civilization." As the scene of the action followed the "frontier" to the South and the West, the actors changed but the roles remained the same.

It was not until the "closing of the frontier" and the beginnings of empire, that the script fundamentally changed: White Protestant Nationalism was reborn as WASP imperialism. The revisions were as follows. First, as Catholics and Jews from Southern and Eastern Europe and Ireland were begrudgingly admitted into the charmed circle of whiteness, various shades of whiteness were distinguished: the whitest of the white were "Anglo-Saxons" (or, alternatively, "Nordics" or "Aryans.") Second, the Promised Land became the Whole World. The motive was no longer conquest; it was "spreading freedom", "civilization" and, of course, Christianity. All this as an act of benevolent "self-sacrifice." Third, the End Times were indefinitely postponed. The Kingdom of God on earth would be achieved through the spread of Christian civilization – whether by peaceful or violent means.

The Spanish-American War of 1898 marked the beginning of WCN qua WASP Imperialism. By the end of the Cold War in 1989, WCN mutated yet again to become (White) Judaeo-Christian Imperialism. The parentheses around "white" reference the shift from the explicit white supremacism of the Jim Crow era to the "colorblind" racism of the post-Civil Rights Era. "Judaeo-Christian" gestures towards the "trifait" vision of American pluralism that took root during World War II. "Imperialism" points towards the fundamental continuity that runs through 20th century American geopolitics: an empire of soldiers, missionaries and businessmen, but an empire all the same.

What really changed during the second half of the century was not so much the script as the scriptwriters. Since the Colonial Era, the dusty old script of WCN had been passed down from one generation of liberal Protestants to another: Congregationalists and Presbyterians, Episcopalians and even Unitarians. By the 1970s, though, they had abandoned WCN – and religion, too, in many cases. Liberal Protestants were becoming secular progressives. A rising

phalanx of white evangelicals eagerly seized the torch. They began fiddling with the script. They brought back the original version of the End Times Story with its battles between good and evil and natural and supernatural forces. With the WASPs out of the way, they went back to good old plain white – which, they insisted, was no color at all. And while they remained firmly committed to American Empire qua military power, they expressed reservations about international institutions that might limit US “sovereignty.”

They had a good run but a short run. By the early aughts, they were losing control of the narrative”, as we now say. The problem was simple: the number of white Protestants was dwindling. They were no longer able to dominate the scene. Immigration and secularization were the cause. The presence of a Black family in the White House added insult to injury. The Financial Crisis of 2008 poured salt in the wound. The howls of pain from conservative white men in the American “heartland” were the loudest.

Enter Donald Trump, Golden Escalator, stage right. At first glance, he seemed an unlikely champion of WCN. But “Christian” had often been outvoted by “White” and “Nationalist” in the past, and the selection of Mike Pence made it unanimous. Trump’s Schmittian friend/enemy politics lined up easily enough with WCN’s good/evil frame. His sociopathic bloodlust and gladiatorial performativity stirred dormant phantasies of white male violence. And then there was his unapologetic and barely concealed racism. “The Blacks”, “The Mexicans”, “The Muslims” – Trump’s vision was the opposite of colorblind. And much as Trump loved “winning”, he was no fan of empire. That was for “losers and suckers.” In short, Trump preached an old-time religion of White Christian Nationalism.

There was just one problem: White Christian Nationalists could no longer muster a majority of the popular vote. They were saved by the

Electoral College in 2016 – literally “saved”, they thought. But not in 2020. And surely not fairly? The lies of their “anointed” leader aside, how could they be losing control of “their” country? Trained to see hidden forces behind political events in “End Times 101”, they were quick to see them behind Trump’s loss, too. And if a “sacred election” were stolen from you, wouldn’t you try to “stop the steal”? So they tried. Unsuccessfully.

Where does this leave us?

I am told that the Chinese character for “crisis” combines the characters for “danger” and “opportunity.” The danger is obvious: the Republican Party has become an anti-democratic party prepared to use all available means to retake power. If they succeed, the experiment of American democracy, however imperfect, is over. The opportunity, too: to undertake a Second Reconstruction that will – finally – realize Martin Luther King’s vision of a “nation of nations, a people of peoples” or, more plainly, a multiracial democracy. It will require, not just a rewrite of the WCN script, but it’s consignment to the dustbin of history.

Cross-national Parallels and Contrasts in Democracy’s Travails: America’s Trumpian Experience

Robert M. Fishman

Carlos III University, Madrid

The near-death experience of American democracy during the Trump presidency holds extraordinary significance for all who care about the principles of equality and freedom, but also in a rather more specific way for scholars who seek to understand patterns of similarity and difference between countries in their historical trajectories of change. The recent assault on democratic norms and procedures in the United States put in place both parallels, or points of convergence, and elements of divergence between American politics and the public life of a number of polities elsewhere that previously confronted the challenge of antidemocratic movements and

parties. This juxtaposition of points of convergence and divergence, along with several crucial elements of fundamental singularity in the American institutional basis for democracy, have contributed to making the American case rather difficult to understand for those lacking case knowledge. However, at a deeper level, the points of contrast and similarity between the American experience with Trump and European experiences with antidemocratic movements – or at a minimum with *ademocratic* politicians – can be seen as reflective of two underlying commonalities: (1) the powerful linkage between battles over the boundaries of inclusion in the polity and struggles over the fate of democracy itself; (2) the important cultural components of such battles, and of the dynamics shaping major points of inflection in the political system. Europe, like the United States, has been subject to deep and polarizing cultural conflicts over the boundaries of inclusion within democratic polities. Although such battles are often taken as normal fare within democratic systems, the triumph of exclusion can, at worst, fundamentally undermine the democratic order.

I suggest four basic lessons of the broad pattern of similarities and contrasts between the United States and Europe in the recent travails of democratic politics: (1) The fundamental importance, for democracy's fate, of struggles over the boundaries of inclusion; (2) the cultural dimension of such battles with their focus on unwritten assumptions, forms of discourse and shifting types of *practice*; (3) the juxtaposition of certain cross-case shared elements with other nationally specific components of how democracies confront the challenge raised by forces of exclusion; (4) certain distinctively American elements of the recent near-death experience of democracy in the United States. In what follows, I briefly address all of these themes, beginning with components of the American experience that are especially difficult to comprehend for many Europeans who are unfamiliar with specificities of American history and institutional form.

Several elements of American distinctiveness that have come into clear view in the events of the last four years – and especially in struggles over the 2020 election – have contributed to the difficulty of understanding American politics fully for those lacking a great deal of case knowledge, whether of a scholarly or simply a practical sort. The enormous range of variation in election procedures across governmental jurisdictions in the United States quite obviously stands in strong contrast to the prevalence of national standards and procedures in Europe. The guidelines shaping electoral participation in the United States vary not only by state but also by county in so many ways that “uninitiated” observers – especially outside the United States – can easily find the empirical substance of the case to be quite confusing. But in a more consequential sense, the rooting of American electoral practice in what should be thought of as a pre-democratic Constitution (Dahl, 2001) that has been *adapted to democracy* – without fully expunging its pre-democratic components – underpins numerous elements of the story of the 2020 election that are difficult to fully understand without a short course in American politics. Prior to the events of January 6, 2021, Trump's efforts to stretch the anti-democratic *misuse* of constitutional provisions on state involvement in the designation of electors well beyond recent precedent had already clearly established the magnitude of this recent challenge to democracy. In that sense, distinctive American components of the story point to a national disadvantage in the defense of democracy, but fortunately that disadvantage has been outweighed by other case-specific factors that have strengthened the American defense of democracy. Some features of all national histories in the struggle for democracy are at least partially distinctive, but many other factors are shared by most if not all cases.

An unmistakable lesson of the Trumpian challenge to American democracy is indeed shared with many other cases: Struggles over

the *bounds of inclusion* – or to put the matter slightly differently, conflicts about efforts to read large numbers of citizens *out of* the legitimate borders of political life – impinge on essentially all elements of democratic life. Those battles often find expression in laws and regulations, but at their core they are cultural conflicts that involve often unstated assumptions and many informal types of practice. Cultural conflicts over inclusion constantly interact with major distributional struggles and essentially all other elements of democratic life, configuring the “playing field” on which political competition takes place. Although it is often both analytically and empirically useful to differentiate between different dimensions of democracy (Fishman, 2016), the way the bounds of inclusion are drawn in a democratic polity holds strong implications for all meaningful dimensions of a democracy’s existence. Rhetoric that demonizes immigrants, those born to them, and racial and religious minorities has led to systemic political consequences extending well beyond the control of the border and the behavior of police. The discourse of exclusion has promoted not only limitations on voting rights, but also actions impinging on the very viability of a system based on the free expression of citizen preferences.

Among the types of severe damage inflicted by recent flagrant efforts at exclusion is the destruction of underlying cultural grounds for *mutual tolerance* between political adversaries – a crucial precondition for successful democracy in the classic formulation of Robert Dahl (1971). I argue that the recent growth within the Republican Party of both direct disloyalty to democracy and what Juan Linz’s pioneering formulation would conceptualize as causally crucial “semiloyalty” (Linz, 1978), has its antecedents in longstanding struggles over the breadth of inclusion. The Trumpian effort to aggressively reverse earlier triumphs of inclusion has involved a considerable intensification of the antidemocratic potential of efforts at exclusion. The specific institutional

forms taken by exclusion vary over time in the American case and between country cases, but tendencies to exclude large numbers of citizens from full rights in the system – typically rooted in a narrow and extreme version of ethno-national identity – have at their core a pervasive effort to define a country’s purported “national essence” in a way that excludes many from effective citizenship. Sociological scholarship on the cultural construction of both the national essence (Berezin, 2009) and the meaning of democracy (Fishman, 2019) has elucidated the importance of national histories for the country-specific contours of such struggles and their implications for democracy. The bounds of inclusion are reflected not only in legislation on voting rights but also in much else, including institutional practices regarding demonstrations and other forms of expression. Comparative analysis suggests how and why some country cases manage to achieve relative consensus in favor of inclusion whereas others do not (Fishman, 2019).

Cultural and political struggles over the bounds of inclusion in the polity – and in that sense over much of the substance of democracy – have assumed great importance in the United States and Europe in recent years. These struggles take on their nationally specific features, embedded in references to specific histories, but at the same time, they have much in common. This dimension of American democracy’s near-death experience is inescapable, but the significance of cultural conflicts over unwritten assumptions regarding inclusion has not been limited to the Trump years, or to the United States. Just as the United States has long been subject to efforts of the far-right to exclude large groups from full citizenship on the basis of race, religion or ideology, so too have many European polities suffered from *de facto* attempts to place large segments of their citizenry outside the bounds of recognized and legitimate political life.

Although many Europeans view Trump as a curiously and almost unintelligibly American

anomaly, in fact his challenge to inclusion – and to basic norms of tolerance – have strong parallels in Europe. Crucially, those parallels are to be found not only in the antidemocratic far right but also among other political forces. In the Spanish case, mainstream political actors on the center right – and even some closer to the center of the ideological spectrum – have supported proposed changes to the electoral system that would leave distinctively Basque parties without representation in the most important parliamentary body in Madrid, thereby drastically undercutting the ability of Spain’s representative democracy to successfully incorporate national minorities such as Basques and Catalans.¹ In political conflicts over the largest of Spain’s nationally distinctive regions, Catalonia, the exclusionary understandings of a major tradition in mainstream Spanish politics have badly complicated potential pathways to the solution of the Catalan problem within the Spanish state, creating severe strains for Spanish democracy (Fishman, 2019; chapter 6).

During the Trump presidency – and especially in its waning days – the United States appears to have come closer to a full breakdown of representative democratic politics than at any other point in the modern era, thus transforming the country’s politics in a fashion that holds points in common with the grim history of periodic democratic failure experienced by a number of continental European polities such as Spain, Portugal, Germany, Italy and others. But many of the elements of near breakdown in American democracy have been substantially different from those experienced by European democracies. The small far-right militias and

extremist groups of the January 6 attack on the Capitol in Washington look far different from the typically more coordinated and unified forces of the European far-right in episodes of democratic collapse or near breakdown. If we focus instead on hyper-nationalism, as opposed to democracy’s fate as such, the US never gave a majority of the popular vote to the standard-bearer of extreme nationalism, whereas that has been the case in several European instances, including the triumph of Brexit in the UK and several cases of right-wing populist success in Eastern Europe. Both in the twentieth century’s interwar period and in the recent instances of hyper-nationalist assaults on democratic or liberal principles, the forces of anti-democratic nationalism have been crucially, even if only marginally, weaker in the United States than in many other polities.

The inability of the Trumpian far-right to win more than 46.9% of the national vote even at what, as of now, stands as its electoral high-water mark in the 2020 election (surpassing Trump’s 2016 popular vote in both absolute numbers and percent, albeit obviously not in the Electoral College thanks to the increased unity of the forces of inclusion in 2020), places the American case in an interesting comparative light. Trump’s increase in support should be understood through the lens provided by extensive scholarly work that demonstrates the considerable advantage conferred by presidential incumbency – a factor that would be expected to increase Trump’s electorate in his 2020 campaign from the White House. The now classic model of political scientist Steven Rosenstone estimates the magnitude of the incumbent effect as a full 8% in added votes for an occupant of the White House seeking reelection (Rosenstone, 1983). One crucial component of the American story concerns the country’s (growing) demographic diversity and the way in which competing political forces have framed that underlying reality either as the basis for inclusion or exclusion. However, another fundamental question involves the resolve of those who favor the principle of

¹ The most important proposal of this nature, advanced by *Ciudadanos*, a center-right party that has at times searched for areas of agreement with the Socialists, would have shifted the basis for calculating proportionality in elections to the *Congreso de los Diputados* from Spain’s 50 provinces to one national electoral jurisdiction, thereby making it almost impossible for distinctively Basque parties to achieve representation in the country’s primary parliamentary body.

inclusion to unify around the strongest defender of that principle. A crucial difference between the elections of 2016 and 2020 concerned precisely that question – the degree of unity achieved by the political forces favoring a politics of inclusion. The explanation for outcomes such as this one, that is 2020’s increased unity of pro-inclusion forces in support of the Democratic nominee, are often to be found in the movements of relatively small pieces of the electorate. In the American case, that involves the role of suburbanites and of specific religiously-defined groups such as liberal Protestants and Catholics, along with many other segments of the national electorate. The extraordinarily complex constellation of factors shaping electoral outcomes in the United States held huge systemic implications in the election of 2020 – as will remain the case in the aftermath of that historic election.

References

- Berezin, Mabel. 2009. *Illiberal Politics in Neoliberal Times: Culture, Security and Populism in the New Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Dahl, Robert. 2001. *How Democratic Is the American Constitution?* New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Fishman, Robert M. 2016. “Rethinking Dimensions of Democracy for Empirical Analysis: Authenticity, Quality, Depth and Consolidation.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 19: 289-309.
- Fishman, Robert M. 2019. *Democratic Practice: Origins of the Iberian Divide in Political Inclusion*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Linz, Juan, 1978. *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and*
- Reequilibration*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Rosenstone, Steven. 1983. *Forecasting Presidential Elections*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Fascism, Trump and the 2020 Presidential Election: Compared to What?²

Mabel Berezin

Cornell University

In late 2016 in response to the widespread media narrative that linked Trump to Brexit and an array of European populists, I wrote a short essay entitled, [“Trump isn’t a European-style populist: That’s our problem”](#), in which I argued that the comparison between Trump and his supposed European counterparts was flawed. For the most part, European populists are career politicians who deploy a standard nationalist script to address any number of political issues. Their predictability as well as commitment to their national political institutions was their strength as well as their weakness. In contrast, Trump questioned the legitimacy of political institutions from the courts to the electoral system and denied the reality of facts. The essay concluded that Trump’s unpredictability made him “profoundly dangerous” and pointed to a rocky road ahead for American democracy.

I did not imagine back then that “dangerous” would take the form of Trump’s refusal to accept the results of the 2020 Presidential election. I did not imagine an attack on the US Capitol building engineered from inside the White House that included the possible assassination of the Vice President. I envisioned milder transgressions than the ones that culminated in the failed *coup* of January 6. As Trump’s behavior became increasingly contemptuous of democratic practice and norms

² This is a longer and updated version of “Political Ineptitude Tempered Trump’s Fascist Behavior,” that first appeared in *The Nation* (January 21, 2021).

and his rhetoric more inflamed, the populist comparison lost salience. In its place, a growth industry in public commentary on fascism developed. Academics (for example, Snyder 2017; Stanley 2018; Finchelstein 2020; Ben-Ghiat 2020; Churchwell 2020) as well as public intellectuals became laser focused on Trump's resemblance to a host of past and present unsavory political leaders with a weak attachment to democracy. In addition to analytic commentary, politicians and pundits deployed fascism as a political expletive. For example, after her speech at the Democratic National Convention, New York Congressperson Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez argued that "stopping fascism in the United States. That is what Donald Trump represents" was the major point on the national political agenda.

Did Trump's challenge to the 2020 election results and the willingness of his strongest followers not only to support this challenge but to commit seditious actions in support of them signal a fascist turn in American politics or merely an outlier event tied to Trump? Today, sequestered in Mar-a-Lago with loyalists and family around him, Trump appears to spend his time playing golf and plotting against Republican legislators who voted to impeach him. He no longer tweets about voter fraud because social media sites have banned him. Yet, his rambling two-hour CPAC speech on February 28 indicates that Trump has not given up on the "stolen election" lie or the dream of seeking office again. Trump's apparent unwillingness to leave the public stage suggests that now is a propitious moment to ask if fascism is the correct focus to understand the political meaning and consequences of the last four years.

In *Making the Fascist Self* (Berezin 1997), I argued that Italian fascism was more than the sum of its numerous public spectacles. There are lessons from this European past. As comparative historical sociologists, it is our job to figure out which lessons are meaningful.

Fascism in its national variations is notoriously difficult to define, making it susceptible to epistemic plasticity. As a concept, fascism tends to act as a "bridging metaphor" (Alexander 2003) for evil, violence and authoritarian behavior—whether it be political, cultural or social. Fascism is "fascinating" as Susan Sontag observed and recent history confirms. Trump's permanent campaign mode, his MAGA rallies and his complete disregard for governmental norms and practices evoke multiple dimensions of inter-war fascist politics and practice. The academic experts who have explored the similarities between Trumpian politics and the 1930s readily acknowledge that whatever Trump's autocratic proclivities, we do not have a Fascist regime—the events of January 6 notwithstanding.

Benito Mussolini coined the term fascism to denote a collectivist system of government. Giovanni Gentile, an Italian philosopher and Mussolini's Minister of Education, laid out the details for this new theory in an academic article in *Foreign Affairs* (1928). Fascism aspired to community and coherence—to eliminating the boundary between the state and the individual. Liberalism with its soulless individualism was as much its enemy as Marxism. Trumpism with its affinity for isolationism, free trade, and antipathy to government regulation makes no common cause with collectivism—no matter what form they take.

Trump is a showman—not a talented politician. Any astute politician—especially an aspiring autocrat, should have recognized the opportunity for power consolidation and electoral success that the COVID-19 pandemic afforded. The virus was democratic. Everyone was at risk. Even a half-hearted attempt to control the virus in March would have whittled away, if not erased, Biden's margin of victory. Trump's own pollster told him that citizens' primary interest was the virus and urged Trump to focus his campaign energies there (Dawsey 2021). Trump did not listen. Trump turned a

vehicle of political unification into one of polarization. His initial denial, rants against science and the “China” virus, and pitting states against states eventually assured his electoral defeat.

Dead loved ones coupled with lost wages proved more politically persuasive than angry tweets and MAGA rallies. Biden got this point. His inaugural team recognized the opportunity that COVID-19 offered to stage a public display of national cohesion to counter the polarization that plagued American politics for the last four years. On the eve of Biden’s inauguration, buildings in D.C. were lit to commemorate the lives lost to COVID-19. Biden and Harris and their spouses stood at the Washington Monument to participate in a moment of silence. At 5:30 pm, all Americans had the opportunity to participate in a moment of silence across the United States and church bells rang in ‘a national moment of unity and remembrance’ to commemorate the dead. Political ritual unifies as well as repels. The Tuesday evening commemoration unified, in contrast to the Jan. 6 insurrection that repelled. Biden and his team staged a political spectacle of unity. They understood that grief and tears are more powerful than the spectacle of disruption, anger and blood. In short, the period between November 6 and January 20 revealed that Trump lost on multiple levels while still managing to do much damage during his four years in office.

The debate over whether or not Trump is a fascist rings alarm bells but hides more than it reveals about the illiberal tendencies in contemporary American politics. Trump’s Presidency and the 2020 election is a Rorschach test that reveals all the fissures embedded in the landscape of American democracy.

First, our institutions held—but often, barely. The last four years have shown how elastic they are. Who knew that the head of the General Services Administration had the power to hold up a Presidential transition or that the

operations of the post-office could interfere with ballots? If Trump had been a slightly more rational person, how far could William Barr have pushed his vision of the unitary executive? Second, Trump encouraged and gave new legitimacy to networks of paramilitary “patriots” who use armed intervention and violence in local and national politics when they dislike the outcome of standard political practices. Paramilitary groups are not new. They have existed on the margins and in rural areas. Trump invited them in and they will not leave as he did. Today a group of *Proud Boys* is as likely to show up on the steps of state capitols as they recently did in Oregon, as in some minor protest in a rural backwater. Charlottesville was the beginning, not the end, of a new genre of organized racism.

Third, the developing idea that we dodged a bullet this time but there is a smarter more efficient Trump on the horizon has traction. Josh Hawley, the conservative Republican senator from Missouri, was the name that frequently came up on Trump 2.0 lists until he tried to stop the certification of the election results on January 6. But this is an open question. Hawley has not disappeared and there surely are other Hawleys out there.

To begin an analysis of Trump that extends beyond the cult of personality we have only to look at the 2021 Conservative Political Action Conference [CPAC]. Founded in 1974, Ronald Reagan was its first keynote speaker. CPAC is the voice of America’s ultraconservative Republicans. In 2021, Donald Trump was the keynote speaker for a conference whose theme was “American Uncancelled.” Three days of Trump adoration led up to the former President’s keynote address. No one at CPAC seemed to mind that Trump had asked followers to invade the United States’ Capitol a mere month before or that he was under investigation for all sorts of business fraud in the Southern District Court of New York. The principal takeaway from Trump’s talk was that he was not abandoning his claim that the election was

stolen from him. Claiming that “we won in a landslide,” Trump questioned the integrity of the Supreme Court that did not have the “guts to challenge” the election results. A second point was that Trump defined Trumpism as “great deals.” The straw poll taken before Trump’s speech revealed that 62% of CPAC attendees saw election integrity as a major issue; 97% liked Trump’s policy agenda; and 68% would be happy to see Trump as a candidate again.

Historian and legal scholar Samuel Moyn’s *New York Review* article, “The Trouble with Comparisons” (2020) argues that locating Trump’s election in the politics of the 1930s obscures more than it reveals and deflects public attention from our real problems. I too have questioned the analytic utility of the term fascism (Berezin 2019) to address our current moment. Yet, that does not mean we should be complacent. If Europe in the 1930s is not the best comparison point for the United States today, then we have to take on the challenging question of what an appropriate comparison would be. In contrast to the United States today, democracy was not deeply rooted in the countries that succumbed to fascist rule in the past. Trump and Trumpism has revealed a willingness on the part of leaders and citizens to chip away at the institutions, norms and values of our long established, if sometimes flawed, democracy. Trump told us that democracy did not matter and 74 million persons, not all of whom were fledgling fascists, were not sufficiently concerned to vote against him.

The failure to value democracy rather than the desire to embrace fascism is the greatest danger that Trump posed and continues to pose. The consequences of this undervaluation are ongoing. European fascism ended badly for all. Biden’s administration should give priority to the restoration of the belief in civic virtue and practice that affirms democracy in all its iterations as our core value. As comparative historical sociologists and citizens, we need to look for the correct comparisons. Our future as

a democracy depends as much on our academic work as our public political practices.

References

Alexander, Jeffrey. 2003. “The Social Construction of Moral Universals.” Pp. 11-84 in *The Meanings of Social Life*. NY: Oxford .

Ben-Ghiat, Ruth. 2020. *Strongmen*. NY: WW Norton.

Berezin, Mabel. 2019. “Fascism and Populism: Are They Useful Categories for Comparative Sociological Analysis?” *Annual Review of Sociology* 45(1):345–61.

Berezin, Mabel. 1997. *Making the Fascist Self: The Political Culture of Inter-war Italy*. Ithaca: Cornell.

Sarah Churchwell. 2020. “The Return of American Fascism.” *New Statesman*. <https://www.newstatesman.com/international/places/2020/09/return-american-fascism>

Dawsey, Josh. 2021. “Poor Handling of Virus Cost Trump His Reelection, Campaign Autopsy Finds.” *Washington Post* (February 1).

Finchelstein, Federico. 2020. *A History of Fascist Lies*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gentile, Giovanni. 1928. “The Philosophic Basis of Fascism.” *Foreign Affairs* 6: 290-304

Moyn, Samuel. 2020. “The Trouble With Comparisons.” *New York Review of Books* (May 19).

Snyder, Timothy. 2017. *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*. NY: Duggan Books

Stanley, Jason. 2018. *How Fascism Works*. NY: Random House.