4.3 — Corruption & Reform

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Growing Democracy

U.S. Popular Vote for President as Percentage of Total Population
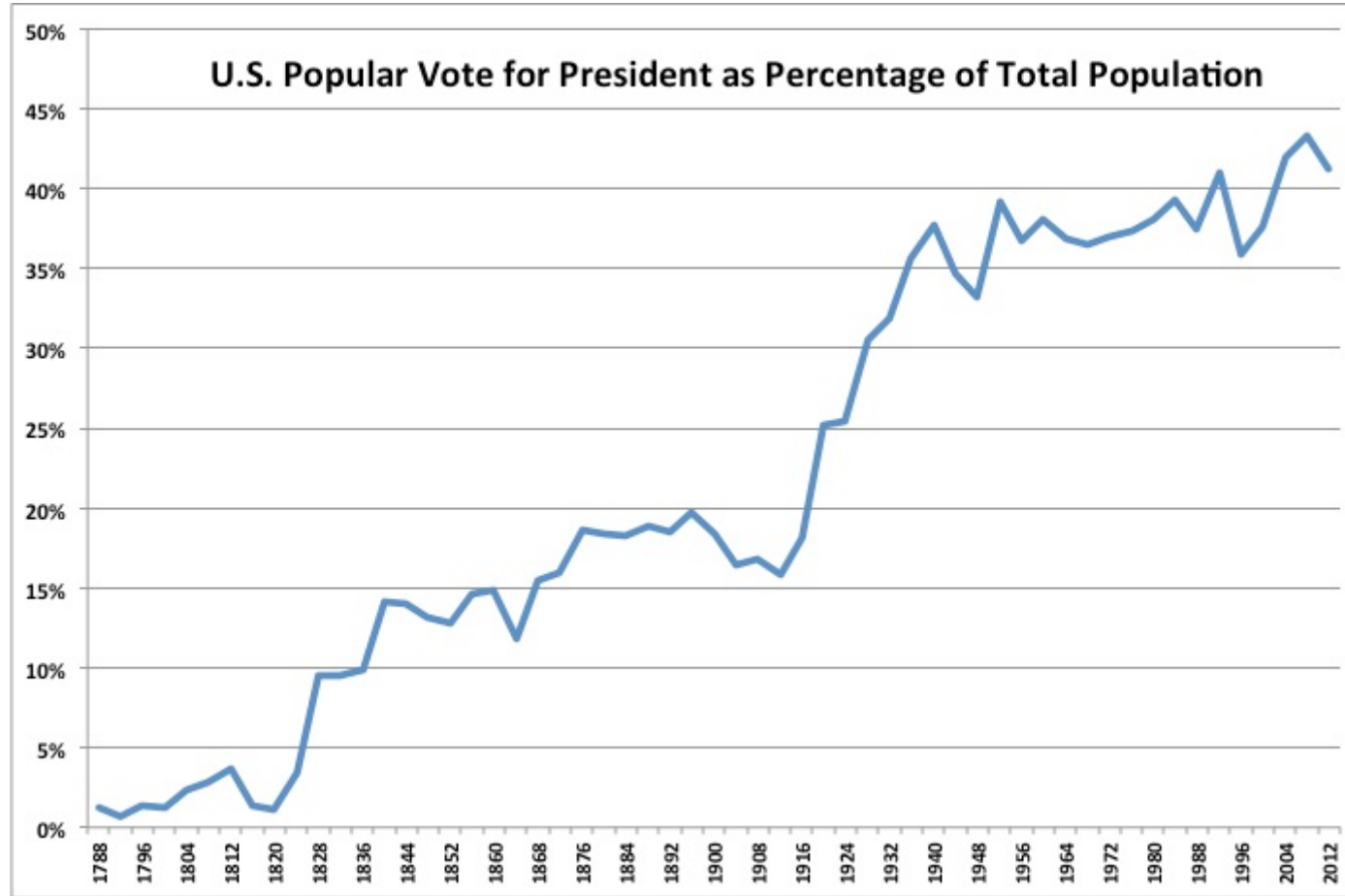
Reminder: Patronage and Political Machines

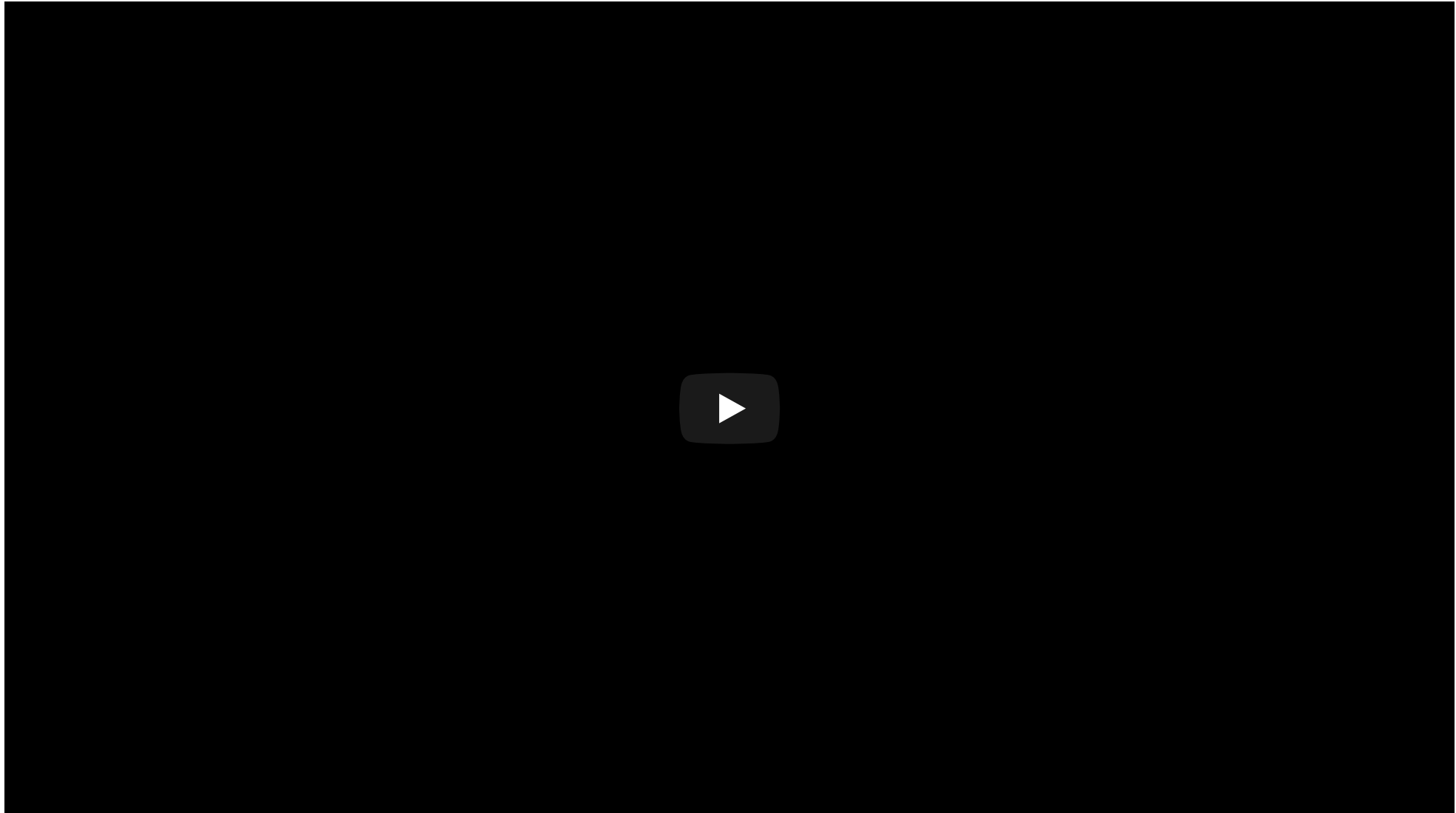- U.S. States and Federal Government was **clientelist**[1], no *professional* bureaucracy until the Pendelton Civil Service Reform Act of 1883

  - Political parties delegated public offices to political allies

- Cities governed by "political machines"

  - Vote buying, fraud, intimidation

[1] Also called "patronage" or "the spoils system".

"THAT'S WHAT'S THE MATTER."

BOSS TWEED. "As long as I count the Votes, what are you going to do about it? say?"

Reminder: Patronage and Political Machines

Reminder: Patronage and Political Machines

George Washington Plunkitt

1842-1924

"EVERYBODY is talkin' these days about Tammany men growin' rich on graft, but nobody thinks of drawin' the distinction between honest graft and dishonest graft. There's all the difference in the world between the two. Yes, many of our men have grown rich in politics. I have myself. I've made a big fortune out of the game, and I'm gettin' richer every day, but I've not gone in for dishonest graft—blackmailin' gamblers, saloonkeepers, disorderly people, etc.—and neither has any of the men who have made big fortunes in politics.

There's an honest graft, and I'm an example of how it works. I might sum up the whole thing by sayin': "I seen my opportunities and I took 'em."

Plunkitt of Tammany Hall, Ch. 1

Reminder: Patronage and Political Machines

George Washington Plunkitt

1842-1924

"[Reformers] mean well but [they] don't know how to make distinctions. [They] can't see no difference between honest graft and dishonest graft and, consequent, [they get] things all mixed up. There's the biggest kind of a difference between political looters and politicians who make a fortune out of politics by keepin' their eyes wide open. The looter goes in for himself alone without considerin' his organization or his city. The politician looks after his own interests, the organization's interests, and the city's interests all at the same time. See the distinction? For instance, I ain't no looter. The looter hogs it. I never hogged. I made my pile in politics, but, at the same time, I served the organization and got more big improvements for New York City than any other livin' man. And I never monkeyed with the penal code."

Plunkitt of Tammany Hall, Ch. 7

Rauch's Argument

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

"The politicos of our grandparents' generation did a pretty good job of governing the country, despite living in a world of bosses and back rooms and unlimited donations, and many of them understood some home truths which today's political reformers have too often overlooked or suppressed. In particular, they understood that transactional politics—the everyday give-and-take of dickering and compromise—is the essential work of governing and that government, and thus democracy, won't work if leaders can't make deals and make them stick," (pp.1-2).

Rauch's Argument

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

"[G]overnment cannot govern unless political machines or something like them exist and work, because machines are uniquely willing and able to negotiate compromises and make them stick.

"[P]rogressive, populist, and libertarian reformers joined forces to wage a decades-long war against machine politics by weakening political insiders' control of money, nominations, negotiations, and other essential tools of political leadership.

"[R]eformers' fixations on corruption and participation, although perhaps appropriate a long time ago, have become destabilizing and counterproductive, contributing to the rise of privatized psuedomachines that make governing more difficult and politics less accountable," (p.2).

Rauch's Argument

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

"[A]lthough no one wants to or could bring back the likes of Tammany Hall, much can be done to restore a more sensible balance by removing impediments which reforms have placed in the way of transactional politics and machine-building.

"[P]olitical realism, while coming in many flavors, is emerging as a coherent school of analysis and offers new directions for a reform conversation which has run aground on outdated and unrealistic assumptsion," (p.2)

Rauch's Argument

"Plunkitt remains relevant: he reminds us that governments, or at least well-functioning governments, rely not merely on formal legal mechanisms but also on informal political structures and intricate systems of incentives. No informal structures and incentives? No governance," (p.3).

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

Amateurs vs. Professionals in Politics

Amateurs vs. Professionals

James Q. Wilson

1931-2012

- Conflict between two groups in politics (*within each* political party!)

1. **"Amateurs"** or **"activists"**

2. **"Professionals** or **"the political class"** ("the deep State?")

Amateurs vs. Professionals

"A keen antipathy inevitably develops between the new and conventional politicians. The former accuse the latter of being at best 'hacks' and 'organization men' and at worst 'bosses' and 'machine leaders.' The latter retort by describing the former as 'dilettantes,' 'crackpots,' "outsiders,' and 'hypocritical do-gooders,'" (p.2).

Wilson, James Q, 1962, *The Amateur Democrat: Club Politics in Three Cities*

James Q. Wilson

1931-2012

The Role of Political Parties

James Q. Wilson

1931-2012

"[Parties] recruit candidates, mobilize voters, and assemble power within the formal government...If legal power is badly fragmented among many independent elective officials and widely decentralized among many levels of government, the need for informal methods of assembling power becomes great...[A]ll three party functions will in some degree be performed differently by amateur as contrasted to professional politicians," (pp.16-17).

Wilson, James Q, 1962, *The Amateur Democrat: Club Politics in Three Cities*

Amateurs vs. Professionals

James Q. Wilson

1931-2012

"[The professional] is preoccupied with the outcome of politics in terms of winning or losing. Politics, to him, consists of concrete questions and specific persons who must be dealt with in a manner that will 'keep everybody happy' and thus minimize the possibility of defeat at the next election...Although he is not oblivious to the ends implied by political outcomes, he sees...the good of society as a by-product of efforts that are aimed, not at producing the good society, but at gaining power and place for one's self and one's party," (p.4).

"Issues will be avoided except in the most general terms or if the party is confident that a majority supports its

Amateurs vs. Professionals

James Q. Wilson

1931-2012

"The amateur asserts that principles, rather than interest, ought to be both the end and the motive of political action...[The amateur] sees each battle as a 'crisis,' and each victory as a triumph and each loss as a defeat for a cause," (p.4).

"Whereas professional politicians attempt to avoid issues because the loyalty of their workers is commanded by other means, amateurs generate issues because there seems to be no other way to command these loyalties," (p.160).

Wilson, James Q, 1962, *The Amateur Democrat: Club Politics in Three Cities*

Amateurs vs. Professionals

James Q. Wilson

1931-2012

"Most generally, the amateur believes that political parties ought to be programmatic, internally democratic, and largely or entirely free of a reliance on material incentives such as patronage. A programmatic party would offer a real policy alternative to the opposition party. A vote for the party would be as much, or more, a deliberate vote for a set of clear and specific proposals, linked by a common point of view or philosophy of government, as it would be for a vote for a set of leaders. The programmatic basis of one party would, to some extent, compel an expression of purpose by the opposing party and thus lead toward the realignment of both parties nationally, with liberals in one and conservatives in the other," (p.358).

Wilson, James Q, 1962, *The Amateur Democrat: Club Politics in Three Cities*

Amateurs vs. Professionals

James Q. Wilson

1931-2012

"The need to employ issues as incentives and to distinguish one party from the opposition along policy lines will mean that political conflict will be intensified, social cleavages will be exaggerated, party leaders will tend to be men skilled in the rhetorical arts, and the party's ability to produce agreement by trading issue-free resources will be reduced," (p.358).

Wilson, James Q, 1962, *The Amateur Democrat: Club Politics in Three Cities*

Amateurs vs. Professionals

- **Professionals** are **repeat players** who work (in) the system for a living
  - build and maintain relationships with other politicians to get things done
  - focus more on making deals between various interest groups
  - realize the need to please enough of a majority to stay in power

Amateurs vs. Professionals

- **Amateurs/activists** are outsiders that care more about **issues**, justice, purity, than deal-making
  - want more democratic parties and primary processes
  - have no way to keep relationships with others except by their commitment to the issue
  - will *manufacture* issues and crises to keep like-minded people loyal
  - see deal-making as "selling out", suspicious of compromise

Polarizing Around Issues

Polarizing Around Issues
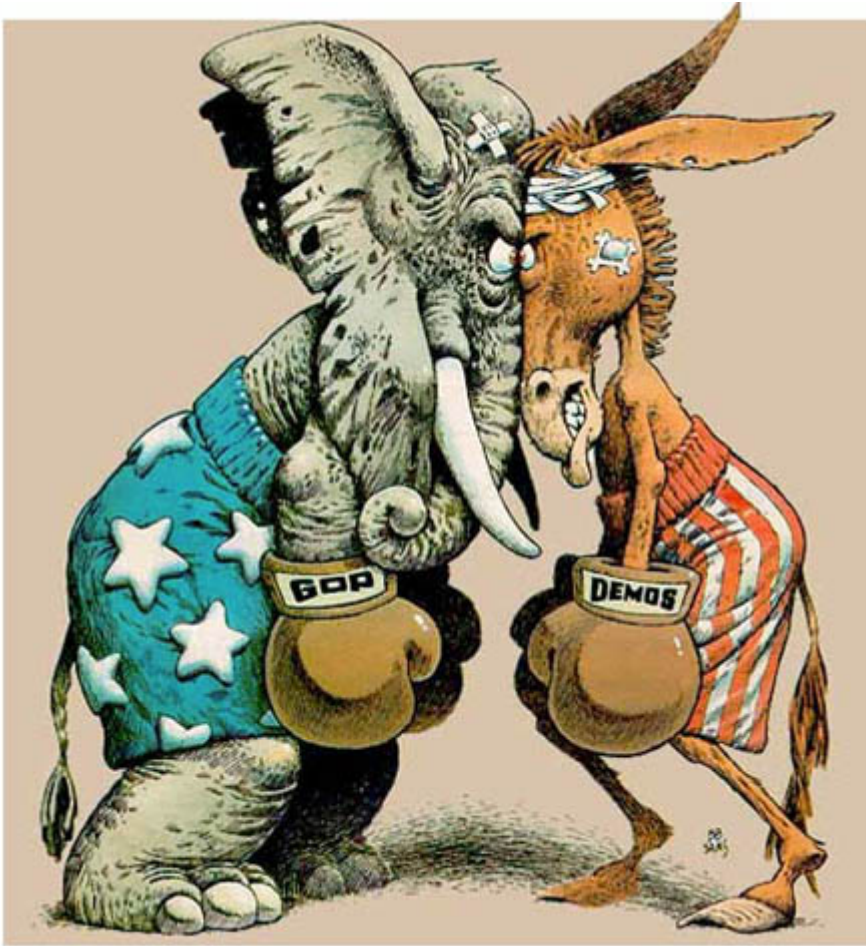
- Decades ago, many internal divisions within both the Republicans and Democratic parties on issues

  - conservative Democrats
  - liberal Republicans

- Today, issues have clear Democrat-side vs. Republican-side

- Politics becomes more ideological, meaning less compromise or deal-making

- Results: less governing gets done, more gridlock

Polarizing Around Issues

Democrats and Republicans More Ideologically Divided than in the Past

Distribution of Democrats and Republicans on a 10-item scale of political values
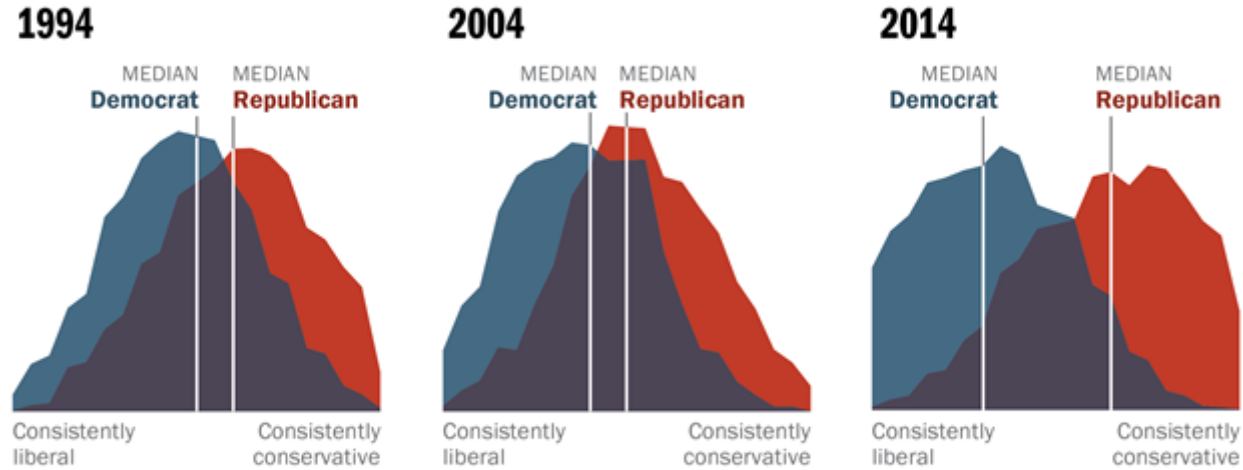
Source: 2014 Political Polarization in the American Public
Notes: Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions (see Appendix A). The blue area in this chart represents the ideological distribution of Democrats; the red area of Republicans. The overlap of these two distributions is shaded purple. Republicans include Republican-leaning independents; Democrats include Democratic-leaning independents (see Appendix B).
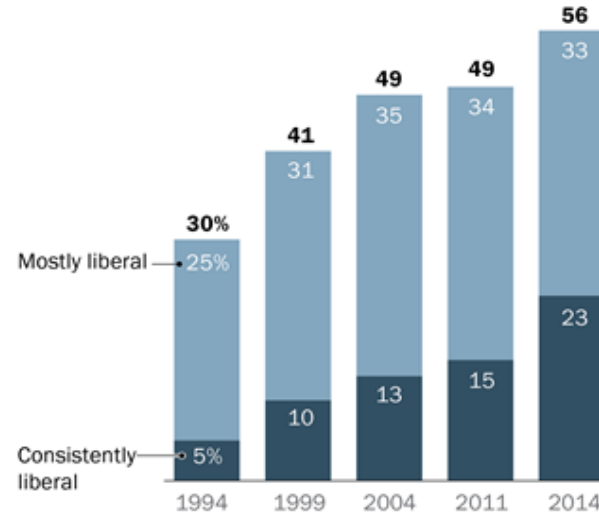
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source: Pew Research Center (2014)
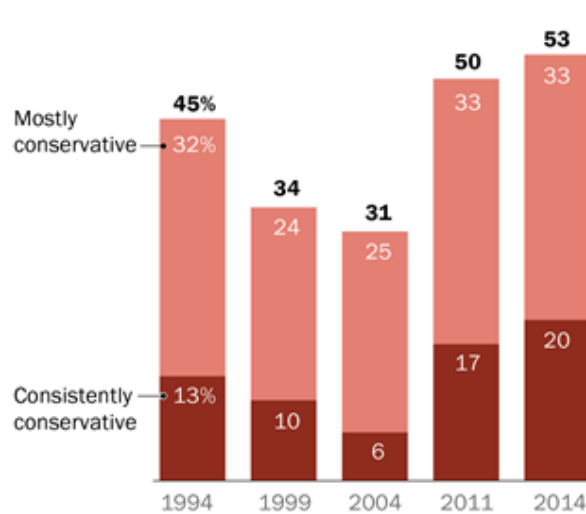
Polarizing Around Issues

More Democrats Take Liberal Positions, More Republicans Take Conservative Positions

Percent of Democrats with political values that are...

Percent of Republicans with political values that are...

Source: 2014 Political Polarization in the American Public
Notes: Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions (see Appendix A). Republicans include Republican-leaning independents; Democrats include Democratic-leaning independents (see Appendix B).

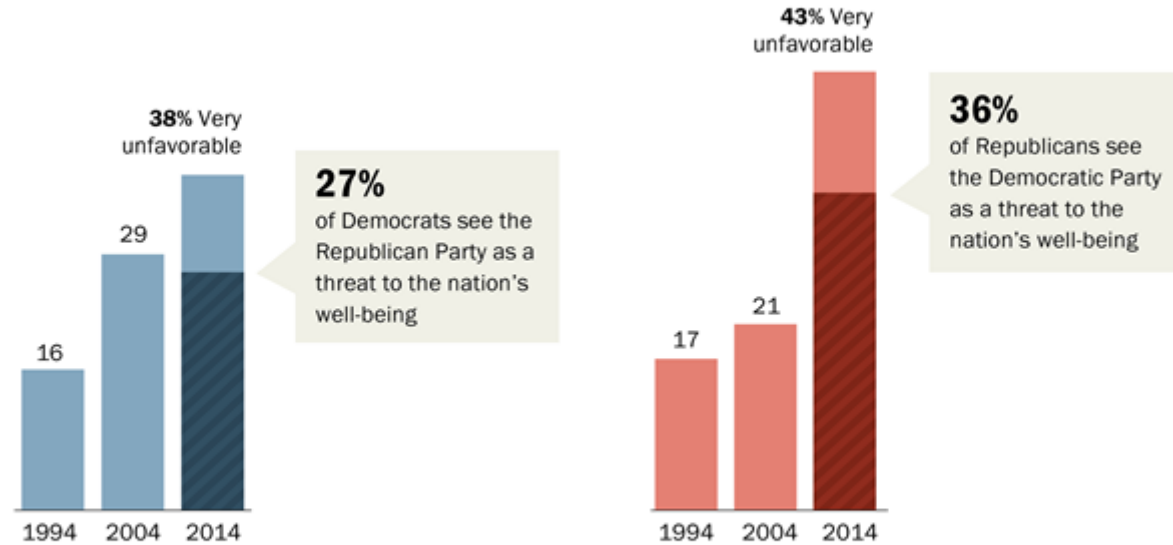**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**

Source: Pew Research Center (2014)

Polarizing Around Issues

Beyond Dislike: Viewing the Other Party as a 'Threat to the Nation's Well-Being'

Democratic *attitudes about the* **Republican Party**   **Republican** *attitudes about the* **Democratic Party**

38% Very unfavorable

27%
of Democrats see the Republican Party as a threat to the nation's well-being

16   29

1994 2004 2014

43% Very unfavorable

36%
of Republicans see the Democratic Party as a threat to the nation's well-being

17   21

1994 2004 2014

Source: 2014 Political Polarization in the American Public
Notes: Questions about whether the Republican and Democratic Parties are a threat to the nation's well being asked only in 2014.
Republicans include Republican-leaning independents; Democrats include Democratic-leaning independents (see Appendix B).
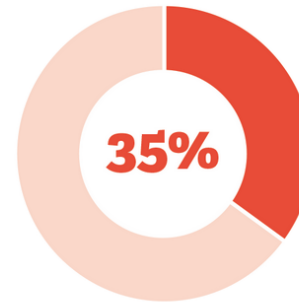
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source: Pew Research Center (2014)

Polarizing Around Issues
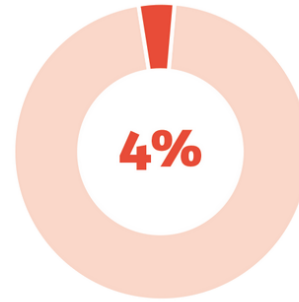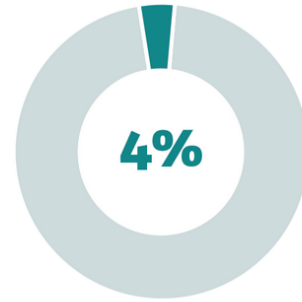
In 1960, 4% of Republicans and 4% of Democrats said they would be displeased if their son or daughter married someone of the opposite party. **5**
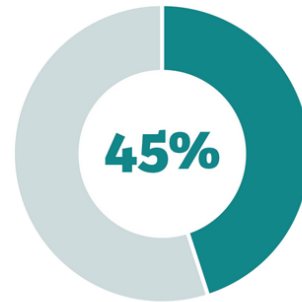
In 2019, 45% of Democrats said they would be unhappy if their child married a Republican and 35% of Republicans say they would be unhappy if their child married a Democrat. **6**

Source: Facing History and Ourselves (2014)

Polarizing Around Issues

Why Twitter is so Toxic

Emotion shapes the diffusion of moralized content in social networks
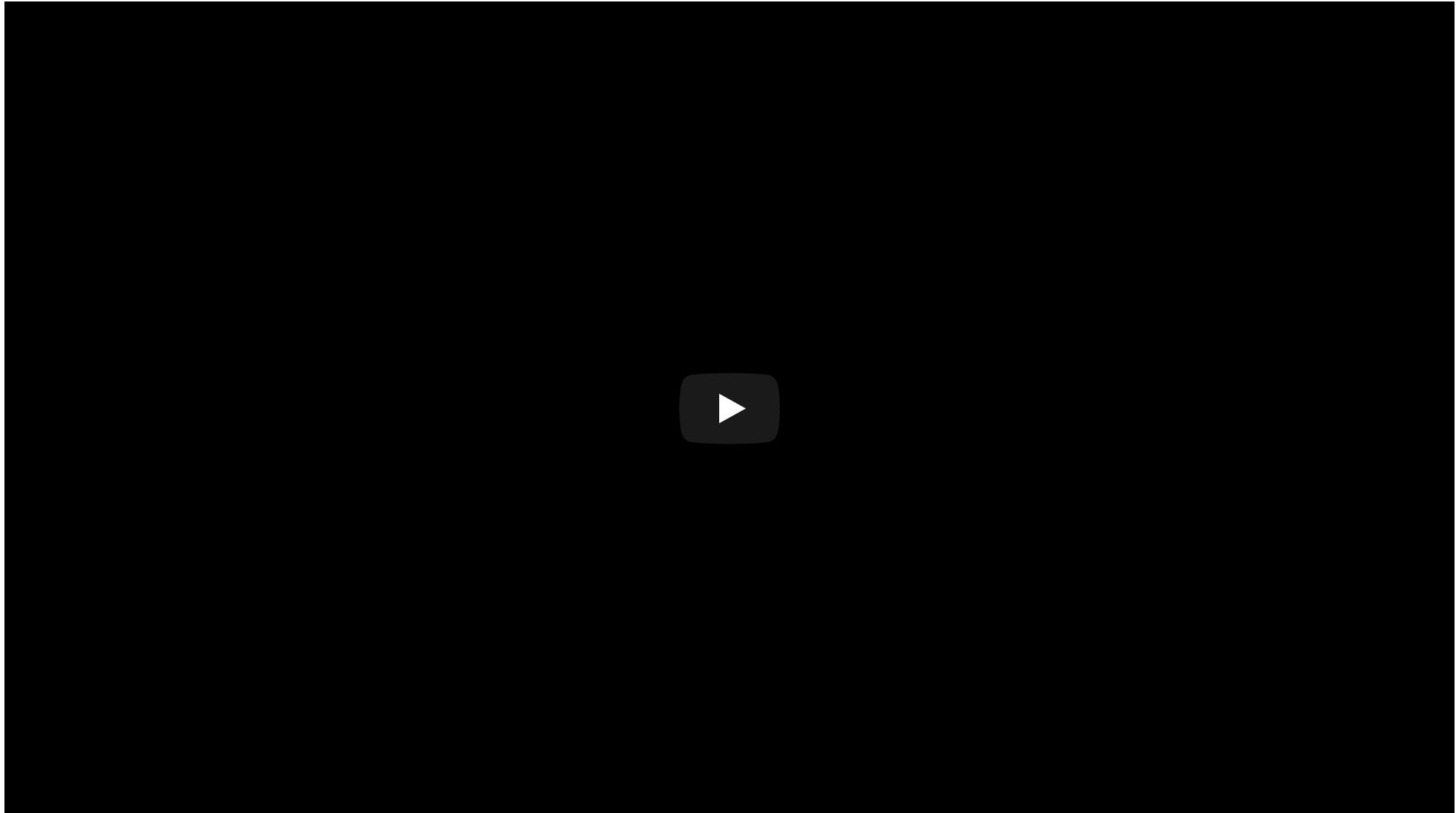
William J. Brady[a], Julian A. Wills[a], John T. Jost[a,b], Joshua A. Tucker[b,c], and Jay J. Van Bavel[a,1]

[a]Department of Psychology, New York University, New York, NY 10003; [b]Department of Politics, New York University, New York, NY 10012; and [c]Department of Russian and Slavic Studies, New York University, New York, NY 10012

Political debate concerning moralized issues is increasingly common in online social networks. However, moral psychology has yet to incorporate the study of social networks to investigate processes by which some moral ideas spread more rapidly or broadly than others. Here, we show that the expression of moral emotion is key for the spread of moral and political ideas in online social networks, a process we call "moral contagion." Using a large sample of social media communications about three polarizing moral/political issues (n = 563,312), we observed that the presence of moral-emotional words in messages increased their diffusion by a factor of 20% for each additional word. Furthermore, we found that moral contagion was bounded by group membership; moral-emotional language increased diffusion more strongly within liberal and conservative networks, and less between them. Our results highlight the importance of emotion in the social transmission of moral ideas and also demonstrate the utility of social network methods for studying morality. These findings offer insights into how people are exposed to moral and political ideas through social networks, thus expanding models of social influence and group polarization as people become increasingly immersed in social media networks.

morality | emotion | politics | social networks | social media

then the social transmission of emotion likely plays a key role in the transmission of morality through social networks.

In the domain of morality, the expression of moral emotion in particular may drive social contagion. Compared with nonmoral emotions, moral emotions are those that are most often associated with evaluations of societal norms (11) and are elicited by interests that may go beyond self-interest [e.g., contempt in response to injustices committed in another country (12)]. Importantly, moral emotions may also be tied specifically to behavior that is relevant to morality and politics, including judgments of responsibility and voting (13, 14). Thus, emotions can be roughly divided into classes of "moral emotions" and "nonmoral emotions" that are associated with distinct appraisals, eliciting conditions, and functional outcomes. Because of the importance of emotions to the domain of morality and politics, we focused here on the role of moral emotion in social contagion.

To investigate the role of moral emotion in the transmission of morality in social networks, we used the context of online social networks. More and more, communications about morality and politics within social networks are computer-mediated (15), and contagion is often studied as information diffusion in online social

Brady, William J, Julian A Wills, et al., 2017, "Emotion Shapes the Diffusion of Moralized Content in Social Networks" *PNAS* 114(28): 7313--7318

Why Twitter is so Toxic

Table 1. Sample tweets from each political topic, separated by ideology

Topic	Mean ideology of retweeters	Twitter message
Gun control	Conservative	America needs to Arm itself. Stand and **Fight** for Your Second Amendment Rights. We are literally in a **War** Zone. Carry and get Trained.
	Liberal	Thanks to **greed**, the republication leadership & the #NRA – No one is **safe** #SanBernadino #gunsense #guns #morningjoe
Same-sex marriage	Conservative	Gay marriage is a diabolical, **evil** lie aimed at **destroying** our nation #o4a #news #marriage
	Liberal	New Mormon Policy Bans Children Of Same-Sex Parents-this church wants to **punish** children? Are you kidding me?!? **Shame**
Climate change	Conservative	Leftists take 'global warming' based on **bad** science as **faith** and act on it, but proven voter fraud is just racism #tcot #teaparty
	Liberal	**Fighting** #climatechange is **fighting** hunger. Put your #eyesonParis for a fair climate deal.

Examples of tweets containing at least one moral-emotional word that were retweeted largely by liberals or conservatives. Moral-emotional words are in bold.

Brady, William J, Julian A Wills, et al., 2017, "Emotion Shapes the Diffusion of Moralized Content in Social Networks" *PNAS* 114(28): 7313--7318
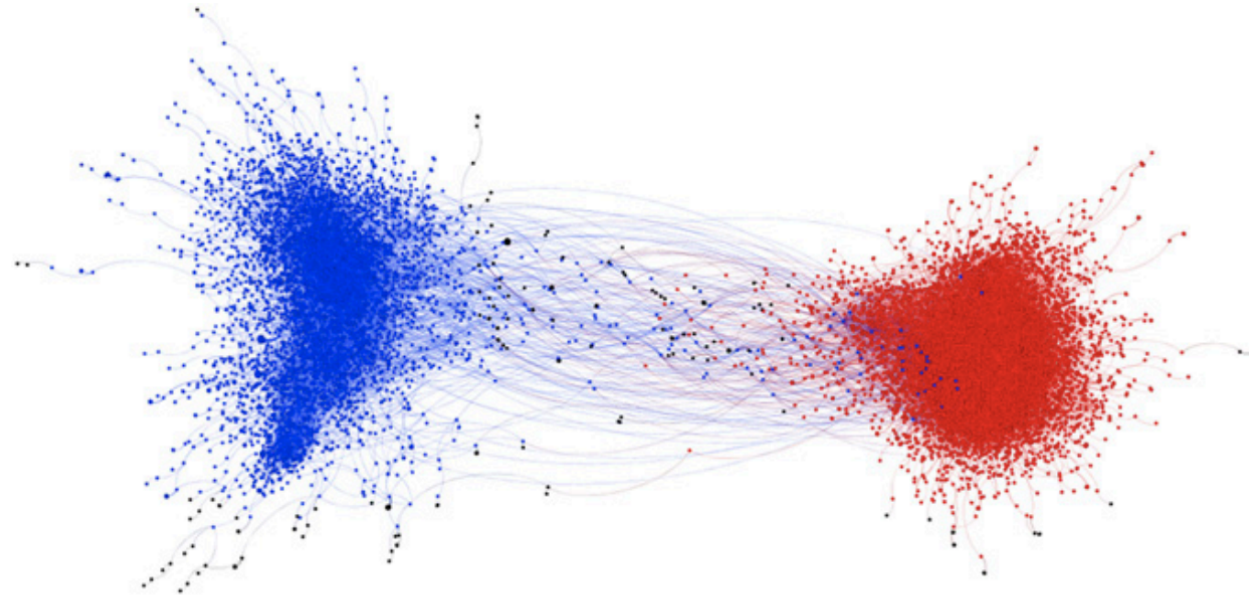
Why Twitter is so Toxic

Fig. 3. Network graph of moral contagion shaded by political ideology. The graph represents a depiction of messages containing moral and emotional language, and their retweet activity, across all political topics (gun control, same-sex marriage, climate change). Nodes represent a user who sent a message, and edges (lines) represent a user retweeting another user. The two large communities were shaded based on the mean ideology of each respective community (blue represents a liberal mean, red represents a conservative mean).

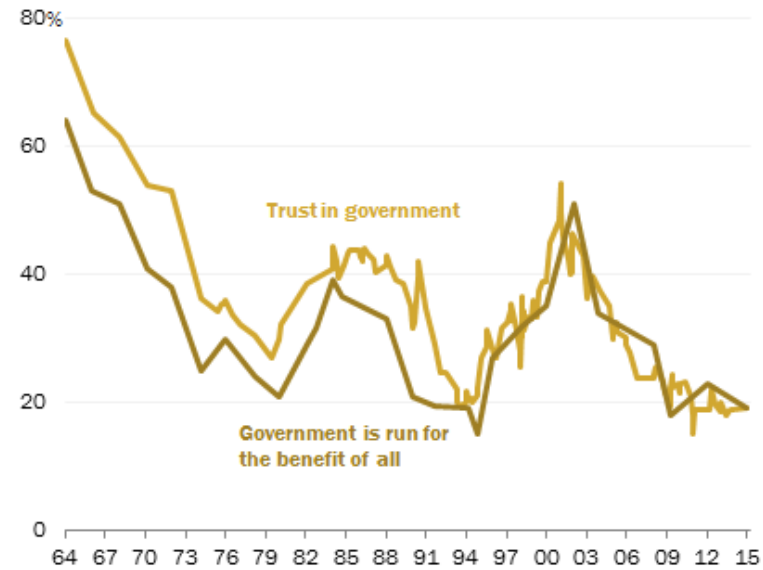# Polarizing Around Issues

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

"[P]eople rightly perceive that politics is more contentious, more ideological, and less productive than in the past, and they are justifiably disgusted. Approval of government was higher, not lower, in the days when transactional politics was healthier, partly because government was seen as more competent," (p.14).

The Decline of Trust in Government

Trust in government and perceptions of government fairness

80%

60

Trust in government

40

20

Government is run for
the benefit of all

0

64 67 70 73 76 79 82 85 88 91 94 97 00 03 06 09 12 15

Survey conducted Aug. 27-Oct. 4, 2015. Q15. Trust trend sources: Pew Research Center,
National Election Studies, Gallup, ABC/Washington Post, CBS/New York Times, and CNN
Polls. Trend line represents a three-survey moving average.
Government fairness trend sources: National Election Studies and CBS/New York Times
polls. Annual means calculated for years with more than one poll.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source: Pew Research Center (2015)

Political Realism

Political Realism

"Above all, the realist believes in the reality of trade-offs. We live in a world of second and often third choices, and in order to govern one must make decisions and engage in practices which look bad up close and are hard to defend in public but which, nonetheless, seem to be the best alternative at the time. Always, the realist asks: 'Compared with what?' Principles alone mean little until examined in the harsh light of real-world alternatives," (p.7).

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

Political Realism

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

"Back-scratching and logrolling are signs of a healthy political system, not a corrupt one. Transactional politics is not *always* appropriate or effective, but a political system which is not reliably capable of it is a system in a state of critical failure," (p.7).

"In politics, likewise, deal-making and balancing require both constitutional structures like legislatures and informal ones like parties and political networks...Ask her quietly, and a realist may acknowledge that, in any political system, the right amount of corruption is greater than zero, because a zero-tolerance approach criminalizes politics without actually ending corruption," (p.7).

Political Machines

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

"In order for governments to govern, political machines or something like them need to exist, and they need to work...By 'political machines,' I mean informal...and mutually accountable hierarchies, networks, and relationships that allow politicians to organize their environment by reaching accomodations, honoring accomodations, rewarding and protecting supporters, punishing and marginalizing defectors, and exerting coordinated influence through multiple formal channels8" (p.7).

The Three-Pronged Attack of the Reformers

Reformers: Progressives

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

"The *progressive* tradition scorns transactional politics for not being meritocratic. Where the realist tends to believe that governing is inherently difficult, that politics is inherently transactional, and that success is best judged in terms of reaching social accomodation rather than achieving some abstract purpose, the progressive tradition tends to see government as perfectible and politics as a path toward a higher public good...the progressive tradition tends to see [the public interest] as an abstract benchmark, against which real-world politics continually falls short" (p.15).

Reformers: Populists

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

"The *populist* tradition scorns transactional politics for deviating from democracy...While agreeing with progressivism that the leading problem in politics is corruption, the populist school equates legitimacy with direct participation by ordinary individuals and corruption with intermediation or influence on the part of organizations or interests, especially large or wealthy ones. For the populist reformer, the solution to almost any political problem involves more democracy, more participation, and more power for the little guy. Populism turns the progressive activist's instinctive suspicion of political insiders and careerists into an explicit ideology: by their very nature, political professionals are interlopers who speak for special interests and the political class; amateurs are the true custodians of the public interest" (p.16).

Reformers: Libertarians

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

"The third member...does not get along with the other two, except in one crucial respect: *libertarians* never saw a political machine that they liked. They, too, scorn transactional politics...because it deviates from market outcomes...[Libertarians] despise political machines less because they are machines than because they are political. If market decisions are, with rare exceptions, more just (because less arbitrary) and more efficient (because less economically distorting) than political decisions, then transactional politics is inherently unjust and wasteful-and thus corrupt," (p.17).

Reformers: Libertarians

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

"And so the libertarian and progressive critiques end up being twins separated at birth. Both are obsessed with corruption, see it everywhere, and are incapable of distinguishing it from policy disagreement; both view transactional politics as illegitimate...Only over the preferred prescription - more government or less, more regulation or more privatization - are they are daggers drawn," (p.18).

Reformers' Target: Political Parties' Primaries

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

"The crown jewel in the populist political reform movement is the political primary system. Once upon a time, the party's nomination to appear on a general election ballot was largely, though not entirely, in the gift of party elders and professionals, who may have fought with each other but could normally make their eventual choices stick," (p.18).

"A crucial premise of populist reform, namely that most people want to participate more in politics, turns out to be wrong. And so, instead of opening decisionmaking to a broader, more diverse, and more representative spectrum than party hacks represented, primaries have skewed decisionmaking toward the notably narrow, ideologically-extreme, and decidedly nonrepresentative sliver of voters who turn out in primary elections," (p.19).

Reformers' Target: Money in Politics

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

"[I]n the 1970s, [a second wave of progressive reformers] established a web of legalistic rules and regulations which have made it much harder for candidates and parties to raise money, on the general theory that fundraising and dependence on big-dollar donors are inherently corrupting. The result was not to reduce the amount of money in politics or to reduce the influence of special interests but to drive money to unrestricted channels, such as party committees. When progressive legislation restricted those channels too, the result was to push money into so-called 'independent' spending by super PACS, nonprofit organizations, billionaires, and other actors who are less accountable, less pragmatic, and less transparant than Tammany ever was," (p.19).

Reformers' Target: Smoke-Filled Rooms

"One important attribute of smoke-filled rooms was that usually you had a pretty good idea who was entiteld to be in them - and the selection, to the dismay of [progressives and populists], was not always based on merit. To the contrary, political leaders delegated deal-making to functionaries who had earned a place at the table by dint of seniority, loyalty, or cunning, as well as expertise. Keeping freelancers and interlopers out of the room and maintaining control over the agenda inside the room are instrumental to making bargaining manageable and delivering on deals; giving loyalists and time-servers a place at the table rewards them and marginalizes outsiders," (p.21-22).

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

Reformers' Target: Pork

Jonathan Rauch

1960-

"And then there are earmarks and pork. For years they were the hard currency of Capitol Hill's political economy. Sometimes abused, they could also be a powerful inducement to win a waivering vote or break an impasse. Lyndon Johnson famously won critical support for the 1964 Civil Rights Act by 'proposing, and personally securing, a NASA research facility at Purdue University,' in the district of House Republican leader Charles Halleck of Indiana. Pork remains alive but earmarks were banned in 2010 under pressue from Tea Partiers, who saw them as emblematic of Washington corruption...Their abolition stripped leaders on the Hill of one of the few tools still remaining to them for influencing behavior. Avoiding a government shutdown in 2013 would have 'absolutely' been easier if House Speaker Boehner had been able to dispense earmarks," (p.23).