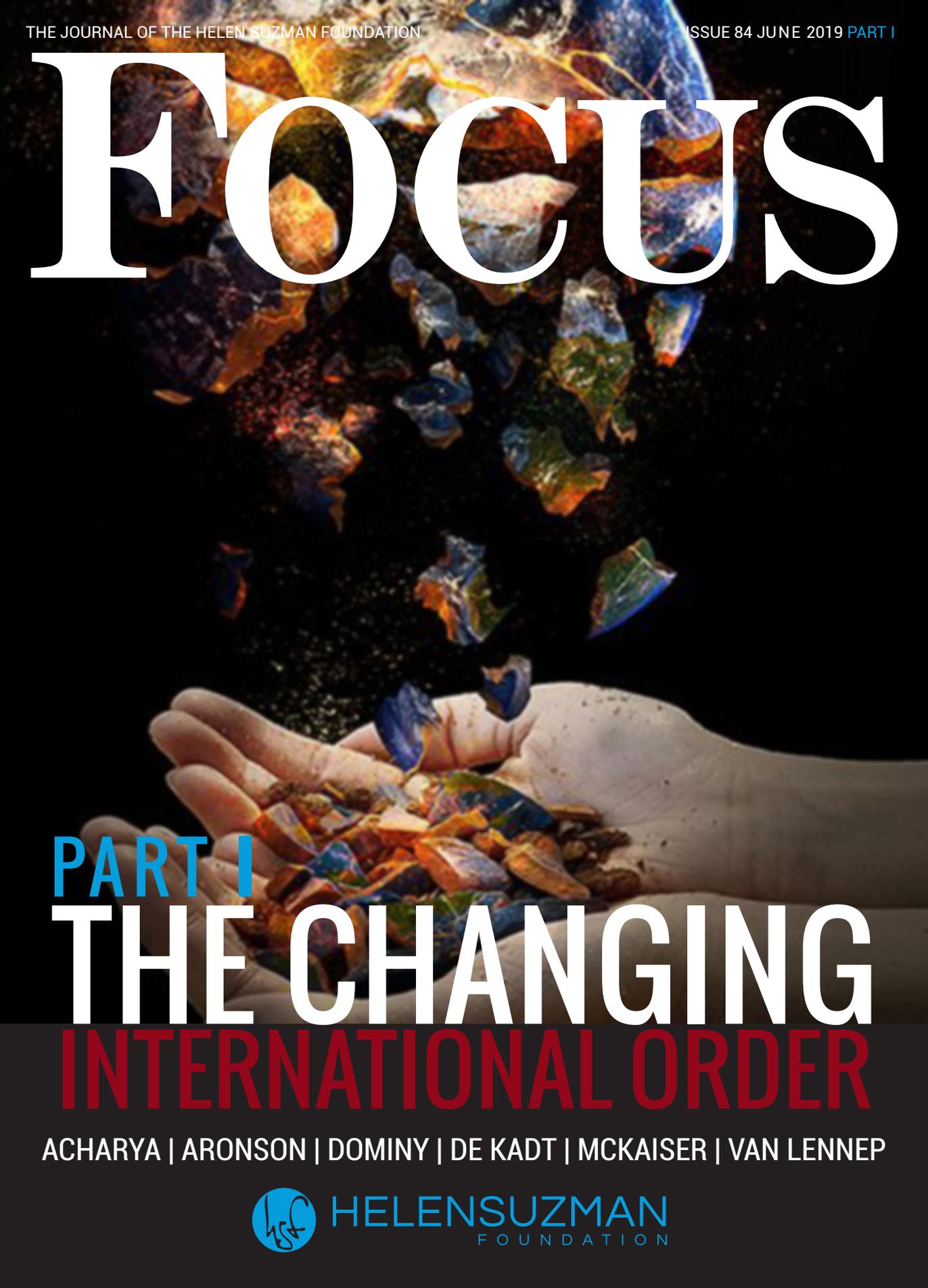


FOCUS



PART I

THE CHANGING INTERNATIONAL ORDER

ACHARYA | ARONSON | DOMINY | DE KADT | MCKAISER | VAN LENNEP



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The Changing International Order?



FRANCIS ANTONIE is the Director of the Helen Suzman Foundation. He is a graduate of Wits, Leicester and Exeter Universities. He was awarded the Helen Suzman Chevening Fellowship by the UK foreign Office in 1994. From 1996 to 2006 he was senior economist at Standard Bank; thereafter he was director of the Graduate School of Public and Development Management at Wits University. He is the founding managing director of Strauss & Co.

This edition of *FOCUS*, the first of two editions dealing with the international order, is dedicated to the memory of Alexius Amtaika. Alex was a Research Fellow at the Helen Suzman Foundation. He had recently been appointed to the Mellon Chair at Rhodes University. All who knew Alex, whether as a colleague or a student, will attest to his great gifts as a teacher, as a scholar and as a man of great integrity. Alex's tragic death in a motorcar accident, in which his daughter was also killed, robs the South African political science community of a person who had accomplished so much and who still had so much to offer.

It was my great pleasure to teach Alex international relations at post graduate level, and I can still recall our extensive discussions around Hedley Bull's *Anarchical Society*, one of the seminal texts when thinking about the questions of international order. Subsequently, it fell to **Raphael de Kadt** to explore further aspects of international relations and political science generally with Alex.

We begin this edition of *FOCUS* with de Kadt's reflections on the **crisis facing the liberal democratic dispensation**. Commencing with its origins and evolution, this article documents the perils confronting liberal democracy; the fracturing of the liberal democratic consensus; the rise of "strong man" regimes, trade wars and the growth of protectionism; and geopolitical shifts and implications. A call to reflection and action is made on the part of those who value what de Kadt notes 'has been a political and economic dispensation that has facilitated greater human prosperity and wellbeing than any other in recorded history'.

In an interview with Tove van Lennep, a Helen Suzman Foundation Researcher, **Amitav Acharya** reflects on the internal crisis of the liberal world order and the advent of a new **"Multiplex World"** of multiple, crosscutting international orders. Although not all emerging hegemonies are committed to progressive values, multiplexity does not necessarily imply a decline in global justice and commitment to human rights. The liberal international order functioned as a club of the West, under which democracy was promoted selectively and human rights abuses were rife. The weakening of the Club may create more openings for weaker actors, state or non-state, to play a greater role in global governance.

Tove van Lennep reflects on the **European Migrant Crisis**. A data-based and historicised perspective of European migration shows that the "waves" of migrants referred to by politicians and the media during the European Migrant "Crisis" are neither unprecedented nor unmanageable. So why have refugees on rubber dinghies been transformed into a threat to one of the most powerful regions in the world? Attesting to the inevitability of human migration, this article explains the upsurge in European anti-immigrant sentiment, fashioned in the shadow of imperialism.

Finally, **Ronald Aronson** explores the unholy marriage of **Trump and his base** in this pioneering article. He argues, contrary to popular perception, that there was no white working-class landslide for Trump. Beneath Trump's victory lie deeper American realities, such as the force of evangelical religion and its recent amalgamation with the Republican Party and the unique right-wing politics this generates. And beneath even this lurk unresolved issues and persistent disorders of American life that date back to slavery.

We conclude with book reviews by **Graham Dominy** (on Richard Steyn's biography of *Louis Botha: A Man Apart*) and by **Eusebius McKaiser** (on Pieter Louis Myburgh's *Gangster State*).

The End of the Liberal Democratic Era?

The origins of the modern democratic era can be dated in institutional terms to the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Specifically, the US declaration of independence (1776) and the French Revolution are the most emblematic markers of the beginnings of the modern democratic age. The ideas, however, that informed the crafting of the institutional dispensations that, historically, we have come to associate with liberal democracy were principally crafted in the seventeenth century with the articulation of social contract theory, and were further elaborated upon during the European (including Scottish) Enlightenment. Fundamental to these ideas was the concept of a social contract through which the legitimacy of government no longer turned on traditional modes of authority or sacral 'revelation', but on the freely given consent of a polity's populace.¹



RAPHAEL DE KADT is a former Head of the School of Politics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He served as Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science, St Augustine College of South Africa, where he held the Bill Lynch Chair of Political, and where he still lectures. He has, for ten years, been a Visiting Professor of Political Science at the accadis University of Applied Sciences in Bad Homburg, Germany and served, for twenty years as Editor-in-Chief of *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*. He has been the author, co-author or Editor of over 80 scholarly publications and is a Research Fellow at the HSF.

The evolution of the modern democratic form of political association was long, and punctuated by a number of setbacks. It is not uncommon to invoke Samuel Huntington's time-line in terms of which the phenomena of democratisation could be seen as coming in the form of "waves", punctuated by caesurae and even 'regressions'. The most recent and globally significant of these waves is the so-called "third wave of democratisation". For the sake of convenience, we can regard this third wave as having begun with the "Carnation Revolution" in Portugal in 1974 with the fall of the Caetano (*Estado Novo*) regime and with the abandonment by Portugal of its remaining colonial territories in southern Africa (Angola and Mozambique). This "third wave" gathered momentum in the context of the 1989 "velvet revolutions" in Eastern Europe which presaged the collapse of the Soviet Union and thereby, by extension, the viability of the Soviet, or "state socialist", mode of political and economic organisation. South Africa democratised during this third wave. The most important feature of the third wave was the remarkable spread and perceived attractiveness of liberal democracy as a form of political organisation.

In 2018, Freedom House 'recorded the 13th consecutive year of decline in global freedom'². One could fairly confidently say that the third wave of democratisation ended decisively in 2011 with the so-called "Arab Spring" which – sadly – was not followed by an "Arab Summer". Since then, the extension and entrenchment or consolidation of democracy has largely come to a halt, though with some regional exceptions. Furthermore, from 2015 onwards, it could be claimed that there has been something akin to a retrenchment of democracy among the seemingly more "robust" democratic countries in the "developed" world – such as Hungary, Poland and Austria. Perhaps the two most iconic markers of this retrenchment have been the Brexit Referendum in the United Kingdom in 2016 and the election, by virtue of the "peculiarities" of the US's Electoral College process, of Donald Trump to the office of President in the United States of America.

The perils confronting liberal democracy

There appears to be evidence of a growing popular disenchantment with modern liberal democracy, associated as it is with the triumph of both capitalism and of its associated liberal political dispensations. This triumph was a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the centrally planned communist-style systems – the

only major alternative forms of politico-economic organisation in the second half of the 20th century.³

The sources of this disenchantment would seem to have both economic and also, importantly, societal and cultural dimensions. In economic terms, what we have witnessed is, certainly in the context of the more developed economies, growing inequality and a decline in the economic status of significant sections of the population. This has been especially notable with regard to the United States of America, with wage stagnation, but also elsewhere.⁴

Especially significant among these social movements have been the various stripes of feminism and movements orientated towards asserting the rights of individuals and groups previously marginalised, such as LGBTQ communities, people of colour, people with disabilities or people identifiable in some way as "marginal".

To some extent, this can be traced to the consequences and impact of globalisation, not least in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2008, as a financial, economic, social and political phenomenon. Globalisation could be thought of as an extension, beyond national boundaries, of many of the aspects of modernisation and "post-modernisation" processes.⁵ All modernisation processes produce both winners and losers. This applies to some extent to the impact that globalisation has had on the perceived wellbeing of citizens in the more developed countries.

Alongside this, modernity has produced normative outcomes which came to be manifested in, for example, the rise of social movements centred on the need to valorise various forms of "marginal" social and personal identities. Especially significant among these social movements have been the various stripes of feminism and movements orientated towards asserting the rights of individuals and groups previously marginalised, such as LGBTQ communities, people of colour, people with disabilities or people identifiable in some way as "marginal".

The rise in the salience and political presence of these identity-defined groupings has produced a "blowback" response among groups of people – especially hitherto "dominant" groups – who have felt, in one way or another, threatened. The rise of these groups, especially in the US, might be seen under a number of aspects. One aspect would be the perceived undermining of the established normative framework or order of the society. In this regard, traditional, conservative, white population groups appear to fear that the Judaeo-Christian underpinnings of their own identities were being upturned. Another aspect would be the extent to which the perceived preferential treatment of these erstwhile outgroups might impact on the economic wellbeing of older, established, classes of people. The sensitivity of such "established" groups to the perceived threat posed by newly ascendant groups may well, too, have been exacerbated by fears of the consequences of ongoing modernization and globalization – such as job losses to "foreigners", immigrants or to robots, artificial intelligence and automation.

The broader geopolitical context

As indicated, both the outcome of the British referendum – a thin, arguably somewhat transient – majority preference for the United Kingdom to exit from the European Union – and the electoral college-based triumph of Donald Trump's presidential bid, have had significant global repercussions and reverberations. Donald Trump's victory, albeit on the basis of a less-than plurality share of the popular vote in the 2016 US presidential elections, has translated into the pursuit of an essentially anti-globalist, nationalist (if not nativist) persuasion on the part of the executive branch of the US government.

Similarly, the outcome of the British referendum brought more clearly to the surface some of the underlying fractures and tensions within the European Union. Furthermore, the Trump administration's turn away from and even substantive abrogation of commitments within the context of multilateral, international, institutional arrangements has had implications for the international system crafted in the wake both of the Second World War and in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet-type system from 1989 through to 1991.

These developments taken together have come to raise questions about the longer-term durability and viability of what came to be known as the "international liberal order", or in the felicitous phrase of John Ikenberry "the liberal leviathan".⁶ The significance of the multilateral institutional system is that it facilitated coordination among often diverse, and even divergent, interests in pursuit of certain social, cultural, economic or political goals. Matters such as climate change, international financial and economic transactions, and the provision of emergency relief and aid projects come to mind. All of these speak to the extent to which, globally, people of very diverse ethnic, religious or geographical backgrounds have, especially in the post 1989 period, come to be interdependent.

The popular discontent with the architecture of the regional, national as well as international systems that evolved subsequent to the Second World War has been mobilised by often wealthy elites.

Some of these multilateral arrangements are of a more specifically regional kind, such as the European Union or – related to it but distinct from it – the Schengen group of countries. Some, however, have been of much more global reach, such as the Paris Climate Accord or, indeed, the Iran Nuclear Deal.⁷ These two examples attest to, respectively, the potentially catastrophic existential threat posed by global warming and climate change as well as of other environmental phenomena, and to the geopolitical instability of the Middle East as well as South-West and Central Asian theatres, characterised as they are by intense volatility and often violent conflict.

The fracturing of the liberal democratic consensus

In a richly cadenced book, *The Retreat of Western Liberalism* (2017), Edward Luce, the chief US commentator for the *Financial Times*, adverts to the structural factors that have undergirded the rise of anti-establishment forces in Western countries – broadly and loosely referred to as "populist". These populist phenomena, as Edward Luce himself noted in a plangent Tweet, could be seen, in one respect, as "Pluto populist". The popular discontent with the architecture of the regional, national as well as international systems that evolved subsequent to the Second World War has been mobilised by often wealthy elites. To effect the mobilisation, recourse has been made to essentially emotional factors, not least those that relate to peoples' sense of vulnerability with regard to their "identities" and sense of self-worth.⁸

One of the key rhetorical instruments that has been deployed by those articulating and mobilising such discontent has been myths of "nativist authenticity" and "cultural purity". Recently, Eric Kaufmann has spoken of a "whitelash", and globally it would seem that a loosely articulated white supremacist movement has been unleashed, not least with the help provided by the now-near universally accessible social media.⁹ Furthermore, the disenchantment with the liberal democratic institutional dispensation has manifested itself across the countries of the European Union. In some instances, right-wing movements have transmuted into parties of government in countries such as Hungary and Poland. In others, they have emerged as potentially significant "veto players" both in national and European Union politics in countries such as France, the

Netherlands and even Germany. The triggers for the growing attractiveness of such right-wing nativist populisms have included a sense of 'distantiation' and alienation – sometimes referred to as a 'democratic deficit' – from central, Brussels-based decision-making instances. This has been reinforced by a fear of cultural displacement by immigrants and refugees.¹⁰

One of the features of the "mythical-nativist" narrative has been to obscure the de facto achievements of the European Union and exaggerate the power of the "Brussels bureaucracy" with its imputed threat to "national sovereignty".¹¹

In global geopolitical terms, this uncertainty has rendered Europe more fragile and vulnerable, not least in light of a resurgent Russian nationalism, which at least at the level of ideological discourse has intimated a possible future Russian engagement with Europe in an essentially "imperialist" mode.

Global geopolitical implications

An immediate consequence of Donald Trump's ascendancy to the White House was to render less certain the assumed stability and reasonable normative consensus undergirding the international political system. The US immediately withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Furthermore, the rhetoric emanating from the new administration adverted to a potential weakening of the Trans-Atlantic Alliance – the institutional anchor of the post-WWII liberal system.

This rhetoric was expressed in a number of registers, ranging from concerns about free trade through to concerns about the US's reliability as the ultimate underwriter of NATO.

In global geopolitical terms, this uncertainty has rendered Europe more fragile and vulnerable, not least in light of a resurgent Russian nationalism, which at least at the level of ideological discourse has intimated a possible future Russian engagement with Europe in an essentially "imperialist" mode. One here is reminded of the import of the writings of Russian nationalist thinkers such as Aleksandr Dugin, with his articulation of a Russia-centred Eurasian vision – a vision which sketches a picture of a Europe divided politically and economically along ethno-national lines.¹²

In tandem with the weakening of the Trans-Atlantic Alliance has been the re-emergence of China as a potentially, if not necessarily hegemonic, major actor with regard to defining the rules of global international relations. This rise and reassertion of China's power has, of course, been emboldened by China's quite extraordinary economic growth over the last forty years.

The trajectory of China's economic growth, and of the politico-economic model that it embodies, constitutes a cautionary signal for the defenders and protagonists of liberal democracy. The Chinese achievement since 1979, has been remarkable. Vast swathes of the population have been lifted out of abject poverty, massive infrastructural projects have been taken to successful conclusions and China's technological capabilities have provided the Chinese leadership with significant capacity for surveillance and societal control. One should also beware of the temptation to attribute this technological prowess simply to pirating and to the theft of intellectual property. China has a vast and rich civilizational history, marked by extraordinary past scientific and technological accomplishments which provide a cultural basis on which to further augment its scientific and technological capacities. The cautionary note is attached to the fact that, contrary to the expectations of many, a demographically substantial middle class has not yet translated into significant pressure to forge a liberal democratic polity. China's model, in effect, can be seen as a "moniker" of a potentially symbiotic relationship between a "state capitalist" type of economy (with a fairly significant measure of decentralisation) and the *dirigisme* of a one-party state.

Angela Merkel has indicated that the structure of the global international framework has been redefined and that what is emerging is neither a bipolar system (of the kind that characterised the “Cold War”) nor the seemingly unilateral hegemony of the US after 1989 – a hegemony which Hubert Védrine, a former French Foreign Minister, once referred to as a “hyper power” (*hyper puissance*). Rather, Merkel sees it transforming into a multipolar system. She sees the “political structure” of the emerging global system as consisting of China, Russia, the United States of America and Europe as the major powers.¹³ One might add to this the likely emergence of a rapidly growing and modernising India, also associated with a newly assertive and increasingly authoritarian Hindu nationalism under Prime Minister Modi. It might even be that, of all of these, the now only essentially non-imperialist power (if Timothy Snyder’s claim is warranted¹⁴) is Europe.¹⁵

There is a perspective in international relations theory known as the power transition theory, associated in particular with the pioneering work of AFK Organski.¹⁵ In terms of this perspective, inter-polity conflict, not least of a military kind, is most likely to occur when the dominance of an erstwhile hegemonic power comes to be challenged by significant emerging powers. Especially important, in this perspective, is that the danger of inter-state wars is most acute when the legitimacy of a current hegemon’s status comes to be questioned and challenged. This insight, if it is empirically warranted as the power transition theorists claim, might well betoken a coming global context of “great power” struggles, contestations and, at worst, conflicts of a potentially military kind.¹⁶

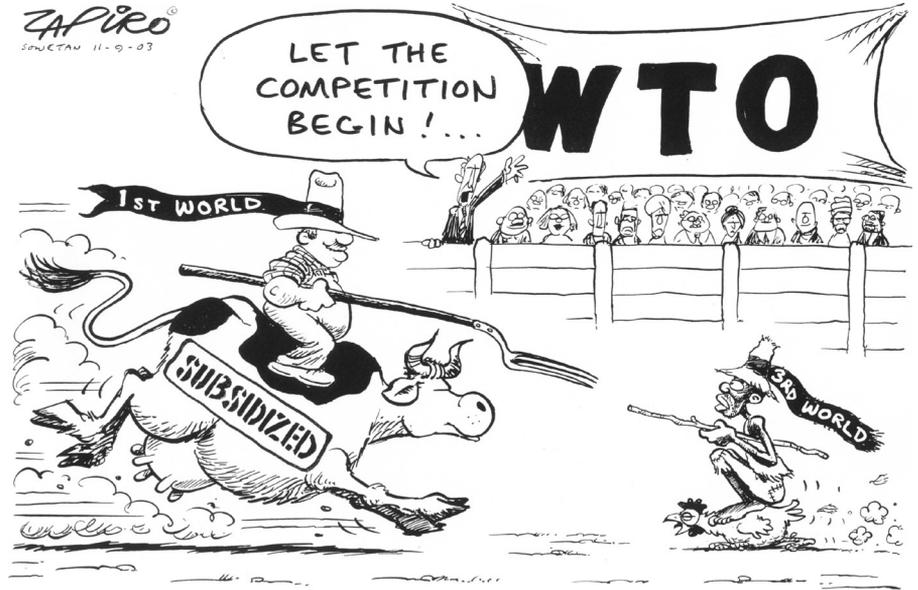
To this end, the rise of nativist, xenophobic discourses and policies is connected to the move to economic protections. Trade barriers coincide fairly neatly, and are ideologically consonant, with the erection of physical barriers, as exemplified by President Trump’s cry to “build that wall”

Trade wars and the growth of protectionism

Against this backdrop of a tectonic shift of the structure of the international system, we are also witnessing the rise of what some might even see as a kind of “neo-mercantilist” style of economic nationalism. Economic nationalism was an avowed objective of the 2016 Trump election campaign. This has already come to entail the pursuit of bilateral, transactional international trade disputes and a disposition, especially on the part of the US, to challenge the multilateral arrangements that were crafted during the long period from the end of WWII through to the present. Specifically, this distancing from such arrangements refers to NAFTA and is, arguably, reflected in the relative weakness – at the level of policy formation and implementation – of the WTO.

Further, such economic nationalism – embodied in the promissory note contained in the “Make America Great Again” campaign cry – implies a move to protectionism. This has potentially detrimental consequences for global economic growth and the spread of prosperity. In this regard, the lessons of Adam Smith and David Ricardo appear to have been forgotten. It is not clear that trade wars, such as the one developing between the US and China, augur well for the health of the global economy or indeed for the economies of the respective protagonists and antagonists.

The temptation to pursue protectionist policies cannot be easily uncoupled from the crafting of barriers with regard to the free movement, not just of goods, services and finances, but of people. To this end, the rise of nativist, xenophobic discourses and policies is connected to the move to economic protections. Trade barriers coincide fairly neatly, and are ideologically consonant, with the erection of physical barriers, as exemplified by President Trump’s cry to “build that wall”.



These developments entail ominous dangers to liberalism and, by extension, to liberal democracies as political arrangements. Classical liberalism has tended to emphasise the values of individualism and individual choice with regard to social and geographic mobility, electing and pursuing diverse “ways of life” and of “being in the world”.

This would suggest that cultural shifts associated with modernisation and growing prosperity constitute something of a “shield” behind which the achievements of liberalism and liberal democracy may be safe from destruction. Whether this protective shield will be sufficient to offset the rise of authoritarian regimes is yet to be established.

In counterpoint to the rise of nativist, populist movements (which tend also to embrace protectionist economic policies and nationalist politics) are the findings of the World Values Survey, led by Ronald Inglehart and based at the University of Michigan. This long-term, global survey would suggest that, as countries become wealthier, there tends to be a shift away from “survival values” to “self-actualisation” values. The World Values Survey also intimates that the shift towards self-actualisation

values reflects an interesting degree of convergence between diverse societies. This is not to say that there are not culturally distinctive properties attached to the variety of self-actualisation values that have come to be associated with growing prosperity and human wellbeing.¹⁷

This would suggest that cultural shifts associated with modernisation and growing prosperity constitute something of a “shield” behind which the achievements of liberalism and liberal democracy may be safe from destruction. Whether this protective shield will be sufficient to offset the rise of authoritarian regimes is yet to be established. The US presently offers an interesting case study in the tension between the preferences of an assertive, non-liberal, “imperial” presidency and the institutional framework of the US’s democratic dispensation.¹⁸

The rise of “strong man” regimes

One may be tempted to abjure and criticise the international liberal system, but one does so at one’s peril. The reason for this is that the components of this system, characterised as it is by a multiplicity of multinational institutions and organisations,

have seen the end of the era of inter-state “Total Wars”. The post-war era has witnessed a marked decline – indeed – near disappearance of inter-state wars. While Britain might have attacked the Argentinian navy to reclaim the Falkland Islands and the US might have invaded Iraq and removed Sudan Hussein’s dictatorial regime, no liberal democracy has gone to war against another. This is related to the character of liberal democracies, whatever their individual failings might be. Such peaceful interstate relationships were anticipated at the time of the European Enlightenment by the great German philosopher Immanuel Kant in his seminal *On Perpetual Peace*.¹⁹

One consequence of this “Liberal Democratic Peace” has been that, overall, the mortality and casualty figures in wars have been reduced and wars have come to be more concentrated in the realm of developing countries. Wars today tend to be civil wars and wars between competing warlords and providers of patronage for control of the relevant states. There have been other changes in the nature of war, too, such as the “feminisation of war” and the increasing deployment, injury and death of children.²⁰

The threats to liberal democracy that we have identified, such as the rise of authoritarian leaders and the destruction of the liberal dimension of liberal democratic states (e.g. Hungary under Orbán), potentially augers ill for a peaceful global framework going forward. The danger here, not least, takes the form of the rise of “strong man” authoritarian regimes, such as Duterte’s The Philippines, Bolsonaro’s Brazil, Putin’s Russia, Erdoğan’s Turkey, Netanyahu’s Israel (though Israel, while becoming less liberal, remains, technically, a reasonably well “consolidated democracy”), and many others. This phenomenon has been referred to as the “retrenchment of democracy” by scholars such as Larry Diamond, and is being monitored in an increasingly worrying set of essays put out annually by Freedom House.²¹

Among the dangers is not only the potential ease with which authoritarian leaders can destroy the institutional safeguards that define liberal democracies, but the ease with which they may be able to collaborate across the planet.

Among the dangers is not only the potential ease with which authoritarian leaders can destroy the institutional safeguards that define liberal democracies, but the ease with which they may be able to collaborate across the planet. One can – in a moment of ‘Dark Fantasy’ – imagine a hard carapace of closely-connected authoritarian regimes systematically eroding the achievements of the modern democratic era. Of course, there will be differences, as we have already witnessed in the case of the Trump administration’s response to the challenges to Maduro in Venezuela, and Vladimir Putin’s response. But, there is least some reason to fear that something akin to an “Authoritarian International” could emerge as the political space within which coordinated action against popular movements, authentic democratic demands etc. might be made.

One of the implications of the ascendance of such authoritarian polities is the weakening of the international liberal system’s institutional leavers of power and multi-lateral capabilities on the global stage.

Conclusion

It is too early to predict confidently the end of the era of the global pre-eminence of modern liberal democracy. However, there are sufficient toxic straws in the ever-stronger winds of authoritarianism and populism blowing across the world to be a source of concern. These serve as a call to action on the part of those who value what, after all, has been a political and economic dispensation that has facilitated greater human prosperity and wellbeing than any other in recorded history.²² Rather than attacking liberal democracy, the challenge is to rescue it from its assailants and to promote its spread to those polities that have not yet embraced it. This certainly is not

intended as a “conservative” call to hide the deficiencies of existing liberal democratic arrangements, but rather as a progressive call to reflection and action – because for all the virtues associated with them, the liberal democracies of the world remain flawed, and can be seen in a number of respects (not least in regard to growing inequalities and bureaucratic overreach) in need of repair.

NOTES

- 1 Instructive here is John Locke's critique of Sir Robert Filmer's *Partiarcha*, which articulated a defense of the doctrine of the 'divine right of Kings', as well as Locke's account of the consensual, contract-based character of what Max Weber would refer to – in a more rigorously articulated manner – as 'legal-rational' authority.
- 2 Freedom House. *Democracy in Retreat* (2019)
- 3 See Philip Bobbitt's magisterial essay in *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace and the Course of History of the three major political economic 'system types' that emerged in the course of the 20th Century: Fascism, Communism and Parliamentary rule* (The Penguin Press, 2003).
- 4 See, among other studies, Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the 21st Century* (Harvard University Press, 2017).
- 5 On the origins and global impact of the financial crisis of 2008, see Adam Tooze's compendious *Crashed: How a Decade of Financial Crises Changed the World* (Viking, 2018), for the most cadenced, comprehensive and methodologically rigorous study to date.
- 6 See G. John Ikenberry, 'Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order', *Princeton Studies in International History and Politics* (Princeton University Press, 2011).
- 7 For a brief overview of the details of this agreement, see the report: 'Iran nuclear deal: Key details', BBC News (7 May 2019)
- 8 See Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018) and Ronald Aronson's contribution to this edition of *Focus*, among others.
- 9 See Eric Kaufmann, *Whiteshift: Populism, Immigration, and the Future of White Majorities* (Harry N. Abrams, 2019). Interestingly, Kaufmann suggests that the sense of vulnerability and insecurity experienced by such communities that feel threatened needs to be addressed by "Establishment" political elites.
- 10 These fears and resentments are not unrelated to, and have been reinforced by, the catastrophic consequences of the ill-wrought American invasion of Iraq in 2003.
- 11 See Sir Ian Kershaw in *The Global Age: Europe from 1950 to 2017* (Penguin, 2019), especially pages 541-563, which provide an excellent summary balance sheet of both the accomplishments and achievements as well as the shortcomings of the European Union as a project of reconstruction and development in the post WWII era. The balance sheet speaks emphatically to the overall benefits as distinct from costs of the European Union.
- 12 Aleksandr Dugin, said to be influential in Russian political elite circles, has consistently, in podcasts, attacked the 'individualism' of the USA and of European liberalism. His vision for Europe bears an uncanny resemblance to the 'Bantustan' vision that informed the Apartheid system in South Africa, with Europe divided along 'nativist lines into separate polities and national economies ideologically under the aegis of the Russian Orthodox Church or its surrogates in Europe'. Dugin, who – along with Steve Bannon, Donald Trump's campaign strategist – draws inspiration from an Italian 'romantic nativist' thinker, Julius Evola, author of, among many other works, *Revolt Against the Modern World* (Inner Traditions, 1994). See Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).
- 13 Fried et al. 'Merkel: Europe must unite to stand up to China, Russia and US', *The Guardian* (15 May 2019)
- 14 See Timothy Snyder's *Speech to Europe 2019*, on the myth of Europe's origins – the need to look towards one another after empire.
- 15 Organski, AFK. *World Politics* (New York, 1959)
- 16 There is, in the "Realist" tradition of international relations' study, the notion of a "Thucydides Trap". In a recent, important book, Graham Allison, director of Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, asks the question: *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides' Trap?* (Houghton Mifflin, 2017).
- 17 See the *World Values Survey* .
- 18 The intensity of conflict between the current USA Presidency and executive arm of government on the one hand, and the Democratically dominated House of Representatives on the other, illustrates the conflictual relationship between the rule of law and sanctity of institutions and the ambitions of an "imperial presidency". 19 The intensity of conflict between the current USA Presidency and executive arm of government on the one hand, and the Democratically dominated House of Representatives on the other, illustrates the conflictual relationship between the rule of law and sanctity of institutions and the ambitions of an "imperial presidency".
- 19 What Kant, in this brilliantly anticipatory essay, referred to as "Republics" would today be termed "liberal democracies".
- 20 Adverted to in the literature by Herfried Münkler in his book *The New Wars* (Polity, 2005), among many others.
- 21 www.freedomhouse.org
- 22 For "comfort", one might look to Stephen Pinker's *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress* (Viking, 2018). For disconcerting reminders of the fragility of liberal democracy, one should look to Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die* (Broadway Books 2019); Edward Luce's *The Retreat of Western Liberalism* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2017); and Yascha Mounk's *The People vs. Democracy: Why Our Freedom Is in Danger and How to Save It* (Harvard University Press, 2018).

INTERVIEW WITH AMITAV ACHARYA

The New “Multiplex World”



In this interview with Helen Suzman Foundation Researcher, Tove van Lennep, **Amitav Acharya** reflects on the internal crisis of the liberal world order and the advent of a new “Multiplex World” of multiple, crosscutting international orders. Although not all emerging hegemonies are committed to progressive values, multiplexity does not necessarily imply a decline in global justice and commitment to human rights. The liberal international order functioned as a club of the West, under which democracy was promoted selectively and human rights abuses were rife. The weakening of the Club may create more openings for weaker actors, state or non-state, to play a greater role in global governance.

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TOVE: Beginning with the concept at the heart of this edition of FOCUS, what should be understood by the “liberal international order”?

ACHARYA: This is a very fuzzy concept, as different people use it differently and there is no agreed definition. At its simplest, the liberal international order (LIO) means the US-crafted and -dominated system of multilateral institutions after World War II. But the concept has also been used to refer more generally to a “rules-based” system that is open to all states. Another aspect of LIO directs attention to liberal values and norms, such as human rights, democracy and free market capitalism. These are not mutually exclusive; so, one might say that the LIO concept incorporates capitalism, democracy and multilateralism under US hegemony.

TOVE: In your paper ‘After Liberal Hegemony: The Advent of a Multiplex World Order’ you argue that the current challenge to the liberal order is ‘as much, if not more, from within as from without’. You view Trump’s ascent to power as a consequence rather than a cause of its decline. What then is responsible for the decline, or indeed, implosion of liberal hegemony?

ACHARYA: Several factors. One is the global economic shift, with the rise of non-Western nations led by China and India but also more generally East Asia. One consequence of this economic shift has been the transfer of industries and jobs to these rising economies. This has created a backlash against globalisation in parts of the US that relied heavily on traditional heavy industries. Trump was able to exploit this populist backlash against globalisation and free trade to win votes in traditionally Democratic states of the US in the 2016 presidential election.

Another domestic factor was race. The Obama Presidency, the first black presidency of the US with its progressive policy on healthcare and commitment to diversity, paradoxically triggered greater racial consciousness and polarisation in the country. This was exploited by the intellectual defenders of white supremacy which saw the Obama presidency as having empowered black people and other minorities. Trump was unabashed in stoking these sentiments.

A third and closely related factor was the growing political and ideological polarisation within the US, especially between the two dominant political parties. This was fuelled by an increasingly partisan media. This cracked whatever consensus there was on



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liberal values and created severe divisions over issues such as gun control, immigration and health care.

Among other things, the confluence of these factors contributed to a serious internal crisis of the liberal order in the US. And while contributing to Trump's success (however narrow the margin of his victory might have been), polarising factors were gathering force well before Trump announced his candidacy as President of the United States.

TOVE: In ‘After Liberal Hegemony’ you describe ‘a “multiplex world” in which elements of the liberal order survive, but are subsumed in a complex of multiple, crosscutting international orders’. Does the “multiplex world” you envisage promise more justice and equality? Or will emerging hegemons, unrestrained by liberal multilateralism and the United States, merely rearrange the current shape of global inequality and injustice?

ACHARYA: The “Multiplex World” concept stresses decentring of power and authority: a world without the hegemony of a single power or a single set of values. Multiplex also implies different layers of governance, global, regional and local, in addition to the traditional national level. The rise of non-Western actors (including global and regional powers) and, more generally, the growing importance of regions are hallmarks of the Multiplex World. These developments are bound to reshape the traditional architecture of multilateralism and global governance. This means a growing voice for the new actors. But one should not think only in terms of emerging powers, or even states; the Multiplex World concept also implies the rise of non-state actors and new types of international cooperation and governance mechanisms which are regional or based on hybridity, e.g. partnerships between states, international institutions and private actors.

While I would not draw any necessary correlation between multiplexity and greater justice and equality, the latter could be a possible outcome of the new ordering as the US and Western dominance of the world diminishes and the roles of a range of new actors become more consequential. Not all of them are committed to progressive values; indeed, some of the non-state actors can be reactionary and even destructive. And some of the rising powers could be parochial in defending their interests and values. But the US was not always a defender of liberal multilateralism either. The LIO functioned as a club of the West, rather than a provider of universal public goods. The international institutions of the LIO were dominated by the West; their governance and decision-making were not all that democratic and sometimes not even transparent. So, the weakening of the Club may create more openings for weaker actors, state or non-state, and not just a handful of emerging powers, to play a greater role in global governance.

TOVE: What does the decline of the liberal hegemonic order and the emerging "multiplex world" imply for those states in which democracy is fragile and human rights abuses rife?

ACHARYA: I really don't see a necessary link between the weakening of liberal hegemony and the rise of human rights abuses since these abuses, were fairly abundant during the heyday of the LIO which was rather selective and self-serving in promoting democracy around the world. Some may think that the end of liberal hegemony might embolden autocrats and human rights violators. And this is quite possible. But the logic is not so simple. Some states in the developing world – such as Indonesia and India – have their domestic reasons for adhering to elections and protection of rights; since the probable alternative of chaos and disorder will threaten economic growth and the stability of their governments. Repression has had political consequences over a period of time, with or without external pressure.

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In view of this, one consequence of the breakdown of liberal hegemony might be that the fate of human rights and democracy will be driven more by domestic than international factors. At the same time, norms and pressures for these values may come more from social movements and NGOs than from states. The European Union may be more consequential than the United States in championing these values. But generally, the importance of domestic forces will be stronger.

TOVE: Many fear that the global order is retreating into a state of anarchy or disorder. With the decline of US-assured multilateralism, what new form(s) could global cooperation and governance take?

ACHARYA: As I have already hinted, multilateralism was never US-assured, as you put it. The US pursued it selectively and showed more favour to ideologically like-minded countries and countries that were strategically aligned to it.

I argue that in the new world order, global cooperation will be more fragmented. I have coined the term G-pLus world, as an alternative to G-7, G-20 or G-Zero (to use international consultant Ian Bremmer's term). G-pLus means a more complex form of global governance, where leadership can be exercised by different actors in different issue areas. Traditional multilateral institutions like the UN, World Bank and IMF are joined, but not replaced, by regional institutions such as the EU, the African union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as well as newer arrangements such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the Chiangmai Initiative to

address financial crises. No single country may lead in every issue area. And there could be possibility for joint or shared leadership over issues such as climate change or refugees and global health.

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Conflict and disorder are not new to our world; the LIO was rife with them, especially when it came to the developing world. And they will rise in some areas or regions and diminish in others. Generally, as I have pointed out in my essays and book (*The End of American World Order, Polity 2014, 2018*), we have a very mixed picture when it comes to armed conflicts. Some forms,

such as inter-state war, have diminished; others, such as intra-state conflicts and civil wars, rise and recede. It has become clear, however, that there are some long-term factors that contribute to stability, including economic growth and development, poverty reduction and norms against international violence.

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TOVE: Can the issues around 'identity' and the demand for recognition be considered a norm transforming national and international systems? Is this the form which nationalism takes in the early 20th century?

ACHARYA: One should not forget that identity can manifest itself at different levels; ethnic, sub-state, national, regional and even international. Identity can have positive and negative dimensions and consequences for international order. With the diminishing memory of colonialism, which was a shared basis of common identity in the developing world, national identities can become more forceful. But this is offset by the rise of common transnational challenges, such as climate change, where cooperation is essential to achieve desired outcomes. International and regional norms and mechanisms for "socialisation", as well as transnational social movements, are still proliferating and can foster shared identity and blunt the edge of narrow and competitive national identities. In a Multiplex World, we will see multiple identities, both competing as well as co-existing and overlapping.

TOVE: How do we understand non-alignment in the developments currently taking place in the global system?

ACHARYA: Non-alignment was a response to the Cold War and it cannot exist in the same form now. But one enduring lesson of the non-alignment norm for the developing countries such as those in Africa today is not to take sides in great power competition, such as that between the US and China. In a Multiplex World, we are more likely to see multi-alignment or cross-cutting alignments. The key challenge is to ensure that these alignments do not generate competition or conflict and are geared to protecting the collective interests of the regions and the world.

TOVE: Finally, what are your reflections about Africa's role in the evolution of the international system? Will Africa be a rule taker or a rule maker?

ACHARYA: I believe that Africa has potential to have more agency, or to make a greater contribution in shaping the future world order. The key to this is Africa's economic development and its willingness and ability to carry out regional collective action; whether it is done through the AU or on some other collective basis. Of course, Africa is a vast region, with a tremendous diversity of cultures, and political systems. Generating effective cooperation is never easy, but Africa has much to contribute to humanitarian action, protection of the environment and global health. Africa should embrace G-pLus leadership, and develop greater cooperation involving states, international institutions, regional bodies and non-state actors.

What is New about the European Migrant Crisis?



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This study starts from three premises.

- **Migration is inevitable.** It is propelled by market forces, and shaped by patterns of development and the aftermath of colonialism. During the age of empire, Europeans risked everything for resources and a better life beyond their borders. There is no reason why 21st century migrants will not continue to do the same.
- **Migration has a long history.** Since the emergence of the first rudimentary states over 6 000 years ago, human migrations have crossed, extended and reshaped political borders. Between 1815 and 1932, over 60 million Europeans emigrated outwards from Europe, so that by the eve of WWI, 38% of the world's population is thought to have been of European ancestry.¹ UN data demonstrate that since 1965, migration has grown at almost the same rate as the global population.
- **The politicisation of migration is not new.** In the last century and a half, there have been British campaigns against Jewish immigrants in the 1880s, the US Nativist movement in the 1920s, the White Australia policy in the 1960s, and Europe's anti-immigration discourse since decolonisation.

The European Migrant Crisis refers to the period since 2013, when foreigners arrived in the European Union (EU) from across the Mediterranean Sea or overland through Southeast Europe. Some of these people were refugees fleeing the Syrian Civil War and other conflicts. Others were low-skilled economic migrants from Eastern Europe and elsewhere, the former having been afforded passage by the 2004 EU enlargement.

How are we to understand the European Migrant Crisis? Is it simply the recycling of old themes with added vigour and media attention, or is something new at work? This study will argue that Europe's crisis is primarily a social and political one: a crisis of insecurity, which has heightened concerns about identity, and is coloured by some hangovers from the imperial period.

But first, some definitions.

Europe

'Europe' as a collection of countries can be defined in a number of ways. The United Nations World Population Prospects defines Europe as a set of 48 territories. The list includes the Russian Federation and excludes Cyprus (regarded as part of the Middle East). Ten of these territories have populations of less than a million.

The European Union, on the other hand, has 28 members. There are 26 Schengen countries and 19 former communist countries, excluding the Russian Federation and East Germany. Five EU countries had longstanding colonies in the past: the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal. More than one concept will be used in this study. The Appendix indicates country membership in each concept category.

Migrants and refugees

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its subsequent Protocol² define a refugee as a person without a nationality who has 'fled their country of former habitual residence owing to a well-founded fear of persecution'.³

People fleeing dire poverty are not considered refugees, even if remaining in their home country amounts to sacrificing their survival. These people are called "economic refugees" in some humanitarian circles and "economic migrants" in international law and popular discourse.

A migrant is 'any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is'.⁴ Refugees are one category of migrant, among others.

People fleeing dire poverty are not considered refugees, even if remaining in their home country amounts to sacrificing their survival. These people are called "economic refugees" in some humanitarian circles and "economic migrants" in international law and popular discourse. Many studies have pointed to the "category slippage" between refugees and economic migrants in the recent decade, particularly evident in the European media and public debate.⁵

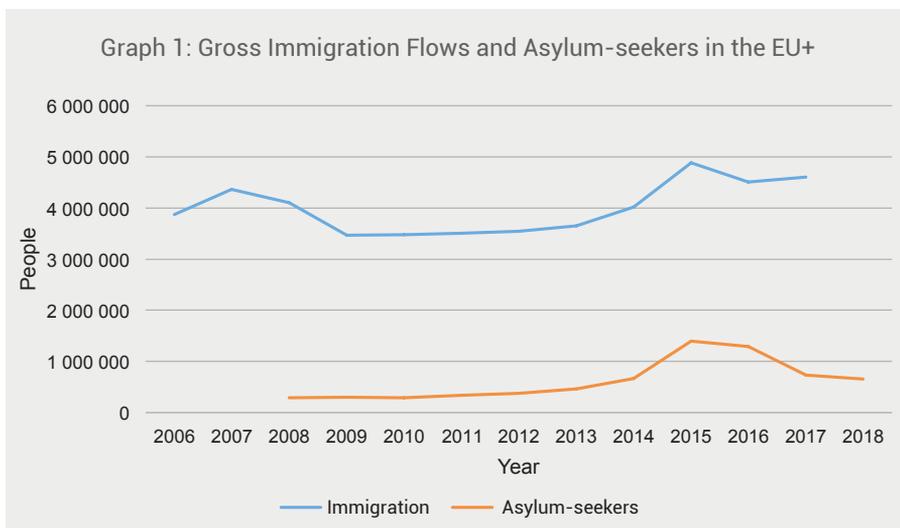
In this study, I shall distinguish between migrants and refugees where possible, whilst recognising that European *anti-refugee* and *anti-immigrant sentiment* are routinely conflated within a general attitude against an undesirable other. They therefore cannot always naturally be separated.

Measuring migration

Migration data is recorded in either stocks or flows. Immigrant stock is the number of immigrants living in a country or region at a given point in time. In many cases, the immigrant stock is regarded as consisting of all people born outside the country under consideration. Immigrant flows are the number of immigrants entering a region during a specified time period (e.g. over a year).

To determine the actual level of the migrant "crisis", it is useful to consider both types of data. Whereas flows give a sense of short-term challenges and the perception of the crisis (a picture of pressure at borders, over-stretched administration, boat arrivals, cost of returns), stock gives a sense of the longer-term reality: how immigrants affect demographics, social integration and the economy. Immigration intensity measures the immigrant stock as a percentage of the local population at a point in time.

Likewise, refugee stock is the number of people with refugee status residing in a given region at a given time. Refugee flows are defined as first-time asylum claims – the number of people who enter a region and claim asylum irrespective of whether they are granted refugee status. Refugee intensity is the percentage of the local population constituted by refugees.



Note: EU+ means the EU plus Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Source: Eurostat

The flow data in Graph 1 indicate the extent of the European migrant crisis. Immigration flows are composed of asylum-seekers, intra-EU immigrants (through the Schengen Area) and immigrants from beyond the Union and continent. In 2017, almost 50% of immigration flows came from within the EU.⁶

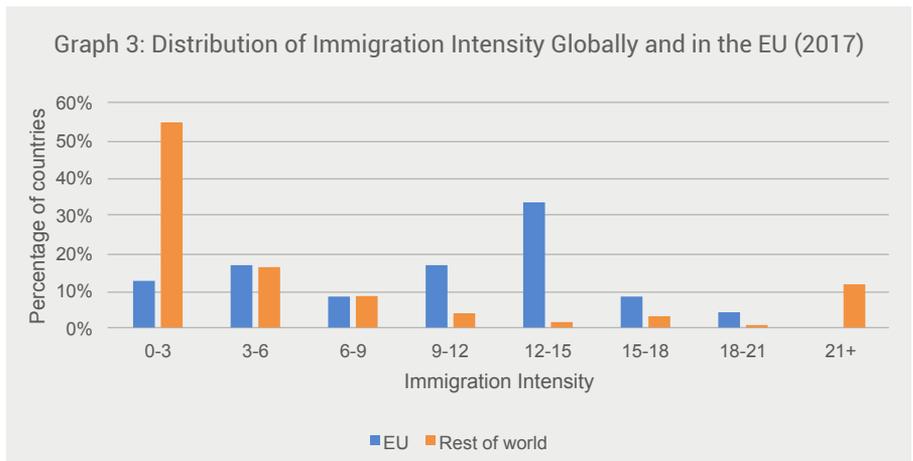
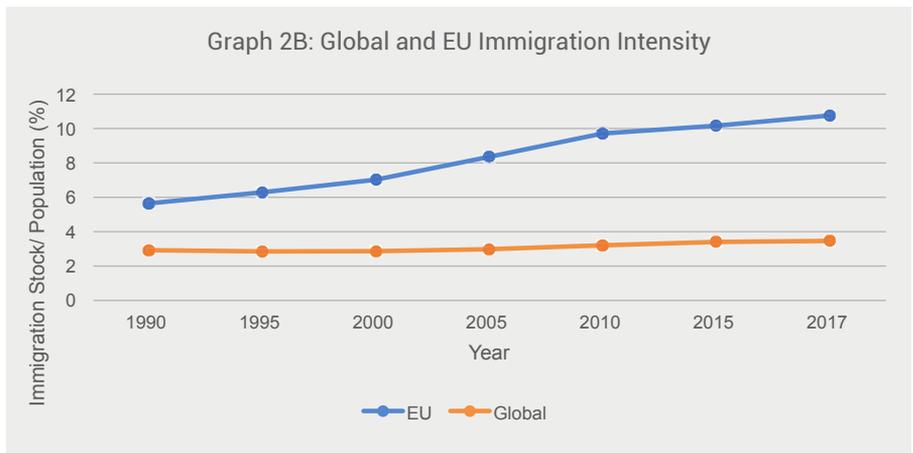
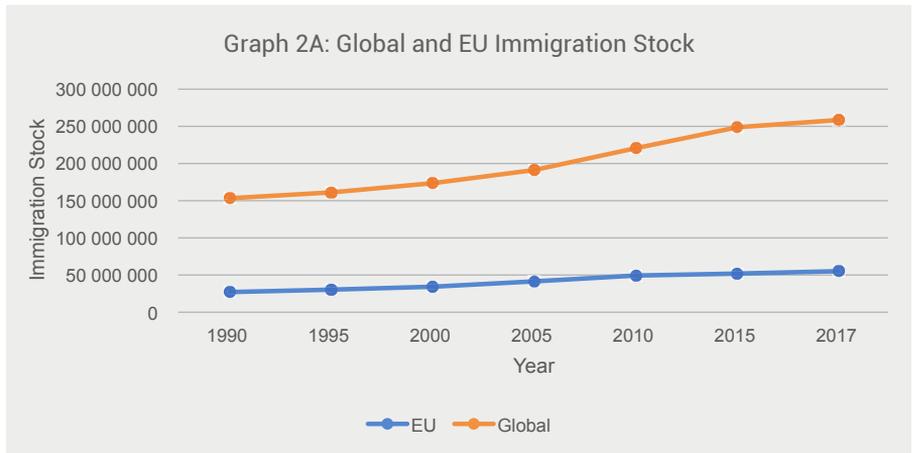
In 2019, contrary to the media and political discourse, Europe is experiencing its lowest number of asylum claims since 2013.

The graph shows that while EU states did see a significant increase in asylum-seekers between 2014 and 2017, the flow has since subsided. In 2019, contrary to the media and political discourse, Europe is experiencing its lowest number of asylum claims since 2013.⁷

Immigration intensity

Eighteen EU countries had immigration intensities of over 6% at the end of 2017. In eight countries (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland and Slovenia) over 50% of immigrants had come from Europe. In Denmark, Finland and Sweden over 10% of the immigrant stock had come from both the Middle East and Asia. In the UK, Portugal, Spain, France and the Netherlands, many immigrants had come from former colonies in Africa, Latin America and Asia. In Estonia and Latvia, more than 50% of the immigrant stock had come from Russia.⁸

The following graphs indicate trends.



Sources: UN World Population Prospects, UN Population Division: International Migration

The stock data in Graph 2A shows that immigrant stock in the EU in 2017 was about 20% of the global stock. Since 1990, the EU's immigrant stock has doubled, compared with a 70% increase in the global stock. The EU immigration stock has increased more slowly in the recent decade than it did between 2000 and 2010.

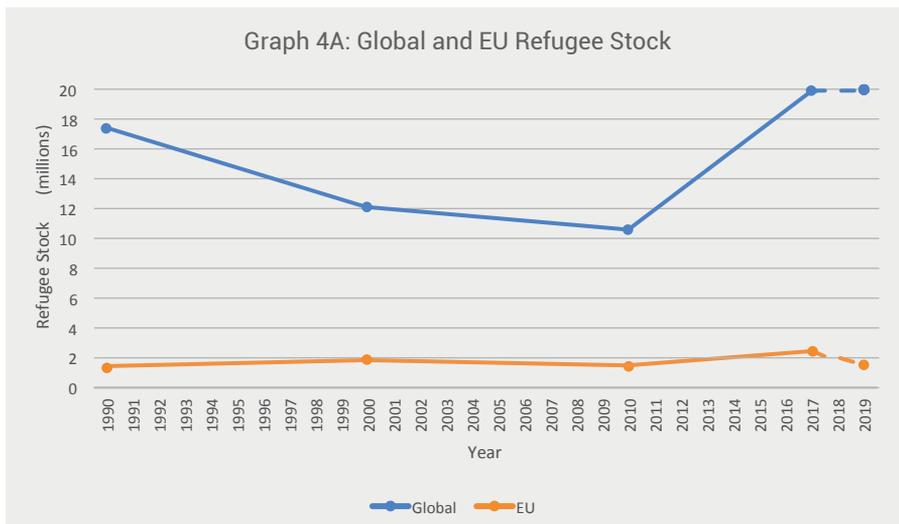
Graph 2B shows that global immigrant stock has grown slightly faster than the global population since 1990. Immigrants have gone from constituting 2.9% to 3.4% of the global population. Immigration intensity in the EU has been consistently higher than in the world as a whole, and it has increased faster – from 5.6% to 10.8%. In part, this is because the EU population has grown slowly from 476 million in 1990 to 507 million in 2017. The EU's low total fertility rate, which stood at 1.57 (well below replacement) in 2017, and its ageing population create a demand for immigrants.⁹

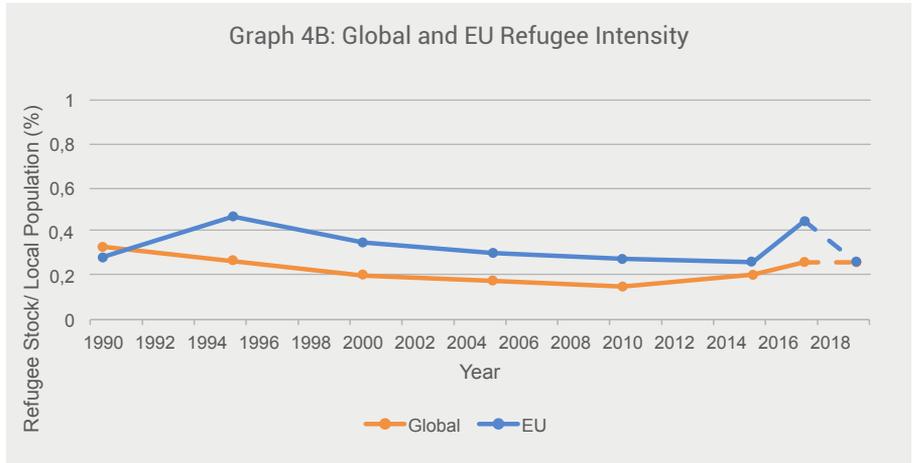
Graph 3 shows that whereas 55% of non-EU states experience an immigration intensity of below 3%, only 13% of EU countries do. European states experience a range of intensities with a median of 9 – 12%. The graph gives a sense of the vastly different experiences of states in the EU, with countries like Austria (19%), Sweden (17.6%), Ireland (16.9%) and Germany (14.8%) absorbing high proportions of immigrants.

To put the stock data in context, in 2017, the EU was host to 13% of the world's migrants, 7% of its population and contributed 22% of global GDP. Immigrants are, by and large, handpicked by the markets and facilitate economic growth. The EU's GDP per capita has increased steadily over the years, except for lulls in 2009 and 2012. In 2017, GDP per capita in Europe was higher than ever before and over 30% higher than it was in 1990.¹⁰ In contrast, GDP per capita in Africa has been in decline since 2010, sitting today at around 10% of European levels.¹¹

Looked at as stock with respect to the EU's population and GDP, immigrant volumes do not seem to indicate a migrant crisis, or the UK Daily Mail's suggested "biblical exodus". However, as intensities, seen against Europe's declining fertility rate and ageing population, immigrants can be construed as a demographic threat – one that has been building incrementally over the decades and which is especially palpable in some EU states.

Refugee intensity

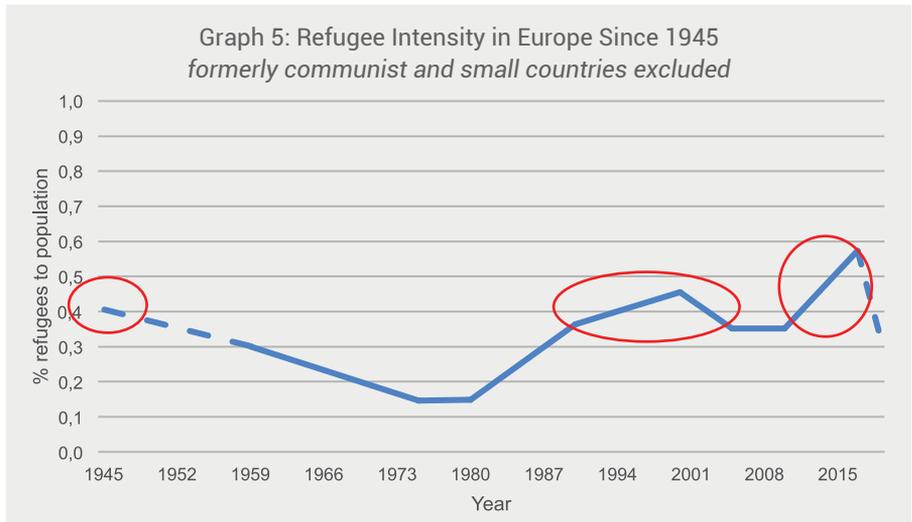




Source: UN Population Prospects, UNHCR, UNHCR Historical Refugee Data

The EU's high rejection rate of asylum-seekers is shown by the stock curve in Graph 4A as opposed to Graph 1. Only 2.3 million refugees resided in the EU at the end of 2017, with many confined to camps.

Graph 4A shows that since 2013, admitted refugees have increased by 89% worldwide but by only 65% in the EU. With respect to population, however, the EU's "crisis" is greater.



Source: UN Population Prospects, UNHCR, UNHCR Historical Refugee Data

The historical data in Graph 5 reveals 3 refugee stock crises in Europe since WWII, defined here as where refugees make up more than 0.35% of the population (3.5 refugees per 1000 people).

The first crisis occurred in the wake of WWII when close to 1 million Western Europeans spilled across the region.¹² This led to the establishment of the UNHCR and the 1951 Refugee Convention.

The second and most prolonged crisis arose in the late 1980s and lasted more than a decade. People from Afghanistan, Iraq, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Somalia, Bosnia, Angola, Eritrea and Croatia sought asylum in Europe. This surge was the outcome of ethnic conflict after decolonisation and the international armed conflict after the

breakup of Yugoslavia. At its peak, around 1.8 million refugees were hosted in Western Europe, a large proportion of which were European (Bosnian and Croatian).

The third crisis is the recent European Migrant Crisis. While Graph 4B shows that the EU experienced its peak in refugee intensity in the 1990s, Graph 5 shows that in Europe outside formerly communist and small territories, refugee intensity was highest in 2017. The refugees hosted in these countries today are predominantly darker skinned, Muslim and Middle Eastern or North African.

In 2017, at the peak of the refugee crisis, the EU hosted 12% of the world's refugees, compared with 7% of global population. Given that it also held 22% of global GDP, many critics have argued that the real humanitarian crisis is outside of the Global North.¹³ In Africa, for example, 80% of migrants never leave the continent.¹⁴ Five of the ten countries that host more than half of the world's refugees are in Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Chad, DRC), and the other five are in the Middle East and South Asia (Jordan, Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran).¹⁵

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To summarise:

- This is the third refugee "crisis" experienced by the EU since 1945, and not the largest.
- The refugee aspect of the recent migrant "crisis" has declined to pre-crisis levels.
- Half of the EU's immigration flows come from other EU states, while the other half tend to come from former colonies, South and East Asia or special bilateral relations (e.g. Estonia and Russia).
- The number of immigrants residing in the EU has increased gradually over the decades. The ratio of immigrants to locals has increased more rapidly, given low natural population growth.
- High levels of GDP and GDP per capita mean that Europe has the resources to cope.

Ultimately, the "waves" of migrants referred to in the media are neither unprecedented nor unmanageable. The EU's challenge should simply be about process – creating and maintaining effective migration policy, housing asylum-seekers waiting for decisions, deporting illegal immigrants and integrating legal ones into the economy and host society. Instead, refugees on rubber dinghies have been transformed into a threat by one of the most powerful regions in the world.

Analysis

Continued immigration from outside Europe is inevitable for the following reasons.

1. State, nation and territory

Though the state is often treated as the container for all aspects of social being, humans have agency and imagination beyond state borders. Particularly when a nation has failed or its survival is at stake, the fragility of the nation-state system and the arbitrariness of its borders become apparent.

By entering the *territory* of the state without entering the *nation*, asylum-seekers and migrants draw attention to the fragility of the state-nation-territory trinity.¹⁶ Resulting anxiety is combatted by politicians and society through anti-immigration discourse and immigration restrictions. These re-inscribe the state's importance in managing the border between national and other identities.¹⁷

In present-day Europe, realities of the nation-state system have combined with manifestations of globalisation – rapid flows of capital, the porousness of national borders and the increasing vulnerability of the state to external realities – to incite a reassertion of nationalism. Nationalism, is arguably a grand response to intergroup

threat perception: 'a crisis of identity', 'the response to the irregularities of modernity' through the reinforcement of the essence and boundaries of the nation.¹⁸

By this argument, it is the very fragility of the nation-state system that necessitates nationalism: Nation-states create migrants, migrants reinforce nationalism and nationalism bolsters nation-states. Populism is an intensification of this dynamic, in an age of globalisation and uncertainty.

2. Globalisation and development generate factors favouring mobility

Given that capital, commodities, ideas and values span the globe and shape societies, the movement of people is inevitable. Transnational communities have become a global norm, through which social and economic remittances unleash powerful processes of social transformation and migration.

Since 1990, the number of people living in extreme poverty (defined as less than \$2 a day) has declined by nearly two-thirds. More people have thus begun to meet the material threshold required to migrate, entering a new global "striver class".

While the positive relationship between *globalisation* and migration is widely agreed upon, the correlation between *development* and migration is contested. Particularly during the decolonisation era, dependency theory literature focused on migration as a North-South exodus driven by poverty and income gaps. Development was prescribed as a "solution" to the immigration "problem".

Since the 1970s, however, transnational theories have begun to link mobility to processes of development and economic integration. Migration transition theory postulates that economic development and social transformation initially coincide with increasing levels and a greater geographical reach of emigration.¹⁹ This is because development expands access to infrastructure and transport, as well as material resources, social networks, media and knowledge. Once industrialisation has taken hold, population and labour supply decline and wage levels increase. Emigration falls and labour immigration begins to occur.²⁰

In a study of Africa in 1960, 1980 and 2000, authors found that countries with a high proportion of extra-continental emigration intensity were those with comparatively higher levels of economic development.²¹ Intra-continental migration, on the other hand, is typical to poorer, landlocked countries. This contradicts outdated interpretations of migration to Europe as being driven by poverty and underdevelopment.

Since 1990, the number of people living in extreme poverty (defined as less than \$2 a day) has declined by nearly two-thirds.²² More people have thus begun to meet the material threshold required to migrate, entering a new global "striver class". Their migration patterns resemble industrialisation migration of the 1800s – 1950s, whereby Europeans with enough money and hardship sought greener pastures in the colonies.

Of course, if Global Southern states are unable to develop (restricted by national circumstances or unfavourable features of the international order), the "striver class" will remain and emigration to the Global North can be expected to continue.

3. Europe may not want low-skilled migrant labourers, but it needs them

European immigration has increased gradually over the past 3 decades.²³ There is no question that Europe knows enough and is powerful enough to prevent irregular migration and deport illegal migrants. Immigration intensity has increased in Europe simply because *Europe has allowed it to*.

Given its low fertility and economic growth, Europe relies on immigrant labourers.²⁴ According to UN World Population Prospects estimates, EU states had a median fertility rate of 1.57 in the 2015 – 2020 period – well below the natural rate of replacement (± 2.1). The median crude birth and death rates of EU states inform a rate of natural increase of -0.6 .²⁵ Immigration is thus a vital source of population, human capital and economic growth.

Low-skilled immigrants tend to be expensive to taxpayers because they are more likely to be poor and stay poor. At the same time though, in the UK, if immigration had frozen in 1990, the economy would be at least 9% smaller than it is now. That is equivalent to a real loss in GDP of more than £175bn over 15 years. In Germany, the net economic loss would be 6%, or €155bn.²⁶

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In response, many immigration policies are arguably "designed to fail". Their purpose may be to persuade the electorate that their concerns – for example the protection of jobs for nationals – are being taken seriously. For example, successive British prime ministers have placated public hostility by declaring "British jobs for British workers", while creating complex and differentiated entry systems to satisfy the markets and stimulate economic growth.²⁷

In some instances, restrictive policies met with employer demand push immigrants into illegality. This can lead to high levels of risk and exploitation and push up 'illegal immigration' statistics. The result is public hostility and even more restrictive policies. Like counter-terrorism, detaining and policing immigrants has become a major and self-sustaining industry in Europe.

4. Colonial echoes and the North-South divide

It is myopic not to recognise colonial legacies in the flows and politics of migration.

Violent conflicts in North Africa and the Middle East (significantly responsible for both European refugee "crises" since 1990) have been directly linked to 1) colonial domination and arbitrarily imposed borders, 2) hurried and violent colonial withdrawal, 3) devastating Cold War proxy wars, 4) ill-conceived Western interventions in the region, and 5) sustained economic domination and exploitation.

The norms and policies that treat migrants as a safety valve for European economies (providing low-skilled labour in times of expansion and disappearing in times of recession) can be viewed as a continuation of colonial practices, which mobilised African and Middle Eastern labour (see African slave trade and European "guest worker"²⁸ policies) to meet the demands of emerging capitalist production, whilst preventing long-term settlement.²⁹

The EU's Neighbourhood Policy, the EU-Turkey Refugee Deal and bilateral agreements with Libya, Morocco and Tunisia have been applied to "contain" migrants in the Global South. Each has had severe consequences. The Italy-Libya deal, amongst other things, allowed Libya to import European weapons in exchange for curbing migration to Europe. European weapons and funding have fuelled civil conflict and an abhorrent migrant slave trade in Libya.

Meanwhile, freedom of migration exists for virtually all middle-class citizens of the Global North, and has for over a century. It is through some combination of hypocrisy and collective amnesia that Europeans discount their migration history – a history that involved not only diluting but exterminating and enslaving host populations across the

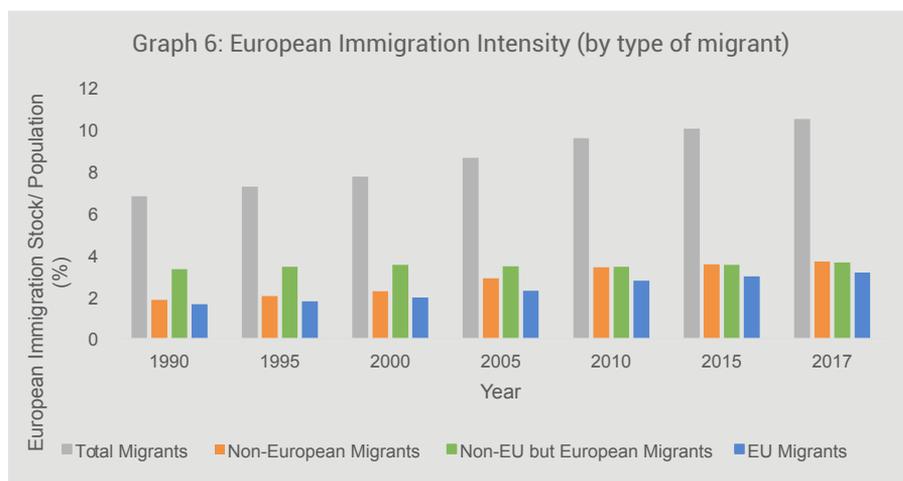
Global South.³⁰ This migration was so immense that by the eve of WWI, 38% of the world's population was of European ancestry.

Migration expert Professor Stephan Castles argues that international migration is an integral part of relationships between societies and that there is currently a “crisis” in North-South relationships as a result of deepening global inequality. Until resources are better distributed, encumbered development, sectarian conflict and economic insecurity will continue to drive both forced and voluntary migration. Accordingly, North-South migration is an inevitable aspect of the North-South divide – one that no policy, however draconian, will be able to prevent.³¹

What has changed?

This final section unravels the factors responsible for the apocalyptic response to the European Migrant Crisis, compared with former crises of the 1950s and 1990s.

1. The colour and composition of migrants



Sources: *UN Population Prospects*, *UN Population Division: International Migration*

Europe's increased immigration intensity since 1990 can be attributed both to the expansion of the EU in 2004 (intra-EU immigration has risen from 1.64% to 3.17% – see Graph 6) and the growth of non-European immigration following decolonisation (which has risen from 2% to 4% of the total European population). This is owing largely to the greater mobility of formerly colonised people, family reunification claims (with origins in European “guest worker” policies of the 1950s and 1960s) and Europe's labour demands and facilitating policies.

It is important to realise that the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights, including the right to asylum, were rights not intended to apply to all human beings. Non-European bodies of the Global South were not recognised under the first international legal framework of humanity. The 1967 Protocol removed the temporal (events associated with WWII) and geographic (Europe) restrictions to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and in the decades between then and the 1990s, Europe was relatively open to refugees. This served Europe's interest during the Cold War in reinforcing a liberal, democratic identity and providing refuge to escapers of communism.³²

However, beginning in the 1990s, escalating European legislation collectively established what is known today as the European non-entrée regime. This coincided with the fact that, for the first time in history, ‘the majority of asylum-seekers making

applications for refuge come from outside Europe. They are, in fact, by and large people who originate from countries which until thirty to sixty years ago were under [...] colonial rule.¹³³

Although asylum-seekers always existed in great numbers in the Global South, they did not have the mobility to reach Europe until the liberalisation and globalisation of the late 20th century. In light of this, the idea that Europe's current "crisis" response is a result of a global "upsurge" in refugees could be interpreted better as a result of the *nature* of those refugees, coupled with their ability to reach Europe.

A similar argument can be made for economic migration to Europe. In a historical account of British national identity, Cesarani tracks the development of British immigration policy from the 1905 Aliens Act to the 1981 Nationality Act. He evidences the increasingly exclusive nature of British national identity and citizenship,³⁴ developing in opposition to the non-white Commonwealth subject while simultaneously preventing such subjects from accessing Britain as their mobility increased.³⁵ He concludes that the same stereotypes that legitimised imperial domination were used to justify the regulation of migration, and served as an antithesis for British national identity as a fragile mixture of 'superiority', 'civilisation' and 'modernity'.

It is important to note, however, that Europe's association between Muslim people and violence far predates September 11th. It has roots going back for centuries.

This argument – of the Global Southern (and therefore "other" and threatening) nature of contemporary migrants – explains the heightened panic surrounding the second and third crises, as opposed to the first. It does not, however, explain the particular response to the 2013 crisis. One might argue that in the 1990s, a significant proportion of refugees and migrants were European and therefore acceptable. Or that still-fresh colonial guilt and political correctness restrained anti-immigration sentiment. But in the decade between the two crises, other important factors have entered the fray: one concerning the religion of migrants, and the other concerning the identity of Europeans.

2. Islam, terrorism and the perceived failure of multiculturalism

The string of terror attacks since September 11th 2001 has changed the game for migration policy and discourse. Until terrorism, European anti-immigration sentiment could usually be boiled down to old-style racism or ethnic nationalism. Now, Islamophobia can claim to be about a security threat.

The reality, moreover, that many bombers have been "home grown" has drawn attention to groups of immigrants in European states who remain unintegrated into their host societies. This has led to ideals of multiculturalism³⁶ (advocated by European governments between the 1970s and 1990s) being discredited. Of course, spatial segregation of migrant communities is often dictated by realities of class and income, and the size of these communities is often exaggerated by the idea that '[w]hen natives have lots of children of their own, immigrants look like reinforcements. When natives have few children, immigrants look like replacements.'³⁷

In any case, the social and cultural problems associated with immigrant Turks, Moroccans and Algerians, politicised in Europe during the 1990s, have become intertwined with the Syrian refugee question in the recent decade, under the umbrella of "Islam".

It is important to note, however, that Europe's association between Muslim people and violence far predates September 11th. It has roots going back for centuries.

The Runnymede Trust Report of 1997 constituted a list of 'modern social imaginaries' – 'a repertoire of beliefs, feelings and behavioural dispositions that could be readily mobilized to foster hostility towards Muslims living in Britain'.³⁸ The report found four groups of stereotypes associated with Muslims: Islam as separate and other; Islam as a monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to new realities; Muslims as barbaric, irrational and primitive, united by tribal loyalties; Muslims as violent, aggressive, engaged in a 'clash of civilisations' and supportive of terrorism.³⁹

Politicians present themselves as 'managers of unease', simultaneously attempting and appearing to protect the national group by adding salience to the threat of immigration.

Revealingly, many of these stereotypes are antitheses of Western Enlightenment values (arguably the basis of European identity). The Enlightenment advocated a set of values centred on reason as the primary source of authority and legitimacy, including individual liberty, tolerance, progress, civility, morality and separation of church and state.⁴⁰ The findings of the Report indicate that the Islamic other is defined in opposition

to Enlightenment values and therefore "European-ness" – inferior and threatening through his intolerance, backwardness, irrationality, immorality and primitiveness.

Islamophobia in Europe, therefore, must be located within the historical context of imperialism and Orientalism⁴¹. The historical stereotypes of Islam are still applied in policies and discourse today.⁴²

3. Inequality and identity leveraged by populism

In recent decades, European states have experienced a growing dualization of their labour markets. That is the creation, widening and deepening of insider-outsider divides between workers with tenured and well-paid jobs and those with poorly paid flexible or part time jobs.⁴³ This dualisation has occurred alongside the transition from traditional welfare states (rooted in industrialisation and based on collective social risks) to post-industrial service economies (with individualised risks and decreased solidarity). It is argued that this 'neoliberal restructuring' has accentuated the power of dominant classes, while reducing the power of subordinate classes.⁴⁴

Personified by Reagan and Thatcher, the neoliberal turn began during the 1980s. It entailed the scaling back of the welfare state and coincided with the economic recession of the early 1990s. One might therefore argue that the political and economic conditions during the 1990s migrant crisis were ripe for anti-immigration sentiment and politics. But missing from the equation were right-wing populist parties which, in the current crisis, have successfully associated the erosion of the welfare state with immigrants – as financial burdens and competitors.

According to Corbett, the threat of immigration is amplified in the right-wing populist environment, which is a "twofold vertical structure" that is antagonistic upward towards the intellectual, political and economic elites, and downward towards those at the bottom of society: criminals, foreigners, profiteers who threaten the purity of the people'.⁴⁵

Politicians present themselves as 'managers of unease', simultaneously attempting and appearing to protect the national group by adding salience to the threat of immigration. While right-wing populists embed unease by articulating and reshaping popular grievances through the prism of identity, liberals tend to respond by securitisation. Liberal securitisation *policy creates politics* by problematising immigration and institutionalising intergroup anxieties. The public response inspires further securitisation policy in a 'ratcheting effect', or upward spiral.⁴⁶

As Fukuyama has pointed out, identity fuels much of politics today. This is often put down to the individualism of modern liberal society, which has led people to feel isolated and unhappy. Many find themselves nostalgic for the community and structured life they think they have lost, or that their ancestors are assumed to have possessed.

'Rural people, who are the backbone of the populist movements [...] often believe that their traditional values are under severe threat by cosmopolitan, city-based elites. They feel victimised by a secular culture that is careful not to criticise Islam or Judaism, yet regards their own Christianity as a mark of bigotry [...] They can be seduced by leaders who tell them that they have been betrayed and disrespected by the existing power structures, and that they are important communities whose greatness will again be recognised'.^{47,48}

Hence the anti-immigration cornerstone of populist identity politics and the liberal securitisation response deflect societal insecurity and resentment onto the immigrant other. The response to the recent migrant crisis is thus a symptom of Europe's internal crisis – a crisis of inequality, alienation, the decline of class-based politics and the rise of populism.

Conclusion

More than 60 million Europeans emigrated between the beginning of the nineteenth century and 1932.⁴⁹ In 2017, the migrant stock in Europe of non-European origin was 43 million. The world population in 1870 was just over 800 million. In 2017, it was seven and a half billion.

Europe is not threatened by immigrants so much as by the political reactions that immigrants and cultural diversity create.⁵⁰ Politicians might be spending time countering those reactions instead of immigrants themselves, if it weren't that anti-immigration sentiment served political ends. But it is becoming alarmingly clear that fostering an inclusive national identity to which newcomers can be assimilated is critical to the survival of liberal democracy.

Stephan Walt promoted history as the 'best antidote against the self-serving narratives that governments and misguided patriots invoke to excuse their own conduct and justify suppressing others'.⁵¹ To counter the politics of identity, entitlement and collective amnesia, a data-based and historicised perspective of migration is necessary.

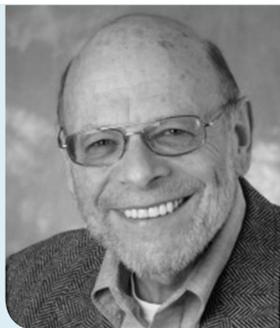
NOTES

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- 2 The 1951 Refugee Convention, as amended by the 1967 Protocol, sets out the rights of refugees and the responsibilities of nations for granting asylum. The UNHCR is the global 'guardian' of the legislation (UNHCR, 2017).
- 3 UNHCR. *The 1951 Refugee Convention* (2017)
- 4 IOM. *IOM Definition of "Migrant"* (2019)
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- 6 Eurostat
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More than 850 000 asylum-seekers arrived in Greece at the peak of the crisis, with many making their way to northern European countries like Germany. By June 2018, little more than 13 000 had made the same journey. Similarly, more than 150 000 people arrived in Italy in 2015. By mid-2018, less than 17 000 had arrived. In 2016 when applications were at their highest, more than 62 000 people sought asylum in Germany every month. In 2018, this fell to little more than 15 000.
- 8 See Appendix
- 9 UN World Population Prospects (2017)
- 10 Trading Economics. *European Union GDP Per Capita* (2018)
- 11 World Bank. *GDP Per Capita* (2019)

- 12 BBC. *European Refugee Movements After World War Two* (2011)
- 13 The term "Global South" is used in this article to denote less developed regions, as a neutral alternative to non-West, developing or undeveloped (with no geographical aspirations). "Global North" denotes the developed world. In some instances, "west" and "non-west" are used for emphasis on the unequal power relations between the Global North and South, or in reference to a period or piece of literature in which they were applied.
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- 23 Refer to Graph 2
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- 25 Eurostat
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- 28 The Western European guest worker programs aimed to satisfy labour shortages during times of economic expansion by importing low-skilled labour from Southern Europe, Turkey and North Africa, through bilateral agreements with sending countries. Guest workers were often assigned to residential areas separate from members of the host population and close to industrial hubs.
- 29 Castles, S. 'Development and Migration – Migration and Development', *A Journal of Social and Political Theory* (2009), 56(121), p13
- 30 See the colonial history of the Caribbean, Mexico, Latin America, Africa, Australia, New Zealand.
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- 32 Innes, A. 'When the Threatened Become the Threat: The Construction of Asylum-seekers in British Media Narratives', *International Relations* (2010), 24(4), p471
- 33 Mayblin, L. *Asylum After Empire: Colonial Legacies in the Politics of Asylum Seeking* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), p12
- 34 In Andrew Nicol's words, the British 'lack a clear-cut nationality or citizenship' 'because [...] nationality law since 1962 has been entangled with, and at last come to be based upon, the law of immigration' (Cesarani, p57).
- 35 Cesarani, D. 'The Changing Character of Citizenship and Nationality in Britain', *Citizenship, Nationality and Migration in Europe* (Cesarani, Fulbrook eds, 1996), pp61-68
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APPENDIX					
United Nations WPP	EU	Schengen	Former communist	Former imperial	Small
EUROPE					
Eastern Europe					
Belarus			x		
Bulgaria	x		x		
Czechia	x	x	x		
Hungary	x	x	x		
Poland	x	x	x		
Republic of Moldova			x		
Romania	x		x		
Russian Federation			x		
Slovakia	x	x	x		
Ukraine			x		
NORTHERN EUROPE					
Channel Islands					
Denmark	x	x			
Estonia	x	x	x		
Faeroe Islands					x
Finland	x	x			
Iceland		x			x
Ireland	x				
Isle of Man					x
Latvia	x	x	x		
Lithuania	x	x	x		
Norway		x			
Sweden	x	x			
United Kingdom	x			x	
SOUTHERN EUROPE					
Albania					
Andorra					x
Bosnia and Herzegovina			x		
Croatia	x		x		
Gibraltar					x
Greece	x	x			
Holy See					x
Italy	x	x			
Malta	x	x			x
Montenegro			x		x
Portugal	x	x		x	
San Marino					x
Serbia			x		
Slovenia	x	x	x		
Spain	x	x		x	
TFYR Macedonia			x		
WESTERN EUROPE					
Austria					
Belgium	x	x			
France	x	x		x	
Germany	x	x			
Liechtenstein		x			x
Luxembourg	x				x
Monaco					x
Netherlands	x	x		x	
Switzerland		x			
WESTERN ASIA					
Cyprus					
	x				

Revolt Against Democratic Modernity: The Unholy Marriage of Trump and his Base



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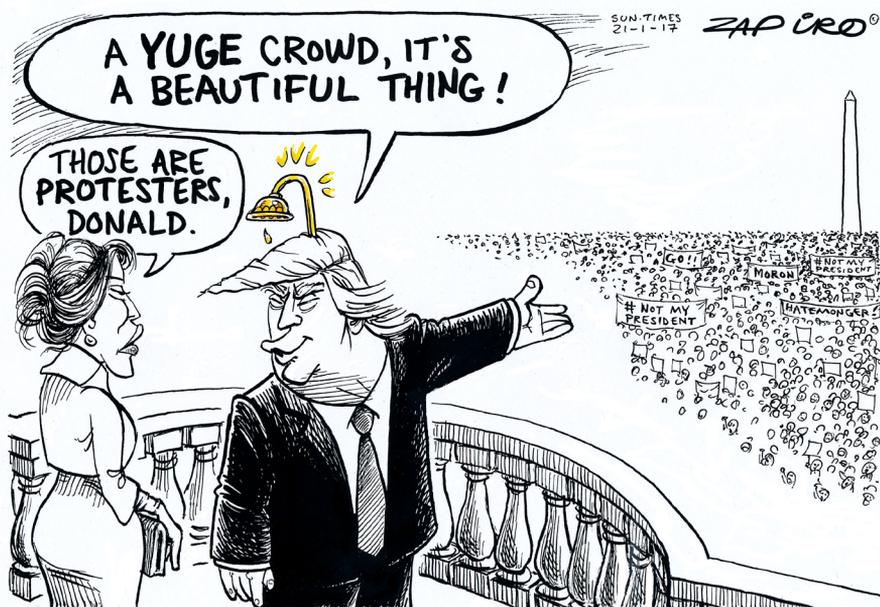
Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is one of the places where the history of our time is being written. On stage a few dozen people wait, nearly all white, many wearing red MAGA caps and T-shirts and holding signs praising Trump. The crowd goes wild as he comes up the stairs, beaming, mingling, clapping, giving thumbs up to those who will face the cameras and cheer as he speaks. Everyone in the hall is applauding, taking cellphone pictures, waving their signs. Trump and his "base" are greeting each other lovingly. They are there for him, and he is there for them, in a way that has simply no parallel in American politics.

This nondescript man with the dyed orange hair and red tie exudes an odd sort of magnetism, absorbing the adulation as is due without hesitation or any obligatory touch of shyness. As four years of rallies and tweets reveal, Trump has not simply been imposing himself on a passive audience, but he and his base have been shaping each other. And doing so in the service of a cause. This cause, which brings him to them and them to him, has a name: "Making America great again."

The Trump Phenomenon

Explaining his rise has led to scholars looking into a number of themes the United States has in common with other advanced societies: the current explosion of populism and its contemporary forms; the nature of fascism and signs of its possible revival; shifts in working-class political loyalties; the weaknesses of democratic states and constitutions; the revival of authoritarianism; ethnic nationalism and hostility to immigrants; the consequences and contradictions of neoliberal globalization; and the end of the post-World War II economic boom. But as we focus on the United States and the movement to "Make America Great Again," one of its most remarkable features is how these themes combine with uniquely American ones: a reality television star sounding very much like a patent medicine huckster who has magically gotten people to follow him. Beneath this lie deeper American realities such as the force of evangelical religion and its recent amalgamation with the Republican Party and the unique right-wing politics they generate. And beneath this present lurk unresolved issues and persistent disorders of American life going back to the beginning. Certain features of our history make Americans especially maladapted to cope with contemporary stresses and give their consequences a unique American cast.

Trump rallies have become community gatherings, entertainment events, love-fests between the man and his followers, and group hate rituals aimed at political opponents ("Lock her up!"), the media ("enemies of the people"), and all those in the "elite" who criticize or make fun of Trump and his people. The rallies are also warnings against Others who are threatening America: drug-runners, rapists, killers, and thieves among the would-be Mexican immigrants ("Build the wall!") and terrorists among Muslim and Central American asylum-seekers. They are statements that "we" are taking back



“our” country. These rallies stoke anger and fear as they develop the driving theme of Trumpism: “us versus them.”

“Us” rather than “we” fits Trump’s audience, even though he often uses the term “movement” to describe what he has created and what they belong to. And of course there are many movement aspects to Trump’s rallies: the t-shirts and caps, the sense of belonging to a common cause, the friendliness the members of his base feel for each other as they wait for the rallies to begin, the radio and television personalities they enjoy, sharing hatred of the media at the rallies (the “enemy of the people”), the fact that they often drive hundreds of miles to get to the rallies, which are as much about being together for their shared cause as listening to Trump and loving him. And there are the collective experiences of cheering in appreciation and booing in anger. But Dylan Riley is right to invoke Sartre’s notion of *seriality* to describe the way in which they are present together: not to act collectively, but in the fundamentally passive and separated form of listening, watching, jeering and cheering, united by “the image of Trump.”¹ Trump works the crowd who is not there to do anything else.

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Trump’s Grand Rapids rally, on March 26, 2019, was noteworthy because it was Trump’s mass event celebrating Attorney General William Barr’s declaration that the Mueller Report gave no grounds for prosecuting Trump for a conspiracy with Russia. Grand Rapids had been the site of Trump’s late-night rally just before the beginning of voting on November 8, 2016 and so returning there was a symbolic way of kicking off his campaign for reelection. As usual, Trump read his main lines from a teleprompter, adding his own flourishes and riffs, many of them in interaction with his audience. Although he might conceivably have been triumphant, in *The New Yorker* Susan Glasser observed that Trump actually sounded “angry and victimized; undisciplined and often incoherent; predictable in his unpredictability; vain and insecure; prone to lies, exaggeration, and to undercutting even those who seek to serve him.” As Glasser says of every one of Trump’s

appearances that week, Trump as usual displayed “a weird combination of perpetual victim and perpetual bully, whose one constant is to remain on the attack.”²

Which means that “us versus them” remains his strongest theme. Trump attacked the press corps as the “fake news” media, and singled out the “deep state” and the Democrats responsible for the “single greatest hoax in the history of politics in our country.” He revisited with great enthusiasm his pre-election rally in 2016, spoke of expanding automobile production in Michigan, and with no advance notice announced his support

for a major initiative to restore the Great Lakes, touting one achievement after another and attacking his critics while careening incoherently from topic to topic as if he was drunk. While his audience enthusiastically or dutifully cheered everything he said and booed the members of the media (“Fake news!”), the strongest applause lines were about immigrants (the lottery system allows countries to send their “worst people”), closing the southern border (“Build the wall!”), and ending abortion.

“The truth is that the powers that be, they are so powerful, they have so much money, that no one person, not the best president in the world, can take them on alone. The only way we transform America is when millions of people together stand up and fight back.”

We can learn something about who these people are not by comparing Trump’s rally with the one that kicked off Bernie Sanders’s 2020 campaign three weeks earlier in Council Bluffs, Iowa. There too a strong “us versus them” mood prevailed, but about a very different “us” and a very different “them,” and with a very different tone. Despite the affectionate “Bernie, Bernie” chant that broke out at least once, there was little personal interaction between Sanders and the crowd, and his one-hour speech, although frequently cheered, was fully written, much drier, and more analytical. When the crowd chanted his name, he broke into his text and said: “It ain’t Bernie, it’s you. It’s not me, it is us.” The crowd responded with a new chant: “Not me, us! Not me, us!” He explained: “The truth is that the powers that be, they are so powerful, they have so much money, that no one person, not the best president in the world, can take them on alone. The only way we transform America is when millions of people together stand up and fight back.”³ This focus on building a movement, especially given the long list of changes Sanders is calling for, is the opposite of Trumpism, which is after all being treated by many researchers as a case study in authoritarianism. While Trump once said, “I alone can fix it,” Megan Day wrote about Sanders: “No viable presidential campaign has ever been so encouraging of agitation from below.”⁴

Despite the many problems discussed by Sanders, his words convey no sense of personal grievance from Sanders towards “them,” but rather a series of systemic and political criticisms of America’s rising inequality and proposals for lessening it. The “them” after all was the capitalist system, and the domination of American society by the largest corporations and the wealthiest billionaires, unregulated by the government and in opposition to “us,” the vast majority. Sanders focused on the power and riches of the corporate elite, Wall Street, the pharmaceutical industry, and the billionaires, including by name the Koch brothers. Beyond these criticisms the speech was a series of policy proposals, all oriented on increasing the democratic political power of the vast majority, improving their health and material well-being, and curbing the power and riches of the “one percent.” It was intellectually far more demanding than a Trump rally, and also far less entertaining. Trump is a showman, Sanders is not. And more important, Trump’s base is simply not interested in the kinds of issues Sanders raises, although by talking about the auto industry Trump was indirectly gesturing towards the “jobs” theme that he had made so much of in 2016.

When Sanders talks about “wealth” he always has in mind a criticism of those who have too much, done in the name of those who have none at all or far too little. The contrast

on this score couldn't be greater with a man whose career as a reality television star was based on his role as a jet-setting all-powerful mogul, and in a sense was all about his personal wealth. Contrary to the unspoken norm in American politics, Trump and his base seem to think that stressing great wealth is an advantage. Thus, after singling out several political figures in Grand Rapids, Trump gave a shout-out to one Stanley Cher, "a friend of mine who's very rich. He shouldn't be shy. He's one of the biggest builders and real estate people in the world, one of the biggest owners of property. I shouldn't introduce him because you guys won't like him, because he's a big owner of property. But you own property, he just owns more of it than you do. . . Stanley, how much did you make this month?"

Acknowledging a supporter in this crass way would have been bizarre any place other than a Trump rally. Obviously, Trump and his people are not remotely motivated by the widening gap between the rich and everyone else that characterizes the Sanders campaign. Whatever considerable resentment they feel, it is not resentment about class or privilege. This suggests how far Trump and his base are from the concerns that have motivated three generations of embattled progressive Americans: beginning with the labor movement of the 1930s and then the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, and in the years that followed, out of a sense of solidarity and mutual struggle, movements of women, Hispanics, student activists, and gays and lesbians. It was this history that Barack Obama took as the meaning of American life when he leaned on it on the campaign trail in 2008. His use of "Si se pueda - Yes we can" situated his groundbreaking candidacy for president in relation to such movements.⁵

This line of analysis suggested that eight years after Obama's first election, Trump's victory was the result of a working-class defection from the Democratic Party owing to its support for neoliberal globalization and its resulting deindustrialization. Trump promised to reverse this and bring back industry and jobs.

Trump's base

Who then is Trump's base? Today's white working-class? One of the most widely trumpeted conclusions after the 2016 election was that Trump won because the white working-class voted for him. Article after article told this story, based on exit polls, anecdotal evidence, and then research. This line of analysis suggested that eight years after Obama's first election, Trump's victory was the result of a working-class defection from the Democratic Party owing to its support for neoliberal globalization and its resulting deindustrialization. Trump promised to reverse this and bring back industry and jobs. Article after article used a kind of class analysis that begins with the transformation of the American economy over the past generation and focuses on the devastation of the industrial heartland: Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Those who tell this story from the left emphasize that Trump is after all, a capitalist who campaigned by appealing to industrial workers hurt by deindustrialization, railing about the "elites" who ignored their suffering and calling for government action to aid them, but who, upon being elected, moved towards tax cuts for the rich and corporations, deregulation, austerity, right-wing economics, and massive corruption. This was smoke and mirrors from the multi-billionaire who happily advertised his wealth while claiming to be responding to the damage wrought by neoliberal globalization and successfully seduced the "left behinds", the industrial working-class. A recent analysis along these lines was done by Marxist Vincent Navarro, who follows the same thread on both sides of the Atlantic through several national instances of today's "populism." He cites a worsening of workers' conditions due to neoliberalism and the rise of nationalist and populist parties. Accordingly, for Navarro, the task for the left is to win back working-class voters from the populists of the right with an authentic left response to the crisis.⁶

Evidence for the working-class wave was broadcast widely immediately after Trump won on November 8, 2016. Nate Cohn's "Why Trump Won Working-Class Whites"⁷ appeared the next day in the *New York Times*. Later Cohn succinctly summarized what has become the standard conclusion: "Mr. Trump's strength among white working class voters, particularly men, put him over the top in the decisive battleground states in 2016."⁸ Cohn is here repeating the conclusion of the research conducted by *The Atlantic* and the Public Religion Research Institute, which showed that Trump won white working-class swing voters over Clinton by a margin of two to one and then proceeded to explain how this happened.

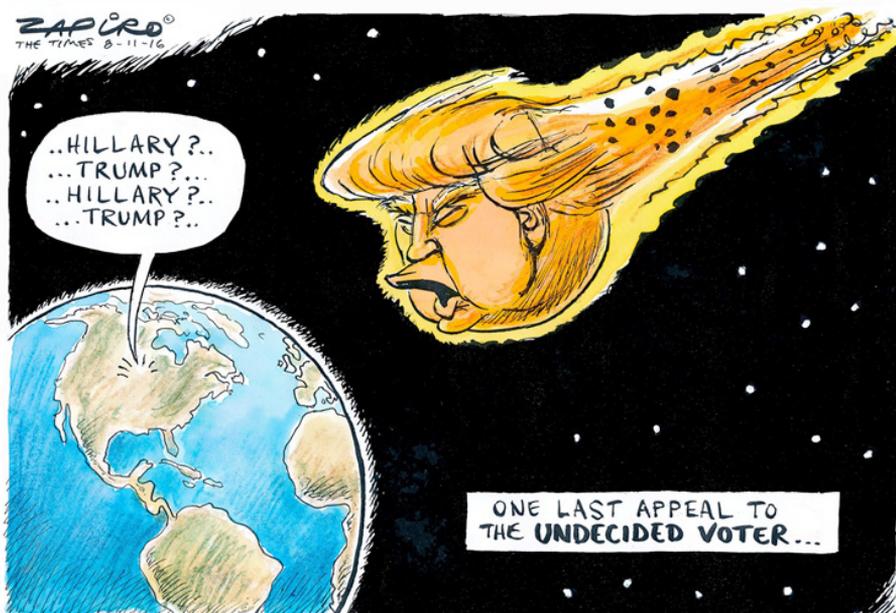
Nationally union households did indeed shift towards Trump from Obama, but by how much? Davis replies: "The phenomenon is real but largely limited to a score or so of troubled Rust Belt counties from Iowa to New York where a new wave of plant closure or relocation has coincided with growing immigrant and refugee populations."

But it did not happen. Pundits made far too much of what Mike Davis describes as the "modest and localized defection of working-class Democrats to Trump."⁹ The confusion was helped along by the distorted (and condescending) definition of "working-class": anyone without a college degree. As Kim Moody points out, this 70% of the population, 135 million American adults without degrees, includes nearly fifteen million white small business owners with an average income of \$112,000. Since over 90% of these say they vote regularly, and nearly two-thirds consider themselves conservatives,

along with spouses the math reveals that they amount to a majority of Trump's thirty-five million white non-college degree voters. To them must be added millions more white non-degree holders who tend to vote as conservatives (managers, supervisors, police, real estate and insurance salespeople). Clearly, the fact that a huge number of Trump's voters are without college degrees tells us nothing about his working-class support.

The other place to look, as Moody points out, is the union household vote, with the caveat that many union members want to see themselves and are widely regarded as middle class, such as teachers, government employees, and nurses. Nationally union households did indeed shift towards Trump from Obama, but by how much? Davis replies: "The phenomenon is real but largely limited to a score or so of troubled Rust Belt counties from Iowa to New York where a new wave of plant closure or relocation has coincided with growing immigrant and refugee populations." There was considerable anecdotal evidence of union members and locals supporting Trump, and his narrow victories in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan were decisive in winning a majority of the Electoral College. But as Moody and others point out, Trump did not win an extraordinary share of union household voters. The reality is that in most elections over the past forty years, around 40% of union workers and family members have voted Republican.¹⁰ This may be an anomaly compared with Europe, but it is a persistent feature of American political life. The union household figure for Trump in 2016 was a much-ballyhooed 43% of the total union vote, but in 1980 Ronald Reagan won 45% of union household votes, in 1988 George H. W. Bush also won 43%. Forty percent voted for Romney in 2012, and four years later Trump's share was 3% higher. That three percent swing is not shocking – the swing from Carter to Reagan was 7%, and the 2004 election also saw a 3% swing for the incumbent George W. Bush. Thus there was no white working-class landslide for Trump.

Still, the numbers demand further analysis, in two ways. First, white working-class swing voters amounted to over eight hundred thousand union family voters nationwide. Michigan's Macomb County, home of the heavily unionized "Reagan Democrats" of 1980, saw a shift of 32,000 from Obama to Trump, which was more than enough to swing the state for Trump. Trump won Wisconsin by 23,000 votes and Pennsylvania by 44,000, and in each case a 3% union voter swing towards the Republican makes up a



considerable share of the winning margin, although not all of it. A second figure is no less important, and accounts for the rest of the winning margin: the drop of 7% in the Democratic union household vote was much greater than the rise in the Republican vote. As Moody says, many “union household members defected to a third party, refused to answer the question when surveyed, or didn't vote and weren't surveyed.” Without the Republican gain in union voters over 2012, and the Democratic loss of even more, Trump would not be president.

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So the hotly contested question of the working-class vote for Trump must be resolved by the numbers. Are there “Trump” Democrats? Mike Davis answers: “Several hundred thousand white, blue collar Obama voters, at most, voted for Trump's vision of fair trade and reindustrialization, not the millions usually invoked.”¹¹ The relatively small shift in the union vote was not a landslide, but was a significant contributor to Trump's paper-thin victory. This evidence about labor support for Trump needs to be balanced with other evidence from 2016 suggesting that what Davis calls “the *Sturmtruppen* who mobbed the rallies”¹² were far more middle-class than working-class. He quotes an *Economist* journalist who, at more than a dozen rallies during the year before the election “met lawyers, estate agents, and a horde of middle class pensioners, and relatively few blue collar workers.”¹³

Religion and Trump supporters

What did these Trump supporters – and those cheering him in Grand Rapids – have in common? The most remarkable, most uniquely American, fact about Trump voters, as revealed by exit polls, is that 81% of them selected “white born-again or evangelical Christian” as their religious identity. They turned out on election day at higher rates than their share of the population, and provided Trump with nearly half of his votes. What does it mean to identify in an exit poll with the intense and decentralized Christianity that has displaced the shrinking mainline denominations since the mid-1970s? Answering this may turn out to entail as many difficulties as talking about who is working-class. For

example, unlike Catholicism or any of the large old-line denominations, evangelicals have no central authority or agreed-upon creed. The Southern Baptist Convention, by far the largest gathering of Evangelical churches, is radically decentralized by comparison and considers "strong believers" to be those who accept the Bible as the highest authority, Jesus as their savior, and his death on the cross as their path to eternal salvation, as well as a duty to encourage others to follow Jesus. Of course, many of those who call themselves evangelicals are not strong believers, and still others may consider themselves to be "born again" through Jesus but without necessarily following any other tenets of belief or behavior. For many rooted in local communities, a high value is placed on church attendance as a core life-activity, but others attend only sporadically or not at all.¹⁴

In the process, those religious believers most exercised by these issues have managed to pass legislation and elect school board members, state legislators, members of Congress, senators, and presidents, to the point where "evangelical" has become as much a political as a religious identity.

Given the numbers (over thirty million voters) and their range of beliefs and practices, it might be tempting to take the label with a grain of salt, indicating a vague identification with a broad community and its culture.¹⁵ But this is immediately dispelled by looking at the patterns of belief and the political profile of white evangelical or "born-again" Christians. According to the Pew Research Center's Religious Landscape Study, white evangelicals have a very distinct religious and political profile. When compared with other major religious traditions among whites, they believe in God much more, pray much more,

go to church much more, believe much more in the literal truth of the Bible. On hot-button religious-related issues, many more of them oppose evolution, abortion, homosexuality, and same sex marriage, and on political issues, many more of them oppose climate regulation, large government, and government aid for the poor.¹⁶ And they have acted on these beliefs since the mid-1970s. No American can fail to notice their presence in a political world roiled again and again by issues of abortion, contraception, school prayer, equal rights for women, homosexuality and gay marriage, and controversies over the teaching of evolution and climate change. In the process, those religious believers most exercised by these issues have managed to pass legislation and elect school board members, state legislators, members of Congress, senators, and presidents, to the point where "evangelical" has become as much a political as a religious identity.

Their political loyalty follows the generational alignment among Christian conservatives (discussed at length by Kevin Phillips in *American Theocracy*¹⁷), who since Ronald Reagan have formed the base of the Republican Party and, in Frances Fitzgerald's pithy summary, "favored the rich in exchange for opposition to abortion and gay rights."¹⁸ The 81% vote for Trump was only a slight increase over the already high numbers that had gone for Mitt Romney, John McCain, or even born-again George W. Bush. And even in the face of the Democratic wave in the 2018 mid-terms, under Trump's urging, 75% of white evangelicals still voted Republican. Still, 2016 surprised many people who have anticipated decline and discouragement among right-wing Christians, whether for organisational, demographic, or historical reasons. After all, the days of Jerry Fallwell and the Moral Majority are behind us, the Supreme Court has ruled conclusively in favor of gay marriage, sympathetic and even evangelical Republican presidents have proved to be a disappointment, and the intransigence of evangelical moralizing about such issues as gay marriage has turned away many in the younger generation. It is said that the negative political associations have led many African Americans to shun using the word "evangelical" to describe themselves. On the one hand, white evangelicals clearly seem to be on the downturn, as forcefully summarised by the title of Robert P. Jones's 2016 *The End of White Christian America* and analysed at length at the end of Fitzgerald's *The*



Evangelicals. On the other hand, candidate Trump was clearly no model of Christian living. How then to explain his highest-ever share of evangelical votes and their high turnout?

Was this spurred by their ultra-conservative leaders? In fact, the question of supporting Trump created a dilemma for many evangelical leaders. During the Clinton years one of them, James Dobson, had spoken of a "profound moral crisis" because that Democratic president had lied to Congress about his affair with an intern, arguing that no "person who lacks honesty and moral integrity is qualified to lead a nation and the world!"¹⁹ How then is liar and bullshitter Donald Trump, author of endless un-Christian actions both personal and political, including, since his election, separating immigrant families at the southern border – how is such a candidate strongly supported by leaders like Dobson? Despite notable early defections on moral grounds from among prominent evangelicals (notably Russell Moore of the Southern Baptist Convention), key leaders such as Dobson, Franklin Graham, Jerry Falwell, Jr., and Robert Jeffress backed and continue to strongly back Trump. They have often cited specific reasons such as his opposition to abortion and appointment of conservative Supreme Court justices, but it seems as if their support is more than transactional. These leaders' enthusiasm for Trump seems to mirror, perhaps even follow, the fervor among those who have flocked to his rallies.

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This relationship, unlike anything ever seen before in American politics, was built during the primary season. Before the primaries began, a meeting of national evangelical leaders agreed to support Ted Cruz, openly devout and son of a pastor himself. Sounding as a preacher as much as a politician, very early in 2016 it was thought that Cruz would draw strong support from white evangelicals. And at first, many did indeed favor him as some in the national Republican and church leadership initially criticized Trump as unfit to become president. But the first few primaries showed Trump's strength and the

beginnings of the relationship that can only be called “Trumpism.”

A look at the South Carolina Republican primary exit data is revealing about Trump's strengths over Cruz: while only a small number (8% for Trump to 34% for Cruz) agreed that he “shares my values,” most of the voters (78% for Trump to 8% for Cruz) liked Trump because he “tells it like it is” and a very high proportion thought that he “can bring needed change” (45% compared with 19% for Cruz). Obviously not being a politician was one of his advantages. His greatest area of policy support was immigration. Trump won the primary with 32.5% of the vote, followed by Marco Rubio with 22.5% and Cruz with 22.3%.²⁰

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The South Carolina primary was Trump's breakthrough. Two weeks later, after Super Tuesday, he became unstoppable. By June Trump met with over a thousand evangelical leaders, and soon after formed an evangelical cabinet of advisers. As Mike Davis said, Trump still had to line up the “big battalions of the GOP, especially the evangelicals who had supported Ted Cruz. Trump's stroke

of genius was to let the religious right, including former Cruz cheerleaders David Barton and Tony Perkins, draft the Republican program and then, as surety, to select one of their heroes as his running mate.”²¹ That platform was noted by the *New York Times* to be “the most extreme Republican platform in memory.”²²

By that point, Trump's base had been built and their leaders followed. Interestingly enough, the base was moved by different concerns than the evangelical leadership. As Myriam Renaud points out, in their relative indifference to the “amped up” issues of abortion and appointments to the Supreme Court, there was indeed an “opinion gap between the people in the pews and their clergy.” While the clergy was concerned about abortion and the Supreme Court, in contrast to their pastors, a huge percentage of the rank and file showed greatest concern about terrorism, the economy, immigration, foreign policy, and gun policy.²³

But no list of conventional issues could capture what was sweeping across the land. Trump's relationship with his supporters was becoming cult-like. His audience went to hear him say the unexpected, reject established politenesses of politics, speak dogwhistle racism, and flirt with violence. What explains the fact that Americans could elect a candidate, and then get behind a president, who enthalls people with his anger and delights them with nasty personal attacks on his opponents? Something is afoot that has led tens of millions of people to respond to his special intensity and love him for his outlandishness. What is that?

Trumpism

This leads to discussions of fascism and authoritarianism, and to a related obsession with the man himself, as by religion writer Stephen Mansfield: “Donald Trump is an undisciplined man of unguarded tongue, ill-focused mind, and turbulent soul. He has been ruled most of his life by rage and the will to win, by the animal forces competition surfaces in him.”²⁴ Yet how is it possible that he has become the man fitted to the moment, his angry disorder becoming normalized because it fits the angry disorder in the country? To answer this, we must free ourselves from the prevailing fixation on Trump as the explanation for Trumpism. True enough, Trump has a peculiar kind of charisma: very ordinary bearing and diction, repeated chest-thumping references to being very rich, a sense of his own genius, possessed of a near-total freedom to say and do anything, and a con man's ability to know his audience. But these traits can become charisma only insofar as they express the historical moment. Trump's charisma is generated when his

traits resonate with his audience's disposition and needs, including their values, angers, and evasions. The question is, how is Trumpism produced in his "base"?

Long before Trump, white evangelical Christians felt alienated from most of the society's main trends. Since the latter part of the nineteenth century they have evolved as a religious force in opposition to many features of modern American life. Indeed, as scholars of fundamentalism and evangelicalism often point out, their alienation has been at the core of their theology. While discussions of Trump's base often stress that they have been "left behind" by both political parties and their commitment to neoliberal globalization, fundamentalists and evangelicals have always felt "left behind" by modernity: its culture, its science, its commercialism, and its ever-more-relaxed morality.

Those Dayton, Tennessee townspeople who cheered William Jennings Bryan's attack on evolution in 1925 were described by arch-modernizer H. L. Mencken in his nationally-syndicated reports to the *Baltimore Evening Sun* as "yokels," "morons," "Babbitts," "hillbillies," and "peasants."²⁵ From beginning to end (and ever since) the sensational Scopes Trial was regarded by Mencken's mainstream as being about living in the present versus clinging to the past, science versus irrationality, enlightenment versus prejudice, and education versus ignorance. The prosecution and Bryan were almost

universally regarded as having undergone a humiliating defeat. As the story goes, in the face of their national embarrassment, anti-evolution fundamentalists withdrew for a generation from arenas of competition against religious modernists and slowly built their congregations, networks, seminaries, and churches as well as increasingly popular forms of mass outreach.²⁶ But the lenses through which the secularized mainstream see and judge all experience make no sense to believers whose formative religious experience is to be "born again" through accepting Jesus into their hearts. As evangelical premises grow more and more remote from the mainstream, evangelicals cannot help but feel judged and criticized, and unfairly, by the dominant outlook. For one thing, miracles and individual illumination have no standing as scientifically testable and replicable forms of evidence. The norms of a scientific-minded, knowledge-centered, and secular culture have to provoke constant defensiveness among those who are centered in the Bible, whether or not they are being explicitly criticized. Moreover, Supreme Court decisions against religion in public places, prayer in public schools, and laws mandating the teaching of creationism, make it seem that the separation of church and state is really a form of war against religion. Those who see it that way wage "culture war" as a form of self-defense. Furthermore, even in softer forms, mainstream arrogance towards Bible-believers is never far away. Barack Obama: In small-town Pennsylvania "they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations." Hillary Clinton: half of Donald Trump's supporters belong in a "basket of deplorables" characterized by "racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic" attitudes.

Whatever other indignities anti-evolution, Bible-believing white evangelicals may experience in today's America, their resentment towards highly educated, globalizing, multicultural elites of the large cities who dominate mainstream culture is constantly being stoked, even if no one intends to do so. At every turn, they encounter sophisticated, self-congratulatory, future-oriented, multicultural, global forces and individuals, the society's insiders. Inevitably feeling awkward in their America, no wonder they talk about "taking back our country." They have found their champion in another resentful outsider.

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What the man says and how he says it create a powerful bond with his “people,” who experience him as honest, supporting them, and determined to change things. “He tells it like it is” is a common refrain, meaning “how we *really* feel” beneath all usual restraint and politeness. He is expressing and legitimizing “us” and our feelings about

“them.” As William Davies points out in *Nervous States: Democracy and the Decline of Reason*, this is not peculiar to Trumpism, but contemporary societies are increasingly characterised by “individuals and governments living in a state of constant and heightened alertness, relying increasingly on feeling rather than fact.”²⁴ Unwaveringly behind him and not troubled to think, they devour each outrageous statement and eagerly anticipate the next. As in “shithole countries,” “They’re rapists,” “Grab them by the pussy,” “Our country is full.” Them: immigrants, terrorists, Muslims, angry women, blacks, Democrats, liberals, elitists.

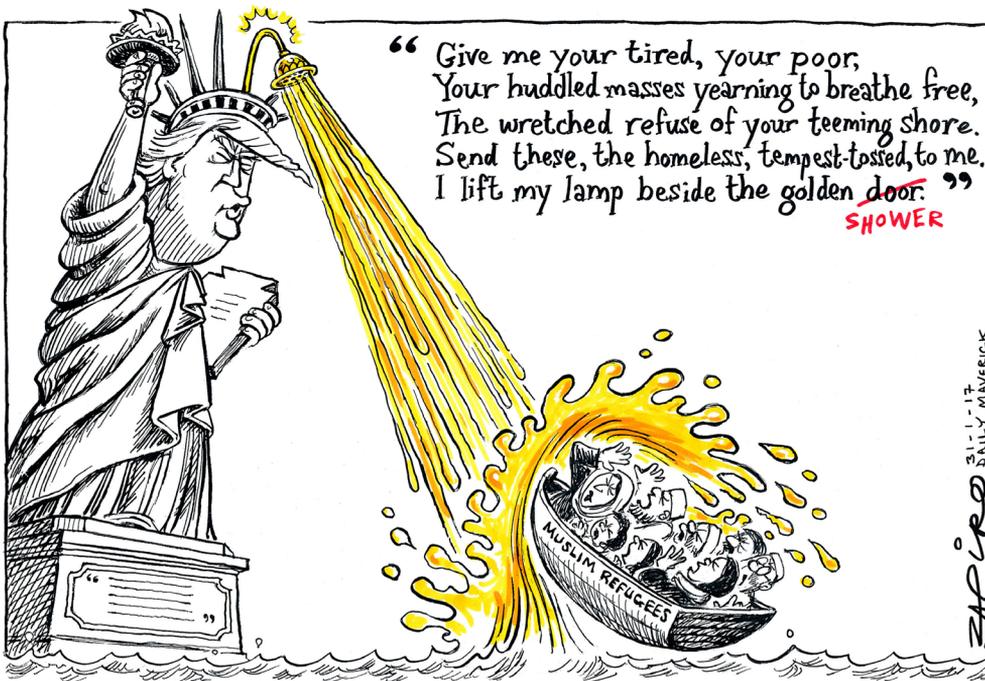
Trumpism is a response to a crisis. The upheaval lying behind the intense embrace of Trump is suggested in a survey taken before the 2016 election: a majority of whites (56%) said that American culture and way of life has mostly changed for the worse since the 1950s, compared with a huge majority (over 60%) of African Americans who believed it had changed for the better.

What brought this resentment to a boiling point in 2016?

Trumpism is a response to a crisis. The upheaval lying behind the intense embrace of Trump is suggested in a survey taken before the 2016 election: a majority of whites (56%) said that American culture and way of life has mostly changed for the worse since the 1950s, compared with a huge majority (over 60%) of African Americans who believed it had changed for the better. Among the whites, evangelical Protestants were the most dissatisfied of all, 74% of them agreeing that things have gotten worse.²⁷ Another study gives a major reason why: a majority of whites believe that whites are being discriminated against in American society today.²⁸ Whatever other reasons evangelical Christians may have for gloom – abortion, homosexuality, pornography – more of them (57%) say that there is discrimination against Christians in the United States than acknowledge discrimination against Muslims (44%).²⁹

Amid the explosion of multicultural and secular America, white Christian America has been experiencing shrinking numbers and shrinking importance. This is the central theme of *The End of White Christian America*, published in early 2016. In it, Robert P. Jones makes an extended analysis of the historical displacement of white Christians, and especially those considering themselves evangelicals.

Jones begins with descriptions of three great twentieth-century monuments to White American Protestantism, the mainline United Methodist Building in Washington, D.C. (1928), the ecumenical Interfaith Church Center in New York (1960), and the evangelical Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California (1980), all of which have since been abandoned either to other owners or other purposes. After replacing mainline churches as the demographic center of White Christian America in the late twentieth century, and after a generation of dominance, including wielding considerable power in the Republican Party, evangelical Christian churches, most notably the Southern Baptist Convention, are now themselves losing numbers and importance. Jones’s study³⁰ takes off from two significant events: the launching of “Black Lives Matter” in 2014 and the 2015 Supreme Court decision legalizing gay marriage. He might also, of course, have mentioned the transformation of the role of women in much of America, which focused the evangelical mind over the past generation on the issue of abortion. A wholly unanticipated drop in relative and absolute numbers of white evangelicals is being caused by a steep falling off of churchgoing among those age 18 to 29. Moreover, they are following in their parents’ religion at a far lower rate than mainline Protestants and Catholics. On the one hand “nones” – those professing no religion – have risen steeply compared with any time in the



past, and now are approaching 40% of the entire younger generation. On the other hand, while white evangelical Protestants now comprise perhaps one-sixth of the U.S. population, they make up only 8% of 18 to 29-year-olds, meaning that white evangelical children are half as likely to follow their parents' religion as mainline Protestants.

During the high tide of white Christian evangelical political presence between the Reagan and Obama presidencies, all Americans became aware of its doom-laden messages of moral decline allegedly caused by feminism, abortion, and homosexuality. Jones strikingly captures the contrast between its social, political, and cultural nostalgia and the forward-looking struggle for increasing equality symbolized by Obama's election. A Happy Thanksgiving email was sent out by the right-wing Christian Coalition shortly after Obama's reelection in 2012. It features a black and white photograph of a white family around a dining-room table with the caption: "Saying grace before carving a turkey at Thanksgiving dinner, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., 1942." Jones comments: "The multiple layers of meaning in this single image make it a nearly perfect exhibit of the lost utopian world of white Christian America."³¹

The contrast couldn't be sharper with Obama's second inaugural address the following January, when the African American president brought the Declaration of Independence up to date by expounding a progressive vision of how American history expanded what it means to be "created equal." The litany included forming a government of, by, and for the people, ending slavery in a bitter Civil War, creating a modern market economy governed by rules to ensure fair play, providing transportation networks, schools, and colleges, protecting the vulnerable including through Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security and on and on, stressing above all the need for collective action to meet collective needs. By citing "Seneca Falls, Selma, and Stonewall" Obama paid tribute to past struggles, and then he ended by looking to a future where women and men

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will be paid equally, African Americans guaranteed the right to vote, gays recognised as equal, schoolchildren are protected from gun violence, and where immigrants will be received warmly. What could be further from the Christian Coalition's narrowly conceived nostalgia than Obama's vision of a hopeful future and his welcoming of collective struggle and government action?

The changing demography

Before the 2016 election Trump told his supporters: "This is our last chance to save our country and reclaim it for we the people. This is it. You don't have another chance." It should be obvious what he meant and how his audience heard him. Trump struck a nerve among white evangelical Christians in the wake of the Obama presidency. These people were angry about cultural and social changes that had been making most of them troubled about the present and fearful of the future. Jones's book, anchored demographically, focuses on the slow, steady *experience* of their displacement from being the essential people in a Christian country, the awareness that "America's religious and cultural landscape is being fundamentally altered."³²

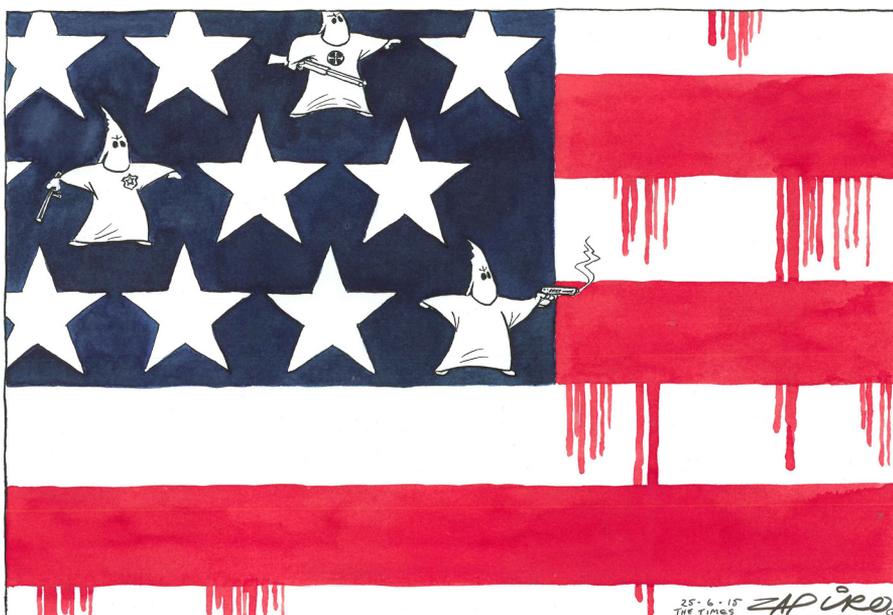
But there is also a uniquely American fact about Trumpism: those who voted most solidly for Trump are not whites in general but those answering to the label of "born-again or evangelical Christian." Indeed, a never-mentioned fact about 2016 is that, among non-evangelical whites, Hilary Clinton came surprisingly close to Trump, 33% to 36%.

According to research conducted by political scientist Diana Mutz, the 2016 election did not turn on the economic troubles of those who had lost jobs or who were unhappy with their wages. This supposed motivation is directly contradicted by the results of her post-election study:

Evidence points overwhelmingly to perceived status threat among high-status groups as the key motivation underlying Trump support. White Americans' declining numerical dominance in the United States together with the rising status of African Americans and American insecurity about whether the United States is still the dominant global economic superpower combined to prompt a classic defensive reaction among members of dominant groups.³³

In short, the white vote for Trump was about the "declining white share of the national population," a phenomenon leading the dominant group to feel threatened even if it still controls political and economic power. Living in a society whose entire national history has been structured around institutions and attitudes of the superiority of one group over another, as that group realizes that it will soon be a minority, as it sees members of the formerly inferior group as equal in positions of authority, it cannot help but experience racial status threat. An African American man becomes elected and the battle cry becomes "Take America back!" "It is not racism of the kind suggesting that whites view minorities as morally or intellectually inferior, but rather, one that regards minorities as sufficiently powerful to be a threat to the status quo." A change in the dominant group's relative position "produces insecurity." Similarly, as it becomes obvious that "The era of American global dominance is over," the sense of America being threatened internationally, especially by China, has increased, especially among Republicans.

Broadly speaking, this is the civilizational "*Whiteshift*" Eric Kaufman has written about which is mingling ethnicities and races around the world and especially creating insecurities among whites.³⁴ But there is also a uniquely American fact about Trumpism: those who voted most solidly for Trump are not whites in general but those answering to the label of "born-again or evangelical Christian." Indeed, a never-mentioned fact about 2016 is that, among non-evangelical whites, Hilary Clinton came surprisingly close to Trump, 33% to 36%. Although Mutz does not narrow her inquiry to evangelicals, she agrees



with Jones: white Christians, for all of American history the dominant population, now see dark-skinned Others almost everywhere they look – at work, walking around, driving around, on television, in medical offices and hospitals, restaurants, shopping, in colleges and universities. Most of the athletes they cheer are Others, and much of the music they enjoy comes from Others. Strange-sounding names are a commonplace. And the word is out: by 2050 or thereabouts, the U.S. Census predicts that whites will be a minority in America. Which means, in the words of Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, “it’s going to be a chastening, humbling moment for American Christians to realise that we’re going to be in the position across the country of speaking as a minority.”³⁵

Increasingly, as shown also by Arlie Russell Hochschild’s study of Louisiana, whites experience themselves as “strangers in their own land.”³⁶

Mutz emphasizes how deep is the experience of displacement, including generating irrational responses. While whites are not likely to lose their economic positions in reality, symbolically for some of them their looming minority status troubles their sense of social and political dominance. Evidence of African Americans’ racial progress threatens them, causing them to experience “lower levels of self-worth” relative to blacks. Accordingly, one defense mechanism to restore a sense of self-worth entails perceiving “greater antiwhite bias.”³⁷ Or should we say *inventing* antiwhite bias? Or *inventing* a threat from Mexican immigrants? Or *inventing* a Muslim threat? Or indeed vastly exaggerating the threat from foreign terrorists? Perhaps this helps us make sense of the issues raised by church members in contrast to the clergy in the survey of concerns mentioned earlier. In addition to the economy, most highly ranked were terrorism, immigration, foreign policy, and gun policy – all areas that indicate people feeling threatened from the outside.

Jones also worries about where things are headed for white Christians finding themselves in the minority, and then sketches a hopeful alternative to feeling this as an existential

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threat: that they may “find a way to integrate into the new American cultural landscape.”³⁸ Similarly, historian John Fea, echoing author John Inazu, calls for fellow evangelicals to learn, as an alternative to dominating others, “confident pluralism” as an approach to living together with humility tolerance, and patience despite deep differences.³⁹

But of course, something very different is happening: Trumpism. It is a refusal to accept being a minority. Its very existence tells us that neither the evangelical leadership nor the base possess the resources needed for coping with the issues raised by Jones, Mutz, and Fea: how do resentful evangelical Christians learn to become part of the emerging multicultural America? Think of Trump's own mania to dismantle every achievement left behind by America's first African American president. It is a sign that something

Think of Trump's own mania to dismantle every achievement left behind by America's first African American president. It is a sign that something more extreme than nostalgia is afoot. So is the strange fact that more white evangelicals believe Christians are discriminated against than believe that Muslims are discriminated against. As Davies has written, this is an example of “the rise of feeling” to the point where it not only overcomes reason, but shapes perception.

more extreme than nostalgia is afoot. So is the strange fact that more white evangelicals believe Christians are discriminated against than believe that Muslims are discriminated against. As Davies has written, this is an example of “the rise of feeling” to the point where it not only overcomes reason, but shapes perception. Above, I follow this statistic about evangelicals' false perception of being discriminated against with an exclamation mark, because it is generated by whites', and especially evangelicals', crazy sense of victimization rather than actual experience. There is more craziness in Trumpism, including its central project of constructing a wall with Mexico against criminals and rapists, cheered on by chants of “Build that wall!” Some of this may be due to the man's own individual dementia, but not all. He is giving voice to widely shared fears and resentments, or he would

not be president. But the wall is a magical solution to a nonexistent problem perceived as an existential threat. By what sort of magic will keeping out even ten or twenty million immigrants stop America from changing color and culture? Of course, Trump's base resonates as if in a trance with strikingly irrational, vicious, and foolish actions and proposals. They listen to him trying to recapture something that is gone, trying to “get our country back.”

Concluding observations

After more than a generation of listening to apocalyptic, fearful sermons about America going to hell, Trump's evangelical supporters have had plenty of training in thinking this way and few resources to confront their situation directly and honestly. Their churches have for years been preparing them to deny the present and to fear modern life as an existential threat. In *Children at Risk*, one of the founding documents of the Culture War, Dobson described today's Civil War of values: “Two sides with vastly differing and incompatible worldviews are locked in bitter conflict that permeates every level of society... And someday soon, I believe, a winner will emerge and the loser will fade from memory.”⁴⁰ In this war it is the believers in God who see themselves as the ones under assault. They have been trained by their religions, and have trained themselves, to ignore key parts of science and to reject many of the society's core values, even though they are people of today in every other respect. But they have diminished their faculties, as we can tell by listening to Jerry Falwell, Jr.'s incoherent insistence that he is unable to imagine Trump doing anything that would undermine his support by evangelical leaders. “I know that he only wants what's best for this country, and I know anything he does, it may not be ideologically ‘conservative,’ but it's going to be what's best for this country, and I can't imagine him doing anything that's not good for the country.”⁴¹ This abandonment of any

rational perspective echoes the feelings of Trump's base.

"Nostalgia" is Jones' polite way of describing their dominant mood before 2016, although after the election he also spoke of their "rage." But even that does not quite capture what happens between Trump and his base, the cult of his personality. As he announces that "I alone can fix it" his base agrees, and the Republican party, out of calculation, complicity, and cowardice, follows his lead. As if to top this comes the evangelical leadership's daffy koshering operation inspired by Benjamin Netanyahu, justifying Trump from pulpits as sent by God, reminiscent of the Hebrew Scriptures' Cyrus the Great, the pagan used by the Lord to deliver the Jews.⁴²

To the theme of resentment and the issues of white Christian identity raised by Jones and Mutz must be added other disorders of the time so dramatically described by Chris Hedges in *America: The Farewell Tour*.⁴³ the economic and social dislocations of neoliberal globalization, the end of postwar economic growth, growing inequality, as well as immigration and ethnic change and the increasing crisis of climate change. As Hedges catalogs only too depressingly, conventional politics has been incapable of addressing these issues, and indeed has only made them worse. While one response in the United States and the United Kingdom is a revival of thinking about socialism, more ominously authoritarian or "populist" electoral movements similar to Trumpism have been coursing through Europe, as well as the Philippines, Brazil, and India. Their common features, described in Roger Eatwell and Mathew Goodwin's *National Populism*, include distrust of elites, the breakdown of traditional political party loyalties, a revival of nationalism, and hostility to immigrants.⁴⁴

When a black president was elected, their representatives in Washington vowed to block him at every turn and make him a one-term president. Because of the color of his skin, they opposed Barack Obama. Soon after his inauguration they joined the Tea Party, vowing to "Take our country back."

In part, this is because Trump's supporters are the heirs of an earlier history. They contain other waves of defeat, resentment, and defiance accumulated over recent generations – drawn from those who defended segregation, supported the campaigns of Barry Goldwater and George Wallace, belonged to the anti-busing movement, were for the Vietnam war and against the peace movement of the 1960s, defended school prayer, refused to ever confront, and ask how to undo, the heritage of slavery, opposed the Equal Rights Amendment, give endless support for the gun culture under the theme of "Gun Rights," embraced the Moral Majority and the Christian Coalition, oppose gay marriage, believe in "religious freedom" to discriminate, justify police killings of unarmed black men. When a black president was elected, their representatives in Washington vowed to block him at every turn and make him a one-term president. Because of the color of his skin, they opposed Barack Obama. Soon after his inauguration they joined the Tea Party, vowing to "Take our country back." Encouraged by none other than Donald Trump, the "birthers" doubted that Obama was born in this country, and accused him of being a Muslim. Trumpism has absorbed all of this history and brought it into the present: against Muslims, against women, against Mexican and Central American immigrants.

There is a related and deeper story that reaches well beyond the limits of this essay: how some of the roots of today's evangelical Christianity can be traced to the slaveholding South; how after the Civil War the defeated South restored white rule and overthrew Reconstruction; how its Redeemers kept the freed slaves at bay through Jim Crow and terror, including lynching, keeping them as near as possible to their former condition; how achieving this entailed systematic retardation of the South, keeping it as an isolated, impoverished backwater lacking industrialization, cities, education, and immigrants; how the white South eventually embraced the kinds of anti-modernist religion that fit its self-chosen backwardness; how its decentralized, evangelical Christianity spread north and

west with millions of white migrants seeking jobs; how these migrants and their churches "Southernized" American society between the end of World War II and the 1970s; how their religions embraced anti-Communism and unregulated capitalism during this time; and how the faithful of this religious tradition came to oppose the transformations being brought about by the Civil Rights movement, the women's movement, the anti-war and youth rebellions of the 1960s and, soon after, the gay and lesbian struggle for equality. In short, in the face of profound global stresses, Trumpism is the story of chickens coming home to roost: how the bitter resistance to modernity, equality, and democracy has spilled over from its starting point, slavery, to poison the rest of American life.

NOTES

- 1 In Riley's words: "Today, charismatic leadership polarizes a serialized public via the media, along the lines of Sartre's description of a bus queue: the unity of Trump's supporters consists in the image of Trump, just as the unity of those queuing consists in the bus for which they wait. But this is a standard postmodern format, exemplified by Obama and Berlusconi before Trump. Jean Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 1, London and New York 2004, p262." Dylan Riley, "What is Trump?" *New Left Review* 114.
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BOOK
REVIEW**GRAHAM DOMINY**

is a South African historian and archivist who has worked in museums, archives and cultural bureaucracy since the late 1970s. Beginning his career in the museum space, he was part of a small team of activists pushing for transformation in the South African heritage sector in the lead up to 1994. He was appointed National Archivist of South Africa in 2001 and served on the International Council for Archives (ICA), where he was a member of the Human Rights Working Group. Dominy is a Research Fellow of the Helen Suzman Foundation.

Richard Steyn

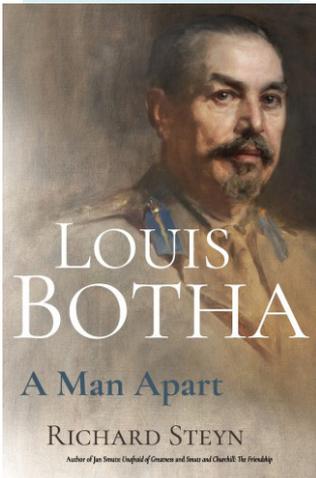
Louis Botha: A Man Apart

For reasons that will become clear below, I am going to take a rather personal approach to this review. One of the problems I had to deal with during my time as National Archivist of South Africa was the disappearance of documents and their later reappearance on sale in London auction houses. Some of these houses bore illustrious names, but I found them to be petty and predatory in the extreme. There were fortunate exceptions, and one of my most pleasant surprises came when a London auctioneer contacted the National Archives to inform us that he wanted to return a letter from Winston Churchill to Jan Smuts, expressing his deep condolences at the death of Louis Botha, to the National Archives in Pretoria. The historic importance of this letter cannot be under-estimated, nor, unfortunately, can its enticing value to manuscript and signature collectors of dubious morals. Richard Steyn quotes this letter in *Louis Botha: A Man Apart*.

In a way this biography completes a trilogy, Steyn has already written a biography of Jan Smuts and an account of the relationship between Smuts and Churchill. This new work focuses on the man who established, albeit for a very brief period, a unified white South African ruling partnership and who was a significantly greater general than Smuts. Furthermore, his political partnership with Smuts built the Union and kept it together through a rebellion and a world war. Botha was not an imperial partner of Churchill's the way Smuts became, but the future British Prime Minister boasted that Louis Botha had captured him during the Anglo-Boer War. Steyn points out that the origin of this myth was in a joke Botha had made and that the real captor was a burgher called Sarel Oosthuizen from Krugersdorp. However, Botha was in effective command of the overall force that Oosthuizen was serving in.

This is a popular history and it is a well-written easy read. The chapters are sub-divided into catchily captioned short sections – a useful application of Steyn's journalistic expertise. Steyn relies on earlier biographies of Botha and on an extensive range of other secondary sources. He has also explored important series of papers in London and Oxford. There are some editorial weaknesses: the illustrations have clearly been selected from online photographic archives which makes them appear unconsidered. British titles are not always accurately given, for example, Steyn should have described Field Marshal Roberts either as Viscount or Lord Roberts, but not as both.

Growing up in Greytown in the then Natal Midlands, where my father had established the local museum in the one-time home of Louis Botha's sister, I have long been aware of Botha's towering presence in South African history. His birthplace, a few kilometres outside the town, is marked by a stone memorial. This small square of land was bought and presented to the nation in the 1930s by a local Indian business family, the Lakhis; a fact that enraged some *verkrampte* officials in the heritage world in the dire days of racial "own affairs", as the abominable concept was described in PW Botha's Tri-Cameral Constitution. But this simple act was a measure of the respect that was felt towards Louis Botha by South Africans of all races and Richard Steyn is right to re-examine his life in the context of his times. This book is a significant attempt to save Botha's name from being "traduced" (as Steyn puts it), by members of a modern generation more intent on "apportioning blame for historical injustices" than in making allowances for the circumstances of the times.



JONATHAN BALL, 2018
ISBN 9781868429226

Louis Botha: A Man Apart is a much-needed new assessment of the life of this distinguished Boer general and first Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa. Why is this so timely? Now, towards the end of the 20-teens, South Africa is still wrestling with constitutional and land issues that were bequeathed to us by the white political leaders who founded the unified South Africa in 1910. Land is the issue that current political parties are rallying around and Botha presided over the passing of the now notorious 1913 Native Land Act. He also persuaded British ministers and parliamentarians to trust the white Union Parliament to settle the black franchise issue; an issue that remained unresolved until 1994. Yet Louis Botha was a man respected by black and white, Boer and Brit. Richard Steyn calls him the Mandela of his time. In Botha's case, he strove to unite English and Afrikaners whereas Mandela strove to unite blacks and whites. Both men demonstrated a generosity of spirit and a depth of understanding that set them apart from many of their contemporaries and that won the admiration of their former foes. Another quick aside: Until the rise of Jacob Zuma to the Presidency, Louis Botha was the only South African head of government to have been born in what is now KwaZulu-Natal. Both men lacked formal education, but what a difference in moral character.

Steyn describes Botha as a great, but flawed, man who must be judged within the context of his times. This point is stressed in the Preface and given further emphasis in carefully selected quotations by three well known historians, including Professor Charles van Onselen, all of whom stress the relationship between historical actors and the contexts and structures of their period.

However, the late Gilbert Torlage, former Natal Parks Board ranger-historian at Spioenkop, used to recall that Botha was not averse to lashing his sjambok across the backs of Boers and blacks alike to get and keep them in line, shooting or digging as he ordered.

Botha's beginnings were modest. He had but a few months of formal school education at Deutsche Schule Hermannsburg near Greytown, but was always uncomfortable speaking English in public. However, unlike the similarly under-schooled Paul Kruger, Botha was not a reactionary: he was far more open-minded, far-sighted and inclusive than the old president. He cut his teeth in public life in 1884 by joining the founders of the *Nieuwe Republiek*, with its new capital in Vryheid. This is when he first met Prince Dinuzulu kaCetshwayo, the heir to the Zulu throne, with whom he maintained a

lifelong friendship. However, one of Botha's first government jobs was as a veld cornet dividing up Zulu territories into farms for the Vryheid Boers. Perhaps the first signs of the political instincts that led to the 1913 Native Land Act?

It was also during his Vryheid days that Botha met and married Annie Emmett (an English-speaker of Irish extraction). It is a pity that Steyn does not give us more information about Annie who seems to have been a spirited and fascinating woman. Although Steyn does not mention it, the South African Emmetts (spelt with a double "m" not a single "m" as Steyn mistakenly does) have claimed descent from Robert Emmet, an early 19th Century Protestant Irish Republican who was executed by the British for high treason in 1803.

Given the temper of the times, Botha can hardly be described as a liberal (Although staunch liberals such as WP Schreiner placed their faith in him despite the racist blemishes in the foundation of the Union of South Africa). Humane and decent in his dealings with individual blacks, he could be ruthless when the situation required it. A good account is given of Botha's leadership at the Battle of Spioenkop, where he turned a potential disaster into a Boer victory. Steyn describes how he exhorted exhausted burghers to make one final, fateful, effort. However, the late Gilbert Torlage, former Natal Parks Board ranger-historian at Spioenkop, used to recall that Botha was not averse to lashing his sjambok across the backs of Boers and blacks alike to get and keep them in line, shooting or digging as he ordered.

Spioenkop was a great victory that is rightfully attributed to Louis Botha's leadership, but Steyn also shows how skilful a tactician Botha was in adversity, conducting guerilla warfare across the veld, despite the privations of his people, until his enemies sought peace. With the Peace of Vereeniging, Botha's greatest victory was to convince his fellow burghers to lay down their arms and accept the peace terms offered by the British.

Steyn confidently deals with the politics of the pre-Union period as Botha and Smuts developed their dominance of the South African political scene and won the admiration of British politicians and generals. One of Botha's first acts as prime minister of the Union of South Africa, on the very first day the union was formed, was to order Dinuzulu's release from the unjust imprisonment he had been subjected to by the Natal colonial government. Botha went further and arranged for him to live out his days on a government-provided farm near Middelburg in the Eastern Transvaal, now Mpumalanga. Yet, three years later, Botha presided over the passage of the Native Land Act of 1913, a piece of legislation that later became the foundation of the apartheid Bantustan policy.

We can all be grateful that it was Botha, rather than Rhodes, who became the first Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa.

Perhaps the most moving section of the book deals with the Afrikaner rebellion in 1914, after the outbreak of the First World War. This was the greatest political trauma in Louis Botha's life. His constitutional duty required him to support the British Empire actively in its war with Germany, but this was at a tremendous cost. Many of Botha's former Boer comrades in arms saw things differently and the famous old General Koos de la Rey was one of the most conflicted. Botha's emotional agonies are movingly described, but Steyn also shows how Botha kept a level head and put down the rebellion through astute political and military tactics, using Afrikaner troops loyal to him. Botha then proceeded to manage a textbook campaign of conquest in German South West Africa. Nevertheless, the rebellion haunted Botha to the premature end of his days and seriously affected him emotionally and physically, undoubtedly hastening his deterioration in health.

Botha and Smuts attended the post-war peace talks at Versailles where Botha's was a voice of reason, urging a peace that did not totally humiliate Germany. Alas, his health was failing him fast and he died shortly after his return to South Africa, having failed to ameliorate the conditions of the punitive peace.

I disagree with Steyn's depiction of Botha as a flawed man. His lack of formal education cannot be described as a personality flaw and his emotional and generous nature emphasised, rather than detracted from, his qualities as a leader. His inability to foresee a future for South Africa wherein all people would be equal was entirely in keeping with the times. Botha may have overseen the passage of the seriously discriminatory and flawed Native Land Act, but this cannot be counted as a personal flaw. Steyn shows how the Land Act rested on proposals and documentation drawn up by British officials in the pre-Union period. The British figure who loomed larger than life over turn-of-the-20th Century Southern Africa was Cecil Rhodes who has been described by Brian Roberts, one of his biographers, as a "flawed colossus". This is a far more appropriate application of the term "flawed" than Steyn's application of it to Louis Botha. We can all be grateful that it was Botha, rather than Rhodes (who also died prematurely, in this instance in 1902), who became the first Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa.

It was Smuts, the highly educated "Slim Jannie", who succeeded Botha as Prime Minister, and who mused that rights for blacks should be left to future generations – a seriously flawed judgement, if ever there was one. Had Louis Botha lived into the 1940s, who knows how his philosophy would have evolved? What Richard Steyn does in *Louis Botha: A Man Apart* is to demonstrate that Botha had the intellectual ability and moral standing to move forward in his thinking. His premature death in 1919 ensured that he was never able to do so.

BOOK
REVIEW**EUSEBIUS MCKAISER**

is a South African political analyst and broadcaster, celebrated nationally in his role as Talk Radio 702 anchor. McKaiser studied philosophy at Rhodes and Oxford Universities and has since lectured the subject in both England and South Africa. He has had a successful career in international debating and has written extensively on South African politics – both as a columnist and as author of the bestselling books *A Bantu in my Bathroom* (2012), *Could I vote DA?* (2014) and *Run, Racist, Run* (2015). McKaiser is a Research Fellow of the Helen Suzman Foundation.

Pieter-Louis Myburgh

Gangster State

If, like the ANC Youth League in the Free State, you cannot handle reality, then you should not open Pieter-Louis Myburgh's second book, *Gangster State*. It will tempt you into dusting off your tickets to Perth but for a couple of reasons: democracy is in crisis the world over so there is hardly respite from looting and divisive politics anywhere on the globe; you probably cannot afford to emigrate even if you were *gatvol* precisely because the years of state capture have decimated the value of our assets; and, less dramatically, many of us are of course deeply committed to the project of yet realising the normative vision of a just and equal South Africa which requires a reckoning with the kinds of (un)realities that Myburgh's book reveals in stunning and lucid detail.

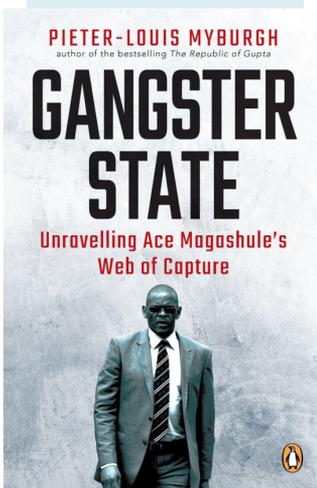
Before teasing out the importance of this book, and situating it within our broader political landscape as well as relating it to other books of a relevantly similar kind with which this one compares favourably, let me give a sense of some of the specificity that a reader encounters in this book.

The heart of the book is a spectacular and patiently-sourced, factual account of mindboggling levels of looting within the Free State, ostensibly sponsored by prominent and senior ANC leader (the party's current secretary general) and former Free State premier, Ace Magashule. The Free State Department of Human Settlements (FSHS), to take but one example, was an important part of the trough at which the thieving pigs were eating for many years. This is why, between 2009 and 2018, the Department was responsible for seven billion rand in irregular expenditure.

When Magashule became premier, he pretended that he wanted RDP houses to subsequently be of a larger size than had previously been the case. This, on the face of it, sounds pro-poor and progressive. As Myburgh demonstrates, however, the real aim soon became clear. It simply allowed Magashule to demand that new tenders be advertised and for existing companies, already evaluated as competent to deliver low-cost housing, to have their access to tenders thwarted. Roughly one billion rand between 2010 and 2011, for example, would in effect be divvied up between a range of new contractors who were mostly a network of beneficiaries close to the premier.

In the end, the poor suffered: socio-economic rights like the justiciable entitlement to the progressive realisation of housing were trampled on while people close to Magashule, like Rachele Els, an old friend of his from Parys, and soccer boss Mike Mokoena (who would prove himself useful when political donations were needed such as in 2014, according to a source the author cites, when called upon to donate towards the ANC's elections campaign by Magashule), benefited. Magashule was and is no friend of the poor. He is, in fact, an enemy of the poor.

This is just one saga. There are many more documented in the book and even a curious political animal addicted to books that drill down into the captured state would be forgiven for experiencing corruption-fatigue. Chapter after chapter exposes a character in Magashule who is, without any doubt, a constitutional delinquent of the most dangerous kind. Even family members, like his daughter Thoko Malembe, scored contracts from the FSHS through a company, Unital, in which she has a 30% stake. The



PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE
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author details a set of such contracts worth more than R150 million that Unital got for a failed housing project in Vogelfontein just outside Bethlehem.

Besides this toxic connection between money and politics, Gangster State also tells the story of suspicious deaths than cannot be ruled out as mere criminality when political motive jumps out at you. The assassination of one Noby Ngombane, lifted back into the public space in Chapter 7, is one such example. Ngombane, a seasoned ANC leader from the Free State, had been asked by the ANC to chair a committee. The Interim Leadership Committee had the task of dealing with the internal political squabbles in the Free State between those in the party loyal to premier Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri and her nemesis, one Ace Magashule, who had been snubbed by the national leadership for the position of premier. But Ngombane was seen by some as anti-Magashule's faction even though changes in the provincial cabinet, and other positions within the provincial government, did not emanate from him but from the executive head and the party's leadership.

There were even rumours that Ngombane was positioning himself to become premier eventually. One afternoon, outside his home, he was gunned down in a hail of bullets. Soon, dockets would go missing, police would do a shoddy job, and there would be no interest shown in following all the hypotheses that jump out at anyone with even a cursory knowledge of the province's politics. It is obvious that any wholly apolitical reading of the killing of this man is absurd given the facts. At the very least, as Myburgh correctly opines, the police should have done detective work to test and eliminate the very real possibility of (yet another) politically motivated killing.

It is a possibility that dovetails with other evidence in the book of thuggery, intimidation, bribery and various run-of-the-mill and also more sophisticated ways of silencing critics and corrupting others so that their complicity in wrongdoing would compel them, too, to remain silent.

Journalists and authors, even in brave works of this kind, do not share everything they think because their published claims must stand up to legal scrutiny. In a radio interview with me on 702, however, I asked Myburgh pointedly whether this chapter is intended to imply that Magashule might be connected to the killing of Ngombane. It was a usefully awkward question and ended in the author saying to me that that possibility cannot be ruled out. It is a possibility that dovetails with other evidence in the book of thuggery, intimidation, bribery and various run-of-the-mill and also more sophisticated ways of silencing critics and corrupting others so that their complicity in wrongdoing would compel them, too, to remain silent.

What then is the significance of this book of which I have given but a small description from a much larger and more grand narrative of illegality? Several 'big picture'-observations must be extracted from the minutiae: firstly, theft doesn't just happen on a gigantic scale at national level. We need to do a much better job of paying close attention to provincial and local government where billions of taxpayer money are stolen, away from the journalistic beat of most reporters and outside the interests of many national editors who focus on the national story, translated as 'the national government'. We know, obviously, that the national story itself is a complex interplay between the three spheres of government but it is hard, nevertheless, to get the public to take seriously the criticality of a book that focuses on a part of the country that might seem to be marginal. What happened and happens in the Free State happens elsewhere. This book could as well have been about the Eastern Cape, North West or Northern Cape. It is important, in the first instance, because it reminds us of the opportunity cost of often ignoring provinces and municipalities in our dominant public discourse.

Secondly, the book demonstrates the culpability of the ANC as an organisation that enables corruption. While Magashule was snubbed for a long time for the post of premier, often the ANC's national leadership, despite not having faith in him to be appointed premier, would pressurise various Free State premiers (like Beatrice Marshoff) to include him in their provincial cabinet. The national leadership knowingly exposed the people of the Free State to an unethical man in key positions of state power. Luthuli House cannot drive a wedge between itself and odious characters like Magashule. It is the political culture, and internal ANC political dynamics, that actively allowed Magashule to be the head prefect of a provincial gangster state. So, while the subtitle of the book names Magashule – Unravelling Ace Magashule's Web of Capture

Unravelling Ace Magashule's Web of Capture – this book, properly interpreted, is yet another exposé of the moral bankruptcy of the ANC. The ANC must take moral responsibility for a failure to use its agentive powers to stop Magashule just as it has yet to fully articulate moral responsibility for enabling the ultimate wrecking ball, one Jacob Zuma.

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Thirdly, this book is an important illustration of how little the normative vision of a just and equal society means unless we animate a principle on which justice depends; the rule of law. It is shocking that so much evidence uncovered by an investigative journalist has not been used already by law enforcement agencies to bring the criminals to book. The criminals are all around us. They

should be jailed. It is disingenuous of the government to keep pleading with the public to "be patient" when it comes to seeing men and women behind bars for corruption. All the lyrical jurisprudence coming out of our courts means nothing if they do not end in actual justice. That someone like Magashule himself can occupy such a powerful position within the ANC tells you a lot about the inability of this party to "renew" itself, a concept they throw around with gay abandon but clearly do not take seriously. Until the rule of law is deeply entrenched, this kind of book will never be the final one of its kind.

Lastly, Myburgh's book is as important as other books that tell the story of state capture such as, among others, Jacques Pauw's brilliant *The President's Keepers*, Crispian Olver's cogent *How to Steal a City* (which is a municipality-level version of Myburgh's book) and Myburgh's own phenomenal first book, *The Republic of Gupta*. Two perversely good consequences of the state capture project are that excellent investigative journalism has flowed from it, and our courts have developed some critically important jurisprudence that entrenches (at least theoretically) the accountability role of the judiciary.

Ultimately, I would rather live in a society in which Myburgh struggles to find corruption stories to write about. That, I'm afraid, is unlikely for as long as South Africans are more upset by the content of his book than inspired to do their bit to keep the democratic project alive.



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- Interventions around the Mining Charter and Nersa/Eskom electricity tariffs.

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Francis Antonie
Director

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