

Current Thinking about Democracy in America

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IN VERY GENERAL TERMS, what characterized discussions of democracy in the United States as I was writing *Self-Rule* characterizes them now.¹ Intellectuals and journalists who address an educated audience continue to express deep concern about democracy, especially as it reveals what they believe are serious flaws in American society. Newspapers and popular magazines echo that concern, sometimes directly, sometimes in the way they report democratic doings around the world. Historians, however, have other interests. The response to my book is illustrative. Public intellectuals, social scientists, and political philosophers—the very groups who have dominated discussions of democracy in the United States for a quarter of a century—engaged it right away. At a recent historians' conference, on the other hand, in a session devoted to my interpretation of American society between the 1780s and the 1850s, only one person noted how *Self-Rule* had changed that interpretation. For contemporary-minded readers, the book's final chapter, arguing a case for American democracy and commenting on its prospects, is the heart of the matter. Alas, the tail wags the dog: I am a historian, not a futurist. Hence in reporting to you on current discussion in the United States, I can draw on a substantial body of works that assess the state of democracy but no comparable list on the history of democracy. In addressing the state of democracy, I will evaluate other people's writings; in addressing its history, I will end up evaluating my own.

Among commentators on the present state of democracy the leading theme is the search for moderation, without which, an important group of them maintain, there can be no democracy. Where moderation is to be found, however, remains in dispute. Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work*,² the most discussed work

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The author is Professor of History, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. He has written *Businessmen and Reform* (Harvard University Press, 1962), *The Search for Order 1877-1920* (Hill and Wang, 1967), *The Opening of American Society* (Knopf, 1984), and *Self-Rule* (University of Chicago Press, 1995).

on democracy of the past few years, provides one answer. Counterintuitively, Putnam's book deals with Italy, not the United States, and even then, only with two small regions of Italy that he contrasts as instances of democratic success and failure. Democracy succeeded, he argues, where centuries-old traditions built cultural habits of discussing public affairs, accommodating differences, and abiding by rules into the region's life; and it failed where those habits were missing. You will pick up immediately the lineage of Putnam's case: in the 1950s, Louis Hartz's profoundly influential *Liberalism in America*³ and David Potter's *People of Plenty*,⁴ both of which relied on forms of cultural determinism; and behind them the giant himself, Alexis de Tocqueville, who explained American democracy by telling us that the country was "born free."

But, you will ask, how did a book on Italian democracy, however intriguing, warrant front-page reviews in the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* and trigger debates in *Atlantic Monthly* and the *Nation*? No doubt it helped that Putnam was by then a dean at Harvard University. Still, the crucial piece in our puzzle is an essay with the inspired title, "Bowling Alone."⁵ Here Putnam turns his cultural analysis to the United States and, once again invoking a Tocquevillean theme, voluntary associations, warns that this basic support for a democratic culture is suddenly, seriously eroding. Not only bowling leagues but also Parent-Teacher Associations, branches of political parties, labor union locals, and similar intermediate groups that have given texture to American society for centuries are disappearing. Without them, Putnam implies, Americans will have only a stark contrast: atomized individualism or mass culture. Although critics have wondered why in Putnam's Italy localities are still stuck with the legacy of the thirteenth century but in his America all can change in a decade, the message has found its audience: the moderating, socializing structures of American democracy no longer function effectively.

A second widely discussed book, the philosopher Michael Sandel's *Democracy's Discontent*, pictures the essential moderation as hidden rather than lost.⁶ In Sandel's scheme, American virtues that had once subordinated personal advantage to various public agendas were overwhelmed in the 1960s by a self-serving liberalism that stripped democracy's collective side of its cultural legitimacy. Since then Americans have been fooling themselves into believing that the public good could arise from millions of selfish decisions. On the contrary, Sandel insists, Americans must revive a republican tradition of civic responsibility that could steer them between the extremes of rampant individualism and bigoted sectarianism—that is, the moderation on which democracy has always depended.

Sandel's argument is essentially circular: the civic virtues necessary for a healthy public life will emerge in the course of a healthy public life. Behind it lies his faith that America's deepest traditions, which include long-standing

commitments to a collective good and a rational public order, can still reclaim its democracy. In a larger context of Anglo-American discussion, Sandel's faith is strikingly sunny. Contrast it, for example, with Margaret Thatcher's 1996 declaration: "There is no society." Other Tocquevillean social critics, such as sociologist Robert Bellah, seem much more worried by the possibility that Dame Thatcher is right.

A series of best-selling books prepared the way for Sandel's lucid, sophisticated account. E. J. Dionne, Jr., James Davison Hunter, and Thomas and Mary Edsall all premised recent writings on an American bedrock of liberal pragmatism that a phony politics of cultural and economic extremism has obscured.⁷ This same sense of a genuine, decent America just waiting to be invoked has given the Communitarians, whom the sociologist Amitai Etzioni organized a few years ago, its vogue. One of their leading voices, Mary Ann Glendon of the Harvard Law School, speaks, for example, of returning to Americans' "time-honored ideals of tolerance, respect for others, public deliberation, individual freedom and responsibility, and the mandate for self-restraint implicit in the rule of law."⁸ Once again, you will recognize how this picture of essential moderation draws upon the mid-century consensus history of Richard Hofstadter's *American Political Tradition*⁹ and Daniel Boorstin's *Genius of American Politics*,¹⁰ that in turn also drew inspiration from Alexis de Tocqueville's classic account of a homogeneous, self-correcting democracy.

In all these writings wisdom lies with Tocqueville but not with James Madison, who accepted the inevitability of conflict, ignorance, and passion in public life and relied on ingenious political structures, not cultural instincts, to manage them. A third widely discussed book that calls for a return to the real America, the political journalist Michael Lind's *The Next American Nation*, makes the hostility to Madison's factionalism explicit.¹¹ Lind also believes that Americans have been led astray, this time by the advocates of multiculturalism on one side and free-market fanatics on the other, and he also counts on the underlying strength of a deep culture to set things right. His touchstones are America's traditions of fairness—in contemporary terms "a color-blind, gender neutral regime of individual rights"—and leadership, with Alexander Hamilton and his successors, not Jefferson and Madison and theirs, as models. Although Lind discovers change in the American past, he finds little complexity. He sees no reason why America's tradition of middle-class fulfillment cannot be expanded to cover everybody in the twenty-first century. Lind himself recognizes a debt to the democracy extolled by Herbert Croly,¹² writing almost a hundred years ago, but he misses an affinity with a contemporary, James MacGregor Burns,¹³ the modern champion of a powerful president with a progressive agenda.

By and large, these are the voices of optimism. If democracy is a reflection of culture and American culture is essentially moderate, achieving a moderate

democracy requires no fundamental change, only being true to one's basic values. But for those who consider American values the problem, not the solution, the prospects for democracy look bleaker. Two illustrations will suggest the breadth of these criticisms.

Robert Kaplan, another publicist who has recently attracted a good deal of attention, should be called a futurist, for his claim to fame rests on a supreme confidence in knowing what lies ahead for all of us. His central prediction is that the modern state, including major ones such as Japan and the United States, will inevitably melt away—his metaphor—under pressure from the global forces of technology and capitalism.¹⁴ Not only are ordinary citizens helpless to alter those forces; in their ignorance of what is happening, they may actually become dangerous. Letting democracy loose in Africa, for example, has produced little more than misery and death. There Kaplan prefers dictators who at least keep order. Even in the United States, he looks to agencies of authority—most recently the military—to supply some direction for a drifting public life. The people are lost: someone else must take charge.¹⁵

The liberal counterpart to Kaplan's barely veiled authoritarianism is the fixation of environmentalists on agencies as vast as their concerns. Greenpeace is a partial exception. Otherwise, the small, closed world of global ecologists is preoccupied with treaties, United Nations agencies, international scientific conferences, and dreams of new supranational structures that will run the cosmos. These two illustrations reflect a widespread pessimism among educated elites about democracy's ability to deal with anything that does not lie directly under its nose. In fact, there is a double irony in these charges. Many of Kaplan's fans were once leaders in the Cold War, a policy that American voters supported steadily for over forty years, even though it lay far beyond their range of experience and it was expected to last indefinitely beyond their own lifetime. Moreover, during the Cold War these same leaders, who could scarcely complain about democracy's ability to keep a long-term commitment, despaired then of its ability to deal with what lay under its nose. Immediate problems demanding immediate solutions, they thought, were democracy's great failing. In general, anyone who demands instant results in politics is no friend of democracy.

A scattered band of liberals and radicals, less vocal and much less influential, have had their own thoughts on the state of democracy. Once we could distinguish the right from the left in American public life by opposite approaches to the process of democratic governance. Where critics on the right deplored what went into the process—unqualified voters, demagogic campaigners, and the like—those on the left were dissatisfied with what came out of it: never enough social justice. Today, however, that rule of thumb no longer works well. As we have seen, conservatives are deeply distressed by what they consider the extreme, irrational outputs in all contemporary democratic societies. Completing

the reversal, critics on the left have devoted their primary energies to improving inputs to the democratic process.

First on their mind is money. Attempts to limit the funds that business, professional, and now religious associations invest in American politics have become an obsession with liberal activists, such as Ralph Nader's Public Citizen group, and repeated failures to enact corrective legislation have caused widespread public anger. As money controls American politics, so the argument goes, the major political parties follow the money. Years ago, many political scientists prayed for a revival of parties as democracy's best hope. But the recent resurgence of partisanship in government, liberals complain, has emerged from "parties of administration ... [that lack] vital links with the public."¹⁶ They organize to get the money, not to serve the people. Today these critics point to a sharp disjuncture between the highly partisan Contract with America that the Republican majority in the House of Representatives has promoted and popular opposition to much of it in opinion polls.

What to do? Answers from the left vary. Some demand new parties. In an interesting conjunction this year, Tom Wicker, a senior journalist at the *New York Times*, and Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, both advised African Americans to abandon the Democratic party as a bottomless pit of false promises and organize in their own behalf.¹⁷ Small groups tried to organize a labor party. Nader himself became the candidate of the tiny Green party. Other liberals, praising continental European practice, have mounted campaigns in behalf of proportional representation, even managing to get the issue on the ballot in San Francisco. Michael Lind has lent his prestige to the cause. Behind these gestures lie a common impulse to multiply voices and centers of actions in American public life. Even the cautious Michael Sandel hopes to accomplish something along this line by diversifying the levels of political life. He envisages local alliances, regional coalitions, and supranational organizations supplementing what state and federal authorities can accomplish. You will not be surprised to learn that almost no one has recommended reviving democracy through guerrilla politics. To my knowledge, the sole exception is the Italian social theorist, Alberto Melucci.¹⁸

The traditional leftist evaluation of democracy by its output has resurfaced in recent debates over America's welfare system, in particular the issue of payments to poor women with children. To the conservative argument that ending a guaranteed payment will make former welfare recipients more responsible, both liberals and radicals cry foul. Once, they say, conservatives were the first to insist that the level of social responsibility be commensurate with the level of wealth and prestige. By demanding that those with the narrowest range of choices be the most responsible, they claim, conservatives twist the word *responsibility* to mean *accept the penalty of being poor and don't complain*. Opponents of

ending a welfare guarantee have drawn on the growing movement in behalf of children's rights, one that has expanded to include campaigns against child abuse, concerns about the quality of education, demands to fund public services for children, and exposés of the damage to children, direct and indirect, from America's drug culture. That tactic, however, shifts the setting from democracy to morality, with one group of adults telling another group of adults what they should do in behalf of a third group, the children.

What connects the welfare debate with a wider democratic discussion is its link with issues of poverty generally and African American poverty in particular. Despite statistics to the contrary, the stereotypical welfare recipient is a young black mother with many children, an image that raises an emotionally charged set of issues about race, sexual mores, and the multiplying poor. Behind that image looms America's so-called underclass, composed heavily of people of color. Here all aspects of democracy come together: the qualifications for participation, the levels of participation, the benefits from participation. Over these issues, commentators on the left split into warring camps. Some express values similar to those of conservative individualism: just give members of the underclass opportunities and they will take care of themselves. Others who believe local cultures reinforce and reproduce the effects of poverty demand a coordinated government attack on the entire system of deprivation. The figure of William Julius Wilson, whose analysis of a ghettoized black underclass, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, has satisfied nobody and influenced everybody, is central to these debates.¹⁹

Shifting from the state of American democracy to its history asks us to think about these same issues—the preconditions, the process, and the outcome of democracy—in long sweeps of continuity and change. In a manner appropriate to the profession's priorities, the richest current debates about the history of American democracy focus on its origins, specifically on its relation to the Revolution. Gordon Wood's *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, claiming it as the source of democracy, has established the benchmark against which other interpretations are measured.²⁰ Wood, of course, has criticized *Self-Rule* for arguing a contrary case. At the same time, other prominent scholars, including Joyce Appleby and James Oakes, who fault Wood for his narrow social vision and loose use of evidence, also find the origins of American democracy in the eighteenth century.

Both of them have been influenced by some of the writings of the political philosopher, Jürgen Habermas, whose account of a public sphere emerging in that century nicely fits their understanding of new conditions—new assumptions—governing American political discussions no later than the 1770s.²¹ In newspapers, flyers, taverns, and town squares, they argue, an expanding body of literate, involved citizens created a novel forum for public affairs that consti-

tuted the essential precondition for American democracy. In their scheme, democracy evolved decade by decade until by the early nineteenth century a full-fledged culture of popular self-government had matured nationwide. Both the strength and the weakness of this line of interpretation are its vagueness. Nobody doubts the vigor of public discussions in the late eighteenth century; nobody doubts the importance of a receptive culture to the origins of democracy. As a result, nobody has to decide when democracy arrived. In this scheme, it materialized so gradually over more than half a century that the problem of timing becomes meaningless.

The second large area of historical concern involves the vitality of nineteenth-century democracy. Although there is no focused debate on the subject, critics one by one are contributing to an alternative assessment of nineteenth-century America, one that questions how popular its self-government actually was. Books such as *Self-Rule*, they say, have romanticized Jacksonian and Lincolnian democracy. Rather than a politics with white men of all sorts participating, they describe American democracy as decentralized elitism with a relatively few white men of superior wealth and social position controlling newspapers, deciding on local candidates, and only giving the appearance of a wide popular participation. Stuart Blumin is prominent among these scholars.²² Blumin, in turn, relies on earlier work by Peter Argersinger, who has concluded that widespread voting fraud tainted nineteenth-century American elections.²³ Alexander Keyssar, a third significant figure among these dissenters, complements their arguments with statistics.²⁴ The very high voting turnouts that historians have been assuming, Keyssar claims, were substantially lower and hence much weaker as evidence of popular self-government. We must wait for Keyssar's book to learn what percentage of the eligible voters he believes did cast ballots.

In sum, the picture these scholars sketch is similar to the standard view of today's American voters: ill-informed, weakly motivated, easily manipulated. Hence it may be useful to contrast this spreading belief among historians in a dumb, erratic nineteenth-century electorate with a study by two senior political scientists, Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro, demonstrating how reliable the twentieth-century electorate has been. "Americans' collective policy preferences are real, knowable, differentiated, patterned, and coherent," they conclude. "Collective policy preferences are generally stable," Page and Shapiro continue; "they change in understandable, predictable ways ... The public generally reacts to new situations and new information in sensible, reasonable ways."²⁵

A third area of historical interest has concentrated on the federal government. From quite different starting points—African Americans in one case, widows and pensioners in another—Eric Foner and Theda Skocpol reaffirm a judgment that had fallen into disfavor: since the Civil War the government in Washington has offered the poorest, weakest Americans their best hope for justice.²⁶ These

are much more complicated arguments than the familiar ones that turned presidents—the two Roosevelts, Woodrow Wilson, and Harry Truman in particular—into the champions of ordinary people. The old-fashioned approach personalized history from the Square Deal to the Fair Deal. Foner and Skocpol, on the other hand, want us to think of the state as a power in its own right and the state bureaucracy, its operational arm, as the potential agent of a rough justice. It is this vision of bureaucracy that the political scientist Benjamin Barber and the social critic Richard Sennett invoke in their call to accept centralized government as the best prospect for fairness in a world of concentrated powers.²⁷

You will recognize each of these lines of interpretation—the eighteenth-century origins of democracy, the weaknesses of nineteenth-century electoral democracy, and the democratic advantages of a centralized government—as contrary to the analysis in *Self-Rule*. Details in the book have also been disputed, but I know of only one more broad criticism: that the book provides no prescription for improvement. It may explain how the United States got here, critics complain, but it does not show Americans how to get out.

My own thoughts about the deficiencies of *Self-Rule* run along different lines. As I explore them, let me ignore chronological order so that I end with the origins of democracy, a subject on which I have something new to say. My first thought can be simply stated. In the book I did not communicate clearly and persistently enough that democracy cannot solve all problems. Not only does any democracy express the limitations of its citizenry, but also self-government of the active, engaged sort I propose is itself limited in solving problems. Democracy will not close the hole in the ozone layer, nor will it keep Tutsis and Hutus from massacring one another. Where social divisions are so deep that voting is like taking a census—the same people in the same camps each time—the potential for change, that essential dynamic in democracy, disappears. By the same token, where the state is so thinly constructed, so shallowly rooted in its society, that it only serves the interests of its officials, it will always be the enemy of its citizens, whose votes can accomplish nothing greater than a change in exploiters. Here the familiar model is a state that sustains only the army tyrannizing it. In *Self-Rule* I emphasized how a healthy democracy expresses diversity, but I failed to emphasize how a healthy democracy requires diversity: citizens with multiple purposes in a society with multiple avenues of expression.

The second deficiency I have on my mind is also a matter of emphasis. In analyzing the problems of majoritarian democracy in twentieth-century America, I concentrated on two issues: hierarchy and centralization. Hence my final charge to democrats: pull down from the top and away from the Center. What I formulated largely in terms of power, however, should include a fuller account of the philosophy of government sustaining it. Walter Lippmann, that brilliant spokesman for the new national class, is a useful point of departure.²⁸ The good

government he pictured in the 1920s was indeed hierarchical and centralized, but equally important it was neutral. Not only did his experts sit far above the masses as they planned for the entire country; their knowledge, Lippmann declared, had freed them from bias. Here, it seems to me, is the kernel of the progressives' most pernicious and enduring legacy: government can be neutral. If it can be, the argument continued, it should be. For much of a century Americans proceeded to build answers to major social problems around the delusion that in some way or another government could be made neutral. As historians, all of our evidence argues otherwise. We may decide that certain individuals have been wise or efficient or even selfless—but never without their own partiality. Nor have competitive bureaucracies brought the government closer to neutrality. Contrary to James Madison's hopes, many, many negatives do not make a positive. If John Rawls, America's most important philosopher in my lifetime, had made no other contribution, his demonstration of the monumental difficulties inherent in the idea of *neutral* would justify much of his reputation.²⁹ To those who say, "How can we *not* believe in the possibility of a neutral government?" I answer: "We *better not!*" Diffuse the government's power, yes; neutralize it, impossible.

Let me at least acknowledge the third deficiency in my book, a thin account of what the individual and individualism have meant in American culture. The fact that other scholars have done little better with the subject is no excuse. Because I chose to place the concept of the individual in the mainstream of my study, I bear responsibility for what I failed to explain. One of our challenges is to transcend a current vogue that fractures the individual to reflect what critics believe is a splintered contemporary culture. Bluntly put, this argument denies the existence of the individual. There are gendered codes, class traps, synthetic needs, virtual realities, and consumer compulsions, but no individuals. With at least as much assurance as these fragmenters, millions of Americans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw themselves whole. As historians, we must begin where they were.

Among the elements that almost all of us have underestimated or overlooked in our search for the public individual in American life, here are a few: religion, which modern materialist analysis never gets right; risk-taking, which includes an extraordinary variety and persistence in gambling; gradations of citizenship, which acquired new meaning with the Civil War; and degrees of security in preserving personal property, which African Americans in particular have recognized as essential to becoming an American individual. Since *Self-Rule* gives special meaning to George Bancroft's additive nineteenth-century democracy, let me also note that this conception does not disappear, as I suggest in the book. As much as I dislike the consumer proxies for democracy in twentieth-century American thinking, they are part of my story, and they often rest on additive

assumptions—the vision, for example, of consumer purchases, bit by bit, generating a healthy economy. In fact, my own emphasis on the significance of the vote itself points in a Bancroftian direction: each ballot adds meaning, each ballot contributes to a full community expression. As you can tell, I am not yet ready to say anything comprehensive on the subject of the individual.

On the fourth and final subject illustrating the book's deficiencies, however, I do have fresh ideas. *Self-Rule* provides no explanation external to the United States for the origins of democracy. In relating these events to any larger history, it never rises above its rhetoric: how odd, the book implies, that this great force would appear first in the American backwash. In this respect, I am a Tocquevillean, using contrasts with Europe as a substitute for analysis and leaving the reader with a vague sense of an American miracle. Of course the book does provide an interpretation of democracy's arrival but only in terms of an American experience. For a new look at the problem of origins, I ask you not to peer more closely into the subject, as I recommended on individualism, but to distance yourself for an overview of Western society.

During the eighteenth century, as Europe's disease pool stabilized and public health measures raised urban survival rates, population soared. While increasing numbers tried to squeeze into an already settled countryside, more and more people moved in search of their opportunities. Even before there was an economy to support them, millions turned towns into cities and cities into metropolises. Between 1800 and 1914, years of accelerating urbanization, 65 million European-born followed an alternative route across the Atlantic. The longer distances people moved, the less likely they were repeating the time-honored peasant practice of leaving to take temporary jobs only to return at the end of the season.

This massive movement of people was no disaster. As a calculated risk for economic improvement, it contained great varieties of victory and defeat. For all of these people, including those who stayed put, these unprecedented migrations rendered obsolete the customary ways of organizing lives around family relations, land tenure, and community status. During what Western historians call the long nineteenth century—from 1789 to 1914—each of these social realms underwent striking reconceptions.

The idea of the nation derived from those family networks straining to sustain long-range, fluid migrations. Nationalism reconstrued kinship to gather widely scattered people into a giant fictive family. The idea of class derived from changes in work and wealth as the power of monetary transactions superseded the power of land ownership. For the integration that town and countryside once gave their working people, Marxism, the most persuasive reconception in its area, substituted the vision of a rapidly expanding, deepening interconnectedness among people as wage earners. The idea of a civic realm derived from the modern state's ability to eliminate intermediary levels of status and regional auton-

my and deal directly with the people living in its jurisdiction. Citizenship offered a mobile population portable, personal ties to the state's simulated community life, with the image of wholeness that this community on a grand scale conjured.

The condition of family lives, the condition of working lives, the condition of civic lives: resolutions to the problems in these basic areas overlapped, intermingled, and competed for loyalties among innumerable people generation after generation. A good deal of modern western history can be told through these interactions. As the historical context changed, of course, so did the interplay among them. The context in the United States of the early nineteenth century gave overwhelming priority to citizenship. Areas with the greatest emigrating populations, such as Ireland and Norway, relied most heavily on nationalism for their cohesion. The United States had virtually no emigrating flow. Areas where crowding on the land pushed people precipitously and precariously into cities turned most sharply to class. The United States astonished the western world with its abundance of arable land. In America, a country with chaotic internal migration and no obvious means of connecting those people on the move, that left citizenship. As it happened, a weak federal government had little to offer these ambitious folk and the prospect of acquiring property of their own undermined the authority of wealth. The result was self-rule—at first for white men only but still a revolutionary construction of citizenship as social cohesion.

Democracy in this framework originates in a setting unique to Western society out of circumstances common to that society. What happened in the United States makes no sense apart from what was happening in a far larger context. If America is exceptional, as I believe it was in the nineteenth century, it was an exceptionalism embedded in transatlantic history. Then by the twentieth century this essential context became global. But that is a story for another paper.

Notes

¹ Robert H. Wiebe, *Self-Rule: A Cultural History of American Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

² Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

³ Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955).

⁴ David M. Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954).

⁵ Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (Jan. 1995): 65–78.

⁶ Michael J. Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

⁷ E. J. Dionne, Jr., *Why Americans Hate Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster,

1991). James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: A Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991). Thomas Byrne Edsall and Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights and Taxes on American Politics* (New York: Norton, 1991).

⁸ Mary Ann Glendon, *Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

⁹ Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (New York: Knopf, 1948).

¹⁰ Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953).

¹¹ Michael Lind, *The Next American Nation: The New Nationalism and the Fourth American Revolution* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

¹² Herbert David Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1911).

¹³ James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978).

¹⁴ Robert D. Kaplan, *The Ends of the Earth: A Journey at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (New York: Random House, 1996).

¹⁵ Robert D. Kaplan, "Fort Leavenworth and the Eclipse of Nationhood," *Atlantic Monthly* 278, no. 2 (September 1996): 74–90.

¹⁶ Sidney M. Milkis, *The President and the Parties: The Transformation of the American Party System since the New Deal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

¹⁷ Tom Wicker, "Deserting the Democrats: Why African-Americans Should Make Common Cause with the Poor in a Party of Their Own," *Nation* 262, no. 24 (17 June 1996): 11–15.

¹⁸ Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*, ed. John Keane and Paul Mier (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

¹⁹ William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

²⁰ Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1992).

²¹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

²² Stuart M. Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class Social Experience in the American City, 1760–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., 1989); *The Urban Threshold: Growth and Change in a Nineteenth-Century American Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press [Midway Reprint], 1984).

²³ Peter H. Argersinger, "New Perspectives on Electoral Fraud in the Gilded Age," *Political Science Quarterly* 100 (Winter 1985/6): 669–87.

²⁴ Keyssar's book had not been published at the time this paper was delivered.

²⁵ Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, *The Rational Voter: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

²⁶ Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution. 1863–1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988). Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Origins of Social Policy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

²⁷ Richard Sennett in *Journal of Urban History* 22 (July 1966): 636–40.

²⁸ Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922).

²⁹ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).