

WARNING: This chapter cannot be referenced or quoted.

RACE AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEMAGOGY—A U.S. PERSPECTIVE
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ABSTRACT

By means of an *interdisciplinary* combination of current and archival library and online based primary and secondary sources, and informed by perspectives from a pluralistic non-positivistic *qualitative* methodology, this chapter seeks, both descriptively and analytically, to expand and elaborate on the fairly well-known theory that the current resurgence of right-wing *populism* in many capitalist societies across the world is rooted, in the final analysis, in deep and legitimate economic disenchantment among large sections of the masses with globalized *neoliberal* capitalism. In the U.S., this resurgence has been masterminded by a virulent racialized *demagogy*, known as *Trumpism*, based on the *scapegoating* of the politically weak (the historically and currently marginalized) for the seemingly permanent *class warfare* by capital, under the aegis of neoliberalism, on the quality of life of the masses, in order to politically neutralize the potential for a dangerous *class struggle* by them in response to this warfare. Hence, the open unapologetic and demagogic deployment of *racism* has proven to be a politically viable distractor for capital, notwithstanding the life and death implications of it for those bearing the brunt of this demagogy, not to mention the further degradation and corruption of democracy in general toward a plutarchy.

INTRODUCTION

Consider this quote from a speech delivered by Donald J. Trump on June 16, 2015, in New York:

Our country is in serious trouble. We don't have victories anymore. We used to have victories, but we don't have them. When was the last time anybody saw us beating, let's say China, in a trade deal? They kill us. I beat China all the time, all

the time. . . . When do we beat Mexico at the border? They are laughing at us at our stupidity. And now they are beating us economically. They are not our friend, believe me. But they are killing us economically. The U.S. has become a dumping ground for everybody else's problems. . . . When Mexico sends its people, they are not sending their best. . . . They are sending people that have lots of problems, and they are bringing those problems with us [sic]. They are bringing drugs, they are bringing crime, their rapists, and some I assume are good people. . . . It's coming from more than Mexico. It's coming from all over South and Latin America, and it's coming probably, probably, from the Middle East. But we don't know because we have no protection, and we have no competence. . . . Islamic terrorism is eating up large portions of the Middle East. They have become rich. I'm in competition with them. They just built a hotel in Syria. Can you believe this? They built a hotel. When I have to build a hotel I pay interest. They don't have to pay interest because they took the oil that when we left Iraq I said we should have taken. (C-Span, 2015.)

Despite this stunningly outlandish speech announcing his electoral candidacy for the presidential nominee of the Republican Party—laced as it is with unabashed racism, jingoism, and egotism; and pockmarked with outright lies and distortions of facts—Trump would eventually win and go on to become the 45th president of the United States. With his electoral victory, he would usher in a presidency trademarked by *Trumpism*—constituting a U.S. version of a racialized *demagogic* protofascist right-wing *populism*,¹ imbued with hardcore neoliberalism on the domestic front, and a flagrant disregard for the U.S. Constitution and the rule of law (earning Trump a historical first of not one but two presidential impeachments)—that was aimed primarily at facilitating an even more virulent neoliberal economic program for the benefit of the capitalist class, but which was falsely packaged as for the benefit of the masses through outright lies and misrepresentations, captured by the facile slogan “Make America Great Again.”

The principal purpose of this chapter then, is to elaborate and expand, by means of *discursive discourse*,² on a fairly well-known theory explaining the current outbreak of governmental level right-wing populism in capitalist societies across the world, not least in the U.S.; namely, that it is rooted in a disenchantment among large sections of the masses with the globalized prevalence of a particular form of anti-dirigisme capitalism, called *neoliberalism* (see, for example, Cayla, 2021; Judis, 2016; Mudde, 2019; and Weitzman, 2020), the operationalization of which has been dependent on vanquishing the *class struggle* of the masses by means of relentless *class warfare* (to be understood here in their ordinary non-Marxian senses) on their quality of life, and on their ability to

¹ Right-wing populism will also be referred to as simply “populism” in this chapter.

² This concept, *as used in this chapter*, is to be very loosely understood, even if Foucaultian in origin, as referring to descriptions, analyses, and the like that are presented with the aim of exposing the materiality of the power relations that underlie the political economy of a capitalist society (and hence the concept has little to do with linguistics). See Bacchi and Bonham (2014), and of course the densely written Foucault (1972), which is also available in many reprints.

organize against it, involving the antidemocratic *plutocratic political capture* of the state by capital in its single-minded pursuit of its *raison d'être*: *accumulation* by any means necessary. Yes, it is true that another major factor motivating the current resurgence of populism in the West generally has been “identity politics” in terms of a cultural backlash against people who are categorized as “they-are-not-like-us.” However, at the end of the day, economic anxiety—real or imagined—still informs this cultural backlash. Imagine this scenario: a thriving economy that not only rewards everyone *equitably* but whose success critically depends on a labor supply that cannot be sourced locally in its entirety; thereby requiring immigrant labor. Identity politics would not be an item on the populist policy agenda. In other words, as Mudde (2019, p. 101), an astute long-time student of the far-right, correctly notes: “It is the socio-cultural translation of socio-economic concerns that explains most support for far-right politics.” He continues, “egged on by nativist narratives in the political and public debates (e.g. “immigrants are taking your jobs *and* your benefits”), many far-right voters link immigration to economic problems, either for them personally or for the region or state they live in.”

Now, while the disenchantment is legitimate under these circumstances, the means to its redress, most ironically, has not been a challenge by the masses to capital and its allies among the ruling classes by opposing this plutocratic political capture of the state by insisting on the restoration of genuine democracy,³ but bizarrely a decided preference for a turn away from democracy via right-wing *populism* (strands of which in the case of many Western democracies of course have a very long history). The political mechanism behind this deep illogic has been demagoguery constructed on the backs of the historically marginalized. Hence, in the face of the massive and ever-expanding politically-engineered economic inequality, widespread unemployment in traditionally high-wage economic sectors, the capture of the State by corporate capital, the stagnantly low wages relative to inflation, the legal and illegal tax-evading practices of the wealthy, the relentless effort to weaken the trade unions, the deep erosion of the social safety net, the pollution of life-sustaining environmental systems, the grotesque distortion of national budgetary priorities by a bloated military industrial complex, the relentless assaults on the biosphere, the corruption of democratic political processes, the criminal provision by corporate capital of lucrative logistical support to the narco-

³ To be understood here in its dyadic sense; to elaborate: Democracy is one of those contested concepts, and as such it has as many definitions as those willing to define it. However, it is enough to simply note that democracy comprises two related halves *as it has come to be understood today*: the *procedural* and the *substantive* (or authentic), where the former is the means to the latter. In a *capitalist democracy*, the first half refers to a government based on majority rule, but qualified by a bill of rights that protects minorities; an independent judiciary locally and nationally (within the context of “balance of powers” of the three key branches of government—the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary); respect for the rule of law; and so on. This somewhat narrowly defined understanding of democracy can be labeled as *procedural democracy*. Democracy, however, also has a broader *substantive* meaning (second half), which, in essence, is about *equitably* securing access for *all* human beings to their four fundamental needs: security, food, shelter, and health.

industrial-military complex, and other ills, that together represent this class warfare, the open unapologetic and demagogic deployment of historically-rooted racism has proven to be a politically viable distractor for corporate capital—even if sections of capital, at the executive level, may find the boorish packaging of it ill-suited to their “liberal” sensibilities—notwithstanding the life and death implications of it for those bearing the brunt of this demagoguery, not to mention the further degradation and corruption of democracy in general toward a plutarchy. In other words, against the background of rampant *crony capitalism*, fueled by unbounded greed and buttressed by the ideology of *neoliberalism*, the resurgence of virulent *racialized* demagoguery in recent years in the U.S. at the behest of ultra-right-wing populism, meaning Trumpism, serves as a means of *scapegoating* the politically weak (the historically and currently marginalized) for the permanent and increasingly merciless *class warfare* mounted by corporate capital on the masses—in order to politically neutralize the potential for dangerous rebelliousness of the working classes by means of *class struggle*, in response to this warfare. Hence, the fuel for Trumpism was and remains white nationalist racial bigotry openly proclaimed and, in effect, celebrated at Trump’s ego-tripping rallies.⁴ Its deployment has been for the purposes of scapegoating immigrants of color (while simultaneously engaging in the traditional dog-whistle variety of anti-black/brown racism that has always been part of U.S. history in the post-civil rights era) for whatever ills, real or imaginary, that Trump’s supporters could conjure up. In fact, as at least one observer would correctly observe, writing just a year into Trump’s presidency:

“It cannot be pointed out often enough that this is not in any way, shape or form a normal Republican or even conservative administration. Forget the serial dishonesty and astonishing dysfunction. This is a White House that indulges and panders to far-right bigots and nativists in both coded and not-so-coded language; *a government of white nationalists, by white nationalists, for white nationalists* (Hasan, 2017; emphasis added).

In terms of the structure of this chapter, it will flow thusly: After going past the two procedural parts of the chapter mandated by the publishing editor via a chapter template, the literature review and the research methodology, the chapter provides a descriptive overview of Trumpism as a racial project for the scapegoating purposes of distracting the attention of the masses away from the fundamental source of their grievance, namely, globalized neoliberal capitalism. The latter forms the analytical section of this chapter from the perspectives of origins and present-day consequences. The conclusion summarizes the basic theme of this chapter, provides a brief introduction to another analytical theory of relevance, and points to questions not addressed.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

⁴ That white nationalist racism has been a crucial factor (albeit not necessarily the only factor) in Trump’s cultish popularity is a fact that is by now well proven beyond any doubt; see, for example: Hooghe & Dassonville (2018); Pengelly & Smith (2020); Reid (2020); and Williamson and Gelfand (2019).

The geographic focus of this chapter is the U.S.; therefore, more specifically, the chapter aims to describe the palpable life and death implications, in the first instance, for people of color in the U.S. of the consequences of the deliberate effort to degrade/corrupt *democracy* through rightwing populism—in its current U.S. incarnation also known as Trumpism—which, as already indicated, is led and sustained by *demagogy*, and which itself is sustained by a malignant variety of socially constructed racialized identity politics, *white nationalism*, that is played out against the right of people of color to exist as legitimate citizens of the planet no different from those of white European ancestry, by means of violence-prone *scapegoating* and *stereotyping*. However, the net consequence of this process is the tragic irony of a seemingly, at least in the short run, unbreakable cycle of: a further entrenchment of (a) neoliberalism; which, in turn, leading to a further degradation of (b) the quality of life of the masses; resulting in a further propagation of (c) racialized demagogy; hence leading to a further preference for (d) right-wing populism, resulting in a further degradation of (e) democracy. In other words, there is a toxic failure among the masses to comprehend the fact that right-wing populism is not the enemy of its root cause, neoliberalism; on the contrary, it is the enemy of the enemy of neoliberalism, *socially responsible capitalism* (which is what, in terms of objective interests, the masses should be seeking today—most especially against the backdrop of rising catastrophes-inducing climate change). To put it differently, populism is a gateway to a form of mass political economic suicide, the most powerful and horrendous exemplar of it being the fascism of Japan and Germany in the 1930s that led to the Second World War and all the horrors that accompanied it, ranging from the Holocaust to Hiroshima and Nagasaki (and of course the deaths of tens of millions more of civilians across the world—against the backdrop of the self-destruction of the two countries).

Describing the principal purpose of this chapter thusly, presents one with this conundrum: how does one do a literature review of this plethora of moving parts (class struggle, class warfare, demagogy, democracy, neoliberalism, plutocratic political capture, populism, race, scapegoating, stereotyping, and white nationalism) in a limited number of pages? In fact, an even more pertinent question arises here: is a literature review even necessary when the intent is to neither test a substantive hypothesis, nor present a novel theory? Wouldn't the issue be, instead, a misguided obsession with imposing a *positivistic* research template on a discursive discourse in the name of scholarly rigor, or to be correct delusional scholarly rigor?⁵ So, here is a two-part

⁵ The positivistic research methodology rests on a number of universal tenets specific to this methodology, and they are ably summarized by Nathaniel (2021): “1) theory is universal, allowing law-like generalizations to be made across contexts; 2) context is not important; 3) reality is fixed and measurable; 4) research pursues an objective search for facts, 5) knowledge is objective and quantifiable; and 6) research rests upon testing of hypotheses.” While there is absolutely no question that this research methodology—characterized by quantitative empirical research grounded in the statement and testing of hypotheses involving deductive reasoning (hence commonly viewed as *the scientific method*)—performs a critical role in the generation of new knowledge, to posit that methodology as the only credible source of new

compromise: first, summarize on the basis of the findings of extant literature the key attributes of two of the moving parts noted above; namely, right wing populism and demagoguery. That is, the two that lie at the heart of the sudden political precariousness, not least in terms of life and limb, of that part of the citizenry that in the U.S. bears this appellation of convenience: people of color. Second, as one proceeds with the discourse through this chapter, provide not one or two but several expository sources for each of all the moving parts, where possible.

1.1. Right-wing Populism

There is now, as would be expected, an extensive body of literature on populism, together with, of course, mandatory reviews of it. See for example, Cayla (2021); Fiedler, et al. (2021); Hardt., et al. (2020); Hetland, G., et al. (2018); Jones (2021); Judis (2016); Kyle & Gultchin (2018); Ostiguy, et al. (2020); Rodrik (2021); Stankov (2020); and Weitzman (2020). Therefore, it is not necessary to rehash this work here. Instead, it will suffice to outline a number of its key characteristics; based on their work, they are: *First*, that populism, in heuristic terms, is an interdisciplinary concept that is quite at home in such diverse disciplines as cultural studies, economics, philosophy, political science, psychology, public health, and sociology. *Second*, by itself the concept does not reveal its ideological location on the left-right political spectrum. Populism is not always about right-wing extremism; it can also take the form of left-wing political extremism. However, as indicated above, it is rightwing populism that is on the ascendancy today, to varying degrees, across the world. *Third*, populism is less an ideology (in the sense of capitalism, fascism, scientism, imperialism, democracy, pluralism, neoliberalism, etc.), and more a particular *style* of politics. That is, it is generally bereft of fully articulated specificities one associates with ideologies (to be understood here in a non-Marxian neutral sense of a programmatic belief system, *which may or may not be cogent*), such as a coherently articulated set of ideas with an internal logic, a clear guide to a course of action, a historically-grounded theory of power relations, and a home base in a particular social group. *Fourth*, populism is a generalized response to grievances (which may or may not be legitimate) among sections of the masses that are of long duration and usually associated with some degree of despair and hopelessness; *Fifth*, where populism rears its ugly head, its damage to society is long-lasting if not permanent because vanquishing populism will require taking up some of the agenda and tactics of the populists, in order to outvote them at the polls. *Sixth*, populism, as fundamentally a style of politics, is cyclical. Over a period of time, the weight of its contradictions builds up to the point sufficient to render it politically unviable, until a new set of contradictions

knowledge is to traffic in intellectual hubris and ignorance. The fact is that not all dimensions of human existence, given their complexity (to put it mildly), can be made to supplicate before that popular but ignorant dictum “if you can’t measure it, doesn’t exist.” Other equally credible research methodologies exist, but which are based on qualitative research involving inductive and abductive reasoning (see below). In other words, the production of new knowledge rests on the application of appropriate research methodologies, not simply one (supposedly omniscient) research methodology. (See, for example, Rahman, 2017.)

emerge to give it new life. *Seventh*, the spread of populism within nations as well as between nations has today been fueled greatly by both corporate media *and* the algorithms of social media. Here, even the supposedly “liberal” corporate media has been seduced into serving as a mouthpiece for populist demagogues, this is not because they support populism but because demagoguery makes good copy, which then translates into money in the bank. So, for example, Trump or Bolsonaro would probably have remained political nonentities if it weren’t for their outrages that the corporate liberal media too, besides the right-wing media, was unwilling to pass up in their pages. This is a case of, essentially, digging one’s grave while in pursuit of profits (because populists, once in power, will attempt to marginalize, muzzle, or even shut them down). *Eighth*, in terms of electoral politics in capitalist democracies, right-wing populism represents the politics of opportunism where it exploits the political failures of established parties (e.g., taking their support base for granted; their assumption that the masses always respond to their best self-interest; paying insufficient attention to new forms of mass media; and so on). *Ninth*, in terms of the political manifestations of populism, there will be some variations across different countries given their diverse historical trajectories. However, it is also true that most (but not all) of the central features of populism remains universal among them, which include: a demagogic leadership at the helm by way of a clearly identifiable demagogue; a convoluted form of anti-elitism where opposition is, bizarrely, only to select elites most likely to support policies that are in the objective interests of the masses (relative to the elites that the demagogue represents); concerted assaults on the *procedural* dimension of democracy; policy failures in meeting the demands of *substantive* democracy (which translates as socially responsible capitalism); a “machismo” orientation, in its most negative sense, toward issues of gender; a “strongman” dictatorial approach to matters of law and order against the background of deliberate and systematic erosion of the rule of law; a disdain for pluralistic inclusivity (especially from the perspectives of gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation); a penchant for outright lies, half-truths, and extreme exaggerations, against the backdrop of vilification, intimidation, physical assaults, and at times even murder of journalists; and the political *scapegoating* of the vulnerable and the powerless (which *inevitably* is accompanied by a rise in hate crimes). Concerning the last, given its near universality in populist demagogic strategies, a word or two on it is in order.

1.2. Demagoguery

Without demagoguery, populism, given the nature of its politics, cannot exist; and demagoguery, it appears, is tragically one of the unavoidable hazards of democracy where, from time to time, malignantly ambitious and deeply narcissistic thuggish political leaders, as demagogues, rise up to address, by means of overly simplistic and often impractical solutions, some actual and/or propagandistically manufactured societal problem(s) afflicting significant sections of the masses. However, they are motivated primarily by both material self-aggrandizement and narcissistic delusions of grandeur and not necessarily a desire to provide *credible* solutions, since the demagogue can offer none or few given his primary motivations/strategy. The central feature of demagoguery is the

identification of scapegoats (on the basis of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and so on), usually among the politically weak and powerless, who then become the targets of his relentless lies, stereotyping, bullying, and othering (with rare exception, most demagogues in history, through to the present, have been males). From this perspective, demagoguery ultimately relies on the identity politics of “Us” versus “Them.” (Note, however, that scapegoats can also be entire countries; hence countries that have served as scapegoats for other countries include China, Cuba, Iran, Israel, Japan, Russia, and the U.S.) From the perspective of democracy, the tragedy of demagoguery is that it has a highly corrosive influence because even if the demagogue fails to get elected, the demagogue will have motivated his political competitors to take up some of his policies and rhetoric in order to electorally out-compete him. Among other key features characteristic of a demagogue—who, it must be noted, can only exist in a democracy, unlike a dictator, because his power is based on *voluntary* political support from large, alienated sections of the masses—are these (not listed here in any particular order; and obviously not all necessarily will be applicable to a single person):

- (a) The pretense of being one of the people (by birth/upbringing—which may or may not be true) by means of shameless lies and a simplistic and/or boorish communication style that emphasizes the linguistic mannerisms and vocabulary of large sections of the masses, who often tend to be the lesser educated in any society; and who therefore misinterpret such style as “speaking truth to power.” Here, a quote widely available on the internet and attributed to the Austrian journalist and writer, Karl Kraus, is apropos: “The secret of the demagogue is to make himself as stupid as his audience so that they believe they are as clever as he.”
- (b) An almost exclusive reliance in political campaigning on emotional appeals, rather than logic and reason.
- (c) The substitution of reasoned deliberations about policy with the identity politics of “us-versus-them,” based on the political construction of internal and/or external enemies.
- (d) The relentless subjectification of the *objective* interests of the masses (equitable access to the four biologically-determined human needs of food, shelter, health, and security), and the objectification of their *subjective* interests (guns, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, nationality, abortion, and so on).
- (e) The cultivation and celebration among supporters of their baser instincts of violence, cruelty, prejudice, intolerance, selfishness, and unreasonableness.
- (f) Fostering a cultish and megalomaniacal worship of himself (*führerism*) among his supporters; that is, the demagogue cultivates every trapping of the hero-worship of himself—even though it will be usually rooted in nothing more than nauseatingly pretentious heroism (or sometimes, in seeming contradiction, even the reverse: “anti-heroism”).

- (g) A deliberate and shameless propagation of outrageous lies (even in the face of televised broadcasts in this day and age) including the promulgation of the “Big Lie,” and unbelievably outrageous conspiracy theories—that are in the same league as the “flat earth” theory or the moon is a big ball of cheese idea, or no human has ever landed on the moon type of nonsensical claims. In support of this strategy, the demagogue will do everything possible to discredit the news media that refuses to go along with him in propagating his lies and exaggerations. *In fact, not even scientists are spared.*
- (h) Assaults on actual and perceived political enemies characterized by shameless falsehoods; false accusations of disloyalty to the nation; gratuitous insults; a deep disrespect for political etiquette (to the delight of his supporters); and at times may also involve encouragement of physical violence and intimidation against them on his behalf by supporters. A demagogue is always, by temperament, first and foremost, a cowardly bully.
- (i) A flagrant disregard for democratic practices and procedures, including the rule of law.
- (j) Engaging in economic corruption at every opportunity to line his pockets, as well as that of his relatives and acolytes.⁶

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The fundamental purpose of this chapter is not the generation of a new theory, or the testing of hypotheses, but the *interdisciplinary* application of existing theory to descriptive data—gathered via library-based archival research, together with internet-based research, involving both primary and secondary sources—with the objective of generating new insights and perspectives (with an implied programmatic bent: championing the human rights of all human beings that a vibrant and robust democracy, to be understood in its dyadic sense, makes possible), regarding right-wing populism in the U.S. as it has unfolded in recent years via the virulent demagoguery of Trump. That said, this chapter is not based on, but rather is informed by perspectives and insights from a research methodology that is broadly qualitative (in contrast to quantitative); and within this broad categorization it is “pluralistic” (also known as mixed-methods)—characterized, specifically, by these three research approaches: critical interpretive, qualitative thematic synthesis, and grounded theory.

Critical interpretive approach. This is a research methodology that does not begin with the usual quantitative methods of hypotheses, concepts, variables, sampling and the like; instead, it is open-ended in which there is a “conversation” of a sort between research data and theories in order to explain a puzzle (such as, in this case, how does

⁶ In the U.S., those who have been categorized as demagogues par excellence include, from the past, Huey Long (governor of Louisiana) and Joseph McCarthy (Republican Congressman); and today, Donald Trump. For more on demagogues see the classic by Hofstadter (1996); and Berend (2020), Knott (2019), Levitsky & Ziblatt (2019), and Roberts-Miller (2017). However, for a quicker read, see Harris School of Public Policy, University of Chicago (2020), and Zócalo Public Square (2016). For an audiovisual portrayal of the archetype, one can do no better than view Charlie Chaplin’s 1940 classic satire: *The Great Dictator*.

one explain the rise of right-wing populism across the world when there is seemingly no obvious causal factor, such as a global recession or a global depression), and it involves a less common form of reasoning in research methodologies: *abductive reasoning*. Here is how Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2011, p. 27) explain this form of reasoning in contrast to the familiar ones, inductive and deductive reasoning: They begin by noting that “quantitative research follows a deductive logic of inquiry— reasoning that begins with theories, which lead to hypotheses, from which testable concepts are generated and then tested against a set of observations (i.e., deducing the particular from the universal), [while] qualitative research follows an inductive logic of inquiry— reasoning that begins with observations of particular instances from which general laws are developed (i.e., inducing the universal from the particular).” However, abductive reasoning, they explain, “begins with a puzzle, a surprise, or a tension, and then seeks to explicate it by identifying the conditions that would make that puzzle less perplexing and more of a “normal” or “natural” event.” They explain further:

One asks oneself, in other words, what circumstances would render an event, a word, a relationship, or whatever else one is seeking to explain more “commonsensical”—less surprising, less puzzling... In this puzzling-out process, the researcher tacks continually, constantly, back and forth in an iterative—recursive fashion between what is puzzling and possible explanations for it, whether in other field situations (e.g., other observations, other documents or visual representations, other participations, other interviews) or in research-relevant literature. The back and forth takes place less as a series of discrete steps than it does in the same moment: in some sense, the researcher is simultaneously puzzling over empirical materials and theoretical literatures.

Qualitative thematic synthesis. In this methodological approach the task is to bring together different but obviously relevant qualitative themes emerging from, if need be, diverse disciplinary and methodological locations, so as to synthesize them into something new; as in, to quote Aristotle: “the totality is not, as it were, a mere heap, but the whole is something besides the parts” (commonly misquoted today as “the whole is greater than the sum of the parts”). In a sense, this approach is akin to *meta-analysis* in quantitative research. The synthesis of individual studies is achieved on the basis of one or more of such methods as applying concepts from and to each other; identifying and exploring contradictions between them; coalescing lines of argument; etc. An obvious example of a research project that would call for such an approach is when researching *intersectionality*, as originally defined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), namely: the complex web of different forms of oppression—such as sexism, racism, and classism—experienced simultaneously by marginalized individuals and groups in a society in such a way as to constitute *super-oppression*.

Grounded theory approach. As with the critical interpretive approach, this qualitative research methodology is open-ended in the sense that through inductive reasoning concepts and theories emerge from the research data. The theory is grounded in the research data, and does not exist a priori. As Tarozzi (2020) explains, this is

research approach “is not limited to collecting and analyzing data to confirm or refute pre-existing theories devised elsewhere by someone else, but rather creatively and rigorously constructs a theory, starting from the data, with the capacity to explain the phenomena in question.” Among its other attributes is the modifiability of theory on the basis of new findings. Another is the salience of concepts, which are generated through analysis of research data. Here are several more: it is process oriented in the sense that it seeks to unearth underlying processes of the phenomena under study; data collection and analysis of it occurs concurrently that allows for what may be referred to as “theoretical sampling” where weaknesses in the emerging theory are addressed by gathering additional relevant data; elements of data are constantly compared, thereby requiring constant questioning of the data at each level of analysis, the end-result of which is theory construction in which intuition comes to play a key role; conceptualization rather than simply description is central to this approach.⁷

3. DEMAGOGIC RACISM: FINDINGS

To say that Trump’s demagoguery has relied primarily on his white nationalist racism, which, like his misogyny, has been legendary (Cohen, 2020; Foer, 2016; and Johansen & Akande, 2021), requires a foray into that racism, but by first noting two points: from the perspective of this chapter whether a person is racist or not, is not the matter of his/her personal beliefs but whether the person’s political *behavior* and/or governmental *policies* reinforces institutional racism, dehumanizes racial groups, fosters racial hatred and violence; etc.; and second, that some of Trump’s supporters—many blacks and other people of color among them included—vehemently and quite disingenuously deny that he is a racist. Consider, for example, the statement by Reverend Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (under whose umbrella there are some 40,000 churches) that the accusations by many that Trump is a racist is just “hyperbole from the liberal media for the purpose of attempting to paint a fascist sort of racist moniker on Donald Trump that I do not believe is accurate whatsoever” (Sells, 2016; see also: Alamillo, 2019; Vohs, 2019; and Woods, 2020). And Trump has defended himself accordingly, claiming that he is “the least racist person there is anywhere in the world” (Guardian, 2019). However, as on so many matters, this is a pure bald-faced lie. In fact, as Andrea González-Ramírez (2019), who has compiled a fairly comprehensive list of Trump’s racist outrages during his presidency, points out, Trump’s racism was already evident long before he entered presidential politics. Similarly, German Lopez (2020) correctly observes that “when you take all of his actions and comments together, a clear pattern emerges—one that suggests that bigotry is not just political opportunism on Trump’s part but a real element of his personality, character, and career.” It appears that once you have had your fill from the pitcher of Jim Crow racism, the possibility of redemption is just not possible

⁷ For more on the three different research methodologies covered here, see also Barnett-Page & Thomas (2009), and Major & Savin-Baden (2010).

against the background of ongoing institutional racism.⁸ (See also Graham et al., 2019; and Leonhardt & Philbrick, 2018).

However, one must emphasize that Trump did not create institutional racism in the U.S., nor for that matter did he create the right-wing populism that he so naturally took to like a duck to water; he inherited both. On the other hand, his narcissistic personality coupled with his sordid lifestyle, groomed over the course of his lifetime and aided and abetted by a variety of people enthralled by his inherited wealth—such as one Roy Cohn, the Jewish American demagogic aide to the infamous and equally demagogic Joseph McCarthy (see, for example, Brenner, 2017)—allowed him to take advantage of the pre-existing racism and right-wing populism to produce his own demagogic brand of politics that would catapult him into the White House. Recognizing the importance of this strategy to his electoral victory, he would continue to work to reinforce both throughout his presidency, and beyond (for the overall benefit of the class to which Trump belongs, the capitalist class). Note too that from the perspective of this chapter, institutional racism, systemic racism, structural racism, color-blind racism, and so on, all refer to the same animal. In the context of the U.S., its most potent and enduring manifestation is the elephant in the room: *residential segregation*, from which almost everything else flows. For a sense of how institutional racism is manifest via the agency of residential segregation, see Massey & Denton (1993); Oliver & Shapiro (2013); and Rothstein (2018); as for institutional racism manifesting as “color-blind racism” see Bonilla-Silva (2021), and Delgado & Stefancic (2013).

Even when it comes to the political strategy of scapegoating people of color for electoral purposes, Trump did not invent that either. Hence, others before him in the Republican party had already set up a blueprint via what has come to be known as the *Southern Strategy* (or more accurately, the *White Southern Strategy*) that involved, beginning with the presidential candidacy of Richard Nixon in 1960, convincing the racist white Southern voters that the Republican Party was a white people’s party and therefore it was *their* party. This demagogic strategy, it must be added, was not a short-term device targeted only at securing Nixon’s victory but a long-term device, aimed at permanently effecting the political realignment of the South and it depended on exploiting the ideology of whiteness—by playing on the racist fears of the white working class, both in the South *and* in the North, in the wake of the beginnings of racial desegregation in the late 1940s, and which would accelerate with the launch of the civil rights movement a few years later. And even though, the objective interests of the white working class dictated that they remain aligned to the Democratic Party, given that the Republican Party had slowly evolved in the post-Civil War era toward an unrepentant

⁸ Here, one must also note that in helping to mainstream white racism, a recurrent feature in U.S. history, Trump and his enablers have turned the clock back with regard to the amelioration of *interpersonal* racism—symptomatic of which has been not only a rise in racist hate crimes by adults, but the socialization of a new generation of white children into white supremacist thinking; see Ansari et al. (2017); Costello (2016); and Villareal (2020).

and cult-like champion of the interests of capital (relative to the Democratic Party), the Nixonites were shrewd enough to realize that race, in a toxic combination with a *mélange* of other ultra-reactionary proclivities (which by the time of the civil rights movement had become deeply ingrained in the psyche of the white *ignorantia* in the U.S.), such as jingoism, militarism, “states’ rights,” right-wing Biblicism, anti-gun-control sentiments, patriarchal beliefs, homophobia, and the like, could be parlayed to subjectify the objective interests of the white working class and thereby win their allegiance. Tragically, in this effort they generally succeeded; consider, since Lyndon B. Johnson’s presidency, the majority of white voters, to this day, have never voted for a Democratic presidential candidate. For more on the White Southern Strategy, see Edsall & Edsall (1992); Gonzales & Delgado (2006); Maxwell & Shields (2019); and Phillips (2014).

3.1. Trump’s White Nationalist Racism

Space does not permit more than a cursory overview of Trump’s racism during his presidency (aided and abetted by his acolytes—see below); therefore, these three examples—one concerning the summer 2020 protests against racist police violence, organized by the Black Live Matter movement and others,⁹ the second concerning a scholarly theory about institutionalized racism in the U.S., and the third about the mythology of white demographic implosion—will have to suffice (they capture the depth and breadth of his demagogic racial project).

On June 1, 2020, a heavily armed police apparatus, made up of contingents from various branches of the government (Park Police, Prisons, Metropolitan Police, etc.), descended on peaceful protestors protesting police brutality, in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, in and around Washington D.C.’s LaFayette Park, which is across the street from the White House, to clear them from the area. The operation, which possibly was unconstitutional as it violated the First Amendment rights of the protestors, involved a heavy-handed use of force—complete with teargas, and attacks on the news media reporting live on the event.¹⁰ Some minutes thereafter, Trump and his top officials marched to the nearby St. John’s Episcopal Church for a photo op, with Trump, not a religious man by any measure, holding up a copy of the Bible in a show of support for the Church—for the benefit of his rightwing Christian supporters across the country—because the Church had experienced some damage from protestors the night before. Regardless of whether the peaceful protestors were cleared from the park because plans

⁹ The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement is an amorphous grouping of, principally, African American civil rights organizations, that took shape, initially, in the wake of the unprovoked vigilante killing in 2012 of a black teenager, Trayvon Martin, in Florida, by a Latino by the name of George Zimmerman and Zimmerman’s acquittal the following year in the murder case brought against him. The movement’s primary focus has been campaigning against institutionalized police violence against black people, which continues to this day almost unabated.

¹⁰ There are many videos available on this operation and its violence on Google’s YouTube video channel by various domestic and international news media (do an initial search using this phrase “Trump June 1 Church”). See also the news analysis by ABC News (Ebbs & Siegel, 2021), together with its summary of the report by the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of the Interior on this event.

to do so had already been in the works for some time in order to erect security barriers around the White House or whether the real motive was, as many alleged, to allow Trump to have his photo op, what this event represented was police thuggery being deployed once again (as had happened numerous times across the country during that summer) against peaceful protestors and the news media because Trump and his administration did not consider the protests against police brutality—or its equivalent by way of white vigilante thuggery—which has disproportionately targeted people of color on a continuous basis going as far back as the first arrival of European colonial settlers several centuries ago, as legitimate. At the same time, he wished to reassure his supporters that he, Trump, while presenting himself as a champion of law and order, and vociferously condemning the anti-racist protests sparked by the brutal killing by a white policeman on a street of, among many others, George Floyd, a black man (while onlookers watched in horror, with some of them pleading to stop the killing), would brook no nonsense from blacks and their liberal supporters, especially in Washington, D.C. Trump called the protestors, at various times, “thugs,” “looters,” and “other forms of Lowlife & Scum.”

The politically manufactured controversy by Trump and his acolytes over the theory that was first advanced by legal scholars some decades ago, called “critical race theory,” to analyze how institutional racism operates in the U.S. today, speaks to his traditional dog-whistle variety of anti-black/brown racism. As Ray and Gibbons (2021), put it “critical race theory (CRT) has become a new boogie man for people unwilling to acknowledge our country’s racist history and how it impacts the present,” after noting that over a period of just a few months in mid-2021, the right-wing Trumpist mouthpiece, Fox News, had mentioned CRT hundreds of times. The idea of making CRT an important vote-garnering political issue, first received institutional support with an executive order, no. 13950, issued in September 2020 by Trump (Trump, 2020) that banned anything to do with CRT (without actually naming it) in federal government institutions. Titled “Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping” (the end phrase intended but not included is “of Whites”),¹¹ what Trump and his acolytes aimed to do with it was to start the ball rolling in cleansing all institutions that received federal government funding from even mentioning the existence of white racism, as well as sexism, let alone do anything about their amelioration—while in the process further cementing his electoral support among conservatives. With this Trump imprimatur, CRT (in its grossly distorted version) soon became an issue in Republican-led states all across the country; so much so that it is thought that the victory of the Republican candidate Glenn Youngkin over incumbent Democrat Terry McAuliffe in the 2021 Virginia elections for governor was attributable to his opposition to the *supposed* teaching of CRT in Virginia’s schools (a completely bogus but, it appears, an effective vote-garnering

¹¹ The intended, but not stated, full title of the executive order would have read: “Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping of Whites.”

exercise). For more on this issue, see Beauchamp (2021), Cineas (2021), and Saletan (2021).

One of the key obsessions of today's white racists is their belief in the myth of white demographic implosion; meaning by the mid-century whites will cease to be a demographic majority and thereby, in their view, ending the supremacy of whiteness (see Alba, 2020, about this myth). Hence, in June 2017, while expressing his desire to discourage people of color from immigrating to the U.S., Trump remarks that Haitians "all have AIDS," and Nigerians after visiting the U.S. would never "go back to their huts." Some months later, on the same subject, in January 2018, he asks in exasperation: "Why are we having all these people from *shithole* countries come here?" (Emphasis added.)¹² Trump would then go on to suggest that the U.S., instead, should encourage immigration from "white" countries, such as Norway. Now, contrast this latter view with what early in this same year (2017), Trump, upon the advice of rabid institutional racists such as Stephen Miller and Jeff Sessions in his administration, would concoct and implement an incredibly inhumane refugees policy, dubbed as the "zero tolerance" policy, at the Southern Border, of separating *infants* and children from their parents and scattering them among detention facilities across the country *as a deterrent* to refugees attempting to seek asylum in the U.S. As if this was not enough, they would also cruelly deport some of the parents *without* their children. (Beltrán, 2020, reminds us that cruelty has been an important dimension of white racism.) Imagine this counter scenario: the refugee applicants were white from, say, one of the Scandinavian countries.

This child-separation policy also brought up another issue of morality that, of course, escaped the Trumpians, and it is one that was brought up by the U.S. Supreme Court in a case involving undocumented immigrant children in 1982, titled *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982) where they would point out: "Even if the State found it expedient to control the conduct of adults by acting against their children, legislation directing the onus of a parent's misconduct against his children does not comport with fundamental conceptions of justice." They would further state quoting another case:

"[V]isiting . . . condemnation on the head of an infant is illogical and unjust. Moreover, imposing disabilities on the . . . child is contrary to the basic concept of our system that legal burdens should bear some relationship to individual responsibility or wrongdoing. Obviously, no child is responsible for his birth, and penalizing the . . . child is an ineffectual—as well as unjust—way of deterring the parent." *Weber v. Aetna Casualty & Surety Co.*, 406 U. S. 164, 406 U. S. 175 (1972).

It is instructive to note here, that Stephen Miller, one of Trump's lead policy advisors on how to implement racist policies is of Jewish extraction! (Though his early racist

¹² An aside about insults: like all demagogues, Trump has a penchant for using insults in public against people he dislikes. However, insults have their political uses. Hence, the fact that a national leader would routinely use gutter language points to the very important political role of insults when deployed by members of the ruling class. They serve as a demagogic weapon to deflect attention away from the underlying issues of import, such as institutional racism or institutional sexism, by getting the public to focus only on the matter of the insult itself (Colker, 2020).

mentorship involved a black man, an arch conservative, by the name of Larry Elder.) The fact that once upon a time, European Jews escaping the barbaric pogroms that were being inflicted on them had sought refuge in the U.S., which would include his ancestors (as his uncle would remind him publicly), appears to have done little to temper his almost *lifelong* ardor for supporting racism, including seeking out the counsel of white supremacist groups and their ilk—many of whom, ironically, are anti-Semites. At the same time, Trump’s forbears (as well as his current spouse and her parents) are also immigrants. The relevance of these facts is that Trump and his allies have been wantonly blind to their hypocrisies on immigration. But then, their immigrant ancestors were white, and it is only whiteness that makes one a full human being in their racist calculations. For more on the child-separation policy, see Coppins (2018), and Southern Poverty Law Center (2020); on Trump’s immigrant roots, see Kranish & Fisher (2016); and on Miller, see Glosser (2018); Guerrero (2020); and Frontline PBS (2019).

3.2 Trump’s Racist History

As already indicated, Trump’s racism while electioneering and during his presidency was nothing new. He had a history of very egregious racist behavior, as the following three examples prove. In 1973, when Trump co-owned with his dad a real estate business in New York city they were sued by the Federal Government for racial discrimination—specifically against black people—in the apartment buildings they owned. The case, *United States v. Fred C. Trump, Donald Trump, and Trump Management, Inc. (No. 73-1529, Eastern District of New York)*, lasted for two years; eventually it was settled in 1975 via a consent decree in exchange for no admission of guilt by the Trumps. The consent decree required them to place ads in newspapers saying that black applicants were welcome in their apartment buildings, and they were required to learn what the 1968 *Fair Housing Act* mandated. Although Trump has attempted to minimize the significance of the case; however, at the time it was litigated, the Justice Department considered it an important case. (See Kranish and Fisher, 2016, and the Civil Rights Litigation Clearinghouse, n.d.).

Fast forward to 1989, and Trump demagogically embroils himself in a tragic case involving the rape and beating of a white female jogger in her early twenties, Trisha Meili, in New York city’s Central Park on the night of April 19. Shortly after the police arrested five black/brown *teenage* boys (Antron McCray, Kevin Richardson, Yusef Salaam, Raymond Santana, and Kharey Wise) who would soon come to be called by the media as the “Central Park Five,” Trump began an inappropriate ad campaign against the boys, costing him thousands of dollars, demanding the death penalty for them. As it turned out, the teenagers were eventually exonerated in 2002 (after having unjustly served sentences ranging from 6 to 13 years) upon the confession of the real rapist by the name of Matias Reyes and whose DNA matched that taken from the crime scene, whereas that of the Central Park Five did not. Trump, characteristically, has never recanted regarding this matter. (It is most ironic that Trump involved himself in this tragedy given that he himself did not have a pristine record in matters of sexual

harassment of women. Further, a question that arises here is would Trump have become involved if the victim had been a person of color?)¹³

On November 4, 2008, about 150 years after the end of the U.S. Civil War that helped end chattel slavery in the U.S., for the first time in U.S. history, a black man was elected president of the U.S. (he would be reelected again four years later). This two-term president by the name of Barack H. Obama, the son of an immigrant father from Kenya who had married a white woman from Kansas when they were students at the University of Hawaii, however, checked all the negative boxes as far as Trump and his ilk were concerned. For them the Obama presidency did not mark progress in race-relations but a huge setback. Chancing upon a sordid racist conspiracy theory—initially hatched, most ironically but perhaps not surprisingly, by white Democrats (specifically, supporters of Hillary Clinton)—that came to be called “birtherism,” Trump, characteristically, would become its chief indefatigable demagogic proponent. In a nutshell, the birtherists bizarrely argued that President Obama was not a legitimate U.S. president because he was not born in United States; he was born a Muslim in Africa and he was smuggled into the U.S. as a potential Islamic terrorist. The fact that President Obama felt obliged to release his birth certificate to the public to quell this stunning hogwash appeared to make matters worse because accusations of forgery then began to circulate. Needless to say, the corporate media always on the look out for “juicy” rumors in order to boost ratings, and thereby profits, ran with this racist nonsense—especially with Trump now demagogically at the helm of this conspiracy (and recall that this is the same man who came from a family that for years had lied to the public that they originally came from Sweden in order to hide their true country of origin, Germany), with the rightwing Fox News, a perennial dabbler in extreme forms of demagogic journalism,¹⁴ leading the pack and lapping up every morsel of his drivel.

There was, of course, a subtext to birtherism; it was a dog-whistle for white supremacist racism. To explain: the criminality that President Obama was guilty of, in reality, had nothing to do with where he was born; no, for the white supremacists like Trump, his criminality sprang *from the very act of becoming the president of United States*. By taking up residence in the “White’s House,” he had dared to challenge the supremacy of whiteness at the presidential level; and he won. As if that was not enough, he had the moxie to have an independent mind, instead of being a conservative “yes massah” kiss-the-white-man’s-toes lackey—akin to those other black darlings of the white nationalist right, such as Ben Carson, Ward Connerly, Lawrence Elder, Alan Keys, Thomas Sowell, Michael Steele, Clarence Thomas, and Armstrong Williams, who among their other

¹³ For more on this tragedy, see Laughland (2016); and Burns et al. (2012). One must be reminded here that false accusations against black males of raping white women has a long history in the U.S., often leading to wrongful convictions and once upon a time even death at the hands of white lynch mobs. In fact, sex and racism has always been an incendiary mixture from the days of slavery up to the present, often involving the rape and/or murder of women and men of color—but most especially black women and men. (See, for example, Hernton, 1988, which is still relevant today.)

¹⁴ See, for example, Mayer (2019), and Stelter (2021).

egregious beliefs deny that institutional racism has anything to do with the current predicament of black and brown people in the United States. For more on birtherism and its significance, see Kranish & Fisher (2016); Frontline PBS (2020; and 2021); Obama (2020); and Serwer (2020). An aside: black conservatism in a racialized capitalist society is not a symptom of progress; rather it is a symptom of the very intractability of racism. In their legitimate quest for racial inclusion, black conservatives are unable to distinguish, like their white counterparts, between the permanence of *institutional* racism and the episodic nature of *interpersonal* racism in the context of black class differentiation—rooted, ironically, in affirmative action and of which many of these black conservatives have been beneficiaries. At the same time, they are gripped by the illusion of tangible dividends that are thought to accrue from playing the role of the black equivalent of the Asian American “model minority.”¹⁵ Not surprisingly, in their ignorance of the insidious ubiquity of institutional racism, black conservatives fanatically adhere to the concept of a “color-blind society,” which falsely argues that we live today in a racially egalitarian society (that is, a color-blind society) and therefore any effort to address institutional racism is itself a form of racism. Moreover, the generally justifiable critique by black conservatives of the hypocrisy of many white liberals on matters of race, blinds them not only to the presence of “John Browns” among *progressive* whites, but to the very serious dangers for black people as a whole—not to mention other people of color—of building an alliance with the *ideological* descendants of the slaveholders of yesteryear.

3.3. Trump and the Functions of Racism

The significance of Trump’s blatant racism in this day and age, which at times, as one may have noted from the foregoing, is so bold as to even dispense with the dog-whistle strategy generally preferred until recently by racist politicians, is that viewed *generically* it is emblematic of the social construction of race and the cultivation of its social signification by the European ruling classes throughout modern history.¹⁶ For them, it was a key ideological device in legitimating the institutionalization of racism across almost the entire spectrum of human endeavors, including the relentless prosecutions of genocidal mass murder,¹⁷ as a means to the establishment of European political, economic, and cultural hegemony across the planet (primarily taking the forms

¹⁵ The problem gets even more complicated, because the “model minority” stereotype of Asian Americans is itself a perverse form of racism (see Chou & Feagin, 2016; and Wu, 2015).

¹⁶ In some places at certain times the roles performed by race/racism in society have been and are performed by ethnicity/ethnicism. Therefore, race/racism can be used interchangeably with ethnic/ethnicity/ethnicism when these latter terms signify race-like oppression.

¹⁷ The establishment of European imperial and colonial hegemony across the planet over a period of roughly 500 years often involved the genocidal mass murder of the indigenous by the millions, regardless of whether they resisted or not, and it was justified through the ideology of racism that was developed by a corrupt reading of the Bible and/or the Darwinian-based pseudo-scientific inquiry. See, for example, Jennings (2011); Moses (2011); Shipman (1994); Smedley & Smedley (2012); and for a succinct overview of a biblically-based racial theory called the “Hamitic Theory,” see Chapter 2 of Lulat (2005).

of jingoism, imperialism, and colonialism—in both its settler and non-settler forms)—*for the purposes of facilitating the capitalist accumulation-driven exploitation* of domestic working classes, together with indigenous workers abroad, including the enslaved, albeit at different levels of intensity, in the service of both primitive and expanded forms of capital accumulation.¹⁸ Now, while this fact is generally well-reflected in the relevant literature—see for example this basket of sources: Beckert & Rockman (2018); Berger (2009); Braudel (1992); Croucher & Weiss (2014); Delle, Mrozowski & Paynter (2000); Galeano (1997); Hochschild (1998); Laidlaw & Lester (2015); Marchal (2017); and Mrozowski (2019)—what is not sufficiently considered is that today, in the 21st century, this same device still continues to be deployed toward the same end, accumulation, but within a radically transformed political and economic context, relative to the pre-industrial mercantile era, that may be labeled as capitalist democracy where, ostensibly, respect for the human and civil rights of *all*, coupled with the rule of law, is now considered almost sacrosanct in words, if not in deeds. (Simultaneously, in economic terms, laissez-faire capitalism is no longer considered acceptable, albeit only for political reasons.)

Yes, to be sure, the literature documenting the persistence in the U.S. of institutionalized racism in its various forms abound, but what is sparse is literature that delves into an explanation of *why* institutional racism persists, *especially* in a context where its practice is *supposedly* no longer legal in law (vide the various civil rights acts of the 1960s). Four recent examples in support of this point are Alexander (2020); Anderson (2020); Tourse et al. (2018); and Wilkerson (2020). While there is absolutely nothing wrong with these works on their own merit, and in fact together constitute a much-needed scholarship that is admirable in its meticulous documentation of the insidiousness of institutionalized racism at virtually all levels of U.S. society from the past to the present, the problem is that it is representative of a vast body of literature on race and racism that does not go beyond the socio-cultural framework by considering the *political economic* dimensions of race/racism in *capitalist* democracies; and thereby seeing race/racism for what it really is: a proxy for *class warfare* (here, to be distinguished from *class struggle*) conducted by capital. In other words, racism as ideology and its corollary, institutional and interpersonal racialized behavioral practice, simply does not emerge out of nowhere. This is true today, just as much as it was true in the past in the heyday of imperialism, colonialism, the Atlantic slave trade, and so on, because ultimately these functions are a dimension of class *warfare* in the service of capitalist accumulation. What then are these functions? The most salient of them, can be placed under these subheadings: class fragmentation; economic exploitation; psychic benefits; and, for the purposes of this chapter, most important of all, demagogic scapegoating.

3.3.1. Class Fragmentation

¹⁸ The term “exploitation” is not being used in this chapter in the Marxian sense of labor theory of value (see Cohen, 2017), but rather in its ordinary sense.

Racism helps to sow division among the working classes along color lines so that they can keep each other in check in their class struggles against capital. Historically, and up to the present, racism has been one of the most important tools used by capitalists in the U.S. to “buy” the allegiance of white workers. (Compare here the circumstances of the white working class vis-à-vis the black working class in South Africa during the apartheid era.) By allowing white workers to exchange their whiteness for a few privileges, the capitalist class has kept all working classes from demanding a fundamental change to the entire political and economic system *for the benefit of all*, that is, to the extent a truly democratic capitalist society can permit in the absence of the plutocratic political capture of the State by capital and its allies. Racism artificially creates an “us” versus “them” mentality, whereas genuinely meaningful progress in a society is only possible under conditions of cooperation and mutual respect by all. Now, to be sure, the white working class (to take the U.S. example) may maintain a short-term advantage relative to the black/brown working classes in terms of, for example, better employment opportunities relative to the black/brown working classes, or better-resourced neighborhoods that residential segregation makes possible, but in the long-run the fact that it is not united with the black/brown working classes prevents it from demanding a greater share of the total profits generated from its labor but kept by capital. At the same time, working-class disunity prevents it from mounting successful struggles in increasing the “public wage” (which takes such forms as retirement insurance, unemployment insurance, life-long medical insurance, public schooling, environmental protection, and so on). Racism, therefore, serves as an additional factor, besides the workings of impersonal “market forces,” in hiding the exploitation of the working class by capital.

3.3.2. Economic Exploitation

A critical examination of the nature of Western imperialism, or European settler colonialism, or the Atlantic slave trade, or Jim Crow segregation in the U.S., and so on, brings up the fact that these were not only economically driven phenomenon, but they could not have been possible to establish, for obvious reasons, without massive and unprovoked armed aggression against peoples of a different hue and/or culture living in their own lands. Not surprisingly, the ideological justification for this aggression was provided by racism. In other words, what one finds here is that historically, *and through to the present*, racism has been a powerful, powerful force in *justifying* the *direct* exploitation of other human beings by ruling classes via various usually primitive brutish economic mechanisms; such as: outright dispossession of their lands via settler colonialism; environmental destruction in the process of extracting dispossessed (stolen) resources while simultaneously placing the livelihood of the indigenous in jeopardy; outright enslavement; the commandeering of corvée labor; and payment of extremely sub-par wages to free (unenslaved) labor. From the perspective of the Americas, the racialization of the exploitation of, first, the indigenous peoples, and a little later, black peoples from Africa, began from the very moment Christopher Columbus inadvertently

set foot in Hispaniola. And even in this matter of indisputable historical fact, Trumpism does not rest.

On the second Monday of October, every year, most U.S. government business comes to a halt because it is an official holiday, Columbus Day,¹⁹ commemorating Columbus's arrival in the Caribbean on October 12, 1492. To mark this federal holiday, Trump issued Presidential Proclamation 10100 of October 9, 2020. As expected by this point in his presidency and in a presidential election year to boot, his demagoguery was clearly evident in the proclamation. Vide:

Sadly, in recent years, radical activists have sought to undermine Christopher Columbus's legacy. These extremists seek to replace discussion of his vast contributions with talk of failings, his discoveries with atrocities, and his achievements with transgressions. . . . They seek to squash any dissent from their orthodoxy. We must not give in to these tactics or consent to such a bleak view of our history.

On this Columbus Day, we embrace the same optimism that led Christopher Columbus to discover the New World. We inherit that optimism, along with the legacy of American heroes who blazed the trails, settled a continent, tamed the wilderness,²⁰ and built the single-greatest nation the world has ever seen.

(Emphasis added.)

Leaving aside the fact that Columbus, as a person, was so obsessed with acquiring personal wealth by any means necessary that it completely corrupted his character (in short, he was such a nasty person that at one point he was taken back to Spain in chains on the orders of those who themselves weren't of exemplary character either) a sanitized version of U.S. history that Trump and his allies are pushing for here seeks to obliterate one fundamental truth: the Columbian Project, whatever else it was, was also a racial project, and the implementation of which brought in its wake the genocidal murder of, possibly, millions of indigenous peoples throughout the Americas (including the United States), and the enslavement of millions of Africans. Columbus did not leave Spain on August 3, 1492, simply with the innocent idea of peacefully engaging in trade with the East, and nothing more. No, he also carried with him the firm belief backed by the royal mandate of the Spanish Catholic monarchs, as if it was theirs to give, such was their arrogance, that any peoples he would encounter enroute to the empires of the East be conquered, subjugated, and converted to Christianity in the name of a Spanish empire he would help to create.²¹ Ponder these quotes familiar to all who know the details of what

¹⁹ Some Native Americans have renamed it "Indigenous People's Day," though October 11 is now officially a U.S. federal holiday with the same name (thanks to a proclamation by U.S. President Joe Biden issued on October 8, 2021).

²⁰ He may have forgotten to include in this listing "killed the primitives."

²¹ To get an idea of what is being referred to, here is an excerpt from a document issued on April 30, 1492 that granted the initial privileges and prerogatives to Columbus that he had negotiated with the Spanish Monarchs (King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella):

is one of the most important but horrifying events in the annals of modern human history:

They do not bear arms nor do they know them, for I showed them swords, and out of ignorance they took by the edge and cut themselves....They ought to make good and clever servants, for I see that they very quickly say all that I have said to them.... Our lord being pleased, I will take six of them from here to your highnesses at the time of my departure, so that they may learn to speak.... These people are very gentle (p. 48). [If] your highnesses should so command, all of them can be brought to Castile or be kept captive on their own island, for with fifty men you will keep them all in subjugation and make them do anything you wish (p. 50).

[We put up a large cross] as a sign that your highnesses consider the land your own, and, most important, as the emblem of our Lord Jesus Christ and in honor of Christianity (p. 86).

Notice the almost nonchalant assumption of ownership in the spirit of “I found it first, so it is mine!” As Adam Smith, writing more than 200 years ago, would observe: “In consequence of the representations of Columbus, the council of Castille determined to take possession of countries of which the inhabitants were plainly incapable of defending themselves. The pious purpose of converting them to Christianity sanctified the injustice of the project.” (“But the hope of finding treasures of gold there,” he further points out, “was the sole motive which prompted him to undertake it” [1961 (1776)], vol. 2, p.72.) It appeared to have mattered little to Columbus and his men that the ownership they were establishing was over human beings and their rightful domain, and neither it appears (with the exception of perhaps a few at a later time) were their Christian consciences troubled in the least bit by, to quote Smith again, “the injustice of coveting the possession of a country whose harmless natives, far from having ever injured the people of Europe, had received the first adventurers with every mark of kindness and respect.”(p. 102)²²

“Our will is, That you, *Christopher Columbus*, after discovering and conquering the said Islands and Continent in the said ocean, or any of them, shall be our Admiral of the said Islands and Continent you shall so discover and conquer; and that you be our Admiral, Vice-Roy, and Governour in them, and that for the future, you may call and stile yourself, D. *Christopher Columbus*, and that your sons and successors in the said employment, may call themselves Dons, Admirals, Vice-Roys, and Governours of them; and that you may exercise the office of Admiral, with the charge of Vice-Roy and Governour of the said Islands and Continent, which you and your Lieutenants shall conquer, and freely decide all causes....” (Ferdinand and Elizabeth, 1492; see also Nader & Formisano,1996.)

²² Those who celebrate Columbus Day, a holiday in the U.S., would counter that this was a regrettable outcome that should not detract from all the good that much of the Columbian Exchange has come to represent (referring to the transfer between the Americas and the rest of the world of people, plants, ideas, technology, food crops, and so on—plus diseases of course). The question that must be asked here,

3.3.3. *Psychic Benefits*

Racism provides for the U.S. white working class an avenue of psychic satisfaction. Specifically, the hierarchic racial categorization at the ideological level that racism permits, creates opportunities for solace at the psychic level that one obtains by seeing oneself as “above” another group; thereby, providing psychological compensation for the tribulational outcomes of class warfare inflicted on all working classes, immaterial of their skin color, by the capitalist class. In other words, what one is really talking about here is something called *schadenfreude*. This is a German word that combines together harm (Schaden) and joy (Fruede) that describes the pleasure one derives from the misfortune of someone else—here, in this instance, the Other; and the Other being of course a member of the racialized outgroup. For more on this socio-psychological concept and its relevance here see Cikara, et al. (2011), and Van Dijk & Ouwerkerk (2014).

3.3.4. *Scapegoating*

When on June 16, 2015, Trump descended down that staircase as part of his version of pomp and circumstance, and then proceeded to spew out his venomous tirade against Mexicans—who in the minds of many in the U.S., including Trump and his advisors, are in actuality a stand-in for all people of color²³—probably few were reminded that Trump was calling upon an important political tradition in the U.S. forged by demagogic politicians, media opinion makers, and bureaucrats at the behest of their own specific political and economic ambitions, going back centuries. It is the racist/ethnicist-driven scapegoating of the politically and economically powerless, in this case immigrant communities (documented or otherwise) from, once upon a time, places such as Ireland, Eastern Europe (including Jews), Southern Europe, and China, and today, from Africa, the Middle East, Asia, South America, the Caribbean, etc. (Plus, of course, besides immigrants, one should not forget the long history of scapegoating African Americans and Native Americans.) Hence, the racist imbuelement of the Mexican-U.S. border (often euphemistically referred to as the Southern Border) in the minds of many whites, as well as others, with the fearful imagery of a bulwark constantly under threat by a dangerous invading “alien”—defined as, in their minds, pathogens in human form, meaning people of color from not only South America and the Caribbean, but elsewhere, such as Asia, and after the 9/11 terrorist event, the Middle-East (and of course pathogens as actual biological pathogens)—is nothing new.

What is so tragically ironic is that the Southern Border *as ideology* arose out of the U.S. war of aggression against Mexico (the 1846-1848 Mexican-U.S. War, also known as *Intervención estadounidense en México* and the ensuing Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that forced the defeated Mexicans to part with not only Texas (the initial source

however, is that did the Taínos agree to their extinction in the service of the Columbian Exchange? What if you were in their place?

²³ White racists may make hierarchic distinctions among people of color; but in the final analysis their adherence to notions of *white supremacy* paints all people of color as undesirable.

of U.S. aggression) but a much, much, larger territory comprising, roughly, Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. (One can legitimately argue that for Mexicans at least the U.S. border is in the wrong place, it should be much, much further north than where it is now.) As if this was not enough, in time, Mexico became a reservoir of cheap labor for the U.S. and which remains so to this day, but on a greatly reduced scale. In fact—going by Massey and his colleagues, who have done extensive research on the subject (see Massey, 2016; Massey et al., 2016; Massey, 2020a; and Massey, 2020b)—if undocumented immigration across the Southern Border was a genuine concern for the Trumpians, rather than a scapegoating device, then they would have been surprised to learn that, first, until border enforcement became a political issue under various administrations (starting especially with the Republican administration of Ronald Reagan) that would involve aggressive *militarized* apprehension tactics, accompanied by large ever-increasing budgetary allocations, undocumented migration across the border was an insignificant issue because the border’s porosity, paradoxically, allowed a circular transhumance of Mexican labor. Second, that because of both demographic and economic changes in recent years within Mexico, undocumented migration of Mexican labor has now dwindled almost to a net negative inflow. Third, that the current undocumented migration comprises primarily non-Mexicans, mainly migrants from the Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras genuinely seeking asylum (hence the large presence among them of families with children, as well as, even more tragically, unaccompanied children) attempting to escape from the horrendous conditions of mind-boggling corruption, armed thuggery, U.S. focused drug-smuggling turf wars,²⁴ unrelenting poverty, climate change, and so on in their home countries—a circumstance in which the fallout from the Cold War-related armed U.S. interventions of the 1980s under Ronald Reagan has had a big part to play (Chomsky, 2021). For more on the racialization of U.S. immigration, see Alvarez (2020); Davis & Shear (2020); Ettinger (2009); Goodman (2020); Lee (2019); Vereza (2018); and Wallace & Zepeda-Millán (2020). A global overview of immigration and demagoguery is to be had from Kaushal (2019).

Another tragic irony of using the Southern Border as a demagogic scapegoating device, is that Trump and his supporters conveniently overlook the fact,

²⁴ Many in the U.S. appear not to understand that illicit drug smuggling is not about “bad hombres” (to quote Trump), but a case of simple but tragic capitalist economics at work here, represented by the principle of “supply and demand,” where the huge demand for drugs by the largest illicit drug consumer on the planet, the U.S., has over time produced a huge *narco-military-industrial complex*, involving the purchase of sophisticated weaponry from U.S. arms dealers by drug cartels (a consequence of which is massive armed violence in the drug-supplier countries); a U.S.-based military infrastructure tasked with drug interdiction and destruction of the drug cartels; U.S.-based manufacturers supplying chemicals for processing the drugs; international banks helping to launder the drug money; human trafficking for labor and for sex; and so on. (For more on this subject see Grillo, 2021; Muse, 2020; and Wainwright, 2017.) Scapegoating South Americans will not do an iota of anything in terms of weakening, let alone destroying the narco-military-industrial complex.

characteristically, that they are complicit in the unconscionable super exploitation of undocumented immigrant labor, as beneficiaries of what this labor produces. This is nowhere more evident than in the case of agriculture (and the related agro-food industry). Human beings, regardless of who they are and where they live, have the unfortunate habit of being hungry for food on a perpetually regular basis. Now, as the scurrilous racist attacks on immigrants of color mounted by Trump and his supporters (at one point even involving mass murder at a mall²⁵), punctuated by chants of “build the wall,” it appears not to occur to anyone among them that their access to relatively cheap and plentiful food is in part a function of the exploitation of one of the most marginalized groups in U.S. society, undocumented immigrant agricultural workers of color. Riding on the back of the racialized marginalization that facilitates the massive exploitation of these workers (ranging from extremely low wages to sometimes even no wages; and from near-indentured servitude to horrendous working conditions—including endemic sexual harassment of female workers), the vast majority of the U.S. population is guaranteed affordable and adequate food supply even while some of them hypocritically bemoan the loss of jobs to undocumented workers that they would never take; while at the same time the agricultural food industry rakes in billions of dollars in profits annually from this exploitation. The COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2019 (and as of this writing is still ongoing) brought out these facts most forcefully. As Daniel Costa (2021) of the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) pointed out in his testimony at a Congressional hearing, held on July 21, 2021, by the Senate Judiciary Committee (interestingly, the hearing was titled “Immigrant Farmworkers are Essential to Feeding America”), that nearly two thirds of farmworkers are undocumented immigrants with absolutely no rights or legal protections; hence, not surprisingly, even during the pandemic they kept on working “in one of the most hazardous jobs in the entire U.S. labor market and as EPI research has shown, they [suffer] very high rates of wage and hour violations” (see also Carrasquillo, 2011).

3.4. Trump and Islamophobia

Besides Mexicans, another group that would be forced to take a front seat alongside them on Trump’s demagogic scapegoating bus would be Muslims, who of course are not a race but adherents of a religion that, most ironically, considers its heritage to include significant themes from the Judeo-Christian tradition. However, in the minds of many Muslims are a proxy for a “race,” specifically representing black and brown peoples from the Middle East and elsewhere (even though there are millions of white Europeans who are Muslims too—in countries such as Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and even Russia). Anyhow, the Islamophobic targeting of Muslims with the imposition of a so-called “Muslim travel ban” under various Executive Orders and

²⁵ Reference here is to a mass shooting that took place in El Paso (Texas) at a departmental store where some 23 people were killed and an equal number sustained injuries on August 3, 2019, where the white supremacist shooter clearly indicated his motive for the mass murder: disenchantment with immigration across the Southern Border.

Proclamation from, initially, seven Muslim-majority countries of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen, but which would later be changed and expanded to include some non-Muslim majority countries (effectively, supported by the U.S. Supreme “Conservative” Court—reminiscent of the Japanese American Internment in the 1940s via the Court’s infamous decision in *Korematsu v. United States* 323 US 214 (1944)—in an ideologically-driven 5-4 decision in *Trump v. Hawaii* 585 US_(2018)) on grounds that they were a potential terrorist threat had, as in the case of the Mexicans, little to do with reality. First, there was the fact that the domestic neo-Nazi inspired terrorism was/is a much bigger threat (Jones, et al., 2020), and second, the one event that had been seared into the minds of most in the United States, the jihadist-inspired terrorism that has come to be known as 9/11 was master-minded and carried out mainly by citizens of Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates, with a majority of them (15 of the 19) coming from Saudi Arabia,²⁶ and yet all of these countries were not on this list. In fact, ironically, Trump appeared to have quite good feelings for Saudi Arabia (despite his Islamophobic-inspired demagoguery) so much so that he made an official visit to that country where he was treated as nothing less than royalty—which also said a great deal about his host, the Crown Prince, a murderous thug in his own right (see Kirchgassner, 2021, and the excellent biography by Hubbard, 2020). One may also note here that when Trump issued his Muslim travel ban, after having played the Islamophobic card consistently throughout the presidential election campaign in 2016, it is doubtful that he and his supporters were consciously aware that this act was an echo of a European tradition that went back hundreds of years, to the period of the Crusades, that involved scapegoating Muslims (and Jews of course) in the service of political and economic projects of the European ruling classes. Moreover, and this is indeed greatly ironic, that Trump’s very presence, and that of all other fellow U.S. Americans of European ancestry, in this part of the world is an end-result of a chain of events going back centuries in which the role of Muslims looms extraordinarily large as progenitors of the European Renaissance of the Middle Ages; and one of those events is the Columbian Project (and its corollary, the *Columbian Exchange*). The Columbian Project, which was a subproject of the *Great European West-to-East Maritime Project*, would not have come about without what may be called, for want of a better term, the Muslim-dominated *Great East-to-West Diffusion* (given the Muslim domination at one time of the international trade routes, on both sea and land, linking the East and the West for some seven centuries and which the Maritime Project was launched to circumvent). For an overview, see the appendices in Lulat (2005); and for more on Islamophobia in the U.S. in a broader but current context see Rane & Mitchell (2021).

4. ANALYSIS: POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEMAGOGY

In this brief overview of what Trumpism as a demagogic-driven right-wing populism has meant in practice, *from the perspective of people of color*, we are left with a

²⁶ A recent declassified FBI report suggests the probability of greater Saudi involvement in 9/11 than previously thought (Sullivan, 2021).

conundrum that must now be addressed. Leaders, whether good or bad, are a product of their times; and lacking any superpowers outside of natural human capabilities, they are in the end made by people, the masses, who *decide* to give them their allegiance. So, in the case of Trump, consider this: from the shenanigans, scandals, and gaffes to the refusal to ever apologize for any of his misdeeds; from the failure to keep almost any promise that would meaningfully improve the lives of the *majority* of the U.S. citizenry to attempts to overturn the presidential elections; from his cruelties to his history of sexual predation; from consorting with some of the world's fellow rightwing thugs and bullies (who pass for leaders of their countries) to a congenital penchant for outrageous and even dangerous lies; from the racism and scapegoating of the politically powerless to his unethical business practices (including his refusal to release his taxes); and from being the target of two impeachments to, perhaps, the most important misdeed of all, the mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic that would cost thousands upon thousands of lives, he has through it all remained more or less politically unscathed. Clearly, for someone who became president of the U.S. in the 21st century, Trump's sins are miles long.²⁷ Yet, from the perspective of his legions of supporters in the U.S. (and even abroad)—which includes of course the Republican Party, of which he, in effect, continues to be its “supreme” leader, as of this writing, even after having lost the 2020 elections to Joe Biden/Kamala Harris ticket—Trump's ability to stoke right-wing populism, to which large sections of the masses are in thrall, with his racialized demagoguery has been met with deeply alarming cultish adulation.²⁸ How does one explain this bizarre, bizarre, circumstance in a country that prides itself to be a democracy (and never misses an opportunity to proclaim it to the world)?

The answer to this critical question, on the basis of which this chapter seeks its legitimacy, that will be presented here takes the form of an abbreviated (given space limitations) *chain of analysis*—a la “supply-chain” model in commerce—based on five main chronological *links* of analysis, each connected to the other; and which if considered separately become meaningless for the task at hand, but when taken together may be referred to as the “political economy of demagoguery.” This analysis, which takes its cue, in part, from Toussaint (2011), can be summarized thusly: In multiracial societies, such as the U.S., among the functions of racism is that it is a

²⁷ The following basket of sources, when considered together, provide a fairly comprehensive picture, by way of highlights, of the 45th president of the U.S. in the full glory of his interminable vileness: Bloomberg (2019); Graham (2017); Johansen & Akande (2021); Kruse & Gee (2016); Mihm, et al. (2021); Murse (2021); Politifact (2021); and the database of Trump lies by Washington Post (2021). And specifically on the terrible mishandling of the pandemic, see Abutaleb & Paletta (2021); Saletan (2020); and Slavitt (2021).

²⁸ In fact, it gets even more bizarre when you take into consideration that a significant section of the Latino population who bore the brunt of Trump's unabashed racism have had no misgivings about voting for Trump—more than a third would vote for him in both elections (2016 and 2020), going by the research findings of the Pew Research Center (2021). The fact is that some are just as racist as Trump toward their fellow Latinos (reflecting the internal racial/ethnic divisions within their original home countries). See, for example, the discussion of this matter by Alamillo (2019), and Paz (2020).

powerful tool within the toolbox of the demagogue, serving as a diversionary device by scapegoating the politically powerless (in relative terms). At the same time, demagogy is a tool that serves the purpose of stoking populism, in this case right-wing populism, which is a deeply misguided response to the excesses of *neoliberalism* (a modernized version of neoclassical economics); especially its corollary *crony capitalism* and the ensuing outcomes of massive economic inequality—both relative and actual—as well as an insatiable greed of sufficient magnitude to have precipitated the Great Recession of 2007-2009.²⁹

As for the origins of neoliberalism, it was a response to structural changes within the global economy that had eroded the magnitude of capitalist accumulation of corporate capital domiciled in the United States—the initial source of proselytization of neoliberalism to the world—against the background of the failures of Keynesian economics to deal with a contradictory phenomenon, prolonged stagflation (which it was thought could not arise under Keynesianism). Meanwhile, Keynesianism itself was a logical response to the failures of neoclassical economics (of which the Great Depression was emblematic). Finally, in commandeering racism for this demagogic project, it speaks to the subtheory of “racial projects” as conceived by Omi and Winant (2015) in their theory of *racial formations*.

Now, beginning with the *first analytical link* in the chain of analysis, one must go back about a century, and bring into focus the *Great Depression*, a huge economic catastrophe around the world the likes of which had never been seen before (and has never been seen since) but which began in the U.S. with, symbolically, the Wall Street stock market crash of Thursday, October 24, 1929 (“Black Thursday”), and which lasted roughly until 1939 that marked the beginning of the Second World War in the European theater. In the U.S., with 20-30% unemployment (provoking great suffering at a time when there was no social safety net to speak of), some 40% of the banks collapsing in the early years, the GDP spiraling downward by 40%, the value of the stock market evaporating by about two-thirds, the huge hit taken by the agricultural sector, and so on, this event was an economic cataclysm of immense proportions. And because the U.S. economy played such a huge role in the global economy then, as it still does today, the ripple effects of the Great Depression were felt across the planet, so much so that in a formerly thriving European economy (that of Germany) it opened up political space for a demagogue of the vilest kind, in the shape of Adolf Hitler, who with his henchmen would launch the Second World War in Europe that would not only give us the unfathomable horrors of the Holocaust, but eventually, taking into account the Asian theater, come to consume, possibly, 60-70 million lives across the planet.

²⁹ A graphic representation of this thesis by the author of this chapter is available by way of a video titled “A Flowchart of the Political Economy of Class, Race, and Demagogy (U.S. Example)” —see *Elegant Brain* (2021).

The ending of the Great Depression was engineered, arguably, by two men: the Democrat and former governor of New York, Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR), who became president in 1933 and would, incredibly, remain president until 1945; and the British economist by the name of John Maynard Keynes. Flying in the face of the reigning orthodoxy of the time, neoclassical economics, a laissez-faire version of capitalist economics, that held that unfettered markets would solve all problems of unemployment, the one (FDR) implemented what the other (Keynes) would come to theorize and lend his name to the macroeconomics school of thought he helped author, known as *Keynesian Economics*. In a nutshell, what one implemented and the other advocated was a forceful involvement in the economy, through spending, in order to steer it away from a recession by creating a stimulus in the economy—even if it required deficit spending (a revived and thriving economy would then take care of the deficit). In practical terms, this thinking was reflected in the Roosevelt's famous New Deal economic program which would intrude into almost all facets of the economy with the overall aim of humanizing and stabilizing capitalism—for the first time in U.S. history it would be the poor and the marginalized (albeit not so much people of color, as Jim Crow racism would continue to reign) who would be the focus of domestic economic policy. It should also be noted that, most ironically, the ending of the Great Depression was also hastened by the Second World War as it further facilitated government intervention in the economy (as well as helping to end unemployment), in support of the war. (For more on the Great Depression, see Kennedy, 1999; and McElavine, 2009.)

Second analytical link: Keynesian Economics, in time, became a new reigning orthodoxy in economic thinking, and would become even the basis of the thinking behind the creation of what is known as the Bretton Woods institutions—specifically, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Keynes was among the key participants at the meeting. These institutions were set up following a meeting of representatives from over 40 countries at Bretton Woods in New Hampshire in 1944 and were motivated by the need to avoid a recurrence of the Great Depression (in which the global economy had also played a deleterious part through protectionism pursued by different countries). However, they were also motivated by the desire to protect capitalist accumulation from, in their eyes, two unrelated forms of ideological extremism: fascism, and communism. Their view was that these ideologies only thrived under conditions of economic chaos in capitalist societies. To this end, leveraging the Keynesian principle, the U.S. launched the European Recovery Program (also known as the Marshall Plan, named after U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall) where Europe, excluding Soviet-controlled Eastern Bloc countries, was funneled billions of U.S. dollars to help rebuild its war-torn economies. Interestingly, the enabling legislation passed by Congress in 1948, was mouthfully titled “*An Act to promote world peace and the general welfare, national interest, and foreign policy of the United States through economic, financial, and other measures necessary to the maintenance of conditions abroad in which free institutions may survive and consistent with the maintenance of the strength and stability of the United States.*” Besides Europe, other beneficiaries of U.S. largesse on a meaningful scale

to have a macro-economic impact included the Asian countries of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

The popularity of Keynesianism was underwritten by the prosperity that much of the West came to enjoy in the years following World War II, leading up to the early 1970s. However, that is not say that the purveyors of versions of neoclassical economics (such as F. A. Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, Milton Friedman, and other members of Mont Pelerin Society) had slinked off into the sunset; as staunch conservative ideologues who mistakenly equated human freedom with the freedom to exploit limitlessly by allowing the capitalist class a completely free reign to do whatever it pleased (which one may label as unbridled capitalism); or that every human being is a master of his/her own economic destiny (not withstanding institutionalized oppression, such as racism and sexism); or that individuals always act rationally in terms of their economic interests (not withstanding evidence to the contrary), they were patiently waiting in the wings.

Third analytical link: The popularity of Keynesian Economics would suffer a major reversal in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The problem was the so-called “Phillips Curve,” named after the economist William Phillips via whose work other economists, such as Paul Samuelson and Edmund Phelps, had come up with an economics model that postulated that there was an *inverse* relationship between unemployment and inflation—meaning, for example, high unemployment would lead to lower wages which in turn would lead to low inflation. Because of a number of historically-based factors, coupled with two severe jolts (or shocks) to the U.S. economy, the Phillips Curve no longer worked. That is, the U.S. economy was hit by a double whammy: high unemployment because of a stagnant economy and a long-running high inflation (known as the *Great Inflation* that lasted roughly from 1965 to 1982)—giving rise to the dreaded term “stagflation”—thereby bringing more or less to a standstill over two decades of post-World War II prosperity under the flag of Keynesian economics. So, what gave? As one would surmise, several factors, but one of them was, in a sense, chickens coming home to roost. The financial aid that the U.S. had given to its former enemies and allies—and to which must be added U.S. defense spending on their behalf, which constituted a huge subsidy to the economies of these countries in the billions of dollars (a subsidy that hasn’t entirely disappeared to this day)—had not only succeeded in putting the economies of these countries back on their feet, given that they had always had sufficient human capital to take advantage of the aid, but they were now proving to be formidable economic competitors in the global market, to the chagrin of U.S. exporters.

However, it was even worse. Manufactured products from these countries were beginning to outcompete those of U.S. manufacturers in the U.S. domestic market, because the foreign imports were not only cheaper but often of better quality. Lack of competition in the global market had over time led to ossification of the U.S. industries, such as the automobile industry. The end result was that the manufacturing base began to shrink within the U.S., as manufacturers either closed factories or moved them overseas to low wage-high skilled areas in Asia and elsewhere, bringing in its wake a

recession and mass unemployment and discontent. Emblematic of the deep frustrations of the U.S. auto-industry workers was the horrifying hate-filled murder on June 19, 1982, of a Chinese American, Vincent Chen, in Detroit, Michigan, by two white autoworkers as they scapegoated him for the Japanese auto imports—they had stereotyped him as a person of Japanese ancestry. He was beaten to death with a baseball bat. Although the racist murderers were convicted of manslaughter, they never saw the inside of a jail; instead, they were put on a three-year probation and fined \$3000. Charles Kaufman, the judge, in a true spirit of standing up for whites, whatever their misdeeds, against the darkies would comment: “These weren’t the kind of men you send to jail.”³⁰ For more on this murder, see, for example, Wang (2017).

As for the economic shocks, there were two main ones, and both had to do with oil imports from the Middle East on which the U.S. economy was heavily dependent. From October 1973 to January 1974, an oil embargo was imposed by the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries on the U.S. in retaliation for the imperialist pro-Israeli U.S. foreign policy that greatly undermined Palestinian rights (the triggering event, in this particular instance, was emergency foreign aid for Israel in the wake of the October 1973 Yom Kippur War). The price of a barrel of oil would jump from \$2.90 to \$11.65, greatly raising the cost of doing business for the entire economy. Some five years later, another oil shock would buffet the economy, with the price of a barrel of oil catapulting from \$13 to \$34, but this time as a consequence of the imperialist U.S. foreign policy toward Iran that supported the rule of the brutal and corrupt Iranian dictator, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, but which would precipitate a revolution and Pahlavi’s overthrow. These two oil shocks were devastating for the U.S. economy; the stagflation continued unabated (symbolized by frustratingly interminable lines at the gas pumps because of gasoline shortages).

It is in response to the inability of Keynesianism to deal with stagflation that not only created great misery for the populace, but also drastically cut into the profits of corporate capital that an alternative economic policy was implemented to replace Keynesian economic policies (albeit not entirely). Hence, at long last, it was the turn of the Mont Pelerin people to have their day in the sun, and they came out with their own orthodoxy with a vengeance, a repackaging of neoclassical economics into what is known today as neoliberal economics (or neoliberal capitalism). And it still continues to hold sway, though the 2008-2009 Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic has forced the U.S. to bring back some Keynesian economic policies. (For more on Keynesianism, see Hall, 2020; Kelton, 2021; Sidelsky, 2016; and Wolff & Resnick, 2012.)

³⁰ Of course, anti-Asian American violence, always endemic throughout the history of their presence in the U.S. since centuries before, continues to the present day—vide the killings of Asian American women in Atlanta in March of 2021—as they continue to be scapegoated, increasingly this time for the COVID-19 pandemic (see, for example, Chang, 2021).

Forth analytical link: It would not be farfetched to suggest that the Keynesian economic policies of the 1950s and 1960s ought to be labeled the “Second New Deal” because it was accompanied in the 1960s by President Lyndon B. Johnson’s *Great Society* programs aimed at vanquishing both poverty and institutionalized racism (represented for instance by the *War on Poverty* programs and the landmark civil rights legislations of 1964, 1965, and 1968). Of course neither of these twin goals were fully achieved, in part due to his tragic, tragic, obsession with the Vietnam War that would, like the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan many years later, cost the U.S. much in blood and treasure (not to mention the horrifying murderous devastation wrought on the Vietnamese civilian population), and in part because he underestimated the limits imposed by capitalism as it had developed in the U.S.—taking the form of corporate monopoly capitalism. With the arrival of neoliberalism (especially after the election of the Republican Ronald Reagan as the 40th president in 1982), with the U.S. version being labeled, tellingly, “trickle-down economics,” or “Reaganomics,” a formidable assault would begin in the effort to turn the economic clock back and reestablish what the neoliberals insisted should be the fundamental goal of all government economic policies: to guarantee the limitless acquisition of wealth by the capitalist class, regardless of its human consequences, by way of *unbridled* capitalism—where the working classes are at the complete mercy of the capitalist class. However, this is not how they couched their agenda, for obvious reasons. Instead, they called on the age-old shibboleths of “democracy” and “individual freedom” arguing that neoliberalism was about protecting democracy and individual freedom, against the threat of socialism. The masses, sadly, bought the argument, forgetting that democracy in its true sense, as noted earlier, has two related halves: the *procedural* and the *authentic* (or substantive).

In terms of policy prescriptions, neoliberalism required governments in the U.S. and across the world to pursue neoliberal monetarism (devaluation of currencies, unrestrained convertibility of currencies, etc.) and neoclassical macroeconomic principles (elimination of trade barriers, privatization of state enterprises, free flow of investment capital, and so on). This package is sometimes referred to as the “Washington Consensus.” In essence, the strategy called for a drastic reduction of government participation in the economy and society, in consonance with the theme of the supremacy of market forces that underlay and unified these principles, and firmly eschewed any attention to the inequitable domestic and international social relations of production. The practical anti-dirigisme policies that ensued from this strategy included a wholesale move toward privatization of as many government functions as possible; devaluation of national currencies; elimination of barriers to currency convertibility; implementation of packages of deep austerity measures in an effort to balance national budgets; removal of government subsidies and price controls; removal of controls on trade and payments; shrinkage of the social safety net; and a reduction and rationalization of bureaucracies. (For more on neoliberalism, see Cahill & Konings, 2017; Toussaint, 2011; and Harvey, 2007.)

While it is true that some of these measures were certainly a step in the right direction, to deal with the stagflation, when the package is taken as whole it has been a prescription for disaster. Why? Because in practice it elevated corporate capital to the position, in effect, of sovereign with virtually no controls on its inherently predatory tendencies in the service of capitalist accumulation. The net consequence of this circumstance has been the rise of massive economic inequality within and between nations *unexplained by the normal processes of capitalist accumulation* (involving competition for markets and resources via innovations, and adherence to the rule of law) because as the power of corporate capital grew, it moved to surreptitiously but effectively dominate governments, big and small, in the global South and in the global North—referred to as “crony capitalism,” or “plutocratic political capture” or “political rigging”—based on a variety of “political” mechanisms aimed at undermining both procedural and authentic democracy; ranging from paying huge fees to consultants and lobbyists to funding conservative think tanks; from financing right-wing “grassroots” organizations to co-opting corporate media; from strengthening chambers of commerce to, in effect, “bribery” of politicians; from commandeering state legislative agendas in support of its own agenda to supporting the stacking of the U.S. Supreme Court with conservative pro-capital extremists; and from influencing elections through “dark money” to financing “influencers” in social media.

However, it gets even worse. While the mechanisms of political capture indicated here are for the most part legal/semi-legal, there is one that is outrightly illegal, and it is huge in terms of magnitude: reference here is to hiding wealth from the taxman by transferring it to tax havens offshore. It represents theft from the national treasuries annually by “politically exposed persons” (PEPs), that is members of ruling elites together with other public figures (ranging from religious leaders to entertainers) via devious mechanisms, a small glimpse of which emerges every now and then via leaks from whistle blowers—vide, for example: *Bahamas Leaks*, *Offshore Leaks*, *Panama Papers*, *Pandora Papers*, and *Paradise Papers*. They show that there exists out there a vast legal/quasi-legal/illegal shadow financial economy that protects the wealthy from not paying their fair share of taxes based on mechanisms such as “wealth-parking” in banks in countries with deep secrecy laws (e.g., Switzerland), or now more commonly, the construction of shell companies located offshore in places, such as Barbados, Britain, Cayman Islands, Ghana, Hong Kong, Luxembourg, Panama, Singapore, South Dakota (U.S.), Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, etc., where relevant laws and regulations are non-existent or lax with respect to these kinds of companies. (Not surprisingly, conventional criminals, such as drug cartels, also use these mechanisms to hide their loot.)

Additionally, there is this icing on the cake for the wealthy: populist and conservative governments underfunding their tax authorities so that they don’t have the resources to pursue these illegal complex financial machinations and/or enacting legislation that enhances secrecy for the tax-dodgers. As if this is all not enough, simultaneously, there also exists another shadow financial economy, albeit based on a

legalized form of corruption that involves capital, in effect, transferring profits to low-tax or no-tax jurisdictions by setting up domicile in tax havens (in places such as Ireland, Luxembourg, and the Cayman Islands). Added to this benefit, are the open legislatively enacted tax-cuts for capital and the wealthy, usually celebrated publicly, such as the one by Trump mentioned above.

When the wealthy do not fulfill their tax obligations, “legally” or illegally, in a society, which today when considered in aggregate amounts to billions upon billions of dollar (perhaps even reaching a trillion or more), while others among the masses do, then it is a form of “wealth transfer” from the masses to the wealthy; this not only unfairly deepens inequality, which has become a huge problem across the world, but the consequences of it can be devastating to a society. Expenditures on much-needed tax-financed amenities and services either do not take place at all or are short changed (they range from roads to school lunches; from pollution clean-up to natural disaster relief; from health care to college scholarships; from social security to low-cost housing; from unemployment insurance to nature conservation; from dealing with epidemics and pandemics to fire services; and so on). For low-income countries, the devastation of wealth transfers (legal or illegal) is especially consequential in negative terms for national development, which itself then translates into outcomes such as economic refugees desperately seeking undocumented emigration abroad to the wealthy countries—some of whom being the very ones that encourage/harbor wealth transfers. Needless to say, these wealth transfers to the wealthy, is yet another dimension of their class warfare on the masses, to which, tragically, supporters of populism, with guidance from demagogues, are blind *in their pursuit of scapegoats*.³¹

Fifth analytical link: Among the outcomes of crony capitalism has been capitalist accumulation on an unprecedented scale, involving the pursuit by corporate capital of almost every imaginable strategy, legal *and* illegal, to the detriment of the objective interests of the masses, as well as the biospheric health of the planet itself; here is a list of examples (not in any particular order):

- hiding profits in offshore bank accounts for purposes of tax-evasion;
- weakening or preventing the formation of trade unions;
- polluting life-sustaining environmental systems by avoiding costly but necessary pollution controls;
- forcing labor to accept stagnantly low wages relative to inflation;
- creating unemployment through widespread computerization of jobs;

³¹ For more on the subject of economic inequality, see, for example, Dimaggio (2021); Wilkinson & Pickett (2011); Part Four of Piketty, 2020, together with the commentary on Piketty by Paidipaty & Pinto, 2021; and the various reports produced by Oxfam.org. On the subject of plutocratic political capture, besides the reports at Oxfam.org, see the website of the *International Consortium of Investigative Journalists* (which provides an extensive exposé of the various leaks, e.g., *Pandora Papers*, mentioned above); together with Alston & Reisch (2019), Chayes (2015), Šumah (2018), Vogl (2021), and Wedel, Hussain, and Dolan, 2017; and on the subject of “dark money,” see Mayer, 2016, and various research reports available at the internet websites of the Center for Public Integrity, Open Secrets, and the Sunlight Foundation.

- lobbying for ever-increasing budgetary allocations to the military industrial complex;
- strongarming economically weak countries for massive tax-breaks, thereby avoiding taxes in the U.S. by parking their profits overseas;
- championing cutbacks in social expenditures that benefit the citizenry;
- lobbying for huge tax-cuts for itself (almost always successful);
- exporting jobs to super-exploited labor markets overseas;
- championing the privatization of traditional government functions to the detriment of the public interest;
- continuing to engage in primitive accumulation by using *slave labor* in its supply chains;
- supporting the dispossession of indigenous peoples in order to steal their resources;
- championing deregulation as a matter of ideology, to the detriment of the public interest, in order to maximize profits;
- resisting curbs on its emissions of greenhouse gases that lead to climate change;
- providing lucrative but unethical logistical support to the prison industrial complex (as well as profiting directly from ownership of parts of it);
- providing lucrative but unlawful logistical support to the narco-military-industrial complex;
- benefitting politically from algorithm-driven conspiracies in the social media, while simultaneously reaping huge profits from the platforms that host it;
- lobbying for the grotesque distortion of national budgetary priorities in order to feed a bloated military industrial complex that it dominates;
- championing the exploitation of federally protected lands regardless of the long-term consequences for the environment, as well as the health and leisure needs of the citizenry.

However, this is not all; in the U.S., among these strategies of capitalist accumulation that corporate capital, specifically finance capital in this instance, pursued was to manipulate the home mortgage loan sector—especially the *predatory* lending subsector that traditionally targeted the poor, many being people of color—in complex ways that would allow it to reap huge profits; it would be greed gone berserk, so much so that eventually the weight of this greed would be so great that it would lead to the collapse of this sector by way of the 2007-2009 *Great Recession*. The consequences of the Great Recession for many ordinary people in the U.S., and around the world, were absolutely tragic; thousands upon thousands lost their homes, and millions upon millions lost their jobs. Yet, very few representatives of finance capital went to jail for the terrible misery and pauperization they had caused. (For more on the Great Recession, see Ferguson, 2010; McKay, 2015; Ritholtz, 2010; and Stiglitz, 2010.)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It is against the background of the foregoing, which in effect represents class warfare on the working classes (of all colors, albeit differentially in impact) on a huge scale by corporate capital, right up to the present, that one must see the rise of right-wing populism riding on the back of racialized demagoguery in the U.S. and in Europe; while elsewhere in the world it would be ethnicism, and even class, serving as the basis for the demagoguery. Whether the deep and unconscionable economic inequality—usually accompanied by poverty and the degradation of the general *quality of life*—created by neoliberal capitalism has been absolute (as has been the case in many other parts of the world) or relative as has been the case, for the most part, in Western countries, the discontent of the affected masses has been channeled toward the scapegoating of the Other (racial, ethnic, or otherwise); thereby serving as a strategy of getting the masses to objectify their subjective interests (race) and subjectify their objective interests (amelioration of inequality; an improvement in the general quality of life; etc.). In fact, behind every self-serving right-wing ideologue, such as Trump, Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller, has been dark money funneled by sections of the capitalist class; yet the beneficiaries have been the entire capitalist class—vide Trump’s fanatical neoliberalism as exemplified, for example, by huge tax cuts for the wealthy; his reckless deregulations; and his assaults on the environment; they have all served to further enrich the capitalist class tremendously at the expense of the masses. Here is a counter thought: imagine that the Occupy Wall Street movement that had sought to bring accountability to capital and the rollback of neoliberalism had succeeded. Trumpism may not have arisen to the heights that it has.³²

Under conditions of capitalism-induced scarcity of resources, the universalization of the fake ideology of meritocracy (that is, the American Dream), the historically-rooted abiding belief in the supremacy of whiteness among the white masses (see, for example, Belew & Gutiérrez, 2021, and Delgado & Stefancic, 2013), and a long history of the sub-humanization of people of color from the moment the first colonial settlers set foot in the Americas, what has developed is a zero-sum mentality among the white masses where any calls for equity for all the citizenry to access to societal resources is interpreted as a gain for people of color at the expense of whites that must be resisted at all costs. Hence, the Trump slogan of “Make America Great Again” or “Build the Wall” represented for the white masses a clarion call to arms—figuratively, and in the case of his ultra-rightwing supporters (groups like the Neo-Nazis) literally—in support of this resistance. Yet, ultimately, the beneficiaries of this kind of thinking among significantly large sections of the white masses has been the ruling classes who have literally laughed all the way to the bank in the wake of neoliberal policies of unbridled capitalism that a

³² On dark money, see Green (2018) and Mayer (2016); on Bannon’s neofascist agenda, see Teitelbaum (2020); on Trump’s pro-capital anti-working class deregulatory activity during his presidency, see the interactive database maintained by the Brookings Institution (2021); and on Occupy Wall Street, see Gitlin (2012).

distracted populace—regardless of their color—has made possible, most especially over the past several decades since the so-called Reagan Revolution.

Yet, the fact that even in the post-Civil Rights era Trump has been able to turn to institutional racism to power his demagoguery, vindicates the theoretical proposition of Omi and Winant (2015) that racism in the U.S. exists separately from class—referring to this phenomenon as “racial formation”—and that it is reincarnated by way of “racial projects;” such as, in this instance, the project of racializing right-wing populism via Trumpian demagoguery. What this also suggests is that institutionalized racism in the U.S. is permanent; given its usefulness for capitalist accumulation (both politically and economically). However, relief from racism is always available for the select few through chance but only at the level *interpersonal* relations. After all, one must be reminded here that a non-racial capitalist society would not be bereft of oppression. In such a society, the only difference (albeit an important one in terms of the lives of many today) would be that wealth *and* poverty would be distributed proportionally across the different racial groups.

To conclude, the fundamental *underlying* premise or subtext of this chapter has been two-fold: First, that while it may be true that humans are the only species that have the genetically-determined capacity for evil (to be understood here in a nonreligious sense), it is also true that the modality of the reproduction of their species, with its demand for altruism and community (loosely understood), indicates that human beings are *sufficiently* altruistic, intelligent, and rational to preclude *systemic* ideologically-based societal oppression *solely for the sake of oppression*. In other words, at the root of all forms of systemic oppression (classism, disablism, ethnicism, racism, sexism, etc.) is *exploitation* for purposes that range from maximizing profits to scapegoating for political purposes to empire-building. Second, that while the human penchant for simplicity may impose an individualistic-oriented reading of societies, the fact remains that major currents and movements in societies are never the product of the ambitions of a single individual.

However, a subtextual question that has not been discussed in this chapter is *why* do so many succumb to demagoguery when it is not in their *objective* interest to do so? As Johansen in his introduction to their book, Johansen and Akande (2021, p. viii) reminds us, Trump “had a Twitter constituency that of up to 88 million people, a twenty-first century bully pulpit to use as a lure for his version of alternative reality, a nearly truth-free stream of toxic trash talk, tweets without end, dumped uninvited on anyone who disagreed with him on any subject at any time.” (See also Kyle & Gultchin, 2018.) Space only permits this short response: the mindless self-defeating fealty by millions to a fabulist like Trump—including, stunningly, by many from the very groups who have been the target of Trump’s racialized demagoguery—is a warning to those, such as the *bourgeois left*, who tend to romanticize the working classes, that the vulnerability of the working classes to demagogues must not be underestimated. The *objective circumstances* of the working classes (which, most ironically, is posited as the very source of their revolutionary potential by the left—as in the words of the 1848 Communist Manifesto: “the proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains”) leaves them with little or no time

for self-education, critical thinking, research, contemplation, etc. that can lead to an abiding political consciousness—or “wokeness” to use a word from the common street parlance of the young in the black community. At the same time, the absence of strong trade unions with respect to most U.S. workers today that can help instill/raise their political consciousness does not help matters either, nor does the relentlessly misleading demagogic political propaganda put out by right-wing think tanks and the media owned or funded by capital.

There is another question too that has not been discussed: What of the future? Again, the tyranny of the word-limit allows only this conjecture: First, the answer to this question requires uncoupling neoliberalism from institutional racism and then addressing each separately. At some point, demagoguery notwithstanding, disillusionment with right-wing populism in failing to deliver the goods, so to speak, by means of its neoliberal policies, *may* build up to such a level as to convince a politically significant number among the masses that the emperor has truly no clothes, thereby convincing them to jettison the populism and opt for rationality by voting for the other party (one is reminded here, of the fate of McCarthyism). A hint of this circumstance—just a hint—was provided by the 2020 electoral victory (albeit a slim one) of the Biden/Harris presidential ticket. However, even here, pessimism must outweigh optimism in the face of a renewed and concerted effort at various deeply troubling mechanisms of voter suppression, potentially of considerable longevity, being legislated by Republican controlled states all over the U.S., in the face of a nonchalant (for all practical purposes), Democratic Party—currently led as it is by the perennial wishy-washy liberal (the president, Joe Biden).³³

As for institutional racism, here one must sadly concede its permanence, given its critically important functions for U.S. capitalism (neoliberal or otherwise). Yes, of course, capitalism does not create racial or ethnic differences, however, where it finds them, it will exploit them; given that racism/ethnicism has proven to be a winning proxy, over the centuries, for both class struggle and class warfare in favor of the capitalist class. This was true during the heyday of European imperialism (in the eras of both mercantile capitalism and industrial capitalism), and it is true today. Under the circumstances, the best that one can hope for is its substantive amelioration (compare the Jim Crow era with the post-civil Rights era) brought about by a proper alignment of the stars: meaning, the same *racially sensitive* political party in power with politically significant majorities across both chambers of Congress, and in the White House, coupled with the presence of an ideologically amenable U.S. Supreme Court—something, sadly, that is not in the offing any time soon.

³³ For more on this insidious and greatly ominous turn in U.S. politics in recent years, see Anderson (2020), Daniels (2020), and Goldstone (2020), together with the various research reports at the internet websites of, for example, American Civil Liberties Union, Brennan Center for Justice, Center for American Progress, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and the Voting Rights Alliance.

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