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DISAGREEMENT AND RESENTMENT IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POLITICS

Stuart Chinn*

KATHERINE J. CRAMER, *THE POLITICS OF RESENTMENT: RURAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN WISCONSIN AND THE RISE OF SCOTT WALKER* (UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS 2016). Pp. 256. HARDCOVER \$90.00. PAPERBACK \$30.00.

ARLIE RUSSELL HOCHSCHILD, *STRANGERS IN THEIR OWN LAND: ANGER AND MOURNING ON THE AMERICAN RIGHT* (NEW PRESS 2016). Pp. 368. HARDCOVER \$27.95.

The influence of presidential elections in shaping constitutional doctrine through the judicial appointments mechanism has long been noted among scholars.¹ In the present-day context of gridlocked federal governance, where major policy shifts at the federal level seem most plausible in the courts, the relationship between presidential politics and constitutional law has only become more prominent among scholars and ordinary citizens. Hence in the 2016 election, there was continued emphasis from public commentators on the significance of a Trump or Clinton win for filling the seat held by the deceased Justice Scalia, with major probable consequences for a range of key constitutional questions including affirmative action, voting rights, and abortion rights.²

We are past the election, of course, and Trump's win with the conspicuous help of white working-class voters, specifically, has drawn the sustained attention of many public commentators toward this key constituency.³ Very much in this vein are two excellent and

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1. See, e.g., Robert A. Dahl, *Decision-Making in a Democracy: The Supreme Court as a National Policy-Maker*, 6 J. PUB. L. 279, 285 (1957); Bruce A. Ackerman, *Transformative Appointments*, 101 HARV. L. REV. 1164, 1165 (1988); Jack M. Balkin & Sanford Levinson, *Understanding the Constitutional Revolution*, 87 VA. L. REV. 1045, 1064–66 (2001).

2. See, e.g., Russell Berman, *Why the Supreme Court Matters More to Republicans than Trump*, THE ATLANTIC (Oct. 14, 2016), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/10/why-the-supreme-court-matters-more-to-republicans-than-trump/504038>; Richard Wolf, *Supreme Court Debate: Stark Contrasts Emerge Between Trump, Clinton*, USA TODAY (Oct. 20, 2016), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2016/10/20/supreme-court-debate-clinton-trump-guns-abortion/92452362>.

3. See, e.g., *The White Working Class*, AM. PROSPECT (June 1, 2017), <http://prospect.org/article/white-working-class>. The editors published a set of thirteen articles touching on this topic in *American Prospect: The White Working Class and the Democrats*, AM. PROSPECT, <http://prospect.org/white-working-class> (last visited Dec. 29, 2017).

extraordinarily timely books that offer an illuminating window into some of the perspectives of these voters. Precisely because of their influence in electing Trump, and in capturing the attention of Republican Party leaders, the perspectives of white working-class voters could very well come to shape constitutional doctrine for years to come through the vessel of federal judges appointed by a Republican president. Or alternatively, these perspectives may end up prompting effective responses from Democratic-progressive politicians that may, in contrast, propel Democratic presidential victories and facilitate different changes in constitutional doctrine. Whether one is inclined to find common ground with these white working-class voters as electoral partners, or whether one is inclined to find ways to defeat or neutralize this constituency, one is well served to understand and perhaps even empathize with their perspectives. Indeed, that goal of finding empathy and common ground between progressives and white working-class Republican voters is the thrust of the two books I review here: Katherine Cramer's *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker* and Arlie Russell Hochschild's *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*.

Below, I first offer brief summaries of both books, and attempt to highlight some points of convergence between them along the way. Once I have briefly outlined the key arguments of both, I focus in the second portion of this review on a discussion of some of the questions and potential problems prompted by these works. Most significantly, I offer some qualms about the underlying normative motivation of both authors to uncover a broad and robust commonality between their (likely) progressive readers on the one hand, and rural voters and Tea Party supporters on the other. While such a goal is laudable, I am skeptical of the viability of this as a potential strategy for progressives to deploy in managing the influence of this voting bloc in the future. Instead, I offer some discussion of the virtues of locating commonality between progressives and white working-class voters within their shared grievances against a third party: the economically privileged.

In Cramer's *The Politics of Resentment*, she opens and closes the book with a concern about political polarization and political conflict in modern-day America.⁴ But more precisely, much of her focus is on the substantive terms of that polarization. In particular, Cramer wonders why in this context, where there is so little overlap and common ground between partisan voters, so many working-class voters seemingly vote against their "interests" in supporting a Republican Party whose positions are so favorable to the wealthy.⁵ Or stated otherwise, why are there not more of these working-class and middle-class voters supporting the Democratic Party? Cramer employs an interview-based methodology in engaging with various constituencies in her native Wisconsin to get at this question⁶—a fertile context for interrogating this matter since, as she states, Wisconsin has been a key partisan swing-state since 2000.⁷ Further, the significance of Wisconsin

4. KATHERINE J. CRAMER, *THE POLITICS OF RESENTMENT: RURAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN WISCONSIN AND THE RISE OF SCOTT WALKER* 2, 210–11 (2016).

5. *Id.* at 4–5.

6. *Id.* at 3, 20.

7. *Id.* at 10.

was reaffirmed emphatically as a key win for Trump in the Midwest in the 2016 election.⁸ Her primary findings center on the existence of a rural-urban divide as perceived by many Wisconsin residents.⁹ Indeed, for many of the rural Wisconsin residents she interviewed, this divide is so powerful that their rootedness on the rural side of it is, she asserts, centrally constitutive of their individual identity.¹⁰

The key concept Cramer introduces in the book is “rural consciousness”—a term meant to encompass this facet of identity for many of her interviewees. Cramer succinctly states that rural consciousness “is a perspective rooted in place and class identities that convey a strong sense of distributive injustice.”¹¹ Precisely because we intuit or assume the centrality of economic class and race for constituting individual identity in modern-day America, Cramer is keen to emphasize the significance of a place-based component to individual identity, and the significance of place in shaping political positions.¹²

Having introduced the concept of rural consciousness, what then does it encompass? Foremost perhaps in Cramer’s account is a sense of unfairness and resentment among the rurally conscious.¹³ That is, her interviewees share a strong and pervasive sense that rural areas are being treated unfairly or dismissively by urbanites—whether the matter may be on comparative public spending between urban and rural areas;¹⁴ or the preparedness of rural children for academic competition as students at the University of Wisconsin;¹⁵ or whether urbanites have a basic consideration for the economic welfare of rural residents;¹⁶ or whether urbanites have respect for rural values.¹⁷ It is from this sense of unfairness and disregard that rural consciousness encompasses a sense of resentment, or a sense of blame toward others for the hardships and shortcomings that come with being a rural resident. Foremost among the targets of this resentment are urbanites, of course.¹⁸ But also prominent targets in this regard are public employees, who are seen as representative of urban values and/or as unfairly privileged by virtue of excessively generous salaries funded by taxpayers.¹⁹ As Cramer notes in discussing university professors in this regard:

When people expressed animosity toward “university types,” part of that was an aversion to elitism But part of it was an aversion to laziness and a sense that university types did not work hard for a living. Those talking through a rural consciousness lens saw professors as part of that broad class of urbanites who sit behind a desk all day. And they hardly appear in the classroom. (“They have

8. See, e.g., Nate Cohn, *How the Obama Coalition Crumbled, Leaving an Opening for Trump*, N.Y. TIMES (Dec. 23, 2016), <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/23/upshot/how-the-obama-coalition-crumbled-leaving-an-opening-for-trump.html>.

9. CRAMER, *supra* note 4.

10. *Id.* at 5–7.

11. *Id.* at 209.

12. *Id.* at 5–7, 12, 217.

13. *Id.* at 5–6, 9.

14. CRAMER, *supra* note 4, at 5, 60, 77, 79, 83.

15. *Id.* at 116.

16. *Id.* at 62–63, 65, 70, 81–82.

17. *Id.* at 5–6, 12.

18. *Id.* at 6, 51.

19. CRAMER, *supra* note 4, at 6, 131, 135–36, 137–38, 143, 178–79.

teaching assistants, after all.”) They “have the summer off.”²⁰

Further, the salaries of public employees may be especially conspicuous in rural areas where they stand out relatively well compared to private sector employment.²¹

From these puzzle pieces, Cramer is then able to explain or illuminate several facets of contemporary politics. For example, to return to the initial question of why working and middle-class Republican voters are not voting their economic interests, Cramer would reject any purported explanations—at least with respect to rural Wisconsin voters within that demographic—that boiled down to the view that they were largely ignoring their economic interests. To the contrary, she claims that they are considering their economic interests, but only as those interests are filtered through the lens of rural resentment toward urbanites and public employees.²² As she states,

People *are* taking economics into account. But these considerations are not raw objective facts. Instead, they are perceptions of who is getting what and who deserves it, and these notions are affected by perceptions of cultural and lifestyle differences. That is, in a politics of resentment, people intertwine economic considerations with social and cultural considerations in the interpretations of the world they make with one another.²³

For these individuals, they are voting their economic interests when they oppose governmental activism or greater taxes or greater public spending when they perceive those actions as generally benefitting areas and constituencies that are separate from, in competition with, or hostile to a rural way of life.²⁴ Meanwhile, for those economic interests that we think working and middle-class voters should care about—like structural economic inequalities hampering their upward economic mobility, or generous tax advantages for the super-wealthy—these issues are ignored or bypassed by these rural voters because there is no easy lens to view them from a rural consciousness perspective.²⁵

Thus we can see how the rural perspective links to a small government perspective that is more rural-resentment based rather than libertarian-based.²⁶ And as Cramer asserts, these sentiments can easily be linked to Scott Walker’s rise to the governorship of Wisconsin.²⁷ Likewise it is not hard to see the relevance of a rural consciousness perspective in understanding the outcome of the 2016 presidential election as well.

Hochschild’s *Strangers in Their Own Land* begins with a concern very similar to Cramer’s: she is also troubled by the polarized nature of present-day American politics.²⁸ And like Cramer, she is deeply puzzled why working and middle-class individuals who align with the Tea Party—individuals who would stand to benefit greatly from certain

20. *Id.* at 131.

21. *Id.* at 133.

22. *Id.* at 209–10.

23. *Id.* at 7.

24. CRAMER, *supra* note 4, at 146, 148, 160, 162, 164, 165.

25. *Id.* at 24, 173.

26. *Id.* at 145–46, 154.

27. *Id.* at 207, 214.

28. ARLIE RUSSELL HOCHSCHILD, *STRANGERS IN THEIR OWN LAND: ANGER AND MOURNING ON THE AMERICAN RIGHT*, at ix, 6–8 (2016).

forms of federal governmental activism—might hold views so hostile to the federal government.²⁹ This question, which Hochschild labels the “Great Paradox,” is the driving question of the book.³⁰ Like Cramer, Hochschild utilizes an interview-based approach.³¹ Her study focuses on Louisiana Tea Party supporters, and emphasizes one particular policy domain: environmental regulation. Both parameters of her study are explained in the book. Hochschild’s focus on environmental regulation is driven by the recognition that federal governmental inaction in this policy domain would seemingly impact voters of all economic classes to some degree. And if working and middle-class Tea Party voters constitute a paradox in their general opposition to federal governmental action, the opposition of these and more affluent voters to governmental regulation in the environmental domain, specifically, would seem to pose an especially acute form of the paradox: environmental degradation from corporate misbehavior would generate all sorts of costs and individual harms that would be inescapable for many of these same individuals.³² Likewise, her focus on Louisiana may be explained by that state’s deep political conservatism, and its equally deep environmental problems due to the under-regulation of industry.³³

Hochschild is motivated to peer into the lives and emotions of these Tea Party supporters so that progressives—like herself—might be able to empathize with them and find areas of commonality with them.³⁴ What does she uncover? Much like Cramer’s focus on rural consciousness, Hochschild identifies her key task to be uncovering and articulating what she calls the “deep story” of these individuals:

A deep story is a *feels-as-if* story—it’s the story feelings tell, in the language of symbols. It removes judgment. It removes fact. It tells us how things feel. Such a story permits those on both sides of the political spectrum to stand back and explore the *subjective prism* through which the party on the other side sees the world. And I don’t believe we understand anyone’s politics, right or left, without it. For we all have a deep story.³⁵

The deep story of these Tea Party supporters sees these individuals as hard-working Americans who have played by the rules their entire lives, and who expect, as a consequence of this, to ultimately reach the American Dream. Their failure to do so in an ever-more competitive economy, however, is due to the actions of a federal government that is willing to instead support “undeserving” constituencies. In short, these individuals believe that the race to achieve the American Dream is unfair, and the prime culprit is the federal government.

Across some of the most powerful pages of the book, Hochschild articulates this story as follows:

You are patiently standing in a long line leading up a hill, as in a pilgrimage.

29. *Id.* at 8–10.

30. *Id.* at 8.

31. *Id.* at 16–18.

32. *Id.* at 11, 21.

33. HOCHSCHILD, *supra* note 28, at 12, 63–64.

34. *Id.* at ix, 5, 8, 15–16, 232–33.

35. *Id.* at 135.

You are situated in the middle of this line, along with others who are also white, older, Christian, and predominately male, some with college degrees, some not.

Just over the brow of the hill is the American Dream, the goal of everyone waiting in line. Many in the back of the line are people of color—poor, young and old, mainly without college degrees. It's scary to look back; there are so many behind you, and in principle you wish them well. Still, you've waited a long time, worked hard, and the line is barely moving. You deserve to move forward a little faster. You're patient but weary. You focus ahead, especially on those at the very top of the hill.

The sun is hot and the line unmoving. In fact, is it moving backward? You haven't gotten a raise in years, and there is no talk of one.

Look! You see people cutting in line ahead of you! You're following the rules. They aren't. As they cut in, it feels like you are being moved back. How can they just do that? Who are they? Some are black. Through affirmative action plans, pushed by the federal government, they are being given preference for places in colleges and universities, apprenticeships, jobs, welfare payments, and free lunches. Women, immigrants, refugees, public sector workers—where will it end? Your money is being run through a liberal sympathy sieve you don't control or agree with. It's not fair.³⁶

In other words, Hochschild has uncovered a deep story for Tea Partiers characterized by a form of resentment politics with predominately older, white men feeling unfairly disadvantaged by line-cutters and an ill-motivated federal government.³⁷ Hence, by way of making sense of the Great Paradox, Hochschild tells us that among these individuals, items like identity and status sometimes overshadow basic economic calculations—and certainly questions of environmental protection.³⁸ As a result, Tea Partiers react against a Democratic Party that does not value the cultural norms they value; further, Tea Partiers resent the sense that they should instead align with and honor the norms that progressive Democrats endorse.³⁹

Hochschild thus emphasizes that because of the fixation of Tea Partiers on these particular fault-lines, they are, in a sense, blind or incapable of conceptualizing the harms they suffer from environmental under-regulation. They lack the ability—or even a basic language—that would allow them to recognize their own victimhood.⁴⁰ And given corporate strategies to locate industrial plants in precisely these localities where anti-federal governmental sentiment runs high, these individuals are truly unfortunate in the sense that they are shouldering the burdens of toxic industrial activity for the benefit of the rest of the nation.⁴¹ As Hochschild notes of one of her interviewees:

Like nearly everyone I spoke with, Donny was not one to think of himself as a victim. That was the language of the “poor me’s” asking for government handouts.

36. *Id.* at 136–37. *See id.* at 136–45.

37. *Id.* at 35, 61, 114.

38. HOCHSCHILD, *supra* note 28, at 47–48, 144, 228.

39. *Id.* at 23, 128, 146, 162, 227.

40. *Id.* at 131, 150–51, 190–91, 200, 232.

41. *Id.* at 81, 97.

The very word “victim” didn’t sit right. In fact, they were critical of liberal-sounding talk of victimhood. But I began to wonder whether the white, older conservatives in southwest Louisiana . . . were not themselves victims. They were braving the worst of an industrial system, the fruits of which liberals enjoyed from a distance in their highly regulated and cleaner blue states.⁴²

Their response is to instead focus their anger on others who seemed to be undermining the status of especially older, white men.⁴³ To the extent that hard realities may eventually seep into their lives in the form of polluted air or a polluted landscape—especially for those that enjoy hunting or other outdoor recreational activities—this cognitive dissonance is managed by various forms of what Hochschild labels “endurance”: “Word from the Lake Charles pulpits seemed to focus more on a person’s *moral strength to endure* than on the will to change the circumstances that called on that strength.”⁴⁴

So what is to be done here? Hochschild is hopeful that a mutual understanding of the deep stories of Tea Party supporters and progressives may facilitate a common empathy, and perhaps some greater rationality in partisan alignments with respect to economic and environmental questions. As she notes near the end of the book,

left and right need one another, just as the blue coastal and inland cities need red state energy and rich community. The rural Midwest and South need the cosmopolitan outreach to a diverse wider world. . . . The focus in this book on the keyhole issue—environmental regulation—is a keen reminder of the great importance to us all of what, beyond deep stories and politics, is at stake.⁴⁵

As already noted above, there are some obvious points of convergence between these two books. Both employ an interview-based methodology, focusing on related constituencies in American society. Both authors have an interesting writing style that has autobiographical tones, with both offering short stretches of narrative throughout explaining their engagement with their interviewees and/or their intellectual journey through the major questions in their respective books.⁴⁶ And both engage in what Cramer calls a “constitutive analysis”⁴⁷ in trying to explain the nature of a worldview of some constituency of Americans. In reading these books, I was reminded of a similar comment by Richard Hofstadter in 1964 in his introduction to *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* that “an understanding of political styles and of the symbolic aspect of politics is a valuable way of locating ourselves and others in relation to public issues.”⁴⁸

Beyond thinking that this method of analysis is inherently valuable and necessary to understanding our political and social world, the narratives told by Cramer and Hochschild are also quite convincing. Both offer incredibly rich portraits of the feelings and perceptions of the constituencies they examine, and both rightly emphasize the point that status and ideological values can and will trump basic economic considerations. Indeed, to think otherwise would be dismissive of the interpretive frames—only some of which

42. *Id.* at 190–91.

43. HOCHSCHILD, *supra* note 28, at 145, 212, 215–18.

44. *Id.* at 124, 155, 163, 166.

45. *Id.* at 233.

46. *See id.* at 78–79; CRAMER, *supra* note 4, at 84, 111–13, 131–32.

47. CRAMER, *supra* note 4, at 21, 22.

48. RICHARD HOFSTADTER, *THE PARANOID STYLE IN AMERICAN POLITICS*, at xxxii (1964).

are purely oriented to cost-benefit calculations—that we all use in perceiving and reacting to the world around us. Because the constituencies they examine remain politically influential, both also offer an especially valuable tool to examine pressing questions in contemporary American politics.

Finally, both books—but Hochschild’s book especially—open a window into the particular obstacles that members of the white, working and middle-class will face in future political conflicts: while they may not necessarily be the most disadvantaged participants in our political system, many are disadvantaged. However, their inability to conceptualize that disadvantage in a way that connects to the more accurate causes for their condition—like structural economic forces or the influence of the super-wealthy—is going to remain a formidable obstacle to their ability to contribute to effective reform, and to find the correct coalition partners for reform. Indeed, the blind spots of many within this social group seem profound. As Hochschild memorably recounts in her book: one of her interviewees attempted to engage his fellow Tea Party supporters on the idea of forcing oil companies to pay for canal and shore repairs that might help offer flood protection. The oil companies were themselves contractually bound to shoulder the cost of these repairs, but state legislators were attempting to shield them from this cost and to shift the burden to state taxpayers. Hochschild’s interviewee (a Tea Party supporter whose house had been rendered dangerously uninhabitable by the environmental effects of corporate misbehavior) thought he had a chance to press against this action by the state in the name of a core Tea Party principle: lower taxes for ordinary citizens.⁴⁹ But as Hochschild notes: “[When] presented with the idea, the Tea Party faces went blank. The environment? That was a liberal cause.”⁵⁰

Still, certain questions do arise from the rich portraits of Americans developed by Cramer and Hochschild. The first concerns race. Both authors recognize that race intersects with the larger narratives they are seeking to tell about white Americans in contemporary American politics. Cramer, for example, acknowledges that the rural consciousness she uncovers among Wisconsin residents implicates matters of race.⁵¹ And yet, she resists reducing rural consciousness to simply being about race, and notes in part that the target of complaints by rural-identifying Wisconsin residents were “almost always directed at white people: government bureaucrats and faculty members at the flagship public university.”⁵² Similarly, Hochschild recognizes the centrality of race and racism to the deep story of Tea Partiers—with racial minorities, and Barack Obama in particular, serving as one of the foils to the hard-working but unfairly disadvantaged older, white male.⁵³ And yet, Hochschild also at least implies that the deep story of Tea Partiers is not solely a story about race, if only because other targets for their condemnation exist in the form of social groups such as feminists, environmentalists, government bureaucrats, coastal elites, and immigrants (though this last category might be seen as strongly

49. HOCHSCHILD, *supra* note 28, at 99–102, 104–07, 194.

50. *Id.* at 200.

51. CRAMER, *supra* note 4, at 14.

52. *Id.* at 86. *See also id.* at 85–87, 165–66.

53. HOCHSCHILD, *supra* note 28, at 136–37, 139–40, 146–47.

overlapping with race).⁵⁴

As far as it goes, this explanation seems correct: rural consciousness and the Tea Party deep story implicate race (perhaps more so in the latter case) but are not consumed by it. Still, this partial relationship to race remains underdeveloped in both accounts. Do the origins of rural consciousness and the Tea Party deep story implicate race in a deeper way? Are there certain issues where racial minorities are especially likely to be the primary targets of political resentments? Are there certain mechanisms which more reliably trigger racial considerations for these constituencies, or which reliably subdue racial themes? There are hints of answers to some of these questions in the two books, but neither fully fleshes out answers in a systematic way. Admittedly, the questions that I pose are larger questions that lie outside the scope of both works, but they do seem important ones that are prompted by the findings of both Cramer and Hochschild.

My second and more substantive question is prompted by the motivating goal of both authors to find a deep empathy between progressives and these disenfranchised constituencies of white working and middle-class voters. Again, the hope—laudably enough—of both authors is that some common understanding may be found so that the partisan alignments in contemporary politics may align in more economically-rational ways.⁵⁵

I confess that I am skeptical of this goal. One takeaway, more implicit in Cramer perhaps, but more explicit in Hochschild, is that the resentment of the rurally conscious and Tea Partiers may indeed fundamentally lie in a reshuffling of social status since the 1960s. Seen through this lens, status is a finite good, and the status gains enjoyed by racial minorities, women, and gay individuals in recent decades has meant that the status privileges that historically came with being white, and especially a white man, have been reduced.⁵⁶ If a decline in relative status is really the driver behind the energies of the rurally conscious and Tea Partiers, could one realistically hope that some common empathy might emerge between these groups and the very social groups they perceive to have displaced them? Can we be confident that even in a world with more robust growth in income for the working and middle-class that such things would happen? To the extent that one is convinced by arguments about how status is driven less by absolute economic conditions and more by economic conditions relative to a reference group,⁵⁷ one would be pessimistic.

Does that mean that we are necessarily condemned to the partisan alignments of the present-day with these white working and middle-class voters destined to support the political party of the rich in significant numbers? On this, I share the aspiration of Cramer and Hochschild, but perhaps for a slightly different reason.

In the same way status may often be defined in a relative sense, feelings of cohesion and commonality should also be understood as a matter of relative inclusion and

54. *Id.* at 139, 144–45, 147–48.

55. CRAMER, *supra* note 4, at 224–25; HOCHSCHILD, *supra* note 28, at 233.

56. HOCHSCHILD, *supra* note 28, at 137–45.

57. ROBERT H. FRANK, CHOOSING THE RIGHT POND: HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE QUEST FOR STATUS 5–8, 106–07 (1985).

exclusion.⁵⁸ Seen from this perspective, it is not necessary that progressives and rural voters/Tea Partiers connect in some meaningful way in order to reorient present-day party alignments. Rather, all that may be needed is the creation of a convincing narrative from one of the political parties—more likely the Democrats—that these constituencies have more in common with each other relative to some other more distant constituency like the economically privileged. That is, perhaps a more fruitful way to draw out commonality amongst the former is to emphasize the common dissimilarity or grievances they share in relation to another constituency.

Of course, this is not breaking news to present-day Democrats. Themes of Wall Street excess and income inequality have taken hold of an increasingly vocal and significant wing of the Democratic Party since the 2016 presidential campaigns. The strategy of targeting economic elites to fashion a broad coalition of the middle and working-class for partisan advantage may rightfully be seen, at present, as a strategy that is easier said than done.

Still, consider two examples from our history that suggest, if nothing else, the plausibility of this strategy. From the Jacksonian Democrats, historians have long emphasized that coalition's focus, in part, on the pernicious effects of a "moneyed power" acting against agrarians and laborers—an especially prominent theme in the context of Jackson's conflict with the Bank of the United States.⁵⁹ Similarly, in the run-up to FDR's landslide victory in the presidential election of 1936, he famously singled out "economic royalists" for critique while pressing the Democratic Party toward becoming a newer, more liberal, and more urban Party.⁶⁰ Again, at least part of what bound these disparate, and very successful, electoral coalitions together was a focus on their common dissatisfaction with a perceived elite—namely, a focus on economic elites.

At present, Republicans have crafted a coalition together from disparate parts by successfully utilizing a populist-inspired narrative fixated on a shared dissatisfaction with a "cultural" elite. This is a point implicit in Hochschild's book.⁶¹ For a progressive-leaning party to overcome or overshadow this narrative, the chore will be to fashion a narrative that will shine the spotlight on an equally appealing target: the economically privileged. The question is, can progressives fashion a narrative that is capable of superseding this focus on cultural elitism for white working and middle-class Republican voters, *and* that can still hold the loyalty of core progressive voters? Only time will tell.

58. See Stuart Chinn, *Trump and Chinese Exclusion: Contemporary Parallels with Legislative Debates over the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882*, 84 TENN. L. REV. 681 (2017).

59. DANIEL WALKER HOWE, *WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT: THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICA, 1815–1848*, at 501 (2007); SEAN WILENTZ, *THE RISE OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY* 369–70 (2005).

60. WILLIAM E. LEUCHTENBURG, *FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT AND THE NEW DEAL: 1932–1940*, at 183–84, 195 (1963); 3 ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR., *THE AGE OF ROOSEVELT: THE POLITICS OF UPHEAVAL* 584 (1960).

61. See HOCHSCHILD, *supra* note 28, at 23, 128, 146, 162, 227.