



# Changing Tides of Democrats and the Rise of Nationalism on the Right

# What's a Democrat?

Heavily Democratic areas include, for instance, white, wealthy, liberal Santa Monica in California—a land of electric scooters, poké restaurants and dogs with their own Instagram pages—and the more socially conservative, African-American heart of the Mississippi delta, one of the most concentrated areas of rural poverty in the country. Native American reservations lean Democratic, as do Hispanics in rural California, middle-class black professionals in suburban Atlanta and white college professors in Iowa. No single place can capture this variety. It is a good thing that the Democratic Party appeals to such a diverse bunch; it also makes it considerably harder to define who or what the party stands for.

# The Tradition of the Modern Democratic Party (1968 onward)

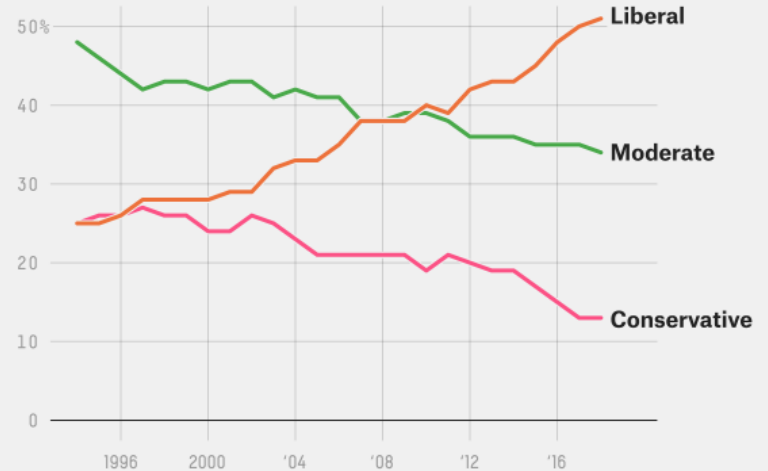
- Faction forged by social movements opposing Vietnam war, and one of blue-collar, more socially conservative union bosses, brought together by social changes of 1960s and declining union power
- Since 1968 Democratic activism has consisted of a loose alliance between these groups: intellectuals, union leaders, feminists, environmentalists, gay people, the disabled and the remnants of the civil-rights movement...described as a “roll call of interest groups otherwise not bound together by a larger idea”

# AOC and the New Wave

- Nearly 150% more women ran for congressional primaries in 2018 than 2016.
- 20% of adults have attended a protest or political rally in the past two years, the vast majority of them hostile to the president (Less than 5% of voters went to a Trump or Clinton rally in 2016).
- Liberal is seen as less of a dirty word by American public.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		
AMERICANS OVERALL		
	1992	2018
LIBERAL	17%	26%
CONSERVATIVE	36%	35%
MODERATE	43%	35%

**The share of Democrats who say they're liberal has grown**  
Self-identified political ideology of Democrats, age 18 and older



FiveThirtyEight

SOURCE: GALLUP

# Factional Collision

<b>Wealthy Liberals</b>	<b>Other Democrats</b>
White, much farther left	Poorer, racially diverse, religious
Tend not to believe in the American Dream	Believe hard work and determination can allow you to achieve success
99% disapprove of Trump	60% disapprove
Favor regulation more	Less a fan of it
Embrace free trade and believe America should be globally minded	Less internationally minded, more protectionist
Big fans of Muslims, immigrants, atheists, and gay people	Those feelings are not always share by this group as much
More activist, donate money and protest more	50% of white Dems think being born here is a big part of what it means to be American

# Conservatism vs Liberalism

“To be conservative...is to prefer the familiar to the unknown, to prefer the tried to the untried, fact to mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded, the near to the distant.” Like classical liberalism, conservatism is a child of the Enlightenment. Liberals say that social order emerges spontaneously from individuals acting freely, but conservatives believe social order comes first, creating the conditions for freedom. It looks to the authority of family, church, tradition and local associations to control change, and slow it down. You sweep away institutions at your peril. Yet just such a demolition is happening to conservatism itself—and it is coming from the right.” -The Economist

# Conservative Values Under Attack (From the Right...)

- Pragmatism rather than zealous:
  - Not how most would describe Trump's base...
  - Australia suffers droughts and reef-bleaching seas, but the right has just won an election there under a party whose leader addressed parliament holding a lump of coal like a holy relic.
  - In Italy Matteo Salvini, leader of the Northern League, has boosted the anti-vaxxer movement.
- Cautious about change, values institutions:
  - Trump has often threatened to leave NATO
- Uphold family values, seek principle and character:
  - Trump has been divorced, allegedly had an affair, and accused of sexual assault by 16 women

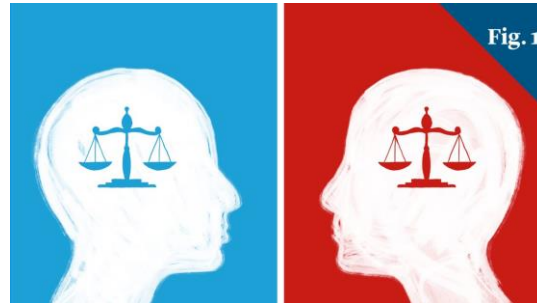
# Reasons for Shift

- Edmund Burke, often cited as father of conservatism, emphasized the importance of religion, unions, community, and the family. → All of these are declining in power
- Another is that the old parties on both right and left were discredited by the financial crisis, austerity and the long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Rural areas feel mocked by and lesser than urbanites and have been wound up by inciting entrepreneurs and politicians
- The collapse of the Soviet Union, some believe, loosened the glue uniting a coalition of foreign-policy hawks, libertarians and cultural and pro-business conservatives. None of these trends will be easy to reverse.



# The Economist, on the Loss of True Conservatism

“Both reject the Utopian impulse to find a government solution for every wrong. Both resist state planning and high taxes. The conservative inclination to police morals is offset by an impulse to guard free speech and to promote freedom and democracy around the world. Indeed conservatives and liberals often bring out the best in each other. Conservatism tempers liberal zeal; liberals puncture conservative complacency.”



# Guiding Questions

1. What three stereotypes do you think others make about your party affiliation, if you have one? What is untrue about these stereotypes? Is there a kernel of truth within them?
2. What's one question you've always wanted to ask someone from the other side? Is there a particular question you'd like to answer about your side?
3. Are you planning on supporting the same party in 2020 as you did in 2016? Does it depend on who the Democrats nominate? Are you more or less invested in this election? Will it depend?
4. Do you think AOC and the Squad represent the true direction of the Democratic Party? Is the same true for Trump and the true direction of the Republican Party? Where does this splintering leave third parties and their candidates? Would you support one, or choose "the lesser of two evils"?
5. Do you think we should pay more attention to local politics than national politics? In your experience, what's the impact of party affiliation on local races?
6. How are you feeling about Notre Dame hosting the first presidential debate next fall? Why do you think debates are hosted on college campuses? Why do you think we won our bid?

# Links to sources

<https://www.economist.com/special-report/2018/07/12/who-is-a-democrat>

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2019/07/04/the-global-crisis-in-conservatism>