

Corruption and the Rise of Donald Trump

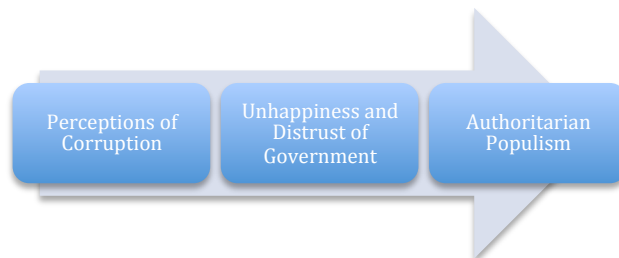
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Abstract

Earlier this year, Jim Clifton, the head of Gallup, noted that most Americans perceive their government to be corrupt. He speculated that this perception fuels unhappiness and distrust of government, which in turn might be responsible for the rise of Donald Trump.



In fact, remarkably high percentages of Americans do say corruption is widespread. And cross-sectional data at the national level show that perceptions of corruption are significantly correlated with unhappiness and distrust of government. Finally, Trump did use corruption as a key theme in his campaign—and he won.

But in the United States, in recent years trends are flat in perceptions of corruption, in happiness, in trust in government, and in desire for an authoritarian leader. Stable trends do not seem able to explain the rise of Donald Trump. Yet Clifton's conjecture has enough resonance both in the United States and internationally to suggest several lines of further research, which are outlined here.

Introduction

In May 2016, Rep. Tom Marino (R-PA) was asked why he and others support Donald Trump. He replied, “Americans, I don’t care if they’re Republicans, Democrats, or Independents, they’re sick and tired of being sick and tired of the way Washington is run. Washington needs bulldozed and start over [sic].”¹

Why? Because Washington is corrupt.

Marino is not alone in this perception. In the fall of 2015, a Gallup poll found that a remarkable 75 percent of Americans said that “corruption is widespread throughout the government in this country.” In January 2016, Gallup CEO Jim Clifton wrote:

The perception that there’s widespread corruption in the national government could be a symptom of citizen disengagement and anger. Or it could be a cause—we don’t know. But it’s very possible this is a big, dark cloud that hangs over this country’s progress. And it might be fueling the rise of an unlikely, non-traditional leading Republican candidate for the presidency, Donald Trump. (Clifton 2016)

“Not incompetence,” Clifton emphasized, “but corruption.”

In the event, discourse about corruption was salient in the 2016 elections. Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders noted: “People are really angry with a corrupt campaign finance system that allows very, very wealthy people to spend unlimited sums of money to buy elections. That’s not what democracy in this country is supposed to be about.”² Republican candidate Trump put it this way: “It’s a rigged system. It’s a crooked system. It’s 100 percent crooked. You’re basically buying these people [delegates]. That’s a corrupt system.”³

In his acceptance speech for the Republican nomination on July 21, 2016, Trump said that corruption was the issue that provoked him to run for president:

When innocent people suffer, because our political system lacks the will, or the courage, or the basic decency to enforce our laws – or worse still, has sold out to some corporate lobbyist for cash – I am not able to look the other way, and I won't look the other way.

And when a Secretary of State illegally stores her emails on a private server, deletes 33,000 of them so the authorities can’t see her crime, puts our country at risk, lies about it in every different form and faces no consequence – I know that corruption

¹ <http://www.npr.org/2016/05/04/476705867/rep-tom-marino-weighs-in-on-trumps-victory-in->

² “If you're going to run for president, you need many, many hundreds of millions of dollars,” Sanders explained. “I’m on the Senate environmental committee. I’ve talked to scientists all over the world. Climate change is real; it’s caused by human activity. And yet you don’t have one Republican candidate prepared to say that. The reason for it is that the day they say it, their campaign funding is cut by the Koch brothers and the fossil fuel industry.” <http://www.newsweek.com/bernie-sanders-talks-brussels-trump-and-corrupt-campaign-finance-jimmy-kimmel-439868>

³ <http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2016/04/18/461399/Trump-rigged-corrupt-system/>

has reached a level like never ever before in our country. When the FBI Director says that the Secretary of State was “extremely careless” and “negligent,” in handling our classified secrets, I also know that these terms are minor compared to what she actually did. They were just used to save her from facing justice for her terrible crimes.

In fact, her single greatest accomplishment may be committing such an egregious crime and getting away with it – especially when others have paid so dearly. When that same Secretary of State rakes in millions of dollars trading access and favors to special interests and foreign powers I know the time for action has come. I have joined the political arena so that the powerful can no longer beat up on people that cannot defend themselves.⁴

As Trump’s campaign continued, he and his surrogates employed a variety of terms to describe the corruption. *Pay to play*, referring to contributions to a campaign or a foundation that enabled wealthy people to have access to a government official. *Quid pro quo*, meaning the favor or action given back to someone who made a campaign contribution or gave a gift. He (and others) questioned a distinction made in the January 2010 decision on the Citizens United case, where Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote that Congress could only prohibit quid-pro-quo corruption in campaign contributions. Outside of a direct exchange in return for a government action, the Court ruled, the First Amendment protects the right to contribute to campaigns.

Quid pro quo: consider the recent corruption case against former Virginia governor Robert F. McDonnell. Businessman Jonnie R. Williams gave McDonnell vacations, a Rolex watch, \$15,000 for his daughter’s wedding reception, the use of a Ferrari, and \$120,000 in loans. Williams said was just paying for “access” (which is legal), not for any government action (which is not).

On June 27, 2016, the Supreme Court ruled in McDonnell’s favor. The decision pointed out that in U.S. law, corruption requires an official decision or action, not just a meeting, contact, or event:

To convict the McDonnells, the Government was required to show that Governor McDonnell committed (or agreed to commit) an “official act” in exchange for the loans and gifts. An “official act” is defined as “any decision or action on any question, matter, cause, suit, proceeding or controversy, which may at any time be pending, or which may by law be brought before any public official, in such official’s official capacity, or in such official’s place of trust or profit.” 18 U. S. C. §201(a)(3)...

The Government’s expansive interpretation of “official act” would raise significant constitutional concerns. Conscientious public officials arrange meetings for constituents, contact other officials on their behalf, and include them in events all the time. Representative government assumes that public officials will hear from

⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/07/21/full-text-donald-trumps-prepared-remarks-accepting-the-republican-nomination/>

their constituents and act appropriately on their concerns. The Government's position could cast a pall of potential prosecution over these relationships.⁵

In the days before the election, an IPSOS/Reuters poll revealed that 75 percent of Americans agree that "America needs a strong leader to take the country back from the rich and powerful."

At first glance, then, Jim Clifton's speculation seems plausible. The public's belief that government is corrupt was an issue stressed by Donald Trump—and going beyond Clifton's January 2015 information, we now know that Trump won the election.

Widespread Belief in Widespread Corruption

Trump's surprising rise has been connected to the rise of "authoritarian populism" around the world (Norris 2016). Politics, so goes the broadest argument, is perceived to be corrupt, and bold outsiders are needed to steamroll the structures of privilege. Indeed, surprising numbers of people in Europe believe their governments are corrupt. In 2013, a survey of 27 members of the European Community plus Croatia revealed startling perceptions of corruption. More than three-quarters of respondents (76 percent) said corruption is widespread in their country, from Greece (99 percent) to Denmark (25 percent). More than half believed that "bribery and the abuse of power for personal gain are widespread" among political parties (59 percent) and politicians (56 percent) (European Commission 2014).

What do these numbers mean? They do not refer bribery in the sense of *quid pro quo*. Only about 7 percent of Americans admit to being asked for a bribe, yet 75 percent think their government contains widespread corruption. Similar gaps are found in surveys around the world (Klitgaard forthcoming).

Rather, people seem to mean by "corruption" the involvement of big economic interests in politics. Among "likely U.S. voters" in 2014, 76 percent declared that the wealthiest individuals and companies have too much influence over elections.⁶ The left and the right agree that "crony capitalism" corrupts:

The liberal position is that Washington has been corrupted by crony capitalism, that the system is grinding the faces of ordinary working Americans ... and that the answer is more Washington. The conservative position is that Washington has been corrupted by crony capitalism, that the system is grinding the faces of ordinary working Americans ... and that the answer is to squeeze Social Security and cut taxes for the rich (Crook 2016).

⁵ Syllabus, *McDonnell v. United States Certiorari to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit Court*, No. 15-474. Argued April 27, 2016—Decided June 27, 2016.
http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/15pdf/15-474_ljgm.pdf

⁶

http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/general_politics/may_2014/bigger_problem_in_politics_48_say_media_bias_44_campaign_cash

In Europe, “the most widely held belief is that links between business and politics are too close” (European Commission 2012). Consider this dramatic generalization by Pope Francis (2014):

The scandalous concentration of global wealth is made possible by the connivance of public leaders with the powers that be... Corruption is a greater ill than sin. More than forgiveness, this ill must be treated. Corruption has become natural, to the point of becoming a personal and social statement tied to customs, common practice in commercial and financial transactions, in public contracting, in every negotiation that involves agents of the State.

These beliefs can justify radical action. For example, Thailand’s prime minister General Prayut Chan-ocha (2015), who took over in a coup in 2014, says, “The link between money and politics and the capture of state institutions by powerful interests at the national and local levels is the most dangerous enemy.” Authoritarians in countries ranging from Turkey to Egypt have blamed corruption and inept democratic politics for their assertions of extraordinary powers.

So, do perceptions of corruption lead to citizen unhappiness and distrust, and do these in turn lead to the rise of politicians like Donald Trump?

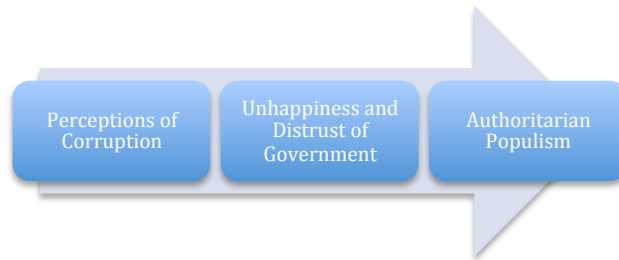


Figure 1 From Perceived Corruption to Donald Trump?

Let’s examine some of the connections.

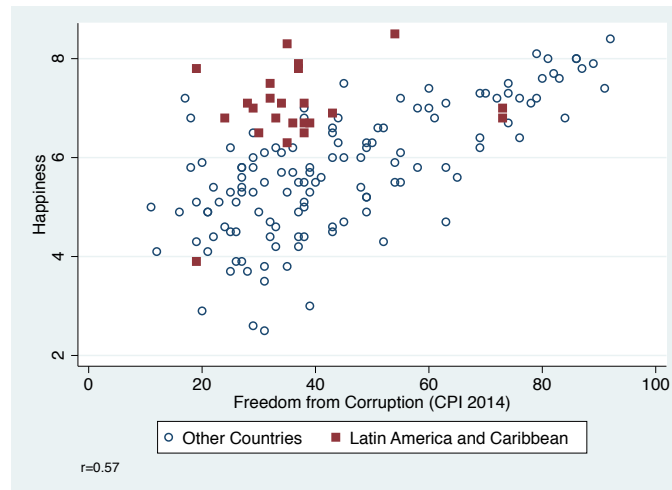
Corruption and Happiness

In a path-breaking paper, David Benjamin and his colleagues (2014) assembled 136 different attributes of wellbeing suggested in the psychological literature. The authors asked individuals to make tradeoffs among pairs of these attributes. Among all the public policies, the most important contributor to people’s wellbeing was “freedom from corruption, injustice, and abuse of power in your country.” This construct admittedly goes beyond corruption alone.

National-level data are consistent with the proposition that higher levels of corruption correspond to lower levels of self-reported happiness. Take a metric of happiness based on the World Values Survey. Across all countries, the average level of happiness in a country is correlated 0.69 with Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (where higher scores mean “more freedom from corruption”). Countries in Latin America are significantly happier. The correlation among countries in Latin America and the Caribbean is 0.40. The correlation among the rest of the countries is 0.78.

Figure 2 shows a different measure of happiness, from the World Database of Happiness (2016) maintained by Ruut Veenhoven, a pioneer in research on wellbeing. The relationship is again positive ($r=0.57$), and again Latin American countries are consistently happier given their levels of corruption.

Figure 2 “Freedom from Corruption” and Happiness



Note: The two squares at the upper right are Uruguay and Chile; the square at the lower left is Haiti. Among countries of Latin America and the Caribbean $r=0.22$; for the rest of the countries of the world, $r=0.70$.

Perhaps the most interesting evidence about corruption and wellbeing comes from John Helliwell, one of the editors of the *World Happiness Report*. In late 2014, Helliwell and several colleagues published a panel analysis of 157 countries using a variety of estimation techniques. Their variable for “governance quality” is a composite of four measures; it is correlated about 0.9 with the Corruption Perceptions Index (Klitgaard forthcoming).

The new results are able to show not just that people are more satisfied with their lives in countries having better governance quality, but also that actual changes in governance quality since 2005 have led to large changes in the quality of life. This provides much stronger evidence that governance quality can be changed, and that these changes have much larger effects than those flowing simply through a more productive economy. For example, the ten most-improved countries, in terms of delivery quality changes between 2005 and 2012, when compared to the ten countries with most worsened [sic] delivery quality, are estimated to have thereby increased average life evaluations by as much as would be produced by a 40 percent increase in per capita incomes. When we explain changes in average life evaluations over the 2005 to 2012 period, just as much was explained by changes in governance quality as by changes in GDP, even though some of the well-being benefits of better governance are delivered through increases in economic efficiency and hence GDP per capita. Our new results thus confirm that quality of governance affects lives via many channels beyond those captured by GDP per capita, and also that important improvements can be achieved within policy-relevant time horizons (Helliwell et al. 2014: 4).

Together, these findings are consistent with the hypothesis that as corruption goes up, happiness goes down.

Corruption and Distrust of Government

Studies show significant but not overpowering correlations at the national and individual level between general trust (of other people), trust in government, and perceptions of corruption (Morris and Klesner 2010). Figure 3 shows the most recent national data on corruption and trust in government ($r=0.50$; note the outliers).

Figure 3. With Interesting Exceptions, Trust in Government and Perceived Freedom from Corruption Are Correlated



So, we perceive some interesting support for Clifton’s conjecture.

- Americans perceive corruption to be widespread.
- Corruption is associated with unhappiness and the distrust of government.
- People rate corruption and abuse of power as very bad for their wellbeing.
- Changes in quality of governance seem causally associated with people’s happiness.
- Trump’s campaign emphasized corruption—and he won.

A next step is to explore some trends in the United States.

- Do we see increases in perceived corruption?
- Do we see changes in self-reported happiness?
- Do we see declines in trust?
- Do we see changes in populist or authoritarian attitudes?

Here are some preliminary answers.

Trends

Trends in Perceived Corruption

James Clifton (2016) noted that in 2015, 75 percent of Americans said “corruption is widespread throughout the government in this country.” But Clifton also observed that “This alarming figure has held steady since 2010, up from 66 percent in 2009.” In Figure 4, because each observation has a 95 percent confidence interval of plus or minus 4 percentage points, the trend since 2007 might be interpreted as flat.

Figure 4 Perceptions of Widespread Government Corruption in the United States over Time

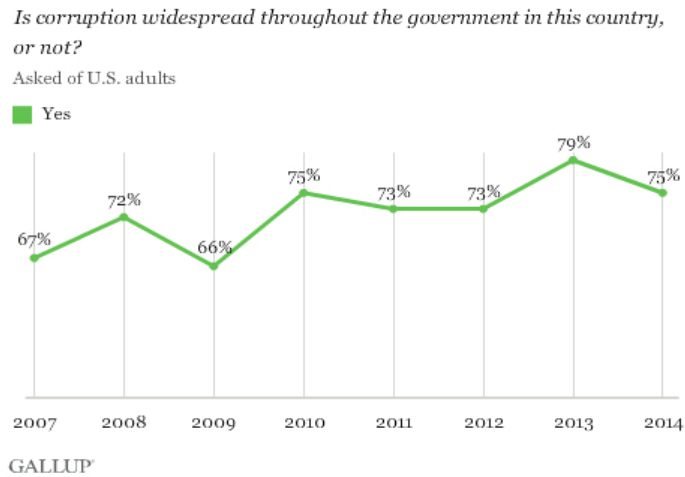


Figure 5 shows similar data over a longer time period. There is great volatility from 1964 to 2015. The percentage of Americans who say “the government is run by a few big interests out for themselves” was 76 percent in 2015 and 78 percent in 2010, both near the historic high of 79 percent in 1995.

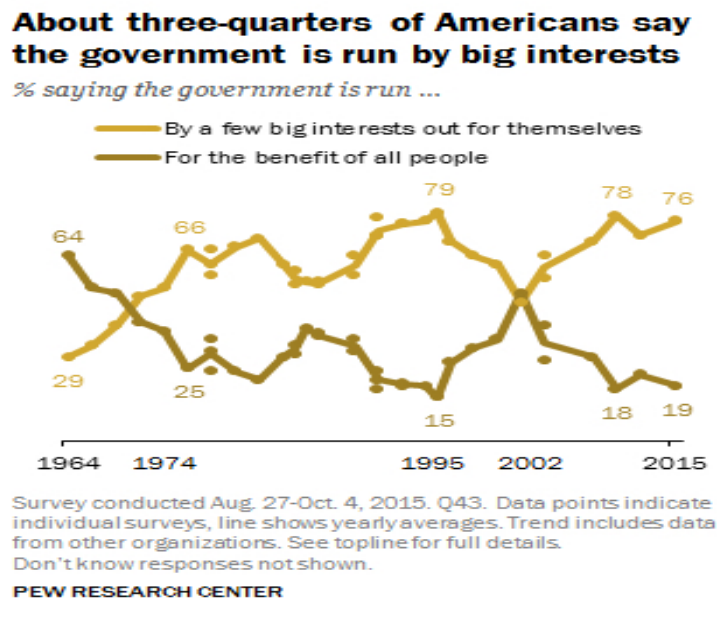


Figure 5 Volatile Perceptions of “Big Interests” and Government

Trends in Happiness

One hears about growing anger, dissatisfaction, and unhappiness in America—even as many economic indicators seem to improve. Typical is this account from the *Washington Post* in December 2014:

So, to recap, Americans have hit low points on their belief in our country’s main economic principle, their general feelings about life and their faith in our government. That just about covers it.

And all of it comes even as there is increasingly good news on the economy, including month after month of solid job creation, unemployment below six percent, fast-falling gas prices and even rising economic confidence (Blake 2014).

This disconnect between static levels of wellbeing even when there are increases (or decreases) in economic indicators has been called “the hedonic treadmill” (see Luhmann 2014). But some research undercuts the treadmill idea.

According to the World Values Surveys, happiness and wellbeing have increased since the 1980s in most Western countries, including the United States.

Analysis of the five waves of surveys from 1981 to 2007 including 88 countries containing almost 90 percent of the world’s population indicates that happiness can show significant and enduring changes—not only for given individuals, as recent research demonstrated, but across entire societies (Inglehart et al. 2008: 280).

Ruut Veenhoven’s website on happiness shows a slight upward 40-year-trend in average happiness in America, but his data run only through 2010.⁷ Similar results hold for the tenth percentile of happiness: no strong trend over time.

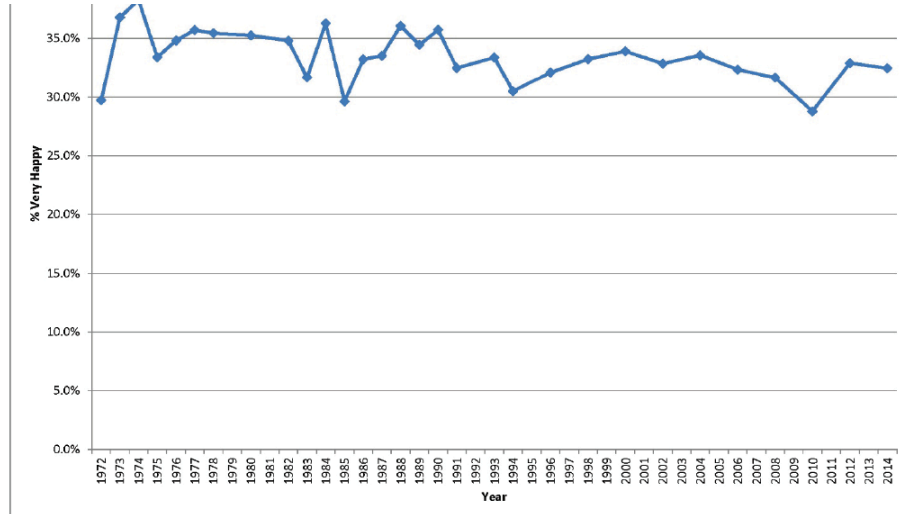


Figure 6 Trend in % of Americans Who Say They Are Very Happy

Figure 6 shows the trend in the percentage of Americans who say they are very happy. In the same report, the National Opinion Research Center shows that those who report they are “not too happy” has averaged 11.4 percent since 1972 (high of 17.2 percent in 1972, low of 8.2 percent in 1988, and improved from 2008 (13.9 percent) and 2009 (14.2 percent) to 2014 (12.2 percent).⁸

In most years since 2008, the Harris Poll has asked Americans about happiness in various forms. Table 1 presents some results.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2013	2015	2016
At this time I am generally happy with my life	83	81	80	80	77	82	81
I frequently worry about my financial situation	65	67	66	68	65	67	62
I’m optimistic about the future	76	79	73	75	67	75	72

Table 1 Percentages of Americans Who Strongly or Somewhat Agree

Note: The 2016 figure is based on a sample of 2019 Americans aged 18 and up, May 31-June 2, 2016

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http://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/hap_nat/findingreports/TrendReport_AverageHappiness.pdf

⁸ http://www.norc.org/PDFs/GSS%20Reports/GSS_PsyWellBeing15_final_formatted.pdf

Gallup began estimating state- and national-level wellbeing in 2008.⁹ The precise questions and aggregation method changed in 2014, so comparisons are precarious. But Gallup asserts that its Gallup-Healthways index of “well-being across the U.S. has shown little improvement since 2008”—and also little change.

So, longitudinal data seem to indicate that happiness in the United States has followed no strong negative trend.

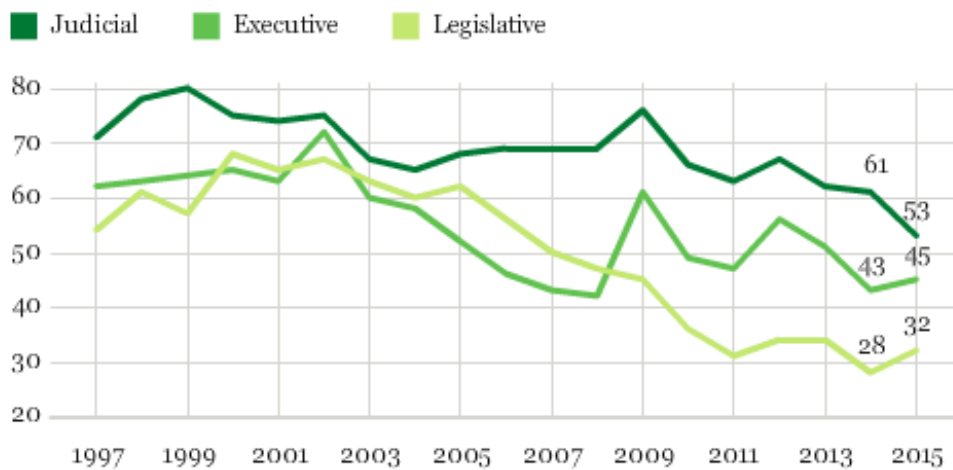
Trends in Trust in Government

Most Americans distrust the executive branch and especially the national legislature. Figures 7 and 8 show some trends.

Americans' Trust in the Three Branches of the Federal Government

Recent trend

Figures are percentages expressing "a great deal" or "a fair amount" of trust



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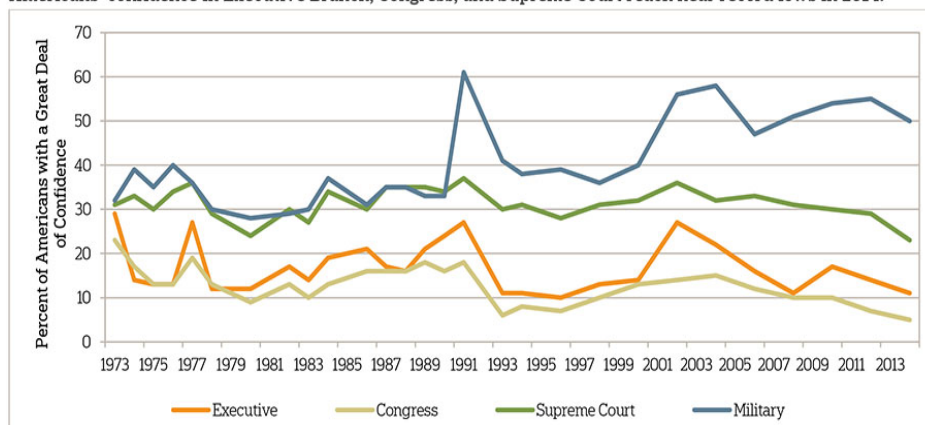
Figure 7 Trust in the Three Branches of the Federal Government, 1997 to 2015

⁹ Gallup says the measure includes questions about “five essential elements of well-being:

- Purpose: liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals
- Social: having supportive relationships and love in your life
- Financial: managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security
- Community: liking where you live, feeling safe and having pride in your community
- Physical: having good health and enough energy to get things done daily.”

http://www.gallup.com/poll/188810/hawaii-reclaims-top-spot.aspx?g_source=CATEGORY_WELLBEING&g_medium=topic&g_campaign=tiles

Americans' confidence in Executive Branch, Congress, and Supreme Court reach near record lows in 2014.



Questions: I am going to name some institutions in this country. As far as the people running these institutions are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them? [Executive Branch/Congress/Supreme Court/Military]

Figure 8 Confidence in Four Branches of the U.S. Government, 1973 to 2014

Two points might be made. First, over the past five years, there has not been great deterioration in confidence in the executive branch or the legislature. Second, current low levels of trust and confidence are not unprecedented: they resemble the years around 1980 and the early- to mid-1990s.

Indeed, it was almost 20 years ago that Harvard University Press published a book called *Why People Don't Trust Government* (Nye, Zelikow, and King, ed. 1997). The authors documented and lamented a downward trend in trust, in America and also in Europe. One contributor noted that declining trust didn't seem to be explained by worse performance of government; in fact, government may have been doing better and better in objective performance, yet generating more and more distrust.¹⁰

Much earlier, in 1974 Arthur H. Miller lamented how the United States government was suffering low and declining trust.

A period of sustained discontent may result from deep-seated social conflict which, for some segment of the population, has been translated into a negative orientation toward the political system because their sense of insufficient political influence implies a futility in bringing about desired social change or control through political efforts; hence, they feel government is generally not to be trusted because it does not function for them. Such feelings of powerlessness and normlessness are very likely to be accompanied by hostility toward political and social leaders, the institutions of government, and the regime as a whole. In such case, "throwing the rascals out" will have little, if any, effect on restoring confidence in government or the political system...

¹⁰ In a statistical model of "mistrust of federal government," the largest positive contributing variable was being unemployed and the largest negative variable was being white (that is, whites trusted government more) (Table 6-3, p. 176). The model explained only about 5 percent of the variation among 17,090 citizens in the sample; no wonder one author concluded that no one knew why trust was low and declining.

A situation of widespread, basic discontent and political alienation exists in the U.S. today (Miller 1974: 951).

Moreover, “These data reveal a strong trend of increasing political cynicism for the general population between 1964 and 1970” (Miller 1974: 952).¹¹

Trends in Authoritarian Attitudes

What about people’s desire for a more authoritarian government? The World Values Survey asks whether people approve of “having a strong leader who doesn’t have to bother with congress or elections.” Since 2005 in the United States, there has been rising support for this statement. Less educated people support it more. “Most remarkably, by the most recent wave in 2011, almost half — 44 percent — of U.S. non-college graduates approved of having a strong leader unchecked by elections and Congress” (Norris 2016).

But note this finding was in 2011, five years ago—before the rise of Trump.

Discussion

In the wake of Donald Trump’s surprising victory on November 8, many have asked how he could have won. His egregious words and actions, it is said, would have eliminated any other candidate. Explanations and excuses have proliferated, ranging from the debilities of his opponent to growing inequalities to white rural discontent.

In her new book *The Politics of Resentment*, Katherine Cramer describes her findings from five years of conversations with rural people in her native Wisconsin.

Listening closely to people revealed two things to me: a significant rural-versus-urban divide and the powerful role of resentment... I heard that urbanites ignore people in rural areas, take in all of their hard-earned money, and fundamentally disrespect and misunderstand the rural way of life.

Rural consciousness ... is infused with a sense of distributive injustice—a sense that rural folks don’t get their fair share. (Cramer 2016: chap. 1)

Perceptions of systematically unfair government are, notes Bo Rothstein (2014), closely related to perceptions of widespread corruption. Katherine Cramer’s observations seem consistent with the hypothesis by Jim Clifton, the CEO of Gallup, of causal connections from perceptions of widespread corruption to citizen unhappiness and distrust of government, and then to the rise of Donald Trump (Clifton 2016).

Our preliminary look at national trends in the United States found that perceptions of corruption in America have not changed much over the past six years, nor have measures of citizen happiness or trust in government. There appears to be more stability in those variables than could explain the rapid rise of this particular candidate, now the President-Elect. A look at trends seems to undercut Jim Clifton’s conjecture.

¹¹ In a commentary, Jack Citrin added: “Neither the country’s present management nor its most prominent rivals inspire public confidence. How, then, can the political system rebuild its depleted reserves of political trust, the basis of future growth and stability?” (Citrin 1974: 973).

To go further and assess Figure 1 quantitatively, we would assemble and analyze longitudinal data about perceptions of corruption, happiness, trust, and political phenomena such as populist attitudes, voting, and so forth. Ideally, we would have data at the individual level, or by county or SMSA. We would include data on a variety of other variables that might intervene along Figure 1's causal chain. We would include demographic factors of various kinds. We would include other variables that plausibly might affect happiness, distrust, and the rise of populism, such as

- economic factors such as labor force participation, income, and inequality;
- immigration (or perceptions of same),
- scandals and information about them,¹²
- security threats,
- and so forth.

In a dream world, we would have such data on many countries, so we could assess whether and how authoritarian populism is rising around the globe. Niall Ferguson describes changes that have been associated with populism throughout modern history: an increase in the foreign-born population, an increase in economic inequality, an increase in perceptions that the system is corrupt, and a financial crisis. "There is still one missing ingredient to be added. If one were cooking, this would be the moment when the flame would leap from the pan. The flammable ingredient is, of course, the demagogue, for populist demagogues react vituperatively and explosively against all of the aforementioned four ingredients" (Ferguson 2016)

Even with plentiful data, we would confront the challenges of theory uncertainty, measurement uncertainty, and specification uncertainty (Aghion and Durlauf 2007). A proximate cause (say, white rural discontent) may reflect a deeper cause (say, perceptions of a government corrupted by urban bias and elite self-serving), which may in turn reflect local economic downturns (Autor et al 2016)¹³—or many other possibilities.

In addition to econometric explorations, further research might examine individual countries that have shown exceptional movements in corruption (or happiness or populism, etc.) and see if shifts in other variables occurred just before or just after those movements.

The phenomena of interest certainly go beyond Donald Trump. Pankaj Mishra (2016) eloquently depicts a worldwide movement of which he thinks Trump may be an instance:

Voters in Britain, heeding Brexit campaigners' calls to "take back control" of a country ostensibly threatened by uncontrolled immigration, "unelected élites," and "experts," have reversed fifty years of European integration. Other countries across

¹² In the United States, investigative journalism has exposed perhaps as never before connections between politicians and business, among both Democrats and Republicans, with Hillary Clinton as perhaps the chief victim. See for example Green 2015.

¹³ Autor et al. (2016: 1) find that local exposure to the negative economic consequences of greater trade exposure led to extremism on both ends of the political spectrum: "Polarization is also evident when breaking down districts by race: trade-exposed locations with a majority white population are disproportionately likely to replace moderate legislators with conservative Republicans, whereas locations with a majority non-white population tend to replace moderates with liberal Democrats."

Western Europe, as well as Israel, Russia, Poland, and Hungary, seethe with demagogic assertions of ethnic, religious, and national identity. In India, Hindu supremacists have adopted the conservative epithet “libtard” to channel righteous fury against liberal and secular élites. The great eighteenth-century venture of a universal civilization harmonized by rational self-interest, commerce, luxury, arts, and science—the Enlightenment forged by Voltaire, Montesquieu, Adam Smith, and others—seems to have reached a turbulent anticlimax in a worldwide revolt against cosmopolitan modernity.

Many in the new wave of “authoritarian populists” (Norris 2016) use Trumpian rhetoric about corrupt systems. For example, Heinz-Christian Strache, the leader of Austria’s Freedom Party, says, “The left and the corrupt establishment, which considers itself so superior, are being punished blow by blow by the voters and voted out of various positions of responsibility” (cited in Nossiter 2016). President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines has won wide support in his country by railing against corruption. And yet under his predecessor Benigno Aquino III, perceptions of corruption and global competitiveness measures were greatly improved, resulting in higher investment, record-low employment, and the fourth fastest-growing economy in the world.

The Philippines case raises final point worthy of further study. What can be done to affect people’s perceptions of corruption? We know a lot about how to reduce bribery (Klitgaard 2015). But how can we address the perception of suspect connections between politicians and parties on the one hand, and donors and foundations on the other? What about perceptions of government unfairness to rural people (or other groups) that are in turn equated to perceptions that the system is corrupt?¹⁴

Eventually, questions about the causes of the rise of authoritarian populism become questions about what, then, should be done.

¹⁴ Cramer (2016) cites evidence that rural people’s perceptions of unfair treatment is belied by government spending in rural areas; this, too, deserves further comparative research.

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