

# TRANSPARTISAN NOTES

## PART FOUR

JANUARY-DECEMBER 2018

WRITTEN BY

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& James S. Turner*

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THE TRANSPARTISAN REVIEW is a digital journal of politics, society, and culture, exploring the apparent disintegration of the traditional political, social and cultural order from a transpartisan point of view. The TRANSPARTISAN NOTES series shares this exploration on the *Transpartisan Review* website every week. Unless otherwise noted, all rights to the material within remain with the authors of the articles or their original publication source. All other material is copyright ©2018 by *The Transpartisan Review*. Inquiries for the republication of any of the following essays, online or off, should be directed to [editor@transpartisanreview.com](mailto:editor@transpartisanreview.com).

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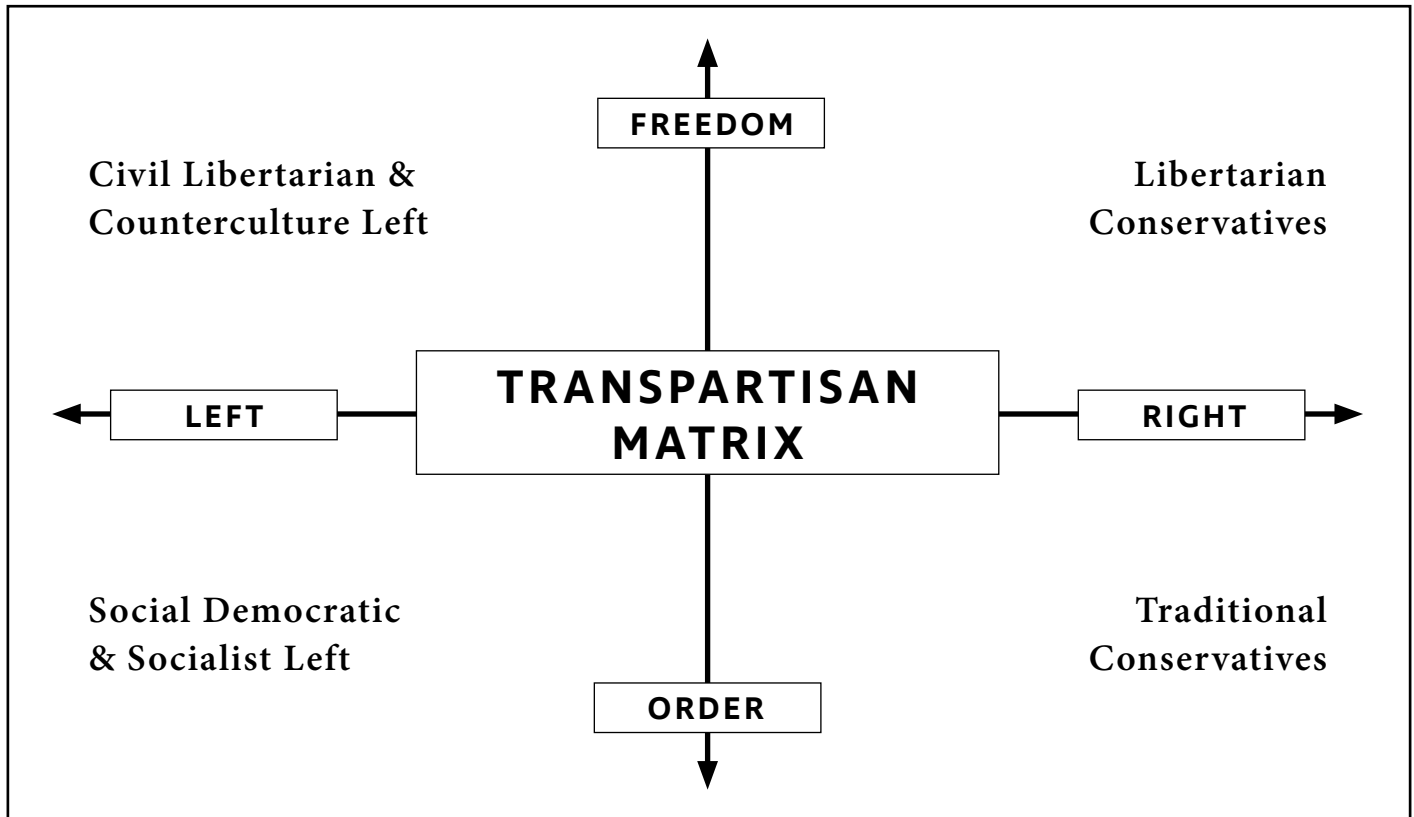
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TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #78 • DECEMBER 25, 2017

## The Transpartisan Matrix: Help Understanding Our Volatile Politics

Our daily political ups and downs present both threats and opportunities. We think the *Four Quadrant Transpartisan Matrix*, as a new tool of analysis, will help us find opportunities and manage threats.

The 2016 election displayed the gap between our politics and our people. The gap both expresses and feeds instability and alienation. The 2016 Presidential winner received the support of 26% of the eligible electorate. Forty-four percent stayed away. These numbers differ little from the previous election, won by the other side.

The Matrix, with its left/right horizontal axis and order/freedom vertical axis, helps explain this divide between politics and the electorate.

See our Transpartisan Note #52, in which we describe the 2016 election in terms of the Matrix.

Between 1932, at the depth of The Depression, and 1994 there was little conflict in our politics. Democrats dominated House elections winning every election since 1932 except 1946 (with President Truman serving out Franklin D Roosevelt's 4th term)

and 1952 (when President Eisenhower won his first term).

In 1994 Newt Gingrich and his 'Contract with America' picked up 54 house and 9 senate seats, ending Democratic dominance. Since 1994 the Republicans won six congressional elections, and the Democrats two. The GOP has maintained control since 2010. It seems all that might be up for grabs in 2018.

The Matrix process suggests a possible transpartisan path. It shows that people seek, individually and collectively, more than the lowest common denominator values embraced by the major parties. We believe people, both left and right, seek both free expression (freedom) and a sense of the higher good (order).

Saying this another way, the four quadrants highlight *larger personal and community experiences* (beyond family and tribe) *gained through free expression and choice*. In times of threat people choose order. In times of opportunity people choose freedom. Today the major parties fight over threats. The people seek choice.

The Trump/Sanders/outside expressed a freedom impulse against party elites who fight over threats to order—climate

change, guns, national debt, moral decay etc. Vast numbers, seeing elites ignore real apparent opportunities, failed to vote. We offer the Transpartisan Matrix process to lure the stay-aways back.

We think the key to overcoming their alienation is to provide more openings for citizen participation in national, state and local elections as an expansion of the more active citizens' roles beginning to take place in community organizations such as schools, housing projects, and community health centers.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #79 • JANUARY 01, 2018

## The Transpartisan Matrix: Help Understanding Our Volatile Politics II

In 1994 the Republican Party took control of the US Congress from the Democratic Party, winning 54 House seats and 9 senate seats. We believe that the *Transpartisan Four Quadrant Matrix* we advocate helps explain this shift in American political control. We believe it also helps us understand the vote in 2016 and prepare for 2018.

The Republicans controlled Congress during the roaring 1920s, which seemed prosperous at the time and profligate in retrospect. Scholarship, especially that by Milton Freedman, suggests that failure of government policy—notably a misunderstanding of monetary policy—led to economic collapse. Republicans lost control of Congress.

The 1932 Depression began a six decades long run of essentially one-party Congressional government. The Democrats held nearly total control of the House and the Senate most of the time. Little vital conflict occurred during these years. In one notable telling the 1994 elections followed the 'end of history' brought on by the 1991 collapse of the USSR.

In the sixties the collective impulse that had responded to the depression and WW II produced enormous public policy failures on poverty and Vietnam. That decade, the collective action impulse lost ground to the impulse toward individual expression. Free expression swept the culture, on both the left and right.

During the long period of Democratic dominance, political scientists called the parties 'tweedle-dum' and 'tweedle-dee'—the same. The 1960s featured great political conflict between activist citizens and the government rather than between the parties (67% of House members voted for the 1964 Civil Rights Act). Democrats controlled Congress 30 more years.

Ronald Reagan, working with Max Kampelman his predecessor Jimmy Carter's arms negotiator, brought an end to the Cold War and renewed optimism around progress through individual

“Work together”, the electorate seems to be saying, to get the best of American politics. To achieve shared outcomes, citizens from all four Matrix quadrants— order, freedom, right, left— need access to active roles in public spaces. The Transpartisan Matrix process offers one important way to understand and promote citizen action.

action. Getting government off peoples' backs' gained favor— leading up to 1994, when Congressional elections became genuinely competitive.

The 2016 Presidential election seems outside past patterns. We argue that widespread voter alienation, ignored by much if not most election commentary, greatly influenced the results. There are now more Independents (40%+) than either Democrats or Republicans, and when you count age-eligible non-voters, both parties combined are a surprising minority.

The alienation was caused by increasing individuation of the electorate – moving from the order to the freedom quadrants – while government remained fundamentally unchanged. Individuation drove people toward a strong concept of active citizenship, but policies remained centralized and bureaucratic, with little or no room for active citizens.

Both parties have significant problems heading into the mid-term elections. The Democrats' greatest problem may be eight years of sluggish economic growth under Obama yoked with the perception that Democrats prefer health, minimum wage and general regulatory pressure mandates to markets. Order over freedom. Rules over morals.

The most important antidote to these dangers, available to all parties, might be to redirect the narrative away from collective party solidarity to empowerment of varied individual initiatives in small, self-governing communities. Such efforts give everyone the chance that mass collectives make impossible often leaving many people isolated and alone.

Individuals participating in electoral efforts from all four of the Transpartisan Matrix quadrants provide real opportunities for the big brand parties. The party that fails to tap them fails an historical opportunity. When both fail chaos reigns.



Photo Martin J. Kraft / Wikimedia.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #80 • JANUARY 08, 2018

## Resolving the #MeToo Controversy May Offer Transpartisan Opportunity

On January 15th, French actress Catherine Deneuve apologized to “victims of horrible acts ... and to them alone” who felt “attacked” by the recent open letter published by French newspaper *Le Monde* stating the #Me Too movement had gone too far.

Five days earlier, on January 10th, 100 French women writers, entertainers, historians, academics and intellectuals signed *a letter published in Le Monde* challenging the #MeToo Movement and its French equivalent, #Balancetonporc (‘Expose Your Pig’), for publicly prosecuting private experiences and creating a totalitarian climate.

While condemning actions like those by producer Harvey Weinstein, the French women, led by the iconic French actress, deplored as ‘witch-hunts’ and a ‘new puritanism’ the public revelations and denunciations of sex scandals that have ruined dozens of men. They decry public exposure of people who are seen as sex offenders without giving them a chance to defend themselves, and they argue that the movements threaten sexual freedom, promote hatred of men, and jeopardize the rights of women.

‘This expedited justice ... already has its victims,’ they write, ‘men prevented from practicing their profession as punishment, forced to resign, etc., while the only thing they did wrong was touching a knee...’ (The latter comment clearly refers to the resignation of former UK Defense Secretary Michael Fallon, who resigned in November after admitting to touching journalist Julia Hartley-Brewer’s knee in 2002.)

The subject of private sexual advances raises issues of the most intimate, subjective kind, and the letter clearly means to address them. All actions that cause sexual discomfort cannot be treated as if they are equivalent to rape. They go on:

*[W]e defend a freedom to bother as indispensable to sexual freedom...*

*Above all, we are aware that the human being is not a monolith: A woman can, in the same day, lead a professional team and enjoy being a man’s sexual object, without being a ‘whore’ or a vile accomplice of the patriarchy. She can make sure that her wages are equal to a man’s but not feel forever traumatized by a man who rubs himself against her in the subway, even if that is regarded as*

*an offense. She can even consider this act as the expression of a great sexual deprivation, or even as a non-event.*

*Incidents that can affect a woman's body do not necessarily affect her dignity and must not, as difficult as they can be, necessarily make her a perpetual victim. Because we are not reducible to our bodies. Our inner freedom is inviolable. And this freedom that we cherish is not without risks and responsibilities.*

The subject calls forth widely different responses from both women and men. They range from women who are discomfited by any workplace sexual innuendo to a reaction exemplified by one woman who said she would be insulted *not* to be hit on by male colleagues at work. (She thinks different attitudes toward the issue may be influenced by differences in self-confidence – whether people are confident they can *handle* unwanted advances — and also in different power relationships.) On the latter point, the threat of public exposure may to some degree equalize the vulnerabilities resulting from power imbalances.

They may also be influenced by differences in how the French versus Americans view sex.

As transpartisans, we suggest that these issues involve the same tension between freedom and order—and the desire to integrate them—that defines most if not all public issues.

This issue is greatly complicated by the fact that it is about *individual responses to individual acts*, with no objective standards to guide judgments—and no objective standards that are even possible.

In a January 17 article, Bloomberg writer Megan McArdle put the matter directly:

## TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #81 • JANUARY 15, 2018

### What We Agree On – Transpartisan Agreement?

In the year following Donald Trump's January 20, 2017 Inauguration as President, Washington Post photo-journalists traveled the country photographing and interviewing 102 individuals, two from each state and the District of Columbia.

They asked: *'What values and beliefs are shared in a country often described as polarized?'*

The journalists analyzed the interviews and found seven recurring themes about what unites America. [On January 17, 2018](#) they reported these themes as:

**Freedom and Fundamental Rights:** We are equals, united by our freedom to say what we want and go where we please . . . and to disagree. Sixty-four of 102 agreed.

*'Me too. Me too. Me too. When our friends and colleagues are the accusers, when our neighbors and peers are the accused, the problem stares us in the face from a proximity so intimate that we cannot dismiss it with a simplistic response. All that's clear is that the problem is real, and the solutions will not be simple.'*

She wrote in another article, 'Sex panic harks back to the days of coddling women: there must be some way to find justice for women who have been abused without rushing to punish men who may not have abused anyone...' We must 'find some middle ground,' she wrote finally, 'between "Boys will be boys" and "Burn the warlocks!" else we may discover that in trying to build a better future, we've accidentally resurrected our repressive past.'

The real issue here is about *engagement*, just as many or most other political and social issues are about engagement. With real engagement, people achieve extraordinary equality. It is true in public school communities mobilizing to reform schools, in community-based law enforcement and public health centers, and also in all relationships when people approach each other sexually. Mechanized relationships without engagement do not work in any social or political sector. That is one of the primal transpartisan principles. #MeToo and its critics both present an opportunity to solve this problem with that principle.

Note: The LeMonde letter was co-written by five French women: Sarah Chiche (writer/psychoanalyst), Catherine Millet (author/art critic), Catherine Robbe-Grillet (actress/writer), Peggy Sastre (author/journalist) and Abnousse Shalmani (writer/journalist). It was signed by some 100 others. See the [full list of signatories](#).

**Community and empathy:** We are united by a capacity for empathy, and we flourish when we come together to help each other. Fifty-nine agreed about this.

**Opportunity and drive:** We all have a shot at making the life we want. That ideal of the American Dream still has a powerful hold on our imagination. Fifty-eight.

**Diversity:** We are a nation of immigrants, and are united by our pride in that fact. Fifty.

**Responsibility to engage:** We are united by our obligation to create a more perfect union. America is a continuing experiment that depends on civic engagement from everyone. Thirty.

**Faith in the nation:** We are united by our faith that American



democracy is sturdy enough to see us through social and political disruption. Twenty-seven.

**Fear of the future:** We are united by our misgivings about the current direction of America. Fifteen.

These themes are examples of what we, the editors and publishers of The Transpartisan Review, call transpartisan. Transpartisan politics begins with what we agree on. We think Americans have faith in our diverse nation to use our freedom

and rights responsibly to engage our opportunity and drive, overcome fear of the future, and receive and add to the empathy that feeds our community.

We think the *Four Quadrant Matrix*, with its left/right horizontal axis and order/freedom vertical axis, helps explain the apparent divide between our current adversarial politics and the shared values of a striving electorate — an electorate that is largely united in ways that our political institutions are ignoring.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTES #82 • JANUARY 22 , 2018

## The Parties' Losing Strategies Could Become Wins For Them and the Country, Part One: The Republicans

We believe that both nationally branded political parties—Republicans and Democrats—follow losing political strategies. There are more voters registered independent than either party; nearly half the electorate not registered. Independents and nonvoters combined equal many more than the two parties combined. See our [Note #52](#).

If the parties were businesses, both would be economically bankrupt. As the record currently stands, the vast majority of Americans—well over 50% and as many as 75%—see the parties as morally, aspirationally, operationally, and politically bankrupt.

The American and global publics move into the 21st century with new ideas, new activities, and major inventions while the political parties lock themselves into the battle structures of the last quarter of the 18th century—time of the French and American revolutions; Napoleon's war as politics and the stirrings of the industrial nation state.

To differentiate their brands, the parties divide the country into opposing armies fighting over 'the pie'. Their professed concern for the 'larger good' disappears. Each acts as if it had all the answers and the other none. Both pitch to a 'base' that excludes the vast majority of the electorate.

The parties market their brands differently. Democrats focus on *distribution*—the existing pie. They attack Republicans for helping the rich and harming the poor. Republicans focus on a bigger economy—expanding the pie. They attack Democrats for waste. Neither aims credibly at expanding the pie and distributing it competently.

Democrats support benefits given *visibly and directly* to people. Republicans support benefits given *invisibly and indirectly* to unknown recipients. Democrats deride Republican policy as '*trickle-down economics*'. Republicans ridicule Democrats for

'*promoting class warfare.*' Everyone else puts their fingers in their ears.

Democrats' political objective expands the numbers receiving public benefits, while the GOP focuses on shrinking those numbers. Republicans seek to shift government support from the poor to entrepreneurs—whom the Democrats call the rich—arguing they will expand the economy helping everyone.

The Republican strategy tends to be a vote loser politically because it is easier to organize people who benefit directly than indirectly. This is important both *financially* and in terms of *personal engagement and caring*. Democrats know who their constituents are. Republicans seemed confused about theirs.

To promote a new, 'caring' brand, Republicans could focus on that which is essential for both rich and poor—on promoting *community*. While governments collect and distribute money to people (rich and poor), *civil society organizations* (CSOs) promote *civic engagement*, the essential energy for community.

Republicans need more than bashing governments. They need *alternatives for helping and empowering people*. They need models of success that not only *engage and empower* people; they also need *political strategies* for importing features that engage and empower people into bureaucratic programs that alienate everyone in them.

Real experiences with civil society citizen empowerment exist, especially in difficult environments. Examples are Delancey Street Foundation (San Francisco), Educate Girls Globally (working in government schools in two states of India), UNICEF's Girls Community Schools in Upper Egypt, and many others.

Candidates, officeholders, and party officials might start by connecting with program such as these, both *civil society projects*



and government institutions that feature the same qualities, *empowering citizens* and manifesting *conservative* values.\* Republican leaders should look for programs that promote citizen engagement—self-governing schools, housing, and community health and others.

The most interesting of these examples might be government programs like Vis Valley under James Dierke that moved away from a mechanized, bureaucratic structure and culture to more engaged, human structures. They need to *launch projects* as examples and promote a new public debate on this new vision of social services from both public and independent sources. They should inform voters about the amazing progress that empowered people achieve and how models like these can be expanded and developed.

Politicians should *visit* successful program and dialogue with teachers and students on their amazing successes. The media would love it, reporting on extraordinary transformational stories on the evening news. *Everyone* would love it because it would represent transpartisan (four-quadrant, including a role for everyone) values. Using this strategy Republicans could rebrand their party. Or the Democrats could. See our Note #83.

*\* An example of the latter would be Visitacion Valley Middle School in San Francisco when James Dierke was principal. Dierke was a product of the public school system. He was founding president of the administrators' union in Northern California. In 2007 [?] he was chosen the outstanding principal of a middle school in California, and in 2008 he won that award for the entire country; and he was Executive Vice President of the National Association of School Administrators.*

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #83 • JANUARY 29, 2018

## The Parties' Losing Strategies Could Become Wins For Them and the Country, Part Two: The Democrats

We believe that both nationally branded political parties—Republicans and Democrats—are following losing political strategies. Here we address the Democrats.

In 1994 the Republicans took control of the House after 62 years of Democratic dominance (since 1932), launching intense conflict between the parties that continues. Like the Republicans (see [Note #82](#)) the Democratic Party brand remains tarnished and rejected by the great majority of the electorate.

[Note #82](#) explored why the Republican strategy is a loser. We suggested how the party could strengthen its brand by finding and promoting community based initiatives both public and private. It is a four-quadrant transpartisan strategy with roles for everyone who wishes one.

It would not require that Republicans abandon any of their basic values—in fact, it would integrate its libertarian and traditionalist themes. It would rebrand the Party in a new form that would allow disinterested voters to take new notice of Republican values.

We also noted that the Democrats' strategy of providing financial and social benefits directly for identified 'victims' in need has political advantages over Republicans' strategy focused on improving the economy, which benefits people indirectly. (We focused on electoral rhetoric, rather than on what either party actually does.)

In 2016, Donald Trump combined the 'help victims' and 'build business' strategies. He appealed to traditional Democratic voters promising to help unemployed rust belt workers and oppose free trade he deemed 'unfair'. He promised less business regulation and cutting taxes—traditional Republican policies aimed at improving the economy.

Trump won, like George W. Bush in 2000, with a minority of votes representing a thin slice of the electorate. Democrats carried the popular vote in all but one presidential election since 2000. In states like Texas and Pennsylvania Republicans in Congress outnumber Democrats despite fewer total votes.

Despite their political advantage, the Democrat's strategy loses outside their base, allowing minority Republicans, to win for three reasons. First, 'victim' as an organizing myth is undependable. Unemployed, poor, working class, women, minorities, and others are all 'victims' in the Democratic story despite very different needs and wants.

Second, despite the Democratic strategy, 'disadvantaged' groups still struggle. After a half-century of poverty reducing policies, the poverty rate remains at 11/15%. The demoralized poor continue to surround us. Racial discrimination stubbornly remains. Women continue as second class in crucial ways.

Third, Democratic rhetoric about a system 'rigged' against the disadvantaged almost certainly drags on the positive spirit

and optimism essential to overcome disadvantage. If you think the system is rigged, how do you avoid giving up? Why bother trying? Why not join the Trumpites (Sanders' loss was rigged).

African-Americans face the same challenge. Chants of 'white racism' suggest no black progress until whites change. It is tragic irony that the party blacks support disempowers blacks. Democrats win 'victims' votes since Republicans offer no real alternatives. Obama governed with a partisan base about the size of Trump's.

The Democrats' political weakness mirrors the Republicans'. Two brands hurling 'trickle down' versus 'class warfare' at each other, while the government closes and disgusts most Americans. Either party brand could improve by *promoting community* as crucial for all groups, including the disadvantaged.

Civic engagement, promoting trust, is the ultimate instrument empowering people for progress. Republicans today struggle to integrate Trump supporters, and Democrats struggle to embrace

Bernie Dems. Across the country people of varied politics work together to solve problems.

With civic engagement, class warfare and trickle down disappear, and the political strategies that depend on them disappear as well. The parties need to engage with these citizen initiatives.

People everywhere are innovating and collaborating in ways to create resources (including money) while the parties play old games. If Democrats used their greater voters access to build community around new initiatives, they could get more voters to look more closely at their brand.

As the parties rebrand themselves, their competition might shift to 21st century issues such as new sources of government revenue and technology supporting communities and promoting trust. The party that leads this movement might well win future elections.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #84 • FEBRUARY 05, 2018

## What Is Your American Dream? Check Out “The Chisel”

What's Your American Dream? TheChisel's new national survey demonstrates something almost unimaginable in 2018: Left, Right, and Center agree on their #1 goal for 53% of the 34 issues surveyed. Join TheChisel for a bipartisan evening celebrating Americans' shared values in the Chisel's new book *What's Your American Dream* at: National Press Club, First Amendment Lounge, 529 – 14th Street, N.W., Washington, DC - Tuesday, February 27, 2018 - 6:30-8:30pm

According to its founder, Deborah Devedjian, “TheChisel is an online tool to empower American voters by informing them about major issues and enabling them to engage with experts in developing bipartisan solutions. Our audience is everyone—all Americans. We're all in this together, from the CEO of a Fortune 500 company or to a homemaker with young children. Each proposal is accessible to everyone.”

Our colleague Mark Gerzon says “TheChisel.com is not a mere feel-good exercise in building “consensus-driven solutions” but works with participating organizations to send proposals to Congress.’ We think this event, the book it celebrates, and the TheChisel offer an important glimpse into an often overlooked reality about American life—Americans share more values than the daily news suggests.

*The Chisel* invites everyone, saying:

*Our nation is experiencing enormous change and uncertainty. Our leaders need to hear from each of us to make our lives more prosperous, equitable, and secure.*

*Step beyond political slogans and platforms. Share what matters to you, your loved ones, and communities.*

*This survey is unlike any other:*

*It is supported by a growing nonpartisan coalition of 29 universities, media outlets, and organizations spanning the political spectrum (see below here).*

*It's simple, quick, and interactive. Seven themes frame our national discussion (see left panel here). You rank your goals with game-like tools. You can even add your own goals, comment on issues, and respond to others' comments!*

*We'll present the shared vision to the media, the President and his Cabinet, Members of Congress, Supreme Court, and state governors.*

*So, join us in answering ‘What's Your American Dream?’ And be part of shaping a shared vision for all Americans.*

Check out *The Chisel*. We are not alone. Americans together share important goals, values, and dreams.



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TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #85 • FEBRUARY 12, 2018

## Korea and the Olympics: Moral, Therapeutic & Transpartisan Values

In a carefully designed public relations maneuver North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un sent athletes and his sister, Kim Yo Jong, to the Winter Olympics in South Korea. He aimed at radically changing the world's perception of North Korea as a ruthless dictatorship.

Responses to the PR blitz ranged from predictable American disgust at Kim's cynical use of Olympic good will to conceal his brutal regime to full embrace of his actions, even by the South Koreans, as breakthrough moves toward a new relationship between North and South.

Mainstream media embraces the North's PR as a great 'story': North and South, athletes march as an integrated Korean Team; North's smiling representatives first post-1950s visit South; Kim's charismatic sister invites peace. Great pictures. Lots of viewers. More ads. South Koreans quickly accept. Counter PR? Life as theatre?

Kim's moves created a triumphant theatrical success. They stood in perfect contrast to U.S. Vice President Pence's relentlessly sullen American Olympic presence. U.S. media commentary, left and right, unlike the photo-journalists, was

overwhelmingly negative. A transpartisan perspective helps us make sense of all this.

The transpartisan process, tending to be more therapeutic than moral, generally supports dialogue. Therapeutic preferences, however, can be complicated and can lead in counterintuitive directions. Seeking dialogue with totalitarians can be impossible or even counter-therapeutic (if perceived as resulting from weakness).

We believe that isolation can be deranging, and extreme isolation can lead to paranoia and even madness. By their nature, totalitarian leaders like Kim tend to pursue closed, 'totalist,' myths (either personal or systemic), avoiding contact. We think Kim's isolation up to now *has* promoted his apparently sociopathic personality.

Understanding his recent shift from isolation toward connection starts by imagining something he wants. Most likely he seeks relief from sanctions, which hurt North Korea and impose costs on China that the Chinese resist.

Our personal contacts with Koreans including visits to Seoul, have influenced our view of these issues. At a macro level, Kim



and other Koreans, both North and South, see the Korean people as chosen for a special, transcendent purpose. This keeps alive their aspiration, on both sides, for reunification, which may have played a role in Kim's initiative. On a more personal level, friends tell us that Kim wants more than anything to attend a Knicks game in Madison Square Garden.

Whatever Kim's motivations, Vice President Pence never stopped frowning while in Seoul; yet soon after he returned to Washington the administration abruptly changed its North Korea policy and *endorsed the forthcoming North and South talks*. What happened?

We generally criticize Trump's preoccupation with media coverage, but it is possible that this abrupt policy change was prompted by his determination to share the limelight that eluded him when Pence was in Seoul. If so, it might be one case where this prominent Trump quality may have produced a positive policy outcome, reducing Kim's isolation.

Sometimes overlapping theatrical objectives can create strange transpartisan bedfellows. What's next? Don't be surprised if at some point Kim is watching basketball at Madison Square Garden.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #86 • FEBRUARY 19, 2018

## Unrig The System: Watch The Summit, Be Energized

*At a meeting in New Orleans Feb 2 to 4, 2018, which we would call Transpartisan, a bunch of folks had a great time working for a better world. Here is what they say about themselves and their work...*

"We Just Convened the Brightest Minds from the Right and Left to Fix American Politics. Conservatives. Progressives. Solutions."

Top advocacy leaders, academics, comedians, musicians, celebrities, activists, philanthropists, journalists, and more all gathered at the Unrig the System Summit in New Orleans from Feb 2-4, 2018. We crossed partisan and ideological divides to work together on concrete solutions to unrig America's political system . . . with plenty of New Orleans fun mixed in.

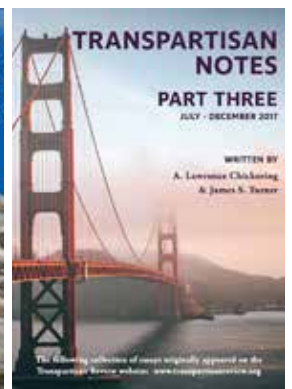
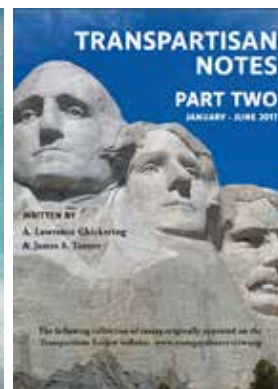
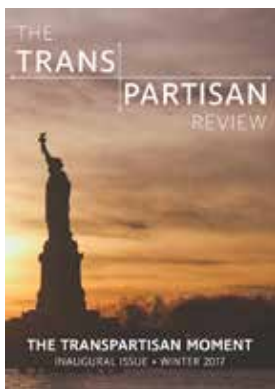
Learn what people are doing to unrig the system every day. The summit's final plenary session, with U.S. Representatives Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI) and Mike Gallagher (R-WI) (embedded above), includes short speeches from grassroots anti-corruption

leaders: *Take Back Our Republic's* John Pudner; *End Citizens United's* Tiffany Muller; *Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund's* Tom Saenz; and *Issue One's* Nick Penniman.

You can also watch the Unrigged Live! variety show below (or on the Unrig [website](#)) hosted by Jennifer Lawrence, with speakers including: *Represent. Us* Director Josh Silver; Professor and former White House Ethics Lawyer Richard Painter; Comedians Tig Notaro, Nikki Glaser, and Adam Yenser; NASA astronaut Ron Garan; and Former State Senator and Our Revolution President Nina Turner. With live music from HoneyHoney, and the legendary New Orleans-based Preservation All-Stars.

*All over the country communities gather routinely to address the fissures in the current American political operating system. A sense of the significance, power and imagination animating these local, national and global initiatives comes from going to [www.unrigsummit.com/summit-live-feed/](http://www.unrigsummit.com/summit-live-feed/) and reliving the Unrig the System Summit. Listen. Watch. Be inspired.*

### Other publications from the Transpartisan Review...





TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #87 • FEBRUARY 26, 2018

## Blockchain & Hernando de Soto: A Transpartisan Path To Reducing Poverty

Our friend Hernando de Soto wrote of ending poverty by recognizing property rights in our first ([January 2017](#)) issue of *The Transpartisan Review*. In the late 1980s and early 90s, de Soto played a key role in ending the Peruvian Terrorist group *Shining Path's* violence by getting the Peruvian government to recognize poor property owners' land deeds.

Today *de Soto* urges societies around the world to use decentralized digital ledgers, based on *blockchain* (similar to those used for bitcoin) to track the property holdings of the poor. His work, embraced by both left and right, and done with an idealistic staff at his *Instituto Libertad y Democracia in Peru*, highlights the importance of property rights for empowering people and mitigating poverty.

Property rights give the people more security and society as a whole more stability, de Soto argues. Formal deeds empower poor landholders. With bitcoin entrepreneur *Patrick Byrne*, de Soto has launched *De Soto Inc.*, a socially-conscious joint venture between him and Byrne's Overstock.com subsidiary Medici Ventures.

De Soto and Byrne's vision is simple. Publicly record property rights and individuals' claims, and globally verify them. This will enable the poor to safely unlock the value of their land. It will also help to resolve land ownership disputes and empower local land ownership.

De Soto Inc. aims to create a global property registry blockchain as a utility that will unlock dead capital, help five billion people secure modernized property rights, give information necessary to settle property conflicts and disputes, and fight terrorism by undermining terrorists' business model.

De Soto is already doing some pilot projects. Byrne is selling part of his stake in Over-stock (worth \$2bn) to pay for the projects. He has also assembled a bunch of Utah whiz-kids to begin creating a special blockchain form for the project. De Soto and Byrne ardently say they can persuade poor people to use social media to record their property rights themselves.

De Soto Inc. uses powerful information technology to empower a unique transpartisan initiative.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #88 • MARCH 05, 2018

## “Americans Agree,” The Chisel Tells Washington Press

On February 27, 2018, *TheChisel.com* told reporters at the Washington Press Club that it's *Bipartisan Survey Shows Right, Left, and Center Agree on #1 Goal for 53% of 34 Issues* ([press release](#)). The Survey reported 'the surprising good news about Americans' shared values from a coalition of partners across the political spectrum'.

'The results demonstrate that despite different vocabularies, favorite news channels, local customs, or professions, Americans maintain many shared values,' said Deborah Devedjian, Founder of *The Chisel*, which spearheaded the survey. You can find the details of the survey at [TheChisel.com](#).

The survey addressed 7 themes: Economy; Social Justice; Liberty & Regulation; Health, Education & Care; Infrastructure & Services; Foreign Affairs; and Governance. The Chisel coalition—30 universities, media outlets, and policy organizations across the political spectrum and the nation—reaches 58 million Americans.

[TheChisel.com](#) hosted the survey on its unique bipartisan public discussion platform. Erik Fogg, Editor of *ReConsider Media* said

of the survey, 'Given partisan stereotypes and soundbites, many commonalities will surprise readers, especially in Employment, Mental Health, Foreign Aid, Campaign Finance, and Elections'

'As a nation, we are frustrated and face uncertainties. We expect this effort will help guide our nation's leaders to understand Americans' goals and devise tactics to achieve those goals. It's time for a new playbook,' said Devedjian. You can order the 100-page book of survey results from [www.YesWeAgree.com](#).

The survey was based on 1,318 voting-age Americans, reflecting 2016 Census by gender, age, race, geography, income. Respondents self-identified for political affiliation and provided numerical rankings and 5,000+ personal comments.

*TheChisel.com* identifies itself as the first and only online civic platform based on 100% bipartisan facts and proposals. No bias, no jargon, and fun, easy-to-understand graphics. Content is developed with recognized experts from both sides of the aisle working together.

[TheChisel.com](#) provides a significant piece of what we call the 'Transpartisan Impulse'.



Image from conorlamb.com.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #89 • MARCH 12, 2018

## Pennsylvania Voters: What Did They Say?

By fewer than 700 votes Conor Lamb looks like the surprising Democratic party winner of the March 13, 2018 Pennsylvania district #18 special Congressional election. This race, southwest of Pittsburgh — where President Trump won by 20 points — raises three key Transpartisan questions.

First, what about the *non-voters*? As in many current elections voters split evenly. Of 532,000 district residents over 18 (PA's voting age) 223,378 voted and 309,000 did not. In the 2016 general election 293,684 voted (100% for the Republican incumbent), and 237,000 did not vote.

Non-voters, intentionally or not, make a political statement — pox on both your houses. Knowing more about them helps candidates, voters, and political parties. In 2014, the Supreme Court upheld a forty-year old Nevada law placing a *none-of-the-above* line on Nevada ballots.

In 2012, Republican Dean Heller beat Democrat Shelley Berkley for a Nevada U.S. Senate seat by 12,000 votes. 45,000 voted 'none of these candidates'. In race after race across the country, non-voters exceed the margin of victory. Their non-vote counts. Non-voters include many Transpartisans.

Second question: What about Gerrymandering? How will the Pennsylvania Supreme Court order abolishing District #18 affect this November's midterm congressional election? The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled against one of the nation's most gerrymandered state systems.

In the 2016, Pennsylvania races with a 53% Republican vote won 13 of 18 Congressional seats. With 45%, Democrats won five seats. A 13 of 18 win requires 72% of a non-gerrymandered state. Dems get unbalanced wins in gerrymandered Maryland. Fed up Transpartisans say pox on both.

Third question, what, if anything, does Pennsylvania's 18th mean for the 2018 midterms? Harry Enten of CNN *says* in seven special elections before this one, Democrats outperformed their partisan baseline by 16 percentage points. Lamb outperformed the partisan baseline by 22.

Analysts of every stripe weigh in. Some suggest a blue wave shifts the house. Others say a strong Trump base and stay-at-home voters hold the house. We suggest that while pursuing their various analyses they also consider that a Transpartisan message, by any candidate, might draw votes from the non-voters.

Transpartisan non-voters offer an untapped or modestly tapped resource for every candidate seeking elective office. Effectively addressed, Transpartisans tip the scales toward winning.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #90 • MARCH 19, 2018

## Warriors For Peace

Bassam Aramin became active in the Palestinian struggle as a boy growing up in Hebron in the West Bank. At 17, he was arrested for planning an attack on Israeli troops, and he spent seven years in prison. He co-founded *Combatants for Peace* in 2005 (with former Israeli and Palestinian combatants) supporting a non-violent struggle against the occupation. He has remained a peace activist since then even when his ten-year-old daughter Abir was killed by an Israeli soldier two years later. (Story shared here: [The Forgiveness Project](#).)

### Combatants for Peace says about itself:

*We are a group of Palestinians and Israelis who have taken an active part in the cycle of violence in our region: Israeli soldiers serving in the IDF and Palestinians as combatants fighting to free their country, Palestine, from the Israeli occupation. We—serving our peoples, raised weapons, which we aimed at each other and saw each other only through gun sights—have established Combatants for Peace on the basis of non-violence principles.*

Founded a year earlier, in 2004, [The Forgiveness Project](#) ‘collects and shares stories from individuals and communities who have rebuilt their lives following hurt and trauma.’ In its own words ‘It provides resources and experiences to help people

[Unite America](#) organizes to elect independents as one strategy for harnessing the none-of-the-above constituency.

examine and overcome their own unresolved grievances. The testimonies we collect bear witness to the resilience of the human spirit and act as a powerful antidote to narratives of hate and dehumanization, presenting alternatives to cycles of conflict, violence, crime and injustice.’

The Project is based on a belief that ‘restorative narratives have the power to transform lives; not only supporting people to move on from harm or trauma, but also building a climate of tolerance, resilience, hope and empathy.’ It does this on multiple platforms — ‘in publications..., in public conversations, and our award-winning RESTORE prison programme.’

The Project is a secular organization ‘sharing stories from all faiths and none’, believing that ‘stories of forgiveness ... demonstrate that forgiveness is first and foremost a personal journey, with no set rules or time limits.’

Sally Kohn’s introduction of Bassam Aramin in her TEDWomen 2017 presentation [What We Can Do About the Culture of Hate](#) has received 565,862 views as of today. [Combatants for Peace](#) and [The Forgiveness Project](#) present useful ways to build trust, the essential element in the transpartisan spirit. Visit their websites to share their experience.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #91 • MARCH 26, 2018

## Transpartisan Opportunity In Foreign Policy

President Trump’s national security shake-up — Mike Pompeo at State, John Bolton as National Security Advisor — is drawing huge criticism from both sides of the aisle, but it also creates an important opportunity to address an important security issue that recent policymakers have largely avoided.

When the planes hit the Twin Towers, it was commonly said that the major security challenges had shifted from ‘strong states’ — USSR, Nazi Germany, China, etc. — to ‘weak states’ influenced by strong non-state parties and forces. At the time, analysts agreed, this seismic shift in the security environment required very different responses than in the past, before 9/11.

The new responses would focus on the non-state sector — local civil society organizations (CSOs), promoting economic, social,

and political change from *within the effected societies*. Despite the talk, little has changed in the foreign policy narrative, which continues to focus on relations between governments.

The failure to think in different ways — to add policy toward non-state actors and parties to traditional concerns about inter-government relations — is rooted in what foreign policy experts know: they know about relations between governments, and they know next to nothing about civil society organizations and non-state issues, including culture. We think this explains much of the policy ‘drift’ of this and the last two administrations especially in relation to the countries of greatest strategic concern, which are the Arab and Muslim countries in the greater Middle East.

The appointment of more ‘hawkish’ foreign policy officials does

not address this new concern — it addresses more traditional challenges (from North Korea and Iran), which are solvable only by governmental action. With all political and media attention on these high profile traditional issues, an unusual opportunity may arise to address these new issues and forces.

For a visceral sense of the power waiting to be harnessed, notice the ‘March For Our Lives’ rally in Washington, DC, on March 24. Also notice, almost simultaneously, the Moscow march urging Putin to resign; rallies across Spanish Catalonia protesting the German arrest of the region’s separatist leader; the massive French protest against labor law reforms; and England’s Brexit struggle becoming known as ‘anti-politics’. States everywhere are struggling to harness non-state energy.

The *Transpartisan Matrix*, proposing integration of freedom and order on both left and right, provides important clues about how to think about these non-state issues. The central challenge in the traditional and tribal societies is to empower traditional people to advance beyond traditional order, which freezes people

in passive concepts of self, to more entrepreneurial selves that can plan active roles in promoting change. There are many examples of real experiences on how to do this so it works both politically and socially. The task is to learn from them.

We propose that a *Working Group* be assembled, including both government and civil society members, bringing together a new breed of experts to examine non-state challenges such as ethnic conflict, strategies for promoting change in traditional cultures, and promotion of property rights for economic, social, and political development — and possible responses to them.

Since civil society organizations have developed the most successful examples of change on these issues, CSOs need to play a significant role in the Working Group, working with traditional foreign policy experts to explore integration of new and traditional policies. Such an effort would represent the best application of transpartisan principles to issues that are both crucial for our security and resist solution by traditional principles alone.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #92 • APRIL 02, 2018

## Gorbachev & Reagan: International Transpartisans

Our colleague Ralph Benko writes ‘*Seven Reasons To Read Gorbachev: His Life And Times*’ for *Forbes Online* (Mar. 31, 2018). The Fall 2017 Gorbachev biography, by Pulitzer Prize winning Amherst history professor William Taubman, underscores the crippling way in which the left/right spectrum hobbles effective political action. Gorbachev’s reform ran into a nationalist reaction.

From one perspective Gorbachev careened from crisis to crisis, domestic and foreign, in the grip of forces changing Europe and the world in ways neither he nor anyone else expected. Attempting to corral the forces of change and expansion into communist ideology, Gorbachev failed to prevent an attempted coup, the fall of the Soviet Union or his own ouster from power. Taubman tells this story.

Jack F. Matlock, Jr, American Ambassador to the USSR from 1987-1991, who wrote of Russia in *Issue #2* of *The Transpartisan Review*, calls Taubman’s biography ‘Comprehensive, judicious, utterly absorbing . . . [giving] rare insight into the man who changed his country and world politics. A model of careful research and compelling narrative skill, this biography is destined to become a modern classic.’

Benko draws attention to important ways Gorbachev’s struggle illuminates today’s politics including the way Gorbachev and

Ronald Reagan created a tight and lasting friendship during their terms in office. Benko says, for example, setting out one of his seven reasons for reading Taubman’s Gorbachev biography:

*Fifth, Gorbachev reveals the story of a political leader in mortal combat with a massive bureaucracy. For those of us following the struggle between our current president and what is romantically, if wrongheadedly, called the ‘Deep State,’ there are profound lessons to be learned. By the way, speaking as one who has served therein, the ‘Deep State’ gives the bureaucracy way too much mystique. Its main weapon is inertia, not laser death rays.*

Ideology — left, right and other — presents a part of the political picture. The integration of freedom and order presents every ideology a task, a puzzle to be solved. As our politics transitions beyond the limits of left/right ideology, a transpartisan awareness may help us see new alliances creating greater freedom within new forms of order.

Taubman’s Gorbachev biography spotlights the workings of that dynamic process. Read Benko on Taubman and Taubman on Gorbachev for useful explorations of how history changes as ideology accommodates social forces—or fails to. The transpartisan vision suggests that recognizing the best ideas in each ideology expands the possibility of finding the best ideas overall.





Detail from Giotto's Ognissanti Madonna. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #93 • APRIL 09, 2018

## David Brooks & The Matrix

In *A Renaissance on the Right* ([NYT 4-12-18](#)) David Brooks writes about an issue he argues underlies the crisis in the Republican Party and in conservative thought that is getting the attention of young conservative writers...

*Suddenly fundamental issues, like the values of the liberal democratic order itself, are up for debate. Some conservatives are laying down comprehensive critiques of the way our society is organized. Modern liberal capitalism is too soulless, they say, too atomizing, too destructive of basic institutions like family, faith and village that give life meaning. Liberal individualism doesn't produce the sort of virtuous, self-restrained people that are required to sustain it.*

We think our [Four Quadrant Matrix](#) helps understand Brooks' issue. We believe he puts his finger on the challenge of order at a time of increasing individualism and individuation. It is an issue that challenges liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans, and society at large. We believe candidates who best address this issue will greatly enhance their chances of winning elections.

Brooks argues that excessive individualism (freedom) is undermining all forms of institutions (order), which are

essential for society to exist. It 'has left us distrustful and alone—naked Lockean,' which explains the recent increase in tribalism, which is undermining basic principles of a liberal democracy. 'Tribalism, he writes, 'is the end product of excessive individualism.'

We think Brooks struggles with this problem because he sees freedom and individualism inherently undermining order—by which he means traditional order. He presents no concept of order that *emerges out of freedom*. He sees freedom and individualism as **substantive**, conceptually *mechanistic*, and *contradictory to order*—inherent enemies of order because separated from it.

An alternative concept of freedom and individualism is **instrumental**, procedural, related to *consciousness* not related to any particular outcome—as in freedom of choice. Parents know that rebelling adolescents, rather than rejecting parental values, seek 'separation' from parents to find values they can call their own. Such separation may or may not lead them to reject, embrace or selectively choose their parents' values. Their real purpose is self-discovery for self-determined values. We believe

that organizations and societies follow a similar course.

Individuation is a *process borne from advancing consciousness of the subjective self*. This process weakens traditional influences and habitual behavior and sets people on a path to *live consciously and make choices*. (Because this process is an individual one, we prefer the word 'individuation' to 'individualism'.)

Brooks focuses on the social effects of this process, tending to see the freedom quadrants as a *collective problem that must have a mechanistic, collective answer*. Believing in a collective-problem and a solution-answer tends to ignore freedom and consciousness, which are essential for individual and collective significance. This significance is redeemed when someone or group freely chooses the good—an expression of the highest form of idealism. In this moment freedom and order become integrated.

The impulse toward freedom, we believe, originates in an accurate understanding of why Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden—they left for 'knowledge', for consciousness.

Individuation is manifest in many intellectual, artistic, and political ways. Two paintings in *Room Two of Florence's Uffizi Gallery*, of 'Madonna and Child', one by Cimabue (created 1280-90) and one by Giotto (1310), represent how, in three decades, expression of consciousness changed from Cimabue's dreamlike Madonna to Giotto's figure, who has become self-determined (and alienated?). This shift displayed individuation and marked the launch of the Renaissance.

Lionel Trilling wrote *Sincerity and Authenticity* (1972) about individuation in literature. Christian mystic Rudolf Steiner (1905), Italian psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli (1965), and the practice of Mindfulness (*used by Congressional mindfulness caucus members* such as Tim Ryan/D OH and Mark

Sanford/R NC) promote individual will-strengthening. With increasing individuation, engaging the self can only happen by strengthening the will as consciousness—to live consciously.

The core challenge here for societies and political systems is imagining a *concept of order that earns voluntary allegiance—order that springs from and is fed by freedom—an order that, in Brook's terms, 'produce(s) the sort of virtuous, self-restrained people that are required to sustain' American democratic life*.

Our suggested answer is counterintuitive and ironic as it looks to *economists* and *free-market capitalism* for support for the democratic enterprise. We suggest a key part of the answer is OWNERSHIP—*property rights* not only in *private space*, which is exclusive and represents traditional economic interests; but also in PUBLIC SPACE, such as schools, housing projects, health programs, and security (policing) systems, for example, which are *inclusive*.

Real experiences show that shared ownership (property rights in public spaces) can be a powerful instrument for bringing people—*everyone*, including the most exalted and the most disadvantaged—together in common purpose. The work of our friend and colleague Hernando de Soto, expanding his previous efforts by using blockchain to legally formalize the existing de facto ownership of land by disadvantaged individuals around the world moves in this direction.

We have presented real, powerful, examples of such integrated efforts, like de Soto's, in previous Notes and articles. We will present more in future writings. They are in fact springing up all around us like seedlings in a newly planted lawn. The political task consists of creating space to effectively nurture and harness the advancing consciousness of millions of individuals across the world. In public spaces ownership belongs to everyone.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #94 • APRIL 16, 2018

## How The Transpartisan Vision Gains Traction

We published the first in our series of weekly *Transpartisan Notes* on July 4th, 2016. In the 22 months since, the world has turned upside down. As we approach our 100th Note, we see the *forces of individuation* challenging the *institutions of order* across the globe in every walk of life.

In the past two years, we've also published two issues of *The Transpartisan Review* (featuring sixteen articles), shared three special notes, a transpartisan bibliography, and focused on the importance of tools such as our Transpartisan Matrix and Joan Blades' *Living Room Conversations* to help people understand the

forces reshaping our world.

Each *Transpartisan Note*, each article, each lead presents an example of political opponents problem-solving together or ordinary people in transpartisan collaboration, or a combination of both. Our accumulating inventory of transpartisan examples shares a vision of political interactions quite different from the click-bait news of daily political conflict.

Taking stock of our two year effort, we see this transpartisan vision gaining ground in the lives of actual people, even as it remains virtually invisible in the hyper-polarized, entertainment-

driven, 24/7 circus of partisan debate that continues to alienate people from parochial political, bickering gridlock.

Imagine alternative paths leading to political successes that are all but impossible for the petty partisans to conceive. Around the world *individual force* challenges *institutional power* in ways unprecedented, unexpected, and unwelcomed by those occupying positions of institutional power.

Let's begin with individual constituencies' seemingly contrary demands: more transparency and more privacy; more government services and lower taxes; more freedom and more security; more income and less useless work; more sexual freedom and more sexual responsibility; and fewer abortions along with more reproductive choice.

This list of assumed dichotomies goes on and on. Today's political class (15% right, 15% left) leverages these contrary perspectives and fights, fights, fights. It seems to enjoy fighting,

egged on by a media that maximize revenues by reporting "stories" of conflict. We urge this conflict include *transpartisan* approaches to integrate these dichotomies into policy approaches that might actually solve problems.

By *transpartisan* we refer to the over 70% of American citizens who are non-registered eligible voters — along with the registered non-voting citizens, the registered voting Independents, registered voters who choose none-of-the-above, and the "hold-your-nose" Democrats and Republicans — all who want more to politics than partisan infighting.

Our *Transpartisan Notes* have included examples from the policy dichotomy areas listed above, and we are aware of many others. In a future Transpartisan Note — How The Transpartisan Vision Gains Traction II — we will reprise some previous notes and suggest new initiatives.

As people learn about Transpartisan, it gains traction.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #95 • MAY 21, 2018

## The Royal Wedding: Transpartisan On Display

That Royal Wedding!!! A kaleidoscope of integrating political and cultural memes, like a flash of lightning showing the flow of transpartisan movement across the globe.

A (the?) most spectacular transpartisan event of this young century. The divorced, biracial American Meghan Markle, and the handsome British prince, son of Diana, emerge from the day as a most important, symbolic embodiment of how far transpartisan values have come and how bright a future they point toward.

Transpartisan appears in multiple forms. Mainstream political symbols tend toward mechanistic, binary concepts, preoccupied with exposing falsehood. These concepts have useful meaning only in disengaged, abstract public life. They have little or no meaning in private, engaged life.

Around the globe privately engaged individuals demand their public servants stop their nonsensical arguing and destructive interference in private lives. The Royal Wedding underscored and flashed into view the vast private changes underway in our community lives and how far out of touch formal politics is with personal living.

Mainstream symbols rooted in crudely crafted identity politics parade across the 'public' stage as weapons. Symbols like left, right, race, gender, life as conflict, 'winners' and 'losers', 'victims' and 'oppressors' (including "oppressive" culture) clash in wasteful conflict. They deny, diminish, denigrate the primacy of 'private' lives.

Transpartisan recognizes individuals striving for connection beyond the superficial public categories. Transpartisan recognizes qualities, in conscious, engaged life that transform the brittle disengaged forms of public political combat. The Wedding showed the breakup of all the mythic furniture, starting with race.

Here was the British royal family, the heart of the British Establishment, with blacks everywhere celebrating the essence of order-right values, rooted in love which order and free, left and right all feel moved by and energetically embrace. That embrace transcends all identity conflict. It is transpartisan. Examples:

- Alongside the Most Revd Justin Welby white Archbishop of Canterbury was a sermon, raved about by Rev Welby, delivered by The Very Rev. Michael Curry, the first African-American to preside over the Episcopal Church of America, delivered in the manner of a Southern Baptist preacher on the power of love;
- Rose Josephine Hudson-Wilkin, QHC a black woman who serves as the personal Chaplain to the Queen, followed with a shorter sermon also intoning about the power of love;
- The Kingdom Choir, made up of 20 singers 'a unique group of dedicated men and women, who blend Choral discipline with the raw Gospel spiritual sound – drawn from an inner experience,' says their website. This all-black choir marked the rise of slavery's descendants into the heart of the colonial enterprise;



- Sheku Kanneh-Mason, the black royal wedding cellist, gave, according to multiple media reports and reactions from the vast audience that watched, a breathtaking performance.
- Then The Wedding disposed of gender orthodoxy. Meghan's arrestingly simple gown came from Givenchy, a first-tier temple of haute couture in Paris. It was designed by the British designer Claire Wade Keller, who was the first female artistic director in Givenchy's history. Long articles appeared on how the dress, 'inspired by all 12 signs of the Zodiac,' was a perfect symbol for Meghan.
- Sir Elton John attending the wedding with his husband David Furnish and highlighting the reception underscored the decline of gender orthodoxies.

The royal couple chose the music, combining traditional High-Church music with African-American gospel. The service began with a musical fanfare by the state trumpeters of the Household Cavalry, featuring Lance Corporal Kate Sandford, first woman from the Household Cavalry band to play the fanfare at a Royal wedding.

Celebrities abounded: Amal and George Clooney, Elton John, Serena Williams, David and Victoria Beckham, Oprah. All in Windsor Castle's medieval splendor in the Queen's own St. George's Chapel, completed by Henry VIII in 1528, reminding

that the march of individual reach, personal conscience, and free expression begun at the beginning of time continues on a long and winding path into today and beyond.

Hundreds of thousands of 'common' private people waited all night and lined the streets to see the royal couple. The constant drum-beat theme was how they LOVED Meghan, how it thrilled them that this beautiful American was marrying the most popular member of the British royal family.

Will the moment last? Divorce until recently was the 'line in the sand' for the English church. How things have changed. Three of the Queen's four children are divorced, to a large degree because of the suffocating rigidity of the roles imposed on people who need more than anything free expression.

And Meghan Markle? Her intense eyes and brilliant smile suggest an embracing transpartisan soul who understands the extraordinary role she has been 'called' to play. Embracing and transcending her commitment to her husband, she seemed to revel in her role, which is more significant and permanent than any she auditioned for as an actress—a role she will play for the whole of her life.

We suggest this role expresses love, drawn from an inner experience which blends discipline and order with the raw spiritual force of freedom. What a Wedding!

## VISIT THE TRANSPARTISAN REVIEW ONLINE

Launched in July 2016, *The Transpartisan Review* website provides a thoughtful examination of historical and current events from a transpartisan perspective.

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- News on Upcoming Transpartisan Events
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*...and much more!*

[www.transpartisanreview.com](http://www.transpartisanreview.com)







Official White House photo.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #96 • JUNE 11, 2018

## The Korea Summit

‘Sometimes overlapping theatrical objectives can create strange transpartisan bedfellows. What’s next? Don’t be surprised if at some point Kim is watching basketball at Madison Square Garden.’ These words ended our February 12, 2018, Note #85, *‘Korea and the Olympics: Moral, Therapeutic & Transpartisan Values.’*

Today, four months later, we find ourselves several steps closer to Kim at the Garden. Korea, Kim, and Trump exhibit one exasperating feature of today’s political debate. Under this President untethered political positions seem to have replaced traditional ‘orderly’ positions on both ‘left’ and ‘right.’

The past debate structure seemed relatively stable. ‘Conservative strong defense’ interacting with ‘progressive engagement’ reassured public and participants. Everyone knew how a Democratic or Republican President would act on issues from trade to war to foreign policy. For 65 years the cold Korean War simmered.

Extra-political forces, technology, population, climate, etc., roil this comfortable structure. Donald Trump masterfully exploits this radically upended stability and predictability. He consciously—even *theatrically*—goes out of his way to be unpredictable. He routinely violates traditional Republican Presidential positions.

Trump explicitly uses, perhaps consciously, uncertainty as a leadership principle. He called Kim Jong Un ‘Rocket Man’ when he fired test missiles and boasted that his atomic and hydrogen bombs could hit the U.S. mainland. Trump called him smart, committed, and loved after the Singapore agreement.

It is a scary, crazy, exciting (pick your adjective) time, when serious people commonly say an atomic conflict with North Korea poses the greatest threat to world peace and then attack the “agreement” to denuclearize the Korean peninsula as dangerous. Ditto when *The Washington Post* reports Dennis Rodman as a commentator.

‘If Trump wants the credit, he can take all the credit. He can have it all. I just want them to talk,’ Rodman said on ‘Good Morning, America,’ . . . he appeared . . . wearing dark sunglasses, a ‘Make America Great Again’ hat and a T-shirt promoting a cryptocurrency company that sponsored his trips to Singapore and North Korea.

Kim at the Garden seems a few steps closer as deep forces drive humanity down a transpartisan road toward a crazy, exciting future.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #97 • JUNE 18, 2018

## The Korea Summit II

How, then, can one understand the Singapore Summit? It brought two circus performers, Kim and Trump, together, proclaiming a new era in the relationship. A result. Democrats attacked Trump's Republican supporters for doing precisely what those Republican would have eviscerated any Democrat for doing.

Now, different from the past, Democrats preach the caution common from Republicans, when they criticized 'weak' Democratic foreign policy. Critics cautioned how 'vulnerable' Singapore made Trump. They argued he just made up the positive—even *transformative*—Summit results. Nothing, they said, had really changed.

In [Transpartisan Note #85](#) we argued that North Korea's *isolation* prior to Trump's interactions with Kim dangerously fueled Kim's apparent psychosis. The most important antidote was to start interacting with him, bring him out of the shadows. We could equally say Kim's warlike rhetoric dangerously fueled Trump's belligerence.

Then the Olympics. Pageantry, Korea North and South marching together. Kim's charismatic sister. US VP Pence scowling. These helped bring Kim and his country into the open. Public dialogue followed about negotiations first with the South and then with Trump, leading to Singapore.

Only a Pence / Muammar al-Gaddafi misstep caused a bump, but only a bump, in the road to Singapore. Pence's gaff cast a light on Kim. He has fear. Gaddafi danced with the West for

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #98 • JULY 09, 2018

## Growing Out Of Identity Politics

We think Trump found and exploits a powerful contradiction in the current terms of American and even global political discourse. This contradiction spotlights a deep wound or tear in the American social fabric—one that profoundly distorts our political debate.

American political parties offer individuals key ways to express and address their wants and needs. Americans today find political parties increasingly unable or unwilling to effectively deliver on their offer. Wants and needs go unmet. Thus the vast majority of Americans resist identifying with either major party.

The central problem arises out of post WWII forces of *individuation*—pushing self-expression—with both economic

years; gave up his nuclear weapons; then died in a culvert beaten by former subjects. It was as if Pence said surrender Kim or die like a dog.

Trump the Unpredictable avoids rigidly following established behavior patterns. He stepped around the gaff. Republicans, Democrats, supporters, and critics, now respond to him, while he responds to our times' shaping forces, in various rigid ways. This strategy takes them all out of creative participation in a fluid environment.

The deep forces shaping contemporary society move all parties. For the moment only Trump seems able to exploit these forces. Each side is trying to 'keep up' often changing positions to sustain conflict. In doing so they miss transpartisan opportunities on both foreign and domestic issues.

David Ignatius, of *The Washington Post*, summed up a grudging side of a Trump alienated media saying, 'Diplomacy isn't always pretty. Dubious people sometimes do very good things. So let's celebrate Trump's success in Singapore and hope someone can translate President Ronald Reagan's injunction to "trust but verify" into Korean.'

Today mainstream political conflict looks reflexive and empty of meaning. Ignatius' comment suggests that the media could play a more creative role than they often do. They might open dialogue to new ideas while continuing to fan the flames of conflict. Conflict feeds their business model. Creative dialogue feeds democracy.

and social consequences tearing at the social and political fabric.

**Economically**, individuation in America and other countries is creating both material improvement for the 'middle class' (neither rich nor poor) and significant inequality between them and both the top and the bottom (1% at the top and 15% at the bottom).

**Socially**, individuation, pushing self-expression, is weakening tradition and undermining traditional communities of family and church that were the basis of traditional social order.

These trends, both economic and social, are pulling countries apart, creating the tricky task of bringing together people in conflict with each other to find new institutions and expressions of values to connect them. Trump is salting a wound related to

identity politics (which exists on both the left and the right). The new information technologies, reflecting and encouraging self-expression, bring this real divide into view while also encouraging it.

On both left and right, identity politics represents 'victims'—people oppressed by 'oppressors'—who will be liberated only when oppressors stop their oppression either by their choice or political force. The seething, righteous anger—if not rage—of the Sanders and Trump campaign crowds captures the pain and the fury.

Inflaming crowds leads to righteous anger and the intense desire to PUNISH oppressors. Sander's left goes after the 1%. Trump's right shifts the conservatives' flag from freedom and virtue (freedom and order). Instead, it pitches to a 'base' of new (non-left) 'victims'—people feeling oppressed by progressive public policies aimed at helping progressives' 'victims'.

Each side actually sees the other's identity politics base as oppressors. Before Trump, his 'victims' of progressive government programs were invisible because conservatives (promoting freedom and virtue) ignored them and their pain (often arguing instead that they were to blame). Traditional conservatives gave the Trump-base 'victims' no place around which to organize politically, so they went left.

Kathleen Parker highlights how Trump picked the scab that radically changed that conservative stance: 'Listen to what people are worried about, then throw fire at it.' Her word choice touches why people rage at Trump: because (fundamentally) they experience his behavior as focused on turning Americans against each other. Meanwhile, Sander's, disdaining traditional Democrats, throws his own fire.

Although his critics see Trump's behavior as uniquely destructive and ugly, he is only imitating the progressive playbook. Like progressives, Trump seizes the dark side of identity politics—the partisan politicizing of 'victims'. He is just doing it, for the first time, on behalf of a different set of 'victims'.

Trump offends the declining number of people who are politically wedded to the left's victims—'offends' is not nearly strong enough: 'CRAZY ENRAGED' is closer. On the right the 'CRAZY ENRAGED' of the declining traditional conservative right (poverty is the price of lost virtue) see the Trump/Bernie crowd as the mob going for civilization's throat.

Both may be even more enraged to consider that Trump is *a natural consequence of progressive identity politics* indulged by *conservative patronizing* that accepts behavior it previously disdained.

Progressive government programs designed to help the poor, the weak, and the discarded focus on and spawn their own set of self-perceived victims—those that government helps by pushing them around—public housing tenants feeling bullied by arbitrary rules; Medicaid and Medicare consumers blocked from using 'alternative' medicine; recipients of student loans and disaster relief hammered by poor government performance and marketplace failure. Progressives are Trump's foster parents—conservatives his indulgent grandparents.

The search for, and revelation of, a transpartisan politics, we believe, depends on seeing that identity politics in either the progressive or conservative form inherently misses the point and tends to turn Americans against each other.

Identity politics disempowers both left and right politically-proclaimed victims from taking control of their own lives. It also disempowers the 'left' and the 'right' as collective political forces, giving each a smaller and smaller share of formal political power. Rather than move to the center, the large mass of society moves out of the current game. In the name of protecting, identity politics disempowers.

Both sides disempower their 'victims' conceptually by constantly telling them their lives are failed; other people (claims the traditional left) or their own character flaws (claims the traditional right) are to blame, and their only hope is that these other people ('oppressors') can be forced to change (the left) or they can change and overcome their character flaws (the right). Then the two sides ('they are to blame', 'you must change') fight.

The hope for recognizing and organizing an emerging transpartisan politics depends on creating institutions that empower individual 'victim' groups—#metwo, blue and #blacklivesmatter, marching victims of mass school shootings, crime victim rights groups, and many, many more (indeed all individuals)—to take control of their own lives, while controlling forces that seek to control them.

We need concepts of equality and supporting institutions that personally engage people so they see each other as human rather than as abstractions (as in identity politics), leading people out of what, in the context of the sex work/trafficking debate, Laura Agustín calls the 'rescue industry.' Transpartisan suggests that empowerment trumps rescue in every arena.

Exploiting differences for political gain, a tendency of our current politics, retards our really great opportunity, which is to create institutions that promote the *personal engagement* that will empower people by encouraging those who are 'different' to see each other as human.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #99 • JULY 16, 2018

## Identity Politics: Transpartisan Story

The May 25th, 2018 New York Times op-ed article *Why Life as a Foster Child Made Me a Conservative* by Rob (Robert Kim) Henderson — a 2018 Yale graduate, 8-year Air Force veteran, and loved son of his foster mother and her female partner — features significant transpartisan themes.

**First**, the headline misdirects. After recounting his story Robert Kim closes by saying: “If today that makes me a conservative, great. I take responsibility for that.” In the article, rather than saying he is a conservative, he says if progressives, society, or others see him as conservative he accepts and takes responsibility for that.

Yale has few conservatives and even fewer foster children. Rob’s drug-addicted birth mother sent him to foster care for five years when he was very young. He was adopted when he was seven and was brought up in broken homes. His three names, Robert Kim Henderson, came from three different adults, all of whom, it turned out, abandoned him.

**Second**, victims, progressive, conservative, other. A Yale classmate recently told Rob he was a victim. He had never heard himself called a victim, only at Yale. He answered: ‘...if someone had told me I was a victim as a kid, I would never have made it to the Air Force, where I served for eight years, or to Yale. I would have given up.’

When he was ten, a teacher told Rob that if he really committed himself, he could change his life—which he did. His fellow student suggested that Rob ‘was not as progressive’ as he was. Strange syntax. Did this fellow student mean Rob was not as progressive as the progressive student? Did he mean Rob was less progressive than Rob thought he was? Did he mean not thinking of himself as a “victim” meant he was not progressive at all?

**Third**, what is a conservative? Rob then reflected on what it means to be a conservative. His first principle was honoring inherited wisdom, which for him meant ‘the value of the

two-parent family’. He listed among benefits emotional and financial support. A psychology professor helped make his case when he asked students anonymously to describe their parental background. All 25 in the class except himself and one other came from traditional two-parent families.

Foster children fare even worse. Ten percent go to college, and only three percent graduate. He noted that out of some 5,000 undergraduates at Yale, fewer than ten were foster children.

In discussing other values conservatives claim, he focused on the rights and responsibilities of individuals. Among responsibilities, he notes ‘a sense of unease among my peers’ when he says parents ‘should prioritize their children over their careers.’ ‘They think I want to blame individuals rather than a nebulous foe like poverty ... [or] ideologies, institutions, abstractions’.

**Finally**, success. When people ask Rob how he was able to succeed given his troubled childhood, or when people use his success to argue for lax attitudes about parenting his ‘skin crawls.’ He explains his success simply: ‘During adolescence, I had the benefit of two parents..., and I had control of my future.’ His parents created a stable home for him in rural California. ‘We had dinner together every weeknight. We talked about minutiae ... we loved each other.’

‘My adoptive mother and her (female) partner [created a stable family]... Though they experienced homophobia and struggled financially, they never let it get in the way of doing the right thing for their son.’

Rob did not comment on the drum beat of opinion in political media, academic studies, legislative initiatives, and in conservative circles that repeats the stereotype that “Conservatives want to keep gay couples from adopting fostering kids”.

What do you call a foster kid from a financially stressed California family with two female parents who promotes duty, love and responsibility? Transpartisan.



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TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #100 • JULY 30, 2018

## The Political Challenge of Reforming Government Schools

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina destroyed the New Orleans school system.

Education is among the most important, if not *the most important issue*, in every community. The greatest education challenge in most communities lies in reforming and sustaining *government* (that is public) schools. With few exceptions, government schools across the country and around the world face deep crisis.

On July 1, 2018, the state of Louisiana, which took over the New Orleans schools after Katrina, returned control of all New Orleans schools to the city. In a little over a decade, *writes* Progressive Pulitzer Prize New York Times journalist David Leonhardt on July 15, "the *academic progress* has been remarkable." In all major dimensions the New Orleans school rebuilding program scored impressively.

On July 15, researchers Douglas Harris and Matthew Larsen *reported* increases in: New Orleans student achievement by 11–16 percentiles; high school graduation 3–9 percentage points; college entry 8–15 points; college persistence 4–7 points; graduation 3–5 points; college outcomes 10–67%. Outcomes for

disadvantaged students and educational inequities for high school and college also improved.

The re-creation of New Orleans schools, say researchers Harris and Larsen, "... represent the first time in the last century that the traditional U.S. government-driven system of K-12 schooling has been completely replaced by a market-driven one."

What lessons can be learned from New Orleans' experience? What features have the limited political opposition which often destroys so many plans for school reform?

Both public government school and private charter schools face powerful political opposition dividing communities for and against each. New Orleans by-passed this common battle very simply: every school became a charter school. No need to fight. We believe that three features of the New Orleans reform are very important, and it happens that they imitate other reform experiences that we are aware of.

The three features are:

- **Everyone is included** in the reform; everyone gets to participate. In current charter school advocacy, schools

become charter schools for groups that organize charters. Everyone else is left behind 'in the nightmare'.

- **Changes occur organically** rather than mechanically. Principals and teachers are given authority and held to accountability. Most public policy reforms today are implemented mechanically on order from 'central'.
- **Every community controls its school.** Though legally part of the public system Charter schools here act independently. This essential principle *empowers* school communities with shared common ownership of schools.

There are many examples of individual schools operating on these principles in many places, both in the U.S. and globally. *Educate Girls Globally*, created by Lawry Chickering, has been working in two states of India for fifteen years in about 7,000 schools serving more than 500,000 children. It uses these principles and has not experienced significant opposition or conflict *in a single school*.

New Orleans' school renaissance provides another way that city overcomes Katrina.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #101 • AUGUST 20, 2018

## A Transpartisan Challenge for Leaders of an Independent Politics

**We spent August 17-19 in Denver, CO at the Unite America Summit.** During the meeting, the rough outline of a path to power for Politically Independent People seemed visible. Here is some of what we saw:

1. **Votes:** Over 40% of voters register Independent. This is more than register for either major political party. Roughly half of Americans constitutionally eligible to vote fail to register. These two unaligned groups—60 to 70% of the American public—add up to more people than both major (and "third") political parties combined. Also, more and more major party members say they dislike their current parties.
2. **Process:** Independent people seek a more effective electoral process. Open primaries, rank choice voting, the end of gerrymandered districts, full disclosure of campaign financing (supported 8 to 1 by the Supreme Court in *Citizens United*), inclusive voting (mail in ballots, same day and driver license registration), and other adjustments expanding voter access all get wide independent support.
3. **Program:** Promoting active citizen participation in, or ownership of, public spaces—schools, health centers and other community services—gets broad local citizen support (we call this transpartisan). Nothing expands greater recognition of Independent values more than citizen participation when informed by successful experiences. Independent candidates thrive when endorsing such programs.
4. **Citizen Empowerment:** Informal, incremental action more than formal government mandates create successful experiences in citizen empowerment. Efforts to reform public schools often draw strong opposition while citizen initiatives to 'increase community support' for schools, emerging

organically and consensually, rarely provoke opposition. Community support fuels independent campaigns.

5. **Shared Ownership:** More shared ownership in public services—schools, hospitals, police, roads/biking planning, and others—creates active roles for all major civic groups. Teachers engage with parents and students, patients and families work with hospitals, citizens join with police and road planners. Everyone has a stake in working together to promote productive communities. Independents thrive.
6. **Models:** One example—shared school ownership—creates informal charter schools with no threat to teachers or families. Empowerment works to 'leave no one—teachers or students—behind'. Empowering programs—infrastructure, health, education, security, etc.—enliven communities. Local political forces uniquely position independents to champion such movements outside formal partisan political channels.
7. **Embrace and Transcend:** Increasingly the shenanigans of the Democratic and Republican leadership sicken party members and neutered office holders. Sound independent strategy leaves no disgusted party member behind. Dems and Reps, like everyone, live in communities. Transpartisan strategy embraces all party players and transcends leadership shenanigans. It takes everyone to make a village work.

For two days in August 2018, 250 inspired, empowered, enlivened former Dems, Reps, Third Party, nonaligned, unorganized, committed political players calling themselves Independent met in Denver to take the next step in organizing—what?

Some said a Third Party. Others said a Second Party. Some said a National (Global) Movement. Others said Local Communities.

All wanted better elections. All wanted more—beyond the stale—possible solutions to every problem on the table. All wanted to be friendly, civil with people holding different ideas. All loved America. All wanted a more perfect union.

**The Transpartisan Challenge:** Find, without creating further obstacles, national, state, local, and community ways to give articulate voice to, and facilitate effective action by, the over 70% of the people who seek better happier lives for themselves,

their communities, their country, and the world and feel that the major political parties fail them.

**The Challenge:** Move Independent to center stage.

Read about **Unite America Summit** in the Washington Post [here](#), the Denver Post [here](#), IVN [here](#), and watch John King talk about it on CNN TV [here](#).

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #102 • AUGUST 27, 2018

## We All Love Our Country

*On Saturday, August 25th, we lost quintessential American John McCain. Agree or disagree with his politics, it's generally accepted that the 5-term Senator, 2-term Congressman, presidential candidate, Navy pilot, and war hero was one of the most devoted civil servants in Washington. His final message to the citizens of the nation he dedicated his life to offers a truly transpartisan message condemning tribalism and celebrating our shared love for our country.*

*In tribute to the service of Senator McCain, we share his final, transpartisan, message with our readers...*

### John McCain's "Letter to America":

My fellow Americans whom I have gratefully served for 60 years and especially my fellow Arizonians. Thank you for the privilege of serving you, and for the rewarding life that service in uniform and in public office has allowed me to lead.

I've tried to serve our country honorably. I've made mistakes but I hope my love for America will be weighed favorably against them. I've often observed that I am the luckiest person on earth. I feel that way even now, as I prepare for the end of my life. I've loved my life, all of it. I've had experiences, adventures, friendships, enough for 10 satisfying lives, and I am so thankful. Like most people, I have regrets. But I would not trade a day of my life in good or bad times for the best day of anybody else's.

I owe this satisfaction to the love of my family. One man has never had a more loving wife or children he was prouder of than I am of mine. And I owe it to America to be connected to America's causes: Liberty, equal justice, and respect for the dignity of all people brings happiness more sublime than life's fleeting pleasures. Our identities and sense of worth were not circumscribed, but are enlarged by serving good causes bigger than ourselves.

Fellow Americans, that association has meant more to me than any other. I lived and died a proud American. We are citizens of the world's greatest republic, a nation of ideals, not blood and soil. We are blessed and are a blessing to humanity when we uphold and advance those ideals at home and in the world. We have helped liberate more people from tyranny and poverty than ever before in history, and we have acquired great wealth and power in the progress.

We weaken our greatness when we confuse our patriotism with tribal rivalries that have sown resentment, and hatred and violence in all the corners of the globe. We weaken it when we hide behind walls, rather than tear them down; when we doubt the power of our ideals, rather than trust them to be the great force for change they have always been.

We are 325 million opinionated, vociferous individuals. We argue and compete and sometimes even vilify each other in our raucous public debates. But we have always had so much more in common with each other than in disagreement. If only we remember that and give each other the benefit of the presumption that we all love our country, we will get through these challenging times. We will come through them stronger than before, we always do.

Ten years ago I had the privilege to concede defeat in the election for president. I want to end my farewell to you with heartfelt faith in Americans that I felt so powerfully that evening. I feel it powerfully still.

Do not despair of our present difficulties. We believe always in the promise and greatness of America because nothing is inevitable here. Americans never quit, we never surrender, we never hide from history. We make history. Farewell fellow Americans, God bless you, and God bless America.

– Senator John McCain





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TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #103 • SEPTEMBER 03, 2018

## Shared Rights In Public Space: A Transpartisan Key

Free market champion and our friend Milton Friedman often said that he thought the apparently socialist, communal, and utopian Israeli *Kibbutzim* are a *triumph of capitalism*. Why? Because they are freely chosen. That many socialists also regard them as a *triumph of socialism* highlights an important principle of our [Four Quadrant Transpartisan Matrix](#) and of transpartisan politics.

Besides being freely chosen, the *kibbutzim* also feature—internally—systems of *shared ownership* of public spaces. Sharing ownership means everyone *having a stake*: everyone *-serving the private interests people have by working for the larger good*.

*In 2010, there were 270 kibbutzim in Israel. Their factories and farms account for 9% of Israel's industrial output worth US \$8 billion and 40% of its agricultural output, worth over \$1.7 billion.*

The debate between capitalism and socialism has always been conducted between *diametrically opposed* visions—the freedom-right versus the order-left. This diametric opposition positions one vision (freedom-right) with limited appeals to the common

good against the other (order-left) with limited appeals to freedom (as demonstrated on our [Transpartisan Matrix](#)).

Neither side can imagine situations in which people will *choose the good*, despite evidence everywhere of people doing just that. *In private life* that is the overriding value in families, communities, and love. In the contentious free-right, order-left conflict, both speak as if it represents the entire right and the entire left.

Property rights in private property are a cornerstone institution in market economies, as studied by economists. *Economists seem to have little or no interest in shared rights in public spaces* such as schools. While insisting their only interest is to observe the real world, economists seem to believe only in self-interest, narrowly understood (in private space) as a motivator of behavior.

Economist's seem to overlook *shared interests*, which can be among peoples' most cherished values (the only values, we would say, that people live and die for). Shared interests are part of 'self-interest'—all studies of happiness, for example, focus on *associations* and *relationships*, which involve shared interests. It



takes much more than money to live a happy life.

Many examples exist of shared property rights promoting powerful examples of social triumphs, with benefits widely shared, including the economically very poor. Working in two states of India, *Educate Girls Globally* (EGG), the education group Lawry founded on the four-quadrant model, has been conducting a fifteen-year experiment.

EGG shows how shared rights, using the same incentives as private rights, can empower traditional communities, including girls, into powerful, active leaders and entrepreneurs. Working only in government schools, EGG's model is changing the cultures of both traditional communities and even government bureaucracies.

The first question in the first EGG community meeting is who owns the school? At first people answer **The Government**, and the next hour is taken up with complaints about what the government is not doing. The first meeting aims for people to understand that the school will never be any better than they themselves make it, and that *they, the people, not the government, are the real owners of the school* (not legally, but informally, in spirit).

EGG has worked in more than 7,000 schools in two states, and in every one people get it. This leads them to mobilize in a variety of different ways for action. An important example is community projects without any subsidy from EGG—Lawry likes to say that EGG's only currency is empowerment.

In EGG's **Girls' Parliaments**, empowerment mobilizes girls as leaders and role models. The crucial empowerment moment comes when they say they want boys to join them. When asked 'How many?', the answer is: '50-50.' They don't want any advantage in numbers.

The magic in EGG's use of the four-quadrant model comes from integrating the empowering feature of OWNERSHIP

(having a STAKE, which is the key to CARING) with the powerful PROCESS of active participation. This crucial integration drives all democratic systems.

When all four quadrants—freedom and order on both left and right—actively empower people, *striving* is internalized. Everyone's contribution to the larger good is valued. SHARED OWNERSHIP—for schools students, parents, families, and communities—drives a PROCESS of working together to promote the common good.

When a community chooses to work together for the good, it does more than merely follow rules. Our current political debate focuses almost entirely on rules—what are they, who makes them (how can I be the one?). What punishment follows violating them? We are now even discussing why should the rules apply to me.

In this age of claimed populism, the principal champions of populist rage—Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders—always seem to *frown in anger*, threatening to punish evil-doing elites. Shared ownership empowers people to look inward and feel their power *positively*. Co-owners are not 'victims'. Nobody is oppressing them.

Friedman often said he thought that the greatest threat to freedom in the world was the decline of both personal and social responsibility. Many experiences show that introducing shared rights in public space—a 'capitalist' (market-based) instrument—would largely solve that problem. The Israeli *Kibbutzim* show how a capitalist/socialist vision can produce 40% of the agricultural output of one major country when policy and culture allows shared ownership to create and allocate resources that are part of the common good.

Freedom and Order, left and right—people working together for the common good—builds strong democracies. Strong democracies build strong communities and strong countries.



TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #104 • SEPTEMBER 10, 2018

## Challenges of Gaining Transpartisan Traction

Signs of discontent with our polarized politics are everywhere: survey data on voter opinions; the number of citizens registering Independent (43%), more than either Democrat or Republican; even larger numbers of people alienated from the major parties (as many as two-thirds of age-eligible citizens avoiding association with either party, more than the *combined numbers* of both).

Despite signs of discontent and increasing efforts to promote a collaborative politics — and increasing reports of transpartisan undertakings in local venues such as those reported by James and Deborah Fallows in their book *Our Towns* — it is hard to see more than fleeting signs of the transpartisan vision taking root in promoting greater collaboration in national politics.

National politicians seem to be playing a game that minimizes or disregards the concerns and interest of their local communities. One place to search for possible explanations for this local national disconnect begins with revisiting the causes and role of conflict.

After World War II, social, cultural *and* political polarization first appeared during the 1960s over policy failures on race and Vietnam. Demands for *self-expression* were changing all social relationships, and tradition was retreating everywhere.

Relationships based on self-expression tend to be torn by conflict especially compared to those influenced by tradition. During the sixties the mass media became a major influence on public perceptions of political events, and the media's business model — marketing audiences to advertisers — systematically encouraged them to report on and thus encourage conflict.

The forces promoting self-expression and weakening tradition — fueled by the forty-hour work week, interstate highways, communication technology, the birth control pill, and increasing incomes — drove the final third of the 20th century. These same forces have accelerated in the 21st century.

The greatest changes in the past seventy years involve a *weakening of adversity*. People's material lives have continued to improve. Throughout history, until the end of World War II, the *threat of war* and of *economic privation* actively promoted strong and active, social cooperation and individual responsibility. As peace predominated American life and material poverty declined individuals felt less pressure to cooperate and more desire to express themselves.

**The end of war**, as a social norm for the United States, first became symbolically obvious when President Johnson said we could fight the Vietnam War and still have 'guns and butter'. During wars before Vietnam, we only had guns; there was no butter. Perhaps the most powerful symbol of the declining role of war in shaping the national identity was the end of the draft in 1973.

While many people remain economically 'poor' in the U.S. their poverty is only relative compared to other countries, where people are much poorer. (According to the Census Bureau September 2017 poverty *report* the official US poverty rate is 12.7 percent, with an estimated 43.1 million Americans living in poverty.)

The US poverty problem is *relative* rather than *absolute*. This relative poverty creates a *subjective* challenge in place of the previous *objective* challenge. People can stay alive. But they appear to have (and in fact have) fewer economic assets than those they see around them, especially on TV.

**Technology** has played an obviously huge role. The scale of change is especially obvious from the *details* of change. An example is the invention of the transistor, which made it possible to build electronic devices that were originally enormous then became small enough to fit into one's pocket or purse right next to the birth control pill.

*Essay continues in the next Transpartisan Note.*

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #105 • SEPTEMBER 17, 2018

## Challenges of Gaining Transpartisan Traction II

We are reading the book *Valley of Genius: The Uncensored History of Silicon Valley* by Adam Fisher and we are bowled over by the scale of innovation and how it empowers individuals, more and more, in the intimate realms of private life and the visible forms of public life.

The social impacts come alive in real examples. An elderly woman recently recalled how mass production of the radio greatly weakened her family as a community. Before radios, the family would gather every evening in the living room and enjoy their time together. When everyone had a radio, everyone went to their own room and listened to the radio. The family get-togethers ended.

Impacts like this are also evident in developing countries. While flying over Cairo's City of the Dead, Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak once pointed at the jungle of television antennas below and said to a friend: 'There is a symbol of why I cannot begin to control this country as I could before.'

Other major technological innovations have empowered individuals and weakened communities: the telephone, the automobile, the birth control pill, and widespread air travel. While it was widely assumed that technological innovations would slow down, Silicon Valley continues to boom.

Skyrocketing housing costs go along with explaining the fact that San Francisco now has the highest poverty rate in the U.S. People are now commuting to the Valley from cities like Tulsa, Oklahoma and Sioux City, Iowa, living like kings on weekends and like paupers during the week.

Concern about eroding responsibility accompanying increased individual freedom led conservative William F. Buckley to write his book *Gratitude: Reflections on What We Owe to Our Country* (1990) proposing a government program of national service. Although voluntary, this opposed program nevertheless showed how Buckley, strongly influenced by the freedom-right, worried about the decline of order in our increasingly individuated age.

Every innovation enhances individual autonomy and reduces social interactions. While all such occasions of individual empowerment push people away from tradition, people continue to need associations and relationships as part of living happy lives.

Unfortunately, political institutions that could be decentralized and empower citizens as significant participants, such as schools, are still run like the Medieval Church — highly centralized and dominated by mechanistic, legalistic systems and cultures. Alternative programs start to appear as these throwback institutions begin cracking under the pressure of individuation.

The question here is: why have political candidates avoided appealing to people trying out these alternative decentralized, empowering programs? Why, when such institutions would be powerfully responsive to increasingly individuated people, do politicians avoid them?

One answer is obvious to anyone who sees our politics as a *theater*, where the only roles for actors are limited to government officials. Spotlighting citizens *making democracy work* would take the officials away from center stage, where corporate media markets audiences to advertisers who know that conflict "sells". Empowered citizens promoting change without conflict make poor stories for the evening news.

We believe the transpartisan vision of empowered citizens will start to influence the larger political narratives when political candidates start winning elections by advocating empowerment. That moment might be arriving. We will devote a separate Note to how candidates could actively campaign for such decentralized institutions, focusing especially on schools.

Twenty-first century politicians have a devil of a time fitting exploding individuation into 18th century forms, embedded into 19th century industrial institutions fueled by 20th century communications systems. This individuation, supported by increasing individual social powers, disrupts the entire global institutional system.

We think our *Transpartisan Matrix*, which we write about [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#), added to other common political tools, helps organize and explain the political upheavals brought about by rampant individuation. Attempts to shoe horn contemporary politics into a left/right spectrum obscure the real nature of current politics.

Today, both the left and right — like the rest of the country and, in our view, the world — work overtime to integrate the two great poetical demands of unfolding human life: freedom and order. The current upheavals create enormous opportunities and offer serious dangers.

We think the transpartisan lens can help reveal the opportunities and avoid the pitfalls. People working together, as they currently are locally, create conditions for our next steps forward. *Transpartisan* explains a bit of what is happening and points a way toward new forms.

All across the country, like new blades of grass, transpartisan innovation begins to be seen as the next wave of American development. The time has come for national political leaders to catch the wave.





Official White House photo.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #106 • OCTOBER 29, 2018

## Musing On Trump

Throughout the election, both primaries and general — and then into the first months of his presidency — major political figures raged against Trump both for the content of his policies and his tone, which often seemed only motivated to win media attention and dominate the news. Up to this point we have focused our attention on the intellectual and social forces that we think brought him to power (see, e.g., *The Transpartisan Effect: Understanding the Political Turmoil* from *The Transpartisan Review*, Vol I, No 2).

Many people cannot get past his tone, which continues to be a mixture of vulgarity and open aggression against ‘victim’ groups. ‘Hatred’ does not seem too strong a word to describe how many people feel toward him for what seems like a conscious crusade to tear the country apart.

The President’s speech to the U.N. General Assembly seemed like more of the same: a deliberate provocation to push countries, both friend and foe, away from us; a very explicit declaration of independence from the world, isolating the U.S. It all seemed on behalf of a narcissistic, egocentric vision of our country, which he asserted wanted no part of its past leadership role.

Trump supporters tend to acclaim his policies, but never his street-fighter tone. Statements supporting him almost always acknowledge the obnoxious price we must pay for his successful policies, especially on the economy. (We know the economy must be flying when President Obama starts taking credit for it.)

Given Trump’s unpredictability, one can only imagine what he might say or do next. He is only predictable when (as in the U.N. speech) he is making up facts to support assertions about his own greatness. (How can he be surprised when audiences laugh in response to his spectacularly risible claims?)

Let us muse on some possible, *hidden objectives* he may have and some *possible, future behavior changes* that could have really interesting consequences. (These thoughts reflect, in part, our recollection that he is, first and foremost, an entertainer and that he is observed to employ instruments that are commonly associated with inducing hypnotic trances.)

### On Abandoning the World Leadership Role

Let’s consider the U.N. Speech. Every president in recent memory has tried to encourage friendly countries to ‘do more’ (especially military spending) and unfriendly countries to be



more friendly. All efforts added up to the same result: absolutely zero — feckless ‘arm-waving’.

What if Trump is testing a **new form of global leadership**: ‘withdrawing’ from global engagement in order to encourage other countries to abandon their roles as U.S.-dependents and step up as adults in addressing real problems? This in contrast to largely-theatrical but mostly motivational exercises such as the Paris Accord on Climate Change. (Think of the emerging form of leadership as ‘quantum’ instead of the old ‘Newtonian’.)

This approach to withdrawal preserves the right to intervene when judged important.

#### **On Savage Criticism of ‘Victim’ Groups**

Trump personally likes self-reliant ‘winners’. What if he made a conscious theatrical commitment to embrace successful local, black initiatives in schools, drug rehabilitation programs, and health clinics? Examples from other times would have been the educational reformer Marva Collins in Chicago and Harlem District Four from the end of the 70s for a decade.

What if he wandered the country embracing four-quadrant models in these and other areas? How would the mainstream political ‘actors’ respond?

#### **On the Trade War**

One action that seems well within the realm of possibility and, if it happens will happen soon, might be a Trump announcement that *‘The trade war is over, and WE WON IT!!!’* This would be followed by abrupt rescissions of all tariffs recently instituted. The stock market would boom — with what effect on the mid-term elections?

#### **Trump and the Four-Quadrant Transpartisan Matrix**

One way of viewing Trump is as someone who embraces three of the four quadrants of our *Transpartisan Matrix* — Order Right, Freedom Right, and Freedom Left. He theatrically and aggressively hates the Order Left, and we understand how those who identify with the Order Left hate him for it. Where would they — or our larger political narrative — be if he started celebrating positive initiatives run by ‘victim’ groups, which would effectively integrate all four quadrants?

We know, as far as can be seen, it will not happen. On the other hand, we continue to be cautious about anticipating what Trump will not do next — or what the forces abroad in the land will encourage him to do.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #107 • DECEMBER 24, 2018

## **Transpartisan Cheer: Criminal Justice Reform**

Big stories often get lost in political chaos. Example: At 1:10 PM December 21st, the day the government shut down at midnight, President Trump signed the “First Step (Criminal Justice Reform) Act.” This initiative received bipartisan support passing the Senate 87/12 and the House 358/36 on December 18th and 20th respectively. It has deep transpartisan roots.

The progressive *Brennan Center for Justice* opposed the bill’s original draft, then (after amendments) supported the final bill. It hailed the signing saying that “in a 2017 *survey*, 71 percent of Americans, including a majority of Trump voters, agreed about the importance of reducing the country’s prison population” — a key element of the reform bill.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) survey cited by the Brennan Center found that reducing the prison population was supported by 87 percent of Democrats, 67 percent of Independents, and 57 percent of Republicans — including 52 percent of Trump voters. This is a transpartisan constituency. We see such constituencies possible for other issues.

The ACLU survey also found that 91 percent of Americans say that the criminal justice system has problems that need fixing. It *cited*:

- 68% (including 65% percent of Trump voters) more likely to vote for a candidate that supports reducing the prison population and using the savings in drug treatment and mental health programs;
- 72% more likely to vote for an elected official who supports eliminating mandatory minimum sentencing laws;
- 84% believing people with mental illness belong in mental health programs not prison;
- 71% agreeing that incarceration is often counterproductive to public safety;
- 66% recognizing racial bias in the criminal justice system.

Other signs of criminal justice reform's transpartisan roots include:

- Powerful opposing party Senators Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), the two senior members of the Senate Judiciary committee, campaigned for the effort.
- The libertarian *Cato Institute* and the conservative *Freedom Partners* supported by the Koch brothers backed the Act.
- The conservative Heritage Foundation reported “*Trump and Congress Earn a Conservative Victory With First Step Act.*”
- The Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), and the National District Attorney's Association (NDAA) *supported* the Act.
- Progressive Democratic Presidential hopeful Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey *said* of the Act: “Our country's criminal justice system is broken – and it has been broken for decades. You cannot deny justice to any American

without it affecting all Americans. That's why the passage of the First Step Act tonight is so meaningful – it begins to right past wrongs that continue to deny justice to millions of Americans.”

- Cato called the Law “bipartisan and cross-ideological” or, in our terms, transpartisan. It wrote “*Don't Let the First Step Act Be the Last Step in Criminal Justice Reform.*” Next Step? Cato identified coercive plea bargaining as perverse and pervasive. “It produces an alarming number of false convictions” and has led to “the near-elimination of the criminal jury trial.”

Transpartisan Criminal Justice reform moves forward. Even as daily demands create chaos, contention and misdirection transpartisan forces work on community problems. They work mostly outside the daily news spotlight (good news does not sell papers). The First Step Act's path to law gives a road map on how transpartisan forces succeed. Study it. We are.



Christmas in the Ralph Waldo Emerson study, Emerson House from Wikimedia.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #108 • DECEMBER 31, 2018

## New Year

Write it on your heart  
that every day is the best day in the year.  
He is rich who owns the day, and no one owns the day  
who allows it to be invaded with fret and anxiety.

Finish every day and be done with it.  
You have done what you could.  
Some blunders and absurdities, no doubt crept in.  
Forget them as soon as you can, tomorrow is a new day;  
begin it well and serenely, with too high a spirit  
to be cumbered with your old nonsense.

This new day is too dear,  
with its hopes and invitations,  
to waste a moment on the yesterdays.

– Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Collected Poems and Translations*

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In the 1830s & 40s, Ralph Waldo Emerson gave Americans thoughts to live by. Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., himself a major essayist, called Emerson's 1837 speech 'The American Scholar' America's 'intellectual Declaration of Independence.' This speech followed on Emerson's powerful essay 'Nature.' Here, from Wikipedia, is one accurate summary of the context for both creations:

*'The American Scholar' was a speech given by Ralph Waldo Emerson on August 31, 1837, to the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard College at the First Parish in Cambridge in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was invited to speak in recognition of his groundbreaking work 'Nature,' published a year earlier, in which he established a new way for America's fledgling society to regard the world.*

*Sixty years after declaring independence, American culture was still heavily influenced by Europe, and Emerson, for possibly the first time in the country's history, provided a visionary*

*philosophical framework for escaping 'from under its iron lids' and building a new, distinctly American cultural identity.*

We add that 'Self-Reliance,' Emerson's most remembered essay, with its arresting line 'A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds . . .', provides, to those who read it, sustenance and great guidance for navigating today's turbulent world. The study notes for this essay, provided at the Emerson archived site, summarizes it saying in part: ' . . . all truth has to do with the "infinite of the private man".'

As we forget the blunders and absurdities, ours and others, of the past year and begin the next year well and serenely, with too high a spirit, we remind all:

*Every year is the best year.*



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