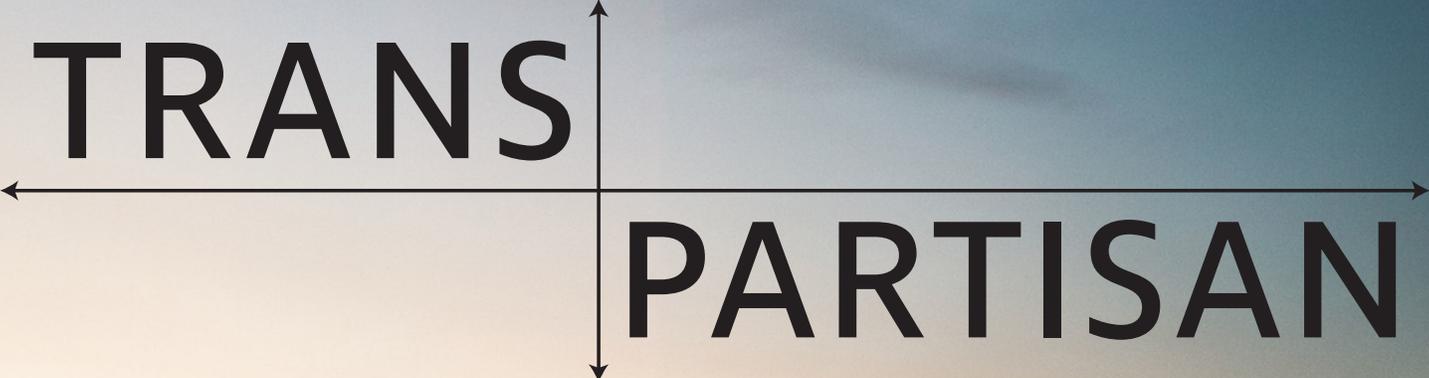


An aerial photograph of a city skyline, likely Chicago, during sunset. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, and the city is filled with numerous skyscrapers and buildings. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene.

THE TRANS

A set of coordinate axes consisting of a vertical line with arrows at both ends and a horizontal line with arrows at both ends, intersecting at the center.

PARTISAN

REVIEW

THE TRANSPARTISAN EFFECT: UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICAL TURMOIL

A special report from the authors of
Voice of the People: The Transpartisan Imperative in American Life

THE TRANSPARTISAN REVIEW

SPECIAL REPORT : THE TRANSPARTISAN EFFECT

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THE TRANSPARTISAN EFFECT

UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICAL TURMOIL

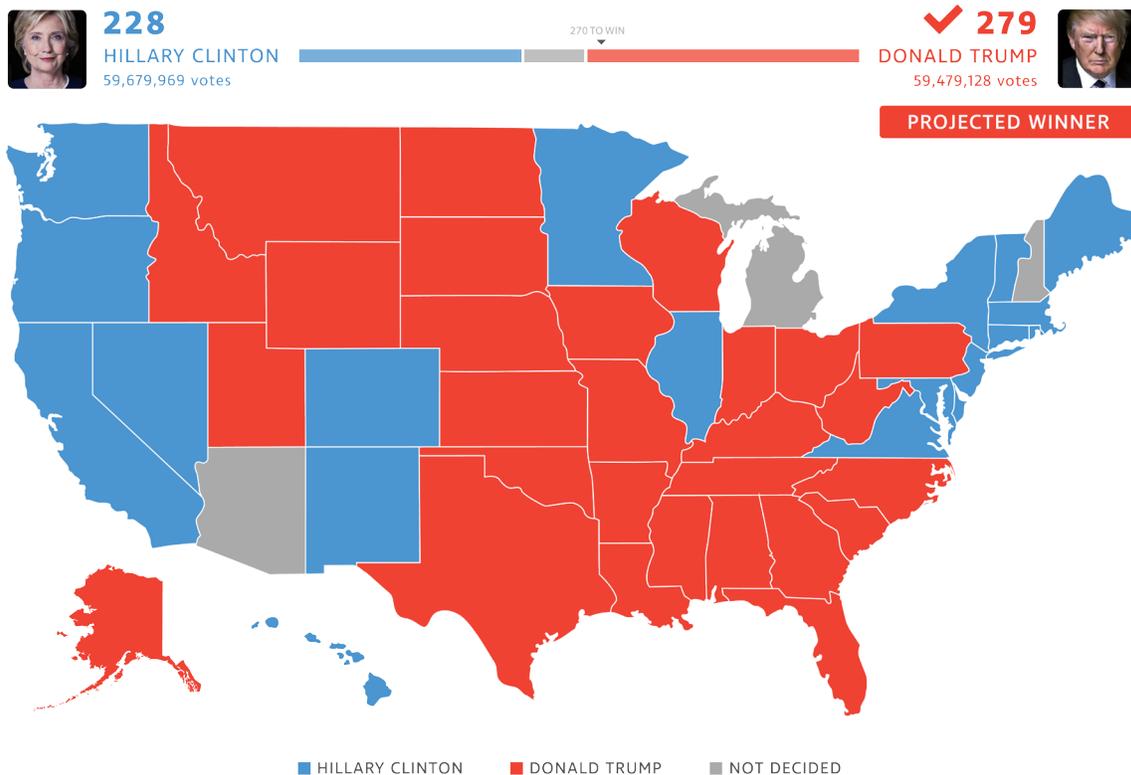
The Election Meant More Than You Thought

by A. Lawrence Chickering and James S. Turner

We believe that the political roiling of the Trump administration's first six months stems in large part from President Trump's misreading of America and America's misreading of the Trump election.

RETHINKING THE ELECTION: TWO MAPS

On Day 99 of his term in office, President Trump underscored his view of the election by sharing with reporters a map from Reuters illustrating his electoral win (recreated below).



Trump loves this map. It presents his personal subjective political reality, which happens also to be the formal, legal reality. It appears to give Trump all the political power. Nevertheless, it also presents a very narrow picture of the election.

THREE CONSTITUENCIES

The media, Trump resisters, and the public are each misreading Trump's victory. Each underscores their narrow reading of Trump's constituency by accepting his voters as 40% of the total when they actually number about 27%. They call Trump fans 'hard-core right' when they are much more varied, and they tend to see his voters as traditionally Republican when they include many traditional Democrats and independents.

Political analyst David Paul Kuhn, in an article called 'Sorry, Liberals. Bigotry Didn't Elect Donald Trump' (NYT, Dec 26, 2016), which we quoted in TTR Vol I Issue 1, has written that Trump won the white working-class vote (traditionally Democratic) over Clinton by more than any major-party nominee had bested his opponent since World War II. One-fifth of voters — more than 25 million Americans — disapproved of Trump's treatment of women; yet Trump won three-quarters of these voters. By 50 to 45% Trump voters support legal status rather than deportation for working illegal immigrants. Trump won about 1/4 of voters who want the next president to follow more liberal policies.

Kuhn concludes that '...stereotyping of Trump voters is not only illiberal, it falsely presumes Mr. Trump won because of his worst comments about women and minorities rather than despite them.' Exit polls said that 20% of voters disapproved of both candidates. If divided evenly, Clinton wins. They backed Trump overwhelmingly.

We believe that in the current political environment stereotyping tends to lose elections. Trump voters are a much more complicated lot than normally assumed. We also believe that relying on the left/right spectrum alone misreads and misleads the country, especially partisan combatants.

We see here three constituencies: 1) hard-core Trump; 2) hard-core Clinton; and 3) pox on both your parties. Trump stands to lose ground if he doubles down on his 27%. Resisters stand to be overrun if they tie themselves to Clinton's 28%. Both could lose if they neglect the 44% pox-on-both constituency. We believe broadening the left/right continuum to a matrix (see below) effectively integrates the 44%.

Whoever provides the 44% transpartisan constituency with plausible policies and programs will gain the most between now and the next election and beyond. Dismissing Trump voters as narrow-minded, right-wing, bigoted 'deplorables,' or dedicated public servants as 'nut-jobs,' walks away from the 44%.

WHY THE ALIENATION? INDIVIDUATION

Out of Touch

Although the two maps show widespread public alienation from mainstream politics, people inside the system — including both political party leaders and media opinion leaders — act as if they control or should control events. People inside see a narrow problem, an erratic leader somewhere between still learning the trade to usurper. Since the formal, constitutional systems are working — the Electoral College and the carefully-crafted Congressional Districts, which create sinecures for the great majority of elected legislative representatives who fill the available jobs — insiders do not see that the country as in a real crisis.

It does not register with the opinion elites that so many people are not voting in the formal systems as a way of voting 'no' to business as usual. They know these formal systems are allowing weak minorities — perhaps

40% (counting both Democrats and Republicans) — to control the government over a much larger majority (voting Independents and non-voters). This system has little if anything to do with expressing the ‘consent of the governed.’

When something approaching *three-quarters* of age-eligible citizens are refusing to identify with the winning candidate, when more people are registering Independent than either Democrat or Republican, you know the results of the formal system are out of touch with the public.

Outsiders Exploit the Alienation

The alienation that conservatives and progressives — and Republicans and Democrats — feel toward each other *within the system* imitates the alienation that many Americans *outside the system* feel toward those inside — their political leaders, their government, and the entire political system. The recent election showed how advanced alienation is in both parties as outsider populists challenged insider candidates supported by the party elites.

Bernie Sanders, an Independent, self-identified ‘socialist,’ starting with no money and little inside Democratic support, nearly upset Hillary Clinton, who enjoyed every advantage in formal party support. (Democratic Party insiders even tilted the formal party apparatus for her and against Sanders.) Donald Trump ran his campaign *against* the Republican Party and *against* the system as well as against all other candidates. He won the Republican nomination and then the election — absolutely *mocking* every convention in the formal political playbook.

In the current environment, Trump’s behavior is totally distracting, tempting us to think he is causing our political upheavals. The upheavals, however, long predate him. The conflict that continues raging around us and him arises from forces — and is itself — larger than he is or we are.

Trump is a phenomenon — at least as much *result* as cause — shaped by forces that are shaping the world. (The same was true of Sanders.) Although his disruptions — behavior, fits and starts, apparent contradictions, and what seems obsessive self-promotion — are exasperating, they also provide insight to his Presidency, the national constituencies, and the forces that are influencing our world.

We described in [our last issue](#) some of the basic, *objective* forces that are shaping our world, especially technology.² We also think significant *subjective* forces are affecting us — even more, possibly, than the objective ones. Subjective forces, however, are not easy to see; and the political idiom, following science, tends to avoid and ignore them. As formal politics stresses the objective, it feeds alienation and fuels outsider candidates.

Recognizing the Subjective

Following objective ‘truths,’ ‘things’ become the dominant prizes that politics (and economics) offer. ‘Things’ symbolize materialism, represented by money and valued by people as objects, *separate from their relationships*. For both the left and the right public policy tends to be all about getting money. At the extremes, Marxists and progressive economic planners care most about money to equalize incomes, and free market economists and conservative supply siders care most about money to create economically efficient incentives. Both focus on money for people as objects and neglect subjective values (people as subjects, in relationships).

Their mantra: ‘It’s the money, stupid.’

For example now, July 2017, we are mired in the 25th year of the modern ‘health care’ debate. However, the political debate is less about ‘health care’ than about health care ‘financing.’ Both sides agree, at least tacitly if not assertively, that the U.S. has the best health care system in the world. The political problem: how do we get the money to each individual so they can access that wonderful system?

In fact, the U.S. system is twice as costly per capita as the next most expensive and ranks 35th in the world by accepted quality measures.³ In the meantime, 50% or more of the public (a number roughly comparable to those disaffected from partisan politics) use one or more of the more than 100 organized complementary, alternative, integrative health modalities (diet, exercise, dietary supplements, nutrition, chiropractic, acupuncture, massage therapies, meditation, etc.) that fall under the mandate of the [National Institute of Health National Center for Complimentary and Integrative Health](#).

An important part of the problem is the focus on ‘health care’ rather than ‘health.’ As we noted in recent [TTR Note #48](#), ‘An Atlantic article quoted Hippocrates to capture the core of integrative health: “It is more important to know what sort of person has a disease than to know what sort of disease a person has.”’

It is useful to distinguish two elements in the alternative health field: *health issues caused by negative behaviors and habits and alternative health care interventions*. From the introduction of Hillarycare in 1992 to the present, the ‘health care’ reformers on both sides have used the Congress, the courts, and the regulators to exclude the representatives of alternative health care modalities from the health *financing* debate. Virtually no alternative modalities are eligible for financial support under any of the various reform proposals, and the reform proposals also pay little more than lip service to promoting behaviors and habits that would improve health and reduce the need for health care.

The health reform political battles rage about money while vast numbers of the electorate seek better ways to advance their health using their own money.

The political debate likes ‘things’ (objects) because they are easy to observe and measure — and are also comparatively easy for policy to deliver. Of course ‘things’ alone don’t make people happy because people are not objects. They are *social creatures*, with *subjective values*, who are happy *in relationships*. Being *subjective*, relationships are hard to observe and measure, and hard to harness for political campaigns run on polling and fund raising. However, leadership, policy, and the structure of institutions can influence relationships when people are seen as subjects (holding subjective values) — who thrive in communities and with connections that include those values.

Relationships are important because they relieve what is arguably the most painful form of *deprivation: personal (subjective) isolation* otherwise known as *loneliness*. There is evidence linking personal isolation or loneliness to many forms of health and social dysfunction — alcoholism, drug addiction, poverty, crime and political alienation as well as physical [disease](#) itself. Unfortunately, *scientific analyses*, which often undergird government policies and see people primarily as objects, are often helpless to relieve these problems when they focus on *poverty reduction* (objective) as a solution. They do not understand that reducing poverty can only be accomplished by people as *subjects*.

Understanding people as subjects is especially important at the present time because we believe that *valuing the subjective — the desire for self-expression or ‘individuation’ — is growing in societies throughout the*

world. This increasing force may also be understood as the increasing need for self-expression, which is first observable as people grow up from infancy through adolescence to adulthood.

Individuation: Infusing Objective with Subjective

Although the current political debate pays little if any attention to individuation, individuation is a *major force influencing our political system.* Individuation drives people away from political parties that are interested only in voters as objects.

Subjective values are important as an instrument of consciousness, motivating decisions by choice rather than habit (tradition) or force (law). When consciousness is weak — think of an infant or small child — desires are for ‘things’ as the principal instruments of identity. As consciousness becomes stronger, individuation motivates people to make their own choices and search for values and relationships that are ‘theirs.’

Understanding the increasing importance of subjectivity is essential to understanding both policy challenges that resist solution and Trump’s recent election as President (or the loss of Clinton and the many other Republican presidential primary candidates). People were protesting a system that denies or ignores their need as subjects to exercise increasing control of their lives. We trace the collapse of repeal and replace Obamacare, in large measure, to its focus on objective cost rather than subjective aspects of health and wellbeing.

The current political system, both left and right, rests on a foundation of *imposed order* — tradition from the right and law (enforcing ‘justice’) from the left. In part because it is invisible in the political debate, advancing individuation presents major threats to both sides as it challenges and threatens *imposed order in both forms,* from both left and right.

Understanding issues relating to the subjective is important to understanding the increasing alienation from our political system. The ‘old’ system treated everyone as simple and the same and imposed structures on them. Advancing individuation breaks down relationships based on tradition, habit, and hierarchy. It weakens institutions that have not understood the changing terms of peoples’ consent — this would include relationships in marriage, religion, organizational management, producer and consumer, health and many, if not most (or possibly all) others. All contemporary institutions struggle — and their leaders struggle — as our political system now struggles.

Expanding Self-Expression

Our current political system developed to unite and connect thirteen independent states. It required a civil war, abolishing slavery, to unite them around the principles of justice and equality expressed in the Declaration of Independence, which principles remain our core values. After the abolition of slavery, states perpetuated injustices by enforcing segregation, which would have to wait until the 1950s to start to change.

Through World War II the progressive agenda was all about *centralized authority* to meet great crises — first the Depression and then the mobilization for and conduct of war. The 1950s, the first full decade after WW II, brought the nation’s attention back to the two great values in all human beings, especially in the modern era. These values are *order* and *freedom.*

The 1950s were a decade committed to *order* (tradition), but the fifties were also the decade that brought the first post-war stirrings for *freedom* (self-expression).

The principal expressions of these apparently conflicting values appeared in the arts. Expression of freedom (self-expression) happened first in music, with the beginning of rock, Elvis Presley, Bill Haley and the Comets; critiques of the new mass culture (*The Organization Man*, *The Lonely Crowd*); and jazz, which came from the emerging African-American voice for freedom (Miles Davis, Duke Ellington). It was a decade of innocence ('Ozzie and Harriet') but also of rebellion in urban gangs ('Blackboard Jungle').

The desire for self-expression and freedom was emerging, eroding tradition. It was the beginning of the modern *conflict between freedom and order* that has been a major force influencing our politics over the past seventy years. The desire for self-expression started to push against traditional attitudes focused on collective action. To respond to these early stirrings of individuation, the old politics divided people into progressives and conservatives — 'left' and 'right' — but divisions also appeared *within* the left and *within* the right, expressing the relationship between order and freedom.

Evolving Self-Expression: Robust Freedom, Resilient Order

The growing impulse for self-expression started pushing us to expand our vision of people and of political positions, and this growing impulse continues, even today (mid-2017) to erode the authority of imposed order, from both left and right.

The simple left-right categories alienate large numbers of age-eligible voters, who see themselves as other than, or beyond, left and right. We developed the Transpartisan Matrix to distinguish the freedom and order themes and factions on both sides of the partisan divide.⁴ Yet the political debate continues to be defined in terms of a simple left-right conflict that has little meaning except to deepen the polarization and intensify the conflict that further alienate people and drive them away from the two major parties.

The Matrix also encourages general agreement when one understands that the freedom and order value quadrants are reinforcing and complementary, rather than conflicting. *Winning politics seeks to integrate freedom and order.*

THE FOUR-QUADRANT MATRIX: FROM ORDER TO FREEDOM

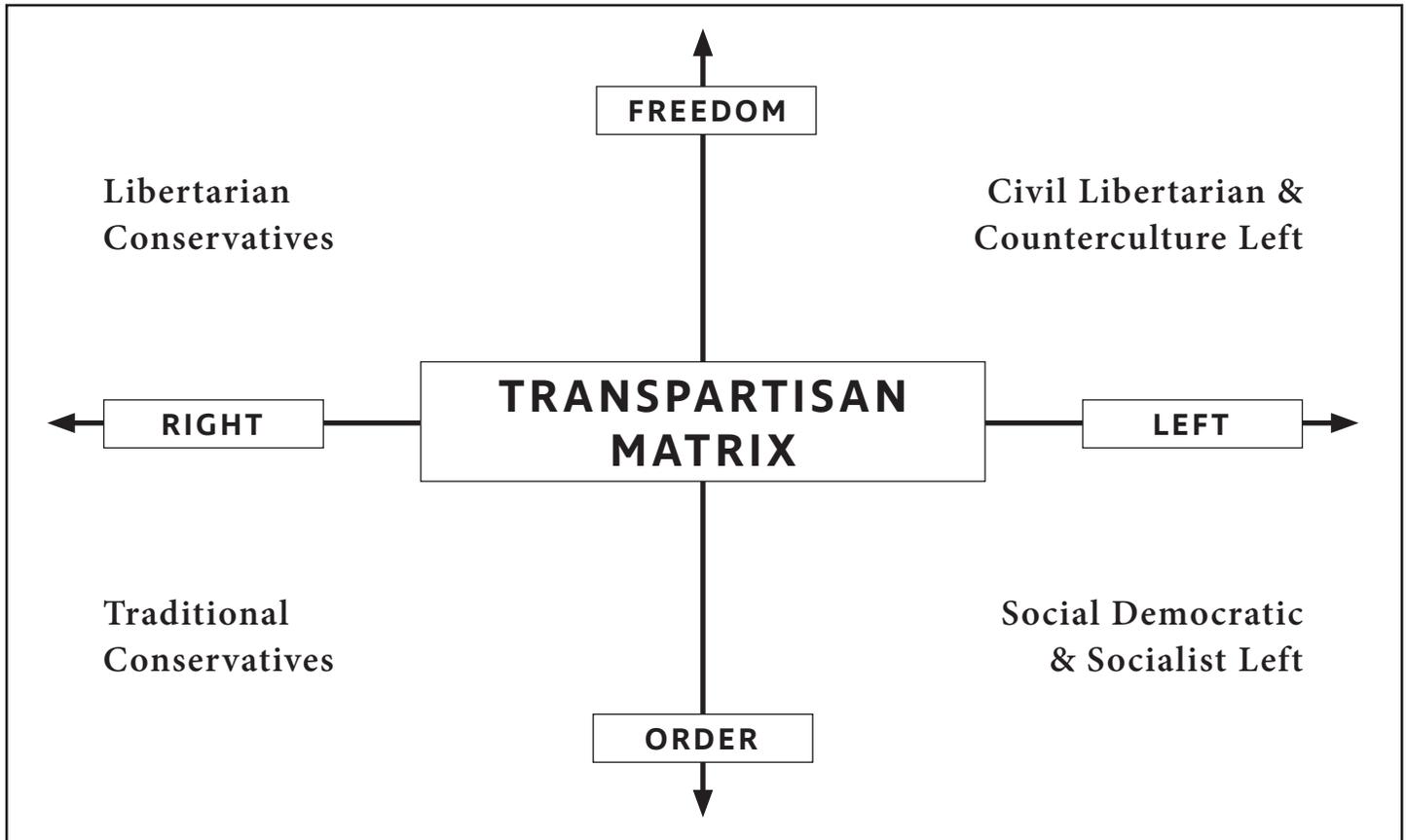
Opportunities

We created our Four-Quadrant Transpartisan Matrix™ to broaden understanding of what people actually care about — values that the current political system is oversimplifying. People want *more* than simply freedom (the central Republican message) or justice (the Democrats'), which the left-right spectrum currently offers them. They want *both*. The left-right spectrum, however, conceals two important factors:

- The powerful, emerging demands for self-expression (freedom) in almost all constituencies. Empowerment as self-expression is an important need of growing numbers of people — not just minorities — for justice; and

- The extraordinary agreement in the country that everyone needs both freedom and order (tradition and justice); and also that resolution of issues that seem intractable will only be found when institutions and policy are reformed to promote active roles by citizens as participating subjects. Solutions will remain beyond our reach as long as they are viewed in terms of the left-right spectrum alone and are seen to be about citizens as objects.

The Matrix, in four quadrants, appears as follows:



The Matrix identifies the principal values and forces influencing our politics, including the behavior of non-voting skeptics. Viewing Trump’s first 192 days through the Matrix, it is clear that the left-right spectrum alone explains very few of the complexities in the current national debate.

Expanding Self-Expression

Advancing individuation (self-expression) may be seen on the Matrix *as movement from the order quadrants to the freedom quadrants*. By bringing free expression into the order quadrants, the order quadrants are changed from preconscious connections to increasingly conscious ones by people *as subjects*.

Understanding that no quadrant is independent, existing on its own, one may come to understand how the quadrants represent *complementary values*. Individuated people tend, increasingly, to insist on *choosing* their relationships, their life styles, and their personal life paths, bringing the freedom quadrants and the order quadrants together. ‘Traditional’ government services for citizens — from education to law enforcement to health care — limit citizens’ roles to passive acceptance.

In the new environment, ‘good’ schools promote active parental, student, and community participation. They know that active parental and student involvement strengthens the entire learning environment, which influences (strengthens) students’ motivation and learning. Health depends on *people taking care of themselves* as well as on doctors and hospitals. And law enforcement is greatly enhanced when communities share responsibility for it with the police.

In these and other arenas active civil society organizations, drawing on experiences in many countries, promote change from the bottom up. None of these emergent possibilities falls neatly on a left/right spectrum, but all depend on reform of government institutions to promote active citizen roles; and over time government institutions themselves will assume operational and cultural forms that look increasingly like civil society functions.

We are imagining changes that may seem far from any current realities. We will explore these emergent potentialities in future issues of *TTR*. For now, we can only say that one can find powerful examples of these changes in many places right now, and we mention some of them below.

A major precondition facilitating the institutional and policy changes we are talking about will be to change how we view *the rule of law*.⁵ At the present time, we often see ‘justice’ as something that laws or traditions impose on people, mostly from the order-left quadrant, though as the power of tradition wanes, the order-right quadrant increasingly uses law to impose its values.

Imposing justice (order) produces a hollow justice, which ignores the demands of individuating citizens for active, voluntary engagement among citizens with much deeper significance than justice imposed impersonally. Forcing people to be just is hollow because it treats citizens as objects and leaves no room for citizens as subjects to reach out to each other in common purpose. These abstract statements will become clearer by examining real experiences revealing what seem to be miraculous outcomes.

The leadership challenge is to engage citizens and offer them opportunities to share ownership and become actively involved as *co-producers of services*. It is a challenge way beyond left and right alone.

This approach will allow the Trump or any administration to govern more effectively, resisters to resist more successfully, and for the very large part of the community who express themselves as beyond partisan — well over 50% and perhaps as much as 70%, who see themselves as outside partisan battles (or wish they were) — to work for institutional reform as individuals and in civil society organizations (CSOs) brought in from outside the formal political system.

We believe transpartisan politics says stereotyping voters loses elections. Arraying Map Two’s numbers on the Transpartisan Matrix, with freedom-right and freedom-left folks opposing order-right and -left elites, begins to reveal complexities that cannot be seen using the simple left-right spectrum alone.

Real examples of the freedom quadrants arrayed against and integrating with the order quadrants include: gay marriage; Whole Foods; integrative health and school choice programs; the sharing economy including firms like Uber, Airbnb, and Snapgoods; dating sites like eHarmony, Tinder and EliteSingles; travel tools like Priceline, GPS, EasyPass, and OnStar; companies like Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Google and many others. Each of these organizations moves individuals from the order of tradition and law toward the freedom of expression and choice within new forms of order.

‘Advancing individuation’ is exerting pressure for change on the mainstream political system. One factor retarding change in this direction may be that political leaders do not know how to sell active citizenship as an important part of winning political campaigns. They may also be unaware of real experiences both in the U.S. and many other countries showing real success and progress in empowering even the most disempowered populations. Without awareness of initiatives that integrate freedom and order reflecting self-expression and individuation, it is almost impossible for politicians to sell the concept as an answer for the future. If this vision does not or cannot come from them, it is likely that it will be forced on them.

Matrix Revealed Complexities

New York Times columnist Ross Douthat cracks the door on the political Matrix opportunity. Writing ‘In Search of the American Center,’ on June 21 (NYT, 6/21/17), he reports on a study by the Democracy Fund Voter Study Group. He also describes an accompanying report by Lee Drutman assessing voter sentiment along two axes. The data and report create the following matrix.

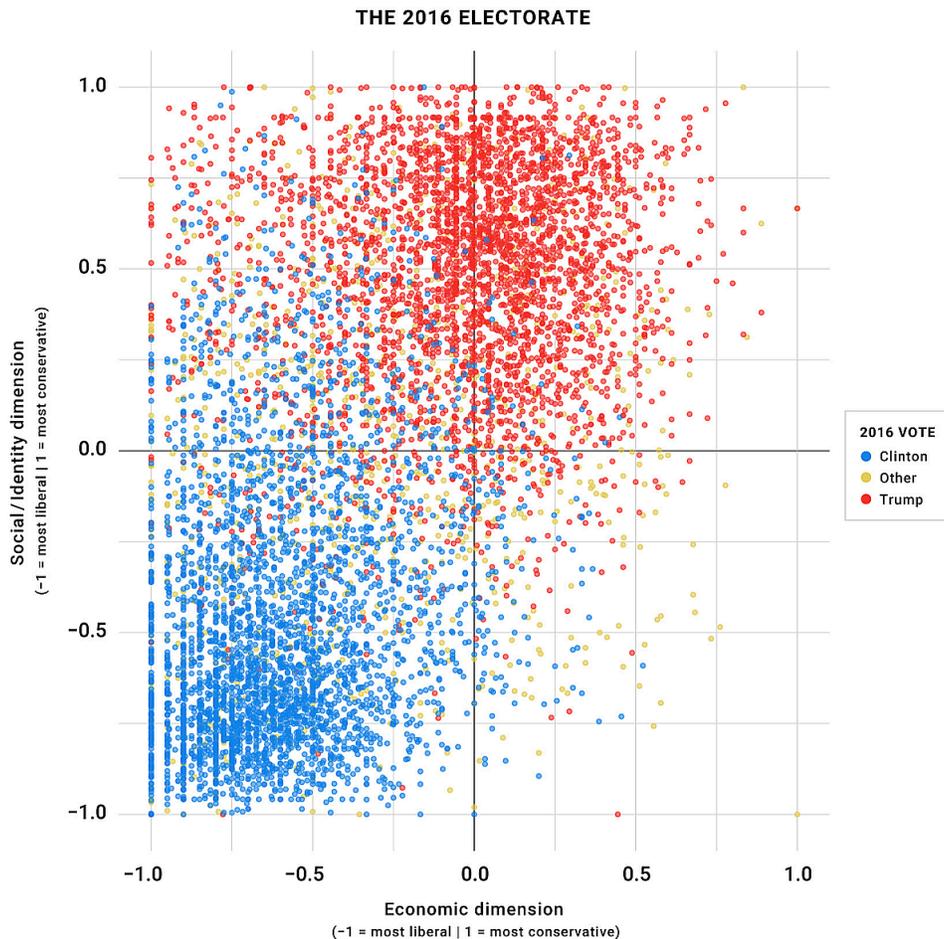


Chart from [Political Divisions in 2016 and Beyond Tensions Between and Within the Two Parties](#) by Lee Drutman (Democracy Fund’s Voter Study Group)

This Matrix ‘helps explain,’ Douthat says, ‘why Donald Trump won the presidency and why his administration is such a policy train wreck, why Democrats keep losing even though the country seems to be getting more liberal, and why populist surges are likely to be with us for a while — a trifecta of rather important explanations.’

We believe the data arrayed on the Drutman matrix point to the *objective left/right horizontal* component of *current politics*, with citizens passively accepting government services. In the old model, governments are active, but government *officials* (contrary to common belief) are passive, following legal rules and regulations that, in effect, mechanize relationships between people. This effectively depresses government officials by forcing them to fight for human contact.⁶ With its freedom/order vertical axis, the Transpartisan Matrix expands the *objective left/right continuum* analysis to include subjective values.

Douthat writes, ‘Look at the smear of red across the top two quadrants and the fist of blue in the lower left, stare awhile at the chart’s lower right-hand quadrant, home of social liberals and fiscal conservatives. It’s astonishingly empty. . .’ Empty, we suggest, because, seeing candidates skip their interests, it is likely this freedom quadrant’s occupants did not vote.

These data, Douthat says, reveal a voter consensus very moderately culturally conservative and very moderately economically liberal that ‘sit(s) low in the upper left quadrant of our chart — the place where Trump won voters who had previously voted for Obama.’ We see Obama/Trump voters as part of a transpartisan public. They are not bound by party or ideology. They respond to authenticity, charisma, and apparent independence, all of which are subjective and difficult to poll for or count. Their subjectivity makes them wildcards.

That transpartisan public also includes the 44% nonvoters. Both groups transcend ideology and occupy political space outside the established parties. It’s as if the ‘empty’ quadrant was the abandoned home of the 44%, whose bumpers read ‘Pox on Both Your Parties. Neither candidate is qualified. Stay home, make a statement.’

We believe that the Douthat-reported matrix takes a major step forward in moving beyond the limits of the left/right spectrum. It is a breakthrough in political analysis. At the same time, we see that matrix reporting the political system in static terms, influencing distributional (economic) and moral (social) outcomes. In this respect, it accepts the system exactly as it is now, with the government as active and voters/citizens as passive. (We mean ‘passive’ here in the sense that citizens’ only active role in the governance system is at the ballot box, when they vote for the order they want the government to impose on them.)

From this perspective, it is not surprising to find a freedom quadrant mostly vacant. Freedom — or ‘free-expression’ — has significance mostly in subjective terms: how people choose to engage with one another, how they relate to communities. This matrix shows the quadrants as representing only unitary values. In our perspective ‘freedom’ has little meaning by itself; it becomes meaningful only when integrated with a social component (an order quadrant).

In our Matrix the freedom quadrants are *the most important quadrants in our immediate political circumstances* but will only show up if a voter can express *freedom together with an order quadrant*.

We believe the empty quadrant contains a signal from a powerful part of the national constituency, seeking

integration between free expression and an order quadrant. When this freedom quadrant is empty, we expect alienation will be high and governance will be difficult.

[Issue #2](#) of *The Transpartisan Review* contains an article by our colleague Michael Briand that addresses the Transpartisan Matrix. That article and our comments on it expand this discussion of the objective and subjective aspects of these two matrices. We believe expanding political analysis from a left/right spectrum alone to a matrix helps find insights otherwise hidden.

WHY TRUMP WON: BONDING WITH THE MEDIA

Outrage

To understand why and how Donald Trump won the 2016 Presidential election, one must understand the role that the media played in his victory. The background for the story starts with the widespread voter alienation from the major parties and their candidates. This opened the field to outraged ‘outsiders’ carrying the flag against the ‘corrupt’ insiders.

The media played a special role in the last election because one candidate, Donald Trump, understood how the media business model set the media up to be manipulated. As an entertainer rather than a politician, Trump understood the model and, before politics, made a fortune working it to his benefit. He also understood that in the model objective facts play a limited role because the model is driven mostly by subjective feelings in what is essentially a theatrical business. Trump has simply played to the model (as one commentator put it) and has *turned the White House into a reality television show*.

Trump did this from the first moment he joined the race for the Republican Presidential nomination. When he started his reality show, serious questions could have been raised about the very troublesome implications. Yet people in the media did not ask these questions, possibly because they knew the answers would shine a light on their own behavior. As CBS president Leslie Moonves [said](#) in February 2016, “It [the presidential race] may not be good for America, but it’s damn good for CBS.”

It would have been hard to conceal the enabling function the media were playing in Trump’s take-over of a role that, in an instant, changed the appearance of the Presidency from an historical constitutional institution to something very different — from something (thought to be) deeply serious to something (it seemed) entirely trivial.

The last thing the media would want to do, as moralists chiding Trump for concocting ‘fake-news’, was to have to explain how an entertainer, who knew and knows nothing about being President, was able to hijack a Presidential campaign and then a Presidential administration and turn them into a reality TV show. If they are the ‘conscience’ of the process that they hold themselves out to be (and that we need), how could this happen without their active cooperation?

With help coming straight from the media business model, his critics might say that Trump has undermined the constitutional responsibilities of the Presidency away from serious policymaking and turned them into a vehicle for entertaining people and making them laugh. But then one might say he pricked the bubble of the haughty and made the pompous pay with embarrassment.

Not everyone is entertained and laughing, of course. The media themselves are raging, but that, too, is entertaining for many people; and the media continue reporting every syllable he utters. While attention is focused on Trump's latest tweet, contradiction, or photo op, or family email the government, as seen by the did-not-voters, continues to grind on in much the way it did pre-Trump. As it grinds, the lives of millions are altered.

Disrupter Entertainer

The story of Trump's Presidency is just beginning. A traditional perspective, such as former Defense Secretary Robert Gates's, might see Trump as a 'disrupter' who is shaking up the traditional system and is opening possibilities for rethinking issues that need rethinking. Many people think that his behavior is creating important opportunities for going forward even as they understand the enormous costs associated with it — in civility, in degrading and coarsening our civic discourse, even in the loss of confidence that our almost universally-admired democratic principles have any real control over our future and our destiny.

The media are not in the news business; they are in the entertainment business. They make money delivering audiences to advertisers. If what they say and do is not entertaining, advertisers lose interest, and their revenues suffer. Media professionals who are successful know how to be entertaining. This is true even if an important part of their reporting is of their own disbelief and rage protesting the President's behavior.

What media professionals do is very profitable, paying its 'rock star' anchors like real rock stars. While many readers will cringe at this thought, it is hard (from this perspective) to avoid the conclusion that, in maximizing entertainment for audiences, the media, while protesting otherwise, are not primarily interested in facts; their main interest is in appealing to and feeding subjective appetites.

As a media entertainer himself, Donald Trump also knows how to be entertaining, while politicians, who *only* know how to be 'Presidential,' are clueless about how to be anything else. (It may be, in fact, that 'Presidential' and entertaining are close to perfect opposites.)

While all political professionals want Trump to be more 'Presidential,' he knows instinctively that Presidential is not entertaining. He also seems to know, at least intuitively, that doing 'crazy' as the continuing theme of his reality show sustains his symbolic 'middle finger' against the system and therefore many followers and potential followers (recall map two above) continue their support. He is the only public figure who is expressing (symbolically at least) their deep alienation from the system.

A perfect symbol of his relentless *mocking* of Presidential protocols was his parodied wrestler's 'take-down' of a CNN opponent, taking CNN to the floor, next to the ring, and lying fully on top of him, as if to squeeze all life out of him. As much as one may want to avoid this conclusion, it is hard to understand this as anything but a crude, crass reality show staged with one audience (of crazed supporters) screaming their approval and the other (critics) screaming their disgust. That Jeff Zucker, the current president of CNN, formerly producer of the Trump Apprentice NBC TV show, served as the driving force behind Trump's TV career contributes to the eerie tone of the Trump/media relationship.⁷

After his wrestling caper, critics asked: has he 'gone too far, stepped over a line?' The obvious answer is: he didn't step over any line when posing as a wrestler; the line had been erased. He stepped over the line *from the beginning*, when he launched his campaign. Trump *lives* 'over the line.' *And he pulled us all over the line with*

him at the same time. He understood that ‘over the line’ was the only way he could run and win, trading on the media’s business model. Over the line he knew and knows the media are helpless to touch him because his corruption was made possible by their corruption.

Serious readers will have no trouble seeing the deep trouble we face. Trump has thrown everything up in the air, in a ride driven by deep voter alienation from politics as traditionally practiced. We are all with him now, over the line defined by entertainment and theater. The media have an important role to play in helping guide us back to sanity, but only when major media figures start to take seriously their complicity in this nightmare. (We plan to explore this major theme in future issues of *TTR*.)

Assaulting convention at every turn keeps people watching and keeps critics complaining and raging their disgust. It also keeps everyone off balance, including the unfortunate folks who work for him and have to ‘explain’ him to mainstream political audiences everywhere. They never know what he is going to say next — or what he or his family has previously said or done will turn up — except he knows instinctively that the demands of a reality show require that he always be impulsive .

Their nightmare also increases mainstream media audiences and profits. The Democrats are invisible because his reality show has no major roles cast for them, at least at the moment. He is holding them off-stage, waiting to be cued on-stage when his script calls for it.

From Frivolous to Serious Theatre

Serious political people know that Trump is exploiting our endangered system of laws not so much by egregiously violating the President’s obligations under the rule of law — though he does that too — but in some ways much worse: by turning the entire process of Presidential governance into a theatrical enterprise that has nothing at all to do with providing political leadership for the country.

Nevertheless, recalling Robert Gates’s thought about disruption, that may be exactly what the system needs.

We need to add here that Trump, too, knows — or *should know* — that he is not invulnerable. His situation is in fact quite vulnerable because television shows do not last forever. At some point his ratings will start to tank, and as they decline, the ‘myth’ of his Presidency will become vulnerable to a collapse. If (when) that happens, he could find himself standing naked and alone on an empty stage.

Can he avoid this fate? There is a specific transpartisan policy agenda that will speak to the alienated, including his followers, his adversaries and the nonvoters. He needs to find a path to it, moving from the frivolous reality show to serious reform to keep his base and start to grow it. Moving away from the reality show does not mean having to close the theater. Serious reform also contains an important theatrical element.

Whether Trump, as an actor, is equal to the challenge of the new role associated with *meaningful* reform is subject to serious doubt and remains to be seen. It is possible he is not the person to make this happen. It is possible, if not likely, that others will come forward to do it.

Media... Love It, Hate It, Cannot Do Without It

The media hate Trump because he is using their business model to subvert the orderly governance of the country. They love Trump because he makes them a lot of money. Political candidates traditionally target their



WE SEE THE TRANSPARTISAN
EFFECT ALL AROUND US.



campaigns at voters. The media has sold traditional candidates with discussions of serious issues. Trump was (and is) almost entirely disinterested and therefore usually ignorant about issues that, until now, have been important to successful Presidencies. He embraced his reality television role and ran his campaign *not for voters, but for the media* — for the sole purpose of maximizing media coverage. Voters followed him. Non-voters dropped out.

As an entertainer, Trump understands what drives ratings: *stories*. What ‘stories’? Trump’s answer: outrageous remarks of any kind including lies and theatrical irresponsibility. He says anything that conflicts with mainstream media behavior, assuming people will forget if he is theatrically ‘Presidential’ enough of the time to remind people that he, as an actor, can play *any role*; he can play ‘Presidential’ as well as he plays the reality show host.

The media also hate Trump because he has *mocked* the media market’s insane incentives, which distort our political system and degrade public debate. The media loves Trump because he entertains, drawing big audiences. Since the beginnings of big-time TV news in 1960, this entertainment medium has been vulnerable to hijacking. That has now finally happened, combining the talents of a charismatic entertainer speaking to deeply alienated voters who want **out**.

Political leaders join the attack because they are slaves to the same, insane market. (The media and political markets create similar incentives. Politicians *act out entertainment* in the form of the conflict and polarization they and the media pretend to deplore but that builds their fortunes and reputations. Politicians do the on-stage acting, leaving the media to be the impresarios, managing the theater. In Iago’s words, plotting the demise of Othello, they, those close to Othello, whom Iago manipulates, ‘will as tenderly be led by th’ nose as asses are.’)

Conflict Sells

Where does political news create greatest entertainment or political value? *In conflict*. Despite whining about polarization, both the media and political classes *live off it*. The *greatest conflicts* occur in high-theater morality plays, with attacks on opponents as embodiments of evil. Our bi-polar, left-right political system is a *perfect medium* for staging never-ending morality plays. There is nothing remotely like it anywhere else in ‘real life.’

When you understand the media’s business model and how it influences what gets on television, on the radio, in the movies, on-line and into all media, you can understand how an entertainer, with no experience or understanding of political issues, could dominate television news and all other media while his opponents shrank into insignificance. This happened when they got almost no television coverage for the masses of money their donors wasted on them, trying to buy air time. It was a ‘perfect storm’ of circumstance — widespread voter alienation, looking for an outsider to assault ‘the system’ with rage . . . and theatrical talent.

Seeing last fall’s election as a reality show organized for entertainment rather than as a political campaign, it is nevertheless still hard to stop thinking about Trump’s Presidency as basically ‘normal’ . . . if idiosyncratic.

At some point, however, reality needs a place at the table. In important ways Trump’s campaign *was not a political campaign*; it really was and is a reality show, with the candidate, casting himself in the leading role, then winning the election, and now continuing the show.

Trump is caught between the two worlds, trying to play both parts: the reality show president and the real, Constitutional President. Temperamentally, the reality show entertainer clearly represents his superior function. Despite nearly universal advice to be more ‘Presidential,’ he can’t seem to escape the entertainer’s role, which provokes continual troubles for him politically.

Media Therapy

Media commentators pretend they played no role in creating and enabling this phenomenon. Unfortunately, the media are so compromised by their historical role, it is hard to see how they find their way to the role of honest broker and critic they claim to be and that we need.

Our purpose here is not to play critic, moralize, and ask who is to ‘blame’ for our predicament. It is hard to blame anyone for a hurricane, and Trump’s political storm is driven by massive social forces beyond the control of any individual. Moral superiority and blame are the theatrical instruments in the psycho-drama of our traditional debate and political system, deranged today by mythic polarization. In this situation, the transpartisan perspective has a chance to be *therapeutic*: trying to understand how we got to where we are and how we might start to move toward a more positive place.

Megyn Kelly used a therapeutic stance in her extraordinary interview with Trump in May 2016. (Her media critics *eviscerated her* for not *savaging* him.) Kelly turned the interview into a *confessional*, creating space, without judgment, to allow Trump to acknowledge his frailties. In the process, she encouraged him to become real and human in a way we have rarely seen before or since. He revealed himself as a deeply troubled and frightened man, always ‘counter-punching’ against imaginary adversaries. After her interview, no one should have been surprised by *anything* he has done in more than a year since then.

Peggy Noonan, in a recent *Wall Street Journal* column, embraced Kelly’s therapeutic position but appealed to the community of journalists. She said Trump is modeling craziness, and his critics are imitating him, deranged and crazy in their attacks. She appealed to his critics to rediscover their critical faculties, stop giving him so much power over them. She did not touch the complicating factor of their own role in creating him. Unfortunately, if you are a media critic with any capacity for self-reflection and self-criticism, you need more perspective than most people have when you realize that your fingerprints are all over the thing you despise so much.

Reality

Our role, along with many other people, is to work to inject some actual reality into discussion of the Trump Presidency and the effect it is having on our country and the political system.

Trump won the election, we believe, largely because he crudely embodied both the freedom (self-expression) and order (authoritarianism) values in his campaign messaging that an important part of the country’s increasingly individuated electorate wants and needs. Trump’s personal behavior, especially his Twitter addiction, maintains the theater of continuing craziness; and those used to more conventional Presidential behavior and rhetoric see it as a combination of sociopathic narcissism and a child’s inability to control his impulses.

So far, Trump’s base, though softening slightly, stays with him — apparently seeing the craziness as, to repeat, a big middle finger to political elites and the system. The challenge for the rest of us is to understand and embrace the positive effect it is having on shaking people out of trances verbally cued by the major party

narratives and creating spaces for a real debate on how our institutions and policies need to be altered to serve our increasingly individuated electorate.

Strong and free, the Trump message plays well with certain individuals within the American electorate. So far, a real program for the administration, its resisters, or the ambivalent that embodies ‘strong and free’ remains unformed. The public waits for a plan.

THE CHALLENGE FOR TRUMP AND ALL POLITICAL LEADERS

Up to this point we have relayed thoughts about how we got to the very difficult place we are in, 192 days after the Inauguration. Some readers may struggle at thinking about the President’s first months in office as a reality television show rather than a Presidential administration. We reached this conclusion by simply watching him. Another way of looking at it is in terms of what he *knows*. Politically a reality show and entertainment is *all he knows*. Why should anyone be surprised that he is doing what he knows?

There is little question that he has a problem, and he knows it. Over time even successful TV shows lose their freshness, and people lose interest. In this case, however, their attitudes toward Trump’s show are driven by their alienation from the political system, which injects unusual variables into the mix. We see no signs that either the Democratic or Republican parties are waking up to the underlying political problem or that they are effectively searching for new ways of connecting with non-voters or even voters for that matter.

The need here — for Trump or others, including his opponents — is to promote institutional and policy reforms that empower individuated citizens who have outgrown the passive roles cast for them by the traditional system. They want more active roles, especially in political institutions that most influence their lives. These might start with education, health, housing, and law enforcement.

Moving in a positive direction will *change the role of the country’s political leaders*. This is problematic, coming out of the gate, because our entire political class was selected for the qualities defined by the current system: a profoundly hierarchical system, with active leaders and passive followers (‘citizens’ who are really objects, with no roles as real citizens). The increasingly individuated electorate wants more active roles as *subjects*. Many among our current political leaders will find their new roles less appealing than the old ones. We suspect that many people in public life are attracted to that life because they like giving orders.

A good analogy is the change in the role of teachers ‘talking at’ passive students (‘rote learning’ is the descriptive phrase) to the more modern view of teachers facilitating active participation by students doing ‘creative’ learning. In experiences we are aware of, teachers *welcome* this change because interacting with active, responsive students has more *life* in it than the older passive model, which involves little or no real interaction. The old model is often, in effect, *dead*; and most teachers prefer life to the alternative. We believe this is a major reason why many public-school teachers leave teaching so early (one-third after five years).

The shift in education toward more active student roles has been in place for a long time, and it can be found even in the most traditional places in developing countries (in Upper Egypt, for example; and in rural India). Our political system lags, at this point, far behind.

An important part of the new leadership roles for more active citizens and students is *theatrical*. Before we get to that, we first need to understand the principles underlying a new empowerment agenda.

PRINCIPLES FOR A NEW POLICY AGENDA

We will now start referring to where we are going as ‘empowerment’ models in both education and politics. An excellent roadmap to empowerment is to learn from successful experiments on different issue areas in different global regions. In this issue of *TTR* we are publishing an article coauthored by Lawry Chickering and Lynne Twist describing a Living Room Conversation (LRC) they cohosted recently on the subject ‘United and Divided: Where Do We Go from Here? Living Room Conversation on a Transpartisan Journey.’ (LRC is a transpartisan organization founded by Joan Blades, co-founder of MoveOn.org.) They end the article by listing five highly-successful programs that empower disadvantaged communities in different social areas. They then extract the basic principles they think account for the programs’ success. We are repeating these principles at least as partial guidelines for a new, future policy agenda.

The programs are **Delancey Street Foundation**, the widely-celebrated drug rehabilitation program that began in San Francisco and now has satellite projects in other cities; **UNICEF’s Girls’ Community Schools** in Upper Egypt, in a region many people regard as the epicenter of Islamic terrorism in Egypt; the **All Stars Project** in New York City, founded by Dr. Lenora Fulani, a ‘radical’ transpartisan who twice ran for President of the United States and who is closely associated with Jacqueline Salit and her Committee for a Unified Independent Party, one of the leading Independents’ organization in the country; and **Visitacion Valley Middle School** (San Francisco; principal: James Dierke). For his path-breaking empowerment program (which included transcendental meditation for his inner-city students), Dierke won awards as the outstanding principal of a middle school in California one year and then won the award for the entire country the next year. He was also Executive Vice President of the National Association of School Administrators, showing how innovative and entrepreneurial action can occur inside government and quasi-governmental institutions. And finally **Educate Girls Globally** (EGG), founded by Lawry Chickering, is promoting education for girls in the most difficult parts of rural India in government schools. EGG promotes empowerment of traditional people, including girls, and promotes cultural change both in traditional, passive communities and in government bureaucracies.

These programs operate by similar empowerment principles. They are:

- The **core ‘conservative’ (order-right) value** of personal responsibility;
- **Strong senses of community, co-ownership, and engagement** by stakeholders, reinforcing shared values; **high social trust** and (therefore) **little opposition or conflict**.
- **Organic processes of change** rather than the mechanical change associated with most governmental action (legislative, judicial, executive decisions);
- Mostly **developed by civil society (nongovernment) organizations** but with two CSOs working in government programs. Only Dierke did his magic entirely from inside the government school system, but following the same principles as the other four.
- **Voluntary action** governed all change. Compulsion played no part in any of these programs (the freedom quadrants).

One might be tempted to think that governments cannot, by their nature, successfully design and implement programs like these. Yet three of the programs are actually operating in government institutions, and EGG

has been working for more than fifteen years on reform of government schools in two states of India, showing it can be done. With positive leadership and institutional incentives that encourage change, we believe this vision can gain far more support from government officials than commonly thought.

We think the example of the district in Uttarakhand, requesting EGG's model in *every school at all levels*, may reveal how government jurisdictions might embrace the model so it expands very rapidly. The triggering moment came when the Chief Magistrate for the District attended a conference of EGG's Girls' Parliaments from all fifty schools. He planned to stay ten minutes, but when he saw the girls asking strong questions of public officials, including the police, and repeating questions when the answers were inadequate, he stayed for two hours. As he was leaving, he said he wanted to see EGG's Executive Director in his office as soon as she could get there. He told her he wanted the Girls' Parliaments in every one of the district's 2,500 schools (serving 334,000 children, two-thirds of them girls) as soon as possible. More than that, he wants EGG to *train the ministry staff to implement it*. Although the precise design of the project EGG negotiates with him may be different than this, the important point is that a government is showing active interest in integrating into its institutional structure EGG's program, and EGG is organizing itself for other, potentially larger requests going forward.

These programs differ from failed programs that can be found in every country, we believe, because they *deal organically with people as subjects*, while programs that fail operate *mechanistically on people as objects*. Some of these successful programs benefit, of course, from relatively small scale, which facilitates engaged, personal interactions. The UNICEF schools, on the other hand, were 206 in number, serving tens of thousands of children. EGG's model is in more than 7,000 schools, serving about 500,000 children; and in Uttarakhand, it will soon start training the ministry staff to implement and expand the program to schools serving 100,000 children. Connection is important for everyone, the very rich and the very poor. (In EGG's case, success includes work with tribal girls who grow up afraid to speak up in front of boys. The model works at very large scales. EGG has seen no drop-off in impact resulting from increasing scale.)

In the beginning, EGG gained acceptance from government ministries, and that led to active support. When Uttarakhand said they wanted EGG's program in every school in a district, it was the first time a government had formally requested EGG to train ministry staff to implement the program, with EGG oversight.

In every school using the model, EGG has experienced *no significant conflict or opposition in a single school* in two states. Its experience has shown that there is no need for compulsion to achieve 'justice': *an entirely voluntary system (the freedom quadrants) will work without any conflict or opposition when people are in relationships (order) they care about*.

Moving in a positive, transpartisan direction begins with social trust based on the belief that people are basically good and will do 'good'. This is especially true in civic engagement with 'different' people engaging each other and seeing each other across differences as subjects and as human. Much of the dysfunction in public spaces today is caused by laws trying to force people to be good. This, in effect, *mechanizes relationships*, treating people as objects — which is to say, as not entirely human.

Jim Dierke's tenure as Principal of Visitacion Valley Middle School showed that people inside government systems can also take leadership and follow these principles.

These experiences show the power of civic engagement, either from organizations formally organized as CSOs or from government departments that are behaving like CSOs. Achieving change at large scales depends on active government involvement. As in EGG's role in Uttarakhand, CSOs can help them by transferring empowerment models and training department staffs to implement them.

Every leader facing voter alienation and demands for change should consider moving toward reform on this empowerment model. We have approached this agenda from a 'traditional' perspective. We have described Trump's very different approach to leadership and governance. We will now consider how he might move toward this reform agenda without giving up his vision of politics as theater.

TRUMP'S THEATER AND THE NEW REFORM AGENDA

Politics has *always* been theater in important ways. However, the demands of today's individuated voters require a shift in the leader's theatrical role. Since Trump is an actor, 'capable of playing any role,' we have no doubt he can play the role we see before us and will now describe.

To the extent that Trump cannot play, or falls short of playing, this role, the forces propelling society offer resisters and ambivalents an historical opportunity to positively shape events. The stage is larger than any single individual. Hamlet the play is bigger than Hamlet the character.

Family as Model

It may seem far-fetched to think of Presidential leadership as a theatrical challenge, but all forms of leadership have theatrical components. The example of leadership in a family — in relationships between parents and children — involves a changing leadership role throughout a person's entire life.

In the first years children are entirely dependent. As they grow up — subjectively *individuate* — consciousness grows, and parents' start to relax their control. In adolescence, children become more independent. Parents' authority starts to depend on communication and persuasion. The time when they can simply 'give orders' passes. As children 'separate,' parents who try to hold onto control court trouble. Parents can maintain 'influence' if they respect this need and if they give children the space to grow up.

One can think of parents' changing roles in *theatrical terms*, with the parents loosening their control and stepping back. This transition to a collaborative relationship is smooth and 'connected' in healthy relationships. In troubled relationships, the reason for distress is often that the transition from control to influence was also troubled.

If Donald Trump wants his Presidency to be successful — or *seen* as successful — he will need to commit to a similar kind of transition from the reality show to a new role guiding social and cultural change toward new, decentralized institutions serving increasingly individuated, empowered citizens. His current role, beginning when he entered the Presidential sweepstakes, brings together unusual qualities — again, combining strong subjective free-expression with authoritarian outbursts — strong and free. Incoherent to his critics, who still rage at him every day, his base understands and accepts his behavior as coherent in opposition to the system and the elites who run it.

Presidency as Theatre: The Bully Pulpit

All Presidents prior to the current President assumed the ‘Presidential’ role as leader. We have described President Trump’s role as reality show host, and now — if he wants to be successful — he needs to change it.

Even as President, Trump has been playing the role of outsider, angry with the system, committed to ‘draining the swamp.’ The affect that goes with this role has been the tough-guy, jaw prominently displayed and permanent scowl on his face. It is the face of somebody who is never happy, who is always threatened by hostile forces. While this demeanor is perfect for his current role, opposing the ‘corrupt’ system, it spells disaster for getting anything done. Successfully replacing corruption requires more than merely opposing it. The road of American democracy is littered with moralisms turned into legislation and then thrown aside by the forces of history. Remember Prohibition.

The new role calls for leadership in a new, positive time, when people are growing into empowerment, throwing off and escaping the disempowerment that previously shackled them. The old time and system were dominated by large, impersonal forces, indifferent to ordinary people and their real lives. Civic engagement is the key to a new, individuated, connected world. That world needs a welcoming, embracing leader who understands the struggles of ordinary people and embraces the challenge of connecting with them. He or she cherishes the opportunity to offer them the empowerment that the old system denied them. Rhetorical thrusting alone, no matter how inspired, falls flat without real accomplishments. The new policy agenda we propose will require few Congressional votes. It will be surprisingly easy to implement politically.

Trump’s current role, as noted above, combines extreme expressions of freedom and order: strong subjective, free expressions communicated principally through his tweets, campaign performances, and turn-on-a-dime management style combined with strongly authoritarian postures. His theatrical postures and voice, which have been defined by his strident facial expression, show a strong, powerful leader who gives orders and publicly displays almost no capacity for personal contact, engagement, or intimacy.

(It is important to be clear that we are not describing or judging his actual personal qualities here, what they really are. Rather, we are commenting only on his qualities as *theatrically presented by his public postures and affect*. ‘Trump on television very much differs from the man in reality,’ Russian President Vladimir Putin said at a press conference after meeting with Trump. [The Hill 7-8-17](#) quotes *Wall Street Journal* reporter Anton Troianovski’s translation. On Air Force one flying to Paris Trump met with reporters presenting, according to Mark Lanler and Maggie Haberman of the New York Times “...a loose, good-humored side of Mr. Trump that the public rarely sees.” Individuals we know who have been to Trump tower or the White House say the same about the President — he is different in private than publically.)

Trump’s Struggle

The principal, current emotions that Trump expresses theatrically are *independence, anger, and dominance*. He manifests as his own man perpetually at war, and this posture serves perfectly his current reality show role, a demeanor determined to effect profound change in the political system while facing united opposition from enemies inhabiting ‘the swamp.’

The institutional and policy changes we are advocating appear very radical. Yet if implemented organically — from the bottom-up — in such successful experiences as the land grant college education system, combined

with the free land program that built much of the Western United States together with the agriculture extension system that empowered individual farmers to build the U.S. agricultural system, they will not seem radical; and people will celebrate rather than fear them. People will accept these proposals because they will bring a radical end implemented by conservative (Burkean) means. The politically fallen away will have a role and begin reengagement.

The end we are talking about might well upend or greatly weaken the entire, hierarchical structure of the current political system and replace it with a system that empowers citizens as real partners in the American political enterprise. The forces driving contemporary society point in this direction. In the process, the swamp will drain.

To lead this change, the President will need a new theatrical role. In this radically changing world, he can no longer be the odd combination of insurgent and dictator, at perpetual war with insiders and resisters. The new role calls for a benevolent leader dedicated to empowering people. It would be in the very nature of the reform that the swamp would be gone.

The most difficult part of this proposal *for Trump* may be his role change from angry, bellicose insurgent to benevolent protector ushering in a new era. If he can manage it — starts to do it — he will trigger confusion on a scale that has few analogies in our history. The confusion will be felt by his allies, his adversaries, and the ambivalents alike. But if he plays the theater right — and sustains it — his allies will quickly support him; his ‘base’ will start to grow as ambivalents begin to focus, and adversaries will soften. If he gets the theatre wrong, more ambivalents will join resisters, and the creative leadership moment will pass from his hands.

Depending on how he designs his theatrical and operational strategies for the change, he will be able, in profound ways, to start to accelerate expression of peoples’ subjective self-concept. This could be especially powerful if he selects as priorities for his attention groups he has treated, at various times, as adversaries in addition to leading groups in his ‘base’. We are thinking about African-Americans, Latinos, Muslims, and women for example — which is to say, by certain objective measures, the heart of the Democratic base. Nothing would stir greater confusion than that; yet with great preparation both operationally and theatrically, it would send a powerful, transformative empowering message to many people.

A key element in this strategy of citizen empowerment will be the operational and theatrical empowerment of groups such as these, sharing leadership with them in self-governing communities while encouraging strong, positive identity formation. If he fails to design effective strategies, he will lose the opportunity to use the emerging power of change to harness engaged citizens. Currently, Trump’s struggle appears unresolved.

Effective Strategy

Implementing this new strategy will require two things: an operational plan and a supporting, theatrical plan.

The politics will be tricky, on two fronts: first, ensuring that his base supports the concept; and second, sharing the concept with his opponents and ambivalents in a way that would avoid instant opposition. Part of managing these relationships would require encouraging communications and civic engagement *across loyalties* — between groups that at present have little or no apparent contact. And then publicizing the engagement.

As we are writing, we are witnessing a live example of activities that perfectly exemplify what we are talking about. It is occurring during the celebration of Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting. We reported in [TTR Note #51](#) a number of stories of Mormons, Latinos, Jews, and other groups joining with Muslims to recognize Ramadan. Under the approach we are suggesting, the President *would have attended* some of them and perhaps would have given a major speech about them. He might well have held a Ramadan breakfast in the White House or other symbolic location, as the Israeli Ambassador to the United States did this year in the Israeli embassy.

This is one example. Many such efforts at reconciliation are occurring across the country every day. Highlighting them daily, weekly or even monthly would alert the country to the massive, positive change underway, which the President was embracing.

We believe that if organized effectively, the dominant ‘narrative’ about Trump and this new engagement with the society would start to register very quickly. If he continued on this new course, the bitter criticism of him that dominates the news would turn to silence. The silence of his elite opponents would not, however, distract from the joyous, jubilant response from multiple, multi-racial and multi-ethnic communities around the country that were starting to experience the new empowerment reality and narrative. With a consistent dedication to sustain civic engagement between groups, the commitment to integrating freedom and order, left and right, among the four quadrants, would gain support from new adherents representing all four quadrants.

If, on the other hand, he keeps shaming and attacking particular groups, all bets would be off. The ambivalents may start turning into resisters, and his opportunity would be lost.

If he takes the path we are proposing, Trump would challenge the media to cover this unfolding story as we wish they had covered the stories of reconciliation that appeared in local media recently, in different parts of the country. There is no question, in fact, that wherever he went to be with these local groups, the media would follow him because the President is a media story — not only this President, but *all* Presidents — no matter what he does. The national media would be forced to cover these stories of the President, cheering these local, transpartisan initiatives.

Justice

We noted a new perspective on **justice** for disempowered groups in this age of increasing individuation and the expanding impulse toward self-expression. For groups suffering long-standing discrimination, justice may require opportunities to launch positive, redemptive initiatives promoting strong, positive identity formation. Such positive initiatives may be especially important for groups that are either ignored by the major parties or branded as ‘victims’ with no chance to succeed because of politically-inflamed antagonism from other, equally disempowered groups. (African-Americans and unemployed white industrial workers might be examples.)

Few actions would make greater changes in peoples’ sense of opportunities than expanding ownership in public spaces such as schools, housing projects, and neighborhoods. When people don’t own anything, as is true with the great majority of people in many countries, there is nothing to hang onto, nothing focusing their attention to build their own lives. With no stake in a society and in this powerless condition, people are often vulnerable to ‘narratives of grievance’ exploited by cynical politicians.

Hernando de Soto's article, 'Fighting Terrorism by Empowering the Poor,' which we published in [TTR Vol. I, No. 1](#), reports how extending ownership to poor Peruvian peasants in the early 1990s created a fierce sense of engagement that led to the defeat of a terrorist group some called the most violent in Latin America (the *Sendero Luminoso*). When people have ownership, especially shared ownership of public spaces such as schools, their attention turns toward preserving and strengthening their communities, and sharing ownership of common space encourages them to work together in common enterprises. This has been the powerful experience of the UNICEF schools in Egypt and the EGG schools in India. Across the country and around the world individuals and groups repeat the 'ownership' experience in styles that show the way to empowerment and justice.

OTHER EXAMPLES PAST AND FUTURE

PAST: Jack Kemp's Project Hope

This point about ownership requires a caution. Such a policy cannot simply be broadcast as policy, hoping that everyone can or will take advantage of it without some preparation and training. That more is needed was a lesson from an initiative called Project Hope launched by Jack Kemp when he was head of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) during the administration of George H. W. Bush. Its purpose was to allow residents of public housing to gain authority, control, and eventually ownership of public housing projects.

Kemp's initiative never had the impact it might have had because it failed to provide for supporting services, such as training to build residents' capacities to take control of housing projects successfully and sustainably. When in the 19th and early 20th century the U.S. carried out the dispersion of agricultural knowledge across the country, one of the most successful knowledge transfer programs in world history, it used a service of agricultural agents stationed in virtually every county of the United States.

One of the most important issues in transferring authority and ownership from governments to citizens is *political counseling*. This is needed to help residents navigate what can be significant obstacles issuing from local political forces, especially those that may lose power and influence when citizens are empowered. This is a large subject, which deserves more detailed attention. It needs to be effectively addressed for any initiative like Project Hope to succeed.

A public leader such as the President, a state Governor, or even a cabinet member can play a strong role in promoting public awareness of powerful, community-based projects that are achieving positive social and cultural change. Success stories can also help publicize opportunities for communities to bid for such empowerment projects. Project Hope gives a sense of what might be tried, while mindful of pitfalls that also need to be addressed. Current HUD Secretary Ben Carson could help develop the Trump strategy we sketch here by reviving the Kemp program with the previously missing counseling component included.

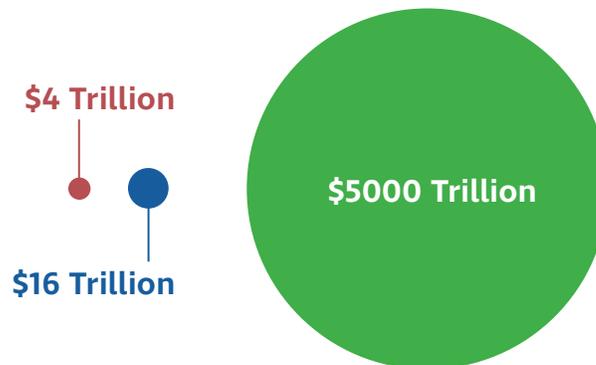
With 'Make America Great Again' his campaign mantra, President Trump went everywhere lifting up and tearing down different groups. He built up some such as Rust Belt voters to see a positive future, while he tore down others in what often seemed like brutal ways (Muslims, Mexicans, and African-Americans). Promoting some people at the expense of others will leave core problems unaddressed and unresolved. This may be the point that determines if the President can make the transition to a new, benevolent role. To be successful as

President, he needs to provide positive leadership for every group in the society; and it will only be credible if the anger and the frown can be permanently retired to the costume closet.

FUTURE: The Automated Payment Transaction (APT) Tax or Fee

In a world shaped by Amazon, Facebook, Apple, Uber, Airbnb, and hundreds of other information technology-based companies, a smart leader might look to the expanding use of new information tools to help implement public policy to manage the towering forces shaping our lives. One idea that we find especially intriguing is the Automated Payment Transaction (APT) Tax or fee created by Edgar L. Feige, an emeritus professor of economics at the University of Wisconsin. If implemented, the proposal would transform how government finances its activities and operations.

‘Capitalizing on financial data processing technology,’ according to the APT website, ‘we can create a tax system for the 21st century that is simple to understand and easy to administer.’ The website for the book, ‘[The Economist’s Tale](#),’ which illustrates the disparities with red, blue, and green spheres, says, ‘We tax the \$16 trillion in income we earn, the small blue sphere in the diagram...’ We don’t tax the whopping \$5,000 trillion in payments that occur each year, the large green sphere. Our government’s budget is \$4 trillion, the tiny red sphere. The red sphere takes a big bite out of the blue sphere — which is why income tax rates are so high. But the red sphere takes a tiny bite out of the green sphere. ‘If we taxed payments at the miniscule rate of 1/10th of 1%, we’d have a trillion-dollar surplus.’ Summarizing the impact on an individual, the site says, ‘Taxes on \$100,000 would drop from \$31,000 to \$100, and the budget would be balanced.’



Red – Current Taxes **Blue – Current Collective Income** **Green – Taxable Payments**

The relative sizes of these balls are meant as impressionistic representations, not as precise representations.

Individuals and groups from a variety of political viewpoints support the idea, and it is being considered in major, international political forums. We present the concept in a more detailed article by Professor Feige in [Issue #2](#) of *The Transpartisan Review* as an idea that policymakers inside governments and individuals outside might find useful in considering this large and important issue. We are including with the article an excerpt from Professor Feige’s original 2000 paper explaining how it works and how it would affect average taxpayers.

We frequently note the transpartisan insight that our conventional left-right debate often overlooks possibilities that fall outside current ideologies but might be useful to solve real problems. The APT gives a taste of what might be possible if we opened our ideological minds.

Imagine that the powerful forces shaping our daily lives can be harnessed and managed. Every day the American people and people globally show that it can be done. A smart leader would collaborate with them.

CONCLUSION

Our political system, representing small minorities, is electing Presidents to the White House while large majorities of citizens withhold their allegiance from formal political processes and parties. They passively acquiesce and accept the outcomes without enthusiasm. At the same time, billions of people globally, including hundreds of millions of Americans, are enthusiastically embracing the new tools of information dissemination and economic efficiency — social media, internet, shopping, sharing, dating, traveling, virtually every aspect of daily life — created by technology entrepreneurs, engineers, and marketers.

We believe that confining political discourse to the narrow left-right spectrum and a small minority of voting age-eligible citizens is promoting widespread political lethargy and alienation. Information tools transcend left/right ideology, while the political tools enforce it. Individuals increasingly answer the question ‘Are you on the left or on the right?’ with a single word — ‘No’. To successfully fulfill its role of representing our whole people, the system needs to expand both our discourse and our institutions. It needs to start creating a system that genuinely responds to the needs of increasingly individuated people by empowering them to play active roles in meeting public challenges.

Public alienation especially from the two major parties is very real. It is time to start understanding why people are so turned off. A good place to start might be to understand that peoples’ identity is not tied to either the left or the right.

Forces shaping the world are sending strong signals demanding significant institutional and policy reforms. Elected officials need to engage with citizens in very public forums on multiple issues, especially including opportunities for involvement.

We have suggested tools to align politics with people. In this age of increasingly individuated people, we need new, empowering institutions and policies. It will be interesting to see which political leaders emerge to align their leadership agenda with the public’s emerging interests and demands. The American nation stands on the brink of realizing fantastic new possibilities. Aligning its politics with its people offers an exciting opportunity to realize the promise of these possibilities.

The nation moves forward while it waits to see who will lead the way.

ENDNOTES FOR “THE TRANSPARTISAN EFFECT”

1. See Brilliant Maps, brilliantmaps.com.
2. ‘These forces (shaping our world) include the apparent calm of the 1950s and the turbulence of the 1960s, the upheavals of a transforming global economy, volatile demographics, explosive technology, capricious and faltering institutions, and the global disruptions following the Cold War’s end.’
3. Which countries have the best healthcare? Medical Press May 19, 2017 <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-05-countries-healthcare.html> U.S. Health-Care System Ranks as One of the Least-Efficient; Bloomberg September 28, 2016 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-09-29/u-s-health-care-system-ranks-as-one-of-the-least-efficient> U.S. Health Care Ranked Worst in the Developed World Time June 6, 2014 <http://time.com/2888403/u-s-health-care-ranked-worst-in-the-developed-world/>
4. A. Lawrence Chickering developed the first sketches of the Matrix in 1993, in his Beyond Left and Right.
5. Law and Society in Transition: Toward Responsive Law 1st Edition by Philippe Nonet (Author), Philip Selznick (Author), Robert A. Kagan (Author) <https://www.amazon.com/Law-Society-Transition-Toward-Responsive/dp/0765806428#>
6. In Voice of the People we relayed a story about Lawry Chickering, in conversation with his friend the late economist Milton Friedman. Lawry said, ‘I know you think that bureaucrats and teachers’ unions (in education), implementing government regulations, are behaving like monopoly capitalists, unwilling to share power.’ His next question then highlighted the reality: ‘If they are really monopoly capitalists, why aren’t they having more fun?’
7. Jeff Zucker’s singular role in promoting Donald Trump’s rise https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/jeff-zuckers-singular-role-in-promoting-donald-trumps-rise/2016/10/02/7c3d4366-865b-11e6-a3ef-f35afb41797f_story.html?utm_term=.96c555d0d6c3

READ THE REPORT...

In this article, we refer to findings from [*Political Divisions in 2016 and Beyond Tensions Between and Within the Two Parties*](#), a Democracy Fund Voter Study Group project written by Lee Drutman. Lee is a senior fellow in the program on political reform at New America. He is also the author of *The Business of America is Lobbying* and winner of the 2016 American Political Science Association’s Robert A. Dahl Award.

We encourage you to read this report, available from the Voter Study Group’s website (www.voterstudygroup.org). In it, Drutman explores several elements from the 2016 election including its primary conflict involving questions of national identity, race, and morality; Democratic voters loss of faith in the political system; and Trump’s success with previously Democratic populists. - TTR



THE TRANSPARTISAN REVIEW

VOLUME ONE : ISSUE TWO

We see “The Transpartisan Effect” all around us. It plays in our national politics, on the world stage, and in our local communities. Our weekly notes point to one place or another where events strike us as examples of the effect of people working together beyond the left/right partisanship that so intoxicates our entertaining media and political comedy/drama.

Available now, *The Transpartisan Review* [Issue #2](#) contains a more detailed introspection of how we, our colleagues, and contributors see the forces behind the daily events we write about each week. Included in this issue...

A REPUBLIC — IF YOU CAN KEEP IT

Ralph Benko, Forbes online columnist, proposes a national citizens’ league that would employ ‘soft power’ to improve the quality and legitimacy of our system of governance.

RUSSIA IS NOT OUR ENEMY

Jack Matlock, former US Ambassador to Russia, thinks our preoccupation with alleged Russian campaign tampering obscures far more important issues of our relationship with that superpower. Risking war, he says, over mere differences in perspective creates a risk of stumbling into unimaginable devastation.

TAXATION IN THE AGE OF DIGITALIZATION

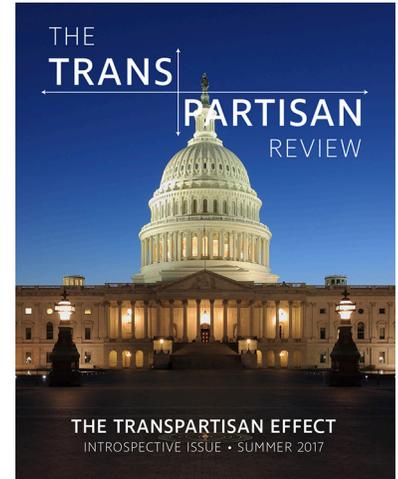
Edgar Feige, economics professor, restates his proposal to replace the income tax with a miniscule user fee on all bank transactions, making taxes simpler, fairer, more productive, and less burdensome. At a stroke the fee eliminates loopholes, special interest lobbying, and deficit spending.

UNITED AND DIVIDED: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Lynne Twist Philanthropist and Lawry Chickering Transpartisan Review executive editor report on a Living Room Conversation, founded by Joan Blades (MoveOn.org co-founder), bringing together three ‘conservatives’ and three ‘progressives’ on a transpartisan journey, learning from five celebrated civil society experiments accomplishing extraordinary success in work with the most ‘difficult’ populations.

NOT JUST AN ABSTRACTION ANYMORE: THE MATRIX VALIDATED

Michael Briand, Transpartisan Review editor, reports a new study showing how useful the transpartisan matrix can be. Neither Trump nor Clinton voters would have to alter their positions significantly for a more pragmatic majority point of view to emerge.



Available online at www.transpartisanreview.com.



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