

# When Political Polarization and Social Differentiation Go Together<sup>\*</sup>

– A Preliminary Observation of the  
US in the Election Year

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## I. SOCIAL FORCES DISTURBING PRIMARY ELECTION

The result of the US presidential election remains something that can always arouse worldwide attention while the competition for the president candidate nomination of both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party leading to the general election appears to be not so exciting. Yet, the 2016 primaries of the two parties broke the rules and since the very beginning they became a focus of public debate and media coverage. The TV rating of the primary debates, which drew few viewers in the past, hit new highs; the voting processes of the states were covered extensively by US and international media; the primary systems and rules of the two parties suddenly became a hot topic discussed by many US political scientists.

There is no doubt that such extraordinary attention arises from the fact that the two “star” candidates emerged in the primaries of

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both parties: Donald Trump on the Republican side and Bernie Sanders on the Democratic side. Prior to the commencement of the election, both candidates were marginal politicians in their respective parties with gloomy prospects. However, with the unfolding of the election process, they rose to prominence at an astonishing speed and attracted a lot of supporters rapidly, not only defeating their famous intra-party rival along the way, but also effectively changing the themes of the primary debates and challenging the principles of both parties. Although Sanders lagged behind Hillary Clinton who has secured the nomination of the Democratic presidential candidate, he outperformed the latter in terms of momentum and influence. Donald Trump had clinched the nomination of the Republican presidential candidate.

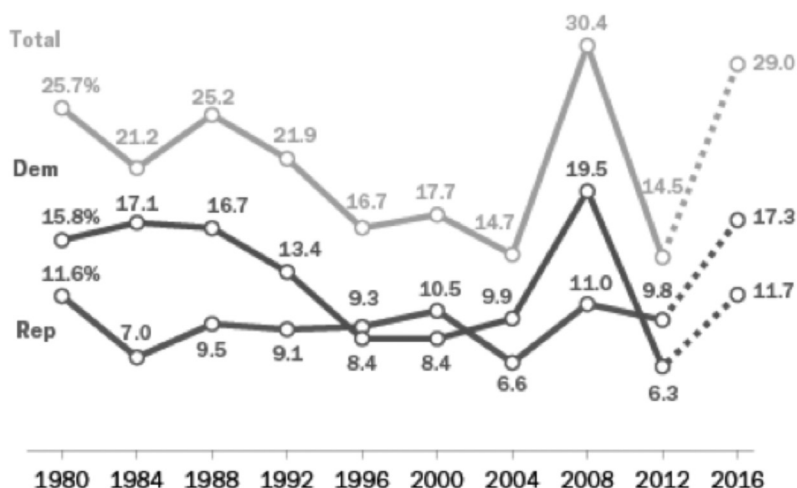
There have been much discussion about the unexpected rise of Trump and Sanders among the Americans, and generally there is more concern than excitement. In particular, there have been dispute both in and outside the Republican Party, criticizing and even boycotting Trump's sweeping victory in the primaries. Some have accused him of splitting society by inciting hatred, manipulating religious and ethnic topics; others criticized him for lacking political experience and clear and consistent policy visions; still others condemned him for not respecting the rivals and opponents, and being rude and mean in language, and they said they were shocked and puzzled at the fact that such a political clown could have won victories one after another.

It should be admitted that the Trump cyclone is opportunistic. 1) The senior Republican leaders underestimated the potential of Trump initially after the primary began, planned to attract media attention to the Republican Party by taking advantage of Trump and were slow in responding to the remarks of Trump that poisoned the atmosphere of the debates. 2) The rivals of Trump within the Republican Party were busy fighting each other and, in particular, the moderate Republicans were reluctant to agree on a generally accepted representative, which severely split the supporters, as a result of which the candidates were defeated by Trump one after another. 3) Trump took advantage of the characteristics of the Republican primary system with the meticulous calculation of

a businessman and poured human and financial resources into the “winner takes all” states. In spite of an average percentage of votes of 41.6%<sup>1</sup> only, Trump secured an obvious lead in the 2016 Republican National Convention; 4) Trump, a man who rose to prominence through reality TV shows, knows well the rhythm of the media in the Internet era, makes best use of the advantages and bypasses the disadvantages, and suppresses material policy discussions with offensive political postures, rendering it impossible for the political veterans who compete with him to push ahead with the fight against him.

Even so, the victory of Trump may not be simply attributed to speculation. Both the national polls and the statistical analysis of the votes of the states indicate that Trump expanded the base of the primary-goers of the Republican Party; non-party independents, grassroots Republicans who did not participate in the events of the party for a long period of time and some Democratic Party members in certain states even participated in the vote for the campaign to support him, enabling the vote rate of the Republican primaries to hit new highs since 1980 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Votes cast in the Democratic and Republican primaries as a share of eligible voters in primary states<sup>2</sup>



More importantly, Trump attracted some firm core supporters. Although senior Republican leaders had taken actions to stop

Trump covertly or overtly and the US mainstream media kept questioning him and criticizing him, these core supporters were not affected and said that they would not vote for any candidate other than Trump. The US right-wing political scientist Charles Murray calls them believers of Trumpism,<sup>3</sup> most of whom are white, middle-aged and labor class, hold high school or below education, and live in the Bible Belt in the southern US and the poverty stricken Appalachian Mountains in the southeast US.<sup>4</sup> They are skeptical about and angry with the existing social and economic structure of the US. Economically, they complain that they are deprived of jobs, thinking that, on the one hand, the outsourcing of the US manufacturing sector results in the flow of jobs to the emerging economies and, on the other, large numbers of legal and illegal immigrants take away the remaining jobs with low pays. As the employment rate and labor participation rate of the communities in which they live remain low for a long period of time, and the age and skills limit their mobility, they fear that the channel by which they look for blue-collar jobs leading them to the middle class has disappeared. What makes them more annoyed is that they feel they are not only abandoned economically, but also looked down upon and oppressed by the cultural elites. When talking about the racial, religious, social and economic issues, they are often being accused of breaching the concept of multicultural inclusion and respect, and being ridiculed and even silenced for being politically incorrect.

According to the research results of famous American economists Angus Deaton and Anne Case, the long-term anger and dissatisfaction of the white males<sup>5</sup> aged 45-54 has affected their health status. A report published by the two scholars in September 2015 reveals a shocking fact: between 1999-2013, while the mortality of various ethnic groups and age groups kept decreasing, the mortality of white males aged 45-54 kept growing. The main reason behind the abnormal rise in the mortality of the middle-age whites is the increase of 134 deaths per 100,000 people with high school or below education while the number of deaths per 100,000 people with college education or a bachelor's degree and above education declined by 3 and 57, respectively.<sup>6</sup>

When interpreting this phenomenon, Deaton and Case pointed out that drug abuse, alcohol and suicide are the immediate causes of the increase in the mortality of the middle-aged whites with low education, which also resulted in the decline in their health status during the same period. And this living style of direct and indirect suicides reflects their mental status of mixed anxiety and pain and they are the main victims of rapid decline in productivity, widening gap between the rich and the poor, and the rise in the sense of social instability.<sup>7</sup> While they were faced with economic pressure, the American decision-makers, instead of taking effective measures to help them, further aggravated their fear about the future and disappointment toward traditional politics through policy adjustment, such as linking of the pension payment with the stock market.

These middle-aged whites became the major vote bank of Trump when he emerged as the “savior of the US”, claiming that “I just like you guys with little education”. He promised to “take back the jobs from the Mexicans and the Chinese” and called for deportation of all illegal immigrants. While astonishing and stirring resentment among the mainstream Americans, these remarks of Trump that challenge the existing standard of “political correctness” in the US were strongly echoed among these audiences. In the “Super Tuesday” vote during the Republican primary held in March 2016, the highest proportion of voters voting for Trump was registered in the several counties identified in the Deaton-Case report to have the highest mortality of the middle-aged whites with low education.<sup>8</sup>

Correspondingly, Sanders on the Democratic side gathered around him another group of core supporters – young voters aged 30 and below, especially those who hold university or above education and are receiving higher education. According to sociological classification in US politics, these people constitute the bulk of “Generation Y” born between 1980-2000. They grew up in the globalization era, witnessed the economic transformation process during which information technology transformed the US manufacturing sector and service sector, and knew well that they must complete higher education in order

to cope with global competition and keep up with the pace of technology advancements. Many of them were admitted to universities before or after the 2008 American financial crisis, during which the federal and local governments cut the education allocations and the financial support received by private universities also decreased while tuition fees of universities grew remarkably. As a result of this, many of Generation Y had to complete their education with student loans, the total amount of which surged from US\$260 billion in 2004 to US\$1.1 trillion in 2014.<sup>9</sup> And, upon graduation, they found it extremely difficult to land their first job due to slow economic recovery and the persistently sluggish job market. The enormous pressure to repay the loan and the difficulty in landing a stable full-time job make the young people aged at 30 and below generally anxious about their personal development prospects.

These young people believe that the problems facing them are long-standing structural ones that cannot be fully resolved by themselves and that the government is obligated to lend a hand. However, the performance of the government since the outbreak of the financial crisis is far from being satisfactory to them. The earliest voters of Generation Y used to support Obama overwhelmingly and helped bring him into the White House. By the 2012 election, Generation Y still stood behind Obama, but the popularity rate of Obama among them declined. In the 2016 primaries, Hillary described her election as Obama's third term, which could not stir up the confidence and enthusiasm in the young people. The policies advocated by Sanders, such as full exemption of the tuition fees of public higher education and forcing the banks to cut the interest rates for student loans, are the measures urgently needed by Generation Y. And the plans of Sanders to invest in public infrastructure gave them hope of improvements in employment prospects. They have good reasons to become firm supporters of Sanders. Although there was little possibility that Sanders could beat Hillary technically, they still solicited donations, carried out publicity campaigns and canvassed votes for Sanders in the Democratic campaigns across the US relentlessly. Their performance astonished the US political circle and media

circle which generally hold the notion that the young people are indifferent to politics.

## II. TREND OF ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION

What disrupts the 2016 US presidential election is more of the angry people stimulated and mobilized by the emerging political stars like Trump and Sanders rather than Trump and Sanders themselves. The anger of the two groups – whites aged 45-54 with high school and below education and young people aged 30 and below with higher education – is directed at the indifferent traditional political process, and their anger is derived from their personal feeling of economic inequality and social injustice. What is worth mentioning is that such a feeling is not limited to the above two groups, but is common across all social classes of the US.

According to the research and analysis results of the US academic circle and policy makers in recent years, different classes of the American society indeed got a feel of the economic reality of polarization.

Firstly, the gap between the rich and the poor has been widening remarkably and the degree of economic inequality has returned to a historical high. According to the estimates of the US Congressional Budget Office, the annual income of the 1% households with the highest income grew 275% between 1979-2007, and their proportion to the national total income doubled from 8% to 17%. The proportion of the income of the low- and middle-income households kept decreasing during the same period of time.<sup>10</sup> After the financial crisis, the trend of a widening gap between the rich and the poor continued instead of being stopped. In 2013, the proportion of the income of the 1% households with the highest income reached more than 20%<sup>11</sup> and the income of the 10% high income households grew 2% from 2010 while the inflation adjusted actual income of the remaining 90% households tended to decrease.<sup>12</sup>

Secondly, as American scholar Richard Haass has put it, what is more intolerable than growing income inequality is the

weakening and even disappearance of social mobility. A rare joint research report published by the US liberal think tank Brookings Institution and the conservative think tank American Enterprise Institute (AEI) at the end of 2015 confirmed the trend of social class solidification: the children of 43% families with the lowest income and 40% families with the highest income remained in the same income classes as their parents when they became adults.<sup>13</sup> Economist Emmanuel Saez, who is dedicated to research on income distribution, calls this trans-generational inheritance as a “lottery of birth”.<sup>14</sup> It is obvious that the American Dream that individual’s hard work may lead to success will no longer exist if the efforts such as receiving education, working hard and applying talents could not change the personal situation determined by the family background.

Thirdly, growing economic inequality and decreasing social mobility may form a malicious cycle in which they reinforce each other. Former chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers Alan Krueger<sup>15</sup>, using data from Canadian economist Miles Corak, introduced “The Great Gatsby Curve”, which indicates the reverse relevance between social mobility and economic inequality. In comparison with other Western developed countries, social mobility in the US since 1979 has tended to be the lowest. Krueger predicted that, due to growing economic inequality in the US during the past 25 years, the difficulty facing the next generation Americans to move up in society would grow 25%.<sup>16</sup>

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Under the dual pressure of economic inequality and reduced mobility, those who are affected negatively are by no means limited to the middle-aged whites with low education and young people aged 30 or below with higher education. Firstly, in the past 40 years at least, the middle class in the US were trapped in difficulty. In spite of their efforts to keep up with the living standards of the



high-income class by means of mortgage loans and double income, few of them succeeded and it was not a rare case that many of them were reduced to the low-income class. The Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan fact tank in the US, calls 2000-2010 as the “lost decade of the middle class”. According to its survey, the middle class in the total population of the US went down from 61% in 1971 to 51% in 2011 and their income in the total income of the US decreased from 62% in 1970 to 45% in 2011.<sup>17</sup> Secondly, things are also getting difficult for the low-income Americans. According to a 2012 survey, nearly 1/3 of Americans regarded themselves as the low-income class, up to 84% of whom were forced to cut their living expenditure after the financial crisis and 77% said that their expectancy for getting out of poverty decreased as compared with 10 years ago and half of them would not believe that their children would be better off in social status.<sup>18</sup> And finally, even the 10% population with the highest income are divided due to unequal distribution pressure: only 1% families with the highest income saw continuous increases in earnings and the bulk of the increased earnings fell into the hands of the top 0.1% families.<sup>19</sup>

### III. DILEMMA OF POLARIZED POLITICS

Since 99% and even 99.9% of Americans are victims of the trend of economic inequality, why do the Americans lack an overwhelming consensus on facing up to the problem and looking for a policy scheme to alleviate the trend? The reason is that the left and right wings in the US are diametrically divided over the perception about the root causes of the problem, could not agree with each other over the principles and methods for resolving the problem, and accused each other of delaying and worsening the problem, pushing political polarization in the US to a new height.

In the eyes of American progressives, the current trend of economic inequality began with the Reagan Revolution during the terms of office of President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. Driven by major capital forces, the conservative right wings robbed the poor to help the rich, weakened the trade unions, damaged the welfare system and overturned the redistribution system established

through the Roosevelt New Deal, in the name of tax cuts and deregulation, resulting in widening the gap between the rich and the poor. American progressives call for reinforcing the public education system comprehensively to ensure a fair starting point for competition; expanding the coverage of medical insurance and improving the welfare assistance system to rebuild the social security network; increasing investment in infrastructure, closing the digital gap facing the poor people, providing job opportunities and increasing the labor participation rate; rebuilding a reasonable taxation system and forcing the high-income class and large enterprises to shoulder social responsibilities.<sup>20</sup>

In the eyes of American conservatives, social pains and economic chaos are the bad consequences of government invention. In addition to hampering competition, the redistribution policy of the federal government results in huge fiscal deficit and treasury bond burdens, distorts the investment structure and damages the economic position of the US in the future. They think that the tax burdens of American enterprises and individuals are too high, putting them at a disadvantage in global competition. Hence, the principles of the Reagan economics must be upheld to reduce the tax burdens of the enterprises and re-regulate them. Some right-wing scholars even believe that inequality itself is not a problem and appropriate inequality is helpful in stimulating competition and driving innovation so as to increase the income levels comprehensively by spurring economic growth.<sup>21</sup>

Both sides are diametrically divided that they lack any common ground for communication and dialogue. In addition to failing to provide a channel for compromise, the traditional political process of the US fails to function due to the polarization trend of party politics and is unable to respond to the substantial social and economic issues.

The two-party system of the US gave birth to the median voter theorem.<sup>22</sup> In comparison with the multi-party system, the two-party system is less prone to sharp ideological antagonism, and in order to win the victory, the two major parties tend to maximize their votes. As a result, they are accustomed to expanding their inclusivity and representation as far as possible and their political

positions tend to be diversified and median. Except under extreme circumstances such as the American Civil War, the political positions of the two parties generally approach the middle, which is conducive to stability of the political system, and lays a foundation for cooperation and compromise between both parties. During the Cold War following the end of World War II, the cooperation between the two major parties of the US reached an unprecedented level of closeness in the field of foreign policies and arrived at bipartisanship. However, since the mid-1960s, the relationship between the two parties reversed. The Civil Rights Movement, the Counter-culture Movement and the protests against the Vietnam War broke out successively, causing the two parties to move apart in internal and external policies. With the rise of neo-conservatism in 1970s, it came into full clash with the multi-cultural concepts advocated by the progressive left wingers and partisan bickering became radical again. However, bipartisan cooperation remained common.

The end of the Cold War and the advent of economic globalization pushed the development of party politics in the US into a new stage. The change in the international environment coincided with the replacement of the US leadership and the Baby Boomers Generation born after 1945 began to take supreme leadership. With Bill Clinton elected as the president in 1992 and Newt Gingrich leading the Republican Party to win the majority seats in the Senate and House of Representatives in 1994, polarization became the main theme in party politics in the US.

Firstly, bipartisan cooperation in the Congress decreased, and putting forward bills, conducting debate and voting in strict accordance with the party positions became the routine. Now,

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After the end of Cold War, polarization became the main theme in party politics in the US.

from the first reading of a motion or bill by the sub-committees of the committees, the congressmen would vote in accordance with the party positions and party unity scores in the Senate and House of Representatives have been kept above 90% since 2010 (see Table 1).

**Table 1 Range of fluctuation of party unity scores of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party<sup>23</sup>**

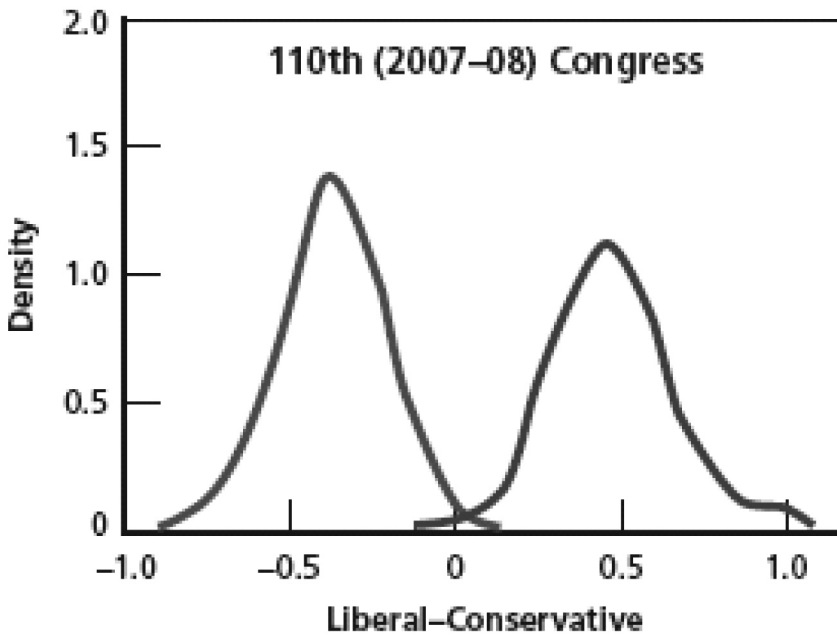
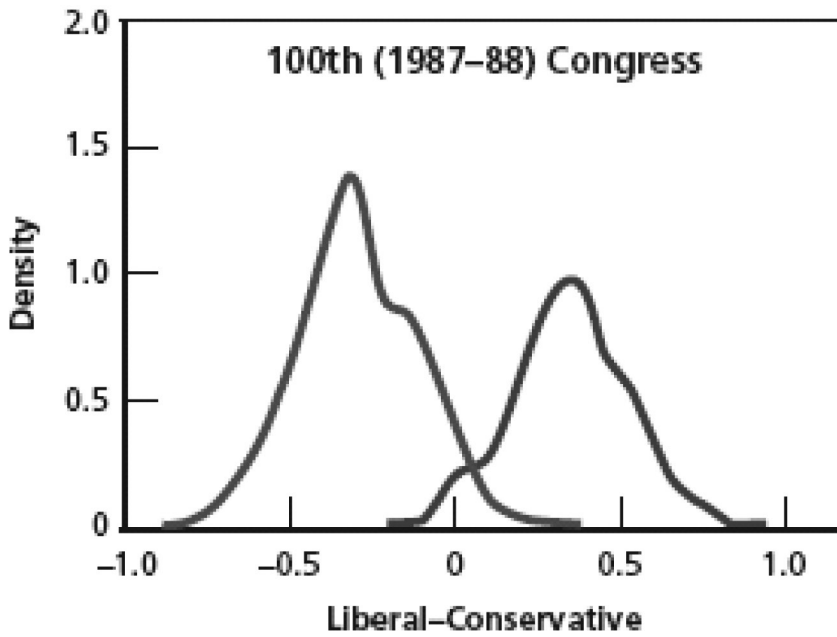
Period	House Democrats	House Republicans	Senate Democrats	Senate Republicans
1971-1980	71%-76%	72%-79%	73%-76%	70%-74%
1981-1990	77%-88%	77%-79%	76%-85%	76%-83%
1991-2000	82%-92%	82%-91%	82%-91%	83%-91%
2001-2013	88%-96%	90%-95%	88%-97%	85%-94%

Secondly, the moderates of the two parties disappeared gradually. They were often attacked for their irresolute positions during the primaries. As a result, they lost the election or were forced to retire early.

In addition, the congressmen of the two parties tended to move apart gradually in terms of ideology. During the 100th Congress between 1987-1988, the moderates of the two parties showed obvious overlapping in their ideological positions. At the 110th Congress 20 years later, the middle ground narrowed sharply (see Figure 2). By the 112th Congress in 2011-2012, the ideology rating of nearly all Republican congressmen appeared more conservative than any Democratic congressman, or the ideology rating of nearly all Democratic congressmen was more liberal than any Republican congressman.<sup>24</sup>

As a consequence of polarized party politics, stalemates have kept emerging in legislation, public policy debate and personnel appointment of the US Congress. Filibuster, a procedure permitted by the Senate rules, used to be rarely seen in the past, but has been increasingly applied in recent years. Between 1917-1968, there were less than seven cloture motions resulting from filibusters for the congresses. Since 1992, there were more than 40 cloture motions for each congress; and for each of the four congresses since 2008, the number of cloture motions exceeded 100.<sup>26</sup> The frequent application of filibuster has deviated from the original intention of protecting the rights of the minority congressmen, but evolved into

Figure 2 Trend of polarization in the US Congress (1987-2008)<sup>25</sup>



a device that is used by the left and right wings to block the policy motions. As a matter of fact, this means that, without the support of a supermajority of the Senate, no major motion will be put to a vote,<sup>27</sup> which results in low operational efficiency of the Congress.

When the two parties control the Senate and House of Representatives, or control the Administration and the legislation body respectively, the split federal government results in more serious bipartisan antagonism and even paralysis of the decision-making process. A raft of nominations by the President for public offices are put aside by the Congress and the key legislation are vetoed by the President. The failure of the Congress and the President to reach compromise over the federal budget will result in the occurrence of extreme events, such as shutdown of the government departments.

It must be pointed out that the key driving force of the growing political polarization in the US is the trend of growing economic inequality during the past 35 years. The results of economic growth have not been distributed in a fair manner, resulting in social differentiation as well as misunderstandings and skeptics among different classes. Politicians that represent the interests of different classes enhance and solidify the social divergence in policy discussions at the Congress in order to maintain their own status. As a result, bipartisan bickering tends to become radical and extreme, paralyzing the political decision-making process. In turn, the failure of the political and decision-making processes to respond to social and economic challenges enables the inequality to keep spreading and worsening, leading to long-term malicious cycles. It is obvious that the polarized political and economic problems of the US have formed a mutually enhancing deadlock, to which no rapid solution can be identified by using the traditional political model.

#### IV. POLICY SPACE CREATED BY MARGINAL FIGURES

It is against this backdrop that innovation and change have turned into the political trend of the US election year. Only when traditional political processes repeatedly let the ordinary people down, there is no hope of relaxing the stiff policies of the two

parties and the cliches of the mainstream politicians cannot produce satisfactory results, is it possible for marginal figures of the political parties and the political arena to arouse public attention and to be extolled.

It should be noted that it is an important trait of the American political tradition to seek policy breakthroughs by means of marginal political figures or social forces. The same scene of emerging stars dominating the election we have seen today occurred in the 1992 election when independent candidate Ross Perot emerged surprisingly to change the pattern of bipartisan antagonism and

make the elimination of the budget deficit of the federal government the focus of national attention. Moving further backward, Jimmy Carter attracted the voters with the fresh image of an outsider of the political circle of Washington in the 1976 election to make his way into the White House, successfully maintaining the authority of the president that had suffered a disastrous decline due to the Watergate Scandal.

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Seeking policy breakthroughs via marginal political figures or social forces is an important trait of the US political tradition.

If we cast our eyes further back into the US history, we can find more examples. For instance, Andrew Jackson, who served as the US president between 1829-1837, was treated as a novice from the western border states in the political arena of the US and edged by the powerful ones within the ruling party. Finally, with the support of the grassroots, he made his way into the White House and committed himself to promoting political equality and economic equality, realizing the white male suffrage, and pursuing regional balance between the east and the west, structural balance between industry & commerce and agriculture and class balance between the major financial capital and the small farming & industrial owners. His efforts created Jacksonian democracy and shaped the diplomatic tradition known as the Jacksonian tradition. It was based on the trend of political, economic and social equality advocated by him that the US embarked on its first wave of industrialization,

urbanization and modernization successfully.

Another example is William Jennings Bryan, who was a key figure active in the American political arena between the 1890s and 1910s. As a marginalized political figure from a farming state in the Midwest, he delivered the sensational “Cross of Gold” speech at the 1896 Democratic National Convention, sharply criticizing the gold standard system, and accusing it as a “crown of thorns” imposed by the Wall Street gurus on the Americans and a “cross of gold” put by the financial capital on the back of the American people. W. J. Bryan ran for the US presidency on behalf of the Democratic Party three times but failed in all. But, his thoughts and words pushed forward the development of the civil movement and progressive movement of the US. These reformative movements explored new policy solutions for such problems as economic inequality left over from the Gilded Age, and came up with such measures as government supervision over the market, protection of the laborers’ rights, gradual establishment of the fiscal redistribution, and enterprises’ assumption of social responsibilities. They expanded the scope of policy options, and alleviated the social conflicts of the US, thus laying a more solid foundation for sustainable economic development.

Other frequently mentioned historical figures who changed American politics with an image of political novice include left-wing populist Huey Pierce Long<sup>28</sup> in the 1900s and right-wing populist George Corley Wallace<sup>29</sup> in the 1960s and 1970s.

It can be said that Sanders and Trump that emerged in the 2016 US presidential election carried forward this tradition. The emergence of the two stimulated the enthusiasm of some marginalized groups for participating in political activities and changed the sentiment of political indifference that used to be widespread among the lower class and young people. By comparison, the policy positions proposed by Sanders focusing on the core problem of economic inequality are better supported by principles and are more systematic, consistent and well-targeted. And, Trump, who elaborated on social differentiation, made sensational remarks, and came up with non-systematic positions, some of which contradicted each another.



Interestingly, although the two are usually described as the two poles of the American political spectrum by the media, there exist certain subtle similarities between the policy concepts of the two in fact. Firstly, both try to bypass the traditional debate over small government and big government between the two parties and advocate government in action and efficient administration. Sanders advocates total medical insurance coverage and large-scale infrastructure construction, which of course require the government to play an active role. Trump advocates trade control, border control, and rapid repayment of national debts, which can be done only through deep involvement of the government in social and economic activities. This differs materially from the long-standing position of the Republicans against government intervention.

Secondly, both support trade protection. The difference is that Sanders supports trade protection measures to protect the rights and interests of the laborers and protect the environment, while Trump prefers elimination of trade deficit and reinvigoration of the US manufacturing sector. No matter whatever the purpose is, the imposition of high tariffs and review of bilateral or multilateral trade pacts contradict the consistent positions of the two parties on trade globalization, especially the original free trade principle advocated by the Republican Party.

Thirdly, on the international security issue, both are Jacksonian, putting the interests of the US first.<sup>30</sup> They insist on firm counterattack against the national security threats to the US, oppose deep involvement in international affairs, and are skeptical about undertaking the international obligations and maintaining military cooperation with the allies.

Finally, they claim themselves to be the representative of the grassroots people, strongly criticize money politics and big-gun politics, and criticize the privileged class. The campaigns of the two attracted plenty of small sum donations, and the large organization donations received by the two from the Political Action Committee lagged far behind those of the political veterans like Hillary (see Table 2). They advocated the advantages of themselves being the outsiders, and promised that they could push ahead with new policies without being restricted by the established system.

**Table 2 Campaign funding raised by candidates of major political parties for the 2016 presidential election by May 23, 2016<sup>31</sup>**

Candidate	Direct Donation (US\$)	Donation from External Organizations (US\$)
Sanders (Democrat)	207 million	610,000
Hillary (Democrat)	204 million	84.81 million
Trump (Republican)	57.66 million	3.29 million
Gary Johnson (Libertarian Party)	348,000	0
Jill Stein (Green Party)	482,000	0

Hence, it is still too early to conclude that the rise of Sanders and Trump will make the positions of the two parties more extreme. If we say that the position of Sanders is more liberal than the mainstream of the Democratic Party and radically progressive, it is very difficult to define the policy orientation of Trump using a single ideological standard. As mentioned previously, although there is a gap between his remarks on social and economic issues with the Republican position of small government, he does not simply reinforce the conservative beliefs of the right wing of the Republican Party on social and cultural issues. Although he challenges the multi-culturalism on purpose and disregards the political correctness standard, he is disinterested in the traditional hot topics of the right-wing conservatives, such as anti-abortion, support for religious activities in public schools, anti-gay marriage and maintenance of the right to hold guns. He is unwilling to be involved in these long-term debated policies. From this perspective, the two emerging stars that disturb the primaries are not bound by the traditional party expressions of positions, redefine the focus of the topics, and keep coming up with governance slogans not heard before (for instance, Trump vows to pay off a total of US\$19 trillion in long-term national debts within eight years and Sanders vows to exempt the tuition fees of all public schools), smashing the policy boundaries of the two

parties. This may provide them with opportunities for resolving the stiffened principle differences, position confrontation, and policy face-off, and creating new policy portfolios.

## CONCLUSION

To a large extent, the social and political landscape of the 2016 US presidential election is an epitome of the political trend in the Western developed countries and the world alike. The long-standing serious economic inequality resulting from the rapid globalization process between 1990-2010 has led to social differentiation and the accumulation of political discontent.<sup>32</sup> In the subsequent stage of globalization, the global economy may slow down and even fall into prolonged stagnation,<sup>33</sup> and fair distribution is replacing rapid expansion as the main topic in the social and economic policies of many countries. How to balance the relationship between the market and the government, forge a consensus that is acceptable to people of all classes of society, and optimize the global governance rules has naturally become the focus of public policy discussions. When the traditional political processes fail to respond to the current problems in a timely and appropriate manner and when the lower-class people lose trust in the privileged system, it is natural that the voters will turn to marginal politicians for the solution. Any country that is capable of transforming such

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Any country that is capable of transforming such efforts into institutions and policy vigor will have the opportunity to lead the global trend.

efforts into institutions and policy vigor will have the opportunity to lead the global trend; any country in which chaos spreads as a result of the extreme voices will possibly affect the stability of the global order. These changes are not necessarily born out of election and will not necessarily disappear as a result of elections, but are the key factor that determines global social and economic development in the future.

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- <sup>1</sup> The statistics as of June 2016, <http://www.thegreenpapers.com/P16/R>, accessed June 4, 2016.
- <sup>2</sup> Drew Desilver, "So far, turnout in this year's primaries rivals 2008 record" (March 8, 2016), <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/03/08/so-far-turnout-in-this-years-primaries-rivals-2008-record>, accessed April 1, 2016.
- <sup>3</sup> PBS interview with Charles Murrey, "Why economic anxiety is driving working class voters to 'Trumpism'", <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/why-economic-anxiety-is-driving-working-class-voters-to-trumpism/>, accessed March 31, 2016.
- <sup>4</sup> According to statistics of the American Communities Project of the University of Michigan <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/despair-led-stunning-hike-mortality-rates-americans/>, accessed April 1, 2016.
- <sup>5</sup> According to the demographic definition, the Latinos shall be counted as whites. In US political and sociological research, the Latinos, Africans and Asians are collectively referred to as the minorities and the whites excluding the Latinos are called the majority whites. This paper adopts the latter definition.
- <sup>6</sup> Anne Case and Angus Deaton, "Rising morbidity and mortality in midlife among white non-Hispanic Americans in the 21st century", *PNAS*, December 8, 2015, Vol. 112, No. 49, 15078-15083.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup> Edward Luce, "The New Class Warfare in America", *Financial Times*, March 20, 2016.
- <sup>9</sup> Janet Yellen, "Perspectives on Inequality and Opportunity from the Survey of Consumer Finances", *Federal Reserve Speeches*, October 17, 2014, <http://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/speech/yellen20141017a.htm>, accessed March 1, 2016.
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<sup>25</sup> James A. Thomson, “A House Divided: Polarization and Its Effect on RAND”, RAND Corporation, 2010, p. 21.

<sup>26</sup> Cloture is the motion submitted to halt filibuster and requires 3/5 majority votes of the Senate to become effective. The number of cloture motions is based on data of the US Senate. United States Senate, “Senate Action on Cloture Motions”, [http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/cloture\\_motions/cloture-Counts.htm](http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/cloture_motions/cloture-Counts.htm), accessed March 30, 2016.

<sup>27</sup> US Senate Supermajority refers to 3/5 majority votes necessary to halt filibuster, generally 60 votes.

<sup>28</sup> Editor’s Note: Huey Pierce Long, 1893-1935, American politician, lawyer and famous public speaker. He was elected Governor of Louisiana (1928) and a federal Senator (1930) primarily relying on the support of the poor whites in southern US.

<sup>29</sup> Editor’s Note: George Corley Wallace, 1919-1998, American politician. He was elected Governor of Alabama 3 times (4 terms) and ran for the US presidency 4 times between 1964 -1976 and made a stir in the US with his sensational remarks about insisting on apartheid in the 1960s.

<sup>30</sup> Here, it refers to the Jacksonian tradition in the field of foreign policy. Refer to Walter Russell Mead, *American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World*, trans. Cao Huayin, Beijing: CITIC Press, 2003, pp. 261-281.

<sup>31</sup> Data published by the Center for Responsive Politics, a think tank focused on money politics in the US. See “2016 Presidential Race”, [OpenSecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org/pres16/), <http://www.opensecrets.org/pres16/>, accessed June 15, 2016.

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<sup>33</sup> For relevant discussions, see Lawrence H. Summers, “The Age of Secular Stagnation”, *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2016.