Traibalism and Liberal Democracy in a Post-Truth Environment

Beverly Crawford
OLLI Fall 2018
bev@berkeley.edu bev.berkeley.edu

Review: The weaknesses of liberalism

- The focus on reason leaves out **emotion**
- Liberal Focus on rationality leaves out **heroism** (are we really rational?)
- The classical focus on individual freedom and equality leaves out the human need for **security and community**
- The focus on the individual leaves out the **need to belong** to something bigger than themselves
- The Liberal focus on competitiveness leaves out **cooperation** and **community**
- Liberal freedom → insecurity, fragmented community, loss of identity

A culture of tribalism thrives on the weaknesses of liberalism

- Tribalism is essential to the human experience
- Liberal democracy lets us belong to many tribes
- All tribesare exclusive
- Ethnic and religious tribes are the most exclusive and the most dangerous
  - They see their exclusive identity as superior
  - They are hierarchical,
  - Leaders engender fear and hatred of “the other”
  - Loyalty in exchange for security
  - leaders are the only source of Truth
  - Without a tribe you are a fool or a sucker
- “Tribalism was an urge our Founding Fathers assumed we could overcome. And so it has become our greatest vulnerability.”
-

Review: Liberalism's weaknesses, Neo-Liberalism and Globalization

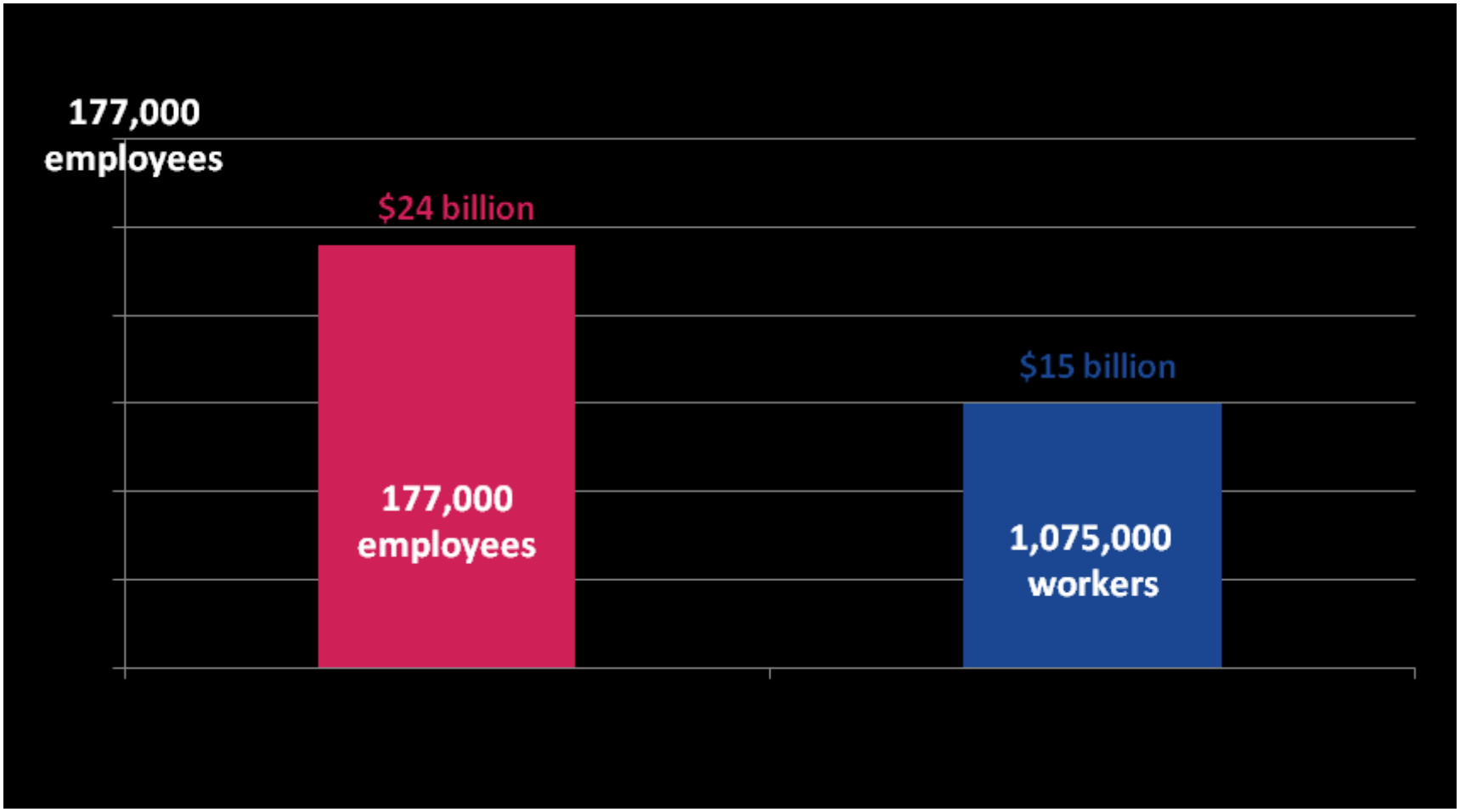
- Economic Freedom → competitive drive for Profit → Social Darwinism
- Freedom trumps equality
- Economic Freedom →
- Which went unchecked to create profound inequality

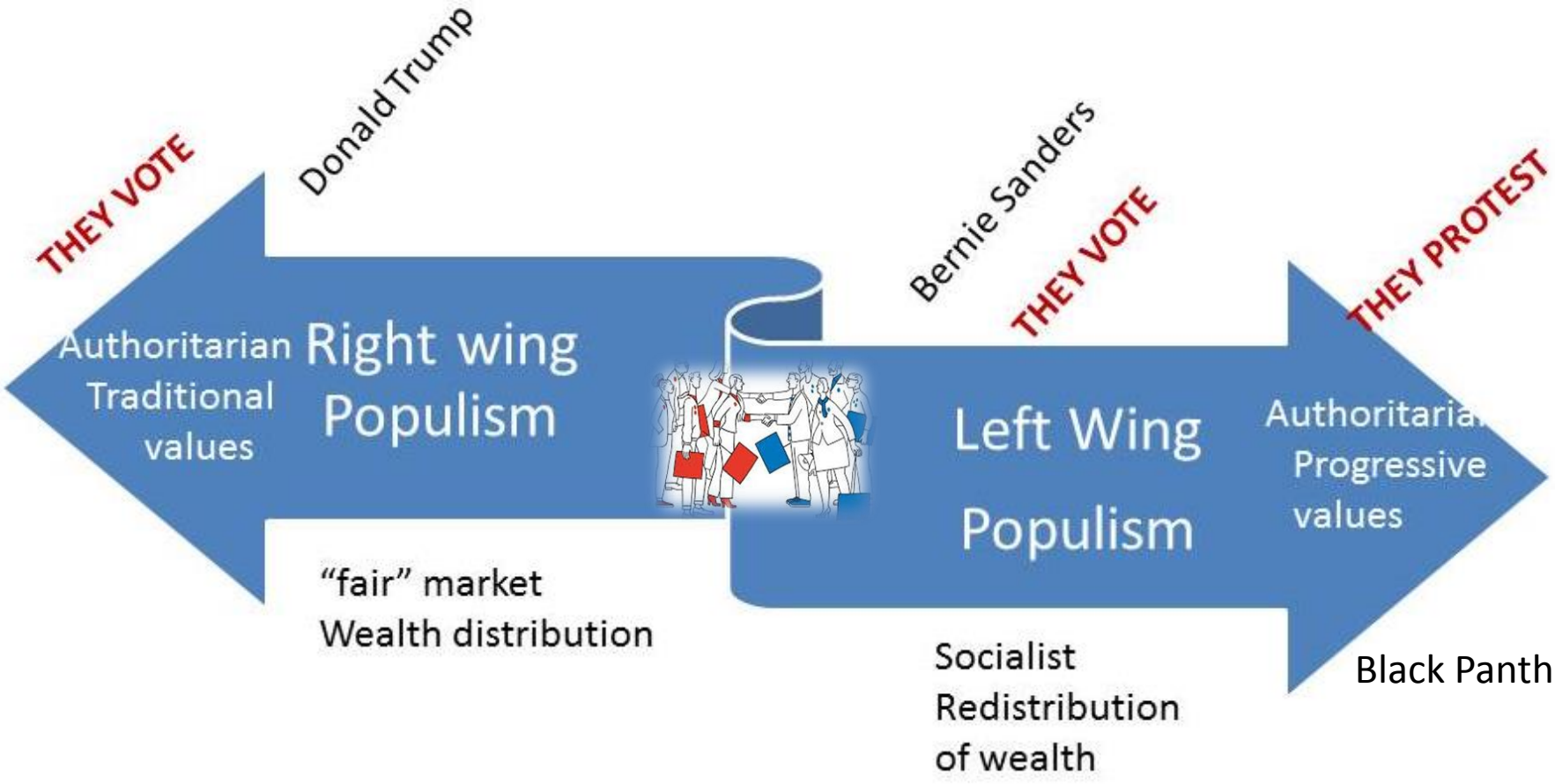
Review: Globalization creates profound inequality

- work that delivers high level ma
  services The Symb st

and services

- worl t
  Rout


177,000
employees
$24 billion
177,000
employees
$15 billion
1,075,000
workers


THEY VOTE
Donald Trump
Authoritarian
Traditional
values
Right wing
Populism
"fair" market
Wealth distribution
Bernie Sanders
THEY VOTE
Left Wing
Populism
Socialist
Redistribution
of wealth
THEY PROTEST
Authoritarian
Progressive
values
Black Panthers?

Big Differences between today's Extreme Right Populism and Left Wing Populism (both moderate and extreme)

Extreme Right-wing Populism (white)

- **Routine Production workers hurt by globalization**
- **Who exclude "the other" based on race, ethnicity**, religion—restrictive national identity
- Want a strong heroic leader for their movement who promises jobs…..
- And who encourages them to Focus on **superiority** of their white community
- **emotion: resentment of "equality" that "discriminates" against them**
- **Demand**: recognition of white identity (of which they are proud)

Currently a Danger to Liberal Democracy

Moderate and Extreme Left wing Populism (whites and minorities)

- Whites want **inclusion** of minorities and **destruction** of corporate power.
- Want charismatic but also democratic leadership for their movement
- Focus: :radical equality of all / **minorities** focus on white injustice
- Emotion: minority **resentment** of continued white oppression
- **Demand**: recognition of ethnic identity and collective equality previously denied.

Currently, Right Wing Populism is dominant:

- Control of government
- Control of the narrative :
  - Depends on a post-truth environment: a “break with reality”
- Why do people believe the narrative?

Can a post-truth environment end Liberalism?

FEAR

TERRORISM!
Die Spur der Welt-Kanzlerin durch Europa.
7.4.2017
STOCKHOLM
5 Tote,
14 Verletzte
18.8.2017
FINNLAND,
TURKU, 2 Tote,
8 Verletzte
3.5.2017. LONDON
3 Tote, 48 Verletzte
17.8.2017
BARCELONA
13 Tote,
120 Verletzte
22.5.2017
MANCHESTER
23 Tote,
116 Verletzte
9.8.2017.
LEVALLOIS-PERRET
6 Verletzte
TRAU DICH, DEUTSCHLAND!
Alternative für Deutschland

Sexualdelikte durch Asylbewerber
Täglich in Deutschland:
43 Opfer sexueller Gewalt
durch „Flüchtlinge"!
RAPE!
Alternative für Deutschland

IS THIS IMMIGRATION
Invasion!
2200 IMMIGRANTS ARRIVE IN MUNICH
NO WOMEN NO CHILDREN APPARENTLY
ONLY MEN FLEE "WAR ZONES"??
OR IS THIS AN INVASION

ISLAM!
Frau Merkel
hier ist das Volk!

Populist Right Reframes and Controls the Narrative

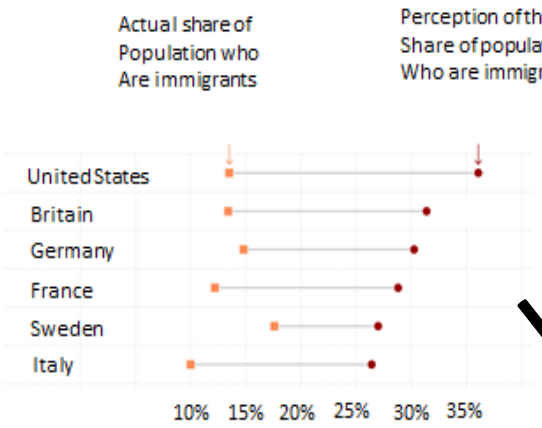
- Salvini: humanitarianism as criminality
- NGOs are in the same business as the Mafia

the populist far right ***depends on breaking with reality*** ***to dehumanize and nurture fear, hatred, and derision of "the other." Of Dark skinned people. Of Jews.***

“Merkel will replace the Ethnic German Population with Foreigners”

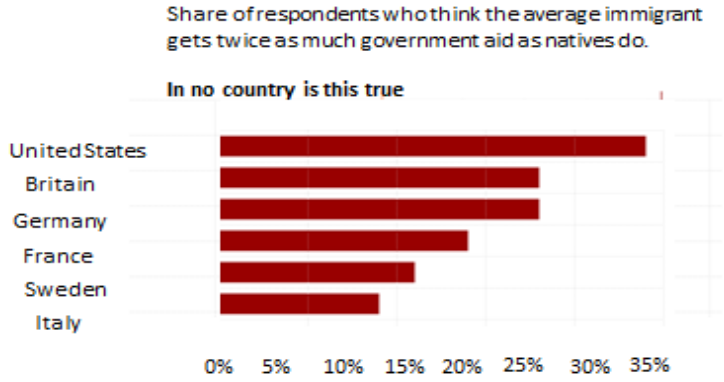
CULTURAL HIJACKING

What People believe

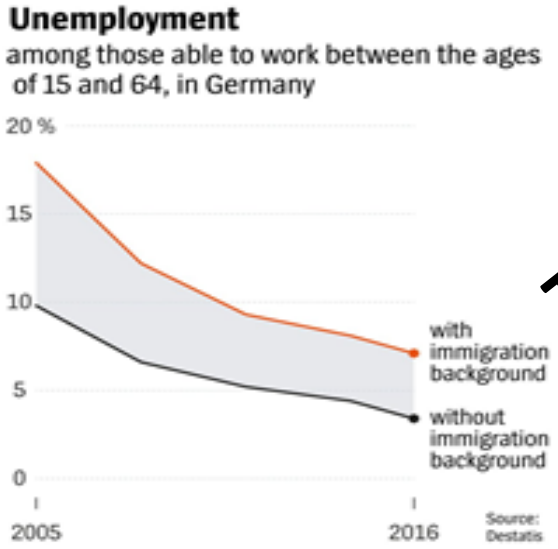


Invasion

What People believe



Job Snatching!



THEY GET MORE Benefits THAN WE DO!

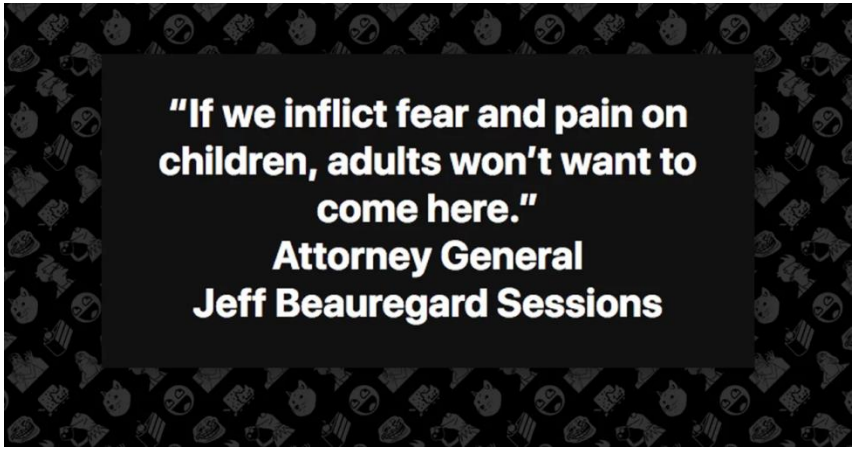
Even among “liberals,” the conventional wisdom in Germany is that Merkel mismanaged refugee crisis….

But Was it?

The Populist Right controls the narrative and Political Elites Follow

Why Do People Believe this rhetoric? And why Now?

- "Tribalism's Contribution to A post-Truth Environment
- The Psychology of post-truth "Tribal" Belief
  - Hot Cognition
  - Tribal Epistemology
  - Social Sharing and Confirmation Bias
  - Cognitive Dissonance and "doubling down"
  - Stoking conflict with outsiders strengthens community cohesion



The 21st Century Delivery of Post-Truth: The Medium is the Message

- The Spread of Falsehoods is not new…. But now…
- Unconnected sources, entertainment and lightening speed
- Social Media
- Trolls and Bots
- Algorithms
- Liberal messages are left in the dust

1. Fictitious stories, Memes Conspiracies

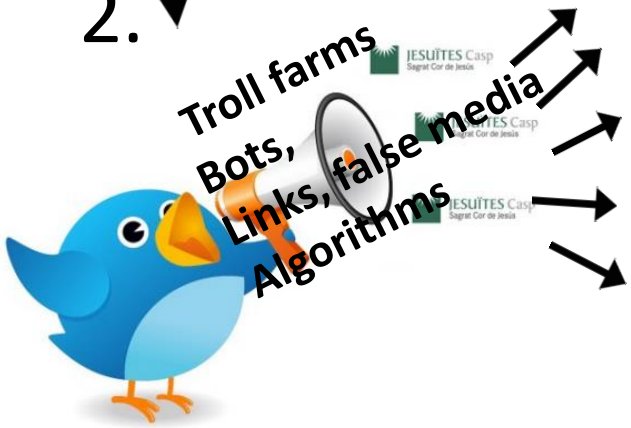
Schlaraffenland Deutschland – Bossmove

Schlaraffenland Deutschland Von: bossmove November 24, 2016 Für mehr Entspannung nach der Flucht verteilt die Stadt Essen jetzt Gutscheine für Massagen an Flüchtlinge, welche den Wert von 1200 EUR auch in bar

UNVERSCHÄMT!! Flensburger Flüchtlinge fordern mehr Geld!

Die ersten Wohncontainer sind noch nicht mal fertig, schon ist es an Dreistigkeit nicht mehr zu übertreffen. Sie stehen an der Exe. In Markenklamotten,...

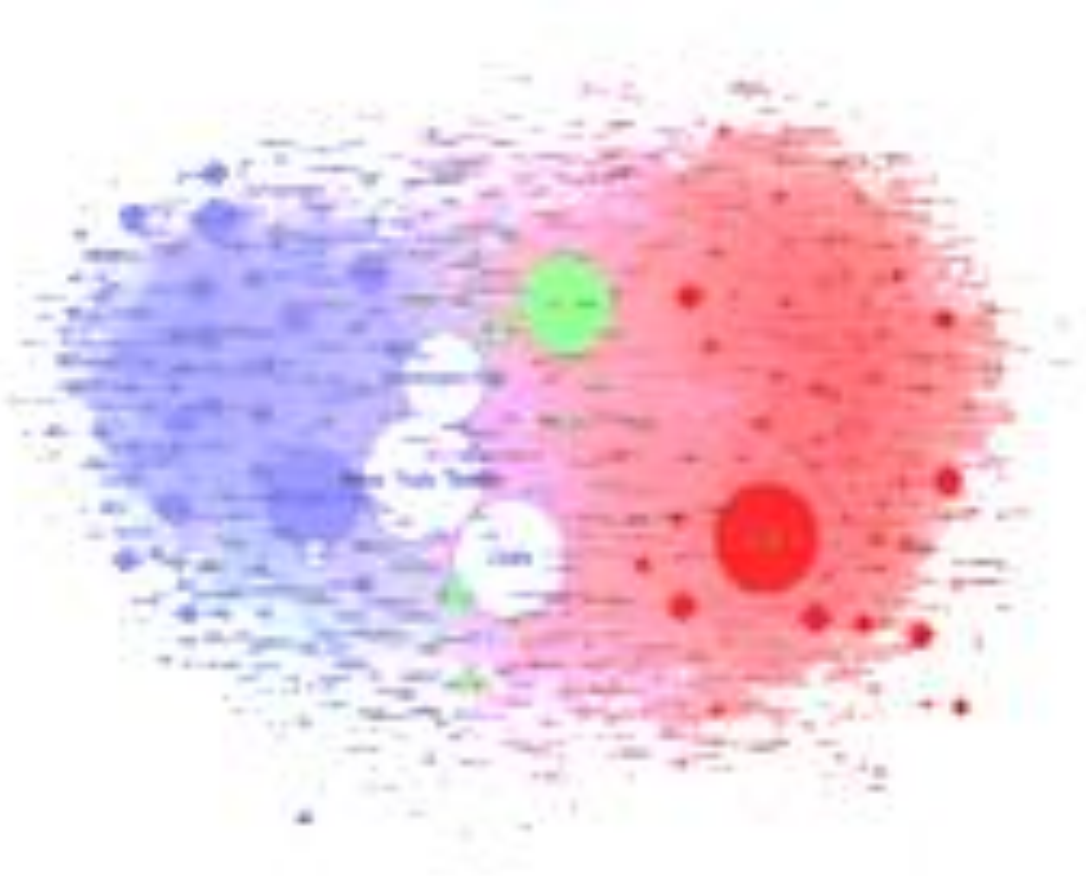
2.



Disinformation

3. Repetition Saturation and overwhelm

4. Twitter, where Journalists hang out

5. Degraded Information

The Consequences of Tribes + social media: Information Bubbles and Power