

STRUCTURALISM / SOCIAL-CONFLICT

Democracy, Mass Society, and Alienation



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Democracy and Global Social Change

Shaeffer- *Global Social Change...*

▶ 1.a. Over the past 250 years, **liberal democracies led to the establishment of a larger proportion of citizens in the new republics, and fewer subjects** (Schaeffer 2013, p. 6-9).

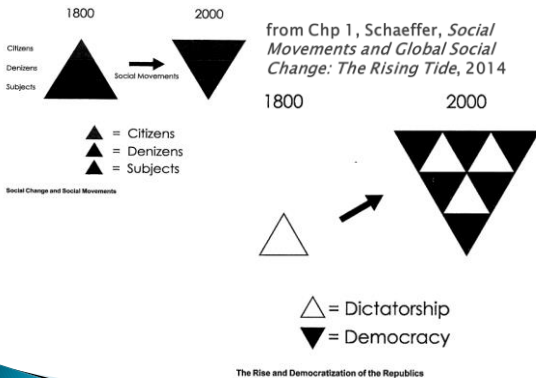


- **Citizen** = a legally recognized subject of a state or commonwealth, with attendant rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- **Denizen** = an inhabitant or occupant of a particular place (second-class citizen: not fully legally represented or exposed to stigma/profiling).
- **Subject** = a person brought under the control or jurisdiction of the state, typically by using force. Few to no rights and under full authority of the state.

▶ Unfortunately, as more people have become citizens in the democratic republics, **basic social inequality has also increased.**



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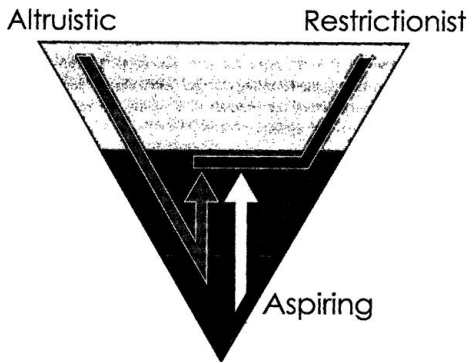
- ▶ **1.b. Social change is a function of social movements** which arise as citizens, denizens, and subjects attempt to gain greater rights and freedoms, or attempt to protect the status quo (Schaeffer, 2013).



- ▶ **Three types of movements address change:**
 - **Aspirational:** actors (usually subjects or denizens) see change as necessary to remediate inequality; example: *BLM*
 - **Altruistic:** relatively more powerful citizens attempt to aid aspirational actors; example: *Celebrity support of BLM*
 - **Restrictionist:** actors attempt to bolster the (often unequal) status quo; example: *White Nationalist Movements (3%ers, Oathkeepers)*



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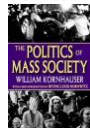
Types of Social Movements

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Early Theories of Collective Behavior

Mass Society Theory (social conflict)

William Kornhauser, "Politics of Mass Society", 1959 (p15)



- Developed by members of the "Frankfurt School" of Sociology (Germany) to explain the turn to totalitarianism in early 20th c. Europe.
- "Massification" requires *social marginalization* (alienation from social norms of work, family, politics, etc.).
- Leads to populism and identity politics rather than democratic politics.
- Related to Durkheim's anomic disruption theory; also promoted by Hannah Arendt, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, others (known as *Critical Theorists* in sociology, all part of the Frankfurt School).
- Critiques suggest** that marginalized people are NOT more likely to join social movements



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On Totalitarianism

"**Totalitarian politics** — far from being simply antisemitic or racist or imperialist or communist — **use and abuse their own ideological and political elements until the basis of factual reality**, from which the ideologies originally derived their strength and their propaganda value — the reality of class struggle, for instance, or the interest conflict between Jews and their neighbors — **has all but disappeared.**"

– Hannah Arendt (Frankfurt School of Sociology), *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951)



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Umberto Eco: Fourteen features of fascism

(*New York Review of Books*, 1996; via Kottke.org)

Characteristics of "Eternal Fascism":



1. "The first feature of Ur-Fascism is the **cult of tradition.**"
2. "Traditionalism implies the **rejection of modernism**" (or rejection of science).
3. "Irrationalism also depends on the cult of **action for action's sake**" – don't think; act!
4. "For Ur-Fascism, **disagreement is treason.**"
5. "**Appeal against the intruders.**"
6. "**Appeal to a frustrated middle class.**"
7. "At the root of Ur-Fascist psychology there is the **obsession with a plot.**"
8. "A sense of humiliation by the '**ostentatious wealth and force of their enemies.**'"
9. Eternal struggle – "**life is permanent warfare.**"
10. "Belief in the **superiority of one people over another.**"
11. "**Everybody is educated to become a hero.**"
12. "Both **disdain for women and intolerance of homosexuality.**"
13. "**The harnessing of 'selective populism'**" and disdain for "**rotten parliamentary governments.**"
14. An "**impoverished vocabulary, and an elementary syntax**, in order to limit the instruments for complex and critical reasoning."

How does Trumpism synchronize with Eco's description of fascism?

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