

The Dying Citizen

What's in it for me? Discover why progressives aren't making any progress.

Do you ever get the feeling that Western society has taken a step backward? Politicians keep saying we need to make more progress on everything from racism to climate change, and yet it feels like something bigger is being forgotten. That something is democracy. In these blinks, you'll discover how so-called progressives are endangering the social fabric of America – and compromising workers, the economy, and the democratic process. From identity politics to the US Constitution, what's really going on is laid out here. In these blinks, you'll learn

why some Americans want to rip up the Constitution; how the deep state really operates; and what globalization is doing to the West.

The destruction of the middle classes spells disaster for democracy.

You might know that the roots of Western democracy lie in ancient Greece. But have you ever thought about which ancient Greeks we have to thank for our political system? In ancient Greece, society was split into three economic groups: the very rich, the very poor, and the people in the middle. Philosophers of the time felt that only the middle classes could be trusted to uphold democratic notions of legal equality, property rights, and fair political representation. In contrast, the rich tended to be idle and were concerned only with generating more wealth for themselves. On the other hand, the very poor were so hungry that they were easily manipulated by political zealots – who told them to hate the rich. Why did the political philosophers of ancient Greece feel the middle classes were trustworthy? Well, first, such people were not easily manipulated; they tended to be self-sufficient landowners who produced olives and wine in abundance, and so they had resources at their discretion. Released from the drudgery of the daily grind, they had more time to spend on political thought. Unlike the rich, though, the middle classes could not afford to be idle. Instead, these landowners set about improving the legal and political systems around them, so that they could pass their hard-won land on to their children. Essentially, the middle classes were the only group that combined hard work, independent thought, and an interest in political stability. Today's Western middle classes still retain these valuable characteristics. But, worryingly, the United States is witnessing the hollowing out of its middle classes – and the reemergence of a class that has more in common with the medieval peasantry of Europe. These are impoverished Americans who don't own their own homes, who are always one paycheck away from destitution, and who are financially exploited by the rich. These modern American peasants now make up around 46 percent of the population. This decline of the middle class leaves us with a sharp dichotomy between the rich and the poor. For an illustration of this, consider the beautiful campus of Stanford University. You'll find its wealthy students' Mercedes-Benzes and BMWs in the college's parking lot. But if you leave the campus and take a look at nearby streets, you'll see hundreds of people living in trailers parked on the curb. This is a problem for all of us, because a society without a middle class is not conducive to a functioning

America's sense of collective identity is now under threat.

America has always been a nation of immigrants. In the nineteenth century, great numbers of people flocked to this huge, sparsely populated land. They came in search of greater freedom and opportunity than they'd had back home. By the end of the century, immigrants from all corners of Europe, as well as Latin America and Asia, had set sail for America. In this blink, we'll take a look at how all these different nationalities managed to transform themselves into a united people. The US Declaration of Independence and US Constitution both state that all men are created equal. In the nineteenth century - when people of different religions, nationalities, and ethnicities were coming to America - this simple but radical statement paved the way for a united people. It meant that despite their differences, new immigrants could all expect to be treated as equals within the great cultural and ethnic melting pot of the United States. To speed up this process of integration, new Americans were expected to make certain sacrifices in return for their American citizenship. First, they were expected to adopt English as their mother tongue. Within a few generations, the traditional ways and customs of their home countries were also replaced by new American traditions. Although this might sound intolerant, the founders of the United States had a good reason for encouraging their citizens to become a homogenous people with a shared language. Namely, they were afraid that if they allowed different immigrant groups to develop separate cultures within different states, then war would break out. They'd learned from the constant religious, ethnic, and civil conflicts among European nations what might happen if they allowed American citizens to pursue different cultural identities. However, in the twenty-first century, the American ideal of citizenship is under threat. Instead of an orderly process of legal immigration, there is now a massive amount of unchecked illegal immigration. Since 1986, the number of illegal aliens in the United States has gone from 5 million to almost 20 million. This constitutes a threat to the American way of life. Instead of becoming citizens and adopting American values, language, and traditions, these migrants are either keeping their illegal status or upgrading it to the nebulous concept of residency. This means that there is no onus on newcomers to integrate or become full citizens.

The deep state has a grip on American political life.

In a democratic nation like the United States, you might assume it's the citizens who decide who wields political power. After all, it's the voters who elect their representatives, and it's these representatives who ultimately control the state's apparatuses, right? Well, that's not exactly the whole story. In fact, there are many people in the United States who have enormous amounts of political power - and yet were never elected at all. We're talking about the deep state. Contrary to what you might have heard, the deep state is not a clandestine conspiracy. Indeed, the deep state's power is on full display, and it makes no attempts to conceal itself. The deep state consists of the intricate web of relationships among the nation's intelligence agencies, its military, and the top echelons of the civil service - as well as elite

universities, New York and Washington media outlets, and top Wall Street financiers. The deep state influences what is taught at top universities and what readers read about in certain newspapers. The deep state also wields power through its army of unelected bureaucrats. These bureaucrats often work in government regulatory bodies, where they are able to directly control what individuals and organizations are – and aren't – allowed to do. Consider the actions of the Internal Revenue Service, otherwise known as the IRS, between 2010 and 2013. During this time, the IRS investigated the political allegiances of nonprofit organizations that asked for tax exemptions. Disturbingly, organizations that described themselves by using words like "patriots," "tea party," or even "constitution" were singled out and, in many cases, had their tax-exemption requests unfairly denied. This biased focus on right-wing leaning nonprofits advantaged Barack Obama's presidential campaign in 2012, because several nonprofits that would have campaigned against him were financially weakened by the IRS's decisions. Although the IRS was eventually forced to apologize for its actions, no one was ever held criminally responsible. Indeed, all the evidence indicates that the problem of the deep state is getting worse, rather than better. Consider that, in 2019, there were a grand total of 450 federal agencies, and these agencies were populated by around 2.7 million bureaucrats. That's millions of people Americans didn't elect who have the power to enforce over 175,000 pages of federal rules – rules Americans didn't vote for.

Tribalism is a narrow and dangerous way to organize society.

What tribe do you belong to? Until a few years ago, most Americans would have replied that they belonged to only one tribe: that of the United States. But these days, American society is splintering into different tribes divided along ethnic, religious, and racial lines. In this blink, we'll examine the bloodstained history of tribalism and explore why the United States' backslide into it is so disturbing. Let's start by looking at what history tells us about tribalism. Before there were nation states, there were different tribes that competed and warred with one another. Indeed, throughout most of human history, tribalism was the norm; your tribe consisted of people who looked like you, sounded like you, and lived near you. Anyone else was the enemy. One of the reasons why tribal societies were, and are, so pernicious is because jobs and rewards are not handed out on merit. Instead of the best people rising to the top, people become successful simply because of their religious or ethnic connections. In other words, it's not about what you know – it's about what tribe you belong to. But more than being unfair, tribalism is also extremely dangerous. When societies split along ethnic or religious lines, discrimination, war, and even genocide may not be far behind. In the first half of the twentieth century, when the southern American states practiced racial tribalism, for instance, Jim Crow segregation laws were the result. In Nazi Germany, society was also divided along ethnic lines, with horrific consequences. Fast forward to the latter part of the century, and you'll find genocide taking place in the Balkan states – this time against Muslims – as a result of tribalism. Worryingly, in today's United States, tribalism is making a comeback, and many Americans are starting to think along racial and ethnic lines once again. But this time, it's left-wing progressives who are driving this tribalist agenda. Not convinced? Then consider the fact that Bernie Sanders, the prominent left-wing politician, now advocates for racially segregated campus theme houses in American universities. Incredibly, Sanders actually fought against racially segregated housing decades ago. Or consider the fact that the University of Chicago

now openly tells graduates that they should not bother applying to its English department unless they plan to study Black authors. Ask yourself: Does this really represent progress? After all, many Americans spent years battling against racialized policies in academia and education. But these days, it seems as if all that is being forgotten. Once again, the color of your skin seems to matter, and tribalism is making a comeback.

The Constitution is under attack from progressives.

The US Constitution has served Americans well for over two centuries. But today, a growing number of people want to see the Constitution ripped up. If they succeed, it will be a disaster for democracy – and for the average citizen. To understand why some people resent the Constitution so much, we have to understand its original purpose. In fact, the founders' intentions when they drew up the Constitution were a lot narrower than you might assume. The Constitution's primary purpose was to enshrine the American citizen's personal freedom and liberty, as well as to protect his property. It was not designed to further egalitarian values, such as greater equity among Americans. Certain politicians and activists believe the Constitution doesn't allow governments enough scope to increase equality in American society. Additionally, they believe that progress will not be made on issues such as global warming, immigration, and income redistribution until the power of the Constitution is replaced by greater powers awarded to the US president. But these progressives have a more radical and controversial agenda that lurks beneath their anti-constitutional position. They believe that, as long-dead white men, the country's founders should no longer have any influence on modern society – a society that progressives characterize as multiethnic, multiracial, and enlightened in its views. Indeed, underlying everything that progressives hate about the Constitution is their burning desire to fundamentally change society. Quite simply, they want the United States to change from a society offering equality of opportunity to a society offering equality of outcomes. Much of this desire for change is driven by the politics of envy. In a meritocratic society like America, many find it difficult to watch their fellow countrymen go from ordinary Joes to wealthy, successful, and powerful people in just a few short years. Instead of facing up to the fact that successful people rise to the top because they are more talented and harder-working, it's often easier for unsuccessful people to blame the structure of society itself. This is the real reason why so-called progressives are now pushing for greater equality of outcome; they simply can't handle the uncomfortable truth that some people are less capable than others, even when granted equal opportunities. As a result, they're directing their frustrations at the US Constitution – and pushing to replace it with something far more radical and socialist in nature.

Globalization is hurting America.

Can you be a citizen of the world and still be a citizen of your home country? In this final blink, we'll look at modern globalization and its effects on the United States. Let's start by exploring a fundamental question: What do we mean when we talk about globalization? Globalization happens when nations begin thinking of themselves as part of a world community. As a result, leaders start putting the interests of this community above the interests of their own nations – or at least start giving them equal

consideration. Although this equal concern for the rest of the world might seem like a good thing, it has damaging consequences for the nation-state. Why? Because resources can only be shared so much before their value becomes diluted. There are plenty of examples of how globalization is diluting America's resources. For instance, although it might be beneficial for the world community when American firms relocate their factories to other countries, this relocation usually disadvantages American workers and makes them weaker. Second, when influential American business moguls invest billions of dollars in another superpower – say, China – it might be good for China, but it's bad news for the United States. That's because these overseas investments make the moguls much less likely to denounce China's authoritarianism and anti-Americanism. Finally, when the international community tries to impose climate-change policies on the United States without these policies being approved by the American democratic process, it weakens the country's political institutions. Of course, you might think that these things are just the price that America must pay for greater global harmony and prosperity. Perhaps you think the United States should give up a little of its power in the pursuit of world peace and progress. But the problem is, these supposed benefits of globalization are only skin-deep. Scratch the surface, and you'll find that globalization hasn't actually brought the world closer together at all. In reality, countries around the world still maintain their own laws, cultures, and traditions – and in difficult times, it becomes clear how at odds these are with American values. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, the Chinese government displayed its propensity for Stalinist and anti-American values, as it concealed the seriousness of the disease from the rest of the world and enacted harsh, top-down measures on its own people. No matter how many jobs, corporate dollars, or environmental policies the United States shares with China, globalism can't change China's culture in this respect.

Final summary

The key message in these blinks: American democracy faces many threats in the modern world. Americans are once again starting to organize themselves along ethnic and racial lines, and ever-increasing numbers of illegal immigrants are undermining the United States' notions of integration and assimilation. American democracy is also under threat from globalization, as the country's elites weaken American workers and the economy by sending jobs and investment overseas.