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Sam Harris dug to request a free account and we grant 100 percent of those requests. No questions asked. OK, well, today I'm speaking with Jack Goldstone. Jack is a sociologist and a professor of public policy at George Mason University. And he's one of the world experts on revolutions and the social and political and economic variables that produce them. He focuses a lot on economic growth in a global economy and on the effects of population change, on economic growth and how all this feeds into the causes and outcomes of revolutions.

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And I must say, I was very impressed with how clearly he frames these issues. And we talk about many of the relevant variables here, inequality of various kinds, wealth inequality included failures of social mobility, changes we might make to the tax code, new norms around social responsibility that we clearly need. I probably don't have to remind you that a few short weeks ago, we witnessed the capital stormed by a mob whose diverse interests and commitments certainly included an intent to overthrow the government of the United States.

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So talking about the prospect of revolution at this point in American history doesn't seem as paranoid as it otherwise might. And I'm convinced that we really need to keep all of the trends that are leading to this level of political instability and hyper partisanship in view and this conversation as an excellent place to start. So now, without further delay, I bring you Jack Goldstone. I am here with Jack Goldstone. Jack, thanks for joining me. My pleasure. Good to talk to you.

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So before we dive into the matter at hand, how do you summarize your background? What are your what's been your professional and academic focus? Well, academics would call me a sociologist, but my study is long term social change. I've looked at revolutions and social protests and changes of regime and government from about 1500 to the present. And this gives you an expertise that seems excruciatingly relevant at the current moment in American life. Really globally, it seems relevant.

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But I think I want to focus on on our own country here where we can go wherever, wherever in the world we like.

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I'm happy to travel.

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Yeah. Yes. I've noticed that in your work. Maybe we should start at least acknowledging the global nature of the phenomenon we're going to talk about. And then then we can talk about the American scene specifically. But we've seen that there's been a rise of populism and anti globalism nativism, that there are many nouns that intersect. There's a loss of trust in institutions. What do we know about the sources of this kind of political instability and loss of social cohesion generally?

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What are the kinds of variables you think about when you try to understand these trends? Sure, well, let me give you a general and then circle around to what's happening in the globe today in general, across the centuries, there's a pretty persistent pattern and it goes back to some of the wisdom that Roman leaders shared among themselves.

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And that is when you work for honor and the richest and most powerful members of society try to enrich and make their society as a whole stronger, the society flourishes.

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On the other hand, when the rich and powerful simply try to protect and extend their own wealth at the expense of others, the society sooner or later collapses. So that's the general picture. And you might say, well, elites know that. Why would they do that? The answer is when a country gets rich and elites are in competition with each other, they often fall back on just kind of keeping score with how they do compared to their peers.

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And they think, well, the rest of society will just go on.

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It's not my problem, not my issue. And so then you get people trying to accumulate more and more wealth to protect it from taxation and to prevent public services from being fully funded.

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And all of that leads to the rest of society growing more and more angry because they have a sense that they're falling behind, they're being left out.

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The government no longer is watching out for them. And so they turn against it. They turn against the government, they turn against the elites. They get angry and they look for ways to let that anger out, usually joining some radical or extremist movements.

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So that was a wonderful summary of of a very depressing landscape to bring it to the U.S. context here. How much do you view Trump and the four years we've just experienced as a mere symptom of these underlying problems and the problems themselves were evident in 2015 and before? And how much do you view him as a an exacerbated or cause of these problems? Well, he certainly and exacerbate her. He's not the underlying cause and in fact the underlying cause, and this is why it's a global phenomenon, has more to do with the changes in technology and society that we've seen in the last 30 years.

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We've had two things happen. One is that the big post-World War two generations, what we call the baby boom in this country, post-war post-war surges elsewhere.

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They came of age in a time when manual labor was the key to the economy. People made things, they provided services. They got wealthy or at least made stable good incomes doing that. And there was respect for people who made things and built things, did things with their hands.

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But as the baby boom got older, they found the rug pulled out from under them.

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The economy started to shift in the direction of finance, high finance loans, credit management of securities grew bigger and bigger from like five percent of the economy to 15 percent of the economy.

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And the other thing that grew, of course, is the digital economy, which we're all familiar with, in which we all enjoy. But the digital economy doesn't employ that many people, and it certainly doesn't give its

rewards and respect to people doing manual labor.

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And so for the baby boomers, the life that they expected, the respect, the dignity that they had and work they find is disappearing. Their communities are hurt by it.

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The prospects for their children, if they can't get into university, which is increasingly expensive and difficult, have diminished.

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So we've seen a slowdown in social mobility the same time we've seen a reduction in the life quality and life prospects for those, especially in kind of the smaller towns, rural areas that were the farming manufacturing heartland.

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Now the big metro areas have continued to thrive, but the big metro areas have their own issues.

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They tend to be very diverse. They have to deal with the issues of racial justice, discrimination, managing diversity. And that's that's another source of anger for those who feel that as immigrants, perhaps, or as people of color, society doesn't grant them dignity and respect either.

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And so you have both on the left and the right, these kind of widespread feelings that, wait a minute, all the rewards of society seem to be going to a very small group. And they also seem to be taking over all the institutions and they seem to be rigging everything in their favor.

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And what's going to become of us? We need someone to fight back against everything being rigged. And that leads to the attraction of kind of the populist strongman who says I alone can fix it, I can be your champion and produces really an almost quasi religious devotion to someone who presents themselves as a savior, as a national symbol of regeneration.

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Now, Donald Trump came along and with all the skills of a pro wrestling television celebrity, donned the mantle of hero and was very successful in that.

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But of course, he had counterparts in other countries bolster Naro in Brazil, Duterte in the Philippines, Erdogan in Turkey, Boris Johnson and the Brexit movement in the United Kingdom. You know, the details vary, but in each case, it's not been the leading edge economically of the society that's been driving change.

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It's been those who feel frustrated that they are not benefiting as much as those leading edge elites that they see.

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Hmm. I think you wrote in a piece that you published with Peter Turchin that and I'm quoting you, inequality and polarization have not been this high since the 19th century. I think we're going to want to focus on wealth inequality, but what are the important measures of inequality? Can you put some numbers to this in the U.S. and is there anything other than wealth inequality that is a major driver of of this problem? Well, there certainly are many inequalities besides just inequality of wealth and inequality of wealth is probably not the most troubling.

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Oh, interesting. That's great, because that's my assumption coming into this conversation is that wealth inequality is really the elephant in every room now. And so, yeah, please fill in the gaps in my knowledge.

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OK, look, we've been through this before. We had the railroad robber barons. We had the Rockefeller and the Carnegie build up huge amounts of wealth. But when they did so, other parts of society were benefiting as well.

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That is, the railroads and the oil industries employed lots of money, lots of workers and gave them opportunities.

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What we've had in the last 30 years with the rise of finance and digital fortunes, is the rich getting richer while everyone else stagnates or grows very slowly indeed.

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And it's more the differences in opportunity and social mobility in access to what I would call middle class amenities, a safe neighborhood, good schools for your children, medical care, the ability to have a varied diet.

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Those things have.

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Even though the price of a color TV has gone way down, the price of a new automobile has gone way down. The things that are essential to quality of family life remain competitive and therefore expensive and in many settings increasingly beyond the reach.

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Both the young people and people who don't have a college degree, professional positions and wealth inequality harms society. If those who are wealthy use that to get control of government policy and steer that wealth in ways that benefits themselves if they are generous with the wealth and use it to endow museums, universities to invest in new businesses to rehabilitate districts, then that's fine.

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That's good for society.

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So a lot of it has to do with how wealth is deployed and how income and opportunities are distributed. And it's the fact that the use of private wealth and the distribution of opportunities really seems to have diminished for large portions of the population, maybe 30 to 50 percent in many of the advanced Western countries.

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And so you have a lot of that anger. You know, the yellow vests in France, people in Chile who rioted against their government, people in Brazil who rioted at the cost of bus fare going up. These are people who feel like they're just getting by and every imposition upon them is increasingly pushing them over the edge.

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So fundamental psychological fact here, which is certainly an unhappy one, is that people's personal judgments of well-being are generally comparative, so that even if by any absolute measure, everyone was getting better off, if the difference between the most fortunate and the less fortunate is continuing to widen, then that is seen as a source of real grievance and frustration. Even if everyone you know or virtually everyone has a smartphone in their pocket that not even the president of the

United States could have managed to get 30 years ago.

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On some level, we seem to be doomed to dissatisfaction, no matter how good things get for everyone, if things are getting better and better and better, faster for a subset of the population. I mean, at least that seems like something like that structure is part of our legacy code.

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That's a pessimistic way of looking at it. Yes, there's always envy. People always feel down and out if they see others doing better than themselves.

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But people compare themselves mainly to other people they encounter in their own life.

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So if you're living in a subdivision or an urban neighborhood, you don't really care whether the guy living on the 17th floor of the penthouse has a gold bathtub or a porcelain bathtub. You don't care whether he's keeping an 80 foot yacht in the harbor or a 50 foot yacht.

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Those things aren't relevant to you.

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What you care about is whether you're going to be able to move into a better house when you get married with room for your kids, whether the people down the block or on just the other side of town who you see are somehow able to afford things that you can't afford any that you thought you or your parents could afford. So you're right.

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There's always a degree of comparing ourselves to others, but it doesn't have to be the kind of well, there'll always be people richer than me, so I'm always going to be unhappy.

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That's not how people are. As long as people feel that they're getting better, that they're getting ahead in their own lives, and that the progress that they're making is reasonable compared to most of the people they see immediately around them, they're usually quite pleased.

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Most people are not quite as prone to torment themselves with the envy of the rich as you might think. Otherwise, there wouldn't be as much of a happy market for watching all those tales of the rich and famous. Those are like fairy tales that people hope will come true, but they don't actually hurt people's feelings. What hurts is if in their day to day lives they feel stuck. If they feel that they can't live the way that their parents did or that they expect it to do 10, 20 years ago.

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And they've been working hard to get ahead and it just hasn't happened.

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So the circle of comparison is tighter than I suggested there, but it seems like the structure travels with us at every level of success in society. So you have billionaires who currently feel like they haven't made it financially because they can compare themselves to Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk. And you have people who have, you know, tens of millions of dollars who feel poor by reference to billionaires. And there's something insidious about this, because, I mean, as you say, if they were deploying their wealth in extremely prosocial and generous ways, it wouldn't represent a kind of toxic capture of resources.

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But I think if people feel they haven't made it, even when they have a billion dollars on some level and they're keeping score with reference to the people who have 10 or a hundred fold more resources than they do, it either, you know, erodes good norms. We used to have and you can educate me on this point. I'm not sure how much we used to have them, or at least it prevents the formation of norms that we should have, which is people should see that that one of the main reasons to be wealthy is to be able to help other people and produce the kind of society that we all want to live in.

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Right. And not to allow that kind of abundance to become just, you know, a magnifying glass for the light of self concern to be even more concentrated at some point.

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And if you know you've got it, I think, you know, if we think about the elites having become more cosmopolitan and. Traveling to the same conferences and the same ritzy resorts and really being cut off in some ways from their society in which they grew up, that's a very unfortunate thing. Not that long ago, the rich might have lived in the fanciest part of town, but they attended public festivals and they attended church in the same town and in some of the same buildings and institutions as the other people who lived in that community.

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And the way the rich wanted to be remembered was as benefactors, as generous, whatever they were in their private lives, in their public lives.

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They wanted to be seen as people who were pillars of the community.

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And that phrase, you know, the pillar of the community seems to have gone out of fashion.

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We used to talk about it being, you know, harder for a rich man to enter heaven.

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Right. Than to go with than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.

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The religious idea was virtue and honor were to be found in helping your fellow men. And today, I think Joe Biden actually believes in the ideal of public service.

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He is more interested in making 350 million Americans better off than making himself better off. That has diminishing returns for him. But he will go to his grave delightfully happy if he has made all Americans better off. Now, that's an old school ideal. I'm glad it's back in the presidency in the United States and I hope it can spread.

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But that's what successful societies, frankly, rely on. If the richest and most powerful turn their backs on public welfare, then democracy doesn't make sense for people anymore.

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Because why should they vote for a government that ignores them and that concentrates its benefits on the rich? So if we want to restore and rejuvenate democracy, we need governments that function to provide broad, general benefits.

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Again, not that simply exist to help those who have the best positions or the most capital get even further ahead.

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Well, it's interesting that it seems that there's a tension here because so in my lexicon, personally, cosmopolitanism is not a pejorative term to think of oneself more and more as a citizen of the world, you know, who's just open to the best ideas, you know, whatever their provenance and whose circle of moral concern has extended beyond the borders of one's country to encompass all of civilization. Right. And to feel that we should be prioritizing certainly some of our generosity, much of our generosity along the lines of greatest need.

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Right. So to care about what's happening, you know, in some beleaguered place in sub-Saharan Africa is not a misappropriation of one's compassion. It's in fact, it's just a recognition of, you know, one should be more moved than one tends to be by the greatest need. And any kind of accidents of geographic distance are just that. They don't actually have ethical import, even though they feel they do. And, you know, if you tell me my neighbor's daughter fell down a well, well, then it's going to occupy all of my attention.

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And you tell me that there's a genocide raging in Sudan or some other place and hundreds of thousands of children, just like my neighbor's daughter, have been killed. You know, I'm going to find that so boring that I'm going to switch the channel when it appears on the evening news. Right. So that seems like a bug in our code rather than a feature. So it just seems like much of what you seem to have just derided or at least flagged as a source of political liability, as cosmopolitanism is just an acknowledgement that so many of our problems are global now and then.

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No, no. One nation and so many of our opportunities are global. Right. It's just that, you know, we are we're struggling to build a global civilization that actually works. And so our thinking on many points should be global. And it's actually all to the good that we wind up going to conferences where people from all over the world bring their best ideas and and network. And yet one externality of that trend, it sounds like, is the complete erosion or near complete erosion of the very principles that would make a single country like our own work as a democracy.

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Well, I clearly hit a nerve here, let me try and talk about cosmopolitanism in a way that avoids, I hope, some of these concerns about where do you do the most good if you have a family and you're living in a house and as you say, your neighbor's daughter fell down a well.

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Well, of course, you're going to go help your neighbor and rescue the daughter. That's an imperative to do. On the other hand, let's say you hear that someone all across town, their daughter, fell in a well. And you certainly would like to help if you didn't have any other priorities at home. But if your own daughter is upstairs sick with a fever and needs to be cared for, maybe she's just gotten out of surgery or she has a very high fever.

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You're not going to leave your own daughter who is sick to go help someone else, even if they need help until your own house is in order. And when you asked me about different types of inequality, I said I wasn't focused on wealth. Let me talk about one that's really down to earth, and that is life expectancy. How long people live in America, along with the United Kingdom, was one of the only rich countries in the world where life expectancy started going down between 2015 and 2018.

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We've never had that in our history. It indicates that our society was suffering from illness. It was an illness of opioid addiction and other deaths of despair, alcoholism, suicide. Now, I do think it's important.

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We have one planet, we have one climate. We all have to pitch in.

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I contribute money to medical charities overseas as well as to hospitals here at home, because you're right, it is important to recognize we're all part of a global community, but we cannot neglect people who are really suffering, who are losing years of life here that they shouldn't be losing.

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And as I say, that was going on even before Trump was elected as part of the reason I think he was elected. You can look at the vote for Trump against counties that had declines in life expectancy in the prior few years.

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And it's a very close match.

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It's one of the best predictors of Trump kind of voting as a protest because you're unhappy with conditions in your community, in your life. So when I say cosmopolitanism is a problem. It's only if people say.

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That they think their country, the United States, is fine and we can, you know, look beyond that, you can look beyond your own country, but not if it blinds you to what's going on right in your own home.

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And I think this is something we missed. It really wasn't until.

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And Case in Angus Deaton published their research calling attention to the fact that life expectancy had started to go down, that it became an issue for policymakers and for the media. It went on for years quietly in communities across America without being appreciated.

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But we could have seen the precursors of it, I believe, by looking at changes in the distribution of income, in the distribution of opportunity and mobility in what was happening to the economic base of many rural and small town communities.

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So by all means, be a cosmopolitan, but that also means get to know parts of your own country that you might not know as well. We talk about flyover and coastal elites. I find that kind of demeaning. I spend a lot of time when I was a kid taking buses across the country listening to country Western music.

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I still like to drive when I can from the East Coast to the west and see this big, beautiful country in between and get to know the people there, because those are the people at the end of the day whose choices, as long as we live in a democracy, those are the peoples whose voices and whose choices will make a difference just as much as mine.

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And we have to come together and find things that will make everyone better off if we're going to keep democracy going. Otherwise, we get into these historical cycles of selfish elites, angry popular groups and the rise of populist leaders, demagogues and mass protest. And it gets violent, it gets ugly. And we've seen that we need to change direction. So I guess where I want to land here in this conversation is with some sense of what we think we should do going forward.



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I mean, it seems like we have, you know, massive problems to solve, many of which are only exacerbating the problem we're talking about. I mean, you know, we have to deal with the covid pandemic, obviously, but the covid pandemic has. Has ramified and worsened various forms of inequality in our society. Certainly wealth is one, and I guess and we've we've begun this conversation framing it in terms of of what the most fortunate people decide to do.

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Essentially, you know what we've put it in terms of philanthropy and charity. But really, the other piece here is, is our tax code and the willingness or disinclination of rich people to pay what we might think of as their fair share or or more in taxes and the degree to which they're going to fight any attempt to raise taxes. How do you view taxation here and any specific strategies we might use to redistribute wealth? Here's what I think the psychological status quo is here.

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Among among fortunate wealthy people at every level, there's a sense that. You know, rather often the government is terrible at what it attempts to do, right, there's a basic cynicism that the government can ever do anything especially well, and therefore, you tend to encounter rich people who think that there's some that this offers some argument for not paying more in taxes because the money will be wasted or spent on some boondoggle. Whereas in my view, that it's really just that's an argument for better governance, by all means.

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Point out all the ways in which government fails and is wasteful. But that's not an argument about where you want to set the tax code. It's an argument for better government. But there is a there's a sense that, you know, taxes are already too high. You run into this with disconcerting frequency among rich people. And therefore, it's only rational to want to decide to give the money to the most effective causes oneself rather than have the government waste it.

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So this is this explains a bias for philanthropy over taxation. But as we know, people aren't, you know, all that generous when they don't have to be, or at least most of them are not. And so the amount that people actually give away, even when it's well publicized, is a, you know, a rounding error on a rounding error of their wealth rather often. And it's certainly not what they would be obliged to give away if we raised taxes on them.

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So how do you view taxation here and and, you know, feel free to get into any specific ideas about how to change our tax code? Thank you for that invitation. Most people would like to tear up the existing tax code and start over, but let me say from the point of view of my model, there actually three things that need to be kept in mind as we try and pull our society back from the edge of extreme conflict and decay.

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One is restoring people's trust that government can function and can solve problems.

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The days when we looked to government to provide the interstate highway system, to build beautiful airports, to build subways, to take us to work, to provide law and order, to provide for the national defense, to send rockets to the moon to develop new cures for disease. All of these things we trusted government to do reasonably well, and we thought they were prudent investments for the future.

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But as you say, too many people now think that any dollar spent by government is wasted and therefore even a dollar spent on an ultra premium whiskey for one person's consumption is still better than letting that money be wasted by the government.

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So that philosophy has to change.

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We have to say, look, there are legitimate things that government can do. And you know what? When there's a disaster, when even a rich person's land gets flooded or a tornado comes, they come to the government and say, what about restoring my property? What about fixing this?

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And so on.

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So government has to be seen as having a valid role in a complex, wealthy society. There are big problems covid-19 obviously a huge one that's hitting us in the face.

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But so too is climate change as the Midwest is flooding and the California is burning and the Gulf Coast is being battered by repeated, powerful hurricanes. We can't allow those things to double or triple and expect that quality of life will go on. So you're right, people have to recover a trust that government is worth funding. Otherwise, everyone fights taxation.

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The second thing is that elites have to work together to find some common ground in what needs to be done to strengthen and improve society, as opposed to just being in competing camps saying this is what our group needs to do and we don't want you to be involved and vice versa.

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If you have Republicans and Democrats or Tories and Socialists, whatever your divisions are, if instead of saying, yes, of course we have differences, we're human beings, but because we're human, we have some common needs and interests and we have to work hard to find them. If you put that task aside and just say, I want my group to win, we go back on the path toward I'm not going to raise anyone's taxes because you might spend them on things that you want.

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And I think that's awful.

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And the other group will say, well, we're not going to raise taxes because you might spend it on things that you want. And instead of saying, let's have an agenda for things that we agree we need and then find a level of taxation that allows us to accomplish what is necessary. So you need to have government that trusted. You need to have elites that work together. And then the third thing is you need people to feel the system is fair, that the taxes that they pay are not unfair compared to the taxes that others, especially the rich, pay.

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I mean, one of the big problems we have with the tax system now is not the rate of taxation, but the fact that so many assets and so much income escapes taxation altogether.

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It's an offshore LLC. It's in real estate trusts. It's an exempt inheritance, trusts all of these things, make the system unfair and give people a general hatred of taxation as just something else that's rigged. So we need to go back to fair enforcement, clear and understandable laws and a system that people believe in. Well, let's take the first piece, what do you think we can do, because there's a kind of perverse self-fulfilling aspect to this. What can we do to increase trust in government?

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You know, there really is a pervasive sense that virtually anything that can be handled by the private

sector is better accomplished in the private sector. There are endless numbers of invidious comparisons between private businesses that have to function by the constraints of a market. And the government is simulacrum of those businesses. So you compare FedEx to the post office, say, or, you know, any any business you've ever had to deal with to the DMV. Right. So it's just there's a sense that throwing more money at it from the government side just gets you a business that, you know, no one would ever direct their money at if they had a choice.

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And so there's that kind of cynicism. How do you see us rebooting from where we currently are to a time where it would just be expected that if the government sets itself to a specific task, whether it's a space program or a public health emergency, it's going to do a wonderful job at that task because many of the best people are involved and it's all well funded and it's got its priorities straight. And it's not captured by endless layers of bureaucrats who don't understand how the world works.

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How do we get to something like daylight here? You need a few big wins. I applaud President Joe Biden for making covid-19 treatment and mitigation his first priority. This is clearly a job that private industry can develop vaccines. They're not going to distribute them.

[00:36:18.880]

So getting vaccines into people's arms, making them safe is a perfect example of the type of thing public health has been doing under government since the 19th century.

[00:36:31.510]

And if we have a big success, I think it'll be applauded and will go a long way to making people say, you know, I'm glad the government was on the job.

[00:36:40.780]

Now, if the government, as under Donald Trump says, well, you know, government can't do things, not really our responsibility, we'll just encourage private firms to make the vaccine and then we'll let people figure out how to get it. That's a disaster. That's what we're living through now. That's why even though the vaccines became available last fall, fewer than five percent of Americans have benefited from them. So we need government programs that are visible and that work.

[00:37:10.330]

And it's not as rare as you think. People love Social Security. They fought bitterly against efforts to privatize it.

[00:37:17.830]

Sometimes people don't realize it's a government program that the government, you know, keep your hands off my Social Security.

[00:37:23.110]

It's mine, OK, but it came to you and still does come to you through your through your government. Your local government provides police protection, provides fire protection. Your local government provides public schools. America has always been attached to private schools. I'm sorry, the public schools and the rich who feel, hey, you know, I can send my kids to private school, you know, there tends to be a kind of let them eat cake view.

[00:37:51.520]

That is, if you're wealthy enough, you can have beautiful private property. You don't need public parks. You can afford private schools. You don't need to pay for public schools for everybody else.

[00:38:02.740]

You can afford private concierge medicine. You don't need to worry about public health.

[00:38:07.630]

And that kind of let them eat cake goes to what happened in Iran in the 1970s where you had such terrible traffic congestion that people couldn't get to work. And instead of building more roads, the Shah's son was quoted as saying, look, if people are unhappy with traffic congestion, let them make some money and buy helicopters.

[00:38:28.390]

That's the attitude that led to a revolution.

[00:38:30.440]

Now, we're not as extreme there, but that's the end point of where elite selfishness and lack of understanding and empathy leads.

[00:38:39.790]

If leaders have empathy for people, if they really do work to make government benefit, not just this interest group or that particular minority, but really help all Americans where all Americans need it, like with public health care, like public education, then we get back to people seeing government as a good thing, an important part of society.

[00:39:02.740]

Yeah, I mean, this is something I'm I'm really quite worried about now, but I've been worried about this general topic, at least since 2009.

[00:39:11.680]

But, you know, that's good for you. But it should be. But under covid, it's just I guess the specific case that I find alarming and I'm not alone here is what is what we've seen in California with the the flight of many people in tech to other states that just by coincidence don't have income tax. Right. So there's many people are going to Texas and Florida. And it's it's an unimpeachably rational decision. If your concern is to make an immediate change in one in your own quality of life and to have it have it make sense on paper.

[00:39:53.650]

Right. You know, if you're going to be essentially paid millions of dollars a year to live in another city that you like just as well as you liked San Francisco before it was inundated with crime and homelessness, well, then why not do that? Why not move to Austin or Miami? It makes sense on every level. And yet it's part of the very trend you sketched out in the beginning of this conversation. I mean, it's a mini version of cosmopolitanism.

[00:40:21.280]

The fact that you were also deracinated, that, you know, any nice city will do where knowledge workers, we can work from anywhere. And covid has really delivered that lesson to everyone who is available to it. So that what we're what we're witnessing is just a flight of some of the most productive people in our society and the corresponding tax base to other states that have a different tax code. Not to get bogged down on this specific case. But I'm wondering what you think California should do in this case, because what we're what we're suffering from.

[00:40:58.680]

Here is just the fact that we have a tax system that can be gamed simply by crossing a border and the barrier to doing that is quite a bit lower than believing the United States would be. And therefore, many, many people are doing it. Do you have any ideas or what California you do in light of. If you'd like to continue listening to this podcast, you'll need to subscribe at Sam Harris. Doug, you'll get access to all full length episodes of the Making Sense podcast and to other subscriber only content, including bonus episodes and Amma's and the conversations I've been having on the Waking Up app.

[00:41:41.230]

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