

Grasping Reality with Both Hands

The weblog
of Brad DeLong. Since 1999.
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Briefly Noted for 2020-08-21

I do confess that I am flummoxed by self-identified positively-valenced “white supremacy” as a thing.

My WASPy view was always that America was an America of ethnicities underpinned by the dominant myth-message: “people coming from elsewhere to build a utopia in which we all could live better lives”. This mosaic worked, with cultural influences flowing every which way, with the ideas and cultural orientations of WASPy Massachusetts Puritans, Virginia libertarians, and Kentucky pioneers serving as the first layer of the cultural matrix. The exchange in the 2006 movie *The Good Shepherd* between Joe Pesci and Matt Damon grossly overstates the case, but is in the right direction:

Joe Pesci: “Let me ask you something.... We Italians, we got our families, and we got the church; the Irish, they have the homeland, Jews their tradition; even the n-----, they got their music. What about you people, Mr. Wilson, what do you have?”

Matt Damon: “The United States of America...”

Yes, African-Americans were always at the bottom, but there was no monolithic “whiteness” in the mosaic anywhere. Remember: when I was at Harvard in the 1980s, when an Italian-American Catholic married an Irish-American Catholic in Boston, it was a “mixed marriage”, and people would shrug their shoulders and say it was unlikely to last.

I look at how somebody by the name of Mark Krikorian can raise the alarm on behalf of "whiteness" against the idea of “Hispanics now hav[ing] their own pizza chain.... [It] may well reflect a kind of cultural secession...” Mark *Krikorian* finds it alarming that an Italian-Lebanese-American born in Columbus, OH sees a market for Hispanic-inflected pizza in Dallas and moves to satisfy it. And then I think: this was always a grift, this is the fascist playbook—create the bigotry against a despised other, and then use that bigotry to create a *volk*:

Sean Illing: *Why Rev. William Barber Thinks We Need a Moral Revolution in America* <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/8/18/21327358/william-barber-poor-peoples-campaign-moral-mondays>: “Racism may target Black people, but it damns a democracy and it damns humanity”...

This is why retail businesses need large permanent financial transfers now. We do not want retail businesses that are not coronavirus transmission hotspots from receiving erroneous “shut down” signals from the market. And yet that is what is happening when we do not make them whole from the effects of the crisis of March and April:

Jason Del Rey: *Amazon, Walmart, & Target Reap the Rewards of Covid Restrictions* <https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/8/20/21375942/amazon-walmart-target-pandemic-earnings-q2-2020-essential-retailers>: ‘Some feared the pandemic would widen the gap between the haves and have-nots of retail. That fear is now reality...

Not that Isaac Asimov’s 1950s novel *The Naked Sun* Is either a great mystery novel or a great science fiction novel. But it is a place to start in thinking about how this next upward leap in interacting with each other via symbols and screens is going to work. What personality types are going to do well? What personality types are going to do badly? In in-person interactions, a great deal of the information channels our bids and offers about authority because rapidly reaching consensus about what the group was going to do trumped reaching the best decision at the price of maybe reaching no decision at all. But those channels do not operate through screens, as anyone who has ever participated in a flamewar Or watched trolls destroy an online discussion knows very well:

Sean Gallagher: *Respawn Point: the Inevitable Reincarnation of the Corporate Office* <https://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2020/08/work-from-home-03-the-office/>: ‘Stanford Institute for Economic Research figures in June showed only 42 percent of the US workforce working from home full-time—the fact remains that people’s relationship with their workplace has been dramatically restructured, perhaps permanently...

Publius Aelius Aristides Theodorus (155): *The Roman Oration* <https://www.bradford-delong.com/2017/11/aelius-aristides-the-roman-oration-it-is-a-time-honored-custom-of-travelers-setting-forth-by-land-or-sea-to-m.html>...

Wikipedia: *Wrought Iron* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wrought_iron | *Cast Iron* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cast_iron | *Bessemer Process* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bessemer_process | *Steel* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steel>

Boichik Bagels <https://boichikbagels.myshopify.com/>...

Constance Hunter (2020-08-19): *Riding the Covid-Coaster* <https://github.com/braddelong/public-files/blob/master/readings/presentation-hunter-covid-coaster.pdf>...

Casey Johnston: *How to Fit in a Real Workout When You Have Only 20 Minutes* https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/889bxx/how-to-get-a-real-workout-only-20-minutes: ‘[Randi Zuckerberg takes] a slightly more aggressive line here with her “pick three” rule: “Work. Sleep. Family. Friends. Fitness. Pick Three.” But I often see this rule separated from Zuckerberg’s follow-up clarification: “I can pick a different three tomorrow, and a different three the following day. But today, I can only pick three. As long as I wind up picking everything over the long run, then I’m balancing my imbalance”...

Jim Wendler: *How to Fit in a Real Workout When You Have Only 20 Minutes* https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/889bxx/how-to-get-a-real-workout-only-20-minutes: ‘This is my favorite. I don’t recommend it, but it’s useful for non-beginners who have limited time to train. The I’m Not Doing Jack Shit program entails walking into the weight room, doing the big lift for the day (bench, squat, military or deadlift), and then walking out... I’ve made this deal with myself many times before I’ve trained: If I do X weight for X amount of reps, I’m leaving...

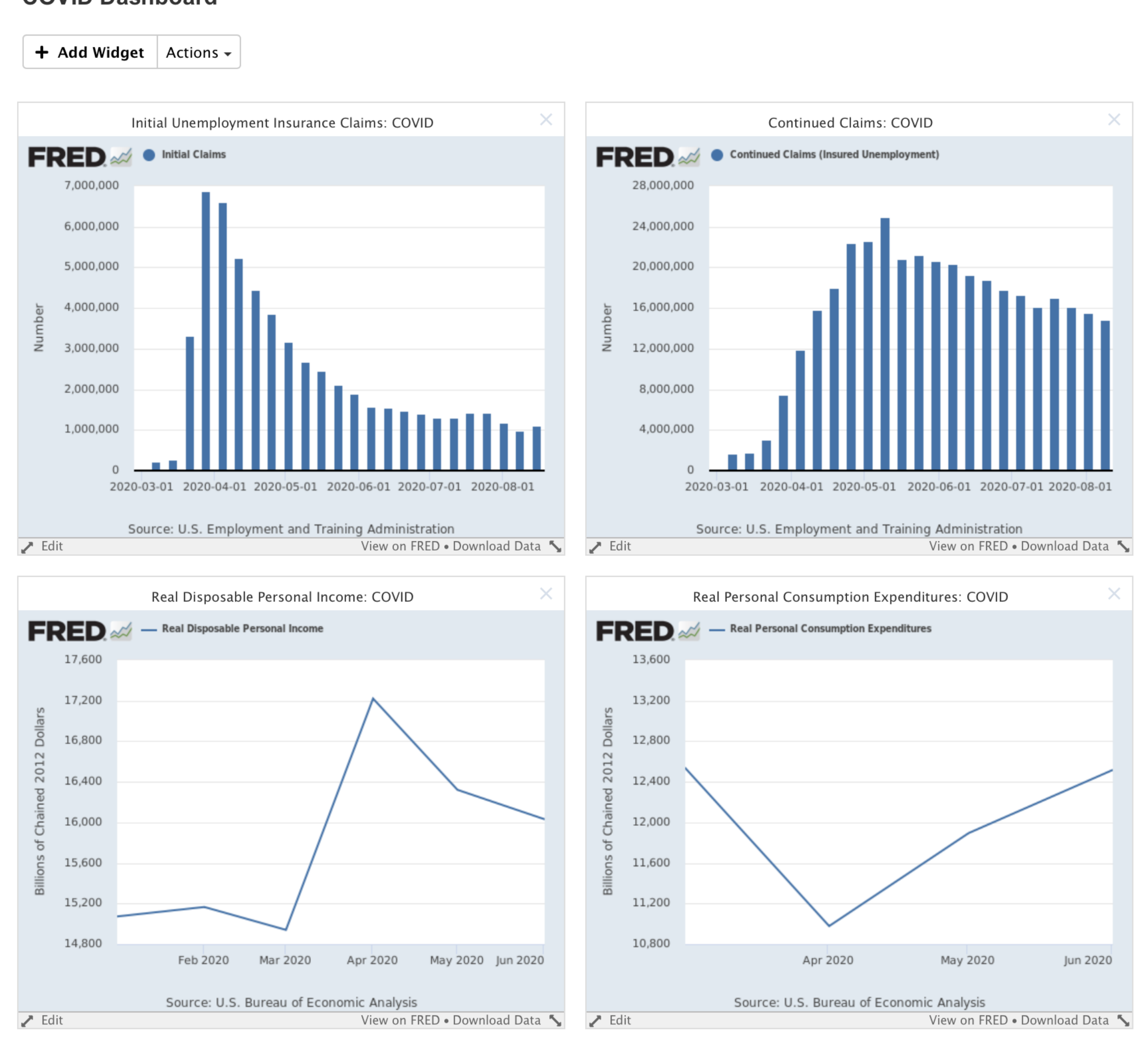
2020 Democratic Party Platform <https://www.demconvention.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020-07-21-DRAFT-Democratic-Party-Platform.pdf>...

Wikipedia: *Titus Aurelius Fulvus Boionius Arrius Antoninus Pius* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antoninus_Pius#Marriage_and_children...

Wikipedia: *Faustina the Elder—Annia Galeria Faustina* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faustina_the_Elder...

Plus:

FRED: *COVID Dashboard* <https://research.stlouisfed.org/useraccount/dashboard/56322#>: Initial Claims, Continued Claims, Real Personal Income, Real Personal Consumption Expenditures...



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