

## Tutorial 5: AY2014/2015: The US after the Civil War

For the readings, please refer to the module handout in the WORKBIN

1. Please read the Adam Fairclough extract, pp 1-6, for the story of former slaves during the period of Reconstruction.

2. For the Richard McCormick article, "Public Life in Industrial America, 1877-1917", (pp. 107-130)

people who can most change public life are the powerful, but often the most content with the current status quo.

eg. 115. practice of women off home influenced public decisions.

from "island communities" to an organized, and metropolitan nation (108)

1. please critically assess McCormick's definition of public life and
2. how he thinks US industrialization shaped American public life

← from "island communities" to an organized, and metropolitan nation (108)  
← previously separate from one another, now a diverse and collective whole.

\*federal government preference to work with large businesses.

definition of public life

desire to keep public life similar to private life

defined public spaces with society as an extension of home.

+ ingrained habits cultivated at home.

progressivism.

empowerment.

industrialization & shaping of American public life.

- no one able to be unaffected by consequences of industrialization
- people had unequal capacities for shaping public choices within common environment of massive rapidly expanding economy cause dislocation, depression, unemployment.
- \* men & women plunging into public life to advance defend their private values
- actors defined public life in Gilded Age.
  - eg. organized cotton farmers, workingmen running for office, business-minded elites reforming NYC.
- voting extremely important in the period: shows inclusion into pol. community, more so than today
- largely split between Repuls. and Dems, with elites remaining faithful to their parties.
- belief that women belonged to sphere of husband and home, ∴ had no separate interests from husbands & families
- contradictory to individual public interests of women
- short in women suffrage.
- inclusion of black suffrage resulted in the word "male" being written into constitution, setting back calls for women suffrage.
- blacks using vote to shape public decisions on land, labour, schools, despite rampant white racism & violence.
- proliferation of extraparty groups & associations who sought to press upon wants and values of its members → change not just through the vote.
- extraparties & associations failed because their "enemies" (traditional pol. parties) were more powerful, and that party voting by men was considered the fully and only legitimate means of influencing public decision. ie. any other means of expressing attempts to influence public decision is just a voice; an opinion that can be ignored
- but success in later periods when legitimacy & popularity of pol. parties declined and government began reshaping along activist lines suggested by Knights of Labour, the Farmer's Alliance)
- every feature of American life transformed.
- businessmen & elites who surpassed others in economic resources and the respect of government officials.
- segment industrial workers and farmers who attempted to organize to improve their conditions of life & labour.
- industrialization → depression "planting seeds of Progressivism", movement for municipal reform
- political upheaval which diminished partisan loyalties, as elites and masses came to be dominated by one party, reducing incentive to vote (and ∴ express public opinion)
- maturation of women in beginning of 20th century who had better education
- recognized care of the home and family in an urban industrial setting no longer a private matter
- but men still gave little encouragement to female participation in public life.
- nonpartisanship as a hallmark of the Progressive era, in order to promote reform causes & special interests.
- new tasks of government fell to independent boards/commissions instead of partisan legislators → politics more inclusive in face of declining parties.
- transformation of political life
- groups compete with pol. parties for membership & loyalty, independent opinion with similar emphasis/weightage as party opinion.
- \* progressivism/decline of parties merely helped those who were organized and not poor, but not for others. of Gilded Age.
- progressivism a response to the anxieties of industrial change.
- eg. corruption in government, large businesses.
- proliferation of groups represented a wide range of interests.
- aims become too diverse to become conducive.
- social sciences developed to make sense of the chaotic circumstances of the progressive era.
- resulting in more trust in the government; government the only entity with sufficient power to enact reforms.



# 1. Adam Fairclough, 'Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1840-2000'

Note: 5 years after 13th amendment abolishing slavery, did Blacks were allowed to vote (15th)

- Blacks who were freed even before civil war (~250K) - freed by masters / bought their liberty
- voteless until 15th amendment, but formed stable families, acquired literacy, skills, and property.
- formed backbone of black leadership
- quickly realised freedom would be meaningless without land, legal rights, education, and vote.
- possibility of. Alienable rights.
- black leadership emerged petitioning for full equality to president, congress, white southerners.
- \* Republicans feared to stop spread of slavery, and had been forced, under pressure of war, to abolish the institution entirely.
- Lincoln proposed vote given to literate & educated blacks, & those who fought in Union forces, but did not press individual states to adopt his suggestions.
- Lincoln's assassination and policies of Andrew Johnson (former slaveholder) prompted Repubs to start program of equal citizenship.
- quickly vetoed self-government, election of Confederate leaders to congress.
- discriminatory laws in South (Black codes) limiting pol. & economic freedom till 14th.
- convinced Repubs of need for federal action to protect blacks.
- Repubs alleged Johnson conspiring with ex-Confederates to undermine union's victory.
- decided that control of Reconstruction had to be taken from Johnson, attempted impeachment (failed), but broke president's power.
- Radical Reconstruction administered by Repubs in the South.
- 14th amendment destroyed Black codes by entitling all citizens to "equal protection of the law"
- Blacks were able to vote (15th), and even held office.
- Freedmen's Bureau creating rudimentary system of public and private schools for blacks
- blacks now with education, ballot, equality under the law.
- but did not provide blacks with land (40 acres & a mule), resulting in sharecropping.
- Freedmen's Bureau closed down in 1870, withdrawing support for public education
- war cripple South unable to continue funding → declining to ensure education for blacks → eventual literacy gap
- failure in enforcing own policy of racial equality
- enfranchised blacks, disenfranchised Southern whites → alienated Southern whites.
- quickly readmitted South without ensuring loyalty & behaviour
- states with clear white majority saw Democrats regaining power quickly, but politics became violent in states with black majorities.
- KKK which threatened & assassinated white Repubs, killing & beating of blacks
- debilitated & toppled Repub. controlled state governments in South
- deployment of troops in attempt to break up the KKK, but white campaign too widespread and well supported.
- allowed Democrats to regain South with admission of defeat by Repubs.
- Democrats tolerated black voting & authorized support, but unwilling to share pol. power.
- devised complicated procedures for registering to vote (literacy laws, grandfather laws, poll tax)
- but Democrats afraid of large numbers of black votes, allowing Repubs to remain as a formidable opposition.
- formation of Populist / People's Party in 1892 reviving hopes of strengthening of biracial democracy.
- populists (white farmers) calling for defense of blacks' pol. rights, and that they shared similar economic problems and should work together.
- made informal arrangements with Repubs to fight against Democrats, policy known as Fusion.
- triumph of Fusion in North Carolina
- changing of state election laws to ensure ease & fairness of voting.
- election of blacks to office
- "homegrown experiment" in biracial democracy.
- but never adopted by other Southern states, which remained politics of white supremacy.
- Southern states resorted to intimidation, violence and fraud to prevent populists from gaining power
- quickly fading outside N. Carolina.

repeal of 14th amendment  
federal government, but → federal unable to force decisions on state policies on education.

exploiting loopholes of the constitution, the "supreme" law of the land.

WILNOT RCT AND THE DESTRUCTION OF DEMOCRACY IN THE SOUTH