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Commentary

The State of Prosperity in the West

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We seek to do this by raising up leaders of character, restoring an ethical vitality to all sectors of society, and developing the practical solutions and data tools that will help build inclusive and peaceful societies with open economies and empowered people.

- Our Centre for Metrics creates indexes and datasets to measure and explain how poverty and prosperity are changing.
- Our Research Programmes analyse the many complex drivers of poverty and prosperity at the local, national and global level.
- Our Practical Programmes identify the actions required to enable transformational change.

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Introduction

When the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) formed in 1960, there was a moral self-confidence which punctuated the Western imagination. The new Western club's offer – prosperity, freedom, self-actualisation – was sharply contrasted with the rigid totalitarianism of the USSR. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the declaration of the end of history was the crowning moment in the ascent of the liberal democratic model.

Fast-forward to 2022 and there is a shadow hanging over liberal democracies. Major global shocks in the last five years have exposed the limits to resilience. The financial crash, populism, the pandemic, China's rise, war in Ukraine, and the cost-of-living crisis have all combined to shake the breezy liberal confidence that marked the early 2000s.¹

Using the Legatum Institute's framework for Prosperity, this essay seeks to understand the state of prosperity in the West. The Prosperity Index's data points to a nuanced picture. In the long-run, Western liberal democracies have consistently performed well across a range of metrics, demonstrating the clear merits of this system of government and the way that free markets can unlock growth.

But there are also signs of real fragility. There has been a plateauing and decline of real incomes of the working classes due to a failure to adjust to major economic shifts. Sharp disparities between metropolitan centres and 'left behind' areas are rising.

The Cambridge Centre for the Future of Democracy notes that that 1.09 billion people live in democracies in "malaise", meaning that between half and two-thirds of the population polled feel dissatisfied with democratic performance. Countries in malaise include the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, Spain, and France.² Since the mid-1990s, the proportion of citizens who are "dissatisfied" with the performance of democracy in their countries has risen by almost 10 percentage points globally. The deterioration has been especially deep in high-income, "consolidated" democracies, where the proportion has risen from a third to half of all citizens. Declining trust in institutions is one of the proximate causes of the rising tide of national populism.³

Meanwhile, people are lonely and isolated, with loneliness particularly salient in the English-speaking world and Southern Europe.⁴ This has contributed to spiralling mental health outcomes.⁵ While physical health is comparatively strong, there are more people struggling with obesity, drug use, depression and even suicide in the West than in other regions.*

* Breakdown of Prosperity Index Mental Health and Behavioural Risk Factors Ranking (out of 167 countries).

Country	Mental Health PI Ranking	Behavioural Risk Factors PI Ranking
Norway	41	93
Netherlands	49	112
Italy	51	102
Canada	70	159
UK	71	153
New Zealand	74	164
France	84	151
Ireland	92	162
Belgium	103	137
Spain	104	142
Australia	113	165
Portugal	115	144
Greece	122	148
US	135	167

The root causes of these interlocking problems are complex, but this essay sits alongside a growing body of work which underlines two driving factors.⁶ Diverging economic trajectories, and particularly a failure to make structural economic adjustments work for everyone, are combining in a toxic way with the fact that many people's lives have lost their 'structure and significance' through the decline of social capital – virtue, community, family, national identity, and faith.

Something must be done, as these symptoms of malaise are beginning to call into question the sustainability of the Western model of society and governance. Starting with a renewal of virtue and the social fabric, and then building out to reimagine the stories of our nations, our economic systems, and our place in the world, the present moment calls for people to unite around the best of virtues and values that lay the basis for the prosperity of the West, and to then chart a vision going forwards. The ideas that emerge must not just be the product of reactionary nostalgia but instead grounded in a realistic and deep understanding of the nature and character of modern society and economy.

Understanding the West's core strengths

Before considering how to address the current issues facing Western society, it is worth underlining the core strengths. There is a tendency among those who consider the implications of the strong evidence for the fragmentation of the Western social fabric to tend towards hand-wringing anxiety and statements that the Western liberal model has failed and should be set aside with a new grand theory. This kind of rhetoric throws the baby out of the bathwater and consciously gives license to autocrats seeking to promote new variants of 'illiberal democracy' or nationalist states.⁷

In the long run, the Prosperity Index's data shows that Western liberal democracies have consistently performed well across a range of metrics, demonstrating the clear merits of this system of government and the way that free markets can unlock growth. And democracies have continued to be resilient in the face of recent challenges.

We must not underestimate the merits of the systems and institutions which have governed these societies. A declinist mentality which fails to fully account for the merits of the Western model falls into the same trap as the triumphalism of the post-Cold War 'End of History' era.

Property rights, the rule of law, free speech and free trade are a recipe which has brought prosperity. We have witnessed a 3,000 percent increase in the real incomes of the poorest families since 1800. A 'Great Enrichment', Deirdre McCloskey notes, bringing '...cheap food. Big apartments. Literacy. Antibiotics. Airplanes. The Pill. University education.'⁸ The list could go on.

Socially, we have learnt to peacefully manage diversity in complex democratic societies. The Prosperity Index shows that Westerners are more tolerant and more trusting of strangers than the rest of the world. Tolerance was not always considered a virtue.⁹ Yet now, an impulse towards equality and compassion sits at the heart of the Western model. We have become far better at accounting for difference with serious gains for equality for women, dissenters, the disabled, sexual and gender minorities, ethnic minorities, immigrants, colonised people and above all the poor.¹⁰ While there still is room for growth and social classification remains a serious issue, the gains must be celebrated.

Civil liberties present a critical bulwark against authoritarianism. In the words of the scholar Francis Fukuyama: 'When liberal democracy regresses, it is the liberal institutions that act as the canaries in the coal mine for the broader authoritarian assault to come... Liberal institutions protect the democratic process by limiting executive power...'¹¹ One only has to look at the rapid deterioration of freedoms in Hong Kong to witness this story play out in recent years.

Virtue must run through everything

While there are some who are concerned that civil and political liberties in the West are fraying, the Prosperity Index data shows that the West has stronger freedoms than the rest of the world. These central strengths continue to lay a strong foundation, and this essay sets out a position which advocates, above all, for the strengthening of the liberal democratic Western order.

But there is also no doubt that there are dimensions on which Western societies are struggling. As noted above, whether one looks at institutional trust, social cohesion, loneliness, the health of the family, economic productivity, mental health or regional disparities, there are clear symptoms of malaise. Although recent shocks have exacerbated this sense of crisis, many of these are long-term trends.*

The cultivation of virtue will be essential if we are to turn things around. From Aristotle to Edward Gibbon to Max Weber, there has long been an understanding in the West that civic virtue underpins the prosperity of society. The restoration of social capital and economic vitality will be possible only if it comes alongside a renewed morality.

What do we mean by virtue and morality? In the words of the former Chief Rabbi in the United Kingdom, Jonathan Sacks, morality in the West has historically been the glue which “teaches us to value the ‘We’ as well as the ‘I.’” It is a shared code of conduct, a means of imagining our existence, which “restores the dignity of agency and responsibility. It leads us to see our lives not as the blind play of external cause – the genome, the free market, international politics, the march of technology – but as a series of choices in pursuit of the right and good, choices in which we are not left unguided but for which a vast store of human experience lies at our disposal. It reminds us that the acts we perform, the decisions we take, make a difference: to our family, to our friends and associates, to our sense of a life well lived.”¹²

There are many thankless jobs in society, from the hospice worker caring for the dying every day to the primary school teacher investing in the life of a child with special educational needs, that require a public-spirited sense of service and duty in those who choose that calling. Virtue matters for society to prosper.

Closer to home, virtue sits at the base of social capital. Strong families rely on covenant commitments which involve self-sacrifice, integrity and a willingness to prioritise one’s family. Community institutions similarly rely on that sense of personal responsibility and pursuit of the common good to function effectively.

One of the root problems that underpins declining trust in institutions has been a perception of moral decline in public institutions. Constitutionalism requires a base level of trust, but we more closely associate politics with scandal and power than public service. A house of cards, the Tower of Babel, the greasy pole – pick the metaphor: it has been a long time since politics was considered a moral pursuit to build a prosperous society and leave a legacy. Meanwhile, the media pursues frivolous headlines and controversy above truth. And the 2008 financial crisis had a polarising effect across Europe, and supercharged populism as a global financial elite appeared to benefit at the expense of the vast majority.

A decline in a sense of moral responsibility has had consequences for our common connections and communities. Volunteering hours are declining in OECD countries,¹³ and, as is explored below, aspects of social capital – from family stability to civil society participation – have been on a downward trend for decades in parts of Europe and North America. This is at least partially as a function of a weakening of a sense of duty to one’s neighbour.

* Consider loneliness. While the pandemic was responsible for some of this uptick, it is only a catalyst for wider trends. In 1950, less than 10 percent of American households contained only one person. There were 37 million one-person households in 2021, or 28% of all U.S. households. A similar trend has been evident in the UK.

So, how did we get here? One of the most significant developments in the last 150 years has been the loss of the established consensus about what a virtuous life looks like. This is neither a defence of nineteenth century prudishness nor an idealisation of the morality of our ancestors, but more the observation that we no longer have a consensus ideal for what a virtuous life should look like and that this causes serious problems. This meant that by the time that Jonathan Haidt was writing *The Righteous Mind*, it was coherent to describe Americans of different stripes as occupying almost separate moral universes.

Love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, humility, self-control, integrity, courage, honesty, decency, service, and self-sacrifice: until recently, these were the ideals to aspire to and they remained central in the ethical imagination for most of the twentieth century.

But Alasdair Macintyre's *After Virtue* observes that, with the loss of a shared moral framework and fragmentation of our social paradigm, ethical debate has fundamentally become a battle of emotional intuitions and we increasingly settle in the public square to confining moral conversations to a narrow band of consensus 'liberal' issues – discussion focuses on autonomy and toleration. And avoiding harming others and politeness have become the minimum baseline for virtue in society.

We are poorer for it because we need a thicker conception of virtue if we are to prosper. We need leaders of character, people of courage, integrity, honesty. Those who know how to speak truth in love and who are not swayed by the wind. People who will stand tall in a time of shaking and have a clear vision of what the society is that we want to build. Public servants who are willing to get their hands dirty and serve the common good. Human dignity has always been at the core of Western notions of virtue and self-perception – this must not be lost. Many of these ideas still sit deep in the unconscious of people in Western society – they need to be called into life and prioritised again if we are to see the renewal of culture, society and the economy.

The fragmentation of the social fabric

A stronger vision of virtue is a prerequisite for unlocking prosperity in the West in the twenty-first century, but we cannot stop there. Many of the most troubling issues facing Western societies are functions of social malaise. From soaring mental health issues relating to loneliness and isolation to the alienation from community and public institutions which correlates with the rise of populism and declining trust in institutions, the fragmentation of the social fabric is at the core of our troubles.

The decline of social capital has been evident for decades. Robert Putnam published his seminal *Bowling Alone* at the turn of the century, tracking the decline of family, community ties, civic and social participation, political participation and religious life.¹⁴ The trends he observed have worsened, not improved.

There has been a considerable decline in the proportion of currently married people across the West and a corresponding rise in children being born into families with unmarried mothers.^{15,16,17,18} Marriage rates across the OECD declined by 25% from 1990 to 2018. Only Sweden and Turkey saw an increase in marriage rates in that time period.¹⁹

To take one example, the share of the U.S.'s 130 million households headed by married parents with children under age 18 fell to 17.8% in 2021 according to the Census Bureau. That is down from more than 40% in 1970.²⁰

Community is on the wane. Fewer than half of people in the UK are now members of a group (48%). Just 10% are members of a working men's or social club and 6% are members of a tenants' or residents' association, down 25% and 38% respectively since 1993, and regular church attendance has more than halved from 6.4 million in 1980 to 3.1 million in 2015.²¹ While online communities have proliferated, rising loneliness points to the fact that the quality of connection is arguably no meaningful substitute.

Civic and social participation in Europe remains on a downtrend, although on other metrics of social capital the story is more mixed – with institutional trust appearing to be more of an issue for the Anglosphere than Northern Europe.²²

Declining religious life is one part of what might be termed the downturn in common narratives of meaning. Surveys that analyse social capital not only indicate a decline of church attendance and community, but also a reduction of patriotism and a sense of shared national identity.²³

The importance of social capital should not be underestimated. There is a strong bank of evidence showing the ties between mental and physical health and the health of the family life.²⁴ Family relationships provide resources that can help an individual cope with stress, engage in healthier behaviours, and enhance self-esteem, leading to higher well-being. These relationships become more important for well-being as individuals age and social networks diminish,²⁵ and being married, especially happily married, is associated with better mental and physical health.^{26,27,28}

Children’s physical, social, emotional and cognitive development is strongly dependent on the healthy interactions with adults, especially with family members. The healthier the family relationships are, the more successful is the development of children.^{29,30,31} Children from stable families are less likely to be excluded and tend to do better at school,³² are less likely to be involved with the criminal justice system³³ and have better employment outcomes³⁴ than children from families where relationship break-up is the norm.

Beyond the family, studies show that social networks provide social and material support, and acts as a buffer to stress in adverse times,³⁵ and socially cohesive communities are more successful at bonding together and have better access to local services and amenities.³⁶ The frequency of interaction with friends and neighbours has a strong correlation with higher assessments of subjective wellbeing and health. Communities with high levels of social capital are more effective at exercising social control over deviant health behaviours, such as smoking and alcohol abuse.³⁷ Stronger social networks can also help contain neighbourhood violence.³⁸

And a weak social fabric is a root cause of loneliness.³⁹ Loneliness is linked to early mortality and a wide array of serious physical and emotional problems, including depression, anxiety, heart disease, substance abuse, and domestic abuse.⁴⁰ Several meta-analyses have found the mortality risk associated with chronic loneliness is higher than that of obesity and equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes per day.⁴¹ Three in ten respondents to a recent Kaiser Family Foundation / Economist survey said that loneliness had led them to think about harming themselves.^{42,43}

Shared national identity, and a healthy religious life, also play an important role. Widely shared national identity forms a foundation of trust between otherwise unconnected citizens, allowing them to look past their individual, local or regional needs. An inclusive national identity enables a range of social goods, including physical security, the quality of government, economic development, trust, socioeconomic equality and liberal democracy itself.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the economist of happiness, Arthur Brooks shows that ‘faith, family, friendship and work that serves’ are the key contingent factors which determine someone’s happiness – the importance of a faith residing in the fact that narratives of meaning that go beyond the immanent provide purpose and a basis for common understandings of virtue as well as community ties. People who are active in religious congregations tend to be happier and more civically engaged than either religiously unaffiliated adults or inactive members of religious groups, according to Pew Research Center analysis of survey data from the United States and more than two dozen other countries.⁴⁵

There is little doubt that the deconstruction and crisis of confidence in the West’s national and religious stories has contributed to the sense that we feel increasingly rudderless. When combined with the evisceration of community, it is not hard to see why the fracturing of the social fabric sits at the root of our malaise. If we do not wake up, corrosive trends including institutional trust, mental health, behavioural risk factors, and a widespread lack of resilience will only become more entrenched.

The shadow hanging over Western economies

We have focused on social malaise and the decline of virtue because the implications of these trends run through every sphere of life, from family homes to the New York Stock Exchange to parliamentary buildings around the world. But no account of the state of prosperity would be complete without an investigation of the shadow hanging over Western economies.

Our account here is neither economically determinist nor culturally determinist, we recognise that the interaction between culture and the economy is profoundly complex, and both have the capacity to shape the other.

In the economic realm, too many people have struggled to cope with major structural adjustments precipitated by the economic policies of the 1980s, and then catalysed by rising automation, globalisation, and a failure of politicians to properly anticipate the rise of behemoth technology corporations.

A noticeable development in the United States economy, which has been mirrored elsewhere, is the process by which “one [economic growth] escalator became two escalators, one of which stopped...”.⁴⁶ The data demonstrates that up to the 1970s, everyone in the US benefited from growth, but after the 1970s, while real incomes for those with graduate degrees increased, there was a tailing off and eventual drop in the growth curves for people without graduate degrees. By the 1980s, “wages rose robustly among the most-educated and fell in real terms among the least-educated—most strikingly, among men with less than a bachelor’s degree.”⁴⁷

“The deterioration in living standards, together with the social disintegration of the white working class, is a slow process that ... [is] working inexorably but out of sight...”⁴⁸ Blue-collar work has been replaced by jobs which are more casual or in menial services.⁴⁹ This is particularly true in cities where there has been a polarisation – college workers need more skills while “non-college workers perform substantially less skilled work than they did decades earlier.”⁵⁰ Workers in many of these jobs are stand-ins for robots meaning there is likely to be more structural adjustment to come. There has been little effort to reskill non-graduates. Similar trends of polarisation have also been seen across European countries.⁵¹

Meaningful work is being replaced with fragile gig economy work.⁵² In James Bloodworth’s account of an Amazon warehouse, one conversation with a man from Birmingham in which he says “People actually say, ‘I’m only at Amazon’, and in the past, they would not have said ‘I’m only at the pit’. You’d have said ‘I’m a collier’, because that’s what you were, and you were proud of it.”⁵³

In America, globalisation and other factors have contributed to more than 5 million jobs being eliminated between 1979 and 2007, another two million jobs disappeared in the financial crash. Large numbers of people have dropped out of the Labour market as a result. These processes have only been worsened by the pandemic.⁵⁴ The European Union saw a sharp decline in employment at the beginning of the pandemic, with upward of 5 million fewer jobs in Q2 2020 compared to the previous year. As COVID-related restrictions eased, the European labour market did significantly recover, however, by the end of Q4 2020, there was still a difference of 3.4 million between actual employment levels and predicted employment levels.⁵⁵

While the nature of transitions differs depending on the context, many of the same trends in terms of declining living standards and quality of life are evident across the West. For example, the major structural shock in the United Kingdom happened in the 1980s and so the rise of China and other emerging economies has not shelled out the industrial base (it had already happened).

One feature which is common across multiple contexts is the changing geographies and the phenomenon of ‘left behind’ regions. Economies of scale create metropolitan centres in market economies, but the process has been taken too far, leaving some regions totally behind and stagnant.

This trend is also evident elsewhere. In Italy, southern regions such as Mezzogiorno have fallen behind the north.⁵⁶ Similarly, there are disparities between French 'periphery' cities, such as Lyon, in contrast to metropolitan cities such as Paris.⁵⁷ The *gilets jaunes* protests were a response to perceived injustices and disparities.⁵⁸

Many of the trends which lie at the heart of the weakening of the working class and declining living standards pre-date 2008, but the Great Recession and subsequently the major explosion of new technologies have acted as catalysts which further entrench a sense of malaise and perhaps add to the sense that the system is rigged and liberal democracies do not work well for everyone. When added to a demographic timebomb fuelled by a fast-aging population, long-running failures to provide affordable housing, and the threat of secular stagnation, there are serious challenges in the economic realm.⁵⁹

Our circumstances have changed so much in the last fifty years, and policy makers have generally been firefighting rather than proactively meeting the economic challenge. But the changes that are ahead – AI and automation among others – may be as profound as those we have just seen.⁶⁰

Ultimately the credibility of the Western economic model depends on us also investing in deeply understanding existing malaise and developing meaningful strategies for the future. New ideas are urgently needed – both among business leaders and in policy-making circles.

What now?

From Alexis De Tocqueville to Vaclav Havel, from Alexander Solzhenitsyn to Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, some of the greatest thinkers of recent centuries have recognised that the recipe for success in the West lies in the combination of liberal political and economic structures with strong social capital rooted in the Classical, liberal and Judaeo-Christian tradition.

Elaborating a full programme for prosperity is beyond the scope of this piece and so this conclusion is more of a sketch of the questions we need to ask and the kind of thinking that is needed. Finding answers to these problems are among the most pressing challenges of our day.

A programme for prosperity in the West must continue to underline the central importance of civil and political rights, free markets and the rule of law, but also call for the rebalancing of economic opportunities and reinvigoration of the social fabric. Too many see their life as having little meaning at work, and no structure or community at home and in their locale. In this context, the liberal structures of our society are not sufficient alone to provide for prosperity.

There must be three pillars for any programme of change: at an individual level, we must recover the virtues which laid the foundation for our prosperity; at a local and community level, we must find a common basis for reinvigorating our social capital; and at a structural level, Western economies must be shaped to provide opportunities for all in a fast-changing world.

Addressing the crisis of social capital and virtue is complex. We must understand that the historical root of our current troubles lies in the fact that we have lost our shared support networks, shared stories and shared values. Ideas which were historically assumed across the society included support for the nuclear family; patriotism; an ethic framed around virtues including humility, compassion, decency, honesty, and regard for the weak; scientific progress and innovation as being valuable and a pathway to knowing more about the world; and liberal democratic norms being developed at the heart of the political and constitutional psyche.

To address these issues, we need a different theory of change to standard policy think tanks. We are talking about the transformation and renewal of society at large, not a policy area. Policy changes in the margins will not be sufficient to restore the position of honour for the family or lead to the recovery of virtue, even if there is some causal link between the shape of legislation and cultural values. We

need to see a movement of people with influence in each sector of society come together to develop a higher vision of what Western society can be, the virtues we aspire to, and a new social covenant. They must be role models. We need something of a renaissance in arts, culture, media to help people remember best of our heritage. And we need people at the local level to start to rebuild the social fabric piece by piece, one community at a time.

Meanwhile, in the economic sphere, leaders must take a step back and ask some critical questions. What is the purpose of work, and is the modern economy set up to provide this? How should we weigh the importance of different economic roles of a person in the west: consumer, producer, worker, saver, borrower, taxpayer, and investor? To what extent have bureaucracies replaced relationships in business? Do we need to reimagine the relationship between employers and employees? Are automation and work from home an opportunity or a threat? Is globalisation still a good thing? When can protectionism be justified? What about AI? Why can the young not buy houses? And how are we going to deal with the demographic trap?

We must acknowledge that market economics have brought more benefits than any other economic model and still provides the best framework for approach. But the credibility of that approach relies on ensuring that the economy continues to provide opportunities for everyone.

Notes

- 1 A small cottage industry of books have been written on these themes – See e.g. Deneen, P.J. (2018). *Why Liberalism Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press; McCloskey, D.N. (2019). *'Why Liberalism Works: How True Liberal Values Produce a Freer, More Equal, Prosperous World for All.'* New Haven: Yale University Press; Fukuyama, F. (2022). *Liberalism and Its Discontents*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux; Hazony, Y. (2022). *Conservatism*. Simon and Schuster; Luce, E. (2017). *The Retreat of Western Liberalism*. Hachette UK; Emmott, B. (2018). *The Fate of the West: The Battle to Save the World's Most Successful Political Idea*. London: Profile Books Ltd; Eatwell, R., and Goodwin, M. (2018). *National Populism*. Penguin UK; Parsi, V.E. (2022). *The Wrecking of the Liberal World Order*. Springer International Publishing; Pabst, A. (2021). *Postliberal Politics: The Coming Communitarian Consensus*. Cambridge: Polity Press; Applebaum, A. (2021). *Twilight of Democracy*. Random House; Sacks, J. (2020). *Morality*. Hachette UK.
- 2 Cambridge Centre for the Future of Democracy. (2020). 'Global Satisfaction with Democracy 2020'. Cambridge, https://www.cam.ac.uk/system/files/report2020_003.pdf; The Edelman Trust Barometer (2022) makes similar findings, not only for government but also other notable institutions including the media, <https://www.edelman.com/trust/2022-trust-barometer>.
- 3 Goodwin, Matthew, Eatwell, Roger. (2018). *National Populism: The Revolt Against Liberal Democracy*. United Kingdom: Penguin Books Limited.
- 4 Studies show that loneliness is growing in the English speaking world. The Kaiser Family Foundation published a report which suggested that over two in ten adults in the US and UK reported loneliness. Another recent Harvard survey found that 36% of respondents in the US reported feeling lonely "frequently" or "almost all the time or all the time" in the prior four weeks. 61% of young people aged 18-25 and 51% of mothers with young children reported this degree of loneliness. DiJulio, B., Hamel, L., Muñana, C., & Brodie, M. (2018). "Loneliness and Social Isolation in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan: An International Survey - Introduction." The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. August 30, 2018. <https://www.kff.org/report-section/loneliness-and-social-isolation-in-the-united-states-the-united-kingdom-and-japan-an-international-survey-introduction/>; Weissbourd, R., M. Batanova, V. Lovison, & E. Torres. (2021). "Loneliness in America: How the Pandemic Has Deepened an Epidemic of Loneliness and What We Can Do about It." *Making Caring Common*. Harvard Graduate School of Education, <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/reports/loneliness-in-america>; Hansen, T., and B. Slagsvold. (2015). "Late-Life Loneliness in 11 European Countries: Results from the Generations and Gender Survey." *Social Indicators Research* 129 (1): 445–64. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-015-1111-6>.
- 5 In the words of the former US Surgeon General, Vivek Murthy, reflecting on his time at the top of the US healthcare system: "loneliness ran like a dark thread through many of the more obvious issues that people brought to my attention, like addiction, violence, anxiety and depression...". Murthy, V. (2020). *Together: Why Social Connection Holds the Key to Better Health, Higher Performance, and Greater Happiness*. HarperCollins Publishers; Vox. (2020). 'Former Surgeon General Vivek Murthy on America's loneliness epidemic', Vox, May 11, 2020. <https://www.vox.com/2020/5/11/21245087/america-loneliness-epidemic-coronavirus-pandemic-together>.
- 6 Wide range of research which considers these two factors across several disciplines. Examples which have been influential here: Putnam, R. (2001). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon & Schuster; Case, A., & Deaton, A. (2020). *Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Murthy, V. (2020); Eatwell, R. & Goodwin, M. (2018); Brooks, A.C. (2013). "Opinion | a Formula for Happiness." The New York Times, December 14, 2013, sec. Opinion. <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/15/opinion/sunday/a-formula-for-happiness.html?from=sunday-review&r=1&pagewanted=all&>; Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed*.
- 7 Putin's interview with the Financial Times demonstrated a close acquaintance with this kind of logic as he justified his position in Russia: Barker, A., Barber, L., & Foy, H. (2019). "Vladimir Putin Says Liberalism Has 'Become Obsolete.'" Financial Times. Financial Times. June 28, 2019. <https://www.ft.com/content/670039ec-98f3-11e9-9573-ee5cbb98ed36>.
- 8 McCloskey, *'Why Liberalism Works: How True Liberal Values Produce a Freer, More Equal, Prosperous World for All.'*, p.5.
- 9 Huseman, W. H. (1984). "The Expression of the Idea of Toleration in French during the Sixteenth Century." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 15, (3): 293–310. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2540765>.
- 10 McCloskey, p.29.
- 11 Fukuyama, *Liberalism and Its Discontents*.
- 12 Sacks, F. (1997). *The Politics of Hope*. Jonathan Cape Publishing.
- 13 Over the last 10 years, volunteering hours have declined in 14 of the 20 original OECD member countries. The Legatum Institute. (2021). "The Legatum Prosperity Index TM 2021: A Tool for Transformation." https://www.prosperity.com/download_file/view_inline/4429.
- 14 Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*.
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