

# Hosted by the Department of Government Listening to One's Constituents? Now, There's an Idea

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OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

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*Listening  
to One's Constituents?  
Now, There's an Idea.*

*Jane Mansbridge*

*London School of Economics*

*May 15, 2017*

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## I. Crisis of **legitimacy**

- Where it came from and how to think about it.

## II. Enter representation

- The representative **as interlocutor**  
Listen; hear; respond: change, or say why not; listen again  
“**Recursive communication.**”
  - Adapting **deliberative criteria**
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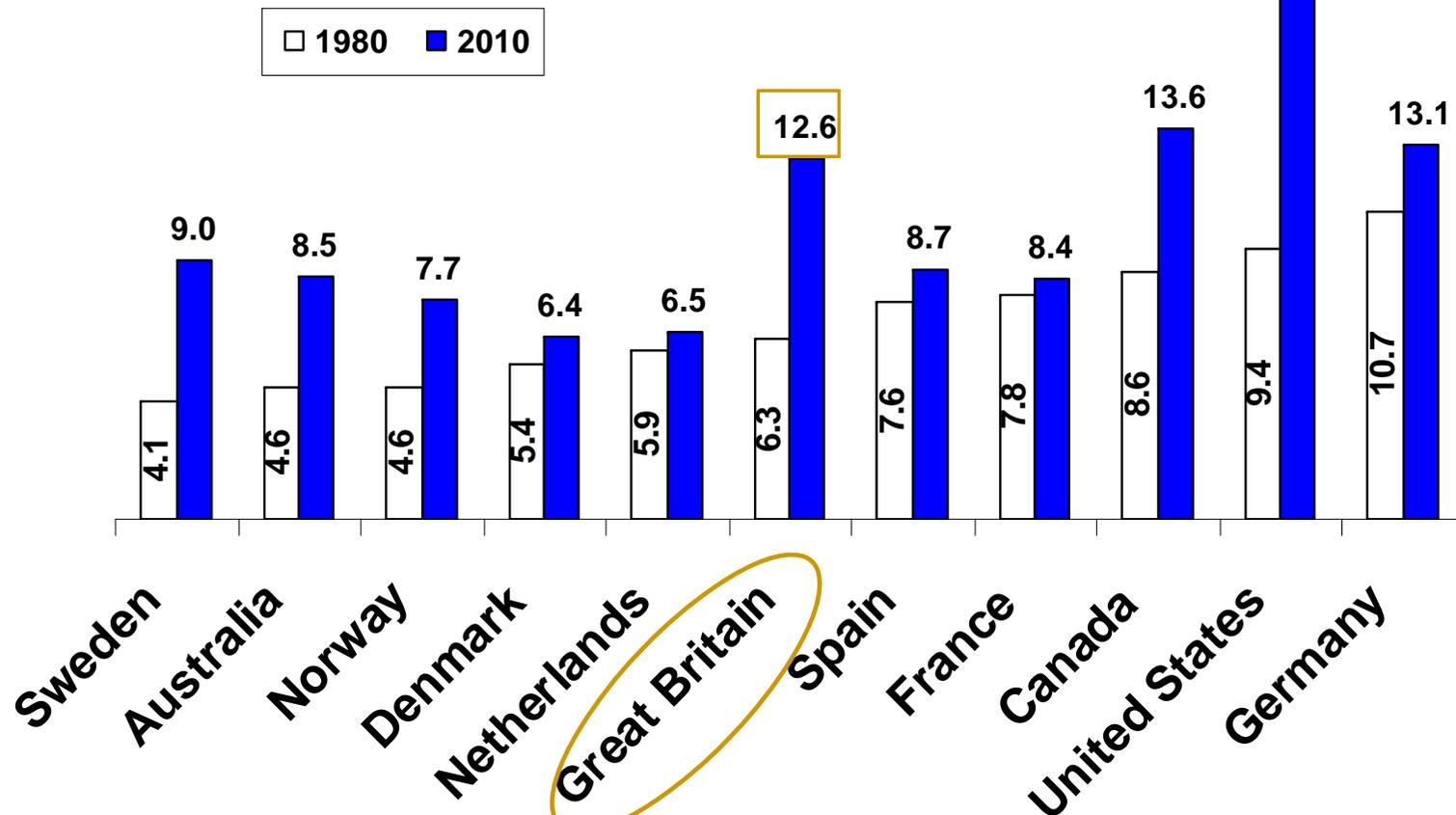
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# I. Crisis of **legitimacy**

- Where it came from

1. Proximate causes

## Percent of personal income received by top 1% of families in 1980 and 2010



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## Economist Joseph Stiglitz on the U.S.:

“In the first three years of the recovery [from the Great Recession], **91 percent of all gains** went to the **top 1 percent.**”

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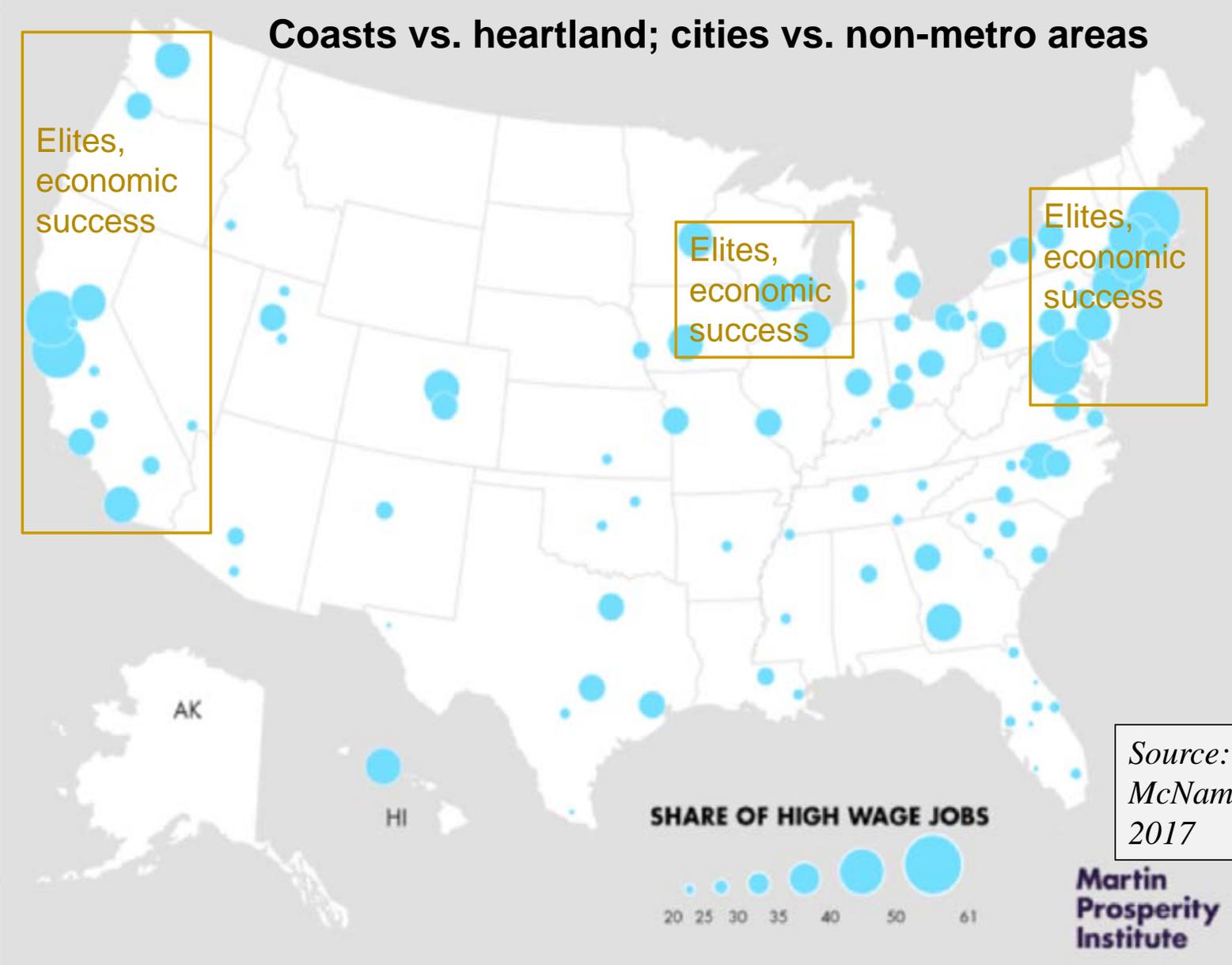
*Source: Stiglitz 2016*

# Coasts vs. heartland; cities vs. non-metro areas

Elites,  
economic  
success

Elites,  
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success

Elites,  
economic  
success



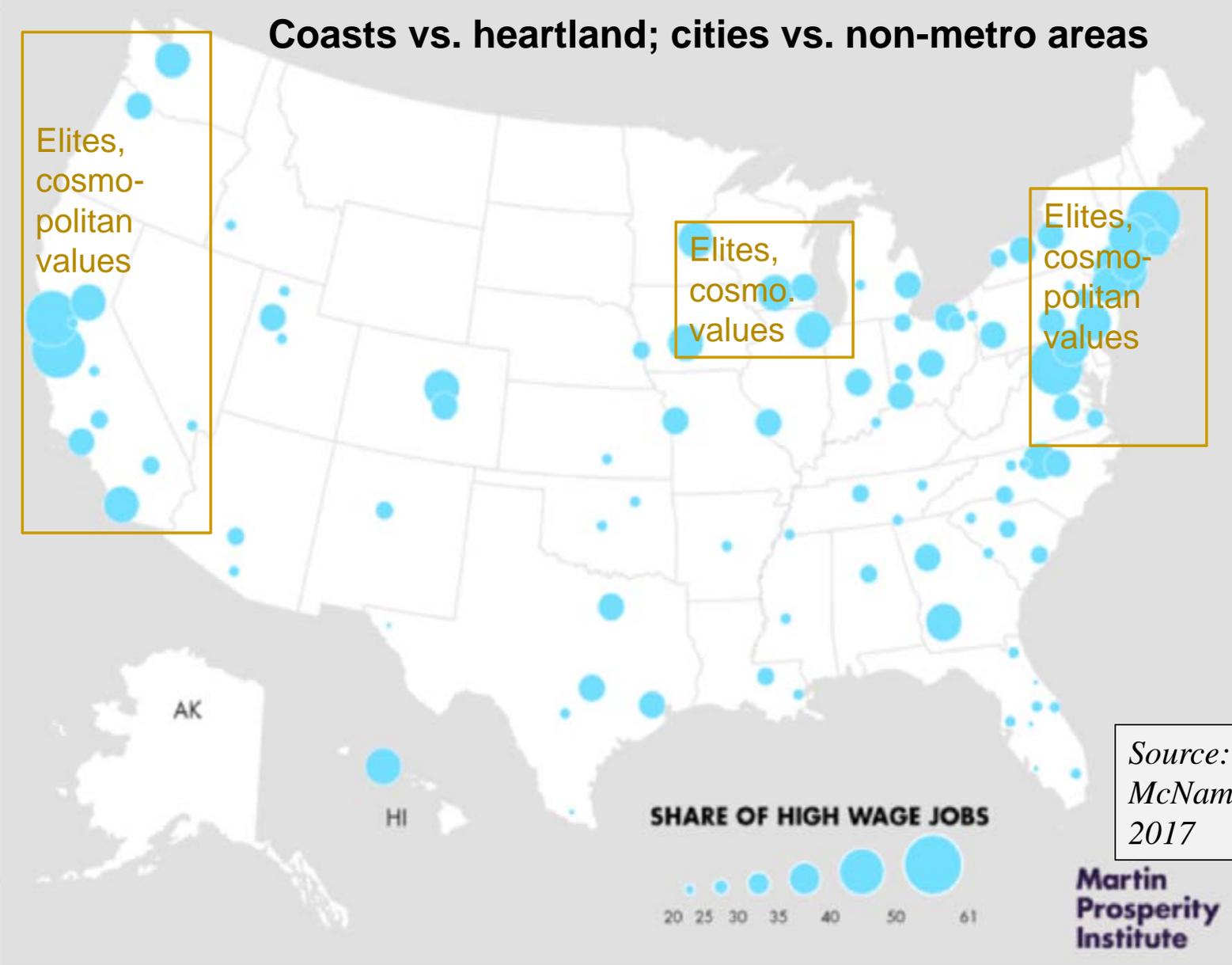
Source:  
McNamara  
2017

# Coasts vs. heartland; cities vs. non-metro areas

Elites,  
cosmo-  
politan  
values

Elites,  
cosmo.  
values

Elites,  
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politan  
values



Source:  
McNamara  
2017

Martin  
Prosperity  
Institute

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Populism includes a struggle for  
**recognition**

← perception of “**social contempt**”<sup>2</sup>

→ Rejection of elites (and  
elite/cosmopolitan values) as  
**corrupt and uncaring.**

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<sup>2</sup>Honneth 1996, 2007

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# I. Crisis of **legitimacy**

## 1. Proximate causes

## 2. Macro causes:

a. Why we need **state coercion**

b. We need **increasingly more** state coercion.

c. Our capacity to **legitimate** that coercion is decreasing.

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## a. Why we need *state coercion*



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...because, in large anonymous societies, we need to solve **free-rider problems** (“collective action problems”) that derive from our need for **free-use goods.**

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**Free use goods** = goods that, once produced, anyone can use without paying.<sup>1</sup>

E.g.: Common defense, law and order, toll-free roads, clean air, clean water, fish in the sea.

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<sup>1</sup>The more common terms are “public goods,” technically inaccurate because it includes non-rivalry; and “non-excludable goods,” technically accurate because when the good is used up latecomers are excluded (Snidal 1979).

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# Free-rider problem exercise

- 
- I endow you with £100.
  - You can **give me either £0 or £100** – nothing in between (for simplicity of calculation).
  - I am a **“doubling machine”**: I double everything I get and give it back to everyone here **equally**.

SO:

- If you give me **£100**, you will get back your **equal share** of what everyone gave me, doubled.
- If you give me **£0**, you will get back your **equal share** of what everyone gave me, doubled **PLUS** your **original £100**. I.e., you will leave with **£100 more** than everyone who gave £100.

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THEREFORE:

- It **pays** you to give £0.

BUT

- If **everyone** gives £0, you completely **waste** the resource of the doubling machine.

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- If **everyone** gives £0, you completely **waste** the resource of the doubling machine.

(If more than half of the people here give £0, you will leave with more than £100.)

No trick to this exercise.

Simply the logic of the free-rider problem (collective action problem) discovered 1950-

65.

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PLEASE WRITE **£0** OR **£100** ON YOUR  
SHEET OF PAPER.

THEN PASS IT OVER TO THE AISLE AND  
THEN UP TO THE FRONT OF THE ROOM.

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This is the “common pool” version of the free-rider problem.

The doubled money is a **free-use good**.

You *benefit* from it even when you *haven't contributed* to producing it.

**Free-use goods** → the free rider problem.

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While the results are being counted, I will assume that 70% of you have contributed **£100**.

**Why** did you do this when you could have contributed **£0** and walked out with **£100** more than most of the others in this room?

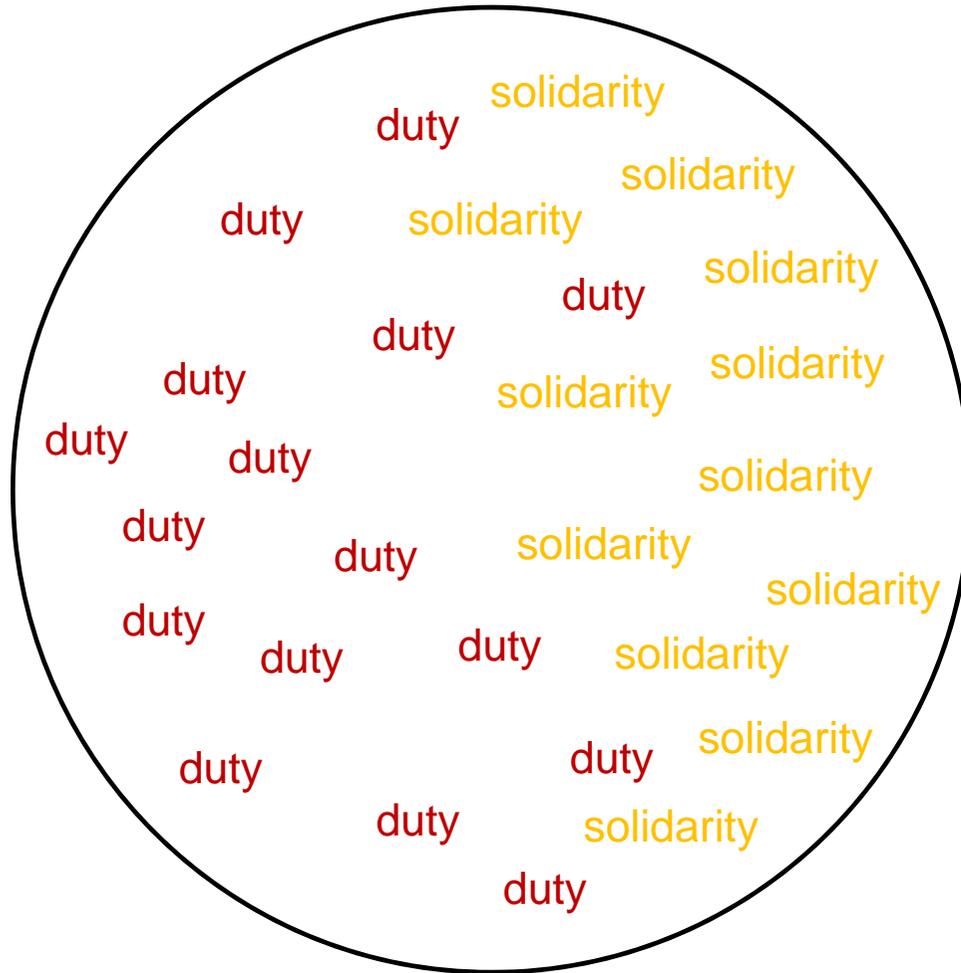
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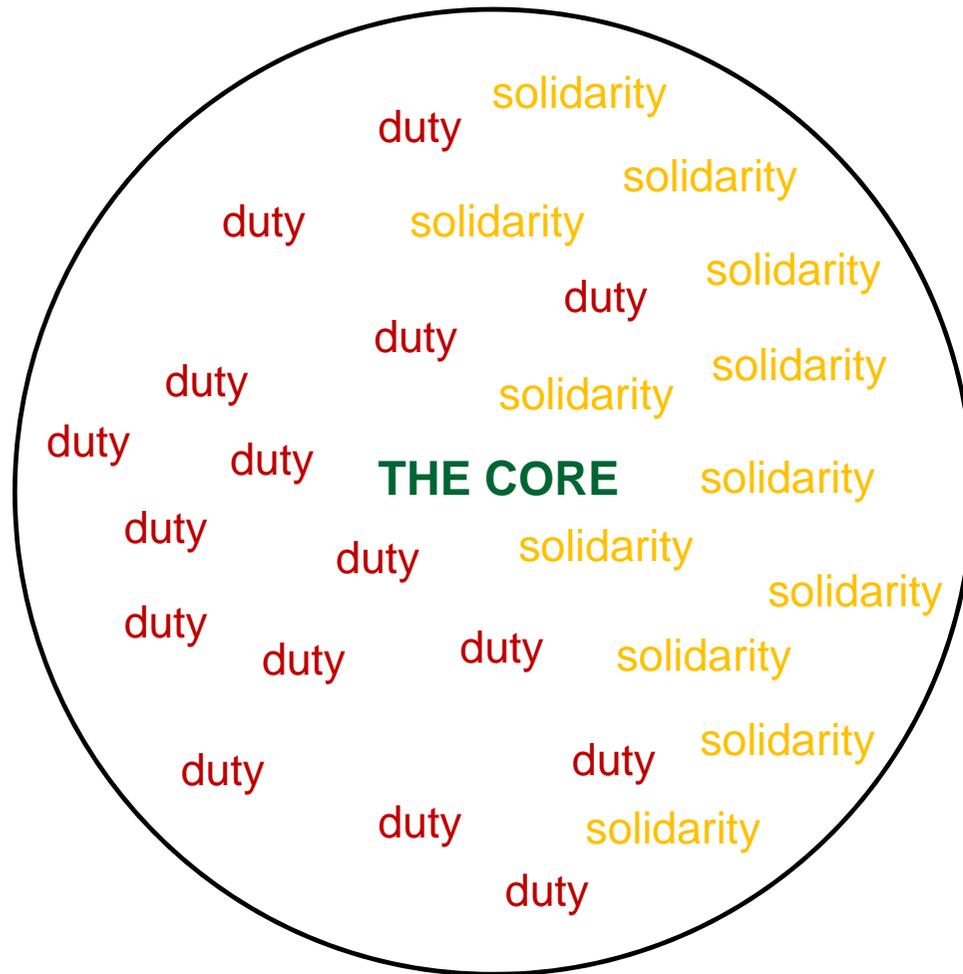
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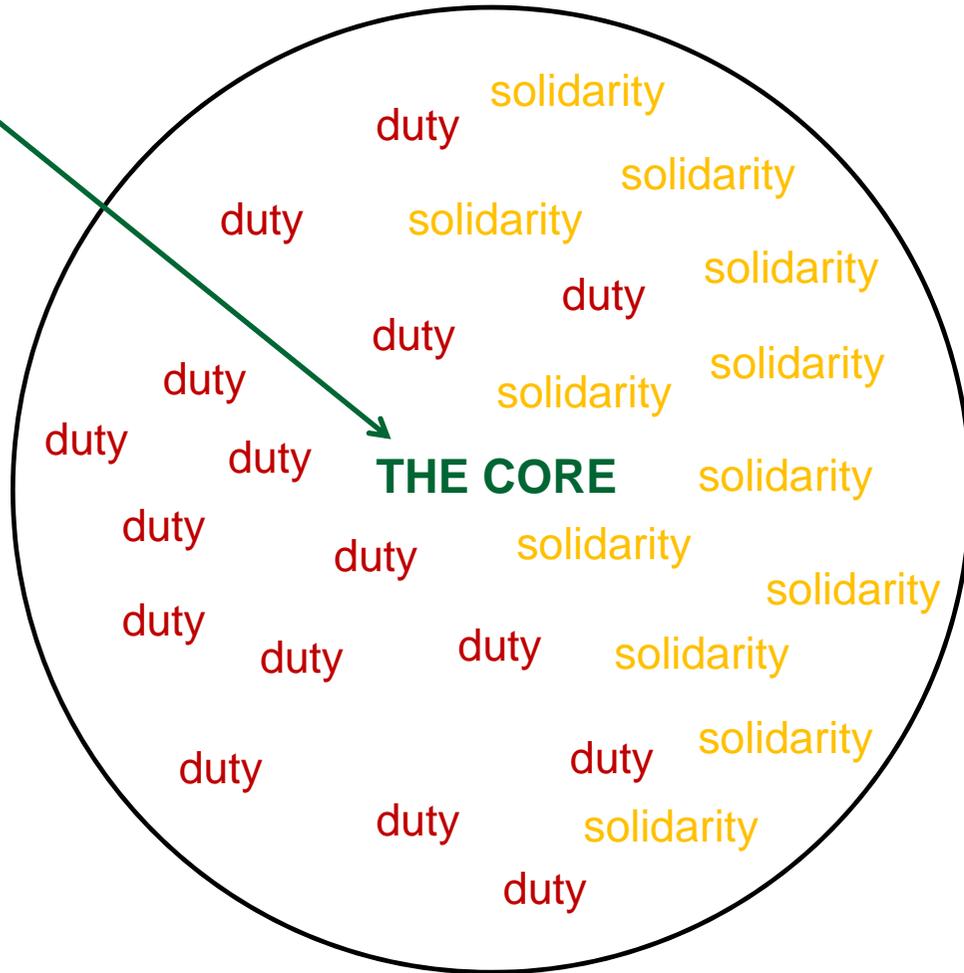
1) **“Duty”** – E.g., “What if everyone acted that way?” (everyday Kantianism) or just “I *should* contribute.” (**cognition**)

2) **“Solidarity”** – E.g., “I don’t want to let everyone else down.” (**emotion**)

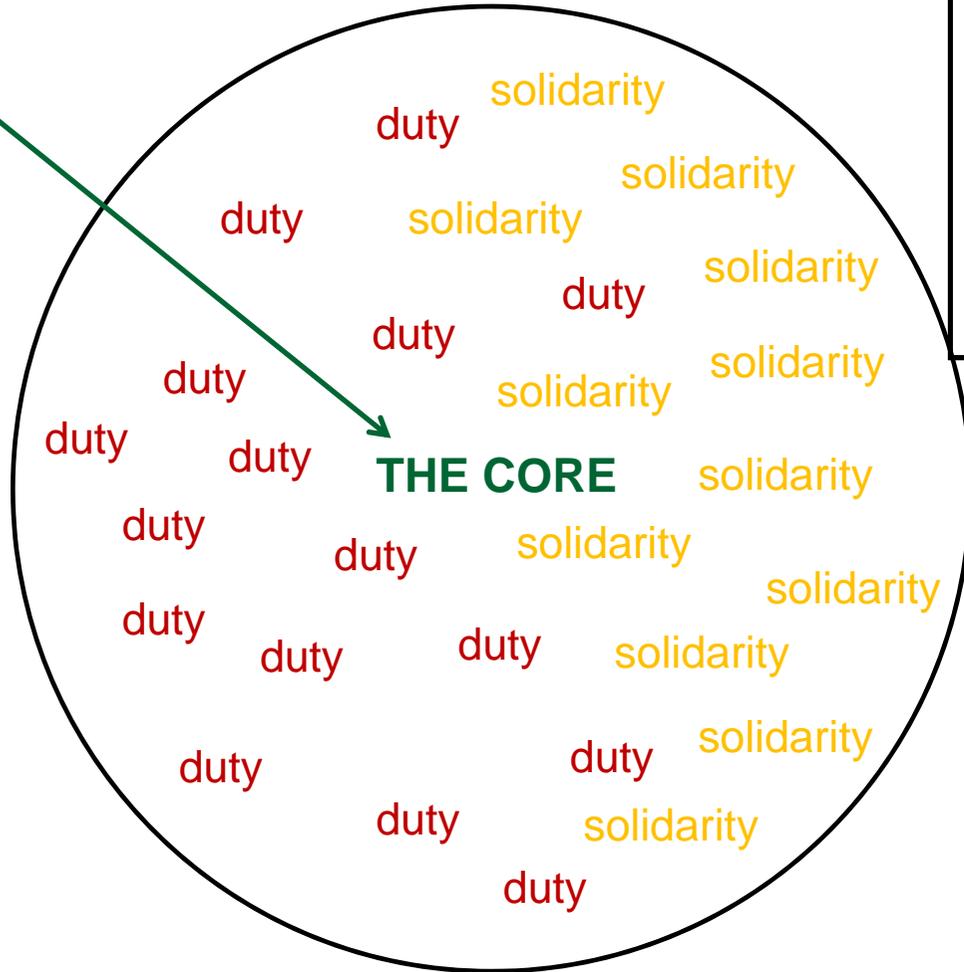




70%

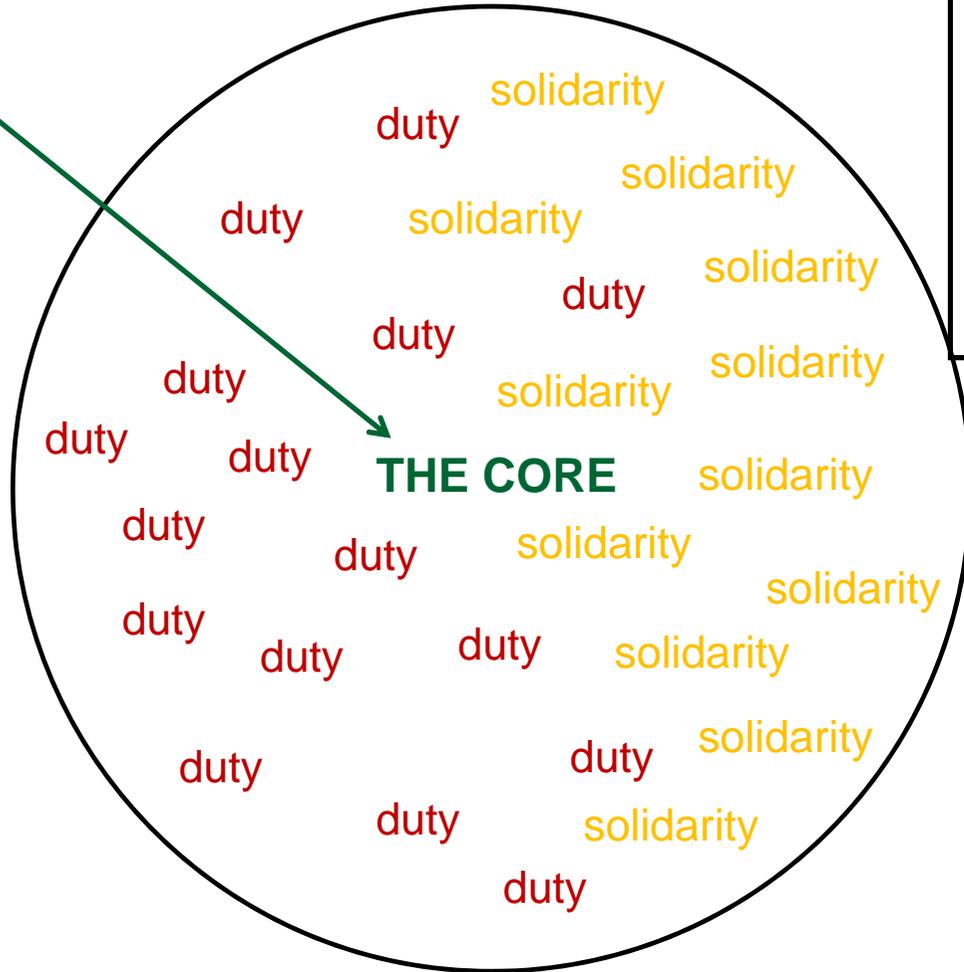


70%



What will happen if we run the exercise again?

70%



What will happen if we run the exercise again?

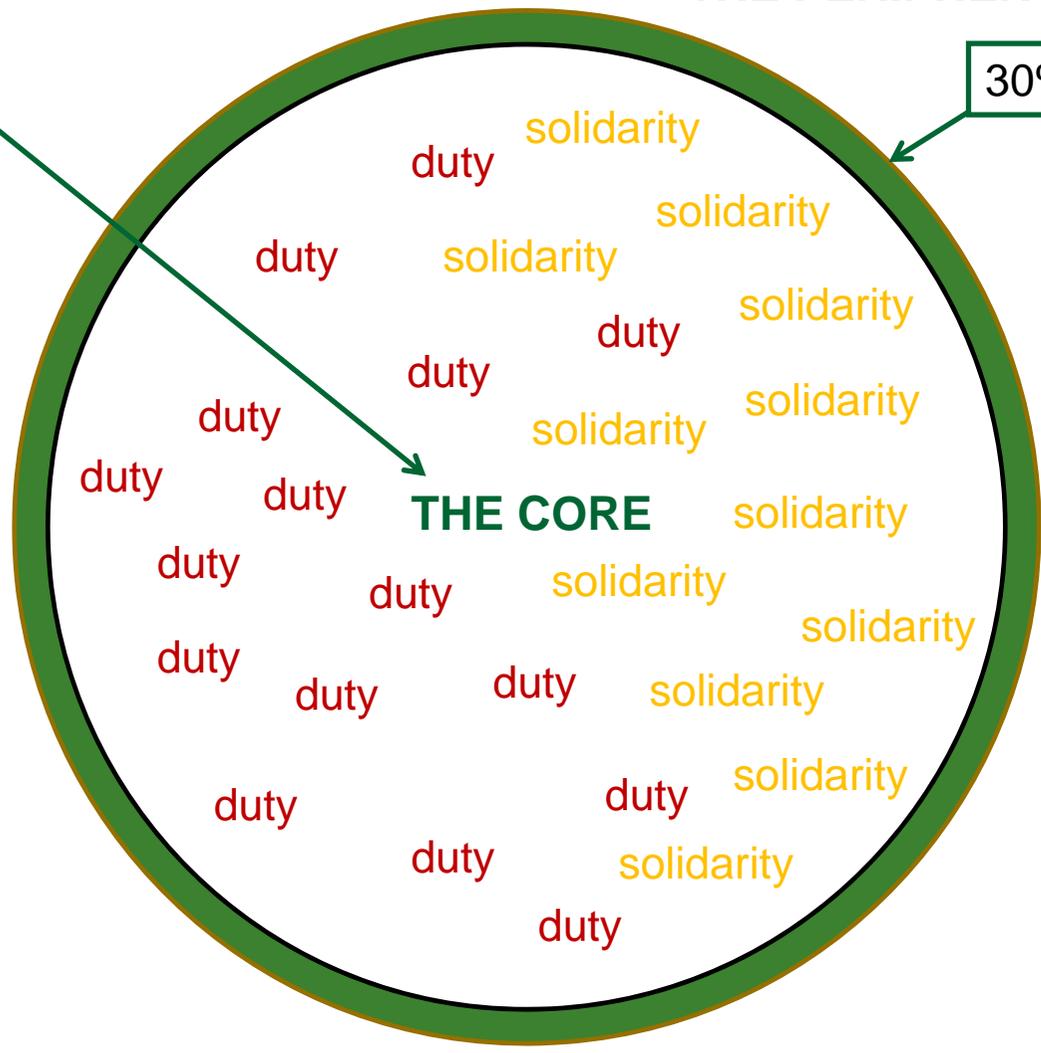
The giving will probably "unravel."

THE PERIPHERY

70%

30%

Minimum coercion needed to keep duty and solidarity from unraveling



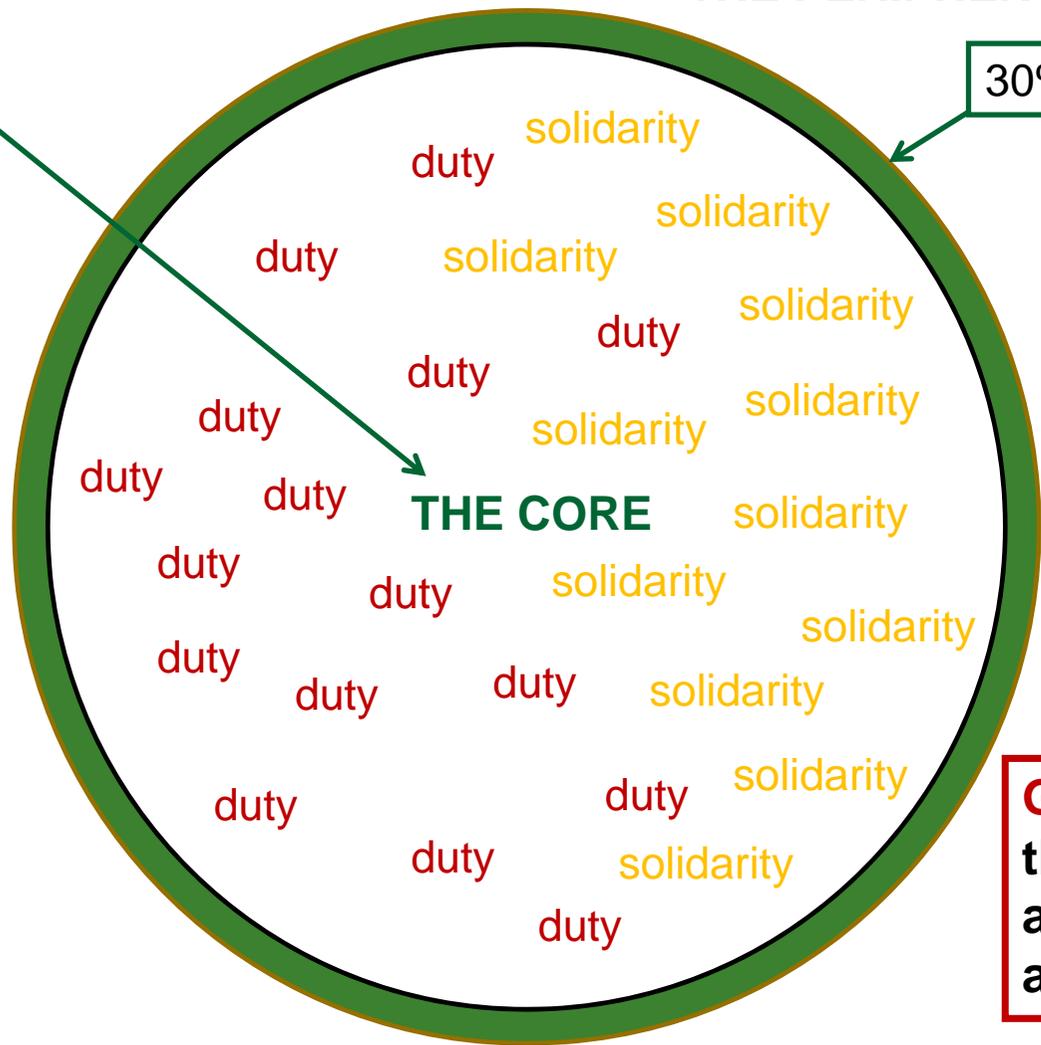
THE CORE



THE PERIPHERY

70%

30%



Minimum coercion needed to keep duty and solidarity from unraveling

“Ecological niche” for duty and solidarity to flourish.

**Goal:** to make that coercion as legitimate as possible.

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**Solidarity:** Fellow-feeling, “we-feeling,” “in-group bias.”  
(emotion) (Fast decisions, intuitions → cooperation)

**Duty:** Conscience, “right thing to do.” (cognition)

**Other intrinsic motivations:** E.g., Wikipedia: fun.

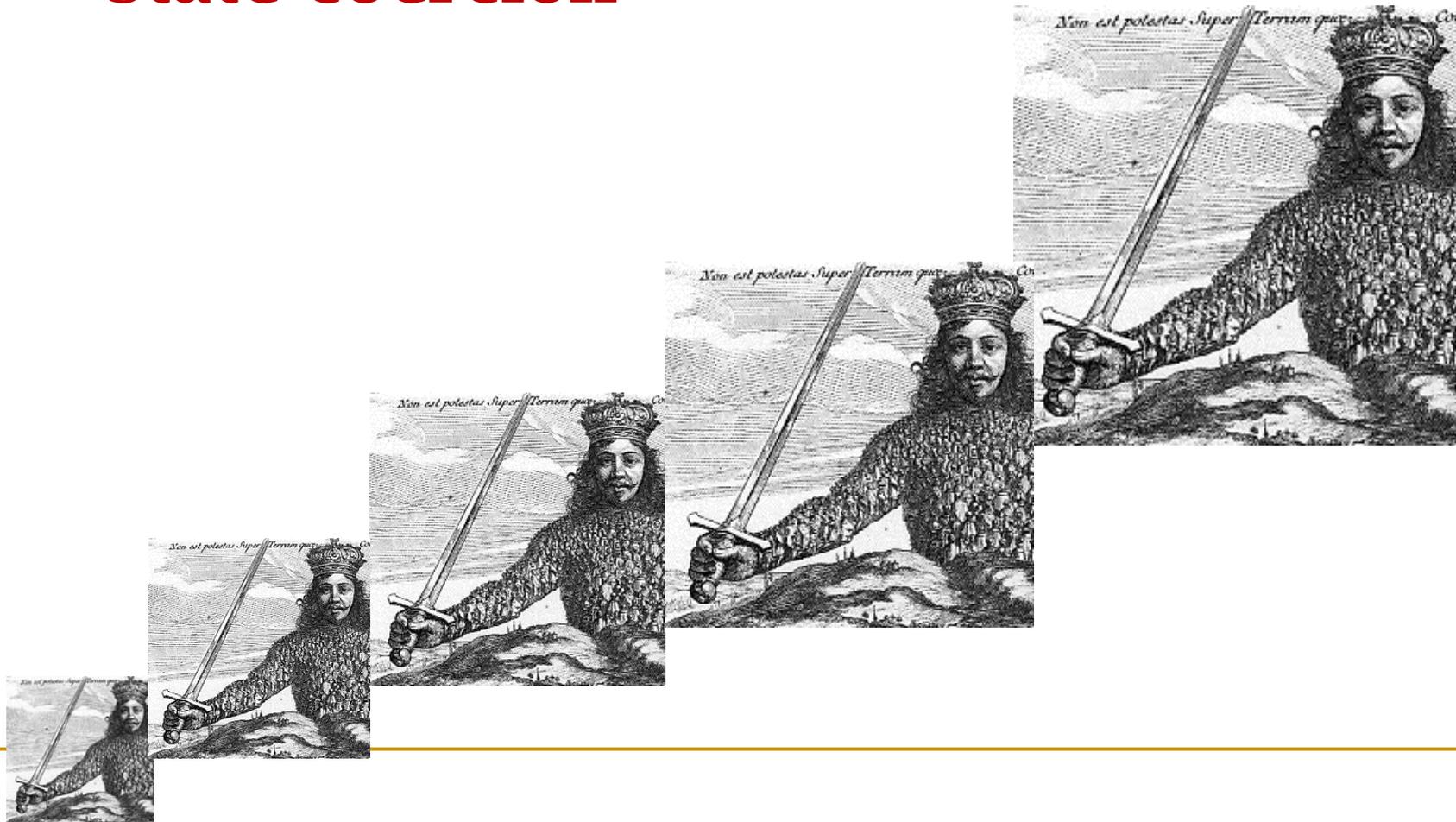
**Coordination:** Sweden moved from driving on left to driving on right. (Incentives built-in)

**Nudges:** “Choice architecture”: Make pro-social choices the default option. (Paint fly on urinal.)

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Need **solidarity** and **duty**  
and *legitimate*  
*coercion* on periphery  
to provide an “**ecological niche**”  
for **duty and solidarity to survive and thrive.**

## b. Why we need *more and more* state coercion



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## **Increasing need to solve free-rider problems**

### **1. Increasing interdependence**

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## **Increasing need to solve free-rider problems**

### **1. Increasing interdependence**

“The story of life on Earth is the story of increasingly complex social cooperation.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Cohen 2115, 59*

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## Increasing need to solve free-rider problems

### 1. Increasing interdependence

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Trivial: **Blueberries** on the table in winter.

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## Increasing need to solve free-rider problems

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*Requires* a host of **free-use goods**.

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## Increasing need to solve free-rider problems

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Immense: **Climate stability**

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## Increasing need to solve free-rider problems

### 1. Increasing interdependence

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Trivial: **Blueberries** on the table in winter.

*Requires* a host of **free-use goods**.

Immense: **Climate stability**

*Is* a **free-use good**.

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## **Increasing need to solve free-rider problems**

### **2. Using up nature's provision**

Clean air

Clean water

Any water

Fish

Forests

**Climate stability**

All of these are **free-use goods**.

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## Summary so far:

1. **Free-use goods** cause **free-rider problems**.
  2. To **solve free-rider problems** in large anonymous societies, we need **state coercion**.
  3. The **number of free-use goods** we need is **increasing**.
  4. Therefore: The **amount of state coercion** we need is **increasing**.
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c. Our capacity to **legitimate** that coercion is decreasing.



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**Legitimacy: Having the “right to rule” (i.e., the “right” to use state coercion\*)**

- 1) **Normative** legitimacy: The claim to legitimacy stands up to critical scrutiny. (Not manipulated)
- 2) **Perceived** legitimacy: The affected population (the coerced) perceive the coercion to proceed from a rightful source.

**Both normative and perceived legitimacy are decreasing.**

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\*Coercion = threat of sanction or use of force

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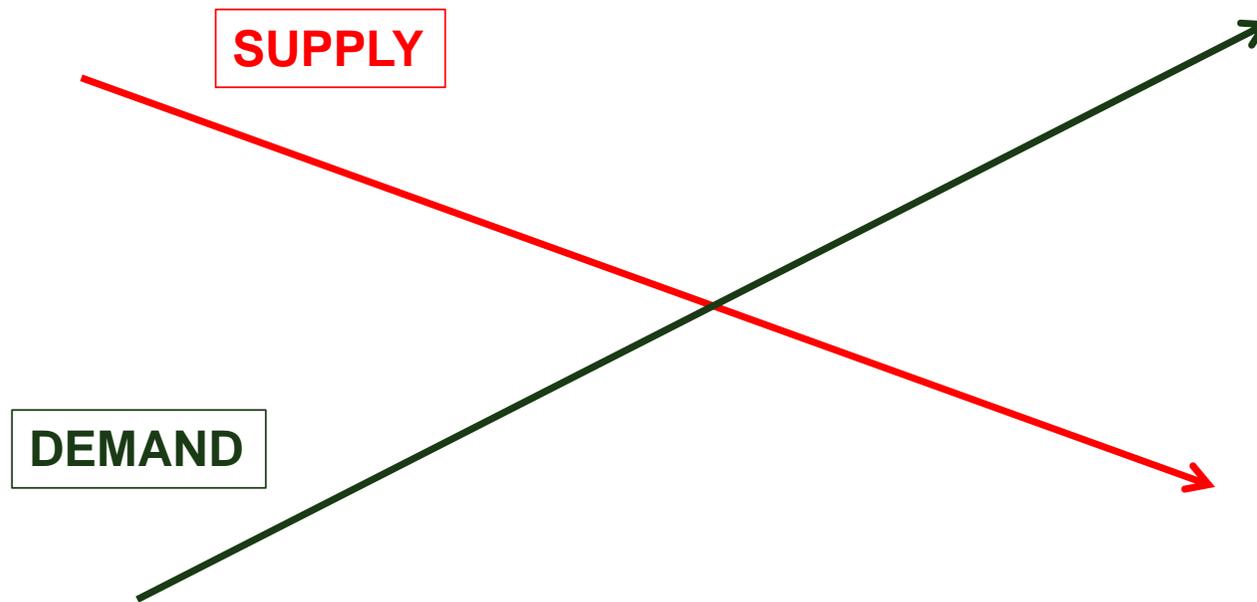
## ***Why is the supply decreasing?***

- 1. Post-materialist society\***  
(“Question Authority”)
- 2. Recent history\***  
(Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot)
- 3. Increasing power of the state**  
(National Security Agency: Mass surveillance. Very need to solve increasing # free-rider problems)

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*\*Thanks to Claus Offe*

What happens when the **demand** for legitimate coercion increases just as its **supply**\* decreases?



The **price** of each **ounce** of legitimacy increases.  
(It becomes more *precious*.)

*\*Thanks to Claus Offe*

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## II. Enter representation

- Preface: *One* factor
- The representative **as interlocutor**

Listen; hear; respond: change, or say why not; listen again

**“Recursive communication.”**

- In electoral, administrative, societal realms
  - Adapting **deliberative criteria**
-

Preface: One factor among many.

To make **state coercion** more **legitimate**:

- Make it *minimal*.
- Retain *intrinsic* motivation.
- Eliminate *money* in politics
- Introduce the *representative as interlocutor*
- Increase *recursive communication*
- Attend to representation in all three sectors
- Think deliberatively, include negotiation

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With **better communication**, would the representatives have convinced their constituents that a **Remain vote better served their interests**?

Or would the constituents have convinced the representatives that some of their **basic interests were being ignored**?

(Or were the representatives powerless in the face of larger forces?)

Not much empirical political science on representative/constituent communication.

Not much **normative theory**.

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## The representative as interlocutor

- Electoral
- Administrative
  - Policy- making level
  - “Street level” point of application
- Societal
  - *Elected* representatives (unions)
  - “*Self-appointed*” representatives
  - *Randomly* selected representatives

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# The representative as interlocutor

- **Electoral : What do citizens want?**

- Talking with constituents.**

- C. Grill (2007): 28 constituents, 1997-98 in upper New York State: the main thing they wanted from their representative was **communication**.

- R. Fenno (1978):

- “Responsiveness, and hence, representation, require **two-way communication**. Although the congressman can engage in this kind of communication with only some of his supportive constituents, he can give many more the assurance that two-way communication is **possible**....

- “Access and the assurance of access, communication and the assurance of communication – **these are the irreducible underpinnings of representation.**”

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# The representative as interlocutor

- **Contact + deliberation:** Neblo et al. (APSR 2010)

**Random samples** of citizens from 13 congressional districts offered an opportunity to participate in an **online deliberative forum** with their member of Congress to discuss immigration policy.

65% agreed to participate in principle. Of those:

34%\* showed up for the discussion. Education, income, race, gender *not* significantly related to participation; having young children in home and being unemployed *was* significantly related (→ time at computer).

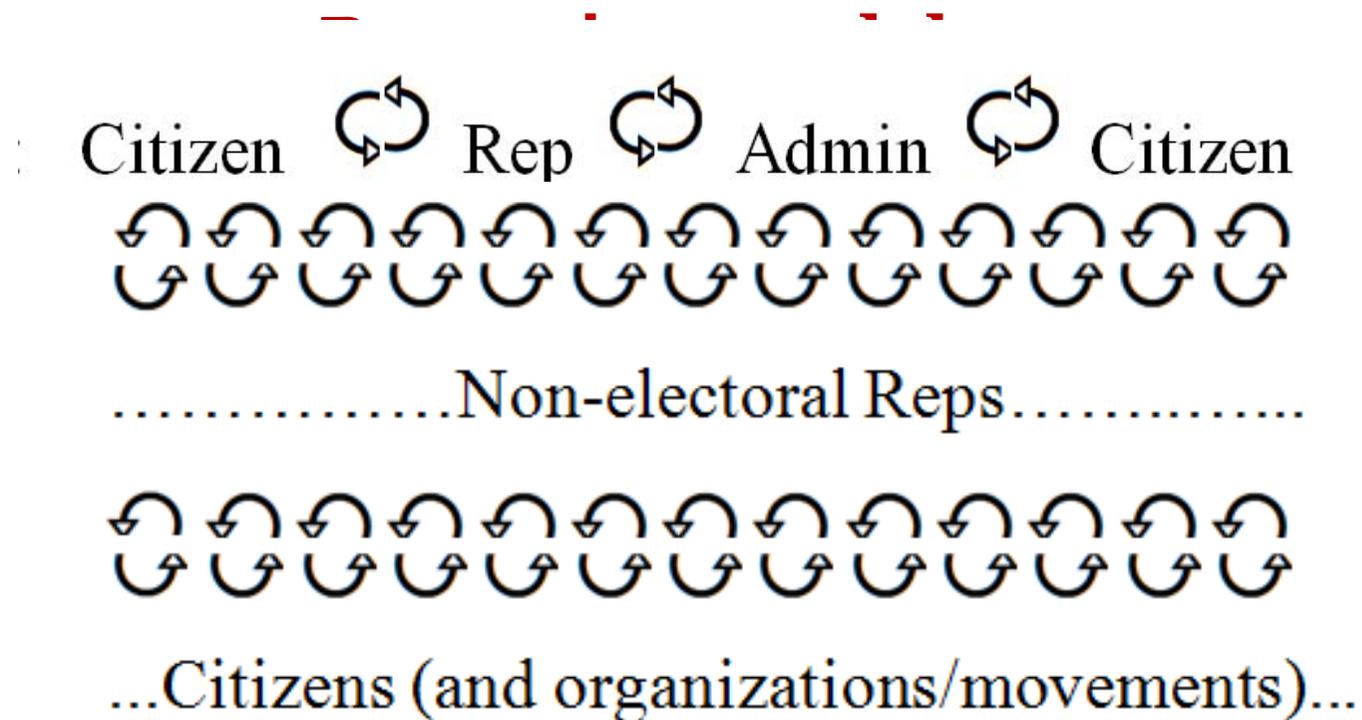
The politically cynical were *more* willing to deliberate.

*Follow-up studies:*

- \* **2-step communication:** Talk to others; they talk to still others.
  - \* About 1/4 of voting-eligible constituents every 6 years could deliberate with their Congressional representative. < 2 hrs/wk for each member; <\$100,000 a year for Congress. **Problem: Two-way?**
-

## Standard model:

Voter → Representative → Administrator → Citizen



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# Elected, administrative, societal

- **Recursive deliberation: Elect/Admin/Soc**
  - **Example of EU “experimentalism”** (Sabel & Zeitlin 2010)
    - a) **Elected representatives** give broad mandate.
    - b) **Administrative (appointed) representatives** i) consult with experts;  
ii) negotiate among themselves;
    - c) **consult recursively** with **societal stakeholder** groups;
    - d) cycle back to **elected** representatives.

**Problems:** 1) excessive influence of **business/capital**;  
2) **stakeholder** groups often “self-appointed”<sup>1</sup> and non-recursive;  
3) few **citizens** involved; 4) by the time they cycle back to the **elected representatives**, usually hard to change.

**Good:** “**Dynamic accountability**”: goal changes as well as means.

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<sup>1</sup> Montanaro, “The Democratic Legitimacy of Self-Appointed Reps” JOP 2012

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## **Societal:**

**“Self-appointed representatives”  
Recursive deliberation not a norm.**

**Forms of communication with societal  
“constituents” relatively unstudied.**

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## Little research on communication in electoral, administrative, and societal representation

- Empirical
- Normative: What is **good** recursive communication?

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## ■ Adapting deliberative criteria

### Evolving standards for good deliberation<sup>1</sup>

#### First generation

Respect

Absence of power

Reasons

Aim at consensus

Common good orientation

Equality

#### Second generation

Unchallenged, unrevised

Unchallenged, unrevised

Relevant **considerations**

Aim at both consensus and  
**clarifying conflict**

Orientation to both common  
good and **self-interest**  
**constrained by fairness**

equal **opportunity** for  
influence; inclusion, equal  
respect

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<sup>1</sup>Baechtger, Dryzek, Mansbridge & Warren forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Deliberative Democracy*, Intro.

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## ■ Adapting deliberative criteria

### Evolving standards for good deliberation<sup>1</sup>

#### First generation

Publicity

Accountability to  
constituents  
("giving an account")

#### Second generation

In many, but **not all** conditions  
(e.g., **negotiations** when  
representatives can be  
trusted)

For non-elected representatives,  
accountability to **other citizens**

Add **recursivity**?

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<sup>1</sup>Baechtger, Dryzek, Mansbridge & Warren forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Deliberative Democracy*, Intro.

# Deliberative negotiation

<i>Agreement-seeking procedures</i>				
<i>Pure deliberation</i>	<i>Deliberative negotiation</i>			<i>Pure bargaining</i>
	<i>Integrative</i>		<i>Distributive</i>	
Common interests, in which all gain, with identical or overlapping benefits, for example, in greater understanding	<b>Full mutual advantage</b> , in which each party gains but with distinct benefits; no losses	<b>Partial mutual advantage</b> , in which each gains but with trades to add value	<b>No mutual creation of value</b> , with fair offers, based on reasonableness, in which each gains, each loses	<b>No mutual creation of value</b> , with strategic demands, in which each aims at maximum
<b>Informed consensus or clarified and structured conflict</b>	<b>Fully integrative agreement</b> , in which no party loses	<b>Partially integrative agreement</b> , in which parties have traded lower for higher values; at least one bears some loss	<b>Fair compromise</b> , in which each has sacrificed something of value	<b>Power-based compromise</b> , in which each loses something of value or capitulation, in which one side appropriates all the surplus

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## Example: Brexit Remain vote

Media

False and inflammatory advertising

Machinations in Parliament

Representative/constituent listening?

Representative as **interlocutor**

**Recursive** communication

**Negotiation** of solutions that meet  
most important needs

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## Hypothetical example of negotiation:

May: “Britain will remain in EU if EU adopts more restrictive immigration policy.”

Does this meet the demanding  
constituents’ **most strongly felt needs**?

Can the pro-immigrant citizens **live with it**?

**How would we know?**

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## Intermediate institutions?

Parties

NGOs

Media

## Representative/constituent listening?

**Recursive** communication

**Representative as interlocutor**

**Negotiation** of solutions that meet  
most important needs

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“[W]e should **evaluate** the process of representation according to the **character of the relationship between the representative and the constituents**. The representative will inevitably be separate from the constituents, but should also be *connected* to them in determinate ways.

...Representation systems sometimes fail to be sufficiently democratic not because the representatives fail to stand for the will of the constituents but because they have **lost connection** with them. In modern mass democracies it is indeed **easy to sever relations** between representatives and constituents, and **difficult to maintain** them.”

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-- Iris Marion Young (2000)

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**The goal:**

**Make recursive communication more  
central to the representative  
relationship**

**...in all its spheres.**

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