Chapter 1

Neighborliness, social prejudice, and democracy

Whatever prejudice and taste may be innocently allowed to do or to dictate in social and domestic relations, it is plain, that in the matter of government, the object of which is the protection and security of human rights, prejudice should be allowed no voice whatsoever…Fellow-citizens, let us entreat you, have faith in your own principles.

Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored Men, Oct. 4-7, 1864[1]

We fall off from the democracy of everyday life when we direct criticism and zealous correction not an individual…but at neighbors as members of a group that to our mind does not belong here.

Nancy Rosemblum[2]

Community is where many of citizens' social experiences and, by extension, experiences with democracy unfold. While the nature of "community" interests everyone from religious theologians to secular academicians, the scholarly study of neighbor relations is mostly sociological. The concept of community has long-served as a central organizing theme for understanding complex social interactions. From de Tocqueville, to Marx, and to Durkheim, communities were often poetically described as the valuable foundations upon which nations rest, although these environments were often depicted in such an abstract way as to allow "an endless array of social thinkers to unite in their praise of community, no matter how diverse their interpretations of it might

[1] Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored Men; held in the City of Syracuse, N.Y.; October 4, 5, 6, and 7, 1864; with the Bill of Wrongs and Rights; and the Address to the American People

[2] Rosenblum, Nancy L. 2016. *Good Neighbors: The Democracy of Everyday Life in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p. 125.

be."[3] Stories about the value of community generally describe how close-knit social ties help people manage uncertainty and avoid the social fragmentation that accompanies the Western world's fascination with individualism.[4] But they also often involve a nostalgia for more idyllic times, when things seemed kinder, simpler, and social ties among community members richer. That nostaligia is, in no small part, a reaction to and against the massive social upheaval brought about by industrialization in mid-19th Century, which disrupted the parochialism of the pre-industrial society. While the industrial economy was accompanied by growth in wealth, education, and social mobility, it also generated competition, conflict, and new economic crises.[5] Thus, despite the rampant inventions of a great many new products, technological advancements, and revolutionary ways of conducting business, industrialization also helped produce the modern city. This change subsequently and irreversibly shaped how future generations would understand the contours and confines of their lived community experiences.[6]

Across both literature and scholarly study, geography and distance play a special role in determining the contours, boundaries, and politics of communities.[7] In sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies' classic text, *Community and Society*, individuals are described as belonging simultaneously to both an immediate community – or *Gemeinschaft*, the local physical space in which neighbors share in common beliefs and are bound by mutually-acceptable norms – and society – or *Gesellschaft*, the wider regional or national space that involves the less personal ties that bind citizens together in a contractual-like arrangement. While citizens possess an uncanny and almost innate ability to "imagine" themselves as a member of the national community (society),[8] the lives of ordinary citizens mostly play out in a narrow geographic context, in which

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[3] Bell, Colin, and Howard Newby. [1979] 2021. *Community studies: An introduction to the sociology of the local community* (Routledge), 22.

[4] Bruhn, J. G. 2011. *The sociology of community connections*. Springer Science & Business Media.

[5] Bensel, Richard Franklin. 2000. *The Political Economy of American Industrialization, 1877-1900*. (Cambridge University Press). Fromm, Erich. 1941 (1994). *Escape from freedom*. Macmillan. Fromm's work places this dynamic in a macro-historical context. Capitalism may have "freed" the individual from the bonds of family, church, and caste, but, in so doing, it disrupted the traditional form and value of community – developments that reverberate in an era of technological disruption to citizens' sense of local life.

[6] Goheen, Peter G. 1973. "Industrialization and the growth of cities in nineteenth-century America." *American Studies* 14(1), 49-65.

[7] Pipkin, John S. 2001. "Hiding places: Thoreau's geographies." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91(3), 527-545.

[8] Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. 1991. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London: Verso), 6–7. Anderson writes that a nation is a community, in part,

members are relatively immobile both physically and socially.[9] That is, people tend to live, marry, raise children, work, and pass away both physically near their birthplace and in similar social standing into which they were born. Thus, while national identities are important, they may have sporadic bearing on the lives, demands, and preferences of ordinary people.[10]

Despite the age and bluntness of Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft* dichotomy, it is a useful lens for thinking about social relations within democracy. Individuals in local communities are naturally nested within wider societies, and so their demands on the democratic system are liable to be in frequent tension. Coal miners in Alabama and computer programmers in Silicon Valley, California, for example, might share beliefs in the almost mythological values of the American creed – individualism, hard work, and independence are characteristics that transcend geography and sustain commitments to the nation. Yet, despite their common relationship to the national identity, the particular nature of their values and the ways in which they are expressed naturally differ within their communities. Miners and programmers may work long hours and rely on their own efforts to put food on the table, but the values of solidarity, commitments to faith, and beliefs about social integration and inclusion will inevitably look different for members of these communities. In turn, the demands they place on democracy are liable to not only be different, but explicitly conflict.

Perhaps ironically, despite the mosaic nature of society, a community's culture often tends toward homogeneity. Although "culture" has many meanings, it more or less "consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and their attached values."[11] In other words, members of a community often share a set of norms that guide behavior in order to minimize conflict and to persevere the intimacy of relations among neighbors. It is difficult for communities to flourish if

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because "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings." On a more superficial level, the Olympic Games make it clear that national identity is a pervasive force.

[9] McKinney, John C and Charles P. Loomi. 1957. "The Application of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft as Related to Other Typologie,", in the introduction to the American edition of Ferdinand Tönnies' *Community and Society* (New York: Harper), 12-29.

[10] Levendusky, Matthew S. 2018. "Americans, not partisans: Can priming American national identity reduce affective polarization?." *The Journal of Politics* 80(1), 59-70. Levendusky finds that appeals to American identity can reduce polarization, which undercuts social cohesion, but only under certain infrequent conditions.

[11] Kroeber, A. L. and Clyde Kluckhohn. 1952. *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum), 181.

the practical application of values stirs disagreement among its members. The value of equality, for example, might demand that all children be educated together in a common setting. Yet, historically, this demand – forcing some persons to integrate schools – has cracked apart communities that attempt to protect racial hierarchies through segregation. In many such cases, homogeneity is not natural, per se, but *enforced* to preserve the aesthetic sensibilities of cultural traditions.

Those dynamics motivate much of this book's story. At the very center of community tensions lays an almost sentimental attachment to the conventions and mores of a time and place in which community members imagine that social, moral, or economic conditions were more ideal, if not more *similar*. These imagined, historical standards help to reinforce social expectations for community members. They are not natural in any elemental sense, but are, instead, upheld relationally by people.[12] In turn, the demand for or enforcement of homogeneity causes tensions: heterodoxy, running afoul of, or pushing back against traditional normative standards is often viewed as undesirable to the preservation of a community's status quo.[13]

But while location naturally guides the construction of community boundaries, it is nevertheless critical to acknowledge the idea that communities can also transcend immediate geography. In sociologist Robert Nisbet's telling, communities primarily involve *social* bonds that are characterized by an emotional cohesion around a set of values. Thus, the system of Jim Crow was not only or specifically relegated to backwaters in Mississippi or the swamps in Louisiana or the suburbs of Georgia. Instead, the values of exclusion, segregation, and rote prejudice emanated from and overlaid onto both local communities and the wider "community" of the American South.[14]

And so we return to the inherent tensions in conceptualization of community. When a community transcends a particular physical geographic space, it has the power to orient how people think, act, and behave more broadly. People don't need to live next to each other to necessarily see themselves in community, as religious adherents demonstrate weekly. Those broader commitments

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[12] Brennan, Geoffrey, Lina Eriksson, Robert E. Goodin, and Nicholas Southwood. 2012. *Explaining Norms* (New York: Oxford University Press).
[13] Colin and Newby, 2021, *op cit.*, 24.
[14] Mickey, Robert. "Paths Out of Dixie: The Democratization of Authoritarian Enclaves in America's Deep South, 1944-1972 (Princeton University Press). Despite important variation in the mechanistic workings of racial authoritarianism at the local level, the Jim Crow "regime" was sustained, in part, by inter-community collaboration in service of white supremacy.

to a creed are not dissimilar to the commitments to democracy, where, despite local or regional differences in culinary preferences, sports team allegiances, or idioms, citizens come together annually as a democratic community to participate in elections. The people surrender a small piece of their own liberty in exchange to participate in a community of self-rule that values equality and promotes, broadly-speaking, diversity, despite dramatic differences in the political groups to which they belong.[15]

If living in democratic community is possible because of a shared commitment to pluralism – a set of conditions in which a diversity of views is permitted and protected – then prejudice is poisonous for democracy. Those biases prevent individuals from entering in and enjoying the benefits of community by stopping others from entering into sacred social spaces. When communities segregate or exclude neighbors based on categorical features like race, ethnicity, or religion, the disregard for commitments to democratic values are revealed. Social prejudice, then, threatens the very fabric of what political theorist Nancy Rosenblum labels "the democracy of everyday life."[16]

In this chapter, we begin by sketching out the essentialness of neighborliness to democracy. We begin with the premise that citizens living in democracy belong to both local and national communities. If healthy communities hold together democracy, then neighbor relations are not only what sustains community, but, by extension, democracy itself. The presence of social prejudice, however, scrambles the normative benefits of neighborliness, replacing commitments to pluralism with a narrow view regarding who is worthy of participating in shared public spaces. We conclude by leaning on social and political psychology research to illustrate how prejudice harms commitments to democracy by driving a wedge between neighbors – relationships that are essential to living out a country's professed democratic values.

[15] *Good Neighbors*, 35
[16] *Good Neighbors,* 5

Neighborliness as a democratic ethos

Communities are made up of neighbors. Of course, this is not to say that all persons in a community are immediate neighbors. That idea is simultaneously too broad and too restrictive. Neighbors are near to us, but the exact distance where one transitions from acquaintance to neighbor is hard to explicitly define. "Neighbors are not just people living nearby," writes Rosenblum, but are, instead "our environment." This definition tends to lend "neighbor" an amorphous quality, which we'll return to momentarily.[17] In the meantime, it is enough to simply note that neighbors are often proximate persons and that neighbor relations involve both "mutual hospitality" and "a selective invitation to mind one another's business."[18] In other words, neighbors afford each other respect and distance, which guide perfunctory daily encounters. Neighbors may be either transitory or permanent in our local terrain, but, in either case, being a "good neighbor" is both a norm and a practice – we expect a certain level of hospitality and respect, but return it in kind even when it is absent.[19]

In several important respects, neighborliness functions as a "form of democratic excellence."[20] Despite the novelist's tendency to depict neighborliness as a sentimental relationship, its exercise is practical and embodies many of the demands democracy makes.[21] Given

[17] *Good Neighbors*, 2. For our purposes, we are not necessarily interested here in delineating "who" counts as a neighbor. Instead, our interest is in the subjectivity associated with the concept. In later chapters, we will study how American citizens think about neighbors, but our interest is less in the specific boundaries of neighbor relations than it is in how people *imagine* the neighbors in their minds.

[18] Everyday democracy, 3.

[19] Rosenblum describes the concept of "good neighbor" as a regulatory ideal, an idea that riffs on Foucault's notion of something that functions as a norm but is part of a regulatory set of behaviors that it controls.

[20] Everyday democracy, 7

[21] It is worth noting, however, that neighborliness is *not* citizenship. Rosenblum (2016) acknowledges the tendency to flatten neighborliness as an outgrowth of good citizenship, to assume that the former is a quality expressed by the latter. But this is wrong on some level. Neighborliness requires more and less than citizenship. It is not governed by political institutions or legal codes. And citizenship, which implies being bound to the rules of the game may put neighborliness in jeopardy. It may be the case that a good neighbor permits activities that actually contravene the qualities of being a good citizen. A good citizen, for example, might be "required" to report the moonshine still operating on her neighbor's back acreage or an undocumented worker living next door. Neither action may exhibit neighborliness. In our framework, citizenship is effectively endogenous to "support for democracy"; it is, quite literally, an expression of democratic values, and linking good citizenship to it feels like selecting on the dependent variable, as it were.

the precarity of the housing and job markets, for example, people often cannot control who their neighbors are. That lack of control positions the neighbor at the mercy of others. Likewise, individual partisans have little control over prevailing political conditions; they may vote for one party in many elections but experience local, one-party control their entire adult lives. Yet, underlying commitments to the practice of neighborliness ostensibly buoy the expectations that people have for fair treatment irrespective of their politics.[22]

While neighbors may give and take offense, they presumably abide by mutual norms that sustain their personal wellbeing, which, in turn, protects the health of the wider community against the spillage of personal grievances. Further, if "the stuff of a civilization consists largely of its substantive norms,"[23] then neighborliness softens the competitive, individualistic ethos that gives democracy its allure. Individualism is deeply rooted in the American psyche, yet no man is an island. Not only does neighborliness permit the sort of (para)social fraternization that is conducive to preserving pluralism, but it counterbalances freedom in the extreme by encouraging social contact.

According to Rosenblum's work, there are several elements that comprise neighborliness, or the "democracy of everyday life" – the form of social exchange necessary to successfully build a democratic culture. Chief among this is the governing normative commitment to reciprocity, which encourages engaging with people whose categorical attributes differ from their own. Reciprocity ignores "the rules of social hierarchy, rank, class, kinship, or sectarianism" that permeate other relationships. To be a good neighbor is to simply return, in kind, the sort of treatment that sustains peaceable interactions; it is, in some sense, a form of anti-prejudice.

This commitment is worked out in several cases, like when neighbors "live and let live." The ideal of live and let live means that there may be occasions where people exhibit self-discipline and allow differences or slights to occur without consequence because they are interested in the preservation of a status quo. But when neighbors recognize behavior or outcomes that cannot stand because they are indecent or unbecoming, they may display restraint or speak out. Both incorporate

[22] In part, this is why the period from 2016 to 2020 was jarring to many citizens. American politics has rarely performed well on meeting public demands for greater inclusion or respect for rights, but democratic deficits were on display in ways that were previously less clear to casual observers of politics. Davis, Nicholas T., Keith Gaddie, and Kirby Goidel. *Democracy's Meanings: How the Public Understands Democracy and Why It Matters*. University of Michigan Press.
[23] Robert C. Ellickson, *Order without Law: How Neighbors Settle Disputes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), vol 2, p. xxi.

a form of deliberate self-governance that is grounded in the commitment to great others as anyone would like to be treated. That restraint is the essence of what makes democracy possible, and it is the spirit that prevents citizens from attempting to override the rights of others via the politics of exclusion.

Social prejudice as anti-neighborliness

Neighborliness is clearly important for social cohesion and, in turn, the practice of democracy. But who is one's neighbor? And what are the implications of *a lack* of neighborliness?

To start, these are not chance encounters. Neighbors are "known." Of course, knowing one's neighbors involves proximity. The phrase next-door neighbor literally invokes the idea that a "neighbor" is physically close. Yet, location is not a sufficient condition to establish precisely who "counts" as one's neighbor. Commonly, people use different scales of distance to describe someone as neighbor, ranging from the house next door to several streets away. Instead, someone is a neighbor largely "because we assign them standing in our personal, social, or sacred geography."[24]

This geographic terrain emerges from both physical boundaries and our own perceptions, which combine to form "a map of our lay of the land."[25] One's neighborhood is an imagined geographical space. It is mediated through individual experiences, and physical boundaries are only modestly helpful in orienting these spaces because people's levels of abstraction do not always attend to nice, clear, bright lines – things like streets, school zones, or census tracts. These matter, to be sure, but the immediate "neighborhood" is often a territory of our own (arbitrary) making.[26]

Neighbors are a part of community and, despite our "imagined communities," their physical presence means that they offer both opportunity for managing uncertainty and introduce threat. In the first case, neighbors provide some casual security and maintenance of the status quo to which we are committed. But in the second case, *new* neighbors may be threatening to the traditional way of doing things. Neighbors are not some abstract, immaterial, or experimental

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[24] *Good Neighbors*, 32. That relationship, however, need not encompass friendship. Rosenblum argues that, "[n]eighbors do not just fall short of friendship. Even good neighbors are not almost-friends. Neighbor relations are not weak friendships. The relation is fundamentally different." That distinction matters in the sense that neighborliness does is at once more basic and delicate. People know neighbors superficially, yet the casual nature of these relationships belies their higher stakes – the wrong word or action, and serious interpersonal strain may result.

[25] Everyday Democracy, 28

[26] Everyday Democracy, 34

threat. They are real, concrete beings who may enrich our experiences or strive against our material or existential wellbeing.

How people think about their neighbors – or, say, the prospect of news ones – provides an important window into their commitments to the democracy of everyday life. While benign forms of solidarity and in-group affinity are perhaps justifiable grounds for wanting to live next to neighbors who share in common customs, the explicit and active exclusion of persons from certain racial, ethnic, or religious out-groups as neighbors is a problem. To reduce someone categorically as an "other" is to denounce a central tenet of neighborliness, to renege on the principles of the democracy of everyday life that encourage people to forgo viewing the world through such sectarian lenses. Such anti-neighborliness, then, is itself a form of social prejudice that undercuts the regulatory ideals of democratic practice.

This idea that anti-neighborliness is evidence of social prejudice draws on several decades worth of psychological research. Definitions of prejudice generally share the view that it involves unjustified, negative feelings toward others based on their membership in a minority group.[27] These views are not accidental, but involve controlled, conscious, and hostile evaluations.[28]

On this final point, there is a great deal of agreement among scholars that prejudice is not ephemeral but constitutes an "attitude." In other words, prejudice may dwell within the unseen lands of the psyche, but it can nevertheless be observed and, critically, measured.[29] According to

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[27] Allport, Gordon. 1954. *On the Nature of Prejudice*, p. 10. Jones, J.M. (1972) Prejudice and Racism. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley pg. 61. Stephan, W.G. (1983). Intergroup relations. In D. Perlman & P. Cozby (Eds), Social Psychology (pp. 414- 441). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 417. Levin, Jack and William C. Levin. 1982. *The Functions of Discrimination and Prejudice*. Harper and Row, pg. 66. In his foundational, midcentury work, social psychologist Gordon Allport described prejudice in simple terms as "an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole or toward an individual because he is a member of that group." In *Prejudice and Racism*, psychologist James Jones takes a similarly broad view, defining prejudice "an unjustified negative attitude towards an individual based solely on that individual's membership in a group." But while these feelings involve any "members of socially defined groups," they often involve a person belonging to a "minority group."

[28] Brown, R. (1995). Prejudice: Its Social Psychology. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. Pg. 8

[29] In part, the hidden nature of prejudice and the demands of polite society are why scholars have shown such recent interest in "implicit" prejudice (sometimes called "unconscious bias"). For a discussion about why implicit prejudice is a thorny concept mired in theoretical debate and practical relevance, see: Mitchell, Gregory, and Philip E. Tetlock. 2017. "Popularity as a poor proxy for utility: The case of implicit prejudice." In Lilienfeld, Scott O. and Irwin D. Waldman (Eds.), *Psychological science under scrutiny: Recent challenges and proposed solutions*, 164-195.

classic works in social psychology, attitudes are multifaceted, and they presumably encompass several different features: (1) beliefs about some object, or what we might describe as a cognitive or deliberative dimension, (2) feelings toward an object that lie outside of the bounds of strict or considered reflection, what we often describe as emotional or "affective" reactions, and (3) tendencies or behavioral dispositions toward the object in question, which are conceptualized as intentions, efforts, or behavioral responses.[30] Thus, someone might perceive that neighbors from an outside group will compete against their interests, and react in fear or anger at the thought of having to rub shoulders with them. This person might then respond by attempting to block "those people" from residing in their shared social spaces.

If prejudice involves negative reactions to persons belonging to (minority) social out-groups, then such attitudes are bad because they are faulty or incorrect – without, as social psychologist Gordon Allport put it, "sufficient warrant." Others describe it in plainer terms. David Milner described prejudice as an "unjust" attitude,[31] while Arnold Rose's early research proposed that it "justifies discrimination."[32] In each of these cases, prejudice is problematic because it violates normative ideals involving reciprocity – a key feature at the heart of neighborliness. If there are social standards that people ought to follow but do not for reasons involving immutable features or stereotypes, then violating those obligations by engaging in discrimination is fundamentally wrong.[33]

The reasons that people exhibit such prejudice are multiple, but, across the various intergroup explanations of social behavior, two forces play prominent roles. First, when people understand that they belong to a social group and are sensitive to its goals, they tend to act on behalf of it.[34] However, in the case of dominant group identities, these attachments can often lay remotely

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[30] Duckitt, John H. 1992. *The social psychology of prejudice* (New York: Praeger), 14-15. Brewer, Marilynn B., and Roderick M. Kramer. 1985. "The psychology of intergroup attitudes and behavior." *Annual review of psychology,* 36(1), 219-243

[31] Milner, David. 1983. *Children and race: Ten years on,* (London: Ward Lock Educational), 9.

[32] Rose, Arnold. 1958 [1951]. *The Roots of Prejudice, fifth edition*, (Paris, France: Unesco), 5.

[33] Harding, John, Harold Proshansky, Bernard Kutner, and Isidor Chein1969. "Prejudice and ethnic relations." In G. Lindzey & E. Aronson (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology*, (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley), 5.

[34] Tajfel, Henri and John C. Turner. 1979. "An integrative theory of intergroup conflict." In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations*, 33–48. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole. Tajfel, Henri. 1982. "Social psychology of intergroup relations." *Annual review of psychology*, 33(1), 1-39. Simon, Bernd. 2008. *Identity in modern society: A social psychological perspective*. John Wiley & Sons, 2008. Oakes, Penelope J., John C. Turner, and S. Alexander Haslam. 1991. "Perceiving people as group members: The role of fit in the salience of social

beneath the surface. White Americans do not have be particularly fond of their whiteness to still benefit from it, which can render the identity more or less normative in the development of their expectations.[35] In other words, people can come to expect certain experiences will occur in predicted ways despite not actively expressing a preference for their whiteness; they benefit from identities that are associated with the status quo at the macro-level (society-wide) in ways that can be worked out at the individual level.

Second, people are quite good at categorizing who belongs to their in-group and who does not. That process of differentiation frequently happens almost automatically, and it, too, can have subtle or explicit consequences depending on whether an in-group involves a majority identity.[36] Categorizing someone as an in-group or out-group member may be associated with different levels of threat on the basis of the viewer's identity. Prejudice, in turn, can occur when group memberships are used to efficiently parse people into in-groups (good) and out-groups (bad). In white suburbs, for example, immigrant or Black neighbors may draw concerned pearl-clutching from white residents who might otherwise claim they do not have a racist bone in their body.

The motivations behind these processes are often split into different explanations involving both material and psychological considerations.[37] Realistic interest approaches, for example, suggest that tensions between groups motivate people to think of outcomes; individuals tend to engage in discrimination when they perceive that their group stands to lose something should another group succeed.[38] In the case of the Jim Crow South, white Americans, like their forebears, did not want to share educational, social, or political resources with Black Americans. The 1900 Census, for example, found that almost two-thirds of Mississippians were Black.[39] What would

categorizations." *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 30(2), 125-144. Group salience matters for these processes; that is, how readily available an identity is to a person will shape the extent to which they will evaluate objects through the lens of that identity.

[35] Jardina, Ashley. 2019. *White Identity Politics.* Cambridge University Press.

[36] Turner, John C., Michael A. Hogg, Penelope J. Oakes, Stephen D. Reicher, and Margaret S. Wetherell. 1987. *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. Basil Blackwell.

[37] Jackson, J. W. 1993. Realistic group conflict theory: A review and evaluation of the theoretical and empirical literature. *The Psychological Record*, *43*(3), 395.

[38] Esses, Victoria M., John F. Dovidio, Henry A. Danso, Lynne M. Jackson, and Antoinette Semenya. 2005. "Historical and modern perspectives on group competition." In *Social psychology of prejudice: historical and contemporary issues*, (eds.) Christian S. Crandall, Mark Schaller. Lewinian Press

[39] See: 1900 Census. Retrieved from: https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/33405927v1ch09.pdf

equal treatment have meant for white Americans living in the Magnolia State? Certainly a loosening of their grasp on political power.

In contrast, symbolic frameworks convey that prejudice is motivated by positive distinctiveness[40] – that is, people hold their in-group in high emotional regard, often at the expense of an out-group (a process that involves out-group discrimination).[41]

While the intergroup relations literature is prodigious and social-psychological theories about the motivations of discrimination numerous, our operating approach here casts a wide net with regards to the general form that social prejudice can take. Social prejudice involves exclusionary and discriminatory attitudes toward others and functions as a parent construct under which racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination fit. Each one of those prejudices draws from similar wells within the intergroup conflict literature involving threat.[42] For example, whites' racism toward Blacks can occur when they perceive threats to their self-image, values and beliefs, or resources.[43] Likewise, nativism is grounded in the conflict between "native" citizens and outsiders.[44] When non-natives are perceived to threaten predominating cultural norms or economic wellbeing, prejudice results.[45] Finally, while it is possible that "love they neighbor" messages might increase sympathy for religious out-groups, "…religious intergroup relations are no different from

[40] Kinder, Donald R., and David O. Sears. 1981. "Prejudice and politics: Symbolic racism versus racial threats to the good life." *Journal of personality and social psychology,* 40(3), 414.
[41] Huddy, Leonie, and Alexa Bankert. 2017. "Political partisanship as a social identity." In *Oxford research encyclopedia of politics*. Retrieved from: https://oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-250
[42] We do not mean to flatten how, say, racism and nativism differ. Instead, our goal here is to simply acknowledge that there are some common motivational sources to prejudice that cut across specific expressions of it. This allows us to eventually categorize people as "socially-prejudiced" if they select at least one out-group category from our menu of potential neighbors for whom they reject as a potential next-door neighbor.
[43] Riek, Blake M., Eric W. Mania, and Samuel L. Gaertner. 2006. "Intergroup threat and outgroup attitudes: A meta-analytic review." *Personality and social psychology review* 10(4), 336-353.
[44] Larsen, Knud S., Krum Krumov, Hao Van Le, Reidar Ommundsen, and Kees van der Veer. 2009. "Threat perception and attitudes toward documented and undocumented immigrants in the United States: Framing the debate and conflict resolution." European Journal of Social Sciences, 7(4), 115-134.
[45] Zárate, Michael A., Berenice Garcia, Azenett A. Garza, and Robert T. Hitlan. 2004. "Cultural threat and perceived realistic group conflict as dual predictors of prejudice." *Journal of experimental social psychology* 40(1), 99-105.

any other form of intergroup relation."[46] In other words, the prejudice that surfaces when traditional religious norms are threatened by newly salient or different religious traditions appears similar to other racial and ethnic ones. In each of these cases, tensions over group distinctiveness and material resources abound, which can encourage tendencies to promote the wellbeing of in-groups as the expense of out-groups.

Conceptualizing anti-neighborliness – the rejection of racial, religious, or ethnic others from living in close contact with oneself – as a form of social prejudice has several practical theoretical benefits. Over the last several decades, the measurement of prejudice has generated enormous debate about the structure and contours of white Americans' attitudes toward out-groups.[47] From symbolic[48] and modern racism[49] to laissez-faire[50] and aversive racism,[51] scholars have devoted significant time and effort to uncovering the shape and motivations of Americans' racial views.[52] Despite being an admirable goal, this research agenda is commonly frustrated by disciplinary silos, terminology, motivations, and goals. Prejudice can seemingly be explained by

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[46] Jackson, Lynne M., and Bruce Hunsberger. 1999. "An intergroup perspective on religion and prejudice." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 509-52.

[47] Kinder, Donald R., and David O. Sears. 1981. "Prejudice and politics: Symbolic racism versus racial threats to the good life." *Journal of personality and social psychology,* 40(3), 414. Sniderman, Paul M., Thomas Piazza, Philip E. Tetlock, and Ann Kendrick. 1991. "The new racism." *American Journal of Political Science*, 423-447. Sidanius, Jim, Felicia Pratto, and Lawrence Bobo. 1996. "Racism, conservatism, affirmative action, and intellectual sophistication: A matter of principled conservatism or group dominance?." *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 70(3), 476. Bobo, Lawrence D. 1999. "Prejudice as group position: Microfoundations of a sociological approach to racism and race relations." *Journal of Social Issues*, 55(3), 445-472. DeSante, Christopher and Candis Watts Smith. 2020. *Racial Stasis.* University of Chicago Press. Carney, Riley K., and Ryan D. Enos. N.d. "Conservatism and fairness in contemporary politics: Unpacking the psychological underpinnings of modern racism." In *NYU CESS Experiments Conference*. 2017.

[48] Kinder, Donald R. and Lynn M. Sanders.1996. *Divided by color: Racial politics and democratic ideals*. University of Chicago Press.

[49] McConahay, John B.1986. "Modern racism, ambivalence, and the Modern Racism Scale." In J. F. Dovidio & S. L. Gaertner (Eds.), *Prejudice, discrimination, and racism*, 91–125). Academic Press

[50] Bobo, Lawrence, James R. Kluegel, and Ryan A. Smith.1997. "Laissez-faire racism: The crystallization of a kinder, gentler, antiblack ideology." *Racial attitudes in the 1990s: Continuity and change*.

[51] Dovidio, John F., and Samuel L. Gaertner. 1986. *Prejudice, discrimination, and racism*. Academic Press, 1986.

[52] Davis, Darren W., and David C. Wilson. 2021. *Racial Resentment in the Political Mind*. University of Chicago Press.

both symbolic and material demands, may be inherently logical or "principled," and, perhaps not even about race at all.[53]

We agree that the psychometric properties of attitudes are important and that the empirical properties of them should guide theorizing both their functions and the conclusions drawn about them. That said, our approach here is guided by a different theoretical goal. Our interest is not simply, say, racism or religious discrimination, particularly, but a broader form of social prejudice involved in the concept of neighborliness (or lack thereof) – whether people willingly accept or reject living next to someone from a racial, ethnic, or religious out-group. In a vacuum, there are few reasons why someone should willingly exclude someone from a particular religious or racial group from their immediate social space. There are certainly rational reasons of solidarity involved in wanting to live next to one's kin. And social structures may conspire to sort and reproduce racial homophily.[54] But, at the individual-level, attitudes involving the exclusion of out-group neighbors on the basis of immutable characteristics like the color of one's skin or on other social group memberships like religion, clearly constitute a thorny form of social prejudice. In our view, thinking about these attitudes as a form of social prejudice not only also sidestep some of the controversy regarding the peculiarities of longstanding measurement protocols of various forms of, say, racial bias, but has clear application to democracy. To borrow from a well-trodden religious aphorism about cleanliness and godliness, if neighborliness lies close to democratic-ness, then prejudice sullies both.

Not my neighbor – How neighborly exclusion undercuts democratic support

To sketch out a theory for how the rejection of neighborly goodwill constitutes a disturbing form of social prejudice and, critically, motivates a rebuke of democracy, we return to the relationship between community and democracy. The journalism professor Lewis Friedland writes plainly that "[f]]or democracy to work, community is necessary."[55] Democracy is not just a system in which election are held, but requires, on some level, a democratic culture that both values deliberative debate and promotes inclusive participation. Such conditions are never totally fulfilled, which of course lends idealistic quality to those features. In fact, "strong" depictions of democracy probably

[53] Lerner, Melvin J. 1980. *The Belief in a Just World*. Springer.
[54] Sampson, Robert J., and Patrick Sharkey. 2008. "Neighborhood selection and the social reproduction of concentrated racial inequality." *Demography*, 45(1), 1-29.
[55] Friedland, Lewis A. 2001. "Communication, community, and democracy: Toward a theory of the communicatively integrated community." Communication research, 28(4), 358.

fail on the merits of the evidence that citizens are often too busy to vote, rarely engage in meaningful exchange, and know only a modest deal about the workings of politics.[56] But the unfulfillment of these demands is less important than the underlying cultural commitments to live out such democratic values.

Despite the view of community as the ethereal social dimension to neighbor interactions, communities are also physical. While it is true that the "tightly bounded, well-integrated community that we associate with the rural village, the city neighborhood, and even the suburb no longer correspond to a social structure characterized by more complex patterns of mobility and migration" people nevertheless live somewhere.[57] And despite economic, cultural, and technological upheaval, the physical community is where much of citizens' social experiences and, by extension, experiences with democracy unfold.[58] Sometimes, the experiences in community are positive, like the shopkeeper looking out for a child on her way home from the bus stop. But other times community interactions are hostile, such as when residents slow integration or block outsiders from settling. In that case, discrimination often prevents individuals from entering in and enjoying the benefits of community; it prevents others from entering into sacred social spaces. When communities exclude others based on categorical features like race, ethnicity, or religion, the disregard for commitments to democratic values are revealed. That social prejudice – embodied in anti-neighborliness – threatens the commitments to pluralism that are necessary for democracy to work.

The introduction to this book raised numerous examples of this sort of anti-neighbor rhetoric popularized by right-leaning pundits. But such social prejudice spills over throughout American history. From the panics over Chinese immigrants looking for work in the 19th Century, allegations of dangerous, racialized "no-go" zones in cities where whites are unwelcome, and to Islamophobia linking humble religious faith to terrorism, politicians often connect community and democracy to the language of social prejudice when they use discriminatory language to talk about the pressing threat of outsiders. "Why do we want all these people from 'shithole countries' coming here?" former president Donald Trump was alleged to have remarked in 2018. In his view, those people were "invading" the country and threatening American communities. This stereotyping

[56] Habermas, Jürgen. 1962 (1989). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Translated by Thomas Berger. Cambridge
[57] (Friedland 2001, 364),
[58] Castells, Manuel. "The information age: Economy, society and culture (3 volumes)." Blackwell, Oxford 1997 (1996): 1998

fixates on the ascriptive characteristics of the immigrant, which functions as a rebuke to neighborliness and, critically, "builds walls" –both literally and metaphorically. Instead of a higher road marked by a commitment to neighborliness, "[t]here is no learning. No accommodation. No appreciation of shared reality. No imagination or empathy."[59] If neighboring is the foundation of social cohesion, then such social prejudice is the antithesis of it.[60]

These ideas about the importance of neighborliness to democracy bring us to the following set of expectations. Despite their peculiarities, group conflict theory cuts across racial, ethnic, and religious forms of prejudice. Whether nativism, religious discrimination, or racism, prejudice involves categorizing people into groups via harmful stereotypes that are then essentialized. That is, group characteristics are imputed upon individuals when making judgments about them. When that process occurs, group features are assigned to individuals in ways that are unfair and unjust; convenient distinctions transition from being descriptive to prescriptive.[61]

In the case of (some) white Americans, "whiteness" may function as a powerful form of social identity, which involves the incorporation of a group membership into the self-concept.[62] Drawing from social identity theory, this process involves viewing an identity group's goals as central to the psychological wellbeing of the individual – a feeling of solidarity with the plight of one's group members.[63] When individuals exhibit racist, xenophobic, or religiously discriminatory beliefs, they construct distinctions between in- and out-group members. They demarcate who is the acceptable member of a community and who is the apostate. Social prejudice strips away the neighborliness that underwrites democratic exchange by blocking people from community. Thus, if rejecting out-group, minority neighbors on the basis of their ascriptive features makes a mockery of democratic culture, then individuals who desire to prevent persons from social out-groups from becoming their neighbors should be more likely to exhibit weaker commitments to democracy. Democracy extends access to such people, inviting them into the political community. Social prejudice, in turn, should undercut support for such a system.

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[59] (Rosenblum 2016, 126)
[60] Forrest, Ray, and Ade Kearns. 2001. "Social cohesion, social capital and the neighbourhood." Urban studies, 38(12), 2125-2143
[61] Roberts, Steven O., and Michael T. Rizzo. 2021."The psychology of American racism." *American Psychologist*, 76(3), 475
[62] Jardina, Ashley. White identity politics. 2019. Cambridge University Press.
[63] Turner, John C., Michael A. Hogg, Penelope J. Oakes, Stephen D. Reicher, and Margaret S. Wetherell. 1987. *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. Basil Blackwell.

Summary

This chapter began by outline the importance of community to the study of democracy and how scholars embed the dynamics of interpersonal relationships within them. We then discussed the nature of neighborliness and how social prejudice is lethal to it. We concluded by linking these dynamics to democracy. If the concept of "good neighbor" is essential to democracy, then the prejudicial anti-neighbor should be unwilling to engage in or exhibit commitments to plural, liberal democracy because it empowers "those people." Prejudice is a cancerous boil on the underbelly of democracy.

To be clear, however, neighborliness is not a sufficient condition for the practice of good democracy, but it is a necessary one. Where neighborliness fails, democratic citizenship is unlikely to follow. Indeed, examples of this tendency are found throughout American history. The period of herrenvolk democracy in the American South that predominated after the failure of the first reconstruction illustrates how social prejudice and a rejection of racial "others" conspire together to rebuke the promises of democracy. The Jim Crow era is one characterized by harmful exclusion of neighbors from the full benefits of the democratic community. Yet, even today, the niceties and social norms that make democracy attractive can be leveraged in exclusionary ways by socially prejudiced people to undercut democracy.[64]

To put a finer point on it, people do not engage in an *empty* neighborliness. Our identities, political affinities, and religious values inevitably color how we view the world around us. When people allow their prejudices to overwhelm the principles of neighborliness, the rejection of others grounded in ascriptive characteristics threatens commitments to the democratic community. In the next chapter, we review three such cases where racism, nativism, and religious discrimination not only lead to *social* suffering, but grave abuses to the ethos and promises of democracy itself. We then pivot to the study of public opinion and what it can tell us about the relationship between this social prejudice and democracy.

[64] White, Mark H., Christian S. Crandall, and Nicholas T. Davis. 2021. "Vicarious Justifications for Prejudice in the Application of Democratic Values." *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, doi: 19485506211040700.