

Sejong Policy Brief



THE SEJONG INSTITUTE

No. 2021-5 (3. 22, 2021)

Executive Summary

Trumpism and the crisis of American democracy



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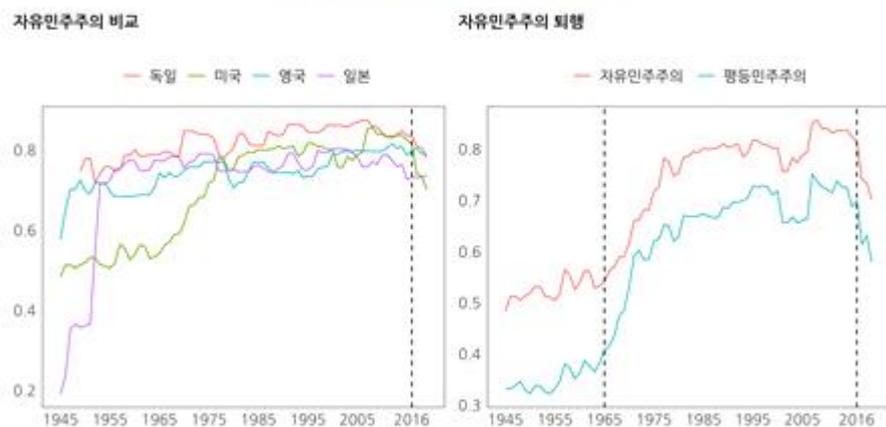
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*This article is written based on the author's personal opinions
and does not reflect the views of the Sejong Institute.*

Executive Summary

- On January 6, 2021, extreme supporters of Trump broke into the U.S. Congress and seriously threatened liberal democracy of the United States, evoking the fact that Trumpism is not a transient but a structural problem.
- Trumpism:
 - First, based on racial nationalism, it defines political opposition as an enemy who cannot coexist.
 - Second, it denies the election and the democratic process and procedures and threatens democracy.
 - Third, it appeals to the losers of free trade and globalization through MAGA and racial hostility and establishes hostile politics.
- Despite the unprecedented two impeachment charges against the president, Trump clearly intends to run again in 2024. It is necessary to discuss this by coexisting as a threat to American democracy.

그림 1: 미국민주주의의 추락 1945-2019



자료: 'V-Dem (Country-Year/Country-Date) Dataset v10',
Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project. <https://doi.org/10.23696/vdemds20>.

■ Background

- Trumpism is the compound effect of three races, cultural and religious conflicts inherent in American history. Wilson's racist nationalism is a tradition that

Trumpism has been able to appeal to white Americans (Abramowitz 2018; Katzenstein 2019).

- According to registered voters, 53% of whites show a sense of unity in the Republican Party and 42% of whites show a sense of unity in the Democratic Party. Among black Americans and Hispanic Americans, 83% and 63%, respectively, have a sense of unity with the Democratic Party (Pew Research Center 2020).
- The union of conservative religion and the Republican Party. Since the ruling of abortion in 1980, after Reagan was elected, conservative religions have encouraged evangelicals to participate in society and have been active in opposing ethical issues such as homosexuality.
- In terms of the unity of white evangelical parties, the ratio of Republican and Democratic parties is 78% to 17%. For white non-evangelicals, the ratio of Republican to Democratic unity is 54% to 39% (Pew Research Center 2020).
- Right-wing Christian forces such as the Tea Party Movement influence the Republican primary with low participation rates and reject candidates who do not conform to conservative religious principles.
- Failed to resolve racial issues after the civil war. Republican Reconstruction Policy failed In 1876 and the northern "occupation force" withdrew from the southern part of the country, and the southern part of the country remained as a single Democratic party until the 1960s civil rights movement.

■ Recent events

- Economic inequality worsened during the Great Recession of 2008, creating an environment of political inequality again.
- Trump's right-wing populism is a presidential election strategy that uses the social enemies of economically and socially angry whites.

- Trump could not exist without Obama. The Republican Party aroused racial antagonism among the white working and middle class since the first black president appeared in 2008.
- After Obama's appearance, white people perceive that black people are "stealing" the white seat and threatening the status of white people. White people are blaming the Affirmative Action that allowed Obama to graduate from Harvard University.
- After the defeat of the 2020 presidential election, an unprecedented situation occurred, in which Trump supporters believed that the election was unfair and broke into the Capitol on January 6, 2021.

■ Two models of democracy

- In a democracy, the system that connects the political elite with the general public is a periodic election, and citizens can reappoint or remove the ruling party and the government in the election.
- Retrospective voting is conducted by voters based on the results of the government's policies during the administration. Voters evaluate the administration by looking at the changes in the country's economy and individual economy a year before the election.

※ Translator's note: This is a third party's unofficial translation of the original paper which was written in Korean. All references should be made to the original paper.