

Tribal Hostility in Political Conflict

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Tribalism is assumed to be an innate tendency to align oneself with others, often to square off against an outgroup. It is not limited to humankind. Other apes, particularly chimpanzees, have been observed to live in small social groups with hostile suspicion toward other groups — sometimes leading to lethal physical violence against them (e.g., Glowacki, in press). Intergroup conflict predates human evolution — unlike, perhaps, intergroup peace, which is largely an achievement of human culture (Glowacki, in press). It is no doubt an oversimplification but also broadly fair to say that war is natural and peace is cultural. Tribes naturally come into conflict and only with advanced culture can they be brought into cooperative harmony.

In this chapter, I focus on modern political conflict, particularly in the United States but also elsewhere. The analysis is particularly relevant to modern democracies in industrialized countries, thus what has been termed the “WEIRD” countries that have been able to offer their citizens exceptionally high quantities and qualities of life. In many of these, one sees ongoing political competition between the so-called left and right. Alternation in power between center-left and center-right political parties is the rule rather than the exception. This chapter focuses mainly on tribal conflict between leftist and rightist political parties.

The core argument is that societies succeed at sustaining and increasing life by doing two main things: amassing resources and distributing them through the group. Hunter-gatherers, who occupied most of human history, lived in groups in which nearly all adults participated in both tasks. In the modern world, however, they have grown apart. The gradual estrangement between those who focus on creating, storing, and protecting resources, and those who focus on redistributing them, has reduced mutual understanding and sympathy. Tribalism replaces cooperation, leading to the much discussed increase in political hostility (Baumeister & Bushman, 2023).

I should point out that most politically active people will immediately reject this analysis. Most people are strongly partisan, and they tend to think their opponents are some mixture of stupid and evil, or at least unscrupulously selfish. My analysis seeks to understand both sides in a positive fashion — as a foundation for analyzing why their mutual hostility and conflict are intensifying.

Essence of Tribalism

Tribalism is a matter of loyalty to one’s ingroup, including favoring one’s ingroup over members of other groups. Often it extends to suspicion, dislike, hostility, and even aggression toward outgroups, particularly those seen as potential rivals. Tribalism was probably an adaptive attitude back in the early millennia of human evolution. People lived in small groups and needed to cooperate with each other. Members of other groups were often dangerous, both in terms of lethally violent attack, and in terms of possibly carrying germs for diseases against which one’s ingroup lacked immunity.

The cultural history of morality accentuates the danger of outgroups and hence reinforces the tribal impulse. Morality emerged to support cooperation, a behavior pattern in which humans engage far more than other animals. Haidt (20xx) has called the human species “the world champions of cooperation,” given how much humans cooperate, including with non-kin (and how little other animals do). But this cooperation occurred mainly within the ingroup. In parallel, morality mainly regulated interpersonal relations within the ingroup. It did not apply to outsiders. The moral traits were ones that would improve cooperation in the group, which would enable the people in the system to create more resources. In contrast, the basic notions of *universal* morality, such as that one has a moral duty to be fair and non-harmful to members of other tribes, did not emerge until civilization was fairly advanced. The Biblical parable of the “good Samaritan” is an early assertion that virtue includes good treatment of members of other groups — and its inclusion in scripture suggests that this may have been a fairly new and radical idea at the time. In any case, various writers have made the point that early moral rules applied specifically within the group and were not extended to outsiders (e.g., Sapolsky, 2017).

As an example, the Comanches, who built the last great indigenous empire in the Western hemisphere, lived in small groups that roamed widely among sparsely populated lands in the center of North America. Periodically a group of natives would encounter another group. If the other group was also Comanches, they might have a sort of party for a few days, exchange some goods and information, perhaps arrange a few marriages. In contrast, if the other group was Apaches, there was no party. Instead, the standard procedure was to engage in violent confrontation: kill the men, rape or abduct the women, enslave or massacre the children, steal the property. Any or all of the above.

Slavery captures some of this tribal difference in morality. In my experience, many people talk confidently about slavery, typically as a supreme evil, but they are largely ignorant of its history. Slavery was in fact at first a positive step in moral progress, and one generally welcome to the slaves themselves. It originated as a substitute for being killed in war. Patterson (1987) analyzed slavery as a kind of social death as substitute for physical death: The slave is permitted to remain alive but sacrifices social standing, including rights and privileges and respect formerly enjoyed. The positive step is evident by contrast with what came before it. Hunter-gatherer tribes did not have facilities for holding prisoners of war. Therefore, if a man surrendered on the battlefield, he most likely could expect to be taken back to the victors’ campsite and then, over the next few days, tortured to death for the entertainment of the tribe. Being allowed to live on as a slave was an appealing alternative option.

Tribalism may seem obsolete in the modern world of integrated, diverse, multicultural societies, but the psychological tendencies are still there. Some of the most compelling evidence comes from the minimal group studies by Tajfel, Brewer, and others back in the 1970s. The research goal was to ascertain precisely why people showed ingroup favoritism. The plan was to start by forming groups that were so trivial that there would not be any ingroup favoritism, and then add various features (e.g., common goals, shared values, interdependency) to see what caused the favoritism to emerge. But the plan could not get to the starting point. No matter how seemingly trivial the basis was for defining ingroups and outgroups, people always showed some favoritism toward their ingroup.

A remarkable conclusion emerged from a detailed survey of all sorts of societies, from bugs to human nations (Moffett, 2019). Like living organisms, societies generally main strict

boundaries between who belongs and who does not. Even modern societies with high levels of immigration maintain precise definitions and so there is no ambiguity as to who is a citizen, who is merely a legal resident, and who is a foreigner — definitions that remain unchanged regardless of where the person is at that moment. More to the point, there is always an outside. Ingroups form in contrast to outgroups. There is no “us” without “them.” Moffett documents several cases such as groups stranded by shipwreck on uninhabited islands. Initially the group was a unity, but in the course of time it would inevitably split into opposing factions.

Although I do not have proof, anecdotal impressions suggest that the inevitable duality of social groups continues to be true in the modern world — and the loss of the “them” can foster divisions among the “us.” I grew up during the Cold War, and Americans had a sense of unity in opposition to the Soviet Union. This was sustained by the knowledge that the two nations maintained huge arsenals of nuclear weapons aimed at each other, capable of utterly destroying each other (and much of the surrounding world to boot). When the Soviet empire abruptly collapsed in 1989, the USA found itself as the world’s foremost power, with no serious outside enemies. The following decade saw a sharp rise in internal divisions, such as racial conflict. This subsided briefly after the terrorist attacks in 2001, but in general the period of American dominance in the world has coincided with rising internal conflicts. If no “them” threatens “us,” then we split into competing groups, as Moffett (2019) suggested is the general pattern everywhere.

That brings us to modern tribalism. My focus will be not on racial or ethnic groups but rather on political ones. (It is actually plausible that it’s precisely because Americans have pushed hard to prevent tribalistic patterns based on race and gender — though some such tribes are approved and continue to exist, such as feminists — that the tribalistic impulse gets channeled all the more into political tribes.)

Cultural Animal Theory of Society

The foundation of my thinking, first articulated in *The Cultural Animal: Human Nature, Meaning, and Social Life* (Baumeister, 2005), is that the human mind and psyche were shaped by nature for culture. That is, our species evolved to use culture as its primary means of improving survival and reproduction. The human psyche is basically designed to be together with others in an advanced social system including shared understanding. My reading of the evolutionary literature emphasizes communication and cooperation as two main spheres in which humans far surpass the other great apes and indeed all other living things. Culture is a giant system based on communication and fostering cooperation. The human essence — that is, the traits that define our humanity and separate us from all other animals, including our closest biological relatives in the great apes — arises from biological adaptations to make culture possible and to enable individuals to flourish by participating in it.

Language is one obvious example. All known human cultures and societies have language. Languages are held in common by the group. And linguists broadly agree that although many species of animals have rudimentary communication, none enjoys anything that qualifies as a genuine language. Language required multiple biological adaptations, including moving the vocal cords and improving them so as to produce distinct sounds, improving hearing so as to be able to distinguish similar-sounding words, making the brain capable of

understanding grammar, and so forth. Language is a powerful tool for sharing information, which is an important foundation of culture. All known human cultures have language.

Why exactly did culture become our biological strategy for solving the eternal problems of survival and reproduction? It must be doing something right. Pushing this line of argument, it seems that whatever else culture does, its adaptive power rests heavily on two achievements, and these explain why human societies that embraced culture thrived better than their rivals. First, it must produce more resources than individuals could produce operating alone. (And the more, the better, in general.) Second, the resources must be distributed through the group, benefiting the majority. The biological test of success is whether the population increases. That requires resources: food, water, shelter, safety, support for bearing and raising children. In a successful society, people cooperate to create those things, and they are shared widely enough so that the population is sustained and, ideally, increases.

There are always complications, of course. Some hunter-gatherer groups lived near the carrying capacity of their environment, so they could not let their population increase. Other groups could increase but had to split up when the group became too large, so that some moved off into unoccupied land. As is well known, agriculture vastly increased the carrying capacity, and so populations increased. With agriculture came the possibility of storing food, which also became important in non-tropical climates, especially the ones with serious winters that limited the food supply.

Moreover, although the hunter-gatherers were very egalitarian, equal sharing of resources is not necessary. The biological test is whether the population sustains and increases. That does not even mean that everyone has to get enough to survive, and certainly not that everyone gets an equal share. Most empires in world history have consisted of a small ruling elite with a military arm, sustained by a large number of farmers whose crops were severely taxed so as to support the elite and the military. The farmers themselves often lived at subsistence level, while the royal and imperial courts lived relatively comfortable and affluent lives (though not by today's standards). But if enough lived and played their roles, the empire would continue and might even thrive.

That required succeeding at the two basic tasks. The society had to amass (produce, store, and protect) resources, and to share them through the group well enough that the population sustained or, preferably, increased.

Modern Political Polarization

The gist of Baumeister and Bushman's (2023) analysis of modern political conflict is that the left and right have grown apart based on differential focus on society's two main tasks. Voters who lean to the right tend to be involved in amassing resources. Those who lean left are more concerned with sharing resources, which usually means redistributing them.

The idea was inspired by considering the voters and policies. Conservatism is found among resource producers. Farmers have traditionally been conservative, as have businesspeople. Bankers store wealth but also help create it by financing business. Military personnel have also leaned to the right. They see their job as protecting resources, though throughout history they also played a central role in acquiring resources by conquering neighboring societies and expropriating their wealth, whether by looting or by establishing a tribute-paying relationship. As for policies, right-leaning governments tend to be business-

friendly. One of the better Republican presidents of the USA famously commented that “the chief business of America is business,” which he went on to say meant producing, buying, selling, investing, and prospering. When the Republicans took over both the presidency and congressional majorities in 2016, with one of their less admired presidents, they quickly set about enacting pro-business reforms such as reducing regulatory burdens, and they were rewarded with an economic prosperity that had eluded the previous administration and flourished until the COVID pandemic.

Meanwhile, the political left has focused on redistribution and attracted votes from those who have little to do with producing resources but much investment in redistribution. The modern left began with the labor movement, which redistributed profits from owners and managers to workers. The welfare state is widely seen as the top achievement of the political left, and its essence is to redistribute wealth (via taxes and government spending) to those in need, ideally from cradle to grave. Affirmative action redistributes opportunities to groups of people who have been unable to create them for themselves. Helping the poor has been a long-standing priority of liberals. As for voting blocs, the modern left draws support from single women, minorities, public-sector unions and government workers, entertainers, and the universities — all groups that rely on redistribution of wealth created elsewhere and that do not produce the basic resources that sustain life. When the Democrats took over the presidency and Congress after the 2020 election, they quickly embarked on ambitious plans for redistributing wealth, including authorizing massive payouts to a wide range of individuals seen as needy and/or deserving.

Remember, it is important for a society to do reasonably well at both tasks in order to succeed. Societies that fail to produce wealth leave everyone poor, possibly excepting a powerful elite class. That has indeed been the traditional fate of communist, socialist, and other leftist governments, from the Soviet Union to North Korea, Cuba, and Venezuela. In contrast, societies that produce resources but let an elite layer of society hog them all while the masses remain destitute also cannot thrive, such as the military dictatorships in South America during the mid to late 20th century, or indeed some of the powerful empires of bygone eras.

Possibly for that reason, most of the world’s most successful and flourishing countries have fairly frequent alternation in power between center-left and center-right governments — or, in systems that permit divided government, they often have the executive branch held by one party while the legislative is held by the other. Such sharing of power does not appear to be a temporary struggle but rather the fairly permanent and stable equilibrium.

Why? Sharing or alternating power ensures that both jobs get done. For a society to thrive, it must succeed at amassing resources and at sharing them. The political left focuses on the latter, the political right on the former, and so in order to succeed at getting both jobs done, it is necessary to alternate or share power.

Why Conflict Has Escalated

There are structural reasons why conflict has escalated. To return briefly to the hunter-gatherers: They too had to produce and share resources. Most people were involved in both tasks, and so they could readily understand the importance of both. The adults had to hunt and gather the food, and no one could be a free rider. And sharing was done in a public fashion, with all involved. (Storing resources was quite difficult for them.)

In the modern world, however, the two tasks have grown apart. Government workers who take in tax money from the private sector and distribute it to qualified individuals do not need to know anything about how the money was made. Conversely, resource producers pay taxes and may resent doing so, especially if it is given away to unproductive people whom they may regard as freeloaders.

The traditional villains exemplify the split. On the left, the villain was the greedy capitalist who profited from the hard work of others and refused to share ill-gotten gains. On the right, the villain was the “welfare queen” or other person who produced nothing but lived a nice life spending money that was earned by others but redistributed by the government. The two cases are not entirely different, because both stigmatize

The capitalistic market economy divides the right and left. The free market has created resources far beyond what hunter-gatherer groups could dream of. Works of economic history confirm that cities and states that engaged in more business and trade prospered, while those who resisted or stifled the market stayed poor and backward (Acemoglu & Robinson; Bernstein).

A crucial point is that market economies thrive by using incentives. The left is uncomfortable with incentives, because incentives create inequality. Indeed, creating inequality is the very essence of incentives. The left prizes equality. The right, however, accepts that markets can only benefit society if they function freely, which means incentives and inequality.

Acceptance of inequality is one of the most basic and universal differences between the political right and left (Jost). The left’s goal is sharing, and sharing is most perfectly achieved by total equality: Everyone should get the same share of resources. In contrast, the right focuses on producing resources, and incentives and inequality are powerful drivers of such production.

I suspect the left and the right would agree that the ideal is to have a society in which everyone is rich, comfortable and happy. How to achieve such an ideal society remains elusive. The more familiar options are equality in poverty, and affluence amid inequality.

Are Citizens Ever More Polarized?

The widespread impression of escalating partisan hostility might not be entirely accurate. To be sure, it can hardly be entirely wrong. Bipartisan neutrality was once a source of pride in many sectors (such as journalism), but those days are gone. The American political parties themselves have moved away from the center. Half a century ago, there were liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats, and a great many moderates in both parties. Thanks in part to gerrymandering, however, most of them have gone, replaced by more doctrinaire and in some cases more extreme partisans. Congressional speeches have indicated that partisanship among politicians has increased. Although some recent presidents (G.W. Bush, Biden) initially promised to cooperate with the opposition and to unite the country, a campaign strategy that does seem to appeal to many voters, once in office they soon abandoned any pretext of bipartisanship and became shamelessly partisan.

However, there are some arguments that the population as a whole has not polarized in terms of its attitudes. The politicians and the media may be more extreme and polarized, but citizens might not be so. Political scientists use the term “affective polarization” (in contrast to attitude polarization) to describe the change: Voters have shifted toward more intense emotional feelings toward parties and candidates, even if they have not really changed much in relation to the issues (Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes, 2012; Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016).

Indeed, partisans on the left and right may share more values than they realize (and this lack of mutual understanding may be getting worse in the modern world, for multiple reasons). Baumeister and Bushman (2023) noted that most modern Americans, across the political spectrum, agree that the government should help people who suffer misfortunes through no fault of their own and become temporarily unable to provide for themselves. They also tend to agree that the government should not support lazy freeloaders who contribute nothing to society and seek to live comfortably supported by the hard work of others. Their disagreement is thus less about basic values than about the perceived proportions of each. (Undoubtedly, there are both kinds of people on government support.) The expansion of government-funded health care during the Obama administration was to varying degrees supported by the left and disliked by the right — in substantial part because those on the left viewed the beneficiaries as needy and deserving, whereas those on the right viewed the beneficiaries as less deserving (Choma et al., 2018). In other evidence, partisan differences in support for redistribution could be eliminated experimentally by explicitly portraying the recipients as either faultlessly unfortunate and needy, or as lazy and undeserving (Aarøe and Peterson, 2014).

The intensification of political emotion may be asymmetrical. Finkel et al. (2020) aggregated survey data over the past half century in the United States. Before 1980, people reported fairly strong positive feelings toward their own political party (“in-party love”) and a relatively mild dislike or animosity toward the opposition (“out-party hate”). Over the years, in-party love has remained at about the same level, while out-party hate has steadily increased. In the most recent polls, out-party hate has become significantly stronger than in-party love.

Affective polarization suggests an intriguing form of tribalism at work. If Moffett (2019) and others are correct that there is no “us” without “them,” then the impetus to form tribal bonds may be substantially driven by threats and enemies. If we accept the consensus that American citizens’ policy attitudes have not changed very much but their emotional feelings about the political parties have intensified — leading to greater tribalism — then it does seem that out-party hate is the driving force. (Again, in-party love has not changed, so it cannot account for any increase in tribalism.)

Out-party hate no doubt fosters disparaging and demonizing one’s opponents. Haidt (2012) documented that the political right and left have somewhat different moral values and see the world through their own priorities. They mistakenly think that their opponents are against their moral values. Thus, the modern American left is highly concerned about promoting racial minorities, and so they easily assume and assert that anyone opposed to them must be racists in favor of oppressing those minorities. Conversely, the modern American right is concerned with working in the market to create wealth, and they think their opponents are opposed to free enterprise.

Further Tribal Disagreements

Another moral difference is the emphasis on rights vs. responsibilities. The political left seeks redistribution to promote equality, so they place emphasis on how people should be entitled to receive benefits and resources from the government (who mainly gets them from the productive private sector). Hence the left talks about human rights, and slowly increases their tally. In contrast, the political right focuses on performing one’s role in the economic system, and so it puts more emphasis on responsibilities. Do your duty. Studies on the Big Five

personality traits find that conservatives score higher than liberals on conscientiousness, which is a key trait for making people perform their duties responsibly (Goldberg & Rosolack, 1994). In contrast, liberals and leftists score higher than conservatives on openness to experience, consistent with the leftist emphasis on bringing change.

Attitudes about time are also different (Baumeister & Bushman, 2023). The political left sees the present as seriously flawed and unjustifiable. The past is mainly interesting as the origin of the iniquities and inequities that plague the present. The future, for the leftist, should be very different from the present, insofar as massive redistribution can usher in a new age of fairness and equality. In contrast, the conservatives see the present as generally working well. They do not reject all change but see the future as fairly similar to the present, with only incremental improvements. The past, to the conservatives, is where the current system was laboriously fashioned. They have a keener sense that the past involved long and difficult struggles to create a good system and are hence skeptical of radical change.

Indeed, the future of humankind itself is seen differently. Sowell (2007) elucidated greater optimism among leftists as to how much human nature itself can be improved. They aim for a more perfect society and believe that improving the beliefs and values of individuals is a viable and important step toward making that happen. (The re-education camps and campaigns in the Soviet Union and Communist China are an extreme example of how leftist governments have sought to improve the minds of individuals toward what they deemed best suited to the perfect society.) In contrast, the conservatives have a greater tendency to assume that people must be taken as they are. They are focused on working to produce resources in the present, and so they think they cannot afford to indulge in fantasies about perfecting human beings, instead must work with them, faults and all.

Baumeister and Bushman (2023) noted that both sides can point to some historical facts to support their position on the malleability and perfectability of human psychology. The rise in tolerance for homosexuality is a major recent change in attitudes across the population that has made life better for a great many people. Meanwhile, the Communist regimes of the 20th century were unable to mold the psychology of individuals in various ways that they aspired to do, so as to make communist economies flourish as Marx predicted they would. Despite very thorough control via education, information media, material control (e.g., job status), housing, and the rest, they could not produce the right kind of human beings to make their system successful.

Tribalism Against a Non-Tribe

One of the most interesting current developments for the psychology of tribalism concerns gender. I try to look at things from all sides. This is my best guess as to what is going on. Many people speak of a widespread “battle of the sexes,” but it is a very peculiar battle given that only one side is battling.

The women’s movement managed to forge a tribalistic mentality among women. This is quite unusual. Throughout the history of the world, women have almost never banded together in large groups to take action in society. When they did, starting in the Western world in the 1800s, it was mostly to protest against what the men were doing, rather than to undertake some positive initiative themselves. If one tries to list from world history the contributions and achievements by large groups of women, the list is very short. History and the progress of

civilization from the Stone Age to the present is mostly about groups of men competing against other groups of men.

The modern women's movement has been extremely effective at shifting laws, policies, attitudes, and the rest in favor of women, at the expense of men. Recent polls show that most men favor institutional policies that favor women over men, in every phase, such as hiring, promotion, salary, awards, and so on. If we think of men and women as two tribes, with the men producing most of the resources, it is a brilliant success of the women's tribe to convince most of the men to support ongoing widespread transfer of resources from the men to the women.

My impression is that women have adopted a tribalistic mentality to oppose men. Men however do not band together to oppose, oppress, or exploit women. What makes this theoretically interesting is that we have two categories of people, one of whom adopts a tribalistic antagonism toward the other, while the other does not. There are very plausible reasons for this. Evolution selected in favor of men who wanted to protect and care for women. Men are innately, biologically inclined to not see women as the enemy. Eventually some of them revise this, such as after they land in divorce court or whatever and find that the system is heavily stacked against them. There is ample evidence of women conspiring against men, but there is precious little evidence of men conspiring against women.

Women do *pretend* that men are conspiring against them. This chapter is based on the international SSSP conference, and I attended a previous iteration of that conference in which there was plenty of recent research on conspiracy theories. The papers were great, and I learned a lot from them. But the researchers were all too chickenshit to even mention the world's most successful and influential conspiracy theory, which is typically called patriarchy. Many people believe there is a large conspiracy by men to exploit and oppress women. This theory is popular among women, because it gives them an excuse for their appalling failure to contribute to the progress of civilization. Again, from the Stone Age to the present, probably 98% of the progress was achieved by men. Yet modern women have brilliantly convinced the gullible male population that it was the men's fault that the women contributed nothing. They like to hint that the women could probably have done a better job if they had been allowed. It's absurd, but the men fall for it.

There may be other angles and aspects on the modern so-called battle of the sexes. But again, it's hardly a battle. I don't see men banding together to fight for their ever dwindling rights. It's one tribe against a disorganized rabble. And the rabble (i.e., men) has been biologically shaped to want to protect and provide for women, so they cannot agree to fight back against them. In contrast, human women have been biologically shaped to extract resources from men, and though they have mostly seen each other as competition for desired mates, they can finally agree to cooperate with a broad movement to shake down men in general.

This is ironic, because in general men organize well into groups and women do not. If the history of the world does not persuade you, you might consult a meta-analysis of data from groups of people playing economic decision games, as in what is called behavioral economics (Balliet et al., 2011). Many of these games require choosing between cooperating and being selfish (including basic prudence.) The participants are not uneducated hunter-gatherers but the most modern and enlightened people, university students and other adults in modern,

Western countries. The statisticians calculate who cooperates with whom vs. is self-oriented. Men cooperate with men. Men cooperate with women. Women cooperate with men (indeed very well). But women don't much cooperate with other women.

The actual origin of gender inequality is not some phantom conspiracy by men to oppress women but rather socially mediated progress. For most of prehistory (and most of history, until quite recently), social life was heavily divided by gender, with the men hanging out with the men, the women with the women. The hunter-gatherers were also very egalitarian, both within and between the spheres. Everybody was roughly equal. Then what happened is that progress emerged from the men's sphere. The men figured out how to work together to produce more resources. They invented group hunting, art, religion, philosophy, science, technology, military organizations, governments, economic marketplaces, and the rest. Nothing much emerged from the women's sphere. That is the origin of gender inequality. Wealth, knowledge, and power were created by the men, and that drove them ahead. In fact, instead of pushing women down, the men actually lifted them up, by sharing the proceeds of their innovations.

For researchers interested in tribalism, the one-sided tribal conflict between men and women is a fascinating phenomenon. Predictably, the women continue to gain power and influence by intruding into what the men created and re-shaping the rules to favor themselves. There is no sign that when women become the majority and take power in some major domain that they show consideration for men. Rather, the trend seems to be that they continue to enact and enforce policies to favor women. The future course of this will be of great interest to advancing theory of tribalism.

Conclusion

Tribal hostility has infused modern American politics, notably to the general detriment of the nation. It is possible to understand the escalating conflict as rooted in different emphases between the left and the right as to the two basic jobs that all societies must accomplish in order to survive, namely amassing resources and sharing them. Those who amass resources lean conservative, and those who redistribute (and thrive from redistribution) lean left. The future is uncertain as to how this will unfold. Meanwhile, gender conflict is characterized by aggressive tribalism in one gender and the lack thereof in the other. Here the future is much easier to predict, as the battling tribe will encounter little opposition and hence can continue to siphon resources from the non-tribe.