White Working Class Politics in an Age of Immigration and Inequality

Once in the middle of British and American societies, today white working class people have drifted to the margins and are transforming their countries’ politics.

PROPOSITIONS:

>>The white working class, traditionally the markers of a center ground in national politics, are now voting for right-wing politics in increasing numbers.

>>Are they voting for these politics because of their own racism and xenophobia, or in reaction to the failings of capitalism and the economic decline of industrial areas?

>>The fear and uncertainty that has gripped deindustrialized communities is destabilizing mainstream politics.

>>Some of the white working class are concerned by their loss of political status but many others are more frustrated by their loss of social status.....their drift from the middle of society to its periphery.

>>Across postindustrial regions of Western Europe and N. America, white working class people sense that they have been demoted from the center of their country’s consciousness. Many feel powerless in their attempts to do something about it.

>>White working class people, especially in Europe, represent Muslim’s primary antagonist. Many of the claims that each make of the political system is in reaction to the other.

>>Research shows that senses of deprivation—the discrepancy between individuals’ expectations and their perceptions of reality---drive political choices.

{Relative deprivation is the experience of being deprived of something to which one believes to be entitled. It refers to the discontent people feel when they compare their positions to others and realize that they have less of what they believe themselves to be entitled than those around them.}
In 1962, James C. Davies presented his *J-curve theory*. He stated that revolutions are most likely to occur when periods of prolonged improvements concerning economic and social development are supplanted by a period of *sharp reversal*.

**Need satisfaction and revolution:** Revolutions do not usually occur in impoverished societies. The reason is that when people are preoccupied with their physical survival, the community-sense and consensus on joint political actions goes down and thus also the likelihood for revolutions to occur. Even though physical deprivation is to some extent present at the onset of revolutions, it is seldom the primary cause. The main factor is rather the fear that ground gained over a time period will be quickly lost.