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RESPONSE

Authors' Response

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We thank the respondents for their generous and thoughtful comments. We acknowledge that writing about respect during this time might be considered timely, but it also might be considered folly. Still, we think respect is important and are grateful to the respondents for pushing us to clarify our arguments. While the respondents raise many good points, we focus on three in our response:

(1) Our obligation to respect outlandish viewpoints or those who vote for odious people;
(2) The liberal respect paradox, including what aspect of respect is driving the paradox and whether the empirical evidence supports its existence;
(3) Alternatives to egalitarian pluralism, given the importance of holding firmly to one's beliefs about justice.

We discuss two types of respect in our book. Recognition respect is the idea that people are fellow human beings who have fundamental moral worth and, therefore, deserve respect. Recognition respect is universal and should be given to everyone, regardless of what they believe. Civic respect is our willingness to engage with and listen to those who disagree with us. This can be done in interpersonal (face-to-face) and impersonal (via news, blogs, articles, and so on) ways, involves not politically stereotyping opposing partisans (by, for example, assuming they are extremists), and means not assuming that citizens who vote differently do so because they are poorly informed, ignorant, or misled.

The first major point, raised by Matthew Wright, Clarissa Hayward, and Diana Mutz, is whether we should respect people who vote for Donald Trump or who hold outlandish views. This concern is, we think, about civic respect, not recognition respect. Wright and Hayward argue that we shouldn't have to

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respect Trump voters, but the implications of this idea are profound. Nearly half of American voters cast their ballot for Trump in 2024 (and more than voted for his main opponent, Kamala Harris).

If we refuse to respect 77 million fellow citizens, what is the alternative? While many Trump supporters voted for him gleefully, many voted for him for more mundane reasons: unhappiness with inflation, anger at Biden's immigration policy, and so on. Granting civic respect gives us the opportunity to understand if people fall into the gleeful or the mundane camp and to acknowledge that most people hold a variety of views, some of which might be outlandish and others quite reasonable. We do not lay out a precise scheme for where to draw the line on which views or vote choices are not worthy of respect because our definitions are about respecting other people, not particular views or votes. Understanding why people have different views is a key component of civic respect, but this is different from respecting specific views.

We do say, as Wright and Mutz note, that because democratic procedures have a fundamental importance in a democracy, people who want to tear down procedural democracy do not necessarily deserve civic respect. Here we should have been more precise: views that undermine procedural democracy (such as denying citizens equal political rights and refusing to accept the outcome of a free and fair election) do not deserve civic respect. But we should be cautious. This boundary on civic respect does not mean, for example, that Democrats should assume that *all* Republicans deny the 2020 election outcome or want to take away people's political rights. Granting civic respect to people, not viewpoints, allows us to determine where people stand on procedural democracy, and not assume their stands based on their party. Once we have this understanding, we don't have to keep listening to those who are set on undermining procedural democracy. We can withdraw civic respect, at least for some period of time.

Still, this raises an important issue: what if someone holds a bundle of views that are outlandish or that undermine democracy? Do we need to grant that person civic respect or even recognition respect? We think the answer is unambiguously yes for the latter. Even for the former, arguments about why democracy is not fulfilling its promise or is not appropriate for this moment should be heard, even as we disagree. We do not need to continue giving civic respect to someone who argues for a bundle of undemocratic ideas, but we should not dismiss them broadly or in perpetuity. Similarly, respect is not a reciprocal notion. We grant recognition and civic respect because our shared humanity and democracy demand it. The fact that some of our fellow citizens fail these standards does not mean that we are then allowed to do so.

The second major point, on the liberal respect paradox, is the idea that liberals are more likely than conservatives to believe in respect and yet less likely to grant respect to opposing partisans. Our findings about this paradox are real but modest, and while the idea is important, it is not a central part of the book. One concern, however, centers on what aspect of respect is captured by the liberal respect paradox. Mutz's comments on tolerance raise the possibility that respect and tolerance are highly similar constructs, which could affect our understanding of the liberal respect paradox. Republicans used to be more intolerant than

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Democrats but now the opposite is true. It is plausible that tolerance and respect track each other, but we argue that they are distinct conceptually and empirically. Anna Stilz raises a more problematic question about what aspect of respect is captured by the liberal respect paradox. We connect it specifically to recognition respect, but Stilz suggests that it is actually about appraisal respect. As she points out, appraisal respect consists of a judgment concerning a person's achievements, judgment, or actions. When people withhold respect, they are saying that they struggle to look up to that person. We are intrigued by Stilz's suggestion but also think that knowledge about a person is needed to grant appraisal respect, and how one voted is an insufficient basis to make this judgment. One would need to know, for example, *why* someone voted for a particular candidate before appraising them based on their vote. One could certainly do this on an individual basis, but not on a mass basis.

Another concern about the liberal respect paradox focuses on the evidence. While Stilz is gratified that we don't have data that suggest liberals want to withhold rights from conservatives (and the reverse), some researchers have found serious consequences of interparty animosity, including heightened incivility,[1] dehumanization of out-partisans,[2] and decreased application of democratic norms to out-partisans.[3] Since recognition respect acknowledges people's humanity, it strikes us as a path to reducing dehumanization. But does the liberal respect paradox exist? Our survey, focus group, and experimental data consistently show that Democrats have a harder time than Republicans granting recognition respect. Especially telling is Table 2.4, which shows that Democrats evaluate Republicans harshly across many characteristics (39). It is hard to respect people you think are racist, sexist, closed minded, and intolerant, which Democrats think of Republicans more than the opposite.

Moreover, when nearly 60 percent of Democrats think Republicans are racist and sexist and nearly 70 percent think they are intolerant, they seem to be making a moral judgment: they are not simply questioning the judgment of Republicans, they are judging them negatively as people. When we asked if opposing partisans are immoral, 34 percent of Democrats said yes, compared to 27 percent of Republicans. When asked if they view opposing partisans' vote for president as a moral conviction, half of Democrats said yes compared to about a quarter of Republicans. Democrats' perceptions of Republicans are negative and moralized, all of which feeds into Democrats having a harder time respecting opposing partisans than Republicans.

[1] Patrick R. Miller and Pamela Johnston Conover, "Why Partisan Warriors don't Listen: The Gendered Dynamics of Intergroup Anxiety and Partisan Conflict," *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 3, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 21–39, https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2014.992795.

[2] Erin C. Cassese, "Partisan Dehumanization in American Politics," *Political Behavior* 43, no. 1 (March 2021): 29–50, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-019-09545-w; James L. Martherus et al., "Party Animals? Extreme Partisan Polarization and Dehumanization," *Political Behavior* 43, no. 2 (June 2021): 517–40, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-019-09559-4.

[3] Jon Kingzette et al., "How Affective Polarization Undermines Support for Democratic Norms," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 85, no. 2 (October 21, 2021): 663–77, https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfab029.

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The final major point we address was raised by both Stilz and Hayward, who argue that it is both possible and important to hold onto deeply important beliefs while respecting opposing partisans. They take our argument for an egalitarian pluralist account to mean that one should not firmly hold one's beliefs about justice. In their view, egalitarian pluralism does not give enough room for people both to keep their deeply held beliefs and to respect the views of others. They offer alternatives to egalitarian pluralism that allow both strong beliefs and respect.

It is not our view that people must give up or weaken their beliefs about justice to improve the prospects for respect, so it is possible that we misled readers. We acknowledge that respect is often hard to grant, but we do not believe that egalitarian pluralism (or, as we also suggest, a liberty pluralism) is the only way forward. We welcome alternative proposals since we are pluralistic about the paths that can lead to respect. We think it important, though, to register some of the advantages of egalitarian pluralism.

We agree with Stilz that income inequality in the US is unjust. After careful consideration of alternative arguments, she comes back to her firmly held belief about this. Yet the disagreement with others is not only about the scope of income inequality, but the paths toward reducing it. One thing that struck us in our study is how many conservatives believe that structural injustice is a real problem but do not think that government is the solution. It helps to increase respect if people recognize that there are other ways to think about solutions and that there might be a kernel of a viable idea in alternative views even as they hold strongly to their own beliefs. We mention in the book Democrats' beliefs about racial injustice and that Republicans are racist, yet Donald Trump did better among people of color in 2020 than in 2016 and better in 2024 than 2020. Democrats can hold strongly their beliefs about racial injustice while trying to better understand why a lot of people, including people of color, voted for Trump. One important path toward respect is to see that other people have reasonable beliefs that differ from yours.

Our worry about the alternatives proposed by Stilz and Hayward is that, while intellectually defensible, they are psychologically challenging. The more one is certain about one's beliefs, the harder it is to respect those with whom one disagrees. Still, any proposed solution to increase respect will face challenges, and more so now with the current US President, whose commitment to democracy is uncertain and whose vulgarity is well known. Mutz speculates that the vulgarity Trump indulges in and permits is now a "front-stage" behavior in American politics and an important cause for the probable decline of respect (we don't have measures of respect over time). Mutz might be correct, but we doubt that this front-stage behavior by Trump and ordinary citizens can be teased apart from the moralization of politics that we discuss. And there is evidence that it is not only Trump and his supporters who have taken back-stage behavior to the front.

We end with a reminder that not everyone who voted for President Trump believes everything he says or supports everything he does. The choices of voters are constrained in a system dominated by two major parties with first-past-the-post voting and where many prefer voting for a candidate who has a chance of

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winning. What is necessary in a democracy is that people work together to find solutions to problems. This is harder now than in prior years, but it doesn't make the importance of working together less important. Recognition and civic respect are essential for this democratic work.

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