

Demetri Kofinas: 00:00 The Hidden Forces Podcast features long form conversations broken into two parts, the second hour of which is made available to our premium subscribers, along with transcripts and notes to each conversation. For more information about how to access the episode overtimes, transcripts, and rundowns, head over to patreon.com/hiddenforces. You can also sign up to our mailing list at hiddenforces.io. Follow us on Twitter @HiddenForcesPod, and leave us a review on Apple Podcasts. With that, please enjoy this week's episode.

Demetri Kofinas: 00:54 What's up, everybody. My guest on this episode of hidden forces is Kevin Vallier, an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Bowling Green State University, whose interests lie primarily in political philosophy, ethics, philosophy of religion, and economics. In his latest book, "Trust in a Polarized Age," Kevin draws on empirical data and liberal political philosophy, to demonstrate that rising levels of political polarization can be largely attributed to a multi-decade decline in trust in each other and in our institutions.

Demetri Kofinas: 01:27 "If we want to reduce the rising incidents of polarization," argues, Kevin, "we have to start by rebuilding social and political trust." While this may seem like a tall order during a time in which Americans are less trusting than at any point since at least the 1960s when measurements began, the situation is not hopeless, and more importantly, it's not out of our hands.

Demetri Kofinas: 01:52 In this conversation, we discuss the causes and consequences of declining social and political trust. The two way relationship between trust and polarization, and what sorts of practical steps can be taken at both an individual and societal level to begin to restore faith in, not only each other, but in our political and legal institutions.

Demetri Kofinas: 02:14 In the overtime, Kevin and I discuss, among other things, rising concerns about domestic terrorism and the parallels that can be drawn between the early 1990s and today. One of the more interesting parts of that discussion deals with the mainstreaming, so to speak, of conspiracy theory and how, unlike in the early 1990s, where domestic terror groups or individuals like Ted Kaczynski were motivated primarily by extreme and atypical ideological beliefs, the groups being monitored today, some of which were involved in the attack on the US Capitol building this month, combine political violence with mainstream views that are shared by a significant percentage of the American people.

Demetri Kofinas: 02:56 If you're interested in accessing that overtime, as well as the episode transcript and rundown to this week's episode, you can do that through the Hidden Forces Patreon page at patreon.com/hiddenforces, and you can learn more about our content offering and subscribe to our mailing list at hiddenforces.io. And with that, please enjoy yet another thought provoking and timely episode with my guest, Kevin Vallier.

Demetri Kofinas: 03:29 Kevin Vallier, welcome to hidden forces.

Kevin Vallier: 03:32 Thanks so much for having me on.

Demetri Kofinas: 03:34 It's great to have you on the program, Kevin. Your timing is impeccable, I must say. This is going to come out the week of the inauguration after an insane week we've already had. You and I are recording this on Tuesday, January 12th.

Kevin Vallier: 03:49 Yes.

Demetri Kofinas: 03:50 Of course, we do not know this is going to be coming out in a little less than a week from now. We have no idea what's going to happen from now until then, only God knows. You have the media wind on your back. For people who don't know who you are, maybe we could start with you giving me a sense of your background, how you got interested in philosophy, and more to the point, political philosophy.

Kevin Vallier: 04:14 The long story that I'll try to make it short as I can, I grew up in South Alabama, in a little town called Fairhope on Mobile Bay. From a pretty early age, I was interested in political issues that was prompted, oddly enough, by the Columbine school shooting that led to the institution of public school uniforms in my high school, which I thought was an outrageous overreaction. I started thinking about questions, about what were our natural liberties? What should government do? What should be its limits? I was interested in other questions too that were philosophical, like the nature of consciousness. I'd even gone to a little summer camp on it, oddly enough.

Demetri Kofinas: 04:56 Light stuff. light stuff for a high-schooler.

Kevin Vallier: 04:58 Yes, light stuff. Well, I wanted to know if we were brains or something more. So, I decided, when I got to Washington University in St. Louis in 2000, that I would probably either study political science or some combination, neuroscience and philosophy of mind. I also, at that time started working on the Gore campaign, even though I was only 17 and couldn't vote for him. A couple of things all happened together. First, I started talking with people about politics from all over the country and lots of different walks of life.

Kevin Vallier: 05:32 I started reading a lot more philosophy and the philosophy of mind and my views began to change on politics and on the mind very, very quickly. Then, pretty quickly after that, my views on God's Existence were also influx, moving from atheism to theism. My undergraduate time was just a gigantic Odyssey of changing my mind. Philosophy was what I loved. I thought wanted to do physics for a time, but I realized what I cared about was metaphysics. I thought I wanted to study the brain, but what I wanted to study was just consciousness.

Kevin Vallier: 06:04 I wanted to know what the fundamentals of the universe were, whether I thought it was just particles and fields for a long time, but I haven't thought that, in even longer time. I was interested in all these kinds of questions. At the same time, as I started to monitor electoral politics in the US on a regular basis, I increasingly ran into a series of social conflicts in my life that made me start to analogize them with political conflict, particularly as polarization began to get worse and worse. I began to think really, really, really hard about the idea of reconciliation. Thinking increasingly that we are here fundamentally as human beings to love each other, and that, whenever there's an opportunity for healing or reconciliation, that we ought to take it if we can.

Kevin Vallier: 06:55 I became convinced of this, not just in my personal life, but I began to wonder whether it was possible to have a politics of reconciliation, particularly in a country as divided as ours. This led me, in graduate school, into a kind of version of what we call the liberal tradition. I see one of the distinctive features of being a liberal is believing in the natural freedom and equality of persons, but also, it oftentimes contains a commitment to some kind of neutrality or fairness between worldviews, where the state doesn't take a position on which religion is true, or which ideology is correct.

Kevin Vallier: 07:30 I thought that was pretty necessary for people to be able to live together well, despite their deep disagreements. This led me into the work of F.A. Hayek, John Rawls, and studying with my advisor, the late Gerald Gaus, and thinking through, as carefully as I could, what the possibilities for reconciliation in divided societies would be. It occurred to me that there was several steps before reconciliation could occur, and one was re-establishing trust. One of the things that struck me about trust was that political scientists and economists studied it. I'd come to a great admiration for interdisciplinary work in political philosophy and I'd been trained that way as a graduate student.

Kevin Vallier: 08:12 So, I started to look at the philosophy politics and economics, not only of personal trust, but of social trust, the faith that most people have that strangers will follow established norms, and also trust in government, or what I call political trust. So, I thought to myself, well, it would be good to see whether the institutions of liberal societies of open societies could sustain social and political trust despite our deep disagreements, especially in the United States. I began to study theories of polarization and trying to, in my own way, synthesize liberal political thought with empirical work on political polarization, and then additional empirical work on social and political trust, and that's how the book was born. I told you it was a long story made short, but it was a long story made long.

Demetri Kofinas: 08:55 That's great. Actually, you set this up really well, and a lot of questions emerged out of that bio that I want to ask you about. One of which we'll probably save for the overtime, because I also, I think this is a common thing that, when you're younger, what draws a lot of people to philosophy are theory of mind type questions, questions of consciousness. We actually had, among others, Patrick Grim on the program for an episode on philosophy of mind. I'm trying to get Chalmers on, he's been perpetually out of touch.

Kevin Vallier: 09:28 That would be extraordinary.

Demetri Kofinas: 09:28 Yeah. He's been promising to come on forever because he's apparently been writing a book forever, so we'll see how that goes. Eventually, I'll get him on. Maybe we can discuss that in the overtime, but I guess what ...

Kevin Vallier: 09:40 Yes, we should actually, make sure that we do, because I chased him in my own way, so we need a story.

Demetri Kofinas: 09:45 Great. That'll be interesting. First of all, what is the distinction between social trust and political trust?

Kevin Vallier: 09:53 Social trust is the trust that we have in most people in our society. It has nothing essentially to do with government at all. Do you trust people to, if you leave your phone and Starbucks, to return it to you? Do you trust people to do even fundamental things like not to run you over with their car, and not to steal from you? Whereas political trust is trust in government to perform the functions that we normally expect it to perform. Most fundamentally, the provision of security and creating an environment of peace where people can engage in cooperation to provide for their most basic needs.

Kevin Vallier: 10:26 On top of that, societies that are fairly wealthy have started to expect government to implement a certain kind of social justice between different groups, particularly historically marginalized groups, and I do think trust in government is also partly based on that. There's different things we trust government to do, but we trust them to perform in certain kinds of ways, and we trust them to do it, I think, not just as a mere mechanism, but out of the sense that the people matter, and that their interests matter. So, social trust is for most people and strangers. It's not directed toward any particular goal.

Kevin Vallier: 11:01 Whereas political trust is trust that government performs certain specific functions, and that it do so out of some kind of concern for its citizens.

Demetri Kofinas: 11:11 Let's break these down, let's start with social trust. What are the causes of social trust? What do we know about the drivers?

Kevin Vallier: 11:18 One of the most interesting things about studying social trust is how little we know about its causes. It's correlated with many wonderful things, like economic equality, to some degree with economic growth with low corruption, both in the legal system, and to some extent, in the political system. It looks like it could be caused by a lot of these things, but in fact, I've become gradually convinced with some Scandinavian economists I've been writing with, they have so much trust over there. They really want to know where they got it from. They have gradually convinced me that social trust is almost always a cause. One of my next big projects is investigating how exactly it came from.

Demetri Kofinas: 11:56 You said it's a cause?

Kevin Vallier: 11:58 It is almost always a cause, and not an effect, but there are some things that can make it worse. We don't know that much about how to get it back, when we've lost it, and we don't know that much about where it came from anyway, because we've only been measuring it in any countries, besides the US, for 40 years, and in the US in any respect for 60. We don't have good ways of inferring social trust levels from beyond those times. We don't have metrics. So, it's just really hard to know. Some of social trust, I think, builds on the more intimate forms of trust that we learn when we were children.

Kevin Vallier: 12:34 We learned to trust our family, and then I think, when we ... I believe this, my wife's a marriage and a family therapist. We've been talking about this, about how we think early trauma can impact your ability to trust anybody, but we don't have data on that, but it's a hypothesis. So, you grow up hopefully, in a fairly safe environment that isn't too punctuated by family trauma war, or something along

those lines. Also, one thought I have is that, that some people have, that you observe how your trusted family members interact with strangers.

Kevin Vallier: 13:06 They tend to be welcoming. If they tend to be relaxed around the strangers, as a child that's one thing that you learn, is that you can have those attitudes too, that you can let down your guard. I mean, think about any child. They hide behind their parents' legs just to see if they can come out. It takes them a little bit longer to get used to people. I think that's the process of learning how to trust and learning who to trust. As we get older, I think we start to pay a lot more attention to how most people are complying with social norms, as our faculty for moral reasoning and our faculty to track what our social norms in our society, do most people tend to follow those norms or not?

Kevin Vallier: 13:44 Then we formulate our trust judgments based on that. There's also a personality element. I think that there are certain personality types that are naturally more trusting than others, people who have more openness to experience, for instance, I think are more trusting. I think people, although we need more data on this, with high on neuroticism are less trusting, but we just don't know. What's weird about it is that, on the individual level, it looks like after age 30, people's social trust levels don't change very much at all. There's been some interesting new work on Swedish immigrants.

Kevin Vallier: 14:16 As you know, Sweden is one of the most trusting countries in the world. People leave Sweden for other countries. If they're over 30, their social trust levels don't seem to change at all, but if you're under 30, particularly under 25 or 20, your trust levels will partly, or the Swedish immigration trust levels will partly approximate that of the country that they're in. You really want to look at say Sweden, where it's 65% of people say most people can be trusted going to Brazil, where 5% of people say the same thing.

Kevin Vallier: 14:46 I do think there's early adulthood. Our faculties for social trust are forming. We don't know a lot about change beyond that. It's very different from political trust. Most people, when they're young, aren't thinking about trusting institutions at all. They don't even know what they are, or that they exist, or how they function. Heck, most people don't even know how the federal government functions. Instead, political trust can be greatly affected by media reports, enormously so, I think, and also just by people's independent sense of whether the government is good or fair, or a run by decent people or not, but that can change well late into people's lives, just based on different events. So, there are very different forms of trust and they're related in complex ways.

Demetri Kofinas: 15:28 Well, so again, ton of questions. One is actually ... it's a funny thought that came to me when you were giving the example of children and how they learn early on whether to trust or not. In other words, they're conditioned before the age of 30. The picture you're painting of a child kind of peeking its head out between its parents legs. It reminded me of this really funny comedy skit by Sebastian Maniscalco. Are you familiar with this guy? Sebastian?

Kevin Vallier: 15:56 Not at all.

Demetri Kofinas: 15:58 I think if you have to search for doorbell, Sebastian Maniscalco doorbell. He talks about how, when he was growing up, people used to come by. They didn't need to call ahead of the time. They'd come, ring the doorbell. I'll come in, look who's here. Bring out the Sanka, bring out some cake, you want to sit dow? Yeah, then he goes to the extreme of what it is today. He's like, today, you can't just come up to somebody's door and ring the doorbell. You have to call from the driveway.

Kevin Vallier: 16:26 Yes.

Demetri Kofinas: 16:26 Anyway, it's an observation about how indeed we've become a less trusting society. This obviously has impacted everything. I know you're familiar with this statistic that it's impacted polling. We did an episode recently with David Shaw, who built Barack Obama's forecasting engine in 2012. He talks about this as well, but let's go back to this thing you said about social trust being a cause and not being caused. I want to ask you-

Kevin Vallier: 16:55 I mean, it's not an uncaused cause, I'll tell you that, but it's-

Demetri Kofinas: 16:58 In certain cases, things like economic inequality, I could see how the feedback loop could be sort of two way, but in the case of things like immigration or diversity, for example, how is social trust impacted? Because I think there are certain anecdotal cases that we see both here in the US, as well as in countries like, let's say Germany, which have had huge inflows of immigrants, not only recently through Syria, but through Turkey over the years and other places, and other Nordic countries that have had a lot of Muslim immigration, How does diversity and immigration impact social trust?

Kevin Vallier: 17:31 It's really interesting, because a lot of people do have the natural intuition that we're going to trust people that we're less familiar with. I think, to some extent, that's true, but the data doesn't quite bear this out. It turns out that in sort of literature reviews on trust and ethnic diversity, that there's either no correlation between the two or a small negative one. But when you disaggregate different ways in which people encounter ethnic diversity, there's a lot of interesting things that happen. Geography matters enormously.

Kevin Vallier: 18:04 If you are, say in a neighborhood that's multi-racial, it doesn't seem to affect your trust level very much. You're used to it. If the ethnic diversity is very far flung, you don't interact with the ethnic diversity, let's say, you don't encounter people of the other ethnicity, it doesn't seem to affect trust at all either. What really seems to matter is residential segregation, particularly within, say 75 meters or so, I'm not even kidding. It's sort of like there's the Italian block and the Irish block. They see each other and they don't really trust each other.

Kevin Vallier: 18:39 Residential segregation, I think, is the main thing that is associated with lower social trust. Workplace diversity is different. If you're interacting at work, you're having to cooperate with people of different ethnicities in order to do your job, I think that's very different. I think the effect that ethnic diversity has on trust is highly contextual, but there are indeed environments in which ethnic diversity can hurt trust. But this just goes to the importance of trying to renew our efforts integration, particularly in housing with the discrimination against black Americans, with respect to mortgage lending and red lining.

Demetri Kofinas: 19:18 That's interesting. It makes me think that the real issue is stereotypes and stereotyping when you're actually ... Indeed, in my experience as well, when you get to know people who you have only stereotyped up until that point in time, you actually can develop friendships and stereotypes break. Obviously media narratives play a huge role.

Kevin Vallier: 19:39 That's right.

Demetri Kofinas: 19:40 When you're talking about this disaggregating, I imagine if you'd be able to control for the slant and narratives that media push in different particular countries and how they stereotype different groups, you probably see a big difference.

Kevin Vallier: 19:51 Yeah. Well, this is very interesting. I have a meta reflection on this. I wrote a piece for the Wall Street Journal on declining social trust, and I got a lot of mail about it. A man sent me a nice cutout of the print edition, which I didn't have in this beautiful looking handwritten note, and what he told me was that low social trust was the fault of the black community.

Demetri Kofinas: 20:17 I'm sorry to interrupt, but I just had to say this, this happens to me too sometimes, where I get fan mail from someone who's really nice and who's being complimentary, and then hits me up with some really hardcore racist or bigoted view.

Kevin Vallier: 20:29 I know.

Demetri Kofinas: 20:30 It's like, how do I respond to this? I want to like this guy, but I obviously totally disagree with you, and horrified by your view.

Kevin Vallier: 20:38 Yes, this is precisely what happened to me. Now, the interesting thing is that something closer to the reverse is true. About 17% of black Americans feel they can trust most people and 46% of whites. In fact, low social trust among the black community is a very severe problem at this very moment, because there's a great deal of vaccine refusal going on right now, particularly among black American first responders. In part, because, and they're citing this to medical professionals, they're citing the Tuskegee experiments.

Kevin Vallier: 21:06 They're worried that there's literal poison in the vaccines, and it's not your standard anti-vacs thing. It's not big pharma. It's that, actually people have literally experimented on us, and I'm not entirely sure that things are okay. The black community suffers from low trust that is, in many ways, warranted, but actually makes them worse off at the same time. It's a real tragedy, but the white community is fairly trusting, although I think there is some masking of lower trust attitudes [crosstalk 00:21:38].

Demetri Kofinas: 21:38 It makes sense. Also, it reminds me of this other episode on Active Measures and Disinformation, the history of disinformation with Thomas Rid. I can't remember the episode number, but one of the ways in which these measures actually activate is they exploit existing fissures of trust in society, and one great example was the AIDS crisis and how the Soviet circulated false claims about the virus created by the US government in order to kill off the gay population in the United

States. So, it's a perfect example, but let's ... Yeah, I want to actually drill in more to some of these other potential, again, feedback mechanisms, because you talk about them in the book. One of them is economic inequality.

- Kevin Vallier:** 22:20 Yes. Very interesting story here.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 22:21 Another is corruption. I've highlighted a few of them. I don't know if I have them all here. Another other one is very interesting, communist societies, also monarchy. Fascinating because I've been watching The Crown.
- Kevin Vallier:** 22:34 Yes, me too.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 22:35 I have a new appreciation for the value of the institution. Also, we talked about it earlier, but we'll go back to it because I do want to ask you the political implications of this, of early trust experiences, because I often, and the audience probably tires of listening to it, refer to my experience in college living through the 9/11 attacks and the invasion of Iraq, and the subsequent consequences of it.
- Kevin Vallier:** 22:59 That was my college.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 23:00 There you go. And the 2008 financial crisis, and how those two events dramatically impact my trust level, and my trust of government, but let's start with economic inequality. What is the feedback mechanism here, and can, for example, simple redistribution mechanisms help to alleviate issues of trust in society?
- Kevin Vallier:** 23:22 There's so much to say on this topic, and I have a non-standard view, which is one reason that I need to say a little bit more. The standard view goes like this. People detect more economic inequality. They're able to roughly track it. The more they see, the less fair they feel their society as a whole is. So, they come to trust society less. The more differences there are between people, the more distrust. That's the hypothesis about how social trust, or how economic inequality leads to less trust.
- Kevin Vallier:** 23:50 However, these are the same people who don't think ethnic diversity leads to distrust. I think there's a tension there because if fear of difference lowers trust levels in one context, it would be weird if it didn't in the other. My sense is that, I bet in economic inequality, that's local. If your neighbors are a lot richer than you, that becomes extremely salient. But if you just know abstractly that there are some very rich people and you don't really interact with them much, I don't think it's going to have that much of an effect, and the two economists I've worked with on this, Christian Bjørnskov and Andreas Bergh have done some really innovative work on this.
- Kevin Vallier:** 24:27 Where they've been able to show, pretty persuasively, that it's social trust that causes more economic equality, because more trusting populaces demand more redistribution. One of the reasons for this is they're more likely to trust the recipients of the transfers. Think about the old urban legend in the US about people who receive food stamps spending it on lobster and stuff like that. Have you heard this before? I've heard this [crosstalk 00:24:53] all kind of different people.

Demetri Kofinas: 24:54 No, I haven't, but that's funny. Why lobster?

Kevin Vallier: 24:58 Yeah. I don't know, [crosstalk 00:24:59] booze, smokes.

Demetri Kofinas: 24:59 I actually remember when I was growing up, I remember, well, you're from Alabama, I spent some years growing up in Winston-Salem North Carolina. I do remember, I don't know if it was there, but I do remember people would go to red lobster, and that was like a big thing. Lobster was a really expensive dish back then. It doesn't seem to be today. Anyway, I interrupted, but that was a funny observation.

Kevin Vallier: 25:22 Yeah. Well, I mean, the thought is that a lot of our redistribution also is racially coded, right? So, it tends to be, the thought is black Americans they're the recipients of welfare. Welfare state was pretty popular among Southern Democrats, and they went out of their way to make sure it only went to whites, and that they didn't go to black Americans. This was one of the things that cause a lot of conflict within the democratic party, is that they were all for more redistribution, but the southerners only wanted it to go to poor whites.

Kevin Vallier: 25:53 The thought is that, if there are people within your in-group that you feel like you could trust, you think, well, okay, they received the money. They're probably going to take care of basic necessities. They're not going to spend it on addictive substances, and so on like that. You hear these kind of things now when you talk about a universal basic income, the same kind of thing comes out. I think that ends up being pretty persuasive. Also, they found something really interesting, which is that, increasing welfare state redistribution does not seem to increase trust. It may be the case that inequality affects trust that is, this is weird, pre-fiscal policy. So, this is pre taxation and redistribution.

Demetri Kofinas: 26:31 That actually makes a lot of sense.

Kevin Vallier: 26:33 Yeah. The thought is that they're these rich people and we made them pay or maybe something like that.

Demetri Kofinas: 26:38 Yeah. The idea, in other words, being that the way in which equality of income or a decrease in polarization of wealth comes about is just as important or more important than the final outcome, that people-

Kevin Vallier: 26:52 Oh yes. I think that's very true. There's a lot of interesting work on trust and perceptions of fairness. I think because a lot of the trust researchers lean left, they're too quick to conflate inequality and fairness. Whereas many people in the right do not think inequality by itself is evidence of unfairness, because they think that sometimes riches are earned and merited, and sometimes they're not.

Demetri Kofinas: 27:15 How much of that is about power? In other words, again, I'm reminded of another episode that we did. I'm the constant beneficiary of other people's brains. With Michael Lind, he wrote a book called The New Class War and he really focused on this, that it wasn't so much about economic inequality. It was about power and the inequality of power. The fact that ultimately, UBS is a great example of this, it doesn't actually resolve in and of itself, any of the power issues in society. It simply takes money from one part and shifts it over to another. But the people

that are moving the money from A to B are in the position of power. I wonder how much of it is that.

- Kevin Vallier:** 27:54 Yeah. I mean, often in this context, I think the most insightful people on the left will talk about inequalities of power in the workplace, but inequalities of power and government, I think a lot of people don't see the power in the redistribution. For instance, when we think about social security, nobody's thinking about powerful overlords engaged in redistribution when it comes to that. We just don't really think about the social security office, even though it engages in a massive amount of redistribution. It's partly because I think most people think of social security as a pension when it isn't actually that, if only it were actually [crosstalk 00:28:27].
- Demetri Kofinas:** 28:26 It's a pyramid scheme.
- Kevin Vallier:** 28:28 Yes, exactly. Yeah, but that somehow seems to keep going.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 28:32 Yeah. It's backed by the full faith in credit of the US Treasury, as long as that doesn't break.
- Kevin Vallier:** 28:39 That's another trust issue, isn't it? Yeah, the economic inequality connection is there, social trust levels are highly correlated with Gini coefficients, the main measure of economic inequality, but people are actually really bad at estimating inequality levels in their society. So, the idea that they're able to track it is, I think, not very plausible. In general, people are highly politically ignorant and I don't think they're going to be highly effective trackers of economic measures, or even particularly over the course of a whole country.
- Kevin Vallier:** 29:09 I don't actually think there are more visible signs of inequality today than there were 20, 30 years ago, not to the degree of increase that we've seen. The main source of the increase in economic inequality has been real estate inequality. That's where it's most visible, the rich having larger homes, being in suburbs, having better schools, that's really where a lot of it has come from, and that can be addressed through policy that isn't even necessarily redistributive. In fact, I think one of the great hopes for restoring a lot of trust is housing reform, basically make it easier for poor, lower middle income people to build houses and to pay for housing.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 29:45 In the book, you you mentioned this term social capital, and it had a sort of profound light bulb switch moment for me, because I knew this ... This is not the only person, but there's this guy I worked for in college briefly in commercial real estate, and he fought in the Korean war, Irish immigrant family, real stand-up guy, classic good kind of American person with strong ethics and strong handshake. We also know, I think, empirically that litigation has risen over the decades in America. We've become a more litigious society.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 30:23 I wonder, this is difficult maybe to measure it or at least not without a huge margin of error, but I wonder how much money has been lost, has been shifted to lawyers, I guess, as a result of the fact that we don't trust one another as much as we used to, and we don't rely much on norms and personal reputation as we

used to. We rely more on contracts. Have you thought about that at all? And is that an example of how trust feeds into economic growth and inequality?

- Kevin Vallier:** 30:54 I don't know about the particulars of that. I think that probably legal expenses are a drop in the bucket compared to the way I think social trust really promotes economic growth, which is that it just increases exchange opportunities and it also allows for institutions that allow people to become more productive, like educational institutions.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 31:14 There's another example, I'll just throw it out there as well. All my family is all physicians. Over the years, they've changed how they practice medicine because of how litigious it is. Now, perhaps some of that is for the best, but I know from their experiences, that a lot of it is not for the best of the patient.
- Kevin Vallier:** 31:33 No.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 31:34 That's another way [crosstalk 00:31:34].
- Kevin Vallier:** 31:34 No, no, no.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 31:35 So, it's interesting to think about that.
- Kevin Vallier:** 31:36 Malpractice stuff is yeah, becomes enormously wasteful very quickly. I just mean, just if you stacked it up. One of the big things, that's the problem with the economy right now isn't so much lockdowns. It's turned out that's a small proportion, not a very small proportion, but a small proportion of the economic harm. The big economic harm is people just aren't trading as much. They're just not buying and selling as much. All those billions of transactions just add up very quickly. I think that you're right, that there's a lot of waste and economic inefficiency. I just think the lion's share of the costs from lower trust is just billions, fewer transactions that make each other better off.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 32:14 What about corruption in society? I don't have any empirical data for this. I'm curious if you do, but certainly, anecdotally, it seems that we've had an increase in corruption, certainly visible corruption, brazen corruption. This has certainly, I think, impacted political trust. One way in which perhaps we've seen that is the fact that, how many thousands of people storm the Capitol recently.
- Kevin Vallier:** 32:37 Yeah. The corruption that seems to really, really matter is corruption in law enforcement, or in the judicial system. If you see someone take a bribe in a society where that's not a norm. There are some societies where bribing police officers are so regular, it's not even considered corruption. In part, for very complicated reasons, like that they'll allow a business to continue functioning, whereas if you have to go and get a license, it'd cost thousands of dollars [crosstalk 00:33:03].
- Demetri Kofinas:** 33:03 Institutionalized racketeering.
- Kevin Vallier:** 33:05 Yes, but in many cases, there are some societies that, that's not even seen as corrupt, but in many societies, it is because it's seen as subverting the rules on behalf of your particular group at the expense of everybody else, and directly

interfering and violating fairness norms. I think, probably we'll see some social trust decline a bit because of the greater attention to police tactics and the militarization of the police, which has made them less clearly community members and more of an alien force, and using a greater violence, in some respects, although really the big effect will be more attention to the use of that violence, the more attention to it.

- Demetri Kofinas:** 33:45 That's a great example, because we've been living in an increasingly hyper militarized police state where like batons, the armor, the vehicle ...
- Kevin Vallier:** 33:53 The SWAT, all these [crosstalk 00:33:54]. Yes.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 33:53 The sirens, everything has exploded in size and scope.
- Kevin Vallier:** 33:57 Yes, and that I think alienates the police on the community. One thing I really want to see is I'm going to see a demilitarization of the police coupled with an expansion of the number of police officers. Minority neighborhoods, they don't want the police to go away. They want the police to be present. They just don't want the police to beat them up and choke them and kill them. What we need are, I think are more but less violent police officers. We don't need the carotid holds to decrease crime rates. There's just a lot of really extreme tactics that are totally unnecessary.
- Kevin Vallier:** 34:34 We've prosecuted on drug war in an especially ruthless fashion that has made things much, much worse. I think we are starting to move away from that, so I think that will help. But in many respects, I think that's ... You see corruption, you find that a cop is on the take, you find that the judge is on the take. That's that seems to hurt, because I think, people see policemen and judges as they're supposed to ... They're like supposed to be exemplary community members.
- Kevin Vallier:** 35:02 I think you tend to think less of your community if the police and the judges, the best people are corrupt. Also, they don't enforce the rules against the bad people, which means it's much harder to trust most people because you could be the victim of crime. I think there's a lot of mechanisms there. But I also think that certain kinds of political corruption can be bad in so far as the political officials are seen as representatives of the community. My guess, and I haven't seen data on this, is that local political corruption is probably worse for social trust. Whereas the corruption of the president, as we've seen, is probably worse for trust in the government, and the reason these-
- Demetri Kofinas:** 35:39 Why is that? That seems initially counterintuitive to me.
- Kevin Vallier:** 35:43 Well, so I think a lot of people can, to some extent, separate out the fact that the president being elected per se by another party isn't really on them and doesn't necessarily represent everybody, particularly in an age of polarization. So, people aren't going to trust most people less because Trump is bad, maybe. Maybe, I mean, I'm actually a little worried that, that's false for reasons we can discuss because of his supporters, so he's seen as a proxy for them, and because there's so many of them, I think we may have less social trust because of that, but we'll see.

Demetri Kofinas: 36:17 Because of what? I didn't fall entirely. We would have less social trust because of what?

Kevin Vallier: 36:20 Because he has so many supporters. Most people say, can you trust most people? Well, there are moons of Trump supporters out there, so I don't know.

Demetri Kofinas: 36:28 But that people who voted for Donald Trump would trust each other more?

Kevin Vallier: 36:33 Maybe. Well, I'm thinking of something else. I'm thinking of, say people who didn't vote for Trump trusting Trump supporters less because they're willing to go along with anything Trump does or says.

Demetri Kofinas: 36:45 Yeah, indeed. That also goes the other direction as well. People who -

Kevin Vallier: 36:48 Yes. No, I think so. Yeah. I actually argue in the Wall Street Journal piece that I think, that because economic inequality doesn't explain falling trust, and because corruption hasn't changed that much in the United States, the official measures, and because-

Demetri Kofinas: 37:02 But are those accurate, those official measures?

Kevin Vallier: 37:05 Yeah, I think so, but at least as far as I know, like the World Bank has a corrupt ... There's a number of different corruption indices that all seem to be from reputable places.

Demetri Kofinas: 37:13 But the government has involved itself more in the private sector today than at any point in my lifetime, right? All these federal reserve liquidity facilities and government fiscal spending programs are huge opportunities for pork. I use that term loosely.

Kevin Vallier: 37:28 Yes, but we got rid of earmarks at the same time, which I actually think was a mistake, but so there's been forces moving in either direction, and it's hard to measure [crosstalk 00:37:39].

Demetri Kofinas: 37:38 And we have citizens United too, which passed in 20 ... Was it 2010?

Kevin Vallier: 37:42 That's probably the affected things on the left on the perceptions of things. I don't think it actually has mattered that much for outcomes because the big money tends to cancel itself out, I think. Note how the big money was on Biden side. How much do we hear about it this cycle?

Demetri Kofinas: 37:56 Yeah. Well, that's because the media is primarily progressive.

Kevin Vallier: 38:00 Well, yes, but I think it probably didn't have any big effect on the outcome and I think that a lot of people are less sensitive.

Demetri Kofinas: 38:08 Well, how much of that is because people have become tribal and polarized?

Kevin Vallier: 38:12 Okay. This is where I think that things really matter and I really talk about in the book about how polarization and social distrust feed one another. We have the

data sets that are out there, and hopefully one of your listeners will hear this and want to help me put the data together, because I've put out feelers for lots of different organizations and I can't find some smart young person that wants to coauthor with me about this. Because I can't run the regression software. I just don't know how to do it as a philosopher.

- Kevin Vallier:** 38:37 Calling any listeners who want to help me work through the social trust and polarization databases and put them together for the first time. But here's the hypothesis that I think there's evidence for, but we can get much more robust evidence very quickly, about whether we have some good evidence for, which is first, that lower social trust is causing more polarization, and second, the more polarization is causing more social or less social trust. So, we can examine both ends of that cycle. Lower social trust, I think leads ... Well, first off, let me back up and try to say a little bit about what political polarization even is, is actually four different phenomenon that get jammed together.
- Kevin Vallier:** 39:16 First, let's distinguish between people changing their minds and sorting. Polarization is when people change their positions to end up further apart. Sorting is when you just spend more time with people that already agree with you. Then there's polarization or sorting that can occur by issue or by emotions. You can have issue-based polarization, where people are further apart in the issues, or you can have an affective polarization where people hate each other more, more affecting sorting where people are spending less time with people they hate and more time with people they trust.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 39:50 Are we saying affective polarization and sorting?
- Kevin Vallier:** 39:54 Yes. Some people are right to say, well, we don't disagree that much more on the issues. I think we've moved further apart on some issues, but the lion's share of it is affective polarization and affective sorting. Things like the number of people who don't want their kids to marry someone of the other party is where opposition to interracial dating was 50 years ago.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 40:16 Wow. Look, who's coming to dinner. They should make a remake of look, who's coming to dinner where a Republican brings home a Democrat, or vice versa.
- Kevin Vallier:** 40:24 Yeah. No, I think that's right. Now we've got the idea of polarization sort of on the table. It's beginning the worst at the elite level, and the more educated people are, the more polarized they are, in general, particularly if they're white. Because black Americans, it's different, because they tend to be very socially conservative and economically liberal, so they don't really fit the standards spectrum very, very well. It's one of the reasons the moderate voters...
- Demetri Kofinas:** 40:47 Because there's less division within the black community? Is that your point?
- Kevin Vallier:** 40:50 As far as I know in politics, yes, there's more agreement, but they also have unusual views because they're socially conservative and economically liberal, and that's why they tend to be moderate Democrats, and in my view, tend to have pretty good sense for who to nominate.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 41:02 Because they approach politics as less ...

Kevin Vallier: 41:04 Less Ideologically.

Demetri Kofinas: 41:05 Exactly. Right.

Kevin Vallier: 41:07 Yeah, and more transactional, which I think is actually a better mindset overall despite being a philosopher.

Demetri Kofinas: 41:11 Yeah, totally. It's less a sport for them.

Kevin Vallier: 41:15 Well, this is another reason why the democratic party is much less crazy than the Republican party, because it's a coalition of people with lots of differences and lots of respects. Different cultures, whereas, in the Republican party, you can get extreme polarization and tribal thinking that I think can take over much easier. Now, among elite progressives, there's a lot of tribal interests too. White progressives I think can be as bad as white conservatives. I think a polarization is primarily a white phenomenon, and primarily a phenomenon, hot college educated whites and elected officials.

Demetri Kofinas: 41:44 That's a really interesting observation. I wonder how latently true it is in the sense that a lot of sort of traditional lunch-bucket Democrats moved over to the Republican party and became Trump supporters.

Kevin Vallier: 41:59 Yeah, and the movement in the other direction, particularly suburban women moving out of the ... College educated, suburban women moving out of the Republican party.

Demetri Kofinas: 42:06 Republican party into the democratic party.

Kevin Vallier: 42:08 Although, we'll see how that goes when you don't have someone who's engaged in all kinds of awful-

Demetri Kofinas: 42:13 In misogynistic language and all sorts of ...

Kevin Vallier: 42:15 Yeah. It'll be interesting. I mean, for instance, Nikki Haley is the nominee or something, to see if that changes.

Demetri Kofinas: 42:20 Do you think she would be the nominee? Has she ...

Kevin Vallier: 42:22 I don't think so, but I'm just giving an example of someone.

Demetri Kofinas: 42:25 They're putting Pompeo out there.

Kevin Vallier: 42:27 No, that's not going to happen. I mean, it's very hard to know, because the Republican party is a dumpster fire right now in terms of its own internal stability. It's actually, I mean, we shift gears a little bit to that analysis. But let me just [crosstalk 00:42:45].

Demetri Kofinas: 42:45 No, yeah, but I would like to hear your thoughts about that because this is timely.

- Kevin Vallier:** 42:48 Yeah. No, we'll go to that very quickly, but I just wanted to say that the last thing, I think, lower social trust makes it easier to polarize and makes polarization worse, because if we had high levels of trust, but we came to disagree more, we could probably work it out. But if you have low trust, you're going to hate and distrust the people who disagree with you, and that just creates all kinds of problems. Political polarization itself is not, in itself a problem, it's a problem in low trust environments. But it also drives lower trust because it makes tribes observationally salient. You can detect who's an out-group and who's in-group.
- Kevin Vallier:** 43:23 That's, I think lowering social trust, because can you trust most people? Yeah, but not Republicans. I think partisan distrust is feeding social distress. I think that's actually going to turn out to explain a lot of what's going on because the traditional explanations of inequality, of corruption, of things like that, I think don't work very well in the United States context. Then switching over to party analysis, there's a polarization scholar who I think very highly of, Nolan McCarty at Princeton, who wrote the book *Polarization: What Everyone Needs to Know*, and created the polarization index that we use to measure polarization.
- Kevin Vallier:** 44:01 One of the things he points out in his book is really fascinating. He says, actually, compared to international democratic parties, the Republican party is a very weak party in the sense that it doesn't have a lot of internal control over who it nominates or its platform. Special interests and grifters dominate the Republican party in a way that's very unusual in developed democracies. You can have a total outsider come in and take over the party. The Democrats have more controls on this, they're much maligned to superdelegates, which I wish they had in the Republican party. There would be no Trump if the Republicans had super delegates.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 44:33 How politically feasible is using superdelegates though? Remember, Hillary Clinton was ridiculed in 2008 with the suggestion that she might actually rely on superdelegates to beat Barack Obama in the primary.
- Kevin Vallier:** 44:46 Yeah, it's because you have primaries combined with superdelegates, that creates the perception of unfairness. But you're watching the crown. I mean, it's not like Margaret Thatcher was knifed by her on party. It's not like there was an election and she lost. She was chosen internal to the party. She wasn't chosen in a primary system. So, in the British system, it's extremely democratic, but they don't have primaries. You vote for the party, you think, okay, I vote for the party because I think they have the good sense to pick good leaders. I kind of know who I'm electing. I kind of get it. But most party systems are not like ours in the perspective.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 45:21 As a political philosopher, you're really perfect to comment on this. I majored in both economics and in political science. One of my classes of course, was comparative politics. I studied a number of parliamentary democracies in Europe and compared them to the United States. There are also mixed systems like France. Parliamentary systems seem to be overall much better than our system. I'm curious what you-
- Kevin Vallier:** 45:49 Yes. That's widely agreed upon among political scientists.

Demetri Kofinas: 45:52 Actually, you can actually get stuff done. You don't get stuck in these prolonged periods of gridlock.

Kevin Vallier: 45:56 Yes.

Demetri Kofinas: 45:56 Of course the American system was designed, in part, to do that, because you didn't ...

Kevin Vallier: 46:01 In part, but not to this degree.

Demetri Kofinas: 46:02 Legislation was seen as potentially evil.

Kevin Vallier: 46:04 Well, yeah. I mean, but the idea was to lengthen the amount of time we were thinking it over, not to make sure we make ... Yes, it was also to make legislation harder, it was to make it wiser, and a lot of that just didn't kind of pan out. But now, US officials make recommendations to do noocracy, they recommend parliamentary systems. Because we have this kind of excessive reverence for the constitution, which was an amazing thing for its time, but the founders didn't intend for us to have it forever. They thought we'd be able to improve upon it. I mean, they were trying to improve in the British constitution.

Kevin Vallier: 46:39 I think they would have thought, if the country made it this long, that we'd have a different constitution. In some ways, we do without it having literally changed. But yeah, the presidential democracies aren't as good. Another cool thing about parliamentary democracies is the parties often have to go into coalition with one another in a public way and we just don't have anything like that. It's just like, one side gets all the cabinet officials. So, I think [crosstalk 00:47:01].

Demetri Kofinas: 47:02 It gives you a more ... The fact that there's actually room for a viable green party in a parliamentary democracy allows for a greater diversity of political opinions to have legitimate voice.

Kevin Vallier: 47:14 That's right. That's right, and so you don't have red versus blue. If we add a powerful third, we'd have red, blue and yellow or something. Yeah, I think if there were any feasible way to shift to parliamentary democracy, I would favor it unless were obviously very violent. I think it would be depolarizing in lots of respects. No, I'm a very big supporter of parliamentary democracy, and of abolishing presidential primaries. We didn't always have them. I think the smoke-filled rooms aren't ideal, but I think that they're better than the system that we have. Now, we see the Republican party's inability to control itself, I think the current hesitance about Trump today is, I actually think some of these politicians are worried they're going to die.

Demetri Kofinas: 47:58 Absolutely. Oh, well, I mean, Steve Scalise got shot along with some of his colleagues who got shot at including, I think Ron Paul was shot at. Not shot. Actually, Ron Paul, both, I think he was there at the baseball field in Washington.

Kevin Vallier: 48:11 Ryan Paul. This is Ryan Paul.

Demetri Kofinas: 48:12 That's what I meant. Sorry, Ryan Paul, both at the baseball field, but I think he was also attacked by his neighbor not too long ago.

Kevin Vallier: 48:18 That's true,

Demetri Kofinas: 48:18 Yeah, legitimately concerned.

Kevin Vallier: 48:21 Yeah. I had no idea how much Trump would be able to profit, well, we'll see if he ultimately profits, from all the distrust of the media and things like that on the right. I'll say this, well, my Christmas was pretty difficult because I went back to South Alabama and everybody believed in voter fraud. Everybody.

Demetri Kofinas: 48:46 When you ask people about, because I've gone through this cycle of asking people, I know many, many, many Trump supporters.

Kevin Vallier: 48:54 Yes, me too.

Demetri Kofinas: 48:55 Yeah, so for me, someone who votes ... "Trump supporter's" not some weird alien species that I stereotype, it's people I know, some people I'm friends with, and people vote for-

Kevin Vallier: 49:05 Friends with on Facebook.

Demetri Kofinas: 49:06 Yeah, so it's not like, if you vote for Donald Trump, you're not a necessarily bad evil person.

Kevin Vallier: 49:12 Yep, no, that's right.

Demetri Kofinas: 49:12 There are all sorts of reasons that people vote for Donald Trump. But I've asked some of these folks, some of my friends and other people who basically say, a lot of times they'll just say, no, it was definitely stolen. I'm like, how do you know that? How do you know that the election was stolen? Ultimately, they don't put forward any evidence for it, or what they do put forward is, is ultimately it's not credible.

Kevin Vallier: 49:34 It's a record of an irregularity with no evidence [crosstalk 00:49:36].

Demetri Kofinas: 49:36 Exactly.

Kevin Vallier: 49:38 It's just a YouTube video of some guy shuffling ballots, or something like that. Trust me, I spent a lot of Christmas looking at this stuff.

Demetri Kofinas: 49:45 Yeah, totally. But I think it stems from a very legitimate lack of trust.

Kevin Vallier: 49:52 Yes, in the media.

Demetri Kofinas: 49:54 A completely legitimate, in the media and the political system, in the "deep state" for all good reasons. That whole segment of society has so badly lost credibility. That of course, the public that doesn't have a lot of time to try and sort through all the bullshit, and of course, knows that they can be easily hoodwinked, and on top of all that, we live this world that's intermediated by layer and layer, and layer, and layer, and layer, and layer, of technology and algorithms that selectively edit this piece of information and that piece of information, then they

see these sort of discretionary practices of banning Parler, but Facebook and Twitter can continue. It's ridiculous. So, I understand why people have a universal distrust.

- Kevin Vallier:** 50:39 Media distrust is something that I'm really only starting ... I mean, I was studying it some in preparation for this, but I was trying to be a generalist. I was trying to speak about trusted institutions in general, but media distrust has gotten me really fascinated, not only because now my personal experience, but my difficulty of coming up with policy reforms that would actually increase trust in the media. I mean, one thing I think is, I wish we paid more attention to the local media, but the Internet's made it easier to focus on national media, which I think tends to be more sensationalist, and also doesn't relay as many trues that people can detect as true or false.
- Kevin Vallier:** 51:12 In the local media, it's like, oh yeah, they represented that correctly, or not, so it's easier to form reasonable beliefs about their trust levels. One thing I think that's underappreciated about low conservative trust in media under Trump is two things. First, many of my Trump's supporting family and friends think that presidents are owed a chance, and that people were after Trump from the beginning. Now, I understand there's legitimate grievances [crosstalk 00:51:39] from the beginning.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 51:40 I think that's true.
- Kevin Vallier:** 51:41 But there's the sense in which they say over and over again, they never gave him a chance at all. I think that people were so unused to all the outrageous stuff he was saying and tweeting, that he was just offending their piety so much, they lost self control, and also they were after ratings. I think that, because Trump knew how to irritate people so effectively, that's what created that sense in the media. He said many things that were unacceptable, but I tend to be a guy who tries to look a little bit more at policy rather than the spectacle, even though I think the spectacle does matter. I was more thinking, oh wow, maybe he won't get us into another war, and he's actually been not awesome or anything like that on foreign policy, but he hasn't destroyed a country.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 52:29 Well, practically, he hasn't done as much damage as, at the very least, one of our two previous presidents.
- Kevin Vallier:** 52:35 Yes, that's correct. I think that there's this also the sense of constant new stuff. Most of my family was like, what is going on with this Mueller thing and this Russia thing? There were so many ins, outs, and what-have-yous that a lot of people just have trouble following. [crosstalk 00:52:52].
- Demetri Kofinas:** 52:53 Because a lot of it was propaganda by the democratic party.
- Kevin Vallier:** 52:57 It's amazing how much of it actually turned out to be BS and how bad it was over what happened-
- Demetri Kofinas:** 53:01 I wasn't surprised.

Kevin Vallier: 53:03 Well, particularly, I think the big moment, the big moment was when Bob Mueller was finally interviewed. The liberal media, and I don't use that phrase a lot, but left wing private media had been building him up as this amazing even handed Republican, and he just sounded kind of like a daughtering old man. I think that a lot of people thought, wait, wait, wait, this was like this ultimate mastermind. This guy can't barely string together an argument. That's exaggerating some, but that was when it really popped and deflated. It also just turned out that there just wasn't much to what was going on, such that, when it came time to something, I think Trump actually did very badly with Ukraine thing, the Russia thing had already detracted so much from it.

Kevin Vallier: 53:54 My sense is that the way that there'd been so much build up about Russia collusion, Russia and the vote, Russia and all this stuff, so I actually think that the Ukraine thing was a very bad behavior, but I wasn't entirely certain then that it was a removable offense, although I do think the current stuff is, but it's-

Demetri Kofinas: 54:14 Well, his comments to the governor, I think it was in Georgia, took it to another level.

Kevin Vallier: 54:21 Yes, no, I know.

Demetri Kofinas: 54:22 I need you to find me 11,000 votes.

Kevin Vallier: 54:26 Yeah.

Demetri Kofinas: 54:28 The Democrats burn their credibility early on in the administration.

Kevin Vallier: 54:32 They were just so upset all the time. I mean, one of my friends, he's a really good philosopher and a conservative and a very good friend. He says, one of the worst things about Trump is that he makes the left worse. It's weird because it's weird to blame him for that. Because I mean, it's partly their responsibility, but it's an effect of his being president, even if it's not his responsibility, that the most people on the left are freaked out and angry and miserable most of the time when they follow politics closely, which many on the left do, I think more than people on the right on the hall. Because they're more invested in it. So, a lot of people in the right are just in church a lot instead of focused ... They are more focused on [crosstalk 00:55:12].

Demetri Kofinas: 55:11 It's also interesting how qualitatively they ... The right wing media really drums ... Well, they both do, I guess, in different ways. They drum the fear index in people, but they do it in different ways.

Kevin Vallier: 55:27 Yeah. The worry, I've been developing a lower opinion of the right wing media circuit over time because of this book I read, Network Propaganda. I think that the biggest problem is there's too few right wing media outlets. What happens is that they can get caught in a sort of very obviously false information much more easily, whereas on the left, NPR can poke holes in MSNBC, something, or other in a kind of subtle way. There's a lot more levels of left-wing media and types of left-wing media that you can trust to varying extents.

Demetri Kofinas: 56:03 Well, Leslie Stahl recently interviewed, for 60 minutes, Nancy Pelosi. I don't know if you saw that interview.

Kevin Vallier: 56:08 No, I did not.

Demetri Kofinas: 56:09 It was fantastic. I mean, it reminded me of ... Did you see the Wolf Blitzer interview of Nancy Pelosi from like a month ago or something?

Kevin Vallier: 56:15 I should have, but I didn't. I heard it was interesting.

Demetri Kofinas: 56:17 Yeah, she came across so entitled. She was outraged that she was being questioned. Similarly, Leslie Stahl really put her feet to the fire in the 60 minute interview. Obviously, there's a big difference between watching MSNBC or The Young Turks on YouTube and watching, let's say 60 minutes, or PBS. But look, Kevin, I want to move the second half of our conversation into the overtime, and we can continue this part of the conversation. I also want to get back to some of the observations you had in your book around social and political trust in partisan divergence.

Demetri Kofinas: 56:52 Also, I teased early on your work and observations around communism and the role of growing up in a communist society. I think this is super interesting, because I've known a lot of people over my life who grew up either in the Soviet Union, or in the Eastern block or in communist China, and they are dispositionally different. I think a big part of that is how they grew up in terms of who they could trust and how they could trust. For anyone who is new to the program, Hidden Forces is listener supported. We don't accept advertisers or commercial sponsors. The entire show is funded from top to bottom by listeners like you.

Demetri Kofinas: 57:33 If you want access to the second part of my conversation with Kevin, as well as the transcripts and rundowns to this episode, and every other episode we've ever done, head over to patreon.com/hiddenforces. There's also a link in the summary page to this episode with instructions on how to connect the overtime feed through your phone so you can listen to these extra discussions, just like you listen to the regular podcast. Kevin, stick around. We're going to move the rest of our conversation into the overtime.

Kevin Vallier: 58:01 Great

Demetri Kofinas: 58:02 Today's episode of Hidden Forces was recorded in New York City. For more information about this week's episode, or if you want easy access to related programming, visit our website at hiddenforces.io, and subscribe to our free email list. If you want access to overtime segments, episode transcripts, and show rundowns full of links and detailed information related to each and every episode, check out our premium subscription available through the Hidden Forces website, or through our Patreon page patreon.com/hiddenforces.

Demetri Kofinas: 58:40 Today's episode was produced by me and edited by Stylianos Nicolaou. For more episodes, you can check out our website at hiddenforces.io. Join the conversation at Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @HiddenForcesPod, or send me an email. As always, thanks for listening. We'll see you next week.

