strangers in their own land

Strangers in Their Own Land: Understanding the Feeling of Displacement and Alienation

strangers in their own land is a phrase that evokes a powerful and often painful image—individuals feeling disconnected or alienated from the very place they call home. This experience is more common than one might think, touching on themes of identity, belonging, cultural shifts, and societal changes. Whether triggered by political, social, or environmental factors, feeling like a stranger in one's own land can profoundly affect personal and collective well-being. In this article, we'll explore the roots of this phenomenon, its impact on communities, and what it means to reclaim a sense of belonging.

What Does It Mean to Be Strangers in Their Own Land?

Being strangers in their own land refers to a state where people feel alienated or disconnected from their homeland. This sensation arises when familiar surroundings, cultural norms, or social structures shift so dramatically that the inhabitants no longer recognize their own environment or place within it. It's a complex emotional and psychological state that can stem from various causes, including demographic changes, economic upheavals, or political polarization.

This feeling is not limited to any single group or region. People across the globe—from rural communities facing urbanization to minority populations experiencing cultural marginalization—may encounter this sense of estrangement. It reflects a broader struggle with identity and belonging, often intensified by rapid changes in society.

Historical and Contemporary Examples

History offers many instances where groups have felt like strangers in their own land. Indigenous peoples worldwide have long experienced displacement and cultural erosion, resulting in profound alienation. Similarly, immigrants and refugees sometimes find themselves disconnected from their new surroundings, though the phrase more specifically applies to those who feel estranged within their native lands.

In contemporary society, political divides have deepened feelings of disconnection. For example, rural populations in certain countries might feel overlooked or misunderstood by urban centers, leading to a perception of being strangers amid familiar landscapes. Economic shifts, such as the decline of traditional industries, can exacerbate this feeling, as communities watch their way of life change or disappear.

The Psychological Impact of Feeling Alienated

The emotional toll of feeling like strangers in their own land is significant. It can lead to anxiety, frustration, and a diminished sense of identity. When a person or group no longer feels at home in

their environment, it challenges their fundamental need for belonging and security.

Identity Crisis and Cultural Displacement

One major consequence is an identity crisis. People may question their place in society or struggle to reconcile their cultural heritage with the evolving social landscape. Cultural displacement can occur when traditions, language, or customs lose their prominence or acceptance, making individuals feel invisible or marginalized.

Social Fragmentation and Community Breakdown

On a broader scale, this alienation can lead to social fragmentation. When communities feel disconnected from one another or from the broader society, trust and cooperation diminish. This breakdown can fuel polarization, misunderstandings, and even conflict, making it harder to address shared challenges.

Strangers in Their Own Land and Political Divides

Political polarization often intensifies feelings of being strangers in one's own country. When political ideologies clash sharply, groups may feel that their values and voices are underrepresented or attacked.

How Political Rhetoric Shapes Belonging

The way political narratives frame "us versus them" can deepen the sense of alienation. For example, rural voters might feel demonized or ignored by urban politicians, while urban residents might feel misunderstood by rural counterparts. This divide can make people feel as though their homeland has changed into an unrecognizable place where they no longer fit.

Bridging the Divide

Addressing this requires empathy and dialogue. Recognizing the fears and hopes of all parties helps build bridges. Efforts to foster inclusive conversations and policies can reduce the feeling of estrangement and promote a shared sense of belonging.

Environmental Changes and Their Role

Environmental transformations also contribute to the sensation of being strangers in one's land. Natural disasters, climate change, and urban development reshape landscapes, sometimes forcing

people to relocate or adapt to new realities.

Loss of Land and Livelihood

For many, especially indigenous communities and farmers, the land is more than just a place—it's a source of identity and livelihood. When environmental changes disrupt this connection, it can feel like losing a part of oneself. This dislocation adds another layer to the experience of alienation.

Adapting to New Realities

Despite these challenges, communities often find ways to adapt and preserve their ties to the land. This can involve sustainable practices, cultural revitalization, and advocacy to protect their environment and heritage.

Finding Ways to Reconnect and Reclaim Belonging

Feeling like strangers in one's own land is undeniably difficult, but there are paths toward healing and reconnection. Understanding and addressing the root causes of alienation is a crucial first step.

Embracing Cultural Heritage

Reconnecting with cultural roots can help restore a sense of identity. Engaging in traditional practices, language, and community events fosters pride and continuity, counteracting feelings of displacement.

Community Engagement and Dialogue

Active participation in local communities encourages bonds and mutual understanding. Dialogue across different groups can break down barriers and build empathy, helping people feel seen and heard.

Policy and Social Change

On a larger scale, inclusive policies that recognize diverse needs and histories can create environments where everyone feels valued. Addressing economic inequalities, supporting cultural preservation, and promoting social cohesion are vital.

The Broader Implications for Society

The phenomenon of feeling like strangers in their own land speaks to the dynamic nature of societies. It reminds us that belonging is not static; it requires ongoing effort to nurture and maintain. As populations evolve and societies face new challenges, fostering a sense of inclusion becomes essential for peace and progress.

Ultimately, acknowledging and addressing the experience of alienation can lead to stronger, more resilient communities. It encourages us to listen deeply, honor diverse narratives, and work together to create a shared future where no one feels like a stranger in the place they call home.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of 'Strangers in Their Own Land'?

'Strangers in Their Own Land' explores the cultural and political divide in America, particularly focusing on conservative white working-class communities in Louisiana and how they relate to environmental issues and government distrust.

Who is the author of 'Strangers in Their Own Land'?

The author of 'Strangers in Their Own Land' is Arlie Russell Hochschild, a sociologist known for her work on social emotions and political divides.

What methodology did Arlie Russell Hochschild use in 'Strangers in Their Own Land'?

Hochschild used immersive ethnographic research, spending years living in a Louisiana bayou community to understand the perspectives and emotions of conservative residents.

Why is the book titled 'Strangers in Their Own Land'?

The title reflects how many conservative Americans feel alienated or marginalized in their own country due to cultural and political shifts that seem to reject their values and way of life.

What role does environmentalism play in 'Strangers in Their Own Land'?

Environmental issues are central to the book as it examines why many residents in polluted areas resist environmental regulations, seeing them as threats to their livelihoods and identity.

How does 'Strangers in Their Own Land' explain political polarization in the US?

The book highlights emotional and cultural factors, such as feelings of loss, resentment, and distrust

in government, which contribute to the political divide, especially in conservative communities.

What insights does 'Strangers in Their Own Land' provide about empathy across political divides?

'Strangers in Their Own Land' suggests that understanding the emotional experiences and values of others is crucial for bridging political divides and fostering empathy.

How has 'Strangers in Their Own Land' been received by readers and critics?

The book has been widely praised for its nuanced, compassionate portrayal of conservative Americans and its contribution to discussions about political and cultural polarization.

Can 'Strangers in Their Own Land' help improve political dialogue in America?

Yes, by offering deep insights into the motivations and feelings of those on the political right, the book encourages more respectful and informed conversations across divides.

What lessons can policymakers learn from 'Strangers in Their Own Land'?

Policymakers can learn the importance of recognizing emotional and cultural factors when crafting policies, especially in areas resistant to change, to create more effective and inclusive solutions.

Additional Resources

Strangers in Their Own Land: Understanding the Complexities of Identity and Belonging

strangers in their own land is a phrase that resonates deeply in contemporary discussions about identity, migration, and cultural belonging. It encapsulates the paradox experienced by individuals or communities who, despite living within the borders of their native or long-term home country, feel alienated or disconnected from the dominant societal narrative. This phenomenon raises profound questions about social cohesion, political polarization, and the evolving nature of national identity in an increasingly globalized world.

Examining the Origins of Feeling Like Strangers

The sensation of being strangers in their own land often stems from a complex interplay of historical, socio-economic, and cultural factors. For many marginalized groups, systemic inequalities, cultural displacement, or political disenfranchisement contribute to a sense of exclusion. This experience is not limited to immigrants or newcomers; indigenous populations, ethnic minorities, and even certain socio-economic classes within a nation can feel estranged within

their homeland.

A notable example is the way some rural communities in developed countries perceive themselves. Despite residing in regions that have historically been their ancestral homes, changing economic landscapes and shifting political priorities can create feelings of neglect or invisibility. Studies have shown that economic decline, coupled with cultural shifts, can intensify feelings of alienation among working-class populations, further exacerbating social divides.

The Role of Political and Cultural Narratives

Political rhetoric and media representation play a significant role in shaping perceptions of belonging. When dominant narratives portray certain groups as outsiders or threats, it reinforces the feeling of being strangers in their own land. This dynamic is evident in debates surrounding immigration policies, national identity, and cultural heritage.

For instance, in many Western democracies, political discourse has increasingly highlighted anxieties about globalization and demographic changes. This has sometimes resulted in polarizing messages that pit "native" populations against immigrants or minority communities. The consequence is a fragmented society where individuals question their place and acceptance within their own country.

Impact on Social Fabric and Community Dynamics

The repercussions of widespread alienation are profound, affecting both individual well-being and broader societal stability. When people feel estranged from their societal context, trust in institutions diminishes, and social cohesion weakens. This can lead to increased political polarization, social unrest, and challenges in governance.

Psychological and Social Consequences

Feeling like strangers in their own land can have significant psychological effects, including increased stress, anxiety, and a diminished sense of identity. Social isolation often accompanies these feelings, making it challenging for individuals to engage fully in civic life. Research in social psychology highlights how belongingness is a fundamental human need, integral to mental health and community participation.

Economic and Political Ramifications

On a macro level, alienation within communities can translate into economic disenfranchisement and political disengagement. Voter turnout may decline among marginalized groups, or conversely, these feelings can fuel support for populist movements that promise to restore a perceived lost identity or sovereignty. This dynamic has been observed in various regions worldwide, where economic stagnation intersects with cultural anxieties.

Strangers in Their Own Land: Case Studies and Comparative Perspectives

To fully grasp the nuances of this phenomenon, examining specific contexts provides valuable insights. Two illustrative cases involve indigenous populations in settler-colonial states and working-class communities in post-industrial societies.

Indigenous Populations and Cultural Displacement

Indigenous peoples in countries like Canada, Australia, and the United States often describe experiences that align with being strangers in their own land. Despite their deep historical and cultural ties, colonial legacies have marginalized these groups politically, economically, and socially. Efforts toward reconciliation and recognition aim to address these injustices, yet many indigenous communities continue to face challenges related to land rights, cultural preservation, and social equity.

Post-Industrial Working-Class Communities

In regions affected by deindustrialization, such as the American Rust Belt or parts of Northern England, long-time residents confront economic decline and cultural shifts that contribute to their alienation. The erosion of traditional industries and changes in demographic compositions foster a narrative of loss and disconnection. These sentiments are often captured in literature, documentaries, and political analyses exploring the lived experiences of these communities.

Addressing the Challenges: Pathways to Inclusion and Reconnection

Understanding the causes and manifestations of feeling like strangers in their own land is the first step toward fostering more inclusive societies. Policymakers, community leaders, and civil society organizations have a role in bridging divides and promoting dialogue.

Promoting Inclusive Political Discourse

One approach involves reshaping political and media narratives to emphasize shared values and common goals rather than division. Inclusive messaging that acknowledges diverse identities while promoting unity can help reduce feelings of alienation.

Economic and Social Investment

Targeted investments in education, infrastructure, and social services can revitalize marginalized communities, providing tangible benefits that reinforce a sense of belonging. Supporting cultural preservation and community-led initiatives also strengthens social bonds and acknowledges historical identities.

Encouraging Civic Engagement

Facilitating greater participation in democratic processes empowers individuals and groups who might otherwise feel disconnected. Civic education, accessible voting mechanisms, and community forums can enhance engagement and foster a collective sense of ownership over national narratives.

Conclusion

The metaphor of being strangers in their own land captures a multifaceted social challenge rooted in identity, belonging, and justice. As societies navigate the complexities of diversity and change, addressing the underlying causes of alienation becomes essential for building resilient, cohesive communities. Through informed dialogue, inclusive policies, and sustained investment, it is possible to transform feelings of estrangement into opportunities for connection and shared prosperity.

Strangers In Their Own Land

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strangers in their own land: Strangers in Their Own Land Arlie Russell Hochschild, 2018-02-20 The National Book Award Finalist and New York Times bestseller that became a guide and balm for a country struggling to understand the election of Donald Trump A generous but disconcerting look at the Tea Party. . . . This is a smart, respectful and compelling book. —Jason DeParle, The New York Times Book Review When Donald Trump won the 2016 presidential election, a bewildered nation turned to Strangers in Their Own Land to understand what Trump voters were thinking when they cast their ballots. Arlie Hochschild, one of the most influential sociologists of her generation, had spent the preceding five years immersed in the community around Lake Charles, Louisiana, a Tea Party stronghold. As Jedediah Purdy put it in the New Republic, Hochschild is fascinated by how people make sense of their lives. . . . [Her] attentive, detailed portraits . . . reveal a gulf between Hochchild's 'strangers in their own land' and a new elite. Already a favorite common read book in communities and on campuses across the country and called humble and important by David Brooks and masterly by Atul Gawande, Hochschild's book has been lauded by Noam Chomsky, New Orleans mayor Mitch Landrieu, and countless others. The paperback edition features a new

afterword by the author reflecting on the election of Donald Trump and the other events that have unfolded both in Louisiana and around the country since the hardcover edition was published, and also includes a readers' group guide at the back of the book.

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strangers in their own land: Summary and Analysis of Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right Worth Books, 2017-05-16 So much to read, so little time? This brief overview of Strangers in Their Own Land tells you what you need to know—before or after you read Arlie Russell Hochschild's book. Crafted and edited with care, Worth Books set the standard for quality and give you the tools you need to be a well-informed reader. This short summary and analysis of Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right includes: Historical context Chapter-by-chapter overviews Character profiles Detailed timeline of events Important guotes Fascinating trivia Glossary of terms Supporting material to enhance your understanding of the original work About Strangers in Their Own Land by Arlie Russell Hochschild: Renowned sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild seeks to understand why some American conservatives continue to vote for policies that ultimately harm them. She traveled to Louisiana to complete a five-year study, talking to members of the Tea Party and attempting to breach the "empathy wall" that stands between conservatives and liberals. A compassionate observer, Hochschild pursues the heart of the "deeper story," blaming the narrative—not her subjects—that informs these peoples' choices. She particularly examines the long history of environmental pollution in the region and the state governments' failure to address it—a failure that this political faction refuses to condemn. Strangers in Their Own Land is a compelling analysis of one of the most important factors in American culture today, and Hochschild's measured and empathic approach leads her readers toward a greater understanding of their fellow citizens. The summary and analysis in this ebook are intended to complement your reading experience and bring you closer to a great work of nonfiction.

strangers in their own land: How the Liberal Arts Can Save Liberal Democracy Steven M. DeLue, 2018-06-06 Currently, liberal democracy is threatened by authoritarian movements, not just in the United States but also in societies around the world. The liberal arts arrests authoritarian tendencies by advancing what it shares with the citizens of a liberal democracy: autonomy and freedom. Autonomy is the capacity to make reasoned decisions about a host of political, social, and personal matters—independent of external parties who seek to control our lives for the sake of their ends and at the cost of our freedom. But autonomy depends on people being able to enter into discussions—what I call discourses of mutual respect—designed to test ideas in public against facts and good reasons. This discourse is facilitated by an enlarged culture through which individuals identify what they hold in common and by which individuals work to understand their differences. Now, authoritarian regimes reject autonomy because it empowers citizens to designate the boundaries and content of political authority. Liberal democracies, in contrast, embrace autonomy

because it is the basis for the political institutions that provide civic equality—and through it—the freedom of citizens to control their destiny. Yet, ironically, an enlarged culture and the discourse of mutual respect that, together, sustain autonomy are not likely to be produced within a highly partisan political atmosphere of a liberal democracy. Still, a liberal democracy is open to the importation of these elements from the liberal arts. Thus, saving liberal democracy from authoritarianism depends on a robust liberal arts presence in society. What reforms of the liberal arts are needed to make this objective possible? Much rides on the answer to this question. For the fact is that if the liberal arts recedes to a whisper, liberal democracy is likely to be defeated by the authoritarian's bluster-filled and always nihilist roar.

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Freudian psychoanalytic theory and early Frankfurt School Critical Theory provide analytical tools to explain this apparent contradiction in psychological terms. Living under precarity capitalism generates feelings of failure and anxiety, which people experience as non-wholeness, because it has become difficult if not impossible to live up to the fetish of economic, interpersonal, and bodily success, and the far right preys on such feelings. Its psychologically oriented propaganda tactics produce the illusion of wholeness and a positive sense of self while leaving the socioeconomic conditions that cause people's suffering intact. At the same time, they remove the inhibitions that keep people's repressed aggression and racist and sexist attitudes in check. To demonstrate the workings of this process, Leeb compares cases including Trump and the alt-right in the United States and the Freedom Party and the identitarian movement in Austria. At once theoretically rich and politically engaged, this book also offers ways to resist the far right and counter the psychological appeal of its propaganda techniques.

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strangers in their own land: Moral Minefields Shai M. Dromi, Samuel D. Stabler, 2023-08-18 An analysis of the effects of moral debates on sociological research. Few academic disciplines are as contentious as sociology. Sociologists routinely turn on their peers with fierce criticisms not only of their empirical rigor and theoretical clarity but of their character as well. Yet despite the controversy, scholars manage to engage in thorny debates without being censured. How? In Moral Minefields, Shai M. Dromi and Samuel D. Stabler consider five recent controversial topics in sociology—race and genetics, secularization theory, methodological nationalism, the culture of poverty, and parenting practices—to reveal how moral debates affect the field. Sociologists, they show, tend to respond to moral criticism of scholarly work in one of three ways. While some accept and endorse the criticism, others work out new ways to address these topics that can transcend the criticism, while still others build on the debates to form new, more morally acceptable research. Moral Minefields addresses one of the most prominent guestions in contemporary sociological theory: how can sociology contribute to the development of a virtuous society? Rather than suggesting that sociologists adopt a clear paradigm that can guide their research toward neatly defined moral aims, Dromi and Stabler argue that sociologists already largely possess and employ the repertoires to address guestions of moral virtue in their research. The conversation thus is moved away from attempts to theorize the moral goods sociologists should support and toward questions about how sociologists manage the plurality of moral positions that present themselves in their studies. Moral diversity within sociology, they show, fosters disciplinary progress.

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of the Federated States of Micronesia's (FSM) engagement with the outside world. Situated in the northwest Pacific, FSM's strategic location has led to four colonial rulers. Histories of FSM to date have been largely written by sympathetic outsiders. Indigenous perspectives of FSM history have been largely absent from the main corpus of historical literature. A new generation of Micronesian scholars are starting to write their own history from Micronesian perspectives and using Micronesian forms of history. This book argues that Micronesians have been dealing successfully with the outside world throughout the colonial era in ways colonial authorities were often unaware of. This argument is sustained by examination of oral histories, secondary sources, interviews, field research and the personal experience of a person raised in the Mortlock Islands of Chuuk State. It reconstructs how Micronesian internal processes for social stability and mutual support endured, rather than succumbing to the different waves of colonisation. This study argues that colonisation did not destroy Micronesian cultures and identities, but that Micronesians recontextualised the changing conditions to suit their own circumstances. Their success rested on the indigenous doctrines of adaptation, assimilation and accommodation deeply rooted in the kinship doctrine of eaea fengen (sharing) and alilis fengen (assisting each other). These values pervade the Constitution of the FSM, which formally defines the modern identity of its indigenous peoples, reasserting and perpetuating Micronesian values and future continuity.

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contradictions between their political ideologies and their material circumstances. Over the course of her research, Hochschild focused on the issue of environmentalism by questioning locals ... PLEASE NOTE: This is a Summary, Analysis & Review of the book and NOT the original book. Inside this Summary, Analysis & Review of Arlie Russell Hochschild's Strangers in Their Own Land by Instaread: · Overview of the Book · Important People · Key Takeaways · Analysis of Key Takeaways About the Author With Instaread, you can get the key takeaways and analysis of a book in 15 minutes. We read every chapter, identify the key takeaways and analyze them for your convenience. Visit our website at instaread.co.

strangers in their own land: Political Speech as a Weapon Sylvia Gonzalez-Gorman, 2018-09-20 Provides a penetrating examination of how political rhetoric from public officials creates tensions via microaggression cues due to changing demographics, campaign rhetoric, and the use of social media. What are microaggression cues, and what are examples of those cues in political rhetoric? How have microaggression cues from former presidents, elected officials, and political candidates led to further polarization of America's citizens? What are the connections between these microaggression cues, the demographic shift of the United States, and the growing fear among longtime majority populations? Political Speech as a Weapon: Microaggression in a Changing Racial and Ethnic Environment answers these questions and helps readers understand related topics such as nativism, the transformation process of the U.S. population and cultural norms, and how Americans can best respond to evolving conditions to meet these challenges. Author Sylvia Gonzalez-Gorman addresses a blind spot in the field of American politics and connects hostile rhetoric by public officials to the effect of such rhetoric, which leads to the marginalization of groups and a polarizing cultural environment. The book specifically focuses on the role of political rhetoric as a microaggression cue and clearly illustrates how these cues are a well established-and damaging-component of U.S. political culture.

strangers in their own land: The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and its Historical Contexts Ehud Ben Zvi, Christoph Levin, 2010-10-19 In ancient Israelite literature Exile is seen as a central turning point within the course of the history of Israel. In these texts "the Exile" is a central ideological concept. It serves to explain the destruction of the monarchic polities and the social and economic disasters associated with them in terms that YHWH punished Israel/Judah for having abandoned his ways. As it develops an image of an unjust Israel, it creates one of a just deity. But YHWH is not only imagined as just, but also as loving and forgiving, for the exile is presented as a transitory state: Exile is deeply intertwined with its discursive counterpart, the certain "Return". As the Exile comes to be understood as a necessary purification or preparation for a renewal of YHWH's proper relationship with Israel, the seemingly unpleasant Exilic conditions begin, discursively, to shape an image of YHWH as loving Israel and teaching it. Exile is dystopia, but one that carries in itself all the seeds of utopia. The concept of Exile continued to exercise an important influence in the discourses of Israel in the Second Temple period, and was eventually influential in the production of eschatological visions.

strangers in their own land: Democratic Respect Christian F. Rostbøll, 2023-03-23 Commentators often interpret the resentment of supporters of populism as blindly emotional and unconnected to facts and principles. Democratic Respect argues instead that we should approach the populist politics of resentment as a struggle for recognition based on moral experiences that are intimately connected to people's factual and moral beliefs. By associating populist resentment with alleged violations of democratic principles, we can discuss what citizens and governments owe one another in terms of recognition and respect. Populism advances a unique interpretation of democracy and recognition, which Rostbøll confronts with the notion of democratic respect. How democracy should recognize the people is shown to be connected to debates over the meaning and value of democratic procedures, rights, majority rule, compromise, and public deliberation. The book builds a bridge between empirical research and philosophical analysis, while providing insights relevant to a public grappling with the challenges many democracies face today.

strangers in their own land: White Working Class Joan C. Williams, 2017-05-16 I

recommend a book by Professor Williams, it is really worth a read, it's called White Working Class. --Vice President Joe Biden on Pod Save America An Amazon Best Business and Leadership book of 2017 Around the world, populist movements are gaining traction among the white working class. Meanwhile, members of the professional elite—journalists, managers, and establishment politicians--are on the outside looking in, left to argue over the reasons. In White Working Class, Joan C. Williams, described as having something approaching rock star status by the New York Times, explains why so much of the elite's analysis of the white working class is misguided, rooted in class cluelessness. Williams explains that many people have conflated working class with poor--but the working class is, in fact, the elusive, purportedly disappearing middle class. They often resent the poor and the professionals alike. But they don't resent the truly rich, nor are they particularly bothered by income inequality. Their dream is not to join the upper middle class, with its different culture, but to stay true to their own values in their own communities--just with more money. While white working-class motivations are often dismissed as racist or xenophobic, Williams shows that they have their own class consciousness. White Working Class is a blunt, bracing narrative that sketches a nuanced portrait of millions of people who have proven to be a potent political force. For anyone stunned by the rise of populist, nationalist movements, wondering why so many would seemingly vote against their own economic interests, or simply feeling like a stranger in their own country, White Working Class will be a convincing primer on how to connect with a crucial set of workers--and voters.

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