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**Review of *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*. Katherine J. Cramer.  
Reviewed by Edward U. Murphy.**

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but will become also a longstanding reference for students and researchers who are interested in the field of social welfare studies and policy research.

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Katherine J. Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*. University of Chicago Press (2016), 256 pages, \$30.00 (paperback).

One of the most perplexing questions in current American politics is how a manifestly unqualified candidate such as Donald Trump could have been elected president in 2016. As a point of investigating that question, Katherine J. Cramer's book is an excellent place to start. *The Politics of Resentment* is a worthy addition to a growing category of recent books focusing on the perspective of the so-called white working class, a category also including ethnographic studies by Arlie Hochschild and Justin Gest, more personal works by J.D. Vance and Joan Williams, and a conservative analysis by Charles Murray.

Cramer's research is on Wisconsin and the contentious politics surrounding the politics of Governor Scott Walker, whose successful attacks on public employee unions led to an unsuccessful recall effort spearheaded by liberal and labor forces in the state. Several years before Walker's election in 2010, Kramer, a professor of politics at the University of Wisconsin Madison and a Wisconsin native, began inviting herself to coffee klatches and group breakfasts and lunches to better her understanding of diverse geographic perspectives on politics and government. From a stratified sample of counties across the state, she deployed snowball sampling to find groups of 'ordinary people' that meet regularly. She subsequently revisited all of them at least once, often more frequently. Although her conversational research goes against the positivist biases of mainstream political science, she convincingly argues that her methods yield important insights into the worldview of

her interlocutors, information that relatively anodyne survey research misses.

Kramer's key explanatory concept for understanding recent Wisconsin politics is 'rural consciousness.' Among those living in small towns and farms, she found a widely shared sense of grievance, a sense that their needs were ignored by government at the state and federal levels and that their values were looked down upon by the city dwellers who dominate politics, the economy, and the wider culture. Specifically, she found deep hostility among her rural informants to Madison, both as the seat of state government and home to its flagship university, and to Milwaukee, the state's highly diverse and largest city. In addition, they resent those who work for state government, even if those workers actually reside in rural communities. Why? First, they enforce Madison's clueless and unnecessary regulations. A particular source of spite was Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources, which oversees hunting, fishing, and environmental concerns. Second, state workers enjoy job security and excellent health and pension benefits, thanks to collective bargaining. To Cramer's rural informants, who had jobs or businesses that do not offer such benefits, these are undeserved perquisites with little justification.

You might ask, as Cramer did of her informants, why not support government policies that ensure greater economic security for all, rather than take it away from those who do? The answer is found in their general distrust of government, not an ideological preference for small government per se. As Thomas Frank famously argued in his book *What's the Matter With Kansas?* (2004), conservatives deviously executed a bait-and-switch by appealing to less educated white voters' cultural anxieties, while actually implementing economic policies that favor plutocrats, not ordinary people. Cramer found little evidence in Wisconsin to support the view that hot-button social issues such as abortion and gay rights were decisive in pulling rural people into the Republican camp. She argues that their concerns are primarily economic, due to their declining fortunes relative to urban areas and the perceived indifference of government. She actually investigated whether rural areas in Wisconsin were shortchanged relative to cities in terms of taxes and subsidies, and concluded (as other analysts have) that on a per capita basis

rural areas did not fare worse than urban ones. In some cases, they actually did better. Nonetheless, the lack of good-paying jobs and opportunities in small towns is undeniable.

Immigration and race are not particularly salient or foregrounded concerns among her informants, but antipathy to Madison and Milwaukee indicates they were looking for someone to blame. In recent years, Donald Trump, Scott Walker, and other Republicans have deployed populist rhetoric against the news media, universities, immigrants, racial minorities, and liberals. By activating a latent 'us versus them' hostility among rural and working class whites, their divisive tactics have paid electoral dividends. Political analysts have debated whether economic troubles or racism and demographic change is more important in explaining the rise of Trump. Of course, the answer is not a simple binary choice, but Cramer's focus on rural resentment adds a new perspective.

*The Politics of Resentment* is an important contribution to the literature on contemporary American politics. Both methodologically and substantively, it breaks new ground. To be sure, Cramer's research was confined to a single, predominantly white American state and the generalizability of her findings is arguably limited. She has provided, however, many ideas worthy of deep consideration, and an innovative methodology for future researchers to pursue.

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Maggie Berg and Barbara K. Seeber, *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy*. University of Toronto Press (2017), 115 pages, \$19.95 (paperback).

If I remember correctly, it was in direct reaction to 'fast food' that I first read about a deliberate move toward 'slow' food. As one who easily remembers my grandmother's cooking, which often took hours and hours, as well as the annual Saturday night