Twitter Thread by David Rothkopf



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Trumpism is no more a thing than Justin Bieberism. It's a fad. 5 years ago there was no Trumpist majority in the GOP. What's enduring is the GOP formula of exploiting the racism/nationalism of rural/suburban Americans to provide political fuel for policies that benefit the rich.

That formula--populism in the service of corporatism--has been with us for ages, was reshaped for the modern age under Reagan and has driven both the widening economic and political divides in America ever since. It will long survive Trump.

Trump weaponized it-fanning the flames of social division so that he could do even morefor a smaller & smaller percentage of the population. The reality was, he has not be very good at it. While he has GOP support, his popularity in polls has lagged all other recent presidents.

At the same time, growing recognition of shifting demographics in the US and the advent of social media have created new opportunities for the most extreme members of the GOP coalition to unite, mobilize and increase their voice.

That isn't just bad for the US. It's a problem for the GOP, particularly in terms of national elections. (The GOP has won the popular vote only once in the past eight presidential elections. While they benefit from electoral college advantages, this is a terrible trend for them.)

Demographic trends don't help the GOP. The Democrats are making inroads into formerly GOP territory (see Georgia, Arizona, etc.) Dems will work hard to try to offset the disproportionate power our 250 year old system gives less populous/red states & the GOP.

To the extent they do--through adding new states, campaign finance reform, judicial reform, pushing back on gerrymandering, etc.--the racist-exploitive model for the GOP will suffer. Trump has contributed to this trend by further alienating the GOP's remaining moderates.

The GOP will have increasingly less influence if it remains a rural-suburban white grievance party. Morphing into something more like one of Europe's hard right parties won't work on a nat'l basis. If Dems can deliver policies that help the GOP base that'll weaken them further.

For all these reasons, the defeat of Trump presents the GOP with an existential challenge. How long do they go on pandering to the most extreme element of the party if in so doing they weaken themselves? The current approach is not viable.

Trump's political failure is a sign that the ideas of Reagan, Gingrich, & the Tea Party taken to their most extreme form are as bad for the party as they are for the country. The question is: Are there effective alternatives emerging within the GOP or must it die and be replaced?