

SEMINARI di DIPARTIMENT



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TORINO, CAMPUS LUIGI EINAUDI, AULA 3D233

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THE 2016 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: IS AMERICA STILL A COUNTRY?

Discussano
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Like Brexit, the results of the 2016 U.S. presidential election shocked people both inside the United States and in other countries. Many commentators have interpreted Trump's victory as an indication of a sea change in the American electorate, specifically, the eruption of deep divisions reflecting a variety of prejudices. Some commentators even suggest the possibility of a second American Civil War.

In this talk, drawn from a forthcoming book, I present data showing that the implications of the election have been greatly exaggerated. In majoritarian electoral systems, small changes in the vote can produce major changes in institutional control and the resulting public policies. Contrary to the images conveyed by the U.S. media, a majority of normal Americans believed that they had a very poor choice of candidates. Trump won not because of his incendiary rhetoric and extreme positions, but in spite of them. Probably the most significant takeaway from the election is the culmination of a long-term trend of the white working class away from the traditional party of the left--the Democrats--a development common to other western democracies.