

Overcoming Cultural and Racial Division in the Age of Trump

Both minorities and poor and lower-middle-class whites agree race relations are getting worse, but they [disagree](#) whether the solution is to talk *more* or *less* about race.

They were divided by the meaning of President-elect Donald Trump's mantra "Make America Great Again." Is it a promise to return to a time when American manufacturing thrived or is it code for restoring white male dominance and returning minorities to the second tier?

If they would look beyond their demographic differences, they might realize that they share a common foe: an unaccountable government that violates the rights of the least powerful in society. They should work together to protect their rights and hold their government accountable.

Taking the time to assess what is not so great about the USA these days, one might observe that we have forgotten our unifying principles of liberty and equality before the law, values which once led to amicable relationships between the nation's commoners and elites.

This friendliness between classes was uniquely American. Charles Murray, author of *Coming Apart: The State of White America*, [observes that](#) even in times of great social and religious division, people of diverse social classes would still interact. Successful people often came from working-class families and so the class divide seemed less profound. Today, relations between the governing elite and the white working class are characterized by hostility and condescension.

American minority groups, however, did not experience these historic moments of inter-class national unity and so, understandably, they associate “making America great again” with the exclusion and subjugation of their ancestors. They recognize that their ancestry puts them at a disadvantage, and demand that past injustices be corrected.

This has spurred affirmative action and diversity training requirements that have the long-term effect of [worsening race relations](#). It has also led to the politically correct movements on the Left today, which demonize dissenting viewpoints as “racist.” Meanwhile, Trump’s rise has brought many more white Americans into identity politics, and demands for restricting immigration and trade to resemble a more comforting past have grown more salient.

Thus, the national narrative has shifted. The new political empowerment of America’s disenfranchised minorities and the growing disenfranchisement of white blue-collar America led to a socio-political climate in which the cultural and political elites of both parties are incentivized to pander to blue-collar whites, minorities, and their perceived cultural interests. Consequently, underprivileged Americans see government action as a means to advance their personal interests.

While working-class Americans are entrenched in cultural battles, the well-connected, socio-political elites continue to expand their own privileges with government bailouts, subsidies, and tax credits at everyone else’s expense.

People can and should work across the cultural divide to restore each other’s rights. Disenfranchised groups on the Left should recognize that many Trump voters are good people whose [rights and ability to make a living](#) have been infringed upon by excessive environmental regulations, harassment by the Bureau of Land Management, and calls to restrict their Second Amendment rights. Trump voters should understand the

discrimination minorities face with [law enforcement](#) and the [criminal justice system](#), and how this discrimination echoes the segregation of the past. Both sides must come together to embrace shared values, and turn their attention to holding the politically powerful accountable for their transgressions.

Examining America's past can show us how to make America great again. We will see that we are a divided society that has succumbed to fear, bigotry, and indifference – a society that looks to the government to solve its woes. Looking back to the darker aspects of our history can inspire us to rectify present injustice. Looking back to times of unity and mutual prosperity can light the way to an inspired future in which we work together and build upon our strengths to everyone's benefit.

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