

[Article]

Political Division and Identity Politics in the United States

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1. Division in American politics

Presidential election of 2020

The U.S. presidential election of 2020 was a contest between two distinct candidates: the non-standard incumbent Donald Trump and the ultimate Washington political insider Joseph (Joe) Biden. The result was Biden's victory. Biden won more than 80 million votes, the largest total in U.S. presidential election history. A surprising election result, however, was that Trump, the losing candidate, won 70 million votes, more votes than he earned when he won the presidential election of 2016. Trump's total votes in this 2020 losing effort was also higher than Barack Obama's winning totals in 2008 and 2012. According to an opinion poll that asked Trump supporters why they supported Trump, an increasing number of voters actively support him because they appreciate his leadership and policies (Pew Research Center 2020, 7). Although Trump lost the 2020 presidential race, it is clear that it was a strong campaign and that he has created a layer of solid support.

The election results, in which each candidate won more than 70 million votes, clearly illustrate the state of social division in the United States. A study by the Pew Research Center found that the political attitudes of the American people were more strongly defined by partisanship than

by age, race, ethnicity, gender, educational standards, and religion (Pew Research Center 2019; Cf., Mason 2018). In the 2020 election, both candidates and both camps of supporters were mobilized by political and social division, and voters voted accordingly.

Political and social division

Political and social division in the United States can also be seen in other poll results. A survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation from the end of August to the beginning of September 2020 asked what was the most important issue in the election. For Democratic supporters, combatting COVID-19 was the top response (36%); racial policy (27%) was the second most popular response. For Republican supporters, the economy (36%) ranked first, followed by criminal justice and police issues (23%) (KFF Health Tracking Poll 2020). At first glance, supporters of the two major parties seem to value different issues, but it may be that they see the same issues from different frameworks. Specifically, while Democratic supporters see a focus on COVID-19 measures and on the suspension of economic activities to prevent the spread of the virus as essential, Republican supporters believe that the economy should be revitalized without lockdowns. The Black Lives Matter movement, which was reignited by the death of George Floyd, a black man, following an improper arrest by police officers in May 2020, emphasized that overcoming racial discrimination is an important issue for Democratic supporters. Republicans also consider criminal justice and police issues to be important, but with different emphasis, including the forced removal of violent people (Nishiyama 2020b).

There are a range of factors behind this division in the United States, but one major factor is that voters obtain only the information they prefer, due to the many diverse sources of media. With the development of satellite broadcasting and cable broadcasting, and the sizeable number of viewing options that have resulted, viewers are able to consume only media that reflects their own views. As the echo chamber phenomenon, in which only certain concepts are amplified in an enclosed information

space, becomes more common, voter division grows, with perspectives on issues changing completely depending on the partisanship of the voter (Maeshima, et.al., 2019).

Disruption of the social contract?

Social and political divisions have existed in the United States since the country was founded, but now the divide is quite serious. Currently, there is a movement that raises doubts about the stability of the United States and of its political system and government.

As the United States has always been a multiethnic and multireligious state, it is not possible to explain nationality in ethnic, religious, or linguistic terms. Instead, the United States has explained its national identity based on an American creed and on confidence in government structure. The national identity of the United States has been explained in the form of an established social contract (Nishiyama 2018, chap. 1). However, as recent confrontations and disruptions have appeared and evolved, the solidarity that forms the basis of the social contract may have been lost.

It is difficult to judge which of the two major political parties has triggered the divide. Perhaps each side will blame the other. Many Democrats identify the hostile election method adopted by the Republican leader Newt Gingrich in the mid-term election in 1994 as the origin or instigation of the discord. Conversely, many Trump supporters believe that liberals, especially those called identity liberals, are responsible for the division. In recent years, both minority Americans and white Americans have been developing identity politics in the United States; the Black Lives Matter movement, which had a major impact on the 2020 presidential election, is part of this development.

This paper focuses on identity politics, increasingly apparent and influential in the United States, explaining how it is dividing American society.

2. Identity-based division

Samuel Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*

In his internationally bestselling and controversial book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), Samuel Huntington put forth the provocative positions that in the post-Cold War world disputes over identity have become the focus of conflict, and that Confucian and Islamic civilizations (the Confucian-Islamic connection) are challenging Western civilization centered on the United States. The book dealt with the foreign challenges that the United States was facing. In his later book, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (2004), Huntington sounded an alarm about domestic clashes within the United States, clashes originating from identity issues.

While the United States is known as a nation of immigrants that has accepted immigrants of all kinds, Huntington points out that national identity is based on an American creed created by Anglo Protestant settlers. An American creed centered on values such as freedom, equality, individualism, democracy, and the rule of law is embedded in American political institutions, and immigrants have accepted those values and the creed. However, in recent years, the country's national identity has been at stake (Huntington 2004).

In *Who Are We?*, Huntington focuses both on the rapid rise in immigration from Latin America, especially Mexico, since the 1960s, and on multiculturalism. Because Mexico shares a significant border with the United States, there are a large number of illegal immigrants of Mexican descent. In many cases, multilingual education is promoted to encourage children to learn not only English but also Spanish, keeping in mind that these children will eventually return home. Huntington also states that the number of people who do not have loyalty to the United States is increasing, in part because the number of Latin American countries that encourage dual citizenship is increasing. A growing number of intellectual elites, including university professors, argue that their ethnic and

cultural identities should be respected. Huntington's concern is that the existence of these immigrants and the rise of multiculturalism are dividing the United States, with its history of coming together as a nation of ideals (Huntington 2004).

Huntington's arguments are controversial. As people of Mexican descent have become more established in American society in recent years, Huntington's concerns may not be valid or true. Another counterargument to Huntington is that multiculturalism does not aim to divide countries but is rather a device that works toward the coexistence of diverse ethnic and cultural groups (cf., Iida 2021). Apart from the question of the validity of Huntington's concerns about Latin American immigrants, identity politics, which emphasizes the identity of ethnic and cultural minorities, has in recent years become increasingly important and has exposed the United States to a risk of division (Lilla 2017).

Huntington's arguments are focused on criticizing the identity politics of those on the left of the political spectrum. However, in the United States today, people who represent both the left and the right of the political spectrum are engaging in identity politics. The resonance of these two groups clearly shows the division of American society.

Identity politics and multiculturalism

In his book *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), Francis Fukuyama presented the famous thesis that the destination of historical development is a liberal state linked to the market economy. He pointed out that, even in a liberal democracy, the problem of Thumos, a part of the soul that craves recognition of dignity, remains unsolved; therefore, Thumos will threaten liberal democratic society in the forms of nationalism and religion. In his book *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the politics of Resentment* (2018), Fukuyama argued that demands that are considered to be based on economic incentives cannot be met by economic means (material self-interest) alone if they are indeed rooted in the desire for approval.⁽¹⁾

In the United States, identity politics became apparent following the

1960s. The early civil rights movement demanded that black people be treated in the same way as white people. As a result, U.S. law now stipulates that the rights of all people should be recognized equally. However, even as the rights of individuals have been established and confirmed by the rule of law, it has not been easy for black Americans and Native Americans, who had been relegated to the margins of society, to gain substantial dignity.

As a result, there have been movements to pursue rights and interests among and for these minorities. Groups such as the Black Panther Party and the Nation of Islam, each with an increasing presence at the end of the 1960s, claimed that black people had their own traditions and consciousness. The groups' position was that black Americans should be proud of who they are, and should confront a hostile white society. While these social movements triggered violent debates, they also resonated with the intellectual elite claim that diversity should be respected. These claims from the intellectual elite were called cultural pluralism or multiculturalism, and expanded to include gender and ethnicity.

One case where the issues surrounding multiculturalism and identity attracted notice was that of "Western Culture Theory," a compulsory subject at Stanford University. Protests by Jesse Jackson, a black activist who sought the Democratic presidential nomination in the 1984 and 1988 elections, and others calling for the elimination of Western Culture Theory drew national attention. The course began with the Hebrew Bible and Homer and examined the classical writings of Western culture, including Machiavelli, Marx, and Darwin. The problem was that the

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- (1) The fact that the need for approval cannot be satisfied by economic means can be understood by recalling that those who seek same-sex marriage are not fully satisfied by the institutionalization of civil unions, partnerships that receive the same status and advantages as marriage in economic terms (e.g., in terms of inheritance). Those who oppose same-sex marriage but recognize civil unions are trying to protect the superiority of heterosexual marriage and the traditional family, also concerns that are separate from economic issues.

writings of non-white people and women were not included. The argument was that if the writings of non-white people and women were treated with respect, the dignity of the culture to which they belonged would be enhanced, and the self-esteem of students who were relegated to the margins of society would be raised.⁽²⁾

It is noteworthy that the argument was not that including those writings would result in important knowledge or recognition that transcended the ages. This point has significance in considering politics over dignity. Discussions about dignity often posit that a person should be appreciated as is, rather than waiting to allow the person's potential to bloom and, then, to be acknowledged. The premise is that there is a problem with people or societies that are unaware of their own excellence; they do not need to change to be appreciated by others.⁽³⁾

Identity politics developed when people and groups pushed to the margins of society began to seek equal recognition. However, the desire for balanced approval often creates a danger: that desire becomes a demand to recognize the superiority of the group. The rise of this kind of identity politics also raises doubts about the traditional evaluation axis in American society. These doubts have the potential to shake what has been regarded as the common foundation of society; they also have the potential to cause a backlash.

3. Left-wing identity politics

Black Lives Matter movement

As noted earlier, the United States, a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, cannot define nationality based on ethnicity, language, or religion; therefore, nationality has been defined based on shared values called the American creed. In the past, both conservatives and liberals were assumed to attach importance to beliefs such as freedom, equality,

(2) See Furedi (2017) for a discussion of using college education as a type of therapy.

(3) In considering this point, Taylor et al. (1996) attempted to reexamine "the politics of recognition" theory; their work remains the greatest guide today.

democracy, the rule of law, and individualism. In recent years, however, some leftists and liberals have suggested that this view no longer holds for both sides, that the values have not been offered to and assumed for all.

The Black Lives Matter movement, which attracted attention again in 2020, purported that these values have not been recognized for black people. The group asserts that the United States has not positioned black people as equals since the country's founding period. Although equality in the legal sense was achieved as a result of Civil-Rights-era laws, actual equality has not been realized; it is clear that black people are not treated like white people. This assertion is closely related to the issues of individualism and the rule of law. While the United States is described as an individualistic country where people are treated based on individual characteristics irrespective of skin color, that view cannot be said to reflect the reality of American society.

For example, black people are targeted by police more frequently than white people. However, police do not necessarily or intentionally target based on racial discrimination. To reduce the total number of offenses, it is efficient to target areas with a high crime rate or to interrogate people with attributes that are frequently found among those involved in crime. Given the high proportion of black inmates, there is room to justify racial profiling. Nevertheless, aggressive crackdowns on black people reduce the resources available to investigate white people. Therefore, even if white people and black people are involved in crime in the same proportion, black people are more likely to be charged for their crimes. In this way, racial profiling produces racially discriminatory results, irrespective of the intentions of law enforcement agencies (Nishiyama 2021). Considering this institutional racism, it seems that black people in the United States are regarded as part of a group and not respected as individuals—and that the rule of law is not realized.

This institutional racism is the background to calls for “defunding the police” heard after George Floyd died in 2020. These calls to defund the police have fueled the division within the United States. This debate

centers around rethinking the nature of the police. While many advocates for change have made moderate arguments, the strong image of the words “defund the police” has overwhelmed those moderate positions. For example, in areas with low crime rates, police officers may be perceived as good neighbors who can help solve community problems; arguments to strip police budgets are seen as unacceptable by the community (Nishiyama 2021, last chapter).

In the early days of the Trump administration, when the focus was on illegal immigration, the call to abolish the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (Abolish ICE) was used with symbolic significance. Most debaters pushed to review the status of ICE in response to inappropriate crackdowns on illegal immigration by the agency under the Trump administration. However, as a result of dominant imagery associated with this extremist slogan, many people distrust the calls for change, without paying attention to the details of the debate. They are under the impression that ICE, which they believe ensures the stability of American society, will be fully abolished.

Although the Black Lives Matter movement eventually became a relatively moderate movement and gained considerable public support, in the early days it was accompanied by a message that was similar to that of the Black Power movement. Many of those who remember the Black Power movement are against the Black Lives Matter movement today.

1619 Project and Cancel Culture

Another controversy in the United States is “the 1619 Project” developed by a writer from *The New York Times*, and others, and published by *The New York Times Magazine*. Although the founding of the United States is often associated with the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the U.S. Constitution, which was written in 1787 and went into effect the following year, this project sets the origin of the United States in 1619. The project asserts that 1619 should be considered the year that the United States was founded, the year black slaves were first brought to the Americas. Later dates ignore that racism has been

the strongest feature of American politics and society, and that white people have violated the human rights of black people. According to those involved with the 1619 Project, even the American Revolution was an attempt by racists to maintain slavery (New York Times Magazine 2019).

A similar movement is called “cancel culture.” Some historical figures who have been celebrated for great achievements in the past, including Thomas Jefferson, who drafted the Declaration of Independence; Andrew Jackson, who advanced American democracy; and Woodrow Wilson, who founded the League of Nations after the end of World War I, have been considered racists by some. People have tried to knock down statues of these figures, change their portraits, or remove their names from the titles of university buildings. However, some conservatives believe that the denial of all past achievements if there is a racist aspect to them undermines the foundations of American society.

I pointed out earlier that the United States is a social contract nation based on trust in an American creed and in government institutions. Of course, a social contract is a kind of fiction, but the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States can be regarded as its contractual documents. Implicit in a social contract is the importance of recognizing its content not just when the contract is made but also when it is passed on to those who join along the way (e.g., immigrants) and to future generations. Immigrants are tested on American values when they enter the country, so it can be said that a contract has been completed. It is also necessary to teach the importance of American values in primary and secondary school education in order to convey the contract contents to later generations. However, identity-oriented groups have recently proposed that the content of the 1619 Project be used as teaching material for schools. In response, there is a growing concern that such an attempt would undermine the foundation of the existing social contract based on the American creed. Those with concerns believe that this attempt will significantly change the nature of the United States and increase the possibility of creating division in the

country.

4. Identity politics from the right

The white working class and the Trump phenomena

Identity politics conjures an image of activities centered on minorities. However, some people who would be considered part of the majority traditionally are developing identity politics, dissatisfied with the rise of identity politics focused on minorities. These people might be called “new minorities” by political scientist Justin Gest (2016).

The white working class, which in large part supported the Trump phenomenon, may be a perfect example of a “new minority.” Some white workers believe that their voices are not being heard by political officials. Their demands are not only economic but also relate to identity and dignity. Liberals who value identity have not amplified those voices; it has been Trump who has amplified them.

The group that gave Trump his victory in the 2016 presidential election and subsequently became the bedrock of his support was the white working class living in the former manufacturing heartland known as the Rust Belt. These Americans have seen their socio-economic status decline compared to when they were engaged in manufacturing and belonged to labor unions. The manufacturing industry has declined, partly because automation has replaced much of the labor previously performed by humans with machines, and partly because companies have moved their bases to Asia and Latin America where labor costs are lower as a result of globalization. In addition, the socioeconomic status of white working-class males has declined as a result of changes in the industrial structure that place a higher value on advanced technology, knowledge, and education. This shift has reduced the role that less-educated workers can play. Increases in the female labor force due in part to the larger share of service industries have also impacted the socioeconomic status of white working-class males (Cowen 2013; Cowen 2017).

In recent years, social ills, such as rising crime rates, the spread of

opioids, and the perceived collapse of families, have spread in communities where white workers live, due to declining incomes and rising unemployment rates that have resulted from the hollowing out of industries (Murray 2012; Putnam 2015). A symbolic example of the social decline of the white middle class would be the widespread abuse of opioid painkillers, with the number of drug overdose deaths exceeding 24,000 in 2016. This is more than the number of people who die in traffic accidents in the United States in a year, resulting in a shorter life expectancy for white men (Case & Deaton 2015).

Given the existence of economic disparities and social problems like these, increased support for leftists who advocate for economic equality and social justice might be a logical expectation. In fact, however, the white workers supported the right wing of politics, Trump, and not the left. It is clear that people are not just acting on economic and material desires.

The politics of resentment and the loss of dignity

In a study analyzing the reasons why white working-class people living in rural Wisconsin supported Republican Governor Scott Walker, Katherine Cramer argues that “resentment” is behind the conservative political behavior of white working-class people living in rural areas. People residing in declining areas are frustrated, believing that the liberal elites living in prosperous metropolises look down on them. At the same time, they also blame the poor who are able to work but do not and are instead dependent on the government. These white working-class people are driven by their resentment of others. They tend to blame others without considering themselves to be at fault. A similar trend was noted in both a study conducted by Justin Gest, which compared Youngstown in Ohio to East London in the United Kingdom, and in a study by Arlie Hochschild, which analyzed a case in Louisiana (Cramer 2016; Gest 2016; Hochschild 2016).

Interestingly, in every case, economic suffering is perceived as a loss of dignity, not as a shortage of goods or money. Identity issues become

apparent when people become dissatisfied, believing that society does not value their worth and dignity. Even when people have positive self-esteem, if others do not recognize their value, or ignore or disregard their existence, their self-esteem is damaged. In a country like the United States, where people often associate economic success with character evaluation, economic distress is also more likely to be associated with loss of self-esteem.

In recent years, white workers have felt that their representation in American society has declined. Recognizing that they played a central role in politics, society, and the economy, their voices were part of the Democratic Party in an era when labor union activities were active. However, their voices were reduced as the unions declined. The loss of high-wage jobs that were protected by labor unions also resulted in the loss of social ties for many of these people. Having lost their identity as workers at the core of society, these white workers came to rely on the attributive identities of whiteness and national identity.

Those who seek to acquire identity through their own efforts and abilities in the new industrial structure are critical of those who emphasize attributive identity. Today, many activists who value the dignity of marginalized minorities in society have argued that membership in traditional labor unions is actually for a privileged class; the unions lack sympathy for the plight of poorer black people or immigrants. Emphasis has been placed on improving the circumstances of minority groups, with no attempts made to improve the economic conditions of all individuals, including white workers.⁽⁴⁾

In this context, the white working class began to feel disrespected by the successful white elites and to feel reverse discriminated against by racial and ethno-cultural minorities in the name of affirmative action. Men have even come to feel disrespected by their wives at home, as the decline of the manufacturing industry makes it difficult to secure employment and creates the possibility of men relying on the income of

(4) Some U.S. labor unions refused membership to racial and ethnic minorities.

their wives who work in the service industry. In this environment, they have come to regard Trump, who makes critical remarks about globalization, immigration, and women repeatedly, as their spokesperson (Gest 2016).

Under these circumstances, white workers are less likely to be attracted by left-wing claims. As income and dignity are linked, it is natural that there will be no widespread support for proposals such as basic income as a remedy for job loss and widening disparities. In the United States, supporters of the Basic Income Initiative are often those who call themselves Libertarians, such as Charles Murray. Their aims are to eliminate social programs, including pensions, and to reduce welfare expenditures to a minimum. Correspondingly, the belief is that it is a natural premise for people to earn a living by working for themselves. In the United States, even public assistance policies are conceived in conjunction with work and are marked by the recognition that work is socially valuable (Nishiyama 2015). Working and paying taxes are sources of pride for middle-class people. Even the activists of the Tea Party movement who advocated for small government were exceedingly proud of being taxpayers (Williamson 2017). These examples demonstrate why some people are attracted to right-wing populists who link life's difficulties to identity and status, rather than being attracted to the left, which links life's difficulties to class.

In the United States, leftist identity politics is no longer tied in with white workers who once played a central role in society. In order to protect the dignity of the white working class, there are some who have argued for a return to the time when they were the center of and central to the United States. This suggestion has led to anger and conflict among people from all social classes.

5. Limitations of identity politics

Respect for the identity of others is important. However, recognizing the rights and dignity of "individuals" and recognizing the dignity of "groups" that have been kept on the margins of society or have not

received attention are different discussions. In the present-day United States, the principles of the civil rights movement, seeking equality for all individuals, are widely shared. However, there is controversy about the appropriateness of requiring that the dignity of groups be recognized beyond the principles of the civil rights movement. The arguments and tactics of those who develop identity politics are rejected by those who argue that there are some limitations to this extension.⁽⁵⁾

First, those who develop identity politics see minorities as socially vulnerable and seek to realize their identity. However, they often do not pay attention to the identities and interests of others, especially to people they consider to belong to the majority or to vested interest groups.

While American multiculturalists advocate for minority cultures, they regard the traditional mainstream culture as biased in favor of white people. These multiculturalists are perceived as having a strong tendency to regard white people (especially men) as vested interest groups. Some of them consider white people (men) as having an unconscious, discriminatory attitude toward minorities. However, members of the white working class may see themselves as victims, as the Trump phenomenon of 2016 made clear, rather than part of vested interest groups, as they are seen by the identity-conscious and multiculturalist theorists on the left.

These “new minorities” are also developing identity politics that resonate with the Trump phenomenon. They are resentful that in the United States today movements advocating for gay people and black people are justified, but campaigns for the rights of white people are interpreted as racist and narrow-minded positions. The “new minorities” see traditional minorities as the new vested interest groups in American society and believe that it is unjust to focus solely on their interests.

(5) The following discussion is organized with reference to Lilla (2018) , Fukuyama (2019: 162-171), and others. However, Lilla and Fukuyama focus on identity liberals rather than on identity politics in general, an approach that differs from that of this paper, which includes identity politics on the right.

Second, identity politicians tend to view their positions as unique and insist that others cannot understand and empathize with them. The Black Nationalism movement took the position that, because black interests could not be understood by white people, separation and independence should be considered in order to realize black interests. For example, the writer Ta-Nehisi Coates links violence against black people to long historical memories of slavery and lynching, arguing that this “lived experience” separates the understanding of black people and white people. A similar development has been seen in the feminist movement, with some claiming that women’s consciousness and life experiences are fundamentally different from those of men (Coates 2015; de Beauvoir 1993; MacKinnon 2005). The idea that the unique identity of each group cannot be understood or shared by others risks negating or neglecting the importance of sharing experiences, views, and feelings beyond group differences.

Third, and relatedly, identity-oriented groups may be seen as not working toward the goal of the common good of the American people overall. If those who emphasize identity politics come to regard their own position as absolute, the goals of liberal democracy, which are to bring people of different positions closer to each other through discussion and to realize the common good, will not be achieved.

A sense of unity and solidarity must exist in order to implement the social policies that liberals aim to achieve with the New Deal. However, when advocates of identity politics become intolerant to different positions, dialogue cannot be established and it is not possible to realize common values and overall societal benefits. If a large number of groups refuse to reexamine their own positions, political society will fragment, and the political system will be in danger of becoming dysfunctional. Elements that induce this kind of division exist on both the right and left sides of the current political spectrum in the United States.

Fourth, identity politics purports to hold up values that cannot be denied, such as people’s dignity and human rights. Identify politics denounces hostilities without acknowledging objections. The style of ac-

cusation and attack is violent, but many people are unconscious of its violence. Even if they are aware, they often justify it because they believe that they are in the right morally. This trend can be seen today in the United States, especially on the left. Self-examination and self-criticism are perceived as an essential part of liberal norms. When people are absolute about the values and norms they espouse but lack respect for others' values, they are exhibiting a double standard.

Conclusion

In today's Western democracies, diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and sexual orientation is real and accepted. While diversity can spark innovation and creativity, it can risk dividing society.

It is natural for people to seek recognition of dignity, and for groups placed in the margins of society to seek approval. However, as groups become more uncompromising in their advocacy and more violent in their methods, it is not easy for them to expand their support. Today, the left has adopted a strategy of focusing on individual groups relegated to the margins of society historically. They no longer attempt to create a larger solidarity that encompasses the working class along with racial minorities and others. Groups that feel that they have been replaced themselves rebel and create new identity politics characterized by resentment. All groups cling to their own narrow identities and refuse to discuss and solve problems as an integrated society.

A liberal democracy is founded on the hypothesis that tacit contracts are signed both between the people and the government and among the people. While liberal democracy aims to connect diverse groups and communities, common norms and experiences are necessary to achieve this connection. If society is divided into an assortment of selfish groups and there is no sense of commonality or solidarity, "others" are regarded solely as zero-sum competitors who are fighting for resources. Tolerance and mutual understanding must be prioritized over confrontation in order to foster widespread trust.

Fukuyama argued that the solution to this problem is to build "a larger

and more integrated national identity that takes into account the diversity that already exists in existing liberal democratic societies” (Fukuyama 2018). The current paper does not have a concrete proposal for this purpose, but the implications of membership and affiliation within a nation is an important future research topic. The problem of societal division is closely related to the questions of who is included and who is excluded.

In the United States, where the social contract is fundamental, it is often argued that the individual, and not the group, should be the unit in discussions of dignity. However, the reality of American society is that white people are treated as individuals, while minorities are repeatedly judged based on the group to which they belong. As a result, some have argued that it is necessary to abandon the basic principles of the United States in order to correct racial and ethnic injustices. However, that strategy would change the nature of the American nation fundamentally. Possibilities and strategies that create an inclusive national identity that enables the coexistence of multiethnic groups, while keeping in mind current injustices, are needed instead.

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