

When the Black Lives Matter organization adds the word "also," this removes the idea that only Black Lives matter. Those who say All Lives Matter are diminishing the truth of the racial situation in our country. But perhaps it's less about race than about culture.

Those of us who find "multiculturalism" charming are right that in cosmopolitan cities around the world, many delightful foods are available and one can hear many languages. However, especially a country as ethnically diverse as ours must have a uniform culture to function. When culture is not uniform, clashes are inevitable. What makes us a uniform culture is rule of law, which most Americans obey.

Culture is comprised of a language understood by everyone (English for us); similarity of family values and community life; commonly observed values for both private and public behavior; an agreed system for participation in governance; and rule of law. Of course, in a country settled by such a diversity of people from all sorts of cultures around the world, achieving uniformity is not as easy as it would be for a homogeneous country such as Denmark. But we have done remarkably well, with the exception of our still existing issue of race. Some of the cultural issues that still divide us are considered below:

? Race. In the past, America had Black slavery, a hideous problem that dogged our development and divided us. In addition, we had racial biases against the Chinese, Japanese, Native Americans, and three religious groups: Catholics, Jews, and Mormons. We also had gender biases: women, homosexuals, and transgender people. But by law and practice today, our more educated citizens have scrapped most of these biases. We have a biracial president, Black judges, Black officials, Black and Latino Congressmen and women, prized athletes and actors, and police. They share with other successful Americans cultural values and education. We can, and do, live together.

? Class. Here is the rub. Black and Latino young men living in our inner cities are facing cultural crisis. Former immigrants who lived there quickly moved away after successful integration. Many of today's residents, however, come from dysfunctional families, often without positive male role models, victims of poor schools systems, and without training for jobs with a future. These young men are not stupid. Many manage criminal gang enterprises and exploit America's bad drug habit. They also have easy access to weapons and are not reluctant to use them. They live like this because they have no hope of entering mainstream culture.

? Police. Many of the police come from inner cities themselves, or from American small towns with primarily American culture. The class culture between inner city Blacks and the police is more responsible for violence than is race itself. If one believes that Black Lives Matter when demonstrating against the police, they are ignoring that the police must operate where the most violence and lawlessness is.

President Obama rightly noted that police violence derives from daily exposure to armed lawbreakers; we ask police to be perfect, but make no comparable requirement of the inner city communities themselves. The police are trying to protect law-abiding poor citizens who are overwhelmingly victimized by criminals of their own race. Yet inner city culture discourages citizens from helping the police. Perhaps the Dallas horror has opened a door to a commonality of culture. Funerals are painful, regardless of class.

? Gun Culture. This is one of the most poisonous cultural divides in our country. People living in rural areas are often hunters; guns are part of their culture, in which most are law abiding. Those living in congested cities, however, do not want everyone armed. The police, who are being retrained not to shoot first and ask later, find themselves out-gunned, making them more fearful and suspicious than they were formerly. Thugs are also murdering policemen, without warning.

We have the means to remedy most of these culture clashes by judicious use of government, law, and money. The National Rifle Association should not be calling all the shots (no pun intended).

673 words

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