

**“THE REASON
DEMOCRACY
DIES!”**





excommunicated from your peers. They drown out your voice with theirs and say that you are privileged and therefore your opinion doesn't matter. They tell you, you don't speak for everyone. However, that's a problem because it's hypocritical. It's hypocritical because they obviously don't speak for everyone in the community either and it silences voices from those same communities which are trying to be heard. What the collective fails to understand is that not everyone in the collective can think the same. It's precisely because of that reason that identity politics is horrible; you don't hear the perspective of many. What you hear is the perspective of one or a few, because they have the numbers to back them up. It's important though that different perspectives are heard because we don't live in separate societies and our problems may not just have one solution, they may have many.

I for one believe that it's too easy to just say that these "outsiders" are white-washed or brainwashed into

believing in what they believe. The way it seems to me, people don't like being told things can be their fault and allow that to blind them in and project the negatives onto other group identities. This creates even more conflict.

I also believe that is why the poor and lesser-educated people fall into identity politics. It's appealing to be told that it isn't your circumstances aren't your fault as an individual, but the fault of outsiders, imposing on the collective. However, that doesn't provide a solution of which you have complete control over. Many times, we see that the changes we want made are for everyone else but ourselves, meanwhile we can only be certain of our own change.

I recall having an argument with a cousin of mine at a bar once. Throughout the night she had mentioned that she hated white people and wouldn't go into a white owned bar because she doesn't want to support them. I half-jokingly said that was racist. She then asked me how that was racist, to which I replied "for

Identity politics will be the reason democracy dies! Actually, that is a bit of an over-exaggeration. However, I very much, highly dislike identity politics. The reason for that is because, ironically, it takes away a key part of an individual's identity; the freedom to have their own thoughts and opinions. How?

At the core of which identity politics revolves itself around is in forming one's own beliefs depending on how a person identifies him/herself. If you're black, you must believe in this. If you're Mexican, you must believe in that. If you're gay, you must believe in this. If you're a woman, you must believe in that. This then leaves in question, what if you don't believe in the same thing as those in your group identity? What happens is you become an outsider, almost



discriminating against them, simply because they're white." She went on to say that white people don't have a race. Then we continued to argue and she became more and more frustrated. She began explaining how there was systemic racism and everything was rigged against us (we're Mexican). It was obvious she belonged to the collective.

In her argument, she made it clear that the blame for our group's circumstances was due to white people and because of that, she doesn't like them. As she continued, she tried to question my morality and loyalty to my people. She tried to do this by asking me "how are you saying any of this? You're Mexican. You're parent's came over from Mexico. Your father runs a non-profit organization for Mexican immigrants." Then I told her that it's precisely because I am Mexican that I am saying this. She needed to understand that there are others that don't believe in the same thing as she, and my different perspective doesn't make me any less Mexican.

To be clear, I don't think our born-with circumstances dictate where we will be in life. We always have a choice to keep going or to give up, and that choice is made by you.

It's important to understand that her achievements were made by her and her decisions. Even though she may have struggled more due to race and circumstance, she still achieved what many in our community don't because they chose not to.

She then went on to say that she couldn't believe what I said and she was going to speak with my father. That was perhaps one most important things to bring, because ironically, I learnt much of what I said from my father, who doesn't agree with her either. When I told her that, she became even more frustrated and stopped arguing.

Having studied a bit of psychology with my father, who majored in that, I was able to understand her frustration and by extension the frustration of many others that believe in the collective's rhetoric. Many people have a strong

attachment to their beliefs and values. This attachment leads them to bind it very tightly with their identity and therefore, is a part of who they are. So, while I was really challenging my cousin's beliefs, it was almost as if I was challenging her as a person. That more than likely lead her to feel as if I called her broken. That's why it's very hard changing a person's mind.

Moving on, it's moments like those that truly make me against identity politics. It can be dangerous because many times, it victimizes huge numbers of people, without actually knowing what their individual lives are like. By doing that, it gives people an excuse to give up because they are essentially told it isn't their fault. However that would be wrong. It would be their fault, but that applies to both the losses and the wins.

