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OPINION

Building a New Populism in the Era of Trump

We're stuck in this together

BY CHUCK COLLINS

Imagine you're standing in line for the American Dream.

You work hard, sometimes in dangerous jobs. You lead a moral life.

But the line is stalling, even moving backwards. Yet you see newcomers up front — some of them immigrants and people of color.

Maybe you've worked all your life alongside African Americans and Latinos — more than most northern liberals have — but when you complain about people cutting you, those liberals call you racist. Worse still, they seem to look down on you because of your Christianity, or your Southern culture.



That's the worldview sketched out by sociologist Arlie Hochschild, a liberal professor who spent five years interviewing Louisiana Tea Party activists. She made friends with them and stayed in touch as they got involved in the Trump campaign, an experience detailed in her new book *Strangers in Their Own Land*.

When Hillary Clinton called Trump supporters "deplorable," Hochschild's Tea Party friends heard a put-down they suspect liberal elites say about them behind closed doors all the time. Trump, on the other hand, never dismissed them as racists or rednecks. Instead, he blamed their problems on the line cutters.

Unfortunately, neither Clinton nor Trump got at the real reasons the line isn't moving.

The fact is, over the last three decades, both Republicans and

Democrats have helped shift America's wealth to a small segment of rich people and global corporations. They've each supported a corporate "free trade" agenda and failed to do anything more than tinker with tax rules that accelerate inequality.

The resulting economic insecurity has given rise to both progressive and regressive forms of populism.

On the one hand, the Bernie Sanders campaign focused on how the rigged rules of the economy benefit billionaires and transnational corporations. On the other, Trump deflected blame away from the real holders of power and onto less powerful groups.

In the general election, when Hillary Clinton became pegged as the status quo candidate, it shouldn't have surprised anyone that Trump's regressive populism won out.

But Trump's plans to deport immigrants while cutting rich people's taxes will almost certainly fail to address the underlying concerns of the non-wealthy voters who elected him. That leaves room for a more progressive populism to get the stalled-out line moving again.

That means building coalitions between urban and rural workers to raise wages and expand opportunities at the state and local levels. At the federal level, campaigns to tax the wealthy, create jobs by building new infrastructure, and provide debt-free education could win allies among Trump supporters.

Meanwhile, progressive populists should engage with Trump's white supporters to explain that millions of black, Latino, and Native workers are stuck in line for many of the same reasons they are. Together they've all been held back by the 1 percent,

though racism has made things far harder for people of color.

Fighting racism is essential. But liberals shouldn't assume that Trump supporters are too racist, too dumb, or too manipulated by the Koch brothers to vote in their real economic interests.

Instead, like Hochschild did in Louisiana, they should take the time to understand the deeper economic and cultural reasons people might distrust the Democratic Party establishment and the broader liberal agenda.

Because we're only going to get the line moving again when we realize we're stuck in it together.

Chuck Collins is a senior scholar at the Institute for Policy Studies and a co-editor of Inequality.org, where parts of this essay previously appeared. He's the author of the recent book Born on Third Base. Distributed by OtherWords.org.

Reacting to the Stereotype, Not the individual

'Before I was ever blue, I was black'

BY BOBBY F. KIMBROUGH JR.

For the last 55 years of my life, before I was ever blue, I was black. Undeniably black. I spent 30 years in law enforcement, but before I was ever recognized as a senior special agent with the U.S. Department



Justice, people saw a black man. Whether I speak to you from a perspective of a seasoned law enforcement expert or an extremely proud black man born and raised in the 60s, I must give you what is true. The truth is there are times when the police deal with the stereotype instead of the individuals. There are indeed times when those on the inside of the system must ask themselves, Are we doing what is right or what is white? Conversely, there are times when the black man lives up to the stereotype in grand fashion.

In our society we function on the rules of law. Within those rules of law there is a moral justice that circles the universe which exists or gets ignored. African American males become the victim of the stereotypes of a white culture. Whether our adornment is given at birth or dispensed over the counter, we are often stereotyped based

on our pigmentation, our style and our decoration.

The truth in America, while we are advancing in certain parts of our society, there are areas where we are at a standstill. If law enforcement would be honest, they would admit there are still some cities that fall under the good ol' boy culture. As one presidential candidate called

nic communities. If you look across America to those who protect and serve, many are doing good, but those who don't skew the results.

In order for us to change the current atmosphere between law enforcement and communities of color, we have to begin an ongoing dialogue that equips everyone with the knowledge to make

is the only way to disarm and alter the system.

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tired senior special agent with the U.S. Department of Justice. He is the author of "Surviving the Stop."

There is a distinct culture in law enforcement. And there is undeniably a racist culture within a culture. Many people know it exists but have no clue to the depths of its impact.

it, "locker room talk." This kind of conversation goes far beyond gender and shows up in encounters people of color have with law enforcement professionals.

There is a distinct culture in law enforcement. And there is undeniably a racist culture within a culture. Many people know it exists but have no clue to the depths of its impact. There is underground racism and unbridled hatred. Some do not realize how expansive it is until they become a victim of it.

As a black man and a law enforcement expert, I understand our cultural roots. I recognize the need for law enforcement to understand the black community, along with the Hispanic, Muslim and other eth-

nic communities. If you look across America to those who protect and serve, many are doing good, but those who don't skew the results.

It is essential that police officers get consistent training to manage their emotions when they come face to face with the stereotypes embedded in their minds. It is imperative that we teach children at the youngest ages in our school systems how to interact with law enforcement officers. It is the things we do not know that harm us and jeopardize our lives.

We must educate ourselves in how law enforcement works and the fact that the system has issues. We must realize that sometimes the system reacts to the stereotype and not the individual. Moving forward, armed with knowledge,

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