



## Why Trump's silent majority isn't speaking up

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President Trump and America are waiting for the “silent majority” to speak up.

Facing dire poll numbers, now less than seven weeks before Election Day, Trump often suggests that a concealed army of shy voters will sweep him to victory on Nov. 3. He tweeted in July, for example, “THE VAST SILENT MAJORITY IS ALIVE AND WELL!!! We will win this Election big.”

The president’s 2016 triumph, defying pundits who in some cases said Hillary Clinton had a 100% chance of victory, buttresses his claim that voters will stun the experts again. But much analysis — amongst others, Nate Silver’s in 2016 itself, and the *New York Times*’s this summer — argues cogently that polls were fairly accurate four years ago and only pundits’ dogged incredulity about them converted Trump’s surprise win into a tectonic shock. Trump’s numbers are worse this time around — even noncollege white voters are proving a problem for him — and the president needs to do more than hope they’re wildly askew while relying on diffident battalions to emerge from the forests to support him.

Whatever the impact of shy voters on the presidential election, it is clear that conservatives declare their real views less readily than left-liberals do. A Cato Institute study published on July 23 found that 62% of the public conceal their views for fear that someone will denounce them as offensive. As dreadful as that number is in suggesting broad self-censorship in the land of the free, it is even more striking when broken down along ideological lines. While 52% of Democrats hide their opinions, 58% of independents do, and the number rises to a vast 77% among conservatives.

Only strong liberals, 58%, feel free to say what they think. Most conservatives have a story of being at a small social gathering where those on the left talk as though all sensible people, and certainly everyone in their little group, agrees with them, when it’s perfectly obvious to the more observant that this isn’t so.

The contrast was stark during this past toxic summer of urban violence. The anarchists of antifa and militants of Black Lives Matter are the activist arm of a left-wing minority — the only sector willing loudly to declare their opinions. Physical intimidation and fear of being labeled a racist or fascist have cowed the decent majority into silence or eye-shifting acquiescence.

None of these, however, denote agreement with the loathsome and absurd arguments of today's left. Perhaps the most telling statistic showing that ordinary people don't accept their nonsense — many elected Democratic officials and news media implicitly condone looting and arson, for example, as legitimate protest — is that a record 5 million Americans have become first-time gun buyers this year. They may not speak up, they may not like or even agree with Trump, let alone vote for him, but they do believe in family and property and will defend them against those who want to destroy them.

Armed defense of one's home is a last resort and certainly isn't enough. It is, as the saying goes, too little too late. It's understandable that most people avoid political confrontation, but it's past time that the silent majority spoke up. It is the minority, with its critical race theory and guff about interlocking oppressions, who are the real oppressors. That's why good people fall silent when they disagree; they don't want to anger their tormentors. But although the thugs often wear menacing black, they are naked of coherent philosophy. Like the emperor who wore no clothes, their vicious transparent ideas need to be mocked and rejected without embarrassment.

As Douglas Murray, best-selling author of *The Madness of Crowds*, noted on a podcast recently, the incessant accusations of racism — all white people are racist, you know — have been devalued to worthlessness by rhetorical hyperinflation of “Zimbabwean” proportions. (The reference doubtless produced further accusations of racism by somebody somewhere.)

The point is that most of us know America is not an irredeemably or unusually racist country, that hucksters and academic agitators are lying about a great nation and its people, and that the rhetorical weaponry of cultural revolutionaries is bunk unsupported by plausible social scientific data.

Whatever the silent majority decides to do on Election Day, it needs to shed its reticence and say what it thinks. It needs, as Murray said, to start demonstrating civic courage and stop appeasing its increasingly successful oppressors. Bullies are cowards. They'll push you around for as long as you let them.