

# The Unprecedented Transformation of Race in Politics: How It Led to the Rise of Donald Trump

In recent years, the political landscape has witnessed a seismic shift, with race playing a central role in shaping the events that unfolded. The rise of Donald Trump as a political figure is intrinsically intertwined with this transformative period in American politics. This article delves into the intricate relationship between race, the Republican Party, and the unprecedented rise of Donald Trump.

## The Changing Face of the Republican Party

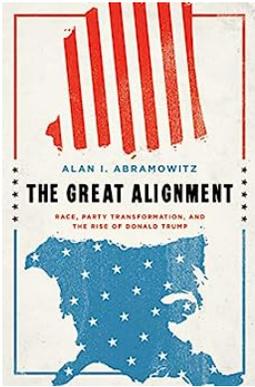
The Republican Party's association with race dates back to its inception during the Civil War era. Historically, the party attracted a diverse coalition, including African Americans, who were drawn to its stance on civil rights. However, over time, significant changes in policy and discourse led to a major realignment.

The turning point can be traced to the 1960s, when the Civil Rights Act prompted a shift in party dynamics. As Democrats adopted a more progressive stance on civil rights, the Republican Party began appealing to voters who felt left behind by these changes. This subtle pivot laid the groundwork for the party's eventual transformation into a vehicle for the grievances of racially conservative white Americans.

## **The Great Alignment: Race, Party Transformation, and the Rise of Donald Trump**

by Alan I. Abramowitz (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5



Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, racial politics became more overt within the Republican Party. The "Southern Strategy" employed by figures such as Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan further solidified the party's association with coded language and policies that appealed to white voters.

During this period, immigration also took center stage in shaping the political discourse. As conservative voices amplified concerns about border security and economic competition from immigrants, racial undertones permeated public debates. The Republican Party capitalized on this sentiment, intertwining it with their broader message of limited government intervention.

### **Donald Trump: The Unexpected Torchbearer**

In this era of heightened racial tension, Donald Trump emerged as an unexpected torchbearer for disgruntled factions of the Republican Party. Capitalizing on the growing frustrations of many white working-class Americans, he pioneered a campaign rooted in nativist rhetoric and policies.

Trump's election campaign exploited the fault lines that had been created within the Republican Party. By mobilizing disaffected voters, he not only secured the nomination but also appealed to millions across the country. With his promises to

build a wall, ban Muslim immigration, and revive American industries, Trump tapped into the fears and anxieties felt by those who believed their racial and economic identities were under threat.

His ability to successfully capture the support of racially conservative Americans, largely white and male, exposed the deep divisions within the party. The grassroots movement that propelled Trump to power marked a definitive moment in the transformation of the Republican Party.

## **The Discontent and Populist Appeal**

The success of Donald Trump's candidacy revealed a broader sense of discontent within the American electorate. Economic and cultural anxieties further fueled by changing racial demographics gave rise to a form of populism that found resonance in Trump's message.

His ability to connect with the concerns of his base was rooted in a narrative that encompassed both economic grievances and the protection of a perceived racial hierarchy. By co-opting existing racial anxieties and linking them to his populist agenda, Trump managed to galvanize a dedicated following.

The dislocation experienced by many white working-class Americans in an increasingly diverse society provided fertile ground for Trump's appeal. Issues such as immigration, trade, and job creation became deeply intertwined with race, as Trump harnessed these concerns to further consolidate his support base.

## **The Aftermath and Legacy**

Donald Trump's presidency marked a pivotal moment in the history of American race relations and political discourse. The strategies employed and sentiments

amplified during his campaign have left an indelible mark on the Republican Party.

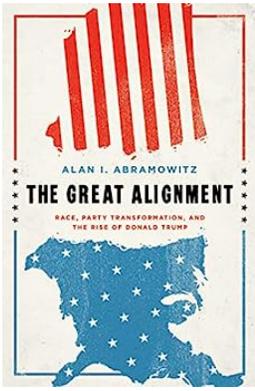
While Trump's presidency has emboldened some politicians to continue advocating racially conservative policies, it also created a broader debate within the party. Discussions around the importance of inclusivity, racial justice, and diversity have gained prominence, forcing the party to confront its role in perpetuating racial divides.

The transformation brought about by the rise of Donald Trump has not only reshaped the Republican Party but also redefined the national conversation on race in politics. The impact of this period will continue to reverberate as the country grapples with the legacies and aftershocks of an era that exposed deep racial fault lines.

The transformation of race as a central theme in American politics paved the way for the rise of Donald Trump. Through the changing dynamics of the Republican Party and the deep-seated racial anxieties that he tapped into, Trump emerged as a symbol for a significant portion of the American electorate.

The legacy of Trump's impact on race in politics has been profound. It exposed the fault lines within the Republican Party, propelled debates on inclusivity and racial justice, and set the stage for a resurgence of populism.

As we reflect on this transformative period, it is essential to recognize the role race plays in shaping political narratives. Understanding this legacy will be critical as we navigate a future that demands a more inclusive and equitable political landscape.



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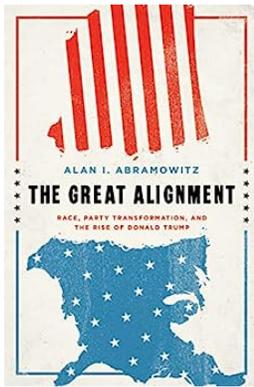


Alan I. Abramowitz has emerged as a leading spokesman for the view that our current political divide is not confined to a small group of elites and activists but a key feature of the American social and cultural landscape. The polarization of the political and media elites, he argues, arose and persists because it accurately reflects the state of American society. Here, he goes further: the polarization is unique in modern U.S. history. Today's party divide reflects an unprecedented alignment of many different divides: racial and ethnic, religious, ideological, and geographic. Abramowitz shows how the partisan alignment arose out of the breakup of the old New Deal coalition; introduces the most important difference between our current era and past eras, the rise of “negative partisanship”; explains how this phenomenon paved the way for the Trump presidency; and examines why our polarization could even grow deeper. This statistically based analysis shows that racial anxiety is by far a better predictor of support for Donald Trump than any other factor, including economic discontent.



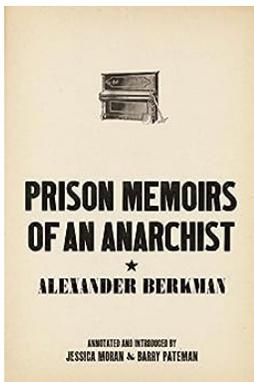
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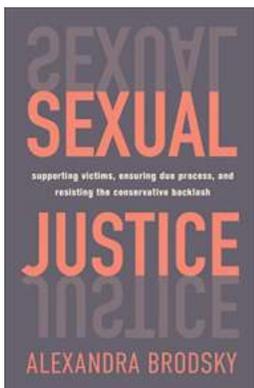
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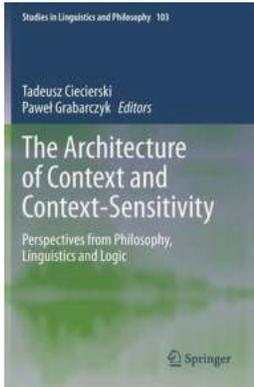
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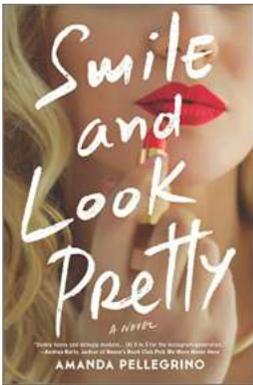
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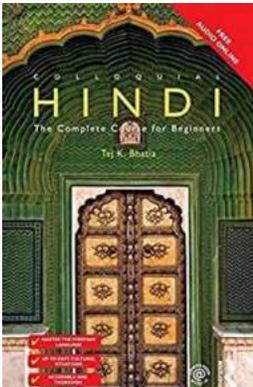
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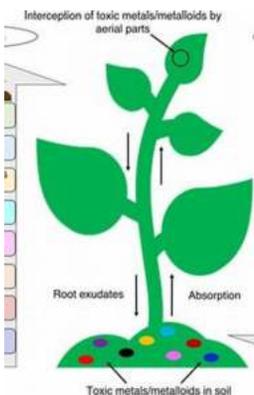
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