

Alex Madva's paper argues elegantly and (to my mind) utterly convincingly against a certain line of thought. The line of thought that he responds to maintains that those wanting to fight the grave injustices of racism, sexism and the like should prioritise structural change efforts over individualistic ones. Madva agrees with his opponents on the importance of structural change, but he makes a powerful case against the prioritizing claim. Instead, he maintains, individual change is a necessary part of any structural change.

Take, for example, his discussion of Anderson's case for the structural reform of integration to fight racism. Madva points out that "*bringing about* integrationist reforms will require, at a minimum, changes in the beliefs, motivations, or actions of those individuals poised to promote integration. Such reforms are more likely if the relevant individuals are persuaded that the reforms are possible and desirable, and start acting to help bring the reforms about. Such reforms are more likely to "stick" and change behavior in enduring ways insofar as the individuals affected buy into them, or at least don't actively resist them."

Madva also tackles the claims of structural prioritisers that individual change will simply follow from structural change, offering several disturbing case studies of structural reform giving rise to backlash effects including increases in individual level bias. To prevent these, he argues, structural and individual reforms must be considered and put in place together.

I think the case Madva makes is powerful, and I agree with all of it. But his paper, like so much of the literature on racism and sexism (including my own work) now seems like a relic of a bygone golden age. It comes from an age in which it seemed reasonable to write about race with barely a mention of explicit, open racism. The focus was on people of good will, and their efforts to change either structures or their own minds. (This may well always have been deeply and dangerously misguided. It has often been remarked that only white people were surprised by Trump's election.)

Now our world is different. An explicit racist and sexist has been elected President despite multiple sexual assault allegations, openly sexist speech, claims that Mexicans are rapists, and plans to build a wall on the Southern border and ban Muslims from entering the US. It is not yet clear whether the acceptance of all of this by his voters represents a change in their psychology or whether they were always like this. But it is clear that we live in a world with new and very pressing challenges as Trump assumes office with a Republican House and Senate.

I don't think any of this undermines Madva's claims. However, I am extremely curious about what he takes it to mean for what we should do now. Madva has argued eloquently that our focus needs to be an evidence-based one on *which* changes—structural and individual—will work best. With that in mind, I'd like to hear his thoughts about what we should be doing in our current desperate situation. Here are some more specific questions that seem worth considering:

1. A crude understanding of the literature on counterstereotypical exemplars might lead one to expect that 8 years of an Obama presidency would lead to a decline in racism. In fact, it seems to have led to an increasing tolerance for explicit racism ([https://www.princeton.edu/csdp/events/Valentino%20workshop%20paper/nv_lmv_Obama_5-\(2\).pdf](https://www.princeton.edu/csdp/events/Valentino%20workshop%20paper/nv_lmv_Obama_5-(2).pdf)). This seems to provide further support for Madva's claim that a structural reform—exposure to a counterstereotypical exemplar— may fail or even backfire due to other factors, including the psychology of those exposed to the exemplar. Can we, with hindsight, see any ways that this backlash might have been prevented through the right interventions?
2. How can we approach the task of re-shaping the psychology of millions of people, scattered across a large country, who are willing to accept (and in some cases endorse) a President who is an explicit racist?
3. Does a focus on explicit rather than implicit bias suggest different interventions to prioritise?
4. We have many urgent policy battles ahead—the wall on the Mexican border, a possible Muslim ban, further efforts to disenfranchise people of colour, etc. These are arguably structural matters. Does the importance of these fights give us a new reason to prioritise the structural?
5. Finally, a non-Trump related question: I often find it difficult to categorise an intervention as individual or structural. For example, if I decided to adopt anonymous marking it is a change in my individual behavior, but it affects the marking procedures for all my students. Is this an individual or structural intervention? I find myself unsure, and also unsure of the usefulness of categorizing interventions as individual or structural. Does Madva think these categories are still useful?