

Call for Papers:
Conference on Multiracial Democracy
University of Notre Dame

The longer history of democracies in the West has produced different forms of *herrenvolk* democracies that actively exclude populations of color. Indeed, many have argued that the United States did not become a true democracy until the 1965 Voting Rights Act. As we look forward to 2042, the date that many demographers cite as the year when the U.S. will become majority-minority, the challenge of full inclusion and participation for historically marginalized groups (African American, Native American, Latinx, and Asian American primarily) becomes ever more pressing. Election denial, the January 6th attack on the Capital, and ongoing efforts to restrict voting access all call into question the nation's collective ability to sustain an inclusive democracy. And of course, this challenge is not unique to the U.S. In Europe and Latin America, we are witnessing the resurgence of fascism and authoritarianism, largely motivated by xenophobia and/or anti-indigenous and anti-Black racism.

The University of Notre Dame will host a conference on multiracial democracy, on March 19, 2027. The conference will address the complex relationship between ethnoracial diversity and democratic institutions, asking: *Why do democracies struggle to incorporate diverse groups, and how does this struggle shape democratic resilience or decay?* The conference challenges the prevailing notion that multiculturalism and ethnoracial diversity are inherently destabilizing for democracy by instead examining how institutional responses contribute to either democratic adaptation or the rise of illiberal practices. The conference encourages comparative approaches to address the role of historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in shaping democratic outcomes.

In a more concrete sense, what are the impediments to multi-racial democracy, and what are the issues and topics that need to be addressed? Some of the conference's topics may include:

- migration
- art and representation
- expressive culture
- mass incarceration
- health disparities
- environmental racism
- wealth inequality
- affordable housing
- education
- voting rights and access

The abstract should not exceed 500 words, including the working title, the main argument of your paper, and methodological approach.

Professors Luis Fraga and Mark Sanders (the co-hosts for the conference) will select papers from the conference to be developed into essays for a volume on multiracial democracy.

Abstracts should be sent to Ms. Aurea Hernandez-Webster: aherna35@nd.edu

Timeline:

Abstract submission deadline: August 18, 2026

Acceptant or rejection notification: September 18, 2026

Presentation at the Conference: March 19, 2027