

**SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**VERSUS**

**SOCIAL SCIENCE**

**WHITE FRAGILITY, IMPLICIT BIAS, AND DIVERSITY TRAINING**

**CRAIG FRISBY AND ROBERT MARANTO**



**MINDING<sup>THE</sup>CAMPUS**

*Reforming Our Universities*

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# *Section I.*

**THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND POLITICAL ROOTS OF WHITE  
FRAGILITY, IMPLICIT BIAS, AND DIVERSITY TRAINING<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> We extend special thanks and gratitude to Mattie Harris, who assisted us with the formatting and copyediting of this book.

# Chapter I

## *The Intellectual Fragility of White Fragility*

BY CRAIG FRISBY AND ROBERT MARANTO

*White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* was released in 2018, published by Beacon Press, and since its publication has topped the best seller lists for both Amazon and *The New York Times*.<sup>2</sup> If you work or study in an institution of higher educational, a public school, or a corporate office and have not yet been subjected to white fragility training, fear not, for soon you will. Be warned that dissenters may face negative consequences. But is it worth it? Does it indeed accomplish what its supporters say it does? Is the concept of white fragility itself even real? For that matter, how about its cousin concepts 'implicit bias' and 'diversity training'?

Training to raise workplace consciousness is not entirely new, of course. University professors must periodically complete training modules designed to promote the protection of human subjects in university-sponsored research, curb workplace harassment, and bolster Title IX compliance. Public school teachers must often attend in-service workshops to develop skills necessary for spotting signs of sexual/physical abuse in children. But what exactly is white fragility? Implicit bias? Diversity training?

The petri dish out of which these concepts were birthed begins with the common observation that certain racial groups have not achieved socioeconomic parity, on average, with whites in America. This seems particularly salient for African Americans, though similar observations can be made for other groups (e.g., Hispanics, Native Americans). Despite the aggressive push for civil rights legislation and anti-discrimination laws in the 1960s and beyond, racial groups continue to display average differences in median household income, high school graduation rates, college entrance test scores, health outcomes, and crime rates.

While reasonable persons agree that overt racism has indeed receded into the fringes of American society (compared to, say, 70 years ago), DiAngelo's *White Fragility* argues that covert and 'unconscious' white racism is omnipresent. White racism is thought to define America even when whites are not guilty of intentional, overt racism. Thus, "anti-racism" efforts promoted by DiAngelo (and fellow travelers like Ibram X. Kendi and his similarly best-selling book, *How to Be an Antiracist*) posit that only the endless search for 'unconscious bias,' never-ending apologies to nonwhites by white people, and revolutionary changes in society can purge America of its embedded racism.<sup>3</sup> If done correctly, America will then be able to sit back and watch group differences in outcomes magically melt away. This process begins in a concrete sense by mobs of anti-racist ground troops toppling historical statues, demanding the renaming of airports and/or schools, calling for the defunding of police departments, censoring the "wrong" movies and books, and demanding the firing or censure of any person unlucky enough to leave a social media trail containing the "wrong" ideas or statements. Any attempt on the part of whites to deny their inherent racism, as well as to deny that they benefit from "structurally" racist systems, is described as white fragility.

The grand irony here is that 'traditional' civil rights movements sought to address overt discrimination by encouraging society to make race matter less. In contrast, white fragility

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<sup>2</sup> Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018).  
<sup>3</sup> Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist* (New York: One World, 2019).

and its cousin movements seek to make everything about race. In university training programs for human service professions (e.g., social work, education, medicine, psychology), claims that one is “colorblind,” or that “we treat everyone the same here,” or that “we don’t see race” are held up to ridicule as hopelessly naïve and, ironically, racist.

And, as with any fad, the lure of easy riches is not far behind. For example, Tim Wise—a self-described “white privilege/anti-racism activist”—earns lucrative speaking fees on college campuses to the tune of \$10,000-20,000 for each appearance as he promotes white self-flagellation in his books *Colorblind: The Rise of Post-Racial Politics* and *the Retreat from Racial Equity*, *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son*, and *Dear White America: Letter to a New Minority*.<sup>4</sup> Robin DiAngelo has a speaking fee of \$20,000 for her itinerant anti-racism “trainings.” As Jay P. Greene and James Paul detail, college and university diversity, equity, and inclusion staff devoted to imposing concepts like white fragility now substantially outnumber history professors, and many are far better paid.<sup>5</sup>

It comes as no surprise that center-right thinkers take issue with this line of thinking, but increasingly analysts on the left are also critical. See, for example, this recent *Washington Post* review and a lengthy treatment by *The New York Times*.<sup>6</sup>

So, what are some of the problems with white fragility? First, in its postmodern disavowal of science, white fragility is inherently unmeasurable and unfalsifiable. This is by design and creates a pernicious catch-22: if whites admit their racism, they are obviously racist. If, however, they deny their racism or become defensive, they are fragile racists. Persons are not viewed as nuanced, three-dimensional human beings whose life experiences are individualistic or complex. In the white fragility/unconscious bias universe, whites are inherently oppressive, and African Americans (and by extension all “people of color,” or POCs) serve only as victims around whom whites must walk on eggshells to avoid triggering deep emotional pain. Interestingly, as journalist Kenny Xu points out, many white fragility fans increasingly demean Asian Americans as “White-adjacent,” reflecting envy that they tend to outlearn and out-earn whites, and other minorities.<sup>7</sup>

Relatedly, in arguing that there is something inherently “white” about values like rationalism and hard work, the ideas of DiAngelo and others in the white fragility movement become difficult to distinguish from the ideas of traditional white racists. Who knew neo-Confederates were actually woke? As an African American consultant charged with increasing the percentage of African American and Hispanic students in New York City advanced classes complained in *The New York Times* piece on white fragility: “The city has tens of millions invested in advanced placement (AP) classes for all, so my team can give kids access to AP classes and help them prepare for AP exams that will help them get col-

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4 Tim J. Wise, *Colorblind: The Rise of Post-Racial Politics and the Retreat from Racial Equity* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2010); see Dima & Hasson, *Tennessee Star*, July 31, 2019.

5 Jay P. Greene and James D. Paul, “Diversity University: DEI Bloat in the Academy,” Heritage Foundation: Center for Education Policy, July 27, 2021, [https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/BG3641\\_0.pdf](https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/BG3641_0.pdf).

6 Daniel Bergner, “‘White Fragility’ Is Everywhere. But Does Antiracism Training Work?,” *New York Times*, July 15, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/15/magazine/white-fragility-robin-diangelo.html>; and Carlos Lozada, “White Fragility Is Real. But ‘White Fragility’ Is Flawed,” *Washington Post*, June 18, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/06/18/white-fragility-is-real-white-fragility-is-flawed/>.

7 Kenny Xu, *An Inconvenient Minority: The Attack on Asian American Excellence and the Fight for Meritocracy* (New York: Diversion Books, 2021).

lege degrees . . . and we're all supposed to think that writing and data are white values? How do all these people not see how inconsistent this is?"<sup>8</sup>

For those of us who value science, prior efforts to find positive results from diversity/sensitivity training have come to naught.<sup>9</sup> Although white fragility is too new of a subject to empirically test, we see no reason to expect this new form of diversity training to be more effective in reducing racial conflicts, if that is indeed the goal.

In this report on white fragility originally serialized in *Minding the Campus*, we offer essays from ourselves and seven other distinguished social scientists that explore, in greater detail, various aspects of why white fragility (and related concepts) has dubious validity scientifically, misses the mark educationally, and misunderstands basic human nature fundamentally. We warn that this will not be for the fragile.

Section I of this report explores the philosophical and political roots of white fragility.

In Chapter 2, the second most downloaded in the series, Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay summarize their notable book, *Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything about Race, Gender, and Identity—and Why this Harms Everybody*. Pluckrose and Lindsay portray white fragility as rooted in postmodern theory, particularly Critical Social Justice (CSJ). While CSJ has varied manifestations, all favor repression rather than debate and deny the possibility of attaining objective truths rather than “standpoints” based in one’s demographics; hence, CSJ approaches are incompatible with the scientific method. This makes it all the more alarming that postmodernism has come to dominate segments of higher education, which traditionally embraced science.

Chapter 3, by Bradley Campbell, admits some sympathy for white fragility approaches, but like Pluckrose and Lindsay sees those approaches as incompatible with science since they deny the legitimacy of criticism. Accordingly, like CRT generally, white fragility and the diversity training so inspired take on a fundamentalist character, rejected even by most (leftist) sociologists. After all, Robin DiAngelo’s pronouncements are unfalsifiable and absolute, not tentative and probabilistic, very unlike social science.

In Chapter 4, Eric Kaufmann argues that elite “left modernist” ideologues have come to dominate key institutions in the West, particularly in the U.S. They label dissenting views on a range of issues such as immigration and national identity as “racist,” and thus taboo. Kaufmann notes that white liberals to a far greater degree than black liberals “feel that it is legitimate for minority groups to defend their demographic interests but that it is racist for majorities to defend theirs.” Though it has roots in the early 20th century, widespread left-modernist domination arose suddenly. As recently as the first term of his presidency, Barack Obama offered tough talk and even action on illegal immigration. The inability in the years since for mainstream parties to talk seriously about patriotism and national borders fueled populist movements in the U.S. and throughout Europe. In Scandinavia, a normal political marketplace of ideas enabled mainstream parties (including social democrats) to move to the center on immigration and other cultural issues. In the U.S., however, the Left used its institutional power to censor critics, creating institutions unable to meet public demands, which in turn fueled polarization and left an opening for the populist

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<sup>8</sup> Bergner, “‘White Fragility’ Is Everywhere.”

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Levy Paluck and Donald P. Greene, “Prejudice Reduction: What Works? A Review and Assessment of Research and Practice,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 60, no. 1 (2009): 339–67.

Trump. Kaufmann concludes that “our goal must be to de-sacralize political ideology and extract the sanctimonious moralizing out of our policy conversations, increasing political toleration” to enable democracy to work.

Section II evaluates the science presumed to support white fragility. In Chapter 5, Wilfred Reilly uses Barry Glasser’s classic *The Culture of Fear* to frame today’s fears about racism generally and police violence in particular, which created the Black Lives Matter movement. Reilly shows that police violence against African Americans is quite rare, usually justified, and statistically not necessarily racist, reflecting different crime rates. Contrary to media accounts, interracial violence is rare: criminals mainly victimize those of their own race. Further, racial differences in income and other outcomes reflect upstream cross-racial differences in family structure, educational achievement, and other variables which are unacknowledged by white fragility backers. Indeed, on income and other measures of privilege, U.S. whites now fall well behind many nonwhite groups. Reilly concludes by pointing out that Black Lives Matter activists have succeeded in reducing police budgets; this has increased crime, helping no one.

In Chapter 6, Craig Frisby notes that the term ‘racism’ functions as the premier ‘scare word’ energizing White Fragility and its cousin concepts (i.e, white privilege, unconscious bias, anti-racism, and the like). In reality, the early meanings attached to the word ‘racism’ were relatively benign, but have metastasized over the decades into a sloppy and muddled concept that has come to mean literally anything anyone wants it to mean for self-serving purposes. These distortions, and the false narratives that have been birthed from them, are discussed in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 underscores the reality of average differences across groups, as well as wide variation in psychological traits within groups—and urges readers to more accurately understand human variation by integrating these two truths. White fragility focuses almost exclusively on the depicting white vs. black conflict as primordial, but it is wholly inadequate as a robust explanation for international and domestic conflicts between groups.

Section III evaluates interventions based on white fragility. In Chapter 9, in an essay originally published by Heterodox Academy, Musa al-Charbi summarizes research on the (in)effectiveness of diversity training. While many find diversity training enjoyable, and while participants typically give the socially desired answers on surveys just after training, decades of evaluations indicate that such training typically fails to raise morale, improve intergroup relations, or increase the percentage of under-represented groups in leadership positions. Some studies even indicate that diversity training has negative effects, including the encouragement to stereotype. Strikingly, many managers who implement diversity training have long considered it ineffective. Yet organizations continue such practices, in part to appear non-discriminatory and in part because training is easy—though change is hard.

In Chapter 10, Robert Maranto tackles one particular growth sector of the diversity training industry; microaggressions. Borrowing heavily from the late Scott Lilienfeld, Maranto argues that, by design microaggressions are non-empirical, eluding measurement and instead existing in the eye of the beholder. This makes them unscientific and thus ripe for abuse, a common theme throughout this report. Anyone who wants revenge on a boss or coworker can charge him with a microaggression, and authorities have no objective standard by which to judge the claim; thus, outcomes will depend on who has power. As

in postmodern thought and practice generally, this is likely intentional, further empowering those who already have prominence.

In the academic world, the Implicit Association Test (IAT) has been a topic of vigorous research interest since the late 1990s. IAT research protocols related to race (called the 'race IAT') have also captured the attention of audiences outside of academia and the business world, who see it as a possible means to identify 'unconscious' biased perceptions and attitudes presumed to be correlated with real-world prejudice and racial discrimination. In Chapters 11, 12, and 13, Craig Frisby underscores the responsibility for any assessment instrument used in real-world decision-making to both meet and surpass psychometric standards for clear, unambiguous interpretation, test-retest stability, and predictive validity both within laboratory and real-world settings. When the race IAT is evaluated using these criteria, it is found severely lacking.

In Chapter 14, Eric Kaufmann argues that multi-ethnic societies are somewhat less stable than those with ethnic majorities, while also distinguishing race from ethnicity and noting that some racial and ethnic identities can be quite porous, open to outsiders and assimilating over time. Often, multiethnic societies are held together by common enemies. In the U.S., a common fealty to liberal democracy and capitalism once served as a unifying force, though this glue has weakened as much of the globe adopted these innovations, and as American cultural elites rejected them. In the aftermath, Kaufmann makes two specific recommendations. First, "calibrating the immigration rate to the assimilation rate is important for national unity." Second, Americans should adopt a "multivocal nationhood" in which individuals define their identities both as Americans, and if desired, as part of complementary rather than oppositional subgroups. After all, those identifying more strongly as Jewish or Catholic also tend to identify more strongly as American. Unfortunately, the modern and, to an even greater degree, postmodern left eschew a common American identity; hence, American nationalism will require us "to shrink the outsized influence of left-modernism in the meaning-making center of U.S. society."

In Chapter 15, Robert Maranto distinguishes between heritage and history: while the former seeks to tell accurate stories, the latter tells the stories which hold nations together, a crucial matter in our culturally diverse United States. Central to the American story are personal responsibility and merit; indeed, the SAT was created to infuse merit into elite college admissions previously based largely on inherited privilege. Maranto thus sees leftist attacks on merit systems as attacks on American values, replacing merit with identity. Further, he portrays the historically inaccurate *1619 Project* as replacing American history and heritage with negative heritage, negating the country's reason for being. Maranto urges education policymakers to instead embrace E.D. Hirsch's Core Knowledge curricula, which is historically accurate, and designed to strengthen rather than undermine a great nation.

Maranto follows in Chapter 16 by attending to higher education, which has bureaucratized race and, increasingly, gender relations. Unfortunately, bureaucracies are prone to insulation and groupthink, often using their "expertise" to impose inaccurate ideologies. Relying on Thomas Sowell's classic (but seldom read) *Black Education: Myths and Tragedies*, Maranto argues that in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Cornell and other universities pioneered approaches to race which have now metastasized across society. Cornell bureaucratized race, setting up separate black institutions within the white university, em-

phasizing racial bean counting. Even worse, Cornell's white administrators doubted that blacks had the talent to succeed academically and admitted black students incapable of challenging those racist (white) assumptions. This general strategy spread, poisoning race relations wherever it went. Relying on Charles Moskos and John Sibley Butler's *All We Can Be: Black Leadership and Racial Integration The Army Way*, Maranto instead advocates the successful approach to integration and class mobility used in the military, which itself accords with psychological research. The Army emphasizes common rather than separate identities and encourages close contact rather than segregated "safe spaces." Crucially, the military employs common, transparent standards, largely taking race and politics out of promotions.

In Chapter 17, George Yancey acknowledges that institutional racism sometimes exists, but sees white fragility-related approaches as unlikely to ameliorate it, largely since DiAngelo and like thinkers conceptualize race relations in zero sum terms (also a theme of Kaufmann) and thus rely on coercion (power) rather than conversation. Yancey instead favors increased interracial contact and collaboration among equals, promoting the concept of mutual accountability. Mutual accountability better fits psychological research and Christian traditions. Its results are more likely to endure, even when power conditions change.

Finally, in Chapter 18, coeditors Frisby and Maranto summarize both the enormous progress on racial equity made since the 1950s, and how this progress contrasts with the institutional and attitudinal changes which have spawned the white fragility social movement. Institutional changes in education, particularly higher education, have played key roles in the transition from a republic which stressed individual responsibility to one which centered around group and collective punishments and rewards. They conclude with a call for educators and policymakers to stop doing what fails and start doing what might work.

Here is one thing we can guarantee of the pages which follow: these readings are not for the fragile.

# Chapter 2

*Why Scholar-Activists Made  
Everything About Identity and Why  
This Goes So Badly Wrong*

BY HELEN PLUCKROSE AND JAMES LINDSAY

## LIBERALISM VS “SOCIAL JUSTICE”

Social justice is a good thing. It is almost unheard of for anyone to say they would not want a just society. Humans are a social species with an innate sense of justice. We aspire to its ideal. This unanimous agreement breaks down when we attempt to make justice real. What does a just society look like? How it can be accomplished? Those of us who consider ourselves progressive generally see a just society as one in which no-one is disadvantaged by their class, race, sex, sexuality, or gender identity. And yet even we disagree with each other about how to achieve that. Brushing broadly, (small-l, classical, and traditional) liberals and radicals see very differently the means by which a just society should be achieved. The main dispute about this is currently between the liberals and the genuinely radical movement that presumptuously calls itself “Social Justice.”

Liberalism—and social justice—predates the current “Social Justice” movement by several hundred years. In the West it formed gradually over the modern period (from the end of the Medieval until roughly now), making society freer, fairer, and more democratic. It did so by moving away from premodern societal structures in which everyone had their place in society, largely defined by their class and sex, and in which everybody was expected to affirm their commitment to the Church and the monarchy and to form heterosexual family units led by a father. In fits and starts with many setbacks and disasters, liberal, secular democracies formed. The ideas that one’s identity dictated one’s station in life and that conformity of belief was a moral imperative were gradually eroded in favor of individualism, pluralism, and universalism.

This gradually emerging conception of society as made up of individuals who have their own abilities, interests, goals, and desires separate from their class, sex, or race and who should have the freedom to pursue them was a remarkable development for the tribal, territorial species of ape known as *Homo sapiens*. So too was the pluralist idea that people didn’t all need to believe the same thing, and if they believed different things about religion, politics, philosophy, or ethics, nobody needed to be persecuted, arrested, or executed. The concept of the Marketplace of Ideas, where viewpoint diversity and freedom of belief and speech were understood to be good for the advance of knowledge and moral progress, was born and did indeed lead to great advances in science and human rights. Universalism, the idea that we all share a common humanity, should all have the same rights and responsibilities, and are equally valuable regardless of race, sex, or class was an astounding development. All these ideas come under the umbrella of liberalism and resulted because liberalism was and is best—though rarely—understood as both a conflict resolution system and an ongoing reforming impulse.

The inherently progressive nature of liberalism was often regarded with concern by more reactionary conservatives, who felt the need for much greater caution when “reforming” aspects of society. Often, they felt liberals wanted to fix things that didn’t need fixing and lacked respect for tradition and continuity, thus endangering the stability and cultural cohesion of society with their eternal drive for progress. In many respects, they have a point, though it is also one that can be taken too far and become reactionary.

Antipodal to the reactionaries who wish for “history” to stop are the radicals who wish for it to all be done yesterday. These progressive factions regard the reforming nature of liberalism negatively because they deem the process too slow and too conciliatory. Liberals,

the more radical leftists felt, are too complacent and tolerant of the status quo in their attempts to reform existing institutions and systems rather than burn them down and attempt to rebuild something better from the ashes. As Marx famously said,

[I]f constructing the future and settling everything for all times are not our affair, it is all the more clear what we have to accomplish at present: I am referring to ruthless criticism of all that exists, ruthless both in the sense of not being afraid of the results it arrives at and in the sense of being just as little afraid of conflict with the powers that be.<sup>10</sup>

The desire to criticize all that exists, along with *conflict theory*—the idea that society is in constant conflict for access to the limited resources held by the powerful and fought for by the powerless—are Marxian ideas that are clearly present in the current progressive movement known as (Critical) Social Justice (CSJ). These ideas were taken forward from Marxism by the Frankfurt School into the realm of culture as well as economics. The similarity of Herbert Marcuse's argument in "Repressive Tolerance" to the intolerance of viewpoint diversity seen in the Critical Social Justice movement is striking.<sup>11</sup> His advocacy of "undemocratic means"

would include the withdrawal of toleration of speech and assembly from groups and movements which promote aggressive policies, armament, chauvinism, discrimination on the grounds of race and religion, or which oppose the extension of public services, social security, medical care, etc. Moreover, the restoration of freedom of thought may necessitate new and rigid restrictions on teachings and practices in the educational institutions which, by their very methods and concepts, serve to enclose the mind within the established universe of discourse and behavior...

Although Marcuse himself is seldom cited in the current Critical Social Justice scholarship, this spirit can be clearly seen in the activism he inspired in the New Left, which in turn informed black feminism, which then informed critical race theory and intersectionality. Similarly, the use of "hegemony" to describe the cultural dominance of one set of ideas over all others as a way for the powerful to preserve their dominance was developed by another Neo-Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, and is also quite clearly present in the CSJ ideology.<sup>12</sup>

Despite these indisputable Marxist and neo-Marxist influences, the underlying epistemology—how we decide what is true—in the prevailing radical approach to achieving social justice has its academic origins in postmodern thought. Postmodern theory, which arose in the 1960s, was a vast and complicated body of work. But key ideas about the way knowledge, power, and language work to allow some groups and ideas to dominate and marginalize others were adopted by later (largely frustrated critical) theorists beginning in the late 1980s, who in turn developed the theories which solidified by 2010 and then rapidly escalated into what we now know as "Critical Social Justice."

<sup>10</sup> Gary Teeple, "Political and Social Emancipation: Articles from the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, 1843-44," in *Marx's Critique of Politics 1842-1847* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 91-120.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Paul Wolff, Barrington Moore, Jr., and Herbert Marcuse, *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 95-137.

<sup>12</sup> Valeriano Ramos, Jr., "The Concepts of Ideology, Hegemony, and Organic Intellectuals in Gramsci's Marxism," *Theoretical Review*, no. 27, (1982): 3-4.

In our book, *Cynical Theories*, we argue that these ideas are best understood as two principles and four themes. The postmodern knowledge principle denies the attainability of objective truth and asserts that what we consider to be knowledge is a social construction. Intertwined with this is the postmodern political principle which claims that society is structured into systems of power and privilege.<sup>13</sup> These systems decide what is knowledge and what is not and what is morally good or morally bad, decisions that are largely accepted by the general population uncritically. Together, these principles present us with a conception of society in which knowledge is a construct of power which is then perpetuated by everybody accepting said knowledge and speaking in ways that uphold the oppressive power structures. These are often referred to as ‘dominant discourses,’ and the purpose of the original postmodernists was to deconstruct them. Later theorists would name these dominant discourses things like ‘white supremacy,’ ‘patriarchy,’ ‘colonialism,’ ‘heteronormativity,’ ‘cisnormativity,’ ‘ableism,’ and ‘fatphobia’ and speak of dismantling, unpacking, or smashing them.

The methods by which CSJ scholars and activists attempt to do this are seen in four recurring themes in their work and activism. Firstly, they aim to blur boundaries and destabilize categories. If knowledge is an oppressive social construct, it is constructed by the categories by which we distinguish things like fact and fiction, reason and emotion, male and female. Secondly, they focus intently on language, scrutinizing it for the ways in which it feeds into dominant discourses that oppressed people. If oppression is perpetuated by discourses, it may be addressed by controlling how society may and may not speak. Thirdly, it stresses cultural relativism and standpoint epistemology—the belief that knowledge is tied to one’s position in society, and in the case of “Social Justice” scholars, identity. If knowledge and morality are constructed by powerful cultural forces, then they vary according to culture, with none being more true or more moral. Further, it leads to the emergence of a radical egalitarianism under which the knowledge that came from the standpoint of marginalized groups is understood to have been neglected and must now be foregrounded while dominant cultural discourses like science, reason, and liberalism must be devalued as products of a white, Western, masculine, and oppressive culture. Lastly, the scholars and activists reject individualism and universalism, arguing that only dominant groups in society get to see themselves as individuals and that so-called universal aspects of our shared humanity are really just the values and knowledge of those dominant groups. Instead, they advocate for a focus on identity groups and a new conception of identity politics differing from the universalizing appeals of the liberal Civil Rights Movement to empower marginalized groups and achieve social justice, which they explicitly conceive of as advocacy for ‘group rights.’

Because of the broadly Neo-Marxist belief that the general population lacks the ‘critical consciousness’ to see these oppressive power systems, which was enhanced by Foucault’s thoughts about prevailing regimes of truth that dominate cultural milieus, the Critical Social Justice scholars and activists see it as their job to enlighten us and make the systems visible by reading them into almost anything and asserting the authority of their interpretation. In common parlance, stemming from African American Vernacular English, becoming able to see the largely invisible systems of power, privilege, and marginalization in this specifically ‘critical’ way is referred to as becoming ‘woke.’

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<sup>13</sup> Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay, *Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything about Race, Gender, and Identity—and Why This Harms Everybody* (Durham: Pitchstone Publishing, 2020).

This ‘woke’ approach explicitly rejects liberalism and its Marketplace of Ideas, in which anybody can argue for anything and anybody can challenge that argument while onlookers can evaluate these arguments on their merits, leading to the advance of knowledge and moral progress. This, the theorists argue, cannot possibly work, as knowledge is related to one’s position in relation to power and only the powerful will be heard. They frequently deny that liberalism, which included the Civil Rights Movement, liberal feminism, and Gay Pride, has produced any increase in racial, gender, or LGBT equality, but that oppression continues in more insidious and hidden forms. Indeed, we find in the introductory chapter to Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic’s textbook, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, “Unlike traditional civil rights discourse, which stresses incrementalism and step-by-step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law.”

Thus identity-based academic disciplines and activism formed to address this hidden systemic oppression in ways the theorists believe liberal approaches simply cannot do. Superficially, it isn’t that their aims differ—both progressive approaches appear to seek racial, gender, and LGBT equality alongside the elimination of poverty—but that their conception of the world and their methods do. Moreover, on closer examination, their aims do differ as well, with liberalism seeking equality and the theorists seeking equity, a form of enforced reparative equality of outcomes more reminiscent of communism than liberalism. Liberalism, CSJ theorists argue, is simply not up to the task of achieving social justice and shoots at the wrong target. Critical Social Justice, liberals (including your two authors) argue, is not only unfit for this purpose—it actually gets things entirely backwards and threatens to undo decades of social justice progress. We intend to demonstrate this by looking at these methods and conceding their valid points while showing how they ultimately and inevitably fail to achieve their goals.

## THE THEORIES

**Postcolonial and decolonial theory** make some strong points about the problems with colonialism. Colonialism did trample over other cultures while demeaning and exploiting the human beings belonging to those cultures. It justified its imperialist domination on the grounds of bringing scientific knowledge, logical reasoning, and enlightened ethics to barbaric and backwards people. Those people, once free of literal colonialism, still had both a material and psychological aftermath to deal with, which would involve a reconstruction of their own cultures and overcoming colonial attitudes which had marked them as inferior and “other.”

Liberals agree that this is an accurate description of the effects of colonialism and argue that the idea that science, reason, and liberalism belong to white, Western people is simply racist. Instead, they argue, there is significant historical and current evidence that these approaches have genuine advantages and belong to all humans, and that most cultural differences are morally neutral, are meaningful to people, and should be respected. This does not include cultural relativism, where misogyny, homophobia, and punishment for apostasy are morally acceptable, and so Western liberals stand with Eastern liberals in opposing all of these.

Critical Social Justice, unfortunately, gets this backwards. Rather than accepting science,

reason, and liberalism as things that work and that belong to every individual who wishes to embrace them, they reinforce the old colonialist ideas that they are white, Western, and male ways of knowing, while other ways of knowing belong to Eastern cultures. The only difference between the colonialist attitude and the Social Justice attitude is that the former believed the Western ways of knowing to be superior and the Eastern ones inferior while the latter reverses this hierarchy to say that Eastern ways of knowing should be both valorized and protected from being in any way appropriated by Westerners or replaced by methods developed in the West, including science and liberalism. This leads to cultural protectionism and a demonization of science, reason, and liberalism as oppressive Western discourses. This attitude is rarely appreciated by non-Western scientists, doctors, and engineers (including those residing in the many Western countries that rely upon them to fulfil those much-needed roles).

**Critical race theory and intersectionality** also started well. Critical race theory traces its roots back to freed slaves who argued for the recognition of African Americans as full human beings. It included the work of abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and leaders of the Civil Rights Movement like Martin Luther King, Jr., who dreamed of a world in which people were valued for the contents of their character and not the color of their skin. So far, so liberal. Intersectionality too made valid points when it argued that black women could be subject to prejudicial stereotypes not placed on black men or white women, and so the intersection of race and sex needed to be considered.

Critical race theory went wrong when it abandoned liberalism and became “critical,” cynical, and postmodern, explicitly eschewing universalism and embracing identity-first politics. The theorist credited with coining both the terms ‘critical race theory’ and ‘intersectionality’—Kimberlé Crenshaw—explicitly argued against the liberal approach of removing social significance from racial and gendered categories and instead argued for increasing their salience. Liberalism argues that while someone’s race or sex might be meaningful to them, these categories should be understood to convey no information about anyone’s character or role in the world. For the critical race theorists, this is wrong. Race and gender must be made significant in everything. How else can people see the white supremacy and patriarchy understood to permeate everything? Thus, we see a return to racial and gender essentialism—construed as cultural and subjected to a similar form of cultural protectionism as under postcolonial theory—where there is an expectation that to be black and/or female is to have a specific political perspective of the world and that to be white and/or male is to have internalized toxic whiteness or masculinity and to be inherently oppressive. Does this seem to have improved race relations at all? We think not.

**Queer theory and gender theory**, which developed from feminism and gay and lesbian studies and was deeply influenced by Foucault and selective readings of Derrida, also began with a solid point. Society really has significantly changed how it sees homosexuality, thus showing that ideas of homosexuality being a sin or a disorder were oppressive social constructs. Society really has significantly changed how it sees gender roles, and the acceptance of women’s right to control their own reproduction and enter every part of the public sphere has amply demonstrated that their former subordination as unfit for roles other than domestic ones was an oppressive social construct.

Liberals not only accept this as true. We were the ones instrumental in getting wider

society to accept it as so. The slogan “Some people are gay. Get over it” is inherently liberal. The work of feminists to open up all opportunities to women and to obtain control over their own finances and bodies was a liberal aim. Consequently, both gender equality and LGBT equality advanced significantly during the 60s and 70s when liberal activism dominated and before queer theory and intersectional feminism emerged to screw everything up.

Where queer theory went wrong was when it decided that because history had been so wrong about the normality and moral neutrality of homosexuality and the abilities of women to be competent and successful participants in the public sphere, sex, gender, and sexuality must all be social constructs created by people pressured to perform those roles, and thus must be infinitely malleable. The aim of queer theory is to break down those boundaries between male and female, masculine and feminine, and gay and straight, so that anybody who doesn't fit the category of “feminine woman attracted to men” or “masculine man attracted to women” is liberated from the social pressure to do so, even passively or by incident. In reality, humans are a sexually reproducing species; cognitive, psychological, and behavioral differences between the sexes really do exist; and sexuality does not appear to be a choice. Furthermore, liberal society has shown that it can capably accept the existence of gender non-conforming people and homosexuals as a normal and morally neutral human variation without any need to deny biology or decry it as an oppressive social construct.

Unfortunately, the main effect of queer theory and associated gender ideologies—aside from their relentless campaigns against progressive civil rights ambitions like marriage equality (because these normalize formerly “queer” identities and render them unproductive for further radical identity politicking)—is to create hostility toward trans people, the majority of whom don't accept or even read queer theory, and to vilify gender-critical feminists (pejoratively called TERFs) as they attempt to raise reasonable objections about the effect of self-identifying one's gender on women's spaces and sports.

**Disability and fat studies and activism** also had quite positive beginnings. In disability activism, particularly, the work of scholars and activists to change societal expectations that the individual with an impairment must find ways to overcome it to an expectation that society should make employment and social opportunities more accessible to people with impairments was very positive. Fat activists too raised good points about unkindness toward and discrimination against the obese, providing evidence that these existed and did nothing to help people lose weight. Stereotypes of obese people being unreliable, undisciplined, and lazy worked against their job prospects, and many obese people avoided seeing their doctor for non-obesity related illnesses for fear of having to discuss their weight.

Disability and fat studies and activism went wrong when they went critical-postmodern and decided that the belief that it is better if all one's body parts work and one maintains a weight that doesn't impede movement or damage organs were both oppressive dominant discourses called “ableism” and “fatphobia.” Again, medical science was blamed for being a white, Western, male, and capitalist construct. Much theory has been produced arguing that attempts to cure or alleviate disability and illness are part of a neo-liberal agenda to produce workers and consumers for capitalist systems (as this is what the theory says is the meaning given to people by neo-liberal systems). It also perceived the aim to reduce the existence of disability as akin to wishing that existing disabled people

did not exist. Medical scientists researching the health risks of obesity and the increasing percentage of the population suffering from obesity were and are accused of fatphobia and supporting a capitalist diet industry.

In addition to this silly, anti-scientific attitude, real consequences for the health of disabled and obese people will arise if these scholars and activists succeed in intimidating medical professionals and researchers from offering advice and developing treatments. Worse, disabled and obese people expressing a wish not to be disabled or obese are liable to be shamed and bullied by activists. It is difficult to see this postmodern theory of disability and fat activism as helping the lives of disabled or obese people.

## THE SOLUTION?

The way to address the unwarranted dominance of Critical Social Justice ideas over liberal ones begins by recognizing that they are both progressive worldviews. This is often denied by advocates of CSJ, who frequently mischaracterize liberalism as a defense of the status quo. This is simply wrong. Liberalism is no more the belief that society is already adequately liberal than “Social Justice” is the belief that society is already adequately socially just. They both aim to make society more just, but one of them is liberal and the other illiberal.

Also, the claim that liberalism seeks to maintain the status quo while CSJ is a radical, grassroots progressive movement fighting the status quo is ridiculous. Liberalism is inherently open to enabling progress, and liberal societies tend not to stay the same for very long. This claim that CSJ is itself fighting the status quo becomes less convincing the more entrenched in education, media, employment, and politics Critical Social Justice becomes. It is increasingly hard to deny that CSJ is a dominant and influential part of the status quo whose power liberals (and others) are seeking to challenge. Whereas liberalism inherently questions the status quo, CSJ deliberately seeks to establish a new one under its dominion.

In our immediate moment, we need to protect the freedom of individuals not to believe in Critical Social Justice theories. The imposition of CSJ on private individuals most commonly occurs in employment, in universities, and in primary education, although in the UK, police have also contacted private individuals to “check their thinking” following a non-CSJ-compliant social media post.<sup>14</sup> In employment or education, people might be required to attend ‘diversity training,’ where they are expected to affirm beliefs in invisible systems of power and privilege permeating everything in society and their own complicity in them, or to write “diversity, equity, and inclusion” statements affirming these ideas even if their own political, philosophical, religious, or ethical beliefs are quite different. This problem is a product of mistakenly putting CSJ “training” or “teaching” in the same category as data protection or algebra, where people can reasonably be required to accept and comply with procedures. CSJ should actually be regarded as belonging to the same category as religion, where it is understood that freedom of belief is a basic human right. That is, the concept of secularism needs to be applied to CSJ—you may believe this, express this, and live by this, but you cannot impose it on me or anyone else who believes

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<sup>14</sup> Keane Duncan, “Humberside Police Tell Man to ‘Check His Thinking’ after He Likes ‘Offensive Transgender Limerick on Twitter,” *HullLive*, January 24, 2019, <https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/hull-east-yorkshire-news/humberside-police-twitter-transgender-limerick-2468385>.

otherwise. (One will note that liberalism explicitly allows for this, not only in permitting reactionary conservatism and theonomist religious beliefs, but also, here, in the preceding sentence, for the explicitly anti-liberal CSJ itself.)

In the long term, the only way to effectively defeat “Critical Social Justice” is on the field of ideas. This requires people to accurately conceive of how it works, recognize its workings as problems, understand what kind of problems they are, and feel confident to critique them. The problems are numerous.

Firstly, there is an epistemological problem. CSJ’s reliance on highly dubious social constructionist theory about power, knowledge, and language and its suspicion of science, reason, and empirical, rigorous research as oppressive, white supremacist, patriarchal, imperialist social constructs have real-world consequences and are sexist and racist. Respect for properly conducted science is necessary for any functioning society, but particularly so during a period in which humans are endangered by factors ranging from a coronavirus pandemic to climate change to antibiotic resistance to an obesity epidemic. Respect for an individual’s ability to make and evaluate reasoned arguments regardless of their identity and theorized position in relation to power is essential to the continuation of a Marketplace of Ideas in which knowledge can advance and moral progress can be made. A theory that cannot be critiqued is one that cannot correct errors and is likely to become increasingly erroneous and divorced from reality—risking, at best, what the Chinese have for centuries dubbed “the bad emperor problem.” Like emperors of the past, Critical Social Justice has made itself unassailable.

Secondly, there is a psychological problem. Critical Social Justice theories simply don’t work well with human nature if social justice is the aim. Humans are tribal and territorial animals, and it has taken significant amounts of time and effort to enable the forming of societies that expect us to extend our innate senses of fairness and reciprocity beyond our immediate tribe and to the whole of society—even if people in it look and believe differently. Liberalism, with its focus on individualism, pluralism, and universalism, has performed best at achieving this because of its embrace of individual agency underlain with a shared universal humanity. Identity politics, standpoint epistemology, conflict theory, and the application of different rules to different groups encourages us to draw our circles of empathy back within our own tribes and to turn our sense of fairness and reciprocity into tit-for-tat vendettas.

This leads to the third major problem with Critical Social Justice ideas, which is a social one. The increase of CSJ’s racial identity politics can only serve to justify an increased white identity politics, which has a far longer and more harmful history, particularly in the United States, and has only recently become broadly socially unacceptable. This is unlikely to work out well for racial minorities. Similarly, societies which have recently begun to enable women to control their own reproduction, to enter all professions, and to overcome sexist beliefs about the moral, intellectual, and social inferiority of women are unlikely to see continued support of women’s equal value if it becomes acceptable to regard more masculine traits such as competitiveness, stoicism, and assertiveness as toxic or even pathological.<sup>15</sup> The astoundingly fast progress in the realms of LGBT rights and acceptance are also endangered by CSJ approaches to gender theory. This is most dangerous for

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<sup>15</sup> Stephanie Pappas, “APA Issues First-Ever Guidelines for Practice with Men and Boys,” *American Psychological Association* 50, no. 1 (2019): 34, <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/01/ce-corner>.

trans people. While society largely came to accept “Some people are gay. Get over it,” and would be quite likely to apply the same ethics to acceptance of trans people, it is unlikely to respond well to being called transphobic, threatened, and intimidated if one objects to being referred to as a ‘vulva haver’ or ‘menstruator,’ believes biological sex to be a reality and fundamental to one’s sexual attraction, or has concerns about women’s spaces and sports if trans women are accepted straightforwardly as women in every situation.

Ultimately, Critical Social Justice, while having some value in bringing to the fore identity issues that liberalism’s focus on the individual and universal can inadvertently neglect, is an inferior model for attaining social justice when compared to liberalism. This is largely due to its complicated theoretical approach, which is actually deeply reductionist and bears little correspondence with reality. CSJ threatens individuals’ freedom of belief, speech, and agency, and their ability to make and evaluate arguments. It is divisive, alienating, and disempowering and brings out the worst of human nature, thus threatening to undo much of human history that has progressed to make genuine diversity, equality, inclusion, and social justice a reality. Critical Social Justice will never fulfill our innate desire for justice.

# Chapter 3

## *Diversity Training and Moral Education*

BY BRADLEY CAMPBELL

“Who says diversity says conflict,” writes Donald Black in *Moral Time*.<sup>16</sup> Black is a sociologist who has spent decades studying morality, and his recent work identifies the causes of conflict in human relationships. Diversity isn’t the only cause of conflict, but diversity—whether it comes about because different cultural traditions come into contact with one another or because of cultural innovations—always produces conflict. That doesn’t mean diversity is bad. Conflict is just one result of diversity along with many other results that most of us view favorably. And, in any case, Black’s work makes it clear that it’s not possible to eliminate conflict.

What it does mean, though, is that if we want to foster diversity and reduce conflict, we’re likely to fail if we don’t recognize and address some of the challenges that arise in diverse social settings. How can diverse people—people with different ethnicities, religions, political beliefs, and socioeconomic backgrounds—interact with one another while getting along better, respecting one another more, and treating one another more fairly?

Once you recognize the promises and the challenges of diversity, it’s easy to sympathize with the universities and corporations that increasingly encourage or require students or employees to undergo “diversity training,” “sensitivity training,” or similar programs intended to minimize discrimination, offensive comments, and other problems likely to arise in diverse environments. It’s also easy to sympathize with a diversity trainer like Robin DiAngelo, who in her book *White Fragility: Why It’s so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism*, talks about the pushback she’s received as she’s led diversity trainings over many years.<sup>17</sup>

It’s clear that, in DiAngelo’s mind, she’s confronting racism by drawing from a theoretical approach that’s uncontestedly true and by using techniques that are uncontestedly fair and effective. Those who argue with her, get angry, cry, withdraw, or in other ways fail to wholeheartedly embrace what DiAngelo is saying are therefore displaying what she calls *white fragility*. DiAngelo seems sincere in her frustrations, but surely many of the people who’ve argued with her over the years, and even many of those who’ve become angry or emotional, have been sincere too. And surely there’s at least a possibility that some of them were right. The problem with DiAngelo’s *white fragility* concept is that it seems to apply to any kind of resistance to her teaching. But should DiAngelo and other diversity trainers really be protected from disagreement and criticism?

One problem with delegitimizing criticism of diversity training is that *any* kind of serious moral education—regardless of whether it has to do with race and diversity—is bound to provoke disagreement in a pluralistic society. In *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age Without Good or Evil*, sociologist James Davison Hunter points to the difficulties of providing moral education in schools.<sup>18</sup> The major challenge is that morality is particularistic. Moral cultures develop in moral communities—often religious communities. In a diverse environment where people of different moral communities interact, they have different sources of morality, they have different moral vocabularies, and they often come to very different moral conclusions. This means moral education can be noncontroversial only by being very thin. Any attempt to teach a thicker morality—and therefore a particularistic morality—would be resisted by those who aren’t part of the same moral community.

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<sup>16</sup> Donald Black, *Moral Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> DiAngelo, *White Fragility* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018).

<sup>18</sup> James Davison Hunter, *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age Without Good or Evil* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

*White Fragility* makes it clear that DiAngelo isn't just teaching widely accepted platitudes about race and diversity, but that she's drawing from a well-developed but controversial set of ideas derived from *critical theory*—and especially the subset of critical theories called *critical race theory* (CRT). Critical theory adopts its general framework from Marxism but adapts Marx's class-based analysis to include race, gender, sexuality, and other sources of "oppression" in addition to class.

From the standpoint of critical theory, racial oppression is inherent in interactions between whites and people of color. DiAngelo thus bristles when white people tell her they personally aren't racist in the same way doctrinaire Marxists would bristle if told by capitalists that they weren't personally exploiting the proletariat. Apparently, some of them bristle back when DiAngelo then explains that she's using racism in a different sense, that it doesn't just refer to individual and malicious acts, or when she says that "anti-blackness is foundational to our very identities as white people."

All of this is what we'd expect from any kind of diversity training or other moral education drawing from a thick, particularistic morality in a diverse setting. We'd expect people to be defensive, argumentative, or even angry when confronted with alternative worldviews and alternative moral ideas. This doesn't make DiAngelo's approach wrong, but it does raise the question of why one particularistic set of ideas about race and diversity—those derived from critical theory—should guide diversity training in public settings.

One possibility is that these ideas are so well supported that any objection to them displays ignorance or bad motives. Certainly, many sociologists and other social scientists use critical theory in their own work or view it favorably, but it's not settled science—like heliocentrism or Darwinism—that's only disputed by cranks. In fact, no sociological perspective has that kind of status. Sociology is a multiparadigmatic discipline full of arguments over basic concepts and even over whether sociology is or should be a science. Critical theorists, moreover, have tended to be outside the sociological mainstream, and many sociologists see critical theory as more of a political ideology than a sociological theory. In practice it's often both, but DiAngelo's thinking is especially unsociological. Her one intellectual contribution is the idea of white fragility, but her discussion of this new concept is heavy on moral condemnation and light on evidence or comparative analysis.

Early on DiAngelo says that even the title of her book "will cause resistance because I am breaking a cardinal rule of individualism—I *am generalizing*. I am proceeding as if I could know anything about someone just because the person is white." A few paragraphs later she explains, "As a sociologist, I am quite comfortable generalizing; social life is patterned in measurable ways." DiAngelo is right to see generalization as central to sociology, and any sociologist could probably give examples of individualistic thinkers resisting valid generalizations. Social life is patterned, as DiAngelo says, and therefore it's also to some degree predictable. But our predictions of the social world are at best probabilistic, and when we generalize we need to be careful not to make claims we can't support. DiAngelo's claims almost never come with numbers, and they're almost never discussed probabilistically. When she talks about what white people believe or about the things white people say in her training sessions, she doesn't say how many white people believe it or how many white people said it, or how that compares to the number of people of color who believe or say the same things.

She also makes little or no effort to think about her subject in any broader context—to think about what kind of social phenomenon she's observing, how it relates to other

phenomena, what kind of variation it displays, or how that variation can be explained. Is white fragility defensiveness about accusations of wrongdoing, is it a kind of in-group loyalty, or is it a kind of resistance to challenges to one's worldview? If it's one or all of these, wouldn't it be worth exploring other instances? Ought we not analyze variation in white fragility and related phenomena? Not only does DiAngelo fail to do any of this, but she seems to reject the very idea of that kind of comparison, at one point saying "the term 'white fragility' is intended to describe a very specific white phenomenon." She goes on to say that "the term is *not applicable* to other groups who may register complaints or otherwise be deemed difficult." While DiAngelo says she's comfortable generalizing, then, she resists exactly the kind of generality that might be useful in developing a sociological theory. The social world is patterned, but for DiAngelo it's apparently not patterned in a way that anything else other than oppressive behaviors by whites could be similar or comparable in any way to white fragility.

The obvious irony is that if we're going to consider defensiveness about one's morality and one's worldview a sign of fragility, we could consider DiAngelo's accusations of white fragility a sign of her own fragility. Throughout the book she gives example after example of criticisms she says her fellow white people have made of her and her training classes, but nowhere does she indicate that any of those criticisms might be valid. Nowhere does she provide any way to distinguish legitimate criticism from white fragility. Her theory of white fragility allows her to dismiss any objection to her theory, her training methods, or her character.

DiAngelo's book unintentionally serves as an illustration of why diversity training may be failing in its objectives. The evidence is clear that it does fail, and this probably isn't surprising if we take Donald Black and James Davison Hunter seriously.<sup>19</sup> Diversity leads to certain kinds of conflict, but the conditions that lead to that conflict make it difficult to create diversity training programs that would reduce it. Teaching people to get along in diverse environments involves moral instruction, but only the thinnest moral injunctions get widespread agreement in diverse settings. Any attempt to impose a more substantive and therefore particularistic moral culture sets one at odds with those who draw from other moral cultures, and it produces more conflict rather than less, as we see from DiAngelo's experiences.

Does this mean diversity training is futile? Not necessarily, but it does mean that diversity training based on critical theory probably is. Diversity training has the same challenges that any other kind of moral education in a diverse setting has, and simply imposing one set of moral ideas on everyone else isn't really an option.

Serious and effective moral education may still be possible. Hunter holds out the hope that we can find ways to allow for serious discussions of morality in which we recognize the diversity of moral communities. The idea is that we could then find areas of agreement, but that we would do this by finding "commonality *through* particularity" rather than trying to force commonality "at the expense of particularity." Exactly what that would look like for moral education generally or for diversity training in particular is unclear, but if we want to better pursue social justice in a pluralistic and free society, figuring this out would be a good place to start.

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<sup>19</sup> Musa al-Gharbi, "Diversity Is Important. Diversity-Related Training Is Terrible," September 16, 2020, <https://musaalgharbi.com/2020/09/16/diversity-important-related-training-terrible/>.

# Chapter 4

## *How Political Correctness on Race Fuels Polarization*

**BY ERIC KAUFMANN**

Craig Frisby usefully points us to the way moral innovators and “virtue-signaling” corporate imitators have stretched the meaning of racism beyond where objective social science and common sense would place it.<sup>20</sup>

Leftist commentators retort that high-profile firings and de-platformings are few and far between in statistical terms.<sup>21</sup> They’re right: these affect fewer than 1 in 1,000 academics. But this neglects the chilling effects that radiate out from such incidents, well beyond academia. For instance, according to a Cato/YouGov survey, 6 in 10 Republicans with graduate degrees feared for their jobs or job prospects if their political views became known.<sup>22</sup>

The progressive approach to complaints about the policing of free speech downplays injustice against conservatives and threats to their expressive freedom as minor issues. I wonder if they would say the same if we were talking about “a few incidents” of discrimination against women or black people.

Nevertheless, even if the naysayers were right that speech policing and self-censorship are no big deal, few could deny that polarization, mistrust, minority achievement gaps, crime, and homelessness are “real” problems. What they fail to realize, however, is that concept creep in the meaning of racism sets us back in all these areas and corrodes social solidarity and political stability.<sup>23</sup>

My work focuses on populism and polarization. When the ideology I term *left-modernism*—today’s dominant elite credo which blends influences from individualist-anarchism and cultural-leftism—takes hold in institutions, it steers policy away from the median voter in a culturally left-wing direction. Mainstream right parties, who tend to care about little beyond economics, foreign policy, and dutifully obeyed left-modernist taboos prior to 2014-15, have grossly neglected education and culture.

Faced with this institutional failure, populism becomes the only way for voters to push back. This in turn sparks a liberal backlash against the upstart masses, bringing forth a further right-populist counter-response, setting in motion a spiral of deepening polarization. The Voter Study Group polling series shows that, for both Republicans and Democrats, the share saying “it is justified for [my party] to use violence in advancing political goals” has risen steadily, from 8 percent in November 2017 to 12 percent in October 2018, 15 percent in December 2019, 30 percent in June 2020 and 35 percent in September 2020.<sup>24</sup>

Political correctness (PC) is a major reason for the surge in populist right support in Europe and America since 2014, as well as the growing partisan polarization we see even in Western countries like Canada where national populism has been weaker. The expanding definition of racism shuts down debate over immigration levels, creating a market op-

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20 Craig Frisby, “Racism: What It Is and What It Is Not (Part I)”, *Minding the Campus*, September 16, 2020, <https://www.mindingthecampus.org/2020/09/16/racism-what-it-is-and-what-it-is-not-part-i/>.

21 William Davies, “The Free Speech Panic: How the Right Concocted a Crisis,” *The Guardian*, July 26, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/jul/26/the-free-speech-panic-censorship-how-the-right-concocted-a-crisis>.

22 Emily Ekins, “Poll: 62% of Americans Say They Have Political Views They’re Afraid to Share,” Cato Institute, July 22, 2020, <https://www.cato.org/survey-reports/poll-62-americans-say-they-have-political-views-theyre-afraid-share>.

23 Gregg Henriques, “The Concept of Concept Creep,” *Psychology Today*, January 4, 2017, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/theory-knowledge/201701/the-concept-concept-creep>.

24 Larry Diamond et al., “Americans Increasingly Believe Violence Is Justified If the Other Side Wins,” *POLITICO*, October 1, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/10/01/political-violence-424157>.

portunity for populist entrepreneurs because mainstream parties won't deviate from the approved script on immigration. Imagine a Soviet department store only selling one color of pants but consumers demanding several. The end result is to create space for black marketeers to sell what the government store won't.

PC contributed to narrowing what political scientists call the Overton window of acceptable debate.<sup>25</sup> For example, Barack Obama's tough talk on border security and illegal immigration, not to mention his lack of support for same-sex marriage, are now well outside the Overton window in the Democratic Party.<sup>26</sup> Donald Trump's willingness to make immigration his central focus during the Republican primary in 2015 also violated a bipartisan taboo that had held for decades—including within the Republican Party and right-wing media such as Fox News, where fusionist RNC Republicanism reigned.

In my recent book *Whiteshift: Populism, Immigration and the Future of White Majorities*, I looked at the data on populist right voting across the West.<sup>27</sup> Trump was the only one of 17 primary candidates willing to break the taboo around making immigration the focus of a campaign, and, as multiple surveys show, this was the key reason why he won the nomination, and why some Obama voters switched to Trump in 2016. Trump's attacks on political correctness strongly resonated with many voters. In my models of primary voting, attitudes to PC were second only to immigration views in predicting a Trump vote. In social psychology, there is an established phenomenon called reactance, in which people may respond to finger-wagging injunctions by reacting against being told what to do or think. A number of studies show that when people read about the importance of political correctness, or hear Trump's policies or confederate statues called "racist," they respond by increasing their support for Trump or confederate symbols.<sup>28</sup>

In Germany, the populist right party Alternative for Germany (AfD) shot up under the new anti-immigration leader Frauke Petry during the 2015 Migrant Crisis. In Sweden, Jimmie Åkesson's Sweden Democrats enjoyed a similar ascent in 2014. In both cases, mainstream parties shied away from opposing liberal policies, and when the Swedish interior minister broached the subject in 2013, he was attacked by the media as a racist. This left a gap in the market. A year later, the Sweden Democrats won 13 percent of the vote, and reached 25 percent at the peak of the crisis. Without elite pressure in favor of high immigration, there would be no space for the Sweden Democrats or AfD. Once the populists made it an issue, the center-right parties changed their tune and started talking about controlling immigration.

This, of course, went down badly with the rising liberal-left metropolitan graduate class, based in the knowledge industries, the 8 percent of the U.S. population which the *Hidden Tribes* report labels Progressive Activists.<sup>29</sup> Such voters had come to view the immigration

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25 "A Brief Explanation of the Overton Window," Mackinac Center for Public Policy, accessed October 19, 2020, <https://www.mackinac.org/OvertonWindow>.

26 Barack Obama, "President Obama Gives a Policy Speech on Immigration," *Wall Street Journal*, November 25, 2013, YouTube video, 2:31,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuuZTJBE5Y>.

27 Eric Kaufmann, *Whiteshift: Populism, Immigration and the Future of White Majorities* (New York: Abrams Press, 2019).

28 Lucian Gideon Conway, III, Meredith A. Repke, and Shannon C. Houck, "Donald Trump as a Cultural Revolt Against Perceived Communication Restriction: Priming Political Correctness Norms Causes More Trump Support," *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* 5, no. 1 (2017): 244–59,

<https://www.psycharchives.org/bitstream/20.500.12034/1434/1/jspp.v5i1.732.pdf>.

29 "Progressive Activists," *Hidden Tribes*, accessed October 19, 2020,

issue as sacrosanct. When first populist parties, then center-right parties, campaigned to control it, this was viewed as nothing short of blasphemy. Surveys I conducted showed that most Democrats considered Trump's Wall racist, when it is simply a barrier to illegal entry similar to numerous others around the world. Trump's victory produced the so-called "resistance" in the U.S. and a mobilization of "mainstream" media outlets like CNN, MSNBC and the *New York Times* against the president. Liberal—especially white liberal—opinion on race issues, immigration, and other cultural topics turned dramatically leftward.<sup>30</sup> They championed slogans such as "abolish ICE (border control)" and, later, "defund the police." Black Lives Matter protests and riots, along with a statue-toppling campaign, signified a more assertive anarchist phase to the movement.

Likewise, in Britain, the victory of the Leave side in the referendum on EU membership produced the "People's Vote" campaign in response, which attracted large numbers of liberal urbanites to marches, agitating for a second referendum to overturn the Brexit vote. The #FBPE hashtag went viral and liberal graduates used their weight on social media and in elite institutions to declare their resistance. Some civil servants refused to work for Brexit. Leavers in turn accused those pushing for a second referendum of opposing democracy. The rise of the Greens and Liberal splinter parties in continental Europe is also a reaction to the populist surge and mainstream parties' rightward shift on immigration (the mainstream's tougher stance on immigration includes center-left parties, especially in Scandinavia).<sup>31</sup>

At the core of the immigration battle lies a fundamental misperception, driven, in my view, by ideologically motivated reasoning, especially on the left. This involves eliding the fundamental distinction between two separate concepts: attachment to the majority in-group and hostility to minorities. Is it racist for ethnic majorities to wish to defend their group's demographic interests? In Shadi Hamid's terms, is racial self-interest racist?<sup>32</sup>

This gets at a vital distinction in social psychology between attachment to in-group and hostility to out-groups. Some assume that the one entails the other. But if you think about it, do people who love their families hate their neighbors more than those who are cool toward their families? Social psychology tells us quite clearly that unless there is a zero-sum clash—especially violent conflict—in-group love and out-group hate are different and uncorrelated dispositions.<sup>33</sup> Attachment to an in-group grows out of an early attachment to one's mother, with hostility to outgroups developing later.

I noticed this in the 2016 American National Election Study (ANES). White Americans who feel warmer toward whites on a 0-100 thermometer do not feel colder toward blacks or Hispanics than whites who feel cooler toward whites on the thermometer. This contrasts with partisanship, a zero-sum relationship, where warmth toward Democrats is highly

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<https://hiddentribes.us/profiles/#progressive-activists>.

30 Zach Goldberg, "America's White Saviors," *Tablet*, June 5, 2019,

<https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/americas-white-saviors>.

31 Jon Henley, "Denmark's Centre-Left Set to Win Election with Anti-Immigration Shift," *The Guardian*, June 4, 2019,

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/04/denmark-centre-left-predicted-win-election-social-democrats-anti-immigration-policies>.

32 Shadi Hamid, "There's No 'Good' or 'Bad' America," *Washington Post*, November 18, 2016,

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-theory/wp/2016/11/18/theres-no-good-or-bad-america/>; and David Goodhart, "White Self-Interest Is Not the Same Thing as Racism," *Financial Times*, March 2, 2017, <https://www.ft.com/content/220090e0-efc1-11e6-ba01-119a44939bb6>.

33 Marilynn B. Brewer, "The Psychology of Prejudice: Ingroup Love or Outgroup Hate?," *Journal of Social Issues* 55, no. 3 (1999): 429–44, <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00126>.

correlated with coolness to Republicans, and vice-versa. In *White Identity Politics* (2019), Ashley Jardina shows how the white identity and racism scales are both associated with a Trump vote but not much with each other.

Broadly speaking, progressives feel that it is legitimate for minority groups to defend their demographic interests but that it is racist for majorities to defend theirs. Survey experiments I conducted in late 2017 sought to probe this further.<sup>34</sup> I asked American and British respondents the question: “a white American [British] woman wants to *reduce* immigration to maintain her group’s share of the population. Is this a) racist, b) racially self-interested, which is not racist or c) don’t know.” I then manipulated the categories, asking, for example if a *Hispanic* American who sought to boost her group’s share of the population by calling for increased immigration was being racist. Net of the undecided, the share of white Democrats (Clinton voters) who called the first form of behavior racist was 73 percent, but just 18 percent said the second formulation was racist. For white Trump voters, the effects were the reverse, with a mere 11 percent calling the first racist and 40 percent labeling the second as such. Minority Clinton voters (58 percent), and minorities overall (45 percent) were considerably less likely to call the white woman racist than white Clinton voters (73 percent). Importantly, a bare majority of Clinton voters also thought it was racist for a black or Japanese American to want less immigration to maintain her group share.

A similar if less pronounced (40-points rather than 60-points) difference separated British Leavers and Remainers on this question. Importantly, over 90 percent of white Democrats with postgraduate degrees delivered the “racist” verdict while only 5.5 percent of non-graduate white Trump voters and zero percent of non-graduate UK Leave voters agreed. The “racist” verdict is very much a minority opinion. In an 18-country international sample, just a quarter of respondents in most Western countries gave the “racist” response, with three-quarters saying the woman was being “racially self-interested, which is not racist.” The U.S. and Canada had the highest share—35 percent—replying “racist,” but even here, 65 percent said this was “racial self-interest, which is not racist.”

## POLITICAL INTOLERANCE

The left-modernist expansion of the meaning of racism is not just a threat to academic and expressive freedom, or merely a matter of injustice for those who are fired or live in fear of their jobs. It has also resulted in the rise of an increasingly intolerant left, who moralize political problems. “Myside Bias” is one of the few biases not correlated with intelligence.<sup>35</sup> In addition, political intolerance rises with education.<sup>36</sup> Finally, highly educated progressives, compared to either non-graduate progressives or graduate conservatives, are most likely to misperceive the median beliefs of their political opponents, in part because they have considerably fewer social contacts with those of opposing views.<sup>37</sup>

This results in progressive fundamentalism in spheres dominated by liberal graduates.

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34 Eric Kaufmann, “‘Racial Self-Interest’ Is Not Racism,” *Policy Exchange*, March 3, 2017, <https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/racial-self-interest-is-not-racism/>.

35 Keith E. Stanovich, “The Bias That Divides Us,” *Quillette*, September 26, 2020, <https://quillette.com/2020/09/26/the-bias-that-divides-us/>.

36 Robby Soave, “The Most Politically Intolerant Americans Tend to Be Urban, Highly Educated Whites, Survey Shows,” *Reason*, March 6, 2019, <https://reason.com/2019/03/06/the-most-politically-intolerant-american/>.

37 “The Perception Gap: Findings,” *More In Common*, accessed October 19, 2020, <https://perceptiongap.us/>.

Once they dominate an elite institution, this intolerant group moralizes political positions into Manichaeian binaries, silencing debate. This cocktail results in institutions which are unresponsive to democratic preferences, creating increasing alienation and populism in the wider society. This sets a polarizing spiral in motion, of backlash and counter-backlash, leading to the dangerous trend of growing approval of partisan violence.

Our goal must be to de-sacralize political ideology and extract the sanctimonious moralizing out of our policy conversations, increasing political toleration. The world is complex, not binary, and a totalizing worldview—"Republican supporters are all racist"—will only increase conflict. Governments should raise political discrimination and diversity to an equal footing with established forms of diversity and inclusion. They need to push back against the conceptual stretching of terms such as racism or transphobia through tighter legal definitions and policy guidance.<sup>38</sup> Executive and legislative oversight of organizational activism, as exemplified by Trump's executive order on critical race theory or the British government's new guidance from the Department of Education on cancel culture and critical race theory, must move from the fringes to the center of conservative politics going forward.<sup>39</sup>

The problem has grown too large for conservatives and classical liberals to leave the direction of the culture in the hands of the progressive left activists who set the tone in our elite institutions. Failure to address this metastasizing problem will not only endanger liberty and justice, but will lead to a failure of social policy in many areas while spawning mistrust of elites and widening affective polarization.

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38 Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics," *American Political Science Review* 64, no. 4 (1970): 1033–53, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1958356>.

39 Exec. Order No. 13950 of September 22, 2020: Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-09-28/pdf/2020-21534.pdf>; and Calvin Robinson, "Beware Critical Race Theory—The Divisive Ideology Infiltrating School History Lessons," *The Telegraph*, October 1, 2020, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/10/01/beware-critical-race-theory-divisive-ideology-infiltrating/>.

# *Section II.*

**EVALUATING THE SCIENCE PRESUMED TO SUPPORT WHITE  
FRAGILITY, IMPLICIT BIAS, AND  
DIVERSITY TRAINING**

# Chapter 5

*The Cost of False Facts:  
A Critical Review of Incorrect  
Boogey-Men from Glassner's 1990s  
to Today*

**BY WILFRED REILLY**

Barry Glassner's classic *The Culture of Fear* just turned 20.<sup>40</sup> In the text, Glassner became perhaps the first serious social scientist to point out to an intelligent popular audience that Americans are terrified of many unlikely threats that are not actually going to kill us. His book focused on the cable news-generated fears of his own late-1990s era, demonstrating that the young child kidnappings, plane crashes, and large animal attacks which panicked an entire generation of upper-middle class Americans are in fact vanishingly rare. Today, following the rise of *social* media and the accompanying Occupy, Tea Party, and (now) "BLM" movements, the alleged threats presented to us 24 hours a day—police brutality, inter-race crime, "systemic racism"—are different and more tribal in nature. However, they are no less exaggerated and nonsensical. And, today as in Glassner's era, uncritical belief in these dangers has serious social consequences which can extend up to the level of public policy.

Probably the most extensively discussed of today's imaginary threats is epidemic police violence. One of the most prevalent narratives in the mainstream press, since at least 2014, has been the alleged epidemic of murderous violence by law enforcement officers (LEOs) targeting African American males. Almost every American consumer of news has been repeatedly inveighed to "say the names" of George Floyd, Jacob Blake, Michael Brown, Alton Sterling, Sandra Bland, Philando Castile, and others; a Google search for "George Floyd" alone turns up 209 million results, two Wikipedia pages, and a Google Sidebar discussion of Mr. Floyd as an "American hip hop artist" with content available on Pandora for a listen or purchase. Media profiles of victims such as Floyd are frequently full of horrific-sounding statistical claims: Black Lives Matter activist Cherno Biko famously told Fox News' Megyn Kelly that an innocent black man is "murdered" by police "every 28 hours," and prominent attorney Benjamin Crump wrote a top-selling book describing police violence and other aspects of the 2020 African American experience as a "genocide."<sup>41</sup>

Facts and data paint a different picture. While the George Floyd case was no doubt an individual tragedy, the total number of unarmed black individuals killed by police in the most recent completed year on record was 14, as per the gold-standard "Fatal Force" database from the *Washington Post*.<sup>42</sup> That number, perhaps updated to reflect a tiny number of cases with a multi-racial victim, was listed as nine until at least June, 2020. The total number of unarmed individuals of all races killed in 2019 was well under 100—and it is worth noting that "unarmed" does not mean "harmless": a suspect attempting to snatch away an officer's gun would generally be counted in this category.

All told, exactly 999 human beings, the vast majority armed with firearms or knives, were killed by police during this representative year, only 250 of whom were identified as black. While that proportion is higher than the proportion of blacks in the U.S. population (~13%), a basic adjustment for black/white differences in violent crime rate—the black rate currently stands at 2.4x the white rate as per the annual Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) crime report—"blue collar" crime rate, or police encounter rate almost entirely closes the racial gaps in police shootings that are so often and glibly attributed to racism.<sup>43</sup>

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40 Barry Glassner, *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans Are Afraid of the Wrong Things: Crime, Drugs, Minorities, Teen Moms, Killer Kids, Mutant Microbes, Plane Crashes, Road Rage, & So Much More* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

41 Deroy Murdock, "Black Lives Matter's Numbers Are Bogus," *New York Post*, November 6, 2015, <https://nypost.com/2015/11/06/black-lives-matters-numbers-are-bogus/>; and Ben Crump, *Open Season: Legalized Genocide of Colored People* (New York: Amistad, 2019).

42 "Fatal Force," *Washington Post*, accessed June 15, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/>.

43 Rachel E. Morgan and Barbara A. Oudekerk, "Criminal Victimization, 2018," U.S. Department of Justice: Bureau of

While I am reluctant to speak ill of the dead or injured, any half-skillful qualitative investigation further reveals that almost none of the tiny handful of police shootings of unarmed citizens to take place in a typical year involve unarmed African Americans being murdered while walking to church or home from baseball practice. Michael Brown was shot while apparently attempting to take a gun from a uniformed police officer: his DNA was found on the slide and trigger guard of Officer Darren Wilson's service weapon, and Wilson was cleared by both his initial grand jury and a later investigation by President Barack Obama's Justice Department.

Jacob Blake was an alleged rapist and was non-fatally shot by Kenosha (WI) officers after police were called on him during an uninvited return to the home of his alleged victim. He physically fought the responding lawmen for two minutes and attempted to depart the scene in a vehicle that apparently was not his. Even the now near-mythical Trayvon Martin case fits this basic pattern: Martin was shot once during a violent physical fight with neighborhood watchman George Zimmerman, which he apparently initiated—and it is further notable that Zimmerman was a left-wing Hispanic man rather than a white bigot.

Influential as it is, the claim of epidemic police brutality is a mere carbuncle atop a larger narrative of constant inter-racial crime and abuse of minorities within the United States. As with law enforcement violence, the past few years have seen a surfeit of major mainstream media stories about the dangers of just “living while black,” describing the heart-wrenching experiences endured by ordinary middle-class people of color attempting just to live life. Within a single 1-2 year time frame, “BBQ Becky” (Jennifer Schulte) became internationally famous for calling the police on a black family grilling in an Oakland park, “Pool Patrol Paula” (Stephanie Sebby-Strempe) drew equivalent headlines after assaulting an African-American teen at a water park, and “Coupon Carl” (actually named Carl) was fired from a salaried job as the manager of a drug-store after aggressively questioning the validity of a black shopper's coupons. Not to be outdone, pundits on the hard right have launched professional-looking websites with names like “White Girl Bleed a Lot,” which seem to publicize virtually every beating or mugging of a white pensioner by a black guy.

Again, this narrative bears almost no connection to actual facts on the ground. First, both leftists and right wingers growing frantic about serious inter-racial crime are obsessing over a rather fringe phenomenon. Inter-racial violent crime involving blacks and whites appears to be roughly 3% of crime in a typical year. Per the previously cited Bureau of Justice Statistics crime report for 2018—the most recent year currently on record—there were 6,385,520 violent crimes and 13,502,840 property crimes serious enough to be recorded during that year, for a total of 19,888,360 criminal offenses. Of those, only 607,726 (3.06%) were (1) violent crimes (2) involving either a black perpetrator and a white victim or a white “perp” and a black victim.

Further, the more prevalent left-leaning fear-narrative of white-on-POC inter-racial crime appears to be, if anything, *more* wrong than its obnoxious right-wing counterpart. Of those barely more than 600,000 inter-racial crimes in 2018, 547,948 (90.2%) involved a black perpetrator and a white victim—compared to the 59,778 (9.8%) which involved a white perp and a black victim. Nor is this particularly unusual: while 2018 was a somewhat

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Justice Statistics, September 2019,  
<https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv18.pdf>.

exceptional year, inter-racial crime in the United States has been at least 70% black-on-white for most if not all of the past 30 years.

False and fear-generating storylines of police genocide and near-race war are part of a still larger storyline: that of “institutional” or “systemic” racism. For much of the time period under discussion, advocates of a sort of meta-narrative of American oppression have contended that virtually every gap in performance between population groups can be attributed to racism, often contemporary, however well-hidden. They use this hypothesis to explain discrepancies not only in police shootings but also in income and wealth, unemployment rates, and even SAT and ACT scores—which the entire University of California system recently eliminated as an admissions requirement because the tests are “racially biased.”<sup>44</sup> The well-known sociologist Ibram Kendi has gone so far as to claim that all performance differences between groups must be taken as evidence of racism, unless you are a genetic bigot: the only two possible explanations for them are “inferiority” or some variety of racism deep within systems.

Again, empirically speaking, such claims often border on the nonsensical. As the legendary economist Thomas Sowell and others have long pointed out, a more sophisticated explanation for group differences than either (1) “racism” or (2) genetics alone is simply that groups which differ in terms of something as notable as race (or gender) also tend to differ in terms of dozens of other cultural and situational variables. Very often, simply adjusting for 2-4 of these variables eliminates group gaps that are almost universally, and mistakenly, attributed to ghostly prejudice.

As I've already pointed out, adjusting for black/white differences in violent crime rate almost entirely eliminates the black/white gap in police shootings. Similarly, both the liberal government economist June O'Neill and the conservative researcher Dinesh D'Souza found back in 1995 that adjusting for a handful of factors including median age, residency in the lower-wage South (far more common for African Americans), and aptitude test scores closed B/W gaps in personal earnings from 17.1% to .9%.<sup>45</sup> The same seems to hold true today, and multiple conservative pundits and scholars have argued that family collapse is now a variable more predictive of high income than race—with *National Review* noting in 2016 that the poverty rate is 22% for whites in single-parent homes, versus seven percent for blacks in two-parent families.<sup>46</sup>

Perhaps the most extraordinary rebuttal of the systemic racism thesis is the performance

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44 Cody T. Ross, “A Multi-Level Bayesian Analysis of Racial Bias in Police Shootings at the County-Level in the United States, 2011–2014,” *Plos One* 10, no. 11 (November 2015): <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0141854>; Angela Hanks, Danyelle Solomon, and Christian E. Weller, “Systematic Inequality: How America’s Structural Racism Helped Create the Black-White Wealth Gap,” Center for American Progress, February 21, 2018, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/reports/2018/02/21/447051/systematic-inequality/>; Ruqaiijah Yearby, “The Impact of Structural Racism in Employment and Wages on Minority Women’s Health,” *Human Rights* 43, no. 3 (August 2018): 21–23,

[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human\\_rights\\_magazine\\_home/the-state-of-healthcare-in-the-united-states/minority-womens-health/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/the-state-of-healthcare-in-the-united-states/minority-womens-health/); and Shawn Hubler, “University of California Will End Use of SAT and ACT in Admissions,” *New York Times*, May 21, 2020,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/21/us/university-california-sat-act.html>.

45 June O'Neill, “The Role of Human Capital in Earnings Differences between Black and White Men,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 4, no. 4 (Fall 1990): 25–45, <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jep.4.4.25>; and Dinesh D'Souza, *The End of Racism: Principles for a Multiracial Society* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

46 Dennis Prager, “The Fallacy of ‘White Privilege,’” *National Review*, February 16, 2016, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2016/02/white-privilege-myth-reality/>.

of Asians, West Africans, and other immigrants of color. The highest annual SAT and ACT performances come not from “privileged” whites but from dark-skinned recent immigrants from East and South Asia. A frank 2017 report by Scott Jaschik for *Inside Higher Ed* concluded that students in the combined “Asian” category easily outperformed whites on that year’s SAT, posting a median combined score of 1181 as vs. 1118 for Caucasians.<sup>47</sup> Asian students did better on both primary sections of the exam, beating white kids by four points on the verbal section and by 59 points on the math portion—where they posted an average score of 612. Nigerians and other black West Africans do at least as well in the U.S. educational system, finishing in several recent years as the best educated group in the country and boasting a 61% combined graduate and undergraduate degree completion rate for adults over the age of 25, as vs. 32% of that for all Americans.<sup>48</sup>

U.S. income statistics unsurprisingly reflect these high levels of minority performance. A 2014-15 data release from the Census Bureau, highlighting that no less than 18 large minority groups outperformed the national average income (then \$57,355), was so pleasantly unexpected that it spawned several trending Internet memes.<sup>49</sup> The list of these high-performing groups “of color” includes not only those already discussed—such as Chinese, Japanese, Nigerian, and Indian Americans—but also U.S. Taiwanese (\$85,566), Lebanese Arabs (\$69,514), dark-skinned Filipinos (\$82,389), and individuals of both black and Indian descent from Guyana (\$60,234).

Indian Americans held the top spot then and still do so today, bringing in \$100,295 on average in 2014 and \$123,453 in the most recent year on record (2018).<sup>50</sup> In addition to, almost in passing, shattering “alt-right” theories of white genetic supremacy, these figures rather clearly demonstrate the absence of massive/effective hidden racial bias in the United States. It is absurd to think that powerful bigots who dislike people with nice, natural tans would refuse in mass to hire African Americans but jump to do so in the case of West Indians, Pakistanis, or literal black Africans. Clearly, something else is at work here.

The fact that the media-generated fake fears of today, like the less tribal but equally ‘edgy’ ones of Glassner’s day—we all recall upper-class mothers walking around with small children on leashes, so they couldn’t be stolen away—are so prevalent matters. It matters because people naturally react to things that intensely scare them with plans for action. Already, the focus of the Black Lives Matter movement on opposition to police violence and anti-POC inter-racial crime has resulted in the proposal of truly sweeping changes to American law enforcement. Perhaps the most popular of these has been the idea of “defunding the police”: cutting large sums of money from municipal law enforcement budgets and re-assigning them to other social services.

This is no longer merely theoretical. In Los Angeles (CA), the police budget was reduced

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47 Scott Jaschik, “New SAT, Old Gaps on Race,” *Inside Higher Ed*, September 27, 2017,

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/09/27/scores-new-sat-show-large-gaps-race-and-ethnicity>.

48 Leslie Casimir, “Data Show Nigerians the Most Educated in the U.S.,” *Houston Chronicle*, May 20, 2008,

<https://www.chron.com/news/article/Data-show-Nigerians-the-most-educated-in-the-U-S-1600808.php>; and Molly Fosco,

“The Most Successful Ethnic Group in the U.S. May Surprise You,” *OZY*, June 2018,

<https://www.ozy.com/around-the-world/the-most-successful-ethnic-group-in-the-u-s-may-surprise-you/86885/>.

49 Mark J. Perry, “Chart of the Day,” American Enterprise Institute, March 17, 2016,

<https://www.aei.org/carpe-diem/chart-of-the-day-4/>.

50 Wikipedia, s.v. “List of Ethnic Groups in the United States by Household Income,” accessed June 7, 2021,

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_ethnic\\_groups\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_by\\_household\\_income](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ethnic_groups_in_the_United_States_by_household_income).

by \$150,000,000 following the death of George Floyd and subsequent urban unrest.<sup>51</sup> New York City made an even more dramatic move, slashing \$1,000,000,000 from the 2021 police budget and reining in aggressive proactive policing during 2020.<sup>52</sup> The claims of many advocates of police defunding left little to the imagination, with New York Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez saying “Defund the police means defund the police,” and the *New York Times* running a major editorial headlined “Yes—We Mean Literally Abolish the Police.”<sup>53</sup> Inter-racial crime more broadly has been targeted alongside police: at least one city—San Francisco—passed a law called the CAREN Act, aimed at criminalizing “racist” calls to the 911 police emergency number.<sup>54</sup>

The problem with all of this is that, because there is no race war or epidemic of police murders in the United States, these measures have very little possible upside. However, they do convey a considerable downside risk. Although this has not been widely reported outside conservative media, the law enforcement cuts made so far in LA have caused the cessation of most specialized police action against animal cruelty and have eliminated the specific sexual assault unit “that investigated...Harvey Weinstein and Ron Jeremy.”<sup>55</sup> The effects of de-policing combined with racial tensions in New York have been even more remarkable: an aghast ABC NYC recently noted that in-city shootings were up 166% in August 2020 versus the same month in 2019, 122% in November 2020, and 95% overall across the two years.<sup>56</sup>

The same stories could be told across a suite of other cities that respond sympathetically to largely fictional claims of racial injustice—perhaps most notably Portland, which reached the remarkable milestone of 100 consecutive days of riots and violent protests during fall 2020.<sup>57</sup> This pattern is unlikely to be a coincidence. The right-leaning quantitative scholar Heather Mac Donald famously coined the term “Ferguson Effect” to describe the year-by-year surge in U.S. murders, from 14,164 in 2014 to 17,294 in 2017, following the death of Michael Brown and the last round of street riots and police pull-backs.<sup>58</sup> To stop the same thing from happening again (wholly unnecessarily), and to counter the predictable effect of popular falsehoods more broadly, it is imperative that those of us aware of reality do something quite difficult, unpopular, and necessary: openly say taboo things that are true.

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51 Anabel Munoz, “Los Angeles City Council Votes to Cut LAPD Budget by \$150 Million,” *ABC 7*, July 2, 2020, <https://abc7.com/defund-the-police-lapd-los-angeles-mayor-eric-garcetti/6289037/>.

52 N’dea Yancey-Bragg, “New York City Will Take \$1 Billion from Police Budget, but Many Say It Doesn’t Go Far Enough,” *USA Today*, July 1, 2020, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/07/01/new-york-city-budget-billion-nypd-defund-police/5354307002/>.

53 Mariame Kaba, “Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police,” *New York Times*, June 12, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html>.

54 Caitlin O’Kane, “CAREN Act Introduced in San Francisco to Outlaw Racially Motivated 911 Calls,” *CBS News*, July 8, 2020, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/caren-act-san-francisco-racially-motivated-911-calls-karen/>.

55 Audrey Conklin, “LA ‘Defund’ Police Budget Cuts Force Department to Dissolve Sexual Assault Unit That Investigated Weinstein,” *Fox News*, November 12, 2020, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/la-police-budget-cuts-sexual-assault-unit>.

56 “New York City Crime Stats: Shootings Surge to Levels Not Seen in Years, NYPD Says,” *ABC 7*, December 4, 2020, <https://abc7ny.com/new-york-city-crime-nyc-shootings-gun-violence/8495935/>.

57 Nathan Rott, “Portland Sees 100th Day of Protests for Racial Justice,” *NPR*, September 6, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/06/910194829/portland-sees-100th-day-of-protests-for-racial-justice>.

58 Heather Mac Donald, “The Ferguson Effect Lives On,” *City Journal*, December 23, 2016, <https://www.city-journal.org/html/ferguson-effect-lives-14919.html>.

# Chapter 6

## *Racism: What It Is and What It Is Not (Part I)*

BY CRAIG FRISBY

A writer for a popular online entertainment publication once remarked that a James Bond movie is often only as good as its villain.<sup>59</sup> This applies to the “Black Lives Matter,” “anti-racism,” “social justice,” “white privilege,” “white-fragility,” and “woke” movements currently in vogue within academia—all of which are linked by their central, dastardly villain: racism.

Whenever the suffix “ism” is added to the end of a root word, it modifies its meaning.<sup>60</sup> As such, “ism” modifies root words by changing them into an ideology, a system of thinking, a school of thought, or a doctrine (e.g., multiculturalism, capitalism, conservatism, communism, socialism, Marxism, and Catholicism—to name a few).

Efforts to identify what “racism” means must first specify what is meant by the root word “race.” Race is a noun referring to an interbreeding subgroup within humankind that shares distinctive physical, behavioral, and genetic traits or characteristics that distinguish them from other interbreeding subgroups.<sup>61</sup> Observable differences between racial groups occur due to climate, geography, topography, or other natural barriers that isolate and insulate subgroups worldwide, restricting gene flow across groups over centuries.

There are wide differences, however, in the degree to which these barriers are permeable over time. Subpopulation migrations, the development of newer and better intra- and inter-continental transportation systems, and intergroup conquests all work interactively to mix subpopulation groups, such that human biological variation in physical trait clusters (e.g., hair texture, skin color, eye color and shape, facial features, bone structure, and body type) can range from relatively homogeneous physical traits (as would be found in Japan) to smooth gradations in observable characteristics (as would be seen in Brazil).<sup>62</sup>

Scientists within the fields of biology, anthropology, and genetics have not achieved consensus on just how many different races currently exist (see Frisby, 2018, Table 13.1, pp. 283).<sup>63</sup> The number of racial categories ranges from a low of three broad groupings (i.e., Negroid, Caucasoid, Mongoloid) to a high of as many as nine groupings that are more nuanced with respect to geographic variables. Differences in the number of racial categories is related to the differing schema used to define racial groupings worldwide, where some subgroups are nested within more overarching categories.<sup>64</sup>

Terms like “ethnicity” and “culture” are not synonymous with race, and the term “race” has often been misused historically in referring to ethnic groups (as in references to the “Jewish race,” the “Irish race,” the “German race,” or the “Mexican race”).<sup>65</sup> In reality, there

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59 Jonathan Fuge, “Rami Malek’s Bond Villain Gets Creepy in Latest Peek at No Time to Die,” *MovieWeb*, August 26, 2020, <https://movieweb.com/no-time-to-die-rami-malek-safin-photo/>.

60 “Suffix in English ‘ism’ - Meaning. Word with ism Suffix,” English Academy, November 12, 2019, YouTube video, 1:48, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRri\\_tN6aXI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRri_tN6aXI); and “Lesson on the Differences between PREFIXES & SUFFIXES ? - RE-cap, DIShonest - developMENT, careLESS,” Englishing, March 3, 2016, YouTube video, 5:33, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMEms6pRJks>.

61 John Hartigan, *Anthropology of Race: Genes, Biology, and Culture* (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2013).

62 Thomas Sowell, *Migrations and Cultures: A World View* (New York: Basic Books, 1997); and Thomas Sowell, *Conquests and Cultures: An International History* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

63 Charles Murray, *Human Diversity: The Biology of Gender, Race, and Class* (New York: Twelve, 2020); Hartigan, *Anthropology of Race*; L. L. Cavalli-Sforza and W. F. Bodmer, *The Genetics of Human Populations* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2013); and Craig L. Frisby and William T. O’Donohue, *Cultural Competence in Applied Psychology: An Evaluation of Current Status and Future Directions* (Cham: Springer, 2018), 283.

64 Andrew Hamilton, “Taxonomic Approaches To Race,” *Occidental Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 11–36, <https://www.toqonline.com/archives/v8n3/TQv8n3Hamilton.pdf>.

65 Thomas Sowell, *Race And Culture: A World View* (New York: Basic Books, 1995); “Ethnicity vs. Race,” Diffen, accessed June 5, 2021, [https://www.diffen.com/difference/Ethnicity\\_vs\\_Race](https://www.diffen.com/difference/Ethnicity_vs_Race); Seumas MacManus, *The Story of the Irish Race* (New

can be many different ethnicities represented within a broad racial group, as well as many different racial groups represented within any one ethnic/cultural or country group.<sup>66</sup>

At this juncture, we can expect howls of protest from those who insist that “there is no such thing as race,” that “race is a social construction,” or that “there is only one race, the human race.”<sup>67</sup> In making these arguments, race deniers point to the staggering degree of genetic admixture among human subgroups over time that occurs as a result of inter-ethnic/interracial marriages and sexual unions. These critics argue that a belief in the biological reality of racial subgroupings leads inevitably toward the slippery slope of racism.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, the insistence that “race is nothing more than a social construction” is seen by race deniers as a necessary condition for fighting (and eventually eradicating) racism.<sup>69</sup>

Whether one is a race acknowledger or a race denier (see Frisby, 2018, pp. 283- 285), the cold reality is that the concept of race is potent in contemporary American life (and is also an entrenched component of personal identity for many).<sup>70</sup> Even race deniers cannot help but acknowledge the reality of race—socially constructed or not—when making arguments against racism. In colleges, urban communities, and public schools in contemporary society, names such as the Institute for Race and Justice, the Racial Equity Institute, the Institute for Racial Reconciliation, the Race Institute for Educators, the Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, the Institute of Race Relations, and the Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture are ubiquitous.<sup>71</sup> The name of the largest Latino advocacy organization in the United States (UnidosUS) was formerly the National Council of La Raza (the last two words meaning “the race”).<sup>72</sup> Additionally, race continues to be a viable category used in the United States Census.<sup>73</sup>

The concept of race in and of itself has no inherent moral connotations (either pro or con). When the suffix “ism” is applied to the root word “race,” however, the term refers to

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York: Chartwell Books, 2018); Wikipedia, s.v. “Master Race,” accessed June 5, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Master\\_race](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Master_race); Laura E. Gomez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (New York: New York University Press, 2008); and Raphael Patai and Jennifer P. Wing, *The Myth of the Jewish Race* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989).

66 Wikipedia, s.v. “List of Ethnic Groups of Africa,” accessed May 22, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_ethnic\\_groups\\_of\\_Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ethnic_groups_of_Africa); and Allan Wall, “Races of Mexico and the Mexican Genome,” *Banderas News*, July 2007, <http://banderasnews.com/0707/eded-racesofmexico.htm>.

67 Robert Wald Sussman, “There Is No Such Thing as Race,” *Newsweek*, November 8, 2014, <https://www.newsweek.com/there-no-such-thing-race-283123>; Megan Gannon, “Race Is a Social Construct, Scientists Argue,” *Scientific American*, February 5, 2016, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/race-is-a-social-construct-scientists-argue/>; and Mary Alexander, “Robert Sobukwe: ‘There Is Only One Race. The Human Race.’” *South Africa Getaway*, March 20, 2021, <https://southafrica-info.com/history/robert-sobukwe-one-race-human-race/>.

68 Elliot Douglas, “Greens Call for ‘Race’ to Be Removed from German Constitution,” *Deutsche Welle*, August 6, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/greens-call-for-race-to-be-removed-from-german-constitution/a-53733161>.

69 Janet E. Helms, Maryam Jernigan, Jackquelyn Mascher, “The Meaning of Race in Psychology and How to Change It: A Methodological Perspective,” *American Psychologist* 60, no. 1 (January 2005): 27–36, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15641919/>.

70 Frisby and O’Donohue, *Cultural Competence*, 281–325; and “Understanding Racial-Ethnic Identity Development,” *EmbraceRace*, May 23, 2017,

<https://www.embraceRace.org/resources/recording-and-resources-understanding-racial-ethnic-identity-development>.

71 Institute on Race and Justice, <https://cssh.northeastern.edu/irj/>; Racial Equity Institute, <https://www.racialequityinstitute.com/>; William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation, <https://www.winterinstitute.org/>; Race Institute for K-12 Educators, <http://www.raceinstitute.org/>; Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, <https://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/>; Institute of Race Relations, <https://irr.org.za/>; and Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture, <https://isprcvoices.com/about/>.

72 Wikipedia, s.v. “UnidosUS,” accessed January 29, 2021, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UnidosUS>.

73 Anna Brown, “The Changing Categories the U.S. Census has Used to Measure Race,” *Pew Research Center*, February 25, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/02/25/the-changing-categories-the-u-s-has-used-to-measure-race/>.

a system of thinking, beliefs, or doctrines that ignores and/or distorts (by minimizing or exaggerating) the nuances and subtleties involved in scientific principles that govern the race construct—as discovered by the genetic, biological, and anthropological sciences.

“Racism,” then, narrowly refers to three interrelated and distorted beliefs: (1) Race is believed to be a fundamental *determinant* of human traits and capacities, (2) All members of a racial group are characterized as possessing characteristics or abilities that are *specific* to that race, and (3) Racial differences are believed to produce an inherent *superiority or inferiority in worth* of a particular racial group relative to others (see D’Souza, 1995, Chapter 2).<sup>74</sup>

Some years ago, I was having lunch with a kind-hearted, church-going white friend in his seventies, who related a story about a difficult exchange he had with a salesclerk. He stated that the situation got so frustrating that [my friend] could “feel his Irish starting to come out.” Given the above discussion, does this statement characterize “racism”?

The answer to this question is considerably more complex than it may seem. Most persons react to the concept of racism in a *visceral* (as opposed to a purely intellectual) manner. This is because the narrow definition for racism previously discussed is limited primarily to *private cognitive distortions*, particularly as these relate to how the human brain processes impressions, perceptions, generalizations, cognitive attributions, and mental biases.<sup>75</sup> The psychological study of these mental processes has a long and rich research history, particularly as this history relates to the study of stereotypes in social psychology.<sup>76</sup>

In contrast, the contemporary usage and “man-on-the-street” understanding of “racism” incorporates *emotional* (i.e., how one feels), *behavioral* (i.e., what one does), and *social policy* (i.e., laws that are made) components. To some individuals who came of age during a certain period in our nation’s history, for example, the word “racism” evokes images of vicious, hooded Klansmen terrorizing poor blacks, or “Whites Only” restroom and water fountain signs mandated under the Jim Crow laws of the late 1800s to the 1970s.<sup>77</sup> To others, the word “racism” evokes images of the government-sanctioned extermination of Jews in Nazi Germany. To those who were not yet born when any of these events occurred, a “racist” refers to that person who—once out of earshot of others in polite society—freely articulates his disdain for certain racial/ethnic groups or the liberal use of offensive racial/ethnic slurs.

In Part II of this series, I will show how this relatively narrow definition for “racism” has been completely severed from its original moorings in contemporary discourse. That is to say, the concept of “racism” has ballooned to grotesque proportions by coming to mean literally anything that anyone may find useful for the purpose of accomplishing self-serv-

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74 Susan A. Gelman, “Science Briefs: Essentialism in Everyday Thought,” American Psychological Association: Psychological Science Agenda Newsletter, May 2005, <https://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2005/05/gelman>; and D’Souza, *End of Racism*.

75 Steven O. Roberts and Michael T. Rizzo, “The Psychology of American Racism,” *American Psychologist* 76, no. 3 (2021): 475–87, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/amp0000642>; Elizabeth Hopper, “Attribution Theory: The Psychology of Interpreting Behavior,” *ThoughtCo.*, September 30, 2018, <https://www.thoughtco.com/attribution-theory-4174631>; and Martie G. Haselton, Daniel Nettle, and Paul W. Andrews, “The Evolution of Cognitive Bias,” in *The Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*, ed. David M. Buss (New York: Wiley, 2005), 724–46, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9780470939376.ch25>.

76 Daniel Reisberg, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Lee Jussim, *Social Perception and Social Reality: Why Accuracy Dominates Bias and Self-Fulfilling Prophecy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

77 “Jim Crow Laws,” *HISTORY*, February 28, 2018, <https://www.history.com/topics/early-20th-century-us/jim-crow-laws>.

ing sociopolitical objectives. Part III concludes with a discussion of how trendy concepts such as “systemic racism,” “institutional racism,” “unconscious bias,” “white privilege,” and “white fragility”—all of which derive their energy from utterly capricious definitions for “racism”—are much more destructive than they are helpful.

# Chapter 7

## *Racism: What It Is and What It Is Not (Part II)*

BY CRAIG FRISBY

In Part I of this series, an attempt was made to break down the meaning of the word “racism” using basic rules of word morphology.<sup>78</sup> Unfortunately, commentaries for popular audiences are under no obligation whatsoever to appeal to any objectively determined definition for, or understanding of, the word “racism” from its early origins. In the contemporary cultural and political wars, “racism” subjectively means whatever an accuser wants it to mean in order to serve his own purposes.

To modern ears, whatever this thing called “racism” is (which is rarely ever defined)—it is always bad—very, very bad. When an accuser calls people, ideas, or actions “racist,” he hopes that: (1) The accused will stop believing, saying, or writing things about race or racial group differences that cause others to feel embarrassed or uncomfortable; (2) Society will be protected from ideas about race or racial group differences that the accuser believes have the potential to damage democracy, equality, or equal treatment under the law; (3) The accused will be intimidated into silence and cease making arguments about race or racial group differences against which the accuser has no rebuttal; (4) Audiences will be predisposed to reject a priori any merits of an argument about race or racial group differences that the accuser does not like; and (5) The accuser will be viewed as morally superior or more virtuous than the accused.<sup>79</sup>

Shouting “racism” or “racist” is akin to throwing a Molotov cocktail into a room filled with tissue paper. The goal is to create a fire so intense that insurance money—in the form of instant attention/sympathy, public apologies, power and prestige, group preferences, and/or political influence—can be collected for whatever has been destroyed in its wake.<sup>80</sup>

Does this mean that real racism or real racists do not exist? By no means. In almost every country on the globe, there are small pockets of persons who proudly and openly identify as “racists,” spreading their beliefs through the internet and other forms of social and print media.<sup>81</sup> Whenever such groups surface publicly in America or abroad, they are universally denounced and opposed by literally one hundred times their number of counter-protestors.<sup>82</sup> In a few countries, however, the official mistreatment of entire ethnic groups is institutionalized in restrictive public policies.<sup>83</sup>

To be called a “racist” arguably ranks on par with “child molester” as the worst name anyone could be called in contemporary American society. The recipient of the racist label (whether or not the label is justified) is ignored, mocked, shunned, censored, shouted down, boycotted, fired, physically assaulted, or even killed.<sup>84</sup>

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78 Frisby, “Racism (Part I);” and Wikipedia, s.v. “Morphology (linguistics),” accessed May 18, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morphology\\_\(linguistics\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morphology_(linguistics)).

79 Bradley Campbell and Jason Manning, *The Rise of Victimhood Culture: Microaggressions, Safe Spaces, and the New Culture Wars* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

80 Kenneth R. Timmerman, *Shakedown: Exposing the Real Jesse Jackson* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2002).

81 Wikipedia, s.v. “Racism by Country,” accessed May 28, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racism\\_by\\_country](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racism_by_country); and Carol M. Swain, *The New White Nationalism in America: Its Challenge to Integration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

82 “Counter-Protesters Drown Out Neo-Nazis at Washington Rally,” *France 24*, August 13, 2018, <https://www.france24.com/en/20180813-counter-protesters-drown-out-neo-nazis-white-supremacists-washington-rally-charlottesville>.

83 Jonah Goldberg, “We Shouldn’t Ignore Systemic Discrimination in China,” *National Review*, August 22, 2018, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/08/china-discriminates-against-minority-populations/>.

84 B. Drummond Ayres, Jr., “Political Briefing: Republicans Decide to Ignore David Duke,” *New York Times*, April 18, 1999, <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/18/us/political-briefing-republicans-decide-to-ignore-david-duke.html>; Robby Soave, “Alt-Right Leader Richard Spencer Crashed a Student Libertarian Conference and Was Shunned,” *Reason*, February 20, 2017, <https://reason.com/2017/02/20/alt-right-leader-richard-spencer-crashed/>; Alexander O. Porte, “David Duke’s Twitter Expulsion,” *Medium*, August 4, 2020, <https://medium.com/@AlexanderPorte/david-dukes-twitter-expulsion-80a34ca->

There are countless “flavors” of racism studied by academics.<sup>85</sup> For example, when diseases disproportionately affect nonwhites due to disparities in underlying health and/or living conditions, “systemic racism” is seen as the ultimate culprit.<sup>86</sup> If a scholar fails by some arbitrary standard to include a sufficient number of “marginalized voices” in his scholarship, this is deemed to be symptomatic of “academic racism.”<sup>87</sup> If a scholar legitimately studies racial group differences on a psychological variable, but his empirical conclusions do not conform to ever-shifting standards of political correctness, he is called “scientific racist.”<sup>88</sup> Even bland technical terms found in such arcane fields as music theory or cybersecurity applications are now flagged by the woke as racist.<sup>89</sup>

Everyday commerce is not even spared from charges of racism. When a shirt maker used race as one of many variables to assist in fitting shirts for customers, an online article suggests that dress shirts could be racist.<sup>90</sup> Advertising images about which consumers rarely give a second thought suddenly require removal because activists consider them to be racist.<sup>91</sup> If a company admires a standard of feminine beauty deemed by the perpetually offended to belong to an aggrieved racial/ethnic group, it is denounced as racist.<sup>92</sup>

Public education is not exempt from bizarre charges of racism. Some state lawmakers call for a ban on history courses taught in schools, labeling them “racist” because they

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2ea00; “Richard Spencer Shouted Down in Florida, Cuts His Speech Short,” *Yahoo! News*, October 20, 2017, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/richard-spencer-shouted-down-florida-115814196.html>; Jessica Guynn, “What Civil Rights Groups Want from Facebook Boycott: Stop Hate Speech and Harassment of Black Users,” *USA Today*, July 7, 2020, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2020/07/07/facebook-ad-boycott-racism-harassment-hate-african-americans/5385514002/>; Hubert Collins, “The Call from inside the House: Cancel Culture Hurts the Left,” *American Renaissance*, June 18, 2020, <https://www.amren.com/blog/2020/06/the-call-from-inside-the-house-cancel-culture-hurts-the-left/>; Jade Haney, “Angry Mob Turns on Liberal Prof for Defending Charles Murray,” *Campus Reform*, March 6, 2017, <https://www.campusreform.org/?ID=8870>; and Cassandra Fairbanks, “Young White Mother Killed By Black Lives Matter Mob for Allegedly Saying ‘All Lives Matter,’ National Media Fully Ignores,” *Gateway Pundit*, July 11, 2020, <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2020/07/young-white-mother-killed-black-lives-matter-mob-allegedly-saying-lives-matter-national-media-fully-ignores/>.

85 Frisby and O’Donohue, *Cultural Competence*.

86 Daniel Greenfield, “The Coronavirus Is Not Killing Minorities Because of Racism,” *FrontPage Magazine*, April 14, 2020, <https://www.frontpagemag.com/fprm/2020/04/coronavirus-not-killing-minorities-because-racism-daniel-greenfield/>; and Andrew Buncombe, “Coronavirus: Bernie Sanders Denounces ‘Systemic Racism’ Behind Huge Disparity in African American Deaths,” *Independent*, April 7, 2020, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/bernie-sanders-coronavirus-black-african-american-deaths-chicago-wisconsin-racism-abhi-the-nomad-a9454096.html>.

87 Miguel A. De La Torre, “Academic Racism: The Repression of Marginalized Voices in Academia,” *Activist History Review*, August 29, 2018, <https://activisthistory.com/2018/08/29/academic-racism-the-repression-of-marginalized-voices-in-academia/>.

88 “Linda Gottfredson,” Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed May 28, 2021, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/linda-gottfredson>.

89 Norman Lebrecht, “So Harmony Is Now a Racist Term?,” *Slippedisc*, August 3, 2020, <https://slippedisc.com/2020/08/so-harmony-is-now-a-racist-term/>; and Phil Muncaster, “Security Agency Changes ‘Racist’ Language on Website,” *Infosecurity Magazine*, May 4, 2020, <https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/uk-security-agency-changes-racist/>.

90 Moises Velasquez-Manoff, “Can a Dress Shirt Be Racist?,” *WIRED*, March 31, 2016, <https://www.wired.com/2016/03/can-a-dress-shirt-be-racist/#.uv63otwgi>.

91 Graham Dockery, “Who Needs Woke Butter Wars? Dairy Company Removes ‘Racist’ Depiction of Native American Woman... but Native Artist Says It Was Fine,” *RT*, April 30, 2020, <https://www.rt.com/op-ed/487474-native-american-butter-racist/>.

92 Ferryn Laws, “Influencing While White,” *American Renaissance*, June 7, 2020, <https://www.amren.com/blog/2020/06/sarah-stevenson-cultural-appropriation-dutch-braids/>; and Alicia Lee, “The ‘Fox Eye’ Beauty Trend Continues to Spread Online. But Critics Insist It’s Racist,” *CNN*, August 11, 2020, <https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/fox-eye-trend-asian-cultural-appropriation-trnd/index.html>.

do not include enough contributions from ethnic minorities.<sup>93</sup> Other lawmakers argue that requiring black children to study or recite from the Declaration of Independence is racist.<sup>94</sup> Professors of “multicultural education”—writing for the second edition of the *Handbook for Research on Multicultural Education* (pp. 240-258)—argue that clocks are a tool of racism used to regulate subordinate groups in schools.<sup>95</sup> Concepts such as “rugged individualism,” “competition,” “justice,” the “Protestant work ethic,” the scientific method, having a “future orientation,” adhering to time schedules, being polite, and following Christianity are all interpreted by self-styled experts of African American culture as being indicative of “white culture” and “white values.”<sup>96</sup> It follows, then, that to require nonwhite students to adhere to certain behavioral norms and values in American schools/society is to perpetuate “cultural racism.”

The entertainment industry is routinely accused of racism.<sup>97</sup> In the mid-1980s, for example, the Steven Spielberg movie *The Color Purple* raised eyebrows due to its having a white director for a film about blacks.<sup>98</sup> The movie was also viciously criticized for not depicting “the black experience” in a positive manner.<sup>99</sup> Ironically, the motion picture academy was charged with racism when the movie failed to win an Academy Award despite eleven Oscar nominations.<sup>100</sup> It comes as little surprise, then, to hear of recent calls for a racial quota system in Oscar considerations.<sup>101</sup> Even cartoon characters of color voiced by white actors are deemed unacceptable and thus “racist.”<sup>102</sup>

Charges of racism are a useful tool for third parties to dictate all aspects of one's personal opinions and behaviors. Being a member of the wrong political party and supporting its policies is an automatic sign of racism.<sup>103</sup> Whenever any test or objective selection

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93 Mike Shedlock, “Illinois Rep Wants to Abolish History Classes as Racist,” *Mish Talk*, August 3, 2020, <https://mishtalk.com/economics/illinois-rep-wants-to-abolish-history-classes-as-racist>.

94 “Louisiana Rep Causes Outrage by Implying Declaration of Independence Is Racist: Politician Says Students Shouldn't Recite It as It Was Conceived in Time of Slavery,” *Daily Mail*, May 28, 2016, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3614267/Louisiana-bill-requiring-students-recite-passage-Declaration-Independence-shelved-slavery-prevalent-written.html>.

95 Christine E. Sleeter and Dolores Delgado Bernal, “Critical Pedagogy, Critical Race Theory, and Antiracist Education: Implications for Multicultural Education,” in *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, eds. James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks (Hoboken: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 240–58.

96 M. Potapchuk, “White Culture Worksheet,” MP Associates, 2012,

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qmAlAnVYIv4iaoHZ3wdXmhJgbg-TikZr/view>; and Mairead McArdle, “African American History Museum Publishes Graphic Linking ‘Rational Linear Thinking,’ ‘Nuclear Family’ to White Culture,” *National Review*, July 15, 2020,

<https://www.nationalreview.com/news/african-american-history-museum-publishes-graphic-linking-rational-linear-thinking-nuclear-family-to-white-culture/>.

97 Michael Coard, “The Oscars Are Racist,” *Philadelphia Magazine*, January 24, 2012,

<https://www.phillymag.com/news/2012/01/24/oscars-racist/>.

98 John Stark, “Seeing Red Over Purple,” *People*, March 10, 1986,

<https://people.com/archive/seeing-red-over-purple-vol-25-no-10/>.

99 Jack Mathews, “Some Blacks Critical of Spielberg's ‘Purple,’” *Los Angeles Times*, December 20, 1985,

<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1985-12-20-ca-5050-story.html>.

100 David T. Friendly, “Academy Hits Racism Accusation,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1986,

<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1986-03-27-ca-1097-story.html>.

101 Madison Dibble, “Academy Mandates Diversity Quotas to Qualify for Oscar Awards,” *Washington Examiner*, September 9, 2020,

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/academy-mandates-diversity-quotas-to-qualify-for-oscar-awards>.

102 Benjamin Starr, “Racism in The Simpsons,” *Contemporary Racism*, April 23, 2018,

<http://contemporaryracism.org/3686/racism-in-the-simpsons/>.

103 Larry Elder, “Trump's Victory: Even Charlie ‘Race Card’ Rangel Doesn't Blame ‘Whitelash,’” *Creators*, December 15, 2016,

<https://www.creators.com/read/larry-elder/12/16/trumps-victory-even-charlie-race-card-rangel-doesnt-blame-whitelash>.

procedure fails to yield racial proportions that an accuser prefers, it is called racist.<sup>104</sup> If a white person simply criticizes the decisions or behavior of a “person-of-color” or a minority group, he is deemed racist.<sup>105</sup> If a white person publicly acknowledges black-on-black crime, he is considered racist.<sup>106</sup> Persons who refuse to discriminate against whites are labeled “racist,” as is the innocent impulse to say “all lives matter.”<sup>107</sup> Celebrating Christmas, or merely saying “Merry Christmas” is racist.<sup>108</sup> To be caught absent-mindedly resting one’s hands and fingers in a manner that some view as offensive can now be called racist.<sup>109</sup>

If a social movement appears to be supported by too many whites and does not appear to have a sufficient number of nonwhite supporters, then it must be racist by definition.<sup>110</sup> One writer attempted to argue that anti-abortion advocates are secretly white supremacists, despite hard facts that suggest the opposite.<sup>111</sup>

Indeed, nothing is too sacred to escape the wrath of the race scolds. Based on shallow, selective, and mangled interpretations of scripture, the Bible generally, and Jesus specifically, Christians are charged with racism.<sup>112</sup>

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104 Joseph A. Soares, “Dismantling White Supremacy Includes Ending Racist Tests like the SAT and ACT,” *Teachers College Press*, June 22, 2020,

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This climate of fear effectively energizes the “woke,” “social justice,” “white privilege,” “white fragility,” “Black Lives Matter,” “unconscious bias,” and “anti-racism” movements in American society. While these movements may differ in their particulars, all use this fear to fashion five False Narratives, as described below:<sup>113</sup>

**False Narrative #1:** Racism is an evil social virus that is qualitatively different and disconnected from other universal human shortcomings.<sup>114</sup> Although this virus can influence anyone, it is inexorably linked with the concept of “whiteness” and its primary victims are “persons of color.”<sup>115</sup> Although earlier manifestations of American racism were largely explicit and relatively easy to identify, more developed skill is required to discern its current forms (which are portrayed as more subtle, hidden, and implicit).<sup>116</sup> The racism virus manifests itself deep within the conscious or unconscious psyches of (usually white) persons; is “systemic” within the functioning of institutions and organizations; exerts its evil influence within state/government laws and policies; is deeply embedded within America’s cultural/historical symbols; and even lies hidden within social attitudes that have no explicit racial content.

**False Narrative #2:** The effects of racism are most clearly evident in large statistical “disparities,” “disproportionalities,” “inequities,” and “inequalities” in political, educational, social, and economic outcomes between outwardly identifiable racial, cultural, ethnic, and language subgroups within American society.<sup>117</sup> Were it not for racism and/or the discrimination that attends it, these groups would display equitable representation across all outcomes, commensurate with their given numerical proportions within the broader society.

**False Narrative #3:** Racism is so deeply embedded in (particularly) American society that racial inequalities will *always* be present.<sup>118</sup> To the committed anti-racist, the continued presence of inequalities proves the unrelenting presence of entrenched racism in the American soul. According to this narrative, whites in particular will *always* be racists, and should not expect to reach a state where they are “cured.”<sup>119</sup> This is why anti-racism and cultural competence efforts are portrayed as life-long behaviors.<sup>120</sup>

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**False Narrative #4:** All persons (from elementary school age to adulthood) are ethically and/or morally obligated to submit themselves to explicit training for recognizing racism in its variety of manifestations; willingly participate in personal/group therapy to develop “anti-racist thinking”; and engage in “difficult dialogues” and “frank conversations” about race that help whites develop deep empathy for the historical/current pain and suffering of racial minority groups.<sup>121</sup> The sufficiently “woke” make a commitment to fight perceived racism wherever it may be found, and must reflexively condemn others who are perceived as perpetuating it.<sup>122</sup> In their personal lives and attitudes, good anti-racists support policies designed to compensate victims of racism (financially or otherwise); increase the percentage of minorities in particular fields; or use one’s “privilege” to reduce perceived barriers to social, educational, or economic advancement for minority groups and individuals.<sup>123</sup>

**False Narrative #5:** If carried out correctly and consistently, the anti-racist crusade will result in increased “social justice” in America, increased harmony and productivity in the workplace, the reduction of academic achievement gaps in schools and colleges, greater economic and occupational parity between subgroups, less racial disproportionality in criminal incarcerations, and a gradual “healing” of centuries of emotional pain experienced by ethnic minorities.<sup>124</sup>

Why do I call these five narratives falsehoods? Because, in a nutshell, they have the intellectual/empirical gravitas of soap bubbles, but the corrosive effects of battery acid when allowed to percolate within academia and civil society.<sup>125</sup> Part III concludes this series by examining these corrosive effects.<sup>126</sup>

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# Chapter 8

## *Racism: What It Is and What It Is Not (Part III)*

BY CRAIG FRISBY

Part II illustrated how the concept of “racism” has come to mean whatever anyone wants it to mean—which, over time, has diminished its power to illuminate or intimidate. Unfortunately, this message has not reached followers of the “white fragility” movement and its numerous ideological offshoots.<sup>127</sup>

These movements are energized, nurtured, and spread by the denial and mischaracterization of two fundamental truths about human diversity.<sup>128</sup> First, subpopulation groups—no matter where on the globe they live or how they are subdivided—differ, *on average*, in the central tendencies of hundreds of social, cultural, biological, and psychological variable distributions. This is observed even in countries where almost everyone belongs to the same broad racial group, yet are still subdivided by social class, language, tribal affiliations, or ethnicity.

These average differences include, but are not limited to, health behaviors, temperament, the distribution of general cognitive ability, personality traits, cultural values and priorities, occupational choices, religious affiliations and practices, economic accomplishments, musical or athletic interests and accomplishments, biological traits, medical vulnerabilities, and involvement with the criminal justice system.<sup>129</sup> Modern progressives, fueled by Marxist ideology, interpret reality as if there cannot be any average differences between human subpopulations that has any relevance for social outcomes.<sup>130</sup> The cold reality, however, is that perfect statistical equality in outcomes across racial/ethnic groups *has never existed at any time, on any variable, at any place on the globe*—having little or nothing to do with “racism” (however this maybe defined), discrimination, or longstanding “systemic oppression.”<sup>131</sup>

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127 Craig Frisby, “Racism: What It Is and What It Is Not (Part II),” *Minding the Campus*, September 24, 2020, <https://www.mindingthecampus.org/2020/09/24/racism-what-it-is-and-what-it-is-not-part-ii/>; DiAngelo, *White Fragility*; Loretta Capeheart and Dragan Milovanovic, *Social Justice: Theories, Issues, and Movements* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2020); and Nathan Doyle, “Why ‘Racist’ Is Losing Its Power,” *Counter-Currents*, May 30, 2018, <https://counter-currents.com/2018/05/why-racist-is-losing-its-power/>.

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130 Jon Miltimore and Dan Sanchez, “The New York Times Reported ‘the Mainstreaming of Marxism in US Colleges’ 30 Years Ago. Today, We See the Results,” *Foundation for Economic Education*, September 10, 2020, <https://fee.org/articles/the-new-york-times-reported-the-mainstreaming-of-marxism-in-us-colleges-30-years-ago-today-we-see-the-results/>.

131 Thomas Sowell, *Discrimination and Disparities* (New York: Basic Books, 2019).

Since this reality is unacceptable to radical progressives in America, objective ability, behavioral, and skill performance standards must be maligned, lowered, altered, or abandoned altogether in order to force artificial equity down the throat of American society in areas as diverse as higher education admissions, public school discipline policies, civil service exams, teacher certification exams, and gifted education entrance requirements in public schools. In some public schools, gifted education programs are simply shut down altogether because the racial disproportionalities in enrollment embarrass educators.<sup>132</sup> In the grand irony of all ironies, higher education's social justice warriors claim to be enemies of "institutional racism," but nevertheless have been found guilty—on the basis of hard numerical evidence—of actual *institutional racism* in their discrimination against high-scoring white and Asian applicants.<sup>133</sup>

In introductory statistics, the concept of variability is just as important when understanding score distributions.<sup>134</sup> Thus, a second and equally established principle of human diversity is the wide variability in hundreds of social, cultural, and psychological variables among individuals *within* broad subpopulation groups.<sup>135</sup>

Discussing the full extent of statistical variation within subpopulation groups on human traits is well beyond the scope of this essay.<sup>136</sup> Although no analogy is perfect, a simple illustration may assist readers in appreciating the reality and importance of statistical variation generally, as well as individual differences specifically. In the analogy to follow, readers can simply substitute "temperature" for any reliable measurement of a psychological or biological trait, and "months of the year" for human subgroupings.

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132 Raven Clabough, "DOJ Forces Cities to Lower Police Exam Standards to Aid Minority Applicants," *New American*, March 22, 2011, <https://thenewamerican.com/doj-forces-cities-to-lower-police-exam-standards-to-aid-minority-applicants/>; Steve Watson, "Chicago Uni English Dpt. Says It Will Only Allow 'Black Studies' Students," *Summit News*, September 15, 2020, <https://summit.news/2020/09/15/chicago-uni-english-dpt-says-it-will-only-allow-black-studies-students/>; Joseph A. Soares and Jay Rosner, "The Future of College Admissions Is Test Blind," *Inside Higher Ed*, September 14, 2020, <https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/views/2020/09/14/future-college-admissions-test-blind-opinion/>; Kimberly Quick, "School Discipline without Racial Equity Is Discrimination," Century Foundation, May 21, 2018, <https://tcf.org/content/commentary/school-discipline-without-racial-equity-discrimination/>; "The 'Racist' New York Firefighters Test," *Conservative Tree House*, March 20, 2014, <https://theconservativetreehouse.com/blog/2014/03/20/the-racist-new-york-firefighters-test/>; "Disparate Impact' Again—New York Teachers Test Ruled Discriminatory—Minority Educators Failed...," *Conservative Tree House*, June 7, 2015, <https://theconservativetreehouse.com/blog/2015/06/07/disparate-impact-again-new-york-teachers-test-ruled-discriminatory-minority-educators-failed/>, and Diane Boothe and Julian C. Stanley, eds., *In the Eyes of the Beholder: Critical Issues for Diversity in Gifted Education* (Waco: Prufrock Press, 2004), 139–55, and "New York School Shuts Down Gifted Student Program Because Not Enough Black Students Enrolled...," *Conservative Tree House*, January 31, 2014, <https://theconservativetreehouse.com/blog/2014/01/31/new-york-school-shuts-down-gifted-student-program-because-not-enough-black-students-enrolled/>.

133 Wikipedia, s.v. "Social Justice Warrior," accessed May 27, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_justice\\_warrior](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_justice_warrior); and Kevin Breuninger, "Yale 'Illegally Discriminates' against White and Asian Students, Justice Department Says," *CNBC*, August 13, 2020, <https://www.cNBC.com/2020/08/13/yale-illegally-discriminates-against-white-and-asian-students-justice-department-says.html>.

134 Vincent Knight, "The Importance of Variability," May 25, 2012, YouTube video, 7:20, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3ZEqc8dkZk>.

135 Gregory J. Boyle and Donald H. Saklofske, eds., *Psychology of Individual Differences* (SAGE Publications, 2003), <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/psychology-of-individual-differences/book226289#contents>; and William Revelle, "Individual Differences," Personality Project, <https://personality-project.org/revelle/publications/ids.html>.

136 Virgil Zeigler-Hill and Todd K. Shackelford, eds., *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences* (Cham: Springer, 2020).

To illustrate: countries that lie along the equator generally do not have four distinct seasons marked by drastic temperature variations.<sup>137</sup> In contrast, most Americans will agree with the statement that “The spring season has higher temperatures, on average, than the fall season.” However, there are certain days in March that are *colder* than some days in September. Additionally, the months of March, April, and May—though all belong to the spring season—differ *between each another* in their *average* temperatures. Yet it is also true that the absolute difference in temperature between the coldest and warmest days in March is *often larger* than the maximum difference in *average* monthly temperatures *across* each of the three spring or fall months. As if this were not enough, the difference between early morning and noontime temperatures on March 3 may be *larger* than the maximum range of average daily temperatures for each of the 31 days in March.

This basic statistical principle of human variability cautions audiences against lazy group stereotyping based exclusively on the first principle regarding subgroup average differences. Thus, it is easy to see why it is absolutely necessary to integrate both statistical principles in understanding human traits, both on an individual and group level.

Militant progressivism, however, pays no attention to any of these principles. When ideological brainwashing is at the top of the academic agenda instead of the careful study of empirical truth, reality must be grossly mischaracterized to fit whatever talking points are central to the ideology.<sup>138</sup> In the white fragility movement, individuals are characterized as little more than flat, cardboard cutouts designed to serve as stock representatives of their racial groups—displaying no nuanced variation in thinking, opinions, background experiences, attitudes, or psychological traits.<sup>139</sup>

Many whites simply do not like being told that their skin color—in and of itself—is the crucial factor that *determines* their conscious and unconscious thinking, particularly on racial issues.<sup>140</sup> Similarly, many blacks do not like being characterized as porcelain victim dolls ready to shatter into pieces whenever a white person commits an innocent microaggression.<sup>141</sup> In order to understand why these hostile reactions to the white fragility concept exist among both groups, we need only to remind ourselves of the narrow definition for “racism” discussed in Part I.

Recall that, in Part I, the term “racism” remained tethered to its root word, and was narrowly defined—in part—as an ideology which holds that race is a fundamental *determinant* of human traits and capacities.<sup>142</sup> In addition, this definition for racism characterizes all members of a racial group as possessing characteristics or abilities that are *specific* to that race. Yet, this is *exactly* how militant progressives think. In the DiAngelo universe, it appears unthinkable that blacks, Hispanics, Asians, or Native Americans may believe

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<sup>137</sup> Matt Rosenberg, “Countries That Lie on the Equator,” *ThoughtCo.*, January 28, 2020, <https://www.thoughtco.com/countries-that-lie-on-the-equator-1435319>.

<sup>138</sup> Free Dictionary, s.v. “Brainwashing,” accessed May 27, 2021, <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/brainwashing>; and Thomas Sowell, *Is Reality Optional? and Other Essays* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1993).

<sup>139</sup> “Custom Cardboard Cutouts,” Life Size Custom Cutouts, accessed May 27, 2021, <https://www.lifesizecustomcutouts.com/>.

<sup>140</sup> Maureen Callahan, “Peddling the Idea That ‘All White People Are Racist’ for Profit,” *New York Post*, August 6, 2020, <https://nypost.com/2020/08/06/peddling-the-idea-that-all-white-people-are-racist-for-profit/>.

<sup>141</sup> John McWhorter, “The Dehumanizing Condescension of White Fragility,” *The Atlantic*, July 15, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/07/dehumanizing-condescension-white-fragility/614146/>; and Derald Wing Sue, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2010).

<sup>142</sup> Frisby, “Racism (Part I).”

that they are superior to other groups, or that whites may be harmed by hurtful negative stereotypes. Yet, this is exactly what sometimes happens in the real world.

When both blacks and whites react negatively to white fragility theory, *they are responding viscerally to the breezy assumption that skin color determines the full range of their private attitudes or feelings—and that these attitudes/feelings are exclusive to only blacks or whites.* In fact, the discomfort many feel in discussing sensitive racial issues publicly is no different from the discomfort anybody would feel if asked to openly discuss (in front of total strangers) how much money they make, or the floral pattern of their underwear. Said differently, human beings are “fragile” about many things—with racial issues ranking far down toward the bottom of the list for many persons.

Social justice brainwashing movements thrive on nutrients from the following four basic food groups: (1) a selective ignorance of history; (2) frustrated, insecure, and disgruntled minorities; (3) well-meaning whites who are easy fodder for phony white guilt; and (4) lucrative opportunities for political grandstanding (see the “There is another class . . .” quote from Booker T. Washington).<sup>143</sup>

Young high school and college students, whipped into a frenzy by the latest police shooting, act as if American history suddenly began with the death of George Floyd.<sup>144</sup> Are they aware that literally *billions of dollars* have been poured into civil rights enforcement organizations, affirmative action incentives, Head Start preschool programs, school busing for racial integration, generous grants for urban development, minority scholarships, Title I programs in schools, and corporate diversity training—most of which began decades before they were even born?<sup>145</sup>

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143 Robert Peterson, *Dark Psychology Manipulation: Highly Effective Techniques for Influencing People Using Mind Control, Persuasion, NLP and Deception—The Subtle Art of Brainwashing.* (self-pub., 2019); Colin Flaherty, *Don't Make the Black Kids Angry: The Hoax of Black Victimization and Those Who Enable It* (self-pub., 2015); Shelby Steele, *White Guilt: How Blacks and Whites Together Destroyed the Promise of the Civil Rights Era* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007); and “Booker T. Washington Quotes,” Goodreads, [https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/84278.Booker\\_T\\_Washington](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/84278.Booker_T_Washington).

144 Ada Tseng, “OC Teenagers Organize a Peaceful Black Lives Matter Protest in Garden Grove That Attracts Thousands,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 4, 2020,

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Well-intentioned whites exhaust themselves in desperate attempts to obey the latest prescriptions for “how to be an anti-racist,” only to discover that the moral goalposts have been moved (yet again)—and that nothing is ever enough to satisfy the race scolds.<sup>146</sup>

Sensitivity to giving racial offense now resembles the theatre of the absurd. Students and administrators at one prestigious school of music stretched logic to its breaking point by linking the George Floyd protests with the lack of African American representation and interest in classical music.<sup>147</sup> High-profile political figures humiliate themselves before TV cameras in order to pander to racial grievances, only to be mocked by the same persons to whom they are pandering.<sup>148</sup> This is heady stuff for the twenty-something-year-old college student shouting about racism through a bullhorn. How do these activities help young people (financed by hard-working parents and generous scholarships) to gain basic and essential competencies in their chosen fields?<sup>149</sup>

When the gullible treat persons from minority groups with the soft bigotry of paternalism, they are completely unaware that their beliefs and attitudes are essentially no different from the “old fashioned white racism” that they presumably loathe.<sup>150</sup>

White fragility/white privilege theory cannot explain why virulent antisemitism and ethnic cleansing exist in predominantly white countries where whites viciously slaughter other whites.<sup>151</sup> Nor can it explain why the continent of Africa has experienced the most horrific period of tribal bloodshed and killings in its history between black Rwandan tribes, who—as far as is reasonably known—contain no white members.<sup>152</sup> White fragility theory provides no explanation for why black children and youth are systematically murdered every month in major American cities by rival street gangs—who couldn’t care less about sharing the same skin color.<sup>153</sup> Nor can it explain why Malcolm X, arguably the highest

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146 Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist*; and Rachel Garlinghouse, “Being Nice to People of Color Doesn’t Mean You’re Anti-Racist,” *Scary Mommy*, June 5, 2020,

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<https://www.history.com/topics/holocaust/ethnic-cleansing>; Cathie Carmichael, *Ethnic Cleansing in the Balkans: Nationalism and the Destruction of Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2002); and “The Divide Runs Deep between Protestants and Catholics of Belfast (1993),” Journeyman Pictures, April 10, 2018, YouTube video, 5:11,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzMVyn9VEJ4>.

152 Wikipedia, s.v. “Initial Events of the Rwandan Genocide,” accessed May 27, 2021,

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Initial\\_events\\_of\\_the\\_Rwandan\\_genocide](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Initial_events_of_the_Rwandan_genocide).

153 Daniel Forstein, “The 5 Most Gang Infested Cities in America,” *Insider Monkey*, November 1, 2014,

<https://www.insidermonkey.com/blog/the-5-most-gang-infested-cities-in-america-334328/>; and Valerie Richardson,

profile antagonist to white America in his early rhetoric, was killed by black men—who in the final analysis were motivated by the most basic of human emotions: jealousy.<sup>154</sup>

The hollow canard that “people of color cannot be racist” (defined here as animosity and violence directed at persons because of the color of their skin) is a disingenuous smoke-screen shown to be false whenever opportunities for basic human revenge present themselves.<sup>155</sup> When put into a position of real or imagined power, “persons of color” in these instances show no reluctance to demand or extract “payback” against individuals from other racial groups.<sup>156</sup>

Human beings display a great capacity for good, but also a great capacity for evil. Basic human nature has never, nor will ever, change as long as human beings continue to exist on planet earth. The white fragility movement and its offshoots have been shown to be intellectually and morally bankrupt, providing no answers for improving troubled societies—whether they be in America or abroad. Higher education deserves better.

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# *Section III.*

**EVALUATING INTERVENTIONS BUILT ON  
THESE APPROACHES**

# Chapter 9

*Diversity Is Important. Diversity  
Related Training is Terrible.*

BY MUSA AL-GHARBI

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In wake of George Floyd's murder and the protests that followed, many colleges and universities have been rolling out new training requirements—often oriented towards reducing biases and encouraging people from high-status groups to 'check their privilege.'<sup>157</sup> The explicit goal of these training programs is generally to help create a more positive and welcoming institutional environment for people from historically marginalized and underrepresented groups.

As I have explained elsewhere, there is a long literature on the benefits of diversity on knowledge production.<sup>158</sup> However, many of the approaches to training people how to navigate and utilize diversity were implemented by corporations, non-profits and universities before their effectiveness had been tested rigorously (if at all).

Beginning in the mid-90s, it became increasingly clear that, due to this lack of validation, many widely-used interventions could be ineffective or harmful. An empirical literature was built up measuring the effectiveness of diversity-related training programs. The picture that has emerged is not very flattering.

### Resources on these point:

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The limited research suggesting diversity-related training programs as efficacious was based on things like surveys before and after the training, or testing knowledge or attitudes about various groups or policies. And to be clear, the training *does* help people answer survey questions in the way the training said they 'should.' And many people who undergo the training say they enjoyed it or found it helpful in post-training questionnaires.

However, when scientists set about to investigate whether the programs actually changed *behaviors*, i.e. do they reduce expressions of bias, do they reduce discrimination, do they foster greater collaboration across groups, do they help with retaining employees from historically marginalized or underrepresented groups, do they increase productivity or reduce conflicts in the workplace—for all of these *behavioral* metrics, the metrics that actually *matter*, not only is the training ineffective, it is often counterproductive.

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## TRAINING IS GENERALLY INEFFECTIVE AT ITS STATED GOALS

The stated goals of these training programs vary, from helping to increase hiring and retention of people from historically marginalized and underrepresented groups, to eliminating prejudicial attitudes or behaviors to members of said groups, to reducing conflict and enhancing cooperation and belonging among all employees. Irrespective of the stated goals of the programs, they are overwhelmingly ineffective with respect to those goals. Generally speaking, they do not increase diversity in the workplace, they do not reduce harassment or discrimination, they do not lead to greater intergroup cooperation and cohesion—consequently, they do not increase productivity. More striking: many of those tasked with ensuring compliance with these training programs recognize them as ineffective (see Rynes & Rosen 1995, p. 258).

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- Newkirk, Pamela (2019). *Diversity Inc.: The Failed Promise of a Billion-Dollar Business*. New York, NY: Bold Type Books.
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## TRAINING OFTEN REINFORCES BIASES

Often, when people attempt to do fact-checks, they begin by underscoring the falsehood, and then proceed to try to debunk that falsehood. This can create what psychologists call an 'illusory truth effect,' where people end up remembering the falsehood, forgetting the correction—and then attributing their misinformation to the very source that had tried to correct it!<sup>59</sup> A similar effect seems to hold with antibias training. By articulating various stereotypes associated with particular groups, emphasizing the salience of those stereotypes, and *then* calling for their suppression, they often end up reinforcing them in participants' minds. Sometimes they even implant new stereotypes (for instance, if participants didn't previously have particular stereotypes for Vietnamese people, or much knowledge about them overall, but were introduced to common stereotypes about this group through training intended to dispel said stereotypes).

Other times, they can fail to improve negative perceptions about the target group, yet increase negative views about others. For instance, an empirical investigation of 'white privilege' training found that it did nothing to make participants more sympathetic to minorities—it just increased resentment towards lower-income whites.

Encouraging people to ignore racial and cultural differences often results in diminished cooperation across racial lines. Meanwhile, multicultural training—emphasizing those differences—often ends up reinforcing race essentialism among participants. It is not clear what the best position between these poles is (such that these negative side effects can be avoided), let alone how to consistently strike that balance in training.

### Resources on these points:

- Cooley, Erin et al. (2019). "Complex intersections of race and class: Among social liberals, learning about White privilege reduces sympathy, increases blame, and decreases external attributions for White people struggling with poverty." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 148(12), 2218–28.
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## TRAINING CAN INCREASE BIASED BEHAVIOR, MINORITY TURNOVER

Many diversity-related training programs describe bias and discrimination as rampant. One unfortunate consequence of depicting these attitudes and behaviors as common is that it makes many feel *more comfortable* expressing biased attitudes or behaving in discriminatory ways. Insofar as it is depicted as ubiquitous, diversity-related training can actually *normalize* bias.

For others, the very fact that the company has diversity-related training is proof that it is a non-biased institution. This perception often reduces concerns about bias and discrimination—by oneself or others. As a consequence, people not only become more likely to act in more biased ways, but they also react with increased skepticism and hostility when colleagues claim to have been discriminated against.

Meanwhile, those who *are* discriminated against become more likely to rationalize mistreatment by others in the institution after undergoing diversity-related training (for the same reason, because they believe the institution must be fair in virtue of its commitment to diversity-related training; indeed, minority employees are often called upon to lead diversity reviews themselves). Consequently, they become *less* likely to actually report or address wrongdoing.<sup>160</sup> As a result, problems persist unabated—often leading to *higher* turnover among the very groups the programs were ostensibly designed to render more comfortable.

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<sup>160</sup> Jennifer Miller, "Their Bosses Asked Them to Lead Diversity Reviews. Guess Why.," *New York Times*, October 12, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/12/business/corporate-diversity-black-employees.html>.

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## **TRAINING OFTEN ALIENATES PEOPLE FROM HIGH-STATUS GROUPS, REDUCES MORALE**

Diversity-related training programs often depict people from historically marginalized and disenfranchised groups as important and worthwhile, celebrating their heritage and culture, while criticizing the dominant culture as fundamentally depraved (racist, sexist, sadistic, etc.). People from minority groups are discussed in overwhelmingly positive terms, while people from majority groups are characterized as typically (and uniquely) ignorant, insensitive or outright malicious with respect to those who are different than them. Members of the majority group are told to listen to, and validate, the perspectives of people from historically marginalized or disadvantaged groups—even as they are instructed to submit *their own* feelings and perspectives to intense scrutiny.

In short, there is a clear double-standard in many of these programs with respect to how members of dominant groups (typically men, whites and/or heterosexuals) are described as compared to members of minority groups (i.e. women, ethnic/ racial minorities, LGBTQ employees). The result is that many members from the dominant group walk away from the training believing that themselves, their culture, their perspectives and interests are *not* valued at the institution—certainly *not* as much as those of minority team members—reducing their morale and productivity.

The training also leads many to believe that they have to 'walk on eggshells' when engaging with members of minority populations. By calling attention, not just too clear examples of harm and prejudice, but just as much (or more) to things like implicit attitudes and microaggressions, participants come to view colleagues from historically marginalized and disenfranchised groups as fragile and easily offended. As a result, members of the dominant group become less likely to try to build relationships or collaborate with people from minority populations.

### **Resources on these points:**

- Anand, Rohini & Mary-Frances Winters (2008). "A Retrospective View of Corporate Diversity Training from 1964 to the Present." *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 7(3): 356-72.
- Dover, Tessa w/ Brenda Major & Cheryl Kaiser (2016). "Members of High-Status Groups Are Threatened by Pro-Diversity Organizational Messages." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 62: 58-67.

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## FOCUS ON: IMPLICIT ATTITUDES

Implicit attitudes are one of the most commonly relied-upon constructs in contemporary diversity-related training. However, there are severe problems with these constructs—as hammered home by meta-analysis after meta-analysis: it is not clear precisely *what* is being measured on implicit attitude tests; implicit attitudes do not effectively predict actual discriminatory behavior; most interventions to attempts to change implicit attitudes are ineffective (effects, when present, tend to be small and fleeting).<sup>161</sup> Moreover, there is no evidence that changing implicit attitudes has any significant, let alone durable, impact on reducing biased or discriminatory behaviors. In short, the construct itself has numerous validity issues, and the training has no demonstrable benefit.

### Resources on these points:

- Blanton, Hart et al. (2009). "Strong claims and weak evidence: Reassessing the predictive validity of the IAT." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 94(3): 567–582.
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<sup>161</sup> Olivia Goldhill, "The world Is Relying on a Flawed Psychological Test to Fight Racism," *Quartz*, December 3, 2017, <https://qz.com/1144504/the-world-is-relying-on-a-flawed-psychological-test-to-fight-racism/>; and Jesse Singal, "Psychology's Favorite Tool for Measuring Racism Isn't Up to the Job," *The Cut*, January 2017, <https://www.thecut.com/2017/01/psychologys-racism-measuring-tool-isnt-up-to-the-job.html>

## FOCUS ON: MICROAGGRESSIONS

Contemporary diversity-related training often draws significant attention to microaggressions—small, typically inadvertent, faux pas involving people from historically marginalized and disadvantaged groups. The cumulative effects of microaggressions are held to have significant and adverse impacts on the well-being of people from low-status groups. However, although the microaggressions framework goes back to 1974, there is virtually no systematic research detailing if and how microaggressions are harmful, for whom, and under what circumstances (indeed, there is not even robust conceptual clarity in the literature as to what *constitutes* a microaggression).<sup>162</sup> There is no systematic empirical evidence that training on microaggressions has any significant or long-term effects on behavior, nor that it correlates with any other positive institutional outcomes.

In fact, when presented with canonical microaggressions, black and Hispanic respondents overwhelmingly find them to be inoffensive—and we have ample reason to believe that sensitizing people to perceive and take greater offense at these slights actually *would* cause harm: the evidence is clear and abundant that increased perceptions of racism have adverse mental and physical consequences for minorities. In short, not only is there no evidence that training on microaggressions is valuable for improving the well-being of people from historically marginalized or disadvantaged groups, there *is* reason to believe it could actually be counter-productive to that end.

### Resources on these points:

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- Lillienfeld, Scott (2017). “Microaggressions: Strong Claims, Inadequate Evidence.” *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 12(1): 138-69.

## MANDATORY TRAINING CAUSES ADDITIONAL BLOWBACK

Although diversity-related training programs are generally ineffective, and often bring negative side-effects, they tend to work better (or at least, be less harmful) when they are opt-in. Mandatory training causes people to engage with the materials and exercises in the wrong frame of mind: adversarial and resentful. Consequently, mandatory training often leads to more negative feelings and behaviors, both towards the company *and* minority co-workers. This effect is especially pronounced among the people who need the training most. Yet roughly 80% of diversity-related training programs in the U.S. seem to be mandatory.<sup>163</sup>

If an institution is going to include diversity-related training, it should offer it as a resource for those who want to learn more. To encourage more people to volunteer for the training, its value and purpose should be linked to specific organizational and development goals. Small incentives could be offered for those who take part, rather than the current norm of sanctioning those who do not.

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<sup>162</sup> Musa al-Gharbi, “Against Reactionary and Myopic Approaches to Higher Ed Reform,” October 4, 2019, <https://musaalgharbi.com/2019/10/04/reactionary-myopic-approaches-higher-ed-reform/>.

<sup>163</sup> *Society for Human Resource Management, 2005 Workplace Diversity Practices: Survey Report* (Alexandria: Society for Human Resource Management, 2007).

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## TRAINING COMES AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHER PRIORITIES

We are in a period of educational austerity. Creating, implementing and ensuring compliance with diversity-related training programs is expensive.<sup>164</sup> In a world where these training programs consistently advanced diversity and inclusion goals within an organization, or enhanced intergroup cooperation and overall productivity, then these costs could be justified—even during a time of belt-tightening. However, when the training is typically ineffective or even counterproductive, it seems antithetical to the pedagogical purpose of the university to dump still *more* money into these programs, even as many departments are seeing hiring freezes or budget cuts, and contingent faculty are being laid off en masse (disproportionately people from historically underrepresented and disadvantaged groups).<sup>165</sup>

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164 Maggie Koerth, "A Half-Day of Diversity Training Won't Change Much for Starbucks," *FiveThirtyEight*, May 29, 2018, <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/a-half-day-of-diversity-training-wont-change-much-for-starbucks/>.

165 Chris Woolston, "Junior Researchers Hit by Coronavirus-Triggered Hiring Freezes," *Nature*, June 2, 2020, <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01656-3>; Fernanda Zamudio-Suarez and Sarah Brown, "The Quandary: How Can I Represent My Department in a Season of Budget Cuts?," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 8, 2020, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-quandary-how-can-i-represent-my-department-in-a-season-of-budget-cuts/>; and Musa al-Gharbi, "Disposable Scholars," May 1, 2020, <https://musaalgharbi.com/2020/05/01/disposable-scholars/>.

Indeed, ineffective diversity-related training programs often crowd out much more substantial efforts that could be undertaken to actually enhance diversity and inclusion within institutions of higher learning. Why do universities instead double-down on training despite its demonstrated ineffectiveness? The short answer is that, even if training is expensive and doesn't work, it *is* relatively easy to implement—and it allows universities to show (including, often, in court) that they are *doing* something to address prejudice, discrimination and inequalities... even if what they're doing is, in fact, pointless.<sup>166</sup>

However, universities are institutions that regularly claim to embody and inculcate such values as evidence-based reasoning, respect for facts, commitment to truth, etc. Universities are doing a bad job at modeling those values for students insofar as they force upon them (and upon the faculty who are supposed to be instructing them!) pedagogical materials that are demonstrably ineffective or even counterproductive.<sup>167</sup>

It insults, rather than honors, the memory of George Floyd to offer empty gestures like these in his name. Indeed, as Cyrus Mehri aptly put it, "When you keep choosing the options on the menu that don't create change, you're purposely not creating change. It's part of the intentional discrimination."<sup>168</sup>

These programs became especially important beginning in the mid-80s to early-90s.<sup>169</sup> Why? Starting in the late 70s through early 80s, for a variety of reasons, universities began enrolling significantly higher numbers of women, minorities, and people from middle-class and lower-income backgrounds.<sup>170</sup> Soon thereafter, employers found themselves with a much more heterogenous labor pool—and had to face, often for the first time, some of the challenges that come along with the benefits of diversity—as people with increasingly divergent backgrounds and perspectives were put side by side and tasked with common goals.

Universities did not do a great job preparing students for these new professional realities. Then (and regrettably, now as well), people were graduating, and going into the workforce, with surprisingly little experience or competence at leveraging diversity to achieve common goals, or engaging productively with people who have radically different experiences and worldviews, etc.<sup>171</sup> In short, the needs that diversity-related training are supposed to help meet are very real and quite pressing: helping people navigate and utilize diversity in contexts where diversity was growing, and was essential. Unfortunately, the training does not effectively meet those needs.

The precursor to contemporary diversity-related training, sensitivity training, actually

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166 Kim Elssesser, "The Real Problem with Diversity Programs: Too Many Lawyers," *Forbes*, January 5, 2016, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kimelssesser/2016/01/05/the-real-problem-with-diversity-programs-too-many-lawyers/?sh=65fa2d4c4087>.

167 Marc Parry, "In Sociologists' #MeToo Moment, Does Their Response Heed the Lessons of Social Science?," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 10, 2018, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/in-sociologists-metoo-moment-does-their-response-heed-the-lessons-of-social-science/>.

168 Pamela Newkirk, "Why Diversity Initiatives Fail," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 6, 2019, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/why-diversity-initiatives-fail/>.

169 Rohini Anand and Mary-Frances Winters, "A Retrospective View of Corporate Diversity Training from 1964 to the Present," *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 7, no. 3 (September 2008): 356–72.

170 Musa al-Gharbi, "On Heterodox Academy and Effective Advocacy," February 25, 2020, <https://musaalgharbi.com/2020/02/25/heterodox-academy-effective-advocacy/>.

171 Musa al-Gharbi, "There's No Reason to Be Smug about the Partisan Diploma Divide," August 27, 2019, <https://musaalgharbi.com/2019/08/27/unearned-smugness-partisan-diploma-divide/2/>.

dates back to the mid 1940s.<sup>172</sup> At that time, social scientists believed that it was possible to radically and durably change people's thoughts and behaviors through targeted interventions. Hence, the great concern over things like brainwashing, propaganda and subliminal messaging—and also the hope that one could more-or-less erase biased attitudes and behaviors through well-calibrated interventions.

However, we have since come to understand that people's attitudes and behaviors are sticky, attempts at mass persuasion generally fail, and you cannot radically and/or durably change people's attitudes and behaviors through superficial one-off interventions.<sup>173</sup> Yet this is precisely what many diversity-related training programs are trying to do! Hence, it should not be surprising that they are typically ineffective. Nonetheless, the research on these points provides much richer insight into how and why they fail, the consequences of failure, and lots of ideas about how these initiatives could be fundamentally re-imagined in order to better achieve their aims.

Unfortunately, none of these ideas are actually being implemented widely and/or in a consistent way, and the proposed alternatives have generally not been robustly empirically tested for real-world effectiveness at substantially and durably changing behaviors.

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<sup>172</sup> Musa al-Gharbi, "Against Reactionary and Myopic Approaches to Higher Ed Reform," October 4, 2019, <https://musaalgharbi.com/2019/10/04/reactionary-myopic-approaches-higher-ed-reform/>.

<sup>173</sup> Hugo Mercier, *Not Born Yesterday: The Science of Who We Trust and What We Believe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

# Chapter 10

*Don't Go for Woke: Microaggressions  
are unscientific*

BY ROBERT MARANTO

The fact is that there is racial insensitivity. People have to be made aware of what other people feel like...what insults them, what is demeaning to them. It's important that people know...It makes a gigantic difference in the way a child is able to grow up and have a sense of self-esteem.

—Democratic Nominee Joe Biden, defending “racial sensitivity training” in the first 2020 presidential debate

## THE NEW WAR ON SCIENCE

Like most professors, I am not a supporter of Donald J. Trump; unlike many, I admitted when the Trump administration got something right. Regarding revisiting and at least temporarily defunding the diversity training forced on federal employees, the Trump administration likely had it right, and former Vice President (at this writing president) Biden, as well as one of my professional associations, the American Educational Research Association—joined by 15 other professional associations<sup>174</sup>—almost certainly had it wrong.

First, to be clear, in a free society we should not muzzle those advocating diversity training, as the AERA statement points out. Only through free speech, debate, and inquiry can we arrive at the truth over time, which should be the key goal of higher education in particular, as Princeton Professor Keith Whittington shows in *Speak Freely: Why Universities Must Defend Free Speech*,<sup>175</sup> a book required of Princeton first-year students. Here, AERA's argument is a distraction, since, so far as I know, no one advocates outlawing diversity training, while many, including in AERA, advocate silencing criticisms of diversity training and other programmatic offshoots of critical race theory and like structural racism paradigms.

In any event, permitting a behavior differs from subsidizing and requiring it. To make an analogy, in a free society we should generally allow medical treatments whose utility is highly dubious; we should *not* publicly fund such treatments. Regarding education and training, obviously, the First Amendment rightly protects the right to advocate for Intelligent Design and other offshoots of creation science. This does *not* mean we should teach Intelligent Design in public school, at least not in *science* classes, as opposed to religion or philosophy classes. Intelligent Design does not accord with the scientific knowledge developed through hypothesis testing within the modern field of biology, and therefore has at best a very marginal place in biology class. One might say the same for much of Marxist economics.<sup>176</sup>

The nature of truth and of science is a key area in which modernism differs from post-modernism, as Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay showed in Chapter 2, and in their recently published, must-read *Cynical Theories: How activist scholarship made everything about race, gender, and identity*. Science accepts truths based not on tradition or religion, but through questioning and rigorous empirical testing. Postmodern theories

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174 “AERA and the National Academy of Education Release Statement in Support of Anti-Racist Education,” American Educational Research Association, September 2020, <https://www.aera.net/Newsroom/AERA-Highlights-E-newsletter/AERA-Highlights-September-2020/AERA-and-the-National-Academy-of-Education-Release-Statement-in-Support-of-Anti-Racist-Education>.

175 Keith E. Whittington, *Speak Freely: Why Universities Must Defend Free Speech* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

176 Robert Maranto, “Should Faith-Based Economics Be Taught in Schools?,” *Foundation for Economic Education*, April 26, 2017, <https://fee.org/articles/should-faith-based-economics-be-taught-in-schools/>.

like critical race theory, queer theory, fat studies, and most other social justice approaches reject scientific processes, arguing instead that so-called objectivity reflects only who has the power to construct subjective reality. Postmodernism recognizes few if any objective truths. Power alone matters, and postmodern theories seek to redistribute power from white, “heteronormative” males to others with various intersectional identities.

For those of us in the academy—and we are still the majority—who believe in science, it is time to admit that many and likely most forms of diversity training are roughly equivalent to creation science. Yet they are far more popular in polite society, and often publicly funded. Indeed, in 2015 the Global Language Monitor deemed *microaggressions* the word of the year. Regarding microaggressions and many other concepts taught in diversity training, many educators and businesspeople are waging a war on science. As detailed in Musa al-Gharbi’s recent summary reprinted in the prior chapter, “Diversity Training: What is it good for?” with few exceptions, decades of research have not validated the positive claims for diversity training:

Beginning in the mid-90s, it became increasingly clear that, due to this lack of validation, many widely-used interventions could be ineffective or harmful. An empirical literature was built up measuring the effectiveness of diversity-related training programs. The picture that has emerged is not very flattering. In a nutshell, it seems that these training programs generally fail at their stated goals, and often produce unfortunate and unintended consequences...Generally speaking, they do not increase diversity in the workplace, they do not reduce harassment or discrimination, they do not lead to greater intergroup cooperation and cohesion—consequently, they do not increase productivity. More striking: many of those tasked with ensuring compliance with these training programs recognize them as ineffective...

As Peter Bregman declared in the *Harvard Business Review*, “Diversity training doesn’t extinguish prejudice.<sup>177</sup> It promotes it,” partly since “anyone who has ever been scolded is familiar with the tendency to rebel against the scolding.”

Likewise, as Harvard Sociology Professor Frank Dobbin detailed in a *Persuasion* podcast titled “Why Do Diversity Programs Fail?” taken as a whole, more than a thousand scientific studies indicate that most popular diversity training-related interventions “tend to do nothing or backfire” regarding increasing demographic diversity and improving intergroup relations, for predictable psychological reasons.<sup>178</sup> Yet organizations have put ever more resources into these programs, doubling down on failure. In contrast, as Dobbin notes and as I will detail in chapter 16, there is at least some evidence that mentoring programs and broader recruitment strategies can increase diversity and improve productivity.

So why do institutions do diversity training if it doesn’t succeed in its stated objectives, and may even make things worse? I see at least four reasons. The first is money and power, as any postmodernist might predict. Many bureaucrats and consultants make good

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<sup>177</sup> Peter Bregman, “Diversity Training Doesn’t Work,” *Harvard Business Review*, March 12, 2012, <https://hbr.org/2012/03/diversity-training-doesnt-work>.

<sup>178</sup> Yascha Mounk, “Why Do Diversity Programs Fail? (And How to Make Them Work),” *Persuasion*, August 3, 2020, <https://www.persuasion.community/p/why-do-diversity-programs-fail-and>.

livings from diversity training. Profit-seeking prophets promote their ventures as a way of warding off charges of racism and as a defense against lawsuits, no matter an organization's actual treatment of the disadvantaged.<sup>179</sup> *The New York Times* notes a major corporation, Levi Strauss, mandating "white fragility" training for overwhelmingly white executives who had just received large bonuses, in part for laying off mainly minority frontline workers.<sup>180</sup> Likewise, the Minneapolis Police Department mandated diversity training *before* one of its officers killed George Floyd. One might forgive his family for failing to see the irony.<sup>181</sup>

Of course, if the main purpose of diversity training is *symbolic*, to improve public relations rather than human relations, then there is in fact no irony in learning politically correct language while treating minorities (or majorities) badly. Higher education has been doing this for decades.<sup>182</sup> For the upper classes, diversity training is symbolic rather than real, teaching one to keep above *hoi polloi*; hence the obsession by the uber rich over politically correct language rather than humane and equal treatment of janitors (including fellow students) at places like Harvard and Yale, as Natalia Dashan writes in "The Real Problem at Yale Is Not Free Speech."<sup>183</sup>

Third, most agree that more diverse organizations with good intergroup relations and fewer civil rights lawsuits are desirable. Diversity training has been branded as a quick, relatively cheap way to achieve these competing goals, even if its actual record is quite poor. Finally, despite its demonstrated ineffectiveness, diversity training and similar woke activities have become standard "best practices" at major corporations, making them low-risk for managers to adopt—again see Dobbin.<sup>184</sup> In real-world bureaucracies, once something is enshrined as an industry standard, it becomes very difficult to dislodge, particularly when outside interests think it matters, or get paid for saying so.

## THE PARTICULAR CASE OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

Within the diversity industry, "microaggressions" are a growth sector, reflecting the concept's common-sense appeal. As both a social scientist who has studied bigotry and a person who has seen it, I think the microaggression concept might sometimes capture empirically slippery realities. I got it when U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor opined that "race matters because of the slights, the snickers, the silent judgments."<sup>185</sup> I understand and sympathize with Joe Biden's good intentions to improve intergroup relations through training in how to avoid microaggressions. Alas, good intentions do not make good policy.

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179 Stephanie Saul, "Campuses Cautiously Train Freshmen against Subtle Insults," *New York Times*, September 6, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/07/us/campuses-cautiously-train-freshmen-against-subtle-insults.html>.

180 Bergner, "'White Fragility' Is Everywhere."

181 "America in Black and Blue 2020," *PBS NewsHour*, June 16, 2020, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/america-in-black-and-blue-2020>.

182 Robert Maranto, "Separate and Unequal," *Inside Higher Ed*, December 19, 2016,

<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/12/19/why-even-our-most-progressive-institutions-have-lousy-race-relations-essay>.

183 Anthony Abraham Jack, *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019); and Natalia Dashan, "The Real Problem at Yale Is Not Free Speech," *Palladium*, August 5, 2019, <https://palladiummag.com/author/nataliadashan/>.

184 Yascha Mounk, "Why Do Diversity Programs Fail?"

185 Julianne Hing, "Justice Sotomayor's Beautiful Schuette Dissent: 'Race Matters,'" *ColorLines*, April 23, 2014, <https://www.colorlines.com/articles/justice-sotomayors-beautiful-schuette-dissent-race-matters>.

The use of microaggressions is unscientific, and thus not ready for real-world application. Currently, it likely does more harm than good.

To understand why, consider an example that the recently departed and completely decent and brilliant Emory University Psychology Professor Scott Lilienfeld gave us, that of one particular “major microaggression” committed by a great political leader. One of the late Senator John McCain’s finest moments came in his losing 2008 presidential campaign against Barack Obama, when at a rally in Minnesota, a McCain supporter called then Senator Obama an Arab, not an American. “No, ma’am,” McCain countered, grabbing the microphone and shaking his head sadly. “He’s a decent family man and citizen that I just happen to have disagreements with on fundamental issues, and that’s what this campaign is all about.”

McCain’s rebuttal of a bigoted remark combined truth, grace, and firmness. As former President Obama recalled a decade later, speaking movingly at McCain’s funeral:

We’ve seen footage [of] John pushing back against supporters who challenged my patriotism during the 2008 campaign. I was grateful, but I wasn’t surprised...I never saw John treat anyone differently because of their race or religion or gender. And I’m certain that in those moments that have been referred to during the campaign, he saw himself as defending America’s character, not just mine. For he considered it the imperative of every citizen who loves this country to treat all people fairly.

Yet in higher education, corporations, and government, McCain’s statement could have gotten him in big trouble. This is no exaggeration. Columbia Professor Derald Wing Sue, who popularized the term “microaggression,” condemned McCain’s *defense* of Obama as aggression *against* Obama. Sue interpreted McCain’s phrase “a decent family man” as a “major microaggression,” signaling that Obama can’t be a Muslim because Muslim men neglect their families.<sup>186</sup> In *The Rise of Victimhood Culture: Microaggressions, safe spaces, and the new culture wars*, sociologists Bradley Campbell and Jason Manning chronicle dozens of such cases in which people are disciplined for such actions. (Campbell wrote Chapter 3 of this report.)

So even rebuking a bigot gets you denounced as a bigot unless you use *perfect* language in doing so. The old civil rights movement sought to make people from different groups more comfortable interacting with each other, to build empathy and understanding. Postmodern approaches to intergroup dynamics, in contrast, seem designed to foster self-segregation to avoid the risk of sanctions from verbal missteps, which could then be reported to the bias response teams operating at hundreds of colleges and universities. Those teams, and the opaque diversity bureaucracies which employ them, have considerable ability to sanction miscreants, as R. Shep Melnick details in *The Transformation of Title IX*.<sup>187</sup>

Scientifically, as Professor Lilienfeld showed in “Microaggressions: Strong Claims, Inadequate Evidence,” microaggressions are currently “far too underdeveloped on the

186 Scott O. Lilienfeld, “Microaggressions?,” *Aeon*, June 27, 2017, <https://aeon.co/essays/why-a-moratorium-on-microaggressions-policies-is-needed>.

187 R. Shep Melnick, *The Transformation of Title IX: Regulating Gender Equality in Education* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2018).

conceptual and methodological fronts to warrant real-world application.”<sup>188</sup> They are so ill-defined that, as Lilienfeld writes, “either ignoring or attending to minority students in classrooms have been deemed to be microaggressions by some authors.” Moreover, inherent to the psychological concept of aggression is *intent* on the part of the aggressor; yet those committing microaggressions typically intend no offense. Microaggressions are “often or usually extremely ambiguous in nature, rendering it difficult or even impossible to ascertain whether they have actually occurred” for either the “victim” or “perpetrator,” as Professor Sue repeatedly acknowledges. So far, researchers have not studied whether microaggressions might cohere with empirically established indicators of aggression in perpetrators.

Second, microaggression theory assumes that minorities, women, LBGTQ+, and other “marginalized” peoples both recognize microaggressions (remember that these are micro actions) and suffer harm when they occur. So far, the limited empirical evidence fails to support either proposition. While some researchers have found correlations between perceptions of widespread microaggressions and reported mental well-being, rather than one causing the other, each might be caused by Negative Emotionality (NE), the tendency in some to “be critical and judgmental of both themselves and others” and thus notice ambiguous interactions and interpret them negatively, as evidence of aggression. The ambiguous nature of microaggressions practically assures such outcomes.

Relatedly, science requires objective measures, not just individual feelings. Microaggressions, in contrast, exist in the eye of the beholder. They are thus unscientific and ripe for abuse. Anyone who wants revenge on a boss for a poor evaluation can charge him with a microaggression, and others have no objective standard by which to judge the complaint. Judgments then come down to who has what power. This will undermine rather than promote equity, posing serious normative concerns. Avoiding microaggressions will be far harder for uneducated people (like my parents) who lack the time and verbal cunning to comply with ever-changing politically correct language, something even Ivy League students have trouble doing. Fighting bigotry by reporting microaggressions will punish a truck driver or janitor who works with, lives among, and loves others, while leaving untouched a bigoted lawyer, Hollywood mogul, politician, or business executive who talks right, but acts wrong.<sup>189</sup>

Fourth, when everything is prejudice, then nothing is: charges of bigotry lose credibility. Calling out John McCain and tens of millions of other white heteronormative males for their supposed microaggressions gives a free pass to Donald Trump, who reasonable people agree has real issues in this area. This likely explains why many voters dismissed charges of racist behavior on the part of Trump, behaviors documented by conservative political scientist John Pitney in *Un-American: The Fake Patriotism of Donald J. Trump*.<sup>190</sup>

Finally, obsessions with linguistic subtleties distract from behaviors that literally kill people. In the real world, some schools educate minorities and others miseducate them.<sup>191</sup> Similarly, as my collaborators and I show, some police departments protect the lives and

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188 Scott O. Lilienfeld, “Microaggressions: Strong Claims, Inadequate Evidence,” *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 12, no. 1 (January 2017): 138–69.

189 Dashan, “The Real Problem.”

190 John J. Pitney, Jr., *Un-American: The Fake Patriotism of Donald J. Trump* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020).

191 Abigail Thernstrom and Stephan Thernstrom, *No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning* (Simon & Schuster, 2004).

dignity of minorities; others do neither.<sup>192</sup> Some organizations segregate; others integrate. On this we have excellent scholarship like Charles Moskos and John Sibley Butler's *All That We Can Be: Black Leadership And Racial Integration The Army Way*. We also have insightful commentary like Baylor Professor George Yancey's *Patheos* essay, "Not white fragility—mutual responsibility," a version of which is printed here as Chapter 17.<sup>193</sup>

I discuss these paradigms and better ways to manage diversity in Chapter 16, in response to the question I often hear from the left: if not diversity training, then what? For now, I will end by pointing out the obvious: Better intergroup relations require both common sense and science; like diversity training generally, microaggression training hasn't got either. We can do better.

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192 Domonic Bearfield, Robert Maranto, and Patrick J. Wolf, "Making Violence Transparent: Ranking Police Departments in Major U.S. Cities to Make Black Lives Matter," *Public Integrity* 23, no. 2 (September 2020): 164–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10999922.2020.1810601>.

193 George Yancey, "The Dangerous World of Kendi's Antiracism," *Shattering Paradigms*, April 19, 2021, <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/shatteringparadigms/2021/04/the-dangerous-world-of-kendis-antiracism/>.

# Chapter 11

## *Prejudice Under the Microscope: The Implicit Association Test (Part 1)*

BY CRAIG FRISBY

A collective groan could be heard around the world as Stars Wars fans finished viewing the eagerly anticipated *Episode I: The Phantom Menace (TPM)*—released approximately 15 years after the much beloved original Star Wars trilogy changed movie-making forever.<sup>194</sup> Die-hard fans objected to numerous aspects of the franchise reboot—not the least of which was the manner in which ‘The Force’ was de-mystified for audiences.<sup>195</sup>

In the first movie (*Episode IV: A New Hope*), the Force was depicted as a mysterious entity that is the source of a Jedi Knight’s power. It was simply described in the movie as an energy field created by all living things, which surrounds and penetrates beings and binds the galaxy together. Makes sense? Not really. But it was sufficient for fueling the affection and creative imagination of millions worldwide.

In TPM, however, the living cells of certain special individuals were blessed with huge amounts of microscopic life forms called ‘midichlorians’ that enabled them to be ‘strong in the force’ (whatever that means). Disappointed fans felt that this ‘technobabble’ (as one critic characterized it) was one among many problems with the film that robbed the original trilogy of its sense of fun, mystery, and magic.

Obviously, the Stars Wars movies—despite the obscene amounts of money and popularity they have generated over the decades—are a work of pure fiction. There are no such entities as Jedi Knights, light sabers, habitable ice planets, Wookies, or Sith Lords. However, there is one aspect of the storytelling that has relevance for today—the strong desire of psychologists to reduce relatively complex, mysterious, and enduring human psychological concepts down to something that can be oversimplified, put into a test tube, and studied. The technical term for this tendency of psychological science is ‘reductionism,’ which has been roundly criticized.<sup>196</sup>

To illustrate, psychologists and mental health counselors who believe in microaggressions theory assure receptive audiences that brief verbalizations such as ‘all lives matter,’ ‘you sound so articulate,’ or ‘where are you from?’<sup>197</sup> reflect a form of racialized aggression (regardless of intent) against others, which inflicts ‘small trauma’ as well as ‘assaults on the mental and physical health of persons of color.’<sup>198</sup>

Neuropsychologists affirm that passionate love can be understood, in part, as reflecting activation of the middle insula, the anterior cingulate cortex, the putamen, the retrosplenial cortex, the ventral tegmental area, and the right caudate of the human brain—along with deactivation of the amygdala.<sup>199</sup> In addition, who knew that being perceived as at-

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194 Al Horner, “The Phantom Menace at 20: Where Did It All Go Wrong for George Lucas’s Star Wars Prequel?,” *Independent*, May 19, 2019,

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/features/star-wars-phantom-menace-20-year-anniversary-george-lucas-a8914821.html>.

195 Charlie Jane Anders, “The *Real* Problem with Midichlorians,” *Gizmodo*, February 26, 2010,

<https://gizmodo.com/the-real-problem-with-midichlorians-5478314>.

196 Kendra Cherry, “How Does Reductionism Work in Psychology?” *Verywell Mind*, July 16, 2020,

<https://www.verywellmind.com/reductionism-definition-and-examples-4583891>; and Sally Satel and Scott O. Lilienfeld, *Brainwashed: The Seductive Appeal of Mindless Neuroscience* (New York: Basic Books, 2013).

197 Derald Wing Sue and Lisa Beth Spanierman, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2020).

198 Michele Barnwell, “Why It’s So Important to Understand and Confront Microaggressions,” *Good Housekeeping*, August 4, 2020,

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/a33404079/what-are-microaggressions/>.

199 Lisa M. Diamond and Janna A. Dickenson, “The Neuroimaging of Love and Desire: Review and Future Directions,” *Clinical Neuropsychiatry* 9, no. 1 (2012): 39–46, [https://psych.utah.edu/\\_resources/documents/people/diamond/diamond-neuroimaging-of-love-desire.pdf](https://psych.utah.edu/_resources/documents/people/diamond/diamond-neuroimaging-of-love-desire.pdf).

tractive boils down to having a face that is 1.5 times longer than it is wide; equal distances between the forehead hairline to the spot between the eyes, the spot between the eyes to the bottom of the nose, and the bottom of the nose to the bottom of the chin; and an ear length that matches the length of the nose?<sup>200</sup>

All human societies, to varying degrees, must grapple with issues related to racial discrimination and racial prejudice—whether such problems are indeed real or are merely *perceived* to be real. Within America, racial tensions between subpopulations lie at the root of vexing problems across a wide variety of areas as diverse as housing, employment, education, human health, state/national elections, and crime.<sup>201</sup>

The public's reaction to popular books such as Robin DiAngelo's *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* has uncovered a sharp divide between those who insist that whites are irredeemably racist, are woefully unaware of their white privilege, and are ultimately at fault for most of the problems persons of color face and those who fundamentally reject such ideas.<sup>202</sup> The central thesis of DiAngelo's book is that whites' conscious denial of their racism and white privilege is symptomatic of their *white fragility*—which in and of itself is symptomatic of their unconscious racism.

Wouldn't it indeed be groundbreaking if a method were discovered whereby the deep-seated evil of racism (however defined) could be objectively identified and accurately measured within persons—much like a midichlorian count in the Star Wars movies could measure how strong a person is with the Force?<sup>203</sup> What if this method were able to bypass an individual's attempts to consciously manipulate or misrepresent their responses—but instead could mine attitudes deeply lodged in the unconscious? More importantly, what if poor scores from this method could allow important stakeholders to predict future prejudicial and discriminatory actions of persons toward others on the basis of race? Some believe that they have found this in the research surrounding the Implicit Association Test (hereafter abbreviated as the IAT).<sup>204</sup>

Professors Anthony G. Greenwald, Debbie E. McGhee, and Jordan L.K. Schwartz of the University of Washington introduced the IAT to the world in a 1998 article published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (JPSP)*, "Measuring Individual Differences in Implicit Cognition: The Implicit Association Test." To date, the article has achieved the status of being among the top five most cited articles from the JPSP, and since its publication has generated hundreds of peer-reviewed journal articles.

In the underlying science supporting the IAT, psychologists theorize that the brain contains a vast interconnected web of knowledge called a 'semantic network.' Each concept

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200 Mounir Bashour, "An Objective System for Measuring Facial Attractiveness," *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery* 118, no. 3 (September 2006): 757–74, <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.prs.0000207382.60636.1c>; and "The Beauty Equation," Oprah.com, <https://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/measuring-facial-perfection-the-golden-ratio>.

201 Jared Taylor, *Paved with Good Intentions: The Failure of Race Relations in Contemporary America* (Long Beach: New Century Books, 2014).

202 DiAngelo, *White Fragility*; and Coleman Hughes, "Black Fragility? Bestseller Prescription for Race Relations Casts Whites as Sinners and Blacks as Children," *Jewish World Review*, December 1, 2020, <http://www.jewishworldreview.com/1220/hughes120120.php3>.

203 Weston DeBoer, "Midichlorian Count List," January 10, 2007, <http://www.westondeboer.com/midichlorian-count-list/>.

204 Anthony G. Greenwald, Debbie E. McGhee, and Jordan L. K. Schwartz, "Measuring Individual Differences in Implicit Cognition: The Implicit Association Test," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74, no. 6 (1998): 1464–80, [https://faculty.washington.edu/agg/pdf/Gwald\\_McGh\\_Schw\\_JPSP\\_1998.OCR.pdf](https://faculty.washington.edu/agg/pdf/Gwald_McGh_Schw_JPSP_1998.OCR.pdf).

in this network is represented as a 'node,' which is a collection of brain cells that code and store a particular concept. According to the theory, each concept shares connections with other concepts in the network that are related or similar in some way. Any perceived stimuli automatically and involuntarily trigger within the brain associated biases, preferences, and emotions.

The measurement tools used in IAT research fit conceptually within the broader discipline of mental chronometry—which is manifested today in the use of computer technology to measure an individual's responses, or reaction times (abbreviated RT) to a visual or auditory stimulus that calls for a particular response, choice, or decision. The use of computers allows reaction/response times to be measured in precise milliseconds (thousandths of a second). Hence, although a particular subject involved in an RT experiment may consciously feel that his reaction/response time was the same in one computerized simulation compared to another, more precise chronometric measurement may actually reveal significant differences in average reaction/response times that lie *beyond the subject's conscious awareness* across the two simulations.

RT methodology seeks to identify which perceived concepts are either strongly or weakly related to other perceived concepts. RT methodology is used in market research, for example, to discover what consumers automatically and subconsciously associate with brand names. To illustrate, when a consumer is shown a picture of the Apple computer brand logo, it is theorized to trigger what is known as 'spreading activation,' or the automatic and involuntary activation of other concepts in the brain's semantic network.<sup>205</sup> If the Apple logo is strongly associated with the words/phrases 'Steve Jobs,' 'computer,' 'fruit,' or 'cool,' then persons will react faster to concepts perceived to be closely related to the Apple logo than concepts perceived to be unrelated.

The main attraction of computerized RT methodology is that it frees the researcher from relying on paper-and-pencil self-report measures, as subjects may be unwilling to report their true personal thoughts or feelings toward a particular subject matter, or may consciously distort/misrepresent their true responses. The low correlations that research studies have found between 'implicit' and 'explicit' measures of the same subject matter appear to reinforce the idea that certain biases lie beyond a person's conscious awareness.<sup>206</sup>

## HOW THE RACE IAT WORKS

In Greenwald et al.'s original 1998 experiment, subjects are instructed to sort word stimuli presented on the computer screen into two categories (i.e., pleasant vs. unpleasant), then indicate their responses by pressing a key with their left hand on the left side of the keyboard (to signal one category), or their right hand on the right side of the keyboard (to signal the other category). In early studies, using the IAT to explore racial issues involved the use of black- and white-sounding names as computer stimuli. Here, the subject participates in the same exercise using the same computer keys, but must sort pleasant and unpleasant words that are neutral and not associated with race (e.g., 'gift,' 'grief,' 'poison,'

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205 Gemma Calvert, "Everything You Need to Know about Implicit Reaction Time (IRTs)," September 30, 2015, <http://gemmacalvert.com/everything-you-need-to-know-about-implicit-reaction-time/>.

206 Gerald Steiner, Bernhard Geissler, Günther Schreder, and Lukas Zenk, "Living Sustainability, or Merely Pretending? From Explicit Self-Report Measures to Implicit Cognition," *Sustainability Science* 13, no. 4 (April 2018): 1001-15, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-018-0561-6>.

'lucky'). The same key must be pressed for a black-sounding name and an unpleasant word, and the other key must be pressed for a white-sounding name and a pleasant word. For subsequent trials, the racial and nonracial word stimuli are then presented in an intermingled fashion, and the subject presses either the left or right keyboard key as quickly as possible after each stimulus appears on the computer screen.

Next, the instructions to the subject are reversed for the random stimuli presentation, in that one key must be pressed to indicate a black-sounding name and a pleasant word, and the other key must be pressed to indicate a white-sounding name and an unpleasant word. If a subject takes longer sorting black-sounding names using the computer key associated with a "pleasant" word than he does sorting white-sounding names using the computer key associated with a "pleasant" word, the IAT deems the subject to have "implicit bias." The IAT ranks the subject's degree of implicit bias based on the differences in milliseconds with which he accomplishes the different sorting tasks. At the conclusion of the test, each subject finds out whether he has a strong, moderate, or weak preference for blacks or for whites. More recent applications of the race IAT use as stimuli actual pictures of faces representing 'European' and 'African' ancestry.

## THE RACE IAT CATCHES FIRE

This initial research resulted in the founding in 1998 of Project Implicit, which is described by the Atlas of Public Management as a non-profit organization of implicit social cognition researchers whose goal is to 'educate the public about hidden biases and to provide a virtual laboratory for collecting data on the internet.'<sup>207</sup> In addition, Project Implicit provides 'consulting, education, and training services on implicit bias, diversity and inclusion, leadership, the application of science to practice, and innovation.' To date, as many as 17 million persons have taken the race IAT (along with additional IAT protocols that focus on other social groups) on Harvard University's Project Implicit website.<sup>208</sup>

The IAT is a veritable godsend for the racism industry in America and abroad, as it appears to affirm the useful narrative that explicit racism—rather than being rendered ineffective by antidiscrimination laws and modern social pressures—is nevertheless alive and well as manifested in 'hidden racism,' 'aversive racism,' 'reasonable racism,' 'unconscious bias,' 'benevolent discrimination,' 'color-blind racism,' 'benign bigotry,' 'symbolic racism,' 'silent racism,' and the like.<sup>209</sup> According to one writer, getting to know one's implicit biases (via taking the race IAT) is 'step one' of becoming an 'anti-racist ally' to the black community, as it 'unravels the workings of racist thinking' and allows race IAT users to 'confront their

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207 "Preliminary Information," Project Implicit, accessed January 13, 2021, <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>.

208 "Preliminary Information," Project Implicit.

209 Dave Lefkowitz and A. J. Nino Amato, *Today's Hidden Racism: A Polite Apartheid* (Los Angeles: Foundation to End Polite Apartheid, 2001); "Understanding the Psychology Behind Aversive Racism," *PsychologyGenie*, <https://psychogenie.com/understanding-psychology-behind-aversive-racism/>; Jody David Armour, *Negrophobia and Reasonable Racism: The Hidden Costs of Being Black in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); Pamela Fuller, Mark Murphy, and Anne Chow, *The Leader's Guide to Unconscious Bias: How to Reframe Bias, Cultivate Connection, and Create High-Performing Teams* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2020); Laurence Romani, Lotte Holck, and Annette Risberg, "Benevolent Discrimination: Explaining How Human Resources Professionals Can Be Blind to the Harm of Diversity Initiatives," *Organization* 26, no. 3 (May 2019): 371–90, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508418812585>; Meghan Burke, *Colorblind Racism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019); Kristin J. Anderson, *Benign Bigotry: The Psychology of Subtle Prejudice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); David O. Sears and P. J. Henry, "Race and Politics: The Theory of Symbolic Racism," in *Handbook of Political Psychology*, ed. Junichi Kawada and Yoshinobu Araki (Tokyo: Hokuju Publishers, 2003); and Trepagnier, *Silent Racism*.

own racist thoughts and beliefs'.<sup>210</sup>

Apparently validating for the social importance of the race IAT, the Project Implicit website reports that three implicit bias researchers (Mahzarin Banaji, Tony Greenwald, and Brian Nosek) were given the prestigious Golden Goose Award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science during a ceremony at the Library of Congress in recognition of their work "as a major breakthrough with exceptional social impact."<sup>211</sup>

At this juncture, a distinction needs to be made between the philosophical assumptions of America's 'racism industry' and the long-established principles of patient, careful, and dispassionate science. In this latter world, before any instrument (that purports to be a good measure of a psychological construct) is ready for real-world use, it must first provide solid and consistent empirical evidence that answers questions in four basic categories:

1. Does the instrument actually measure what it purports to measure? Or, are there plausible competing explanations as to what is being measured? How much of whatever is being measured is useless 'noise'?
2. Whatever the instrument purports to measure, does it do so reliably? That is, can whatever is measured provide stable scores over time?
3. Is whatever is being measured related in meaningful ways to other behaviors measured in laboratory settings?
4. Is whatever is being measured related in meaningful ways to other behaviors deemed to be significant and important in real-world contexts?

In the next chapter, I will examine the evidence for the race IAT under the first three categories of questions. Finally, in Chapter 13, I will discuss evidence for the fourth question in considerable detail, concluding with an overall assessment of the utility of the race IAT in light of its numerous claims.

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210 Kells McPhillips, "Harvard's 'Project Implicit' Test Reveals Your Unconscious Bias in Just 10 Minutes," *Well+Good*, June 29, 2020, <https://www.wellandgood.com/am-i-rationally-biased/>.

211 Liz Redford, "Mapping County-Level Geographical Variation in Implicit Racial Attitudes," Project Implicit, November 4, 2018, <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/blog.html>.

# Chapter 12

## *Prejudice Under the Microscope: The Implicit Association Test (Part II)*

BY CRAIG FRISBY

In Part I, the introduction in 1998 of the race Implicit Association Test (IAT)—developed originally by Professor Anthony G. Greenwald and his colleagues at the University of Washington—was described.<sup>212</sup> Since then, the IAT has generated a number of follow-up studies and widespread commentary on its role in understanding persons' social attitudes toward race—and whether the test has important practical applications for use in a wide variety of environments. This has culminated in the IAT's extensive promotion through Harvard's Project Implicit website.<sup>213</sup>

In Part I, an argument was made that a systematic evaluation of the race IAT and its claims must be organized under four categories of important questions. In Part II which follows, the first three of these questions are discussed.

## **CATEGORY #1: WHAT DOES THE RACE IAT MEASURE?**

In the conclusion of their original article, Greenwald et al. were careful to avoid use of the word 'unconscious' in describing what the race IAT measures.<sup>214</sup> Instead, they describe the test as 'resist[ing] self-presentational forces that can mask personally or socially undesirable evaluative associations.' Many race IAT descriptions use the more bland, safe, and neutral language of 'preference for whites' (rather than 'racism') to reflect 'politically incorrect' results.

Ironically, activist supporters of the IAT—as well as its fiercest critics—are prone to use more inflammatory language to describe what the test presumably measures. For example, the race IAT is described as 'measuring how implicitly biased people are' and as revealing the 'unconscious levels' and/or 'unconscious roots' of racial prejudice.<sup>215</sup> Even critics of the race IAT talk about it as if it is a 'measure of racism.'<sup>216</sup>

IAT supporters are often surprised about the extent to which persons who hold 'egalitarian attitudes,' or those who are members of 'minority/victim' groups, achieve IAT results that are radically different than expected. That is, some black subjects display stronger preferences for whites, and gay subjects may express stronger "gay = bad" associations. This is accompanied by a combination of shock, shame, and embarrassment by those who are genuinely surprised by these findings.<sup>217</sup> In fact, before potential test-takers proceed further into the Project Implicit website, they are instructed to agree to a mini-disclaimer which states: 'I am aware of the possibility of encountering interpretations of my IAT test performance with which I may not agree.'<sup>218</sup>

Part of the popularity of IAT theory is that it seems to reinforce repeated assertions by an-

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212 Craig Frisby, "Prejudice Under the Microscope: The Implicit Association Test (Part I)," *Minding the Campus*, December 30, 2020,

<https://www.mindingthecampus.org/2020/12/30/prejudice-under-the-microscope-the-implicit-association-test-part-i/>.

213 Project Implicit, <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>.

214 Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz, "Measuring Individual Differences."

215 Singal, "Psychology's Favorite Tool"; and Joel Schwarz, "Roots of Unconscious Prejudice Affect 90 to 95 Percent of People, Psychologists Demonstrate at Press Conference," University of Washington, September 29, 1998, <https://www.washington.edu/news/1998/09/29/roots-of-unconscious-prejudice-affect-90-to-95-percent-of-people-psychologists-demonstrate-at-press-conference/>.

216 "Can We Measure Racism? Yes We Can," *Replicability-Index*, June 11, 2020, <https://replicationindex.com/2020/06/11/can-we-measure-racism-yes-we-can/>.

217 Shankar Vedantam, "See No Bias," *Washington Post*, January 23, 2005,

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/magazine/2005/01/23/see-no-bias/a548dee4-4047-4397-a253-f7f-780fae575/>.

218 "Preliminary Information," Project Implicit.

ti-racism activists that racism/prejudice is an omnipresent force that lies buried within the subconscious thinking of whites.<sup>219</sup> One writer defines implicit bias as occurring whenever someone consciously rejects stereotypes and supports anti-discrimination efforts, but also holds negative associations in his mind unconsciously.<sup>220</sup> According to this narrative, therefore, it is the task of those with more highly developed sensitivities about racial matters to educate the masses about the racial prejudice that lies beyond their conscious awareness.

The notion that the race IAT functions as a 'portal into the unconscious' has been challenged on both philosophical and empirical grounds. According to Doyle (2018):

Its invisibility is what makes it impossible to rebut. When someone accuses you of something that you yourself cannot see, in the eyes of your accuser, you cannot refute it. If I accused you of wearing a shirt that was stained by invisible jam, how could you tell me it wasn't so? Its invisibility makes it so that you cannot see it, and implicit in my accusation is the assertion that I, for whatever reason, can see it. So it goes with racism and white privilege. When someone would accuse me of either, I would deny it. My opponent would then note that racists with white privilege do not believe they have it, and that not believing you have white privilege is a fundamental part of having white privilege. Said privilege also blinds one to their own racism. The tautological reasoning is airtight.<sup>221</sup>

It may indeed surprise many readers that the phrase 'unconscious racism' is not clearly understood—even by those who believe that they know what this phrase means. Fortunately, researchers Blanton and Jaccard offer alternative interpretations as to what the phrase 'unconscious racism' could possibly mean.<sup>222</sup> One alternative interpretation observes that human beings often lack awareness of the effects that their own actions have on other people. Thus, a 13-year-old boy who asks about the age of a middle-aged woman may not possess the social awareness (that comes from maturity) which would inform him that such a question may be perceived as offensive to women of a certain age. This reflects the central idea behind microaggressions theory, which holds that whites' seemingly innocuous statements may be interpreted as hurtful to another person belonging to a different racial/ethnic group.<sup>223</sup> Here, the issue is *not* that the hapless white person is consciously unaware of his presumed racism. Instead, the issue is that both actors have *different socialization histories and value systems*. The white actor possesses a value system (shaped by previous experiences) in which certain statements are genuinely considered to be harmless. In contrast, the non-white actor may possess a different value system (again, shaped by previous experiences) in which the same statement is considered hurtful. This is a simple matter of one party being *ignorant* of the other party's value system—and is not necessarily reflective of hidden racial animus that lies beyond a person's conscious awareness.

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219 Benson and Fiarman, *Unconscious Bias*.

220 Hayley Roberts, "Implicit Bias and Social Justice," Open Society Foundations, December 17, 2011, <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/implicit-bias-and-social-justice>.

221 Doyle, "Why 'Racist.'"

222 John H. Evans and Michael S. Evans, "Religion and Science: Beyond the Epistemological Conflict Narrative," *Annual Review of Sociology* 34 (August 2008): 87–105, <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.soc.34.040507.134702>.

223 Sue and Spanierman, *Microaggressions*.

Second, individuals may be consciously unaware of the multitude of factors that influence their perceptions/attitudes on racial matters. These factors may involve events that were recently experienced, or the accumulation of events that have been regularly experienced over time. To illustrate, a person with vocational interests in the culinary field who has been regularly exposed to working in high-end restaurants—dominated by men as head cooks—would hold different perceptions than a person whose background with skilled cooking exclusively involved women as role models. Here, a person's perceptions about gender and culinary skill are not due to some deep-seated gender bias for or against women in general.

Instead, these perceptions can be simply attributed to idiosyncratic experiential histories about which the person may not be consciously aware.

Supporters of the 'unconscious racism' thesis essentially argue that negative associations held by whites about non-whites, as revealed by the race IAT: (a) are not consciously accessible to whites in non-IAT experimental conditions, (b) operate in the real world outside of a person's individual awareness, and (c) take the form of clear racial discrimination, behavior which can be clearly documented as having negative or harmful effects on non-white individuals. Blanton and Jaccard essentially argue that no social-psychological research (up to the date of their article's publication) comes close to supporting any of these assertions.

While Blanton and Jaccard offer alternative explanations as to the meaning of 'unconscious,' other researchers challenge the central thesis that people are indeed unconscious of their racial perceptions. On this front, Adam Hahn and his colleagues have empirically challenged race IAT interpretations through their research.<sup>224</sup> In a series of laboratory studies, they directly asked participants to predict their results on IAT measures featuring five different social groups (Blacks, Latinos, Asians, Celebrities, and Children). They found that participants were 'surprisingly accurate' in their conscious predictions, suggesting that the predictions reflected unique and *conscious* insight into their own implicit responses—beyond intuitions about how people in general may respond. They interpreted their findings as casting doubt on the belief that IAT results reflect unconscious attitudes.

Other researchers concede that the race IAT measures 'something,' but that 'something' is not racism. A provocative paper by Arkes and Tetlock has as part of its title: "Would Jesse Jackson 'Fail' the Implicit Association Test?"<sup>225</sup> This is because Reverend Jackson has made public statements that display pro-white and anti-black sentiments, yet his life's work arguably makes him the last person to be charged with racial prejudice against blacks.

In their paper, Arkes and Tetlock suggest three alternative explanations for what the race IAT could measure. These are: (1) the race IAT measures *easy familiarity with cultural/racial stereotypes* to which subjects have been exposed, but with which they do not agree. They cite as an example Greenwald et al.'s original study, which found that Korean and Japanese participants held negative views of the other group, but that these results were

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224 Adam Hahn, Charles M. Judd, Holen K. Hirsh, and Irene V. Blair, "Awareness of Implicit Attitudes," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 143, no. 3 (June 2014): 1369–92, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035028>.

225 Hal R. Arkes and Philip E. Tetlock, "Attributions of Implicit Prejudice, or 'Would Jesse Jackson Fail the Implicit Association Test?'" *Psychological Inquiry* 15, no. 4 (2004): 257–78, <http://faculty.washington.edu/agg/IATmaterials/PDFs/AT.psychinquiry.2004.pdf>.

*stronger* for subjects who were more steeped in Asian culture (thereby being more aware of each group's mutual stereotypes of one other); (2) since large multiethnic and multi-racial societies display long-standing, empirically validated, and easily observable group differences in a variety of important social outcomes (e.g., average crime rates, sexual mores and behaviors, cognitive test scores, levels of educational attainment and levels of economic accomplishments), a subject's simple awareness of these average differences when displayed on the race IAT (and absent personally hostile emotions or the personal propensity to apply rigid stereotypes) *cannot be labeled as 'prejudiced' in the commonly accepted understanding of this term*; and (3) race IAT results have been experimentally shown to differ as a function of the *different contexts* in which subjects perceive persons of different races and ethnicities. That is to say, when subjects are exposed to depictions of minorities in contexts that promote negative characteristics (as opposed to depictions of minorities in contexts that promote positive characteristics), reductions in reaction time (RT) responses that would support a 'prejudice against minorities' interpretation occurred. These findings suggest that race IAT results reflect *susceptibility to situational/contextual variations* rather than stable personal dispositions. For other alternative scientific interpretations as to what race IAT experiments measure, readers are encouraged to consult a review by Althea Nagai.<sup>226</sup>

## **CATEGORY #2: DOES THE RACE IAT MEASURE SOMETHING RELIABLY?**

Any psychological measurement must demonstrate minimum standards of reliability if the construct measured is to be taken seriously in theory-building and theory-testing. One type of reliability is the rank-ordering stability of individuals when scores are assessed on multiple occasions over time. When a group of subjects is tested in RT research, persons whose response times are first, second, third, to last in speed should generally retain this rank ordering upon multiple administrations with the same instrument over time. A retesting that yields an identical rank ordering in subjects' responses from the first test administration to the second test administration will yield a stability coefficient of +1.0. When a second test administration yields a rank ordering that is a perfectly inverted mirror image of the ranking from the first test administration (i.e., the fastest person in Time 1 is the slowest person at Time 2, the second fastest person in Time 1 is the second slowest person in Time 2, etc.), the stability coefficient will be -1.0. A coefficient of 0.0 means that there is no relationship in the rank ordering of subjects between a pair of test administrations under consideration. The closer a stability coefficient is to +1.0, the higher the stability in an instruments' scores over time.

Psychological tests are generally considered to have good reliability for use in applied settings if studies yield test-retest stability coefficients of at least +0.7, and preferably over +0.8.<sup>227</sup> Singal reviewed the reliability/precision estimates calculated from available race IAT studies and was immediately struck by how infrequently studies have been conducted on the reliability of these tests, given what is typically reported for other

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226 Althea Nagai, "The Implicit Association Test: Flawed Science Tricks Americans into Believing They Are Unconscious Racists," Heritage Foundation, December 12, 2017, <https://www.heritage.org/science-policy/report/the-implicit-association-test-flawed-science-tricks-americans-believing-they>.

227 Hank Berrien, "Flawed Psychological Test Used Everywhere to Ignite Claims of 'Implicit Bias,'" *Daily Wire*, December 4, 2017, <https://www.dailywire.com/news/flawed-psychological-test-used-everywhere-ignite-hank-berrien>.

organizational, clinical, and educational assessment tools.<sup>228</sup> From the few studies that were published, Singal found that reliability coefficients ranged from a high of +.65 to a low of +.39.<sup>229</sup> A more recent 2014 study by Yoav Bar-Anan and Brian Nosek found that the race IAT yielded test-retest stability coefficients of +.44.<sup>230</sup> Singal reports that when all IAT studies (including non-race related IAT studies) are aggregated, test-retest reliabilities averaged at around +.55—which is objectively rated by psychometricians as poor.<sup>231</sup>

Different writers have interesting ways of translating the meaning of the race IAT's poor reliability into lay language that anyone can easily understand. One writer asserts that if one takes the race IAT today, and then takes it again tomorrow—or even in just a few hours—there's a solid chance of getting a different result.<sup>232</sup> One published critic of the race IAT is quoted as saying: "The [race] IAT isn't even predicting the IAT two weeks later . . . How can a test predict behavior if it can't even predict itself?"<sup>233</sup> Another writer opines that since RT methodology measures responses at the precise level of milliseconds (thousandths of a second), then as little as a tenth of a second average difference in RT scores from one administration to another could very well determine the difference between being labeled 'racist' and 'not racist'—and that these interpretational errors are multiplied as an instrument's scores are less reliable.<sup>234</sup> One critic elaborates:

When I first took the implicit association test a few years ago, I was happy with my results . . . According to this test, I was a person free of racism, even at the subconscious level. I took the IAT again a few days later. This time, I wasn't so happy with my results . . . According to this, I was a little racist at the subconscious level—against black people. Then I took the test again later on. This time, my results genuinely surprised me: It found once again that I had a slight automatic preference—only now it was in favor of black people. I was racist, but against white people, according to the test . . . Was this test even worth taking seriously, or was it b\*\*\*\*\*t? I felt like I had gotten no real answers about my bias from this test.<sup>235</sup>

### CATEGORY #3: IS THE RACE IAT EFFECTIVE IN PREDICTING NOXIOUS

228 Singal, "Psychology's Favorite Tool."

229 Brian A. Nosek, Anthony G. Greenwald, and Mahzarin R. Banaji, "Understanding and Using the Implicit Association Test: II. Method Variables and Construct Validity," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 31, no. 2 (February 2005): 166–80.

230 Yoav Bar-Anan and Brian A. Nosek, "A Comparative Investigation of Seven Indirect Attitude Measures," *Behavioral Research Methods* 46, no. 3 (September 2014): 668–88, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24234338/>.

231 "Test-Retest Reliability / Repeatability," Statistics How To, accessed January 13, 2021, <https://www.statisticshowto.com/test-retest-reliability/>.

232 Singal, "Psychology's Favorite Tool."

233 Tom Bartlett, "Can We Really Measure Implicit Bias? Maybe Not," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 5, 2017, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/can-we-really-measure-implicit-bias-maybe-not/>.

234 Nagai, "Implicit Association Test."

235 German Lopez, "For Years, This Popular Test Measured Anyone's Racial Bias. But It Might Not Work after All," *Vox*, March 7, 2017, <https://www.vox.com/identities/2017/3/7/14637626/implicit-association-test-racism>.

## BEHAVIORS IN LABORATORY SETTINGS?

At its simplest level, test validity refers to the degree to which evidence supports the inferences that are made from test scores for their intended purposes.<sup>236</sup> The material in response to Category #2 casts serious doubt on the race IAT's ability to measure whatever it purports to measure in a reliable and stable manner. For the sake of argument, even if it can be assumed that the race IAT does measure something reliably, this is *not sufficient* for establishing the *validity* of scores for particular purposes. As one IAT critique notes, a person's height can be measured reliably, but it is not a valid measure of happiness.<sup>237</sup>

In the introduction to Banaji and Greenwald's 2013 book *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People*, the authors claim that the race IAT is now established as signaling discriminatory behavior.<sup>238</sup> When providing evidence in support of such statements, researchers correlate race IAT results with any number of behavioral outcomes observed in laboratory settings. Laboratory settings are indispensable for experimental research, in that they permit investigators to carefully control the environmental conditions under which the research is carried out, as well as carefully select the desired characteristics of research subjects. Laboratory settings allow researchers to hold variables constant when comparing groups, experimentally manipulate other variables presumed to influence outcomes, and use precise specifications to operationalize how psychological constructs are to be observed and measured. When research results are interpreted under these conditions, researchers are on stronger footing for ruling out alternative explanations for results.

A complete listing of the behavioral outcomes observed in race IAT laboratory settings is well beyond the scope of this relatively brief essay. Nevertheless, select examples include: videotaping subjects being interviewed by white and black interviewers; observing participants' facial expressions, length of speech, laughing at jokes, measured proximity to the interviewer; and/or documenting interviewer impressions of interviewee friendliness and perceived comfort. For some studies, researchers analyze how subjects make decisions after interviewing equally qualified white and black applicants in a simulated hiring situation. In others, researchers study physicians' optimal treatment recommendations for black and white patients who present with the same symptoms. Some studies operationalize racial preferences through studying voting preferences for a black and white candidate in a presidential election.

Validity, in its most basic terms, is understood by looking at the correlation between scores on a predictor variable (in this case, race IAT scores) and a criterion variable (scores from behaviors measured in a laboratory setting). In statistical terms, researchers calculate a correlation coefficient, square it, then multiply this value by 100. The resulting value indicates the percentage of the variation in one variable that is explained by variation in the other variable. Thus, two variables that are correlated at .7 share 49 percent variance ( $.7^2 = .49$ ;  $.49 \times 100 = 49$  percent). Variables correlated at 0.0 do not share variance, and variables perfectly correlated at +1.0 or -1.0 share all of their variance with each other.

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236 American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education, *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association, 2014).

237 "The Implicit Association Test: A Measure in Search of a Construct," *Replicability-Index*, May 30, 2019, <https://replicationindex.com/2019/05/30/iat-pops/>.

238 Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald, *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People* (New York: Delacorte Press, 2013).

In a 2009 meta-analysis of 122 research papers involving 184 independent samples and 14,900 subjects, Greenwald and his colleagues found that studies involving race IAT scores accounted for only 5.5 percent of the variation in racially discriminatory behavior in laboratory settings.<sup>239</sup> In Singal's review of a 2013 meta-analysis of IAT criterion studies published by Oswald and his colleagues, he argued that Greenwald's race IAT/lab behavior correlations were *overestimated* from the inclusion of studies that did not actually measure racially discriminatory behavior, as well as the inappropriate exclusion of studies in which subjects displayed *better* behaviors toward out-groups compared to in-groups.<sup>240</sup> Singal also points to a 2015 commentary by Greenwald and his colleagues where the authors essentially concede (on p. 557) that the psychometric shortcomings of the race IAT "render them problematic to use to classify persons as likely to engage in discrimination"—*an admission that undermines the fundamental reason why countless persons, university instructors, organizations, and companies feel that the race IAT is useful*.<sup>241</sup> However, Greenwald and his colleagues counter this criticism with the argument that small effect sizes can have large 'societal effects.' In response, Singal nevertheless concludes:

The point is that key experts involved in IAT research no longer claim that the IAT can be used to predict individual behavior. In this sense, the IAT has simply failed to deliver on a promise it has been making since its inception—that it can reveal otherwise hidden propensities to commit acts of racial bias. There's no evidence it can.

In Part III, race IAT evidence under the fourth category of questions is discussed, concluding with an overall evaluation of its usefulness in addressing contemporary problems.

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239 Anthony G. Greenwald, T. Andrew Poehlman, Eric Luis Uhlmann, and Mahzarin R. Banaji, "Understanding and Using the Implicit Association Test: III. Meta-Analysis of Predictive Validity," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97, no. 1 (2009): 17–41, <http://faculty.washington.edu/agg/pdf/GPU&B.meta-analysis.JPSP.2009.pdf>.

240 Frederick L. Oswald, Gregory Mitchell, Hart Blanton, James Jaccard, and Philip E. Tetlock, "Predicting Ethnic and Racial Discrimination: A Meta-Analysis of IAT Criterion Studies," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 105, no. 2 (2013), 171–92, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032734>.

241 Anthony G. Greenwald, Mahzarin R. Banaji, and Brian A. Nosek, "Statistically Small Effects of the Implicit Association Test Can Have Societally Large Effects," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 108, no. 4 (2015): 553–61, <http://faculty.washington.edu/agg/pdf/Greenwald,Banaji%26Nosek.JPSP.2015.pdf>.

# Chapter 13

## *Prejudice Under the Microscope: The Implicit Association Test (Part III)*

BY CRAIG FRISBY

In Part II, evidence for the race Implicit Association Test (IAT) was evaluated as to (1) the plausibility of the underlying construct that it claims to measure, (2) the reliability (stability) of its scores, and (3) its validity for predicting laboratory behaviors assumed to be indicative of racial prejudice.<sup>242</sup> In this final installment, evidence for the test's ability to predict noxious behaviors in the real world is discussed. Part III concludes with an overall evaluation of the race IAT's utility for widespread use.

## **CATEGORY #4: IS THE RACE IAT EFFECTIVE IN PREDICTING NOXIOUS ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS IN THE 'REAL WORLD'?**

Contemporary psychology abounds with inventories, rating scales, and questionnaires designed to measure racial, sexual, and sexual orientation discrimination outside of the research laboratory.<sup>243</sup> One critic of the race IAT puts the matter succinctly: 'Although individual persons may not feel racist, the test purports to show that they will *act racist* in real-life settings.' Singal discusses some research studies that make sincere attempts to correlate IAT scores (race or otherwise) with 'real-world' behaviors.<sup>244</sup> But even in these studies, 'racism' or 'racial prejudice' must be *inferred* from behaviors that—on surface observation—are *far removed from direct observations of actual bigoted actions or the effects of such actions on the behavior of individuals* (e.g., days absent from work, working more slowly on the job).

### **The Messiness and Difficulty of Attempts to Discern Racism in the Real World**

Most readers have heard of laboratory studies in which subjects are presented with contrived data about fictitious persons, all of which have been carefully designed to portray such persons as having identical qualifications, skills, background information, or behaviors—except for names that either 'sound black' or 'sound white.' Because relevant variables can be scrupulously controlled in laboratory settings (by controlling the content of the protocols examined by research participants), researchers are on a more solid footing for interpreting racial prejudice should study participants grant less favorable evaluations/decisions to applicants with black-sounding names. This effect has been demonstrated in studies of public school teachers needing to determine punishment for discipline infractions, studies of employers needing to hire applicants for jobs advertised in help wanted ads, and studies involving written requests for information from local public services.<sup>245</sup>

Unfortunately, there is a proverbial 'elephant in the room' that is frequently kept offstage

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242 Craig Frisby, "Prejudice Under the Microscope: The Implicit Association Test (Part II)," *Minding the Campus*, January 13, 2021, <https://www.mindingthecampus.org/2021/01/13/prejudice-under-the-microscope-the-implicit-association-test-part-ii/>.

243 Meg A. Bond et al., *Expanding Our Understanding of the Psychosocial Work Environment: A Compendium of Measures of Discrimination, Harassment and Work-Family Issues* (Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services, 2007).

244 Singal, "Psychology's Favorite Tool."

245 Macrina Cooper-White, "When 'Deshawn' and 'Greg' Act Out in Class, Guess Who Gets Branded a Troublemaker," *HuffPost*, April 21, 2015,

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/black-students-troublemakers\\_n\\_7078634](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/black-students-troublemakers_n_7078634); Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan, "Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination," National Bureau of Economic Research: Working Paper 9873, July 2003,

[https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w9873/w9873.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w9873/w9873.pdf), and Corrado Giulietti, Mirco Tonin, and Michael Vlassopoulos, "Racial Discrimination in Local Public Services: A Field Experiment in the US," Institute for the Study of Labor: Discussion Paper No. 9290, August 2015, <https://ftp.iza.org/dp9290.pdf>.

when such findings purport to validate the simplistic morality play of ‘white wickedness/ black victimhood.’ *In the real world*, there are persistent and stubborn racial group differences in socially significant outcomes that cannot be ignored.<sup>246</sup> For example, African American students (on average) achieve the lowest average National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP) school achievement test scores compared to all other ethnic/ racial groups, and this has held fairly constant throughout all decades of NAEP testing, as well as in other forms of testing.<sup>247</sup> Black students display higher rates of discipline problems (on average) in integrated schools, which lead to higher rates of disciplinary sanctions (i.e., suspensions/expulsions).<sup>248</sup> Among those who have completed high school or who have received a General Educational Diploma (GED), black and Hispanic students are less likely to enroll in college compared to their white peers.<sup>249</sup> A 2016 report found that higher percentages of black students enroll in community colleges compared to white peers with the same high school grade point averages.<sup>250</sup> Black students also attend the least selective higher education institutions with the fewest resources. Lower percentages of black students, when compared to white students, obtain bachelor’s degrees.

More African-Americans than Caucasians have poor credit scores, such that whites earning less than \$25,000 per year are more likely to have better credit scores than African Americans earning between \$65,000 - \$75,000 per year—a finding which inevitably results in racial disparities in home mortgage lending rates.<sup>251</sup> To date, roughly 70 percent of black children are born out of wedlock.<sup>252</sup> In America, blacks proportionally have the highest crime rates of any racial/ethnic group, a pattern which holds true for virtually all crime categories and age groups.<sup>253</sup>

Whites are expected to not even notice such facts.<sup>254</sup> If these facts are noticed, they certainly are not allowed to be discussed openly—unless the discussion remains tethered to

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246 Heather Mac Donald, “The Bias Fallacy: It’s the Achievement Gap, Not Systemic Racism, That Explains Demographic Disparities in Education and Employment,” *Jewish World Review*, December 8, 2020, [http://www.jewishworldreview.com/1220/mac\\_donald120820.php3](http://www.jewishworldreview.com/1220/mac_donald120820.php3).

247 Brandon L. Wright, “Some Racial and Ethnic Groups Do Much Better on NAEP than Others. Here Are Some Factors That Might Explain Why.,” *Thomas B. Fordham Institute*, April 25, 2018, <https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/commentary/some-racial-and-ethnic-groups-do-much-better-naep-others-here-are-some-factors>; and S. F. Reardon, “What Explains White-Black Differences in Average Test Scores?,” Educational Opportunity Project, September 2019, <https://edopportunity.org/discoveries/white-black-differences-scores/>.

248 Travis Riddle and Stacey Sinclair, “Racial Disparities in School-Based Disciplinary Actions Are Associated with County-Level Rates of Racial Bias,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 116, no. 17 (April 2019): 8255–60, <https://www.pnas.org/content/116/17/8255>; and Tom Loveless, “Racial Disparities in School Suspensions,” Brookings: Brown Center Chalkboard, March 24, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2017/03/24/racial-disparities-in-school-suspensions/>.

249 Gokhan Savas, “Gender and Race Differences in American College Enrollment: Evidence from the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002,” *American Journal of Educational Research* 4, no. 1 (2016): 64–75, <http://pubs.sciepub.com/education/4/1/11/index.html>.

250 Lauren Musu-Gillette et al., *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2016* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

251 Sowell, *Discrimination and Disparities*; and Steven Tumulski, “Study: African-Americans More Likely to Have Bad Credit,” *BadCredit*, October 18, 2016, <https://www.badcredit.org/african-americans-are-more-likely-to-have-bad-credit/>.

252 Robert VerBruggen, “Trends in Unmarried Childbearing Point to a Coming Apart,” *Institute for Family Studies*, February 20, 2018, <https://ifstudies.org/blog/trends-in-unmarried-childbearing-point-to-a-coming-apart>.

253 Rubenstein, “Color of Crime.”

254 Rachel Sharp, “Wells Fargo CEO Angers Black Staff during Zoom Where ‘He Claimed the Bank Struggled to Reach Diversity Goals Because There Was Not Enough Qualified Minority Talent,’” *Daily Mail*, September 22, 2020, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8760935/Wells-Fargo-CEO-ruffles-feathers-comments-diverse-talent.html>.

'politically correct' causal interpretations (i.e., racism, discrimination, prejudice).<sup>255</sup> Interpretations that attempt to explain away or mute the implications of inconvenient facts are plentiful. As one among many examples, embarrassing facts on interracial crime are breezily justified by the Southern Poverty Law Center as follows:

So while it is true, for instance, that blacks rob whites far more than vice versa, that is hardly a surprise—whites, after all, own nearly 10 times the wealth that blacks do on average. They also own far more businesses. Thus it is only natural that any rational robber would select whites over blacks as victims . . . That poor people are more prone to criminality at the expense of the wealthy is utterly unsurprising.<sup>256</sup>

According to like-minded thinkers, therefore, only hardcore racists would believe that statistics on racial differences in socially important outcomes are 'real' (i.e., not attributable to white racism, bigotry, or discrimination). It comes as no surprise, therefore, that 'racism' is the most preferred interpretation of race IAT results that appear to disfavor blacks.

This highlights the challenges inherent in conducting 'race research' in real-world settings, where careful subject selection and the control of extraneous variables is extremely difficult. Conducting research in 'real-world' settings poses seemingly insurmountable challenges—not the least of which is the difficulty of trying to control numerous variables that work interactively to complicate or undermine the clear and unambiguous interpretation of results.

### The Complexity of Interracial Social Interactions

In order to illustrate the complex psychological, moral, philosophical, and ideological variables inherent in real-life situations—as well as the insurmountable roadblocks they pose to simplistic interpretations about interracial interactions—consider the following thought experiment:

A young black boy/man asks a white girl/woman out for a date and is politely turned down. Without any further information about the actors involved or the social context of this situation, we can assuredly expect to hear accusations of 'racism' from the usual sources.<sup>257</sup> When this situation is analyzed through a broader lens, however, the human emotions experienced by both parties are *universal*, regardless of whether or not racial issues play a role. That is to say, nearly all males can relate to the bruised ego and embarrassment that is felt from being rejected, and most females can relate to the irritation of being romantically pursued by someone in whom they have little or no interest. While many psychologists and mental health counselors promote the popular narrative that 'racism damages the mental health and psychological well-being of persons of color,' the truth is that *life itself* negatively affects the mental health of all people—regardless of

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255 Andrew R. A. Conway, "The University of California and the SAT: Speaking the Truth?" *Psychology Today*, August 10, 2020, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/channel-g/202008/the-university-california-and-the-sat-speaking-the-truth-0>.

256 "The Color of Crime, a Booklet by White Separatist Jared Taylor, Uses Faulty Analysis in Its Claims That Whites Are Overwhelmingly Victimized by Blacks," *Intelligence Report*, September 15, 2000, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2000/color-crime-booklet-jared-taylor-popular-radical-right>.

257 Scott Mahoney, "Who Is The Most Likely to Be Racist in Online Dating?" *Beyond Ages*, May 6, 2021, <https://beyonddates.com/racism-in-online-dating-part-one/>.

whether race is a factor or not.<sup>258</sup>

A researcher cannot put this fictitious girl in a time machine, transport her back in time, then record her response to a white boy to see if she would have made a different decision. Researchers are therefore limited as to what they can conclude from this isolated scenario. Unknown are the numerous factors about the boy, the girl, or the social context that may complicate simplistic charges of ‘racism.’ The girl may be despondent from a broken heart caused by the recent breakup of a previous relationship (from which she still has deep feelings for her former boyfriend) and may simply have no desire to quickly jump into another relationship. Or, the boy may have approached the girl in a brutish and crude manner that offended her, which makes her rejection of his advances a ‘no-brainer.’ Or, it could be that she genuinely likes the boy and wants to go out with him, but her parents strongly disapprove of interracial dating and have threatened to disown her if she does. In this case, her rejection of the boy stems from fear of her parents and not necessarily from any personal racial animus toward the boy. Or, it could be that the girl has dated many black boys in her past, but that she judges *this particular boy* as not handsome or high-status enough to waste her time with him.

Suppose that this girl truly harbors racial animus in her heart and feels personally disgusted at the thought of dating a nonwhite person. This girl would represent the kind of thinking that modern progressives feel deserves banishment from civil society. As noxious as these attitudes may be, doesn’t this girl have the right to freedom of association, guaranteed for all American citizens under the U.S. Bill of Rights?<sup>259</sup> If this girl shows no evidence of ill treatment toward nonwhite minorities in other areas of her life, then what would be the point of using the race IAT to identify her as in need of ‘intervention’?

Let’s complicate this hypothetical scenario even further. Suppose that this girl has a *bias in favor* of black boys, where she *prefers* to date black boys exclusively. If IAT supporters argue that racial bias—in and of itself—is inherently bad, then why would racial bias *in favor* of dating black boys be any less objectionable than racial bias *in opposition* to dating black boys?

### The Problem with Defining ‘Discrimination’

Fundamentally, there is a serious problem with the sloppy manner in which words/terms are carelessly used in social commentaries that flow from race IAT research studies. Words and concepts such as ‘disparities,’ ‘racism,’ ‘prejudice,’ ‘bias,’ ‘preferences,’ and ‘discriminatory’ are lumped together into one amorphous blob, as if they are all interchangeable in meaning. For example, consider these snippets from one article criticizing the race IAT.<sup>260</sup> Here, “hot-button” words are highlighted in bold print:

When I first took the implicit association test a few years ago, . . . [t]he test found that I had no automatic **preference** against white or black people . . . I was a

258 Jade Wu, “How Does Racism Affect Black Mental Health?,” Quick and Dirty Tips, September 4, 2020, <https://www.quickanddirtytips.com/health-fitness/mental-health/racism-black-mental-health/>; and Joanne Lewsley, “What Are the Effects of Racism on Health and Mental Health?,” *Medical News Today*, July 28, 2020, <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/effects-of-racism>.

259 Wikipedia, s.v. “Freedom of Association,” accessed January 21, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom\\_of\\_association](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_association).

260 Lopez, “Popular Test.”

person free of **racism** . . . I took the IAT again a few days later . . . Then I took the test again later on . . . I was at a loss as to what this test was telling me . . . [should I average the results] essentially showing I had no **bias** at all? . . . uncovering people's subconscious **implicit biases** seemed like the way to show people that they really can be and are still **racist** . . . Project Implicit . . . [raises] awareness about **implicit biases** and how **racism** and other kinds of **prejudice** still exist within American society today . . . It seems like the IAT predicts some variance in **discriminatory behaviors** . . . [however] it's questionable just how useful the IAT really is for predicting **biased behavior** . . . I worry that an obsession by some with **implicit bias** . . . [may hinder the examination of] factors that are far more influential and important in shaping **discriminatory behavior** and that create . . . unjust ethnic **disparities** . . .

In writing about a subject as visceral and as volatile as race relations, it is easy to understand how these concepts are often viewed as interchangeable in meaning (i.e., in the sense that they all connote something 'bad'). However, this does not excuse or mitigate the confusion that results when *no effort is taken to carefully distinguish between these concepts in the context of everyday living.*

Consider, for example the manner in which the word 'discrimination' is used. Race IAT research, whether conducted by its supporters or its critics, implicitly assumes that discrimination—in and of itself—is *inherently 'bad.'* In reality, however, the essential meaning of 'discrimination' has no inherent moral connotations. Discrimination, in its broadest sense, simply refers to 'an ability to discern differences in the qualities of people and things, and choosing accordingly.'<sup>261</sup> Standardized tests, for example, *are supposed to discriminate*—in the sense that their sole purpose is to reveal individual differences in the underlying trait being measured. Otherwise, why use tests?

During the normal course of the day, persons *discriminate* among the relative advantages/disadvantages of waking up earlier or staying in bed for extra sleep. Persons *discriminate* between whether to have cereal for breakfast or eggs and bacon—or whether to have a cinnamon roll, bagel, or English muffin. Persons *discriminate* among the color of socks they will wear for the day, and will eventually choose one pair to wear over another. Persons *discriminate* in buying cars (choosing one over another), choosing a school for their kids to attend (selecting one over another), choosing a mate to marry (and ignoring others), or choosing a neighborhood in which to live (and not another). In the broadest sense, the girl in the aforementioned scenario *discriminates* between the implications of accepting or not accepting an invitation for a date, the outcome of which is idiosyncratic to her own unique personal circumstances. The moral evaluation of her choice depends on numerous factors that are unknown to laboratory researchers, who see only the skin color of the actors. Said differently, her decision may indeed be evaluated through a moral lens, or morality may have nothing at all to do with her decision.

Unlike laboratory settings, human beings in the real world are not randomly distributed by race with respect to the neighborhoods, schools, social clubs, or churches they attend—*nor are groups randomly distributed by race with respect to social, economic, educational, artistic, or athletic accomplishments.* This means that if a particular racial/ethnic group is 13 percent of the American population, we should not expect that they will

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<sup>261</sup> Sowell, *Discrimination and Disparities.*

be represented at 13 percent in all possible real-life settings, circumstances, or outcomes (as these percentages may be significantly higher or lower). As each human being goes through life, they most assuredly *discriminate* among all acquaintances that cross their path as to which persons will/will not be close friends, if they have friends at all. If persons from minority groups are relatively scarce within the pool of acquaintances that a majority-white community routinely encounters in its schools, neighborhoods, employment settings, or churches of attendance, then how can they be accused of ‘racial discrimination’ if they have little to no opportunities to interact closely with nonwhites (and vice versa for nonwhites having few chances to interact closely with whites)?

## Discrimination in the Workplace

Similar problems are encountered in attempts to understand what ‘discrimination’ means within the world of business and employment law. One writer, reporting on a recent 20 million-dollar sex discrimination settlement from Walmart, warns audiences that ‘employers should do more to uncover the implicit bias preventing individuals from advancement.’<sup>262</sup> In these contexts, ‘uncovering unconscious bias’ is seen as the golden key that will unlock solutions for any problems that organizations have with respect to race issues.<sup>263</sup>

In the real world, however, job advancement is contingent upon the quality of an employee’s work performance in his current job. As the late Professor Walter Williams reminds readers in his excellent book *Race & Economics: How Much Can Be Blamed on Discrimination?*, it is in companies’ best financial interests *not* to engage in racial discrimination.<sup>264</sup> Nevertheless, if an employee feels that he has not been given proper advancement opportunities, companies have human resources departments and other internal grievance mechanisms (as well as redress through the courts) to utilize if they suspect racial discrimination.

Race IAT advocacy is attractive to businesses because its supposed benefits can be translated into the ‘bottom line’: money. Businesses believe that using the race IAT test—in addition to implementing corresponding ‘diversity training’—would save them money by warding off discrimination lawsuits and enabling them to be more competitive.<sup>265</sup> True Office Learning, for example, warns that businesses ‘cannot afford’ to live with implicit bias in their ranks if they do not want their ‘bottom line’ to be affected. In their view, the mere perception of implicit bias in the workplace causes disengagement at work to the tune of \$450 to \$550 billion dollars per year.<sup>266</sup> They further state that unconscious bias contributes to the lack of diversity in boardrooms—which stalls performance and creates opportunities for more diverse organizations to gain a competitive advantage.

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262 Karen Michael, “Labor Law: Walmart’s \$20 Million Sex Bias Settlement Is a Good Reminder for Employers to Examine Hiring Criteria,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 26, 2020, [https://richmond.com/business/labor-law-walmarts-20-million-sex-bias-settlement-is-a-good-reminder-for-employers-to/article\\_4ea9de5b-5894-5a45-9a1b-754a6817e25a.html](https://richmond.com/business/labor-law-walmarts-20-million-sex-bias-settlement-is-a-good-reminder-for-employers-to/article_4ea9de5b-5894-5a45-9a1b-754a6817e25a.html).  
263 Arlene Hirsch, “Taking Steps to Eliminate Racism in the Workplace,” Society for Human Resource Management, October 22, 2018, <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/global-and-cultural-effectiveness/pages/taking-steps-to-eliminate-racism-in-the-workplace.aspx>.

264 Walter E. Williams, *Race & Economics: How Much Can Be Blamed on Discrimination?* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2011).

265 Edward Cheng et al., “Does Diversity Training Work the Way It’s Supposed to?,” *Harvard Business Review*, July 9, 2019, <https://hbr.org/2019/07/does-diversity-training-work-the-way-its-supposed-to>.

266 “The Cost of Unconscious Bias in the Workplace,” True Office Learning, April 12, 2019,

<https://www.trueofficelearning.com/blog/unconscious-bias-in-the-workplace-what-it-costs-your-bottom-line>.

These inflated claims have no basis in reality. This comes into sharper focus when three key issues are examined: (1) the irrelevance of the 'unconscious' in everyday business interactions, (2) the actual legal criteria used for evaluating a business' vulnerability to discrimination lawsuits, and (3) the apparent failure of unconscious bias/diversity training.

### The Dubious Relevance of the Unconscious

Advocates use the race IAT in business/commerce as a makeshift 'lie detector test' for uncovering unconscious racial animus despite a persons' conscious protestations to the contrary.<sup>267</sup> If a business can identify a potentially racist employee by unearthing deep-seated sin presumably embedded in his unconscious—and then requires said employee to undergo 'diversity/sensitivity training'—the company gains public-relations kudos for 'proactively doing something' to 'combat discrimination' in its ranks.<sup>268</sup>

In reality, however, there is absolutely no need to invoke the 'unconscious' in efforts to improve business-customer relations. Hundreds of thousands of store clerks, cashiers, and salespersons across America learn to put up with (on a daily basis) difficult customers who are rude, smelly, obnoxious, demanding, or duplicitous. Employees who value their jobs know that they must resist their natural impulses and 'go the extra mile' to be gracious and accommodating to such customers—or else risk losing their jobs.<sup>269</sup> The salesperson's private or 'unconscious' feelings about the race (or any other characteristic) of customers are totally irrelevant to effective service if businesses want to attract customers, make money, and stay afloat.

### The Meaning of 'Disparate/Adverse Impact'

The term 'disparate impact' (also called 'adverse impact') is the name given to a judicial theory that allows plaintiffs to charge defendants with 'discrimination' in employment, business, or educational practices. The cornerstone of disparate impact theory is that employment, business, or educational practices can be 'nondiscriminatory' on their face, yet exert a disproportionate effect on members of legally protected groups.<sup>270</sup> To illustrate, suppose a shipping company requires its loading dock employees to be able to bench press at least 50 pounds (viewed by the company as necessary for successfully loading and unloading large items for transport on trucks, boats, or planes). Since men, on average, have stronger upper body strength compared to women, this requirement for employment causes women to be disadvantaged in their probability of being hired for the job (resulting in proportionally more male applicants being hired for the job than female applicants). In legal challenges, plaintiffs must show that the defendants' job requirements were adopted with *discriminatory intent*, and the defendants must show that

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267 Chris Mooney, "Across America, Whites Are Biased and They Don't Even Know It," *Washington Post*, December 8, 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2014/12/08/across-america-whites-are-biased-and-they-dont-even-know-it/>.

268 "Remote Training for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI)," Hone, accessed January 21, 2021, <https://honehq.com/lp/deib-training/>; and "AGC Diversity & Inclusion Awards," Associated General Contractors of America, accessed January 21, 2021, <https://www.agc.org/DiversityAwards>.

269 Skye Malmberg, "World's Nicest Fast Food Employee? Chick-fil-A Worker Goes Viral for Politeness," *Western Journal*, January 4, 2020, <https://www.westernjournal.com/worlds-nicest-fast-food-employee-chick-fil-worker-goes-viral-politeness/>.

270 Wilhelm Heitmeyer, "Discrimination," *Britannica*, accessed January 21, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/discrimination-society>.

its hiring standards are directly related to successful job performance. If the defendant (business or company) cannot demonstrate this, then it must make reasonable attempts to establish alternate hiring criteria that are directly related to successful job performance, but that do not result in a disparate impact on legally protected groups.

Companies, businesses, or educational institutions that have used intelligence or scholastic aptitude tests, high school graduation requirements, specific height/weight or age requirements, or the possession of a doctoral degree as a condition for employment have been vulnerable to accusations of racial or gender discrimination—since racial/gender groups do not show equivalent outcomes in performance on these hiring criteria.<sup>271</sup> In court, plaintiffs' success or failure in disparate impact discrimination lawsuits are contingent on additional subtleties and nuances of antidiscrimination law. The point here is that an individual's display of personal 'discrimination' (i.e., of the type feared by race IAT advocates) *does not have to be present for plaintiffs to win 'discrimination' lawsuits against businesses/organizations (based on disparate impact theory).*

In 2012, African-American employees brought a class action lawsuit against the executive branch of the State of Iowa, claiming racial bias in hiring and promotion within 37 departments. The plaintiffs' claim relied on implicit bias theory. The theory's main proponent, Dr. Anthony Greenwald, testified on behalf of the plaintiffs.<sup>272</sup> According to Greenwald's argument, approximately 70% of whites show an automatic preference for whites over blacks in race IAT studies, which (in Greenwald's view) *necessarily* influences employment decision-making absent strict bureaucratic supervision. The judge flatly rejected Greenwald's argument using the following counterarguments as grounds for rejecting the plaintiffs' claims (paraphrased):

- Subjective discretion in hiring/promotion/firing decision-making is a reasonable method of conducting business and does not necessarily infer racial discrimination.
- (There is no evidence that) a racial preference identified by the IAT necessarily results in racially prejudicial behavior.
- (There is no evidence that) a racial preference identified by the IAT explains statistical disparities among racial groups in hiring or promotions.
- (There is no evidence that) 'racially stereotyped thinking' explains outcomes in discretionary employment decisions.
- No IAT data was collected on employees or managers for the State of Iowa that were relevant to the case under consideration—it was merely *assumed* that the percentages found in IAT studies would be comparable for the State of Iowa.

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271 Linda S. Gottfredson, "Racially Gerrymandering the Content of Police Tests to Satisfy the U.S. Justice Department: A Case Study," *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* 2, no. 3/4 (1996): 418–46, <https://www1.udel.edu/educ/gottfredson/reprints/1996gerrymandering.pdf>.

272 "Iowa State Court Rejects Theory of Unconscious Bias and Disparate Impact Class Claims in Bellwether Ruling," *Seyfarth Workplace Class Action Blog*, April 19, 2012, <https://www.workplaceclassaction.com/2012/04/iowa-state-court-rejects-theory-of-unconscious-bias-and-disparate-impact-class-claims-in-bellwether/>.

## The Failure of Unconscious (Implicit) Bias/Diversity Training

Implicit bias training has become 'the new big thing' in areas as diverse as social media platforms, higher education, the judicial system, and the health care professions.<sup>273</sup> As Musa al-Gharbi has demonstrated, diversity training falls far short of its initial expectations, leading to deleterious outcomes despite enthusiastic (but data-light) testimonials that promote its benefits.<sup>274</sup>

For example, roughly two-thirds of all police departments across the country offer implicit bias training, and most of these make such training mandatory.<sup>275</sup> The New York Police Department implemented an implicit bias training program in 2018 to reduce excessive amounts of force against African-American suspects and the use of racial profiling to stop and arrest African Americans at greater rates. After the NYPD spent 5.5 million dollars on this program, researchers found that such training had absolutely no effect on officer behavior.<sup>276</sup>

Even when implicit bias training is not based on laboratory IAT results, it is often a magnet for retaliatory lawsuits from plaintiffs who claim that such training is divisive, ideologically biased, and disparaging of certain groups (e.g., whites, males, Christians).<sup>277</sup>

## IAT and the Brain/Mind Distinction

In their 2013 book *Brainwashed: The Seductive Appeal of Mindless Neuroscience*, psychiatrist Salley Satel and psychologist Scott Lilienfeld wrote a trenchant critique of how results from brain imaging technology are often overstated, exaggerated, oversold, and 'mindlessly' applied to problems in the legal, business, clinical, and philosophical domains of life.<sup>278</sup>

Eerie parallels can be drawn between the premature enthusiasm that greeted brain imaging studies and the general public and popular media's similar embrace (and misinterpretation) of race IAT research. In Satel and Lilienfeld's analysis, the fundamental flaw in

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273 "Managing Unconscious Bias," Facebook, accessed January 21, 2021,

<https://managingbias.fb.com/>; "Unconscious Bias Training," University of California San Francisco, accessed January 21, 2021,

<https://diversity.ucsf.edu/resources/unconscious-bias>; Marella Gayla, "A Federal Court Asks Jurors to Confront Their Hidden Biases," The Marshall Project, June 21, 2017,

<https://www.themarshallproject.org/2017/06/21/a-federal-court-asks-jurors-to-confront-their-hidden-biases>; and Rod Meloni and Dane Kelly, "Gov. Whitmer Mandates Implicit Bias Training for All Michigan Health Professionals," *Click-OnDetroit*, July 9, 2020,

<https://www.clickondetroit.com/news/michigan/2020/07/09/gov-whitmer-mandates-implicit-bias-training-for-all-michigan-health-professionals/>.

274 Musa al-Gharbi, "Diversity Is Important. Diversity-Related Training Is Terrible," *Minding the Campus*, November 6, 2020, <https://www.mindingthecampus.org/2020/11/06/diversity-is-important-diversity-related-training-is-terrible/>; Musa al-Gharbi, "Research Shows Diversity Training Is Typically Ineffective," *Real Clear Science*, December 5, 2020,

[https://www.realclearscience.com/articles/2020/12/05/research\\_shows\\_diversity\\_training\\_is\\_typically\\_ineffective\\_652014.html](https://www.realclearscience.com/articles/2020/12/05/research_shows_diversity_training_is_typically_ineffective_652014.html); and Unber Ahmad, "Implicit Bias in the Workplace," *Training Industry*, June 8, 2017,

<https://trainingindustry.com/articles/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/implicit-bias-in-the-workplace/>.

275 "We Asked 155 Police Departments about Their Racial Bias Training. Here's What They Told Us," *CBS News*, August 7, 2019, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/racial-bias-training-de-escalation-training-policing-in-america/>.

276 Robert E. Worden et al., "The Impacts of Implicit Bias Awareness Training in the NYPD," *John F. Finn Institute for Public Safety*, July 2020,

<https://apps.npr.org/documents/document.html?id=7203724-The-Impacts-of-Implicit-Bias-Awareness-Training>.

277 Joshua Molina, "Group Files Another Lawsuit against Santa Barbara School District over Cultural Proficiency Training," *Noozhawk*, April 9, 2019,

[https://www.noozhawk.com/article/lawsuit\\_santa\\_barbara\\_unified\\_training\\_implicit\\_bias\\_cultural\\_proficiency](https://www.noozhawk.com/article/lawsuit_santa_barbara_unified_training_implicit_bias_cultural_proficiency).

278 Satel and Lilienfeld, *Brainwashed*.

these movements rests in the blurring of important distinctions between the *brain* and the *mind*.

### **The Brain . . .**

In Greenwald et al.'s original race IAT paradigm, a computerized reaction time task involves both physiological and cognitive processes that occur within the brain between the time a stimulus (words or pictures) appears on the computer screen and the time the subject presses a computer key to indicate his response.<sup>279</sup> Physiologically, the computer stimulus must first be registered by the eyes; then neural impulses travel by nerve pathways to a specific location in the brain where the stimulus is recognized as belonging to a binary category (black vs. white; pleasant vs. unpleasant). Cognitively, a decision is made (i.e., which button to push), after which a neural impulse travels from the brain to either the left or right hand, where nerves in the hand muscles respond.

Even though this has been described in multiple steps, these separate steps occur in mere fractions of a second—the exact measurement of which lies beyond a person's conscious awareness. For example, in pressing the snooze button on one's alarm clock after the alarm goes off in the morning, no one can provide a precise measurement of how much time was taken for the alarm clock buzzer to be perceived by the ear, the time for this information to reach the brain, the time it takes for a person to decide to press the snooze button, the time neural impulses travel from the brain to the hand, or the time it takes for the hand to make contact with the snooze button. Here, individual differences in total reaction time are a function of complex interactions between the quality of one's hearing, neurological capabilities of the brain, sleep and arousal patterns controlled by the brain's hypothalamus, the physical distance between one's bed and the alarm clock, and idiosyncratic factors that influence conscious decision-making from morning to morning.

### **. . . Versus The Mind**

In contrast to these functions that are largely associated with the brain and nervous system, *the mind* is infinitely more complex and is to a large extent *unfathomable*. As Satel and Lilienfeld argue, one cannot use the physical rules at the cellular level (of the brain) to completely predict activity at the *psychological level* (of the mind). The mind consists of thoughts, contemplations, memories, imaginations, moods, feelings, fantasies, guilt, perceptions, motives, a sense of responsibility, morals, intuitions, intentions, the ability to learn, and the ability to plan for the future—all of which are powerfully shaped by individual differences in personality, previous life experiences, as well as individual differences in sociocultural forces (which can change considerably over a person's lifetime).

Irrespective of whatever is found in the physical features of the brain, human beings are not robotic automatons in everyday life—passive 'Manchurian candidates' whose latent racism (however defined) is automatically activated by a face belonging to a person of a different race.<sup>280</sup> The human mind possesses the ability to choose, learn, adapt, and develop in response to a wide variety of environmental contingencies that operate in everyday life. These, in turn, shape the subsequent choices that individuals make as they progress

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279 Arthur R. Jensen, *Clocking the Mind: Mental Chronometry and Individual Differences* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2006).

280 "The Manchurian Candidate," IMDb, accessed January 21, 2021, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0368008/plotsummary>.

through life. The ability to choose with the mind is what makes individuals capable of maturing in their character, being educated through learning, or being ruled/constrained by societal norms and laws (although imperfectly). How this shapes each person's life trajectory may be shared by certain classes of individuals in some respects, but can also be unique to each individual in many other respects.

## Concluding Thoughts

As Professor Glenn Loury observes, racial problems and racial conflict are perennial in America, having been present since our nation's founding centuries ago. If we can get rid of 'racism'—so the thinking goes—America's racial problems will most assuredly melt away eventually.<sup>281</sup> There are three elements of this false narrative that, when combined into a combustible solution, explain social psychology's enthusiastic (but misguided) embrace of the race IAT: (1) America's *desperation* to find a 'magic pill' for solving racial problems that are presumed (incorrectly) to be due almost exclusively to racism (however defined); (2) the lack of basic humility in reductionist psychology, which holds fast to the idea that anything objectionable identified in the brain (or which can be explained by brain functions) must have direct and 'mechanistic' implications for psychological behavior in the real world that *is ruled by the mind*; and (3) the irresponsibility of popular print and digital media, whose stock-in-trade is the reckless promotion of 'juicy' stories with attention-grabbing but irresponsible headlines (e.g., 'Is Everybody a Little Bit Racist?'; 'You May Be More Racist Than You Think, Study Says').<sup>282</sup>

In a lengthy article criticizing problems in the psychometric features and real-world applications of the race IAT, Nagai offers the most succinct summary of the essential 'take-away' of this essay:

Given the high probability of errors associated with the IAT, it should not be incorporated into public policies, such as hiring and university admissions, housing, banking, and government contracting, by law enforcement, in lawsuits, or in jury selection. Although it has been hailed by the media as uncovering a dark, secret side of the American psyche, numerous critics of the IAT have demonstrated that it simply cannot predict how test takers will act in the real world. The test fails to prove that we are a nation of unconscious racists.<sup>283</sup>

Returning to the Star Wars analogy that opened Part I, there are no such entities as 'race midichlorians' that can be captured in a test tube and interpreted as reflecting an individual's level of racial prejudice, bigotry, or propensity for racial discrimination in the real world. Whether academicians, researchers, policy makers, or the lay public can cultivate the basic humility required to truly appreciate this truism remains to be seen.

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281 Glenn C. Loury, "The Bias Narrative v. the Development Narrative: On Different Views of African-American Disadvantage," *Jewish World Review*, December 11, 2020, <http://jewishworldreview.com/1220/loury121120.php3>.

282 Nicholas Kristof, "Is Everyone a Little Bit Racist?," *New York Times*, August 27, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/28/opinion/nicholas-kristof-is-everyone-a-little-bit-racist.html>; and Elizabeth Landau, "You May Be More Racist than You Think, Study Says," *CNN*, April 2, 2009, <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/HEALTH/01/07/racism.study/index.html>.

283 Nagai, "Implicit Association Test."

# *Section IV.*

**BETTER WAYS TO MANAGE DIVERSITY**

# Chapter 14

## *Inclusive Majorities in an Inclusive Nation: Managing Ethnic Diversity*

BY ERIC KAUFMANN

In this chapter, I argue for a new way of conceiving national identity and ethnic relations. This entails a porous 'melting-pot' ethnic majority, which is informal and social, within a personalized national identity that includes virtually everyone. I also trace the origins of today's left-modernist ('woke') ideology, with its penchant for contrasting the blessings of diversity with a confining and oppressive white majority, to early-twentieth century Liberal Progressivism and modernist radicalism.

My view is that nations with ethnic majorities are more stable than polycentric multi-ethnic nations like Trinidad, Kenya, Belgium, or Guyana. In polycentric nations, ethnicity is the basis for political parties, and the 'normal politics' of left and right is submerged. Federations which have ethnic majorities tend to endure much longer than those where there is no majority.<sup>284</sup> Higher ethnic diversity correlates with lower economic development, which is a major reason why many sub-Saharan African countries—which are generally the most ethnically diverse in the world—have struggled compared to East Asia.<sup>285</sup>

## AMERICAN ETHNICITY

Ethnicity is not the same as race, even if race is sometimes used to tightly demarcate one ethnic group from another, as with the 'one-drop' rule in the pre-Civil Rights American South, which stipulated that even those with a fraction of African ancestry could not be considered white. However, in parts of Latin America, the color line was not drawn so tightly. Meanwhile, a number of ethnic groups cross conventionally defined racial boundaries. Some central Asian Turkmen look 'white,' others East Asian. Some Pashtuns look South Asian and others 'white.' Some African Americans pass for white and are only recognized as black when they are known to have African ancestry.

## WHAT IS ETHNICITY?

Ethnicity is based on a subjective belief in common ancestry, as well as a shared collective memory.<sup>286</sup> Ethnic groups can be transracial and inclusive, with boundaries defined by a critical mass of traits rather than a single criterion—just as the line between country music and rock cannot be boiled down purely to subject matter, instrumentation, or style but rather to a threshold defined by the sum of all three. In other cases, there is a sharp ethnic boundary defined by race, language, or religion. I distinguish between the former, *liberal ethnicity*, and more tightly bounded ethnicity in which intermarriage and identity shift is difficult.<sup>287</sup>

In defining ethnicity, 'objective' cultural markers such as race, religion, and even language are secondary to the subjective myth of ancestry. These markers often blur at the boundaries between groups. Think of the line between light-skinned blacks and dark-skinned whites, part-Anglo Hispanics with Anglo first names (Ted Cruz, George Zimmerman), and English-speaking Hispanics like former New Mexico governor Bill Richardson; between assimilated Kurds in Turkey and ethnic Turks, between Italians with German surnames

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284 Brendan O'Leary, "An Iron Law of Nationalism and Federation? A (Neo-Diceyan) Theory of the Necessity of a Federal *Staatsvolk*, and of Consociational Rescue," *Nations and Nationalism* 7, no. 3 (2001): 273–96.

285 William Easterly and Ross Levine, "Africa's Growth Tragedy: Policies and Ethnic Divisions," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 112, no. 4 (November 1997): 1203–50.

286 Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

287 Eric Kaufmann, "Liberal Ethnicity: Beyond Liberal Nationalism and Minority Rights," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23, no. 6 (2000): 1086–119.

and ethnic Germans with Italian surnames in Italy's South Tyrol region.

It's clear that some critical mass of markers is needed to tell one's group apart from others. You may not look white, but you act, speak, or dress 'white.' Or you may look white, but you wear a turban and have a foreign accent and surname. Each combination may put you on one side or another of a line. That line may vary depending on the observer. It may change when people talk to you and find out about your ancestry, as with a white-looking person who relates that their father is African American and is thereby accepted as such.

Most ethnic groups are at least somewhat porous and open to intermarriage. Depending on the tightness of ethnic boundaries, mixed offspring may or may not be accepted as group members. Some ethnic groups are sealed tightly, such as the Parsees of India or Northern Ireland Protestants (where intermarriage with Catholics is a taboo). Others such as the Kikuyu of Kenya or Creoles of Mauritius, or African Americans or Native Hawaiians, have looser boundaries.<sup>288</sup>

America's ethnic majority is white American, which is a category that expanded its membership criteria in the 1960s from being white, Protestant, and 'colonial stock' (British, Dutch, or French Huguenot) to include German and Scandinavian Protestants, as well as white Catholics and Jews. This happened mainly due to intermarriage and a decline in sectarianism, but also because of the growing power of a pan-ethnic white American mass culture.

The Civil Rights revolution may have elevated race as a more politically salient marker for northern whites than religion. I think the jury is still out on this, as it is difficult to argue that race didn't matter prior to the 1960s. I reject the notion, from critical race theory, that Catholics and Jews 'became white' because a WASP power elite decided they were useful for shoring up a white power structure.<sup>289</sup> They were already legally and socially white in a way blacks, American Indians, and Asians were not. What changed was that they became part of a newly defined 'white American' ethnic majority *as well as* being racially white. That is, the ethnic majority expanded from being narrower than all racial whites to being coterminous with all racial whites.

Looking ahead to the next century, when a majority of Americans will be mixed-race, I would expect ancestry (having some European background) and culture to eclipse race as the key criterion of membership. This would, of course, mean that many African Americans (80 percent of whom have European origins) could become 'white' if they adopted 'white' cultural codes.

The new ethnic majority group might even evolve into a twin-stranded 'American' ethnic group based on a fusion of Anglo-European and African descent, much like Mexico's 90 percent Mestizo majority. Most other lineages would be airbrushed out of the collective memory, though their myths and memories may survive in local pockets such as Chinatown, Irish South Boston, and Hasidic Borough Park. There are many examples of this in world history, such as the Turks and Hungarians, who assimilated outsiders that were

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288 Andreas Wimmer, "The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 113, no. 4 (2008): 970-1022.

289 David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991).

more numerous than the original ethnic core.<sup>290</sup> Just as the ethnic majority expanded from being narrower than all whites in 1920 to coterminous with all whites in 1970, it will likely expand to being wider than all whites in 2050 or 2100.<sup>291</sup>

## AMERICAN NATIONHOOD

Thus far I have largely discussed American *ethnicity*. But not everyone must join the ethnic majority: assimilation should be voluntary, and there are other long-established groups, notably African Americans and American (Native) Indians, which are also poles of attraction, with their own melting pots. Some might move between categories or combine them. We need a superordinate category that encompasses virtually all citizens: the nation.

The American *nation* must include everyone from the most recent immigrant from Somalia to an Amish farmer from Ohio, an African American in the Mississippi Delta to a Navajo from Arizona or a Mayflower descendant from Oregon. It must bridge an ideological divide between socialists and libertarians, nationalists and cosmopolitans. While the traditional means of doing this are the American Creed of liberal democracy and capitalism, ideology on its own is not a sufficient basis for nationhood. How so?

First, people may differ ideologically, with many on the left and some on the right rejecting a narrowly defined liberal-democratic capitalism. More importantly, liberal democracy and capitalism are much less distinctively American than was once the case. Much of the world shares these systems. Without a war—or even a Cold War—ideology cannot overcome the divisions that exist in diverse societies. Imposing a civic nationalist state-assimilation project along the lines of the French Third Republic (1870-1900) or the 100 Percent Americanization crusade of the 1920s is much more difficult in today's peaceful, individualistic society.

In addition, this 'hymn sheet' approach to nationhood fails to incorporate 'everyday' symbols that make the nation real and bind people to it in their everyday lives.<sup>292</sup> It fails to recognize that people attach to the nation in different ways. A rural American may connect through ancestry and the rural landscape. An immigrant may attach through the idea of America as a nation of immigrants and diversity. The leftist may look to the country's heritage of radicalism from the antinomians to the Hippies. The Southern Baptist will draw on a long Christian heritage beginning with the First Great Awakening. In England, for instance, religious 'nones' are nearly 50 points less attached to Christianity as a symbol of Englishness than even nominal Christians who don't attend church. Even South Asian Hindus and Muslims are 5 points more attached to Christianity as a symbol of Britishness than white British 'nones.'<sup>293</sup>

Finally, there will be cross-identification: we know that conservative Hispanics and Asians who voted for Trump are attached to the country's Anglo/European-Protestant heritage, while left-liberal whites who vote Democratic are attached to its non-European diversity.<sup>294</sup>

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290 E. K. Francis, *Interethnic Relations: An Essay in Sociological Theory* (New York: Elsevier, 1976).

291 Kaufmann, *Whiteshift*, 462; and Richard Alba, *The Great Demographic Illusion: Majority, Minority, and the Expanding American Mainstream* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

292 Tim Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (Oxford: Berg, 2002).

293 "The English Question: Young Are Less Proud to Be English," *BBC*, June 3, 2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/ukengland-44142843>.

294 "New Poll: Some Americans Express Troubling Racial Attitudes Even as Majority Oppose White Supremacists," UVA

## DIFFERENCES IN OUR COMMONALITY: TOWARD MULTIVOCAL NATIONHOOD

I believe the idea of nation-as-menu is more meaningful than nation-as-hymn sheet. The menu model is what I term ‘multivocalism.’ This is not multiculturalism, which looks away from the United States to people’s foreign roots and homelands. Rather it is about different ways of identifying with America: to the same flag and country. Multivocalism derives from anthropologist Victor Turner’s concept of *multivocality*, which captured how people read different meanings into the same symbol.<sup>295</sup> Beethoven’s Ode to Joy, for example, has been an anthem of the Nazis and is now the anthem of the European Union. The American flag can be a symbol of freedom, of tradition, or of equality. It has been appropriated by both Hippies and the far right. The Union Jack in Britain has likewise been used by Northern Ireland Protestants, the 60s ‘mod’ youth culture, and the far right. Even the Confederate flag has multiple meanings to different parts of the population.

‘Freedom’ and the American Creed are important touchstones, but so are the ‘everyday’ symbols of American nationhood from landscape and history to sports, cars, and place names; regional cuisines and architecture to popular culture. Having people construct their own ‘personal nationhood,’ with no version viewed as the ‘correct’ way of identifying with the nation, will help make nationhood more meaningful, more tolerant, and more cohesive—all at once.<sup>296</sup> Of course, this doesn’t mean that symbolic competition over the meaning of nationhood will cease: each side will push its cherished constellation of symbols, myths, and memories. The conversation over which version of nationhood is a truer reflection of its essence can be cordial; this struggle, as John Hutchinson notes, almost always reinforces the idea of nationhood.<sup>297</sup>

By contrast, a compulsory ‘hymn sheet’ civic nationalism flattens the differences in how people meaningfully attach. Many Americans with deep ancestral and cultural ties to the land will not appreciate their identity being defined abstractly in terms of a universalist idea which rejects the importance of the ethnocultural aspects of their Americanism. Other Americans—immigrants or liberals—may view urban cultural diversity as an important aspect of their American nationhood that is flattened by the notion of nation-as-idea. Alienating people through forcing all into a truncated Americanism tends to reduce both freedom and unity.

## THE LINK BETWEEN THE ETHNIC MAJORITY AND THE NATION

The vision of an inclusive majority within an inclusive nation recognizes that ethnic majorities are important for well-functioning nations. Much of national solidarity is in fact an overspill from the taken-for-granted unity that ethnic majorities have, and which extends to encompass the wider nation which the ethnic majority implicitly associates with itself.<sup>298</sup> Minorities’ identification to the nation differs symbolically from the way majorities

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Center for Politics, September 14, 2017,

<https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/new-poll-some-americans-express-troubling-racial-attitudes-even-as-majority-oppose-white-supremacists/>.

<sup>295</sup> Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967).

<sup>296</sup> Anthony P. Cohen, “Personal Nationalism: A Scottish View of Some Rites, Rights, and Wrongs,” *American Ethnologist* 23, no. 4 (November 1996): 802–15.

<sup>297</sup> John Hutchinson, *Nations as Zones of Conflict* (London: SAGE Publications, 2005).

<sup>298</sup> Eric Kaufmann, “Ethno-Traditional Nationalism and the Challenge of Immigration,” *Nations and Nationalism* 25, no. 2 (April 2019): 435–48.

identify to the nation. That's fine. There should be no one way to be American.

There are limits to the national menu. Those who reject equal treatment under the law and individual rights should be seen as violating a condition of national membership. But this stipulation should be drawn loosely, allowing room for ideological differences to be accommodated. All but the most extreme antisocial dissenters and anti-liberals should have a way of being American.

Immigration is also pertinent here. Immigration tends to increase diversity while ethnic assimilation reduces it. As diversity increases, the anxiety of members of the ethnic majority who care about unity and continuity with the past grows. In survey experiments, telling conservative American or British voters that immigrants will melt into the ethnic majority, leaving the country little-changed, tends to reduce opposition to immigration. Telling them that the majority is shrinking and that the country is becoming ever more diverse, and that these are great things, tends to heighten anxiety and sow divisions.<sup>299</sup>

Calibrating the immigration rate to the assimilation rate is important for national unity. Doing so permits voluntary assimilation through intermarriage and acculturation to take place, which tends to increase the size of the ethnic majority. By contrast, rapid immigration tends to reduce the share of the population comprised of the ethnic majority. The problem is that it typically takes several generations for deep assimilation to take place. When it happens, as in America in the 1960s when ethnic neighborhoods began to dissipate and intermarriage took off, it happens very quickly. This is mathematical: the children of mixed offspring are automatically mixed, and so the curve of mixed-race population is exponential. The share of mixed-race Americans will still be a minority in 2100 but will be a clear majority of at least 75 percent by 2150.

State integration policies can do little to accelerate the process, and there are few if any examples of state policies that do more good than harm. This means that periods of rapid increase in the foreign-born share, as today or a century ago, should be followed by periods of immigration reduction—such as that of 1924–65—which slow down the rate of change. When assimilation takes off, the immigration taps can be loosened once again.

## **COMMON ENEMY VS. COMMON HUMANITY IDENTITY POLITICS: THE ROLE OF THE LEFT**

Some commentators correctly decry the 'identity politics' of the left, but pivot to attacking the notion that any identities other than that of the civic nation should matter to people. This is not realistic, in my view. While all politics is not identity politics (there is also self-interest), it is nonetheless the case that group identities matter a great deal in politics and always have. Identity need not produce disunity, but can even reinforce cohesion. Does identifying as a Protestant Christian or as Irish make a person feel less American or more American? What about being Jewish or Catholic? In most survey data I have seen, people

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299 Emily Ekins and David Kemp, "What Increases Public Support for Immigration? Results from a New Experiment," Cato Institute, December 29, 2020,

<https://www.cato.org/blog/what-increases-public-support-immigration-results-new-experiment>; Robb Willer, Matthew Feinberg, and Rachel Wetts, "Threats to Racial Status Promote Tea Party Support among White Americans," Working Paper 3422, Stanford University, 2016,

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2770186](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2770186); and Maureen A. Craig and Jennifer A. Richeson, "More Diverse Yet Less Tolerant? How the Increasingly Diverse Racial Landscape Affects White Americans' Racial Attitudes," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 40, no. 6 (March 2014): 750–61.

who identify strongly with the one also identify more strongly as American.

The key to compatibility lies in whether the group identity is viewed as opposing the nation or complementing the nation. Once we allow that people identify through different symbolic pathways to the nation, various ethnic, regional, and class identities can be readily compatible with nationhood.

But this is not possible for an oppositional identity. If, for instance, black, gay, or Muslim identity is defined in opposition to the nation, then identity politics weakens the country. We move from what Jonathan Haidt and Greg Lukianoff term a 'common humanity' identity politics, where groups see their distinctiveness as not being in a zero-sum relationship to society, toward a 'common enemy' identity, in which groups are defined against society.<sup>300</sup>

Ethnic identity can be defined in a positive-sum or common enemy form. The Irish used to define themselves against the British, drawing on a storyline of a thousand years of oppression, from the Normans to the British Empire. The English were caricatured as anti-Catholics who exploited the Irish and caused the famine. More recently, the Irish have turned to a positive form of identity that emphasizes their achievements in poetry, music, and culture, as well as their 'tiger' economy. This cultural confidence allowed them to invite the English rugby team to play at the iconic nationalist venue of Croke Park, a Gaelic football stadium in Dublin. African Americans, likewise, can define themselves through their cultural achievements and their considerable economic and political rise in the face of adversity, or through a 'common enemy' identity that foregrounds the misdeeds of the white oppressor.

Most minorities, including African Americans, adopt a common humanity form of identity, taking pride in their achievements. However, today's cultural left places a premium on the oppression narrative and thus encourages minorities to adopt a victimhood-based 'common enemy' form, rather than a 'common humanity' form, of identity.

The dominant ideology in Western elite institutions today is what I term left-modernism.<sup>301</sup> This is not socialism. Instead, it is a hybrid left-liberal ideology that emerged hegemonic after two world wars and the Civil Rights revolution. It involves applying a leftist worldview, which sees the world in terms of oppressed and oppressor groups, to cultural categories that had been the focus of liberalism, notably race, religion, gender, and sexuality. Beginning in the 1910s, ordinary Anglo-Protestant Americans came to be stereotyped by the modernist left as boring, repressed bullies. Since the 1990s, critical race theory has repurposed this culture of self-repudiation into anti-white animus, as with Noel Ignatiev's call to 'abolish the white race' and stop being white, or Robin DiAngelo's more recent trope of white fragility.<sup>302</sup>

Left-modernism began in America with Liberal Progressives such as Jane Addams and John Dewey around 1905-10. Dewey in particular looked down on his New England Yankee heritage as confining and uninteresting compared to the exotic culture brought by new

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300 Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt, *The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting up a Generation for Failure* (New York: Penguin Press, 2018).

301 Eric Kaufmann, *The Rise and Fall of Anglo-America: The Decline of Dominant Ethnicity in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 33; and Kaufmann, *Whiteshift*, 21.

302 Noel Ignatiev, "The Point Is Not to Interpret Whiteness but to Abolish It" (speech), University of California Berkeley, April 1997, <https://blog.pmpress.org/2019/09/16/the-point-is-not-to-interpret-whiteness-but-to-abolish-it/>.

immigrants from Europe. This outlook was then succeeded by a more explicit denigration of WASP America by the mainly Anglo-Protestant bohemian 'Young Intellectuals' of Greenwich Village, New York, in the 1912-17 period. Randolph Bourne, a student of Dewey's at Columbia and a bohemian writer who was viewed as the doyen of a new youth culture, set the template which left-modernists have followed down to the present day.

In his 1916 essay, 'Trans-National America,' Bourne urges his fellow WASP Americans to shed their ethnic identity and find the 'cosmopolitan note.' On the other hand, he warns Jews and other immigrant groups not to become assimilated 'cultural half-breeds' but to 'stick to their faith.'<sup>303</sup> The conceit that ethnicity is wonderful for minorities but toxic for majorities spread widely with the 1960s countercultural explosion as universities and television expanded. Meanwhile the anti-WASP animus of left-modernist intellectuals has morphed into anti-white sentiment. It has since become *de rigueur* for elite whites to repudiate their own group and encourage minorities to assert an oppositional form of identity. What Matthew Yglesias terms the 'Great Awakening' involves a surge, since 2014, in the share of white liberals who believe racism and white supremacy are major problems in American society.<sup>304</sup>

## SUMMARY

Left-modernist white Americans have a long tradition of repudiating ethnic majority identity and encouraging a 'common enemy' form of minority identity. Since the late 1960s, and especially since 2014, there has been a surge of left-modernist 'antiracist' activism which seeks to weaponize minorities as an opposition force to overthrow a perceived (but seldom carefully evidenced) white power structure. The 2020 election, in which minorities shifted toward the Republicans, shows just how little resonance that message has, and how much white liberal and minority views of the country diverge. Instead of embracing the victim narrative touted by left-modernists, a growing number of minority voters are rejecting their overtures.

Going forward, slower immigration and continued assimilation through intermarriage can make the vision of an inclusive-majority-within-an-inclusive-nation a reality. Moving from the state-led assimilation drives of the past to voluntaristic multivocalism is the best way to make this model work in the twenty-first century. This can help erode the historically high diversity which has both increased conservative anxiety and emboldened left-modernism.

A prerequisite for change, however, is to shrink the outsized influence of left-modernism in the meaning-making center of U.S. society. This ideology, which has reached a peak of influence since its inception more than a century ago, encourages minorities to adopt a hostile posture toward the ethnic majority and national traditions while simultaneously teaching whites to repudiate their heritage and wallow in guilt. The net result is to stoke cultural division and populist backlash, all of which underpins today's increasingly toxic level of affective polarization.

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303 Randolph S. Bourne, *War and the Intellectuals: Collected Essays, 1915-1919*, ed. Carl Resek (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1999), 107-23.

304 Matthew Yglesias, "The Great Awakening," *Vox*, April 1, 2019, <https://www.vox.com/2019/3/22/18259865/great-awakening-white-liberals-race-polling-trump-2020>.

# Chapter 15

## *History, Heritage, and the Many Troubles with 1619*

BY ROBERT MARANTO

The great enemy to the American vision is essentialism, which says that your ethnicity or your race is who you are in your unchangeable essence ... The idea that identity and ethnicity are inborn and indelible from birth is a false view that leads to group hostility.

—E.H. Hirsch, *How to Educate a Citizen* (pp. 111-12)

## AMERICA AS AN IMAGINED COMMUNITY

In a real sense, the nation state is, as Benedict Anderson put it, an *imagined community*, since no member can know more than a handful of his compatriots.<sup>305</sup> This is unlike a real community (like a family or religious congregation) where members know and care for each other. Arguably, the welfare state is a poor replacement for these little platoons holding society together. Even so, citizens of a nation state feel a real sympathy for their compatriots. They are often willing to raise taxes to help them and even to die for them. Compatriots distinguish the in-group from out-groups daily, from the use of language to founding myths.

In the brilliantly funny, but also sad and scatological FX series *Atlanta*, which portrays mostly striving black women and mostly drifting black men, characters often refer to each other using the N-word. To me, this was an unpleasant term I heard constantly (from black people) while doing factory work in 1970s Baltimore. Of course, the N-word is used openly mainly within the African American “nation,” just as my tribe (back in the day, Sicilian Americans) would generally say WOP (“without papers,” referring to illegals like one of my grandparents) mainly within the group. Until a Sicilian felt securely rooted in a common American identity, a non-WOP would need to be a familiar to say that without sanction. Yet within the group, WOP signified affection as often as derision: you were one of us, to be somewhat preferred in business dealings and dating. Based on my wife’s appearance, my mom incorrectly but approvingly insisted that “that girl has some WOP in her.”

Even so, those of my parents’ generation born here rather than in Sicily were unquestionably *Americans first* and WOPs a distant second. This was no small thing. Recall that, far into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, “race” denoted different European regions and nationalities in science, in government policies related to immigration, and in social and economic life.<sup>306</sup> In the 1940s, when some of my relatives first married non-Italians, it was a far bigger deal than in the 1990s, when some married blacks. In the 1930s, a nearby beach had a sign saying—in the vulgar terms of the day—“no Italians, Jews, or blacks allowed.” My grandfather Maranto apparently thought the owner a fool, and not a proper exemplar of American values. Anyway, he had already bought his own waterfront property. When corrupt local officials tried to steal that property for alleged non-payment of taxes, my grandfather produced the receipts and threatened legal action, after which they backed down. That would not have worked back in Sicily. With Italy and all of Europe for comparison, my family considered America a land of opportunity, something they wanted to be part of, much as most immigrants do today. That is one reason my grandfather’s children were not allowed to speak Italian in the home: Americans speak *English*. My family cheered when

305 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

306 Kenneth Prewitt, *What Is Your Race? The Census and Our Flawed Efforts to Classify Americans*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

lawmen (both WOPs and regular Americans) broke the back of the mafia. In a similar vein, much of the civil rights movement of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century was about marginalized groups joining rather than wrecking America, so America could live up to its founding values.

Schools taught those values and symbols. In public schools, my father learned to revere George Washington, not Giuseppe Garibaldi. This became relevant in 1942, when he and his brothers joined the U.S. Army to fight Italy and its Axis allies: *Americans* were their *paisons*. I suspect most of my extended family voted for Trump to slap leftist identity politics, but also due to Trump's adept use of *patriotic American* symbolism (whatever the man's behavioral patriotism deficits, as chronicled by John Pitney).<sup>307</sup> As the brilliant Eric Kaufmann put it in the prior chapter, the American voice sounded far louder than the Sicilian one in my family's multi-vocal nationalism.<sup>308</sup>

To a multi-ethnic nation state like America, this is crucial in so many ways. A broader national identity allows one to expand, economically and culturally, beyond a narrow community. While racism and other bigotries presented enormous barriers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and even more before, they were often superseded by a broader American identity. This identity was endorsed by civil rights movements and opposed by others (both northern WASPs and southern populists) who instead emphasized *whiteness*. Back then, civil rights meant support for merit over subnational tribal loyalties. For white-collar society, the SAT was created largely to infuse more scholarly merit into college admissions systems based partly on inherited privilege among WASPs.<sup>309</sup> Blue-collar society had its own emphasis on merit as an American value. My father's career in the U.S. Postal Service—which he pursued while keeping an interest in the family business—was promoted more by Jewish and black bosses than by Italians. I suspect non-Italians comprise more than 90% of the now century-old family business' customers, and most of its employees.<sup>310</sup> Like most Chinese restaurants, our Italian bakery could have never survived without out-group patronage, though it is in fact in-group patronage—that is, patronage from fellow *Americans*.

Living in suburbs and going to school with non-WOP fellow Americans literally changed my life trajectory. High school guidance counselors were mediocre bureaucrats, but luckily, my best friend was a year older and Jewish. His B'nai B'rith counselor told him about the General Honors Program at the University of Maryland. He enrolled, reported back, and I followed a year later. It turned out to be a great fit. In a state that was perhaps 5% Jewish in the 1970s and less now, the flagship public university honors program was about half-Jewish.<sup>311</sup> That mattered little (save in romance) because of our common *American* identity, with an English lingua franca. No one in a seminar ever would have questioned someone's point based on their ethnicity.

This common *American identity* that transcends other boundaries was something taken

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307 Pitney, *Un-American*.

308 Eric Kaufmann, "How Political Correctness on Race Fuels Polarization," *Minding the Campus*, October 19, 2020, <https://www.mindingthecampus.org/2020/10/19/how-political-correctness-on-race-fuels-polarization/>.

309 Jerome Karabel, *The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005).

310 Dan Rodricks, "Maranto Bakery on a Roll for 103 Years," *Baltimore Sun*, April 29, 2017, <https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/columnists/dan-rodricks/bs-md-rodricks-0430-20170429-story.html>.

311 "States with the Largest Jewish Populations," WorldAtlas, accessed February 10, 2021, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/states-with-the-largest-jewish-populations.html>.

for granted in the 1970s.<sup>312</sup> In retrospect, we should have recognized its fragility. In the 1800s, when Americans had greater loyalty to their states, ethnicities, and faiths (and less to the nation state), anti-Catholic pogroms were common.<sup>313</sup> Of course, the history of anti-black violence in places from Tulsa to Rosewood is far better known, far worse, and often had support from public authorities. It claimed more than 3,000 lives from 1883 to 1927 and a far smaller, though non-negligible number since.<sup>314</sup>

Still, as Thomas Sowell reminds us in *Black Rednecks and White Liberals*, this too could have been far worse: "All the blacks lynched in the entire history of the United States do not add up to as many people as the number of Chinese slaughtered by [Vietnamese] mobs near Saigon in 1782, or the Jews killed by mobs in Central Europe in 1096 or in the Ukraine in 1648, much less the slaughters of Armenians by mobs in the Ottoman Empire during the 1890s or the First World War."<sup>315</sup> Marxist regimes from Cambodia to Nicaragua oppressed ethnic and religious minorities with special zeal.<sup>316</sup> It seems likely that more Ukrainians died at the hands of the Soviet state on individual days than the total number African Americans killed in America's sad history of white supremacy.

Despite certain risks, multiethnic societies often have more vibrant economic growth, in part due to *cultural exchange, not appropriation*. This is today's America. As Wilfred Reilly puts it in *Taboo: 10 Facts You Can't Talk About*, "cultural appropriation may be the one of the silliest damn concepts embraced by smart people."<sup>317</sup> In America, our best beer is German, our favorite takeout food is Chinese, great swaths of our pop culture from "White Christmas" to jazz were produced by Jews or African Americans, our language and law came from England, our democracy has roots in ancient Greece, and our very alphabet has Phoenician origins. There is nothing white-supremacist about any of this, nor about the 18 primarily non-white American ethnic groups with higher median household incomes than whites. An estimated 37% of Silicon Valley workers and 75% of computer scientists in the region are foreign-born, with Indians, Chinese, and Nigerians all overrepresented.

One sees this at my son's STEM-oriented university, the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD), whose students typically have higher SAT scores than the flagship campus, UT-Austin. UTD is a school where relatively new Americans attend to work rather than network (or woke). It resembles the City University of New York (CUNY) back in the day. Just as CUNY was once heavily Jewish, UTD is heavily South Asian and East Asian, and nearly a fifth Hispanic. A significant number of the East Asians who attained full scholarships at UTD as national merit scholars likely failed to get into more elite schools due to quotas limiting their numbers, just as quotas once limited the number of Jews in the Ivy League.<sup>318</sup> Fewer than a third of UTD undergraduates are white, perhaps half that in my son's STEM honors program, something he found attractive since, after all, college is supposed to be a cosmopolitan experience. (At the activities fair, we saw an anime orchestra and a Japanese

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312 Amy Chua, *Political Tribes: Group Instinct and the Fate of Nations* (London: Penguin Press, 2018).

313 Robert Maranto, "School Choice and the Value of Religious Diversity," *National Review*, August 9, 2020, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/08/school-choice-and-the-value-of-religious-diversity/>.

314 Stephan Thernstrom and Abigail Thernstrom, *America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999).

315 Thomas Sowell, *Black Rednecks and White Liberals* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2005).

316 Wikipedia, s.v. "The Black Book of Communism," accessed February 10, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Black\\_Book\\_of\\_Communism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Black_Book_of_Communism).

317 Wilfred Reilly, *Taboo: 10 Facts You Can't Talk About* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2020).

318 Karabel, *Chosen*.

American sorority.) The only noted campus protest occurred when Donald Trump hosted Indian Prime Minister Modi in Houston, leading a small number of Muslims and Hindus to protest and counter-protest. Given the diversity mantra of the day and its own diversity bureaucracy, UTD hosts a European Heritage Celebration to go along with Hispanic Heritage Month, Asian Heritage Month, Black History Month, and various other celebrations. Yet these ceremonies mandated by diversity bureaucracies are strangely artificial. No one sees himself as European. A white UTD student likely self-identifies as American, or Christian, or Texan—never as European. Similarly, almost no one sees himself as Asian, but as Indian-American (more likely Hindu or Muslim), Chinese-American, Japanese-American, Korean-American, or most often, *American*, a nationality that is unacceptable in postmodern academia.

The UTD students with recent roots elsewhere have no wish to return to the lands of their parents—they know too much. They appreciate America as a place where you *can* make money without bribing police or fearing religious zealots. In America, the roads function, crime is relatively low, the Internet works, and when you turn on the tap, you get clean water. Americans, including rural “European” American Trump voters, tend to be reasonably friendly, not bigoted. These are no small things. In appreciating them, the newer Americans seem to have more patriotism than European Americans like me. Yet immigrant patriotism is not quite the same as the patriotism of old. The American nation state must mean more than a bundle of services if it is to endure.

## **WE ARE LOSING THE AMERICAN NATION**

Pluralistic America has avoided the worst of the calamities of multi-ethnic states. Yet like any diverse society, ours is potentially fragile, as our own history of racial pogroms should remind us. Without a strong commitment to a *single* rule of law and a transparent merit system crossing group boundaries, how can one do business with outgroups knowing that they could forego payment or other contract obligations without sanction? If my grandfather lacked access to reasonably honest courts, he would have lost his waterfront property, and perhaps far more. To be clear, such things *have* happened even in the U.S., in the South more than other places, and to African Americans more than to most other people. But they are far less common than in other multi-ethnic nations.<sup>319</sup>

Unfortunately, in any multi-ethnic society, ambitious political entrepreneurs magnify or even manufacture group differences to sow division, in order to win votes and avoid accountability for their own poor performance in office. As Thomas Sowell detailed nearly two decades ago in *Affirmative Action Around the World*, politicians in multi-ethnic nation states as different as Nigeria, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, India, Germany, and the U.S. employed ethnic quotas—and profited from battles over those quotas to mobilize support in taking or holding power.<sup>320</sup> Once those ethnic genies came out of their bottles, economic growth slowed, in large part due to violence. Sowell notes an estimated one million deaths in the Nigerian civil war alone. In the 2000s, at times 60 Nigerians a day died from ethnic violence. Parenthetically, this hardly compares with the roughly 25 dead in 2020-21 from America’s leftist Black Lives Matter-related unrest and the pro-Trump insurrection combined, despite a far larger U.S. population. Even adding in the carnage from higher

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319 John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1982); and Jack Bass, *Unlikely Heroes* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981).

320 Thomas Sowell, *Affirmative Action around the World: An Empirical Study* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

homicide rates (chiefly involving African Americans killing African Americans), which likely resulted from BLM's push to "defund the police," group-related violence in the U.S. claims at worse thousands of lives, not tens of thousands.<sup>321</sup>

This does not mean all is well. As Sowell documents, an irony of affirmative action both in the U.S. and around the world is that schemes promoted to help the disadvantaged nearly always do far more for already advantaged politicians and their backers. The African American advance into the middle class sped up in the two decades *before* affirmative action, only to stall thereafter. Affirmative action can stigmatize successful "beneficiaries." Sowell recalls Clarence Thomas' lament that white employers undervalued his Yale Law degree, assuming his achievement reflected quotas, not merit. This has long been a widespread complaint of successful African Americans.<sup>322</sup> As John McWhorter writes, affirmative action may reinforce stigmas that studious blacks are "acting white" and thus are not "authentic."<sup>323</sup> In *Please Stop Helping Us: How Liberals Make It Harder for Blacks to Succeed*, Jason L. Riley recalls a black teacher criticizing him for acting white in using standard English.<sup>324</sup> Reflecting such pressures, Sowell shows that even as black college attendance rose, the absolute number of black high scorers on the SAT fell in the two decades *after* affirmative action was introduced. Possibly, as in other countries like Malaysia, emphasizing group solidarity rather than individual merit undermined cultures which promote upward mobility.

Sowell and others discuss a related issue that undermines minority progress—namely, that the ethnic solidarity encouraged by politicians erodes accountability. Jason Riley points out that an emphasis on black solidarity to fight discrimination in the U.S. has increased black voter turnout to the point where it is somewhat higher than white turnout, despite lower levels of education. Yet this very emphasis on solidarity allows black political leaders to evade accountability, blaming distant or long-dead whites for poor schools, high crime, and other public-service failings disproportionately affecting black communities. As political scientist Carol Swain recalls, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus she interviewed lamented that "one of the advantages, and disadvantages of representing Blacks is their shameless loyalty. . . . You can almost get away with raping babies and be forgiven. You don't have *any* vigilance about your performance."<sup>325</sup> The same is increasingly true among working class, mainly white Trump backers. As Trump himself once remarked, "I could stand in the middle of 5th Avenue and shoot somebody, and I wouldn't lose any voters."<sup>326</sup> Intergroup warriors are more apt to change their views of objective conditions than change how they judge political leaders presiding during those conditions.

Unfortunately, just as in countries like Nigeria and Sri Lanka, some American politicians have used ethnic solidarity to advance their own agendas. Long before Donald Trump engaged in conspiracy theorizing, African American preacher Al Sharpton raised his profile (and cash) through the 1987 Tawana Brawley hate crime hoax, and again in 1995 by

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321 Wilfred Reilly, "Did the BLM Protests against the Police Lead to the 2020 Spike in Homicides?," *Quillette*, January 27, 2021,

<https://quillette.com/2021/01/27/did-the-blm-protests-against-the-police-lead-to-the-2020-spike-in-homicides/>.

322 Stephen L. Carter, *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

323 John McWhorter, *Losing the Race: Self-Sabotage in Black America* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2001).

324 Riley, *Stop Helping Us*.

325 Riley, *Stop Helping Us*.

326 Katie Reilly, "Donald Trump Says He 'Could Shoot Somebody' and Not Lose Voters," *TIME*, January 23, 2016,

<https://time.com/4191598/donald-trump-says-he-could-shoot-somebody-and-not-lose-voters/>.

attacking as a “white interloper” a Jewish-owned business in a black neighborhood. The business was later attacked, killing seven along with the attacker—four more than died in the Capitol Hill insurrection encouraged by Trump. Yet both Trump and Sharpton remain respected politicians, albeit in different circles. These are hardly the only such savvy political entrepreneurs. In *Hate Crime Hoax*, Wilfred Reilly offers data indicating that at least one eighth of reported hate crimes (and likely far more) are hoaxes aimed at getting the “victim” money, fame, or influence.<sup>327</sup> Some were even perpetrated to increase the status and budgets of college diversity bureaucracies, a remarkable example of what William Niskanen dubbed budget-maximizing bureaucrats.<sup>328</sup> As Reilly details, college administrators and the news media seldom hold hoaxers accountable, even though their actions spread alarm, cost money, and poison intergroup relations. Even cool kids like student body presidents have hoaxed: Reilly marshals evidence portraying the 2015 University of Missouri unrest as one likely example. Accordingly, he urges administrators to “stop the flow of benefits from which we currently reward these crimes.” (Many hoaxers are white and heterosexual, but they currently lack comparable institutional backing.)

Alas, Reilly’s sensible recommendations seem unlikely, since those on the left, who dominate both media and academia, are emotionally invested in believing in omnipresent white supremacy. As such, they are psychologically ill-equipped to ask tough questions, but instead cling to the belief that even in the cases of obvious hoaxes, underlying bigotry *must be* the root cause. As Eric Kaufmann and Zach Goldberg point out, on the left, the belief in omnipresent white supremacy has become a matter of faith, impervious to facts.<sup>329</sup> Liberal whites (similar to disproportionate numbers of *New York Times* readers) have moved well to the left of most minorities on race-related issues such as the seriousness of police violence. According to Goldberg, this reflects in part the rise of Twitter since 2014, which gave activists previously confined to obscure blogs “access to a much wider audience.” Goldberg further finds a .95 correlation between the increased use of woke terms in the *New York Times* and racial liberalism among liberals, a relationship which cannot be explained by generational shifts. The secular John McWhorter grouches that, with the rise of wokeness, we now witness the birth of a new and far less charitable variant of Christianity.<sup>330</sup>

For many, the new allegiance to wokeness has ended allegiance to the American nation on the left and, perhaps in response, enlarged anti-Americanism on the right. After all, one would never accuse one’s countryman of a fake hate crime, nor invade the capitol. These are not things one does to “poisons,” but to enemies.

## **NEGATIVE NATIONAL HERITAGE: THE 1619 PROJECT**

National disunity reflects the decline of national heritage, as well as the decline of reverence for traditional symbols and sites (e.g., Independence Hall or Mount Rushmore) and

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327 Wilfred Reilly, *Hate Crime Hoax: How the Left Is Selling a Fake Race War* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2019).

328 Wikipedia, s.v. “Budget-Maximizing Model,” accessed February 10, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Budget-maximizing\\_model](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Budget-maximizing_model).

329 “The Great Awakening,” Manhattan Institute, streamed live on July 30, 2020, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqiVkrJyzJ3s>.

330 Glenn Loury and John McWhorter, “Calling Out Ibram X. Kendi,” Bloggingheads.tv: The Glenn Show, November 27, 2020,

YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qanSigTOO4>.

for individuals like successful presidents. As Jay Greene and his colleagues reported back in 2007, even in conservative Florida, more than twice as many public schools (11) were named after manatees than after the father of our country (5).<sup>331</sup> Of course, school systems in places like San Francisco have more recently renamed schools that originally honored such now-hated individuals as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and even liberal former San Francisco mayor and longtime U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein.<sup>332</sup>

These matters involve the differences between heritage and history. Ideally, history chronicles what happened as objectively as possible, within human limitations. Heritage, on the other hand, justifies a nation's existence, accentuating and sometimes even creating positive stories. Heritage is Parson Weems writing of a young George Washington confessing to chopping down his father's cherry tree because he cannot tell a lie.<sup>333</sup> Arguably, Washington's discomfort with and eventual renunciation of slavery is heritage that is historically accurate.

But what of *negative* heritage? What of a treatment that invents or twists facts to argue for a nation's illegitimacy? This is the *1619 Project*.<sup>334</sup> With an estimated \$10 million advertising budget, the *New York Times* and the Pulitzer Center intended the *1619 Project* to have an immediate and lasting impact on elementary and secondary education, to replace a largely positive portrait with a canvas *defining* America by its slavery and racial oppression, and to further portray any and all American prosperity as based on that oppression. As Peter Wood argues in *1620: A Critical Response to the 1619 Project*, *1619* is in part a case for reparations, but also "an effort to destroy America by teaching children that America never really existed, except as a lie told by white people in an effort to control black people."<sup>335</sup>

However unwise, this could make *1619* acceptable—if it were mostly true. It is not. As historian Robert Paquette states, only *four* of the 31 *1619* contributors are historians, who are outnumbered by journalists and poets. None of those four specialize in the U.S. founding, showing how much the *Times* values historical expertise. Some basic factual errors in *1619* are documented as follows:

- As Peter Wood points out, slavery in the New World did not start in 1619. People owning people was globally ubiquitous, and widely practiced among certain Native American groups and the Spanish. In America, the first enslaved Africans (and the first slave revolt) came not in 1619, but in 1526 after the Spanish established a settlement in or near present-day Georgia.
- As economists like Phillip Magness show, the *1619 Project* vastly overstates

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331 Brian Kisida, Jay P. Greene, and Jonathan Butcher, "Four Score and Seven Manatees Ago," *City Journal*, Summer 2007,

<https://www.city-journal.org/html/four-score-and-seven-manatees-ago-13037.html>.

332 Tim Fitzsimons, "San Francisco Board Votes to Rename Schools Named after Washington, Lincoln and Feinstein," *NBC News*, January 27, 2021,

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/san-francisco-board-votes-rename-schools-named-after-washington-lincoln-n1255836>.

333 Roger Wilkins, *Jefferson's Pillow: The Founding Fathers and the Dilemma of Black Patriotism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).

334 Nikole Hannah-Jones et al., "The 1619 Project," *New York Times Magazine*, August 2019,

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html>.

335 Peter W. Wood, *1620: A Critical Response to the 1619 Project* (New York: Encounter Books, 2020).

the economic importance of cotton, and thus of slavery, by a factor of eight or more, through obvious calculation errors.<sup>336</sup> Confederate diplomacy seeking European allies rested on the assumption that, both in the U.S. and globally, cotton was king. Luckily, it was not.

- Slavery did not provide the model for American capitalism, but rather proved both more brutal and less able to accumulate capital than the free economies outside the South, as Reilly points out.<sup>337</sup> Business innovations like double-entry bookkeeping, which *1619* attributes to plantations, in fact came centuries earlier.
- As scholars like John Stauffer point out, *1619* ignores the integrated nature of the abolitionist movement.<sup>338</sup> It likewise ignores the historical fact that the U.S. Civil War was largely about slavery. If the South, the North, and Abraham Lincoln all supported involuntary servitude, as *1619* claims, then South Carolinians would never have attacked Fort Sumter.
- As Wilfred Reilly writes, *1619* posits a direct line between slavery and past oppression and current African American conditions, when a far more empirical appraisal is needed.<sup>339</sup>
- Most important, *1619*'s foundational premise is fake news. As a range of experts on the founding, from Princeton's Sean Wilentz to Brown's Gordon Wood, show, there is no evidence that the founders fought the Revolutionary War to preserve slavery (sharply contrasting reasons the South fought the Civil War). It would take Britain a half century *after* the U.S. revolution to outlaw slavery in its colonies. The founders rejected repeated South Carolinian efforts to explicitly protect slavery in the Constitution. Many of the founders believed (mistakenly) that slavery would wither away after they outlawed the importation of enslaved peoples. One historian and fact checker sympathetic to the *1619 Project*'s goals nonetheless complained that, on this and other matters, the instigator and lead author of *1619*, journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones, simply refused to accept facts.<sup>340</sup>

An idea's veracity may have little to do with its believability. Just as in the early 1800s, when many believed the story about George Washington and the cherry tree, so today millions believe that Washington fought the American revolution to maintain slavocracy. Nikole Hannah-Jones herself has defended the project by insisting that these are not objective truths but rather interpretations based on the identity of the interpreter, a post-modern argument negating any possibility for science or history, as Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay show in Chapter 2 and in their book *Cynical Theories*.<sup>341</sup>

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336 Phillip W. Magness, *The 1619 Project: A Critique* (Great Barrington: American Institute for Economic Research, 2020).

337 Wilfred Reilly, "Sorry, New York Times, but America Began in 1776," *Quillette*, February 17, 2020, <https://quillette.com/2020/02/17/sorry-new-york-times-but-america-began-in-1776/>.

338 National Association of Scholars, "Panel Discussion: Absences from the 1619 Project's History," streamed live on September 14, 2020,

YouTube video, 1:45:44, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1j2noKJgtmU>.

339 Reilly, "Sorry, New York Times."

340 Leslie M. Harris, "I Helped Fact-Check the 1619 Project. The Times Ignored Me.," *POLITICO*, March 6, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/03/06/1619-project-new-york-times-mistake-122248>.

341 Pluckrose and Lindsay, *Cynical Theories*.

## REBUILDING THE NATION

It may or may not be too late to rebuild a national heritage, and thus a national identity. As noted above, one promising sign is that immigrants and their children may well be more patriotic than longtime Americans. A second is the high and growing rate of interracial intermarriage, as previously noted by Eric Kaufmann. As America grows more multiracial, it will require ever morechutzpah to define the nation as inherently racist. Yet the postmodern left may prove up to the task, so relying on the perception of racism to dwindle may not be enough.

As Mickey Kaus observed in the 1990s, in the past, common experiences like military service bound (male) Americans across lines of race, religion, class, and geography.<sup>342</sup> Indeed, as I will detail in the next chapter, the U.S. Army may still be the institution that best integrates and unites Americans.<sup>343</sup> Sadly, in the 1960s that train left the station: today's Americans and westerners are generally too individualistic for national service. It is likewise a fantasy, mostly on the part of the left, that controlling free speech could build national unity, rather than simply reinforce populist paranoia.

This leaves education. Through much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, educators considered it a legitimate goal of public schooling to build a positive national heritage uniting across regional and geographic lines, to build the American nation as the super-group described by Amy Chua.<sup>344</sup> Unfortunately, as E.D. Hirsch has chronicled in a series of books (most notably *The Making of Americans* and most recently *How to Educate a Citizen*), since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, public schools gradually shifted from teaching content to custodial care of children.<sup>345</sup> To the degree that schools still teach academic content, it is justified in strictly vocational terms. As Hirsch reports, and as I found while serving on a school board, those running public schools often see knowledge as *detrimental* to children, reflecting the roots of the U.S. education profession in early-20<sup>th</sup> century scientific management, which sought to make schools factories processing batches rather than teaching students.<sup>346</sup>

Over time, this has had three significant effects. First, lacking knowledge, young people cannot think systematically about the world around them. Increasingly, the same is true of college graduates, as Arum and Roksa empirically demonstrate in *Academically Adrift*.<sup>347</sup> This makes young people less able to discern fact from branding and more apt to support demagogues of the left and right, including ethnic or authoritarian ones.

Second, as Hirsch shows, schools traditionally taught standard English and common knowledge, including common expressions and a common history. All societies have a language of power, so teaching common knowledge and language enabled the poor to communicate with, argue against, hold accountable, and even join elites. Alas, Americans

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342 Mickey Kaus, *The End Of Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

343 Charles C. Moskos and John Sibley Butler, *All That We Can Be: Black Leadership and Racial Integration the Army Way* (New York: Basic Books, 1996).

344 Chua, *Political Tribes*.

345 E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *The Making of Americans: Democracy and Our Schools* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); and E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *How to Educate a Citizen: The Power of Shared Knowledge to Unify a Nation* (New York: HarperCollins, 2020).

346 Robert Maranto and Jonathan Wai, "Why Intelligence Is Missing from American Education Policy and Practice, and What Can Be Done about It," *Journal of Intelligence* 8, no. 1 (January 2020), <https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence8010002>.

347 Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

are now unable to debate whether our involvement in Afghanistan more resembles the Vietnam War or World War II since the mass public, and increasingly even elites, do not know anything about either. Regarding such matters as the U.S. founding and the Civil War, vast gaps in knowledge leave most young people (and their teachers) unable to refute 1619 and other negative heritage narratives.

Third, without a common conception of the American founding and values like free speech, young Americans lack the constitutional knowledge to understand why cancel culture on the left and insurrections on the right threaten the nation.<sup>348</sup> Relatedly, as Hirsch says repeatedly, if Americans lack a common affection for national symbols from the capitol building to Mount Rushmore, the nation is ever more likely to split apart into smaller communities which invent their own symbols, leading to more rather than less racial (and other) unrest.

Good teaching of American heritage at the younger grades and history at the older grades could over time unite the country, as it did in my parent's day. As Rick Hess points out, ignorance has enabled rightist violence in the nation's capital and leftist violence elsewhere.<sup>349</sup> Only a quarter of Americans can name the three branches of government. Yet educators seem unconcerned:

...the Rand Corporation conducted a national survey of social studies teachers and found that barely half thought it essential that students understand concepts like the separation of powers or checks and balances...Prominent voices in education and academe have given every indication that they are more interested in telling students why American institutions are fundamentally corrupt than in teaching students why these institutions are an inheritance to be safeguarded.

For three decades, E.D. Hirsch's Core Knowledge curriculum has fostered nation-building in hundreds of schools. To combat both postmodernism and authoritarianism, this should be Hirsch's moment. Unfortunately, I see little evidence of it.

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<sup>348</sup> Donald Alexander Downs, *Free Speech and Liberal Education: A Plea for Intellectual Diversity and Tolerance* (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2020).

<sup>349</sup> Frederick Hess, "The Storming of Congress Reminds Us That Educated Citizens Are Freedom's Only True Safeguard," *Forbes*, January 7, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/frederickhess/2021/01/07/the-storming-of-congress-reminds-us-that-educated-citizens-are-freedoms-only-true-safeguard/?sh=6fe9b3a44904>.

# Chapter 16

*Work, Not Woke—Why on Race, U.S.  
Higher Education Should Copy the  
U.S. Army*

BY ROBERT MARANTO

## ON RACE, THE BEST OF TIMES AND THE WORST OF TIMES

For inter-ethnic relations in America, it is the best and worst of times. It is the best regarding personal relations, policing, and merit systems, and the worst regarding how people feel about their collective and individual prospects. So where are we, how did we get here, and how can we do better? The answer requires a consideration of how institutions work. My last essay explored how race ideologues, including politicians, the media, and lower (K-12) educators, divide us.<sup>350</sup> Since “the roof leaks from the top,” as the old saying goes, here I turn my focus to higher education.

### THE BEST OF TIMES...

As William Frey and, earlier in this book, Eric Kaufmann point out, Americans of different races increasingly intermingle, intermarry, and have children.<sup>351</sup> What was in many states illegal in my lifetime is now commonplace. My white kids have always had black relatives, and it is no big deal. At an ever-increasing rate, demographically, America continues to become what the late journalist and onetime Lyndon B. Johnson speechwriter Ben Wattenberg dubbed “the first universal nation.”<sup>352</sup> In many respects, this is nothing new. As Herman Melville put it in the 1800s, “you cannot spill a drop of American blood without spilling the blood of the whole world.”<sup>353</sup> We continue to become the crew of *The Pequod*. This complicates the efforts of (often white) politicians seeking to stir racial resentment by selling a simple story of oppressive whites and oppressed minorities (from one side of the ideological spectrum), or of indulgent whites and criminal, sly, or freeloading minorities (from the other side of the political spectrum).

One sees this positive change in the Californians for Equal Rights (CFER) coalition, which in November 2020 defeated California Proposition 16, a referendum to bring back the racial quotas of the 1990s in hiring, contracting, and public university admissions.<sup>354</sup> Though outspent nearly 16-1 in a state Joe Biden carried nearly two to one, CFER won in a landslide, led by 81-year-old African American patriot Ward Connerly and 33-year-old Chinese immigrant, and patriot, Wenyuan Wu. A warrior, Connerly led the 1996 passage of California Proposition 209, which outlawed racial quotas in the first place. Much of the financial backing to defeat 2020’s Prop. 16 (and thus continue to back merit over quotas) came from Chinese American small donors.<sup>355</sup> Most non-elite Americans, including the ethnic minorities who make up roughly two-thirds of Californians, support merit. Their mainly white elite *bettors*, including newspaper editors, do not: consider the relative absence of

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350 Robert Maranto, “History, Heritage, and the Many Troubles with 1619,” *Minding the Campus*, February 10, 2021, <https://www.mindingthecampus.org/2021/02/10/history-heritage-and-the-many-troubles-with-1619/>.

351 William H. Frey, *Diversity Explosion: How New Racial Demographics Are Remaking America* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2018); and Eric Kaufmann, “Inclusive Majorities in an Inclusive Nation: Managing Ethnic Diversity,” *Minding the Campus*, February 23, 2021, <https://www.mindingthecampus.org/2021/02/23/inclusive-majorities-in-an-inclusive-nation-managing-ethnic-diversity/>.

352 Ben J. Wattenberg, *The First Universal Nation: Leading Indicators and Ideas about the Surge of America in the 1990s* (New York: Free Press, 1990).

353 “Herman Melville Quotes,” Goodreads, accessed March 4, 2021, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/7904733-you-cannot-spill-a-drop-of-american-blood-without-spilling>.

354 “California Proposition 16, Repeal Proposition 209 Affirmative Action Amendment (2020),” Ballotpedia, accessed March 4, 2021, [https://ballotpedia.org/California\\_Proposition\\_16\\_Repeal\\_Proposition\\_209\\_Affirmative\\_Action\\_Amendment\\_\(2020\)](https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_16_Repeal_Proposition_209_Affirmative_Action_Amendment_(2020)).

355 Stuart Hurlbert, “Memorializing a Dragon-Slaying and a Civil Rights Movement Reborn,” *Minding the Campus*, January 10, 2021, <https://www.mindingthecampus.org/2021/01/10/memorializing-a-dragon-slaying-and-a-civil-rights-movement-reborn/>.

media coverage of this upset election. If California sets trends, then in the new multiracial America, those who seek to stir up racial animosity may have difficulty—at least outside of college campuses and the elite media, where they dominate.<sup>356</sup> For many (particularly immigrants), merit systems and individual responsibility are *American* values that cut across ethnicity. Parenthetically, as noted in the prior chapter, my kids' friends are largely East Asian and to a lesser degree South Asian, just as my friends back in the 1970s were heavily Jewish—for the same reasons. Kids who work rather than network stick together and are too busy to be woke.

A second area for optimism, as strange as it sounds, is law enforcement. In my lifetime, overwhelmingly white policemen in some places routinely beat or even killed African Americans with no accountability. For two generations, police departments in major cities have been more integrated, and more professional. Contrary to most media accounts, police killings of civilians are now very rare, are usually justified, and are investigated.<sup>357</sup> Academia and the media almost *never* report that, in a typical year, only about one in 670 police officer kills a civilian in the line of duty.<sup>358</sup> Roughly 90% of those killed by cops are armed, and many of the others were attacking police. As Wilfred Reilly points out in Chapter 5, controlling for behavior, it is not clear that police disproportionately use lethal force against African Americans. Discriminatory issues regarding policing may remain, particularly regarding traffic stops, but they are far smaller than in living memory.<sup>359</sup> Before living memory, more blacks died from racist, often state-sanctioned violence on single *days* than over the past decade across the whole country.<sup>360</sup>

A third area of optimism regards not support *for* merit, but the realities *of* merit. Nearly 20 years ago, Harvard's Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom reported that those of different races with similar academic achievement (test scores, rather than mere degrees) had comparable mean incomes.<sup>361</sup> The difference between degrees and test scores is key, since some majors are far easier than others—a stubborn fact those with education degrees obscure for their own self-interest.<sup>362</sup> For at least the past generation and arguably far longer, human capital trumps race in America, something unthinkable through most of human history. From heaven, Frederick Douglass smiles. (Parenthetically, Douglass, who wanted a chance rather than a check, is notably absent from *The 1619 Project*.<sup>363</sup>) Likewise, as Wilfred Reilly and others note, differences in family structure (single-parent homes) largely explain achievement, income, and crime differences between blacks, whites, and

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356 Stanley Rothman, *The End of the Experiment: The Rise of Cultural Elites and the Decline of America's Civic Culture*, eds. Althea Nagai et al. (New York: Routledge, 2017).

357 John F. Timoney, *Beat Cop to Top Cop: A Tale of Three Cities* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); and Charles Campisi and Gordon Dillow, *Blue on Blue: An Insider's Story of Good Cops Catching Bad Cops* (New York: Scribner, 2017).

358 Robert Maranto, "How Academia Failed to Improve Police Practices," *Wall Street Journal*, June 10, 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-academia-failed-to-improve-police-practices-11591807543>.

359 John McWhorter, "Racist Police Violence Reconsidered," *Quillette*, June 11, 2020, <https://quillette.com/2020/06/11/racist-police-violence-reconsidered/>.

360 "Elaine Massacre of 1919," CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas, accessed March 4, 2021, <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/elaine-massacre-of-1919-1102/>.

361 Thernstrom and Thernstrom, *No Excuses*.

362 "Your College Major Is a Pretty Good Indication of How Smart You Are," Archive-E, February 3, 2015, <https://archive-e.blogspot.com/2015/02/your-college-major-is-pretty-good.html>; and Robert Maranto, "Joseph Epstein Is Right about the 'Dr.' Problem," *National Review*, December 17, 2020, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/12/joseph-epstein-is-right-about-the-dr-problem/>.

363 Hannah-Jones et al., *1619 Project*.

Asians, with the latter outpacing whites by ever larger statistical margins.<sup>364</sup> Among African Americans, we find enormous variation in family structure and income, individually and across immigrant groups, with some outpacing the white median.<sup>365</sup>

## ...AND THE WORST OF TIMES

Yet this is also among the worst of times. As detailed in my prior essay, *The 1619 Project* is one of many half-century-old efforts by bureaucracies and whole academic professions to shape historical consciousness so as to make century-old racial pogroms raw, as if they happened yesterday and still define the American nation.<sup>366</sup> As Wilfred Reilly details in *Taboo* and as Eric Kaufmann notes in his prior essays here, their efforts worked. Purveyors of what co-editor Craig Frisby calls “racial essentialism”—the notion that your race defines you—have won the day for now. Surveys indicate that most Americans see race relations as deteriorating. Accordingly, President Biden promises to address “structural racism.”<sup>367</sup> Any white Democrat needs key Democratic party constituencies, the media, and academia, and so must promise the same. Yet, like U.S. misadventures in Vietnam and Afghanistan, bad policies may eventually face negative feedback loops even in a wealthy country. Going much farther down our half-century road of racial (and now gender and sexual orientation) essentialism may pave the way for self-correction, if the right political entrepreneur appears. (Is Marco Rubio, Nikki Haley, Corey Booker, Val Demings, Ben Sasse, or Tim Scott reading this?)

For decades, African Americans have voted overwhelmingly Democratic as a matter of *identity*, though, interestingly, in 2020 Donald Trump had unusual success for a Republican among both blacks and Hispanics.<sup>368</sup> While the Hispanic and black vote grows somewhat less predictable, white working class and traditional Christian voters are increasingly loyal Republicans, wedded to their own identity politics. As detailed in my last essay, the dangers of identity politics to democracy are obvious.<sup>369</sup> Identity politics undermine accountability, making politics about *who* a leader is rather than what he *does*, thus discouraging ethical and effective leadership. Identity politics also enables conspiracy theories, both of the authoritarian right and the postmodern left. As the Grievance Studies affair perpetrated by series contributors Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay (along with Peter Boghossian) shows, sometimes one literally cannot tell the difference between *Mein Kampf* and postmodern feminism.<sup>370</sup> There is a long tradition of conspiracy

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364 Mitch Pearlstein, *From Family Collapse to America's Decline: The Educational, Economic, and Social Costs of Family Fragmentation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2011); and W. Bradford Wilcox, “For Black Boys, Family Structure Still Matters,” Institute for Family Studies, March 22, 2018, <https://ifstudies.org/blog/for-black-boys-family-structure-still-matters>.

365 Tod G. Hamilton, *Immigration and the Remaking of Black America* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2019).

366 Maranto, “Troubles with 1619.”

367 Tommy Beer, “Perceptions of Race Relations in U.S. Sink to New Low and Support for BLM Dips, Surveys Say,” *Forbes*, September 2, 2020,

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/tommybeer/2020/09/02/perceptions-of-race-relations-in-us-sink-to-new-low-and-support-for-blm-dips-surveys-say>.

368 Musa al-Gharbi, “The Trump Vote Is Rising among Blacks and Hispanics, despite the Conventional Wisdom,” *NBC News*, November 2, 2020,

<https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/trump-vote-rising-among-blacks-hispanics-despite-conventional-wisdom-ncna1245787>.

369 Maranto, “Troubles with 1619.”

370 Robert Maranto, “What the ‘Grievance Studies affair’ Says about Academia’s Social Justice Warriors,” *The Hill*, April 20, 2020, <https://thehill.com/opinion/education/490366-what-the-grievance-studies-affair-says-about-academias-social-justice>.

theories in African American communities, in fairness, sometimes reflecting objective conditions.<sup>371</sup> After all, absurd beliefs that the government invented AIDS or that Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen is a front for the Ku Klux Klan are not so very different from realities like the Tuskegee experiment, or using urban renewal as “Negro removal.” Likewise, certain right-wing conspiracy theories reflect the reality that traditional Christians and blue-collar people, such as cops, are barred from elite circles.<sup>372</sup>

At least among elites, demographic essentialism now defines both culture and politics. Kamala Harris is known *only* for her demographics, not her nearly three-decades-old public service career, including many years as a tough-on-crime prosecutor—before becoming a social justice warrior. Harris’ record of imprisoning low-level offenders fell to the right of Donald Trump, who signed the First Step act to reduce federal incarceration.<sup>373</sup> Likewise, the U.S. has 335 cities with more than 100,000 people, so it seems doubtful that former South Bend (pop. 101,168) Mayor Pete Buttigieg would make a serious presidential contender as a straight man. Buttigieg’s unexceptional mayoral record got no sustained media attention when he ran for president. Even Bernie Sanders now gets mocked for his whiteness rather than his (silly) ideas, like supporting the USSR during the Cold War.<sup>374</sup>

Ethnic or sexual minority identity now denote victimhood, which translates to status.<sup>375</sup> Victimhood is a zero-sum game and its status is not accorded to all. In June 2014, when I last visited, the Smithsonian Museum of American History hosted a temporary exhibit on Americans from the Indian subcontinent. The Smithsonian chronicled numerous Indian Americans who faced discrimination, including Dalip Singh Saund, the first U.S. Congress member born in India, who served three terms ending in 1963 with no notable legislative achievements. Somehow, the Smithsonian never mentioned the two Indian Americans who were then prominent governors and likely presidential candidates, South Carolina’s Nikki Hailey and Louisiana’s Bobby Jindal. Minorities who define themselves chiefly as patriotic Americans do not get to enjoy victim status; rather, elite arbiters of culture portray them as race traitors, or not at all. Note the newspaper political cartoonists in Kentucky, North Carolina, and South Carolina who drew conservative black officeholders as Uncle Toms or even Klansmen.<sup>376</sup> This free speech is and should be protected, but it seems far more violent than the threats to “safety” so often punished on college campuses.<sup>377</sup>

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371 Patricia A. Turner, *I Heard It through the Grapevine: Rumor in African-American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

372 Robert Maranto, “Biden Should Combat Democratic Intolerance of Fundamentalists Christians,” *New York Daily News*, September 23, 2020, <https://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/ny-oped-biden-democratic-intolerance-20200923-fvyzqbd2b-dr3fmy4j2d3n5h3a-story.html>; and Joan C. Williams, *White Working Class: Overcoming Class Cluelessness in America* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2017).

373 Tim Head, “Federal Criminal Justice Reform Is Now Law: What Comes Next?” *The Hill*, January 26, 2019, <https://thehill.com/opinion/criminal-justice/427087-federal-criminal-justice-reform-is-now-law-what-comes-next>.

374 Kenneth Garger, “San Francisco Teacher Writes in Op-Ed: Bernie Sanders’ Mittens a ‘Lesson in White Privilege,’” *New York Post*, February 2, 2021, <https://nypost.com/2021/02/02/teacher-calls-bernie-sanders-mittens-lesson-in-white-privilege-in-op-ed/>.

375 Wikipedia, s.v. “The Rise of Victimhood Culture,” accessed March 4, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Rise\\_of\\_Victimhood\\_Culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Rise_of_Victimhood_Culture).

376 Salena Zito, “North Carolina’s Black Conservative Lieutenant Governor Responds to Racist Attack from the Media,” *Washington Examiner*, February 5, 2021, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/north-carolinas-black-conservative-lieutenant-governor-racist-attack-media>.

377 Lukianoff and Haidt, *Coddling of the American Mind*.

## PROGRESSIVES, BUREAUCRATS, AND K-12 SCHOOLS

How did we get to this point? Much like the racial essentialism of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which enabled the Lost Cause Myth and racial pogroms, the race and gender essentialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century started with the educated and their institutions.<sup>378</sup>

Well-educated Progressives idealize bureaucracy. Bureaucracies are large, stable, hierarchical, typically monopolistic organizations with supposed expertise in their specialized jurisdictions. They employ promotion-by-merit systems and are governed by formal rules rather than parties, traditions, tribes, or caudillos.<sup>379</sup> From the Navy to the EPA, bureaucracies guard their turf, basing claims for legitimacy on their presumed expertise within their domains. Yet, in practice, bureaucracies are often wrong, and nearly always define solutions to problems in ways that enhance their missions and budgets. Even with the fate of the world at stake during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the U.S. Air Force insisted that the Kennedy administration bomb Cuba, while the U.S. Navy lobbied for a blockade. Each bureaucracy portrayed other options as *inexpert*.<sup>380</sup> Along with formal rules, bureaucracies have informal ideologies and standard operating procedures (SOPs). Once adopted, these become nearly impossible to dislodge, as Anthony Downs detailed in the classic *Inside Bureaucracy*.<sup>381</sup>

Bureaucracies function best where technologies are noncontroversial and stable.<sup>382</sup> From water and sewer systems to roads, air traffic control, and a military deferential to civilian control, modern societies profit from bureaucracy, but only up to a point. Woodrow Wilson, a prominent public administration scholar before entering politics, wanted bureaucrats to take the politics out of governance. If academic and bureaucratic experts rather than elected politicians made key decisions, and if expert decrees replaced political bargaining, government could become more efficient, in theory advancing the public interest.<sup>383</sup> In *The State*, Wilson went so far as to favor abolishing private charities for their inefficiency and particularism, a model for progressives who today wish to abolish private schools and homeschooling.<sup>384</sup> There is something un-American about this. The late Vincent Ostrom casts Wilson's technocratic approaches as aligning more with Prussian governance than with the American separation of powers, limited state (*reich*), and Tocquevillian volunteerism.<sup>385</sup> Regarding education, countries which have chosen religious and social diversity through markets rather than bureaucratic public monopolies have enjoyed greater freedom, less social division, and even higher test scores.<sup>386</sup>

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378 Jonathan Zimmerman, *Whose America? Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

379 Wikipedia, s.v. "Bureaucracy," accessed March 4, 2021, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bureaucracy>.

380 Robert Maranto, "Lessons in Cuba," *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*, November 7, 2020, <https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2020/nov/07/lessons-in-cuba/>.

381 Anthony Downs, *Inside Bureaucracy* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1967).

382 Karen M. Hult and Charles Walcott, *Governing Public Organizations: Politics, Structures, and Institutional Design* (Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1990).

383 Wikipedia, s.v. "The Study of Administration," accessed March 4, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Study\\_of\\_Administration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Study_of_Administration).

384 Woodrow Wilson, *The State: Elements of Historical and Practical Politics* (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co. Publishers, 1898).

385 Vincent Ostrom, *The Intellectual Crisis in American Public Administration* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008).

386 Maranto, "School Choice"; and Robert Maranto, "Between Elitism and Populism: A Case for Pluralism in Schooling and Homeschooling," *Journal of School Choice* 15, no. 1 (2021): 113–38, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15582159.2020.1856562>.

Naturally, elites prefer the centralized bureaucracies they control to the informal actors they do not control. For idealistic bureaucrats, public sector growth means more ability to change society, or, as Thomas Sowell put it, to impose their visions of the anointed.<sup>387</sup> In practice, as a friend quips, empowered bureaucracies can build water systems—or concentration camps, showing the folly of empowering bureaucrats too much. Contrary to Woodrow Wilson’s model, bureaucracies are not neutral: they have dominant ideologies, typically adopted in their founding period. Once an ideology dominates an agency, it is static because new members are recruited to conform to their peers, even if the agency ideology is morally suspect, empirically flawed, or unrepresentative.<sup>388</sup> Ideological homogeneity fosters groupthink, particularly when an organization has powerful external supporters. For example, in *The Transformation of Title IX*, left-leaning political scientist Shep Melnick details how the ideologically homogenous Office of Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education wrote regulations ending free speech and the presumption of innocence in its quest for gender equity, often with full support from interest groups and reporters.<sup>389</sup> Even college presidents, hardly a conservative lot, thought OCR went too far, though most feared saying so given the agency’s power to launch damaging investigations. Despite the prestige of the Brookings Institution, which published Melnick’s fine book, it has not been widely reviewed. One academic reviewer even feared the work might trigger students.<sup>390</sup>

Though ideological disfunction poses the most serious challenges, bureaucrats’ own material and psychological interests also counter the public interest. As the late economist and public official William Niskanen argued, just as private firms seek to maximize profits, public bureaucracies seek to maximize budgets.<sup>391</sup> Rising budgets permit more raises and promotions, giving bureaucrats material stakes in growth. More money reduces internal conflict, allocating more for all. Further, it is impossible to overstate how much agencies (right and left) value loyalty. While a 1940s bureaucrat, public administration scholar Rufus Miles first stated *Miles’ Law*, namely that “where you stand depends on where you sit.” Miles was inspired by an official who sought to slash a budget while at the watchdog Bureau of the Budget, only to defend that same budget a year later upon joining the affected agency.<sup>392</sup> Anyone who departs from a bureau’s party line may find their career cut short. In all my years studying and working in government, I cannot think of a public organization that voluntarily advocated to cut its own budget, though at times top leadership forced such actions.

The same self-interest characterizes professions vetted through universities. Once a professional ideology becomes dominant, as is happening now with social justice ideology in the media, academia, and much of the corporate world, apostates face danger. Material and ideological interests of the bureaucratic and higher education establishments severely limit what research is acceptable and disseminated. For example, education professors and interest groups have ignored research showing that *tripling* public education fund-

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387 Thomas Sowell, *The Vision of the Anointed: Self-Congratulation as a Basis for Social Policy* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

388 Robert Maranto, “Still Crashing after All These Years: Ideological Conflict in the Reagan Executive,” *American Journal of Political Science* 37, no. 3 (August 1993): 681–98, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2111570>.

389 Melnick, *Transformation of Title IX*.

390 Personal Communication, September 30, 2020.

391 Downs, *Inside Bureaucracy*.

392 Rufus E. Miles, Jr., “The Origin and Meaning of Miles’ Law,” *Public Administration Review* 38, no. 5 (1978): 399–403, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/975497>.

ing in Kansas City failed to improve schools.<sup>393</sup> Similarly, a study measuring ideological discrimination in college grading proved difficult to publish, with eight of ten journal editors unwilling to send the paper for peer review.<sup>394</sup>

Particular academic professions often dominate particular bureaucracies. Since its early-20<sup>th</sup>-century beginnings, doctors of education (the notorious Ed.D.) have dominated public schools. In part to distinguish themselves from other university-based professional fields, doctorates in education tend to eschew academic content, often portraying content knowledge as damaging to children (despite no evidence for this). Further, in part to gain favor from business-dominated school boards and in part since they arose when scientific management was the dominant business paradigm, schools of education stress compliance and division of labor. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, they turned what had been small, academically oriented schools often led by women into large educational factories, in which male principals with graduate degrees (factory managers) hired and supervised female teachers (workers)—who in turn processed children. In modeling schools after factories, the field quite intentionally privileged compliance over academics.<sup>395</sup> Indeed, the education field has never been troubled by low teacher quality: standards for teacher certification in many states require mere *junior high* knowledge levels.<sup>396</sup>

Interestingly, while other professors often welcome debate, education professors seem more likely to isolate and denounce critics rather than to engage with their ideas, as school reformer E.D. Hirsch recalls of his efforts to reform the field.<sup>397</sup> One recent example is the American Educational Research Association's immediate denunciation of critics of the Ed.D. as sexist, since Jill Biden and many Ed.D.s are female, rather than engaging intellectually with the degree's critics.<sup>398</sup> Generally, as fitting its roots in scientific management, the education establishment puts political expediency ahead of knowledge and truth-seeking, in contrast (at times) to more traditional academic disciplines.

America has now had five generations of students educated by graduates of schools of education, two generations since teacher quality nose-dived after women gained access to a wider range of career prospects. This impacted how both higher and lower education treat diversity.<sup>399</sup>

## DIVERSITY AT CORNELL: SEPARATISM FROM THE BEGINNING

Like individual organizations, regimes are their most ideologically and operationally flexible at the start, when they are imbued with the ideology of their founders and when SOPs are under construction. Nascent academic diversity bureaucracies appeared in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In his classic *Black Education: Myths and Tragedies*, Thomas

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393 Joshua M. Dunn, *Complex Justice: The Case of Missouri v. Jenkins* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

394 Matthew Woessner, "Campus Conservatives Aren't under Siege—but There's More to the Story," *NBC News*, August 14, 2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/right-says-campus-conservatives-are-under-siege-left-dismissive-both-ncna1042051>.

395 Maranto and Wai, "Intelligence Is Missing."

396 Sandra Stotsky, *An Empty Curriculum: The Need to Reform Teacher Licensing Regulations and Tests* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

397 Hirsch, *Making of Americans*.

398 Maranto, "Joseph Epstein."

399 Robert Maranto, "Why Don't Schools Teach Poetry?" *Academic Questions* 28, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 165–74, [https://www.nas.org/academic-questions/28/2/why\\_dont\\_schools\\_teach\\_poetry](https://www.nas.org/academic-questions/28/2/why_dont_schools_teach_poetry).

Sowell details the mistakes he witnessed while a junior economics faculty member at Cornell securing foundation grants to recruit and mentor black students.<sup>400</sup> Sowell began an intensive summer program to prepare students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) for challenging economics doctoral work. As one of the few black professors at Cornell, Sowell played a (sometimes unwilling) role in the 1968-69 campus unrest. At Cornell and other schools in the period (and since), Sowell found virtually all-white university administrators obsessed with public relations and indifferent (at best) to integrity, scholarly rigor, and the well-being of students, whether they were black or white. Broadly, this manifested itself in three ways, each with long-term effects.

First, when white racist behavior occurred, as when black students quietly complained about a visiting economics professor who (arguably) taught in a racist fashion, the administration's response was not to investigate and come to reasoned judgments, but instead to cover up. (As a general rule, educational administrators fail at investigations, but excel at witch-hunts and coverups.) In contrast, when students protested, administrators immediately caved to even unreasonable demands. As Sowell writes, for activist students and faculty, "one very important lesson came out of all this: When you tried to talk reasonably to Cornell officials, nothing happened, but when you raised hell you were rewarded." These incentives radicalized many students, black and white. They also pioneered today's cancel culture.

Second, white Cornell administrators showed quiet contempt both for black students and for academic standards, along with a pre-woke attachment to fashionable ideas, no matter their veracity. This led admissions officials and scholarship organizations to reject academically stellar black applicants with the talent to succeed at Cornell while accepting academically unqualified peers with *authentic* black profiles. As Sowell mocks, white administrators preferred to admit blacks "who act like the ghetto-dwellers white people have read about in books . . . instead of 'middle-class' blacks (those who don't)," even when those middle-class individuals had very low incomes. Sowell discovered that Cornell's black students had standardized test scores far below their white peers. Accordingly, blacks faced far greater danger of flunking out, or barely surviving in easy majors, both of which were disastrous outcomes covered up by administrators. Sowell's common-sense observations came forty years before Richard Sander and Stuart Taylor wrote *Mismatch: How Affirmative Action Hurts Students It's Intended to Help and Why Universities Won't Admit It*.<sup>401</sup> After California's Proposition 209 outlawed quotas in 1996, the number of black graduates at UCLA stayed the same because the black graduation rate *doubled* once the university could no longer admit ill-prepared minorities as academic cannon fodder serving numerical goals dictated by politics and public relations. *Can we imagine a more racist policy in its effects on blacks?* As a result of Proposition 209, blacks who would have flunked out at UCLA instead graduated from lower-tiered California campuses. Further, since STEM-related fields are more cumulative and more challenging, affirmative action had pernicious effects reducing the number of black STEM professionals.<sup>402</sup> Such policies worsened both white racist stereotyping and black alienation, turning students

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400 Thomas Sowell, *Black Education: Myths and Tragedies* (New York: David McKay Company, 1972).

401 Richard Sander and Stuart Taylor, Jr., *Mismatch: How Affirmative Action Hurts Students It's Intended to Help, and Why Universities Won't Admit It* (New York: Basic Books, 2012).

402 Gail Heriot, "A 'Dubious Expediency': How Race-Preferential Admissions Policies on Campus Hurt Minority Students," Heritage Foundation, August 31, 2015, <https://www.heritage.org/civil-rights/report/dubious-expediency-how-race-preferential-admissions-policies-campus-hurt>.

who would have succeeded at good colleges into relative or even actual failures at elite schools. Sowell describes one such student leader, radicalized at Cornell after undergoing a “personal hell” there:

A proud young man, he faced a crushing load of work in a difficult subject, with humiliatingly poor results. In addition, he was submerged in a sea of white people, who did not even understand what he was going through. He bitterly resented those black students who found the educational and social adjustments much easier. His personal plagues were fused in his mind into a general, worldwide political and economic vision of white oppression, black “traitors,” and an evangelical mission to set all this right.

As Sowell details, such student leaders intimidated other black students into taking leftist courses with little academic content and at least pretending to support campus violence. The true culprits, however, were academically weak, mainly white professors who used radical causes as “their only chance of playing a prominent, or even a self-respecting, role at the university . . . black students were a stalking horse behind which they could safely attack.”

These two attitudes led to a third long-term effect, at Cornell and elsewhere. In reaction to student unrest, including the famous guns on campus crisis of 1969—back then the *left* favored guns on campus—Cornell’s administration set up politically radical and academically marginal new majors, departments, and offices. This, in effect, separated black students into their own ghetto—in the university but not of it. As Sowell documents, this became the model for many campuses, leaving “beneficiaries” embittered and others fearful. It also reflects an administrative focus on numbers rather than individuals.

As I wrote in 2016, the scientific management-inspired strategy of bureaucratizing diversity and stressing black body counts rather than successes has marginalized blacks within the academy, making many in the academy but not of it, tokens rather than people.<sup>403</sup> I have seen this tendency many times. While on academic probation in my top-ten doctoral program, I was housed in Africana Studies, the one department with sufficient space or insufficient clout to protest my presence. We Africana students had the only office in a large building *without a phone*—that was how much the university trusted us! No one from there would ever make dean. Even today, while there are many African American Army generals, notably few African Americans lead higher education institutions. Instead, many are forced onto a black track described by Sowell way back in 1972, where they take symbolic roles to show an institution is not racist, rather than teaching and researching like other faculty. Such roles are often time consuming, involving endless committee work representing *the* black viewpoint, not to mention recruiting and mentoring black students. Fast forward a few decades after my brief exile in Africana Studies—as a tenured professor, I heard a (white) chancellor suggest that, for racial diversity reasons, we should enlarge majors like education, sociology, and African American studies—not engineering, linguistics or Arabic. His meaning was clear: you can’t expect certain people to have the brains to handle regular majors, so to make the diversity numbers look good, we would create refuges (ghettos?) within the institution. This chancellor was both a good person and left-leaning, but in practice, his view of black potential was downright alt-right. Those

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403 Maranto, “Separate and Unequal.”

views were on public display, but far more common are quiet references in hiring committees to the effect that, “you just can’t expect certain minorities to cut it in academic settings.” This epitomizes postmodern thought generally. Like the Cornell administrators lambasted by Sowell, many and perhaps most on the left now view characteristics like politeness, rationality, and hard work as inherently *white*. In 2020, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture publicly endorsed this view, in what may be the most racist use of tax dollars since the Wilson administration.<sup>404</sup>

What starts in the academy seldom ends there. Postmodern approaches which evolved in diversity programs at universities like Cornell have infected society. Arguably, the roots of today’s ineffective, multi-billion-dollar diversity industry came out of half-century old struggles at Cornell and other campuses. These began with and reflected liberal white condescension toward black students, and blacks generally. These approaches have both made race relations worse and ignored science. The spread of diversity training, for example, flies in the face of hundreds of empirical studies and considerable common sense showing that it tends to backfire, as Musa al-Gharbi details in a prior essay. Yet public and private sector organizations embrace it for fear of being called racist. The overwhelmingly white administrators who hold power view managing diversity as a matter of ‘box checking.’ Diversity and personnel bureaucracies which claim to hold expertise embrace it as an organizational best practice.<sup>405</sup>

The effects on the university, and increasingly on society, have encouraged segregation. Consider Carrie Pritt’s experience at Princeton:<sup>406</sup>

*This mandatory orientation event was designed to help us appreciate our diversity as a student body during the first week of classes. But what did it really accomplish? In compressing us into isolated communities based on our race, religion or gender, the minister belittled every other piece of our identities. He faced a crowd of singular young adults and essentially told them that their heritage outweighed their humanity. The message was clear: know your kind and stick to it. Don’t risk offending people from other backgrounds by trying to understand their worldviews. Why were the university administrators, who speak so highly of diversity, choosing to strip us of our individuality?*

A key reason is that this is big business, and money is made. In a front-page story, the *New York Times* describes approvingly the cottage industry of well-paid university diversity officers training students in a highly complex set of categories and the do’s and don’ts of ethnic and gender etiquette.<sup>407</sup> Woe to those who say the wrong thing and then get tagged as bigots. As noted in my prior essay, Wilfred Reilly even mentions cases of diversity bureaucracies staging hate crimes to increase demand for their services.<sup>408</sup>

There is a better way.

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404 Frederick M. Hess, “Smithsonian Institution explains that ‘Rationality’ & ‘Hard Work’ Are Racist,” American Enterprise Institute, July 20, 2020,

<https://www.aei.org/op-eds/smithsonian-institution-explains-that-rationality-hard-work-are-racist/>

405 Robert Maranto and Craig Frisby, “Biden Starts on the Wrong Foot: Diversity Training Divides Rather Than Unites,” *The Hill*, January 1, 2021,

<https://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/535802-biden-starts-on-the-wrong-foot-diversity-training-divides-rather-than>.

406 Carrie Pritt, “Diversity for the Sake of Democracy,” *Quillette*, January 24, 2017,

<https://quillette.com/2017/01/24/diversity-for-the-sake-of-democracy/>.

407 Saul, “Subtle Insults.”

408 Reilly, *Hate Crime Hoax*.

## WORK OR WOKE? WHAT THE ARMY COULD TEACH THE UNIVERSITY

The way higher, and increasingly lower, education deals with diversity is essentially bureaucratic. These efforts consist of programmed (and ineffective) box-checking responses in line with the SOPs of bureaucracies, which are themselves at the margins of their organizations, who impose often complex terminologies and etiquettes. These have failed to improve intergroup relations, or indeed to accomplish much of anything save to pad their budgets. But what if institutions instead adapted holistic approaches based in both science and common sense? This is possible, and indeed has happened. Consider the intergroup contact research developed after World War II by social psychologists including Gordon Allport and the team of Carolyn and Muzafer Sharif.<sup>409</sup> Though this line of psychological research is not unquestioned, its commonsense presumptions are that good intergroup relations can be fostered by several practices.

First, different groups should have other identities that support intergroup cooperation, such as superordinate loyalties to a common religion, university, or even nation—such as America. Indeed, as Amy Chua points out, *American* patriotism once served to transcend other boundaries.<sup>410</sup> Likewise, as detailed in my prior essay, E.D. Hirsch argues that the key role of public schools should be to develop a common American identity. Unfortunately, today's academic institutions, particularly higher education institutions, will find patriotism a very difficult value to embrace.

Second, groups should have roughly equal status in things that matter. Traditionally, in academia, academic success mattered; indeed, transparent academic merit systems enabled outgroups like Jews and Asians to work their way into the center of academic life. Any merit system, ideally, should cut across group lines, separating status from race. The idea of color-blind merit has been under attack by those within the academy through the past century, by upper-class WASPS in the early and mid 20<sup>th</sup> century who wanted to keep Jews out of elite institutions, by leftists since Thomas Sowell's days at Cornell, and, more recently, again by upper-class whites offended when ever more of "their" spots at elite institutions were taken by high-scoring Asians.<sup>411</sup> This is setting up a titanic battle between those who are woke and those who work. I know which side I am on, but do not know which will win.

Third, rather than retreat to safe spaces, individuals from different groups must have close contact so they cannot avoid each other, and thus might come to profit from cooperation. My first college roommate back in the 1970s was African American. After getting to know each other regarding commonalities (chiefly girls), we did in fact have some interesting discussions about race. Such informal contact seems less common in higher education today. Many institutions have all-black dorm communities. At others, incoming students fill out extensive questionnaires about what sort of roommates they want, potentially making interracial roommates a thing of the past. A final driver of good group relations are authority figures who encourage positive, equal interactions. These would seem to be the opposite of what today's diversity bureaucracies are prone to do. Of course, diversity bureaucrats are hardly the only bureaucrats to blame. At many universi-

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409 Wikipedia, s.v. "Contact hypothesis," accessed March 4, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contact\\_hypothesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contact_hypothesis).

410 Chua, *Political Tribes*.

411 Asra Q. Nomani and Max Eden, "Merit on the Ropes," *City Journal*, September 23, 2020, <https://www.city-journal.org/lefts-campaign-against-educational-excellence-suburbs>.

ties, Greek-letter organizations are central to student life—and remain completely segregated. Yet, to my knowledge, no university president has walked around campus enough to notice this and follow up with conversations with fraternity and sorority leaders about how we can do better over time.

In their classic *All That We Can Be: Black Leadership And Racial Integration The Army Way*, sociologists Charles Moskos and John Sibley Butler report that, after four years in the Army, black and white soldiers grow more likely to have cross-racial friendships and to like each other's music.<sup>412</sup> (Black soldiers even thought that O.J. Simpson was guilty.) In contrast, they offer research indicating that, over time, elite university students become less likely to cross such racial lines, for clear reasons. Even today, the Army prioritizes common identities (soldier, American) while higher education disparages them. Rather than a tangle of widely different majors and standards, the military has transparent, effective merit systems. Soldiers know what they need to do to stay in and earn promotion. They thus have every expectation that those of all races have the talent to do their jobs: the black NCO or captain bossing around the white private earned the privilege of doing so through real expertise, not just a piece of paper. It goes without saying that soldiers have common goals and live in close contact. They cannot retreat to safe spaces or claim that microaggressions derailed them.

The military experience offers applied lessons. As Thomas Sowell pointed out in 1972, *we cannot compromise academic merit for intergroup harmony without losing both*: if students and faculty at a university have expectations grounded in empirical realities of admissions policies that some groups are smarter than others, this will reinforce rather than erode negative stereotyping. Ending failed policies like diversity training and trigger warnings might allow us to attempt new approaches, some of which might work.<sup>413</sup> Putting more emphasis on academics would be a good start, unifying students around the common demands of coursework. Spending endless hours in the library makes you smarter, humbler, and less apt to create conflicts based on demographics. Going a step farther might mean de-emphasizing institutions of progressive privilege (like diversity programs) and traditional privilege (e.g., fraternities and sororities, athletics programs). Further, it will be difficult to desegregate higher education without reducing achievement gaps. To do so, we in higher education must support K-12 schools, chiefly charter schools, which successfully educate rather than merely feed and babysit black students. As usual, the now 94-year-old Thomas Sowell offers useful insights.<sup>414</sup>

Will any higher education leaders take steps in these directions? If not, then why should American taxpayers continue to subsidize institutions that do more to divide than unite America?

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<sup>412</sup> Moskos and Butler, *All That We Can Be*.

<sup>413</sup> al-Gharbi, "Diversity Is Important"; and Benjamin W. Bellet, Payton J. Jones, and Richard J. McNally, "Trigger Warning: Empirical Evidence Ahead," *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry* 61 (December 2018): 134–41, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0005791618301137>.

<sup>414</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. "Charter Schools and Their Enemies," accessed March 4, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charter\\_Schools\\_and\\_Their\\_Enemies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charter_Schools_and_Their_Enemies).

# Chapter 17

## *The Inadequacy of White Fragility*

BY GEORGE YANCEY

It is a misrepresentation to argue that *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo represents all of the antiracism movement.<sup>415</sup> However, it is a book that has topped the *New York Times* Best Sellers list, and we ignore its influence at our own peril. The term “white fragility” has entered our common lexicon, and it may be the best-known expression of antiracism to the general public. An examination of the usefulness of white fragility as conceptualized by DiAngelo helps us evaluate its ability to deal with racial alienation—which I define as our inability to relate to each other and work out our problems together.

Institutional racial bias, or systematic racism, is a real phenomenon. There are institutional factors that work against people of color. A lot of ink has been spilled documenting the reality of this type of racial dysfunction, and I do not want to cover old ground. Here, I will just point out a way it has personally affected me—residential segregation. When I was in high school, there were very few businesses who could hire me for a job in my predominantly black neighborhood. To get a job, I had to catch a bus to go across town. It took me about 45 minutes to an hour to go one way to work. It was a barrier that those who did not live in an African-American neighborhood lacking economic resources did not have to face. Residential segregation, as a representation of institutional racism, did not make my success impossible, but it made it more difficult.

Naturally, this is not the only way institutional racial bias effects people of color. We can talk about how it affects us in our educational systems and criminal justice administration, and how we receive health care or talk about other social institutions that perpetuate racial inequality. But often, European-Americans show little interest in investigating how systematic bias impacts people of color. If books like *White Fragility* help to bring awareness of such bias to majority group members, then it provides a valuable service. Only when whites become willing to deal with systematic biases will we be able to shape the type of society where racial alienation decreases.

But while *White Fragility* may resonate with some people, I fear that the very nature of DiAngelo’s argument limits its potential. DiAngelo’s basic thesis is that whites are socialized to have “a deeply internalized sense of superiority and entitlement.” In essence, she communicates the message that all whites are racist—not racist in the sense that they burn crosses, but rather complicit in the internalized racism in our society. Their denial of said racism is seen as evidence of the “white fragility” after which the book is titled. It is the stress they feel when their worldview, upon which they have built an understanding of society that serves them so well, is challenged. DiAngelo argues that we must break down defensiveness and the need of whites to assert their innocence of the charges of racism if we are to move away from a white-dominated society. To be sure, this is not a complete description of her reasoning, but it summarizes key points that are relevant to the arguments I will make in this essay.

There are several empirical and philosophical problems with DiAngelo’s approach. Rather than focus on all of them, I simply want to explore whether this is an approach well-suited for moral suasion, since without moral suasion we are left with forced compliance. If we assume that DiAngelo has goals that will reduce the racial tensions in our society, is her approach to achieving those goals likely to succeed? Research suggests not. If we want to engage in moral suasion then we know that we should seek to: identify where we agree with our interlocutor, admit when he has made a good point, build rapport with him, and

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415 DiAngelo, *White Fragility*.

truly understand his arguments. Accomplishing these goals significantly increases our chance to convince others of our point of view.<sup>416</sup>

The philosophy of *White Fragility* does none of this. Instead, white fragility has become a term used to stigmatize whites who do not line up with the “proper” racial attitudes that DiAngelo supports. I have no doubt that some whites go along with the demands of antiracists to avoid such stigma. But unless these “allies” develop deep and honest convictions about racially progressive ideas, then they are unlikely to be willing to work for those ideas when there is insufficient social pressure compelling them to support antiracism.

There is another path. For years I have promoted the concept of “mutual accountability.” It is a model that came to me as I conducted research on multiracial churches and interracial marriages. From that research I began to argue that interracial contact, done correctly, is a vital element for producing positive racial change in our society.<sup>417</sup> In fact, I do not see how we will adequately deal with racial alienation until we interact with each other in healthier ways. Positive interracial contact alone will not be sufficient—but until we, across the racial spectrum, are willing to work with each other on ideas that go beyond serving the interest of our own racial, and at times, political, tribe—then we will not make further progress in race relations. I call it mutual accountability because we are all accountable for promoting healthy interracial conversations.

I would argue that the best way to envision my model is as collaborative conversation. Collaborative conversation has been defined as “a purposeful, outcome-driven conversation aimed at building on each other’s ideas.”<sup>418</sup> The idea works by finding solutions through listening. We must listen to the concerns of others and articulate our own concerns. While we have a natural inclination to get as much as we can from others, that can backfire on us. When we try to coerce others into giving in to us, we can make them so bitter that they will sabotage whatever we gain. It is probable that antiracism efforts motivate some whites to capitulate to the demands of activists. But it is also plausible that these efforts strengthen the resolve of other whites to resist any reforms that come under the banner of antiracism. A process of collaborative communication where we prioritize productive communication with each other helps to minimize that possibility and create more unity in our search for a solution to racial alienation.

Today much of our communication across racial and political boundaries consists of us attempting to force others to meet our expectations while we minimize any compromise on our part. But without that compromise we will fail to devise paths by which we can work with, instead of against, each other. However, I argue that learning how to interact with each other in ways where we use collaborative conversations to devise solutions will result in ‘win-win’ instead of ‘win-lose’ outcomes. So much of the approach of *White Fragility*, and much of what has been called antiracism, is based on ensuring that people of color win and whites lose. That is an understandable sentiment given the centuries of racial abuse from which people of color have suffered. But seeking out win-win solutions

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416 Trena M. Paulus, “Challenge or Connect? Dialogue in Online Learning Environments,” *Journal of Computing in Higher Education* 18, no. 1 (2006): 3–29, <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/BF03032722.pdf>; Robert B. Cialdini, “The Science of Persuasion,” *Scientific American* 284, no. 2 (February 2001): 76–81, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26059056>; and Michael Watkins, “In Practice: Principles of Persuasion,” *Negotiation Journal* 17, no. 2 (2001): 115–37, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1571-9979.2001.tb00231.x>.

417 George Yancey, *Interracial Contact and Social Change* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007).

418 “9 Tips for Creating More Collaborative Conversations,” TMA World, May 7, 2019, <https://www.tmaworld.com/2019/05/07/9-tips-creating-more-collaborative-conversations/>.

creates 'buy in' from most Americans. With that we can create stable, sustainable solutions rather than those that alienate large sections of the population.

If we did this, then I have little doubt that the 8 billion dollars a year we spend on diversity training would yield much more powerful dividends. But as of today, there is little evidence that diversity training reduces prejudice.<sup>419</sup> However, research has indicated that collaborative styles of communication lead to less prejudice and more volitional compliance in the decisions that are made by the parties involved.<sup>420</sup> Research has also shown that efforts based on including whites in the decision-making process lead to more hiring of people of color in managerial positions than forcing white managers into diversity programs.<sup>421</sup> In other words, bringing others into conversation is more effective in creating real racial diversity than browbeating whites with accusations of fragility. In time, I hope we develop better diversity programs based on collaborative conversations rather than antiracism. Programs that teach people how to find interracial agreement are superior to programs that sow interracial discord.

I have written two books advancing an approach of mutual accountability. My first book, *Beyond Racial Gridlock*, is a Christian book where I make a theological as well as practical argument that the best way to deal with racial alienation is to recognize our tendency to put our own needs over others.<sup>422</sup> In that book I argue that this can be overcome with an attitude of caring about the needs of others. The second book, *Transcending Racial Barriers*, is an scholarly treatment of this issue where I use academic theories of contact hypothesis and group interest theory to chart a path away from antiracism and toward mutual accountability.<sup>423</sup> I am currently working on another book that updates these previous efforts.

Nonetheless, I do not want to be alone in my analysis of collaborative conversations. There are important questions that need to be answered. How do we facilitate conversations that are collaborative and do not reproduce power dynamics that favor whites over non-whites? How do we make certain that individuals feel comfortable speaking their mind when there may be dramatic social costs to being seen as a racist or a complainer? How do we ensure that the important issues are the ones we have conversations about? These and others are vital questions. I do not claim to have the answers for all of them. Some will have to be learned from trial and error. If we continue to ask those questions, then we have a chance to one day answer them. In time, I hope more will join me in considering how we can use collaborative conversations to discover win-win solutions to many of the racialized problems that trouble us. This, rather than an approach inspired by ideas within *White Fragility*, is the key to dealing with racial alienation in our society.

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419 Calvin K. Lai et al., "Reducing Implicit Racial Preferences: II. Intervention Effectiveness across Time," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 145, no. 8 (2016): 1001–16, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27454041/>.

420 B. Aubrey Fisher and Donald C. Ellis, *Small Group Decision Making: Communication and the Group Process* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994).

421 Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev, "Why Diversity Programs Fail," *Harvard Business Review* 94, no. 7 (2016), <https://hbr.org/2016/07/why-diversity-programs-fail>.

422 George Yancey, *Beyond Racial Gridlock: Embracing Mutual Responsibility* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2006).

423 Michael O. Emerson and George Yancey, *Transcending Racial Barriers: Toward a Mutual Obligations Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

# Chapter 18

*Why Are We Here? Where Do We Go  
From Here?*

**BY CRAIG FRISBY AND ROBERT MARANTO**

As we reflect on the varied contributions to this book, we are struck by the intellectual diversity of the contributors. Contributors come from the fields of education administration, mathematics, school and educational psychology, sociology, and political science. One is a self-described 'exile from the humanities.' What we all share is a heartfelt alarm over current trends that, in our view, are corrupting language and common sense, poisoning political discourse, destroying K-12 and higher education, misrepresenting history, and misdirecting young persons.

Although all of us have minor disagreements over smaller issues, we can consolidate our observations into six key factors, the confluence of which appears to play a significant role in leading us to where we are today. These are Black Frustration, White Guilt and Fealty, the Immaturity of Youth, an Irresponsible Media, Compromised Educators, and Contentious National Politics. We discuss briefly each of these factors below.

## BLACK FRUSTRATION

Ask any well-known black celebrity, politician, or civil rights activist about his opinion on black progress in America, and one is likely to hear the following boilerplate response: "We have come a long ways ... (but) we still have a ways to go."<sup>424</sup>

The first half of this phrase is undeniable. Nearly all contemporary Americans (whatever their background) acknowledge and condemn the injustice of laws and social practices that upheld racial discrimination, segregation, and prejudice in America's past. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the 1954 Supreme Court decision to strike down school segregation, the millions of dollars poured into Head Start preschool programs, and the existence of government-sponsored affirmative action programs all testify to this American good-will.<sup>425</sup>

The United States frequently proclaims its 'commitment to diversity and inclusion' in many symbolic ways, which include the establishment of June 19 ('Juneteenth') as a federal holiday and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as a national holiday, the celebration of Black History Month, the celebration of and advertising 'diversity' as a virtue in politics, education, and civic life, and the promotion of diversity training in organizations.<sup>426</sup>

American social attitudes have changed in ways that were unimaginable 50 years ago. In

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424 Dwayne Wagner, "We Have Come a Long Ways ... We Have a Ways to Go," *Military Review* (June 2021): 1-13, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/Army-Press-Online-Journal/documents/2021/Wagner.pdf>.

425 "Legal Highlight: The Civil Rights Act of 1964," U.S. Department of Labor: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration & Management, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/civil-rights-center/statutes/civil-rights-act-of-1964>; Wikipedia, s.v. "Voting Rights Act of 1965," accessed July 13, 2021,

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voting\\_Rights\\_Act\\_of\\_1965](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voting_Rights_Act_of_1965); "1954: Brown v. Board of Education," National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/brown-v-board-of-education.htm>; "FY 2021 Head Start Funding Increase ACF-PI-HS-21-01," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, February 19, 2021,

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pi/downloads/acf-pi-hs-21-01.pdf>; and "Affirmative Action," U.S. Department of Labor, accessed July 13, 2021,

<https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/hiring/affirmativeact>.

426 Wikipedia, s.v. "Juneteenth," accessed July 13, 2021,

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juneteenth>; Encyclopaedia Britannica, s.v. "Martin Luther King, Jr., Day," accessed July 13, 2021,

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Martin-Luther-King-Jr-Day>; "Black History Month," *HISTORY*, January 14, 2010,

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-month>; "Why Celebrate Diversity?," Appalachian State University, accessed July 13, 2021,

<https://diversity.appstate.edu/celebration/why/>; and Kizzy M. Dominguez, "Top 3 Diversity Training Programs for Businesses," K. Parks Consulting, January 13, 2016, <https://www.kpcinc.com/diversity-training-programs-for-businesses>.

1968, for example, (white) pop singer Petula Clark hosted a TV special with Harry Belafonte, a black Jamaican singer and actor who popularized Calypso and Caribbean music during the 1950s. At one point during the program, Clark and Belafonte together sang an emotional anti-war song titled "Paths of Glory." During the song, Clark innocently rests her hand on Belafonte's arm. Upon seeing this, an NBC executive 'went ballistic' over the optics of the moment and wanted to edit out the scene for fear that it would offend the sensibilities of viewers in the South.<sup>427</sup>

The executive's reaction was not too far removed from ugly realities in the South at that time. Beginning in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, anti-abolitionist groups would use fears of miscegenation to scare Southern whites into opposing integration.<sup>428</sup> Indeed, to allay such concerns, in 1962 Martin Luther King famously stated: "*I want to be the white man's brother, not his brother-in-law.*"<sup>429</sup>

Fast forward five decades, where such social attitudes have been literally turned upside down. According to current statistics, at least 10 percent of Americans are married to someone of a different race/ethnicity, with a larger percentage represented in new marriages. At least 18 percent of African Americans marry someone of a different ethnicity or race.<sup>430</sup> There are online dating sites specifically targeted for patrons who desire to date interracial.<sup>431</sup> One online dating site considers it 'racist' if dating requests are not evenly distributed across all racial/ethnic groups.<sup>432</sup> At the time of this writing, advertisers are making a concerted effort to use interracial couples to advertise their products on television, partly as a means to attract certain segments of the buying community, and partly to aggressively reflect pro-diversity values.<sup>433</sup>

However, the second half of the phrase ("*... but we still have a ways to go*") is considerably more contentious. What exactly is being communicated here? There are clearly areas in civic life where blacks have exceeded expectations, as compared to their proportional representation in American society. Yet, there are also many areas where blacks have not, with numbers far below proportional representation. Here, it is implied that expectations of perfect, proportional equality of outcomes (popularly known today as 'equity') are baked into the civil rights vision of the 1950s and 1960s. This is typified in President Johnson's 1965 commencement address at historically black Howard University. In that speech, President Johnson opined:

"[T]he barriers to . . . freedom are tumbling down. Freedom is the right to share, share fully

427 Petula Clark and Harry Belafonte: The Interracial Touch," *TV Banter*, June 13, 2016, <http://www.tvbanter.net/2016/06/petula-clark-and-harry-belafonte.html>.

428 Wikipedia, s.v. "Miscegenation," accessed July 13, 2021, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miscegenation>; and "Political Caricature. No. 4: The Miscegenation Ball," Library of Congress, 1864, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2008661682/>.

429 "Martin Luther King, Jr. Quote," LibQuotes, <https://libquotes.com/martin-luther-king-jr/quote/lbf9c6u>.

430 Hermina Drah, "24 Groundbreaking Interracial Marriage Statistics for 2021," 2Date4Love, January 9, 2021, <https://2date4love.com/interracial-marriage-statistics/>.

431 Interracial Dating, <https://www.interracialdating.com/>.

432 Scott Mahoney, "Who Is the Most Likely to Be Racist in Online Dating?" *Beyond Ages*, May 6, 2021, <https://beyondages.com/racism-in-online-dating-part-one/>.

433 Deborah Block, "Americans See More Interracial Relationships in Advertising," *Voice of America News*, March 7, 2021, <https://www.voanews.com/usa/race-america/americans-see-more-interracial-relationships-advertising>; and Hallie Golden, "Inside the Biracial Advertising Boom," *Daily Beast*, February 5, 2018, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/inside-the-biracial-advertising-boom>.

and equally, in American society—to vote, to hold a job, to enter a public place, to go to

school . . . But freedom is not enough . . . You do not take a person who, for years, has been

hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say,

“you are free to compete with all the others,” and still justly believe that you have been

completely fair . . . This is the next and the more profound stage of the battle for civil rights.

We seek not just freedom but opportunity. We seek not just legal equity but human ability,

not just equality as a right and a theory but equality as a fact and equality as a result . . . To

this end equal opportunity is essential, but not enough, not enough. Men and women of all

racess are born with the same range of abilities”<sup>434</sup>

It is not known if President Johnson was aware of the full implication of his words, however this quote is widely considered by many to represent the formal blessing that inaugurated the affirmative action movement in America. However, Johnson’s phrase “Men and women of all races are born with the same range of abilities” requires greater clarity in its meaning. As Frisby notes in Chapter 8, all human groups display the full range of values on a variety of psychological traits and abilities, however racial/ethnic groups *differ in the averages* of these traits. The implications of this basic truth are straightforward. Entrance into certain jobs, careers, and education/training programs is often based on achieving minimum scores on entrance tests. To the extent that certain groups have lower or higher average scores on such tests, they will be under- or over-represented in outcomes if a set cutoff is used to select or reject applicants. Thus, disproportionate outcomes become a function of disproportionate skills that groups bring to selection tests. Many disproportionate outcomes are *not due—as many are prone to automatically assume—to ‘racism,’ prejudice, or discrimination.*<sup>435</sup>

Many prefer to avoid, dismiss, reject, or ignore such facts, which in turn breeds frustration and anger. The irony here is that the more America works tirelessly to eradicate, sanction, or legislate away explicit racial discrimination, the more frustrated activists become when racial equity in outcomes fails to materialize. For example, a recent article reported that out of the 614 billionaires in America, seven are black.<sup>436</sup> Instead of this being a cause for

434 “Commencement Address at Howard University: ‘To Fulfill These Rights,’” American Presidency Project, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/commencement-address-howard-university-fulfill-these-rights>.

435 Linda S. Gottfredson, “Skills Gaps, Not Tests, Make Racial Proportionality Impossible,” *Journal of Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* 6, no. 1 (2000): 129–43, <http://www1.udel.edu/educ/gottfredson/reprints/2000skillsgaps.pdf>; Sowell, *Discrimination and Disparities*; and Charles Murray, *Facing Reality: Two Truths about Race in America* (New York: Encounter Books, 2021).

436 Taylor Nicole Rogers, “There Are 614 Billionaires in the United States, and Only 7 of Them Are Black,” *Insider*, Sep-

celebration (as being a billionaire confers a status that the average American can only imagine in his wildest dreams), the author of the article implies that 'racism' may explain why there aren't more black billionaires. This attitude provides a valuable clue as to the essence of Black Frustration that drives contentious politics. Black Frustration evolves out of simple jealousy, envy, and resentment that blacks (as a group) do not have what whites have (as a group). It can also provide a soothing balm that explains away what are in many cases personal shortcomings and/or failures.<sup>437</sup>

If, after decades of aggressive civil rights enforcement, it becomes increasingly difficult to identify the evil things that white people do to oppress blacks, then the 'obvious' culprit must be rooted in *who white people are*. That is to say, there must be something that is fundamental about *being white* that 'implicitly,' 'invisibly,' or 'systemically' keeps black people down.<sup>438</sup> Following this bizarre logic leads to the equally bizarre creation in universities of "whiteness studies," "white fragility," "white rage," and "white privilege" theory.<sup>439</sup> These academic 'disciplines' are unlike other related fields. Whereas other ethnic studies fields celebrate the achievements of the target group, 'whiteness studies' does just the opposite—pointing out in mind-numbing detail "the pathology of being White."<sup>440</sup> What's more, such studies eschew theorizing and hypothesis testing as "white" methodology, as noted here by Pluckrose and Lindsay and by John McWhorter in his recent book.<sup>441</sup>

Some scholars have argued that blacks are qualitatively different from every other minority group in the relative difficulty with which they can assimilate into the broader American culture. Whereas immigrant groups from Europe (e.g., Italians, Poles, Russian Jews, Greeks) in the late 1920s are included within the general category of 'whites,' some scholars have coined the term 'black exceptionalism' as characterizing a more strict and less permeable color line that restricts blacks more than it does Latinos and Asians from fully assimilating.<sup>442</sup> This, in turn, breeds despair within militant critical race theory, which claims that there is nothing that blacks can do to achieve true equality in a predominant white country.

## WHITE GUILT AND FEALTY

Black Frustration would not gain nearly the traction that it does in American discourse without the assistance of White Guilt and Fealty. White Guilt gives power to Black Frustration.

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tember 4, 2020, <https://www.businessinsider.com/black-billionaires-in-the-united-states-2020-2>.

437 "Stop Using Racism to Excuse Failure, Obama Tells Black America," *Daily Mail*, July 17, 2009, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1200355/We-using-poverty-racism-excuses-failing-achieve-says-Obama-fiery-sermon-black-Americans.html>; and Isaac Peterson, "Featured Speaker Calls Racism 'Blacks' Excuse for Failure," *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder*, March 2, 2016, <https://spokesman-recorder.com/2016/03/02/featured-speaker-calls-racism-blacks-excuse-failure/>.

438 Levinson and Smith, eds., *Implicit Racial Bias*; and Joe R. Feagin, *Systematic Racism: A Theory of Oppression* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

439 Christopher Paslay, *Exploring White Fragility: Debating the Effects of Whiteness Studies on America's Schools* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020); DiAngelo, *White Fragility*; Carol Anderson, *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016); and Paula S. Rothenberg, *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism* (New York: Worth Publishers, 2016).

440 Bruce Bawer, "If You're White, You're Racist. Period.," *FrontPage Magazine*, June 26, 2020, <https://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/2020/06/if-youre-white-youre-racist-period-bruce-bawer/>.

441 John McWhorter, *Woke Racism: How a New Religion Has Betrayed Black America* (New York: Portfolio/Penguin, 2021).

442 David R. Roediger, *Working towards Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2018); and Jack Citrin and David O. Sears, *American Identity and the Politics of Multiculturalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

tration. Shelby Steele, arguably the most prolific writer on the subject, argues that White Guilt is rooted in the erroneous premise that the (positive or negative) fate of black people rests solely in the hands of what whites do or don't do.<sup>443</sup> In other words, whites' lack of enlightenment or cultural competence, white microaggressions, and white ignorance are assumed to directly 'harm' minorities, preventing them from succeeding to the extent that many believe that they should.<sup>444</sup>

White Guilt comprises two elements. The first, according to Steele, is a lack of moral authority felt collectively by whites in the aftermath of the admitted wrongs visited on blacks (and other non-whites) in earlier decades. The second is the literal *terror* whites collectively feel from being suspected of, seen as, or publicly accused of being a 'racist.'

After whites have admitted their wrongdoings as a prelude to historic legislation (see previous section), this moral authority then shifted to non-whites. This resulted in 'non-whiteness' becoming the only qualification for being perceived as an authority on race relations and racism, which is a notion that mimics 'standpoint theory' in the ideology of cultural Marxism.<sup>445</sup> White students (sitting under the teachings of critical race theory) learn that their 'whiteness' *disqualifies* them from having any sort of valid or credible opinion about racial issues that stems from their life observations. In order to gain credibility in the eyes of non-whites, whites learn that they have only two options for how they must relate to non-whites and racial issues: The first option is to adopt a submissive "I-am-here-to-learn-about-your-suffering" posture. To illustrate, we call attention to the "Grievance Studies affair" (Pluckrose and Lindsay chapter) in which fake papers were submitted to and accepted by leading cultural Marxist academic journals. One paper proposed making white male students sit chained and silent during class sessions to make up for their centuries of being listened to (and blacks not being listened to).<sup>446</sup> The second option is to burnish one's 'race bona fides' by adopting the stance of a fiery, hyper-militant, 'take-no-prisoners' cultural Marxist.

Accusing whites of racism is a powerful tool that can be used by non-whites to gain power, influence, advantages, or the ability to publicly shame or humiliate anyone who does not 'toe the line' on political correctness. As Frisby discussed in his three-part essay on racism, accusations of racism can result in whites being forced to make public displays of subservience to violent rioters; being pressured to issue apologies for historical wrongs to minorities; being pressured to apologize for belonging to organizations that at one time were 'too white' or too unabashedly 'southern' in their heritage; or being pressured to issue apologies for publicly saying the wrong thing on racial issues.<sup>447</sup> Likewise, companies

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443 Steele, *White Guilt*; and "Shelby Steele - White GUILT Cause & Effect Beautifully Explained," 161 Exploits, June 12, 2020,

YouTube video, 5:47, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsCaDzHckrl>.

444 Derald Wing Sue et al., "Disarming Racial Microaggressions: Microintervention Strategies for Targets, White Allies, and Bystanders," *American Psychologist* 74, no. 1 (2019): 128–42, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Disarming-racial-microaggressions%3A-strategies-for-Sue-Alsaidi/cd7b31d184c21ea63e3d2408fd701d3d12e1bc>.

445 Wikipedia, s.v. "Standpoint Theory," accessed July 13, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standpoint\\_theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standpoint_theory).

446 James Lindsay, Peter Boghossian, and Helen Pluckrose, "From Dog Rape to White Men in Chains: We Fooled the Biased Academic Left with Fake Studies," *USA Today*, October 10, 2018,

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/voices/2018/10/10/grievance-studies-academia-fake-feminist-hypatia-mein-kampf-racism-column/1575219002/>; and James Lindsay, Peter Boghossian, and Helen Pluckrose, "Academic Grievance Studies and the Corruption of Scholarship," *Areo*, February 10, 2018,

<https://areomagazine.com/2018/10/02/academic-grievance-studies-and-the-corruption-of-scholarship/>.

447 Bruce Thornton, "Free Citizens Do Not Kneel," *FrontPage Magazine*, June 12, 2020,

<https://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/2020/06/free-citizens-do-not-kneel-bruce-thornton/>; Kobbie Vance, "Mississippi

experience pressure to issue public statements in support of social justice in the aftermath of high-profile racial incidents. Companies and businesses are pressured to remove ads that offend the 'woke' or agree without pushback to being reprimanded, suspended, fired, and/or forced out of their jobs.<sup>448</sup>

## IMMATURITY OF YOUTH

Imagine the following scenarios:

1. After hearing a series of lectures on the problems of worldwide poverty and global material inequalities, a group of university undergraduates decides to commandeer a local bank in town using armed weapons. They demand that the bank distribute its assets to poor people in other countries.
2. After watching a series of documentaries on the epidemic of date rapes and sexual abuse of women at fraternity parties, a group of college students form an organization called "Students Against Male Lust" (SAML). They petition clothing

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Officials Apologize for Gross Mistreatment of Native Americans," *Mississippi Public Broadcasting*, May 7, 2021, <https://www.mpbonline.org/blogs/news/mississippi-officials-apologize-for-gross-mistreatment-of-native-americans/>; Vikki Ortiz, "As Evanston Students End 'Elitist' Cotillion, Other Events Remain Strong," *Chicago Tribune*, August 11, 2017, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/evanston/ct-evanston-cotillion-ends-20170809-story.html>; Tasneem Nashrulla, "Actor Ellie Kemper Is under Fire after Photos of Her Being Crowned Queen of a 'Racist And Elitist' Ball Resurfaced," *BuzzFeed News*, June 1, 2021, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/tasneemnashrulla/ellie-kemper-veiled-prophet-ball-queen-racist>; Nicole Chenoweth, "Bachelor's Rachael Kirkconnell SLAMMED for Attending 'Old South' Plantation Party but Cousin Insists She's 'NOT Racist,'" *The Sun*, February 6, 2021, <https://www.thesun.co.uk/tvandshowbiz/13972514/bachelor-rachael-kirkconnell-slammed-old-south-plantation-party-racist/>; Mike Ingram, "How I Confronted the Truth about My Fraternity's Racist History," *Medium*, January 6, 2020, <https://humanparts.medium.com/how-i-confronted-the-truth-about-my-fraternitys-racist-history-2202e05ec08a>; Nik DeCosta-Klipa, "Joe Kennedy Says He Cut Ties with His College Fraternity over Its 'Racist Record,'" *Boston.com*, June 19, 2020, <https://www.boston.com/news/politics/2020/06/19/joe-kennedy-college-fraternity-kappa-alpha-racism/>; Amanda Mitchell, "Controversial *Bachelor* Contestant Rachel Kirkconnell Was One to Watch, but Where Is She Now?," *Parade*, March 15, 2021, <https://parade.com/1147383/amanda-mitchell/who-is-rachael-kirkconnell-the-bachelor/>; Emily McFarlan Miller, "Jen Hatmaker Apologizes for Line in Inaugural Prayer Critiqued as Erasing Native Americans," *Religion News Service*, January 21, 2021, <https://religionnews.com/2021/01/21/jen-hatmaker-apologizes-for-inaugural-prayer-seen-as-erasing-native-americans/>; Jaclyn Hendricks, "Drew Brees' Wife Brittany Issues Apology: 'We Are the Problem,'" *New York Post*, June 7, 2020, <https://nypost.com/2020/06/07/drew-brees-wife-brittany-issues-apology-we-are-the-problem/>; and Nathan Cofnas, "Philosophy Is Being Hijacked by Woke Twitter Mobs," *Quillette*, October 21, 2020, <https://quillette.com/2020/10/21/philosophy-is-being-hijacked-by-woke-twitter-mobs/>.  
448 Sonia Thompson, "Your Brand Shouldn't Stay Silent about the Killing of George Floyd," *Inc.*, June 3, 2020, <https://www.inc.com/sonia-thompson/your-brand-shouldnt-stay-silent-about-killing-of-george-floyd.html>; Hanna Ziady, "Volkswagen Apologizes for Racist Ad," *American Renaissance*, May 21, 2020, <https://www.amren.com/news/2020/05/volkswagen-apologizes-for-racist-ad/>; Alex Winter, "Police Force Warns Officers Who Don't Kneel at Black Lives Matter Rallies That They May Be Targeted by Protesters," *The Sun*, June 14, 2020, <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/11859702/police-force-warns-kneel-blm-targeted/>; Harriet Alexander, "Radio Broadcaster, 26, Is Fired for Referring to Senator Kamala Harris as America's 'First Colored Vice Presidential Candidate,'" *Daily Mail*, August 21, 2020, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8651119/News-anchor-fired-referring-Kamala-Harris-colored-vice-presidential-candidate.html>; Stephen Shemilt, "Ollie Robinson: England Bowler Suspended for Historical Tweets," *BBC*, June 6, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/sport/cricket/57379184>; and Andrew Limbong, "Country Star Morgan Wallen Suspended by Label, Dropped by Radio, CMT after Using Slur," *NPR*, February 3, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/03/963664999/country-star-morgan-wallen-suspended-by-label-dropped-by-radio-cmt-after-using-s>.

stores to stop selling provocative women's clothing because doing so contributes to the epidemic of male sexual assaults against women.

3. A group of graduate students are fed up with the air pollution caused by textile factories in India.<sup>449</sup> They start a series of petitions on campus to boycott the classes of Indian professors at their university and have promised to stop only after their list of 15 demands are met.

Most readers would find these fictitious scenarios utterly ridiculous. Yet, how are they qualitatively different from *actual incidents* where groups of young people at Evergreen College, for example, demanded that all white students, faculty, and staff observe a 'Day of Absence' by not showing up to campus?<sup>450</sup> Or, UNC-Chapel Hill students demanding that campus police not participate in assisting students with residence hall move-in activities in order to create a 'safer space' for black students on campus?<sup>451</sup> Or, black students from the University of Missouri demanding that the sitting campus president compose a hand-written apology and hold a press conference acknowledging his 'white privilege'?<sup>452</sup>

Young people can have a tremendous impact on the world.<sup>453</sup> To ambitious entrepreneurs, there are obscene amounts of money to be made by tapping into the explosive passions of youth culture, as anyone who was around when Elvis Presley, the Beatles, or Michael Jackson exploded on the world stage can attest.

The problem with many youths, however, is *immaturity* (yes, we said it). In its broadest sense, this refers not only to developmental immaturity but also to *intellectual immaturity*. All human beings, at various points in life, are developmentally immature. The purpose of secondary and post-secondary education, however, is to help young people grow up into intellectual maturity, even if this leads to drastically different worldviews in adulthood. Here, 'being smart' is not synonymous with 'cultivating wisdom.'

While young people have the privilege of attending school, they are expected to grapple with and debate the answers to ancient, fundamental questions about individual and collective virtue—as well as to explore what it means to be a good citizen in society. Immature students think and behave as if these questions have already been decisively settled, and as if being young and idealistic certifies them as being in full possession of moral truth. The problem, however, is that many young students haven't a clue as to how to defend the positions they hold, simply because they have had no sustained exposure to contrary ideas. This is why immature students can become *literally enraged or unhinged* when confronted with well-articulated positions with which they disagree.<sup>454</sup> To the im-

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449 "Various Pollutants Released into Environment by Textile Industry," *Fibre2Fashion*, May 2012, <https://www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/6262/various-pollutants-released-into-environment-by-textile-industry>.

450 Charlotte Allen, "The Appalling Protests at Evergreen State College," *Washington Examiner*, June 9, 2017, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/weekly-standard/the-appalling-protests-at-evergreen-state-college>.

451 Mike LaChance, "UNC-Chapel Hill Student Group Demands an Alert When White Supremacists Are on Campus," *Legal Insurrection*, July 26, 2021, <https://legalinsurrection.com/2021/07/unc-chapel-hill-student-group-demands-an-alert-when-white-supremacists-are-on-campus/>.

452 Brad Crawford, "Here's the List of Demands from Mizzou's Protesting Athletes, Students," *Saturday Down South*, 2015, <https://www.saturdaydownsouth.com/mizzou-football/heres-list-demands-mizzous-protesting-athletes-students/>.

453 Emmie Martin and Melissa Stanger, "The Most Powerful People under 30," *Insider*, March 9, 2015, <https://www.businessinsider.com/most-powerful-people-under-30-2015-2>.

454 Andrew Hiyama, "Protesters Grapple with Charles Murray's Appearance on Campus," *Michigan Daily*, October 11, 2017, <https://www.michigandaily.com/campus-life/protestors-grapple-charles-murrays-appearance-campus>

mature, ideas that threaten orthodoxy must be shouted down, eradicated, condemned, or censored.

It is a mark of a healthy classroom when students disagree with one another. In classrooms immersed in social justice ideology, dogmas about race—and the social enforcement of these dogmas—are mistaken for ideological consensus.<sup>455</sup> Respected professors will endorse the creation of a toxic classroom atmosphere on racial issues that upsets students to the point of sullen silence, anger, and/or tears, and then ‘spin’ such actions as pedagogically *necessary* in order to force students to confront their ‘white privilege’ and ‘unconscious racism.’<sup>456</sup>

Being young naturally entails having a limited perspective about the world. Today’s young adults fall in love with American politicians who extol the wonderful benefits of socialism, and yet they have no knowledge of what it is like to grow up in socialist Venezuela or communist Cuba.<sup>457</sup> At the time of this writing, for example, 17-26-year-olds were born between the years 1997-2007. These young people take for granted what took decades to accomplish during the years before they were even born (or even before their parents were born). While it has taken countless marches, police arrests, lengthy state and Supreme Court legal battles, landmark federal legislation, and even numerous deaths to expel race out of public civic life and education, *it has only taken the publication of a few relatively recent best-selling books to thrust race back into the forefront of civic life.*

Today’s generation has grown up with a two-term African American president, as well as continuous exposure to African American mayors, police chiefs, school superintendents, state governors, congresspersons, senators, cabinet officials, secretaries of state, attorneys general, and a vice president. Today’s TV and internet generation sees black millionaire (and less often, billionaire) entertainers, athletes, musicians, and movie stars as commonplace. To young ears, being told that racial group disparities in outcomes has little or nothing to do with ‘racism,’ ‘prejudice,’ or ‘discrimination’ comes as a shock and is anathema to current ‘woke’ sensibilities.

The immature (whether chronologically younger or older) want what they want when they want it (which is yesterday), and have difficulty delaying instant gratification in deference to future goals. The world revolves around their wants and needs, and they have difficulty imagining the devastating future consequences of their destructive actions in the present.

The immature feel that they will be young forever, and do not imagine themselves being

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455 William Deresiewicz, “On Political Correctness,” *American Scholar*, March 6, 2017, [https://theamericanscholar.org/on-political-correctness/#.WSnd\\_xPyvUJ](https://theamericanscholar.org/on-political-correctness/#.WSnd_xPyvUJ).

456 Derald Wing Sue, “Race Talk: The Psychology of Racial Dialogues,” *American Psychologist* 68, no. 8 (2013): 663–72, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a00333681>; Derald Wing Sue et al., “Racial Dialogues: Challenges Faculty of Color Face in the Classroom,” *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 17, no. 3 (2011): 331–40, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024190>; and Derald Wing Sue et al., “Racial Microaggressions and Difficult Dialogues on Race in the Classroom,” *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 15, no. 2 (2009): 183–90, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014191>.

457 Kathleen Elkins, “Most Young Americans Prefer Socialism to Capitalism, New Report Finds,” *CNBC*, August 14, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/08/14/fewer-than-half-of-young-americans-are-positive-about-capitalism.html>; Jarrett Stepman, “This Man Grew Up in Venezuela. Here’s His Message to Americans Who Want Socialism,” *Intellectual Takeout*, May 3, 2019, <https://www.intellectualtakeout.org/article/man-grew-venezuela-heres-his-message-americans-who-want-socialism/>; and Mary Margaret Olohan, “Here’s What Life Is Like Living in Communist Cuba,” *Daily Caller*, February 4, 2020, <https://dailycaller.com/2020/02/04/cuba-communism-tpusa-socialism/>.

beholden to house mortgages, screaming infants needing their diapers changed, or dealing with healthcare or Medicare bills. After all, Rolling Stones front-man Mick Jagger famously remarked to *People* magazine in 1975 (at the age of 32) that he would rather be dead than sing 'Satisfaction' when he is 45.<sup>458</sup> At the time of this writing, Jagger is 81 and is still getting no satisfaction.<sup>459</sup>

In their essay, Pluckrose and Lindsay argue rightly that nearly all people desire to live in a society that is just—even if not everyone takes the time to think through the implications of this word. Many also believe, however, that achieving a perfectly just society will never occur this side of heaven. Even if we sequester the belief in heaven to the province of religious thought, even secular thinkers believe that the inherent flaws of human nature effectively shatter such pipe dreams, and that the most that can be achieved are miniscule improvements here and there, if at all.<sup>460</sup>

Alarmed scholars often assume, incorrectly, that exposing the Marxist roots of social justice and critical race theory would be enough to frighten young people away from embracing such ideas. Yet this has proven to be wrong. Due to youth, inexperience, immaturity, and a negligent educational system, many young people couldn't care less that certain ideas spring from the womb of classical or cultural Marxism. The oft-repeated truism that 'those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it' falls on deaf ears.

## AN IRRESPONSIBLE MEDIA

Wilfred Reilly's penetrating essay reminds readers how easily consumers can be frightened and manipulated by a media that distorts information to promote racially-charged narratives. This requires a certain degree of manufactured sensationalism. To hook readers, TV, print, and internet media publish salacious, attention-grabbing headlines that are most likely to instantly attract viewer attention. In the visual medium of the internet, this is called 'clickbait.'<sup>461</sup> In his chapters on racism and the Implicit Association Test, Frisby discusses how the word 'racism' instantly attracts eyeballs to newspaper headlines, yet the associated stories connected to these headlines tend to be both shallow and ill-informed.

Due to blatant media bias, there is little to no healthy skepticism among the general public about the accuracy of the nationwide 'epidemic-of-racism' narrative in policing.<sup>462</sup> The names Michael Brown, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Trayvon Martin are easily recognizable to middle America as belonging to the 'Mount Rushmore of Racist Victimhood' in popular narratives on miscarriages of 'racial justice.'<sup>463</sup> In contrast, the names Tony Timpa, Daniel Shaver, and Jeffery Tevis are not as likely to be recognized—simply because these three were *white victims* of alleged wrongful police shootings.<sup>464</sup> So too are the names

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458 Lynn Yaeger, "Happy 72nd Birthday, Mick Jagger!," *Vogue*, July 26, 2015, <https://www.vogue.com/article/mick-jagger-birthday>.

459 "Rolling Stones Tickets," *Vivid Seats*, accessed July 13, 2021, [https://www.vividseats.com/rolling-stones-tickets/performer/738?vkid=20587483&utm\\_source=msn&utm\\_medium=cp-c&utm\\_campaign=50053510&utm\\_term=rolling%20stones%20concert%202021](https://www.vividseats.com/rolling-stones-tickets/performer/738?vkid=20587483&utm_source=msn&utm_medium=cp-c&utm_campaign=50053510&utm_term=rolling%20stones%20concert%202021).

460 Thomas Sowell, *A Conflict of Visions: Ideological Origins of Political Struggles* (New York: Basic Books, 2007).

461 "Clickbait," *Slangit*, accessed July 13, 2021, <https://slangit.com/meaning/clickbait>.

462 Rav Arora, "Narrative before Facts," *City Journal*, January 26, 2021, <https://www.city-journal.org/police-shootings-media-role-narrative-before-facts>.

463 Jared Taylor, "Opinion: George Floyd One Year Later," *Prescott eNews*, June 5, 2021, <https://prescottnews.com/index.php/2021/06/05/opinion-george-floyd-one-year-later/>.

464 Chelsea J. Carter and Dave Alsop, "Dallas Police Body Cam Footage Shows Officers Mocking a Man Who Later

Fredrick Scott, Justin Tyran Roberts, or Charles Edward Turner not as likely to be instantly recognized.<sup>465</sup> These are examples of black criminals who victimized whites, and who displayed open and unambiguous anti-white racial animus while committing their crimes.

As reported by journalist Jason Riley, the eminent economist and social philosopher Dr. Thomas Sowell was asked by an interviewer how he, as a black conservative, has dealt with criticism from fellow blacks (who tend to overwhelmingly identify with, as well as support, the liberal Democratic Party).<sup>466</sup> In true Sowellian fashion, Sowell challenged the premise of the question. Sowell argued that the question implicitly assumed that hostility toward his writings stems from critics' perceptions that conservative ideas are fundamentally antagonistic to blacks' best interests. The reality, however, is that criticism of Sowell's contrarian ideas comes from *African-American intellectuals*, or more generally, *African-American elites* (civil rights activists, politicians, journalists, and academics). The popular media reflexively consults such elites whenever racial incidents dominate the news. In both Sowell's personal experience and in his research, 'everyday' African-Americans tend to share his common-sense views on a variety of hot-button issues (welfare, charter schools, vouchers, religious values on the definition of marriage, to name a few) affecting blacks. Yet, the popular media, with very few exceptions, is slow to promote these ideas nationally.<sup>467</sup>

## COMPROMISED EDUCATORS

Education scholars have long debated what the most important objective of secondary schools, specifically, and the schooling process, generally, should be.<sup>468</sup> Most agree that the purpose of schooling should be to prepare citizens for success in their future jobs and careers. With respect to the academic curriculum (e.g., reading, language arts, math, science, social studies, vocational education), most schools provide adequate instruction in these areas. Unfortunately, the process of educating becomes considerably more difficult as educators are forced to grapple with deleterious learning behaviors and attitudes of students, and the grim social conditions that shape behaviors as students progress through school.<sup>469</sup>

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Died," *CNN*, August 2, 2019,

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/02/us/dallas-police-body-cam-footage-captures-death/index.html>; Erik Ortiz, "Daniel Shaver Shooting: Ex-Arizona Police Officer Acquitted of Murder," *NBC News*, December 8, 2017,

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/daniel-shaver-shooting-ex-arizona-police-officer-not-guilty-murder-n827641>; and Matt Walsh, "Over 500 White People Have Been Killed by Cops since 2020. There Has Been No Rioting over Those Deaths," *Daily Wire*, <https://www.dailywire.com/news/walsh-over-500-white-people-have-been-killed-by-cops-since-2020-there-has-been-no-rioting-over-those-deaths>.

<sup>465</sup> Bill Lukitsch, "Accused Serial Killer Is Mentally Incompetent, Judge Rules," *Kansas City Star*, June 14, 2021,

<https://www.kansascity.com/news/local/crime/article252110913.html>; Tim Chitwood, "'I Had to Have Him.' Columbus Police Say Weekend Shooting Spree Was Racially Motivated," *Ledger-Enquirer*, June 14, 2021,

<https://www.ledger-enquirer.com/news/local/crime/article252097433.html>; and Cassandra Fairbanks, "Racist Black Man Stabs 12-Year-Old Boy in the Neck at McDonald's while Ranting about 'White Devils,'" *Gateway Pundit*, March 22, 2021, <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/03/racist-black-man-stabs-12-year-old-boy-neck-mcdonalds-ranting-white-devils/>.

<sup>466</sup> Jason L. Riley, "The Soul of Black Conservatism," *Wall Street Journal*, May 29, 2021,

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-soul-of-black-conservatism-11622226565?>

<sup>467</sup> "'Hannity' Special on African American Conservatives - COMPLETE - 4-8-13," *Conservative Outlook*, April 9, 2013, YouTube video, 40:51, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wn4ve4jh83w>.

<sup>468</sup> Liane Brouillette, *A Geology of School Reform: The Successive Restructurings of a School District* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996); and David F. Labaree, *The Trouble with Ed Schools* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

<sup>469</sup> Robert Weissberg, *Bad Students, Not Bad Schools* (New York: Routledge, 2017); and Charles M. Payne, *So Much*

In many educational settings in which racial/ethnic minority (particularly black and Hispanic) students are the majority, this simple objective of preparing students for the future can seem almost insurmountable.<sup>470</sup> In integrated educational settings in which racial/ethnic minority students form a ‘critical mass,’ behavior/discipline problems and academic failure become ‘color coded’—which is a source of searing embarrassment and hand-wringing among educators.<sup>471</sup>

Many education researchers and hardworking educators will pursue common-sense, ‘mainstream’ interventions to combat these difficult problems.<sup>472</sup> Sadly, other troubled schools appear to ‘throw up their hands’ and succumb to the siren song of social justice ideology.<sup>473</sup> Whether the motivation for these efforts is to improve minority academic performance or simply to appear more progressive varies from setting to setting and person to person.

What is clear is that CRT and its offshoots are extremely seductive to exasperated educators who have experienced many decades of frustration in their attempts to educate vulnerable minority students.

## CONTENTIOUS NATIONAL POLITICS

No society on Earth is completely homogeneous racially, ethnically, or linguistically. There is nothing unusual about ethno-political conflicts among racial/ethnic groups in societies around the globe.<sup>474</sup> As Bradley Campbell and Eric Kaufmann remind us in this volume, it would be *truly bizarre if there were no ethno-political conflicts within a given society*. All pluralistic societies struggle with how to accommodate multiculturalism.<sup>475</sup> To what extent, for example, should nations insist on a common national identity? What should be the glue that holds society together? Should societies insist on a common language, or should they accommodate multiple languages? How should a society balance the equal treatment of individuals with special exemptions, rights, or entitlements to groups? Should the state be ‘difference-blind’ to the racial/ethnic identities of its members, or should it recognize and promote these identities? To what extent should a nation value objective merit, when the application of this principle results in unequal representation and outcomes between groups? Canada’s solution to these vexing questions differs from

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*Reform, So Little Change: The Persistence of Failure in Urban Schools* (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2008).

470 Kathryn M. Neckerman, *Schools Betrayed: Roots of Failure in Inner-City Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); “14 Inner City Public Schools Problems: Are They Failing & Bad?,” Check4Lead, November 25, 2019, <https://www.check4lead.com/inner-city-public-schools-problems/>; and A. Teacher, *What It Is Like to Teach in Failing Schools: A Memoir, an Inquiry, and a Critique* (self-pub., CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016).

471 Heather Mac Donald, “Undisciplined,” *City Journal*, Summer 2012,

<https://www.city-journal.org/html/undisciplined-13485.html>; and Heather Mac Donald, “Who Misbehaves?,” *City Journal*, April 6, 2018,

<https://www.city-journal.org/html/who-misbehaves-15811.html>; and Janet Ward Schofield, *Black and White in School: Trust, Tension, or Tolerance?* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1989).

472 David Whitman, *Sweating The Small Stuff: Inner-City Schools and the New Paternalism* (Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2008); Thomas Sowell, *Charter Schools and Their Enemies* (New York: Basic Books, 2020); Craig L. Frisby, *Meeting the Psychoeducational Needs of Minority Students: Evidence-Based Guidelines for School Psychologists and Other School Personnel* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2013); and Jim Horn, *Work Hard, Be Hard: Journeys Through “No Excuses” Teaching* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

473 Benson and Fiarman, *Unconscious Bias*; and Christopher F. Rufo, “Failure Factory,” *City Journal*, February 23, 2021, <https://www.city-journal.org/buffalo-public-schools-critical-race-theory-curriculum>.

474 Joseph R. Rudolph, Jr., ed., *Encyclopedia of Modern Ethnic Conflicts* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2016); and Karl Cordell and Stefan Wolff, *Ethnic Conflict* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010).

475 Citrin and Sears, *American Identity*.

Japan's solution, which in turn differs from Great Britain's solution and India's solution.

For better or worse, the primary objective of the politician is to accrue enough votes to beat his opponent and win elections. To the extent that this can be done using 'whatever means necessary' is, unfortunately, an all-too-common template followed by the campaign staffs of even the noblest of politicians. If, in order to achieve victory, a politician must stoke constituents' nativism, their sense of grievances or entitlements, their racial/ethnic prides or prejudices, or their sense that other groups are out to oppress them, then he will do this.<sup>476</sup>

Unfortunately, 'racism,' 'racial equity,' 'social justice,' 'diversity training,' 'implicit bias,' 'black lives matter,' 'white fragility,' and 'white privilege' are radioactive concepts that are much too valuable not to be used in political campaigns.<sup>477</sup> One recent presidential candidate even admitted publicly that questioning the racial motives of an opponent in a televised debate was little more than a slick debate tactic.<sup>478</sup>

At the time of this writing, at least five states have signed into law a ban on critical race theory instruction in schools, and similar legislation has been proposed in at least 22 states.<sup>479</sup> This debate has gotten so contentious that one group wants teachers to wear body cameras to ensure that critical race theory is kept out of schools.<sup>480</sup>

CRT supporters argue that it is 'necessary to help Americans understand the historic influence of race and methods for undoing modern day racism.'<sup>481</sup> They believe that a ban on teaching CRT is an insidious effort to whitewash American history and is more harmful to students in the long run.<sup>482</sup> They also claim that CRT 'maps the nature and workings of 'institutional racism.'<sup>483</sup> According to a spokesperson for New America, a public policy think tank, "protecting education means being honest about the parts of our history that hurt, particularly chattel slavery, and being proactive in ensuring that we end current reproductions of racism and inequity in classrooms and beyond."<sup>484</sup>

Our position on this matter is clear, as gleaned from the content of this book. As educators, we believe that controversial ideas should be aggressively and openly debated.

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476 Charlton D. McIlwain and Stephen M. Caliendo, *Race Appeal: How Candidates Invoke Race in U.S. Political Campaigns* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011).

477 "Race in Our Politics: A Catalog of Campaign Materials," Campaign Legal Center, accessed July 13, 2021, <https://campaignlegal.org/race-our-politics-catalog-campaign-materials>.

478 Ben Bowles, "Acting! Kamala Harris Admits Her Near-Tearful Attack on Biden during Debate Was Pure Theatrics," *Liberty Unyielding*, August 12, 2020, <https://libertyunyielding.com/2020/08/12/acting-kamala-harris-admits-her-near-tearful-attack-on-biden-during-debate-was-pure-theatrics/>.

479 Char Adams, Allan Smith, and Aadit Tambe, "Map: See Which States Have Passed Critical Race Theory Bills," *NBC News*, June 17, 2021, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/map-see-which-states-have-passed-critical-race-theory-bills-n1271215>.

480 Daniel Villarreal, "Nevada Family Alliance Wants Teachers to Wear Body Cameras to Keep Critical Race Theory Out of Schools," *Newsweek*, June 10, 2021, <https://www.newsweek.com/nevada-family-alliance-wants-teachers-wear-body-cameras-keep-critical-race-theory-out-schools-1599233>.

481 Villarreal, "Nevada Family Alliance."

482 Divya Kishore, "Critical Race Theory: Full List of States That Have Banned Teaching of CRT," *MEA WorldWide*, June 15, 2021, <https://meawww.com/critical-race-theory-full-list-of-states-that-have-banned-teaching-of-crt-anti-racism>.

483 Jack Dutton, "Critical Race Theory Is Banned in These States," *Newsweek*, June 11, 2021,

<https://www.newsweek.com/critical-race-theory-banned-these-states-1599712>.

484 Kishore, "Critical Race Theory."

Well-articulated views should be allowed an open airing and should be subjected to careful clarification when necessary. Debaters should insist that important terms be carefully defined, that verifiable data be presented to support arguments, that alternative interpretations of data be offered, and that criteria for falsification be clearly articulated.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

All of these observations help explain how we got here. Now we ask the next logical question: *Where do we go from here?* We certainly do not have the collective expertise to dictate public policy or to influence local, state, or national legislation regarding what schools and colleges teach. These decisions are determined by a complex web of factors that lie far beyond our control. However, we do believe that there are seven principles that should guide future discussions on the topic of white fragility and related ideologies.

### 1. Reality Reframes and Clarifies Who the Combatants Really Are

The central topic of this series, white fragility, often generates intense levels of guilt, rage, vitriol, defensiveness, and fear because it is superficially framed as reflecting a fundamental war between blacks and whites. Active fringe groups in American society certainly exist—some extreme and others not so extreme—who ‘cut their teeth’ on stoking racial conflict for political ends. These groups would have us believe that whites are angry and defensive at the message of DiAngelo’s *White Fragility*, while blacks are relieved that their concerns are being heard.

Although this series necessarily discusses ‘hot-button’ issues that frequently lead to racially charged disputes, we urge audiences to recognize the deeper message that binds all chapters in this book. Each chapter, in its own way, urges readers to appreciate the crucial difference between careful scientific and historical analyses and superficial analyses promoted by trendy movements in contemporary society. We defend the careful study of history as it actually unfolded, which tells a much different story than recent attempts to rewrite history for political ends. We defend basic psychometric principles for evaluating assessment tools, which undermine superficial impressions of what assessments purportedly measure. We defend the existence of recurring trends in historical movements that do not fundamentally change despite bearing different names—which in turn exposes the tendency to mischaracterize today’s trendy concepts as new or original. We encourage readers to carefully distinguish between the pretty words behind noble-sounding social movements and hard, empirical analyses of their real-world results.

This contrast is not ‘race-coded,’ where all whites line up on one side and all blacks line up on the other side. There are whites who are militant anti-racists and CRT advocates, as well as blacks who are vehemently opposed to the many forms of social justice ideology.<sup>485</sup> The elements that divide these two groups go much deeper than skin color. The real dividing line is a stark difference in how one weighs the importance of contrasting principles; the carefulness and accuracy with which history, facts, and data are interpreted; as well as how hidden assumptions are identified and dealt with when attempting to reason clearly and logically. We urge readers not to be fooled by efforts to superficially ‘racialize’

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485 Elizabeth Denevi and Lori Cohen, “White Antiracist Activists,” *Teaching While White*, <https://www.teachingwhile-white.org/resources/white-antiracist-activists>; Coleman Hughes, “How to Be an Anti-Intellectual,” *City Journal*, October 27, 2019, <https://www.city-journal.org/how-to-be-an-antiracist>; and McWhorter, *Woke Racism*.

these important debates. One writer even notes the irony that opposition to social justice ideology actually *unites* supporters of racially diverse backgrounds!<sup>486</sup>

## 2. Social Justice Ideology is Unfalsifiable, and Therefore Unscientific

Social justice is, in sum, a closed system—closed to outside ideas and quick to persecute dissenters. As mentioned in the series opening, whites are considered by social justice ideology to be racist if they admit to being racists, and whites are racists if they deny being racists. Any innocent remark uttered by a white person can be construed as an insidious microaggression which hides nefarious racist ideas. As John McWhorter repeatedly notes, social justice is in this way more akin to a messianic religion than an empirical social science; indeed, it is a threat to science.<sup>487</sup> This closed system might make sense if experts knew the answers to problems of racial inequity, in the same way that civil engineers know how to build bridges. Unfortunately, as much of this book demonstrates, on concepts ranging from microaggressions to the use of the Implicit Association Test, “experts” have simply refused to consult and incorporate empirically verifiable knowledge. Likewise, as Thomas Sowell showed two decades ago, affirmative action enjoys wide support among elites; yet in multiple societies the empirical record indicates that having different standards for different people nearly always does more harm than good.<sup>488</sup> In fact, color-blind merit systems were central demands of the Civil Rights movement and key drivers of 20<sup>th</sup>-century successes in the U.S. and across the West.<sup>489</sup> They also continue to hold vast support among the public, as recently shown by the lopsided failure of California’s Proposition 16, discussed by Maranto in Chapter 16. It turns out that most non-elite Californians of all races want their doctors, engineers, and other professionals to show technical merit rather than demographic representation.

Unfortunately, in contemporary academia, even making these points can put one’s job at risk. This means that at least in the short run, we cannot have reasoned discussions about race without first having discussions about free speech and free inquiry in order to make it safe to talk about race rationally and scientifically. The purveyors of cancel culture, the vast majority of whom are white, claim to be racial saviors. Before race relations can be improved, cancel culture must be ended, so that people of knowledge and good will can discuss racial and other issues without fear. As Wilfred Reilly writes in Chapter 5, “to counter the predictable effect of popular falsehoods . . . it is imperative that those of us that are aware of reality do something quite difficult, unpopular, and necessary—that is, openly say taboo things that are true.”<sup>490</sup> We might add that most of the contributors to this volume are tenured professors, and the whole point of tenure is to enjoy the academic freedom to be able to write and say unpopular things in the pursuit of truth, as Keith E. Whittington reminds us in *Speak Freely: Why Universities Must Defend Free Speech*.<sup>491</sup> In short, why have tenure if you are not going to use it? As more people say more things that are objectionable to the woke, doing so will become safer—and the supporters of social

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486 Helen Raleigh, “Believe It or Not, Critical Race Theory Is Uniting Us,” *Newsweek*, August 3, 2021, <https://www.newsweek.com/believe-it-not-critical-race-theory-uniting-us-opinion-1615252>.

487 John McWhorter, “The Elect: The Threat to a Progressive America from Anti-Black Antiracists,” *Substack: It Bears Mentioning*, February 9, 2021, <https://johnmcwhorter.substack.com/p/the-elect-neoracists-posing-as-antiracists-e2f>.

488 Sowell, *Affirmative Action*.

489 Yascha Mounk, “Saving Meritocracy,” *Persuasion*, July 31, 2021, <https://www.persuasion.community/p-saving-meritocracy>.

490 Reilly, *Taboo*.

491 Whittington, *Speak Freely*.

justice ideology will be forced to use reason rather than intimidation. Through debate and dialogue rather than censorship, we all might find workable solutions.

### **3. Equal Treatment Does Not Necessarily Result in Equal Outcomes**

The engine that drives America's racism industry runs on frustration, anxiety, and concern over racial group differences in important outcomes. The woke argue that this *must* be due to the different varieties of racism (e.g., 'invisible,' 'systemic,' 'unconscious,' 'microaggressions,' etc.) that are most assuredly ubiquitous, despite not being seen. The sad reality, though, is that as long as these differences are alleged to exist, there will always be a market for the racism industry.

At the time of this writing, the 2020/2021 Olympics has just concluded. There is no enterprise that better promotes objective standards than Olympic-caliber competition. For years, athletes around the world understand that there is only one standard to prepare for, and that standard involves doing something better, faster, stronger, longer, or higher than other competitors. Olympic measuring standards are precise to the hundredth of seconds, inches, or averaged numerical ratings by expert judges, which is necessary in order to objectively and clearly determine medal rankings. No matter the color, nationality, religion, or language, all Olympic athletes within their individual disciplines know what behaviors are required to meet objective standards. Athletes know that they must be focused, alert, disciplined, able to delay gratification, able to withstand physical pain, and able to make current sacrifices for the sake of future gains. Nearly everyone understands and values the underlying principles of hard work and fair competition embedded in the Olympic tradition.

In athletics, there are only three explanations for why one athlete does not do as well as another: (1) the losing athlete did not train as hard as the winning athlete; (2) both athletes trained equally hard, but the winning athlete has better inborn athletic ability, resulting in better scores; or (3) the judges' evaluation standards were purposely slanted in order to disadvantage the lower-performing athlete.

Using this athletic analogy as a foundation, the racism industry in America overwhelmingly casts its lot with the third explanation. In addition, it has distorted the first two explanations for its own political ends, to wit: (1) the losing athlete did not have the opportunity to train as hard as the winning athlete, therefore the competition itself is inherently unfair; and (2) the concept of one person's superior 'inborn athletic ability' is 'racist.'

The reality of average subpopulation differences in psychological traits—as well as the wide variety *within* subpopulation groups—is a basic scientific fact that will be true as long as human beings reside on Earth.<sup>492</sup> As long as cultural Marxists can get audiences to believe that unequal outcomes necessarily connote 'racism,' Marxist concepts such as 'white privilege' will continue to poison society.

The promotion of equal opportunity for all groups, coupled with the hard work of individuals, is the best that any society can offer its citizens. Lowering standards for particular groups, pretending that objective standards are 'racist,' redefining objective standards as culturally/racially 'relative,' or getting rid of standards altogether is a recipe for utter

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<sup>492</sup> Murray, *Human Diversity*.

disaster.<sup>493</sup>

#### 4. Power is a Seductive Motivator

Unfortunately, we must conclude that supporters of social justice ideology do not seek better race relations, better democracy, or even better social science. Rather, they seek *power*, and the all-too-human thrill of telling others what to do—a desire that cuts across ideologies.<sup>494</sup> After all, as the essays by al-Charbi and Maranto on diversity training and microaggressions detail, supporters of social justice have mandated programs to improve race relations that both science and common sense tell us *do not work*.

This should come as no surprise, for two key reasons. First, power corrupts. As we are reminded by the *Federalist Papers*, and more recently by the rise of censorship among universities and publishers (which until recently tended to support free inquiry), basic human nature enjoys censoring others with whom one disagrees. Naturally, intellectuals take special joy in censoring those with unpopular ideas, particularly those competing for academic jobs or publishing contracts.<sup>495</sup> Power motivates those on the left who seek to impose social justice as orthodoxy, but we must also acknowledge psychological motives—people simply dislike having others question their views. This is all the more true of young people, who, as noted previously, often lack the maturity to interact civilly with ideological opponents.<sup>496</sup> After all, there are deeply rooted psychological reasons why people and whole organizations fall prey to *groupthink*, prioritizing agreement over reasoned debate.<sup>497</sup>

As John McWhorter observes, social justice supporters can go years, or even decades, without having their views seriously questioned (particularly those who exist within the safe, comforting cocoon of the ivory tower). They are thus neither willing, nor emotionally or cognitively able, to debate, preferring instead to denounce and intimidate opponents.<sup>498</sup> Intimidation via charges of 'racism' is hardly new. Thomas Sowell detailed such power plays by (mainly white) radicals at Cornell a half century ago.<sup>499</sup> Today, social media has further enabled these methods, which are now uninhibited by traditional religious

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493 Michael Reagan, "Dumbing Down Our Kids of Color," *Jewish World Review*, August 20, 2021, <https://www.jewishworldreview.com/michael/reagan082021.php>; John McWhorter, "'Acting White' Remains a Barrier for Black Education," *Reason*, October 8, 2014,

<https://reason.com/2014/10/08/acting-white-remains-a-barrier-for-black/>; Julie Marquis, "Doctor Becomes Symbol in Affirmative Action Debate," *Los Angeles Times*, September 2, 1997,

<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1997-sep-02-mn-28080-story.html>; Luke Rosiak, "Activists Want to Abolish Your Kid's Honors Classes, Cite 'White Toxicity' and 'Supremacist' Values of High Achievement," *Daily Caller*, October 31, 2019,

<https://dailycaller.com/2019/10/31/honors-classes-math-racist-activists/>; and Luke Rosiak, "As Colleges Move to Do Away with the SAT in the Name of Diversity, Detroit High School Valedictorian Struggles with Low-Level Math," *Tennessee Star*, December 5, 2019, <https://tennesseestar.com/2019/12/05/as-colleges-move-to-do-away-with-the-sat-in-the-name-of-diversity-detroit-high-school-valedictorian-struggles-with-low-level-math/>.

494 Joseph H. Manson, "Right-Wing Authoritarianism, Left-Wing Authoritarianism, and Pandemic-Mitigation Authoritarianism," *Personality and Individual Differences* 167 (2020): <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110251>.

495 Claire Lehmann et al., eds., "Panics and Persecutions: 20 Quillette Tales of Excommunication in the Digital Age," *Quillette*, <https://quillette.com/panics-and-persecutions-20-quillette-tales-of-excommunication-in-the-digital-age/>.

496 Lukianoff and Haidt, *Coddling of the American Mind*.

497 Paul't Hart, "Irving L. Janis' Victims of Groupthink," *Political Psychology* 12, no. 2 (June 1991): 247–78, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3791464>.

498 John McWhorter, "Kendi and Diangelo Don't Debate People Like Me," *Substack: It Bears Mentioning*, August 6, 2021,

<https://johnmcwhorter.substack.com/p/kendi-and-diangelo-dont-debate-people?>

499 Sowell, *Black Education*.

morality emphasizing forgiveness rather than denunciation.

## 5. Stop Doing What Fails

We believe that the key lesson of this book is that when you find yourself in a hole, stop digging. Empirical evidence fails to support techniques which the woke promise will improve race relations, including diversity training (Chapter 9), microaggressions (Chapter 10), the IAT (Chapters 11-13), and CRT-based teaching (Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 17). Billions of dollars have been poured into these failing efforts. We must stop wasting public funds on policies which *do not work*. Unfortunately, as discussed earlier, there are forces which will administer life support to these dying practices because they are politically useful.

Ending public support for such practices might lead the far larger private sector to follow. Here conservatives share the blame, both for lacking the courage to point out progressive failures, but also for neglecting to offer plausible alternatives. Of course, the Edmund Burke conservative approach is to accept that social change is slow, that intergroup inequities caused by past discrimination will take generations of color-blind policies to fade away. Yet Americans are and always have been people in a hurry.<sup>500</sup> Burke was realistic, but insufficiently idealistic for Americans. Conservatives must accept that policies intended to reduce racial inequities will happen because elites demand them: accordingly, we should encourage policies which help rather than harm society.

## 6. Failure to Heed Reasonable Warnings Will Lead to Lawsuits

Many claim that “woke” ideology functions like a secular religion.<sup>501</sup> While there can be reasonable arguments as to the appropriateness and accuracy of this analogy, the central idea communicated by this criticism is that woke ideology is impervious to facts that clearly contradict it.<sup>502</sup> While the arguments presented in this text may be persuasive to some, the same arguments mean absolutely nothing to hardcore woke ideologues, many of whom are motivated by the need to maintain ideological purity. *However, there is no better wake-up call to the dangers of woke excesses like an expensive lawsuit.*

At the time of this writing, we searched Google News and used the search terms ‘CRT,’ ‘critical race theory,’ ‘social justice,’ ‘ethnic studies,’ ‘white fragility,’ ‘DEI,’ ‘diversity,’ ‘lawsuit,’ ‘court case,’ and ‘sued.’ Our search led to 16 articles concerning legal challenges brought against woke ideology, published online between 2020 to 2021.<sup>503</sup>

In one case, a teacher in Evanston, Illinois filed a landmark civil rights lawsuit against her school district over the district’s attempt to translate CRT principles into the real world.<sup>504</sup> Included in the facts of the case was the district segregating staff by race for professional development, subjecting students to race-shaming “privilege walks,” instructing teachers

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500 James A. Morone, *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

501 Max Funk, “Wokeism—The New Religion of the West,” *Converge Media*, October 20, 2020, <https://www.convergemedia.org/wokeism-the-new-religion-of-the-west/>.

502 Gene Callahan, “How to Wake up from Woke Ideology,” Intercollegiate Studies Institute, June 22, 2020, <https://isi.org/modern-age/how-to-wake-up-from-woke-ideology/>.

503 We extend special thanks and gratitude to James Paul, who assisted us in locating these references.

504 Max Eden, “A Landmark Civil Rights Lawsuit,” *City Journal*, July 8, 2021, <https://www.city-journal.org/evanston-critical-race-theory-lawsuit-and-the-non-enforcement-of-civil-rights>; and Douglas Belkin and Lee Hawkins, “Can School Be ‘Antiracist’? A New Superintendent in Evanston, Ill., Has a Plan,” *Wall Street Journal*, October 6, 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/can-school-be-antiracist-a-new-superintendent-in-evanston-ill-has-a-plan-11601982001?>

to take race into account in student discipline, and teaching students that treating people equally “helps racism.”

In another case, a senior attending a Las Vegas charter school alleges that a teacher gave him a failing grade in his ‘Sociology of Change’ course, in addition to threatening his ability to graduate, simply because he refused to ‘confess his white privilege’ openly as required by the teacher.<sup>505</sup>

In one lawsuit, a parent accused a school board of holding secret meetings (in violation of transparency principles) for the purposes of promoting diversity agendas that are in opposition to parent and community concerns.<sup>506</sup> School district officials must now provide a defense as to why certain programs—offered under seemingly innocuous titles such as ‘equity work’ or ‘diversity training’—are not covers for CRT indoctrination.<sup>507</sup>

In another lawsuit within a college department that was brought on by a white faculty member, minority faculty members allegedly accused their white colleagues of racism (with no specifics) and demanded that they read and discuss Robin DiAngelo’s *White Fragility*—in addition to reflecting on how ‘white normativity’ plays out in the department.<sup>508</sup>

The issue linking these cases together is that social justice programs create a hostile work environment for white students, educators, and employees. In such environments, dissenters are demoted for objecting to racial segregation stemming from CRT training and are subjected to bullying tactics and violations of their First Amendment rights.<sup>509</sup>

These lawsuits allege that CRT-based policies and practices violate the 14th Amendment’s guarantee of equal protection and Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibit discrimination by race, color or national origin—as well as a host of other antidiscrimination laws that have developed since the 1960s.<sup>510</sup>

Obviously, the issues involved in balancing the free exchange of ideas and the rights of state and local elected officials to make informed decisions about school curricula are complex. One writer distills these complex issues into one simple mantra: that critical

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505 Joshua Dunn, “Critical Race Theory Collides with the Law,” *Courts and Law* 21, no. 4 (May 2021): <https://www.educationnext.org/critical-race-theory-collides-with-law/>.

506 Talia Richman, “Judge Halts Carroll ISD’s Diversity Plan after Opponents Win Temporary Restraining Order,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 4, 2020, <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2020/12/04/judge-halts-carroll-isds-diversity-plan-after-opponents-win-temporary-restraining-order/>.

507 Hannah Natanson, “Top Loudoun School Officials Defend Equity Work against Charges of ‘Critical Race Theory,’” *Washington Post*, June 2, 2021, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/loudoun-schools-critical-race-theory/2021/06/01/641fba8-c2ed-11eb-9a8d-f95d7724967c\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/loudoun-schools-critical-race-theory/2021/06/01/641fba8-c2ed-11eb-9a8d-f95d7724967c_story.html).

508 Kathianne Boniello, “Racial Divide Erupts among Baruch College Professors: Lawsuit,” *New York Post*, September 26, 2020, <https://nypost.com/2020/09/26/racial-divide-erupts-among-baruch-college-professors-lawsuit/>.

509 Bill Salisbury, “Critics Plan Lawsuits against Three Area Institutions for Promoting ‘Critical Race Theory,’” *Pioneer Press*, July 26, 2021, <https://www.twincities.com/2021/07/26/critics-plan-lawsuits-against-three-area-institutions-for-promoting-critical-race-theory/>; and Callie Scott, “Minnesota Lawsuits to Argue Critical Race Theory Fosters Intolerance, Bullying,” *New York Post*, July 30, 2021, <https://nypost.com/2021/07/30/minnesota-lawsuits-to-argue-critical-race-theory-fosters-intolerance-bullying/>.

510 John Murawski, “Op-Ed: Critical Race Theory Is about to Face Its Day(s) in Court,” *Center Square*, April 27, 2021, [https://www.thecentersquare.com/national/op-ed-critical-race-theory-is-about-to-face-its-day-s-in-court/article\\_9dce-fa10-a76c-11eb-bf9f-27e0e238e56d.html](https://www.thecentersquare.com/national/op-ed-critical-race-theory-is-about-to-face-its-day-s-in-court/article_9dce-fa10-a76c-11eb-bf9f-27e0e238e56d.html).

race theory training and civil rights law are incompatible.<sup>511</sup> Nevertheless, we encourage readers to consult an issue brief authored by James Copland, senior fellow and director of legal policy at the Manhattan Institute, which provides careful guidelines for states to consider in crafting legislative proposals affecting schools related to social justice ideology that respect free speech rights, the rights of schools to determine their own curricula, and the rights of parents.<sup>512</sup>

## 7. Guidelines for Policies and Practices that Have a Better Chance of Working

We and many others prefer policies which deemphasize rather than emphasize race. The notion spread by Ibram Kendi and other progressives that “the only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination” has been proven wrong time and time again. Fighting racial discrimination requires only that we fight racial discrimination. The difficulty here is that racially discriminatory practices *are not labeled as such*. Instead, racial discrimination operates under such seemingly innocuous labels as ‘affirmative action,’ ‘ethnic studies,’ ‘difficult dialogues,’ ‘safe spaces,’ and ‘cultural affirmation.’ There is nothing inherently objectionable about the study of race in academia. *What is objectionable* to some, however, is to ask the question of why these subjects can’t be studied within the broader context of the humanities and social sciences. No scientific good (and certainly no equity) has come from intellectually isolating ethnic studies from closely related topics. For interracial comity, we must end enforced separatism within elite institutions, which now seem more racially divided than their working-class counterparts. When it comes to racial integration, elites have done more harm than good, and it is long past time to acknowledge this.

Parenthetically, as Gail Heriot notes, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), which have only 20% of blacks enrolled in college, have produced 40% of black students who graduate with demanding natural science degrees. Heriot offers strong evidence that this reflects the fact that in HBCUs, black science students do not face a mismatch—their objective preparation as measured by the SAT matches that of other students, so they do not fall behind. (See also books by Sowell and Sander & Taylor.)<sup>513</sup> To be clear, this does not mean that HBCUs’ science graduates are less prepared, but merely that their professors covered ground more gradually. Indeed, as Thomas Sowell points out, a student of any color with a top 5% score on the SAT math section would find himself in the bottom 10% at MIT. Such students would likely fare better at a sound STEM-oriented university like Purdue or Virginia Tech, where they would learn much the same material as at MIT, but at a pace that is commensurate with their abilities.<sup>514</sup>

Furthermore, since HBCUs are mainly black, there is no social pressure for black students to view studying as “acting white.” In effect, race is taken out of the equation; for a pop culture example, see a recent scene from the TV show *Black-ish*.<sup>515</sup> It is not surprising that

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511 George R. La Noue, “Critical Race Training or Civil Rights Law: We Can’t Have Both,” *Law & Liberty*, November 4, 2020, <https://lawliberty.org/critical-race-theory-or-civil-rights-law-we-cant-have-both/>.

512 James R. Copland, “How to Regulate Critical Race Theory in Schools: A Primer and Model Legislation,” Manhattan Institute, August 26, 2021, <https://www.manhattan-institute.org/copland-critical-race-theory-model-legislation>.

513 Sowell, *Black Education*; and Sander and Taylor, *Mismatch*.

514 Thomas Sowell, *Choosing a College: A Guide for Parents and Students* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989).

515 Stuart Buck, *Acting White: The Ironic Legacy of Desegregation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); and Kayla Hawkins, “‘Black-ish’ Nailed Why Historically Black Colleges Are Anything but Obsolete in 2018,” *Bustle*, April 4, 2018, <https://www.bustle.com/p/junior-chose-howard-university-on-black-ish-after-dre-stood-up-for-the-legacy-of-historically->

HBCUs do very well in increasing the expected lifetime income of their graduates, as well as in fostering upward class mobility.<sup>516</sup>

Second, as Eric Kaufmann points out in Chapters 4 and 12, we must find common identities that allow all Americans to be Americans, even when they have supplemental identities. We can do this without creating racial hierarchies or spoils systems. This again calls for less rather than more emphasis on race. As Maranto argues in Chapter 13, educators must use history and heritage as lessons and symbols to unite, not weapons to impose new racial hierarchies to replace the old ones. Teaching common national stories and terms, as in E.D. Hirsch's Core Knowledge curricula, would be a good start—indeed, this was the traditional role of public schools. To this we might add the work of *1776 Unites*, which situates African American history and, in particular, the stories of individuals taking responsibility for their own lives, within the common American story. These stories are not told in zero-sum or divisive terms, but are rather tales that all Americans can be proud of. We can also stress areas like music and sports, which are indeed “crossover” in nature.

Third, and most importantly, we must have transparent merit systems, as in model institutions like the U.S. Army. Numerous chapters detail damage that the woke have inflicted upon merit systems; we must undo that damage. Here, the SAT rather than “holistic admissions” must be our model.<sup>517</sup> The more advancement is transparent and simple, the more trust people of all races will have that they have control over their life outcomes. Transparency guards against excessive elite manipulation, such as in the Varsity Blues scandal. Here, dozens of wealthy individuals paid Rick Singer and other fixers to arrange for their children to gain admission to elite colleges through faked athletic careers, faked disabilities allowing for special accommodations on standardized tests (which enabled cheating), and out-and-out bribes to coaches and admissions officials.<sup>518</sup> These sorts of scandals erode the value of merit, and correspondingly erode faith in American institutions. More racial and political conflict will inevitably result.

Fourth, much of the white fragility movement has promoted disorder, to *disrupt* perceived inequities. Yet a key lesson from the U.S. Army, successful schools, and, indeed, all organizations which achieve high levels of inter-racial equity is the necessity of *order*, managed by predictable authorities rather than mercurial authoritarians. Where disorder reigns, whether in schools, prisons, or on the streets, people naturally retreat into racially homogenous safe spaces.

Ironically, order is thought of as a conservative value; yet without it we cannot have racial equity. One of us lives in Arkansas, still remembered for serious and nearly deadly unrest when white racists *disrupted* racial integration in Little Rock Central High School in 1957. In her noted autobiography *Warriors Don't Cry*,<sup>519</sup> Melba Pattillo Beals recalls that her only

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black-colleges-8688139.

516 “Washington Monthly’s 2020 College Guide and Rankings,” *Washington Monthly*, <https://washingtonmonthly.com/2020college-guide>.

517 Xu, *Inconvenient Minority*.

518 Chris Quintana, “Fake Disabilities, Photoshopped Faces: How Feds Say Celebrities, Coaches and Scammers Got Kids into Elite Colleges,” *USA Today*, March 12, 2019,

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2019/03/12/felicity-huffman-lori-laughlin-how-college-admissions-scam-worked/3142160002/>.

519 Melba Pattillo Beals, *Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1994).

respite from constant verbal and physical attacks by whites came in classrooms where competent teachers had authority and kept order; elsewhere in and around school, Beals faced hell. Disrupting authority is the modus operandi of social justice ideology—there is simply no evidence that it builds cross-racial social capital, while there is much evidence that it causes harm.

Finally, to pursue more equity and better race relations, we must think long term. As political scientists remind us, politics makes programs, and programs build constituencies, which in turn create political pressures. A half century of affirmative action has created powerful constituencies for separatist programs which have proven tragically counterproductive. Dismantling those programs will take decades, as will undoing the damage they have caused. For better race relations and a stronger country, we must begin the work of dismantling social justice ideology sooner rather than later. There is no time for delay.

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