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## Holder's 'Nation of Cowards' and the Fallacy of a Post-Racial America

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### Abstract

Former United States Attorney General Eric Holder called the country “a nation of cowards,” in his description of the fear and avoidance from the leaders and the population of a forthright discussion on racism and racial differences and disparities (Wingfield & Feagin, 2012). Despite agreement from many scholars, his statement was met with heavy criticism, an almost unequaled outrage, and insult from opposing political party leaders, media personalities, and many in the public. Critics even called Holder racist for bluntly bringing up the problem of race (Wingfield & Feagin, 2012), only proving his point that they were unwilling to have an open, serious dialogue regarding race and racial disparities, although research clearly supports his argument (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; 2003; Picca & Feagin, 2007; Wingfield & Feagin, 2012). Holder held that, despite evidence of some racial progress, the modern day has not transitioned, just because of the election of a Black man to the nation's highest office, from the cultural intolerances and racial disparities seen historically in this country by way of Jim Crow segregation, and that there continues today to be in policy and in effect a deeply rooted economic and social racism (Bobo, 2011; Esposito & Finley, 2009; Popova, 2015; Sorokin, 1985; West, 2015; Wingfield & Feagin, 2012). His statement supports that the U.S. cannot be accurately portrayed as post-racial for numerous reasons, including disparities in education, industry, politics, and in society-in-general (Bobo, 2011; Esposito & Finley, 2009; Hoffman & Stallworth, 2008; Hackman, 2005; Jayne & Dipboye, 2004; Teasley & Ikard, 2010; West, 2015; Wingfield & Feagin, 2012). In fact, Holder's comments were generous in comparison to what the actual conditions are regarding integration in the U.S. workforce (Wingfield & Feagin, 2012). Since then, we have seen tremendous upheaval in race relations, and it is even more obvious now than it was in 2008 through 2016, that our nation's

racial problems persist, and this written work posits that the suggestion of a post-racial America was enthusiastically exaggerated by hopeful media figures and national officials, and was then and continues today to be a fallacy.

**Keywords:** Racism, bigotry, post-racial, implicit bias, hidden bias, prejudice, inequity, disparity, social justice, inequality, white privilege

## **Introduction**

It is no secret that the dominant culture in a society, a community, or an organization molds individuals, their attitudes, their beliefs, their values, and their behaviors (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). In the United States of America, the predominant culture of White dominance (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017) has shaped the government, the laws, the communities, companies, and the individuals within the population for generations. Over hundreds of years, a society of White supremacy was introduced, supported legally, and not only accepted, but proliferated throughout U.S. History. It is argued that this culture has been finely casted to our society, and although it does not represent all sectors of the society or all people within any section of the population, it has historically been the social scriptorium of our country, with stereotypical notions providing at least loose norms or models which shape human interactions, behaviors, and group and population dynamics (Appiah, 2005).

Cultures are not static, and societal change is inherent. Societal cultures are impermanent and mutable (Appiah, 2005; Kymlicka, 1995). Changes in acceptable norms do occur, and societies, nations, and communities begin to change over time. It has been repeatedly argued over the past decade that that U.S. had reached a pinnacle in cultural reformation, from the perspective described above. It has been claimed that the election of Barack Obama carried with it the banner of a post-racial era in which racial, ethnic, or religious background would no longer be a determining factor in personal outcomes (Wingfield & Feagin, 2012). Nevertheless, despite the impermanency and mutability of cultures (Kymlicka, 1995), there is a continuance of attempt towards preservation of the cross-generational societal status quo, despite the unavoidable change.

We began this manuscript prior to and proceeded through the 2016 presidential election, and through 2017, positing that the claims of a post-racial America held over this period were false and easily open to ridicule, and were furthermore held fast through a privileged ignorance largely by those embedded in and blinded by, often through no fault of their own, the predominant societal culture of dominance, inequality, inequity, and racial privilege. We awaited more data prior to publication due to the rapidly changing political and social environment and rich data open to collection and analysis on practically a daily bases. In fact, it was debated that perhaps this article should be placed on hold for even more data collection, but it was decided that supportive data from the current national environment, including but not limited to the political administration, occurring on a daily basis could result in a never-ending exercise of qualitative assessment and analysis.

Nevertheless, we further posit that our argument of a fallacy of a post-racist environment is not only supported by the events that transpired during the 2008, 2012, and immediately after the 2016 elections, but strongly supported and verified by recent events, particularly the racial-political rallies in Virginia and other states, actions towards rescindment of executive orders, unacceptable leadership behaviors, behavior of criminal justice authorities, university events, and proposed legislation, among others.

## **Discussion**

### **Purpose**

Most of us have learned about slavery, indentured servitude, share-crop practices, Jim Crow laws, and continuous racism towards minority populations in this country throughout history. These times and atrocities cannot be stressed highly enough. This manuscript, however, is focused on racism and the falsity of a post-racial America in the modern era, with particular emphasis on the past decade.

The purpose of this manuscript is not to determine which organization or government agency is at fault, or to incriminate, defend, or support any individual, organization, agency, or political party. That said, the examples provided are reported based on actual incidents that have occurred, reported objectively, and interpreted not from a personal emotion-driven agenda, but from a sociological, psychological, and organizational development approach. We recognize that the evidence, findings, statements, and recommendations may be upsetting to some when they disagree with the incident, interpretation, or take a particular position with respect to content. Despite that, the purpose of this paper is rather to define our position regarding the United States not reaching a post-racial national status, and to exhibit examples and examine the reasons, behaviors, and ignorance of how and why racial inequality continues to be a significant and serious problem. Furthermore, we will offer interventions that should be used in order to help push us forward, as a society, to confront head on the issues that cause these problems, regardless whether they are personal, family, community, organizational, or societal issues, and to make headway into managing these conflicts.

### **The Racism Condition in the United States Before the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Two well-known scholars, James Baldwin and Margaret Mead, had a serious open-forum discussion regarding race in America in 1970 (Popova, 2015). The emotional dialogue was a conversation touching the deeply rooted concerns of identity, power, privilege, and justice. Baldwin explained the ignorance of the perpetrators on the position, profession, or ideals of the Black individual, stating that “I’m of this society and I’m in exactly the same situation as anybody else – any other black person,” describing that he was generally seen by the public and by the authorities as no different from any other Black man, regardless whether he was a lawyer or a Black Panther, and that separating oneself from that understanding as a result of profession, education, or piety equates to self-delusion (Popova, 2015).

This is an unresolved societal struggle. Before the turn of the millennium, even as late as 1990, a national survey showed that White people expressed a substantially negative image of Black people. Black people were perceived as more likely to commit criminal acts, as well as being seen negatively on the factors of hard work and intelligence (Bobo, 2011). It is apparent that racial inequality is endemic to the very concept and practice of national order in the U.S. (Goldberg 1993; Hughey, 2012; Mills 1997), and this is something that we have struggled to overcome. Unfortunately, Baldwin’s comments regarding racial inequality and negative identity perception (Popova, 2015) have proliferated through the decades into continued modern day racism in 2018.

### **Racism and the Falsity of a Post-Racial America during the Obama Era**

United States Attorney General Eric Holder called the country “a nation of cowards,” in his description of the fear and avoidance, from the leaders and the population, of a forthright discussion on racism and racial differences and disparities (Wingfield & Feagin, 2012). His statement, despite agreement from many scholars,

was heavily criticized with an almost unequaled outrage from opposing political party leaders, media personalities, and many in the public. It wasn't just a matter of denial, but the critics even called Holder racist (Wingfield & Feagin, 2012), only confirming his position that they were unwilling to have a forthright, honest, and serious dialogue regarding race and inequality in the United States, despite the fact that research clearly supports his argument (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; 2003; Picca & Feagin, 2007; Wingfield & Feagin, 2012). Holder posits that the modern day has not transitioned from the cultural intolerance and racial disparities seen historically in this country by way of Jim Crow segregation, and even further, not simply policy, but in effect a deeply rooted economic and social racism (Bobo, 2011; Esposito & Finley, 2009; Popova, 2015; Sorokin, 1985; West, 2015; Wingfield & Feagin, 2012). Despite evidence significant racial progress, there is also significant research showing that the U.S. is far from what has inaccurately been claimed after the election of Barack Obama, as a post-racial America (Bobo, 2011; Teasley & Ikard, 2010; Walker, 2011; Wingfield & Feagin, 2012).

People of Color (PoC) can be defined, for the purposes of an academic definition by diversity scholars, as Black, Latino/Latina, Hispanic, East Asian, Southeast Asian, Near Eastern, Jewish, Native American, Pacific Islander, among others. Their defining features include, but are not limited to skin color, hair texture, eyes, shapes of noses, and body types, or an intersection of all of these categories (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017). Today, there are more PoC in positions or leadership in government and in the corporate sector in the United States than there ever have been previously. In the past two decades, we have seen the numerous firsts in military leadership, and a definite increase in the number of PoC in decision-making and professional positions throughout industry. Nevertheless, the United States cannot, at the time that it was confidently surmised by media hosts, nor now, be accurately portrayed as post-racial. A post-racial America, if one is to imagine it, is a nation in which there is no disparity in economics and benefits to the degree that access to loans, jobs, corporate positioning, housing, high-quality elementary and secondary education, high-quality college and university education, and high-quality health care would be equitable regardless of race or ethnicity (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017). People of Color in positions of power would be assumed to be there as a result of hard work and achievement. There would be no expectation that PoC speak for their entire group or race. It is a nation in which voting is not suppressed based on race and drivers are not profiled and stopped when no traffic law was broken. A post-racial nation would be one in which unarmed Black men would not be assaulted or shot by police, and the incarceration rates of Black and Latino men would approximate their percentage of the overall population. This currently-imaginary U.S. is one where African-Americans, Latinos, American Indians, and Jews could walk down any street without being assaulted, insulted, or both at the hands of race haters (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017). Today, yesterday, one year ago, or 8 years ago, this simply was and is not the case.

The United States cannot be accurately portrayed as post-racial for numerous reasons, including disparities in education, industry, politics, and in society-in-general (Bobo, 2011; Esposito & Finley, 2009; Hoffman & Stallworth, 2008; Hackman, 2005; Jayne & Dipboye, 2004; Teasley & Ikard, 2010; West, 2015; Wingfield & Feagin, 2012). In fact, Holder's comments were generous in comparison to what the actual conditions are regarding integration in the U.S. workforce (Wingfield & Feagin, 2012).

Baldwin's argument regarding the plight of Black people under the existing authority did not end in 1970. His position that all Black people were forced to share guilt for any unlawful act, because there was no perceived difference between a Black Panther and a Black lawyer, were not far from truth then (Popova, 2015), and have

meaning in the current era. Race-driven incidents have generated mass media coverage, exhibiting the truth about the state of race relations in the United States. Recent deaths of unarmed Black men at the hands of law enforcement in Missouri and Maryland, and other similar incidents of violence against PoC have caused civil unrest. Shooting of parishioners in a church by a White nationalist and similar incidents have continued to drive polarization between the races (Garcia, 2015), as does the inequitable treatment of the perpetrator when compared to minority suspects committing much lesser crimes.

It has been claimed, since the election of Barack Obama, that the United States had reached the post-racial era in which a racial background would no longer be a determining factor in personal outcomes (Wingfield & Feagin, 2012). Newspapers and media personalities, such as Maureen Dowd, among others from the *Wall Street Journal* and comparable periodicals, reported that the election had heralded in an era when race no longer matters (Wingfield & Feagin, 2012). The post-racial claim was ironic and ludicrous, considering the rise in hate group membership and hate speech that followed the election. Even media personalities, newspaper outlets, cartoonists, and a few politicians insulted the President and his family, calling their eleven year-old daughter a “ghetto hoochie” and equating the family members to gorillas and chimpanzees (Wingfield & Feagin, 2012). The dialogue was a very racist dialectic, and the hard White racial framing that had decreased over the years leading up to the election had suddenly increased, or better yet resurfaced, and has become more evident since. White nationalist groups have called for a new civil war and visceral racist rhetoric has become central and mainstream in partisan media outlets (Wingfield & Feagin, 2012). This violence perpetrated against PoC is a reaction attributed to the White backlash against the progressing movement of PoC into the fullness of humanity, rising to positions of institutional and organizational power, socio-economically and politically (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017). These acts of violence continue to transpire at the hands of deflection, disillusion, and fear, at the cost of humanity, and at the price of a historic preponderance and perpetuation of the status quo of a dominant-subordinated national culture.

Although so many media elements have been fascinated by the idea of a post-racial America upon the 2008 election, public media, even including many of those constantly viewed as progressives and champions of diversity, have ignored, perhaps due to ignorance and implicit biases, that the before-mentioned requirements for a post-racial nation have not been met and are not nearing such conditions. These same ‘champions’ were publicly elated, as were many, but announced such a time of equality, multiculturalism, and inclusion while ignoring the economic, educational, political, and social disparities and wealth inequality that continue to exist, and in many cases to grow, likely due to the privilege that even these professionals experience and benefit from. It can be argued that these hidden biases have affected their understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner, without their awareness of their privilege or any intention of control (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017). Numerous people may take offense or contest the statements of White privilege and hidden bias, but such offense or opposition can only be expected. People often fall into a mode of denial when there may be a proclamation or any indication that they may have done or be doing something wrong. Denial, as well as adoption of White Liberalism is sometimes an unconscious behavior to cover racism or ignorance to the social constructs of racism. People fear being called racist or associated with racism, and so the immediate reaction is to enter defense mode with the emotion of feeling unfairly judged. Regardless if the question is only about lack of awareness or about privilege, it is easier to simply cling to a positive self-image rather than to have to listen to feedback (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017) and confront such an undesirable potential self-reality. Further, if people deny it, they do not have to deal with the

personal dilemma of fundamentally changing their selves or the system within which they currently thrive (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017). Nevertheless, this denial and lack of awareness is also what results in biased, privileged, and insensitive statements and attitudes, such as displayed in Table 1. But this is not about blame, but rather about recognition.

As such, these public personalities are much more fixated on the less substantive properties of the racial dialogue (Teasley & Ikard, 2010). And the understanding, based on experience and what is observed in the media, is very different among people of different ethnicities, with particular emphasis on their upbringing and social reference. In a 2009 survey, White and Black participants responded very differently in their beliefs regarding whether the U.S. had reached racial equality. Nearly two-thirds of White responses claimed that Black people had achieved racial equality while another 21.5 percent believed that racial equality for Black people would be reached soon. Together, nearly 85 percent of all White survey participants believed that the period of a post-racial America had arrived (Bobo, 2011). On the other hand, the data exhibited that only 20 percent of Black people answered similar to that of the White participants regarding having achieved racial equality, and approximately 30 percent fewer than White participants believed America was nearing a post-racial era (Bobo, 2011). The glaring ideological disconnect regarding a racism-free society is apparent in these statistics, and the pitfalls of the wholesale speculation toward post-racial thinking is clearly exhibited (Teasley & Ikard, 2010), a byproduct of the dominant-subordinated culture, one including and surviving the social construct of racism, upon which our society has been constructed and continues to sustain, particularly since the campaigns and elections of 2015-2016.

### **Race Relations During and After the 2016 Presidential Campaign**

Long before the most-recent election, Hunt and Wilson (2009) described that the perceptions of many White people regarding racism is that it is primarily attitudinal, and thus view disadvantages due to discrimination as resulting from unfair attitudes and treatment from a minority of White people harboring ill will. Although this certainly exists, this perspective is lacking a considerable and evident truth. This perspective regarding racism is one that is rooted in political correctness as it applies to White identity, recognizing and perhaps even being ashamed regarding how PoC have been abused and oppressed. But this individualism convinces people that racial journeys are personal, thus shielding them, who perhaps had nothing directly to do with it, from the knowledge that the journey is actually going on at the societal level and that they are part of those phenomena (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017). This outlook completely ignores, whether on purpose or through ignorance, the existence of institutionalized racism and disparities that exist in society (Hunt & Wilson, 2009). This is one clear example of the White privilege that is so often attributed to hidden bias, among other attitudes in this nation. As previously mentioned, implicit bias suggests that people may be treating others differently or unequally without even being aware that they are doing so (Jolls & Sunstein, 2006). Nevertheless, a lack of awareness regarding mistreatment does not absolve individuals from such behavior and discrimination, and should be judged morally or legally as such (Jolls & Sunstein, 2006). Intent is certainly important, but outcome is as well. It is not uncommon that this hidden bias is a result of privileged advantage, a privilege that tends to be unspoken and oft invisible to those with the privileged identities, allowing them the ignorance regarding their own advantages over others (Hastie & Rimmington, 2014). This White privilege, defined as unearned advantages due to being White, is an example of institutional power in a racially stratified society that goes largely unacknowledged to many White individuals. This privilege is also considered and defined as confirmed societal dominance (Pinterits, Poteat, & Spanierman,

2009), putting PoC in subordinate and unequal statures (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017). It often comes with denial, even an unconscious one. But again, this is not about blaming all White people for the plight of PoC in the United States. That said, acknowledging such position and social favor, a strong force in its own, is a critical step. People resisting to acknowledge this at the conscious level acts as an admission that, intentional or not, much power, privilege, and comfort have come to non-PoC at their acceptance of false superiority and at the expense and burden of others (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017).

It was obvious to those who would be willing to see that the election and re-election of a Black president did not end the era of racism or carry in a dawn of post-racialism (Knowles, Lowery, & Schaumberg, 2009). Evidence shows quite the opposite, including an increase in even blatant racism during the Obama's presidency (Wingfield & Feagin, 2012), and also including the continued spike during the recent presidential campaigns and election, particularly in the Donald Trump campaign of populism. The literature shows that the Trump campaign was viewed as having polarizing comments characterizing Mexican people as criminals, Muslims as terrorists, Jews as greedy globalizers, and Prisoners of War as inept cowards (Garcia, 2016). Though it is evident that both the Obama and Trump campaigns, even if for different reasons, generated high enthusiasm and the emotional contagion that conditioned indulging racial attitudes (Tolbert, Redlawsk, & Gracey, 2018), their purposes and methods differed, and had different results, although both outcomes resulted in election. Trump used emotions and social contagion through direct attacks on immigrants and foreigners in order to capture a particular voting base, and resulting in increased racial resentment (Tolbert, Redlawsk, & Gracey, 2018). The discourse in the media during the 2016 presidential campaigns were contentious, emotional, and often hostile, and the rhetoric has further polarized the nation. As a result, many question whether, and it has become evident that, the racial animosity has instead been exacerbated, leaving wonder regarding whether any true racial healing or progress toward inclusion and equity is possible in the United States in the present and the near future (Garcia, 2016).

The use of populism in political strategy has a long history in the United States, both on the left and the right sides of partisanship. The defining feature of populism is a worldview that exemplifies a fundamental antagonism between people, with one side identifying as some version of the 'moral, hardworking, honest majority' being oppressed by a corrupt elite or migrant population who prey on them (Hustvedt, 2017). In recent elections, populism was most strongly used by the Trump campaign because experts and consultants identified that it is an effective way to gain votes during times of economic stress and cultural change. When recently interviewed on HBO, renowned author Salman Rushdie clearly stated his perspective that the election of November eighth, 2016, had little to do with policy and was nothing more than an ill-advised, racist backlash against eight years of a Black presidency. Rushdie and others posit, with supporting evidence, that Donald Trump's campaign methodology was to blame "the other" for everything that is wrong with this country. He inaccurately points a finger of responsibility for failures at "the other," and whatever the voting population views as "the other" permitted many of them to connect with the candidate, and now to connect with and defend the President and any deplorable, unpresidential behavior, regardless of legality or morality (Doherty, 2017). Trump's campaign blamed Hispanics and immigrants for the economic woes, and the Muslim population for the violence, in addition to blaming the establishment for a failure to enact useful policies to correct economic and criminal problems (White, 2016). The rhetoric of masculinity, sexism, misogyny, and racism were used often against Trump in the media, but were as effectively used by Trump to communicate the populist view, and to combat, in the eyes of his public, the

establishment attacks (White, 2016; Wilz, 2016). It is argued by numerous scholars, journalists, politicians, and experts that the campaign slogan itself, and the rhetoric by the President during the campaign has, even if unintentionally as claimed by the administration, sparked a perception of racist nativism and portrayed the movement as a virulent adherence to White supremacy, strengthening the values of racist supremacist organizations and hate groups (Huber, 2016).

Social contagion is a psychosocial theory that has been explained as the spread of behavior from one group participant to another, in which one individual serves as the stimulus for the imitative behaviors and motivations of others (Marsden, 2005), particularly when the participant is an educator, authority figure, or senior leader (Radel, Sarrazin, Legrain, & Wild, 2010). Social contagion has steadily expanded in scope, particularly through media, including social media platforms, to a vast array of processes such as fads and political opinions (Ugander, Backstrom, Marlow, & Keleberg, 2012), and has been shown as a means of political recruitment. Social contagion occurs through social networks, and the interpersonal influence affects human thought and behavior (Christakis & Fowler, 2013). Opinion leadership, such as in politics, effects decision-making by both corporate and agency seniors, as well as by users (Iyengar, Valente, & Van den Bulte, 2009). Moral emotion is key to the spread of political ideas in this way, and moral contagion is bound by group membership, with the potential of increasing group polarization (Brady, Willis, Jost, Tucker, & Van Bavel, 2017) depending on the actions of the group leader. From a socio-psychological perspective, statements and influence of leaders become the narrative that grants and strengthens identity of the followers (Popper, 2011). Thus, leader statements that support a particular social identity (Brady, Willis, Jost, Tucker, & Van Bavel, 2017), such as that held by the alt-right, justify the group's expressions. Further, human senses of right and wrong shapes their daily interactions (Brady, Willis, Jost, Tucker, & Van Bavel, 2017). Studies show that people tend to view unethical behavior as less wrong or less unethical if it is designed or used creatively, and thus are more likely to emulate creative unethical behavior. Further, emotional language on political topics produces substantial contagion effects (Wiltermuth, Vincent, & Gino, 2017). All that being considered, when a leader makes it acceptable, or even right, to be a bigot or to make bigoted statements, the public will follow based on this theory of social contagion. Kwon & Gruz (2017; 2017b) found a strong presence of mimicry in verbal aggression in response to Trump's campaign statements. It can be logically argued that the Trump campaign, Trump's remarks, or silence allowed many individuals across the nation to express their bigotry in a venue or in support of a campaign, and empower them to feel as though this way of racist thinking, speech, or action is acceptable and justified, or even admirable. Peer-reviewed studies have exhibited some compelling evidence of the relationship between Trump's election and an increase in hate crimes, a phenomenon that has been termed the "Trump Effect (Rushin & Edwards, 2018)." Additionally, although many may criticize that he goes too far with his interpretation, Timothy Snyder (2017) defines the Trump campaign as a threat of paramilitary proportions, due much to the maintenance of private security policing the crowd during his campaign rallies and removing people forcefully for peacefully expressing different opinions. Further, these behaviors were encouraged by the President not only to the security personnel, but to the audience, sometimes resulting in verbal and even physical assaults against protesters in the crowd. Then, with social contagion at play, candidate Trump baited the audience to proceed with these behaviors by verbalizing to them to "...get the remnant out," stating that it was "more fun than a regular boring rally" when people he viewed as dissenters were forcibly removed, often being shoved, spat on, or struck by members of the audience or

the security contingent (Snyder, 2017), with know legal consequence. This social contagion has empowered a racist contingent of the population to express their bigotry in an open forum, and seek support from like believers, in some cases running for political office.

In 2018, there are eight White nationalists running for federal and state office, and not just in small, all-White communities. Arthur Jones, a candidate in Chicago, considers himself a 'White racialist' and believes that Black and White people should not live in the same areas. His campaign is rooted on a message of separation, White superiority, and an urgency to maintain Chicago's suburban neighborhoods no lower than 90 percent White (Folley, 2018; Jackson, 2018). Jones believes that "...the average Black American has an IQ of 20 points lower than the average White person," and when confronted about the fact that the investigative reporter interviewing him is a graduate of Harvard, he replied by saying "...you have a lot of White in you too." A former member of the American Nazi Party, Jones is a Holocaust denier, and argues against equal right of Black people and against the self-determination of Jews and First Nations or American Indians (Folley, 2018; Jackson, 2018). Jones believes, and states openly, that Black people are genetically inferior, and he runs for an opportunity to represent only White Americans. Like Jones, Patrick Little, a Californian running for Diane Feinstein's senate seat, is a known anti-Semite, and like Jones he is a Holocaust denier. He is running on a ticket of White supremacy, while creating a faux story of Jewish supremacy over the nation. He has been seen standing and simultaneously spitting on an Israeli flag and blaming Jews for most of the problems in our nation, including the terrorist attacks against the United States (Folley, 2018; Jackson, 2018). In politics, this is an era of falsehoods, and Little makes these statements with no evidence, likely with the practiced knowledge that the only thing that matters is the social contagion. A committed neo-Nazi, Little accounted for more than 18% of the vote in a poll of likely primary election voters, only second to Feinstein. Although polls cannot be free of bias, this finding is indicative at least of a growing number of the population believing, supporting, or being willing to vote based on openly racist beliefs and views. And the supporters of these types of candidates remark that they are not racist, but rather that "we're marginalized, and we're the ones being oppressed, (Folley, 2018; Jackson, 2018)" directly in line with the White privilege and white supremacy attitudes and behaviors of projection, self-enlargement, blaming, and fear displayed in the Journey Continuum that eloquently maps out the race relationships and transitions in today's U.S. society (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017).

Race anxiety in the U.S. has also continued to be seen over the past two decades when there's a question of immigrants. Our population stands tall and proud at the mention of being a nation of immigrants, until there's a question of new immigrants and we somehow struggle with the means by which to balance the rights of those that immigrated after we did to pursue the same dream as we did, and yet we find a way or a reason to protect that which we think is ours and ours alone (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017). The past two decades, and particularly the past two years, have become terrifying if you're Hispanic. The United States is the second largest Spanish speaking nation in the world, second only to Mexico (Passel & Cohn, 2016). But, many Hispanics refrain from speaking Spanish openly in public due to the racist reactions and potential for physical assault by non-Hispanics that has, over the last 18 months, become generally acceptable behavior to many. Recently, border patrol agents in Havre, Montana stopped and detained two American citizens solely because they were "observed speaking Spanish," based on the claim that Spanish "is very unheard of up here." An American Civil Liberties Union

investigation is pending to get to the bottom of the incident (Associated Press, 2017), but it is not the only one of its kind.

Although there were numerous concerns regarding immigration during the previous administration, there was clear progress toward solving the undocumented immigration issue, with numerous proposals in Congress toward establishing a clear track toward legal residency for undocumented long-term residents (Passel & Cohn, 2016). Of the estimated 6 million undocumented Mexican residents of the US, 66% of them have been here for more than ten years and have no intention of returning to Mexico (Passel & Cohn, 2016). They have established themselves with stable jobs, families with children in school, and a true “American” life. With the new administration, undocumented immigrants report terror as their operative emotion. Now, their doors are being kicked open in the middle of the night and “illegal” parents torn from their homes leaving crying children behind—children who are eventually placed in “for profit” housing facilities, if not lost in the system entirely. The betrayal of DACA dreamers is a matter that is entirely beyond the comprehension of many people, particularly Hispanics. That “America” would disavow a commitment to nearly 690,000 young immigrants, law-abiding participants of a program, that played exactly by the rules, is simply incomprehensible. Approximately 94% of DACA participants are Hispanic, with the majority being female (Lopez & Krogstad, 2017), and under only rhetorical arguments, they are being treated like criminals, detained, deported, and children are being separated from their parents.

Within just ten days after the election of Donald Trump to the presidency, there were at least 867 post-election hate incidents across the United States, in private places, universities, public settings, schools, and workplaces (Southern Poverty Law Center [SPLC], 2016). These attacks included 100 anti-Semitic attacks, 49 anti-Muslim incidents, 95 anti-LGBT events, 40 anti-women cases, 23 anti-Trump incidents, 280 anti-immigrant incidents, and 187 anti-Black attacks, among others (SPLC, 2016). It is obvious that we have to move the nation towards a direction of healing, acceptance, equality, and peace. Despite this, it is apparent through recent events, now many months after the election, that the road to such a culture has become increasingly challenging, and the idea of equality, the principal that this country is so inaccurately reported to have been founded upon centuries ago, is far from our reach.

### **Data forming support for the falsity of post-racial America in 2017 and 2018**

Although it may be a continuation of the previous subheading, regarding pre- and post-election of 2016 events, we felt that the proliferation and exacerbation of the racially-driven culture of hostility in the United States in the summer of 2017 deserved an independent section for discussion as a sub-era of institutionally-sponsored racial tensions and hostilities that further verify the fallacy of a post-racist society.

Increased numbers of racist acts continue to be reported against PoC in the media, including violence, rallies, slogans, and harassment by some groups against others. Of late, skinheads wearing swastika armbands have been seen harassing PoC in public locations. People have been posting photos on social media of neighbors’ homes, neighbors they never knew were prejudiced against them, displaying Nazi and confederate flags flying beside their U.S. flags, as though that’s not a contradiction. Minority students in universities all over the U.S. have been experiencing acts of hatred, including verbal insults, the burning or defacement of Israeli flags, or racial slurs and slogans left on their dorm room doors, such as recently reported at Swarthmore and Cabrini Universities in the greater Philadelphia area, among others (Iieto, 2017).

In 2016, the University of Alabama Greek fraternity and sorority system faced a great deal of criticism regarding segregation practices. The University of Alabama has been under scrutiny for the failure of the administrators to appropriately and justly manage the behavior of fraternities and sororities, as well as other organizations and individuals, who have participated in racially insensitive remarks or acts. Recently, the university has been marred by scandal in the media after release of evidence of years of shocking instances of racism by White students, with particular emphasis on those that are part of the Greek fraternity and sorority system. This goes far beyond just exclusion from historically White sororities, and shows exclusion from student government, tampering with judging for election, among other instances. Further, it is no secret that there have been a variety of other racist incidents, including but not limited to racial slurs being left on student dorm doors, racial remarks on student government candidate posters, racist social media posts, and nooses and swastikas purposefully left in various locations for Jewish and Black students to find (Craen, 2013).

Similarly in 2018, at George Washington University, just blocks from the White House, the Lincoln Memorial, the Capitol Building, and the Washington Monument, and in one of the most diverse universities and locations in our nation, racist photographs on sorority member social media posts sparked outrage as two Alpha Phi members, the same sorority involved in a racial incident a month earlier at the University of Alabama, held up peeled bananas with a posted quote that stated “ I’m 1/16<sup>th</sup> Black (Lapin, 2018).” The university and the student body government condemned such behavior and stated that this type of activity can make students feel unwelcomed on campus, and is unacceptable. The Student Association voted unanimously to banish the sorority from the campus, making statements that such behavior cannot be tolerated on campus and would not be tolerated by the student body. Nevertheless, Just a couple of months later, the same Student Association became blatantly complicit with this type of behavior when they failed to stand against bigotry and hatred and voted not to censure one of their own Student Association Senators who was found to display clear and blatant racism, making anti-Semitic statements and posts on social media. Despite their affirmation after the Alpha Phi incident that “...all members of the GW community carry a responsibility to stand up against racism and discrimination in any way, shape, or form, in the spirit of empathy, respect, and inclusive community (Slavkin & Shufutinsky, 2018),” they reaffirmed the racism and inequality instead, exhibiting the very bigotry that they claimed they have responsibility to stand up against. This is an exhibition of the absolute presence of prejudice and inequality that exists in our nation, even in the diverse nation’s capital, and in the generation that has so avidly claimed the title of progress but instead displays, at a minimum, unrecognized bias and privilege, and more appropriately, blatant bigotry, which has not been uncommon in the past two years.

In summer of 2017, an event titled as the “unite the right rally” was held for two days in Charlottesville, VA, supposedly to bring together the conservative right in support of protest against removal of confederate statues. This event, however, was ostensibly a cry to draw the far-right white nationalists in protest against the removal of these civil war statues, with particular emphasis on the statue of Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville’s Emancipation Park (Morlin, 2017). We will forego, in this manuscript, the fact that our society has long ignored the impropriety of the existence of a General Lee statue in historic location named after the emancipation of the very people that he fought to keep enslaved. Simultaneously, there were approximately 130 other “unite the right” solidarity rallies being held around the nation. The Charlottesville gathering received the bulk of the media attention, however, especially considering the size and the make-up of the crowd, and the resulting confrontations that occurred. The

Charlottesville group was comprised of various segments of the far right, including white supremacists, white nationalists, neo-confederates, KKK clansmen, and neo-Nazis who marched openly carrying semi-automatic rifles under banners of swastikas and confederate flags while chanting “you will not replace us.” This rally has since been characterized as the single “largest hate-gathering of its kind in decades (SPLC, 2017).” It is argued that the rally had little to do with the removal of the statue, and that it was, in the historic traditions of the area, a demonstration of power, intimidation, and hatred aimed at PoC and immigrants. Their message was clearly identified by bystanders, a message that was an unvarnished hatred and a provocation to engage in armed violence (Morlin, 2017).

Presuming a hate rally is as equally protected as any other rally under the First Amendment, the truly shocking climax of this particular open demonstration of racism came the following day when the President of the United States failed to condemn these acts in clear terms for what they were – “you had a group on one side that was bad and you had a group on the other side that was also very violent. Nobody wants to say it, but I will say it right now,” he stated. While at the same time members of his own party, such as Republican Cory Gardner of Colorado, stated that “these were White supremacists, and this was domestic terrorism.” David Duke, former Grand Wizard of the KKK, reminded the president on twitter, shortly after he spoke, that he “...would recommend you take a good look in the mirror and remember it was White Americans who put you in the presidency, not the radical leftists.” Such a failure of the president to condemn racist groups espousing radical change through violence could easily be, and has been viewed as condoning and approving it (Morlin, 2017).

As a result, Donald Trump has received staunch criticism for failing to effectively condemn the acts and behaviors of individuals and groups carrying swastikas, confederate flags, white hoods, and torches, and outstretching their arms, hailing Hitler. Trump is strongly criticized for failing to disavow hate groups, at least in a timely manner, whom openly supported him during his campaign, and he has continued to fail to do so since his election. Some defend him, stating that it is uneasy and that he is trying to avoid conflict, and others contend that he was right in pointing out that there were violent offenders on both sides of the argument. Nevertheless, the two sides of the conflict are not identical in that one side did not establish and conduct a rally that was rooted in hatred and racism, regardless of the outcome.

Stepping into conflict and dealing with it is necessary for progress (Katz & Miller, 2013; 2014), and without unease, freedom and progress are limited or stunted (Snyder, 2017). Many critics go farther, stating that the President’s response, or lack of condemnation, is completely purposeful and rooted in his true beliefs and character, and this trend of behavior supports that argument. At the very least, this behavior is consistent with the manner in which many have stated this administration has separated, split, and pitted the nation’s parties and people against each other. But further, some of the older American population who witnessed history might suggest that the Charlottesville rally fiasco is reminiscent in many ways of the behavior during the George Wallace rallies, in which people, including the governor himself, screamed for eternal segregation in Alabama, and in the United States.

Another critical example of racial tensions in our nation is the conflict that arises over public protest by groups seeking equality and justice. Even the idea of the chant that “all lives matter” in argument against protests by the Black Lives Matter movement is a clear indication of the misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and misrepresentation of the movement’s meaning by White groups, likely due to some degree of White privilege. The

commonly held idea that Black Lives Matter is taking something away from all lives, or in some way is saying that all lives do not matter or that Black lives matter more than others, is an exhibition of either the lack of understanding or the blatant racist animosity against the group. On the contrary, the entire purpose of the Black Lives Matter movement was to express exactly the idea that all lives matter, including Black lives, and that Black lives matter no less and should receive no less due process or justice than any other. The reality that people have experienced throughout history, and we have all recently been exposed to repeatedly on social media and the news media, is that there is a consistent trend in which Black people, regardless of innocence or guilt, have been unjustly harassed, arrested, injured, or killed, often resulting in no justice or inadequate penalty against the law enforcement perpetrators. Although this has been increasingly evident in the media of late, this is not a new phenomenon. In fact, the brutal unjust beating of Black motorist Rodney King after being pulled over, and the ignorant, arrogant, and unjust acquittal of the perpetrators, is one of the most well-known examples of these modern law enforcement injustices, and despite the outcome, and the protests and riots that occurred as a result, this nation's population and authorities, it seems, have learned little from it (Cannon, 1997).

Since then, our nation has experienced numerous judicial failures, including in the case of acquitting George Zimmerman in the murder of Trayvon Martin in Florida (Koplowitz, 2012; Lee, 2012; Williams, 2013). But the acquittal was not the sole injustice. The events leading up to the case, including media coverage and the handling by the authorities was problematic, during which the victim's bodily fluids were tested for drug and alcohol concentrations, and the victim's school and police records were exploited to paint the darkest picture of him, while identical treatment against the assailant was not performed (Williams, 2013). This is a behavior that is a common example of psychological and emotional violence that takes place in the racial relationships in our dominant-subordinated society. In this case, it is an example of character assassination, used in order to taint the reputation of the involved PoC, using deceit in order to justify wrongdoing (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017). Likewise, the injustice of law enforcement reared its ugly head of white supremacy in the south when an unarmed Black teenager, Michael Brown, was gunned down in Ferguson, Missouri (Bonilla & Rosa, 2014; Miller, 2014; Mirzoeff, 2014; Woods, 2014) with his hands raised and pleading "don't shoot" to the officers. This killing occurring on the heels of racial tensions in Missouri college campuses, and of similar police killings of unarmed black men, including the choking death of Eric Garner in New York and the murder of Oscar Grant III in Oakland, California (Bonilla & Rosa, 2014). In the Grant case, like with the other incidents, the defense for the police officer openly and clearly stated their intention to use Grant's previous encounters with law enforcement as a defense mechanism, in an attempt to vilify the victim, assassinate his character, and instead to justify shooting an unarmed, restrained young Black man in the back (Armaline, Sanchez, & Correia, 2014; Blaisdell, Glenn, Kidd, Powers, & Yang, 2015; Bonilla & Rosa, 2014; Taylor, 2013). Despite the evidence, including video and witness testimony, these cases led to what most criminal justice and legal experts call inadequate or unjustified acquittals or punishment. Officer Johannes Mehserle, for example, was given a sentence of 2 years and served only 11 months after murdering a restrained, unarmed Oscar Grant III at Fruitvale Station (Armaline, Sanchez, & Correia, 2014; Blaisdell, Glenn, Kidd, Powers, & Yang, 2015; Bonilla & Rosa, 2014; Taylor, 2013).

In August of 2017, a Philadelphia police officer shot a black man in the back after he stopped him for riding a dirt bike in the streets. This incident became another controversial shooting that prompted the attention of local and national protests, including a protest by BLM on a residential street near the officer's home, calling for

the suspension and investigation of the police officer. The response resulted in a considerable amount of police activity, and remarks considered racist from the President of the police officer's union. The police held a "back the blue" rally at the union headquarters where the union President made a jarring statement, calling the BLM protesters "...a pack of rabid animals." Regardless of the agreement or disagreement about the BLM protest location, such terms and language used to describe protesters regarding a controversial shooting, in line with a series of shootings across the nation, was in poor taste to say the least, and speaks clearly of the racial tension that exists between the public and law enforcement (McCrone, 2017).

These incidents are evidence-based examples for the argument regarding the falsity of post-racialism in this nation. There are many, often as a result of their witness to their selected news media station, that will deny the validity of these disparities, or simply suggest that they are exaggerated. Of course there are law breakers and people that may be threatening to police officers that are Black, just as you would find them in the White, Asian, Latino, or other populations. The argument is not about an incident or a few PoC being injured or killed during law enforcement activities. The argument is with regards to the disparate treatment, and the numbers of PoC that are stopped, searched, arrested, assaulted, convicted, sentenced, or killed at the hands of a historically unjust justice system. In the wake of these events, and the outrage of the public, people often blame or point fingers at the population involved, particularly when there are protests that turn physical, or riots. This is nothing other than projection and denial, finding blame in actions of others, or even deflecting, rather than addressing own inadequacies, root causes, or mechanisms that led to the problems to begin with. As a nation, we are in complete denial if we take the position that race is not a factor in the murder of unarmed Black boys and men by White law enforcement (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017), or their overall arrest, conviction, and incarceration rates and terms.

This evidence exhibits the disparate ideas regarding a post-racial era mentioned earlier, and displays just how the distinctive narratives of participants of different races are at odds with one another with regards to being provided a level playing field, and whether such a playing field is possible in a land where the people simply appear to not want to confront the social construct of race. These examples, both the controversy over the BLM movement, and more importantly the continuous mistreatment of certain ethnicities by law enforcement professionals, and the lack of just judicial response when it does occur, serve as clear indications of the state of race relations in our nation.

The above-mentioned was not the sole incident in the city of Philadelphia in recent history. Another recent incident took place in a Philadelphia Starbucks's Coffee shop, and resulted in the arrest of two Black men who were awaiting a friend to show up before ordering, and requested to use the restroom. The barista called the Philadelphia Police Department to have the men removed from the premises because they had not yet ordered (Clemens, 2018), claiming that they were not customers and were trespassing. Upon arrival of the police, they handcuffed the two individuals and began to remove them, despite their friend showing up to meet them for coffee in the middle of the incident. Starbucks Corporation has been under fire since, and faced a boycott before they decided to assemble professionals to design a diversity and anti-bias training program for Starbucks employees (Hanna, 2018) nationwide.

Equally controversial, however, was the behavior of the BLM protest representation regarding the statements of defamation aimed at the Jewish population and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), an organization

that was selected as a partner to aid in the design and roll out of the diversity and anti-bias training program that Starbucks committed to in response to the incident. Starbucks Corporation assembled a group of diversity and social activism experts to implement the anti-bias training, including ADL, whose mission is to fight anti-Semitism and contribute to diversity, inclusion, and collaboration. However, Starbucks changed their position on ADL's involvement after public announcements by protest organizer T. Mallory, who argued for exclusion of the Jewish group. Mallory has been criticized as an anti-Semite for meeting with and supporting Louis Farrakhan, known for consistently and continuously making controversial and bigoted remarks over many years regarding Jewish and other groups. This scenario was completely unfortunate, because instead of targeted minority groups working together for cooperation and inclusion, this was an example of exclusion and judgment based on personal bigoted alliances, agendas, and emotional connections unsupported by evidence—behavior that resulted in committal of bigotry while attempting to correct or prevent bigotry. Hate speech, such as that committed by Jones, Little, Mallory, Farrakhan, and Trump, plays a clear and key role in inciting ethnic tensions and collective violence and serves as a mobilizing call to arms against a perceived enemy, which in reality is usually just a scapegoat (Zvagulis, 2010). Then, the media manipulates the information and allows mass dissemination, intensifying the collective emotions and serving the power goals of the extremist leadership, fixing the public's attention, instead, on false problems and illusory goals (Zvagulis, 2010). Starbucks, already under fire for the incident in Philadelphia, has fallen further under scrutiny for excluding the originally included ADL, an organization that has stood at the forefront of fighting for equality, civil rights, equity, diversity, and inclusion in this country, from partnering in the development and implementation of the anti-bias training (Hanna, 2018). Bigotry cannot be resolved through more bigotry, and this is particularly what transpired in this incident, much ado to misdirection, scapegoating, and planning of illusory problem solving.

In context with these incidents is the split in opinion regarding the behavior of professional athletes in the National Football League (NFL)—players who have chosen to peacefully protest the brutality under which American citizens have to live in fear on a daily basis, and certain elements in the media, the NFL, and the government administration have resolved to misdirect the protest towards a fallacy that it is one aimed towards the flag or the sacrifices of the members of the U.S. Armed Forces, all of which have clearly been denied by the protesters in their explanation of exactly what the protest is aimed towards. And, despite the opportunity to honor the civil rights of their employees, and millions of fans, and at the very least stay out of the argument, the NFL has decided, in the business interests of profit, to disregard the social inequities in our American society, and instead to cower to political pressure and implement a mandatory fine for any player who does not stand during the playing of the national anthem (Jenkins, 2018).

Acts against PoC continue to occur on a regular basis all over the nation, and some become a media contagion while others do not. Nonetheless, they occur. For example, in October of 2017, the Sturgis School Board in South Dakota cancelled homecoming activities after racial slurs stating “go back to the rez” were spray-painted on a car, directed at the American First Nations population indigenous to the area. This is not a new phenomenon in South Dakota, as racism has been aimed at the American Indian population in the area throughout a long history. For example, in 2015, a middle-aged White man poured beer on Native American children at a local minor league hockey game while uttering racial slurs at them (Whitney, 2017). These types of acts, although not new to our nation, are becoming more open and pronounced, and are openly invading areas that are not consistently

as prone to them. In May, 2018, residents of Hatboro, Pennsylvania, a diverse suburb of Philadelphia, awoke to find flyers telling “White America to wake up,” and advertising recruitment to the Loyal White Knights, a North Carolina branch of the KKK (McCormick, 2018). Similar incidents occurred in other local areas in the state that has historically prided itself on diversity, but has since hosted plenty of controversy.

### **Disguised Racism**

Barack Obama ran on what some viewed as a ‘catch-phrase’ of hope. Nonetheless, the *Make America Great Again* campaign slogan was also a campaign of hope, with regard to what it brought to Trump supporters. In the election, the slogan was a gut-wrenching emotional plea and call on a sector of the population, with the expectation that the targeted section of the population would vote for Trump with that same level of fervor and hope for improvements to what they believed ails them and their lives, and perhaps whom or what they blame. It is often exactly that emotion that drives people to vote *en masse* for a particular candidate. However, the level of emotion does not make the message the same. The message is actually quite different.

One campaign ran on the idea that all people should have equal opportunity, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or creed. Partisanship aside, the campaign brought with it the hope of things being done in a way that was not politics as usual. It was a campaign that was driven to be hopeful regarding improvement to national health, to international conflict, to education, to employment and reduction in homelessness, and to our environment. The campaign ran on the idea of bringing people together. It certainly spoke to PoC, the disenfranchised, and the blue-collar worker affected by financial struggles nationwide. The recent campaign, on the other hand, also ran on not doing the work different from politics as usual. However, that campaign appeared to strategize to focus on negative emotions of fear, disdain, and perceived inequity with a target or multiple targets to blame, singling out groups and promising to protect the public against the injustices that those groups supposedly bring. Although this is not an article about partisan politics, it is difficult to ignore the direction that partisan campaigns have taken in order to be elected, including driving division of the population into a larger schism through indirect race bating, and inciting the public through hate speech in order to affix their attention to false problems and illusory goals (Zvagulis, 2010). This social moral contagion strategy resulted in election, and has continued to be used shortly thereafter, as it became apparent that the incumbent began his re-election campaign almost immediately after taking office.

The U.S. economy has taken significant hits in the past 11 years, with downward spikes that have considerably affected employment and incomes of millions of American people. During economically tumultuous times, it has been shown that people blame political administrations, and they search for other scapegoats, even if not consciously, for their problems. Thus, when a scapegoat is provided by leaders, even if only through the power of non-evidenced suggestion, many people accept it as truth. This is undoubtedly at least part of the problem that has created a racial rift in our lower- to middle-class blue collar population, amongst others, exacerbating an environment of racism, even if it is subconscious to privileged demographics of the population that do not recognize their advantages, but rather accept pushed prejudices towards scapegoats in times of national economic turmoil.

The peer-reviewed literature also suggests that, in 2008 and 2012, some anti-egalitarian White voters, and leaders, voted for Barack Obama in order to prove that his election means that racism no longer exists in this society and, therefore, the policies and programs that address racism in our country are no longer necessary and

should be terminated, including affirmative action (Knowles, Lowery, & Schaumberg, 2009). This could not be farther from the truth. First, these are statements and actions of White privilege and White liberalism. Second, affirmative action has been contested for many years, and has been battled in court but has been proven effective for over 25 years in colleges, despite being taken through the court system repeatedly (Boddie, 2016; Roithmayr, 2017).

The fore-mentioned scenario is, in effect in many cases, a byproduct of White privilege, which is, again, a system of benefits, advantages, and opportunities that White people experience in society much ado to no more than their skin color, when compared to PoC and their access to the same or similar opportunities (Donnelly, Cook, Van Ausdale, Foley, 2005). The same groups that have fought affirmative action at every turn have simultaneously been proponents for class-based affirmative action, reportedly because of the predominantly White beneficiary base. Although White people consistently fare better than their minority counterparts on indicators of wealth and social status, it has been argued for many years that they often do not perceive these benefits as stemming from a racial or ethnic advantage (Branscombe, Schmitt, Schiffhauer, 2007). As such, considerable research on the antecedents of White Americans' attitudes regarding race have shown a lack of their own understanding of the extent of advantages and privileges many White Americans have consistently experienced, including in education, workplaces, and in the justice system, among life's other trials and proceedings. Thus, it makes sense that the peer-reviewed literature exhibits that when some are confronted with racial inequality that they benefit from, they may respond to this as a threat to their group's position and moral values, and therefore yields side-effects of increased racism (Branscombe, Schmitt, Schiffhauer, 2007), and this is particularly possible in scenarios where they are goaded into believing that they are being shorted by other sectors of the population. These scapegoats are simply a means of political or leadership use of disguised racism, and it feeds itself as it spreads throughout the public. Thus, it is evident that in the current national condition, we are not dealing strictly with a problem of unidentified White privilege, but rather with a party of White grievance (Adams & Roseigno, 2005; Tesler & Sides, 2016), where a significant percentage of the population, goaded or not, believes that they are being victimized, oppressed, and short-changed by opposing political parties and the PoC that they represent (Robinson, 2017). The support or empathy for, or simply the failure to condemn these White racial grievance groups that urge revolution, among other acts, is akin to fueling the flame on a burning cross—a flame of fear and prejudice, and often resulting in blatant and open racism.

In order for our nation to thrive rather than simply survive, we must explore, understand, and try to overcome these barriers, and accept, celebrate, and effectively use our differences and experiences, rather than following false leads of blame and illusory goals and creating or perpetuating unnecessary national unrest. With that in mind, one of the most effective statements made in the literature is simple, but brilliant in its truth that “We’ve got to be as clear-headed about human beings as possible, because we are still each other’s only hope (Popova, 2015).”

### **The Way Forward Through Intervention**

Yes, it is true that progress has been made over the last several decades, but a small stepwise progression does not move us rapidly enough towards the dissolution of the dominant-subordinated culture in which we live. Many will deny their roles in such systemic and systematic problems, and others simply may not wish to participate as a result of the emotional complexities involved in understanding the social dynamics of Whiteness.

Nevertheless, it is the consistent and perpetual replay of attitudes and behaviors of projection, denial, colorblindness, sameness, tokenization, credentializing, White privilege, and White liberalism that results in a consistent cycle that, despite progress, reverts back to a dominant-subordinated culture, as seen in Figure 1. This diagram displays the status quo existing in the U.S. in which progress is slowly being made that benefits diverse participation, and to some degree, inclusion, but the forces acting against the progress, and the resistant attitudes and thought drive the condition in a cyclical pattern directly back to a culture of inequality despite any progress. On the other hand, applied behavioral scientists and critical thinkers, both PoC and White, have studied, recognized, and named Whiteness, a term that defines a frame of mind and a way of living, not solely and sometimes not at all describing skin color, but a term existing in various spheres of social life (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017). It is only by actively and continuously doing the race work that will break the cultural cycle represented in figure 1, a cycle that continuously places strong forces against progress and perpetuates the elements and behaviors of intolerance and subordination and returns the culture repeatedly to one of a dominant-subjugated status quo.

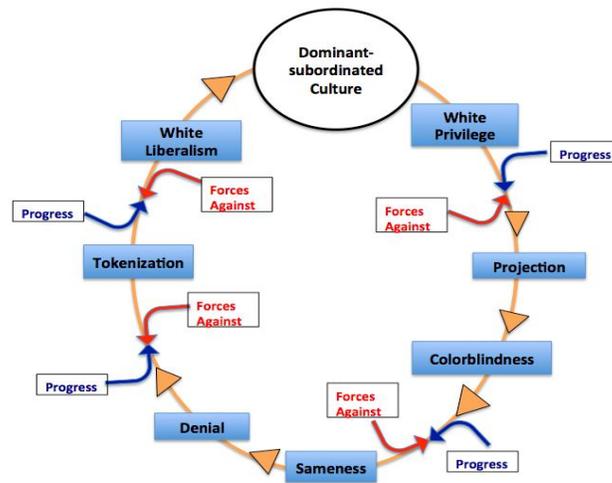


Figure 1. The common cycle of Continuous Dominant-Subjugated Culture in the U.S.

The historic situations described by Sorokin, Mead & Baldwin, and West are pertinent and repeat themselves (Popova, 2015; Sorokin, 1985; West, 2015) today. We cannot ignore the past, and we cannot accept the default (Grant, 2016). We must seek to have integrity, decency, honesty, and virtue in the face of oppression (West, 2015). Mead and Baldwin stated that it is critical to understand and focus on the changes we must make because of the responsibility we have for the children, understanding that it is what we do this week that matters (Popova, 2015). We need to grasp the notion that we have work to do and that that work is not about helping PoC (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017). It is about making change to the inequitable culture that pervades our history as a nation and society. The culture of helping and privilege, and the impulse that many people have to help PoC, is about the White identity and related expectation that the White population has the power, knowledge, and control, so they are obligated to help, without first checking the assumption about whether the PoC group wants, needs, or is willing to accept the help (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017). This is not the work to be done. Race work must be done on every level, including individually. Instead, it is about helping ourselves and our society, in movement towards reflection and understanding and towards being the change that moves away from the dominant-subordinated culture and move towards one of equity and inclusion (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce,

2017). We have to remind ourselves and those around us that we are the difference and that a justice movement cannot exist if the people don't speak their minds or are unwilling to pay the sacrifices of doing so (West, 2015). If people with integrity, honesty, decency, and virtue are willing to stand up and speak up, and pay the price for what is right, we can create the necessary change (West, 2015). If we see ourselves as one population, because of our differences rather than in spite of them, and we are involved and active, we can have the shared guilt Margaret Mead spoke of, as well as shared success, for what occurs in our society (Popova, 2015).

**Do the Work.** In order to address diversity, socio-cultural concerns, and inclusion matters, and to create transformational change as the leaders of organizations, communities, and as leaders of the nation, a number of interventions should be used. This cannot and will not be a quick and simple process, because such is not possible under the current societal condition. It is clear, from the history of numerous generations, that many methods or levels of intervention will be necessary to at least begin to make effective change and start the healing, and in bridging of differences and management of conflict to move the country forward, together. Like most organizational or community development strategies, the strategy to our way forward should include elements of (a) dialogue and feedback, (b) increased interaction and communities, (c) improved communication from effective leadership, (d) responsibility and accountability, (e) confrontation of discomfort and conflict, (f) multi-cultural, intercultural, and diverse education, (g) devoted and determined participation and engagement, and finally, (h) increased energy and optimism (French & Bell, 1999), among many other potential actions through progress.

Much of the race work to be done in this country is to be done by all of us, as individuals. A group, a think tank, a government, a President, or a consultant will not solve this problem for us. This must be taken on freely and openly with the intention of doing the smart and hard work. Resistance is a major block to progress (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017), and will not result in moving forward, so people must be ready, intent, and involved.

This kind of work is not simple. It is in fact extremely complex, especially in a time of upheaval—a time when our nation has arguably taken a few steps backwards in equality and inclusion. We are charged to do the work in the face of 400 years of inequality and disparity. We are eager to do the work in the face of 400 years of an unjust culture of dominance and subordination (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017). We need to continue to push the cart forward, regardless how steep the hill is. We must commit, and remain committed despite the challenges.

**Cultural Understanding for Government Administrators.** Although governments and governmental leaders are not going to solve the problem of racism, and do not hold the sole responsibility of ensuring equality and inclusion, governments do hold the unique position of affecting change in policy, procedures, and regulations. Furthermore, as discussed in this manuscript and exemplified in research studies, as well as in media on a regular basis, our governmental leaders, including the executive, legislative, and judicial branch leaders make decisions, make appearances, and make comments openly and publicly, often without a strong understanding or awareness of cultural differences in the population they represent or are speaking to, or the impact that their words will have.

One of the methods to begin this trend of hard work is the use of cultural analysis interventions. One of the main problems is the lack of understanding, sensitivity, or care about race and cultural differences in Congress and other organizations. The public needs to hold them to it. These leaders who are entrusted with our government must take purposive personal action and commitment to better understand cultural differences. Sure, our leaders are people, and people are molded by the environments they grow up in. Therefore, the community culture that

they are exposed to generally becomes ingrained, and it is difficult to change those culture-related acts and behaviors, but not impossible (Sorokin, 1985). Thus, making a cultural change is very important in the United States, and it is partially up to our leaders. The cultures of both the interconnection between the different branches of government, and on populations within the country are necessary. Cultural Analysis is complex, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to perform this type of intervention on the entire nation (French & Bell, 1999). Nonetheless, part of the problem with the way that we work as a country is that we are divided by the beliefs and the disagreements of our political parties, and when the parties split the elected government that we voted for, that government makes decisions that do not represent the core of the population. Groupings of the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the Executive Branch need to come together, in mediated sessions, to assess and understand the culture concept and to begin identifying the sources of their assumptions and their arguments (French & Bell, 1999). This can be accomplished through direct intervention to these organizations, preferably facilitated by an organizational development or other applied behavioral science professional that can facilitate the introduction and use of frameworks such as Schein’s Cultural Analysis, Denison’s Human Synergistics & Organizational Culture Inventory (OCI), and Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions. This should be completed through a long-term plan, including assessment, reflection, action, and constant re-iteration. Further, numerous organizational design frameworks can be used to understand the interplay of culture with organizational systems, structures, strategies, leadership, vision, and mission in each of these organizations, and the assessments used to design further interventions as necessary. Using cultural analysis and dialogue will help individuals understand the racial underpinnings of their attitudes and statements, including those that transpire under hidden bias and White privilege, as well as White liberalism.

**Table 1. Comparison of common statements and attitudes of bias, privilege, and insensitivity with reference to racial underpinnings**

Common Attitudes or Statement of Bias, Privilege, Insensitivity, and Racist Underpinnings	Attitudes or Statements of Equity and Equality, and a Move Away from Racist Underpinnings
"We practice tolerance in this company."	"We practice equality, inclusion, and multiculturalism in this company."
"I don't even see color"	"We recognize and celebrate each other's differences and use them to strengthen us as a group."
"I'm colorblind"	"We recognize and celebrate each other's differences and use them to strengthen us as a group."
"we're all the same"	"We are not all the same, but we are all equal and we will treat each other equitably."
"We are all one race, the human race."	"We have different cultures, rites, rituals, and upbringings, and we recognize, acknowledge, and celebrate those differences."
"So, what's the Black perspective on that?"	"So, what do you think about that personally?"
"It was horrible how my ancestors treated PoC"	"Our culture is unjust and full of systemic and systematic racism. I recognize my privilege in today's dominant-subordinated culture and am directly doing work to be the change."
"How can I help?"	"Although I may not have directly and blatantly participated in racism, I recognize my privilege in today's dominant-subordinated culture and am directly doing work to be the change."

These statements or attitudes do not necessary have to come from an evil place, bad intentions, or racist beliefs, but they often do arise from environments rich in privilege, ignorance, and misunderstanding, and result in insensitivity, at the least from racial underpinnings. Table 1 provides some examples of these types of statements or attitudes, and a comparison to what they would appear like without racist underpinnings.

Problems will no doubt surface, and as they are identified, dialogue can occur in an attempt to begin fixing the problems through a constant and continuous collaborative communication effort regarding inequity, inequality, hidden bias, White privilege, White liberalism, and subordination. This is vital, because if our branches of government and partisan leaders cannot work together to implement policies for the betterment of the nation and all the people, and instead aim only to stop each others' successes, then that is a government that does not function, will not represent the population, and will continue to increase fissures in race relations.

**Leadership Accountability and Responsibility.** As seen in the previous paragraph, and throughout this paper, leaders are a critical point of interest regarding issues of race relations. Whether they are leaders in neighborhoods, communities, organizations, agencies, governments, or nations, people look to leaders for strength and answers, and they take cues from their leaders. Earlier in this article, we discussed social contagion and the means by which leaders' actions and behaviors influence and justify actions and behaviors of the population they lead. Thus, it is critical that leaders act responsibly, and take accountability for their actions, and denounce or condemn statements, behaviors, and actions that are racist and bigoted. Those that do not should be removed from the government of, by, and for the people.

The SPLC (2016), and other organizations and individuals, have called for the leadership, with particular reference to Donald Trump and his Administration, to take measures to disavow hate organizations and condemn hate crimes, hateful acts, discriminatory acts, hate speech, and other vile behaviors of not only individuals in government, but of private organizations and individuals in public. Donald Trump and his administration have rejected this call, and have not done so in numerous situations, during and after the campaign, leaving people only to make their own determinations regarding the reasons, and opening the door to only more assumption and controversy. Disavowing racist organizations, and standing up against their rhetoric and stating that it is wrong is one significant measure of a leader, and in no way suggests the removal of rights, such as freedom of speech, that are protected for all individuals, including those making reprehensible statements. It is the responsibility of leaders to shape the face of the world, and the symbols of today enable the reality of tomorrow. A failure of leaders to condemn or to have removed the symbols of hate and violence, such as swastikas, emboldens their users and increases their use (Snyder, 2017). Declining and denigrating the support of these hateful organizations, and shunning their behavior, is critical in showing that this is not what our nation and our society is supposed to be, and it indicates that our leaders, Republican, Democratic, or Independent, will not stand for hate. This would show that the nation and the people are more important than elections and partisan politics. The present time is not one for hubris and narcissism, nor are the positions that our leaders in the federal and state executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government hold.

Media and social media companies are not immune. They must also take accountability and bare the responsibility for their roles and participation in this, because their continuous reporting, coverage, and posting, often for television ratings and stock scores, results in mass distribution and viewership. More than 60 percent of adults receive their news through some form of social media (Ott, 2017), and the continuous coverage, and even

support at times, of these racially motivated statements and behaviors, is spreading through social contagion to epidemic and pandemic levels.

Our national leaders, state leaders, community leaders, agency leaders, media leaders, and organizational leaders must be willing and able to have open dialogue, listen, reflect, and understand their roles in these positions, the consequences of their actions or inaction, and the roles that they have played and may continue to play in the negative condition of not just race relations, but the racial, ethnic, and other discrimination that poisons our society. As leaders, they have great power, and with that comes a great responsibility.

That being said, doing race work is the responsibility of everyone. We cannot count solely on our leaders in order to do the right thing and to understand the factors that cause or affect racial tensions, racism, and community instability. We must be self-reflective, self-aware, and be able to use ourselves as the instrument of change in moving our nation towards a culture of multiculturalism, racial equality, and inclusion.

***Distributed Use of Self as Instrument.*** The terms self-awareness, self-reflection, situational awareness, and mindfulness are all part of understanding the self as an instrument. This is called use of self, and it is a method that enables the engagement of personal emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects in the moment and in different situations (Jamieson, Auron, & Shechtman, 2010; Shufutinsky & Long, 2017). Use of self as instrument is a link between our individual potential and the world of change, and this method is the connecting fabric of the concepts of self-awareness, choices, and actions as the fundamental structure of our capacities to be effective agents of change (Seashore, Shawver, Thompson, & Mattare, 2004; Shufutinsky & Long, 2017).

Use of self is important to practically any profession or task, and can be used for focus, and for organizational or environmental diagnostic purposes (Jamieson, Auron, & Shechtman, 2010; McCormick & White, 2000), including diagnosing interactions, emotional reactions, initial perceptions, and understanding biases. Use of Self as instrument can be used as a tool of awareness of one's own biases, in real time (Shufutinsky & Long, 2017). The complexities of working with the unconscious self may cause discomfort and may be intolerable to some, but this method for acknowledging unconscious forces can be a vital step in increasing understanding of individual behaviors and how they translate to the organization, or in this case to communities and the nation, as well as providing feedback on one's own behavior (Seashore, Shawver, Thompson, & Mattare, 2004). The use of self provides a capacity for showing up and being present in the social space, an awareness of personal projections and stereotypes, a commitment to the journey in whatever endeavor, a knowledge of personal triggers and how to manage them, an ability to use emotional energy positively, and clarity to facilitate change (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017).

Each of us, as members of this nation, of society at large, and of humanity, must take it upon ourselves to use self in order to reflect on our thoughts, our beliefs, our rites and rituals, our upbringings and the cultures in which we were brought up, our fears and our prejudices. Using the self as instrument permits us to identify and bring forth these factors and aspects in our lives and in ourselves, and to understand them, deal with them, and work through them.

We must use self as instrument not only in order to understand ourselves and have this dialogue with ourselves, but we must use self in order to dialogue with others, to educate others on the Journey Continuum, and to fully participate, experience, and learn from others, and our interactions with them.

**Dialogue.** Dialogue is critical to effectiveness of organizations (Katz & Miller, 2013; 2014), and is critical at all levels of society. The use of dialogue strategies have been used effectively in many organizations and settings to improve social responsibility and engage diversity and related issues (Haddon, 1987; Isaura, Corso, Macpherson, 2003; Katz & Miller, 2013; 2014; Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, Zuniga, 2009). Communication and interaction are key elements for any organizational development strategy (French & Bell, 1999). We must use our reflection and self- and situational-awareness to prompt dialogue around the topics of race, diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusion in all of our environments. If an instrument is required in order for initiating dialogue, then we must be that instrument of change and use the self to foster dialogue, engage others in discussion, participate in debates, reflect on the experience, learn from them, and to educate others with regard to the work and the process.

**Follow Miller & Katz.** In the current market, the industrial complex has generally accepted that diversity is critical for organizational success (Greene & Berthoud, 2007; Joplin & Daus, 1997; Plummer & Jordan, 2007). They understand that they need the best talent to remain competitive in the modern rapidly changing global industrial environment, and that this talent often comes from different populations, ethnically, culturally, and internationally, and has the potential to lead to an increased market share (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). Nevertheless, although important, this is not an issue of capitalism, but rather a socio-cultural question of humanity. There can be many positive outcomes that come out of doing this work, but the work must be done in order to move from a culture of racial inequality and racism to one of multiculturalism, racial equity, and inclusion.

Katz & Miller (2013; 2014) touch on the importance of joining instead of judging and also direct us to the link of civil rights and social justice to organizational development. The mission of both is to create an environment in which all people are treated fairly, respectfully, and are allowed to participate fully and influence their work experience (Katz & Miller, 2014). They detail the necessity for acceptance of diversity of the population through the fourth of their *4 Keys*, expressing how vital it is to promote difference and diversity in organizations in order to create workplaces where people and their individual talents, ideas, and thoughts are valued (Katz & Miller, 2013; 2014). However, it is not limited to the fourth key. Katz & Miller's (2014) *4Keys* provide a framework for leadership and practice. Through (a) joining and not judging, (b) leaning into discomfort, (c) listening as an ally, (d) stating intent and intensity, and (e) observing and analyzing all streetcorners, Miller and Katz provide a solid foundation of how to practice use of self as instrument for this type of work. They stress participating in non-judgmental dialogue (Miller & Katz, 2013), regardless of the knowledge of the relevant discomfort, and honestly and intently talking with and listening to others on the opposite side of the dialogue, and observing all perspectives, no matter which corner of the dialogue it comes from, to get a better understanding of the big picture, and how to move it forward (Katz & Miller, 2014).

**Education and training.** Education programs, whether in universities or in K-12 programs should include some sort of diversity and inclusion education and training, through dialogue and coursework (Checkoway, 2009; Isaura, Corso, & Macpherson, 2003). Further, diversity and inclusion training has been proven effective through action research, and should be used in order to help close gaps in inclusion and to improve cultural interaction and understanding between and among groups in our population. Diversity training serves as a means to reduce prejudice, and to increase inclusion (Paluck, 2006). Hundreds, and probably thousands of workplaces and schools use diversity training, and though it has been shown to improve diversity and inclusion, there is also a need for

action research to ensure that these measures are grounded in theory (Paluck, 2006), and continue to be practiced and distributed throughout our population and organizations.

Nevertheless, there is much more room to fill regarding the types and methods of training and the population to receive it, particularly with regard to areas or organizations that have significantly struggled of late, such as law enforcement, and our agencies and branches of government. But we must never give up the opportunity to become better educated and move forward on an individual level, because we must be the change.

### **Conclusion**

In short, the heralding in of a post-racial America upon the election of Barack Obama was a dream, and it did not come true. Although it has been shown that there is progress in some aspects of race relations in the United States, the racial divide also appears to be increasing in some areas. The post-election activity in 2008 and 2012 exhibited an increase in hate group membership and blatantly inappropriate and racist remarks from the mainstream media and from government officials and other public figures. The 2016 election showed only an exacerbation of that activity, with hate speech and events being passed during a message of populism in a heated presidential contest, and over 800 post-election hate crimes and incidents recorded and reported in just 10 days immediately following the election, and an ever-increasing number since. The events of August and September of 2017, among many others, also showed the blatant attitudes and behaviors of hatred, racism, and racial supremacy, as well as actions to remove legal status of Dreamers, without any non-theatrical, evidence-based reasoning. These behaviors have led to physical and violent acts as well as threatening behaviors toward people and religious establishments. There is an intensification of racial tensions across the nation, and these tensions have crossed into a rift among government leaders in various branches of government and the American population, arguably approaching closer and closer the heights experienced during the Civil Rights movement. We, as a nation, are at a crossroad and if we do not reject our cowardly ways of blaming, hatred, and racism and instead approach our challenges from the perspective of every one of the street corners of the crossroads, we will continue to miss the hazards and proceed haphazardly and reactively to tragic and unnecessary social accidents, and a society of inadequate and sub-ideal human relations. We are in need of measures to close the divide, and move to a place of inclusion, equality, and peace. This can only be done once we, the population, understand what the challenges are, including our own internal challenges. We need an environment of reflection, open dialogue, integration, and effective diversity and inclusion programs throughout our agencies, communities, and organizations. And we need our leadership to be responsible for establishing inclusive environments, and to take accountability for their own missteps. Until then, we will only continue to exacerbate our problems and periodically search for some proof of unity and equality, although it will be, like in 2008 and 2012, through a hidden bias lens, and will perpetuate a falsity of a post-racism state. Until we can have the difficult conversation, and engage one another in this conversation on a daily basis, we will continue to resemble, in that context, Eric Holder's definition of us as a nation of cowards.

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