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Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education: White Privileged Resistance and Implications for Leadership

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Abstract: Extrapolating history is crucial to mitigating the current underpinnings of racial and ethnic inequities in higher education; however, to establish sustainable change, one must consider its fundamental origin. The inception of 15th-century white settler colonialism is at the epicenter of modern-day racial discrimination and the normalcy of oppressive practices in the United States' education system (US) of America. To understand white settler colonialism and its denigrating manifestations is to understand the dynamics between those in power and those who are subjugated. America's white settler colonialism's horrific ideology is insidiously depicted through *torture, persecution, brutality, plunder,* and *pillage* (Traore, 2004). This ideology is the foundation that breeds our

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society's racial and ethnic hierarchy, including in higher education. Racial discrimination in higher education creates a partisan, culturally divided learning environment, frequently normalized in academic leadership. The purpose of this paper is three-fold: (a) to examine normalized whiteness in higher education, (b) to examine how mere talk about diversity and inclusion inhibits disruption in power to transforming modern-day consciousness of inequities, discrimination, and racism, and (c) discuss action steps to promote leadership among black and brown raced individuals in higher education.
Keywords: higher education; white privilege; racism; leadership; diversity

Diversidad racial y étnica en la educación superior: Resistencia blanca privilegiada e implicaciones para el liderazgo

Resumen: El inicio del colonialismo de colonos blancos del siglo XV está en el epicentro de la discriminación racial moderna y la normalidad de las prácticas opresivas en el sistema educativo de los Estados Unidos (EE.UU.). El colonialismo de colonos blancos y sus manifestaciones denigrantes se basan en la dinámica entre los que están en el poder y los que están subyugados. La ideología del colonialismo de colonos blancos de Estados Unidos se describe insidiosamente a través de la tortura, la persecución, la brutalidad, el saqueo y el pillaje (Traore, 2004). Esta ideología es la base que genera la jerarquía racial y étnica de nuestra sociedad, incluso en la educación superior. La discriminación racial en la educación superior crea un entorno de aprendizaje partidista y culturalmente dividido, normalmente normalizado en el liderazgo académico. El propósito de este artículo es triple: (a) examinar la blancura normalizada en la educación superior, (b) examinar cómo el mero hablar sobre diversidad e inclusión inhibe la interrupción del poder para transformar la conciencia moderna de las desigualdades, la discriminación y el racismo y (c) discutir los pasos de acción para promover el liderazgo entre las personas de raza negra y marrón en la educación superior.
Keywords: educación superior; privilegio blanco; racismo; liderazgo; diversidad

Diversidade racial e étnica no ensino superior: Resistência privilegiada dos brancos e implicações para a liderança

Resumo: O início do colonialismo de colonos brancos do século 15 está no epicentro da discriminação racial moderna e da normalidade das práticas opressivas no sistema educacional dos Estados Unidos (EUA). O colonialismo de colonos brancos e suas manifestações denegridoras é baseado na dinâmica entre aqueles que estão no poder e aqueles que são subjugados. A ideologia do colonialismo de colonos brancos da América é insidiosamente representada por meio de tortura, perseguição, brutalidade, saque e pilhagem (Traore, 2004). Essa ideologia é a base que alimenta a hierarquia racial e étnica de nossa sociedade, inclusive no ensino superior. A discriminação racial no ensino superior cria um ambiente de aprendizagem partidário e culturalmente dividido, frequentemente normalizado na liderança acadêmica. O objetivo deste artigo é triplo: (a) examinar a brancura normalizada no ensino superior, (b) examinar como a mera conversa sobre diversidade e inclusão inibe a interrupção do poder para transformar a consciência moderna de desigualdades, discriminação e racismo e (c) discutir as etapas de ação para promover a liderança entre indivíduos de raça negra e parda no ensino superior.
Palavras-chave: ensino superior; privilégio branco; racismo; liderança; diversidade

Introduction

> The academy never stood apart from American slavery—in fact, it stood beside church and state as the third pillar of a civilization built on bondage. (Wilder, 2013)

Higher education in the United States (US) was established on the historical underpinnings and modern legacies of chattel slavery, white settler colonialism, along with the development of the U.S. global domain (Poon, 2018; Wilder, 2013). Entwined with the creation of white European colonies, presently known as the US, and with the evolution of the country, higher education has taken on a significant role in furthering white supremacist philosophies, in theory, policy, and with the abuse and dehumanization of black and brown racially identified individuals in the US (Poon, 2018). As Wilder (2013) indicated, U.S. establishments of higher education were constructed on and by black slave labor. Likewise, as President Lincoln's adoption of the 1862 Morrill Land Grant Act is regularly reveled for increasing public funds for higher education as a mechanism for national growth, this historical policy was essential to the settler-colonial campaign of Manifest Destiny—beliefs enacted which displaced and demolished Native American populations (Poon, 2018). These realities defy sanitized and hegemonic accounts of higher education as a location of enlightenment and humanizing democratic values (Poon, 2018).

Thus, it is crucial to develop a historical lens to contextualize and glean how our present climate supports enduring displays of racial discrimination in higher education while also espousing values of diversity with a negligible representation of leaders from brown and black racial backgrounds in the higher education arena. As Linley (2018) acclaimed, matching a new paradigm of inclusion can be more difficult in practice than it is theoretically, particularly when higher education's espoused conceptual theory of embracing diversity and inclusion does not align with its theory-in-use—whiteness prevails.

To that end, the purpose of this paper is three-fold: (a) examine how whiteness is normalized in higher education, (b) to examine how mere talk about diversity and inclusion inhibits disruption in power to transforming modern-day consciousness of inequities, discrimination, and racism, and (c) discuss action steps to promote leadership among black and brown raced individuals in higher education.

Whiteness Normalized in Higher Education

Historical Reflection

The structures of higher education are reflective of societies' systemic racism (Patton, 2016). Typically, as racism is historically institutionalized in American society, so too is it reflected in the practices and operations of higher education (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Given this historical account, a critical assessment of whiteness must occur relative to higher education since whiteness originates from the dynamics of racism. In accordance with critical race theory, racism is a form of power (Linley, 2018). Likewise, whiteness directly relates to power and privilege along with the inheritances of inter-generational advantage.

Sensoy and Diangelo (2017) further acknowledge that whiteness is multidimensional. Specifically, it is a position of structural advantage in race privilege. Similarly, whiteness is a viewpoint; meaning, it is a lens from which white individuals see themselves, others, and society, at large. Moreover, whiteness denotes a collection of cultural practices that are typically unmarked and unnamed, and rendered invisible (Sensoy & Diangelo, 2017; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Consequently, to identify whiteness is to indicate a series of relations that are historically, socially, politically, and culturally manufactured and inherently connected to the dynamic relations of white

racial domination (Sensoy & Diangelo, 2017). Therefore, whiteness is recognized as a deep-level set of philosophical norms, beliefs, and tenets produced and reproduced by a racialized social order grounded in white supremacy (Hode & Meisenbach, 2016). Regardless of how low a white person is in a specified socioeconomic group, they benefit from being white, and this does not need to be an intentional act (Braithwaite, 2018). Race bypasses gender and socioeconomic class (Vidal-Ortiz, 2018). It portrays whiteness's power dynamic as the standard, which relegates and silences racially black and brown individuals (Hode & Meisenbach, 2016). Simultaneously, it can go unnoticed by racially white individuals; it can hide the reality that they are likewise raced (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). While whiteness is considered the cultural and human norm, it is generally gleaned that the white experience and the white narrative are essentially the only ones.

Over time, those in higher education pronounce support of equal opportunity and democratic citizenship though concurrently employed acts of racial segregation, cultural genocide, and discrimination against racially black and brown individuals (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). For these individuals, white domination requires deculturalization— a methodical process of stripping an individual or population's culture and identity and supplanting the culture of the dominant population. The philosophical underpinning for deculturalization is to ensure that subjugated cultures embrace rather than resist conquest under the guise of schooling (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). U.S. higher education, from its origin, has been a significant force in persistent inequities (Bell, 2015; Patton, 2016). As illustrated, Wolfe and Dilworth (2015) highlighted this practice with the initial five postsecondary schools in the British American colonies. These included the following schools and years they were founded: Harvard (1636); William and Mary (1693); Yale (1701); Codrington in Barbados (1745); and College of New Jersey (1746), which is currently branded as Princeton University (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). These schools were used as arms in the annexation of native populations (Stein, 2017).

Moreover, these schools were perpetrators in the expansion of the African slave trade and slavery, which supported a system that enabled college expansion, with the pursuit to increase white dominance (Stein, 2017; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Founding colonial colleges were from slave-owning families who earned their wealth from slavery, including the crops/products it produced from slave labor (Patton, 2016). Whiteness provided the primary justification for chattel slavery, along with the seizure of land from Native Americans; accordingly, white racial identity is entwined with economic advantages and domination (Hode & Meisenbach, 2016). Moreover, legalized chattel slavery was validated by white supremacy in addition to authorizing the exploitation of human beings (i.e., buying, selling, trading, inheriting, black individuals as property). This means that whiteness was, in fact, a protective safeguard where whites would not become property (Hode & Meisenbach, 2016).

What's more, higher education has long been complicit in facilitating and celebrating slavery; for example, celebrated institutional portraits and representations, named after significant contributors to the domination and cruelty of imprisoned Black Africans and North American Indigenous populations (Stein, 2016). Thus, power and higher education's affiliation were synergetic. In Bell (2015), Wilder stated, "The American college-trained the personnel and cultivated the ideas that accelerated and legitimated the dispossession of Native Americans and the enslavement of Africans… Modern slavery required the acquiescence of scholars and the cooperation of academic institutions" (p. 2).

Even though Harvard University's endowment remains the largest at $36.4 billion, a growing endowment whose historical legacy allowed for such wealth will not be acknowledged in any meaningful or substantive way. Harvard has created a website (https://www.harvard.edu/slavery), but there has not been a fundamental plan of action appropriately addressing the historical

transgressions and complicity in endorsing and promulgating slavery. "Dominant group members are usually aware that any acknowledgment of complicity in racial subordination seriously compromises their positions of power and privilege" (Patton, 2016, p. 319). Thus, symbolic efforts toward remedying their complicit actions are all they are willing to engage in; no more will occur unless [again] they believe that these actions would profit them in some way (Patton, 2016). Assuredly, higher education institutions may be driven to guard their "brand" and the outlook this would have for prospective students, alumni, and funders (Stein, 2016). Indisputably, there are implications in institutional judgments about how or whether to speak about its connection to slavery (Stein, 2016). We know that higher education used slave labor to advance and sustain their schools, and their campuses presented as "intellectual and cultural playgrounds of the plantation and merchant elite" (Patton, 2016, p. 318; Wilder, 2013, p. 138). Symbolic demonstrations do not dismantle the structures of racism, nor do institutional apologies. Indisputably, slavery and racism were pervasive in early America. From the colonial period to the 20th century, white American society backed its wealth on the exploitation and oppression of black and brown racialized individuals. Given that education is central to the practice of cultural transmission, there should be no shock that the earliest institutions of higher education extended the inhuman and sadistic value systems of their time. American academics must acknowledge that our professional domain was constructed on a bedrock of bigotry and violence (Bell, 2015).

Continued Effects of Whiteness in Higher Education

> Discrimination on the basis of race appears to be nearly absolute [in the academe]. No major university in the United States has more than a token representation of Negroes on its faculty and these tend to be rather specialized persons who are filled in one way or another for such a role. (Caplow & McGee, 1965, as cited by Wolfe, 2010, §1)

In 1971, Executive Order 11246 ordered affirmative action directives to higher educational institutions to offer broad-based entrée to all spheres of the academy to black and brown raced groups (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Later, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People accessed the court system and contended that the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare did not terminate subsidizing segregated institutions of higher learning as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). External mandated policy led institutions to abide for fear of losing accreditation slowly. Even with this mandate, "colleges and universities devised sophisticated internal mechanisms to subvert affirmative action in recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion to the advantage of the privileged gender and race that dominate the academy" (Kawewe, 1997, p. 264). Arday (2018) acknowledged that the normalization of whiteness and racism permeates obscurely throughout higher education at the detriment of black and brown raced faculty.

Moreover, the U.S. Department of Labor acknowledged that affirmative action provided gains to all ethnic groups, yet interestingly, the chief recipients have been white women (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). An increasing number of white women have secured higher education leadership roles and have profited from multiculturalism and inclusion practices. Daniel (2018) asserted that white women had supplanted some white men as the power agents and higher education gatekeepers. Daniel further indicated that white women are analogous to patriarchy in dresses, pantsuits, and pumps, given that interrogation of racism lacks the upholding of power structures and oppressive practices. This highlights how white skin privilege and the lived experience of white women can easily disconnect them from the lived experience of black and brown raced individuals, consequently, leaving the structure of white supremacy unopposed, intact, and reproducing racial

inequality (Daniel, 2018). Moreover, white supremacy is adaptive, and its present-day manifestation is rooted in cultural denial of its very existence (Okun, 2011).

Hiring practices lacking substantive discussion about institutional racism allow the propagation of an ignorant system, exploitation, and power to oppress black and brown raced populations while favoring policies that advance racially white individuals (Gasman et al., 2015). For example, when affirmative action policies are implemented in higher education and once an underrepresented minority-hiring goal is achieved, departments no longer sought minority applicants pulling ads from minority publications, regardless of vacancies that remained (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). This practice highlights a facet of institutional (structural) racism—the display of racism in social systems and institutions, including the social, economic, educational, and political forces or policies that function to promote biased results (Sensoy & Diangelo, 2017). Such practices systematically bring about inequitable effects for black and brown raced faculty. And for the colorblind racist, race isn't important because he/she just see a person motto and color muteness; the resistance to describe people as racialized, challenge us to have a discourse about racism and whiteness, as if it were taboo or unnecessary (Ortiz, 2019).

Similar to leadership in other societal domains, striving for racial equity in leadership in higher education is multifariously attributable to relationships shaped by group dynamics and especially the context of structured inequalities. Higher education depends on well-known, customary ways of functioning in which leadership is described by traditional values and norms espoused by white raced individuals; this emphasizes an organizational status quo, which propagates inequities in access and leadership (Gasman et al., 2015).

Given the flagrant ahistorical and acontextual understandings of race and racism's modern-day role in influencing leadership opportunities, critical race discourse can help disrupt dominant white perspectives and white privilege in higher education (Hode & Meisenbach, 2016). Critical Race Theory (CRT) appeared in the 1970s, initially focused on legal issues, then later applied in the educational arena due to worsening racial equality developments made during the 1960s, particularly on the disparate effect of the lawful policies adversely impacting Blacks (Gasman et al., 2015). Foundational tenets of CRT include:

> the permanence of racism, which is ingrained in American society; that the power structures based on white privilege and white supremacy, maintains the discrimination and marginalization of persons of color; a rejection of liberalism, meritocracy, colorblindness, neutrality, and objectivity—these notions reinforce the self-interest of whites in the position of power; and CRT urges us to use our voices through storytelling, narratives, and firsthand accounts…to provide a counternarrative to the oppressive dominant discourse (Gasman et al., 2015, pp. 3-4).

CRT challenges the philosophies of neutrality entrenched in meritocracy that fail to recognize the intersectional relevance of elements such as race and gender (Cabrera et al., 2017). Meritocracy has a unique lure in the U.S. philosophy since it lets white raced individuals believe they were successful in their own merit with no regard to the United States' racial history (Cabrera et al., 2017). Bonilla-Silva (2014) acknowledged that scrutinizing race and racism related to higher education is commonly decontextualized, ahistorical, and colorblind.

The fundamental value in whiteness is grounded in the social narrative that Feagin (2013) called the white racial frame, encompassing a collection of cultural narratives and symbols constructed on white supremacy and antiblackness that form views, ideologies, and emotions that prevail in the US; white oppressors have long viewed U.S. society through this lens. Cabrera et al. (2017) noted that the white racial frame consists of "(a) racial stereotypes (a belief aspect), (b) racial

narratives and interpretations (integrating cognitive aspects), (c) racial image (a visual aspect), and language accents (an auditory aspect), (d) racialized emotions (a feelings aspect), and (e) inclinations to discriminatory action" (p. 62).

A fundamental premise in CRT is that historical events and context have decisively produced undesirable thinking, structural barriers, and insufficient progress for black and brown raced individuals in higher education. Whites' disregard of historical context strengthens their power and demotes black and brown raced individuals to remain in a lower rank and underrepresented in leading positions. The function that race enacts in everyday life must be compared to assertions that the U.S. system is established on merit, objectivity, and colorblindness. The result of not considering individuals or systems' fundamental racial positions as pivotal to their being more favorable outcomes in derisory.

Critical race theory is also a pertinent curriculum to advance the decolonization of the academy. As it stands, deeply embedded whiteness must be challenged via the institutionally sanctioned curriculum. White terrain as it relates to curriculum omits diverse viewpoints and permits entrenchment of a Eurocentric lens that aligns more with white individual's experiences (Cabrera et al., 2017). Accordingly, race matters in academic curriculum where policies and practices tend to impede learning and the forming of knowledge beyond the 'master' scripting deemed worthy of learning (Crichlow, 2015; Parker et al., 2017). This silences broader narratives beyond dominant, white, upper-class male voices, which traditionally set the standard. The "cannon" knowledge propagated throughout generations, safeguarding whiteness, persists irrespective of subject matter (Crichlow, 2015). Given its normality, curriculum is not often interrogated because it delivers a "good" education short of accounting for the advantages of white individuals. Parker et al. (2017) also asserted that knowledge originates from a range of sources, rather than from the implementation of a gatekeeping theory used to underpin an intellectual class hierarchy in higher education, "and with it, a colonial and Eurocentric ego-politics of knowledge" (p. 2). Specifically, decolonization involves acknowledging the artificiality and disingenuousness nature of curriculum espoused pervasively from Eurocentric origins and its presumed universal applicability (Parker et al., 2017). Moreover, Arday (2018) recognized that black and brown raced faculty's manifestation powerfully compromises and disrupts normativity by defying discriminatory elitists binaries of higher education while advancing broader discussions about what we remark to be legitimate knowledge. What's more, this legitimization of some knowledge and failure to recognize other forms of knowledge supports the belief that knowledge dwells within apartheid, which disregards and devalues certain forms of knowledge (Arday, 2018). However, it is believed that pedagogical approaches ought to afford learners with a more expansive cultural landscape canvasing all types of knowledge (Arday, 2018).

Interestingly, as a perceived property right, whiteness in curriculum within diversity-related courses does not create change; they often reinforce others' stereotypical perceptions without interrogating whiteness (Crichlow, 2015). As Eduardo Bonilla-Silva describes, white-oriented and-led institutions breed whiteness via their curriculum, culture, demography, symbols, and traditions while concurrently appearing as impartial spaces free of race and racialized perspectives (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Sensoy & Diangelo, 2017). Only black and brown raced individuals are racialized and perceived as moving race into race-neutral (white) spaces; thus, race is unspecified and is not acknowledged as an organizing dynamic in higher education. For example, terminology such as Historical Black Colleges and Universities is often used where Historically White Colleges and Universities are an invisible term. Bonilla-Silva classifies this as "the white racial innocence game," whereby whites assert to lack racial knowledge and consequently lack awareness of the structures of racism that reproduce white advantage (Sensoy & Diangelo, 2017). This invisibility allows racism to

be normalized and pervasive in society regardless of the "liberal" nature of one's background. In general, white raced persons are socialized to embody a deep sense of superiority.

Moreover, when the curriculum integrates discussions on race, enhances racial literacy, and advances one's understanding of racism, a problematic issue arises for whites in higher education to confront, especially when it requires whites to recognize that their privilege substantially plays a part in upholding cycles of inequality for black and brown raced folks in higher education. Consequently, learning about race necessitates 'difficult knowledge,' specifically knowledge that faculty, staff, and students find emotionally charged and contentious, especially when delving into how power and privilege preserve normativity and hegemony at the expense of racially brown and black individuals (Arday, 2018, p. 144). Learning perceived to be incommensurable and traumatic naturally challenges traditional pedagogies positioned within a dominant white Eurocentric context; cultivating an ability to sit with anxiety and discomfort that may be created with this learning is necessary to advance towards more egalitarian spaces for knowledge development. Notably, the seriousness of any educational decolonization can only be applied by leadership with the power to make sure that such interventions develop into compulsory and pervasive practices.

The dynamics, as mentioned earlier, uphold disparate portrayals for black and brown raced individuals in administrative roles, especially in predominately-white institutions. Black and brown raced leaders in higher education have had to play by the rules of competition established by the dominant status group—white males. These marginalized groups compete with one another, while white raced individuals lack similar competition because of their already inherent power and privilege position. Given that higher education institutions manifest the dominant group's culture and values, managing prominence and resources to target racial inequity and racism is in their favor (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015).

Thus, terminology such as diversity and inclusion (D&I) is pushed forward and lauded instead of targeting structural inequities that uphold the status quo; if this were taken on, institutions would not have to worry about diversity—this would be an outcome. Also, as U.S. higher education institutions advocate for democratic values, which champion the principles of liberty, justice, and equality in their language, historical accounts display distinct repetitions of engaged practices that underpin beliefs and values antithetical to those principles. Often, these practices centered on white male dominance. Colleges and universities are unique American establishments that mimic the racial antipathy of the larger society.

Moving forward, structural and tangible transformations are vital to dismantling organizational racial bias along with a steadfast assessment of institutional blind spots. The implementation of well-intended actions frequently lacks an in-depth and systematic understanding of the dynamic circumstances that produced present-day realities. All too often, when our efforts do not achieve expected outcomes, we tend to give up believing we tried everything feasible. Blame is projected outward for difficulties, including those who have been historically and are currently victimized—this is usual rationalization for maintaining the status quo of racial bias and systemic racism. We must position space and groundwork for honest, authentic inquiry and action steps within society and higher education. As higher education institutions take on this form of critical self-scrutiny, eliminating current approaches, taking transformative steps, and new tools will need to be employed (Walters et al., 2017).

> The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. And this fact is only threatening to those [people] who still define the master's house as their only source of support. (Lorde, 1979, p. 10)

Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education

Diversity is reflective of differences such as culture, gender, religion, language, and social class. It perceives that varied identities, experiences, and perspectives are seen as an enhancement factor or promotes representation; however, commitment to diversity does not automatically translate to nor serve as a commitment to equality or equity. These steps necessitate the destruction of institutional norms, along with personal practices and ideologies, that serve to safeguard racial inequality and injustice. Inclusion requires an invitation to engage in spaces that may not have been formerly open to the individual; nonetheless, barriers to equal participation remain. As Vernā Myers states, one is "being invited to the party" and "being asked to dance," which illustrates an already disparate relationship (Kraehe, 2019, p. 2). The "inviting" and "asking" occurs from a privileged position, demonstrating the set power structure. Thus, inclusion does not advocate for changes in veiled problematic power dynamics that essentially uphold the status quo. The party's host doing the "inviting" and "asking" therefore maintains the power to include and exclude.

Consequently, they determine the rules of engagement; however, the guest's presence at the party rests on the will and tolerance of the host. Ultimately, they occupy space at the party as perpetual provisional guests (Kraehe, 2019). Accordingly, invitees at the party or even in hiring practices focused on D & I can lead to shallow or tokenizing practices; for example, expecting a black or brown raced individual to represent, speak, or act on behalf of their subjugated identity. Consequently, it is necessary to extrapolate the inimical structures that protect white privilege and fragility, while intentionally removing culpability from the entire system that create and maintain "the other." This section will extrapolate the underpinnings of D&I.

The Uphill Trend of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

In the last several decades, the US experienced an uphill trend of diverse student enrollment (Clauson & McKnight, 2018). Academic institutions created distinctive initiatives to cater to and keep up with its growing, diverse student body. To accommodate DEI, its inaugural yet rapidly growing movement led many colleges to institute Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), professional positions to address academic universities' overarching needs (Clauson & McKnight, 2018). Harvey (2014) summarizes the broad role of CDOs as "systemic re-configuration," responsible for bringing structural change, often against subtle and overt resistance (as cited in Clauson & McKnight, 2018, p. 41). While the CDO can be instrumental with the development of a diversity strategic plan to highlight institutional accountability and evaluate advancement toward multi-year goals, CDOs generally have no official power to hold people accountable when they do not answer to them.

Consequently, CDOs often need to operate through persuasion, symbolic power, or the ability to convey work through economic or human resources. This does not promote transformation. Mere talk about DEI efforts is not enough to undo the deeply rooted systems of racism across college campuses.

The Interplay of White Privilege and Fragility

While the incorporation of DEI entertains the desired notions of fundamental change in American academic leadership, the central role of white privilege remains illusory and opaque. Kendall (2002) reported that "white privilege is an institutional (rather than personal) set of benefits granted to those of us who, by race, resemble the people who dominate the powerful positions in our institutions" (p. 1). Therefore, white privilege speaks to the 'invisible package of unearned assets, a superfluity of opportunities and advantages that are enforced and contingent on the notion of being White—this amounts to entitlement. We cannot dismantle the structures of racism without

intentionally and incessantly addressing the interplay of white privilege (DiAngelo, 2018; Mills, 1997; Waxman & Simms, 2016). The obfuscation rooted in diversity efforts dismisses accountability from key players and systems (Mills, 1997) that would otherwise un-suture the inextricable link between white supremacy/power and whiteness.

Mill's (1997) historical theory of racial Contract further explains the fundamental element of white supremacy in Western political philosophy, a principle intended to serve and protect the ideals of a "white America," subsequently creating the "other" and supplications of unconscious bias. Racial Contract provides an in-depth examination of the process of white supremacy within the Social Contract conceived of by Western political philosophers. The Contract and its epistemologies allow white supremacy and racial entitlements to remain unnoticed by individuals racialized as white (Mills, 1997) through summonses of unconscious bias. Mills (1997) further denoted that (un)conscious bias supports the maintenance of white privilege and power. The establishment of its assertion and origin materialized during a time of overt racist sentiment. Cunningly, the belief of equal treatment aspires to defend and maintain the dominance of racially white individuals (Mills, 1997). Remnants of this conception are present today, categorizing whiteness as superiority while simultaneously proclaiming black and brown raced individuals as subordinate, underpinning the idea of 'othering' and oppression (Mills, 1997).

White fragility is common, as individuals who are racially white avoid talking about whiteness and oppression. DiAngelo (2011) defined white fragility as "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation" (p. 57). These practices upholds whiteness and implicitly preserves the notion of segregation, while concurrently moving further away from equity. To emphasize equity in this context is to dismantle the ideal of power and control over "the other" and build equitable, fair systems for everyone, eradicating the notion of "them and us" (DiAngelo, 2018; Klymicka, 2010). Wiley and Sons (2017) address the impact of America's white-centered lens, inflicting partisan view in our politics, economy, and social systems while creating nefarious oppression over non-whites (Tate & Paige, 2018). The resulting paradox challenges our ability to dismantle racism, creating a barrier to address white supremacist ideology (Wiley & Sons, 2017). This inhibits opportunities for black and brown raced individuals to gain more equitable opportunities in leadership roles among higher education institutions.

The DEI discourse lacks explicit messaging around ideals of individualism. Kolber (2017) identified 'abstract liberalism,' which deflects white privilege and creates fallacies to justify inequity among racial groups. Whites in leadership roles reproduce racial hierarchies within workplace settings, principally through informal hiring practices grounded in current social networks, often homogenous affinity networks (Henry et al., 2016). Disruption of white racial equilibrium would be a norm if diversity initiatives had substantive teeth to interrupt what is racially familiar to Whites and change structures to ensure equitable steps. Having the courage to sit with these disruptions, i.e., acknowledging that as a White person, you have a racialized frame of reference; also, in meaningful discussions, expect that one's feelings regarding race will be challenged and probing may occur to have the individual critically think about their views. Without reserving time to reflect on what it means to be White, authentic dialogue, exchange and collaboration cannot occur. Moreover, as decision-makers, leaders must acknowledge any biases they have in hiring practices that collide with espoused DEI goals. Patience, empathy, and emotional intelligence are requisite to tolerate discomfort and not become defensive or shut down when undertaking these bold but vital steps (Selzer et al., 2017).

Developing institutional efforts to address DEI without deliberate incorporation of discussion on racism, emphasizing its origin of colonialism and deep examination of white privilege is superfluous. Studies have yet to demonstrate how current diversity programs clearly and directly impact the prevailing disparities in higher education, still evidenced through the underrepresentation of Black students and faculty leadership in academia (Higher Education, 2018; Lynch, 2017). The consistency of the snail-like growth among black and brown raced faculty in academia is merely one of the many symptoms that affirm the fundamental problems that continue to hinder anti–racism and equitable outcomes (Journal of Blacks Higher Education, 2009).

To support the inimical and prevailing disparities, NCES (2016) data shows:

> Of all full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions in fall 2016, 41 percent were White males; 35 percent were White females; 6 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander males; 4 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander females; 3 percent each were Black males, Black females, and Hispanic males; and 2 percent were Hispanic females.[1] Those who were American Indian/Alaska Native and those of Two or more races each made up 1 percent or less of full-time faculty in these institutions.

Action Steps to Promote Leadership Among Black and Brown Raced Individuals

To mitigate racial diversity fatigue (i.e., the manifestation of stress racially black and brown individuals displays when confronted with daily microaggressions performed by racially white individuals) and the lack of racial equity within higher education, leadership must engage in work using an activist strategy to counter privileged white resistance (Okun, 2011). As Flynn (2015) identified, the resistant, who do not see systemic and institutional racism and the avoidance completely prohibit critically engaging with an array of viewpoints that expose how racism operates and how white privilege is all but assured via day by day systemic and institutional practices. In addition, the resistant often does not recognize his/her own complicity in maintaining systems of oppression (Flynn, 2015).

Making whiteness visible in higher education is requisite. Leadership in higher education must explore how White faculty and leaders valued by and benefiting from white culture resist in academic classrooms while accessing leadership, where they are expected to think about structural power and privilege. They also must think about their own positions of dominance and their relationship to subjugated populations and nondominant theoretical practices that are a source for knowledge development (Okun, 2011). Preparation to address normative defensiveness is necessary given that privileged resistance is entailed by a white supremacist culture that depends on the continuing repudiation of both the presence of racism and the realism that both white individuals and their collective group continue to accrue advantages from it. Thus, providing recommendations that can address questions like these can promote leadership for black and brown raced individuals in higher education: how do (in)actions reproduce racial inequity; in what respect does racism live in an institution's identity or architecture; how can racial and ethnic diversity be employed for empowerment; what do I and we need to do to be a change agent for my institution's racial and ethnic diversity, equity and inclusion efforts; when seeking individuals for faculty and leadership roles who defines quality; and how do faculty and leadership of black and brown racial backgrounds inform characterizations and explanations produced by racially white persons from historical white privilege. The key recommendations below, if implemented, can help promote leadership among black and brown raced individuals to preclude fake equity practices:

- Reject initiatives that suggest solving complex, historical and systemic issues through technically oriented strategies that allow prevailing systems and structures to remain intact and unexamined.

- Diversify historically white institutions at all levels while being intentional in their efforts. Haphazardly applied changes that claim to promote institutional, racial, and ethnic diversity policies will bolster exclusion, deficit thinking, and inequity among black and brown raced individuals (Gasman et al., 2015).

- Promote race-conscious leadership in higher education with a clear intention to research, discover, listen to and discuss the racial brutality that impacts the lives of persons from black and brown racial backgrounds. These leaders do not expect a racially black or brown person to educate them about racism or speak for all other people of that racial background. This would place the emotional burden of racism back on brown and black racially identified persons when White people need to take ownership of these issues (Selzer et al., 2017).

- Champion for race-conscious leaders to produce change by both persistent critical inquiry and self-reflection. They acknowledge their inadequacies by being vulnerable (Selzer et al., 2017). Discuss the critical race analysis and reflection, which are essential for leadership and faculty of all walks of life (Ortiz, 2019).

- Reflect on what it means to be White to enable authentic conversation and collaboration requisite for leaders. This takes empathy, patience, and emotional intelligence to endure and lean into discomfort that will arise. It requires that faculty and leadership not be defensive or "shut down" when these emotions elevate (Selzer et al., 2017). White raced individuals must learn their dominance and how it shapes their day-to-day experiences, rather than purely perceiving the struggle against racism as a practice that is external, discretionary, or as an act of compassion (Ortiz, 2019).

- Hire race-conscious leaders. This is necessary to promote steps towards equity practice towards racially brown and black persons. For example, the appointment of one Black or Latino dean lacks sufficiency towards progress.

- Establish multilevel accountability by race-conscious leaders that incentivize professional literacy on this topic. This includes holding themselves and their colleagues personally responsible for actualizing racially and ethnically inclusive campus environments; this supports systemic cultural change (Selzer et al., 2017).

- Situate privileged resistance in a reflective and iterative curriculum and professional workshops that aid students/faculty comprehension of personal, institutional, and cultural displays of race and racism (or any oppression) and how these have been historically formed to advantage the white (dominant) group at the detriment of black and brown raced persons (the oppressed group). This approach is a must, or

else we risk positioning both oppression and privileged resistance as individualized portrayals by "evil" or "wrong" or "naïve" individuals (Okun, 2011).

- Implement racial and ethnic diversity training in higher education that underscores the history of the US and diversity, especially establishing the contemporary understanding of race and who and why it was constructed.

- Foster critical interracial dialogue about race among leadership and academic context to develop a critical consciousness in white, black and brown raced faculty and leadership to enhance their skillfulness with critical and cross-racial practice (Ortiz, 2019).

- Examine recruitment strategies. It is critical to tackling the historical and present-day policies and practices that either accelerate or counteract the aspirations of diversity. Dismantle obstructions in racial and ethnic diversity by employing external evaluators with internal champions that can operationalize their conclusions within higher education and challenge the current power structures when it tries to push back against suggestions for change. This practice has been effective at some ivy league schools (Gasman et al., 2015).

- Interview search committees must be racially and ethnically diverse, shifting the interview weight in the selection process and reviewing position descriptions to concentrate on requirements in contrast to style preferences. It is preferred to have a black or brown racial person with power and rank to chair or co-chair the search committee. When traversing a senior leader's appointing process in high education, there should be equal representation of black or brown and white raced individuals. What's more, a group of multiracial applicants is requisite; when only one practical black or brown racial candidate is offered, there is a tendency for that individual to be appraised by stereotypes of their racial or ethnic group rather than being assessed as an individual. In contrast, a group of racially brown or black candidates creates a higher probability of being judged as individuals. Data tell us that black and brown applicants are exposed to more prejudicial inquiry and disparagement when the foundation of judgment is only racially white administrators (Gasman et al., 2015).

- Create internal committees or task forces that examine racial and ethnic disparities among leaders in higher education. These task forces should consist of both experienced and recently hired administrators in academic and student affairs and student leaders on campus, faculty, and alumni (Gasman et al., 2015).

- Mitigate higher education service gaps and maximize service-learning benefits while building financial, equitable practices legitimizing its importance. Black and brown faculty tend to be overburdened when it comes to performing diversity efforts on historically white campuses. This can seriously diminish ambitions to earn tenure. Since the conventional pipeline to leadership roles begins at the professorate level, this can create a fundamental challenge to diversifying senior leadership; black and brown raced scholars are mainly absent in the faculty pipeline (Gasman et al., 2015).

- Assessing outcomes of racial and ethnic equity initiatives using an authentic and transparent process is needed. Equity plans must have clear priorities and goals to disrupt whiteness. These plans must also acknowledge the professional or personal work that white individuals engage in to improve racial equity within the higher education setting, beyond urging racially white individuals to admit their racial privilege and bias. They already know this, and consequently, it becomes an open ceremonial confession (Irby et al., 2019).

- Implement equity-oriented leadership and policy using Critical Whiteness (CW) and Critical Race Theory (CRT) for creating and maintaining opportunities for a broader range of racial and ethnic populations. CRT is integral to analyze and disrupt the widespread, sweeping forms of racial oppression interlocked into educational organizations and the structure of day-to-day university life. For example, CRT adds to this analysis by illuminating the use of whiteness as a standard in policy, which measures the progress and success of back and brown raced individuals and exposes the inherent racism in diversity policies (Gasman et al., 205). While CW extends CRT in education studies through owning the brutality that whiteness sanctions on black and brown raced persons and documenting its devastating effects on white people, their souls, and hence (in)capacities to act and be connected with black and brown raced individuals in ways that promote humanity (Irby et al., 2019).

- Consciously examine course assignments to develop strategic practices that present black and brown racially identified faculty opportunities to develop and teach mandated scholarly courses (e.g., science, politics, and core courses) and not centering their efforts diversity-centered initiatives. Also, extend courses addressing racial diversity and associated social science courses to white faculty, with the intent to disrupt best and biased practices. White faculty and leadership need to discuss racism and, more importantly, whiteness. For example, the social construction of whiteness and its relationship to racism must be examined by Whites in discourse with black and brown raced faculty.

Institutions must scrutinize their colonialist practices and take an untethered approach to develop anti-racist practices; leaders in academic institutions will not be successful in their racial and ethnic diversity efforts. Any hope of transforming intransigent racism, disturbing our cultural suppositions about the attractiveness of whiteness, must penetrate the resistance that those of us who benefit from privilege are gifted with by this culture and its institutions (Okun, 2011). Academic leadership must be authentically interested in supporting themselves and their students to understanding the toxic legacy and present-day manifestations of structural and cultural racism. We then have a responsibility to extend our abilities to think critically and compassionately about these concepts, afford support for moving through our socialized resistance, and assist each other as we courageously take on this needed work.

Conclusion

To undo colonized structures of America's higher education, we must first acknowledge the implications of our history and its impact on leadership, policies, and the sloth-like progression towards dismantling racist and inequitable practice. While diversity, equity, and inclusion appear as a "tag phrase" mission, among many higher education institutions, its implementation and practice are leaden at best.

To eradicate archaic, invisible systemic whiteness, we must intentionally unweave its progeny: white fragility, supremacy, and privilege. Acknowledging whiteness, and its implications; operationalizing equitable and meaningful practice towards an inclusive culture, allows for a fundamental inauguration of integration, shared citizenship, and social justice within higher education.

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