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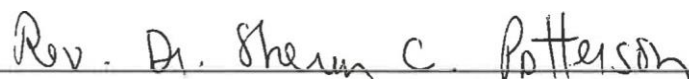
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RACIAL INTEGRATION AND WHITE SUPREMACY IN AMERICA:  
CAN AMERICA INTEGRATE ITS POWER STRUCTURES AND LIBERATE THEM  
FROM WHITE SUPREMACY?

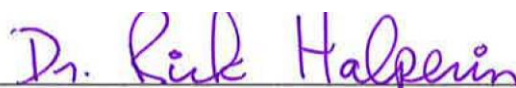
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RACIAL INTEGRATION AND WHITE SUPREMACY IN AMERICA:  
CAN AMERICA INTEGRATE ITS POWER STRUCTURES AND LIBERATE THEM FROM  
WHITE SUPREMACY?

A Thesis Presented to the Graduate Faculty of  
Simmons School of Education and Human Development  
Southern Methodist University

in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

Master of Liberal Studies

with a

Concentration in Human Rights and Social Justice

by

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## ABSTRACT

Neither the presence of black people in predominantly white spaces nor the appropriation of black culture are indicators of racial justice. Power structures must be integrated even more so than subdivisions, classrooms, breakrooms, church pews, and pop culture. This thesis will explore the absence of African-American leadership from the highest ranks of our power structures that are central to contemporary life and the dynamics within each of these power structures that help to protect white supremacy and therefore maintain segregation.

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Racial Integration and White Supremacy in America  
Can America Integrate its Power Structures and Liberate Them from White Supremacy?

**Introduction**

The potential of racial integration to remedy the wrongs of the past and to protect against racial oppression and injustice in the future is still speculative. It is evident that racial integration is not a stand-alone solution. The protection of rights – voting rights, fair-housing rights, equal opportunity employment, and rights to healthcare and education among others - for people of color continues to be the key element. Racial integration cannot have any significant impact apart from the protection of these individual liberties. If these essential liberties had been protected at the level they should have been, then it is likely that imposed racial integration would not have been necessary. Rather, racial integration would have been the natural outcome of justice.

Nevertheless, since the Civil Rights Act of 1964 enforced racial integration as a remedy for state sponsored racial segregation of the past, we, as a nation, have invested heavily in its implementation. Our investment in racial integration includes, but is not limited to, hundreds of hours spent litigating and lobbying around various aspects of racial integration, reconfiguring formerly segregated public spaces, publishing and producing public awareness campaigns, information documents, professional training to help institutions such as hospitals, schools, and corporations follow Civil Rights laws, embedding a Civil Rights track in law schools across the country along with faculty, and massive reforms procedures in of state and federal bureaucracies that involve policies and procedures. The doctrine of racial integration has transformed our entire Human Resources industry.



Blacks, in particular, have invested much social capital in racial integration before and after the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Pioneers, like the Little Rock Nine, endured physical and emotional abuse to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957. In 1961 groups of white and African-American civil rights activists boarded charter buses and rode through segregated towns in the South to challenge the enforcement of integrated bus terminals. In 1964, civil rights activists organized voter registration drives throughout Mississippi to integrate the electoral process. These are examples of contained, targeted efforts. Other efforts were on a larger scale. For example, hundreds of thousands of Black children in school districts across the country were bussed miles from their homes to integrate predominantly white schools. Hundreds of college-educated blacks entered corporate America and integrated their various professions. These events continue to be the subject of movies, books, and analysis. They are enshrined in museums, namely, the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. These museums house Civil Rights artifacts that are part of our national memory. Thus, a vast amount of material and non-material resources – blood, sweat, and tears - have been invested in racial integration.

The level of our investment in racial integration makes it difficult for us to consider the idea that it has not yielded what was expected, or that it is incapable of bringing about what is needed. The case of Lenell Geter was a hard reminder for black and white Americans that racial integration was not the equivalent of home plate on a baseball diamond, that once reached, it amounted to a score for freedom. In 1983 Lenell Geter, a black man, was sentenced to life in prison. Mr. Geter, a twenty-four-year-old mechanical engineer from South Carolina, was recruited and employed by E-Systems in Greenville, Tx. He was convicted of armed robbery of a

Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant in Balch Springs, Tx, - over 50 miles away from where he worked. Investigators accused Mr. Geter of pocketing approximately \$615. “What happened to Lenell Geter is not supposed to happen in America.” (Adler & Schwartz, 1983) Working-class blacks like my parents were livid over the matter.

“Of the ironies to which Geter has been subject, the most acute is the way he came to the attention of the police of Greenville, Texas: his habit of spending time every day reading and feeding ducks in a local park struck one public spirited citizen -- 68-year-old Mrs. R. J. Peavey -- as suspicious. When a fast-food restaurant in another part of town was held up in August of last year, Mrs. Peavey reported her suspicions to the police.” (Adler & Schwartz, 1983)

Months later, Lenell Geter was given a new trial and exonerated. The fulcrum for his exoneration was an investigative report by the award-winning television series, *60 Minutes*. The report was delivered by the legendary journalist Morley Safer and included interviews with Geter, investigators and attorneys who handled the case, and witnesses, particularly Geter’s colleagues at the E-Systems Corporation. In less than one week after the broadcast, Geter was released from prison. Lenell Geter’s case reminded all Americans that racial integration was, at best, the equivalent of first base, not home plate.

It could be that racial integration has not been given a fair chance to succeed. It could also be that if racial integration had been given a fair chance to succeed that racial equity would not be significantly better than it is now. Fortunately, there have been a plethora of voices who recognize that while racial integration has brought benefits to our society, other tools are needed to achieve racial equity. Although segregation is still present and potent, desegregation is not the only yardstick by which “liberty and justice for all” is measured. For both blacks and whites, racial integration often distorts the reality of racial equity. For example, a white person who has who grown up on a block in which there was a person of color, or who has attended a school that had a smattering of black students, or who has worked in a setting alongside of black employees,

will often exempt herself/himself from the curse of segregation and racism. In general, white Americans dismiss modern segregation and racial injustice on the basis that people of color are represented in every aspect of our society, including, since the presidential election of 2008, the Oval Office. Indeed, there are blacks who also hold this view. The Trailblazer label has become a component of racial integration that tends to make African American authority too much of an exhibition, a side-show, rather than an exercise of authentic leadership. In other words, it is a novelty and should not be taken too seriously. It makes the presence of blacks in authority so exotic that when transformative decisions are made, they are quickly and rather easily extinguished or maligned amidst the hype of trailblazer. On the other hand, without this term it would be easy to believe that desegregated power structures are normal.

However, neither the presence of black people in predominantly white spaces nor the appropriation of black culture, are indicators of racial justice. Power structures must be integrated even more so than subdivisions, classrooms, breakrooms, church pews, and pop culture. Ideally, racial integration places individuals of African descent and individuals of Anglo and European descent in proximity with one another so that genuine relationships can be developed based on equality. Unfortunately, racial integration became a way of dispersing blacks among whites so that blacks have access to the resources and opportunities that are due every human being. This was unfortunate because rather than being humanized, blacks were simply integrated among whites who were counted as fully human. This is similar to the way in which pets are sometimes treated in a household. Although the pet endears itself to all the members, it is still an animal, not a human being. No human being should be required to change schools, jobs, or neighborhoods in order to be deemed fully human. Dehumanization of the “other” is the primary tool of white supremacy. Thus, it is rare that a person of color assumes untethered

authority - authority liberated from white supremacy - outside of spaces that are reserved for blacks.

The historic correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Banneker, collected in the book *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, illustrates the subtle way in which white supremacists' ideology rejects the full humanity of people of color. Author, mathematician, and farmer, Benjamin Banneker was the son of a mixed-race woman who wed an enslaved African man. Banneker, born in 1731, was a free man. In 1791, Banneker, having surveyed the nation's new capital, wrote a letter to Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson. It is not clear whether the two ever met in person or why Banneker supposed that Jefferson was a figure who would give the slightest consideration to his concerns. He does mention early in the letter a report, "*which hath reached me.*" (Cullen, p. 49) Perhaps this is what prompted him to write to Jefferson specifically. It is possible that this report was none other than Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* - Jefferson's only published book, one that contained scathing defamations about the black race. Banneker states toward the end of his letter that he simply intended to send Jefferson a manuscript of his almanac which had not been released. Although it cannot be confirmed, it is likely that Banneker was sending this pre-release almanac to Jefferson as another exhibit to disprove Jefferson's speculations about the inadequacy of black people's ability to think and reason on the same level as any white person. Nevertheless, Banneker addresses his appeal to Jefferson as if he himself were a statesman and the conscience of a virtuous nation. Banneker exudes confidence in his equality with Jefferson as a free man, saying, "I am fully sensible of the greatness of that freedom, which I take with you on the present occasion;" (Cullen, p. 49) Yet, Banneker also writes that his experience of liberty, unlike Jefferson's, is overshadowed by, "prejudice and prepossession, which is so prevalent in the world against those of my

complexion.” (Cullen, p. 49) The letter itself is arguably a leap of faith and an exhibition of courage on Banneker’s part for he presumes that Jefferson desires to do that which is in the interest of liberty for ALL. Banneker makes clear his expectation of Jefferson, writing,

I apprehend you will readily embrace every opportunity, to eradicate that train of absurd and false ideas and opinions, which so generally prevails with respect to us; and that your sentiments are concurrent with mine, which are, that one universal Father hath given being to us all; and that he hath not only made us all of one flesh, but that he hath also, without partiality, afforded us all the same sensations and endowed us all with the same faculties; and that however variable we may be in society or religion, however diversified in situation or color, we are all of the same family, and stand in the same relation to him. (Cullen, pp. 49-50)

He expects that Jefferson will act to not only abolish slavery, but act to “eradicate” white supremacists’ ideas. Banneker helps us understand that such ideas, namely, that people of color are inferior to whites, made for slavery, and therefore, less than human, are viral in their effect and make every individual who does not question such “absurd and false ideas and opinions” (Cullen, p. 49) an accessory to oppression. Although Jefferson’s direct response to Banneker was seasoned with diplomacy, it was also laced with the usual suspicions about black people.

Jefferson wrote, “I thank you sincerely for your letter of the 19th. instant and for the Almanac it contained. No body wishes more than I do to see such proofs as you exhibit, that nature has given to our black brethren, talents equal to those of the other colours of men.” (Cullen, p. 97)

That Jefferson concluded that Benjamin Banneker was nothing more than an aberration among his race was confirmed in a personal letter to his friend, Joel Barlow in 1809, three years after Banneker’s death. In that letter Jefferson wrote,

we know he [Banneker] had spherical trigonometry enough to make almanacs, but not without the suspicion of aid from Ellicot, who was his neighbor & friend, & never missed an opportunity of puffing him. I have a long letter from Banneker which shews him to have had a mind of very common stature indeed. (Cullen, p. 00)

Jefferson concluded that Banneker's human capacity and brilliance were the product of Banneker's close relationship with Andrew Ellicot, a white man. Jefferson was blinded by white supremacy which would not allow him to see the full humanity and potential that resided in every person of color, regardless of his or her achievements.

This is Jeffersonian white supremacy and it continues to complicate and compromise racial integration. It is much different than the George Wallace brand of white supremacy politics in Alabama during the Civil Rights Movement. This means that white supremacy cannot be restricted to white people who openly and aggressively propagate the idea of the superiority of whiteness. It cannot be restricted to hate speech, derogatory comments, flags, symbols, monuments, or offensive jokes. White supremacy is the conventional, the everyday, it is the norm. It is a set of unexamined attitudes and assumptions which dehumanize people of color. Over a long period of time, these attitudes and assumptions shape the rules, values, and laws in our society. The original attitudes and assumptions are no longer needed because the value system and its associated laws are firmly in place. For example, in April of 2018, 27-year-old Marquise Wiley, a black man, was captured on cell phone video in an episode in which he caused significant property damage at the Timberglen Branch of the Dallas Public Library. On the video, Mr. Wiley can be seen yelling as he turned over several computer desks, tables, tossed chairs, broke a glass door to a conference room, and pushed over several book shelves. The episode lasted for approximately twenty to twenty-five minutes. At least two news stations in the Dallas, Texas market aired the story. The narratives of each report are similar in that they emphasized the extent of the property damage, estimated at \$10,000. They also gave credit to the staff who followed protocol and did not engage Mr. Wiley and the overall resilience of the operation in light of National Library Week. Additionally, no one was hurt during this episode.

The report which provided the most coverage described the episode as a “fit of rage” and used the word “rampage” twice. The last line of the report reads, “As for the 27-year-old behind the vandalism, a police spokesperson says he remains in a mental care facility after suffering from some sort of mental breakdown.” (Robertson) Although the final line of the report acknowledges that Mr. Wiley was suffering, this was not the focus of the headline. Rather the headline reads, “Computers smashed, books were thrown everywhere, and a glass conference room door was destroyed.” (Robertson) We recognize suffering as a circumstance that persons experience. In this case, Mr. Wiley, a black man, was first and foremost a vandal who destroyed property, not a person suffering. This report can hardly be described as malicious. It does not overtly attack Mr. Wiley and it does not mention his race or ethnicity. This information can only be discerned by watching the video. Yet, sensitivity to his personhood is clearly absent. This devaluation, this choice to withhold personhood, is the legacy of white supremacy. Therefore, an individual does not have to hate people of color, or spew vitriol at black faces in order to be complicit with white supremacists’ ideology. All that it required is acceptance of the values and the rules with the assumption that they are fair. This same value system, one which renders black lives as non-persons, also keeps our power structures segregated.

All things being taken into consideration, our power structures are as segregated today as they were during the height of Jim Crow. One could take a random group of 10 middle-class white Americans and ask each of them the following questions: 1) Have you ever been employed in a company headed by a black president or CEO? 2) Have you ever attended a college or university that was led by a black president (not an HBCU)? 3) Have you ever been a member of a religious organization in which the executive leadership was majority African American? 4) Has your state ever had a black governor? 5) Have you ever lived in a city in which the police

force was majority African American and the chief was also African American? 6) Have you ever lived in a city in which the major newspaper was majority owned by African Americans? 7) Have you ever lived in a city in which each of the major professional sports franchises were majority owned by African Americans?

Because of the absence of African-Americans in any of these power structures, it is reasonable to project that only a very small percentage of respondents will answer each of these questions in the affirmative. Each of the questions represents a domain of power. A domain that remains segregated in terms of leadership and decision making. Moreover, the office of president of the United States, Commander in Chief, has been in place for over 200 years. To say that this office has been integrated because a black man has occupied it for less than four percent of its span of existence, is a clear exaggeration. Thus, Barack Obama's presidency is a stellar example of segregation in our power structures. Just one out of 44 presidents have been black. However, equally important as the percentage of blacks in our power structures, is the authenticity of black leadership. In other words, black leaders must be unbridled by white supremacy and paternalism. This does not mean that black leadership is inherently hostile to white America. It means that blacks in authority must be free, having the same range of motion to think and act in the broader interests of a constituency as do whites in authority. This informal evidence can be corroborated by formal evidence.

Within the corporate domain, the list of Fortune 500 corporations represents approximately twenty-seven million employees, a number nearly equal to the population of the state of Texas. Among this population, there are a total of three black CEOs. According to an October 2017 article in *The Atlantic*, "When their overall numbers peaked (at seven, in 2007), their representation was still minuscule, representing fewer than 2 percent of all Fortune 500



CEOs.” (White, 2017) The first black CEO in the Fortune 500 family was not appointed until 1987 – Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., of TIAA-CREF. Mr. Wharton held the position until 1993 when he left to serve in President Clinton’s administration. According to Ellen McGirt, Senior Editor at *Fortune Magazine* and co-chair of the CEO Initiative, “For much of corporate America, racial diversity continues to be at best a challenge—and at worst a flat-out fiction—particularly in the executive ranks. There have been only 15 black CEOs in the history of the Fortune 500.”

(McGirt, 2016) Thus, although whites may relish the fact that they have black neighbors, or were part of a graduating class featuring an African-American Cum Laude, or worked on a project team with several black colleagues, or even follow Jay-Z on Twitter, most have not been required to accept authority from a black face. Whites and Blacks continue to live in a reality in which the “buck stops” with a wealthy white male, a trend that has stretched over two centuries. Even among millennials, who are often praised for being socially color blind, few have lived in a context in which black authority was normal.

Because America’s power structures are segregated, the presence of trailblazing African Americans in seats of authority, while promising, means that they are restricted to navigating these domains within the contours of white supremacy. These professionals are forced to choose between improving their lot in life or working to dismantle the system that exacerbates the plight of all people of color. President Barack Obama accomplished the impossible even within the borders of white supremacy by implementing comprehensive healthcare reform, also known as the Affordable Care Act. The urgency to repeal this reform was not driven merely by a Republican agenda, but by white supremacists’ ideals which fundamentally oppose any redistribution of wealth to the working class, especially to minorities (see the chapter *Renewing the South* in *Stamped from the Beginning* by Ibram X. Kendi; also see *Why Republicans hate*

*Obamacare* in *The Economist* December 11, 2016; and *Health Coverage by Race and Ethnicity* by Artiga, Foutz, and Damico, published by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation). Public enthusiasm over racial integration's milestones, such as the first black President of the United States, conceals the impossible task presented to these black leaders of eliminating white supremacy and its impact without upsetting the status quo. People of color have integrated a society in which they are virtually barred from exercising authority. Is it possible to not only integrate our power structures but to liberate them from white supremacy?

This thesis will explore the absence of African-American leadership from the highest ranks of our power structures that are central to contemporary life and the dynamics within each of these power structures that help to protect white supremacy and therefore maintain segregation. The high ranks include, 1) CEOs of large corporations, especially those companies counted among the Fortune 500, 2) state governors, and 3) presidents of historically white colleges and universities. It is important to understand that each of these power structures, in other words, large corporations, state governments, and major universities, are inextricably connected. The thesis will then explore strategies that leverage racial integration in order to dismantle white supremacy in these power structures. There have been African-American chief executive officers, governors, and university presidents in the history of these power structures however, the individual achievement of a few African-American leaders here and there, now and then, cannot desegregate these structures nor derail white supremacy.

### **The Black CEO and the Corporate Power Structure**

How is this power structure defined? Professors Richard L. Zweighenhaft and G. William Domhoff use the terms establishment and power elite in their analysis of Jews, African

Americans, and women in the highest levels of leadership within corporate America. They provide a useful way of looking at this group. They write,

We define the power elite as the leadership group of the upper class. This concept is very similar to what Baltzell and others call “the establishment,” but it has a little sharper edge to it because it rightly gives the impression that the power elite is involved in defending a structure of upper-class privileges that involves the subordination of others. Moreover, the concept of the power elite is narrower in that it focuses on actual decision-makers within corporations and their closely related policy-oriented institutions. The establishment, on the other hand, is a more general term encompassing all those who are comfortably ensconced in all elite institutions related to and nourished by the upper class, including museums, art galleries, upscale publishing ventures, and prep schools. The concept of a power elite, then, locates power in top-level positions in institutions controlled by the upper class. These institutions include corporations; banks; law, accounting, brokerage, marketing, and advertising firms; foundations; trade associations; policy-discussion groups; and think tanks. All these institutions have their roots in the upper class, and all strive to serve its interests in one way or another. (Blacks in the White Establishment?, pp. 129-130)

This is helpful because at eye-level, where the daily news is generated, persons of color in corporate attire bearing business cards containing any number of credentials, are easily visible. Indeed, these persons are likely associated with the mainstream middle class, but are they members of the power elite? Members of the power elite have responsibility for bottom line decisions that directly affect shareholder value. Thus, although a noticeable number of African Americans have migrated into the mainstream middle class, this does not mean that there has been similar representation in the power elite.

Historically the pathway for African Americans that led to the integration of the white middle class was treaded out first – like a rut through a grassy field - and then paved over by Civil Rights legislation such as the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. This well-worn pathway was the result of years of violence and social conflict between disenfranchised black communities and the white working class. The subsequent paving of these worn pathways is

what investigative journalist Jim Schutze calls “the accommodation.” During the era of segregation, also known as Jim Crow, Dallas and cities like it around the nation were run by a small group of business oligarchs, all white. In Dallas, this group of business barons included people such as John W. Carpenter, John Stemmons, and Robert L. Thornton – each have freeways named in their honor. According to Schutze, these power elite became a “shadow government.” As such, they were responsible for making sure that Dallas did not make the national news, like Birmingham and Montgomery, as black resistance to racial injustice and Klan violence rocked the city. Schutze writes,

The outcome, then, was not a product of law. It was a product of truce and accommodation. It was a social standoff, with the black community arrayed on one side, the South Dallas white community on the other, and the business oligarchs in the middle, threatening here, cajoling there, holding things together with political influence. The peace, as it was, was not rooted in any ultimate appeal to justice. It was rooted in appeals for mercy, appeals to the business community for intercession. It was a peace bestowed and guaranteed by the white business leadership in the interest of commerce. (Schutze, p. 73)

It was this same type of accommodation by the business elite, in the interests of commerce, that formed the pathways which would soon be made into law. Essentially, the power elite used access to the middle class as a peace offering in hopes of stabilizing commerce by pacifying discontent among African Americans and their sympathizers. This strategy meant that educated blacks – some who held degrees from the most prestigious schools in the country – could integrate the white middle class because of new career advancement opportunities in the corporate ranks. Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which forbade discrimination based on sex as well as race in hiring, promoting, and firing, along with the enforcement capacity of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) supported this integration. Yet, except for the Emancipation Proclamation and the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, no legislation has triggered a mass migration of blacks from a lower social status to a higher social

status. Educated black professionals did not swarm the corporate suites on the winds of Title VII and the EEOC, but there were several notable pioneers.

Journalist and author, Cora Daniels, a former staff writer for *Fortune Magazine*, summarized the journey of six black males who were among the first to integrate the executive ranks of corporate America. Harvey C. Russell, vice president for Pepsi-Cola, 1962; James Avery, Public Affairs Manager for Exxon, 1971; James Ward, Senior Vice President of Organization Development for Marriot, 1967; Darwin Davis, Vice President of Manpower Development for Equitable Life Insurance, 1974; George Lewis, Treasurer and Vice President of Financial & Planning for Philip Morris Industrial, 1975; and Lee Archer, CEO for Vanguard Capital Corporation, an investment arm of General Foods, 1973. Each of these men were pioneers. Like the nine black students who enrolled at formerly all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in September 1957, these men entered the executive suite under hostile circumstances. In response to Harvey Russell's promotion, "[t]he Ku Klux Klan called for a national boycott of Pepsi's products. The group flooded the country with handbills that read: DON'T BUY PEPSI-COLA AND MAKE A NIGGER RICH." (Daniels, Neering, & Soehendro) James Ward's white colleagues became divisive, complaining "that they didn't want to be paid less than a black man. To ensure office peace, Ward says, he got two checks on payday: a red check at the office for less than the rest of the vice presidents and a blue one mailed to his home that made up the difference. The blue check was cut from Bill Marriot's private funds." (Daniels, Neering, & Soehendro) Darwin Davis recalled being pressured by the CEO to withdraw his name from a coveted, company-wide sales competition in which he was the obvious winner. He refused and threatened to leave the company. After Davis was promoted, few, if any, of the white

regional managers who reported to him would introduce him as their boss when in the presence of their peers.

In the late 1960s, young, college educated blacks also encountered resistance in the middle management tier, according to Edward W. Jones, Jr. He writes, “When I was graduated from a predominantly black college, I was offered a job in one of the largest corporations in America.” (Jones, Jr., What it's like to be a black manager) Although Jones went on from being a trainee to an area manager with responsibility for an \$11-million operating unit, and earned an M.B.A from the Harvard Business School in 1971, he acknowledges that his journey into middle management was nearly aborted because of the “informal organization [...] built on white norms.” (Jones, Jr., What it's like to be a black manager) The gauntlet which he had to navigate is even more interesting considering the fact that Jones served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserve (he went active duty during the time he was in the company’s management training program and then returned). It is reasonable to conclude that he was not a novice in the areas of discipline, structure, attention to detail, diplomacy, and chain-of-command, things that can make or break a corporate professional. Thus, Jones acknowledged that he was mentally and emotionally stunned when his performance appraisal hovered just above the failure rating, despite exceeding departmental performance targets. He survived through a combination of sheer resilience, good fortune, and mental-emotional contortion. Jones went on to establish his own consulting business and conducted his own research around black executives in the highest positions of leadership in America’s largest corporations. His findings, which are referred to frequently in books and other articles that deal with the advancement of black executives in corporate America, were published in the May-June 1986 edition of the *Harvard Business Review*. Jones’s findings indicate that the social activism and social upheaval that led to the

doors of American corporations being widened for black executives had cooled down considerably. For example, “[b]etween 1977 and 1982 alone, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the proportion of minority managers rose from 3.6% to 5.2%. EEO data from 1982 show that of all “officials and managers,” 4.3% were blacks (including 1.6% black females) and 20.4%, white females.” (Jones, Jr., *Black Managers: The Dream Deferred*) Perhaps this progress is commendable. However,

“two surveys of Fortune “1000” companies by the recruiting firm Korn Ferry International show that as of 1979 and 1985 these businesses have not made even a dent in moving minorities and women into the senior ranks. The 1979 survey of 1,708 senior executives cited three as being black, two Asian, two Hispanic, and eight female. The 1985 survey of 1,362 senior executives found four blacks, six Asians, three Hispanics, and, and 29 women. I think it’s fair to say that this is almost no progress at all.” (*Black Managers: The Dream Deferred*)

These numbers clearly contradict any notion that Affirmative Action policy has displaced a significant population of qualified white professionals. Shockingly, in an Information Age, less than one tenth of one percent of senior corporate executives were black. Jones’ three-year research project consists of interviews with over two-hundred black managers and executives and offers insight around why the C suite of America’s corporations continues to be segregated.

Professor Sharon M. Collins, sociologist and researcher at the University of Illinois, Chicago, conducted two rounds of interviews (1986 and 1992) with seventy-six of the “highest ranking black executives in Fortune 500 companies – the people whom researchers, public policy makers, and the general public refer to when they talk about black breakthroughs.” (Collins, p. 13) Each of the executives she interviewed worked in the Chicago area. “Three of the executives I interviewed were chief officers, five were senior vice-presidents in operations, two were vice-presidents in corporate finance, and one was a chief finance officer.” (Collins, p. 147) Collins writes that her intent was to “illustrate the resilience of segregating systems, even under social

conditions designed to improve race relations.” (Collins, p. 16) However, her research shows that these segregating systems, despite affirmative action guidelines associated with Civil Rights laws, were never intended to be tested let alone dissolved. From inception, Civil Rights legislation was intended to accommodate and to pacify black citizens in the interests of restoring socioeconomic order. This is not to say that such laws were not good and necessary.

Nevertheless, if the white corporate power structure truly viewed the equality of all human beings a value worth preserving in their corporate culture, then it would not have been necessary to impose anti-discrimination laws on them. For example, Collins shows how large corporations satisfied EEOC guidelines by tracking talented black professionals into racialized jobs, in other words, jobs in which the target constituency is primarily black. Some of these jobs were in the area of sales, but most fell in the area of personnel or public relations. According to Collins, “Fifty-one of these executives (67 percent) had held one or more jobs in a company in which they implemented corporate programs for, funneled corporate goods and services to, or advised the white corporate elite about black constituents.” (Collins, p. 15) The problem was that black executives with technical expertise (e.g. engineers, architects, accountants, financial analysts, etc.) were not only tracked into these racialized positions, they were given lucrative incentives to remain there for the rest of their career. Coincidentally, or not, these were not the mainstream positions from which CEOs were elevated. Moreover, in times of economic downturn, these positions were among the first to be eliminated. Collins writes,

“...the typical African American executive career path, racialized or not, converged in corporate arenas that neutralized their power to change the culture of companies. Although both racialized and nonracialized jobs pushed them a certain distance up the corporate ladder, the jobs offered the least chances to wield influence, control resources, or sustain upward career mobility. White executives view personnel as once of the worst routes to top jobs in a company (Korn/Ferry 1990) – the crumbs at the corporate table.” (Collins, p. 142)



Thus, a number of black executives were removed from the pipeline of the corporate power elite. This, by itself, was not a manifestation of white supremacy. Rather, the lack of perception at the executive level was a manifestation. In other words, white corporate officers did not perceive that they were hurting the company by removing talented black executives from the CEO pipeline, away from the core business of the company. Highly qualified black professionals were the sacrificial lambs as it were, expendable, and easily replaced.

Although the research of John P. Fernandez – a former executive turned corporate consultant - preceded that of Jones and Collins by nearly a decade or more, respectively, his findings and recommendations shed much light on the overall impact of Affirmative Action Programs. Between 1971-'72, Fernandez organized “a comparative analysis of the careers, attitudes, and opinions of black and white male and female managers of all levels from six large corporations and two small operations of large corporations in California.” (Fernandez, p. v) At the time of his research, six of these companies were part of the Fortune 500. Fernandez conceals the names of these companies. “The firms all have a heavy impact on the economy and on employment practices in California, if not the entire country. Four of the firms are among the top ten companies in California in dollar volume, and the six largest have a total employment force of approximately 210,000, of whom 85 percent are employed in California.” (Fernandez, p. 5) A total of 272 managers were interviewed, 116 blacks and 156 whites, to identify the primary factors that impact the career trajectory of black managers in these corporations. Basically, the career trajectory for educated, experienced, black managers goes up and away from executive positions that lead to the CEO suite. “In three of the large firms participating in this study, women and minorities make up more than 50 percent of the employment workforce.” (Fernandez, p. 69) Nevertheless, the companies in this study had no blacks in senior leadership

positions. Fernandez's research attempts to discover why this is so. Fernandez finds that, "In most firms the prevailing racial attitudes and atmospheres are negative, Affirmative Action Programs are weak, and top management apparently lacks any real commitment to equal employment opportunities." (Fernandez, p. 119) In other words, highly motivated, qualified, talented black managers were still at a disadvantage even with Affirmative Action programs.

The weakness of corporate affirmative action plans was reflected by the general perspective of corporate lawyers. According to attorney James Hollander "An affirmative-action plan's purpose is to further equal employment opportunity by assuring that current employment practices are nondiscriminatory and eliminating the effects of past discrimination." (Hollander, p. 67) This indeed describes the spirit of affirmative action. Yet, the perspective of corporate officers is captured by the sketch on the opening page of Hollander's article. The black and white sketch depicts a giant hand opened palm up, helping a black business professional as he ascends a steep bank of stairs. The sketch represents affirmative action as literally helping people of color and women to climb the corporate staircase. Therefore, it is not surprising that a significant percentage of white managers interviewed by Fernandez saw affirmative action as reverse discrimination, providing an unfair advantage to minorities. Fernandez writes, "In my continuing research on black and women managers, I have found an ever increasing feeling among white men that blacks are indeed becoming favored over whites." (Fernandez, p. 101) However, while the sketch accurately represents the general attitude of white managers at all levels, it contradicts what Hollander states as the purpose of affirmative action. Affirmative action should have been the removal of the invisible hand and its legacy that had systematically subverted opportunities for minorities. One white manager interviewed by Fernandez put it this way, "Most black executives are super-blacks - mediocrity is the privilege of the white male." (Fernandez, p. 89)

Affirmative Action programs had nothing to do with helping minorities to do the same things that their white, male peers could do for themselves without assistance. This skewed perspective on the part of white corporate leaders weakened affirmative action, rendering it as a necessary burden to shelter them from potential lawsuits rather than a path toward greater progress and prosperity. Most corporate leaders were sincere regarding affirmative action, yet they sincerely misunderstood its purpose and benefit. Consequently, Fernandez has sobering advice for blacks in corporate America. He writes,

“Blacks in corporations must continuously stand up for their own rights to be treated fairly. [...] It may be time to seriously consider and act on the boycott techniques used by Rev. Jesse Jackson of wide varieties of products normally used by proportions of blacks. It may be that only such action will force the hand of white corporations to provide blacks with equal employment opportunities. What blacks must remember, despite all the laws, programs, and promises, is that whites will not concede anything to blacks unless blacks demand and struggle for their fair share, and do not give in or give up.”  
(Fernandez, p. 217)

Fairness and equality in the workplace were not the path of least resistance for white corporations navigating the waters of the Civil Rights movement. Rather, preserving cultural homogeneity in the workplace was deemed more advantageous.

Even lawsuits and the threat of lawsuits were not enough to steer white corporations fully in the direction of equal opportunity. In the early 1970's, the EEOC and the Department of Labor, having been pressured by the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), opened an investigation of employment discrimination by AT&T (American Telephone and Telegraph), the nation's largest nongovernmental employer. The investigation resulted in a consent decree in which,

AT&T and its 24 subsidiary “operating companies,” such as New York Telephone or New Jersey Bell, are making lump sum payments of \$15 million to 13,000 women and 2,000 male members of minority groups who allegedly suffered job discrimination. The Bell system is also granting \$23 million in immediate pay increases to some 36,000 workers whose advancement may have been hindered by discrimination; it is also

committed to further wage increases costing \$25- to \$35-million a year for the next five years. (Shapiro, 1973)

Even in today's dollars this would be considered a substantial settlement. In this same article, NAACP attorney Morris J. Baller, is quoted saying, "Making discrimination expensive is what will end it faster." Yet, despite this settlement in 1973 and other discrimination lawsuits in the decades that followed, AT&T has yet to name its first black CEO.

These large discrimination settlements were curtailed by a Supreme Court that favored corporate interests rather than individual rights even when discrimination was demonstrated. A notable case is *Ward's Cove Packing Co., Inc. v. Antonio* in 1989. "Wards Cove reinterpreted the disparate impact method of proof, and held that an employer can avoid liability merely by showing a business justification for the practice causing a disparate impact, and that the plaintiff has the burden of proving a lack of a business justification." (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.) As a result, the 101 Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1990. This bill aimed to "negate five decisions of the United States Supreme Court that civil rights advocates saw as diluting important protections against employment discrimination under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act;" (Cathcart & Snyderman, p. 849) Unfortunately, President George H.W. Bush vetoed this bill reasoning that it might prod corporations into establishing quotas to avoid costly discrimination suits. See *President Vetoes Bill On Job Rights*, by Steven A. Holmes in *New York Times*, October 23, 1990. Unable to override President Bush's veto, the 102 Congress passed a watered-down version in 1991. Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1991 is known as the Glass Ceiling Act. This act

"Establishes the Glass Ceiling Commission to conduct a study and prepare recommendations concerning: (1) eliminating artificial barriers to the advancement of women and minorities; and (2) increasing opportunities and developmental experiences of women and minorities to foster advancement of women and minorities to management and decisionmaking positions in business." (Congress, n.d.)

In 1995, the twenty-one-member commission released a report containing its findings and recommendations. The commission found that

“At the highest levels of business, there is indeed a barrier only rarely penetrated by women or persons of color. Consider: 97% of the senior managers of Fortune 1000 industrial and Fortune 500 companies are white; 95 to 97% are male. In Fortune 2000 industrial and service companies, 5% of senior managers are women—and of that 5%, virtually all are white.” (Glass Ceiling Commission, p. iii)

According to the report, white males made up a little over 43 percent of the workforce. White females made up over 35 percent of the workforce. African American males and African American females combined made up 10 percent of the workforce. Thus, white males are over-represented at the CEO level by a factor of at least 2. Under-representation at the CEO level leans more toward gender, specifically white females, than race. Nevertheless, if the same factor of over representation among white males were applied to blacks, then blacks would have made up over 20 percent of the nation’s CEO’s. Yet, the number of black CEO’s of large corporations has never reached 1 percent. According to Robert Reich, Secretary of Labor at the time of the report, “Two-thirds of our population, and 57 percent of the working population, is female, or minorities, or both. Women and minority men will make up 62% of the workforce by the year 2005.” (Glass Ceiling Commission, p. iv) The pipelines or feeder-patterns that lead to CEO positions require drastic change if the demographics of senior management are to represent the demographics of the workforce.

Rather than making specific recommendations, the Glass Ceiling Commission looked at best practices, in other words programs that were already working in corporations who had success in diversifying their senior management teams. The problem was that the success of corporate programs was subject to the interpretation of corporate officers, all of whom were white men. Because the Supreme Court weakened Title VII protections of the 1964 Civil Rights

Act, minority employees could scarcely challenge the corporation’s benchmarks of success. Therefore, whites continue to be overrepresented at the CEO level while blacks continue to be underrepresented. In 2017, Black Enterprise, a black owned media company, compiled a list of 300 black executive officers of major corporations. According to Derek Dingle “This year, our editorial research team reviewed more than 1,400 companies comprised of the 1,000 largest public corporations, 100 international companies with a major U.S. presence, all firms listed on the S&P 500, and 250 leading privately held companies.” (Dingle, 2017) A section of the complete table of 300 executives is reproduced below. Table 1 contains information on the CEO’s only, a total of sixteen.

*Table 1*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Company</b>
Craig Arnold	Chairman & CEO	Eaton Corp. plc
Lloyd A. Carney	CEO	Brocade Communications Systems Inc.
Kenneth I. Chenault	Chairman & CEO	American Express Co.
Lloyd H. Dean	President & CEO	Dignity Health
Arnold W. Donald	President & CEO	Carnival Corp. & plc
Marvin R. Ellison	Chairman & CEO	J. C. Penney Co. Inc.
Roger W. Ferguson, Jr.	President & CEO	TIAA
Kenneth C. Frazier	Chairman & CEO	Merck & Co. Inc.
Jo Ann Jenkins	CEO	AARP
François Locoh-Donou	President, CEO & Director	F5 Networks Inc.
Kevin E. Lofton	CEO	Catholic Health Initiatives
Charles E. Phillips	CEO	Infor Inc.
Tidjane Thiam	CEO	Credit Suisse
Bernard J. Tyson	Chairman & CEO	Kaiser Permanente
Lisa W. Wardell	President & CEO	Adtalem Global Education
Eugene A. Woods	President & CEO	Carolinas HealthCare System

Several changes are worth noting regarding this list. Ken Chenault, CEO of American Express retired earlier this year. In May of this year, Marvin Ellison became the CEO of Lowes. It should also be noted that Ursula Burns served as CEO of Xerox from 2009 to 2016. She is the first black woman to serve as CEO of a Fortune 500 company.

Indeed, black men and women in corporate America have attained levels of decision making authority that could hardly have been imagined when Harvey C. Russell became a vice president for Pepsi-Cola's Negro market in 1962. Yet, fifty years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, blacks represent just over 1 percent of CEO's, based on a list of over 1400 companies. This percentage drops considerably if the list of companies is narrowed to Fortune 500 corporations. This does not represent progress nor diversity.

Although America's corporations have been racially integrated in the managerial ranks, integration exists alongside white supremacy just as it does in the larger society. White supremacy has impacted the pool – the reservoir of talented black professionals– and the pipeline – the conduit through which these professionals move up the corporate ladder. In other words, there is a shallow pool of black professionals in corporate America, and the pipeline through which they ascend to the highest ranks is constricted. However, the question is not simply whether we can get more blacks in the pool and through the pipeline. The question is whether we can liberate them from white supremacy as they enter the pool and as they move through the pipeline. Merely having a black man or woman that propagates white supremacy rather than a white man or woman is not a gain. The cycle of white supremacy in corporations must be disrupted.

The black CEO does not have the luxury of merely doing an excellent job by meeting or exceeding performance measures. The fight to disrupt white supremacy does not end at the C-suite, rather, this is where it begins. For white professionals, the pathway to CEO is akin to an obstacle course. Although rigorous, it has a definite beginning and end, and the reward is the position. For black professionals, on the other hand, this pathway resembles a labyrinth. Blacks who have navigated the corporate labyrinth to the top executive position, are much like a boxer.

This athlete trains for months in preparation to enter the ring to fight and to be brutalized – win or lose. Thus, once the black professional steps into the role of CEO, she must fight. While doing her job, discharging her responsibility to the board of directors, shareholders, and stakeholders, she must also battle. She must fight so that her existence and non-assimilated identity are recognized as normal in the C-suite, rather than as an exception to the rule. French philosopher and author Frantz Fanon said of the emancipated blacks in France,

“the Negro knows nothing of the cost of freedom, for he has not fought for it. From time to time he has fought for Liberty and Justice, but these were always white liberty and white justice; that is, values secreted by his masters. The former slave, who can find in his memory no trace of the struggle for liberty or of that anguish of liberty of which Kierkegaard speaks, sits unmoved before the young white man singing and dancing on the tightrope of existence. (Fanon, 1986)

The black CEO must fight to avoid being dehumanized as a novelty, a deviation from the standard. Margot Lee Shetterly, author of *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race*, describes how racism has dictated the way that blacks are included in history, making professionals like NASA mathematician Katherine Johnson an anomaly. She writes,

“For too long, history has imposed a binary condition on its black citizens: either nameless or renowned, menial or exceptional, passive recipients of the forces of history or superheroes who acquire mythic status not just because of their deeds but because of their scarcity. The power of the history of NASA’s black computers is that even the Firsts weren’t the Onlies.” (Shetterly, 2017)

In order to create a new standard for the c-suite the black CEO must do battle with forces that make her an exhibit by dehumanizing other black professionals. Moreover, black CEOs need the help of the very communities that often look up to them as role models. These voices must continue to chant, scream, and shout, “There are others, why are they not here?”



## **The Black Governor and the Political Power Structure**

Within the domain of state government, Governors are powerful political actors. Regardless of the various powers that state constitutions give to or withhold from governors, this is the highest office in the state, an office that represents every resident of the state. Additionally, the office of governor is a recruiting ground for presidential candidates. According to PolitiFact Texas, thirteen presidents held the office of governor before becoming president. Yet, this high-profile office remains very segregated. In the history of the United States, only four African Americans have held this office. “Of the nation’s four Black governors — [Pinckney Benton Stewart] Pinchback, [Douglas] Wilder, New York’s David Paterson and Deval Patrick of Massachusetts — only two were voted in, as Paterson assumed his role upon the resignation of New York’s Eliot Spitzer.” (Jackson, 2017) Although there are several black gubernatorial candidates vying for their party’s nomination for the November 2018 election, the odds of one of the thirty-six states electing a black governor remain slim.

The representation of blacks in the office of governor mirrors the underrepresentation of black CEOs in America’s largest corporations. In other words, black leaders regularly occupy seats in state legislatures, yet these leaders have far less frequently occupied state-wide offices, and in particular the office of the governor. For example, according to data from the National Conference of State Legislatures, black lawmakers accounted for 10 percent of the Texas Legislature in 2015. Mississippi had the highest percentage of black lawmakers in the nation with 28 percent. Blacks make up over 20 percent of the legislature in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, and South Carolina. Still, a black governor has yet to be elected in either these states. According to Zweighenhaft, the institutions that make up the power structure “include corporations; banks; law, accounting, brokerage, marketing, and advertising firms;

foundations; trade associations; policy-discussion groups; and think tanks. All these institutions have their roots in the upper class, and all strive to serve its interests in one way or another.” (Blacks in the White Establishment?, pp. 129-130) Zweighenhaft does not mention state governments nor the governor’s office specifically. We will see below that there is a close relationship between corporations and government, and therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the corporate power structure and the political power structure are two pieces of a larger power elite. Thus, like the corporate CEO, the governor – the highest elected official at the state level – is a central figure.

The interaction between corporate officers and government officials ranges from collaboration to collusion. Regarding collaboration, state officials work with corporate leaders to develop a business environment that will attract and retain large corporations who employ thousands of workers. This in turn generates millions of dollars in tax revenue for the state. For example, the e-commerce company Amazon announced last year that it was scouting for a location to build its second corporate headquarters, referred to as HQ2. According to a local newspaper report, Texas Governor Greg Abbot said, “Amazon officials have been in the state of Texas talking with my office as well as talking with leaders in Austin and in Dallas as they continue the process going nationwide to figure out which locations would be the best match for them,” (Halkias, 2018) Amazon’s second corporate headquarters could bring an estimated 50,000 jobs. Abbott went on to say, “with our reasonable regulations, low tax rate, low cost of living and the ease of doing business, you can see that Texas is the right fit for the Amazon expansion.” (Halkias, 2018) Regarding collusion, corporate officers often use expensive gifts or large campaign contributions to government officials as a way of ingratiating themselves to influence decision making. For example, Robert Leonard, CEO of Force Multiplier Solutions, a

school bus camera company based in Louisiana, plead guilty to bribery. “Federal prosecutors say Leonard paid about \$3.5 million to "Dallas area officials," [Councilman] Caraway among them, to secure more than \$70 million worth of contracts.” (Wilonsky, Hacker, & Moffeit, 2018)

However, the relationship between corporations and government is more formal than what these interactions suggest. According to Professor Bruce R. Scott of the Harvard Business School,

“Ultimate responsibility for the institutional foundations of capitalist systems rests with political authorities; they have the power to decide on major policies and regulations, and the power to enforce them through the various agencies of the state. In addition, political authorities have the power to tax the many economic actors to defray the costs of government and its programs.” (Scott, 2006)

When political authorities exercise this responsibility, competition among the economic actors should be fairer which ought to result in the maximum social good. Unfortunately, sometimes an implicit process takes over that makes the goals of the explicit process virtually incidental. This implicit process is akin to political capitalism. For example, as a consumer, I attribute the outrageous cost of healthcare to political capitalism. In other words, national lawmakers and private health insurance company executives work hand-in-hand to protect their own status, thereby creating precarious circumstances for people who need medical treatment. Dr. Randall G. Holcombe, DeVoe Moore Professor of Economics at Florida State University, writes,

“Political capitalism is an economic and political system in which the economic and political elite cooperate for their mutual benefit. The economic elite influence the government’s economic policies to use regulation, government spending, and the design of the tax system to maintain their elite status in the economy. The political elite are then supported by the economic elite which helps the political elite maintain their status; an exchange relationship that benefits both the political and economic elite.” (Holcombe, 2015)

Jack Alan Markell, former governor of Delaware, a notorious tax haven for businesses all over the world, briefly describes the range of powers that governors exercise in this process. Markell writes,

“I became very familiar with this process: A big business promises thousands, hundreds or even dozens of jobs and waits for offers from mayors and governors eager to demonstrate to voters that they are bringing them jobs. In Delaware, our economic development office, with my full approval, was busy calculating direct subsidies to corporations through grants and tax breaks... a combination of the types of direct payments that governors and mayors regularly make to businesses: incentives to reduce initial capital costs, relocation and work force grants, tax credits and exemptions, reduction of other fees and assistance with utility costs.” (Markell, 2017)

Thus, governors are in the forefront of this partnership between state governments and corporate interests. Moreover, it is not unusual for CEOs of large corporations to run for political offices such as mayor, governor, senator, or president. For example, in 1992 Henry Ross Perot, founder and CEO of Electronic Data Systems, ran for President of the United States as an independent. In 1994, businessman George W. Bush, majority owner of the Texas Rangers baseball team, was elected Governor of Texas. Billionaire Steve Forbes, editor-in-chief of *Forbes* Magazine, campaigned as a Republican candidate for President of the United States in 1996. In 2006, Dick DeVos, CEO of Amway, ran for governor of Michigan, and in 2010, Meg Whitman, CEO of eBay, ran for governor of California. Additionally, CEOs are often picked by governors to serve on various policymaking and advisory boards in their administration.

Given this relationship between corporate power and state-wide office, it is no coincidence that blacks are as underrepresented in the office of governor as they are in the office of CEO. The underrepresentation of blacks among U.S. governors can be better understood in the larger context of political colonialism. Actor and American Civil Rights activist Ossie Davis wrote in 1965, “Protocol and common sense require that Negroes stand back and let the white man speak up for us, defend us, and lead us from behind the scene in our fight. This is the essence of Negro politics.” (Hayley, p. 524) Davis articulates at least one aspect of political colonialism. According to Stokely Carmichael, civil rights activist and former leader of the famed Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and Columbia University Political Science

Professor Charles V. Hamilton, the idea of political colonialism recognizes that “black people in this country form a colony, and it is not in the interest of the colonial power to liberate them.

Black people are legal citizens of the United States with, for the most part, the same legal rights as other citizens. Yet they stand as colonial subjects in relation to the white society.”

(Carmichael & Hamilton, p. 5) Peter Beinart, associate professor of journalism and political science at the City University of New York, shows how political colonization is protected by voters who support Donald Trump. Quoting from Professor Jason Stanley’s book, *How Fascism Works*, he writes, “the fascist politician’s denunciations of corruption sound like a denunciation of political corruption. But such talk is intended to evoke corruption in the sense of the usurpation of the traditional order.” (Beinart, 2018) Despite mounting evidence of illegality and impropriety on the part of Mr. Trump the only criteria for corruption that matters is the disruption of the traditional order. At the heart of this “traditional order” is political colonialism.

Carmichael and Hamilton present three aspects of political colonialism. First, when pressed with demands for civil or political equality by the black populace, white society reacts monolithically by rejecting such demands to protect its vested interests. “The whites react in a united group to protect interests they perceive to be theirs – interests possessed to the exclusion of those who, for varying reasons, are outside the group.” (Carmichael & Hamilton, p. 7) The struggle over affirmative action, in its broadest sense, continues to be among the primary examples of this aspect. Consequently, a governor whose platform aggressively accelerates economic and social equality between blacks and whites, particularly through employment, housing, and educational reforms, will be rejected by most white voters.

The second aspect of political colonialism is the use of puppet leaders to control the black populace. Such leaders are sometimes referred to in the black community pejoratively as house

negroes or Uncle Toms. These leaders essentially represent, protect, and impose the interests of white leaders who endorse them. Carmichael and Hamilton write,

“when one talks of a “Negro Establishment” in most places in this country, one is talking of an Establishment resting on a white power base; hand-picked blacks whom that base projects as showpieces out front. These black “leaders” are, then, only as powerful as their white kingmakers will permit them to be. This is no less true of the North than of the South.” (Carmichael & Hamilton, pp. 11,12)

Booker T. Washington, the unofficial President of the black people of America at the turn of the twentieth century, also known as “The Great Accommodator,” is an example of this aspect (see *Before there was a black American President, black America had a President*, by Kelefa Sanneh, *The New Yorker*, February 2, 2009). Washington was born into slavery but after emancipation he attended the Hampton Institute (later known as Hampton University) and was trained by General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, a Union Army officer. During the movement for higher education for blacks in the early twentieth century, Booker T. Washington saw the need to downplay black equality through education and emphasize black’s loyalty to country and community through industriousness. “Washington believed that Southern whites had to be convinced that the education of the Negroes was in the true interest of the South. Washington counseled the Negroes to respect the law and to cooperate with white authority in maintaining peace. In this way he won the good will of the ruling class.” (Franklin, p. 390)

Thus, a black leader who embodies Booker T. Washington’s gradualist approach to racial equality is embraced by white voters. At the same time, such leaders rationalize that it is not time for a black person to exercise the powers of governor. Consequently, they rarely run or if they do run, the campaign is largely symbolic and usually ends in the primary election phase. Two examples of modern day blacks who are representative of the Booker T. Washington persona, although not related to the office of governor, are worth noting. Justice Clarence Thomas, a

member of the Republican Party, was nominated by President George H.W. Bush in 1991 to fill the seat of retiring Justice Thurgood Marshall. Justice Marshall was the first black man to serve on the United States Supreme Court and was also a recognized key figure in the American Civil Rights movement. The speed at which Republican Party leaders expedited Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court is another testimony to political colonialism. Thomas had served on the Federal Court of Appeals for a mere 16 months before being nominated to the Supreme Court. Thomas was politically conservative and he was black. These were the most important criteria, not his success in advancing justice for blacks in America. Another example is Alan Keyes. Keyes, a political conservative whose political platform centered on moral issues such as abortion, ran three unsuccessful campaigns to get the Republican Party nomination for President of the United States. During his 2000 campaign Keyes said, "In my mind, I know there is a path that leads to the nomination. That path, while not likely, is possible. There is a very possible series of events that leads to Alan Keyes being nominated." (Nagourney, 2000) Although Keyes desired to be the new face of his political party, his own words reveal that his presidential campaign was mostly symbolic.

The third aspect of political colonialism is the monopolizing of political representation. This is accomplished using tactics that either suppress black voter participation or dilute their participation. "[B]lack people have never been able to utilize fully their numerical voting strength. Where we could vote, the white political machines have gerrymandered black neighborhoods so that the true voting strength is not reflected in political representation." (Carmichael & Hamilton, p. 16) The authors also point out that "election to City Councils by the at-large system, rather than by district, reduces the number of representatives coming out of the black community." For the past seven years, Texas has been embroiled in litigation regarding

state and congressional maps that minority rights activists allege are discriminatory (see “Seven years later: Why everyone is mad in the Texas redistricting fight” by Alexa Ura, *The Texas Tribune* April 4, 2018). Although state-wide offices such as the governor are not susceptible to gerrymandering, research shows that state voter identification laws can suppress black voter participation (see A Dead-Simple Algorithm Reveals The True Toll Of Voter ID Laws by Issie Lapowsky, [www.wired.com](http://www.wired.com), January 4, 2018 and ADGN: An Algorithm for Record Linkage Using Address, Date of Birth, Gender, and Name, by Stephen Ansolabehere and Eitan Hersh, *Journal of Statistics and Public Policy*, Volume 4, 2017 Issue 1). According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the legacy of voter identification dates back to 1950, “when South Carolina became the first state to request that voters show some kind of identification document at the polls. No photo was required—just a document bearing the voter’s name.” (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2017) For over half a century, states, particularly in the south, have adopted some form of voter identification request or requirement at the polls. NCSL compiled data that show the number of states adopting such laws from 2000 to 2016. In 2000, at least 70 percent of states had no identification requirement at the polls. By 2016, nearly 70 percent of states had either an identification request or requirement at the polls. See Figure 1 below.

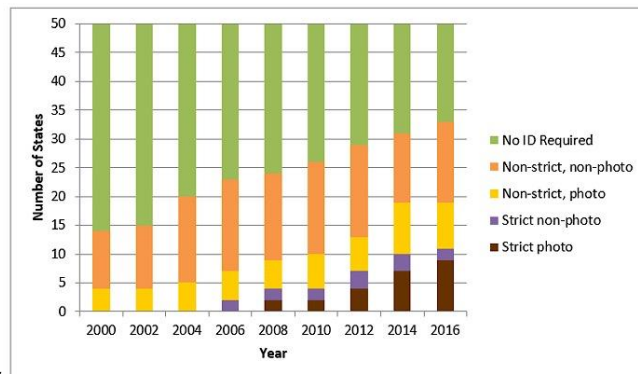


Figure 1



Although the impact of this form of political colonialism is small by percentage, it must not be underestimated. “Across all registered voters in Texas, the researchers found 4.5 percent lack proper identification.” (Lapowsky, 2018) However, “that 4.5 percent still represents 608,470 Texas citizens who could potentially be disenfranchised.” (Lapowsky, 2018) This is more than enough to swing a state-wide election.

Political colonialism has been the reality for black people and people of color in America for centuries. Although black politics became public during the Reconstruction era and was validated by the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870 and the Civil Rights Act of 1875, black enfranchisement was never the goal of post-Civil War America. Black suffrage was merely a vehicle to provide the Republican party with a legislative advantage over Southern Democrats (see *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution 1863 -1877*, by Eric Foner). This advantage would allow the Republican party to dictate the terms of national reconciliation and reconstruction. Once this objective had been met and the nation had been marginally mended, capitalistic interests among both parties took precedence over the protection of blacks as citizens, the preservation of their constitutional rights, and the redistribution of ill-gotten white wealth.

Nevertheless, during the short period between the end of the Civil War and the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, black politics flourished. “When not deterred by violence, blacks eagerly attended political gatherings, and voted in extraordinary numbers; their turnout in many elections approached 90 percent. “It is the hardest thing in the world to keep a negro away from the polls,” commented an Alabama white, “that is the one thing he will do, to vote.”” (Foner, p. 291) As a result, the 41<sup>st</sup> United States Congress had three black members, including Joseph Hayne Rainey, the longest serving black in Congress during Reconstruction. The 42<sup>nd</sup> Congress had five black members, the 43<sup>rd</sup> Congress had seven, and the

44<sup>th</sup> Congress had eight. (United States House of Representatives, 2008) This trajectory would likely have continued were it not interrupted by the Compromise of 1877 which ended Reconstruction. Blacks were well represented at the state level. Foner writes, “the fact that well over 600 blacks served as legislators - the large majority, except in Louisiana and Virginia, former slaves - represented a stunning departure in American politics.” (Foner, p. 355) Unfortunately, the black political machine was dismantled by the unchecked terrorism of the Klux Klan, the U.S. Supreme Court’s reversal of the Civil Rights Act of 1875, and, in 1877, the withdrawal of Federal troops who, to some degree, protected the rights of black citizens in the South.

In December 1872, the state of Louisiana had the first and only black governor in the country. His name was Pinckney Benton Stewart Pinchback. Like many black politicians during Reconstruction, Pinchback was of mixed-race and educated. His father was a wealthy white planter and his mother was a former slave. He was appointed Lieutenant Governor in 1871. For thirty-five days, he served as governor during the suspension of Henry C. Warmoth. In 1990, one hundred eighteen years after Pinchback, Lawrence Douglas Wilder was elected the 66<sup>th</sup> governor of Virginia and the first black elected to the office of governor in America. “Of the 1,864 people who have served in the Senate since 1789, 15 have been minorities: four blacks (two elected), three Hispanics, four Asian-Americans, three Native Americans and one Native Hawaiian. More than 2,200 people have served as governors. Nine have been minorities: four Hispanics, three Asian-Americans, one black and one Native Hawaiian.” (Kiely, 2002) According to 2017 data compiled at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, “Forty-seven of the nation’s governors are white. There are two Hispanic governors (Susana Martinez, NM; Brian Sandoval, NV) and one Asian governor (David Ige, HI). There are currently no African-American

governors in the United States.” See Figure 2. (Center on the American Governor, 2018)

Race/Ethnicity of America's Governors

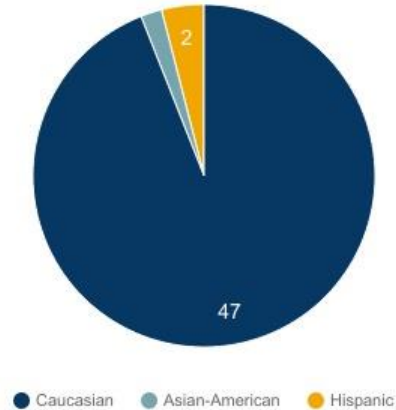


Figure 2

Virginia was the first state to elect a black governor. This is interesting because the Virginia General Assembly was a stronghold of political colonialism. White politicians were overrepresented in terms of seats in the assembly. According to the 1980 U.S. Census, blacks represented 18 percent of the states’ total population yet, after the 1985 elections blacks occupied only 10 of the 140 seats in the assembly. A study by researchers Michael L. Clemons and Charles E. Jones entitled *African American Legislative Politics in Virginia*, analyzes black politics in Virginia over an 18-year period, from 1970 to 1988. They show that white politicians also monopolize seats and chairmanships on powerful legislative committees. Clemons and Jones write,

“The absence of African American membership on the Privileges and Elections, Appropriations, and the Nominations and Confirmation committees is particularly glaring. These committees are powerful entities within the House of Delegates. The lack of Black representation on the Privileges and Elections Committee is of particular import because of its role in the reapportionment process. The central obstacle to the acquisition of influential chamber positions is low seniority. Because of the relatively recent inclusion of African Americans to the Virginia general assembly, it has been difficult to accumulate the tenure required for position of internal influence.” (Clemons & Jones, p. 759)

The dynamics of state legislative committees are just as important for black politicians as the elections themselves. Dr. Benjamin J. Lambert III, elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in 1977, said, "Seniority leads to power committee assignments which eventually lead to committee chairmanships. To successfully affect the lives of Black Virginians, you have to have power, and to acquire power you have to have seniority." (Clemons & Jones, p. 759) According to Clemons and Jones, Lambert's fellow legislator, Douglas Wilder, was successful in navigating the gauntlet of legislative committees and chaired three during his time in the senate including the coveted Privileges and Elections committee. Wilder was a powerful figure in the Virginia assembly but, with the exception of lifting restrictive voter registration rules, he focused on the economic issues that impacted middle-class blacks.

The novel fact that Virginia had never had a black governor was not enough to give Wilder, who served in the Virginia Senate and as Lieutenant Governor, a decisive victory over his opponent, Republican Marshall Coleman, former Attorney General of Virginia. According to a *New York Times* article, "The most expensive and one of the nastiest gubernatorial campaigns in Virginia history ended in one of the closest elections, with complete but unofficial returns, as reported by the A.P., showing Mr. Wilder leading Mr. Coleman, 896,283 to 890,750, with all precincts reporting." (Oreskes, 1989) Although Wilder was declared the winner, the "razor thin" margin of his victory – less than 1% of all votes cast - compared with the wide margin of victory by Attorney General elect Mary Sue Terry (26% margin) and Lieutenant Governor elect Donald Beyer, Jr. (8% margin) on the Democratic ticket, raised questions of how much race played a role in the election.

"Even in states with large minority voting blocs, some of the best-known black politicians have been stymied in their careers: Andrew Young, a civil rights pioneer who won three terms in the U.S. House and two as Atlanta's mayor, couldn't win his party's

nod for Georgia governor in 1990. Tom Bradley, a respected four-term mayor of Los Angeles, lost two attempts in the 1980s to become California's governor.” (Kiely, 2002)

Politicians, election strategists, and campaign analysts often point to money as the key factor for the underrepresentation of black governors.

“Minnesota Rep. Keith Ellison, a Democrat now in his fourth term, cites money as an impediment. ‘As long as minority congressional members represent districts that tend to be lower income, then your funding base is going to be smaller, which will put you at a dollar disadvantage when you want to run for statewide office,’ he said.” (Harvie, 2014)

During an interview with a vice president for Allyn Media, a full-service public relations and political media firm in Dallas, Texas, I asked him to explain how money helps a candidate to win an election. I reminded him that studies show that more money does not necessarily equate to more votes. He explained that money allows a candidate to use media in order to change the way people think. He further explained that political campaigns are all about perception, how candidates are perceived by the voter. (Williams S. P., 2018)

Thus, if a black candidate does not have the funding to secure at least the same level of media resources as a white opponent, then the path to victory narrows dramatically. Former Railroad Commissioner Michael Williams, the only black man to win a statewide office in the history Texas (in the executive branch), echoed this observation. Mr. Williams, an attorney who also served in the George H.W. Bush administration, explained to me that because Texas is a large state with twenty-seven media markets, it is impossible for any state-wide candidate to knock on enough doors or to shake enough hands to create a perception that will lead to victory. “That black-box,” Williams told me, pointing to the television, “allows you to tell your story.” (Williams M. L., 2018) Williams credits his state-wide success to Governor George W. Bush, whom Williams says, “picked him out” to fill a vacancy on the Texas Railroad Commission. The Railroad Commission is a three-member panel that regulates the state’s natural resources,

primarily oil and gas (at one time the commission did regulate railroads). It is considered a launchpad for candidates seeking higher offices. Williams predecessor, Carole Keeton Rylander, went on to win election as Comptroller of Public Accounts and then ran for Governor. Prior to Williams' confirmation to fill the vacancy, he had distinguished himself as a powerful campaign strategists in Midland, Texas and was hired to work on the Bush gubernatorial campaign in that area. After being confirmed to complete the unexpired term of Carole Keeton Rylander, Williams only had a year to campaign for the 2000 election, hardly adequate time to raise enough money to compete. Williams said that Governor Bush surprised him. Unbeknownst to Williams, the governor rallied key donors from his own base to support Williams in the 2000 election. Williams said that without the support of these Bush donors, he would not have won the 2000, 2002, and 2008 elections. In the 2002 general election, Williams raised over \$1.2M, more than four times that of his Democratic challenger, Sherry Boyles, and received approximately 55 percent of the vote. Interestingly, Boyles still received 41 percent of the vote (see [followthemoney.org](http://followthemoney.org) and [elections.sos.state.tx.us](http://elections.sos.state.tx.us))

Williams acknowledged that his state-wide political success was not typical of most black candidates because he was picked out by a sitting governor. Without the donor base mobilized by then Governor Bush, Williams had no path to victory. I asked Williams, a member of the Republican party, about the campaign of Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, a Democrat, and whether he was well funded in comparison to his opponent. "The Clintons," Williams speculated. In 1994 President Bill Clinton appointed Patrick Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Rights Division of the United States Justice Department. Williams says that the Clintons were instrumental in helping Patrick organize a funding base for his gubernatorial campaign in 2006. Deval Patrick and his running mate, Timothy Murray, raised nearly \$18M and received

55.6 percent of the vote, while their opponents Kerry Healy and Reed Hillman raised almost \$17M and received 35.3 percent of the vote. (see [electionstats.state.ma.us](http://electionstats.state.ma.us) and [followthemoney.org](http://followthemoney.org)) Wilder and Patrick prove that given adequate funding, it is possible for a black candidate to win a gubernatorial race in the U.S. But are campaign contributions enough to redress the under representation of black governors in our country? According to political science professor Adam R. Brown of Brigham Young University, not necessarily. Brown's article, *Does Money Buy Votes? The Case of Self-Financed Gubernatorial Candidates, 1998-2008*, does not explicitly address the over representation of whites and the under representation of blacks as governors, but it does shed light on the connection between money and successful political campaigns. Brown samples data from 88 gubernatorial elections from 1998 to 2008. His findings show that "[s]elf-financed spending does not have a correlation with election results, but externally-financed spending does." (Brown A. R., 2013) In other words, the amount of campaign money does not correlate to election-day victory. Thus, super-rich candidates such as former New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine, who contribute large amounts of money to their own campaigns, cannot simply buy an election. Rather, it is the source of these funds that correlates to election results. "In 2010, former eBay CEO Meg Whitman self-financed an astounding \$144 million in her bid for California governor. Her self-financing alone more than tripled the relatively meager \$40 million that her opponent, Jerry Brown, raised from all sources combined. Despite this infusion of cash, Whitman lost to Brown by nearly 13 percentage points." (Brown A. R., 2013) This is because donors, both individuals and organizations, in an election are like consumers in a market. They spend their money on the candidate whom they believe can win. These external dollars are the result of a path to victory, not a cause. Campaign donations are the result of a strategic decision on the part of the consumer-donor based on her assessment of the

quality of the product-candidate. Consequently, the highest quality candidate is usually the candidate with the most external money. But what do these consumers expect for the thousands of dollars they donate? I asked Commissioner Williams about the return on investment for donors. According to Williams, donors expect two things. “They expect for you to win, and they expect for you to answer the phone when they call.” In other words, in return for their donation, investors expect the candidate to move enough people to the polls to secure a victory and they expect to have a level of access that ordinary voters do not.

Professor Brown shows that external dollars predict the outcome of an election rather than determine that outcome. On one hand this is welcomed news for black gubernatorial candidates in the November 2018 elections. Candidates like Stacy Abrams of Georgia, Andrew Gillum of Florida, and Ben Jealous of Maryland must get their message to every market in their respective states but whether they outspend their opponents will not necessarily determine their success. On the other hand, when Brown speaks of the candidate’s “quality” he does not consider the racial bias that is a natural part of this subjective determination. The same racism that deems white managers more appropriate for the CEO pipeline than black managers, as discussed earlier in this paper, assigns more “quality” to white candidates than to black candidates in gubernatorial races. In general, the virtue and perception of innocence that is associated with white privilege, regardless of party affiliation, is protected even when there is evidence to the contrary. The support for Supreme Court Nominee Judge Brett Kavanaugh serves as a timely example. Even an accusation against Kavanaugh of unlawful, juvenile sexual behavior that occurred 36 years ago, is deemed politically inflammatory rather than statistically probable. The possibility that Judge Kavanaugh behaved selfishly and irresponsibly as a teenager, as teenagers are prone to do, is an assault on the innocence that is automatically assigned to whites of his



stature. The innocence and virtue of black candidates is not afforded any measure of protection, and accusations merely confirm stereotypical suspicions regardless of evidence to the contrary. It cost more money to move public perception from suspicion to trust than it does to merely affirm trustworthiness. Consequently, black candidates are easy targets for subtle suggestions of impropriety and incompetence by white opponents, a factor which sometimes influences the Democratic Party leadership to dodge investment in black candidates for open seats. In response to this timidity, groups like Collective PAC, were launched to fund progressive black politicians. Founder Quentin James, “a veteran of the Obama campaign, established a boot camp — the Black Campaign School — to train those candidates.” (Khalid, 2018) Reporter Asma Khalid also writes, “The pop-up school was sponsored by the Democratic establishment, but in many ways, it was also defying that very establishment, trying to build black political power where the Democratic Party has not always succeeded.” Ironically, it is risky for black candidates to suggest that they are being attacked because of their race, or that their white opponent is employing racist ideas to gain advantage. Doing so could cause irreparable damage to their campaign. Thus, “Mr. Wilder, maintaining a stand he took all through his campaign, said today that race was irrelevant. "I'm saying it is not and was not a factor in the results because I was elected," Mr. Wilder told a morning-after news conference.” (Oreskes, 1989) I recall when Texas State Senator Royce West visited our church in southeast Dallas during his initial campaign in the late 80’s. Our pastor allowed him a few minutes to address the congregation. Near the end of his presentation, Mr. West said, “Don’t vote for me because I’m black.” After Mr. West finished, our pastor reminded our all black congregation that many others will vote for West’s opponent because he is white. “Unfortunately, a lot of our progressive trainings and Democratic trainings

don't center the experience of racism in this country," said James, who insists Democrats of color can't afford to ignore race, particularly now, in the era of President Trump." (Khalid, 2018)

Yet, the issue is not simply whether a black candidate can be elected governor, the issue is, at what cost. Essentially, black candidates must present themselves as centrists, and avoid appearing to side with the black community on issues such as police brutality, workplace discrimination, and underinvestment in public education. Black gubernatorial candidates, for example, must go out of their way to project an image that is tough on crime, suspicious of Affirmative Action programs, and hard-nosed about spending on public education. Although such positions are but shibboleths of white supremacy, black candidates will scarcely attract moderate white voters otherwise. According to Dr. Raphael J. Sonenshein, Executive Director of the Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs at California State University Los Angeles, there are simply not enough black voters in any one state in the country to carry an election, even if they voted as a block. (Interestingly, during the rise of the Nation of Islam in the United States during the decade of the '60's, leader Elijah Muhammad proposed that the federal government allot blacks six states so that they can separate from whites and govern themselves.) Sonenshein analyzed the political campaigns of Edward Brooke, the first black elected by popular vote to the United States Senate in 1966, Governor Douglas Wilder, and Tom Bradley, the first black Mayor of Los Angeles and a 1982 candidate for Governor of California. His research explored the question: Can black candidates win statewide elections? He concludes that black candidates can win statewide offices but it depends on three factors; "racial attitudes of the state electorate, the political situation, and the campaign stance adopted by the black candidate." (Sonenshein, 1990) It is this last factor over which black candidates have the most control. Sonenshein wrote,

"While there was some overlap among the strategies of the three black candidates, there were significant differences. In the area of style, Bradley, Brooke, and Wilder pursued

similar strategies. They presented the image of the nonthreatening, moderate middle-class black politician. Only Wilder, whose previous style had been somewhat more flamboyant, needed to make changes in order to present this image. None of the three mobilized the black community through overt racial appeals.” (Soneshein, 1990)

Thus, the idea of a black gubernatorial candidate speaking truth to white power is much like that of a unicorn. A black candidate must acquiesce to the sensitivities of moderates, be they Republican or Democrat, to have any chance of victory.

Acquiescence may not be a severe limitation from the standpoint of a political platform and public policy. All politicians, regardless of their racial identity, must compromise to build consensus. However, in the case of black politicians, moderation does not seem to energize black constituents who live on the economic margins of society to embrace the ballot as a critical measure to remedy white supremacy. Moderation does not send the message that “the man” (i.e. the white moneyed class) is finally being confronted. Rather, it sends the message that “the man” will always be in control and that black politicians in general are on a short leash.

Disenfranchised blacks must sense the righteous zeal of a candidate against the forces of oppression before they become active members of the electorate. It was the righteous zeal of Malcolm X and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that mesmerized blacks trapped in poverty and kept in check by violence. In 1957, during his tenure as minster of Nation of Islam Temple Seven in Harlem, Malcolm X led a showdown with the New York City Police Department. It began when Johnson Hinton, a member of Temple Seven, was brutally beaten by police as they were attempting to disperse a group of innocent bystanders. “His scalp was split open, and a police car came and he was taken to a nearby precinct. And with some telephone calls, in less than half an hour about fifty of Temple Seven’s men of the Fruit of Islam were standing in ranks-formation outside the police precinct house.” (Hayley, p. 269) This was neither a protest nor prayer vigil. Rather, it was a direct demand that authority, white authority, respect black people

as human beings or else pay a price. What followed embodies what disenfranchised blacks want from a governor or any other elected official who claims to be on their side. According to Malcolm X,

“Other Negroes, curious came running. And gathered in excitement behind the Muslims. The police, coming to the station house front door, and looking out of the windows, couldn’t believe what they saw. I went in, as a member of Temple Seven, and demanded to see our brother. The police first said he wasn’t there. Then they admitted he was, but said I couldn’t see him. I said that until he was seen, and we were sure he received proper medical attention, the Muslims would remain where they were.” (Hayley, p. 269)

Tense moments followed and Johnson Hinton was transported to a hospital emergency room where he received proper treatment for a skull fracture. “After that operation, the Nation of Islam helped him [Hinton] to sue; a jury awarded him over \$70,000, the largest police brutality judgement that New York City has ever paid.” (Hayley, p. 270)

In 1963, Dr. King lambasted white liberal clergyman in a public letter for their moderate stance on the oppression of blacks in Alabama and across the nation. In an open letter the clergymen accused King of being imprudent and impatient based on his role in protesting the administration of newly elected Mayor Albert Boutwell. King responded saying,

“I guess it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, “Wait.” But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policeman curse, kick, brutalize and even kill your black brothers and sisters with impunity; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year old daughter why she can’t go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her little eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see the depressing clouds of inferiority begin to form in her little mental sky, and see her begin to distort her little personality by unconsciously developing a bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year old son asking in agonizing pathos: “Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?”; when you take a cross-country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading “white” and “colored”; when your first name becomes “nigger” and your middle name

becomes “boy” (however old you are) and your last name becomes “John” and when you wife and mother are never given the respected title “Mrs.”; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance never quite knowing what to expect next, and plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of “nobodiness”; then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into an abyss of injustice where they experience the blackness of corroding despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.” (Washington, pp. 292-293)

King served notice to the white power structure that time was up. They had exhausted the patience of a patient people. No political strategist would recommend the actions of Malcolm X or Dr. King to a candidate for governor, but these actions were powerful. They resonated with blacks from Harlem, to Greensboro, to Birmingham, to Atlanta. Although Malcolm’s and King’s righteous zeal mirrored that of the founding fathers of this nation when they rebuffed the authority of mother England, any black gubernatorial candidate who remotely made demands of white authority so boldly would scarcely have a chance of being competitive let alone winning an election. Given these circumstances, many qualified, influential, visionary black leaders do not even consider the governorship. Thus, racism not only plays a role in the outcome of elections, it plays a role in the input.

Nevertheless, the optics of a black governor continues to have significant appeal to the black electorate regardless of the political constraints. Perhaps this is because the disparity in representation is so wide that even a symbolic victory is welcomed. Fortunately, response to police brutality, particularly by the Black Lives Matter Movement, and response to the overtly racist presidency of Donald Trump, have provided black gubernatorial candidates the opportunity to reclaim political turf that had been surrendered to centrism. This is especially true because the “tough on crime” as a campaign talking point has often been used to impugn black state-wide candidates. Democratic Gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams is an example.

Despite being labeled as a lover of crime by President Trump, Abrams speaks candidly in her interviews about criminal justice reform in terms of accountability and second chances, not charging juveniles as adults, and decriminalizing poverty so that people who can't afford justice are not held behind bars. Additionally, she speaks of expanding Medicaid in Georgia, and putting money back into public education. The fact that a black woman can win the Democratic primary for Governor of Georgia where Donald Trump won 51% of the 2016 vote, openly refer to the President and his supporters as "fascists," and still run a competitive campaign, signals that the window of opportunity for more aggressive action against political colonialism is open. Some polls show Abrams and her Republican opponent Brian Kemp, tied at 45 percent. Clearly, it is the volume of political noise from the grassroots that shapes the campaign trail, not merely the volume of persons registered to vote. In other words, the black electorate may not have the numbers to dominate an election, but they can make enough noise to shape an election. In a speech delivered on August 3, 1857, Frederick Douglas said,

"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress." (Douglass)

Black representation in the office of Governor rests not only on the shoulders of those who campaign for the office, but on the backs of the black electorate. Despite being out numbered, this electorate must consistently resist the tyranny of political colonization regardless of election outcomes, token concessions, and white patronage.

### **The University President and the Higher Education Power Structure**

College and university presidents occupy a unique position in the power structure along with corporate CEOs and state governors. Colleges and universities are like seedbeds of

leadership, part of a larger farm system for incubating public intellectuals and decision makers. Interestingly, the word “seminary,” comes from a Latin word meaning seed plot. Several of the country’s oldest universities began as seminaries where priests, rabbis, and ministers were trained. These institutions later expanded their focus to include arts and sciences. The colonial institutions of higher learning such as Harvard University, Yale University, Princeton University, and Moravian College are examples. Beyond keeping the doors open and the campus operational, and raising money for new programs, the president is ultimately responsible for producing people, “seedlings,” who can then be easily transplanted into the soil of other institutions for further development and utilization. Thus, university presidents impact the quantity and quality of professional labor, a critical component in a highly competitive capitalist society. Moreover, universities and colleges often serve as vanguards within disciplines such as law, medicine, computer science, and business administration. As a result, colleges and universities are connected to various industry leaders and decision makers in these fields, including elected officials. This means that the influence of the university president goes far beyond the boundaries of the campus.

The career of John Engler, interim president of Michigan State University (MSU), is indicative of the tacit collaboration between CEOs, state governors, and university presidents. Before his appointment to the university, Engler was a career politician, serving two decades as a state law maker in Michigan. He began as a state representative and went on to be elected to the state senate, and was elected governor in 1990. In 2003, after three terms as governor, Engler accepted an executive position at Electronic Data Systems (EDS), one of the largest computer services companies in the country. Dick Brown, CEO of EDS, aimed to leverage Engler’s experience in advancing Michigan’s technological infrastructure during his governorship, to

secure contracts with state and local governments. In 2004, Engler applied his political acumen on a broader scale in the corporate arena. He was CEO of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), a trade organization composed of manufacturing companies. In 2011, Engler was named president of the Business Round Table (BRT), a lobbying group for CEOs of major corporations. Both the NAM and the BRT rely heavily on influencing government policy, and on shaping educational criteria in secondary schools and in higher education institutions in the interest of their member's workforce needs.

In February of this year, Engler was appointed interim president of MSU. Engler's political ties to the state government and his alliances with CEOs and major corporations will no doubt be used to help stabilize state funding for MSU and to preserve MSU's institutional reputation, in light of the crimes of Dr. Larry Nassar (see *Ex-Michigan State Athlete's Lawsuit Says Larry Nassar Drugged and Raped Her on Camera* by Christine Hauser, The New York Times, September 13, 2018). Despite strong opposition from members of the Steering committee over Engler's lack of higher education experience, the board of trustees moved forward with the appointment. Clearly, Engler is not a career academic, his experience was external to higher education. Yet, according to the American Council on Education, his path to the presidency of Michigan State University represents about 15 percent of college presidents around the country. (see American College President Study 2017).

Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates was also an outsider to higher education. His primary career was with the United States Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Council. After his retirement from government intelligence, Gates was involved in higher education in various non-faculty capacities. Then, in 1999, he served as interim Dean of the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University. Finally, he was



appointed president of Texas A&M University in 2002. A year earlier, Harvard University appointed Larry Summers as its twenty-seventh president. In contrast to Engler and Gates, Summers was a faculty member and a tenured professor at Harvard (at age 28). He left the university to serve as chief economist for the World Bank in 1991, and eventually was appointed U.S. Treasury Secretary by President Bill Clinton in 1999. Nevertheless, Summer's tenure in higher education was short in the context of university presidents. He did not progress from tenured professor to dean to chief academic officer and then to president, a common pathway to the top executive office of a university.

Although there are internal and external pathways to the office of president of a university, the same pattern of underrepresentation of blacks that we found among corporate CEOs and state governors, also exists here. The high representation of black presidents of historically black colleges and universities (HBCU), is not an indication that white supremacy has been eradicated in higher education leadership. Black presidents of HBCUs became more common after the Great Depression. However, in the twenty-first century, black presidents of HWCUs (historically white colleges and universities) are rare. In the late nineteenth-century, HBCUs were necessary because blacks were legally barred from most white institutions of higher learning. Interestingly, except for Wilberforce University, Tuskegee Institute, and Bethune-Cookman College, each of the HBCU's established in late 1860 following the Civil War, had a white president.

“In the Reconstruction years following the Civil War, northern religious groups that were active in the abolition movement continued their benevolent efforts on behalf of black Americans. These groups – including Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and other sects – founded schools throughout the South to train black teachers and preachers to educate freedmen. Many of these white religious groups had made substantial investments in time and money in the black colleges. The white founders and supporters of the black colleges were reluctant to entrust control of the institutions to black people. In Addition, it was correctly believed that white college presidents would be far more successful in raising

money for the institution among foundations and wealthy benefactors.” (The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 1997)

Because America’s wealth was held predominantly by whites during the time that black colleges were established, white leadership of black colleges would have been essential for raising funds. However, there was another practical reason for the dominance of white leadership at black colleges: assimilation. The white philanthropists who helped launch higher education institutions for blacks leaned heavily toward assimilation ideology (see Ibram X. Kendi *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*, p.243). In other words, much like the Indian Boarding Schools that were established in the same era with the purpose of “saving” Indians by overtly coercing them to abandon their cultural heritage, so too, benevolent whites aimed to subtly coerce blacks into acceptance of white supremacy rather than resistance to white supremacy. Fortunately, for black students and administrators who resented and resisted white superiority, the Great Depression helped bring about changes in higher education leadership on black campuses. White administrators were hesitant to lead severely underfunded black colleges that seemed virtually doomed to fail.

“At the onset of the Great Depression, many of the white controlled northern church groups experienced financial troubles and either cut off or reduced their budgetary support for their black colleges. The future of many of these colleges was in doubt. Under these circumstances, resistance to the selection of black administrators waned and many institutions hired their first black presidents, in some cases, the cynics say, to set up a convenient scapegoat if the institution were to fail.” (The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 1997)

Still, Spelman College, an icon of higher learning among blacks founded in 1881, did not seat its first black president until 1953.

In January 1970 Clifton Wharton, Jr. began his tenure as the fourteenth president of Michigan State University, making him the first black president of a HWCU. In an interview with *Jet Magazine* (May 21, 1970), however, Wharton stated that he was not the first black

president of a white university. He gave the credit to Jesuit Priest, Patrick F. Healy of Georgetown University, Washington D.C. But the situation surrounding Patrick Healy's racial identity was quite different from Wharton's. Healy was born in Georgia in 1834. His father was Michael Morris Healy, an immigrant of Irish descent, and his mother was Mary Eliza, a mixed-race slave. There is no evidence that suggests that Healy openly presented himself as a black man. His light complexion afforded him the opportunity to be presumed white. Passing as white, if possible, was not unusual for children born through illegitimate sexual relations between free white men and enslaved women, especially since the education of blacks was illegal in the Southern states and extremely limited in Northern states prior to emancipation. Healy's case is one in which some were aware of his mixed-race ancestry while others simply presumed that he was white. In either case, as Healy advanced through Catholic schools, efforts were made on his behalf, by leaders in the Catholic church, to conceal his black ancestry.

“Healy took his final vows as a Jesuit on 2 February 1867, the first African American to do so. If the illegitimacy of his birth made his ordination problematic, it may be that the records were altered within the church, as apparently had been the case with his brother James, the first African American ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood (10 June 1854).” (Newman, 2000)

After receiving his doctorate, he returned to the United States and joined the faculty of Georgetown University. He progressed through the ranks and in July 1874, Patrick Healy became the twenty-ninth president of the university. Ironically, it was after 1947 that Georgetown admitted its first black graduate student. Healy served as president until his retirement in 1882.

It is certainly possible that colorism played a role in Wharton's advancement, just as it did Healy's. Colorism is a racist idea that encourages preferential treatment based on skin complexion. (see Ibram X. Kendi, *Colorism as Racism: Garvey, Du Bois and the Other Color*

*Line*, May 24, 2017, [www.aaihs.org](http://www.aaihs.org)) Wharton's complexion is also light. Earlier in this paper it was stated that most black politicians during the Reconstruction period were light skinned due to their mixed race (see Goldsmith, Hamilton, and Darity, "From Dark to Light: Skin Color and Wages among African-Americans," *The Journal of Human Resources*, Vol. 42, No. 4, Fall 2007, pp. 701-738 for a study of colorism in the late twentieth century). However, in contrast to Healy, Wharton was openly black. Thus, his appointment as president of a large public university drew special recognition. Wharton served as president until December 1977 when he left to assume the role of chancellor for the State University of New York (SUNY). At the time, SUNY was one of the largest public higher education systems in the world, with 64 campuses. Wharton was also the first, and so far, the only, black to serve in this position. In the 40 years since Wharton left, Michigan State University has yet to appoint another black president. Thus, his appointment was not a watershed moment for black administrators in higher education.

According to the 2017 American College President Study (ACPS) by the American Council on Education, over the 30 years that this study has been conducted, minority representation among university presidents has increased, but at a pace that is more a cause for concern than praise. The data for this study was collected through a survey tool that was mailed to 3,615 presidents, chancellors, and CEOs in office during the 2015/2016 academic year. The institutions which these leaders served include both public and private, for-profit and not-for-profit. They also include institutions that grant doctorate degrees and those that grant associates degrees. Of the surveys mailed, 1,546 leaders responded. The study does not indicate the size of the institution in terms of student body or the age of the institution. This information might help us to understand what types of HWCUs are more likely to hire black presidents. Additionally, an ACPS study that focused on state universities would be helpful since these institutions are more

accountable to state governments, and thus to the voters. Most of the surveys mailed, were sent to leaders of associate degree-granting institutions. However, doctorate degree-granting institutions had the highest response rate.

The study is helpful in approximating the depth of the problem regarding black presidents at HWCUs. “In 1986, the first year of this study, racial/ ethnic minority groups represented 8 percent of all college and university presidents. In 2016, minorities accounted for 17 percent of presidents, an increase of nine percentage points from 30 years ago. Since 2011, the representation of minority presidents grew from 13 to 17 percent.” (Gagliardi, Espinosa, Turk, & Taylor, p. 33) In 2017, blacks accounted for just eight percent of all college and university presidents, and increase of two percent from 2011. Although the low percentage of black presidents does not differ dramatically from the percentage of black students enrolled at colleges and universities, it is worth noting. According to 2017 preliminary data from the National Center for Education Statistics, black students made up 12.4 percent of college enrollments at Title IV institutions (colleges and universities that processes U.S. federal student aid). (Ginder, Kelly-Reid, & Mann, 2018) On the other hand, the over representation of white presidents in relation to the number of white students enrolled, is significant. White students made up 50.4 percent of enrollments, and white presidents account for 83 percent of all college presidents according to the ACPS. Interestingly, the 2017 ACPS does not provide a specific percentage for black presidents of HWCUs, also referred to in the report as non-minority serving institutions (MSI). However, it is easy to estimate, based on the graphic they do provide, that blacks represent only five percent of college presidents of non-MSI’s. See figure 3 below.

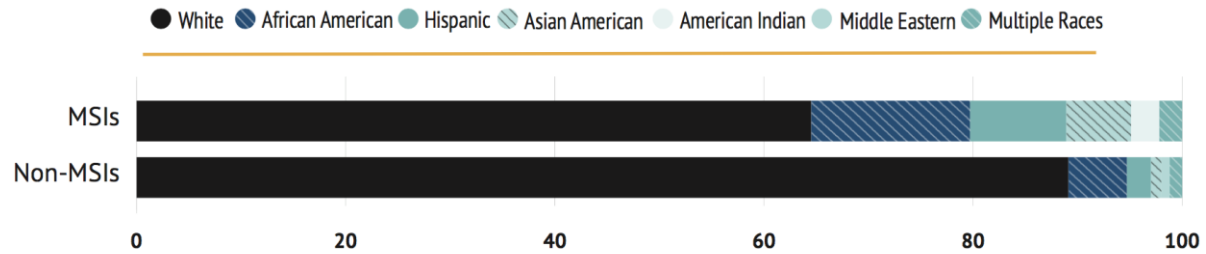


Figure 3

At the same time, whites represent over 60 percent of MSI college presidents. Although the percentage of white students attending some MSIs has increased significantly, so has the percentage of minority students attending non-MSIs. Yet, white presidents continue to be over-represented in both categories.

Performance metrics are imperative to the attainment of goals for any institution. Moreover, as it relates to higher education institutions, performance metrics that are connected to revenue receive the most attention from executive leadership. The 2017 ACPS included a new question that gauged the extent to which president’s perceived specific performance measures legitimate. Since nearly 65 percent of presidents’ report spending most of their time on budget and financial management issues, and 58 percent spend most of their time fundraising (see p.42 of ACPS), their perceptions of legitimate performance measures reveal true institutional priorities. For example, although the annual *U.S. News and World Report* college rankings may draw the attention of consumers, presidents of public institutions score this ranking at 2.2 on a scale of 0 to 10 (see p.53 of ACPS). A score of ten means that the measurement is completely legitimate and zero means that the measurement has no legitimacy. In other words, they do not perceive these rankings as a legitimate measure of the performance of their institutions. This does not mean that a president whose institution is highly ranked won’t acknowledge the recognition. It simply means that attaining a high ranking is not a foundational priority. At the other end of the spectrum, presidents of public institutions score graduation rates and retention

rates at 7.7 and 8.0, respectively. In other words, these are highly legitimate measures of performance. These measures are also tied to funding, particularly federal funding. Faculty diversity was also among the specific measurements gauged. Presidents of public institutions scored this measurement at 6.7. Although this score is not the lowest, it is certainly not a high institutional priority. More importantly, it may not be enough of a priority to address the anemic level of diversity that has existed in some institutions since they were established. Irrespective of the public attention garnered by diversity and inclusion, diversity of the president's office, will seldom be any more than an aspiration among colleges and universities. It is interesting that while the majority of the 1,546 presidents surveyed for this study recognize the importance of diversity in the executive pipeline, diversity outcomes are not directly connected to any funding priority. In other words, the 45 percent of presidents who have begun initiatives to attract black higher education professionals will not suffer financially if these initiatives fall below expectations. This reinforces the idea that diversity – especially at the presidential position - is more ornamental than foundational. It is a noble goal, but not essential to the existence and viability of the institution.

It is likely that racial equity in the office of president must become a market demand of each successive class of graduating high school seniors who are deciding where they will continue their education. This is a demand that must be nurtured in students, black and white, so that it becomes the seeds of a movement. The threat to an institution's market share of the classes of incoming freshmen has the potential to accelerate structural changes in HWCU leadership pipelines that produce executives such as the president. As was discussed earlier in this paper regarding black corporate executives, it was the market, especially the "negro" market during segregation, that prompted large corporations like PepsiCo to promote black professionals to the

senior executive ranks. This by no means was a solution, for it was simply tokenism, not structural change. However, since HWCUs have embraced the theory of diversity for their executive leadership, a theory largely defined by white leaders, the opportunity exists to provoke these institutions to embrace the reality of more blacks in the presidential pipeline.

The 2017 ACPS does not discuss the reasons for the overwhelming level of racial homogeneity in favor of whites in the office of president. There is good reason to believe that racial bias and racism continue to play a role in this area. Search committees and executive search consultants make the key decisions around who will become the next president of an institution. Unfortunately, these groups, according to Marybeth Gasman, professor of higher education in the graduate school of education at the University of Pennsylvania, tend to be predominantly white (see essay by Marybeth Gasman, “The five things no one will tell you about why colleges don’t hire more faculty of color,” [www.hechingerreport.org](http://www.hechingerreport.org), September 20, 2016). They also tend to be protective of white sensitivities says Dr. Richard T. Ingram, former president of Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (see Karin Chenoweth, “African American college presidents in decline,” July 13, 2007, [www.diverseeducation.com](http://www.diverseeducation.com)). Search committees recognize, “that the people who amass the greatest wealth tend to be White. And the alumni of elite institutions are predominantly White and there may be concern about upsetting them.” (Chenoweth, 2007) Search committees expect that a potential president will have access to wealthy donors whose donations can help the institution be competitive while also remaining financially stable. Ingram says, “We have got to face the fact that our institutions are going to have to rely on private support more and more.” (Chenoweth, 2007) Ingram’s observation remains valid. The 2017 ACPS shows that 85 percent



of presidents who responded expect funding from private gifts, grants, and contracts to increase and 69 percent expect government funding, federal and state, to decrease (see p.52).

Yet, access to the wealth held by whites is not the only gulf that separates black higher education professionals from the office of president. Professor Gasman says that it is simply a matter of the will of HWCUs. “The reason we don’t have more faculty of color among college faculty is that we don’t want them. We simply don’t want them.” (Gasman, 2016) Although this statement sounds a bit dramatic, it accurately summarizes the decades of lip service around diversity of executive faculty at HWCUs. In her essay, “The five things no one will tell you about why colleges don’t hire more faculty of color,” Gasman examines the usual rationale given by search committees as to why there are not more blacks serving as president of major colleges and universities. For example, the professional experience of black candidates is deemed substandard unless the candidate’s experience is strongly connected to a recognized source among white elites. This validating connection could be with a thought leader in a field of study, an elite postdoctoral fellowship program, or it could be with a large multinational corporation.

Gasman writes,

“the word ‘quality’ is used to dismiss people of color who are otherwise competitive for faculty positions. Even those people on search committees that appear to be dedicated to access and equity will point to ‘quality’ or lack of ‘quality’ as a reason for not hiring a person of color. Typically, ‘quality’ means that the person didn’t go to an elite institution for their Ph.D. or wasn’t mentored by a prominent person in the field. What people forget is that attending the elite institutions and being mentored by prominent people is linked to social capital and systemic racism ensures that people of color have less of it.” (Gasman, 2016)

This approach to vetting blacks is not a premeditated assault by modern day search committees, rather it is a learned behavior. It is embedded in the systems that compose our civil society.

Blacks not only experience this, at times they are also the accomplices. Search committees also complain about the fact that there are not enough black faculty in the candidate

pool. Although this is true, it is also the result of centuries of institutionalized racism that has denied blacks access to education. Nevertheless, the volume of black candidates in the pool also diminishes as these professionals are denied well deserved promotions in their fields. As a result, they leave the field and pursue other opportunities which offer a higher salary and less sacrifice.

Gasman writes,

“there are great numbers of Ph.D.’s of color in the humanities and education and we still don’t have great diversity on these faculties. When I hear someone say people of color aren’t in the pipeline, I respond with ‘Why don’t you create the pipeline?’ ‘Why don’t you grow your own?’ Since faculty members are resistant to hiring their own graduates, why not team up with several other institutions that are ‘deemed to be of high quality’ and bring in more Ph.D.s of color from those institutions? If you are in a field with few people of color in the pipeline, why are you working so hard to ‘weed’ them out of undergraduate and Ph.D. programs? Why not encourage, mentor, and support more people of color in your field?” (Gasman, 2016)

Furthermore, search groups purport that the rules used to guide their decisions are applied without respect to race, gender, religion, and the like. What they seldom acknowledge is that rules are like living things, they change over time. Unfortunately, minoritized groups rarely make the rules that guide HWCU search committees and are seldom in position to bend such rules.

Gasman asserts,

“I have learned that faculty will bend rules, knock down walls, and build bridges to hire those they really want (often white colleagues) but when it comes to hiring faculty of color, they have to ‘play by the rules’ and get angry when any exceptions are made. Let me tell you a secret – exceptions are made for white people constantly in the academy; exceptions are the rule in academe.” (Gasman, 2016)

Gasman also writes that hiring committees are relatively homogenous in their racial composition and lean toward hiring a candidate that is more like them. They call this, “the right fit.” Members of these committees also tends to reach out to others who are like them for candidate referrals and recommendations. Like the affirmative action programs implemented by large corporations as discussed earlier in this paper, the diversity and inclusion efforts of HWCUs have proven too

weak to impact the office of president. “The best plan for increasing the number of black faculty is not convening a new diversity committee or appointing another vice president for diversity, it’s hiring more black presidents, deans and department chairs at TWIs [Traditionally White Institutions]”. (Strauss, 2015)

There are several doctoral dissertations that examine various aspects related to black presidents who served HWCUs. “How African American Males Become Presidents of Four-Year Predominantly White Colleges and Universities: Three Oral Histories,” by John Barker (2008), identifies key details from the personal and professional life of three presidents. Barker explores how these men paved their path to the presidency. He interviewed Roderick McDavis of Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, Ronald Crutcher of Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts, and Marvin Lee Pelton of Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. In addition to relevant details related to their professional development, Barker also found that black presidents such as those he interviewed sought to create a pathway to the office for other black, higher education professionals to follow. Barker writes, “there exists a small discourse community of African American presidents who utilize one another’s knowledge and understanding to help in decision-making regarding academic trajectories and the presidency.” (Barker, 2008) The professionals interviewed in this study are part of the contingent of blacks who made it to the top office. Barker intends his research to be a resource for black, higher education professionals who might not have the privilege of direct contact with a black president to benefit from lessons learned. While this information is helpful, we must be careful not to represent merit as the remedy for racial injustice.

*Integrating Social Justice Values in Educational Leadership: A Study of African American and Black University Presidents* by Guadalupe Navarro-Garcia (2016), examines six

black presidents of HWCUs to identify how they became social justice practitioners and how their activism permeates their presidency. Navarro-Garcia interviewed Dr. Michael V. Drake, current president of Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio; Jackie Jenkins-Scott of Wheelock College in Boston, Massachusetts; Dr. Horace Mitchell, current president of California State University, Bakersfield; Dr. George Pruitt, current president of Thomas Edison State University in Trenton, New Jersey; and Dr. Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran of Kalamazoo College in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The name and college of the sixth president interviewed was not disclosed. Navarro-Garcia understands moral leadership as a quality more valued by higher education institutions than managerial authority. She also sees the practice of social justice as vital to moral leadership and a key characteristic that led to the appointments of those she interviewed as well as their efficacy as president. For black presidents, this type of leadership, though necessary, can be detrimental to a career. Navarro-Garcia writes, “adopting an equity or social justice frame, which can include the practice of speaking out and shining a light on institutional practices that foster inequity and injustice, can be met with resistance, denial, controversy and risk.” (Navarro-Garcia, p. 55) Navarro-Garcia’s research shows that even black presidents who lead from a social justice position are limited in how far they can turn the institution toward justice. These leaders need help from outside their institutions as well as within.

The third dissertation, *A Mixed Methods Exploration of Black Presidents Appointed to Predominantly White Institutions: Assessing their Exposure to the Glass Cliff*, by Malandie Katrice McGee (2017) is especially relevant to this paper. McGee looks at the frequency of black presidents at HWCUs not only from the standpoint of the career portfolio of the candidate, but also from the standpoint of the life-cycle of the institution. In other words, the motivation of a HWCU to appointment a minoritized person as president could be influenced by precarious

circumstances of the institution in addition to the qualifications of the candidate. It is likely that such precarious circumstances are underrepresented, if not camouflaged altogether, to the public and to candidates. Earlier in this section, I stated that initially many HBCU presidents were white. This began to change during the Great Depression when funds for higher education dried up, particularly funds for black colleges. White professionals were not interested in trying to navigate these institutions to more stable fiscal waters. As a result, the predominantly white religious institutions that founded many HBCUs began appointing educated blacks to the position of president. It is doubtful that white trustees were transparent about the conditions of the college or about their motivations. This is an example of what is known as the glass cliff, a term coined by researchers Michelle Ryan and Alex Haslam of the University of Exeter, located in the United Kingdom. These researchers focused their study on women leaders who, more frequently than men, were appointed to “leadership roles that are associated with an increased risk of negative consequences.” (Ryan & Haslam, 2005) These women were often blamed and mischaracterized if the organization failed. McGee sees this scenario as applicable to black higher education professionals, particularly presidents of PWIs (predominantly white institution). McGee interviewed six black, currently serving presidents of PWIs. Their identity and institutional affiliation were not disclosed. McGee found that on average, a black president comes to the office of a PWI under more adverse circumstances than a white president. She writes,

“Based solely on mean scores over a four-year period, it appeared that institutions appointing Black presidents experienced the least favorable circumstances for four of the seven adverse conditions (i.e. tuition, retention, revenue, and graduation) whereas institutions appointing White presidents experienced the least favorable circumstances for three of the seven adverse conditions (state support, enrollment, and endowment).” (McGee, 2017)

The difference, McGee acknowledges, is small.

However, it is important to recognize that even in the absence of glass cliff circumstances, being a black president of a PWI and being a white president of a PWI are not only different experiences, they represent different starting points within the same office. These differences are often unrecognized or underestimated because of the illusions of racial integration. Consider the fact that most, if not all, of the black presidents who participated in these studies were the first blacks to hold the office, an office with a long history of white leadership. Wellesley College for example, is considered among the most diverse colleges in the country. The college is currently led by a black president, Dr. Paula A. Johnson, inaugurated in July of 2016. She is the first black to serve as president in the school's 140-year history. For black pioneers, a great part of their challenge is simply adapting to an environment from which they have been historically excluded. Yet, the demands of the institution rarely allow ample time for the black president to adjust. Therefore, a black president who began with the same set of glass cliff circumstances as a white president would be in an equal position but not an equitable position in relation to a white president.

It is interesting that although some black presidents who were the first to hold the office at a HWCU moved on to become presidents of other colleges, I could not identify one case in which a first-black president was succeeded by another black president. In many cases, the institution has had only one. This situation, I believe, is indicative of the illusions of racial integration and by extension, diversity and inclusion. By illusion, I do not mean that racial integration is not real or significant. I mean that we have centered racial integration in a way that over-represents its true value. The value of racial integration has been distorted much like heat waves distort how the contour and texture of a road appear to a driver. The illusion is that racial integration, as well as, diversity and inclusion, have the capacity to remedy racism and white

supremacy. Dr. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart, professor of higher education and student affairs at Bowling Green State University, says that HWCUs have accepted a “Kool-Aid” strategy to redress decades of educational disenfranchisement of black people. While delivering a lecture entitled, *Minding the Gap: The Distance Between Compositional Diversity and Institutional Transformation*, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Dr. Stewart said,

“It is my assertion that both student demands and institutional responses have suffered from a Kool-Aid approach to addressing the deep systemic and structural issues that result in racial injustice and inequity in higher education. For too long we have centered the goal of achieving a critical mass of racially minoritized constituents as the best reflection of campus progress. Where white cisgender, heterosexual, Christian, temporarily able-bodied, and middle and upper-middle class people are the water and minoritized people are the Cherry Kool-Aid mix, campus diversity’s strategic plans, goals, and priorities have reflected the assumption that simply pouring the contents of the cherry flavored pouch into the existing water and stirring, would be enough to produce sustainable change in the campus climate and to quiet activist. When this has not worked, and the Kool-Aid is still too watery, campus constituents have either thrown up their hands in frustration and despair, or found another Kool-Aid packet to add to the mix and gone back to stirring some more.” (“Minding the Gap: The Distance Between Compositional Diversity and Institutional Transformation,” Stewart 2016)

In an essay entitled, “Language of Appeasement,” Dr. Stewart writes, “Such “Kool-Aid approaches leave not only the institution fundamentally unchanged but also its students.”

(Stewart, *Inside Higher Education*, 2017) The scarcity of black presidents of HWCUs is not merely the result of an under-sourced leadership pipeline in higher education. Recall that Clifton Wharton, Jr., the first black president of Michigan State University, came from outside of the higher education community. Nor is the scarcity of black presidents merely the result of under trained executive recruiters and search firms. After all, there are black-owned executive search firms that would readily do business with higher education institutions. The scarcity of black presidents of HWCUs is primarily the result of the tools that leaders of HWCUs have chosen to use to address the decades of injustices they have perpetrated against blacks and other

minoritized people. The data from the American College President Study and other studies like it shows that these tools are inadequate.

## **Conclusion**

Some will argue that if students are receiving a quality higher education in a setting that reflects the diversity of their world, if they have jobs by which they can support themselves and their families, if they can find housing, then the racial identity of the people in charge is not important. It would not matter – to use the topics that I have considered in this thesis, who the university president, or the governor, or the corporate CEO is. For example, if local businesses are profitable, if the unemployment rate is down, if taxes are low, if our borders are safe, and if the violent crime rate is down, then why is it important that the governor is not a black person? Isn't the overall quality of life of the citizens more important than the skin color of the person in charge? As for the CEO, if the company is profitable and competitive, if the working environment is safe, respectful, and productive for all employees, if wages and benefits are fair with respect to the market, and if the company is being socially responsible, then why should the racial identity of the CEO be of any concern?

Interestingly, questions such as these shaped the philosophy of the Civil Rights movement. The problem is that evidence points to the fact that whites tend to be the primary beneficiaries of these outcomes. There is no shortage of longitudinal evidence showing that black people are virtually excluded from experiencing the same respect, liberty and prosperity as whites. Generalizations are made that capture the quality of life for a relatively small section of the populace and this section is usually predominantly white. The impact of the power elite on the quality of life for blacks is only visible when blacks integrate into predominantly white spaces. Otherwise, blacks who are disenfranchised are virtually invisible to these decision



makers. On September 23, 2016, Randall Stephenson, CEO of AT&T, gave a speech to AT&T employees gathered for the eight annual National Employee Resource Group (ERG) conference in Dallas. AT&T is a large corporation, ranked in the top 10 among Fortune 500 companies, with a broad constituency. Stephenson's address was part confession and part exhortation. He confessed that he had been confused about the collective response of local black communities and of the Black Lives Matter movement, toward police shootings of unarmed black men in places like Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Falcon Heights, Minnesota. He told the story of how his own shallow understanding of racism was exposed after watching a video of a presentation given by his neighbor and close friend, a man named Chris. After the killings of five police officers in Dallas, Texas on July 7, 2016 and of three officers in Baton Rouge Stephenson on July 17, Chris, a black physician and military veteran, gave a presentation to his predominantly white church at the request of his pastor. The presentation was recorded on video. Stephenson said,

“When I watched the video I have to confess that I was stunned by what he said. He said the following, ‘I was the first black boy with his two sisters to integrate elementary schools in southern Louisiana. I remember being afraid as bricks were hurled at our home and I saw my father fire his shotgun to scare away angry invaders. I was told not to associate with Southern Baptists because in my hometown the deacon board were all members of the KKK. I’ve heard more epithets than I can ever describe, I’ve been called names that I would not repeat in mixed company, I have been refused service, followed in stores, asked to serve people in restaurants while I was dining, pulled over in routine traffic stops, and been called boy more times than I care to remember. When I run in the neighborhood to stay healthy, I always make sure I have my driver’s license so I can show the police that I actually live in my neighborhood.’ I will be honest with you, when I watched this video, I was really ashamed that this was all new information to me about Chris. This man lost his teenage son last year to a very tragic disease and Chris and I have gotten on our knees and prayed to God to save his son together. He’s stayed at my home many times and I have stayed with his family many times. I’ve spent hours with him and his son in the hospital. I wondered how I could conceivable not know this about this guy. How could I not understand the very core that formed his worldview about race. I wondered how two very close friends, one black and one white, could never have discussed the matter of race. And then I thought, if two very close friends of different races don’t talk openly about this issue that’s tearing our communities apart, how do we expect to find common ground and solutions for what’s a really serious, serious problem?” (Judge, 2016)

After years of friendship, Chris finally became visible – visible as a black man - to Stephenson. Stephenson ended his address by encouraging employees to be intolerant of mere racial tolerance, and instead do the hard work of understanding each other by talking about race.

Stephenson’s testimony not only shows that racial integration is not a guarantee that blacks and whites will understand each other or will even make the uncomfortable effort to do so, it also shows the likelihood that there are millions upon millions of whites, particularly among the power elite, whose cognizance of racialized oppression is severely limited. The white CEO carries this limitation, the white governor carries this limitation, and the white university president carries this limitation. Had Stephenson not been provided the video of Chris’s presentation, it is possible that he would have continued to carry this severe limitation. Were it not for the tragic deaths of eight police officers in the same month, it is possible that Chris would never have been invited to be the interpreter of black frustrations to his predominantly white congregation. Would that every white CEO, governor, and university president had a close friend like Chris and that they came to understand, as Stephenson said, “the core that formed his worldview about race.” This could make a difference. On the other hand, the problem is not that there are not enough Chris types to scatter about the predominantly white, exclusive communities where the power elite live. The problem is that white elites like Stephenson, although sincere, fail to understand the core of what shapes their own worldview about white supremacy. Hence, white elites are offended when they are called racists. Chris’s story resembles that of millions of blacks in America, including me. Such recollections tend to evoke sympathy from upper and middle class white audiences who have managed to buffer themselves from racial tensions.

Yet, Chris's story represents the outputs of white supremacy not the input nor the outcomes. The input is that black people are inherently inferior to white people. The work of French scientist and natural historian George Louis Leclerc (aka Buffon), helped solidify formally what had already been accepted informally because of slavery. Although the work was more opinion than science, Buffon produced a massive, widely circulated, comprehensive assessment on the origin and development of all things, titled *Histoire Naturelle* 1749-1804. (see *Race: The History of an Idea in America*, by Thomas F. Gossett) The premise of Buffon's work was that the white race was the standard by which all humans are measured. Therefore, as Thomas Jefferson believed (see *Notes on Virginia*), black life, liberty, and happiness is subordinate to that of whites like himself. Perhaps blacks can find life, liberty, and happiness, but never at the expense of the life, liberty, and happiness of white people. The outcomes of white supremacy are not racial epithets, nor assumptions about occupation, nor being under constant surveillance while shopping, nor being refused service in a public venue. These are but outputs. The outcomes have been captured in decades of longitudinal studies that show housing disparities, health disparities, educational disparities, wealth and income disparities, and disproportionate incarceration between blacks and whites. Unlike Chris's testimony, conversations around the normalization of white domination rarely evokes sympathy among the white elite. Yet, even when CEOs, governors, and university presidents are persuaded of their handicap, it does not mean that they will do anything beyond empathize with the suffering of black people.

On July 24, 1973, Dallas Police Officer Darrell Cain, a white officer, arrested and handcuffed 12-year old Santos Rodriguez and his brother for an alleged theft of money from a vending machine. As he interrogated the brothers in the back seat of his squad car, Officer Cain

used a .357 magnum revolver to intimidate Santos. Officer Cain fired the weapon at point blank range into the boy's head. Officer Cain was convicted of murder and served just over two years before being paroled. (Phillips, p. 164) Are there any among the Dallas power elite who are outraged over a law enforcement system that is so infected by white supremacy that it took 40 years for the City of Dallas to offer the Rodriguez family a marginal apology (see *Dallas apologizes for 40-year-old murder* by Rebekah Tate, The Daily Campus, September 26, 2013, Division of Journalism, Southern Methodist University)? If the white power elite will not even press city leaders to offer a formal apology for the murder of a 12-year old boy, then how can they be counted on to make the much more difficult choices to end white supremacy?

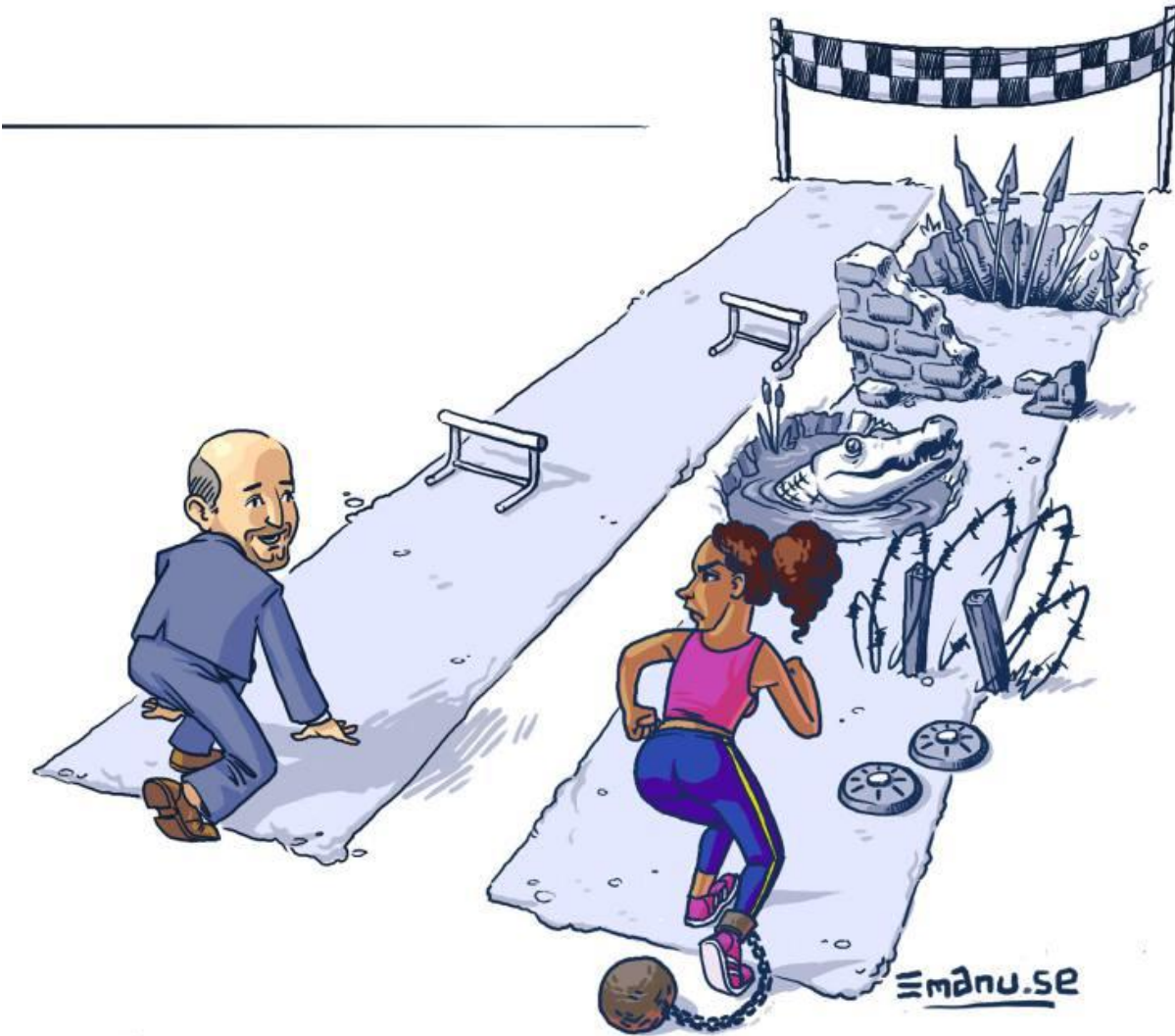
Leaders of our power structures continue to demonstrate a loyalty to white supremacy while also expressing a deep concern for justice and fairness for all. This results in the perception that blacks and other non-whites need a hand up, as captured in the illustration below by Dennis Hermanson and appeared on the front of an affirmative action guide for corporations. See Figure

4



Figure 4

However, such a perception implies black inferiority and therefore obscures white supremacy as the source of the problem. Figure 5 below represents what is closer to the reality.



**“What’s the matter?  
It’s the same distance!”**

*Figure 5*

Last Christmas, my wife and I traveled to her hometown in Missouri to visit her family. During our visit, I picked up a copy of a special edition of the county magazine. This edition was dedicated to the history of the county. As I thumbed through the pages and read some of the articles, one picture took me by surprise. It was a picture of a basketball game in the 1940’s

between a team of players who were all white and a team of players who were all black. That was not something I would have expected, particularly in the state of Missouri. My wife asked her father, who grew up in the county, if such mixed-race activities were common during segregation. He wasn't sure, but he did recognize one of the names of the players in the picture and recommended that we contact him. So, we did. The next morning, we met Marv for coffee at a local diner. Marv was a high school junior at the time the picture was taken in 1949. He brought other pictures with him that corroborated the picture in the magazine. I explained to Marv, who is white, that I was surprised to learn that a mixed-race basketball game took place in this part of the country during segregation. (Keep in mind that Jackie Robinson didn't make his major-league debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers until 1947.) Marv explained that these were town teams and played each other on a regular basis. They always played at the gym of the predominantly white town and, of course, black spectators and white spectators did not sit together. A section was reserved for the black spectators. I asked Marv where the team of black players was from. He told us that the team was from Hyde Park in Springfield, Missouri. "We never had any problems, said Marv." Our conversation with Marv was warm and pleasant. Moreover, I was convinced that Marv had nothing to hide and shared with us the facts as he understood them. However, although the basketball game may have been a simple, carefree competition between two town rivals from Marv's perspective, it could not have been such for the black players. Marv did not take into account the complex risks that his opponents assumed by merely leaving their enclave to travel the 80 miles to a county in which blacks made up .15% of the population in 1950.

The gravity of the risks that the Hyde Park basketball team faced was certainly no different than those faced by the Hyde Park Stars. According to a 1991 article in *The Springfield*

*News-Leader*, the Hyde Park Stars were “Springfield's all-black semi-pro baseball team from 1945-52.”, wrote reporter Bob Linder. (Linder, 1991) But the team also played white opponents. Both the travel required to and from a venue (white opponents would not travel to a black community to play a game) and the competition itself, posed a lethal risk to black players. Linder wrote, “they challenged and beat white teams at their own game, even though they knew winning could mean threats, racial slurs and even jail.” (Linder, 1991) Linder also interviewed Katherine Lederer, a well-known scholar who studied and wrote about black history in the Ozarks. She said, "There were sundown laws in some towns where they played, that meant blacks has to be off the streets by dark.” (Linder, 1991) Marv, his teammates, and the fans who came to watch them, had the luxury of just focusing on the game. The basketball team from Hyde Park, on the other hand, experienced the DuBoisian double consciousness. One mind was dedicated to the game they loved, while the other mind was captive to their survival – before, during, and after the game.

It is also possible that Marv was unaware, at the time, of how capricious a crowd of whites can be toward black lives. He may not have known of a particular incident of white terrorism in 1906 that stained the town of Springfield. According to Professor Lederer, in 1906 three black men were lynched and burned in the town square based on a rumor that they had committed a crime. She writes,

“On Good Friday, April 13, 1906, a white woman claimed to have been raped by two young black men, Horace B. Duncan and Fred Coker. On Holy Saturday, April 14, they were arrested and released because the police had to admit they were "probably innocent." On Saturday night, they were rearrested and dragged out of the county jail by a mob of several thousand men and boys. They were hauled forcibly to the Public Square, where they were hanged and burned beneath a replica of the Statue of Liberty. A crowd estimated at 6,000 men, women, and children looked on. Unsatiated, the mob went back to the jail, brought Will Allen back, gave him a mock trial, and repeated the ritual. That Easter weekend hundreds of blacks left Springfield forever. Left behind were business and property, farmland and livestock. In 48 hours, it was all over.” (Lederer, 1986)

Marv was not present when the Hyde Park parents of these young players, gave them “the talk.” The talk was an admonishment to their children based on their experience of injustice as a black person in America, and based on their knowledge of the lynching of these three innocent young men (ages 20, 21, and 25). The talk was a warning to their children to be hyper-vigilant in every word and deed when in the company of white people, lest they be accused and murdered while simply trying to play some hoops. I’m certain that Marv was not present when these parents told their children what the Hyde Park community used to be, and why it is no longer. Surely, Marv was not a part of the caravan of black players and fans that made their way through the small towns holding their breath each time a squad car appeared. Although I cannot be certain, I doubt that Marv realized that the same racism that led to the murder of 14-year old Emmett Till in 1955, was present in that gym, in those bleachers, on that very basketball court in 1949. What happened to Emmett Till could have just as easily happened to any black player on the court.

For Marv and his community, the basketball games were not a problem because the suffering of black people, in Hyde Park or anywhere else, was unrelated to the everyday life of white people. In other words, the suffering of black people was strictly a black problem. It had nothing to do with the freedoms, privileges, or opportunities enjoyed by whites. Fortunately, as a society we have learned better. We know that there is an inverse relationship between the privileges enjoyed by whites and the suffering experienced by blacks. Unfortunately, leaders of the power structures that impact our daily lives have resolved to expand the footprint of liberty without altering the footprint of white supremacy. This is not possible. Jesus said to his followers, “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” (Luke



16:13) Our leaders must make a choice, whether they will serve the cause of liberty and justice for all or the rights and privileges of some.

The remedy to white supremacy is not a takeover by blacks of the power structures that shape our lives, rather it is recognizing and valuing the full humanity of black people. The fact that blacks continue to be systematically excluded from the power structures is evidence that the humanity of black people is not fully recognized and valued. Blacks may be welcomed, but they are prohibited from being in charge, in the sense that their word is the last word. Recognizing and valuing the full humanity of black people has little, if anything, to do with black/white racial reconciliation, racial harmony, or racial healing. It is the detoxification of systems that dehumanize people based on the color of their skin, or any other feature or characteristic of personhood. White supremacy is the toxin that causes racial disharmony, strife, and division. Racial integration and better understanding may be good and necessary, but these are insufficient to remove the toxin. The pathway toward remedying our situation begins with adopting a different perspective. Dr. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart, quoted earlier in this paper, contrasts a perspective based on palliation regarding racial injustice (i.e. diversity and inclusion) in higher education with a perspective based on equity and justice. Although Dr. Stewart addresses higher education leaders, these points are relevant to each of the power structures covered in this paper. Dr. Stewart writes,

- “Diversity asks, “Who’s in the room?” Equity responds: “Who is trying to get in the room but can’t? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?”
- Inclusion asks, “Has everyone’s ideas been heard?” Justice responds, “Whose ideas won’t be taken as seriously because they aren’t in the majority?”
- Diversity asks, “How many more of [pick any minoritized identity] group do we have this year than last?” Equity responds, “What conditions have we created that maintain certain groups as the perpetual majority here?”

- Inclusion asks, “Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?” Justice challenges, “Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow others to be comfortable maintaining dehumanizing views?”
- Diversity asks, “Isn’t it separatist to provide funding for safe spaces and separate student centers?” Equity answers, “What are people experiencing on campus that they don’t feel safe when isolated and separated from others like themselves?”
- Inclusion asks, “Wouldn’t it be a great program to have a panel debate Black Lives Matter? We had a Black Lives Matter activist here last semester, so this semester we should invite someone from the alt-right.” Justice answers, “Why would we allow the humanity and dignity of people or our students to be the subject of debate or the target of harassment and hate speech?”
- Diversity celebrates increases in numbers that still reflect minoritized status on campus and incremental growth. Equity celebrates reductions in harm, revisions to abusive systems and increases in supports for people’s life chances as reported by those who have been targeted.
- Inclusion celebrates awards for initiatives and credits itself for having a diverse candidate pool. Justice celebrates getting rid of practices and policies that were having disparate impacts on minoritized groups.” (Stewart, Inside Higher ED, 2017)

A perspective based on equity and justice has the potential to move us closer toward the remedy needed.

The shift in perspective is not easy, particularly with institutions and their leadership. Recently, I watched an interaction between a general contractor and his client that, for me, illustrates how institutions continue to follow the toxic legacy of white supremacy even as they work feverishly implementing diversity initiatives. During a routine walk-through, the contractor explained that one of the restrooms in the building was not measured correctly. Consequently, the standard sized sink and toilet fixtures had to be downsized to fixtures that were half the normal size. The contractor demonstrated how using standard sized fixtures would not allow the door to the restroom to open properly. “Whose fault is this,” asked the client. The contractor said he wasn’t sure and that he went by the plans. The client replied, “These fixtures will not work.” The contractor responded emphatically, “Look, you can see for yourself. This door will not open. Even if we move this over here and that over there. There’s not enough room. I’ve seen these

smaller fixtures in big stores. They are compliant. It will pass inspection.” The client replied, “Just flip the door so that it swings out.” After a noticeable pause, the contractor nodded in agreement, “We can do that.” It is no secret that institutions and their leaders often follow the path of least resistance. I am confident that this contractor, given the depth of his experience, understood flipping the direction in which the door opened was an option, before it was mentioned by his client. However, at the time, reducing the size of the fixtures was the path of least resistance. Moreover, he could reduce the size of the fixtures and still pass building inspection. Similarly, predominantly white institutions, such as corporations, the governor’s office, and colleges, reduce minoritized people to fit the legacy of white supremacy because it is the path of least resistance. Their rhetoric around diversity, cultural change, and healing, comply with what is socially acceptable. Thus, they can defer flipping the door that will bring about equity and justice. Like the client, those who are committed to ending white supremacy must resist attempts to accommodate dehumanization.

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