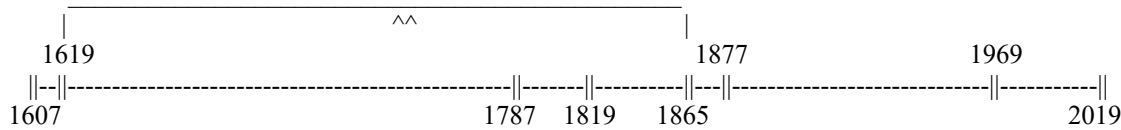


WHITE SUPREMACY: HARSH REALITIES, TOUGH SOLUTIONS

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- (1) CONSIDER THE *OFTEN-FORGOTTEN* TIMELINE OF OUR HISTORY OF FOUNDATIONAL AND SYSTEMIC WHITE RACISM, SINCE THE ENGLISH INVASION. FOR ONE KEY EXAMPLE, TAKE THE CASE OF AFRICAN AMERICANS:

BLACK ENSLAVEMENT, ABOUT 60% OF THIS COUNTRY'S HISTORY



JIM CROW, ABOUT 22 % OF OUR HISTORY

- (2) For full picture of our systemically racist reality, add into time line other white oppression: **genocidal oppression of & land theft from Indigenous Americans since 1607; by 1830s-1850s, exploitative oppression of Mexican & Chinese Americans; and of many other groups of color thereafter.**

White-on-others oppression has been foundational and systemic--deeply imbedded in our economic, political, educational, and other institutions for 400+ years. We still live under a *highly undemocratic* 1787 U.S. Constitution made, undemocratically, by elite white slaveholders and their white business allies. *Ignorance* of this white-supremacist history is *central to systemic racism's perpetuation today, especially the dominant white racial framing. Aggressive and accurate education of all Americans about our white-racist history is an extraordinarily important strategy for racial change.*

Much of our racist history has been hidden from us: A major example of elite white oppression: George Washington was an **authoritarian slaveholder** who viewed his slave plantations as a patriarchal "family." His overseers used whips (torture); he had the teeth of some of the enslaved "yanked" from their heads and "fitted into his dentures." Washington vigorously punished runaways: One was sold to the brutal West Indies' plantations for running away (death sentence). In another case Washington had his agent try to kidnap a runaway in New York & return her to his plantation. When first U.S. president, the capital was Philadelphia. Southern slaveholders in the government opposed a U.S. capital in free-state Pennsylvania, whose laws mandated freedom for enslaved people there for 6 months. Washington, famous in school textbooks for his morality, devised a scheme to **bypass the Pennsylvania law**. He wrote instructions to his secretary to send his enslaved black servants periodically back to Virginia so they would not meet the six-month condition: "I wish to have it accomplished **under pretext** that may **deceive** both them [the slaves] and the public." Washington told his secretary to lie & send them back on an innocent-looking trip to Virginia with Martha: "I request that these sentiments and this advice may be known to none but yourself and Mrs. Washington." Unsurprisingly, the capital of "democratic" U.S. relocated to Washington, D.C., away from economic/cultural centers of Philadelphia and New York, because powerful slaveholders (e.g., Washington,

Jefferson, Madison) worked to insure it was in a slave-state area where white government officials could keep black servants enslaved. **Notice: Powerful whites ignore the law; white power and privilege; white immorality. Few know import of foundational U.S. racism. We are in an educational race against societal disaster.** (See Wiencek, Feagin and Ducey)

(3) WHAT IS SYSTEMIC WHITE RACISM TODAY: Systemic racism *includes (1) a complex array of white anti-other discriminatory practices, (2) the unjustly gained economic & political power of whites, (3) the continuing economic and other resource inequalities along racial lines, and (4) the dominant white racial framing created by whites to rationalize persisting white privilege and power.*

(4) UNDERSTANDING SYSTEMIC WHITE RACISM'S REPRODUCTION TODAY: *Why do white supremacy, white privilege, and huge racial inequalities persist so powerfully today?*

(a) *Because past large-scale discrimination becomes present racial inequality*—By means of the *social reproduction of past unjust enrichment of whites & past unjust impoverishment of many people of color* (e.g., Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, Middle Eastern Americans). Recent research (Jenni Mueller) in a southwestern area found **huge** racial differences in acquisition & intergenerational transfer of wealth & social capital over three-plus generations: “White families reported **more than six times as many transfers of monetary assets** across generations in these families histories. Inheritances of *land, home & businesses* were similarly disproportionate.” **Why?** A majority of white families secured significant assets in the past from “**white affirmative action**” programs—e.g., large-scale government Homestead Acts (1860s-1930s, 240 million acres of farmland, stolen from Native Americans) & major federal housing & veterans programs after World War II. Mueller’s white family histories report *five times as many instances of these government-derived assets* as families of color. **Notice:** Most U.S. wealth is today in white hands & regularly **passed** across white generations. Great racial inequality persists substantially because most whites insist on keeping the *unjust enrichments* they or ancestors secured over centuries of systemic racism. Note the great racial illiteracy among whites & others about this reality. Dismantling it begins with **honest, repeated** education.

(b) *Because of highly racialized, segregated white networks (“social capital” reproduction over generations):* Conducting 200 white interviews, Nancy DiTomaso demonstrated their networking patterns reproduce systemic racial inequality. Most reported *using acquaintances, friends, family to find most jobs over lifetimes. Most avoided open-market competition, secured jobs using racially segregated networks--not just on “merit.” Not one* expressed concern about “**opportunity hoarding.**” **Notice:** Most whites fear that aggressive affirmative action programs for oppressed people of color weaken *institutionalized white favoritism*. Again, dismantling it begins **with honest, repeated** education.

(c) *Because of persisting racial discrimination in all major institutions. We have important 1964/65/68 civil rights acts, but modest or weak government enforcement. They ended official*

segregation, but government allows continuing racial “inequalities” & extensive discrimination. Dozens of recent research studies show high levels of racial discrimination in employment, housing, education, policing. **Notice:** Need for **honest, repeated** education & organized pressure for **law enforcement.** (See Feagin)

(d) ***Because of the still dominant White Racial Frame.*** Since 1600s a powerful *white racial frame* has rationalized & legitimated this racist society. It includes these dimensions: **(1) racist stereotypes/prejudices; (2) racist narratives & interpretations; (3) racist images & language accents; (4) racialized emotions; (5) inclinations to discriminate.** This broad & strong framing has a very ***positive orientation to whites as virtuous (pro-white subframe)*** and a ***negative orientation to the oppressed racial “others” largely viewed as unvirtuous (many anti-others subframes)***. For most whites, this racial frame is a *worldview* providing routine perspectives and orientations for their everyday lives. (Additionally, all Americans are indoctrinated to some extent in this white racial frame.)

A recent example. Latino college student in North: Freshman year I lived in [names dorm] with Eduardo. . and I remember we were at this party in the neighborhood. I left early because I was tired, and then later on that night, Eduardo comes into our dorm room bleeding in his hands and face. I asked what the hell had happened to him. He told me the story of how he got beat up by three white males on his way back to the dorm. The reason why he got beat up was because he was . . on the phone with his girlfriend of the moment, screaming out in Spanish while he walked back. The white guys that beat him up told him that, ‘This is America, and we speak English only,’ and beat him up. . It’s absurd to beat someone up because he was speaking in another language. I had a similar experience on my freshman year, too, where I was called a ‘Spic.’ (Picca) **Notice: White racial frame** explains most white discrimination, including hate-crime violence. Dismantling that frame begins with repeated **deframing** and **reframing** education.

CONCRETE INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP STRATEGIES FOR RACIAL JUSTICE:

(1) Aggressively promote your group’s engagement in racial justice *learning.* Honest, repeated anti-racist education matters. In 1995 Dr. Noel Cazenave, a brave black assistant professor of sociology at the Univ. of Connecticut decided to teach a sociology course titled “White Racism,” the first in the U.S. His department approved, but college curriculum committee tabled it because white faculty were upset at the “derogatory” name & argued course was “offensive to whites because it implies that whites are morally defective.” After intensive opposition, the course was barely approved. On/off campus, whites, including newspaper editors and politicians, tried to end it. White head of prominent Yankee Institute said: He has a “racial agenda so strongly implanted in his psyche that you want to jump across the faculty lounge and strangle him.” Bravely, the untenured Cazenave pressed on, wrote researched articles for local papers, gave professional/community lectures explaining course as necessary for U.S. “social health.” In the end, the support of his students in the rigorous course & of sociology faculty was important. In 1997 a permanent *White Racism* course was approved. This successful anti-racism strategy involved courageous scholarship and teaching & unwavering commitment to racial justice. Over decades of teaching thousands, I have learned that until whites have substantial

instruction improving racial literacy, they do not understand well their white privilege/power or support significant anti-racist actions. (Feagin et al.)

(2) Help yourself/your group take racial justice efforts to next level by focusing on what you/they already value & provide anti-racist tools to advance farther. Develop group situations (e.g., workshops, courses) to encourage individuals' reflection on their white framing & offer anti-racist strategies for everyday interactions as individuals & in groups. E.g., we can teach ourselves and others how to respond well to racist commentaries & actions in everyday life. Possible responses to a racist comment or joke: (a) Assertively call it out. Show it hurts. "I know you meant well, but that comment hurts." Use pointed humor ("Rob, Did you learn that racist joke from the Klan?"). Show puzzlement ("Can you please explain that racial comment?"). (b) Reframe the event to accent positive framing. Where people have conflicting frames in their minds (for example, a justice/fairness frame versus a white racist frame), respond by activating a positive justice/fairness frame. (c) Remind people of their faith or moral values if relevant ("We are all God's children; "Love thereby neighbor as thyself"). We should regularly teach strategies to call out racist performances in the all-white backstage settings and more diverse public frontstage settings. (Westen, Aguilar, Feagin and Ducey)

(3) Encourage many cross-racial dialogues (e.g., in communities, churches) about everyday anti-racism. In Minnesota area ASDIC (Antiracism Study Dialogue Circles) activists have facilitated 100+ workshops and dialogue circles with 2,200+ community participants in learning antiracist activism—teachers, students, non-profit/government staff, religious org. members. ASDIC has worked with communities under stress from racist incidents, with religious organizations to hold anti-racism forums and develop anti-racist and multicultural congregations, and in helping to set up Overcoming Racism conferences providing educational & other support for anti-racism trainers and anti-racist education. We need to organize many thousands of such anti-racist groups. **Today we are in an educational and organizational race against looming societal catastrophe, including expanding white nationalism.**

Some Sources: H. Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*; J. Feagin & K. Ducey, *Racist America*, 4th ed. (Routledge); J. Feagin, *The White Racial Frame*, 2nd ed., (Routledge); J. Mueller, "The Social Reproduction of Systemic Racial Inequality," Ph.D. Diss., Texas A&M, 2013; N. DiTomaso, *The American Non-Dilemma* (Russell Sage); L.H. Picca, unpublished research. On Dr. Cazenave, see J. Feagin et al., *Liberation Sociology* (Routledge). On change actions, see: D. Westen, *The Political Brain*; and the Aguilar website: Ouchthatstereotypehurts.com My Email: joerfeagin@gmail.com. Twitter: [@JoeFeagin](https://twitter.com/JoeFeagin) Our social science expert blog: www.racismreview.com