

Chapter 1

The Trump Effect: Debunking the False Narrative of “Post-Racial” America



Shukri Hilowle

1.1 Introduction

The 2008 election of Barack Obama signified for many a cultural shift in America; for some his election marked a shift away from racial divisions toward unification and a “post-racial” society. President Obama’s entire presidency was marked with racial tensions especially surrounding police brutality against Black men and the emergence of the Tea Party, along with resistance toward any policies he introduced. Fast-forward to 2016 and the election of Donald Trump, color blindness and the era of “post-racial” completely contradict the current political and social climate of America. The purpose of this essay is to explore how race plays a role in America and to challenge the idea of “color blindness” through examining the political and social climate of America.

As a Black Canadian woman, I have in many cases have witnessed color-blind attitudes about race. In my experiences, it was often privileged individuals who denied racism; when race is discussed, it is those who want to address racism that are accused of reinforcing racism. The notion of color blindness began in the civil rights era; Dr. Martin Luther King argued that a just society was one that did not use skin as a measure of character but the actions of such individual. He stated, “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character” (King, 2). Dr. King gave this speech during the height of racial tensions during the civil rights movement in the 1960s. While this notion is very appealing especially for those marginalized for their skin, Dr. King did not once state that America has healed from the wounds of slavery and Jim Crow. The problem and dangers with the color-blind ideology is that it seeks to erase ongoing discrimination and violence against

S. Hilowle (✉)
OISE, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada
e-mail: shukri.hilowle@mail.utoronto.ca

Black people. It seeks to stifle any discussions about racism despite race-based data, employment figures, racial profiling, and ongoing state-sanctioned violence against Black people, indicating that racism is still an issue in America. This paper argues that the idea of a “post-racial” America was reaffirmed by President Obama’s election, but through examining media, social movements, and contemporary race relations, the idea of a post-racial society in America is a fallacy. Critical race theorists like bell hooks and Patricia Hill Collins have discussed contemporary race relations in the United States; this paper will be using contemporary race theorists to analyze the current political climate in the United States since the election of Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential elections.

1.1.1 Race Relations in America

Historically, race has always been a central issue in America, politically and socially; the civil rights era ushered in a key moment of progress for African Americans. The 1956 ruling of the *Brown vs Board of Education* was a monumental shift during Jim Crow Era American politics. The case was central in desegregating schools where the “separate but equal” doctrine allowed for the continual marginalization of Black students in schools. The historic ruling created change and disrupted the notion of “separate but equal” when data showed the effects segregated schooling had on Black students. Despite these advancements, scholars have noticed a similar re-segregation of schools comparable to the 1960s can continue into the current generation. This along with the notion of color blindness, contemporary race relations in America have moved from the recognition of racial discrimination toward subtler racism and the denial of racial discrimination. Some scholars have argued that a “new language of race” must be developed to address contemporary race issues (Ivery & Basset, 3). The immergences of class theory have also proved to be challenging for race theorists; the persistence that class was the central issue for Black Americans completely erases the Black struggle; class theory is now the dominant discourse for analysis on social inequality (Ivery & Basset, 3). This is a direct result of the hegemonic post-racial discourse that has rose to dominance after the civil rights era. Theorists like Kimberle Crenshaw, bell hooks, and various other Black scholars have discussed race alongside other social divisions. Crenshaw developed an intersectional framework to examine how race alongside class, gender, sexuality, and other forms of inequalities shape the lives of marginalized communities. The decision to move away from discussions about race allows for continual discrimination of Black people to continue under White supremacy. While other social divisions such as class, sexuality, and gender continue to affect marginalized communities, it is the concept of race that continues to play a substantial role in American society. Dialogue surrounding racial discrimination continues to be challenging, despite the fact that race continues to be the central most divisive issue in contemporary American politics. Public dialogues regarding racial discrimination and Black deaths at the hands of police, along with systematic barriers Black people

face, continue to be challenged despite overwhelming research. Economically, White family household incomes are 20 times more than Black Americans; structural racism particularly in the judicial system continues to impact Black American disproportionately more than White Americans. These are the new challenges Black theorists face when it comes to contemporary race relations in America.

In the past Black theorists had challenge Jim Crow laws that assured the “separate but equal” doctrine; in contemporary discussions about race, the number challenge is discussing race.

W.E.B Dubois book *The Souls of Black Folk* challenged the current problem with American social, economic, and political institutions and infrastructures. He stated, “the problem of the Twentieth Century (would be) the problem of the color line” (Catanese, 4). The current issue many Black scholars face today in the Academy is this push back against discussions about race. For Black feminists like bell hooks, using race as a stand point entry to discuss the plight of Black women has been central to her work. For many Black feminists, race does matter, and it is what differs the experiences of Black women from previous feminist movements that were exclusive toward women of color and was primarily focused on the experiences of White middle-class women. It is important to ask, does race matter too? Who was overwhelmingly affected by Jim Crow laws? It is always those who are not affected by race that argue that race is not an issue; for people of color, it is not a question that race not only matters but plays a role in our everyday interactions. Historically, Jim Crow laws were based on the idea that race was a biological determinate, and this had an impact on Black Americans and was the basis for the eugenics movement which sought to discriminate “inferior” groups including Black Americans and other marginalized groups. Since then scientific evidence shows a lack of difference between the races biologically, therefore concluding race as a social construct. Many theorists have discussed the saliency of skin color; George Dei argues:

The hegemonic social evaluations of human differences, skin colour differences have historically been used to justify unequal human treatment. Therefore, as we call for an understanding of new and alternative meanings of race, we must be careful to deny the saliency of skin colour.... (Dei, 12)

While the understanding of race has changed since W.E.B Dubois work on race and the color problem, for many theorists today, the challenge is to continue to theorize about race and the meaning of race. Race continues to play a large role in politics and ever more in the American criminal justice system.

What are the differences between race and racism? While most theorists agree that race is a social construct, the everyday interactions and implications it has on Black people continue to operate under the system White supremacy. Racism on the other hand is a process that has developed historically through racial domination (genocides, slavery, colonialism, etc.). Eduardo Bonilla-Silva argues that this system has now become embedded within the fabric of societies (Bonilla, 1359). In order for a post-racial society to exist, racism along with the White-Black paradigm must be discontinued. Bonilla-Silva argues that new forms of racism are subtler and therefore harder to challenge and classifies color-blind racism as a new form of

racism (Bonilla, 1358). He states, “That is, that racism is above anything, about practices and behaviors that produce a *racial structure*—a network of social relations at social, political, economic, and ideological levels that shapes the life chances of the various races” (Bonilla, 1360). The dominate group continues to prosper under this racial structure; meanwhile certain groups (subordinate groups) continue to be marginalized. This system is not fixed, and the categories do change over time:

...Although the content of racial categories changes over time through manifold processes and struggles, race is not a secondary category of group association. The meaning of black and white, the “racial formation,” changes within the larger racial structure.” (Bonilla-Silva 1997, p. 472)

What continue to be real are the everyday consequences these meanings have on human beings along with the interaction (race relations) between certain groups. Social constructions of who is Black, White, and where other races fit within this paradigm do change; the social function of race plays a role in interracial relations, racial inequality, and the continual racial domination.

1.1.2 Contemporary Race: Black Lives Matter

One of the greatest injustices in America currently is the mass incarceration of young Black men and the continual state-sanctioned violence carried out by the police. Carding, racial profiling, and murders continue to take place in an alarming rate, and disproportionately the hardest hit continues to be Black men. One social movement that has gained mass attention for addressing this issue continues to be the Black Lives Matter movement. This international movement centers race as an entry point to analyze this current problem; this movement has come to the forefront amidst the deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and countless other Black men who have lost their lives to law enforcement officers. While the BLM movement gained attention for protesting for Black men who were targeted by police, their guiding principles focus on wide issues concerning Black people. This movement is focused on addressing anti-Blackness on a structural and institutional level. Carding and racial profiling is an institutional issue, and in a “post-racial” society, it begs to question the need for racial profiling, especially if we are striving for a color-blind society. Clearly, statistics shows that not only are the police not color-blind, but they target young Black men more so than any other group of men. BLM has been met with a lot of resistance particularly from the All Lives Matter movement. The ALM is a clear example of the application of color blindness and the desire to not discuss race. This movement also sheds light on continual racial tensions; the denial of race is strategic because it erases the history of racism and violence against Black people and the wounds of Jim Crow. What is also very sinister about this movement is that it continues to erase violence Black people face currently by denying any discussion of race. Alison Bailey argues that, “ignorance is often an active social production... From positions of dominance ignorance can take the form of those in the center

either refusing to allow those at the margins to know...” (Bailey, 80). The ALM also points to an issue of lack of empathy and this determination to maintain privilege. Disregarding the saliency of race allows for this type ideology to spread and for marginalization to continue under this movement. While the BLM and ALM movements point to a divide in America and social tensions, the 2016 Presidential elections contributed vastly to these already existing social and political tensions.

The murder of Michael Brown in 2014 sparked heated debate and protests throughout the nation, and the list of murdered men continued to grow; meanwhile, protesters were faced with repression. Some news coverage referred to the protests as “riots” and “unlawful,” while others referred to the protests as “uprising” against racial discrimination and state-sanctioned violence.

Juliet Hooker states:

...calls into question not only the integrity of U.S. democracy, but also the kinds of democratic obligations that can be fairly placed upon black citizens as a result. When other citizens and state institutions betray a pervasive lack of concern for black suffering calls into question not only the integrity of U.S. democracy, but also the kinds of democratic obligations that can be fairly placed upon black citizens as a result. When other citizens and state institutions betray a pervasive lack of concern for black suffering. (Hook, 449)

The BLM movement and protestors questioned the value of Black life and the unwillingness for the judicial system to properly charge police with the murders of countless of Black men. These racial tensions during President Obama’s last few years as President indicated a crisis within America’s democracy. The murders of Michael Brown and many other Black men show a flaw in America’s democracy and also shed light into race relations. The mass carding and frisking of Black men disrupts the idea of color blindness, inclusiveness, and the overall American pride in diversity. It also disrupts the romantic ideas of the civil rights movement that ushered in the notion of progress in regard to race relations in America. For many including the ALM groups, race relations have significantly improved, and others have asserted that Martin Luther King Jr. would have not supported the BLM movement (Hook, 450). While some critics of the movement stemmed from the disdain they had for violent protests, some saw the protests and called for nonviolent responses to the murders. African Americans must always respond to terror with nonviolence; Hook states, “African Americans learned to meet racial terror with nonviolence in order to preserve their own lives within an arbitrary system in which responding in kind to any insult or harm could lead to sudden death” (Hook, 453). This puts a strain on the individuals to act nonviolent especially when faced with violence from the police.

Police presence in urban communities has always been a source of tension; many of the inner-city neighborhoods populated mostly by people of color have been shown to be targets of over-policing. The Black body often is marked as an assailant and is subjected to police harassment on a daily basis. Police practices have contributed to poor police and community relations. Research shows that violent and aggressive cops are more likely to be met with resistance; meanwhile the opposite holds true when police show restraint when approaching Black citizens; “males and minority citizens are *more* likely to show compliance” (Brunson & Miller, 613).

Black communities are subjected to more surveillance, verbal abuse, and overall disrespect by police; meanwhile, they experience slower response times and protection from police (Brunson & Miller, 614). The construction of the Black male body as a threat plays a substantial role in why they become targets of deadly force to begin with. In all the videos released of deadly shootings of Black men, the police interaction escalates quickly and violently, and this largely has to do with the suspicion police have of Black men. In some of these cases, following police instructions still resulted in death or injuries. Police are more likely to use deadly police force toward Black assailants than any other population of people. Studies have shown that 46.6% of Black people have been harassed, stopped, and questioned by police (Brunson & Miller, 616). Black people were five times more likely than any other group to report instances of harassment by police. In comparison only 24.8% of White youth have experienced police harassment or surveillance (Brunson & Miller, 616). Legal cynicism and negative attitudes toward police are also very prevalent in Black Americans than in White Americans.

There is a great discrepancy in the ways African perceive the legal system in relation to how White Americans view racial profiling. Middle- to upper-class African Americans also show negative attitudes toward police; age also plays a factor because juveniles show more unfavorable attitudes toward police. A report on police and community relations show, “minority youths consistently expressed more negative views of the police than did whites, and race/ethnicity was the strongest predictor of perceptions of police fairness and police discrimination” (Brunson & Miller, 617). Racial profiling victims have also been shown to have less favorable views of police (Brunson & Miller, 618). Consistently, race is the most important factor in the experiences of people with the police; disproportionately Black men showed to have the more resentment to police presence and harassment in their neighborhoods. One participant Darnell stated during a research study on the experiences of Black men with police, “police over there by me, they stop you just to mess with you for real. That’s what they do. Sometimes they’ll pull up and be like, ‘get that damn crack out your mouth boy!’ and keep going” (Brunson & Miller, 624). This is indicative of the ways certain citizens are over-policed and government, while other citizens are protected and given human rights. Many of the respondents in this study did not have prior criminal convictions but were still subjected to harassment by police. Some of them indicated that this was not unordinary occurrences but were frequently happening in their neighborhoods.

1.1.3 Whiteness: White Identity Politics

Donald Trump’s slogan “Make America Great Again” best represented the sentiment shared by many opponents to President Obama’s policies and presidency; for many his elections signified a loss of power and privilege. When examining race, and how race plays a role in American society, we must begin by examining how the White identity has been formed and maintained. Cheryl Harris argues:

Whiteness was premised on white supremacy rather than mere difference. ‘White’ was defined and constructed in ways that increased its value by reinforcing its exclusivity... The concept of whiteness was built on exclusion and racial subjection. (Harris, 98)

Whiteness is exclusive, and this is why it very valuable and desirable for many; the construction of race is neither static nor fixed but can very fluid. The definition of race, however, is never created by the marginalized but rather those who have power and privilege. Donald Trump’s election was a clear example of a desire to return to the status quo and what is familiar: White hegemonic power. Donald Trump is a surrogate for many who needed representation; he symbolizes the American Dream. Sarah Lucia Hoagland argues that the error of Whiteness is its failure to be seen as interdependent on other groups. (Hoagland, 97). The value of Whiteness is dependent on the denigration of Blackness, without the process of dehumanization people of color. Whiteness cannot exist or have any value, thus the need for the continual protection of all the privilege of Whiteness in America. For a post-racial society to truly exist, this process of the White and Black paradigm must be erased. The Trump election indicated that for many, the White identity continues to play a role in politics. The polls show a large support for Trump by White voters; meanwhile 3% Black voters only voted for Trump; what was very alarming was the support of Trump from Hispanic voters despite his anti-Hispanic rhetoric (Kirk & Scott, 2). The results of this election indicate a growing concern and anxiety about America along with the fears of losing domination and power. The Trump slogan, “Make America Great Again,” heightens this fear and allows voters a way out, a way to push back against societal change through the process of electing him as President. Trump in many ways symbolizes White identity politics or the Alt-Right movement, economic freedom, and conservatism (Fisher, 744).

The Trump election much like the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom to leave the United Nations signaled a shift in race relations and a counterreaction to the changing demographics in the United States and in Europe. While White Americans according the United States census continue to make up 77% of the population, millions of illegal immigrants along with a loss of economic growth in the working-class employment sectors, there have been existing tensions between working-class Whites and other marginalized groups (Kirk & Scott, 2). Trump’s campaign was filled with racist and sexist rhetoric aimed at certain marginalized communities including Hispanics, Black Americans, and women. The largest support for his campaign stemmed from White males; similarly, anti-immigrant sentiment was the primary factor for the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom on June 2016. Once again, the overarching issue was primarily stemming from economic issues particularly from working-class British White citizens, but the racial element in this case also played a factor. The Obama election may have created a fear of loss of power and White hegemony, but for middle- and upper-class White Americans, there was no loss of economic growth and development. Racial consciousness of working-class Whites has been designed to place value on their White skin and position while ignoring their economic situation. Globalization and the shift to unskilled workers in the Global South have had a devastating impact on the working class. American

corporation's reliance on cheap migrant and immigrant labor has also had equal impact on the conditions of working-class communities in America. Racial consciousness allows for those within the same race to relate at a greater rate, and this plays a significant role in race relations; race consciousness is also a political identity that transformed how people react to certain policies and can predict voting turnout. The "Make America Great Again" slogan may have appealed to some working-class White Americans, but it completely alienated the Black vote.

Given the political and social climate of American since the Trump election, why do certain groups like the ALM movement continue to deny the saliency of skin color considering the power it has played during this election? Mills argues that this willful ignorance stems from the inability for Whites to relate to the problems that face Black Americans. The push back against BLM stems from the reluctance to admit that Black Americans suffer from police brutality at an alarming rate and higher than all other races in America; the BLM movement does not actively deny that others races are also victims of this ongoing problem. The ALM movement is just a small fraction of social movement aimed at denying racism and institutional racism; the Alternative Right group also known as Alt-Right has also emerged within the last few years as a major political and social movement in America. The Alt-Right differs from the ALM movement because it does not deny its roots with White nationalism and White supremacy, while the ALM continues to juxtapose itself against BLM, a group that continues to challenge White supremacy and institutional racism in America. The Alt-Right group is strongly against immigration, multiculturalism, and political correctness and supported the election of Trump, whom also denounces immigration and despises political correctness. Steven Bannon, a key member of the Alt-Right group, was a chief strategist to Trump during his election and will serve as the Senior Counselor to the President. The key focus of this group is to continue to promote anti-immigrant and anti-Black propaganda to fuel support from their supporters. Trump take-over of the Republican Party was effective because he gave supporters someone to blame and dislike John Kenneth White who argues corrupt politicians who allow illegal immigrants easy entry sign bad trade deals that undermine manufacturing jobs, refuse to stand up for America overseas, and allow "radical Muslim extremists" to run free in the Middle East and, eventually, find their way into the United States (White, 266).

Trump promised the working class to not only to "Make America Great Again" but to secure back employment to the working class. His racist rhetoric drew support from the working class; during his speeches, he made it clear that he was there for to serve the working class:

I have visited the laid-off factory workers, and the communities crushed by our horrible and unfair trade deals. These are the forgotten men and women of our country, and they are forgotten, but they will not be forgotten long. These are people who work hard but no longer have a voice. I am your voice. (White, 267)

This excerpt is one of the many speeches he gave to supporters in working-class cities that have been in financial ruins since the 2008 recession. Trump's entire election campaign was filled with divisive propaganda that has proven to be very dangerous for Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, and other non-White citizens.

1.1.4 American Politics: Trump Effect

Historically, populist political movement has always proved to be anti-immigrant and anti-Black; White argues, “Like the American dream itself, populism lives too deeply in the fears and expectations of American citizens to be trivialized or replaced” (White, 272). It was the Democratic Party in the 1830s that had a racist, populist platform that targeted White farmers in rural farms in America who were the hardest hit economically. Many of the working class were filled with racist attitudes toward Black Americans who they felt were the source of their own economic downturn; similarly, the anti-immigrant sentiments toward Hispanics, and Muslims, stem from similar conditions and fear about the economic conditions of the working class. The Trump movement and the anti-immigrant sentiments are another upsurge of a populist movement, and it has taken over the Republican party and gained Trump his election into the White House. The populist sentiments were tapped into by Trump despite resistance from previous Republican candidates like the 2012 Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney. Trump spoke for the working-class people and his choice of words appealed to many because he would critique the establishment: media, lobbyists, and congress. Trump has spoken against the establishment; in one of his speeches, he stated, “And even our lawyers and judges, the reflective ‘wise men,’ have been stepping all over the U.S. Constitution, the bulwark of our democracy. They have recklessly appointed themselves to be policy makers, because our actual elected officials are paralyzed by partisanship” (White, 275). Trump’s appeal to the working class and his anti-immigrant rhetoric made him the ideal candidate following the Presidency of Obama.

Trump gained a lot of support due to his stance against Muslims and illegal immigrants; in polls it showed that 67 percent of Republicans supported his anti-Muslims policies for more securitization of American Muslims (Kirk & Scott, 2). In addition, 44 percent also favored Trump to deal with immigration policies (Kirk & Scott, 2). One of his highlights of his presidential promises was his desire to build a wall on the border of Mexico and America, and this was met with support from Republican voters because many of them believed immigrants were bad for the economy. Trump also asserted that Mexico would pay for the infrastructure of this wall; he also promised anti-fair trade agreements, which he asserted were the source of the economic downturn and loss of jobs for the working class.

Trump’s appeal also stems from his wealth; he symbolizes the American Dream and the lust for social mobility. Although Trump represents the top 1% with earning combined to over a billion, his speech along with his lack of political correctness allowed him to appeal to the poorest Americans in rural townships. Trump appeal also stems from his lack of experience in American politics; while for other candidates the more experience in politics helps your candidacy, Trump was able to gain support because of his critical views on politicians like Hilary Clinton. Trump has been regarded as a newcomer, one who has not been tainted by lobbyists or self-interest groups. The political structure has always been a source of suspicion by working-class Americans, and an example of this can be seen in the current gun

control debates and Obamacare. There has been a lingering fear of too much government intervention long before Trump announced his candidacy. The anti-government sentiment is very strong in the Republican Party, and many of the Republican candidates like Ben Carson along with Trump were newcomers to politics. While Trumps gained support, he was also met with a great deal of criticism particularly for his comments about African Americans, Hispanic, immigrants, and Muslims. The ideas that illegal aliens bring only crime to America along with his assentation that American Muslims are radical supports of terrorism, along with proposed decision to create a database to track Muslims, were being all met criticism. The Trump election sheds light on the divisive politics, and the support of Trump signals racial divide in America. The 2016 elections were one the most racially divisive elections, but it brought the discussion of race back into American Politics.

1.1.5 Anti-Political Correctness: The Alt-Right Movement

The Trump elections also sparked debate surrounding race and political correctness; the Alt-Right movement was the key supporter of Trump's election. What is the Alt-Right movement, and what role had this movement have on the 2016 Presidential elections? The term Alt-Right was first introduced by Richard Bertrand-Spencer in 2008; this movement key role was to center White nationalism and White ideals, along with the goal of persevering Western civilization (Heimbach 2016). Race realism is one of the key ideas of this far-right group; they also advocate for the return of biological race. This movement follows the neoconservative uprising in French politics, along with England's National Front, another far-right group that are also anti-immigration. Much of these far-right groups are exclusionary and vehemently against immigration; the supporters of these groups tend to think Western civilization is on the decline due to the changing demographics from newly arrived immigrants. Some of the proponents have also coined the term "white genocide" as a response to Syrian refugee settlement along with any resistance of White supremacy. Although this group is not monolithic, some key issues seem to be central in this movement including the preservation of Whiteness and the fear of the changing demographic of America and Europe. The National Policy column, an Alt-Right conservative think-tank, continues to spew propaganda surrounding this notion of white genocide; "immigration is a kind a proxy war—and maybe a last stand—for White Americans, who are undergoing a painful recognition that, unless dramatic action is taken, their grandchildren will live in a country that is alien and hostile" (Heimbach 2016). This movement is a direct response to immigration and the ongoing tensions surrounding race relations in America; this movement is vehemently against the BLM movement, and the disruption of White supremacy. It is not a coincident that this movement gained prominence during the Presidency of Obama. Some have argued that this movement and its support for Trump was a part of the larger "White lash" as a response to Obama's candidacy (Heimbach 2016). The Alt-Right disrupts the color-blind ideas of race and the imagined cohesiveness of America; it also shatters the idea of post-racial America.

Throughout his presidency, Obama faced adversity from Alt-Right groups and the Tea Party movement that posed a great deal of resistance to all the policies. The rise of the Tea Party was a direct reaction to the election of Obama; this populist movement was the first wave of anti-Obama rebellion and was the first populist movement from the right. The Tea Party pre-dates the Alt-Right group which gained more momentum within the last few years and its height during Trump’s election race. The Tea Party has been labeled both populist and libertarian; their growing concerns over government intervention and spending along with their resistance to Obamacare were the key features of this right-wing conservative group. Many scholars have argued that race and loss of privilege seem to be the source of the growing anti-immigrant sentiment and the source for the uprising of both these far-right groups; the loss of White privilege and the concern over America’s changing demographics seem to have signed White resistance in the far right. Most scholars agree that American politics have become more polarized since the 2008 election of President Obama. This polarization was for the most part by Republican strategists; the popular opinion that America was in crisis created a moral panic among working-class Americans. Some scholars have argued that there has been a crisis within the White identity, which has been a response, firstly, to the changing demographics in America, along with anti-racist policies aimed at creating equity and ending discrimination. What is interesting is the resistance to these policies stem from the fear of the implementation of anti-racism policies. For example, the BLM movement seeks to end police carding, profiling, and police continual murder of unarmed Black men. The ALM seeks to resist these changes by arguing that these barriers do not exist and are not systematic but isolated incidents. There has not been any loss of privilege; these groups seek to stop any changes from happening. This crisis stems from the absolute fear of the future of possibilities of American change; they are not a reaction to the contemporary conditions of marginalized groups. There have not been many changes under the Obama administration that have contributed to this type of reaction from the far right.

Some authors have argued that this reaction stems from the loss of privilege during the civil rights era and that many White Americans have resentment. The inauguration of President Obama further fueled this resentment toward the changing political and social structures in America. Therefore, it is not a reaction to supposed loss of privilege but the reclaiming of racial superiority;

Joel Olson argues:

During slavery and segregation, white identity functioned as a form of racialized *standing* that granted all whites a superior social status to all those who were not white, particularly African Americans. The loss of individualized standing due to the victories of the civil rights movement, however, led to anger, anxiety, and resentment among many whites, and a desire to restore that standing. (Olson, 704)

The assertion that there has been an ongoing white genocide seems to illustrate this moral panic surrounding the loss of privilege. This panic also serves to mobilize White voters to support the Republican Party, and this tactic is very powerful gaining support from White voters against Black freedom movements. Public opinion has been reshaped by Black grassroots organizations like the BLM movement along

with various other movements that challenge white supremacy. White mobilization is a direct reaction to the demands of marginalized groups that demand changes to be made to end racial discrimination. Therefore, the BLM movement gave birth to the ALM movement, which was just a reactionary movement that did not pre-exist the BLM movement.

The Alt-Right movement and Tea Party directly mobilized under the presidency of Obama, it was a direct reaction to the changes in American politics along with the mobilization of Middle America. What is particularly dangerous about these groups are the ways in which they operate to normalize Whiteness. While other social divisions are marked and marginalized, Whiteness creates a bubble wherein the White working class can gain esteem simple from being White. Olson argues, No matter how poor, mean, or ignorant one might have been, or whatever discriminations on the basis of gender, class, religion, or ethnicity one may have been subjected to, one could always derive social esteem (and often draw on public resources) by asserting, 'At least I'm not black'. (Olson, 708)

This is why the Alt-Right movements and various other populists' movement are particularly dangerous; they erase the social conditions of the working class while operating to serve the elite class. While White racial privilege still operates systematically, it no longer has the same experience during the post-civil right era. While this sentiment ever present, it took the right candidate to push and mobilize this resentment, and this provided the best opportunity for the Republican candidates. The Republican party was able to gain support from grassroots movements by "the development of a polarizing virtuous middle" (Olson, 710). The construction of "Middle America" under the threat from Black protesters along with the elite allowed for more support for the Republican party that promised to support middle-class values.

The 2016 elections showed the divisions among races and the ways in which racial consciousness dictates politics in America. The immergence of the BLM movement along with various other demands for the end of structural racism created a "White lash" which helped mobilize the middle-class along with working-class Americans. The politics and the election of Trump was a direct result of the populist movement in the Alt-Right and their predecessors the Tea Party. These reactionary movements were a direct result of the push to further end racial discrimination in the United States. The politics of Trump also show that race continues to be a factor within the very fabric of America's cultural, social, and political climate. Despite the false notion of a post-racial America, the immergence of the Alt-Right movement along with various other White nationalist movement indicates that there is still a great deal of resistance to maintain the already established White supremacist structural system in place in America. The judicial system along with law enforcement has gained a lot of push back from Black Americans; the ongoing violence of unarmed Black men at the hands of police has shed light into the current divide in America along racial lines. The statistics surrounding carding and civilian violence at the hands of cops indicate that there are differences between White Americans and Black Americans contrary to color-blind enthusiasts. While the election of President Obama was a turning point in American politics, the resistance to his presidency along with the support for Trump shows that America has yet to

achieve a post-racial society. President Obama’s speech at a commencement echoed similar remarks about this false notion of post-racial America. He stated this in front of hundreds of graduates at Howard University a historically Black University, “Be confident in your blackness, there is no one way to be black ... There’s no straight-jacket, there’s no litmus test for authenticity.” He also stated “my election did not create a post-racial society.” While a post-racial society seems very appealing, especially to those most effected by racial discrimination, it is important to work toward ending White Supremacy in America.

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