



Consolidating Whiteness in Leisure Places: Answering the Call for a Fourth Wave of Race Research in Leisure Studies

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Abstract

The fourth wave of leisure studies challenges researchers to investigate the social construction of race through leisure, in contrast to understanding race as a variable. Floyd (2007) challenged us to think about the future challenges and trends around race and ethnicity in leisure studies. Though significant progress has been made since the 1970s, we still have far to go in assessment of race and ethnicity in leisure. The objective of this manuscript is to answer the call made by Floyd for an anticipated fourth wave task of “understand[ing] how leisure practices create, reinforce, and perpetuate racist practices in contemporary America” (2007, 249). We apply a theoretical framework that centers racism and whiteness, drawn from race scholarship across fields: the sociology of race, Critical Race Theory (CRT), whiteness studies, settler colonialism studies, and Black and Native Studies. We apply this framework to investigate the storytelling at two National Park Service (NPS) monuments which we provide as case studies to analyze how spatialized historical storytelling consolidates structural white supremacy in the parks, despite a rhetoric of inclusivity. Only once we understand how racism and white supremacy are embedded in NPS narratives can we begin to make changes to reduce white supremacist storytelling in leisure practice.

Keywords National Parks · Settler Colonialism · Whiteness · Race · Recreation · Colorblindness

Fourth wave race research in leisure studies starts from a critical understanding of race as a social construction, uses theory to understand leisure in the broader context, and requires methodological innovation to move beyond the methodological

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formalism that has characterized the bulk of past race and leisure research (Arai & Kivel, 2009; Bramham, 2002; Pinckney et al., 2019). Notwithstanding critiques of the wave metaphor, we argue that it is imperative to revisit this call for research, in light of current events and the continuing significance of racism and White supremacy in not only US society but in locations across the globe. The first three waves of race research in leisure studies focused primarily on participation disparities between White and non-White populations. Floyd (1998) argues that the marginality hypothesis within the ethnicity paradigm is not only insufficient to explain the problem, but asks the wrong questions based on “biased ideological assumptions” (7) privileging Anglo leisure behaviors as the invisible standard. In contrast, race as a primary focus of the investigation only represented five percent of research in the main leisure studies journals (Floyd et al., 2008). Since the 1970s research on race and ethnicity has grown only slightly in leisure studies, compared to other discussions about race and decolonization in other disciplines. Though leisure scholars have called for the study of race, racism, and Whiteness in leisure studies, research that takes race seriously as an object of investigation, rather than a mere variable, has remained minimal (McDonald, 2009); years after initial calls for research in anticipation of a “fourth wave” of critical leisure studies, scholars are asking again (Arai & Kivel, 2009; Mowatt, 2020). Pinckney et al. (2019) calls for the sociology of leisure to engage with what they term *race scholarship* rather than *race studies*, which analyzes race as a variable. Race scholarship, as these scholars define it, is to study race as the central phenomenon being examined; this aligns with the key tenet of CRT and the sociological perspective that race pervades every aspect of everyday and institutional life in the United States and is a central axis of power and domination (Christian, 2019; Crenshaw, 1988; Delgado, 1995; Han, 2008; Hylton, 2005).

Americans started spending more time outdoors during the early months of the pandemic, and national parks and other outdoor recreation areas are experiencing record numbers of visitors now that restrictions are lifted (Coren & Kopf, 2020; Jenkins, 2021; National Park Service, 2021a, b, c, d, e; Outdoor Industry Association, 2021; Rott, 2020; Trust for Public Land, 2021). At the same time as Americans headed outdoors, the world became increasingly aware of police brutality and racial inequities, and realities of systemic racism, injustice, and inequity became more visible in the media. In fact, both the outdoor leisure and public health crises are connected through racism—White people enjoy easier, safer, and more abundant access to green space, compounding how non-White people’s health, wealth, and public safety were disproportionately negatively affected by the pandemic (Bailey & Robin Moon, 2020; Bonilla-Silva, 2020; Embrick & Moore, 2020; Feagin, 1991). At the same time, racism is more visible to more people—Black Lives Matter and #sayhername movements have brought racism to a national conversation after the high-profile murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Aundrea Aubrey. The central park bird-watcher Christian Cooper’s experience brought attention to the hostile environment created by thinking of outdoor leisure as a Whites-only enterprise, and to the ways in which ordinary Whites police the boundaries of leisure places using threats of state violence (the police). Politicians have invoked racism at an international scale to deal with the coronavirus crisis as well as issues like immigration—“China virus” comments spurred anti-Asian hate violence and politicized rhetoric about

immigration from “shit hole countries” spawned zealous border patrol violence against Haitian migrants. Organized white nationalist terror is an officially acknowledged internal threat to homeland security, and communities of color are increasingly under attack by lone gunman preaching theories of White supremacy. And yet, despite rising awareness of racism, today’s common sense understanding of race and racism is confused by colorblindness, the progress narrative used by Whites to argue that society has largely recovered from racism, leaving only a few ‘bad apples’ who perpetrate overt racist violence (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Colorblindness confounds attempts to address inequity and injustice (and thus promote diversity and inclusion) by minimizing or ignoring the structural nature of racism in American culture and institutions (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Lipsitz, 2019). The colorblind racism characterizing Whiteness includes social practices of “disavowal” (Mills, 2015; Veracini, 2008) and “colonial unknowing” (King, 2016), which function as “settler moves to innocence” (Tuck & Yang, 2012) that foreclose any serious effort to dismantle White supremacy by denying it even exists in the first place.

According to Floyd (2007), “what is not well understood is how leisure practices create, reinforce, and perpetuate racist practices in contemporary society. And can understandings of race and leisure contribute to the formation of social policies designed to foster constructive engagement and goodwill among different racial and ethnic communities?” (pp. 249–250). If leisure researchers and scholars are to meet the challenge of the study of race in leisure studies, per Floyd’s call, there needs to be an application of race scholarship to understand how racist practices are perpetuated in leisure studies and in leisure practice—scholars should shift to studying structural race and racism instead of ethnic and cultural differences, and suggest strategies for leisure practitioners to utilize (Arai & Kivel, 2009; Floyd, 1998; Kivel et al., 2009; Pinckney et al., 2019; Roberts, 2009). Just as it is addressed in the larger society and in social science research, we must become more “deeply engaged in discussions about the history, status, limitations, and potentialities of this subfield and connect the field of race and ethnicity” (Floyd, 2007:247). The concepts of colorblindness and structural racism counter racial progress narratives (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Feagin, 2006) and incorporate settler colonialism as structure (Glenn, 2015) in the sociology of race, but the subfield remains limited by lack of sustained engagement with Indigenous and world-systems perspectives which account for the intersections of race and colonialism in the foundational politics of this nation and the international order (Christian, 2019; Fenelon, 2016; Magubane, 2016; Murphy, 2021).

We use concepts of White supremacy, Whiteness, and White nationalism drawing from the sociology of race and ethnicity as well as from other disciplines—critical race theory, history, Black feminist theory, Whiteness studies, Black studies and Native Studies have been influential in the way we understand and use these concepts. Researchers can find the concepts used and defined in the same way across those disciplinary frames and the critical scholarship on race, racism, and whiteness spanning more than a century. Classical sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois began a study of Whiteness as such in the early twentieth century, writing that “whiteness is ownership of the earth, forever and ever, amen!” alluding to the role of capitalism, land and religion in socially constructing the land-as-property identity category

of “White” which property law professor Cheryl Harris (1993) would decades later conceptualize as literal property for those who could claim it. White supremacy is a necessary ideology for legitimating genocide, slavery, colonialism and settlement, which were state, corporate, community and individual efforts protected and promoted by European and then American law since 15th-century Discovery Doctrine (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014; Watson, 2005). White supremacy encompasses religious, scientific, legal, biological, and cultural theories of so-called race; the concept of race is a product of White supremacy (Fields & Fields, 2014; Kendi, 2016). White Nationalism is the ideology of settler colonialism that frames the United States as a White country (Bonilla-Silva, 2000), melting pot (Steinberg, 2007), or a nation of immigrants (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2021). Both covert (for example, in historiography) and overt (for example, in violent extremist hate crime and terrorism) expressions of this ideology are built on a foundation of White supremacist settler colonialism. Today, the explicitly stated idea that the US *should be* a White country drives hysteria about immigration, abortions, and “CRT” as we speak.

Therefore, national parks and monuments in the United States are anything but “pure” leisure spaces, but rather active sites in the construction and reproduction of the racialized social structure. While our findings are based in the context of the United States and are not generalized outside of the US, white supremacy takes different forms around the colonial-modern world system and the fourth wave theoretical framework can be used to investigate the connections between racism and leisure in any place. Leisure can be conceptualized as a power relation embedded in and productive of the broader systems of race and gender, a social practice that functions to legitimate the status quo through emotional experiences of modern ‘selfhood’ or subjectivity (Bramham, 2002; Rojek, 1985). Much the same has been said about touring leisure places as a “performed art” of “worldmaking and self-fashioning” (Adler, 1989). Rojek (1993) argues that monuments and the wilderness are among four key ‘ways of escape’ (including the beach and the hotel) where subjectivity is constructed through leisure. Thus, in these scholarly and national contexts, it is even more important to investigate the social construction of race in leisure spaces that do national historical storytelling. We ask, how do monuments in the National Park Service (NPS), an institution of the federal government, tell the story of the US? How does this storytelling reflect and reproduce racism in leisure places? What does this mean for our understanding of race in leisure places? In this article, we apply critical race theories to make an empirically based theoretical contribution to making race *matter* in leisure studies (Rubinstein & Mowatt, 2021), contributing to answering the fourth wave call for studies that investigate the social construction of racial categories and perpetuation of racism in leisure spaces.

1 National Parks Service (NPS): America’s Best Idea

“National parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst.” Wallace Stegner, 1983

“For the National Park Service, relevancy, diversity and inclusion defines both a value and a practice for connecting the American public to the nation’s shared natural and cultural heritage.” (NPS.gov)

In this section, we discuss the importance of National Parks Service (NPS) and monuments in public life and review some of the research on diversity and inclusion in the NPS. National Parks are important leisure destinations, especially during months of quarantine, stress, racial and economic tension, and isolation from COVID-19 that has led many Americans to escape to the national parks for leisure recreation. The national parks have always been a place of refuge as well as providing social, mental, and physical health benefits for all citizens. The national parks are supposed to be open and welcoming to all citizens, as reflected in the above quotes from the National Parks Service webpage. As restrictions have been lifted, more people are visiting the parks than ever before (Coren & Kopf, 2020). Overwhelming, however, the people who visit and benefit from the national parks have been White. African Americans are 13.4% of the population but represent only 2% of national park visitors (Scott & Lee, 2018). According to recent NPS data, overall, 23% of visitors to the parks are non-white. Research and theoretical perspectives have examined the reasons for the absence and constraints of racial minorities in outdoor spaces and national parks, such as economic resources (Scott & Lee, 2018; Stodolska et al., 2014), geography (Weber & Sultana, 2013), cultural and boundary maintenance (Scott & Lee, 2018), access (Shinew et al., 2004; Stodolska, 1998) discrimination and white racial framing (Mott, 2016). The domination of whiteness goes beyond visitors. The NPS is also the least diverse agency in the federal government (Jacobs & Hotakainen, 2020).

According to Mott (2016: 467), “Arguably, the more our national parks incorporate and value minority history, the more minorities will actually want to visit the parks.” New monuments and parks “should attempt to focus on the historical significance of minorities and minority contributions to society and the national park system as a whole.” The agency has made efforts towards racial diversity, equity, and inclusion to parks through their marketing campaign, hiring employees from diverse racial backgrounds, and training around cultural competency and diversity. In 2017, President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum entitled “Promoting Diversity and Inclusion in Our National Parks, National Forests, and Other Public Lands and Waters (Whitehouse.gov, 2017). The purpose of this memorandum is for “all Americans” to experience and enjoy public lands so that “all segments of the population” can engage in the decisions of the management of the land, and the federal workforce “is drawn from the rich range of the diversity in our nation.” The memorandum further states how the parks are a “powerful sign of our democratic ideals, these lands belong to all Americans – rich and poor, urban and rural, young and old, from all backgrounds, genders, cultures, religious viewpoints, and walks of life.” However, in the years after this memorandum, the National Parks still have a predominately white clientele. The national parks system’s emphasis on diversity and inclusion must go beyond visitors, and employees, but also extend to the stories that they tell America.

In regards to diversity and inclusion drives in outdoor recreation, Anderson et al. (2021) argue that it is worth asking “whether this entails diversifying its participant group profile without necessarily reflecting on the design, delivery, or content of its programming, which might reflect and discretely reinforce norms of the hegemonic group” (540), considering ‘the great outdoors’ has historically been a site of White supremacist violence and exploitation (Ho & Chang, 2021; Murphy, 2021; Walter, 2020). Furthermore, the authors argue that these initiatives betray their own hegemonic Whiteness by framing diversity as an invitation to people of color, implicitly assuming the outdoors is theirs to share (Anderson et al., 2021). Accordingly, the National Park Service desires not just diversity and inclusion but relevancy; the NPS seems to see non-White park participation as an instrumental (rather than transformational) path to institutional survival.

1.1 The Whiteness of National Parks

In this section, we explore some of the literature on Whiteness and leisure. For leisure studies to effectively engage with racism and Whiteness, researchers must understand how White supremacy fundamentally structures Whiteness, rather than using individualistic ‘White privilege’ as the central analytic (Mowatt, 2020; Pulido, 2015). This broader conceptualization of Whiteness as a “social formation to ensure authority and legitimacy” (Mowatt, 2020: 3) beyond mere ‘privilege’ frames our understanding of the role of leisure places and practices as sites for the construction of White identity based on dominance. Research on Whiteness in leisure studies investigates how power operates through leisure space and practice, in contrast to approaches which obscure the historical and structural nature of racism in favor of class explanations (Rojek, 1985), ethnicity and marginality paradigms (Floyd, 1998), or a race as a taken-for-granted variable (Pinckney et al., 2019). For example, Ho and Chang (2021) explain that Whiteness “refers to a social construct of racial hierarchy as part of the settler colonial structure, and the institutions of power that structure social relations...thus instituting an order that constructs and perpetuates *race* as an integral part of its function.” McDonald (2009) emphasizes that Whiteness in the fourth wave of leisure studies must be understood as a performative social practice which functions as an ideology.

The ongoing structure of that history tends to be ignored as something in the past, if it is ever brought up. Understanding of the past will help us to move forward. The foundational genocide, forced labor, and segregated participation in the national parks have current impacts on people’s perceptions being that of a white space in which black and brown people are not welcomed. That has been shaped by racially segregated laws and policies. In 1854, the Plessy v. Ferguson case established separate and unequal, dual park systems for whites and non-whites. The segregation laws and culture were still in effect in 1916 when President Woodrow Wilson signed into the law the NPS. One hundred and ten years later, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title X), made public accommodations for integration. Even Dr. Martin Luther King Jr said:

“In fact, prior to the 1960s, the fight for equal access to public accommodations had been characterized by a long history of temporary advancements precipitated by protest, followed by legal retrenchments at the hands of lawmakers and the courts. The Civil Rights Bill of 1875 guaranteed all American citizens “full and equal enjoyment of public accommodations,” but was declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1883. During the 1880s and 1890s a series of local ordinances and state statutes, known as Jim Crow laws, were issued to further restrict the freedoms of blacks in the South. As the 19th century came to a close, the Supreme Court set the course of Southern race relations for the next 58 years as the 1896 ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* sanctioned the policy of “separate but equal.” Notwithstanding, direct action and legal challenges persisted until the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* ended legal segregation of public schools, building momentum to continue the fight against the unflinching racist policies of the South.” (King 1963)

This dynamic of reform and retrenchment mentioned by Dr. King has been echoed by critical race scholars in the period after the Civil Rights movement (Bell, 2004; Crenshaw, 1988). The US government made hundreds of treaties guaranteeing land and use rights to Indigenous people since the American Revolution, but through federal policies like Indian Removal, assimilation, and later legal settlements and termination the land Native peoples had physical access to dwindled, despite the maintenance of oral histories and relationships to these places (Deloria, 1969; Moreton-Robinson, 2015; Wolfley, 2016). National Parks, and particularly Monuments and Memorials, fit the definition of “White institutional space” (Moore, 2020), institutions in which patterns of power, values, and identity are structured in terms of hegemonic White (read: colonial modern) racial ideology (Embrick & Moore, 2020). Furthermore, National Parks are *state* ideological institutions, White spaces that tell the official stories of the nation thus constructing a homogenous national identity, value system, and ideological mindset of what it means to be American (Spracklen, 2013).

National Parks and monuments are situated within the power structures of American society at large. However, as the National Park Service (NPS) desires to attract more diverse and inclusive audiences, we argue that hegemonic narratives of White Supremacist Capitalist Patriarchy (Hooks, 1984) continue to pervade the storytelling in these nationally symbolic places. What can national parks, at the confluence of nature and culture, space and society, teach us about the ways in which race and racism play out in leisure? As tourist destinations which also function to preserve and protect national history, these parks tell an explicitly patriotic, place-based story of the nation. Historical storytelling at each site tells the story of the place to millions of visitors each year, each site framed as a piece of the national story. The NPS manages over 400 individual units, also referred to as “parks” which include national monuments, national memorials, historical parks, national parks, historic sites, national preserves which cover over 80 million acres of land and coastline (nps.gov).

2 Background

The two sites under study here are monuments and memorials with cultural significance and, like museums, they serve public history and educational functions. Monuments and memorials also cross over different scales and institutions outside of the NPS, with cities and private organizations also taking part in their management and preservation. In addition to time outdoors, national parks and especially monuments and memorials offer historical storytelling. Called public history, collective memory, or mythology, what's left out of the stories told at nationally significant places is just as important as what is included. Furthermore, because NPS memorials and monuments tell the story of the nation, they also teach national ideologies, narrative justifications for the status quo, which reconcile the contradiction between purported American values of freedom, liberty and happiness and the American reality of excluding and conditionally including (assimilation, tokenism, etc.) non-White people from rights and resources. Both sites were chosen because they occupy distinct and multilayered 'tourism imaginaries' (Salazar, 2012), representations of place constructed by a host of experts across hospitality, academic, and government industries and adopted by tourists before they arrive, influencing how visitors make meaning out of the specific place and construct a place-based worldview embedded in the broader social context. These places also hold special significance as national landmarks, they are national heritage sites invoking a national imaginary as well as a tourist imaginary. Florida and The West are both iconic places in the national imaginary, with their touristic imaginaries of wilderness, adventure, conquest and settlement—White settler national origins that comprise the 'stock stories' of American culture and society past, present and future.

Why national parks as opposed to other federal settler agencies embedded in white nationalism and white supremacy? National Parks provide visitors with a unique opportunity to learn about history, culture, and global issues through leisure. Visiting different monuments in the park service provides people with primary access to state knowledge resources. The parks' historical storytelling is even more important since the barring of discussions of history, race, gender, and sexuality in many schools. The National Parks can still tell those cultural and diverse histories. If the voices, power, and the lived experiences of Black, Latinx, Asian, and Native peoples are being denied, then where can people go to learn about those voices and lived experiences? The parks hold possibilities for counter-storytelling that could educate the public about the reasons for reparations, LandBack, and affirmative action through place-based learning that is not based in fantasies of Whiteness. We will return to this idea in the discussion. In this section, we provide a brief background on the parks before we discuss our methods.

"The purpose of the memorial is to communicate the founding, expansion, preservation, and unification of the United States with colossal statues of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt." (Gutzon Borglum, NPS.gov)

Over two million people a year visit Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills of South Dakota. South Dakotan state historian Doane Robinson came up with the idea of sculpting historic figures of the west into large pillars of granite to attract tourists to the state (“Historical Letters and Legislation” 2021). Robinson contacted Gutzon Borglum who created the sculpture and design of Mount Rushmore. The 60-foot carvings of the four presidents on granite rocks were picked by Borglum because he believed they represented the important events and ideas in the history of the United States. Started in 1927 and completed in 1941, Mount Rushmore’s mission is to “Commemorate our national history and progress through the visages of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt” (NPS.gov). Mount Rushmore is framed as the ultimate place to see democracy and freedom. Visitors to the park can explore the half of mile Presidential walking trail, enjoy Thomas Jefferson Ice cream, visit the sculptor’s museum and attend the evening lighting ceremony.

“America Begins Here: Built by the Spanish in St. Augustine to defend Florida and the Atlantic trade route, Castillo de San Marcos National Monument preserves the oldest masonry fortification in the continental United States and interprets more than 450 years of cultural intersections” (Castillo de San Marcos, NPS.gov)

In 2016, about 650,000 visitors toured the Castillo de San Marcos per year and 150,000 more toured the grounds (Korfhage, 2016); a busy Saturday in 2021 averaged 3,500 visitors. School groups are common. The Castillo de San Marcos National Monument is located in the growing tourist town of St Augustine, Florida, which welcomes millions of tourists each year along with a steady flow of new residents. The coquina stone fort was built at the orders of Spanish settlers to defend the strategically placed city and Atlantic slave-trading route from attack by pirates and colonial rivals. Enslaved Africans and Indigenous people were forced to mine the coquina (a wet cement of shells and sand that dries solid) from a quarry on Anastasia Island, transport it, make stones and construct the stone fortress (Palmer, 2002; Coltrain, 2016). After the US acquired Florida through the Transcontinental Treaty of 1819, the name was changed to Fort Marion and the structure served as a prison for Native people incarcerated during the “Indian Wars,” as well as a few confederate soldiers during the Civil War. In 1924 Fort Marion was designated as a national monument under the 1906 antiquities act, and it was not until 1942 that it was renamed the Castillo de San Marcos to reflect the site’s Hispanic heritage. The fort serves today as a landmark and museum; visitors cross the moat and tour the various stone-walled rooms, each containing a different exhibit. Living history means that visitors can also witness and participate in canon firings and various historical reenactments. The museum text is presented in English and Spanish.

3 Methods

The fourth wave of race research in leisure studies is connected to a critique of the formalist methods which have been hegemonic in the field (Floyd, 1998; Rojek, 1985). Within leisure studies and in other disciplines, scholars have argued for a Foucauldian discourse analysis methodology to investigate how social-political fields, discourses and representations, and institutions reproduce Western European, colonial-modern epistemological and ontological frameworks (definitions of what counts as knowledge and the human) (Moreton-Robinson, 2015; Rojek, 1985; Smith, 1999). Because the fourth wave “contextualizes discussions of race and racism within theoretical frameworks which enable broader discussion of social and structural inequalities, power, ideology and white hegemony” (Arai and Kivel: 464), the case study method is a particularly good methodological fit. The extended case method is a qualitative, sociological research method that puts theory at the center of the analysis. Case studies investigate ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions to understand contemporary events in their own context. Though case study findings are not generalizable, extended case studies require researchers to make conceptual connections that corroborate, extend, or challenge existing theory beyond the specific case (Burawoy, 1998; Yin, 2018).

The authors¹ visited each site separately for several hours each and recorded field notes on the monument, park narrative, and spatial experience, supplementing that ethnographic data with narrative data from each park’s website. We use these case studies to apply CRT to the study of national parks and monuments, and in an effort to adequately understand how racism and Whiteness influence leisure spaces in the United States. The unit of analysis for each case is the story, which in the analysis we connect to the broader theoretical and social context. Our use of storytelling as an analytical strategy derives from critical race theorists who argue that storytelling is central not only to the law, but to human experience and cognitive processes. Psychologists and neuroscientists indeed have found evidence through various lines of research, including experimentation with human subjects, that stories promote cognition in children and adults (Mar, 2018). CRT shows how storytelling is both embedded in and functions to serve existing power relations in society. The standard plot lines of American origins tales comprise a stock story, the hegemonic narrative serves as a formula for identity on majority-minority lines and defines in-group reality, serving as a backdrop for personal political opinions and policy decisions as well. Counter-stories represent the silenced, obscured, denied, and hidden histories of out-groups, and they are unwelcome for the very reason that they challenge the one-dimensional and monolithic received wisdoms of the dominant stock story and thus white supremacy (Delgado, 1989; Ewick & Silbey, 1995; Loseke, 2007; Polletta et al., 2011).

¹ The authors’ positionality is that of two women, one is a white woman of working class background and one is an African American woman of middle class background.

4 Findings

4.1 Mount Rushmore National Memorial

"You may as well drop a letter into the world's postal service without an address or signature, as to send that carved mountain into history without identification."

- Mt Rushmore Sculptor Gutzon Borglum, 1939

Before visitors can walk into Mount Rushmore, they see the presidential silhouette behind the gauntlet of flags which lead to the American presidents: Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Theodore Roosevelt. The design of this popular leisure attraction produces a patriotic inspiration of American greatness. Families and individuals are surrounded by overt and covert symbols that represent a shrine to American democracy; the Presidents and their stories, avenue of flags, ice cream, and the first-generation son-of-immigrants who became a great American sculptor, Gutzon Borglum. To reach the iconic view of Mount Rushmore, visitors have to walk down the Avenue of Flags. Constructed in 1976 for the bi-centennial American celebration, the flags represent all 50 states, Washington D. C., two commonwealths and three territories of the United States. Walking towards the flags, visitors pass a gift shop on the left and the Carver's Cafe and Ice Cream Shop. Before you see the cafe, there is a sign with a picture of a vanilla ice cream cone, an equal picture and a picture of Thomas Jefferson after the equal picture. The sign reads: "President Jefferson was the principal author of the Declaration of Independence and of the first ice cream recipe in America...Come get a taste of history at the Memorial Ice Cream Shop." Ice Cream is synonymous with families, fun, summer recreation and being an American. Former President Ronald Reagan signed into law by presidential proclamation that July is National Ice Cream month and July 15th is National Ice Cream Day. At that moment visitors are exposed to the symbolic image of seeing President Jefferson on "the rock", looking down at the avenue of flags, and knowledge that the recipe for America's favorite dessert came from President Jefferson adds to the national pride and shrine of democracy narratives.

Continuing down the walkway, flags are on both sides of the path. Under each flag is a plaque with the name of the state/territory and the year of admission into the union. The flags are arranged in alphabetical order with the As at the start of the Avenue in the back towards the gift shop and Ice Cream shop and W's toward the end of the avenue which leads to the Grand View Terrace and Mount Rushmore. The Terrace is the ultimate goal for visitors. From this unimpeded view, visitors are close to the president monument to take pictures and examine the massive structure. That is the main highlight of Mount Rushmore. From the terrace, you can walk down the steps to the amphitheater and visit the Lincoln Borglum Visitor Center. The amphitheater is where people go to see the evening light shows and different programs. The park ranger has evening programs that "focus on the presidents, patriotism, and the nation's history." The end of the evening

program is a film called "Freedom: America's Lasting Legacy" (nps.gov). The center and studio are the two main buildings to visit to learn about Mount Rushmore. Both have exhibits and information with the focus is on the presidents, sculptor, and construction of Mount Rushmore. The narratives throughout the park re-enforces the "shrine of democracy" from the stories of the struggle and challenges the presidents and sculptors all overcame to make their dreams come true.

If visitors do not want to walk down to the amphitheater or visit the Visitor Center, then the other options are to walk the Presidential Trail or Nature trail. Both trails loop behind Mount Rushmore and connect to each other. The popular trail is the Presidential Trail. It's a short 0.6 mile walk around Mount Rushmore. The trail consists of 422 stairs and is the closest visitors can reach Mount Rushmore without climbing on it. Along the trail, there is information about the presidents. In 2008, a new addition was added to the Presidential Trail. The Lakota, Nakota, and Dakota Heritage Village. The Village consists of three tipis off the trail which operates during limited times during the summer, not all year around. Visitors will find American Indians who are cultural interpreters about their communities. This is the only place in the park that native Americans are a mainstay. The park included the Village to be inclusive and diversify the narrative of Mount Rushmore.

The narrative and placement of Heritage Village are separated and marginalized from the rest of the narratives throughout the memorial. The history, contribution, and story of Native Americans, which is an American story, a story about democracy, gives the impression as an aside story that was added but doesn't fit into the larger narrative of "Mount Rushmore" as a display of democracy and patriotism. The design and delivery may be transformative because Native American stories are included, but not instructional. Maureen McGee-Ballinger, Chief for Interpretation and Education in the National Park Service stated "Mount Rushmore is attempting to carry out its mission of celebrating the "shrine of democracy" but also incorporate Native American culture as part of the visitor experience. "We strive to provide a broad spectrum of history and messaging," (McGivney, 2021). The parks have a narrative of the "shrine of democracy" that is void of the colonialism, exclusion, and manifest destiny of democracy in the United States. At the same time, inclusion and diversity wants to be celebrated. The park does not see how both narratives are a part of the story of democracy. Adding the Village sparked many debates and comments from visitors ranging from being glad it was there to the village not fitting into the "theme" (Mt. Rushmore), which is a "celebration of the nation's constitutional ideals and the great presidents who established, preserved and expanded the union" (Soderlin, 2018). Others believe, "Mount Rushmore should be turned into a Holocaust Museum" (McGivney, 2021 quoting Phil Two Eagle a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota) for the stolen land, destruction, and lives lost of Native American. The park's narratives are thus problematic.

However, the monument and story of Mount Rushmore is framed as a symbol of freedom, hope, and democracy to all US citizens—an American story. Nestled in the Black Hills, which the Lakota Indians called, Paha Sapna, which means "the heart of everything that is" there is Mount Rushmore. Even the original name of the sacred rock "Six Grandfathers" from the Lakota Sioux was changed to Mount Rushmore,

because it was assumed it did not have a name and Charles E. Rushmore, a New York Attorney, “named” the mountain. In 1930, the U.S. Board of Geographic Names made Rushmore the official name. Even the sacred rock’s original name was taken away from the original people that named it (Bergman, 2016).

If national parks are our “best idea” and are “absolutely American, absolutely democratic” and reflect our best rather than our worst”, ideally Mount Rushmore represents those sentiments. On the National Park Service, Mount Rushmore page, they describe this monument as.

“Majestic figures of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln, surrounded by the beauty of the Black Hills of South Dakota, tell the story of the birth, growth, development and preservation of this country. From the history of the first inhabitants to the diversity of America today, Mount Rushmore brings visitors face to face with the rich heritage we all share.” (“American History, Alive in Stone” 2021)

However, the narrative of Mt. Rushmore that the national park service tells the millions of visitors is an “American (white) perspective”- that ignores the oppression and violence of native Americans and people of color. The story of diversity and the first inhabitants is not told. Having the story as an aside and not incorporated in the main narrative doesn’t tell the full story. Not telling their stories normalizes a narrative of whiteness and white spaces in the norms, policies, and procedures throughout the park (Moore, 2020). The complex history of the “majestic” figures on carved rock gets ignored and disregarded which is a “a principal mechanism of contemporary white institutional space” (Moore, 2020). The stories that are being told shape and instruct not only our sense of the world and who we are, but also reinforces a status quo of whiteness.

Visitors are told stories of the birth and development of our country which the former presidents contributed to shaping freedom and democracy which we all hold dear. Those narratives tell a story which idealizes the “pure and homogeneous spaces” in which white men have controlled and dominated. The four presidents represent the expansion and unification narrative of the US through a manifest density narrative. Manifest Density, legally grounded in Doctrine of Discovery, is the idea that the United States was destined by God to spread democracy and capitalism through expanding their domination over land and people. For example, both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson owned slaves. Washington was known as “Town Destroyer” among the Iroquois, (Cornblatt, 2008) Jefferson laid the groundwork and was the architect of policies for forcefully removing native Americans from their land. Lincoln signed an executive order to hang 38 Dakota in Minnesota for their alleged crimes which became the largest mass execution in U.S. history (Miller-Still, 2020). Teddy Roosevelt in an 1886 speech said, “I don’t go so far as to think that the only good Indians are the dead Indians, but I believe nine out of every 10 are” (DiSilvestro, 2011). Thus, the storytelling and institutional history ignore the ways that racism shaped the “unification, founding, preservation and expansion of America by Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt” (National Parks Service, 2015). With Manifest Density the story that visitors hear is framed in a way that ignores how the United States government took the land from the Native

American, the understanding of the “rock” that people visit, and the Black Hills as sacred ground, with the irony of celebrating the European who killed and appropriated native land. The silence and hiding of Native American and the Lakota Sioux stories, normalizes and romanticizes a white narrative of America. All of these majestic figures contributed to the violent displacement of Native peoples.

The absence of other voices and narratives supports white supremacist practices that become interconnected with the storytelling of Mount Rushmore. The irony of American democracy is the carved faces of the presidents are on stolen land. The battle for the Sioux (Dakota, Lakota and Nakota) and Arapaho to keep fighting over their stolen land has been ongoing. The U.S government signed a treaty with the Lakota-Sioux nation stating the Black Hills were their land in The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. Once gold was found in those hills, the treaty didn't exist. In 1980 the U.S. The Supreme Court, concluding a long-running case brought by the Sioux Nation, confirmed the illegality of the government's actions, ruling that the Native Americans were entitled to damages for the theft of their land. The government would offer compensation but not give the land back.

The flags are a symbol of a common heritage and ideals. The 56 flags of the United States and territories have a partial meaning about democracy and shared values. Symbols of flag and land are components of culture, identity, nation, and meaning. The imagery of the flags, especially the American flag is “symbolic patriotism”. The symbols have multiple meanings of “patriotism, partisanship, and even racial prejudice.” (Kalmoe & Gross, 2016). The symbol of the flag mirrors social reality, that social reality has a particular meaning based upon similar cultural meanings. Meaning of a particular cultural object lies in the social patterns it reflects” (Griswold, 2008). In other words, there has to be a set of agreed upon, understanding, traditions and beliefs of what the flag means. The meaning of the flag(s) has to be put in the context of the experience to those it represents (Talbert, 2017). Since we are a diverse nation and want to be inclusive, there should also be representation from the Lakota Sioux and other Native Nations' flags. What is absent from the avenue of flags are the flags and stories of the Lakota Sioux in this space and their land. There is also an invisibility of the nine native American tribes in South Dakota. If there is a “rich heritage, we all share”, the story and narratives privilege white power, and wealth (Embrick & Moore, 2020). This is told in the name of the “rock,” who is on the rock, and the romanticized imagination of land and “the West.”

4.2 The Castillo de San Marcos National Monument

Originally administered by the War Department, the Castillo was designated a national monument in 1924 using the Antiquities Act of 1906, which played a fundamental role in the institutionalizing archaeology as an arm of the state for the specific purpose of maintaining a coherent national narrative of history. Whereas anthropology grew into an academic discipline based on the principle of cultural relativism and pluralism, archaeology was increasingly funded by the government, practiced by amateurs, and supported a concept of culture as linear and evolutionary. Thus, the state-sponsored story of the USA incorporated the false narrative of

“savage” and “primitive” Indigenous people, naturally and inevitably supplanted by White settlers through a naturalized process of evolution. The preservation of indigenous sites as national heritage under the Antiquities Act furthered the notion that Native Americans simply died off or vanished, leaving the land and built environment for White settlers to inherit (Colwell-Chanthaphonh, 2005; McLaughlin, 1998). Inside the walls of the fort, this narrative is reflected in the paucity of indigenous stories compared to European ones, and the tropes these stories reproduce. For example, all displays about Indigenous people are through the lens of their incarceration, and they highlight cultural differences and rituals, a move characterized by scholars as “jungle-book” ethnography and “ethnographic entrapment” (Arndt, 2016; Rios, 2011; Small, 2015). Furthermore, the evidence of “Indian Incarceration” presented by the monument in the former prison cells is encased in glass and described as vanishing from the walls due to exposure to the elements, approximating the ‘vanishing Indian’ trope prevalent in white narratives of US history.

While evidence of Indigenous presence is framed as naturally delicate and vanishing, European presence is represented in the natural permanence of stone. The fort today is framed within the broader “Oldest” story of the city as an “enduring Monument,” “North America’s oldest masonry fortification” built “more than 100 years before the United States became a country” (“America Begins Here” 2021). While on the surface the Castillo de San Marcos seems out of step with other National Parks’ ‘wilderness’/nature claims, the monument makes use of nature tropes to make its White nationalist claims, naturalizing white supremacy and white nationalism. Echoing the role of the fort as a symbol of permanence and continued occupation of the land, the fort served as an icon for the city to advertise its 450th celebration to millions of visitors who came to the city one September weekend in 2015. This is an exemplary case of “firsting and lasting,” (O’Brien, 2010) in which place-based historical storytelling is used to draw distinctions between the supposed modernity of Europeans and the supposed primitiveness of Natives, freezing Indigenous peoples (and genocide) in the distant past.

Indeed, throughout the nineteenth century, the fort served as a place for wealthy White tourists to exercise their freedom and mobility vis-a-vis the Indigenous prisoners, who were forced to entertain the tourists with ‘cultural’ performances and make drawings of their experiences as prisoners to be sold as souvenirs. Throughout history, human display has been a method of constructing so-called racial difference between Whites and colonized Indigenous people around the world through leisure, constructing White subjectivity through White supremacist theories of human difference that aided imperialism and colonization (Rony 1996). The fort/prison today offers an embodied leisure experience of colonialism for visitors and is a central landmark in St Augustine tourism providing a grassy lawn and waterfront views. Visitors can pay to enter the park and exhibition space inside but can also use the surrounding space for varieties of leisure and recreation activities as well. During the city’s annual July 4th fireworks, the fort lawn is the primary space for spectators to set up camp to wait for the nighttime show. Without paying to enter, on any day visitors can walk the seawall portion of the structure and access some of the cannons on display. Therefore, the fort provides a leisure space even outside of the interpretive exhibit. Even on the outside, visitors can touch the coquina, imagine

themselves firing a cannon, and keep watch over the inlet where pirates and colonial rivals would appear on the horizon. Once inside the park monument, visitors have even more opportunities to embody colonialism through performative individual reenactments, that is, if there isn't an official reenactment and cannon firing going on already. The top level of the fort invites this kind of interaction with the space by not providing any interpretive material, just cannons and parapets that provide a view seemingly just like the colonists would have seen as they defended the city. Visitors are not invited to imagine themselves as prisoners, and the spaces used for incarceration down below are completely transformed into museum exhibits, breaking the straight line between past and present subjectivity and precluding any easy imaginary embodiment of the Indigenous prisoners. Instead, on the inside of the fort/prison visitors are encouraged to imagine themselves as colonizers in the colonial scene through still-life displays of supposed everyday life, with no replicas of everyday life as a prisoner of White supremacy.

Consolidating this distinction, the exhibits that do tell indigenous stories portray indigenous people as prisoners or cultural relics in the past by focusing on "their culture" and refusing to include living people in the narrative, despite the well-known existence of native descendants of people who were imprisoned there who are members of two federally recognized nations, the Miccosukee and the Seminole. Though the fort applauds its exhibition of indigenous incarceration as part of the fort's history, the terms of this inclusion must be examined in-depth. Upon entering the museum, one of the first exhibit rooms contains a timeline beginning with European settlement, complete with the flags of each European nation that has possessed the territory (France and England in addition to Spain). The fort museum *includes* the story of nineteenth century Indian incarceration during the conquest of Florida. However, rather than a true story of US war and genocide, viewers are met with a story of assimilation that asks them to sympathize with the colonizer, in this case General Richard Henry Pratt, known as the creator of the insidious phrase, "To kill the Indian is to save the Man." He used the fort to experiment with different techniques of power and control, which were later exported around the country in the Indian boarding or residential schools (Barnewolt, 2018; Hayes, 2018). The text of a display narrating this history is instructive:

"In 1875 Captain Richard Pratt was assigned to Fort Marion. He had to guard 75 American Indian prisoners. Imagine being taken away from your home and brought to a strange place. People speak a different language and act differently. How do you survive? Pratt began a program of assimilation. He believed that the adoption of white culture, language, and religion were the Indians only chance. An advocate for American Indian education and civil rights, he sought to find a way to accomplish his goals, and his actions led to the beginning of the American Indian schools concept." (Castillo de San Marcos National Monument, 2016)

In this quote displayed to visitors, the genocidal intent of Indian boarding schools is completely dismissed in favor of a pro-assimilation narrative that portrays Pratt as a benevolent savior. Though it appears on the surface that the viewer is being asked to sympathize with the prisoners, by the end of the paragraph the sympathy lies with

Pratt, who is described as an “advocate” in stark contrast to reality. The “kill the Indian to save the man” quote is left out, and there is not even tacit acknowledgment of the wrongdoing at Indian boarding schools.

Current differences in White and Indigenous worldview on the Castillo de San Marcos National Monument became visible in the lead up to the 2013 “Viva Florida 500!” commemoration and the city’s own 450th commemoration in 2015, when activists and members of the Original Miccosukee Simanolee Nation Aboriginal Peoples specifically highlighted the grotesque contradictions of using the former genocidal prison-laboratory as a family leisure destination. A group of Florida Indigenous leaders known as the Council of the Original Miccosukee Simanolee Nation Aboriginal Peoples opposed both commemorations and sent official information packets detailing their opposition in early 2013. Among the specific proposals included in the document is the demand to tear down the fort/prison as “a minimum first step towards honoring of the Aboriginal Indigenous Peoples of this Land... once the fort/prison comes down this will give us all an opportunity to heal from brutal crimes against humanity that were committed by Juan Ponce de Leon, Pedro Menendez de Aviles, and others” who figure prominently in the storytelling and visual branding of not just the 450th and 500th commemorations, but St Augustine tourism overall. The Council cites the former Mayor of St Augustine stating that he was tired of hearing these kinds of “negative” comments. Responding to 2015 protests on the fort lawn during the 450th, the director of the commemoration retorted that “Native American culture is a huge component of the story” and the Mayor at the time disagreed with protestors as well, arguing that the city was not celebrating the conquistadors but rather the city’s history as a melting pot, though she did note that “founding European settlements in this country was never pretty” (Benk, 2015).

5 Discussion and Conclusion

Whereas some have insightfully argued that the race and rights framework does not apply to Indigenous Nations (Steinman, 2015) precisely because of the national sovereignty issue, we argue that because colonization was tied to White supremacy through the law starting with Discovery Doctrine, it is essential to understand the role of racist ideology, specifically White nationalism, in the perpetuation of settler colonialism as the structure of US society. Decolonial and antiracist movements and policy projects are not monolithic, there are a variety of approaches under way and there exist divergent ideas within movements and communities on the best path forward. However, we briefly discuss some of the recent approaches and argue that the NPS should not only be aware of but humbly and diligently learn from the centuries-long efforts to resist colonization if they truly desire relevancy, diversity, and inclusion.

The United Nations’ 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples acknowledges the international movement for Indigenous sovereignty, against the racialized dispossession inaugurated with Discovery Doctrine and consolidated as US law in the *Johnson* decision in 1823 (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2019). Some settler states have begun fraught and limited decolonization efforts through biculturalism

(Johnson, 2010) or consultation (Youdelis, 2016). Indigenous groups have successfully worked with settler environmental movements on co-management and land return agreements that cross settler-defined borders (Brown, 2022). However, official settler decolonization efforts have so far remained limited in that they have maintained White power structures by paternalistically and sometimes superficially “including” Indigenous people in colonial institutions and governance rather than listening to self-determining Indigenous Nations as coeval sovereigns. This results in coerced if not forced assimilation into the White settler nation-state, which is exactly what Indigenous Aboriginal First Nations are struggling against. In addition to protest movements of the late twentieth century such as the American Indian Movement (AIM), Indigenous Nations have also fought legal battles against the federal government, enacting their status as coeval Nations, rather than US citizens to be included in the settler project (Hampton, 2019).

Today’s LandBack movement is part of a long genealogy of anticolonial struggle. It is a movement for not only land but sovereignty; it is one instantiation of an Indigenous resurgence that has been built on the “collective continuance” of Indigenous civilization despite centuries of US land theft, assimilation and genocide (McKay et al., 2020; Simpson, 2017). An anticolonial movement is not just about territory but about an altogether different ontological relation to land (Goldstein, 2008) citing Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred who argues for restitution rather than reconciliation) and to return Native peoples to the national parks, deconstructing the White fantasy of ‘wilderness’ that never was (Wolfley, 2016). When Indigenous history is ‘included’ as “prehistory” in leisure sites, even though Indigenous people in the case of many national parks live right next door, this amounts to a “denial of coevalness” (Fabian, 2014), positioning White and non-White on unequal footing in time and space. This portrayal of Indigenous peoples and nations as frozen in the past, as inherently not-modern or vanishing, has implications for how sovereignty and tribal existence is negotiated with other nations (the US) (Deloria, 1969; Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

In conclusion, we found a consolidation of settler colonial whiteness and white nationalist narratives through spatialized storytelling about the nation’s history in two iconic national park sites, a monument and a memorial. By 2045 our population is going to be a majority of people of color and the NPS is making a push to be more racially inclusive and to bring in more people of color into the parks. The parks have made efforts through social media, hiring more diverse park rangers, and reaching out to communities that may be excluded. However, our findings indicate that these demographic changes have not been reflected in structural changes, but rather, a greater entrenchment and consolidation of White supremacy through the facade of diversity. We argue that structural work needs to be done to change the National Park Services narratives of monuments and heritage sites. Our case studies demonstrate two different places with similar consolidations of the white spatial imaginary and settler origins narrative, despite the appearance of diversity. The case studies suggest that national park monuments reproduce the false narrative of America as a White nation and settler colonial conquests as morally righteous, and ideology of white supremacy which fuels White nationalist violence and consolidates

general ignorance or “colonial unknowing” (King, 2016) that is a characteristic of Whiteness.

Floyd asks not just how leisure reinforces racism, but how “can our understandings of race and leisure contribute to formation of social policies designed to foster constructive engagement and goodwill among different racial and ethnic communities?” (Floyd, 1998: 249). Rojek reminds us that leisure space is an effect of broader systems of legitimation in society, however, that “we all have the power to challenge and redefine the conditions and consciousness which define legitimate leisure behavior” (Rojek, 1985: 178). The national parks could start by making a concerted effort to help the predominantly White guests understand the sites from a different, valid perspective—Mount Rushmore as an “international shrine to White supremacy” (Oglala Dakota activist Nick Tilson of NDN collective, quoted in Estes 2021) and the fort as a disgraceful prison that should be torn down (Council of the Original Miccosukee Simanole Nation Aboriginal Peoples). Thus, NPS sites could play an essential role in acknowledging the foundations of the nation in racism and Settler White Supremacy, helping the public understand calls for reparations and ‘truth and reconciliation,’ processes started by other nations complicit in slavery and genocide. An accurate portrayal of American history by the NPS is absolutely necessary for White people, who like everyone else learn a fraction of US history in schools but additionally lack experiential and intergenerational knowledge of racism that can help to understand the demands of US-based movements like Black Lives Matter and LandBack. Lies and omissions instill a false sense of unfairness in social justice efforts and feed into a politics of aggrieved, embattled ‘White masculinity under attack’ that is not supported by evidence. Leisure, recreation, and public history professionals should foster a deliberate responsibility towards the symbols displayed—their historical and present meanings, as well as the futures they project.

Declarations

Conflicts of Interest The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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