ARTICLE

UPROOTING AUTHORITARIANISM: DECONSTRUCTING THE STORIES BEHIND NARROW IDENTITIES AND BUILDING A SOCIETY OF BELONGING

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Authoritarianism is on the rise globally, threatening democratic society and ushering in an era of extreme division. Most analyses and proposals for challenging authoritarianism leave intact the underlying foundations that give rise to this social phenomenon because they rely on a decontextualized intergroup dynamic theory. This Article argues that any analysis that neglects the impact of dominance as a legitimizing characteristic of in-group formation and identity construction based on dominant in-group membership will fall short of understanding the surge of authoritarianism. In the West, and the United States in particular, this dominant in-group takes shape around the ideology and social

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*force of whiteness. Whiteness, as the bonding
element of a dominant identity-based in-group,
compels narrow identities and exclusive group
membership. It also makes promises of social gain
and advantage to those constituted as white, the
erosion of which is the source of the authoritarian
uprising in the United States. This Article
discusses the establishment of the Western meta-
narrative, and whiteness's relation to it, and then
advances a strategy to replace it with a more
inclusive narrative of deep belonging, offering
guidance to the social justice movement in its work
toward this end.*

I. INTRODUCTION: AN AGE OF AUTHORITARIANISM

Now more than ever, it is important to move toward a society of belonging where every life is truly valued, where differences are seen as strengths, and no one is left to suffer outside of the circle of human concern.[1] The world that we instead inhabit is one where nations and people are fearful of difference, increasingly xenophobic, and where lives are valued differently depending on skin color, nationality, ethnicity, and religion. The need for belonging has become all the more urgent in the face of rising ethno-nationalism and authoritarianism around the globe.

In the United States and elsewhere, these phenomena have surged forward at alarming rates. Countries like the United Kingdom, France, and Hungary have elected or flirted with the election of far-right, authoritarian leaders.[2] Across Europe, in Poland and Austria, anti-immigrant nationalist parties are securing blocs of parliamentary power.[3] Demagogic leaders like Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines and Narendra Modi in India strategically incite social divisions and inflame nationalist sentiment to consolidate and maintain influence and control.[4] Currently, over fifty-three percent of the world lives under authoritarian leadership not including Brazil and the United States.[5] Over one third of nations have walls.[6] The retreat of

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[1] *See* sources cited *infra* note 26, at 32, and accompanying text (discussion on the circle of human concern).

[2] STEPHEN MENENDIAN ET AL., HAAS INST. FOR FAIR & INCLUSIVE SOC'Y, 2017 INCLUSIVENESS INDEX: MEASURING GLOBAL INCLUSION AND MARGINALITY, (Dec. 2017), http://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/haasinstitute_2017inclusive nessindex_publish_dec31.pdf [https://perma.cc/R25J-ZWJM].

[3] *Id.*

[4] *Id.*

[5] Garry Kasparov & Thor Halvorssen, Opinion, *Why the Rise of Authoritarianism Is a Global Catastrophe*, WASH. POST (Feb. 13, 2017, 1:32 PM), https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/democracy-post/wp/2017/02/13/why-the-rise-of-authoritarianism-is-a-global-catastrophe/ [https://perma.cc/LG76-PV4M] (reporting that the Human Rights Foundation's research shows that ninety-four countries live under non-democratic regimes, equaling fifty-three percent of the planet's population).

[6] Simon Tomlinson, *World of Walls: How 65 Countries Have Erected Fences on Their Borders—Four Times as Many as When the Berlin Wall was Toppled—As Governments Try to Hold Back the Tide of Migrants*, DAILY MAIL, https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3205724/How-65-countries-erected-security-walls-borders.html [https://perma.cc/LP9K-SUUC] (Aug. 22, 2015, 3:55 AM).

democratic institutions and norms currently underway is cause for great concern.

In the United States, a rightward surge is underway as the country is in a period of extreme fracturing. To our closest allies and to our neighbors, our divisions appear insuperable. Canadian author Stephen Marche writes in his essay, "America's Next Civil War," that "there is very much a red America and a blue America. They occupy different societies with different values" and because of the instability this deep divide creates, Canada should disentangle its fate with that of the United States.[7]

Much attention and analysis has gone into understanding not only deep division, but the underlying forces animating authoritarianism and what can be done to mitigate its effects. The predominant discourse around this phenomenon, however, has operated in an incomplete fashion. It has opted for an explanation decontextualized of identity construction and intergroup dynamics. The literature undertheorizes the social conditions created when a society's in-group constitutes itself around the idea that it has the right to dominate the rest of the population and the strong desire this creates for individuals to be a part of and build their identities around membership in that group. This claim to the entitlement to dominate varies across contexts and can be built upon race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or other characteristics used to form exclusive group membership. However, in the West, and in the United States in particular, the in-group forms around the aggressive guardianship of whiteness and the presumptions to domination that it claims. Attachment to this group and the tending to identity it performs lie at the heart of authoritarianism in this setting.

Understanding this central aspect will determine the strength of the response to this destructive force and whether or not society can root it out. Namely, attempting to thwart authoritarianism without unseating whiteness may suppress the force of authoritarianism temporarily but will leave the underlying causes at the center of authoritarian surges intact. Accommodating authoritarian sensibilities, as mainstream analyses of authoritarianism call for, demands an unjust exclusion of marginalized identities or suppression of

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[7] Stephen Marche, *America's Next Civil War*, WALRUS, https://thewalrus.ca/americas-next-civil-war/ [https://perma.cc/SP62-GFSY] (June 2, 2020, 3:57 PM).

characteristics that make them different. While it is true that people are innately sensitive to difference and that people who tend toward authoritarian reaction are more likely to perceive difference as threatening, it is also true that much of what people understand as differences are socially constructed. Dominant identities like whiteness are constructed when differences are given social meaning and labeled as inferior. Doing so makes affiliation with people who have these "inferior" qualities particularly abhorrent to people within the dominant identity group who have a heightened sensitivity to difference. Suggesting that people who are "othered" as marginal and inferior either erase their differences through assimilation or have their membership within society restricted and regulated is misguided because it naturalizes the social construction of dominant identities and ignores the often-violent forms the construction process takes.

This Article begins with an outline of the common characterizations of authoritarianism as articulated by two of the leading academics on the phenomenon, behavioral economist and political psychologist Karen Stenner and New York University professor and social psychologist Jonathan Haidt. The pair argues that certain people are naturally predisposed to desire authoritarian control in times of rapid change, as these periods of rapid change increase anxiety among this group. This Article critiques that perspective by offering that although Stenner and Haidt get much correct about the nature of authoritarians, their analysis lacks context on the socially determined interpretation of change. Not all change induces extreme anxiety. Here, we explore why certain populations are interpreted as a negative change that creates backlash and root that exploration in the process of othering, or building an in-group and identity around dominance, superiority, and exclusion. In Part III, we attempt to incorporate this framework into intergroup dynamic theory and explain how the United States' dominant identity of whiteness shapes intergroup relations. In Part IV, we illustrate how the debate over immigration policy is influenced by and filtered through this sense of white entitlement to dominance. Those situated within this paradigm, we show, do not necessarily see it as a force at work. This oversight leads to a misinterpretation of the immigration issue and erroneous policy prescriptions, in our view. Part V explains in greater depth what we mean by "situated within this paradigm." We hold that the Western notion of the self, or the liberal subject, as well as the basic Western social structure is not egalitarian but based on a hierarchical ordering of humanity. Whiteness is defined as

existing at the top of the ordering and constitutes the dominant in-group, the rest of humanity being othered into lower rankings within the stratification. Because the liberal subject and the basic social structure are ideologically interpreted as egalitarian, the othering and stratification is not observed, constituting the paradigmatic blindness. Part VI shows the consequences for society of constituting the self in this hierarchical manner, with a particular focus on globalization, neoliberalism, and polarization. Part VII concludes with offerings on constructing a self that does not need to dominate or be a part of an in-group built around superiority and dominance. We also offer recommendations for all, but particularly for the social justice movement, around the work needed to move society in this direction—toward a just world where all belong.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF AUTHORITARIANISM

Behavioral economist Karen Stenner and social psychologist Jonathan Haidt, preeminent scholars on the topic of authoritarianism, write about the causes, forms, and tendencies of authoritarian uprisings. In their contribution to Cass Sunstein's comprehensive volume on authoritarianism, *Can It Happen Here?*, the pair provides a thorough description of the conditions that lead to authoritarian outbursts and the personality type that desires authoritarian responses, followed by a set of recommendations to quell such uprisings.[8] Their work serves as the basis of this Article's analysis.

Stenner and Haidt argue that authoritarianism does not rise up as anomalous disruptions in an otherwise linear progression toward ultimate enlightenment and liberalism, but that authoritarianism is always there—latent and under the surface ready to be provoked by external factors.[9] When many analysts of moments like the current one are caught off guard and interpret authoritarianism as coming from seemingly nowhere, Stenner and Haidt offer that periods of great intolerance to difference are in fact unsurprising and predictable.[10] Flares of authoritarianism, they assert, are a function of a predisposition to authoritarian leanings interacting with external normative threats to stability. By their estimation, around a third of any population has a personality predisposed

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[8] Karen Stenner & Jonathan Haidt, *Authoritarianism Is Not a Momentary Madness, but an Eternal Dynamic Within Liberal Democracies*, *in* CAN IT HAPPEN HERE? 180 (Cass Sunstein ed., 2018).
[9] *Id.*
[10] *Id.*

to resisting complexity, diversity, and difference and desiring of authoritative crackdowns to compel simplicity and sameness when instigated.[11]

Stenner and Haidt also make sure to point out that people with authoritarian tendencies differ in significant ways from Laissez Faire conservatives and status quo conservatives, all of whom tend to get lumped together under the broad umbrella of "right-wing." Laissez Faire conservatives, people generally categorized as classical liberals or libertarians, are of the right of center variety that favor market solutions and detest government attempts at wealth redistribution.[12] Status quo conservatives are "psychologically predisposed to favor stability and resist rapid change and uncertainty."[13] This segment of the right supports the security and dependability of institutions if they maintain an even keel and apply the brakes on sudden sociopolitical reform. Authoritarians, on the other hand, "demand authoritative constraints on the individual in all matters moral, political, and racial, are not generally averse to government intrusions into economic life," and are amenable to "willingly overturning established institutions that their (psychologically) conservative peers would be drawn to defend and preserve."[14]

The latency of authoritarianism is surfaced, Stenner and Haidt argue, when activated by external threats that upset and provoke anxiety. These include a loss of faith in leadership, a splintering of public opinion, or a rupturing of the social fabric and perception of uniformity.[15] Even though certain people are psychologically predisposed to desire heightened authority when aggravated, many people who fall outside of this personality range can still find themselves susceptible to such reactions if the external threat is strong enough. When these anxieties are stimulated, the authoritarian demand is to eradicate diversity or restore the prevailing or pre-existing social order. Authoritarianism urges a "structuring of society and social interactions in ways that enhance sameness and minimize diversity," and call for or participate in "disparaging, suppressing, and punishing difference."[16] These appeals often result in support for "the actual coercion of others (as in driving a black family from the neighborhood)," and "demands for the use

[11] *Id.* at 210.
[12] *Id.* at 181.
[13] *Id.* at 182.
[14] *Id.* at 183.
[15] *Id.* at 186.
[16] *Id.* at 184.

of group authority (i.e. coercion by the state)."[17] The condition in the world today is currently ripe for this latent tendency.

While Stenner and Haidt provide many useful insights for understanding authoritarianism and the dynamics that provoke an uprising, they misunderstand critical aspects of the social fabric and thus arrive at conclusions inadequate toward the effort of constructing a society of true belonging. Stenner and Haidt find from their data analysis that "the notion that populism is mostly fueled by economic distress [is] weak and inconsistent."[18] Instead of focusing on economic anxiety, they suggest, efforts are better aimed toward being more mindful of the concerns of people with authoritarian-leaning personalities. To this end, the authors urge that to minimize authoritarian tendencies in society, we must promote "the abundance of common and unifying rituals, institutions, and processes."[19]

This recommendation by Stenner and Haidt misses how challenging that may be in societies built on an extreme process of othering.[20] In the United States, race has been central to the process of othering and self-making. There is also a central role of gender domination. One may note that the process of othering is not limited to race and gender. Sexual orientation, religion, differently-abled people, and other identities have all been important in the construction of the other and therefore the construction of who is the belonging normative "we." As Stenner and Haidt state, it is important to give attention to the potential for authoritarian tendencies to be activated by normative threat in roughly a third of the population. However, the threat is deeper than they presume and the accommodation of such a tendency much more problematic. By ignoring the centrality of othering to the process of self-making, they overlook how important an association with dominance is to the activation of authoritarian reactions. Their promotion of "common and unifying" practices leaves in place and legitimizes identity groups based in dominance. Instead, a more effective response would be to displace dominance as an organizing force in identity construction. Before addressing these points, however, it is important to thoroughly understand the conditions that produce anxiety and can be used to stoke authoritarians and right-wing identity-based nationalism.

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[17] *Id.*
[18] *Id.* at 207.
[19] *Id.* at 211.
[20] *See infra* note 26 and accompanying text.

A. The Function of Anxiety in the Othering and Belonging
   Process

        Humans' threat perception defines how they experience
anxiety, both individually and collectively, in a changing world.[21]
While this is consistent with Stenner, Haidt, and others related
to authoritarianism and normative threat, there are some
important additional insights that are less dependent on the
concept of latent authoritarianism. Not all change produces
threat, and there are certain types of change that are more
important in producing anxiety or threat.[22] The anxiety
associated with rapid change might be most acutely experienced
by people with authoritarian tendencies, but the general
experience of anxiety is more inclusive. Virtually all people will
experience anxiety with a heightened degree of change across a
number of salient factors. While there are some scholars who are
skeptical of the theory of authoritarianism—this Article does not
dispute the theory—the psychological underpinnings of anxiety
stand on firmer ground.

        In regard to anxiety, people have a relationship to the
conditions and environment they inhabit or from which they
come. People have adapted over a long period of time to the
environment around them. But, when the environment changes
at a rate faster than the ability to adapt, people experience
stress, anxiety, and possibly threat.[23] Yet, the environment is
constantly changing, and so are the people in it. This may go
largely unnoticed because of the rate of change. On one hand,
change is often welcomed and indeed seen as necessary for
growth; however, the rate of change and the nature of change
matters. While those with authoritarian tendencies may be more
challenged by change, all people will find change difficult and
even impossible at some rate.[24]

        A number of people have begun to focus on the anxiety
and stress of rapid change. Thomas Friedman, for instance,
describes the current era as one of accelerated change. He focuses
on three accelerating areas that are causing anxiety and stress.

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        [21] COLLECTIVE PSYCH. PROJECT, A LARGER US (2018),
https://www.collectivepsychology.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/A-Larger-
Us.pdf [https://perma.cc/YN3K-MTJA].
        [22] *See, e.g.*, Blake M. Riek et al., *Intergroup Threat and Outgroup
Attitudes: A Meta-Analytic Review*, 10 PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCH. REV. 336
(2006).
        [23] *See infra* note 26 and accompanying text.
        [24] *Id.*

They are globalization, technology, and climate change.[25] His list, however, leaves out two of the most important factors driving anxiety today—changes in migration patterns and changing demographics. According to authoritarian leaders and their followers, of concern is rarely the hidden pitfalls of technological advancement, or the threat of climate change (even the science behind it being flatly denied). To authoritarians, the gravest threat is always the "other." In Europe, the other is especially organized around anxiety toward Muslims and migrants. This is increasingly true in the United States as well. But, the "other" does not have to be a recent migrant to occupy a central role. The other is defined as outside of who belongs and a threat to the "we."[26] This process is described as othering to reflect the dynamic aspect of the practice. Othering is often critical to defining the "we." The "we" are those that are considered to belong. Re-defining and expanding who is in the "we" is the process of practicing belonging.

Constructing the "we" through belonging is also a dynamic process. Determining who belongs and who does not belong then is a contested process that is not completely stable. Marginality and belongingness not only change from society to society, but context to context. In one context, one racial or religious group might be most marginalized, but in another, a different social group might be. Negative response to or fear of the reality of changing demographics and regional migration is a subset of othering. Rapid change, and particularly change related to people, is likely to play a heightened role in the othering and belonging process. This process is never just about the other but also about the "we" and who belongs.

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[25] Thomas L. Friedman, Opinion, *The End of Europe?*, N.Y. TIMES (Dec. 18, 2018), https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/18/opinion/europe-france-economy.html.

[26] To clarify terminology, it may be helpful to provide a brief overview of the processes being described. Othering is a set of dynamics, processes, and structures that engender marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full range of human differences based on group identities. It is the action of systematically marginalizing a group of people or constructing an identity for them that labels them a threat too unrecognizable from the ingroup to coexist with. Systematic othering occurs through a process called breaking—which is the construction through stories and practices of the image and perception of the outgroup as a threat and a subordinate. In contrast, the process of belonging—which happens through bridging—is the story-crafting that broadens the ingroup and defines whose full humanity is recognized and who will receive the concern and attention of society. john a. powell & Stephen Menendian, *The Problem of Othering: Towards Inclusiveness and Belonging*, OTHERING & BELONGING, Summer 2016, at 14.

Next, consider changes leading to anxiety, stress, and threat. Rapid change along a salient axis is likely to produce anxiety. This reaction is biological. But how change is perceived and what types of change produce anxiety is largely social.[27] This social process is based on a set of stories that signal to the population that the changes in demographics are either a threat, and must be contained or corrected in some way, or that these changes are good, and will make the population better off in the future. The first set of stories about threat can be categorized as breaking. Breaking is a way of creating social distance. Social distance or the threat of the other does not have to be based on race, language, or religion. The nature of the threat is a part of the story both about the other—the "them"—and how that relates to the "we." It is not just that the other is a threat. This story easily pivots to the goodness and even the purity of the "we." The story of the glorious, pure "we" is bound up with the story of "them."

In the context of change, the story of this narrow exclusive "we" is often tied to an imaginary past. One of the offered solutions to the changing and threatening future is an effort to retreat into the imaginary past when all was good and the "we" was uncontaminated.[28] This story often asserts that there is a natural "we" and a natural other. Neither assertion is true. The conditions that foster a "we" and the story that is the glue can always be contested. One may go back to hunter-gatherers or the family structure to look for a natural "we" with a given categorical boundary, but, even there, one is unlikely to find social groupings that could be described as fixed and natural.

There is a gradient between breaking and bridging. First turning to breaking, if the story of the other is accepted as a mild threat, then one would expect the practice of breaking to also be mild. While if the story that the other is a profound threat is accepted, the subsequent breaking is expected to be extreme. The more extreme the breaking, the greater the chance for a violent response to the other. If one accepts that the other is a fundamental threat to one's existence, then the project of normative practice—the "common and unifying rituals, institutions, and processes"[29]—called for by Stenner and Haidt

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[27] *See* JOHN A. POWELL, RACING TO JUSTICE: TRANSFORMING OUR CONCEPTIONS OF SELF AND OTHER TO BUILD AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY 51, 229, 241 (2012) [hereinafter POWELL, RACING TO JUSTICE].

[28] ROBERT A. WILLIAMS, JR., SAVAGE ANXIETIES: THE INVENTION OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION 31–48 (2012).

[29] Stenner & Haidt, *supra* note 8, at 211.

becomes deeply problematic. For example, if whiteness is experienced and defined as purity and the domination of Blackness, what then would be the normative practice in response? While not the majority, there is clearly a growing number of people who believe in white, or male, or Christian dominance, not just descriptively, but normatively as well. Stenner and Haidt's call for normative practice is more akin to assimilation—or "same-ing"—a flattening of differences and the continued maintenance of a social boundary in order to achieve agreeable coexistence—than it is to bridging. In the context of dominance and threat, the likely outcome is a deep and persistent breaking with very little opportunity for bridging. While same-ing presents a simpler solution, it is too deferential to a social identity that insists on diminishing others in order to generate a sense of value. Bridging and ultimately creating a society of belonging is a steep challenge, even appearing impractical when social hierarchies are considered to be natural. However, this difficult work offers the highest likelihood of defeating, not just containing authoritarianism.

III. CRITIQUE OF DECONTEXTUALIZED INTERGROUP THEORY: THE INCOMPLETE RESPONSE TO AUTHORITARIANISM

While Stenner and Haidt are correct in their assertion that authoritarian tendencies are provoked by normative threats not related to economic anxiety, their proposed response to authoritarianism is inadequate and based on an incomplete assessment of the issue. They end up aligning their sympathies with the authoritarian-minded because their reasoning lacks context of the social process of othering and is completely blind to the functioning of whiteness throughout the West and in the United States specifically.

In recommending that greater attention be paid to people who resist diversity, the authors quip that "it is perhaps ironic that tolerance of difference is now threatened by liberal democrats' refusal to recognize that many of their fellow citizens are . . . different."[30] Whether intentional or not, this statement is a crafty sleight of hand. What the authors are really pointing out is not that liberal democrats do not recognize that some people are different, but rather that democrats do not agree that society should bend to the will of the intolerant. That the public should not have to acquiesce to people who would rather not have a liberal democracy or who would rather destroy democratic

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[30] *Id.* at 210 (ellipses in original).

society than share it with people who are different. As Stenner and Haidt say themselves, "authoritarians may seek massive social change in pursuit of oneness and sameness, willingly overturning established institutions and practices."[31]

Consider this point in the context of Donald Trump's rise to power through the provocation of authoritarian fears and his willingness to use the office of the presidency to pursue the political demands of the authoritarian-minded. Stephen Marche speaks to this point, worrying that democratic institutions—the mechanisms meant to preserve our society—have possibly weakened to the point of being ineffective in holding the United States together. He points to President Trump's "attacks on the FBI, the Department of Justice, and the judicial system" as evidence of the country's veer "toward political collapse."[32]

While Marche sees the attack on institutions by the Trump Administration as an attack on structural norms, Trump is also fighting for a society that values white people above all others. Marche categorizes democracies as "built around institutions that are larger than partisan struggle,"[33] but what if our current division is more than a mere *partisan* struggle? What if it is a struggle for who belongs and whom institutions should serve? Yes, Trump has attacked institutions—but not all of them. Institutions he understands as serving the interests or elevating the status of people of color and other marginalized communities—the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, Housing and Urban Development, and federal judges appointed by President Obama—these he has sought to destroy or render ineffective. However, he has strengthened and expanded the institutions where he sees opportunities to harm and oppress communities of color—the Department of Homeland Security and its agencies of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection being a prime example.

Additionally, most arguments in favor of accommodating the preferences of the authoritarian-leaning involve a decontextualization that obscures how embedded into social stability white racial hierarchy is and the degree to which it has shaped norms, values, and traditions. Conservative journalist Conor Friedersdorf, for instance, in his endorsement of Stenner's scholarship, chooses to highlight an experiment by Stenner in

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[31] *Id.* at 183.
[32] Marche, *supra* note 7.
[33] *Id.*

which people identified as authoritarian-leaning experienced higher rates of anxiety in interactions with Black surveyors as an example that underscores her point that "difference" rather than racism explains the reaction.[34] This choice of evidence to support this point and his explanation as to why it does is a striking demonstration of this decontextualization at work. Friedersdorf defends her by clarifying that "their intolerance of difference was much broader than racism, encompassing racial and ethnic out-groups, political dissidents, and people they consider moral deviants."[35] He points out that Stenner finds that "intolerance manifests most commonly in demands for broad conformity, typically including . . . 'the regulation of moral behavior, for example, via policies regarding school prayer, abortion, censorship, and homosexuality, and their punitive enforcement.'"[36] For the authoritarian-prone, moral decay and decline evoke intolerance just as much as race.[37]

But, as will be discussed later in greater detail, political scientist Wendy Brown demonstrates that morality often serves the purpose of "challenging social justice with the natural authority of traditional values."[38] This is because harkening to traditional values developed via the exclusion of out-groups can stave off any threat to the status of the dominant in-group. These traditional values safeguard the identity of in-group members as constituted by notions of superiority to subordinated out-groups. Morality and traditional values, this suggests, are not evidence that racism is not a factor. Friedersdorf's argument therefore lacks persuasiveness when he posits that "Trumpist politics [is less so] rooted primarily in racism, or even an ideological belief in white supremacy, rather than an authoritarian 'different-ism,'"[39] because he has not given due consideration to the possibility that 'different' may mean a departure from white racial hierarchy communicated through the language of morality and traditional values.

Stenner and Haidt also call for deeper sympathies for the authoritarian-leaning by pointing out that "democracies will

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[34] Conor Friedersdorf, *What Ails the Right Isn't (Just) Racism*, ATLANTIC (Aug. 9, 2019), https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/08/what-if-left-was-right-race/595777 [https://perma.cc/LT84-W7BP].
[35] *Id.*
[36] *Id.*
[37] *Id.*
[38] *See* WENDY BROWN, IN THE RUINS OF NEOLIBERALISM: THE RISE OF ANTI-DEMOCRATIC POLITICS IN THE WEST 37 (2019).
[39] Friedersdorf, *supra* note 34.

persistently harbor a certain proportion of residents (roughly a third) who will always find diversity difficult to tolerate."[40] But, they fail to question why certain traits are considered so different that their presence constitutes an otherness that is difficult to tolerate, and, moreover, who gets to decide which others are worth tolerating. This point, at least, they implicitly understand: white people—who occupy the dominant position in the West— were the only ones included in the data sample they used to analyze authoritarianism.[41]

A. The Role of Whiteness in Intergroup Construction

Questions of social group interactions have long been the terrain of intergroup relation theory, as thinkers within this field have sought to explain the conflicts and difficulties that arise between groups co-existing within a society. An examination of the field's major themes and how they relate to Stenner and Haidt's argument exhibit the absence of context that characterizes their depiction of authoritarian dynamics. Both Stenner and Haidt's analysis and intergroup relation theory as it pertains to the United States context fail to recognize the potency of whiteness to intergroup reactions mediated by race. The central question is: what bonds the white in-group so strongly? What factors interact with the construction of the white "we" and the non-white other? What stories and practices of belonging and breaking occur in this group's construction and maintenance? To be clear, whiteness is not the only dominant identity defended by the process of othering. The privileged and heavily-guarded identities built around patriarchy and heteronormativity exist in the United States, the West broadly, and around the globe. Other countries also grapple with the fracturing caused by nationalism and the exclusion built around their internal dominant groups. In Myanmar, the genocide of the Rohingya people is the virulent outcome of a Buddhist majority's assertion of dominance.[42] In India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in demagogic fashion, has stoked the resentment and anxiety of Hindu nationalism against the country's Muslim minority in brutal crackdowns to shore up power and control.[43] Globally, there are numerous examples of dominant groups' angst and insecurities being activated and exploited for political

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[40] Stenner & Haidt, *supra* note 8, at 210.

[41] *Id.* at 189–90.

[42] powell & Menendian, *supra* note 26, at 16.

[43] Rana Ayyub, Opinion, *Mobs are Killing Muslims in India. Why Is No One Stopping Them?*, GUARDIAN (July 20, 2018, 7:35 AM), https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jul/20/mobs-killing-muslims-india-narendra-modi-bjp [https://perma.cc/M6BN-ZF4C].

gain, and often resulting in devastating oppression. In the United States context, and in the West generally, whiteness—crosscutting and interacting with patriarchy, heteronormativity, and other forms of super-ordination—is the prominent identity of the dominant in-group and is the locus of the authoritarian crisis at hand.

Social psychologist Marilynn Brewer's contributions to intergroup relation theory includes an exploration of "optimal distinctiveness theory." In her framing, the need for inclusion is central to group attachment. She describes inclusion-needs as being "satisfied by assimilation within the group while differentiation is satisfied by intergroup distinction."[44] But, is mere distinction and assimilation enough to satisfy members of a group, especially when the benefits of being a group member are marginal? What is it about association—principally for low-income white people—that makes attachment to white identity so strong and their commitment to that in-group so deep? Perhaps it is not mere association, but the psychological benefit of regarding oneself as superior through group membership that creates such a vociferously-defended bond.[45] In this reading, whiteness needs a permanently subordinated group to maintain group cohesion.

Marche understands the role of race in driving the divisions he warns of, pointing to growing intolerance of diversity among white Republicans as the source of the seeming irreconcilable chasm that has formed in recent years.[46] A need to protect the status of whiteness, in his view, fuels much of the widespread resentment in the states and is stoking violent reactions. Marche is correct to point to a deep investment in whiteness and a clinging to its promises as the root of the country's crisis and as fueling the rise of violence. To interpret current social tensions as a contentious 'tribalism' is to analyze without context. The current state of affairs is not tribes of the same social status finding it harder to get along. What drives much of the acrimony in the United States is white identity defined in opposition to the groups it excludes and subordinates. What engenders white resentment is a sense that whiteness is losing its currency and luster for those who have depended on the psychological wages of whiteness in lieu of material benefit. As

[44] Marilynn Brewer, *The Psychology of Prejudice: Ingroup Love or Outgroup Hate?*, 55 J. SOC. ISSUES 429, 429, 434 (1999).
[45] *See* DAVID ROEDIGER, THE WAGES OF WHITENESS: RACE AND THE MAKING OF THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS (1991).
[46] Marche, *supra* note 7.

Marche puts it, white resentment and intolerance to diversity derive from "a frustration in the face of minorities making significant gains" and warns "violence protects status in the context of declining influence."[47] Brewer's theorization of in-group and out-group dynamics describes this relationship as "ingroup favoritism and protectivism provid[ing] fertile ground for perceived conflict and antagonism toward outgroups."[48] In this case, the in-group is protecting its status as white and the privileges whiteness confers.

Kimberlé Crenshaw improves upon the analysis of intergroup dynamics by applying a race conscious perspective as she explores why "whites include themselves in the dominant circle—an arena in which most hold not real power but only their privileged racial identity."[49] In the article, *Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Anti-Discrimination Law*, Crenshaw takes on the political right's formal equality argument and the political left's criticism of a rights-based strategy to support her argument that challenges from within the dominant ideological structure can result in Black advancement. Crenshaw critiques the left's (who she categorizes as critical legal studies scholars) use of Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony to explain Black people's condition in the United States.[50] Under this framework, Black people, by buying into the legitimacy of American Society, "accept and consent to their own oppression."[51] Crenshaw pushes back against this argument, pointing out that, because of the brutality of racism, it is more accurate to say that Black people have been coerced into an oppressed position and that overlooking civil rights progress reflects an underestimation of the power of Black struggle against an oppressive society.[52]

In both views—the left's argument and Crenshaw's rejoinder—the framework positions white people as the dominant group and Black people as the dominated class. Yet, using hegemony to describe the relationship between groups is

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[47] *Id.*

[48] Brewer, *supra* note 44, at 438.

[49] Kimberlé Crenshaw, *Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Anti-Discrimination Law*, in CRITICAL RACE THEORY: THE KEY WRITINGS THAT FORMED THE MOVEMENT 116 (Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, & Kendall Thomas, eds., 1996).

[50] *Id.* at 108 (citing Gramsci's definition of hegemony as "a system of attitudes and beliefs, permeating both popular consciousness and the ideology of elites, [which] reinforces existing social arrangements and convinces the dominated classes that the existing order is inevitable.").

[51] *Id.*

[52] *Id.* at 110.

more apt if it interprets socioeconomically elite and upper-class white people as the dominant group and lower-class white people among the subordinated groups. This reconfiguration places Black people in an even lower position than the previous interpretation. Instead of the dominated group, Black people become a durably positioned outsider, who must remain there to serve as a tool to exert control over lower-class white people and compel them to identify and commit to membership in the "white in-group." But it also better explains group acceptance and consent of its own oppression—it is just that in this case, the group is not Black people but lower-class white people.

It is the establishment of Black people as the durably positioned outsider that encourages poor white people to favor white group membership, even when the pay-off from membership is minimal. It is this shared belief—embedded in the popular consciousness and the ideology of elites[53]—in the inevitability of the predominance of white people in society, or what Herbert Blumer describes as a shared sense of position (explored in greater detail below) that binds white people as a group. [54] The shared sentiment that "blacks were simply inferior to whites and therefore not included in the vision of America as a community of equals."[55] In fact, this "ideology of whiteness"— and the preservation of it—unites people across the political spectrum. When white liberals are criticized for a tepid commitment to racial justice or for being more sympathetic to reconciliation with the political right than to recognizing the full humanity of people of color, it is because of this implicitly shared belief. Whether an explicit racist, an authoritarian, a traditional conservative, or a liberal—an a priori submission to the ideology of whiteness as natural necessitates the subordination and exclusion from the true "we" of Black people.

This forging of a white group consisting of elites and lower class white people who have less to gain from group membership is described by intergroup theorists—University of Cambridge economists Partha Dasgupta and Sanjeev Goyal—as a "group pressure" that is applied toward individual members to assume narrow identities.[56] If there are inter-group conflicts, resources to be protected, or other gains the group stands to make through exclusive membership, then the group will compel

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[53] *Id.*

[54] *See* Herbert Blumer, *Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position*, 1 PAC. SOC. REV. 3 (1958).

[55] Crenshaw, *supra* note 49, at 114.

[56] Partha Dasgupta & Sanjeev Goyal, *Narrow Identities*, 175 J. INSTITUTIONAL & THEORETICAL ECON. 395 (2019).

its members to bury and leave latent the "perpetual possibilities" of identity.[57] In this case, white elites interested in power, status, and wealth accumulation compel lower-class white people to suppress potential affiliations along lines of a broader identity or solidarity with people of color. Instead, they are encouraged to embrace white group membership. The "hook" is an artificial sense of superiority in lieu of material benefits. Dasgupta and Goyal explain this as groups attempting to secure advantage by discouraging its members from joining other groups. Groups do this by "implementing narrow rules" for group membership based on characteristics and criteria that group members are unable to control, like "caste, race, and ethnicity."[58] This may be compounded with Brewer's analysis that in-group maintenance produces a sense of superiority within the group and apprehension toward out-groups which "can lead to hostility and conflict between groups."[59] In reference to political groups, political leaders may intentionally instigate fear and hostility to obtain or keep hold of power.[60] Taken together, Dasgupta and Goyal's along with Brewer's analysis describe the Southern strategy that has taken hold of electoral politics in the United States since the 1960s, President Trump's demagoguery, and the general stoking of authoritarian tendencies happening across the globe.

     A race conscious reading of group dynamics' interaction with whiteness in the United States also helps make sense of Brewer's theory of "in-group favoritism" existing independently from outgroup hate—or the "dynamic of bonding." Bonding is a facet of social capital theory and is the social practice of focusing on strength of connection within a social group as opposed to between social groups.[61] Brewer states that "outgroups can be viewed with indifference, sympathy, even admiration, as long as intergroup distinctiveness is maintained."[62] This idea evokes images of white people being generally tolerant of the presence of Black people in society but responding with resistance, backlash, and anger at the prospect of having to live in the same neighborhoods or attend the same schools as Black people. Group distinctiveness is important for understanding racial

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[57] *Id.* at 23.

[58] *Id.*

[59] Brewer, *supra* note 44, at 437.

[60] *Id.*

[61] Tristan Claridge, *What Is the Difference Between Bonding and Bridging Social Capital?*, Soc. Cap. Rsch. & Training (Jan. 2, 2018), https://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/difference-bonding-bridging-social-capital [https://perma.cc/BRQ2-UB7J].

[62] Brewer, *supra* note 44, at 434.

segregation, but thinking of it in terms of separation for the purpose of mere distinction falls short of fully capturing the forces at work. If Black people share the same resources, have access to the same educational opportunities, and are substantively equal members of society, what makes being white special enough to maintain that psychic sense of superiority?

IV. IMMIGRATION POLICY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF RACE

Stenner and Haidt explain their point of conciliation in the context of immigration. As stated earlier, one of the clearest distinctions between the "other" and the "we" in both the United States and Europe. Stenner and Haidt believe that an authoritarian's concerns over immigration are not pretext for pragmatic fears such as job insecurity but driven by discomfort and anxieties about "where this country is headed."[63] They legitimize this sentiment, arguing that if citizens are concerned about the rate of immigration, and by extension, the direction of the country, their concerns should be taken at face value and not assumed to be masking racism.[64] However, this argument glosses over the different ways immigrants are perceived—and received—in a decontextualized, almost "formally equal" way, as though all racial conjoiners are erased and all newcomers are imbued with the same "equally other" identity in the eyes of the majority population. If it really is merely the rate of immigration that concerns authoritarians, why do only immigrants from certain regions, who are people of color, evoke enmity and hostile reactions? Why are certain immigrants "othered" and some not? What are the notable "identities" that make someone seem like a disruption to the norm?

What Stenner and Haidt overlook is the historical context of American immigration law. These laws reinforced the notion that the United States is a white, Christian country, that only white people are fit for citizenship, and that an infringement on the whiteness of the nation erodes opportunities understood to be reserved for white people. This erosion results in white people's negative views toward non-white immigration. They see it as a force corrupting the very promises the country is expected to keep. As Ian Haney López demonstrates, "law is one of the most powerful mechanisms by which any society creates, defines, and regulates itself,"[65] and the "stark division" created by

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[63] Stenner & Haidt, *supra* note 8, at 211.
[64] *Id.* at 213.
[65] IAN HANEY LÓPEZ, WHITE BY LAW: THE LEGAL CONSTRUCTION OF RACE 7 (2 ed. 2006).

immigration law "carried important connotations regarding agency, will, moral authority, intelligence, and belonging. To be unfit for naturalization—that is, to be non-white—implied a certain degeneracy of intellect, morals, self-restraint, and political values; to be suited for citizenship—to be white—suggested moral maturity, self-assurance, personal independence, and political sophistication."[66] Restrictions on immigration throughout the country's history—such as the Naturalization Act of 1790, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and the restrictive quotas in the Immigration Act of 1924—maintained and fortified the image of the United States as a white country by excluding non-white people. Their exclusion validated by the legitimacy of the law affixed a particular stigma to them. White people, constituted in contrast, thus understood themselves to be the only ones qualified for the benefits and privileges of full membership to the United States body politic. The operation of the law toward this end being largely hidden, these conclusions appear to be natural. Thus, "the notion of a White nation is used to justify arguments for restrictive immigration laws designed to preserve this national identity,"[67] and such concerns can be defended as discomfort with immigration rates and not the byproduct of an institutional effort to construct racial definitions and then limit opportunity on that basis.

The anxiety around immigration has been strengthened by generations of creating, hardening, and instigating a fear of the "other" as a threat to white exceptionalism and purity. *The Atlantic* journalist Adam Serwer chronicles the history and context around the xenophobic up-rise that swept the nation and set the ground for the Immigration Act of 1924.[68] Though humans are innately attuned to differences, and rapid change can lead to anxiety, these broad value systems built on race are artificial. These "categories of difference" had to be socially constructed. A reason to perceive certain groups as a threat had to be created and ingrained into the collective psyche of the population.

Serwer begins by addressing the widespread belief among elites of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that it was their duty to protect the supremacy of the white race. He

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[66] *Id.* at 11–12.

[67] *Id.* at 13.

[68] Adam Serwer, *White Nationalism's Deep American Roots*, ATLANTIC (Apr. 2019), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/04/adam-serwer-madison-grant-white-nationalism/583258 [https://perma.cc/2UBJ-Y8H3].

tells this story through the work and influence—and the milieu in which it existed—of Madison Grant. "The preservation of a pure white race, uncontaminated by foreign blood," Serwer writes, "was in fact sown with striking success in the United States," orchestrated through "a powerful cadre of the American elite, well-connected men who eagerly seized on a false doctrine of 'race suicide' during the immigration scare of the early 20th century. They included wealthy patricians, intellectuals, lawmakers, even several presidents. Perhaps the most important among them was blue blood . . . Madison Grant," and his book *The Passing of the Great Race*.[69] Serwer explains how the concept of race suicide preceded today's use of "white genocide," evoking a deep fear of a loss of status, control, cultural influence, and numerical majority of white people.[70] In explaining the essential role of the aristocratic class in propagating racial fear, he taps into the concept of "hegemony theory," a set of intractable beliefs common in the elite and general population. Serwer identifies this "hegemony theory" as essential to social coercion toward the maintenance of sharp social group boundaries. Serwer unearths the history of elites consuming Grant's ideas with alacrity, including Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Warren Harding, and Calvin Coolidge. Harding embraced the ideas of a Grant acolyte who issued "warnings about the destruction of white society by invading dusky hordes." Harding would go on to orate that between races exists, "a fundamental, eternal, and inescapable difference," and that "racial amalgamation cannot be." President Coolidge would write that any mixing with "inferior races" would cause a degradation to white people and that the natural laws of racial hierarchy had to dictate immigration law.[71]

    These elites sought to create a broadly held conviction amongst white people that their natural superiority and their political, social, and cultural dominance was being threatened. Serwer writes of statistician Francis Walker who bemoaned "racial inferiors," "whose offspring were crowding out the fine 'native' stock of white people."[72] Other elites at the time spoke of "the decay of the American race."[73] Serwer also quotes Grant from *The Passing of the Great Race*: "the cross between a white

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[69] *Id.*
[70] *Id.*
[71] *Id.*
[72] *Id.*
[73] Daniel Okrent, Opinion, *A Century Ago, America Built Another Kind of Wall*, N.Y. TIMES (May 3, 2019), https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/03/opinion/sunday/anti-immigrant-hatred-1920s.html [https://perma.cc/C5C3-XANF].

man and an Indian is an Indian; the cross between a white man and a Negro is a Negro, the cross between a white man and a Hindu is a Hindu; and the cross between any of the three European races and a Jew is a Jew." Serwer makes clear that during this time of heightened attention to the national ethnic makeup, public intellectuals and thought-leaders were actively working to create a social preoccupation with the artificial notion of "white purity" which had to be defended.[74] By fabricating the concept that a "white race" would erode through contact and contamination by invented "non-white races," these thinkers biologized race in a way that needed staunch protection by any means necessary and by all who had a stake in unadulterated whiteness. Within this notion of "purity" sits an anxiety about biological vulnerability—a fragility that demands zealous attentiveness, which in turn instigates a hysteria among those enlisted to defend it. Grant also wrote about immigrants stealing white America's women on the way to racial extermination for white people.[75] Revealed here is not only the continued social construction of a reason to fear newcomers as different, but a reliance on the device of invoking assumed entitlements to female subordination, dominance, and ownership—another essential aspect of the conceived identity of the Western white male.

A. Patriarchy and the Authoritarian Male Self

Female subordination, as Peter Beinart notes in *The Atlantic*, is a ubiquitous mainstay of consolidating political power and projecting political strength.[76] Beinart writes that "the right-wing autocrats taking power across the world share one big thing, which often goes unrecognized in the U.S.: They all want to subordinate women."[77] What Beinart highlights is a common thread across authoritarians, from Trump to Duterte to Bolsonaro. The only weakness in this theory is that the subjugation of women is even more common than he outlines. As Beinart hints, common among "revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries" alike,[78] the oppression of women has been characteristic of many besides autocrats. Across a range of regimes and even within certain movements of marginalized

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[74] Serwer, *supra* note 68.

[75] *Id.*

[76] Peter Beinart, *The New Authoritarians Are Waging War on Women*, ATLANTIC   (Jan.–Feb.   2019), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/01/authoritarian-sexism-trump-duterte/576382 [https://perma.cc/FWZ2-RV4M].

[77] *Id.*

[78] *Id.*

people, a consistent thread has been legitimizing political power, at least partially, through notions of female inferiority and organizing around a patriarchal political structure. This underscores the pervasiveness of constructing the male "self" through the devaluation of women across cultures, and the uniquely potent form of dominance that "othering" takes when it comes to gender.

This is the result of the normalization of female subordination in the service of the accumulation of political power. Beinart quotes political scientist Valerie Hudson who instructs that "for most of human history, leaders and their male subjects forged a social contract: 'Men agreed to be ruled by other men in return for all men ruling over women.' This political hierarchy appeared natural—as natural as adults rearing children—because it mirrored the hierarchy of the home."[79] The normalization of this gender relationship, to the point of it being perceived as the "natural order," causes any departure from it to stir fear and anxiety among the authoritarian-minded as a disruption to stability. This feeling of disorder is then exploited by authoritarian leaders whose "efforts to denigrate and subordinate women cement—for their supporters—the belief that the nation, having been turned upside down, was being turned right-side up."[80]

Beinart's response to the threat of authoritarians exploiting female equality derives from an analysis different from what Stenner and Haidt propose. Beinart recognizes the long-pursued strategy of political opportunists to deepen and instigate fear of gender equality and to present female subordination as a reflection of stability. He thus calls for "normalizing [female] empowerment so autocrats can't turn women leaders and protesters into symbols of political perversity."[81] In Stenner and Haidt's framework that calls for a decontextualized reading of sociopolitical affairs, a move too quickly toward female equality would be understood as faceless change whose rapidity would place an unfair burden on the authoritarian-prone and their anxiety. Calls for tradition and a restoration of norms—strong patriarchal households, women relegated to domestic roles—would be preferable to the hard work of creating new norms and building a society where the full

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[79] *Id.*
[80] *Id.*
[81] *Id.*

humanity of women is recognized, as to not perturb those who cannot tolerate change.

B. The Evolving Boundaries of Whiteness

Returning to the discussion of immigration and xenophobia in the early 20th century, what these voices and influences sowed were the conditions to pass an immigration law as restrictive as the 1924 bill. Immense effort went into forming and affirming the notion that the United States was a white country and that "true Americans" should fear non-white people. In the lead up to passage of the bill, "Republicans and Democrats converg[ed] on the idea that America was a white man's country, and must stay that way."[82] Serwer illustrates this sentiment through the voice of Grant who announced, "we have closed the doors just in time to prevent our Nordic population being overrun by the lower races."[83]

The United States constructed its identity as a "white nation," and stoked fear of that purity being threatened. That this construction was an artificial yet intentional design is illustrated by the Supreme Court's effort to establish the boundaries of whiteness. The Court, Serwer notes, had great difficulty as it strained to come up with a consistent definition of whiteness, made even more challenging by its reliance on baseless race pseudo-science.[84] The Court repeatedly changed course as it catered its definition of whiteness to white elites' ideas regarding exclusion from and worthiness of citizenship.[85] Serwer recounts the Supreme Court case of Bhagat Singh Thind, an immigrant from India. His claim of "whiteness" was denied by the court on the basis that—although he was hereditarily Caucasian—he was not "white" by common understandings of the identity.[86] Contrast this ruling with another case where the Court was tasked with deciding who qualified as white. Takao Ozawa, a Japanese man who petitioned to be categorized as white, was denied by the Court because, according to the justices, he could not be technically classified as Caucasian.[87] These two examples demonstrate ever evolving boundaries of "whiteness," which are based on exclusion from that group and on what basis that exclusion would occur. The Court waffled between rejecting science in favor of established notions of white identity on the

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[82] Serwer, *supra* note 68.
[83] *Id.*
[84] *Id.*
[85] *Id.*
[86] *Id.*
[87] LÓPEZ, *supra* note 65.

one hand and elevating science as the determinant on the other. In its deliberations, the Court exposed the supposedly scientific concept of Caucasian as actually a social invention—referring to it as being "popularly", as opposed to "scientifically," defined.[88]

All of this conformed to popular sentiments and attitudes about who was deserving of "full humanity," and recognition as such, by the United States government. The panic to close the doors to the outside world to define and defend whiteness and the fear that reverberated from this position is what motivates fears about immigration. The anxiety emanates from this logic and the resulting actions. In the era of the Immigration Law of 1924, the United States' idea of the "supreme white race" consisted only of the "Nordic race," the top of the "three tiered" races of white people as the prevailing understanding at that time dictated.[89] Whiteness has since changed, but the disposition toward non-white people and the message communicated regarding them has not.

Stenner and Haidt fail to appreciate the historical basis behind certain groups triggering anxiety amongst the United States' population. They bypass this history in an effort to decontextualize how immigration is perceived, labelling it "change" which inherently causes anxiety in populations. By isolating their stance from history, social forces, and an awareness of identity construction, Stenner and Haidt's interpretation of "anxiety due to immigration" is misleadingly laundered. In their view, this anxiety is cleansed of its reliance on racial hierarchy and white purity; instead being re-presented as nothing more than a psychological inevitability. On this point, it is worth quoting Serwer at length as he dissects this intentional sterilization:

> But to recognize the homegrown historical antecedents of today's rhetoric is to call attention to certain disturbing assumptions that have come to define the current immigration debate in America—in particular, that intrinsic human worth is rooted in national origin, and that a certain ethnic group has a legitimate claim to permanent political hegemony in the United

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[88] *Id.* at 5.
[89] Serwer, *supra* note 68. Serwer describes the prevailing thinking during the turn from the 19th to 20th centuries when academics who were considered race experts established hierarchical categories within the white race. They were the "brave, beautiful, blond 'Teutons'" (whom Grant later changed to Nordics), "the stocky 'Alpines' and the swarthy 'Mediterraneans.'"

States. The most benignly intentioned mainstream-media coverage of demographic change in the U.S. has a tendency to portray as justified the fear and anger of white Americans who believe their political power is threatened by immigration . . . .[90]

Given Serwer's documentation of President Trump and his advisors brandishing the symbols of white nationalism, denouncing Muslim immigration as dangerous, and advocating for "Scandinavian immigrants over those from Latin America or Africa,"[91] Stenner and Haidt failed by not considering the obvious social dynamics at work. Immigration officials have not hidden their racial motivations or intentions, plainly disproving Stenner and Haidt's point that anxiety around immigration is purely driven by the pace of change. "The president's rhetoric about 'shithole countries' and 'invasion' by immigrants," as well as the rise of the "white genocide" term, are directly linked to the fear-based language of "race suicide" that suffused the atmosphere leading to the 1924 immigration bill.[92] These racially motivated factors are important to understanding the present situation. Stenner and Haidt reach the conclusion they do because they analyze from within the United States' dominant narrative. Their perspective proceeds from a position that "erases the extent to which the republic was itself . . . one of settler control over excluded populations," leading them to implicitly endorse this project as a suitable aim.[93] The true impact of othering and white America's preoccupation with maintaining a hierarchy should not be silenced in favor of artificial, sterilized explanations that portray American society as innocent of racial bias and authoritarian impulses as harmless.

This assumption is why anxiety over immigration from Latin America remains high even as undocumented immigration is on the decline and immigration from these regions relative to others around the globe is decreasing.[94] Authoritarian-minded people care less about facts regarding who is coming than about who the perceived threat is. The rate of immigration isn't inducing fear as much as what Justin Gest of George Mason

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[90] *Id.*

[91] *Id.*

[92] *Id.*

[93] *See infra* note 118 and accompanying text.

[94] *See* Thomas B. Edsall, Opinion, *Who's Afraid of a White Minority?*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 30, 2018), [hereinafter, Edsall, *Who's Afraid?*] https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/30/opinion/america-white-minority-majority.html [https://perma.cc/RUC8-E545].

University interprets as "a pervasive perception that Latinos, Africans and Asians are simply too different, too far removed from what Sam Huntington called the 'American creed.'"[95] Stenner and Haidt get as far as understanding that authoritarian backlash is in response to a disruption of order. It is what constitutes that "order" that they get wrong. The fear is not a mere loss of stability, but a loss of social status and access contingent on a white identity. It is the attack on the pre-existing social order and the arrangement of social groups that is the threat.

C. Racial Prejudice as Group Positionality

This point is incisively captured by Herbert Blumer's theory of group positionality. Blumer argues that racial prejudice is larger than individual malice or a set of negative feelings toward a different racial group, but rather "exists in a sense of group position."[96] The position of the dominant group in relation to the subordinated group is constructed through collective processes of socialization that solidify the dominant group's self-image of superiority. Racial prejudice is thus a collective activation of that sense of superiority, "a feeling that the subordinate race is intrinsically different and alien, a feeling of proprietary claim to certain areas of privilege and advantage, and a fear and suspicion that the subordinate race harbors designs on the prerogatives of the dominant race."[97] The instigation of prejudice, therefore, "lies in a felt challenge to this sense of group position. The challenge, one must recognize, may come in many different ways. It may be in the form of an affront to feelings of group superiority; it may be in the form of attempts at familiarity or transgressing the boundary line of group exclusiveness; it may be in the form of encroachment at countless points of proprietary claim."[98] The violation to the claim of whiteness—encompassing notions of citizenship, deservingness, and all of its attendant privileges—is the threat behind the reactionary backlash, as opposed to the introduction of instability.

Upon articulation of this theory, Blumer asserts that "the scheme, so popular today, which would trace race prejudice to a

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[95] *Id.* Justin Gest of George Mason University provides this quotation for an article in which Edsall distills the opinions from several scholars on the topic of United States demographic trends, the potential loss of majority status for white people, and the social implications of such a shift.

[96] Blumer, *supra* note 54.

[97] *Id.*

[98] *Id.*

so-called authoritarian personality shows a grievous misunderstanding of the simple essentials of the collective process that leads to a sense of group position."[99] Stenner and Haidt go a step beyond this misunderstanding, and completely excuse authoritarian-leaning personalities of harboring any racial prejudice. This absolution is the product of a social environment where explicit racism is condemned but whiteness must maintain a sense of purity and positional superiority. In order to preserve both, manifestations of racism (especially of the variety that cannot be traced to raw hate or the interpersonal) will not be uprooted but re-inscribed outside of popular definitions of racism. Stenner and Haidt reach the conclusions they do because, being members of the dominant group, they fall under the influence of the "processes of [group] definition." Through the "complex interaction and communication between the members of the dominant group," through the "leaders, prestige bearers, officials, group agents, dominant individuals and ordinary laymen present[ing] to one another characterizations of the subordinate group. Through talks, tales, stories, gossip, anecdotes, messages, pronouncements, news accounts, orations, sermons, preachments, and the like definitions," the white in-group takes form.[100]

　　　To construct white identity, outsiders must be first constituted and then barred from membership, thus creating an image of whiteness as worthy of exaltation and entitlement. Although this process requires the subordination of an "other," it is interpreted as innocuous—its insidiousness is overlooked. This "self-making" is rarely conscious by the members of the group. Through complex interactions, shared stories, common definitions and the like, the in-group agrees no offense has been committed against others; the collective goodness of their group being self-evident. Stenner and Haidt have the sympathies they do because "to the extent they recognize or feel themselves as belonging to that group they will automatically come under the influence of the sense of position held by that group."[101] To Stenner and Haidt, the authoritarian's desire to exclude is, to some degree, sensible. They wouldn't have their own in-group without it. These are the contours and injurious solipsism of whiteness.

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[99] *Id.*
[100] *Id.*
[101] *Id.*

D. The Whiteness Paradigm and its Impact on Immigration
    Policy

What Stenner and Haidt draw from their examination of
immigration is that incorporating the concerns of authoritarians
will lead to better immigration policy. They argue:

> there are surely types and degrees of affinity
> between host and newcomers, rates of entry, and
> methods of supporting their assimilation and
> inclusion that facilitate successful integration
> into the community. Frank consideration of these
> matters is the key to broad acceptance of
> immigration policy and vital to the continued
> health of our liberal democracies.[102]

However, any immigration policy resulting from this
decontextualized process will produce outcomes, though
considered well-grounded and sound policy, that "just happen" to
exclude people from Latin America and the Middle East because
they are "harder" to assimilate. In short, their customs are just
"too different" from the norm of whiteness.

The solutions engendered by this decontextualized
framework are exemplified in journalist David Frum's analysis
of US immigration policy. Frum argues that immigration is not
going anywhere so it is necessary to understand the pros and
cons of it to be able to regulate it appropriately and ensure the
"right kind" of immigration occurs. Because he accepts as given
many of the assumptions that Stenner and Haidt make, his
aversion to large-scale immigration comes from its potential
social disruptions, particularly the threat it poses to stable
democracy.[103] He comments that the political left was once more
closely aligned to what he considers reasonable by quoting
Hillary Clinton as saying, "I think Europe needs to get a handle
on migration, because that is what lit the flame . . . . [I]t is fair to
say Europe has done its part . . . if we don't deal with the
migration issue, it will continue to roil the body politic."[104] He
reiterates this point by warning that "too much, or the wrong

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[102] Stenner & Haidt, *supra* note 8, at 214.
[103] David Frum, *If Liberals Won't Enforce Borders, Fascists Will*,
ATLANTIC   (Apr.   2019),
https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/04/david-frum-how-much-
immigration-is-too-much/583252 [https://perma.cc/AE2S-BU2Z].
[104] *Id.*

kind [of immigration], and you ... possibly upend your democracy."[105]

This stance takes for granted the exclusionary foundation of Western society. A body politic built on excluding, pillaging, and expropriating the globe, then denying access to those confiscated resources and the society enriched and given form by that extraction. What "lit the flame" is an objection to losing the right to exclude, the "roiling" of the body politic stems from the tight regimentation of who constitutes the "we." Clinton's and Frum's positions are that a society of belonging across ethnicities, races, and places of origin is prohibitively costly—or more simply—that they find such a society unimaginable having never questioned the merits of Western world-making. The question is never asked—what mechanisms or processes would cause the "upending of democracy"? Throughout our nation's history, white people have shown a willingness to undermine democracy and reject and dismantle institutions of social stability rather than lose their sense of status atop the racial hierarchy.[106] This reaction playing out, and not immigrants themselves, is what puts democracy at risk.

Frum reveals how firmly he is situated within the ideological framework of Western liberalism[107] when he describes the current global migratory patterns as an "exit from the *less successful* countries of the global South into the *more successful* countries of the global North."[108] Frum has chosen to construct his worldview devoid of historical context, making the inequality between the global South and North appear just a matter of "success." It is merely one set of nations outcompeting

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[105] *Id.*

[106] *See* Nikole Hannah-Jones, *The Resegregation of Jefferson County*, N.Y. TIMES MAG. (Sept. 6, 2017), https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/06/magazine/the-resegregation-of-jefferson-county.html [https://perma.cc/9XBG-Z6VR] (recounting that in 1956 along with other Southern states, Alabama decided to shut down public schools completely rather than integrate). *See also* IAN HANEY LÓPEZ, DOG WHISTLE POLITICS: HOW CODED RACIAL APPEALS HAVE REINVENTED RACISM AND WRECKED THE MIDDLE CLASS 166–68 (2015) (writing of white people rejecting New Deal and Great Society era policies even as these programs reduced inequality, in part because politicians instigated white resentment about the social gains of people of color); Jonathan M. Metzl, *Dying of Whiteness*, BOS. REV. (June 27, 2019), http://bostonreview.net/race/jonathan-m-metzl-dying-whiteness [https://perma.cc/TV2N-TBXH] (detailing sacrificing health care expansion, in some instances costing them their lives, to preserve the white racial hierarchy).

[107] Western liberalism is defined here as the cognitive erasure of persistent hierarchy in the creation of a liberal subject—that subject then being universalized so everyone appears to be an equal.

[108] Frum, *supra* note 103 (emphasis added).

another in an equal playing field of opportunity—fair and square. Colonialism is completely absent from his analysis, because in order for the Western liberal subject to put together an understanding of the world in which it will exist, the Western world's crimes have to be erased so the subject can understand itself as a pure being ever-marching toward the liberal ideal.[109]

E. Frum's perspective leaves one with an incomplete and distorted view of the world that does not match reality. This foundational misunderstanding leads to proposals that dramatically miss the mark. For instance, Frum advocates that:

> [As] immigration pressures . . . increase, it becomes more imperative than ever to restore the high value of national citizenship, not to denigrate or disparage others but because for

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[109] *See* ROXANNE DUNBAR-ORTIZ, LOADED: A DISARMING HISTORY OF THE SECOND AMENDMENT (2018) (ebook). [Frum's selective sampling of history to construct his worldview is evident in his highlighting of President Theodore Roosevelt as a proponent of equality. He heralds Roosevelt as someone whose "insistence on a singular national identity was founded not on any sense of hereditary supremacy, but on his passionately patriotic egalitarianism." Frum, *supra* note 103. He quotes Roosevelt as saying, "The children and children's children of all of us have to live here in this land together. Our children's children will intermarry, one with another, your children's children, friends, and mine. They will be the citizens of one country." *Id.* Contrast this with Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's characterization of Roosevelt, who she describes as:

> an early convert to "Social Darwinism," leading to the racist pseudo-science of eugenics. In his view, all the darker peoples were inferior, particularly Native Americans, who were destined to disappear completely. But he also regarded poor white people as inferior . . . . Furthermore, he theorized that a new race was born with testing of settlers' survival skills in nature, creating a new kind of aristocracy destined to rule the world. The settler "stock" that morphed into that superior species was composed of English, Scots-Irish, French Huguenots, German, and Dutch, all Protestants. . . . Roosevelt argued that the superior European was strengthened by not intermarrying with their defeated enemies, which would cause loss of vigor.

DUNBAR-ORTIZ, *supra* note 109, at 41. It appears that in the quotation Frum cites, Roosevelt was not intending that his vision include everyone. It cannot be pretended that the exclusionary vision of the United States prevalent at the time, embodied in Roosevelt's words, has no effect on how we interpret immigration issues today, whose interests and security is centered, and how we understand and define the "immigration problem" and thus how we shape "solutions." As seen here, Frum's worldview as an outgrowth of a narrow "we" philosophy leads him to attempt to universalize words and sentiments meant only for an exclusive category of people without examining the way that narrow "we" philosophy shaped ways of reasoning, laws, and institutions that are not designed to accommodate everyone.

> many of your fellow citizens—perhaps less affluent, educated, and successful than you—the claim "I am a U.S. citizen" is the only claim they have to any resources or protection.[110]

In this passage, Frum comes upon a central truth, but one that he does not completely grasp. In place of equal access to resources and capital, in place of adequate wages, and in place of health care and other social safety nets, many people in the United States have been granted in-group membership through national identity. Instead of equal access, they have been given an "insignia of belonging" as capital has shifted across borders and as their jobs have been shipped overseas. What is left for them is to fulfill the important social role that keeps the West bound together—what Steve Martinot refers to as the "middle stratum."[111]

Author Rana Dasgupta describes this bolstering of symbolic citizenship as an arbitrary assignment of worthiness to people. This arbitrariness encourages the "productive role" of the "middle stratum"—regenerating the value of in-group membership through their acts of violence and oppression as an expression of ultra-nationalism.[112] Without challenging the underlying foundations of society's current structure, proposals will struggle to devise an egalitarian path forward while stretching to accommodate formations that demand hierarchy.

As reasons to support more restrictive immigration policy, Frum provides a laundry list of issues he believes immigration exacerbates. Among these are American citizens moving between states less frequently than the previous generation due to housing costs, the strain on government finances, Social Security and Medicare, the lowering of scores on national educational assessments, workplace safety and exploitation of workers, the delay in mass incarceration and the opioid epidemic garnering national attention, and the white working-class feeling like strangers in their own country.[113] Frum finds a way to link each of these issues to high rates of immigration.

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[110] Frum, *supra* note 103.
[111] STEVE MARTINOT, THE RULE OF RACIALIZATION: CLASS, IDENTITY, GOVERNANCE 78 (2003).
[112] Rana Dasgupta, *The Demise of the Nation State*, GUARDIAN (Apr. 5, 2018, 1:00 PM), https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/apr/05/demise-of-the-nation-state-rana-dasgupta [https://perma.cc/FUK9-3UTU].
[113] Frum, *supra* note 103.

Frum does not spend any time interrogating other well documented explanations for these problems. He ignores exclusionary zoning and the rise of institutional investor landlords. He ignores the corporate capture of government which severely limits government revenue, affecting the viability public institutions of resources. He ignores the exclusionary and assimilationist ethos of the United States which influences the way schools view and inadequately accommodate English language learners. He ignores the predominating extractive form of capitalism that encourages worker exploitation and the warehousing of people in penal institutions. He ignores the unsustainability of the implicit arrangement to compensate a certain part of the working-class—the "real American" segment—with honorary but tenuous membership in the dominant in-group, even as that value erodes in the face of capitalism's evermore rapacious demands. His arguments, in this regard, are not so much astute critiques that give reason to oppose immigration as they are reasons to reform American society and institutions. He is not exposing flaws in the way the country handles immigration. He is holding up a mirror—a point he eventually, however reluctantly, comes around to admitting: "it is more true that America's tendency to plutocracy explains immigration policies than that immigration policies explain the tendency to plutocracy."

F. The Price of the Ticket: The Problem with Same-ing

Stenner and Haidt conclude their analysis by calling for "attending to people's needs for oneness and sameness; for identity, cohesion and belonging," and for an attentiveness to authoritarians' "needs and preferences."[114] But what if those needs and preferences are existential threats to certain groups of people? As Stenner and Haidt pointed out themselves, authoritarian demands will "typically include legal discrimination against minorities, coercion of others," and demands for the use of group authority (i.e. coercion by the state).[115] Further, they concede authoritarians display "a willingness to support extremely illiberal measures (such as the forced expulsion of racial or religious groups)."[116] In the United States context, this means *support* for police brutality and unjustified police killings of Black people, children ripped from families and caged at the Mexican border, and a Muslim ban. Through this conclusion, the authors reveal that the other side

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[114] Stenner & Haidt, *supra* note 8, at 215.
[115] *Id.* at 184.
[116] *Id.* at 183.

of their overly-sympathetic disposition toward authoritarians is a dismissive and devaluing stance toward people of color and religious minorities. When Stenner and Haidt call for "belonging," they are actually advocating for "same-ing," a softer othering, yet still an erasure of identity that flattens and destroys everything that makes one appear different (everything deemed unacceptable to the social majority). This "same-ing" is advanced as a prerequisite for acceptance without due consideration for what it is demanding. Proponents carry a false sense of self-congratulatory virtuousness believing they are extending a welcoming embrace, unaware that their acceptance is conditional upon a cleansing of anything that smacks of difference, anything that would make the "other" recognizable as "the other." Same-ing, in other words, is "the price of the ticket."[117]

Stenner and Haidt's use the word "belonging" is misleading. When they conflate "belonging" with oneness and sameness, they are speaking of "belonging" as a condition in which marginalized groups assimilate into the dominant group, or "join the club," no matter the restrictions and demands of conformity that club may place on membership.[118] The authors

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[117] The price of the ticket refers to James Baldwin's sentiment that the cost of admittance into white social circles is to eliminate everything that identifies one as distinguishably non-white. For him, acceptance into white literary spaces meant burying his Blackness and queerness. This price that is demanded—the price of the ticket—is in essence a demand for same-ing, or the compulsion of narrow identity. *See* JAMES BALDWIN, THE PRICE OF THE TICKET: COLLECTED NONFICTION 1948–1985 (1985).

[118] Nikhil Pal Singh, *Universalizing Settler Liberty: An Interview with Aziz Rana*, JACOBIN, (Aug. 4, 2014), https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/08/the-legacies-of-settler-empire [https://perma.cc/M48M-6QTT]. Also neglected are the unjust foundations of the institutions and structures into which marginalized people are included. This approach of inclusion, as opposed to reckoning and co-creation, has materialized in the folding in of a smattering of people from marginalized identities atop unjust and exploitative systems of human stratification—where equality is defined by a diversity of people operating and benefiting from arrangements that demand and generate value from oppression and subordination. As Aziz Rana puts it, "the country can have a nonwhite person as president, secretary of state, or chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff without any expectation that this individual will challenge the basic parameters of economic and racial hierarchy or of American interventionism abroad." *Id.* Because the United States has "never properly confronted the country's colonial infrastructure or its imperial legacies" or has pursued a reconciliatory strategy of inclusion into the existing American project for its marginalized and subordinated populations instead of a "conscious moment of colonial accounting" with them, the nation has been allowed to believe that "the application of US power is fundamentally non-imperial," and that the "projection of American power necessarily means the defense of liberal values," even as it has suppressed democracy and popular sovereignty, imposed

also assert that "in the absence of a common identity rooted in race or ethnicity . . . the things that make 'us' an 'us' —*that make us one and the same* —are common authority (oneness) and shared values (sameness)."[119] They believe that "democracy in general, and tolerance in particular, might actually be better served by an abundance of common and unifying rituals, institutions, and processes,"[120]—in other words, the practice of systematic same-ing through culture-making and institution-building. That might serve the goal of belongingness, but not unless marginalized peoples have a role in the construction of that culture and those institutions. Stenner and Haidt's argument that assimilation is a necessary component of immigration policy betrays their bias. Implicit in their analysis is the fact that the authors cannot imagine the existence of a truly multiracial, multicultural democracy with diverse salient identities. They are challenging the project of pluralism itself.

G. Conservatives and the Pace of (Racial) Change

Conor Friedersdorf provides a clear articulation and defense of Stenner's perspective, mainly in reference to her 2005 book *The Authoritarian Dynamic*.[121] The main points he underscores from Stenner's work are that status quo conservatives, because they have a predilection for defending tradition and order, are perhaps the strongest hope for defending liberal democracy in the face of rising authoritarianism. He makes this case by quoting Stenner's reasons why conservatives are so dependable in trying times. He lifts up her assertion that "it is no secret that liberal democracy is most secure when individual freedom and diversity are pursued in a relatively orderly fashion," and that if conservatives are provided "reassurances regarding established brakes on the pace of change, and the settled rules of the game to which all will adhere," they can be expected to "defend faithfully an established order."[122] But if made to withstand accusations of racism, status quo conservatives can be driven "into unnatural and unnecessary political alliances with the hateful and intolerant."[123]

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economic systems of extraction, and colonially derived hierarchical valuations of people abroad. *Id.*

[119] Stenner & Haidt, *supra* note 8, at 185.

[120] *Id.* at 211.

[121] Conor Friedersdorf, *How Conservatives Can Save America*, ATLANTIC (Feb. 2, 2017), https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/02/how-conservatives-can-save-america/515262 [https://perma.cc/3EGM-AUS7].

[122] *Id.*

[123] *Id.*

However, both Stenner and Friedersdorf miss that in order to divorce notions of "order" and "change" from race, the extent to which society in the United States is predicated on hierarchical stratification must be obscured. Only once the stratification is ignored can immigration from non-white regions of the globe and movements among the marginalized in search of opportunity be described as an aversive rate of change that has nothing to do with race. They call for a reliance on conservatives to "defend faithfully an established order," but what if the established order is unjustifiable and cannot create the conditions for equality for the marginalized and a fully inclusive and broad "we"? Advocating for "diversity [to be] pursued in a relatively orderly fashion,"[124] is the equivalent of telling people of color and other marginalized groups that your freedom must wait. It must conform to a restrained manner that will not upset those who find a world that changes to accommodate your freedom to be distressing. There is a direct relationship between liberty and equality. For the group that has built its identity upon being the top rung of a hierarchy, embedded in their liberty is the right to dominate others, and for those others, equality presents the pathway to liberty. An unencumbered move toward equality then becomes an affront to "liberty" for people whose identity is constituted by whiteness as a super-ordinated position.

What is lacking in this analysis is even a notion of concern for the trauma, hardship, and struggle that people of color and marginalized communities face. Instead, that trauma is dismissed to focus exclusively on how members of the dominant in-group feel about the pace of change—change that is rooting out their "right to dominate." Is it not the height of in-group (white) entitlement to believe that someone else's freedom or full humanity is a pace of change in need of regulation? Such a position recalls the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s statement on the white moderate who is "more devoted to order than to justice," and "who paternalistically believes he can set a timetable for another man's freedom."[125] Stenner—and Friedersdorf in his support—has not interrogated sufficiently exactly what her words advocate.

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[124] *Id.*

[125] Letter from Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King, Jr. (Apr. 16, 1963) (on file with the Columbia Journal of Race and law), http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document_images/undecided/630416-019.pdf [https://perma.cc/5EJF-U8K3].

Ibram Kendi grapples with these implications when he asks, "Am I an American?"[126] Kendi, through a tour of history, demonstrates how marginalized groups and Black people in particular have been told to put their freedom on hold out of concern for the white in-group's sense of comfort. He writes of the popular opinion in the antebellum period that "slavery be diminished in a way so gradual as to prepare the whites for the happy and progressive change." He explains how President Grant grew "tired of alienating racist Americans from the Republican Party every time he sent federal troops to defend our right to live, vote, thrive, and hold political office." He reveals that Thomas Jefferson felt that Black people needed not equality but relocation through colonization in order to be civilized.[127]

Kendi's point is not to show how virulently racist the country was in its past, but to illuminate how similar arguments persist today to continue to deny full humanity to people marked as the other. "The moderate strategized then," he writes, "as the moderate still does now, based on what was required to soothe white sensibilities." In the America of slavery, moderates stressed that "immediate emancipation was impractical and impossible in the way that anti-racists are told immediate equality is impractical and impossible today."[128] Kendi communicates how the message from Stenner, Haidt, Friedersdorf and others, who plead to put white comfort ahead of equality for all people, is received by those "othered:" "I can dine on American soil until I demand a role in remaking the menu that is killing me . . . . I hear the moderate message of compliance, of assimilation, of being happy just dining."[129] This is the message broadcasting from those calls to accede to the preferences of the authoritarian-prone, or to create the conditions necessary to allow status quo conservatives to deliver us to a stable order. It is conformity garbed in language that severs its relationship from race and the construction of white identity.

Stenner and Haidt defensively fend off any criticism that considers the context of power and racial dynamics, claiming that "it is implausible to maintain that the host community can successfully integrate any kind of newcomer at any rate whatsoever, and it is unreasonable to assert that any other

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[126] Ibram X. Kendi, *Am I an American?*, ATLANTIC (Jul. 16, 2019), https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/07/am-i-american/594076 [https://perma.cc/3BQP-XU4U].

[127] *Id.*

[128] *Id.*

[129] *Id.*

suggestion is racist."[130] This position drastically misunderstands the role of whiteness and white racial hierarchy in binding the West, determining identity, and making non-white people seem beyond integration. The authors likely cannot make sense of such a critique in the context of racism narrowly defined as interpersonal racial animus. But, in the context of maintaining white centrality, white normalcy, and the potency of whiteness as a force permeating Western and United States society, criticism of their conclusions becomes resonant. In fact, preservation of white normativity is exactly the work the authors do through their argumentation and outsized sympathies for authoritarianism. What needs to be examined is the Western ideology from which they write, its relationship to white hegemony, and their own role in reifying the epistemologies that continue to mask its foundations.

V. WESTERN IDEOLOGY AND THE FICTION OF WHITENESS

Understanding Stenner and Haidt's conclusions will require an exploration of the construction of Western ideology. In *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, Yuval Noah Harari argues that the characteristic that sets humans apart from other species is the ability to create collective fictions.[131] During the Cognitive Revolution, when new ways of thinking and communicating rapidly developed, humans adapted a new skill that allowed for mass cooperation: myth-making. While other animals can communicate information about the physical world—a warning of trouble, the location of food—humans can speak about and believe in ideas and concepts that are completely fabricated. The widespread belief in these ideas and the trust that others believe in them, too, allowed humans to form ever larger groups, leading to cities, nations, empires, civilizations, and entire cultures.[132] Through collective stories, people "have been able to change their behavior quickly, transmitting new behaviors to future generations without the need of genetic or environmental change."[133] Human myths propelled the species to its position atop the food chain and to the heights of spectacular achievement.

Among these myths, Harari includes money, religion, ideology, legal systems, corporations, and nations. He makes

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[130] Stenner & Haidt, *supra* note 8, at 214
[131] YUVAL NOAH HARARI, SAPIENS: A BRIEF HISTORY OF HUMANKIND, 32 (2015) (ebook).
[132] *Id.*
[133] *Id.* at 33–34.

certain to point out that these myths are not lies. The nation state, for example, is "an imagined reality . . . that everyone believes in, and as long as this communal belief persists, the imagined reality exerts force in the world."[134] These fictions are the basis for mass social connection and the behaviors, norms, and values that derive from them form culture.[135] Harari calls these grand myths by which humans live, "imagined orders." Once an imagined order is established, great effort must be undertaken to maintain its stability. Through indoctrination, coercion at times, and its appearance in the physical world, the imagined order is embedded into our thinking and incorporated into our lives so deeply that it is assumed to be natural and pre-social.[136] Harari also notes that "an imagined order can be maintained only if large segments of the populations—in particular large segments of the elite and the security forces—truly believe in it,"[137] or in other words, if it takes on a hegemonic nature.[138]

For most people, race is primarily understood narrowly as skin color and not that "laws and customs helped to create 'races' out of a broad range of human traits."[139] Many forget or do not realize that whiteness is just another fiction. It only exists in the collective minds of humans for the purpose of legitimizing the imagined order of Western ideology.

The Western notion of the self is borne out of the Enlightenment tradition by thinkers such as Kant, Descartes, and Locke.[140] These philosophers imagined a self that was one-dimensional and capable of reasoning separate and apart from any social experience—a fixed, unfragmented, and unitary self, excluding any possibility of a self with multiple identities. In fact, this self is not set apart, above, or before social experience, but devised and constructed by societal influence. The self reflects—not determines—social values, preferences, and practices. Indicative of its conception as a construct of European society, despite its claims on universality, this "self" did not intend to include non-white people and their ways of life.[141] As powell notes, "by construing the essence of the human self as individual

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[134] *Id.* at 32.
[135] *Id.* at 37.
[136] *Id.* at 112.
[137] *Id.*
[138] Crenshaw, *supra* note 49.
[139] *Id.* at 113.
[140] john a. powell & Stephen M. Menendian, *Remaking Law: Moving Beyond Enlightenment Jurisprudence*, 54 ST. LOUIS L.J. 1035 (2009).
[141] POWELL, RACING TO JUSTICE, *supra* note 27.

and autonomous, European thinkers deliberately excluded from selfhood members of non-white societies that were organized around non-individualistic norms."[142]

Furthermore, this individualistic self borrows ideas of dominion—an ordained entitlement to rule over the earth and "lesser" forms of life—from the religious traditions of Western society. For instance, "Hobbes's state of nature is a secularized version of Calvin's 'natural man' without God," and "John Locke's theory of individual rights is rooted in a Protestant understanding of man's relationship with God."[143] This "adherence of modernists to Christian beliefs justified the conquest and subjugation of non-Christian (that is, non-white) [peoples]."[144] As DuBois reveals through his study of whiteness, central to white identity is the claim by whiteness to the "title of the universe,"[145] motivated by the belief that the universal self (white male) was created in God's image. As Harari points out, "the idea of equality is inextricably intertwined with the idea of creation. The Americans got the idea of equality from Christianity."[146] Since non-white people were constituted outside of notions of the Western self, equality was reserved for white people, and people of color were part of the lesser world subject to the West's domination.

Because whiteness is constituted in opposition to other explicitly racialized identities—deriving its value, virtuousness, and esteem from standing apart from degradation and debasement—it required anti-Blackness to take form. As Crenshaw states,

> Throughout American history, the subordination
> of blacks was rationalized by a series of

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[142] *Id.* at 169.
[143] *Id.* at 217.
[144] *Id.* at 169.
[145] Ella Myers, *Beyond the Wages of Whiteness: DuBois and the Irrationality of Anti-Black Racism*, SOC. SCI. RSCH. COUNCIL: ITEMS (Mar. 21, 2017), https://items.ssrc.org/reading-racial-conflict/beyond-the-wages-of-whiteness-du-bois-on-the-irrationality-of-antiblack-racism [https://perma.cc/B3WC-YG2Y]. Myers discusses DuBois's conceptualization of whiteness in *Darkwater* and quotes his pondering of what constitutes whiteness: "I ask soberly: 'But what on earth is whiteness that one should so desire it?' Then always, somehow, someway, I am given to understand that whiteness is the ownership of the earth, forever and ever, Amen!" She then goes on to elucidate DuBois's point even further, stating that "Whiteness entails 'passionate' belief in one's right to everything and anything. The 'title to the universe claimed by White Folk' is an 'extraordinary dictum,' which lies at the heart of white identity."
[146] HARARI, *supra* note 131, at 109.

> stereotypes and beliefs that made their condition appear logical and natural. . . . Today, it is probably not controversial to say that these stereotypes were developed primarily to rationalize the oppression of blacks. What is overlooked, however, is the extent to which these stereotypes serve a hegemonic function by perpetuating a mythology about both blacks and whites even today, reinforcing an illusion of a white community that cuts across ethnic, gender, and class lines. . . . Racism helps to create an illusion of unity through the oppositional force of a symbolic 'other.' The establishment of an Other creates a bond, a burgeoning common identity of all non-stigmatized parties—whose identity and interests are defined in opposition to the other. . . . [A] structure of polarized categories is characteristic of Western thought.[147]

Central to the conceptualization of the Western self was not only the exclusion but the degradation of non-white people. This animating necessity of the white identity fuels beliefs around who belongs and who does not—who *can* belong and who cannot—as long as whiteness and current configurations of the Western self rule the day. Compounding the damage is that, in order to have an appearance of validity, the claim of universality necessitates the cloaking of this exclusion and degradation in today's world. At least in theory, if not in action, racial hierarchy is frowned upon, equality is extended to everyone, and the universal self is meant to apply to all people, not just white men.

A. Objective Reasoning or a Biased Worldview?

The assertion that the ability to reason resides with an a priori self that precedes society is also fundamental to the process of myth making—the insistence "that the order sustaining society is an objective reality created by the great gods or by the laws of nature."[148] As reason was conceived as the ability to know and interpret pre-social and empirical aspects of the world and of being, it serves as the basis on which Enlightenment thinkers believed they discovered and came to realize the essence of the universal unitary self. However, as is evident from Harari's insights, what were thought to be universal conclusions from an a priori ability to reason are

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[147] Crenshaw, *supra* note 49, at 112–13.
[148] HARARI, *supra* note 131, at 113.

actually constructs heavily informed by Christianity and European society. Neglecting this insight, Western thinking claims—as the interaction between reason as a concept and the construction of whiteness is relegated to the background—that all persons through the process of reasoning would naturally reach the same conclusions. This move, by definition, excludes from full personhood anyone with differing conclusions. Understanding this interaction reveals that reason, though thought to be a priori and its conclusions universal, is in reality highly dependent on positionality.

Stenner and Haidt reach their conclusions because they operate within the boundaries of the "whiteness-privileging Western imagined order." They fail to see how significantly white societal primacy influences their thinking. The authors conclude that authoritarian concerns should be attended to. They believe that this conclusion was reached through careful objective "reasoning." They are blind to the fact that their "reasoning" is positional and shaped by their socialization in a society that ignores its own racially exclusive foundation. They see nothing wrong with asserting that the dominant culture has the right to demand assimilation and that authoritarian fears of immigrants are valid. They cannot conceive of how their reasoning is colored by race. This is the same logic that motivates the sentiment that Ashley Jardina of Duke University touches upon in her description that many white people are not motivated by racial animus, but:

> "that the rug is being pulled out from under them—that the benefits they have enjoyed because of their race, their groups' advantages, and their status atop the racial hierarchy are all in jeopardy. . . . [W]hite identity is not synonymous with racial prejudice. White racial solidarity provides a lens through which whites interpret the political and social world that is inward looking. . . . Put bluntly, the politics of white identity is marked by an insidious illusion, one in which whites claim their group experiences discrimination in an effort to reinforce and maintain a system of racial inequality where whites are the dominant group with the lion's share of power and privileges." Because for many whites "identifying with their group and protecting its status hardly seems problematic, especially compared to racism," it's difficult to

"convince some whites that there's something normatively objectionable about identifying with one's racial group and wanting to protect its interests."[149]

Just as Stenner and Haidt are flabbergasted that anyone could interpret their conclusions as racist, the white identity politics that Jardina describes interprets itself as benign. Perhaps describing these perspectives as racism and bigotry seem too strong. However, it is important to convey the entanglement of safeguarding social benefits for white people with an ideology that declares white people superior to others. This ideology that is a close cousin of racism—and, in fact, relies on racism for its birth as a dominant ideology—is just as harmful to people of color. Stenner, Haidt, and others who are fully enveloped by this imagined order may not like the accusation of racism, but are unwittingly toiling in an ethos that wields the same weapons and inflicts the same injuries.

Also going unnoticed is the act of mythmaking in which Stenner and Haidt are partaking. By defending authoritarian fears, taking the reasoning on which their conclusions are based for granted as natural and universal, and flatly denying that race could ever have had an impact on their thinking (thus rendering its work invisible), the authors are participating in a bit of maintenance work on the imagined order from which they operate.

VI. A SOCIETY AND POLITICAL ECONOMY SHAPED BY AN EXCLUSIONARY "WE"

A. The Social Death

Harari notes that in the many revolutions that changed the course of humanity, there were central transitions in behavior and ways of thinking that powered these new directions. The Scientific Revolution was marked by an admission of ignorance which allowed people to seek new knowledge and solutions to existing problems. This change in thinking led to a belief that the future would be better than the present, paving the way for the concept of credit and the modern

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[149] Thomas B. Edsall, Opinion, *White Identity Politics Aren't Going Anywhere*, N. Y. TIMES (Dec. 20, 2018) [hereinafter Edsall, *White Identity*] (quoting ASHLEY JARDINA, WHITE IDENTITY POLITICS 267–68 (2019)), https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/20/opinion/trump-race-immigration-democrats.html [https://perma.cc/6XRR-M37P].

economy.[150] The Cognitive Revolution's essential lesson is that
humans are capable of creating and believing grand myths that
allow for widespread cooperation.[151] While slavery in the United
States was not a new innovation—as the practice of enslaving
people had been in existence for millennia—nor was it
transformative to the point of marking a revolution in human
history, it did have an impact on *modern society* (from the era of
slavery on through the present) similar to the transition in
behaving and thinking that marks epochal revolutions. Slavery
showed people of the modern era that their myth-making
abilities can be used to conceptually kill others—to exact upon
them a social death.[152] This process involves the stripping of full
person status and the induction into a subordinated and
subservient hierarchy meant to enable a full range of life for
those still recognized as whole and respected selves. Once
socially dead, these people could be exploited and extracted for
all they were worth without harm, consequence, or guilt. It
should be noted, as Cedric Robinson and other theorists of the
Black Radical Tradition point out, the social death concept takes
the perspective of state structures, institutions, and the powerful
that are served by them.[153] From the perspective of the people
rendered "socially dead," their resistance, especially in a
collective form, testifies to their persistent social existence.[154]
But in terms of how they are regarded and offered for
expropriation by the political economy, their social status was
made one of insignificance. Once this discovery was made, it not
only justified but completely erased the exploitation, death, and
destruction of the industrial revolution, capitalism, and
globalization. Saskia Sassen refers to this process as
expulsion.[155]

B. Globalization and the Nation-State

        This ability to incorporate social death of the victims of
existing systems and institutions underpins the neoliberal
ideology guiding United States domestic and foreign policy today.
The global economic integration promoted and extended across

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[150] *See* HARARI, *supra* note 131, at 212–84 (discussing the consequences
of the scientific revolution in chapters 14–16).
        [151] HARARI, *supra* note 131, at 20–35.
        [152] ORLANDO PATTERSON, SLAVERY AND SOCIAL DEATH 35 (1982).
        [153] H.L.T. Quan, *It's Hard to Stop Rebels that Time Travel: Democratic
Living and the Radical Reimagining of Old Worlds, in* FUTURES OF BLACK
RADICALISM, 176 (Theresa Johnson Gaye & Alex Lubin eds., 2017) (ebook).
        [154] *Id.*
        [155] SASKIA SASSEN, EXPULSIONS: BRUTALITY AND COMPLEXITY IN THE
GLOBAL ECONOMY 10 (2014).

the planet by the United States has reached its level of domination by exploiting the convenience of socially dead peoples and extracting advantages granted by the lasting impacts of colonialism. As Toni Morrison defines the term in *The Origin of Others*, globalization is "the free movement of capital and the rapid distribution of data and products operating within a politically neutral environment shaped by multinational corporate demands. . . . [B]ut [it is] also the collapse of nation states under the weight of transnational economics, capital, and labor," as well as "the preeminence of Western culture and economy."[156]

This economic structure has achieved the prodigiousness and vast control that it has because it has compelled nations and their mechanisms for governance and restraint to bend to it. Instead of corralling it, national governments have been sufficiently captured to the point of serving it. In this environment, there is nothing protecting people from the abuses and exploitation of the excessive greed of unchecked global capitalism. As Rana Dasgupta puts it, "20th century political structures are drowning in a 21st century ocean of deregulated finance [and] autonomous technology."[157] While "financial elites—and their wealth—increasingly escape national allegiances altogether,"[158] while corporations turn their backs on their "home-nations," refusing to contribute to the social systems of those countries, and while borders essentially become meaningless for the global elite, the dislocated and expelled face continually steeper barriers. They are fleeing poverty, the vicissitudes of climate change, and unrest—much of which has been induced by globalism. Many of these challenges to free movement across borders for people (while capital, technology, and the wealthy move uninhibited) are due to last gasp efforts by formerly effective nations trying to cultivate a sense of power. Dasgupta explains that, "political authority is running on empty, and leaders are unable to deliver meaningful material change. Instead they must arouse and deploy powerful feelings: hatred of foreigners and internal enemies, for instance, or the euphoria of meaningless military exploits."[159] Strong borders play this important role for a decaying national assertiveness, but so too do they serve an essential purpose for the global business elite. Above the advantages restricting the movement of labor creates, strong borders provide a much more subtle, fundamental, and

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[156] TONI MORRISON, THE ORIGIN OF OTHERS 96–97 (2017).
[157] Dasgupta, *supra* note 112.
[158] *Id.*
[159] *Id.*

pernicious necessity toward maintaining stability of the global economic structure. A re-examination of the process of racialization in the United States will help to better understand this point.

C. The Violent Process of White Racialization

In 18th century colonial Virginia, the ruling class needed a mechanism to protect the slave economy. It needed something to prevent African slaves and poor laboring Europeans from rebelling against an unjust economic system. In response to a series of uprisings in the late 1600s, most notably the Bacon Rebellion of 1676, by the early 1700s, that mechanism was advanced in earnest and institutionalized in the form of slave patrols. Scholar activist Steve Martinot states that "the patrols brought white people together from a variety of classes . . . . Their main task was to guard against runaways and autonomous organization among the Black working class (as slaves)."[160] In other words, the slave patrols' main purpose was to foster a sense of unity among white people and deny any semblance of equality to or community with white people for Black people. Through the unifying ritual of conducting these patrols, what Martinot refers to as a "middle stratum" was constructed.[161] It served an intermediary purpose as a source of control, both forfeiting itself to the control of the elites and acting as a control mechanism of the enslaved class. But, it also, as Martinot argues, acted as "social unity reconfiguring a sense of allegiance," becoming "the predominant moment in white self-racialization through the racialization of the Africans."[162] In this telling, as is established above in the re-analysis of the concept of hegemony, white identity itself takes form with the creation of a permanent subordinated "other." Citing Theodore Allen's *Invention of the White Race*, Martinot explains that the creation of race—of an identity based upon race—for the dominant white group required "that the group to be dominated be given undifferentiated status, that is, generalized and inferiorized," and also "that the dominated group is accused of lacking something, which specifies its inferiority,"[163] recalling Blumer's definition of racial prejudice.[164]

The act of policing and patrolling Black people was justified by the instigation of a deep fear associated with

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[160] MARTINOT, *supra* note 111.
[161] *Id.*
[162] *Id.* at 70.
[163] *Id.* at 68.
[164] Blumer, *supra* note 54.

Blackness. As Martinot puts it, "the concrete social separation of the English and African bond-laborers depended on the generation of a massive social paranoia."[165] The deep-seated nature of this paranoia was necessary to make it seem to white people that any resistance to oppression on the part of Black people is a threat so severe that it renders any violence inflicted upon Black people not only reasonable, but valiant and commendable. Martinot writes:

> The possibility and appropriateness of rebellion by the oppressed and the rationales (and valorization) of preemptive suppression by the English are the two sides of this question. If one side is the recognition of the reality of uprising against oppression, the other entails imagining a forbidden rebellion against which all countermeasures are appropriate a priori. The notion of paranoia substitutes the demonic for what would have been supported in terms of social justice (or class interests), within an alternate paradigm of solidarity (English). It is from within the convoluted thinking of this structure that race and white supremacy evolve.[166]

In other words, paranoia serves to erase the evil of white violence and in its place imbue it with notions of honor and righteousness, or even an innocuous and unremarkable way of life, while also demanding conformity to a narrow white identity and allegiance. This erasure is what Jardina refers to when she reports that white people do not interpret guarding unearned white advantage as problematic, and it is what activates the racial prejudice—read by white people as anything but prejudice—that Blumer elucidates in his theory of "group positionality."

Present calls for border security closely mirror the rationales and objectives of the colonial Virginia slave patrols. In a period where the wages of whiteness are eroding, to distract from this fact, the strengthening of white identity and the bond of the white group is attempted through the inflammation of border tension. As whiteness as race was constructed through the slave patrols, white identity is being regenerated through fury at the Mexican border and in reactions to Muslim immigrants. Paranoia is being stoked through descriptions of

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[165] MARTINOT, *supra* note 111, at 64.
[166] *Id.* at 65.

migrants as national security threats and through President Trump's national emergency declaration to build a border wall. This paranoia then justifies and triggers intense violence at the border and against immigrants of color, which is read through the lens of whiteness as merely a defense of the national fabric. In reference to the slave patrols, Martinot writes that "terrorism toward Africans and African Americans signified that racism relies on a process of paramilitary activity."[167] The border patrol is the present-day slave patrol: using paramilitary force and executing acts of terror, they reinforce the inferiority and the need to control those deemed as outsiders, inversely fortifying exclusive claims of belonging and the superiority of whiteness. Martinot explains that on the one hand, white "potential violence as a control mechanism engendered an ethos of impunity that expressed itself as terror in the face of their operations. On the other, they appeared to the white population as the institution of peace and social tranquility. Terror and impunity toward Black people constituted the materialization of white solidarity and tranquility, and white consensus in solidarity constituted the product of terror and impunity."[168] While immigrants and other communities of color experience violence and terror as the result of white identity constructing itself, those who believe themselves to be white find in this violence and terror a peace and tranquility—as it, for them, nurtures a sense of self and a welcoming in-group. Furthermore, as Martinot points out, "the violent abuses of slaves that quickly came to characterize the operation of these patrols provided the poor white people with a way of discharging frustration and anger at the elite."[169] As dissatisfaction heightens as the result of present-day economic exploitation, those grievances and resentments are displaced— transferred upon those who have been othered for the purpose of white self-assertion. The danger of acquiescing to authoritarian-minded desires lies in this revelation. It is not simply complexity or disorder that they fear, but a loss of identity (as built around whiteness).

The people whose hysteria is activated by the Trump Administration's border fear-mongering serve as today's middle stratum. They call for strong borders that in reality only serve the interests of multinational economic giants; constructing a whiteness which makes space for those grasping most desperately to white identity to lay down in accordance to their

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[167] *Id.*
[168] *Id.*
[169] *Id.*

own domination. Just as white identity was not of the same importance to the elite as it was for the poorer white laborers who they needed for economic stability, the paranoia around border security is not a cause of concern for the global elite. They need it to the extent that it will activate the populations that they dominate to demand for the elite the key to the elite's own economic advantage. Multinational corporations and the global business elite need the obsolete national governance structures to remain in place to continue to operate above any system of accountability. Toward that end they've enlisted the new patrol class to demand strong borders and national identities.

D. The Western Self and Capitalism

Just as colonial slave patrols bear great resemblance to present border control, so too does the universalized Western self, in its constitution as an implicitly racialized white self, reflect the contours of the neoliberal free-market-regnant economy of globalization. This connection exists because the Western ideology that birthed as well as grew out of the concept of the Western self, underpins the construction of capitalism. As delineated in this Article's discussion of the Western self, this self relies ontologically on innocence and purity (whiteness), universalism, and egalitarianism, even as it depends on hierarchy, dominion, and the erasure of those who don't conform to its image. In order to maintain a veneer of egalitarianism, innocence, and purity, the system must conceal its domination and exploitation. University of California, Los Angeles, economic anthropologist Hannah Appel shows through a study of transnational oil markets that global markets "do not merely deepen racialized and gendered postcolonial disparities; they are constituted by them."[170] In making a case for this argument, she provides an account of how wage schedules are set for oil company laborers by nation of origin. Appel points out that "whereas the value of labor varies radically across the furiously-maintained border of nations, genders, and races, the price of oil is largely stable across space."[171] Multinational oil companies exploit these variations. She details how even when possessing greater skills, workers from the Global South are paid significantly lower wages than workers from the West—generally set by a rating system that decides wages based on

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[170] Hannah Appel, *Race Makes Markets: Subcontracting in the Transnational Oil Industry*, SOC. SCI. RSCH. COUNCIL: ITEMS (Dec. 17, 2018), https://items.ssrc.org/race-capitalism/race-makes-markets-subcontracting-in-the-transnational-oil-industry [https://perma.cc/EYS5-6U5B].
[171] *Id.*

nationality.[172] "Firms," she highlights, "have long argued that wage, schedule, and facility segregation is not a question of racism," and can convince themselves that this is true because the "idea of the market absolves the firms and the rating systems from charges of discrimination or racism."[173] This faulty logic on which this structure depends leads to her ultimate point that many markets in the global economy do not just deepen racial and gender inequality, but wouldn't exist without them.

        An economic system, borne out of a culture whose guiding ideology will erase the pain and suffering of deemed inferiors to maintain its own self-image of innocence and purity, will do the same. And this is exactly what happened in the onset of globalization. Writer and organizer Nikil Saval argues that even while globalization demanded the erosion of organized labor, wage mismatches between rich and poor countries, and the decimation of social safety nets, "the social cost . . . was consistently underestimated by economists"[174] and that "local adverse effects . . . [such as sweatshop labor and starving farmers] were increasingly obscured by the staggering GDP numbers."[175] In promoting an exportation to the entire planet of neoliberalism, the West made enormous promises of prosperity, "yet this revolutionary transformation has done almost nothing to close the economic gap between the colonized and the colonizing,"[176] because, as Appel demonstrates, many of the markets that generate wealth for the West depend on the racial arbitrage from the vestiges of colonialism. The globe is now dealing with a rejection of this order, even as the West is caught off guard by this backlash.

        This disbelief on the West's part stems from the conditions its ideological commitments dictate. Constituted by whiteness—as the West behaviorally interprets itself—the Western world must maintain its material domination even as it denies—for the sake of self-image—its abuses to achieve that status. This mentality obscures the damages it inflicts as it interacts on the world stage, allowing it to achieve a much more benign perception of its impact and a much more optimistic outlook on its promises. As Morrison elucidates, with

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[172] *Id.*

[173] *Id.*

[174] Nikil Saval, *Globalization: The Rise and Fall of an Idea that Swept the World*, GUARDIAN (July 14, 2017, 12:28 AM), https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/14/globalisation-the-rise-and-fall-of-an-idea-that-swept-the-world [https://perma.cc/Q73M-FSFB].

[175] *Id.*

[176] *Id.*

globalization came "the preeminence of Western culture and economy . . . . Globalization, hailed with the same vigor as was manifest destiny, has reached a level of majesty in our imagination."[177] On the presumption of cultural superiority, the West felt entitled to demand global surrender and assimilation.

To sell globalization, the West pushed a narrative of national self-determination. But following the fall of the Soviet Union, what national self-determination has meant for the United States as the sole world superpower, as Dasgupta illustrates, is international lawlessness.[178] Much of the economic advantage acquired by the United States was accumulated through the disregard of attempts at international governance— the United States expecting this behavior to be reserved for it alone. Even as it acted recklessly on the world stage, the United States—and the West generally—was ideologically restrained from seeing the harm of its actions. Dasgupta states that "for many decades, [the West] was content to see large areas of the world suffer . . . ; it cannot complain that those areas [the rest of the world] now display little loyalty to the nation-state idea."[179] But, the West complains because it is in disbelief. Western ideology—so entangled in whiteness—cannot conceive of its own culpability for destructive action. Such an approach to conduct, unbridled, coupled with the realization that the ideology has the capacity to make people "socially dead" is a dangerous combination. Without a new vision for containing this unbound greed and appetite for abuse and exploitation, the current system will continue to extract more from the masses of ground down people finding themselves ever closer to their breaking point.

E. Understanding Neoliberalism and its Connection to the
    Western Subject and Authoritarianism

Political scientist Wendy Brown approaches authoritarianism more from an ideological political perspective than a psychological perspective. In her book *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism*, she describes the ways in which the deliberate influences on society that set the conditions for neoliberalism to take root would logically lead to the political expressions of the present. She states that it is necessary to understand "the rise of white nationalist authoritarian political formations . . . as contoured by more than three decades of neoliberal assaults on democracy, equality, and society."[180] Brown explains that the

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[177] MORRISON, *supra* note 156, at 96–97.
[178] Dasgupta, *supra* note 112.
[179] *Id.*
[180] BROWN, *supra* note 38, at 8.

neoliberal project required the decimation of critical institutions of human interconnectedness to make room for the omnipotent rule of the market. This dominance of market rule and market ideology, she illustrates, depends on a very specific and narrow definition of liberty. The individual, as conceived by neoliberals, must be unconstrained from any restrictions of intention or design. The market requires the free maneuvering and interacting of individuals bound only by the norms and common understandings developed through none other than generations of free maneuvering and interacting, and the practices, agreements, and arrangements those actions gave way to.[181] Freedom, then, becomes defined as the ability to do as one pleases within the bounds of, and uninfringed by, anything other than these longstanding practices, agreements, and arrangements. These traditional values become the outer boundary of freedom as individuals forge their paths through the arena of life organized by the invisible hand of the market. This relationship merges traditional values and morals with markets as interconnected forces that provide the platform for organized life.

Anything that would interfere with this construction, therefore, must be arrested, mitigated, and preferably destroyed. Brown demonstrates that for the original neoliberal theorists, this included the social, the political (specifically democracy), and the public.[182] The political, she states, "identifies a theater of deliberations, powers, actions, and values where common existence is thought, shaped, and governed."[183] The people that make up the theater of the political are a community that must decide collectively the norms and rules by which they will live, which means that the political power that this community generates in order to rule itself will have a "distinct rationality" reflective of the comprising members and the unique ethos that they co-create.[184] It follows that this would also require political equality among people in order for them to collectively decide their fate. That facilitating the realization of "a people capable of engaging in modest self-rule" requires that these people be recognized, navigate society, and interact as equals.[185] Democratic rule, in other words, needs a great deal of effort committed to minimizing or eradicating "social or economic inequalities" to prevent the loss of political will to exploitative

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[181] *Id.*
[182] *Id.*
[183] *Id.* at 56.
[184] *Id.*
[185] *Id.* at 27.

relationships or the concentration of power—a role Brown, in citing Sheldon Wolin, situates with the state, or the public. True democracy in this sense "requires a robust cultivation of society as the place where we experience a linked fate across our differences and separateness," the definition of belonging.[186]

The progenitors of neoliberal thought believed that life should be organized by the mechanisms of the market. This theory was shaped around enlightenment philosophy's concept of the Western self and enacting this vision, as Brown argues, required the dismantling of the spheres of society, democracy, and political equality. By this what is meant is that the Western self, as has been detailed above, is constructed as a being atop a hierarchy that subordinates the majority of humanity, all other forms of life, and nature to it. Its full personhood is fulfilled by the rest of life's subservience to it. Because Western society is patriarchal and the concept of race serves the purpose of creating the notion of white supremacy, the Western self and the white male are conceptualized without distance between the two constructs. This self being the only one worth theorizing the arena of life for, the institutions designed to support that life accommodate only it as a full person. Everyone else has a stratified order within these institutions to serve this self's interests. The institution of particular concern here is the economy. The functionality of the system depends on inequality. This is why democracy and the social sphere are such a danger to the neoliberal order.

Through this lens, it is apparent that the stratification of humanity serves both the market system and the Western subject's perception of its own identity. This is why liberty as defined by the freedom to dominate and subordinate becomes so essential—and why equality becomes such a threat (for equality vacates the substance of the Western subject's identity). Since the public sphere, the function of the state, and the theater of the political should in theory contribute to realizing and securing political equality for all toward the facilitation of democratic self-rule, these domains must be restrained and undermined to maintain the stage upon which the Western subject expects to carry out its existence and build an understanding of itself.

The social and the political are undermined by three forces as identified by Brown: the denial of society, natural order, and traditional values.[187] She writes that "if there is no such

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[186] *Id.*
[187] *Id.*

thing as society, but only individuals and families oriented by markets and morals, then there is no such thing as social power generating hierarchies, exclusion, and violence, let alone subjectivity at the sites of class, gender, or race."[188] Instead, traditional norms and the internal logic of market interactions organize life. Brown contends that for Hayek, freedom arises from "the un-coerced capacity for endeavor and experimentation within codes of conduct generated by tradition and enshrined in just law, markets, and morality."[189] Both traditions and markets, for Hayek, develop organically out of this process of freedom left to be. "Traditions that develop the best possible ways of living together," Brown writes, "emerge not from the sheer authority of the past, but from the experimentation and evolution that freedom permits,"[190] and similarly, "markets and morals, equally important to a thriving civilization, are rooted in a common ontology of spontaneously evolved orders borne by tradition."[191] Markets, morals, traditions, as Hayek understands them, do not emerge from any intentional or deliberate effort or from rational design. They instead are the product of freedom at work. Over time, through the interaction of "free" beings, norms will develop and out of this will emanate the spontaneously organized natural order of the free market. Any laws decided upon and enacted by a democratic society or any attempt to increase fairness by altering the structure of society or redistributing wealth and resources is an unsupportable interference in the market. The market, along with traditional norms, are the only legitimate sources for governing life. Hayek's "conventions and customs of human intercourse," then, must be extended "in order to constitute a crucial bulwark against the wrong-headed designs of social justice . . . and the despotism of an overreaching state that those designs inevitably yield."[192]

This relationship between the Western self and the institution of the market reveals the root of neoliberalism. It seeks most to protect a version of the "self" constructed through the subordination of others and an economic system that depends, for productivity, on the stratification of human value produced by said subordination. Equality not only threatens the Western self but also threatens the structure of the economy. Freedom means the right to constitute oneself in contrast to those one dominates as well as to exploit their stratified value for

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[188] *Id.* at 40.
[189] *Id.* at 97.
[190] *Id.* at 99.
[191] *Id.* at 96.
[192] *Id.*

economic gain. As Hannah Appel's analysis makes clear, it is not merely that markets exacerbate racial inequality; markets are made—or come to be—from racial disparity, from race itself more accurately, as it stratifies people's assigned value based on their racialization and creates arbitrage opportunities domestically and globally through the legacies of colonialism. The relationship, therefore, goes beyond Brown's contention that "white and male super-ordination are easily tucked into the neoliberal markets-and-morals project," or that neoliberal theorist James Buchanan was able to "alloy his brand of free enterprise with the project of white supremacism."[193] The connection is so deeply intertwined because white and male super-ordination and the market structure are ontologically based on the same hierarchy of human stratification.

Hayek's perception that "markets and morals . . . are . . . borne by tradition" rings true if one understands tradition as reinforcing both self-making and economic objectives.[194] Traditional norms thus reveal themselves as common practices, agreements, and arrangements forged over time out of and to serve patriarchal white racial hierarchy. As Brown states it, the traditions that neoliberals seek to fortify are constituted by "heteropatriarchal norms and family forms; racial norms and enclaves; property ownership and wealth accumulation, retention, and transmission—in short, all that reproduces and legitimates historical powers and ordinances of class, kinship, race, and gender."[195]

The part that does not hold up to scrutiny is Hayek's claim of spontaneity. The above analysis that identifies Western ideology's egalitarian strain as serving mostly the Western subject's purity-needs and self-image as a fair and self-sufficiently industrious being helps bring clarity to neoliberalism's denial of society and theorization of spontaneity. The social must disappear so that unjust distributions of power go unseen. Equality becomes defined narrowly as only formal equality to mask structural differentiation of human value. Power is understood as coercion to submit to equality demands and liberty as freedom from coercion so as to protect the Western subject's placement at the top of the human hierarchy. This formulation fixes stratified relationality in place as it creates the perception that all people are equally situated in a market system free of exploitation. This is the work that is done by

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[193] *Id.* at 13, 62.
[194] *Id.* at 96.
[195] *Id.* at 106.

universalizing the Western self to everyone while neglecting the reality that not everyone fits this mold (because their position is to be in service to it). Neoliberal philosophy calls for this universalism. The existence of stratified levels of human value that the economic system demands and deepens, however, dictate that there can be no universal among the people within the system. The perceived universality therefore has to be imposed, which means that those in subordinated positions have to know and accept their place (and only in doing so are they considered to possess rationality). In this way, the functionality of the economy as theorized by neoliberals requires what Dr. King referred to as a negative peace.[196] Instead of the presence of justice where all people are substantively equal, the stratification on which the market relies necessitates a tensionless acquiescence to subordination.

Spontaneity, however, is doing more work than this. The relationship between these traditions of heteropatriarchal white racial hierarchy and the market reveal that a belief in the spontaneous ordering of the market—by organically originating traditional norms—is a belief that white supremacy is the stable and natural state of the world. That the web of relationships observed in life are not only acceptable but unalterable. That there is nothing to fix—but even if there were, we should not attempt it. The state of human order is a natural order. It is settled. It is thus made clear that the erasure of hierarchy is more than a necessity of an enhanced self-image. It is productive in the sense that it provides structure and generative capacity for the market system. This is why the social cannot exist—so that social hierarchies can be conflated with nature, leaving nothing to correct. Everyone is at once an equal as well as in their place. This is the productive work of the ideology—the cognitive pushing in both directions to make both of these claims true at the same time forces this contradiction into reality as logical consonance. It is generative of the worldview that births the market structure.

This project, though, is clearly one of mystification and de-contextualization. The belief in spontaneity is the result of ahistoricism. To believe that traditional norms arose organically merely from innocuous human interaction is to completely bypass the violent history of conquest, colonialism, racial and gendered oppression, and coercion into positions of subordination

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[196] King, *supra* note 125 (referring to a "negative peace which is the absence of tension" in contrast to a "positive peace which is the presence of justice").

and marginalization. Apparently within neoliberal theory, coercion only refers to moving toward equality from the Western subject's perspective—or an infringement of its freedom—and not to the coercion faced by those brutalized into an unjust order in service to the constitution of the Western subject and its life pursuits. This de-contextualization allows for the erasure of social power and dynamics and relationships of exploitation, creating the condition for the forced universalization upon which neoliberalism relies.

Take, for instance, the impact this reasoning has on David Frum's framework to judge the merits of immigration. Frum states that "from an economic point of view, immigration is good because it encourages specialization and thus efficiency."[197] He mentions the lower standard of living many immigrants experience compared to American citizens leading them to also have lower wage expectations. He then walks through a scenario where an American citizen can free up some of her time by hiring an immigrant at a lower rate than what she would've paid an American, allowing her to save money and put that newly freed up time to other productive use.[198] Embedded in this sketch of how the economy works is the uncritical acceptance, as if preordained, of the hierarchical valuation of people that generates what has been termed "efficiency." The same reasoning that allows Frum to argue in a neutral-presenting way about immigration without confronting implicit assumptions about deservingness allows him to see in our economic system an impartial and detached apparatus that guides people to their highest productive placement and resources to their best use. This conceptualization also reveals why Frum sees the disparity between Global South and Global North countries as a matter of degree of success, as opposed to relationships of colonial oppression that opened patterns of relation and causeways that presently generate economic value.

Such reasoning supports "[t]he overwhelming tendency . . . to present immigration as an issue that begins at the national border, with virtually no attention paid to the particular histories, international economic pressures, and specific US foreign policy practices that generate migration patterns in the first place," which are "deeply tied to patterns of colonization and empire that stitch together the Global North and the Global South, as well as to the recent security politics of the [United

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[197] Frum, *supra* note 103.
[198] *Id.*

States] and Europe across the post-colonial world."[199] Here lies the problem with how the immigration debate is framed. Not only is it decontextualized to ignore the history of building fear of "inferior peoples" which is the basis for the anxiety that people experience from immigration patterns, it fails to connect those patterns to colonial oppression and expropriation and the continued reliance on the still extant relational infrastructure colonialism produced. In this way, it also obscures how these two actions are related: the belief that non-Western people are inferior is forced into existence so people would act on that belief, supplying the subordinate relationship needed to extract economic value from them. This value never intended to be shared with the "middle stratum," whose identity as white or European is meant to keep them satisfied. It is this arrangement, and not one of universal egalitarianism, that constitutes the Western liberal project, which means that as these global chains of exploitation deprive more people and more of the globe becomes uninhabitable, it becomes more apparent that this prevailing ideology cannot deliver us to a sustainable future and is incapable of organizing human life much longer. It is better this reality be recognized than to look for ways to preserve this worldview by bending one's analysis to the presumed inevitability of our current path.

A number of these aspects of neoliberalism contribute directly to the rise of authoritarianism. Brown points out that "because the political has been disparaged and attacked, but not extinguished while democracy itself has been thinned and devalued, undemocratic and anti-democratic political powers and energies in neoliberalized orders have swollen in magnitude and intensity."[200] Additionally, since democratic governance should enact the will of the people and respond to social conditions which will disrupt the rule of the market bound only by traditional norms, Milton Friedman "legitimiz[es] political authoritarianism to forge liberalized markets."[201] Friedman calls for a strong central authority to uphold traditional values and fortify the market from intrusion (all of which can involve oppressive crackdowns on the marginalized as well as on dissidents and coercion to confine people to their subordinated position within the order, but of course for Friedman legitimate coercion only flows in one direction).[202] With the political sphere withered, "truth withdrawn from political life is rolled over to

[199] Singh, *supra* note 118.
[200] BROWN, *supra* note 180, at 58.
[201] *Id.* at 66–67.
[202] *Id.*

moral and religious claims rooted in the authority of tradition. The effect is to sever truth from accountability (a recipe for authoritarianism)."[203] All of these conditions—the insistence that the self be constituted through domination and the oppression of women, people of color, and other marginalized populations; the valorization of traditional values that derive from and contribute to the same project; the assault on democracy and the legitimization of authoritarian rule— encourage and instigate the reactionary and authoritarian environment we are living through currently.

Not only does neoliberalism foster authoritarian uprisings, it has come to dominate current thought and reasoning, revealing how even efforts to contain the authoritarian surge replicate its internal logic and therefore work against their own goal. Stenner and Haidt's decontextualized rapidity of change and discomfort with difference mirrors the decontextualized theory of spontaneity of morals and markets, "the order without design," described by Hayek and his fellow neoliberal thinkers.[204] The blindness to the force, oppression, and violence that went into creating the order that produced Western traditions and values is the same type of blindness that allows people like Friedersdorf to speak of "different-ism" divorced from a connection to racism or white supremacy and descriptions from Frum and others that frame the rate of immigration, and not a clinging to status for the dominant in-group, as the problem.

Hayek's "common acceptance" as the "condition for a free society," the negative peace, and the resignation to a subordinated position is taken up by Stenner and Haidt. They call for assimilation, a tempered and slow approach to equality, and an avoidance of significantly altering social arrangements to avoid a disturbance of the prevailing order and to mollify the authoritarian-prone. In Brown's reference to Hayek's advocacy for the "discredit[ing] of social justice talk . . . and the expansion of what Hayek calls the 'personal protected sphere' to extend the purview of traditional morality,"[205] echoes of the same can be heard in Stenner and Haidt's encouragement to move slowly on equality and instead to commit to familiar common rituals and reaffirm traditional values and norms. They advance what is ostensibly a psychological analysis of an observation of human nature but they make the same assumption that Hayek does—

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[203] *Id.* at 102.
[204] *Id.* at 34.
[205] *Id.* at 104.

that they are dealing with nature and not social constructs. They are, in effect, operating within and promoting a line of neoliberal reasoning and, in doing so, are advancing the project of neoliberalism and falling into the same trap as its intellectual progenitors of generating the conditions that produce authoritarianism. To state it again, the Western organization of society predicated on the prerogative of whiteness cannot deliver the world into a sustainable, egalitarian future.

F. Dealing with Polarization

        Authoritarianism, arising from these forces, imposes a tremendous strain on society, contributing to extreme polarization. The activation of authoritarian tendencies within thirty percent of the population does not fully explain society's current experience of deep division. The question must be asked as to why this segment of the population appears to be, so to speak, punching above its weight, especially if, as Stenner and Haidt put it, there are categorical delineations between authoritarians, status quo conservatives, and laissez-faire conservatives. How is it, given that authoritarians exhibit certain tendencies that should disturb other conservatives, that this faction has coalesced into a firm identity group? Why has the population generally consolidated into distinct and oppositional corners? In other words, what is the nature of our polarization?

        Political scientists Jennifer McCoy and Murat Somer comprehensively surveyed a number of countries where similar dynamics are occurring to develop a theory of deep division— what they refer to as "pernicious polarization." This condition is characterized by the "division of the electorate into two hostile camps, where multiple cleavages have collapsed into one dominant cleavage or boundary line between the two camps," whose political identities have become "mutually exclusive and antagonistic" social identities.[206] Entrepreneurial politicians, as the pair labels them, exploit existing socioeconomic divisions to the point that crosscutting identities that may sustain relationships and political interaction across separation dissipate, making way for hardened, adversarial identity groups. These two distinct groups increasingly come to see each other not only in an "us vs. them" manner but in "good vs. evil" terms,

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[206] Jennifer McCoy & Murat Somer, *Toward a Theory of Pernicious Polarization and How It Harms Democracies: Comparative Evidence and Possible Remedies*, 681 ANNALS, AM. ACAD. POL. & SOC. SCI. 234, 246 (2019).

interpreting the other side as a credible threat to the nation and its cultural fabric.[207]

Author Jonathan Rauch makes similar claims but adds that emotional attachment drives identity-based polarization. Although ideology plays some role, it turns out that the internal ideologies of each camp demonstrate significant incoherencies.[208] Team affiliation, Rauch concludes, depends on strong emotional identification rather than any set of consistent political ideas. Affective polarization is what we are experiencing—the "subjective feelings [of partisans] towards each other"—and those feelings consist of deep disdain for the other side.[209] Rauch writes that "[i]t's not so much that we like our own party as that we detest the other."[210] He cites University of Memphis's Eric Groenendyk, who finds that a strong dislike of the other party works to rationalize and deepen one's sense of belonging to one's party of choice.[211] This emotionally-motivated connection also facilitates coalescing around diametrically opposed poles. Even if the organizing ideology, rhetoric, and politics are being driven by the bases, out of team-identification, people with more moderate or even contrasting views can end up joining forces with the base in a polarized environment. This explains how authoritarians punch above their weight by forming an allegiance with status quo conservatives, who were offered "something more appealing than any particular list of policies: they [were] offered solidarity against a threat."[212] In this way, status quo conservatives "did not rally to Trump because they embraced his message; they embraced his message in order to rally to Trump. He offered a vivid us-versus-them story that energized one portion of the party, and then, once his followers redefined what "we" (the in-group) believe, the rest of the party preserved its identity by scrambling aboard."[213] This summation contradicts Stenner's contention, communicated via Friedersdorf, that status quo conservatives' bonding with authoritarians constitutes an unnatural union.[214] Accusations of racism may push status quo conservatives in that direction, as the pair argues, but the resulting bond is not unnatural. It has everything to do with psychologically balancing the self-serving perception that society

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[207] *Id.*

[208] Jonathan Rauch, *Rethinking Polarization*, 41 NAT'L AFFS. 86 (2019).

[209] *Id.*

[210] *Id.*

[211] *Id.*

[212] *Id.*

[213] *Id.*

[214] Friedersdorf, *supra* note 121.

is egalitarian with the material need for a hierarchical order. The racism accusation wound's the status quo conservative's self-image—that is, their identity as someone committed to egalitarian principles. The recoil from this injury gives hard lines to the "them," but pushes these conservatives toward an affective connection with people attracted to and moved by racial demagoguery and supportive of racial and gendered oppression, exposing the central confusion of Western subject's identity.

To know how to respond to this deep and identity-based polarization, it must be understood how polarization of such a firmly seated nature arose. Rauch roots polarization in the naturally tribal disposition of humans, stating that our emotionally driven polarization "satisf[ies] a deep atavistic craving to belong to an in-group and to bind ourselves to our group by feeling and displaying animosity toward an out-group."[215] But, the assumption that humans are naturally tribal is strongly contested. For instance, writer Brian Stout posits that analyses of human behavior and theories about how we should design our world uncritically take for granted that humans are inherently primarily driven by competition and marked by tribalism.[216] Stout and Rauch present the same Jonathan Haidt quotation:

> It is difficult for tribalistic humans to run and sustain a modern liberal society founded on compromise, toleration, and impersonal rules and institutions. Pulling it off requires getting a lot of social settings just right. Those settings include formal laws like the Constitution, informal norms like law-abidingness and truthfulness, rules-based institutions like free markets and elections, a system of education that inculcates liberal values, and public mores that honor and defend those values.[217]

But as Rauch takes Haidt's statement at face value, Stout challenges it and asks if humans are indeed naturally tribalistic. Stout's point is that Haidt takes this assumption for granted, and therefore believes that the institutions and practices we develop must at their foundation protect us from our own divisive nature. But Stout points out that perhaps the innateness of our tribalism

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[215] Rauch, *supra* note 208.

[216] Brian Stout, *What If Darwin Was Wrong?*, BUILDING BELONGING, (Feb. 1, 2020) https://citizenstout.substack.com/p/what-if-darwin-was-wrong [https://perma.cc/9QC2-2YX4].

[217] *Id.*; Rauch, *supra* note 208.

is exaggerated and that what we attribute to tribal nature may actually be socialization toward antagonism and contradistinction. In making this point, Stout references journalist Christine Mungai who reminds us that the concept of tribalism is based on a racist stereotype borne out of colonialism and meant to demean those who the colonizers intended to civilize, and that what we often perceive as exemplifying our naturally tribal tendencies such as fierce conflict is likely better described as the manifestation of intense patriarchal socialization.[218]

Tribalism in this sense can be read as a concept developed as the result of a persistent neglect of the extent to which people are hierarchically organized within society. As with the term tribalism itself, social stratification is de-socialized and naturalized. The process of de-socialization demands the shunning of an analysis of whiteness, patriarchy, or any type of super-ordination. When this analysis is removed, and therefore an analysis of power unconsidered, all there is left to observe are equally situated warring factions. Therefore, any challenges to or defenses of whiteness, patriarchy, or other claim to the right of domination are misread and labeled tribalism.

McCoy and Somer perhaps provide a stronger basis upon which to develop an analysis of power. They argue that social cleavages alone cannot explain deep polarization, but rather what they term formative rifts sit at the root of pernicious polarization. They define formative rifts as "long-standing and deep-cutting divisions that either emerged or could not be resolved during the formation of nation-states, or, sometimes during fundamental re-formations of states."[219] In the United States, for McCoy and Somer, this comes down to "the basic question of citizenship and who enjoys the rights espoused by the founding fathers—Thomas Jefferson's 'these truths' of political equality, natural rights, and sovereignty of the people—has been debated since the founding of the republic and its differentiated citizenship for [enslaved Africans], Native Americans, and women."[220] Entrepreneurial polarizing figures also "seek to exploit grievances centered on political, economic, or cultural complaints; to activate latent resentments based on underlying cleavages and formative rifts."[221] These include feelings of being excluded or left behind without political representation, all but

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[218] Stout, *supra* note 216.
[219] McCoy & Somer, *supra* note 206, at 237.
[220] *Id.* at 239 (citation omitted).
[221] *Id.* at 240.

forgotten by "unresponsive technocrats or expert governments"; or economic exclusion driven by inequality; or cultural grievances based on disputes around morality or "from a perceived loss or threat of loss of social or economic status by a dominant group in society."[222]

While political actors exploit these grievances and feed polarization by doing so, the grievances themselves are not independent of but related to the aforementioned formative rifts. For instance, the cultural rift centered on morality disputes harkens back to Wendy Brown's analysis on the development of traditional values through world-making around a "self" defined in opposition to subordinated others. Additionally, McCoy and Somer explain their point about economic anxiety through the example of this grievance's attachment to the idea of job-stealing immigrants and declare, "the reaction of white, male, Christian, Trump supporters to the presidency of a biracial man in the United States, and to the growing diversity of the United States (in terms of race, religion, sexual orientation, and gender relations in the workplace) exemplifies a perceived loss of social and economic status."[223] All of these examples of exploitable grievances share at their root that formative question for the United States of who belongs, whose humanity is to be fully recognized, honored, and supported by the institutions and engines of opportunity of the nation. A continual struggle, essentially, with the question at the center of the Civil War conflict: will the nation constitute its definition of the people around an exclusive "we" or by the recognition of everyone's shared humanity?

The perceived loss of status leads to what Brown identifies as a nihilism growing out of an erosion of whiteness—the loss of status that stood in for self-constitution. She refers to Marcuse who saw social and political violence as a result of "individuals getting used to the risk of their own dissolution and disintegration."[224] Brown points out that Marcuse understood this as a reaction to the Cold War nuclear threat and then herself applies this insight to describe the fallout from "world-ending climate change or other existential threats." However, it just as well characterizes how fundamentally entangled whiteness or dominant in-group identification seems with the natural self—so much so that a loss of status feels like existential destruction, unleashing a nihilism and a violence completely fine with tearing

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[222] *Id.* at 236–41.

[223] *Id.* at 241.

[224] BROWN, *supra* note 38, at 168.

down a world that moves closer to equality since the end of the world and the end of whiteness is perceived as one and the same.

Revisiting Rauch, he concludes by advocating for bridging, stating that "we need understanding and awareness; then we can build personal and community connections; then we can rebuild social norms and institutions."[225] He is correct in this assessment. The question remains, however, if his path there can be trusted given his power-absent conception of identity politics and tribalism. An analysis of whiteness has to be a part of any serious grappling with understanding and responding to polarization and authoritarianism. The presence of which will engender solutions that recognize whiteness as an impediment to belonging and the fuel re-instigating division, as opposed to solutions that continue to accommodate it.

Rauch raises the factors that he sees as having exacerbated deep polarization. The loss of civic organizations, the erosion of political safeguards "designed to protect the system when the settings go out of alignment," "a social life without supports," and the regarding of institutions as "obstacles to personal fulfillment"—all conditions Brown identifies with the demands neoliberalism makes on society.[226] Although he clearly understands market fundamentalism's contribution to our divided state of affairs, he lumps identity politics in with market fetishism as root causes along with "fears of economic and cultural displacement among whites," and "the decline of traditionally masculine jobs and social roles leaving working-class men feeling emasculated and marginalized."[227] He connects these things without having a critical analysis for how they are connected. There is no attempt to address the fact that the "traditionally masculine" jobs and social roles he writes of are based on white male super-ordination and the exclusion of all who are barred from that category to give shape to white male identity. What he calls identity politics are simply demands to no longer be excluded and subordinated. The shared identity that he claims is eroded by identity politics is less a shared identity than an acceptance of place in a stratified established order. Any enjoinder to again rally around this shared identity is none other than the bidding of white male identity politics. Furthermore, as long as the self is built out of a sense of dominance—accepted in exchange for acquiescence to a callous economic system—this self will feel crushed from both ends as it perceives a loss of status at

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[225] Rauch, *supra* note 208.
[226] *Id.*; BROWN, *supra* note 38.
[227] Rauch, *supra* note 208.

calls for equality and as payment in the form of dominant identity becomes less valuable due to the excesses of capitalism becoming more audacious. The likely result being that the self-engages in acts of breaking to reaffirm itself.

An identity that does not assume dominance over anyone is therefore needed. Rauch is right to echo Yuval Levin's call for a stronger "structure of social life; a way to give shape and purpose, concrete meaning and identity, to the things we do together."[228] But instead of building that togetherness through institutions that assume that we are of a rivalrous and tribal nature, we must design institutions that facilitate our cooperative nature and do not take for granted white male primacy in their design.

Practices such as deep canvassing can help toward this end. Researchers have found that this technique—engaging in a two-way discussion guided by non-judgmental listening and surfacing common humanity can facilitate belonging and a reduction in prejudice and that the effect lies in the mutual exchange of narratives about receiving compassion from others.[229] Deep canvassing, in other words, provides experimental evidence supporting a real-world positive impact of bridging and the fostering of belonging. The primary political scientists studying deep canvassing hypothesize that "it works because it's not threatening. People are resistant to changing their mind during an argument, the hypothesis goes, because it threatens their self-image,"[230] exemplifying on an interpersonal level the work that self-image does on the scale of the collective Western identity and revealing the best way to approach this entry point for bridging given its central function. The researchers also conclude that their findings "tell you something about just how willing most Americans are to have an open conversation with a stranger about . . . ostensibly divisive issues," which serves as "a reminder that our political opponents aren't always as rigid or ideologically severe as they appear in our minds."[231] It is a reminder that there is good reason for optimism that Dasgupta and Goyal's "perpetual possibilities" can rise above the collapsing of our identities that polarization induces; that we should not give up on fostering together new identities that have no need for dominance; and that instead of tribalism

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[228] *Id.*

[229] Brian Resnick, *How to Talk Someone Out of Bigotry,* VOX, (Jan. 29, 2020, 9:40 AM) https://www.vox.com/2020/1/29/21065620/broockman-kalla-deep-canvassing.

[230] *Id.*

[231] *Id.*

being our nature, perhaps our nature is "our capacity to learn and improve" and "expand our concept of what it means to be human."[232]

VII. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

A. A New Imagined Order

For these reasons, it is necessary for any proposed solutions to today's social issues to incorporate all people fully into the circle of human concern. To paraphrase Martin Luther King, Jr. in his speech, "Where Do We Go from Here?" a person who will lie will steal, and a person who will steal will kill. In order to change, one must be born again. One's structures must change. The same is true for the United States. A nation that will enslave will commodify people, a nation that commodifies people will exploit the poor generally, and it will pillage the resources of other nations and protect those foreign investments with military might. The nation itself must radically transform.[233]

In a sense, the American Civil War was a fight over whether to maintain a segment of the population in a state of social death or to realize Lincoln's call in the Gettysburg Address for a new birth of freedom.[234] Marche sees the United States as barreling dangerously toward another civil war,[235] but United States history can be thought of as a constant and repeated re-engagement with this "formative rift"—that it is okay to render some people socially dead and marginalized, confined to a stratified order, or that the circle of human concern should include all. As Dr. King argues, a system corrupted at its core cannot be reformed into a just version of itself—it must be reborn. A rebirth of freedom is required to achieve a society of belonging, hand in hand with the construction of a government responsible for the larger good and a renewed commitment to all people and not just profits or market efficiencies or commercialism. A government responsive to the people and one that recognizes everyone's humanity must be forged, and the social justice movement must lead the charge. For people

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[232] Stout, *supra* note 216.
[233] Martin Luther King, Jr., Where Do We Go from Here?, Address to the Southern Christina Leadership Eleventh Annual Conference (Aug. 16, 1967) (transcript available at https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/where-do-we-go-here-address-delivered-eleventh-annual-sclc-convention [https://perma.cc/X98P-G4F7].
[234] Abraham Lincoln, The Gettysburg Address (Nov. 19, 1863) (transcript available at https://rmc.library.cornell.edu/gettysburg/good_cause/transcript.htm) [https://perma.cc/6QTA-6EUJ].
[235] Marche, *supra* note 7.

engaged in social justice work, this translates into a need to create a new imagined order, a realization of the multiplicity and interconnectedness of the self and all systems, and the understanding that this work cannot move forward without love and engagement.

As Harari illustrates through his imagined order argument, society is based on a network of fictions that exert real power in the material world. Therefore, it is up to society to decide what type of force it wants to wield upon the physical world and physical beings. A society of belonging is possible, but it will require new stories for people to believe in. In Harari's words, "in order to change an existing imagined order, we must first believe in an alternative imagined order."[236]

B. The Multiple Self, Spirituality, and a Society of Belonging

A new imagined order will require a transformation of the self and an unseating of whiteness, as it is deeply intertwined in Western ideology and is an animating force for Western society and Western political legitimacy. Clearly, exposing whiteness as a fiction will require the presentation of a new identity built upon love, connection, multiplicity, and belonging. A self-capable of embracing full and substantive equality for all and holding all life and nature within its circle of concern must be the project we pursue for ourselves and must be the basis from which we build.

From intersectional feminism developed by women of color to W.E.B. DuBois's double consciousness theory, many people of color have expressed that the unitary, single-identity self never fully described or accurately represented their perception of self.[237] For many, trying to fit into the Western conception of the self-caused great dissonance, frustration, and lack of completeness. Although "there is no dissonance between societal definitions of humanity and whites' personal experiences of humanity,"[238] as the Western self was constructed in the image of whiteness and maleness, this feeling of completeness as a unitary being is still just an illusion and an invention supported by social underpinnings. In order for the Western self to make a convincing claim to universality, the centrality of whiteness and maleness to its construction must be rendered invisible. However, as Black feminist theory's concept of intersectionality makes clear, the self is always marked by race and gender. Therefore, the white male is "no more a unitary, cohesive

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[236] HARARI, *supra* note 131, at 118.
[237] POWELL, RACING TO JUSTICE, *supra* note 27, at 169–77.
[238] *Id.* at 170.

individual than is the Black female," or any other constituted being having a number of potent and conflicting components of identity.[239]

Despite the fact that for the white male, experience and the Western understanding of the self-share the strongest overlap, dissonance and disappointment stemming from the fissure between the expectation as a fully constituted Western self and what is actually experienced manifest in other ways. Revisiting Jardina's findings, "whites feel, to some extent, that the rug is being pulled out from under them—that the benefits they have enjoyed because of their race, their groups' advantages, and their status atop the racial hierarchy are all in jeopardy."[240] When the conception of self to which one adheres confirms that one is the ultimate being deserving of society's rewards, a sense of failure and resentment toward others emerges when one sees others advancing relative to one's position. This sense of suffering feels like existential suffering because white people are so convinced that whiteness is the constructive tissue of the self and not a social construct that ruptures them from a multitudinous identity connected to others who have been established as estranged subordinates.

To give in to demands fueled by this sentiment, as Stenner and Haidt propose, would be to bend to an artificial and false sense of self that must exclude non-white people to feel whole. Instead, it is necessary to take note of John Rawls's insight that "individual wants and desires are themselves a product of situatedness and background institutions."[241] Harari makes a similar point, stating that "every person is born into a pre-existing imagined order, and his or her desires are shaped from birth by its dominant myths. . . . Even what people take to be their most personal desires are usually programmed by the imagined order."[242] The desire to suppress diversity or to limit immigration are not products solely of an aversion to complexity and rapid change—especially when crackdowns on immigration are so selectively activated—but a function of the angst and anger of white identity not living up to its promises and expectations. Stenner and Haidt do not understand this because they operate in a framework that they believe to be universal, objective, and impartial, but it is in actuality a framework

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[239] *Id.* at 187.
[240] Edsall, *White Identity*, *supra* note 149 (quoting JARDINA, *supra* note 149, at 267).
[241] POWELL, RACING TO JUSTICE, *supra* note 27, at 199.
[242] HARARI, *supra* note 131, at 114–15.

conceived for the purpose of creating and justifying white racial hierarchy. This also speaks to why they are more sympathetic to the pleas of authoritarians than to the societal inclusion of people of color. The pleas, in part, make sense to them because their identities are cut from the same cloth. To revisit Crenshaw's insight, hegemony refers to "a system of attitudes and beliefs, permeating both popular consciousness and the ideology of elites."[243] Stenner and Haidt's proposal to engage with and listen to people who have authoritarian leanings—a group potentially as large as a third of the population—is correct, but not in the way that they suggest. The answer is not to acquiesce to their demands for less diversity and suppression of minority communities or to advance a same-ing approach to resolve the conundrum of otherness. The answer is to develop a new meta-narrative that creates fertile grounds to grow a culture of belonging and to turn to spirituality for assistance in that process.

C. Spirituality and Engagement

There are vast and relevant lessons to be learned from spirituality with regard to repairing the damage of whiteness. It severs the intrinsic connections between all people and a whiteness-based identity creates suffering. Spirituality is the journey toward a deep connection with other people, forms of life, and the planet as humans contend with the fact of loneliness (a life divorced from meaningful connection) and death—what can be referred to as existential suffering. Because the Western self is so intertwined with whiteness, many white people assume that whiteness is essential to, or is, the organic self. Therefore, any effort to expose whiteness or any erosion of the 'wages of whiteness,'[244] or the benefits that being white are supposed to bestow, feels like existential suffering. An end to whiteness feels like death. This suffering of course is not based on actual grappling with mortality, but rather a false sense of existential suffering based on a fictional identity. This physically real pain, borne of an artificial distinction, is the root of authoritarian anger.

Doctor and professor Jonathan Metzl discusses this in an article adapted from his book, *Dying of Whiteness*, as he profiles a white man of middle age who is dying of preventable diseases in a state that does not have the Affordable Care Act Medicaid expansion—the rejection of which he supported. Metzl asks the

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[243] Crenshaw, *supra* note 49.
[244] ROEDIGER, *supra* note 45, at xx.

man if he regrets, now that he is dying, opposing the health care expansion. His answer is still an unequivocal "no," described by Metzl as "a literal willingness to die for his place in this hierarchy, rather than participate in a system that might put him on the same plane as immigrants or racial minorities."[245]

This man's position, for Metzl, is representative of a whole subgroup of white people whose value fully depends on their symbolic membership to the white in-group. This is why the potential for "outsiders" to benefit from the privileges attached to citizenship and gains by people of color induce such anxiety. With nothing to differentiate the standing of those long depicted as "others" from the elevated status white in-group membership is supposed to bestow, the resulting "insecurities can lead them to act in ways that seem at odds with their own longevity."[246] Metzl writes that these harms result from a politics of resentment that "gain traction by playing to anxieties about white victimhood in relation to imagined threats."[247]

The people suffering from these self-inflicted wounds are the people Stenner and Haidt argue we should give more attention to. Yet, when it comes to their anxieties that are being exploited, why is their answer to accommodate these anxieties, which can be reduced and alleviated, as opposed to combating and lessening them with practices of deeper belonging? Emphasizing common rituals and clinging to traditions will not only leave these anxieties latent but firmly in place and further entrenched, making them all the more explosive the next time they are unearthed by the next round of social change. It is tempting to acquiesce and feel sympathetic to this anger, especially when the universality of the Western self is taken for granted, but creating a true society of belonging requires the dislocation of whiteness from its central position and its replacement by an acceptance of the multiple self.

True belonging requires understanding the ways in which whiteness operates in Western society—that its bonding force is an adhesive for the white in-group, upon a narrow white racial identity. Both Brewer's and Dasgupta and Goyal's works contain the seeds for achieving a society of belonging. Their arguments rest on the concept of the "multiple self." Brewer advances this notion by citing Gordon Allport's concept of concentric loyalties where "loyalties to more inclusive collectives

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[245] Metzl, *supra* note 106.
[246] *Id.*
[247] *Id.*

(e.g. nations, humankind) are compatible with loyalties to subgroups (e.g. family, profession, religion)."[248] This is Dasgupta and Goyal's "perpetual possibilities" argument that "individuals prefer to have rich (multiple) identities in excess of what groups desire."[249] The powerful group members that stand to gain from narrow inter-conflicting groups will incite and encourage fear of the other, unleashing authoritarian tendencies and promoting division and tension. As Dasgupta and Goyal propose, group members have a deep desire to realize their multiple identities. Overcoming the rise of authoritarianism needs to involve working against the group desire to maintain narrow identities and helping people to understand, explore, and live through their latent multiple selves. Stenner and Haidt explain how authoritarian tendencies are latent within a population—but, as Dasgupta and Goyal point out, so is the potential for "perpetual possibilities." This tendency for connection and broad self-definition must be fostered and advanced, instead of the tendency to retreat, close off, and exclude.

D. Unearthing the Multiple Self

The first step is to recognize that part of what it means to be a "multitudinous self" is that the "other" is inseparable from the "self"—that within everyone considered the "we" exists everyone considered the "them." As an alternative to acquiescing to authoritarian demands, Roberto Unger's concept of engagement offers a more constructive pathway forward. Unger explains that "through engagement, we experience both mutual need and mutual fear of the other. . . . The other is thus necessary both for the constitution of our being and for the realization of self-expression and growth. . . . Because we need the other and are threatened by the other, there is an interplay of love and hate."[250] This offering is useful in a number of ways. Firstly, it is based off an understanding of the self in contrast to the Western unitary self. It understands being as numerous and multiple—proposing that within everyone is everyone else. This framework provides a comfortable landing spot for those most threatened by the disappearance of a unitary identity based on whiteness—a reminder that their prior identity was an artificial one and a reconnection to the latent but inherent desire to leave behind a narrow identity for one of endless potential.

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[248] Brewer, *supra* note 44, at 434 (citing GORDON W. ALLPORT, THE NATURE OF PREJUDICE (1954)).

[249] Dasgupta & Goyal, *supra* note 56, at 414.

[250] *See* POWELL, RACING TO JUSTICE, *supra* note 27, at 203 (citing ROBERTO MANGABIERA UNGER, PASSION: AN ESSAY ON PERSONALITY (1984)).

Secondly, the contending with the fear of the other even as we engage with the other is the foundation of belonging and describes the dynamic process of bridging. An alternative response to anxiety produced by the changing "we" is to embrace through stories and practice an inviting and empathic space. The other is not the infinite other. Bridging rejects the categorical other but does not require that the other and the self become the same—only that the self recognize the other within it. Bridging calls for the construction of spaces and stories for a large, inclusive "we." The acceptance and inclusion of an other, despite their differences, is what constitutes authentic belonging. When one engages in deep bridging over time, there is a shift. The emphasis is no longer just to empathize with the other, but to begin the project of building a new and larger "we"—where the "other" stops being the other. This is the process of real belonging. When this is institutionalized in policies, laws, and culture, then it becomes a belongingness paradigm. This may seem like inclusion or even assimilation. In fact, it is neither and differs from Stenner and Haidt's proposal of accepting immigrants and racial minorities only on the basis that they assimilate, renounce their cultural customs, and flatten their differences in the name of oneness.

Assimilation, especially in one direction, is an erasure. Some of the pundits who opine about white anxiety suggest that we comfort white people by reminding them that they have a good chance of remaining both the demographic majority and the power majority long into the future and that there is a place in such an arrangement for non-white people.[251] There are a number of problems with this proposal for accommodation. It is too willing to make peace with white anxiety by conceding to white dominance. It operates from a false binary of either white dominance or non-white dominance. This is still a form of breaking. The calls for assimilation made by Stenner, Haidt, and other proponents of the same view are akin to the categorical dismissals of identity politics that many on the left have adopted, most recently in the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election. Such views understand identity politics as distracting from central issues that affect everyone, like economic inequality, health care, or climate change. This type of narrow politics, it is argued, is merely the special interests of marginalized groups and are the source of anxiety and resentment that forgotten, everyday and working-class people experience.

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[251] Edsall, *Who's Afraid?*, *supra* note 94.

However, behind "everyday" and "working-class" is an assumed whiteness. And since white identity is also believed to be universal, there is a presumption that everyone is situated identically to a set of core issues. Neglected is the fact that marginalized people care about these issues too, but until they are recognized as full members of society, any universal proposals will inadequately address their relationship to these issues. What does a universal approach to economic inequality mean for people who continue to be harmed by structural race and gender discrimination? How can education policy that neglects the specific redistributional needs of communities of color be universally beneficial? If transgender people cannot receive the medical care they need and face persistent misperceptions and prejudice, how would a universal approach to health care solve these issues? What promises do universal climate change strategies hold for people of color when high emission power plants continue to be zoned into their neighborhoods? What does it mean to base policy decisions on an assumption that everyone has the same understanding of 'public safety' in a nation where law enforcement has always been used as a method of social control of Black people?

There is greater concern for losing people to demagogic appeals who would otherwise support a progressive platform than for understanding why their support for progressive policies is dependent on the exclusion of marginalized people. A strong willingness exists to move toward accommodating this constituency instead of grappling with the reasons a message of othering is having such a powerful impact. This is not a departure from identity politics but a pivot to exclusively embrace white identity. A move in this direction under the paradigm of universalism is a form of breaking—the same-ing that compels erasure of difference. It leaves intact whiteness's claims to universalism and the expectation that full societal membership and social gains are its exclusive domain. This breaking needs to be abandoned for the deeper challenge of bridging. The deep bridging described in this Article calls for another approach. The solution to othering is not same-ing or assimilation, but belonging. Belonging moves beyond assimilation and superficial inclusion. It acknowledges that all are co-creating the conditions, institutions, and story that all will inhabit.

Unger concedes that the other's presence can generate discomfort but argues that it is only through engagement that

one can possibly come to know one's full self.[252] This process can help in overcoming authoritarian tendencies to fear and reject the other. The process will not be easy, but it is more promising for a multicultural and multiracial society than giving in to authoritarian fears. For, "the greater our sense of interconnectedness, the greater the scope of our empathy and compassion for those who are suffering."[253] Despite having differences, belonging allows for deep empathy, investment in, and concern for all.

From advancements in psychology and neuroscience, we also know that "a lack of connection with others not only scars our emotions but also restructures and distorts the brain."[254] As Stenner and Haidt tell us that authoritarianism is "substantially heritable and mostly determined by a lack of openness to experience,"[255] it stands to reason that engagement can help start to bring down that alarmingly high percentage—a third of the population—that has authoritarian tendencies instead of conceding defeat to this statistic as a fixed number.

The love that spirituality breeds requires an engagement with the multiple self—a resistance to shortsighted and selfish interests to constrain life to narrow identities. Again turning to Unger, "we must reject those institutions and structures that limit and frustrate our multiple evolving ways of embracing love, hope, and charity in our routine human relations."[256] The hegemony of whiteness is deeply entrenched, to the point that it operates invisibly. Crenshaw explains that hegemony "convinces the dominated classes that the existing order is inevitable."[257] However, "accepting the falseness of what is deemed natural and necessary in our existing context is only the beginning of opening our imaginations to possibilities that can better reflect our own contingencies."[258] The hegemony of whiteness is not inevitable, and existing behind it is true love and a path to a society of belonging.

E. Working Toward a Just World for All

As the Western unitary self has been demonstrated to be fallacious and a central component of an exclusionary imagined order, the social justice movement must embrace the multiplicity

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[252] POWELL, RACING TO JUSTICE, *supra* note 27.
[253] *Id.* at 221.
[254] *Id.* at 209.
[255] Stenner & Haidt, *supra* note 8, at 183.
[256] POWELL, RACING TO JUSTICE, *supra* note 27, at 208.
[257] Crenshaw, *supra* note 49, at 108.
[258] POWELL, RACING TO JUSTICE, *supra* note 27, at 208.

of the self as a composite of the "we" and the other. By extension, the same recognition must be applied to the interconnectedness of all life and all systems. In this same mode of thinking and practice, not only must the work of the social justice movement itself be integrated and the connection of all life understood, there also needs to be a recognition that the breaking and othering occurring in the United States is not an isolated phenomenon but connected to the same process of breaking and othering happening around the globe. This knowledge of multiplicity is inherent to critical race theory, as the field is not monolithic, but a hetero-doctrinal undertaking in understanding and addressing social issues. This approach can be instructive for the work social justice takes on and the way in which that work is conducted.

In order to advance a new meta-narrative of belonging, the work needs to reflect the goal. The social justice movement, and race scholars in particular, need to engage with the world in the same interconnected manner in which it understands the world. That means working with policymakers and those involved in implementation. That means teaming with activists. That means inter-institutional and multi-sector work. And most importantly, that means engaging with the communities that are the subject of this work—the most marginalized and vulnerable of society. As Fanon demonstrates in *The Wretched of the Earth*, the greatest knowledge lies with the most oppressed peoples. Academia does not offer superior knowledge; it provides the skills to uplift the voices with whom knowledge already resides.[259] The social justice movement is at the service of those in need.

Approaching the work in this way can serve as a reminder that the issues facing marginalized communities are structural and interconnected, even if experienced personally. Transgender rights scholars Rickke Mananzala and Dean Spade write on the transgender movement and how it can be informed by Black liberation and Black feminist thought. They cite as a powerful example the Black Panthers' survival programs. These programs were essentially service delivery programs, but it was connected to the Panthers' message of societal transformation. Mananzala and Spade argue that there is a severance between personal roadblocks and structural barriers because in the nonprofit sector, service delivery has been siloed from social

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[259] FRANTZ FANON, THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH (Richard Philcox trans., 2004).

transformation work.[260] The social justice movement must be thoughtful in the same way by connecting its work to people's everyday struggles and linking those struggles to systemic injustices. This connection can only be achieved through direct engagement with these communities.

There must also be a recognition that social justice work is global and that the struggles for liberation and belonging are connected and transcend borders. The inadequacy of the nation-state system to rein in the abuses of global neoliberalism demonstrates the necessity for a new system of organization and a new effort to co-create institutions that serve all people. The current structure of strong national borders—and even the conception of the nation-state based on the Westphalian model—is fraying and in need of reconsideration. Restricting citizenship and free movement tends to make acceptance into a nation's dominant in-group more valuable and more strongly desired. In the United States, for instance, another effect of the Trump Administration's strict immigration policy for people migrating from non-white countries, is to make whiteness—to the extent that it is equated with citizenship—all the more coveted. As Dasgupta states, "citizenship is itself the primordial kind of injustice in the world. It functions as an extreme form of inherited property."[261]

Hard and fixed borders also deepen and perpetuate the inequality resulting from the racial arbitrage that a significant amount of the global economy needs for its existence. The solutions on the table to address the consequences of the current economic order and lack of oversight are insufficient and misguided. The neoliberal answer is to bolster the nation-state organization within the current global economy while also allowing multi-national corporations to supersede national borders. This result occurred in part because of Western ideology's inability to see its own flaws and its undimmed belief in the universality of the nation-state. Just like the desire in constructing a "we" to return to some imaginary ideal past, the "nostalgia for that golden age of the nation-state continues to distort Western political debate to this day."[262] The West is mistaken about an inherent goodness of the nation-state structure because it was devised to serve the West's interest and promote the existing advantages in place as a result of

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[260] Rickke Mananzala & Dean Spade, *The Non-Profit Industrial Complex and Trans Resistance*, 5 SEXUALITY RSCH. & SOC. POL'Y 53 (2008).

[261] Dasgupta, *supra* note 112.

[262] *Id.*

colonization. Universalism sullied the West's judgment in assuming that the benefits the West stood to receive would be enjoyed globally—never mind the fact that many of the nations the West arrogantly and carelessly cobbled together cut across and inflicted divisions created or exacerbated by their colonial histories.

The neofascist solution is to withdraw from the global order—to turn inward and reclaim a powerful nation-state for a narrow group of a pure and true people. This is clearly extreme breaking, motivated by ideas of an essentialized dominant in-group identity around which nations are currently constructed and can lead to nothing but deeper violence and fracturing of humanity.

It is undeniable that the nation-state system is being challenged by the realities of the current global political economy. Yet, this issue is not being sufficiently grappled with to produce a workable solution. This dilemma must be taken head-on and driven by a desire to achieve full human recognition for all, a respect for the planet and all forms of life, and with a goal of an all-encompassing belonging and circle of concern.

A remaining question, then, might be how to bridge with people who are grounded in a claim of superiority, the right to dominate and a striving for purity, and whether this bridging is necessary. Given this atmosphere, those engaged in the work of social justice must work harder to do the work of bridging, of embracing and celebrating differences, and of pulling everyone into the circle of human concern. As Frederick Douglass points out, "power concedes nothing without a demand." Change will require struggle, but this struggle gives meaning and enriches humanity. The answer is to not start by building bridges with those folks but to still avoid breaking. Begin with shorter bridges and as this practice becomes more routine, start to bridge across larger divides. It is also important to be mindful of wellbeing as the process to engage in the practice of bridging begins. Healing is an important part of the bridging process as a recognition of one's own identity and the identities of others constituted at a distance from oneself will inevitably cause initial tension. But, as these small bridges grow into larger efforts to bridge, this process in itself is a form of healing. As strong human connections are made with people who were previously distant, those connections restore a previously missing need and fill a chasm that was disruptive to the self. Having that connection that bridging brings elevates the shared humanity of all and contributes to healing.

Bridging across large divides is also necessary to help create a place and a resonant identity in the new imagined order for those whose former identities relied so heavily on the need for an "other." The stories that are told about who constitutes the "we" don't only create a sense of a "we" but also create a sense of self. Psychologists assert that there is no stable sense of self until the development of a self-story. It matters little that these stories are not always accurate and oftentimes are myths. The purpose of this effort is not to build the truth, but to build a self and a people. One might notice that the claim of purity is not only false, it is also anxiety-producing. Anything that is pure is always under the threat of contamination and being destroyed. The anxiety has been shaped into an existential, ontological threat that has the sense of religion gone bad. The purity central to whiteness has contributed to the anxiety surrounding whiteness's eroding social currency. Realizing that purity is a hollow device meant to create an artificial sense of worth and its replacement with the authentic meaningfulness constructed through engagement and a broad encompassing "we" must be integral to the advancement of any new narrative.

We should be clear: we are not suggesting that there is not deep anxiety for conservative white males, nor are we suggesting their anxiety be ignored. Any path forward must include this group, but we should be equally clear that inclusive fairness and belonging cannot be built upon continued domination either by whiteness or by neoliberalism. As Brown states, "th[is] politics of [resentment] emerges from the historically dominant as they feel that dominance ebbing."[263] Whiteness and patriarchy provided the basis for dominance. But, it is also true that these forces serve as the basis for this group's dominance as well as domination, "as whiteness, especially, but also masculinity provides limited protection against the displacements and losses that forty years of neoliberalism have yielded for the working and middle classes."[264] In the building of a broad and inclusive "we," this group cannot be excluded. There must be space even for the formerly dominant, as there needs to be recognition that the construction of in-group hierarchical identity involved their subjugation as well—as long as it is unequivocally clear that the broad and welcoming space created for this purpose and the co-constitution of a new "we" cannot in any way rely upon a need to dominate.

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[263] BROWN, *supra* note 38, at 175.
[264] *Id.*

As the targets of oppression and the process of othering, there is an urgent role for people of color and other marginalized groups in overcoming the current social structure and advancing a new meta-narrative. People of color, women, the LGBTQ+ community, and the differently abled, along with their allies in the social justice movement, are not simply joining something that is already there—this group is contributing to a new future. The price of the ticket is not erasure but compassionate engagement and practice. People of different identities will not necessarily become the same, but the sameness and differences existing between different identities will be held together by belongingness and caring. The goal then is not to displace white people or any other dominant group experiencing rapid change with a new dominant group. The goal is to displace dominance. In its absence, social boundaries become more porous and identities become more multiple and fluid.

The stories and practices of a new narrative must have space for many "we's" and aspire toward no categorical other. The new stories must be an array of everyone's stories. These stories cannot just appeal to the head but must also engage the heart. One challenge is to put these stories into practice. This Article is a call for such practice recognizing that the grammar, institutions, and stories can borrow from the past but must be open to a new future where all belong.