

Chapter 3: The Modern-Day Racial Controversies Which Surround L

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Recent violent encounters between police and black Americans led to a resurgence in protests around civil right violence and systemic racism. Both sides engage in violence to underscore their beliefs (which include broad ar American public is divided in its support of the movement, seemingly split between declaring support for law and

groups), two ideals that need not be pitted against each other. The underlying issue in BLM and the other movement is power and control and how they play out in people's everyday lives.

Racism occurs when people feel prejudice or practice discrimination against others whose racial background diminishes their status as superior to others. All the other *-isms* are manifestations of the same sentiment: one group forms stereotypes and diminishes the other in some way.

Discriminatory beliefs function as a rationale for using power as an advantage over the other. They justify treating people differently applied them to our group.^[1] Conflicts over racism, sexism, transgenderism, and all other types of bias and bigotry are part of the same story: two factions dispute the consequences of power around a facet of identity. In-group and outgroup dynamics, prejudice, and discrimination facilitate people becoming entrenched in their opinions.

Racism in the News

In the summer of 2017, violence broke out between protesters and counter-protesters in Charlottesville, Virginia, over the removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee from Lee Park, recently renamed Emancipation Park. This was one protest in response to a series of events that resulted from the Charleston church shooting in 2015 in which a white supremacist murdered nine people in a church. There is a wide array of ideologies, but they united in opposition to white supremacy.

Police were criticized for not being more proactive in deescalating the violent skirmishes that erupted throughout the city. One woman died in a vehicular attack against counter-protesters, and the city descended into chaos.

President Trump reacted to the event on camera: "We all must be united and condemn all that hate stands for. There is no room for hate as one!" And, "We condemn in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many streets, many people, and media."

He was criticized for not condemning white supremacists directly, and for the next two days he expanded and defended his position. He placed blame on both sides, called out the very violent alt-right, and registered his objection to the removal of George Washington's statue [taken down]? No. . . . They're trying to take away our culture, they're trying to take away our history.

In the Charlottesville rally, opposing groups demonstrated their viewpoints publicly on an issue of identity. Acts of protest and racism that has fractured this country since before the Civil War. Demonstrations and rallies are one form of expression that is protected as one of our civil liberties.

In 1918, Theodore Roosevelt said, "Free speech, exercised both individually and through a free press, is a necessary condition of freedom of expression, or free speech, is closely linked to the right to peaceful protest: "free speech would mean no protest known."^[3]

Protest can take the form of mass demonstrations or individual statements, in which a person tries to enact change. Colin Kaepernick, a San Francisco 49ers who led the team in the Super Bowl in 2012, became a lightning rod of controversy for kneeling during the national anthem. He stated he was protesting social injustice and police brutality toward minorities, not the flag or the military.

Though Kaepernick has not played football since 2016 when he opted out of his 49ers contract, he remains in place as a symbol for teams that need an effective quarterback. Some in the NFL, the media, and the public believe Kaepernick has no background.

Kaepernick's protest sparked similar dissent throughout the NFL. It raised the ire of wealthy team owners, most of whom are white.

In response to player protests during the national anthem, Jerry Jones, owner of the Dallas Cowboys, issued a statement that he would bench players who do not stand during the anthem. After he issued his threat in October, all of the Cowboys players remained standing during the anthem.

It was debated whether Jones had the power to bench players because of their beliefs. The NAACP informed Jones that the NFL's policy was unconstitutional.

violation of their First Amendment rights. Some contend that, in football, white owners still have ultimate power and

In other professional sports, seven-time world champion and NASCAR team owner Richard Petty and multimillionaire Jimmie Johnson made simultaneous statements that if any individual on their respective teams did anything other than stand during the anthem, they would be fired. This led to a firestorm of arguments over First Amendment rights.

However, no firings occurred on either team, and the entire NASCAR community continued to stand during the anthem. However, retiring NASCAR legend and fan favorite Dale Earnhardt Jr. stated that he defends the right to protest.

Richard Petty Motorsports named Darrell "Bubba" Wallace as a full-time driver, making him the first full-time black driver in NASCAR as one of the most influential "new" drivers in NASCAR and won championships in NASCAR's lower-division races.

His appointment came after individuals inside and outside NASCAR complained that the sport was biased and that it was not as popular as other American sports have accepted. Yet Richard "The King" Petty said they decided on Wallace because of his talent, not the color of Bubba's skin.

Incidentally, Wallace, who is biracial, disagreed with the decision of other professional sports figures to kneel during the anthem.

In Game 3 of the 2017 World Series, the Houston Astros first baseman Yuli Gurriel was seen on national television kneeling during the Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Yu Darvish. This occurred after Gurriel hit a second-inning homerun off Darvish.

Gurriel is Cuban and noted for his inability to hit against Asian pitchers. Darvish is Japanese-Iranian and was raised in the United States. Nationally for the gesture, Gurriel issued a strong apology to Darvish, and Darvish accepted Gurriel's apology and returned to the game.

As a consequence of Gurriel's gesture, he was suspended for five games at the beginning of the 2018 MLB season. However, his suspension did not occur during the World Series, which upset a great number of players and fans and deepened the divide. Advertising income and network ratings must out-value racial decency.^[8]

Bias in Business in the News

Even with laws in place to protect Americans from unequal treatment, discrimination still occurs. Sexism is prejudice based on sex in the workplace, gender discrimination mostly centers around on hiring, pay inequity, and company culture. Injured parties, regardless of gender, received pay that was less than that of colleagues of another gender in similar positions, or were treated differently. Company culture is more subtle and insidious and adds up to everything that makes it more difficult for one sex or gender to succeed.

The Civil Rights Act prohibits harassment in the workplace related to race, sex, national origin, and religion. But it has a weak defense. To exploit this soft spot in the law, employers (1) must provide a channel for employees to complain to (2) investigate and (3) prevent further harm. This gives employers a lot of latitude in dealing with reported abuse, and sometimes the steps taken by an economically valuable high-ranking employee, may be superficial.

In weighing the options for how to deal with the reported abuse by a prized employee, employers take profit, the damage to the company brought by the terminated employee into consideration. It's often more practical for employers to allow the abuse to continue in other ways. Note that Fox News allowed Bill O'Reilly to keep his job until news of his sexual misconduct began to surface.

Yet, "in a climate where victims speak freely, employers must now expect to publicly defend their employment decisions. If harassment or discrimination could balloon into a PR nightmare and threaten a company's all-important brand.^[9] The fear of public scrutiny to trigger public discourse and spark a change in sexual harassment and gender discrimination policies.

Take Curt Schilling, a former All-Star baseball pitcher and analyst for ESPN, who was fired after he posted a message on Twitter. The accompanying comment was in response to the North Carolina law barring transgender people from using public restrooms. In a statement about his firing, ESPN said that it is an inclusive company and that Schilling was told his conduct was inappropriate.

A Google engineer who wrote an "anti-diversity manifesto" was fired. The essay, titled "Google's Ideological Echoes," argued that the company should focus on ideological diversity. The manifesto also mentioned that women might not be in the company because of their preferences and abilities, not because of sexism.^[11]

Sexual Harassment and Assault in the News

Sexual harassment and sexual assault are severe forms of sexism and are exactly about power and control, enacting violence against bodies and disregard other people's right to consent."^[12] Sovereignty of the body is also called self-ownership and humans have a moral or natural right to have bodily integrity and exclusive control over their body and life.^[13] "The right to bodily integrity, including children, to autonomy and self-determination over their own body. It considers an unconsented physical assault a violation of the right, but violations in gender-based violence, such as sexual assault and harassment, more often affect women."

Although the act is sexualized, the motivation stems from the perpetrator's need for dominance and control. Such as one person, who holds more power, controls more resources, wields more influence, and a target, who is in a less powerful position, controls, such as a job, an opportunity, safety.^[16] When "one person is in a position of authority over another, even if the act is sexualized, the motivation stems from the perpetrator's need for dominance and control."

Harvey Weinstein, a Hollywood producer and film executive, sexually assaulted complete strangers and actresses. He used phrases like "Don't embarrass me" and "Don't ruin your friendship with me," in a decades-long pattern of sexual misconduct. He used his power with talent, asked them to his room, and if they refused he tried to coerce and terrorize them by threatening destruction of their careers.

If he manipulated an actress into his room, he would begin by asking for a massage, giving a massage, or asking for a favor. Many actresses he had slept with in exchange for their roles to make it seem like it was an expected thing. Later, he was compared to anything like Bill Cosby did, as in, drug women, which he deemed coercive.

Weinstein's assistants were always complicit in his actions. In most of the rape cases, Weinstein had a key to the room. He knew they would be vulnerable. He reached quiet settlements to make accusations go away and used spies to spread rumors. When his public with her rape allegation against him, Weinstein hired Stella Penn Pechanac, an agent in a private Israeli intelligence firm, and a women's rights activist, to dissuade McGowan from accusing him publicly.^[18]

Weinstein was fired from his company when his behavior was made public. Many of his friends, including notable actors, remained silent until events prompted them to make public statements. Affleck posted a message to his followers saying he was "sick" and that he was "saddened and angry that a man who I worked with used his position of power to intimidate and harass women. Then women began making allegations against Affleck.

Quickly, this triggered the exposure of the sexual misconduct of numerous entertainment industry power players. Weinstein was fired from his company when his behavior was made public. Many of his friends, including notable actors, remained silent until events prompted them to make public statements. Affleck posted a message to his followers saying he was "sick" and that he was "saddened and angry that a man who I worked with used his position of power to intimidate and harass women. Then women began making allegations against Affleck.

Weinstein's downfall also sparked the #MeToo social media campaign in which women denounced sexual harassment. On a day, 4.7 million people around the world joined the conversation on Twitter. Facebook reported that more than 100,000 people posted a message including the words "Me Too."

"On one side, it's a bold declarative statement that 'I'm not ashamed' and 'I'm not alone.' On the other side, it's a statement that says 'I understand you and I'm here for you or I get it,'" said Tarana Burke, creator of the #MeToo movement. She had heard from women of color who had survived sexual abuse and exploitation.^[21]

The public shaming and reprisal in the entertainment industry quickly surged into other male-dominated areas. The restaurant industry was fostering an environment of vulgarity and sexism in his kitchens. Multiple women complained of harassment and lack of resources support. Besh stepped down from his company, but many attested that the restaurant industry continues to be a place of sexual violence.^[22]

After the Besh news, a chef and restaurant owner in New Orleans conducted an informal phone survey of other p company culture is set at the top. "When the leader isn't setting an example of a welcoming, equitable and respo organization can become toxic."[\[23\]](#) Her findings also support the idea that employees need an objective agent, s with.

"Unless men in the restaurant industry, and in all industries, join the ranks, systemic change will never happen. A will have to come from those who have it."[\[24\]](#)

Jon McNeill, the president of global sales and service at Tesla, said, "As a father of a daughter, I do not want to b help that I'm a white dude, but I can help the culture that gets created."[\[25\]](#)

In the media, Mark Halperin, the well-known journalist and coauthor of a book on Barack Obama, was suspended. Halperin apologized for his behavior and said he would step back from his work to deal with his issue.[\[26\]](#)

Bill O'Reilly, host of the highest-rated political commentary show on cable, *The O'Reilly Factor*, was forced to resi nearly \$50 million to settle sexual harassment suits. The network was aware of the accusations made against O' top executives of 21st Century Fox, decided ... to retain O'Reilly despite being made aware of the fresh complain worth \$25m a year." It added language to his contract saying he'd be let go if new allegations came up, which the

O'Reilly's departure followed that of Roger Ailes, the former Fox News chairman, who was accused of sexual mis "21st Century Fox has taken concerted action to transform Fox News...installing new leadership, overhauling ma channels through which employees can report harassment or discrimination."[\[27\]](#)

Power does corrupt, and those who stand to gain economically by keeping quiet about misconduct are complicit plays, abounds with sexual harassment. One commentator says:

For my own part, I received a crash course in all this in Washington during the 1990s, where I spent five form scandals that yielded two valuable lessons. One was that an atmosphere of casual sexism might constitute a specific word or gesture directed at a specific woman. Another was that "consent" loses much of its meaning

A majority of people interviewed who worked in Congress said they experienced sexual harassment or knew so senators, must learn the unwritten rules to avoid being sexually harassed or abused. "There is also the 'creep lis male members most notorious for inappropriate behavior, ranging from making sexually suggestive comments o interns."[\[29\]](#)

Despite the reprisal of other powerful figures in various industries, it's not likely that the culture in politics will cha The power hierarchy often takes the shape of one central figure at the top on whose success the rest of the netwo jeopardize their position or get the leader in trouble.[\[30\]](#) On the other hand, "sometimes, the sexual advances fro advancing one's career--what one political veteran bluntly referred to as a 'sex trade on Capitol Hill.'"[\[31\]](#)

During Donald Trump's 2016 campaign for the U.S. presidency, the most powerful position in the world, eleven v brushed aside as lies and "locker-room talk," but accusations against Harvey Weinstein, a person of relatively lo firing, and takedown of multiple abusers across sectors of society?

It may have to do with the social standing of the accusers relative to that of the accused. "Weinstein's sexual hara many of his accusers are celebrities, with status, fame, and success commensurate with his own. Sexual harassi power to overcome the disadvantage that most accusers face."[\[32\]](#)

The three dimensions of the social hierarchy--power, status, and influence--come into play and determine whose exercise authority or control over others. But for people who have no power, it is status that helps them to have a

Although most perpetrators are men, and there is a general pervasive myth that men have an uncontrollable biology, it is more about how men are socialized, and how our society has constructed gender and masculinity, than biology." [34] It worsens the trauma and shame for survivors. But when perpetrators face few consequences for their abuse, it reinforces their power.

Since the Weinstein scandal, a number of people who have been sexually harassed have come forward and named their abusers. What is at stake for accusers; the current tidal wave of exposures represents a significant change in public consciousness.

Power disparities affect people's--or a nation's--behavior in relation to difference. Just as sexual harassment threatens the sovereignty of the United States, the argument goes. President Trump is building a wall between the United States and illegal immigrants pose a security hazard; they bring crime, gangs, and drugs; they steal jobs from Americans; and they are placing an undue burden on the American people.

Sovereignty is the power of a state--or an individual--to do what is necessary to govern itself. "By not exercising its sovereignty, the United States government would surrender a supposedly vital component of its national sovereignty." [35] Notice a state's lack of power leads to breaches of bodily integrity in the form of sexual harassment and to the unfair treatment of minorities.

In the following quotations, substitute the name of any less-empowered group for "women," substitute the name of any more-empowered group across all the *-isms*:

After the revelations about Weinstein and others...issues like unequal pay and lack of promotion might seem like women's problems--but they are the problems that create men like Weinstein. It's the imbalance of pay and power that gives men control over the economic lives of women and, as a result, influence over their physical lives. These subtler forms of abuse, like not getting a job, can in fact be especially insidious, since they are easier for companies, and even victims, to dismiss. [36]

Men who demean, degrade or disrespect women have been able to operate with such impunity--not just in the workplace but in their influence and investment can make or break a career. The asymmetry of power is ripe for abuse. [37]

The cases of racism and sexism that have come to public attention seem to point to the power held by white males in our culture in which white men embody the vast majority of power, through both economic and political might as well as wealth and male. [38]

This is an observation, not a value judgment. We can see and acknowledge that there are relative differences in power in human relations lead to more advantages and benefits accorded to some, and less to others. Let me reiterate: it is not wrong. It is the way our society operates now.

What *is* wrong is when a person in a relative position of power uses that power to coerce another into an unsafe situation on a prejudice based on a stereotype to discriminate against another. What *is* wrong is when a person in a relative position of power uses that power to harm another's health, welfare, and purpose in life. Whether power is earned or inherited, it demands to be used responsibly with respect for the rights of others.

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