

WHITE SUPREMACY: AMERICA'S ORIGINAL SIN?

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Abstract: Writing about white supremacy in the US may sound unoriginal and trite but I believe it is way too important to continue studying it with regard to its relevancy and the challenges it continues to pose to justice, equity and harmony in the American society. Undoubtedly, it is path breaking to say that it is America's original sin even though we have long been made to believe that racism is America's original sin. Ideology and force have been its main vehicles. In other words, racism, or rather racialism, and violence allowed it to become institutionalized and to subtly operate. Power and privileges are at its heart and it seeks their accumulation and control. That is why it is the most decried and biggest internal problem of the nation. In the face of deeper divide of the US national fabric, regular discriminatory practices and hate acts against African-Americans that often culminate to countless murders and what seems like hereditary poverty, it becomes more than relevant to tackle the problem and find its solutions. Thus, this paper intends to study how white supremacy has become the nation's original sin, its characteristics, the ways in which it operates and its consequences on African-Americans particularly. It contends that it has established and rooted itself in the nation's fabric since settler colonialism in the America's in the 15th century. It has been consolidated and institutionalized through nation-building and maintained itself through astute resilience. At the end, this capacity to adapt itself and continue to exist despite serious challenges makes it hard to be routed.

Keywords: White Supremacy/Supremacism, African-Americans, Discrimination, Injustice.

1. Introduction

White supremacy is the source of mostly all the problems African-Americans are facing in the US today. Its construction and consolidation are the biggest challenges to their emancipation and aspiration to political and socio-economic justice. Despite the tremendous efforts deployed in all spheres, acts of white supremacists, explicit and implicit, are commonplace and seem to be treated complacently by the State and judicial authorities. Many cases, past and present, can be used as illustrations and tend to make people pessimistic about its end. Lately, the horrendous and public murder of George Floyd by suffocation in Minnesota

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in June 2020 by a white policeman has triggered unprecedented world reactions of indignation, protest and condemnation of the lethal effects of white supremacy on African-Americans.

It is anachronistic to say that almost every aspect of American life bears the imprint of white supremacy: education, politics, religion, housing, the military, the entertainment industry, the cultural, social and economic life, to the point that many simply don't differentiate it from racism. Thus, it is very popular to hear the rhetoric "racism is white supremacy" and "white supremacy is racism". Historically, the roots of white supremacy go a long way back and predate the building of the nation. It has been there since the beginning of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestants' (WASP) settler colonialism in the 15th century. From enslavement to Independence, through Secession War to the Civil Rights Movements up to "Trump-America", white supremacy has had the opportunity to construct, feed, consolidate and mold itself into a variety of privileges today. It has done irreparable harms and uncountable victims among the black community for over such a long period, roughly four hundred years, making it hard (but not impossible) for African-Americans to catch-up. So, early bigoted policies have outlined today's African-American possibilities and generated all the evils we are denouncing here.

In its simplest definition, it is a term used to describe both an ideology and practice. As an ideology, it assumes the centrality and superiority of people defined and perceived as "white". As Practice, it is the collective and all-encompassing cultural, political and socio-economic system of privileges for "whiteness". In other words, white supremacy is a narcissist system borne out of capitalistic needs through the enslavement and domination of specific peoples, particularly people of African descent, so as to keep the most important powers and privileges offered by the American society - political, social and economic mainly - and through the use of prejudices, oppression and injustice. From a broader sense, it has also been perceived as Euro centrality. It is illustrated in different ways such as racial profiling, police brutality, the surveillance (state) of blackness, mass incarceration, voter suppression, the ghettoization of African-Americans through housing projects, gentrification and job exclusion to name a few. These proceedings, in a way or in another, reckon old practices such as the "black codes", the overseeing of enslaved Africans in the plantations, lynching and the "separate but equal" laws during Jim Crow.

Thus, the objective on this paper is to analyse and find answers to the following questions. How did white supremacy become America's original sin? What are its characteristics? How does it operate? How was state apparatus used to construct and consolidate white supremacy? What are the different ways in which it gets concretely entrenched in the nation's political and socio-economic life? How does it disfavour African-American communities and how do the latter resist it? How can it be defeated?

To answer these questions, I will use an historical, ideological, judicial and socio-economic approach. The historical approach will allow me to look into history so as to find the roots and routes of white supremacy in the US. For this, among other works, I will question and analyse the relevance of Howard Zinn's accounts of the beginning of white settler colonialism in the Americas, its support to the construction of white supremacy and its consequences on dominated peoples, namely native Indians and black people. Also, we will need to convey the various productions of pioneering physiologists, anthropologists and biologists that are at the intersection of history and ideology. They will serve us to deconstruct the ideological scheming behind whitewashing and white superiority in general. From a judicial perspective, I will look at the early use of the law either during enslavement, nation-building or Jim Crow that tried to give a legal basis to white domination over blacks. Lastly, the socio-economic approach will allow me to discuss the impact of white supremacy on African-Americans.

To this effect, the first argument this paper makes is that what we have so long been fed and manipulated to accept and repeat as racism is, in reality, white supremacism which is at the heart of the construction of the American nation. To me racism does not exist and what we falsely call racism is simply supremacism or the belief and acting as if one is superior to another on the basis of established prejudices (explicit or implicit). Second, I contend that invisible/implicit/systemic white supremacism is more detrimental than the visible/explicit one and is mainly motivated by the preservation of power of all types (political, social, economic, intellectual and cultural) and domination over African-Americans. Third and last, I maintain that it is aberrant and totally irrational to hope for the elimination of structural white supremacism from the state which is its main supporter, promoter and protector.

2. Racism or White Supremacy?

The formation of prejudices against “the other” under the guise of racism has undoubtedly been linked with human mobility or migration through invasion, domination and conquest. Generally, invading people tend to consider themselves as the rulers and to mobilize a variety of prejudices, particularly racist, that they use as a superiority device to validate their economic, political and social domination. This is how fifteenth century capitalistic explorations and imperialism have contributed to the dissemination of white supremacy, using the false pretense of race to mask atrocities and cruelties exerted on the dominated other. So, these two opportunities have been ceased to construct white supremacy in the United States: enslavement and nation building.

In this perspective, it is important to say straightforwardly that racism equates white supremacy in all aspects. They are not the two different sides of a coin but one side of it. Racism was undoubtedly invented and implemented to sustain the advantages and opportunities inherently related to it for the benefit of its inventors: the White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASP). On the American continent, it started during the first contacts between white settler colonialists and native Indians. Christopher Columbus and his crewmembers are made famous and remembered for their looting and massacre of masses of native Indian populations who welcomed them in the Island of Hispaniola (present-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic). Unquestionably, this story of invasion, conquest, bloodshed and enslavement, praised as heroic adventure in the US where Columbus Day is a celebration even though he never laid foot there, marks the beginning of settler colonialism of the Americas.

The genocidal and cruel encounter between Columbus and Native Indians is acclaimed by his contemporaries and successors who unveiled and populated the New World. The enslavement and exploitation of Arawak Indians (who docilely greeted and welcomed him) to meet his wild dreams and visions of gold was a turning point in the history of transatlantic exploitation of human labour. He sent expedition after expedition and huge raids against Arawak men, women and children and ended up entirely decimating them (Howard Zinn, 2003, p.5). This period, commonly referred to by many Eurocentric scholars as the starting point of American history, is unfortunately remembered by people of African descent as gloomy and cruel as it marked the mass murder of thousands of Arawaks. A number of clichés and fallacies have accompanied it and have certainly contributed to their racialization as they were based on the Columbus’s “horrible” account of them. Columbus (an Italian sailor in the service of the Spanish King and Queen Ferdinand and Isabella) and his Spaniards crew members have described and depicted the Arawaks in dehumanizing terms so as to justify their enslavement. They have consequently laid the basis for all future invasions of the Americas and beyond, particularly the US as Zinn supports: “What Columbus did to the Arawaks [...], the English settlers of Virginia and Massachussetts (did) to the Powhatans and the Pequots” (2003, p. 11).

Today, a solid and strong momentum is being achieved in the US, though started decades ago, to counter master narratives and offer people the truth about Columbus and his evil deeds against indigenous peoples. According to Johnnie Jae, over “141 cities, 15 states [and] numerous universities officially recognize Indigenous Peoples’ Day” in the place of or alongside Columbus Day. However, the struggle continues on two fronts. The first one is to definitely overcome the inexact portrayal of Christopher Columbus as a hero in American History books. The second is to obtain the official national recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ Day to replace Columbus Day.

Over a century later, around the beginning of the 17th century, during one of the most horrific human trafficking through the black Atlantic, a larger scale system of human trade and exploitation was built and consolidated by the same European people. They have made millions of victims who have crossed the Atlantic from Africa to America for free labor until the 1860s. As with Indians, they have mobilized a plethora of myths and pseudo-scientific literature (Eugenics) to validate and pass their classification, drawing on the works of Swedish botanist, Carolus Linnaeus “*Systema Naturae*” (1735), German physiologist and anthropologist, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach “*On the Natural Varieties of Mankind*” (1776). The Caucasoid or what is described today as White or Caucasian has been ranked as the best race and the Negroid or what is described today as Black as the worst one which is meant to be exploited and subdued. As a consequence, African descended people were depicted as everything “inferior” and “backward” and “white” people as everything “superior” and “civilized”.

Thus, little by little, white supremacists in power imposed and influenced the different understandings of race they defined as a natural not a social construct. Such understandings had even penetrated African societies and supremacist pseudo-science became the new mode of explaining and spreading white supremacy. It reached its epitome with supremacist rule (government) in colonial as well as independent America when it was instituted. From “Black Codes” to *de jure* racism, Black people have been excluded from the privileges and opportunities offered and guaranteed by the US Constitution and enslavement considered as their only “natural” condition. Most members of the Convention that drafted the Constitution in 1787 embodied white supremacist ideologies. So, despite the strong words by Thomas Jefferson that “*all men are created equal,*” Black people were covertly or overtly excluded. They did not deserve the privileges of “*life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness*” as people characterized by the inability of reasoning. At the time of the American Revolution, white supremacy was already an institution that existed in all colonies and formed the basis of their social structure and economy.

Clearly, the construction and evolution of white supremacy has inherently been linked with the making of the races or racialization and systemic racism. The exclusion of African-Americans through the institutionalization of racial rule is the foundational basis of the building of the American nation despite all the rhetoric of Enlightenment ideas having inspired the drafting of the Constitution. Somehow, the issue of their integration made nation building incomplete. The establishment of clear boundaries between them and supporters of white supremacy has had heavy consequences on the life on the first as those hard racial lines defined and limited their socio-economic possibilities in a society they were initially excluded from then treated as second-class citizens.

As a matter of fact, people of African descent have been excluded from citizenship and related advantages by the fundamental law of the nation. Despite the magnificent values of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” granted by the 1789 Constitution that created the federal union, other provisions, catered to accommodate southern states’ desire to carry on the enslavement system, denied the federal government the power to legislate against it where it already existed. In addition, the 1790 Immigration Law limited as well the right to citizenship

through naturalization to “free white persons” only. Consequently, African-Americans have basically been deprived of all other rights as human beings. They could not own a property, they could not sell or buy, they could not be witnesses in a court of justice and they could not marry without the consent of their enslavers. In summary, they simply had no rights as they were only good as enslaved people. To this effect, Coates (2014) contends:

Having been enslaved for 250 years, black people were not left to their own devices. They were terrorized. In the Deep South, a second slavery ruled. In the North, legislatures, mayors, civic associations, banks, and citizens all colluded to pin black people into ghettos, where they were overcrowded, overcharged, and undereducated. Businesses discriminated against them, awarding them the worst jobs and the worst wages. Police brutalized them in the streets. And the notion that black lives, black bodies, and black wealth were rightful targets remained deeply rooted in the broader society. (Coates, 2014)

However, this exclusion culminated with the Dred Scott case. In 1857, Dred Scott, an enslaved African made a legal case for freedom on the basis that he had lived in parts of the United States (Missouri) where slavery was illegal. The Supreme Court ruled that Scott, an enslaved African, was not an American citizen and therefore could not sue in a federal court. It hence declared all blacks ineligible for citizenship. Subsequently, white supremacy was able to resist, either radically or tacitly, all notable challenges through structural and systemic racism and the domination and exclusion of enslaved Africans continued in the best way, mainly in the South.

Thus, Charles Wagley has eloquently summarized the reasons why the American supremacist problem started and will be hard to efface. He identified three main factors. The first one is the economic factor, related to the plantation regime and all the resources it generates for its dependents. The second is cultural and explains that the culture of enslavement has been inherited by the WASP and that they are willing to continue it. Third and last, there is a sociological factor, borne after the Civil War, which particularly consisted of defending their antebellum social status (cited in Bastide, 1957, p.449).

Today, the reality is striking. In a well-documented article published in *The New York Times* dated September 9 2020, Lu et al. give the figures of the effects of white supremacy. White people make 80% of the forces of power in the US or 742 out of the 922 most powerful people. In almost all walks of life, the access by African-Americans to historically white-dominated public and private institutions is viewed as a threat and an assault on white privileges and power and has been prevented or reduced. The illustrations by Lu et al. are simply gloomy:

- 29 prosecutors charge people with crimes and only 12 are Asian, Black or Hispanic;
- 24 people lead the Trump Administration and only 3 are Asian, Black or Hispanic;
- 9 justices sit on the US Supreme Court and only 2 are Black or Hispanic;
- 8 men are military chiefs and only 1 is Black;
- 25 highest-valued companies and only 6 are Asian or Black;
- Only 4 Black chief executives running Fortune 500 companies;
- Of the people who head universities ranked in the top 25 only 1 is Hispanic;
- Of the 15 people who direct major news organizations only 3 are Black or Hispanic;
- The 5 people who have the most influence over book publishing are all white;
- The people who edit the 10 most-read magazines are all white;

- Of the 14 people who influence most of the music that is produced and played only 2 are Black or Hispanic;
- Of the 25 people who run the top TV networks and Hollywood studios only 3 are Black or Hispanic;
- Of the people in charge of the 25 highest-valued fashion companies only 3 are Asian or Hispanic;
- Of the 99 people who own baseball, basketball and football teams only 6 are Asian, Black or Hispanic;
- Of the 100 people who write laws in the Senate only 9 are Asian, Black or Hispanic;
- Of the 50 State governors only 3 Asian, Hispanic or Native American;
- Of the 431 people who currently write laws in the House only 112 are Asian, Black, Hispanic or Native American.

These figures describe the most powerful institutions in the U.S. and the people who run them. They are a good illustration that white supremacy is not merely the work of hotheaded demagogues, or a matter of false consciousness, but a force so fundamental to America that it is difficult to imagine the country without it (Coates, 2014)

3. The Fluidity/Invisibility of White Supremacy

One of the most distinguished characteristics of white supremacy is its fluidity, invisibility and its capacity to reinvent, readapt and sustain itself after moments of insurgencies and turbulences to dismantle its structures. It has never derailed from its objective of keeping the most important power, privileges and resources in the American society. Though, the ways of reaching them may have varied at specific times. At different moments in American history, it has been shaken by landmark events and situations but has never disappeared.

As a matter of fact, it is necessary to distinguish two forms of white supremacy: the visible and the invisible one. From a general perception, visible white supremacy can be alluded to all acts of open racism perpetrated at the individual or collective level and that are based or have been motivated by the belief in white supremacism. The most noticeable ones are those that have been committed and have involved innumerable black victims, and include the murders during the black Atlantic and in the plantations to the lynchings and racist assassinations of recent times. However, in the eyes of many Race Studies experts, this form of white supremacy is a simple diversion today in the face of the more harmful and more in-rooted one (Diangelo, 2018) . It is epitomized by the declining Ku Klux Klan and many other far-right affiliated hate groups that are authors of a number of hate crimes against Black people.

African-Americans have tremendously suffered from the violence exercised by white supremacists and affiliated groups. The black body has never meant something to them and this perception has been incepted since enslavement and plantation life. It used to be savagely mutilated in numbers and exposed when it tried to revolt or escape captive life. It was used as guinea-pig in experimental science or as “breeding tools”. It used to be dumped as thrash when it was tested inapt for field work. It used to be considered a material object in the hands of the most affordable buyer or a sexual gadget in the hands of whoever desired it. It used to be sadistically buried or burnt alive. Thus, white supremacists’ perception of Blackness continues to be influenced and guided by these age-old considerations.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, the black body received the same representation as before, or worst, and lynching became the most horrendous weapon in the hands of white supremacists who continued the same type of murders as during enslavement. It was more prevalent in the South where former exploiters of African captives’ free labour used it as retaliation weapon against emancipation along with discrimination and socio-economic

exclusion. Encouraged by the existence of frontier lynch law and lynch-law regimes, thousands of victims were made among the African-American communities who were murdered in the most atrocious manners. They were shot, knifed, burned or hanged. For instance, according to Brundage (1993, p. 8), in the South only, the number of black victims of lynching reached three thousand between 1880 and 1930. This motivated their large displacement in areas where they believed they could save their life. However, everywhere they lived with constant fear and vulnerability that they could be attacked and killed any time simply because they are black, whether in rural south or urban north. As Christopher Waldrep puts it, African-Americans perceived lynching as white “authority to kill without fear of punishment” and as such, it “more effectively controlled black people by being so terrifyingly unpredictable” (2009, p. xv).

To understand how deeply entrenched lynching was in American society is to study it in relationship with the law. From the time it started in the years following Emancipation Proclamation in 1865, a number of political and judiciary initiatives have unsuccessfully tried to curb it by making it punishable under law. In early 20th century, successively in 1922 and 1937, the Senate had blocked antilynching bills passed by the House of Representatives. It is only in 1990 that Congress succeeded to pass the first federal hate crime law, the Hate Crime Statistics Act, that was unfortunately ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court three years later, in 1993. Then, in 1994, Congress enacts the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act which required the U.S. Sentencing Commission to enhance sentences for people convicted in federal court of hate crimes (Waldrep, 2009, p. viii).

The epitome of lynching was reached with the violent bombing and destruction of a whole African-American neighbourhood, “Little Africa”, in 1921 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where 200 African Americans were murdered (Palmer, 1998). Also known as the “Black Wall Street”, Tulsa was home for successful African-American businesses. The main cause of the massacre was false rape accusation of a black man over a white female elevator operator. White mobs burned down and looted the thriving African-American economic neighbourhood on Greenwood Avenue, including their homes and businesses, with the complicity of local law enforcement officials, the local police and national guardsmen. This episode has been described as the most damaging and deadliest in US racial violence history with uncountable black deaths and property destruction. However, today lynching is undoubtedly replaced by police killings and profiling of the black body. From the unaccountable murders of masses of African-Americans with the pretext of the war on drugs during the Reagan era to the most recent ones in Trump America, visible white supremacy has never ceased to operate with the deceitful complacency of successive establishments.

On the other hand, it is important to underline invisible white supremacy which is more entrenched and detrimental to African-Americans. In fact, it operates and reinvents itself in three different ways. The first is pretexted democratization, the second is theatrical inclusion programs and the third is the use of fanciful theories/concepts like “colour-blindness”, “multiculturalism” or “political correctness”. Thus, when we look back in history, we can easily see that initiatives like the Emancipation Proclamation of 1865 and the Civil Rights Acts of 1965 are pretexts for more democracy in the US which is always a democracy for “whites”. On the other hand, Reconstruction and Affirmative Action were both fallacious inclusive programs that pretended to redistribute resources and wealth to disfavoured communities but there is no need to assess their result. Finally, language and theory serve as well white supremacy’s resilience through the ban of politically loaded words and concepts to the creation and popularization of new ones that people are fancifully made to accept. At the end, what happens is simply a demonstration of political ingenuity of the administrators of white supremacy to adapt to situations any time that they face irresistible resistance. In all evidence, the consequences of white supremacy on African-Americans are tangible. They have the poorest

education, healthcare and they continue to be discriminated in the job market, housing, loan approvals and law enforcement. For instance, The Pew Research Center estimates that white households are worth roughly 20 times as much as black households. Coates (2014) adds that the concentration of poverty has been paired with a concentration of melanin.

4. Black Resistance to White Supremacism

In this section, I am going to analyse black agency, mobilization and resistance to white supremacism. Specifically, I will look at the different categories of resistance and their impact and consequences on the ideology and practice.

As a matter of fact, African-American resistance to white supremacy has been scaled and followed specific circumstances. At all times, it has been characterized by a combination of action and theory that always look to overcome it. In other words, the resistance combines physical protest and intellectual mobilization that have yielded appreciable results over time. When we look back at history, we can easily see that these two have seriously and strongly challenged it to its core despite external diversions of all sorts. As we can see, from the early beginning of the construction of white supremacist ideology up to now, several landmark African-American actions, individual or collective, successful or unsuccessful, have initiated and maintained this resistance.

The first ones, even though they might look very distant, can be traced back to plantation revolts and conspiracies. Others go even further back into slave ship revolts to date the beginning of resistance to the ideology and practice of white supremacy. Aptheker (1983), one of the pioneering specialists of slave revolts, found “records of approximately two hundred and fifty revolts and conspiracies in the history of American Negro Slavery” (p. 162), with the first ones dating back in the “latter part of the seventeenth century” (p. 163). The most famous and early ones are the 1791 Haitian Revolution led by Toussaint L’Ouverture, the 1733 St. John (now United State’ Virgin Islands) Slave Revolt in the Danish West Indies against the owners and managers of the island's plantations, the Stono Rebellion (sometimes called Cato's Conspiracy or Cato's Rebellion) in 1739 in the colony of South Carolina, the Amistad sea rebellion also known as United States versus Libellants and Claimants of the Schooner Amistad in 1841, and the Tacky’s War or Tacky’s Rebellion which occurred in Jamaica in 1760. Other cases of resurrections, most of which inspired by religion mainly, occurred during enslavement as well.

After these attempts, with a coalition of anti-enslavement revolutionaries, African-Americans have also tried to take advantage of the egalitarianism and promises of free government and the Declaration of Independence offered by the American Revolution and Independence in the 1770s and 1780s, to resist and overcome white supremacism in vain. However, at the end of the Civil War of the 1860 and Civil Rights Movement of the 1960, African-American activism and resistance have made possible several concessions from the executive and judicial apparatus such as emancipation through the Thirteenth Amendment (1865), the rights and responsibilities of citizenship through the Fourteenth Amendment (1868), the right to vote through the Fifteenth Amendment (1870), desegregation in all walks of life and completion of voting right.

Today, at the turn of the twenty-first century, the Black Lives Matter Movement seems to encapsulate the resistance and cause the biggest unease to structural white supremacism together with the consistent parallel work achieved by other entities like the Congressional Black Caucus, the NAACP, Colour of Change, Grassroots Law, Venus Roots, Campaign Zero, The Equal Justice Initiative, the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation and the Center for Law and Social Justice, to name but a few. From black mayorship, to black governorship and black President, African-Americans are pushing forward to integrate the very system of

white supremacy structure despite countless hurdles. All these achievements are made possible with the courageous and commendable intellectual works of committed African-American scholars as well.

Without a doubt, it is clear that action alone is not sufficient to effectively address the resilience and reinvention of white supremacy. Old and new bodies of disciplines were invented as well: race and ethnic studies, critical race theory, diaspora theory, Afrocentricity, class and gender theory, postcolonial theory, subalternity theory and post-race theory. They all have a common interest: “to explain how and why and in what form racial distinctions operated in such changed circumstances” (Winant, 2004, p. 197) but also to overcome colour-based injustice and inequality promoted by white supremacism. Great names of African-American thought have left indelible marks in raising consciousness and substantially shaking white supremacists everywhere.

Resistance against white supremacy has been characterized by the interplay between conflict and compromise. From accommodationism, to separatism to black radicalism, “official white supremacy” resorts, every time, to minor concessions which particularly accommodate the political, social, economic and cultural hopes of African-Americans and other minority middle-classes to the detriment of millions of poor lower classes. This capacity of “absorbing and adapting much of the “dream,” and repackaging itself as “colourblind,” pluralist, nonracialist, and meritocratic,” (Winant, 2004, p. 22) is how it maintains continuity and is best proof of its resilience. However, this appears “neither stable nor satisfying [...] and [...] also filled with threats of “ethnic cleansing,” resurgent neofascism, and perhaps equally insidious, renewed racial complacency” (Ibid).

Overcoming white supremacy is, undoubtedly, not an easy task, particularly when we consider that the State which is best hoped to do it is implicitly its main promoter. This means that it is useless to place such demands and hopes on it. On several occasions, it has proven itself incapable of neutrality and stopping discriminatory practices. Quite often, it does not hide its siding and support for white supremacy as is illustrated by President Donald Trump’s considering the Black Lives Movement (created to peacefully defend and promote Black people’s rights) as a terrorist organization and his refusal to condemn hate crimes by white supremacist affiliates and militia. So, until African-Americans and justice-minded people exercise power to oblige the state to address institutionalized white supremacy, racial injustice and discrimination will never be defeated.

It is not exaggerated to say that all the sins that have been committed against African-Americans were in the name of white supremacy. It has been behind the racialization of people through the deployment of numerous prejudices and clichés and sometimes violence, specifically vis-à-vis black people. To illustrate how fundamental it is for the white nationalists, Coates (2014) states that “white supremacy is not merely the work of hotheaded demagogues, or a matter of false consciousness, but a force so fundamental to America that it is difficult to imagine the country without it”.

5. Conclusion

The problem of white supremacy in the United States poses a big challenge to national harmony between different communities, particularly the white and black ones. It is deeply rooted in the very structures of the nation’s fabric. Enslavement and its consequences have been central in building it and racial differences exploited to consolidate it. Despite strong agency and serious challenges, starting with plantation revolts, to the Civil Rights Movement and Black

Lives Matter movement, African-American resistance is still unable to overcome it. More than ever, white supremacy continues to have a grip on all aspects of life in the US and whiteness to keep the power and privileges.

White Supremacy is best characterized more by its invisibility than what is visible. Many people would think that supremacism describes the people we generally see on the media parading and shouting hatred and verbal violence against African-Americans and other minorities in the US. It is important to differentiate between hate and extremism as openly displayed and proclaimed by white extremist groups like the KKK in white hoodies and torches marching and shouting “blood and soil” and structural -lesser popular- supremacism that does more harm to the country and that continues to deepen the American socio-economic divide. In other words, the reduction of white supremacy to popular hate and extremism generally hides from understanding the reality of supremacism and tackling it.

Overall, in this paper I have tried to show that white supremacy is America’s original sin. As I demonstrated, white nationalists belief and acting as if they are superior to African-Americans on the basis of established prejudices will not disappear soon considering the high stakes included, mainly power and privileges. It is structural and is implicitly protected by the system itself through strategic resilience and fluidity that allow it to survive and resist challenges of all sorts.

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