The Changing Face of Race-Based Aggression in the USA: Where We Are, Why We Are Here and Where We Are Going

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Abstract: Despite the fact that in the recent years, race based aggression has been increasing in the United States, there is little to no literature that examines the characteristics and possible reasons for this escalation. Most available literature deals with historical events and not the most current ones that have certain unique characteristics, which segregates them from historical racism. Understanding these characteristics is crucial to fostering mitigating agencies and strategies. The paper seeks to contribute to literature and provide a foundation upon which future research may be done on this issue. Using a Qualitative methodology, data from surveys were triangulated with themes emerging from interviews and document analyses. Despite the fact that a large gap in literature exists with respect to the most current racism trends the paper seeks to examine, every attempt was made to support the discussion with literature wherever possible. The findings indicate that the United States is under the throes of a new kind of aggression that is displayed using a new concept of Negative Social Irrigation or NSI that represents critical trends of race-focused aggression and bias existing in the post 2012 period in the United States. Practitioner and future research implications are also discussed.

1. Introduction

An examination of current conversations in the news and media indicate that the trend of race based aggression (RBA) in the United States has risen dramatically in the years following the death of Trayvon Martin, an African-American citizen in 2012 (CNN Library, 2016; Dahl, 2013). The rapid escalation of racially charged incidents following this event leading to racial mistrust, mutual disrespect and even several fatalities suggests the need to investigate RBA resurgence in this post 2012 era in the context of uncovering its defining characteristics (Devega, 2016; Freyer, 2016). Knowing this may provide insights for educators and scholars to find ways to help mitigate RBA resurgence. This study investigates the post 2012 era RBA resurgence, using Generic Qualitative Inquiry (GQI) and answers the research question: What are stakeholders’ perceptions of race based aggression in the post 2012 period?

Even though there is an abundance of scholarly literature on racism and associated issues in a historical context, there is very little, if any, available in terms of discussing critical factors associated with the resurgence of RBA in the post 2012 period in the United States. However, there is an abundance of conversations and debates in public forums about this resurgence, and its effects on our societal landscape. These are events, actions and reactions reported by citizens as real-time, real-life incidents that are fast becoming a part of our daily lives, and thus warrant in-depth and immediate attention as it affects our citizenry and world image. The primary purpose of this paper is to contribute to literature and provide a platform upon which future researchers may build and share.

2. Background

2.1 Critical Race Theory (CRT)

The study is framed using concepts from the Critical Race Theory (CRT). Additionally, the concepts of Structural and Cultural Violence Theory and the Social Panorama Model supplement this frame. Developed by a bevy of scholars and lawyers like Richard Delgado, Jean Stefancic, and Derrick Bell, CRT seeks to study changing dynamics and relations pertaining to race, racism and the associated power structure and struggles that underpin social inequalities within the American social structure (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). A key tenet of CRT belief is that because racism is an everyday, ordinary entity in our society, it
becomes difficult to address, because it is not acknowledged. In addition, there is less incentive for the dominant group to eliminate racism. CRT also contends that racism is a social construct rather than a genetic issue. There can be differential racism, wherein different groups of people may be racialized in different ways at different times, depending on historic, social, or economic need of the dominant group (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2007, 2012). The study’s research question focus on changing aspects of racism within the American social structures, including power play dynamics that are CRT core tenets.

2.2 Cultural and Structural Violence and Social Panorama Model

The Cultural Violence concept was derived from the Structural Violence concept developed by Johan Galtung (1969, 1990). Cultural violence refers to aspect of culture like ‘religion, ideology, language and art, as well as empirical and formal science-that can be used to justify or legitimate direct or structural violence’ (Galtung, 1990, p.291). Both the use and legitimation of violence and aggression creates issues for our socio-cultural ecology. Human nature is largely influenced by the socio-religious climates in which they are placed. When discussing his Social Panorama Model, Lucas Derks (2005) explains how the way people place themselves in regards to others in mental space, determines a large part of their social behavior and the social side of their personality. Humans view oppression as an integral part of their lives. A key focus of the study is to examine how the RBA related events are being perceived by people and how such perceptions are impacting further events.

2.3 Race-Based Aggression and Our Roles as Educators

Researchers, scholars and philosophers who subscribe to CRT beliefs contend that we must continually and vigilantly study, develop and sustain secularism and racial tolerance in education so that we can create a thriving and positive social, political and economic climate (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). The American Psychoanalytic Association (APSAA, 2014) believes that society, as a whole, should participate in a deeper discussion of racism and violence, so that we get a better understanding of the ways by which we can contribute to the preservation of our society as a multicultural hub. One way to facilitate societal conversations is to engage educators and students, since school life is the foundation of knowledge creation. Education is the means and the target of societal changes, and it is important to examine the depth and breadth of its role in dispelling the current black hole of racial ignorance and disharmony that is threatening to consume our society (APSAA, 2014).

Given the recent incidents of nationwide race based violence, it is imperative to investigate how teachers and students can interact more robustly to spread cultural awareness and in doing so, also reduce cultural insensitivity. The examination may be extended to curriculum design and redesign strategies to facilitate the process of cultural empathy and awareness. Reciprocity between students and teachers is important, because a one sided transmitting of information using stagnant curriculum can stifle the learners’ intellectual growth and ability to think critically, leading to learning deficiencies (Eagan, 1983). While examining the politics of education, SHOR (1992) contends that education can ‘enable or inhibit the questioning habits of students, thus developing or disabling their critical reaction to knowledge, schooling and society’ (pp. 12, 13). This mirrors the concept of CRT and the Social Panorama Model that societal landscapes in which people are placed influence their worldview.

2.4 Historical Constructs

Practitioners of CRT work on the premise that despite its firm commitment to secularism and equality for all, racial posturing and associated RBA have been, and continue to be practiced within the United States. According to FBI’s Bias Breakdown Report 2013, 48.5 % of all hate crimes are race based (United States Department of Justice, FBI, 2014). This relates to the Structural Violence Theory and Galtung’s (1969) typology of violence in which he lists the categories and sub-categories of violence. Based on this topology, Galtung (1969) rationalized the study of cultural violence and aggression as it may provide insights into how “the act of direct violence and the fact of structural violence are legitimized and thus rendered acceptable in society” (p.292). He posited that cultural aggression worked by changing the perceptions of morals associated with aggressive acts. For example, a cultural group may perceive that murder for a cause is right, and not the same as murder for self. In addition, such a mindset makes “reality opaque, so that we do not see the violent act or fact, or at least not as violent” (Galtung, 1969, p.292).

2.5 Microaggression

Microaggressions are deliberate or inadvertent, subtle verbal, non-verbal and/or visual insults, directed towards people, based on their racial profiling. College racial scenarios are negatively impacted by this phenomenon (Solorzano, Ceja &
Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja & Solorzano, 2009). Inflictors of microaggression are often unaware of their actions, and for the recipients the ‘micro’ aspect creates a doubt that an aggression actually took place. In short, it is easier for minorities to identify and deal with overt racism than with covert racism (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal & Esquilin, 2007). However, covert racism does lead to macro aggression, if left unchecked for extensive periods. For instance, it could lead to increase in hate groups (Brunker, Alba & Dedman, 2015; Potok, 2013). The practice of microaggression, as seen in society, including within collegiate settings, could be a critical entity influencing the rise of recent RBA. Due to the difficult nature of the topic, intervention authorities like instructors and administrators may be unable to handle such dialogues effectively and/or fail to recognize that the racial microaggression exists (Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, & Rivera, 2009). Both white and students of color can experience microaggression, and the effects are equally detrimental to both communities (Caberera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella & Hagedorn, 1999).

2.6 Stereotyping Effects

A critical aspect of racial aggression relates to the rhetoric of race as postured within social and political environments. Literature indicates that the individuals’ ideas about the groups they associate with determines the way they interact and associate with in-groups and out-groups. It is also argued that people assimilate their impressions of targeted individuals to form an impression about the group to which the targeted individual may belong (Rothbart & Lewis, 2006; Taifel, 1982). This is commonly known as stereotyping, and is an integral part of the social rhetoric of race. Racial stereotyping can lead to negative perceptions and race based violence (Anderson, 2004; Andersen, 1995; Green, 1999; Oliver & Fonash, 2009; Weitzer & Tuch, 2006). Stereotyping emanates from inherent judgment patterns that people belonging to specific races use to profile other races. When we, as a society, commit to making unconfirmed judgments, we may suffer the consequences of self-propagated deceit. However, with some efforts, as a people, we may perhaps be able to claw away the blindfolds of racial assumptions and emerge as a more cohesive society (Karamanolis, 2014). In the context of the study, such factors were considered both during the examination of data pertaining to the recent race based aggressions as well as recommendations for mitigating such issues.

3 Methodology and Methods

Following the tenets of Generic Qualitative Inquiry, an Alternative Inquiry Paradigm frame was used as methodology. Percy, Kostere and Kostere (2015) contend that Generic Qualitative Inquiry (GQI) investigates peoples’ subjective opinions, attitudes, beliefs, or reflections of their experiences. GQI allows data to fit within quantitative elements to represent the statistical side of the study (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003; Creswell, 1995; Percy, Kostere & Kostere, 2015; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). GQI research studies are those that seek to discover and understand the perspectives of the people involved in a phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). All of these factors apply to the current study. Even though the data is primarily qualitative, parts of it are represented in quantitative ways, lending the study an Alternative Inquiry Paradigm essence, as derived from Guba and Lincoln’s (1994) descriptions of the research process and paradigms. Guba and Lincoln (1994) claim that a paradigm represents “simply the most informed and sophisticated view that its proponents have been able to devise” (p.108) and that, “No construction is or can be incontrovertibly right; advocates of any particular construction must rely on persuasiveness and utility rather than proof in arguing their position” (p.108). In addition, Alternative Inquiry Paradigms have been researched and supported in literature, particularly with respect to academia-focused research (Chesler, 1991; Toma, 1999; Toma, 1997). Central to this investigation is the view that knowledge is created by the interactions of individuals within society, and meaning is constructed based on people’s perceptions. Thus, different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon (Burningham & Cooper, 1999; Crotty, 1998; Schwandt, 2003; Young & Collin, 2004). In addition to building on these tenets, the study seeks to go beyond just examining racial characteristics of the post 2012 era, as it also focuses on peoples’ perceptions of RBA in the United States, and use those perceptions to suggest possible ways to mitigate RBA. Thus, the fruits of the collaborative efforts of the researched and the researcher are used to produce a socially constructed viewpoint. Race is a social construct that is fluid and changing, even though surreptitiously and gradually. As such, we as a society must attempt to change with the changing dynamics of race, if we are to survive as a prospering whole (Chavez & Guido Dibrito, 1999; Coates, 2009; Frazier, 2010). The long-term goal (and hope) is that such recommendations will foster a more tolerant societal landscape. This conforms to the critical approach frame of the study as it focuses on emancipation as a key part of the research process.
Data included survey results from 80 student participants, interviews from seven faculty members, and an in-depth analysis of information gathered from more than 300 documents such as government published or sponsored data, reports, news items, videos, blogs and online texts. The participant selection was done using purposeful sampling, due to the limitations of resources and time constraints, and participants who were interested in the study’s focus were selected. This technique was useful as researchers had limited resources, and were looking to identify and select cases most rich in information. Thus, selection was made from populations that had special knowledge, experience and interest in the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011; Patton, 2015). Given the paucity of literature on the topic of post 2012 resurgence of race-based aggression in the United States, it was important that when investigating this topic, extra care be taken to arrive at the most authentic and credible findings as possible. Thus, depending on one source was not an option.

3.2 Documents

Given the focus of inquiry and the absence of meaningful literature on it, using documents was a legitimate choice, supported by literature. “The social researcher can undertake empirical research based on documents which incorporates as wide and as inclusive data as possible, and which aims to ‘bring things up to date”’ (Denscombe 2003. p.10). Approximately 5000 online documents were initially examined, and after consideration based on emergent coding themes and patterns, approximately 320 documents were selected to supplement and support the data gathered from primary sources. The codes were developed while perusing the documents, and were continually modified as needed. The five criteria list suggested by BECK (2004) was used for selecting the sites (Accuracy, Authority, Currency, Objectivity and Coverage). Concerning objectivity, since given the nature of the research focus, it was not possible to follow all Beck’s suggestions, objectivity was ensured by using opposing keywords that would provide information showing multiple perspectives on the same topic, and perusing the conversations that allowed for a minimum biased perspective. In addition, newspapers and magazines that are featured in library and scholarly databases of prominent universities and community colleges were purposefully selected. Some examples of such sources are Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, New York Times, CQ Researcher, and Opposing Viewpoints. Rubin and Rubin (2011) list documents that can be used for research purposes. These include newspapers, blogs, novels, diaries, reports from government organizations, etc. These documents are not scholarly literature, but rather “peoples’ interpretations” (p. 27) and as such, “are treated by qualitative researchers in a manner similar to transcripts” (p.27). The data gathered from them not only served to complement and supplement the themes emerging from the primary interviews and surveys, but helped create new themes. Additionally, following the directions of Lacey & Luff (2007), the coding was developed based on an identification of critical information needed from the data. This was suitable given the
large amounts of data gathered from interviews, surveys and documents.

3.3 Analyzing Surveys and Interviews

The survey consisted of 17 questions, relating to background information and assessing participant views on post 2012 racism. The multiple-choice questions used a mixture of 5 point Likert value and numerical scales. The interview questions were designed to probe in-depth the perceptions of the participants regarding the current RBA in the United States. The response from both data sets were then matched and synthesized. Percy et al’s (2015) Thematic Analysis with Constant Comparison steps were used. “Inductive analysis is data driven and does not attempt to fit the data into any preexisting categories. The researcher sets aside all pre-understandings. The data collected from each participant (interviews, observations, open-ended questionnaire, etc.) are analyzed individually (Percy, et al, 2015, p.80). Subsequent to the initial data analysis, the repeating patterns are synthesized and used to interpret implications of the RQs. After reviewing raw data and highlighting any sentences, phrases, or paragraphs that appeared to be meaningful in the context of the RQs, data was reexamined and what was considered not as important was removed, and kept them aside for later review. Thereafter, the data was coded and clustered with similar or connected codes to develop patterns. Finally, themes were identified using the patterns. This was done for each participant’s data, and finally combined them to synthesize the data to include in the findings.

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4 Results

Based on an examination of the themes that emerged from reviewing literature and the study data, the first author also provides a conceptual best practices list for teaching and learning to help mitigate the crisis of race-based aggression, by generating greater cultural awareness, and tolerance for all. In addition, the first author developed the concept of “Negative Social Irrigation or NSI” to represent a new paradigm of the racism phenomenon, as reported in the findings. The paradigm details are given below, followed by a detailed discussion of the findings that justify the concept of NSI.

Negative Social Irrigation (NSI) represents the trends of race-focused aggression and bias. The hypothesis is that these trends are creating a new paradigm of social existence, interactions and reactions that are displayed visually in the NSI Paradigm Diagram below. The analogy of irrigation and terrain has been used to establish the philosophical contexts of a physical phenomenon, when coining the phrase. The term irrigation is used to denote an activity that is nourishing and nurturing, and that usually leads to growth and sustenance. However, if the waters used to irrigate are toxic and tainted, it may result in toxic roots and harmful crops that will negatively affect those that consume such crops. Similarly, when certain members or segments of society engage in destructive and violent behaviors, it can be deemed as negative irrigation as the consequences of such behaviors percolate down into the foundations of the societal landscape, potentially harming the roots of our social existence. The cause-effect can ripple on until, we as a people, work to defy and defeat such negative behaviors, creating an antidote that may reverse or mitigate the expanding corrosion of our social systems perpetrated by NSI. Thus, NSI can be defined as a paradigm that represents a time and space in any society’s landscape that is characterized by negative actions and reactions.
sustained over a period, the consequences of these actions can take roots in the societal soil.

Literature supports the creation of terms and analogies to facilitate articulation of a researcher's worldview so that consumers of the research can have a clearer understanding of such views and evaluate them using their own worldviews (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2013; Smith & Deemer, 2000). In addition, using analogies relates to cognition and can be effective in creating clarity since humans are naturally equipped to extract gist of information to arrive at an analogy, and subsequently map that novel input to familiar representations in memory (Bar, 2007).

Figure 1: NSI Analogy
The diagram in Figure 1 represents the roots and crop analogy. Using analogies relates to cognition and can be effective in creating clarity since humans are naturally equipped to extract gist of information to arrive at an analogy, and subsequently map that novel input to familiar representations in memory (Bar, 2007). Using analogies enhances learning by transferring existing knowledge to a new context, as well as creating self-awareness and cultural empathy (Suthakaran, 2011; Welling, 2007).

The study’s findings report that race-based aggression can lead to negative effects at both foundational (roots) and communal (crops) levels. In addition, when the societal roots are damaged by NSI, it can have large-scale communal effects. Thus, NSI can be both the cause and the effect relevant to a damaged societal landscape. The foundational levels that taint the roots of our society (micro effects) in three major areas are: Political, Cultural and Economic. Over time, as individual members of society experience and feel these effects, and enough individuals share such experiences, they explode into communal effects (macro effects), because they grow out of a NSI infused societal soil and impact a larger group of people, as well as our nation’s image in the world. The findings of the study and the emergent themes support this.

The findings are based on interpretations of information received through documents including news, research and government agency reports, combined with data from survey and interviews. The analysis confirmed that there has been a resurgence of race-based aggression within the United States in the recent past. According to the study’s survey results, 97% of the participants agreed that RBA is a major issue in the United States today, 67% were concerned about it, and 72% agreed that this aggression has escalated in the past few years. To further support this claim, the lead researcher identified the important RBA incidents in the United States in the post 2012 period by examining thousands of documents, and selecting approximately 320 documents from credible sources such as reputable newspapers, magazines, and reports published by government and non-profit organizations.

Triangulation of data from surveys, interviews and document analysis, revealed three major arenas in which Negative Social Irrigation (NSI) is taking place. These arenas are Political, Cultural and Economic. It is important to note at this point that these elements of NSI can be both causes and effects, as the cycle of actions and reactions continue. The Cultural category has sub-categories of social, psychological, and academic. All three are validated by literature as being crucial elements of any cultural landscape. Culture is not the property of individuals, but rather a social and psychological entity that is enriched by shared understandings of, and within the individuals (Huckfeldt & Mendez, 2008; Huckfeldt, Ikeda, Pappi, 2000; Lichbach & Zuckerman, 1997).

A perusal of documents, reports and news reveal several events that were critical to the investigated timeline based on these categories.

4.1 Political
One of the critical elements of NSI prevalent in the United States currently is the new forms of acceptable rhetoric that is fast becoming the hallmark of the 2016 Presidential election campaigns. The recent political climate is unique several ways. The openness of dialogues indicates that the new mantra of political correctness may include a level of ‘candidness that may or may not adhere to conventional values of niceties. In any other time and space, conversations that were perceived to be racially charged, would have been the subject of backlash, and more likely to reduce and demolish the popularity of those engaged in such conversations. However, the reality today is exactly the opposite.

This exemplifies one of the key principles of NSI, which is that when certain members of society engage in unconventional social behaviors, and they do so persistently and publicly, the effects percolate to a communal level. The recent socio-political rhetoric mirrors the frustration of a segment of people, who see the new correctness as a venue to not only embrace openness, but also to unleash and vent feelings that were perhaps so far confined to the living rooms (Blow 2016).

Several people seem to believe that the election of President Obama 8 years ago, added a new dimension to the current socio-political and racial rhetoric. Data indicates that a significant section of people believe the foundations for aggravated racism
were laid eight year ago, when Barack Obama became President. There is a debate on, and even though many argue against this belief and dismiss it, there are perhaps equally many who subscribe to this. Irrespective of what the truth is in this context, the conversations reveal a mindset that is representative of the dominant population’s discomfort at what they may perceive to be a major shift in power dynamics; something that many are afraid will take away their hegemonic privileges. Thus, many in the dominant group may not want to remove racism, at least not in a radical way (Berlatsky, 2016; Bonopriti, 2016; Bouie, 2016; Roberts, 2016; Teirney, 2016) “Obama’s election felt like an inversion..it seemed to signal the end of a hierarchy that had always placed white Americans at the top, delivering status even when it couldn’t give material benefits” (Bouie, 2016, n.p).

In their interview responses, the faculty participants Dominic, Tom, Sarah and Kendra, all expressed concern over the racism laced political climate in the United States, and the fact that a large number of people appear to be supporting it, which is indicative that there are many who do not want to eradicate racism. They pointed to the negative effects of the Trump factor on the image of the United States. For example, Dominic said, “I think there is a segment of the society in the US that does not believe in inclusiveness and tolerance…. take the Republican Party presidential nominees and their level of support even though their rhetoric is quite intolerant and non-inclusive”

In response to the interview question regarding what effects the current trends of race- focused aggression in the US A may have on her global image as a tolerant and secular nation, Dominic, Sarah, Tom, Kendra, Pam, Larry were in agreement that this will lead to several negative consequences. This trend will not only increase aggression, but also lead to a loss of goodwill and trust, while tarnishing the global image of the United States as a benevolent leader who proclaimed secularism and freedom for all. For example, Pam said, “The US is becoming less tolerant as many blame action of radical groups on a culture/religion as a whole. The decrease in tolerance leads to biases, discrimination and sometimes violence. These actions could negatively affect the global image of the US”. Larry mentioned, “Continuation of such racial/religious based violent acts may precipitate an emotional reaction of hate towards certain groups which may not be justifiable and create chaos in the country”.

A critical factor driving the 2016 election race is the changing demographics of the electorate, who are rapidly becoming a non-white dominant group., which has increased the chasm between the cultural ideologies of participating parties (Tatlor, 2016). Please view the graph using this link. It has also increased the pushback by the dominant population, who is now concerned about the hegemonic dissipation and is showing this by supporting race laced political rhetoric by candidates like Mr. Donald Trump. To counter this, the anti-Trump population is showing its muscle, leading to several rallies and riots. Diamond and Schleifer (2016) of CNN News reported the sentiments using conversations from rioters. ‘I’m protesting because I’m black and Mexican and I’m not sure where he wants to deport me to, but I deal with racism daily in Chicago and I’ve had enough’ (Diamond & Schleifer, 2016, n.p).

Adding fuel to the fire, there is talk about things such as riots are “not a bad thing” (NBC News, 2016; Sarlin, 2016; White, 2016). This is setting dangerous race- based- aggression precedence, representative of NSI characteristics.

4.2 Cultural

The Events Chart lists some important incidents that took place in the post 2012 era. Almost each incident listed had intense social and communal repercussions, both short and long-term. The death of James C. Anderson in 2012 prompted marches in Jackson and accusations that the police and local prosecutors were not being aggressive enough with the case (Severson, 2012). The death of Trayvon Martin in 2012 created a flood of protest raging through Sanford as people demanded justice in the name of an unarmed black teenager shot dead (Barry, Kowalski, Robertson & Alvarez, 2012). In the case of Jeffrey Aguilar and Efren Marquez Jr, it was a situation of the perpetrators’ family being accused of spreading racism and having to defend themselves against such accusations. In this case, there appears to be two sets of victims: the perpetrator of the crime as well as the receiver. Jeffrey and Efren were presented as victims of stereotype, who lived under the tension of racial acts and persecution (Cocca, 2013; NBC, 2012). As time passed on, the social and communal repercussions became even more prolific.

This unrest is also being manifested among the changing behaviors of law and order personnel, who appear to be reacting to unrests more and more aggressively. A yearlong study by the Washington Post revealed that in the first five months of 2015, approximately three hundred and eighty-five people, and two-thirds of who were African-Americans, were shot and killed by police. Approximately one thousand people were killed in cop shootings in 2015 (Kindy, Fischer &Tate, 2016; Kindy, 2015). Please use this link to view graph.

In this study’s survey response to the question regarding the probability of increased diversity
mistrust due to the recent race-based aggressions, 61% participants strongly agreed or agreed, and 18% believed it to be somewhat probable. These perceptions were verified through document analysis and interview transcripts. An emerging trend in diversity mistrust relates to citizens’ perceptions of law and order personnel. Reports published by PEW Research Center indicate that these are related to racism resurgence and cases of police discrimination, like the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO (Tracking The Events in The Wake Of The Michael Brown Shooting, 2014). While most Whites believe that police are doing their jobs appropriately, African-Americans do not share the confidence. In a 2014 survey conducted jointly by the Pew Research Center and the newspaper United States Today, using 1,501 adults, it was found that the mistrust has been increasing over the past few years. Another interesting dynamic in this regard is that younger individuals share greater mistrust than others do, as displayed in the graph in the PEW Research Institute report (2014). Please use this link for graph on low job ratings for police, and this link for a graph on African-Americans expressing less confidence in police. In addition, there is also a graph for depicting people’s perception of police based on the participants’ age differences that can be viewed using this link.

Racism resurgence is also creating mistrusts pertaining to the traditional White-Black equation, where the former were considered privileged and the latter oppressed. The concepts discussed in the principles of Zero-sum racism (Norton &Sommers, 2011) is picking ground as new conversations are emerging about whether Whites should be considered an oppressed faction of society. NORTON’s and SOMMERS’s (2011) study suggested that whites see racism as a zero sum game, one in which, “decreases in perceived bias against African-Americans over the past six decades are associated with increases in perceived bias against Whites—a relationship not observed in African-Americans’ perceptions” (Abstract, p.215). They predicted that this mentality will gain traction and that “these changes in Whites’ conceptions of racism would be extreme enough that many Whites would view anti-White bias as the bigger societal problem” (Norton &Sommers, 2011, p.215).

A 2011 CNN news report raised similar issues, and cited Charles Gallagher, a sociologist at La Salle University in Pennsylvania researching white racial attitudes, claiming Whites are concerned about the changing demographic dynamics, which is making them believe that they are a minority group (Blake, 2011). Norton (2013) continued to comment on these findings, claiming that there will soon be an emergence of civil rights groups advocating for the Whites. This line of thinking continues to receive momentum for several reasons. For instance, the U.S Census Bureau Report of 2015 predicted that the United States population as a whole will become a majority-minority in 2044, with the minority population predicted to be 56% of the total in 2060 (U.S Census Bureau, 2015). The fear of zero-sum racism may perhaps be one of the causes of the support that racism laced political conversations, like those of the Trump campaign, are receiving. It is also being reflected in popular discourse. A report published by Public Religion Research Institute, indicates that 52% of white Americans, including white Republicans and Tea Party members believe that discrimination against whites has become as big of a problem as discrimination against minorities (Piacenza, 2014).

The effects of this mindset are not limited to expressions of concerns or psychological issues. It is being manifested in incidents of racial aggression and unspeakable violence. One example is the case of Dylan Roof, a Caucasian youth, who shot nine people to death at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in South Carolina in June, 2015. Roof was disturbed by what he perceived to be a rise in Black on White crimes as he explains in the manifesto he left behind. "At this moment I realized that something was very wrong," the manifesto said. "How could the news be blowing up the Trayvon Martin case while hundreds of these black on White murders got ignored?" (Sanchez & Payne, 2015). In his manifesto, Roof claimed his frustration that there were no organizations like the skinheads, to deal with the black-on-white crimes, and that he hoped that his actions would incite a nationwide racial unrest (Apuzzo, 2015). Although it is fortunate that cases like Roof’s are an exception, and not the norm, the fact remains that there is fear and concern with the white population about the increasing rate of black-on-white crimes and media’s attempt to downplay them (Papaherakles, 2012). According to research done by Stop Hate Crimes, and organization dedicated to study hate crimes; there is a steady increase of black on white mob attacks, which are not always reported by media. In an attempt to investigate this concern, they created an interactive map that shows known attacks occurring in July, August, and September of 2015, and found out that over the course of these three months, there were two incidents each for Chicago, Kansas City, Omaha, and Louisville (Stop Hate Crimes, 2015). This situation is a ticking time bomb, waiting to explode, which reflects NSI elements.

In the survey for this study, participants were asked if they agreed with the U.S Department of Justice’s (2014) statement that all of crimes, hate crimes are most likely to create or increase racial tensions and larger community-wide racial conflict.
Although many perceived the decision as another instance of police brutality, its implications became more far-reaching than ever. The rise of social media and technology, including hate speech and online harassment, created a new dynamic that was not historically prevalent. The critics of RwR refuse to admit that it is possible for a community to believe that they are racists and yet are able to practice it without noticing it (Huston, 2014; Reed, 2008). In believing so, it is possible that they are themselves practicing RwR.

The rise of technology and social media networking has transformed the role of media involvement in inciting racism-laced rhetoric. Media can create, involuntarily or deliberately, widespread fear in the general population about attacks on their communities, even when there is flimsy support for these claims. Frohardt’s and Temin’s (2003) report, published on behalf of the United States Institute of Peace, suggest “as part of a larger matrix of factors, media can be extremely powerful tools used to promote violence” (p.2). They also point to the dangers of involuntary media involvement where “journalists can inflame grievances and promote stereotypes by virtue of the manner in which they report, even though their intentions are not necessarily malicious and they are not being manipulated by an outside entity. Such a scenario… is no less dangerous” (Frohardt & Temin 2003, p.2). Mass media may be instrumental in creating false dangers of involuntary media involvement where "journalists can inflame grievances and promote stereotypes by virtue of the manner in which they report, even though their intentions are not necessarily malicious and they are not being manipulated by an outside entity. Such a scenario… is no less dangerous" (Frohardt & Temin 2003, p.2).
In this era, media is gaining exponential momentum in influencing conversations and reactions on the topic of race based aggression, which is now seen both in the political and cultural fronts. There are indications that media, including social media, may be causing more harm than ever before, both due to the reporting of facts and manipulation of facts. Some of this may be inadvertent on unintentional, since it is the job of the media to report facts, and the facts are inciting on their own. Barring these, there is a growing concern regarding fact manipulation by the media, which could possibly be brought on by pro-White media groups.

Some believe that the racism-laced stance taken by some participants of the 2016 election campaigns received full attention and coverage by media, inciting aggressive and radical reactions by supporters and detractors alike (Berlet, 2015). Reich (2015) who is a Professor of Public Policy at University of California, Berkley and the founder of the American Prospect magazine, describes how the voice of Presidential candidates carry significant weight due to their status as future aspirants of the nation’s leadership, and how Mr. Trump’s agenda comes off as pro-White when he supports the racist actions of his supporters.

In addition to the role of media in politically charged racism, there are some new dimensions to the spread of racial rhetoric through social media networks like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, which are becoming increasingly popular venues to vent and dump racist sentiments. As diversity increases, anti-diverse sentiments are also increasing, leading to many unusual incidents. For example, in the 2014 Spelling Bee contest, the Indian American winners Srima, then 14, and Ansun, then 13, were barraged with racist comments on Facebook and Twitter, such as “Nothing more American than a good spelling bee:.Oh wait. All Caucasians are able to get a White girl and not me? I am beautiful, and I am half White myself. I am descended from British aristocracy. He is descended from slaves. I deserve it more” (RAJAN, 2014). In another post he vented, “How could an inferior, ugly Black boy be able to get a White girl and not me? I am beautiful, and I am half White myself. I am descended from British aristocracy. He is descended from slaves. I deserve it more” (RAJAN, 2014). In another post he said, “Then later on in the day I was shopping at Trader Joe's and saw an Indian guy with 2 above average White Girls!!! Don't you just hate seeing these things when you go out? It just makes you want to quit life” (Alternet Staff, 2014; Glassetter, 2014; Kimmel & Leek, 2014; Vega 2014).

The rise of race-laced social media trolling is also an outcome of NSI, adding yet another new dimension to acts of racism. Trolling is “the uncivil use of discussion forums to provoke, degrade, and distract others” (Youmans & York, 2012, p. 319). Trolls may post any kind of inciting comments and lies to incite and provoke viewers, just because they can hide behind cyber anonymity (Moreau, 2016). However, on several occasions regular social media users behave in a troll-like manner, and even use their regular identities (Cole, 2016). The purpose of trolling goes beyond simply venting, which makes it a dangerous tool to incite racial aggression (Eriksson, 2013).

Racial tensions have always caused psychological traumas at individual and communal levels. Today, there are new dimensions to the psychological ramifications of the increased racial aggressions.
One such dimension is the increased psychosis of the weapon effect, a term used to describe the psychological effects on humans who are apt to react violently when faced with threats, perceived or real, of potentially harmful weapons. In short, guns can potentially stimulate violence (Berkowitz, 1971; Berkowitz & Lepage, 1967; Ellis, Weinier & Miller, 1971). In the context of NSI, there has been a steady increase in the militarization of police departments nationwide. The trend seems dichotomous when contrasted with the FBI reports of decrease in crime rates nationwide. If crimes have gone down, why is law and order expense going up? This is a question asked by many. Several studies done by psychologists indicate that militarized policing can greatly inflame situations that might otherwise end peacefully. The increased militarization is creating tensions and distrusts that can escalate into anti-police outbursts (Apuzzo, 2014; Kane, 2014; Singal, 2014). Please use this link for a graph on military equipment distribution for local police.

According to reports nationwide, there is a steady increase in racism related incidents and aggressions across campuses. The Campus Racial Incidents chart lists several of these incidents. A new dynamic related to this is the influence of political campaigning. There are surges of riots related to the President Elect’s debate, like the recent one at Emory University, where his name chalked on the campus grounds was cause for anger and protests (Jaschik, 2016; Logue, 2016). There is renewed vigor of academic activism, as students are becoming frustrated about the administration’s lack of understanding in this regard. For example, students at Purdue University rallied during November 2015, to support the incidents at Missouri, and exhibit concern over the comments of Purdue President Mitch Daniels in a letter issued to the community, which underplayed the role of rampant racism on Purdue campus. Students feel that the President is unaware and that because there is no recognition that discrimination exists, nothing will ever be done about it (Jefferson, 2012; Williams & Kelly, 2015). Harvard law students expressed similar sentiments when someone placed strips of black tape over the faces of black professors’ portraits at Harvard Law School (Krantz, 2015). As these incidents continue, it is creating a snowball effect of actions and reactions, bringing more heated conversations about racism within college campuses.

A developing dynamic about this situation is that students are more vocal and open about accusing administrators at high levels about racial unawareness. The outcry is getting enough momentum to oust upper level managers of universities. A pertinent example is the ouiting of the heads of the University of Missouri (Hartcottonis & Bidgood, 2015). In addition, racial slurs and dangers are now being perceived in more unexpected and unprecedented ways. For example, Harvard university students and administrators believed that using the title ‘Masters’ for the chief administrative officers of undergraduate residential houses, was unsavory due to its perceived association with slavery. Based on student protests and demands, Harvard College Dean Rakesh Khurana announced that leaders of the university’s undergraduate residences have agreed to give up the title of “Master” (Wang, 2015). Using another example, the word ‘thug’ became the center of contention in academic and political settings. The word originates from the Hindi language of India, and refers to a religious organization of assassins and robbers. It has been adapted in English language to mean ‘a crook’ (New World Encyclopedia, 2015; Mastin, 2011; Verma, 2015). It was an innocuous expression, until it strangely came to the controversy arena, when irate outbursts over the use of the word surfaced on Southern Methodist University’s campus, because of its inclusion in a party invitation by two fraternities included the word on a party invitation. Due to the outcry, the party was cancelled (Araroza, 2015).

Picking momentum from this, several other ‘thug’ related incidents took place, mostly within political and civil unrest settings. In the aftermath of the Boston riots, Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, the Mayor of Baltimore made this statement, “Too many people have invested in building up this city to allow thugs to tear it down.” She was accused of engaging in racial slur by using the word ‘thug’, and the outcries forced her to apologize in public and on social media (Jacoby, 2015). Subsequently, President Obama supported the use of the word "thug" to describe the rioters (Jackson, 2015). Interestingly, in an interview about the use of the word "thug" to describe Baltimore rioters, John McWhorter, Associate Professor of English and Comparative literature at Columbia University, suggested that the use of the word had different connotations for African-American and Caucasians. That is why the outcry over its use by the Baltimore Mayor or the President, both of whom are African-Americans, was an out-of-the-ordinary response (McWhorter, interviewed by Block, 2015). As is conceived within the NSI paradigm, the perceptions of few may become the perceptions of many, leading to mass hysteria about things that may otherwise have been ignored. The word ‘thug’ is now being seen as the new ‘n’ word due to this momentum, even though it did not originate as a racial slur (Watts, 2015).

Finally, in 2014, based on the alarming increase of race-based aggression within campuses, the government decided to intervene in the form of new guidance to implement school discipline. By issuing
these guidelines, the Education Department and the Justice Department sought to ensure that minority students do not receive more disciplinary treatments than their white peers do. This was done as per the administration’s legal authority vested via Titles IV and VI. These guidelines offer detailed rules for how school districts can administer discipline (Wolfgang, 2015). Even though this step was taken to mitigate racial discrimination, it gave rise to problems of containing aggression and maintaining order in schools. That is because; the rules lead to highlighting segregation in a negative way by encouraging racial quotas as part of the restorative justice process, which calls for peer, counselor and superintendent of school’s intervention to restore order. It also means that perpetrators of aggression may no longer be suspended or removed, except for very high stakes offences (Berry, 2015).

Even though there is data that indicates the success of restorative justice in some schools during the earlier years of usage (Brown, 2013; Dalaporto, 2015; Davis, 2015; Richmond, 2015), data from subsequent years indicate that this might set off a dangerous trend of aggression and disruption. Sperry (2015) describes how this policy has backfired, and even though there may be lesser suspensions, it is not matched by lower infraction rates. For example, there are multitudes of incident reports (Syracuse Teachers Association, Los Angeles Unified School District, Chicago School District) about the growing inability to enforce consistent consequences for violently disruptive students, resulting in greater disruption of school environments and teaching. (Berry, 2015; Green, 2015; Sperry, 2015). A poll conducted by the Education Next Journal, using about 4000 people, including teachers, African-Americans, and Hispanics, suggests that few people think this approach is useful. Instead, they argue that this will lead to racial quotas (Henderson, Peterson & West, 2016). In fact, data suggests that this may increase racial aggression within schools, lower safety for students and teachers, and widen discrimination.

For example, in Portland, Oregon, a white teacher was severely assaulted by an African-American high school student. What was even more concerning being that the teacher was reportedly counseled by the assistant principal not to press charges against the student, and was asked to examine what role she, “as a white woman” with white privilege bias, played in her own attack (Perry, 2015). In a recent incident, an African-American seventh grader repeatedly assaulted a teacher at St. Paul’s. The teacher was injured enough to be hospitalized (Gothfried, 2016). This is true of an NSI climate, where racism begets racially laced policy interventions that may backfire seriously.

**4.3 Economic**

Besides being costly in terms of social and cultural progress and well-being, the post 2012 racism environments have incurred unprecedented financial expenses, which relates to the consequences of NSI. Let us look at some examples. A survey conducted by the Small Business Administration's survey calculated that there was a damage of approximately $8,927,000 due to the damages inflicted by the Baltimore riots during the aftermath of the Freddie Gray death. These were damages to private citizens as well as government and state owned organizations (Abdussabur, 2015; Reuters, 2015; Toppa, 2015). The financial costs of Roof's act of gun violence fueled by racial hate can be gauged using data on gun violence costs. In 2013, veteran crime reporters W. Zachary Malinowski and Amanda Milkovits wrote a three-part report on gun violence costs. Using data from the Children’s Safety Network and Urban Institute, both based in Washington, D.C., they estimated the cost of each fatal shooting to be $5,094,980 per person, representing costs associated with quality of life costs and loss of income (Malinowski & Milkovits, 2013). Based on these figures, the estimated financial damages of Roof's shooting nine Black parishioners will be a staggering $45,854,820. 00 to the South Carolina taxpayers (Abdussabur, 2015). A study done with the help of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, investigated direct and indirect costs of gun violence. Direct cost relates to costs incurred every time a bullet hits somebody. These can include emergency services, police investigations, and long-term medical and mental-health care, as well as court and prison costs. According to the lead investigator of the study, Ted Miller, about 87 % of these costs fall on taxpayers. Indirect costs factor in lost income, losses to employers, and impact on quality of life, based on amounts that juries award for pain and suffering to victims of wrongful injury and death. In collaboration with Miller, reporters from Mother Jones analyzed data from 2012 and found that the annual cost of gun violence in America exceeds $229 billion (Follman, Lurie, Lee & West, 2015). Since gun usage is common in race-based aggression, part of these costs will be attributable to racism. In addition, economic issues with the middle class white population and black population’s view of economic racism may contribute to the nationwide support of Donald Trump, despite, or because of, his racial rhetoric (Frank, 2016; Guo, 2016).

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s report on the cost of race-based aggression indicates some alarming, eye opening socio-economic facts. The study, titled The Business Case for Racial Equity, used scholars from Johns Hopkins, Brandeis, and Harvard
universities and demonstrated how “race, class, residential segregation and income levels all work together to hamper access to opportunity” (Turner, Acevedo-Garcia, Gaskin, Laveist, Willims, Segal & Miller, 2013, p.3). The study suggests that an income gap resulting in part from racism costs the country $1.9 trillion dollars each year (Alexander, 2013). In another report published by the National Urban Policy Institute, Gaskin, Laveist, and Richard (2012), predicted that the economic impact of differential health outcomes by race and ethnicity would rise to $126 billion in 2020 and $363 billion by 2050 if existing health disparities remain. They based their predictions on an update of a prior report that indicated that disparities in health cost the U.S. an estimated $60 billion in excess medical costs and $22 billion in lost productivity in 2009.

The findings from the data analysis clearly provide proof that unique NSI conditions exist in the United States today. In order to prevent or mitigate further escalation of NSI, we must take as many measures as possible and act today. As hinted earlier on in this paper, the world of academia is a great place to start implementing some of the counter measures for NSI.

5 Discussion

5.1. Is all lost or can there be a reversal?
The good news is that even though the elements of NSI are quite prevalent in the United States right now, there is still a large part of the population who care about inclusion. Thus, we still have hope and can focus on strategies to mitigate the effects of NSI. However, since the NSI elements are present and increasing, it is important for us to think and act on a mitigation action plan as soon as possible. For this study, all 80 participants agreed that increase in race-based aggression would lead to more aggression. As the people becomes more intolerant of certain groups, there will be more aggression. For example, Tom stated, “I do believe that our "melting pot" (inclusive) status is currently being threatened, the various racial and religious acts of violence certainly, certainly, make Americans appear less tolerant than we claim to be”. Sarah shard how “It’s almost embarrassing to speak to people and hear about their opinion of the United States as it is seen internationally as a country with very high violence”.

The role of academia in the NSI paradigm is undeniable. As educators, we can provide the cultural awareness and clarity to our people that will allow them to rise above racial segregation. The study data supports this contention. Seventy-two % of survey participants selected five and four to the question: “On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being least and 5 being most) how likely is it that educating people about different cultures will help deescalate race and religion based negativity in the United States”. Eighty-one percent participants selected five and four to the question: “On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being least and 5 being most) how important is the role of educators and students in spreading cultural awareness and tolerance in the United States”. The faculty interviewees also had similar opinions. Kendra agreed that, “The most important thing we can do as instructors is to include cultural diversity in the classrooms and educate students on the importance of tolerance and acceptance of others. Cultural awareness is the first step, but we need to go further in the classroom environment”.

Dominic, Sarah, Tom, Kendra, Pam, Mike and Larry, all provided compelling details about what they would be willing to do to foster inclusivity. However, there was also some expectation and desire that fighting against NSI characteristics can be better achieved if we worked collaboratively, as educators. For example, Sarah explained that she would be willing to do just about anything, but also that she needed help, “I do not tolerate any bias I run into in my classroom but I do feel under prepared at times. It would be great to raise and educate future generations so some of our current issues become past problems”.

5.2. Make people aware of ‘multicolorism’.
We need to have more dialogues in classrooms about how racism is not a black and white spectrum anymore. Instead, it is white, black, yellow, and brown. FBI statistics show that more whites face race based incidents than the other way around. Latino and Black communities are also engaged with each other in such aggressions (Taylor, 2015). Please use this link for a graph representing distribution of violence victimization. The racism paradigm now includes a multicolored group. We need to talk less about skin tone affectations, and more about the real nature of racism and how it coalesces with economic and educational marginalization. Race based violence is now more apt to be triggered by extrinsic variables to victimize the poor, the homeless, the under educated and the underprovided. A well to do Latino or African-Americans is less likely to be shot at, than a poor teenager from an under privileged neighborhood. We have an African-Americans President, but we also have Trayvon Martin and Freddie Gray.

5.3. Redesign Curriculum to be Robustly Culturally Inclusive.
This is critical to help create awareness within society. Curriculum must be designed keeping diversity in mind, not only to accommodate diverse learners, but also to educate all learners about diversity. It is not enough to include this in specific
courses. The magnitude of the problem demands that this should be an institutionalized approach for all courses. In response to the survey question for the study regarding the role of culturally inclusive curriculum in mitigating racism, 63% agreed that it would help. All faculty interviewees also agreed. In addition, Dominick believed that “It would be more impactful to do so at the K-6 environment. Try to introduce students to culturally inclusive curriculum at an early age”. Larry had the same idea when he said, “Culturally inclusive curriculums must start at the very beginning, at the school level. This will help our young students become more comfortable and accepting of people who are different than themselves”. In a similar tone, Pam said, “Yes. It would help students to have a better understanding of other cultures. The limited knowledge is what leads to intolerance”.

5.4. Encourage Socially Diverse Interaction and News Reading/Watching in Classrooms.

The interview data offered some interesting and practical ways to apply inclusivity. All interviewees mentioned that reading or watching the current news was the best way to be cognizant of race-based incidents and the resulting dialogues. It is important for students to know what is really happening so that they may become more aware of their cultural surrounds. It may help to encourage students to read current affairs news. This can be done via assessments, assignments and/or instructional materials.

Another deterrent to cultural awareness is that students today are becoming more and more detached from their immediate surroundings and are less trusting. Thus, it is important to provide learning environments that encourage students to interact socially, including outside of classrooms, and not just within class parameters of group work and assignments. A PEW Research Center report data showed just 19% of Millennials say most people could be trusted. The reporters claimed that racial diversity might partly explain Millennials’ low levels of social trust (PEW Research Center, 2014). Please use this link for a graph representing Millennials’ distrust of others. Some of the faculty interviewees shared this concern. For example, Mike said, “I’m seeing a change in our social skills. Watch what is going on when students are in a public gathering area. In many instances there is no interaction with each other because they are all on their phones texting”.

One suggestion to do this would be to incorporate techniques like having social gathering or something like open house for faculty and students, where they can mix socially, outside the rigid academic protocols of a classroom. Typically, open house is an event that is organized at the start of a school year, to recruit new students (Education World, 2014). In a report published by Hanover Research (2014), a global information services firm providing knowledge support to both for-profit and non-profit organizations, having an open house event was stated to be one of the most effective ways of outreach for both public and private 4-year institutions, as it involves direct contact with students and parents in a social setting. There is also precedence of faculty having open house events at their residences to encourage socialization. This is a great opportunity for students and faculty to socialize in an informal setting.

In addition, we can fuse entertainment and socializing, as a means of education outside of the walls of a classroom, to bring learners into the world experiences that entertainment mediums like films can provide. A recent animation film called ‘Zootopia’ is a great example of this. The message of the movie focuses on the social realities that all social and racial identities are capable of carrying prejudice and wielding judgement, but we still need to have conversations about awareness so that eventually it can bring change (Whitney, 2016).

5.5. Train Faculty

It will be helpful to provide some cultural diversity training to faculty since they have the opportunity to interact one on one with students. When students perceive their faculty as having a positive outlook and compassion, it enhances student performance (Torregosa, Ynalvez, & Morin, 2016). Topics for training could include making the curriculum more inclusive of the needs of minority students, dealing with differences in learning styles/teaching styles that may affect minority student performance, and recognizing communication style differences based on culture (Sue, 1991). “Training programs on cultural diversity need to be tailored to institutional and individual needs.” (SUE, 1991, p.100). The value of training and diversity –infused dialogue among educators is not fully recognized or appreciated. “This detachment has serious consequences for what children of color will learn and what teachers will experience in the profession” (Cross, 2003, p. 2014).

Banks (2001) discusses the concept of multicultural citizenship and argues, “Teachers must develop reflective cultural, national, and global identifications themselves if they are to help students become thoughtful, caring, and reflective citizens in a multicultural world society” (p. 5).

There is already some precedence of teacher training in diversity on some campuses. For example, the University of Cincinnati has a Five Year Diversity Plan that aims to provide greater...
opportunities to recruit, retain, promote and support faculty and administrators from marginalized backgrounds, as well as actively recruit students from diverse communities. The University believes that such an approach will provide, “exposure to multi-dimensional aspects of individuals and groups, opportunities to examine stereotypes, variances in perspectives and thinking which ultimately enhance the learning and teaching process” (University of Cincinnati, 2016, p. 4). The University is requiring all faculty and staff to complete an online training program on racial and sexual harassment, and also encouraging students to participate (The University of Cincinnati Mounts an Online Program to Combat Racial and Sexual Harassment, 2012).

5.6. Learn from Global Innovations

Since racism is not just an American issue, and is practiced and dealt with worldwide, it may be useful for us to look to what is being done in other countries to deal with racism and incorporate that knowledge into our academic systems. A campaign called Virtual racism, real consequences” launched by the Brazilian civil rights organization called Criola, is an innovative approach to dealing with racism. The organization collects racist comments from Facebook or Twitter, and locates the people who posted them using geolocation tools. They then buy billboard spaces nearby and post the comments in huge letters, with names and photos pixelated. The idea is to encourage people to speak out and report racism (BBC Trending, 2015).

Similarly, in the United Kingdom (UK), there is a demand to use the same methods to block racist commentators as they use to block sexually charged comments posted by sex-offenders. The strategies proposed by the All Party Parliamentary Inquiry into anti-Semitism report was accepted by UK Prime Minister David Cameron (Whitehead, 2015). The Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA) (2011) provides some innovative and insightful best practices to deal with racism, such as the Windermere Child and Family Service program, which aims to, “Implement cross-social and educational programs between the Muslim, Christian and other faith schools and activities aimed to create racial harmony, understanding and tolerance between children and youth” (Australian Council for Human Rights Education, 2016).

6 Limitations and Implications

This study provided compelling evidence to show that Negative Social Irrigation (NSI) not only persists, but also is growing at an alarming rate in the recent years. This is valuable information for our society and the world of academia, as it gives a clearer and more substantive picture of the realities we are facing and will continue to face, if we do not think in terms of taking restorative and mitigation actions now. After careful consideration, it seems inevitable that the change can happen more meaningfully if we go the curriculum route and think of designing and modifying curricula to be more robustly, culturally inclusive.

However, the study has limitations in that more research needs to be done if we are to walk this path, and make sure that it does not fizzle into an idealistic rhetoric. It is important not to move forward on an idealistic path, without stopping to think about pragmatic ways to implement those ideals. In the context of creating more culturally inclusive curriculum, there may be several implementation hurdles pertaining to the course subject matter, faculty mindset and availability of ready resources. Tom referred to such challenges, “Such a curriculum is difficult to imagine, however, in the job-centric and S.T.E.M. oriented culture that dominates much of higher ed. at present”. However, the benefits of such inclusivity may far outweigh the difficulties of implementation, especially given the presence of critical Negative Social Irrigation (NSI) factors. As Kendra stated, “Hopefully with the help of including cultural diversity in the classrooms, any impact of race/religious incidents will be minimal”. This study provides compelling reasons for future research to investigate ways in which we can immerse

7 Conclusion

This study introduced the concept of Negative Social Irrigation (NSI) paradigm that houses certain unique characteristics pertaining to race based aggression in the United States today. It also provided evidence of the existence of NSI characteristics that are steadily reshaping our society in negative ways. If nothing is done to mitigate them, it is very possible that things may escalate to a point of no return. A perusal of most recent events in 2016 indicates a chain reaction effect as violence based on racism is aggravating. The killings and counter-killings in Minneapolis, Dallas, Falcon Heights and Baton Rouge (Joseph 2016; Lowe 2016; Zelizer, 2016) are evidence of a mass reaction and public health problems that NSI elements are creating.

The crux of the NSI concept is that when negative social events are rampant, the effects percolate down to the societal roots and soon become the causes for the next negative events. As humans and as a society, sometimes in our lives we do acts that we are not proud of. Many of us learn to make peace with those acts and the consequences of those actions, taking refuge in the fact that humans are frail, imperfect
creatures. However, we truly fail as humans when we find justification of our misdemeanors in our perceived frailty of others, using them as scapegoats, instead of taking responsibility for our actions. It is within such moments that NSI is born, and thrives. Negative Social Irrigation is real, and occurs every time we discriminate and differentiate, using our self-proclaimed notions of right and wrong, just and unjust. As a nation that prides itself on being a champion of equality and respect for all, it is intolerable for race-based violence to exist in the country. This paper is a step towards helping us understand the ramifications of our actions, so that we can take remedial measures and reclaim our rightful designation of being called humane.

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