



# Organizing Freedom and White Supremacy

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## Introduction

The current American culture war about education and teaching history provides an opportunity for thinking about how power, the political, and political change are conceptualized.

For example, take the struggle over how to approach and teach a nation's founding narrative. In August 2019, the *New York Times Magazine* published *The 1619 Project*, which argued that the historical—and thus the political and ethical—origins of the United States began not in 1776, the year the Declaration of Independence was signed. Instead, *The 1619 Project* argued that the founding began with the historical events of 1619 when the first enslaved Africans arrived on the shores of the modern-day state of Virginia. Changing the date of the nation's origin story elevated the sociopolitical status of African Americans and other minoritized groups across the past and present while lowering the status of the Founding Fathers across the same. That edition of *The 1619 Project* was made freely available to public schools as social studies curriculum (Silverstein 2019; "The 1619 Project" 2019).

Anxiety over how *The 1619 Project's* historical narrative publicly threatened the traditional origin story and the status of the nation's founders compelled the former Trump Administration to organize the *President's Advisory 1776 Commission*.

The declared purpose of the President's Advisory 1776 Commission is to 'enable a rising generation to understand the history and principles of the founding of the United States in 1776 and to strive to form a more perfect Union (The President's Advisory 1776 Commission 2021: 1).



The *1776 Commission* then issued its narrative—*The 1776 Report*—to correct the historical record.<sup>1</sup>

*The 1776 Report*, part of a larger conservative response, was authored by those affiliated with Hillsdale College, a private conservative Christian liberal arts college in Hillsdale, Michigan. Recently profiled in *The New Yorker* (Green 2023), Hillsdale College is “well known as a kind of fortress for conservative, and often racist views” (Conniff 2021). The College self-published “The 1776 Curriculum” (*The Hillsdale 1776 Curriculum* n.d.), a publicly available, 2,400 page, K12 social studies curriculum (history and civics), a staple of the home-schooling and charter school networks, today’s largest growing segment in American education. Tennessee’s Governor Bill Lee tapped the College to create a conservative civics program (Adams 2022) to counterprogram what many see as the social effects of the Black Lives Matter movement. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis aimed to refashion Sarasota, Florida’s New College, into a “Hillsdale of the South” (Moody 2023). Planning the nation’s future is afoot.

This struggle over the national imaginary reflects a public problem: what historical knowledge is of most worth? One can think through this problem’s dimensions of power, knowledge, and change by returning to *The 1776 Report* and how it focuses on particular objects of scrutiny to reason through this public problem. For example, *The 1776 Report* begins with,

In the course of human events there have always been those who deny or reject human freedom, but Americans will never falter in defending the fundamental truths of human liberty proclaimed on July 4, 1776. (1).

To the objects of national identity (Americans) and abstract political principles (freedom, liberty), *The Report* adds the fields of education and history:

This requires a restoration of American education, which can only be grounded on a history of those principles that is ‘accurate, honest, unifying, inspiring, and ennobling.’ And a rediscovery of our shared identity rooted in our founding principles is the path to a renewed American unity and a confident American future. (1)

What we see here is an administrative view (though not administrative as traditionally conceived, which is discussed later). *The Report* is concerned with the identities and internal capacities of people (children and parents), transcendent political principles (freedom, liberty), and public powers (schools) within the national imaginary. It then

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<sup>1</sup> An archived copy of The Report can be found at [The-Presidents-Advisory-1776-Commission-Final-Report.pdf](#).



assembles and places these objects in relation to social change through a chronology of the nation-state's great past, the present status of its people, and the concept of the future. These objects together serve as a source for national prosperity ("a renewed American unity and a confident American future") and the reason for *The Report's* action.

This essay takes this administrative concern with this public problem as a case study of how the production of knowledge administers freedom and articulates identities. Exploring knowledge production as a form of political rule within education and history considers how power can be theorized, freedom can be socially administered, and morally responsible human subjects are constructed. The purpose is to understand how concrete practices within *The 1776 Report's* struggle over these particular objects of reflection articulate conceptual divisions and partitions that generate an ontological and epistemological framework. How *The Report* reasons through this framework solves a public problem, that of social integration. *The 1776 Report's* solution to this problem entangles with nation-building, for when *The Report* orders and classifies objects of reflection in history, schooling, and society, it engages in a political project that allocates individuals and their dispositions to preserve national unity.

This essay concentrates on the knowledge of and how *The 1776 Report's* epistemic rules and principles build a nation conceptually before the rise of the state. These epistemic principles help *The Report* socially administer individuals by allocating their dispositions, in this case, focused on race-based divisions and partitions, utilizing a form of white supremacy (Anglo-European) without any explicitly racist discourse to achieve one vision, yet not another, of a unified "America."

Let me untangle these dimensions in this essay. The first section lays out concepts and terms. The second discusses how *The 1776 Report* makes kinds of people. The third section discusses how *The Report* allocates the pre-given racial identities of humans before the conclusion discusses implications.

## Concepts and Methods

This section lays out the concepts and methods related to conceptions of power, social administration, and the problem of integration. I first explore how power can be theorized. Existing traditions often approach history and education using a particular analytic style when theorizing power.



Textbooks are one common source of scrutiny. The approach to textbooks often focuses on how groups are historically represented in the nation. The focus rests on the internal qualities of deficient individuals (Au et al. 2016; Banks 2016; Goodwin et al. 2008) or how textbooks can distort historical group accomplishments (Texas Freedom Network 2014). The common approach here rests on how a textbook's historical content serves as a source of power that narrates, shapes, and drives a social context that, in turn, reproduces sociocultural inequality.

Particular methodological distinctions, separations, and oppositions can occur in this analytic style. One methodological assumption is to separate the textbook from the practice of education, as though adjusting or correcting the textbook's content corrects educational content. Related to this assumption is the operational view that separates text and context, as though the ideas or theories within the text constitute real human action or practices within the social context, where one exists outside the other. A final assumption can distinguish between the state and the individual, as though state-based or corporate interests such as textbook publishers shape content that shapes individual identities and conduct.

For example, Banks (2016: ix) discusses one of the "overarching and compelling themes" in earlier "educational histories, struggles, and victories" of how various "ethnic groups were depicted." Historically, within texts, the "school curriculum reinforced the negative images [...] that were constructed by mainstream scholars and textbook writers that were widespread within schools and the popular culture." By way of contrast, Banks' account seeks to reconfigure the representation of those groups in school texts to resist forms of "victimization and oppression and" allow those groups to "pursu[e] self-determination, cultural maintenance, and agency" to "assimilate into U.S. Society [or] to develop strong national loyalties" and "full citizenship" within the nation. However, what is overlooked is how various rules and processes construct a social context for "self-determination" or "cultural maintenance." Those processes operate prior to the internal capabilities of humanistic "agency" that can be realized within the context of the nation or society.

What these interpretations hold in common is an analysis of where and how power operates. Power is often invested in the human actor or agent, where corporate agencies like textbook manufacturers operate as self-interested autonomous agents in the public sphere wielding outsized power that shapes social contexts. Alternately, power is focused on state-centered interpretations where it is the authority of state mechanisms when selecting textbooks that rules over the ruled. Moreover, problems of social equality and



inequality can be treated as two problems, where adjusting one fixes the other. The solutions in this analytical approach suggest that re-presenting social groups one way, changing a textbook's internal content another way, or making institutional adjustments another way when adopting textbooks will lead to achieving a goal state of a more just and equal society.

While these approaches and their important social goals should not be lost from view, below takes a different strategy to engage the dimensions of power in history and education. The strategy seeks to explore the processes that generate an onto-epistemological framework whereby history and education express particular modalities of living (subjectivity) within the nation.

Exploring this framework and how its centralizing and controlling processes produce what Ian Hacking (1999: 163) calls a "kind of person" situates this essay in a long tradition that draws on how others have thought through the processes of subjectivization. For example, Foucault (1980: 117) argued for "arriving at an analysis which can account for the subject within a historical framework," and how and where history and education converge within that onto-epistemological framework can serve as a fruitful space of exploration.

In this essay, for example, a kind of person is generated as an administrative category within a greater nation-based scheme. I want to focus on administrative knowledge and its power dimensions to explore this framework, where the problems of history and education or textbooks or schools and the state outlined above are considered by using a different set of cleavages, where, for example, a historical text is not separate from a social context, educational practices, individual identities, or the confluence of state and corporate power, or where social equality and inequality are not considered as two problems but the same problem.

Rather, below considers how history and its education entangle with cultural practices that narrate how pre-given identities can be positioned within a single social whole (a social context). This different approach means considering how "telling" history and historical knowledge operate as a technology of social regulation and how this technology generates racialized and nationalized bodies (and sex-based or colonized, among others).

What differs here is a strategy that focuses on how historical and pedagogical knowledge operates as a domain of practices. These practices intervene in some measure of social life. The knowledge-based "system of reason" can express a sense of social difference and sameness within an abstract empty space. This system of knowing positions people on a single social field and configures how an individual's sensibilities are formed when



constituting social and individual life, thereby changing the conditions for how one experiences life based on how (un)marked bodies can stabilize populations within a nation.

Within this knowledge, a comparative field emerges. The comparison within this field allows for an interplay of sameness (conformity or “the normal”) and difference (deviance or “the abnormal”). It is determined by a social standard (norms) within a single whole. In the instance of *The 1776 Report*, this interplay between sameness and difference positions people in a hierarchical social scheme that carries resemblances to white supremacy, where the social locomotion of racialized and nationalized bodies are populated and thus positioned on a “white” (Anglo-European) social field.

A second issue centers on the concept of administration. Administration is typically approached by examining the state or an institution (like an organization or firm). Below, however, focuses on earlier power dimensions based on how knowledge connects an individual’s capacities and orientations to those public powers often emphasized by others.

The administrative dimensions of knowledge emerge in the case of *The 1776 Report* when absolute, *a priori*, and transcendent First Principles and historical truths are articulated as the source of change. Those generalized categories travel across various domains in the national and social imaginary beyond any particular instances of social or political institutions, people, or geographic spaces into which schools or economic or political or social welfare agencies are classified. This approach in *The 1776 Report* administers freedom by fulfilling the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century views of Classical Western Liberalism based on the principles of limited state activity and justifying constitutional mandates that restrain government, which permits the circulation of certain rights and freedoms. Moreover, this approach administers personal knowledge when those First Principles also guide people’s actions by providing the historical truths that direct how people participate in social affairs. These principles determine human agency by restraining people’s conduct according to social obligations and meeting the moral mandates of democratic self-regulation and personal responsibility without the need for external policing.

The administrative view thus allocates the individual across a unified social field. For example, *The 1776 Report* seeks to preserve a “need [for a] new principle of political legitimacy for [...] government,” authority, and national unity to achieve social integration while respecting the private exercise of freedom and the autonomy of individual rights. “In other words,” *The Report’s* solution sought “government [that] needed to be strong enough to have the power to *secure* rights without having so much power as to enable or encourage it to *infringe* rights” (7, original emphasis).



Under the governing patterns *The Report* advocates, individuals obtain rights secured by the state to act, yet not so many rights such that someone operates as a state actor that infringes on the conduct of others. Thereby people's actions are already allocated under a sense of power and *governance* but without *government*.

This administration of freedom entangles with the third and final issue: the problem of integration. The problem of integration is a public problem that centers on the difficulties of maintaining the social whole. This problem can occur across several social spaces and involves preserving the conceptual organization of a higher-level general category like a nation-state. In the case of *The 1776 Report*, the generalized superintending category is the American nation-state. Moreover, as this primary authoritative category incorporates disparate, seemingly more elementary parts, its citizens ("Americans"), so classified as particular instances, serve as elementary functions.

Part of this public problem is that as these particular instances are taken as a derivative of the original transcendent category, those lower-level pre-integrated parts, like an American citizen can resist vertical and horizontal integration into how the current social order is conceptualized. Such resistance can often promote different values around which social integration is organized or even social disintegration and degeneration if people are improperly socialized. Any solution to this longstanding historical problem of achieving integration and avoiding disintegration is a social strategy. This strategy seeks to ensure that the elementary functions (citizens) remain derivative of the original function (the state).

Here, integration and disintegration entangle with the political knowledge of social administration and are taken as a single problem, not separate problems. Moreover, this essay centers on the cultural and political knowledge of how *The 1776 Report's* strategy of social administration seeks to prevent social disintegration and degeneration. This strategy preserves one way of social integration but not others by coordinating sociocultural functions to achieve cohesion, integrity, and stability internal to that larger social whole.

### **Organized Freedom: Strategies to Solve the Problem of Integration**

As part of exploring how power is theorized, I want to consider how the current public problem about what history to teach intersects with the problem of integration. Again, while existing traditions often can focus on the role of the state and state-based institutions in people's lives, I want to focus instead on the administrative concern about the present



state of a person's internal capabilities. I do this by exploring the strategies that *The 1776 Report* uses to solve the problem of integration, focusing particularly on how one's regard for the past provides the source for future action. The first strategy involves how a subjectivity can be constructed (again, see Foucault 1980), a strategy that conjoins the moral order and political order to organize freedom and liberty within the individual, which provides a lens into how power and change can be theorized. The second strategy (in the next section) focuses on how the spatial arrangement and allocation of group identities produce a social positioning according to white supremacy.

*The 1776 Report's* administrative concern first resolves this public problem by reasoning through a political strategy that produces human subjects. This strategy involves two parts. The first part steers people toward a particular goal state, that of integration and social unity based on assigned commitments and freedoms. This stratagem forms the second part, which produces a human subject (subjectivity) by configuring an individual's dispositions, plying the internal content of the individual's mind, which regulates how an individual understands their place in collective activity, helping the reckless human learn to constrain their self-conduct based on greater social goals. Instantiating a stance from which the individual understands how to self-regulate their conduct helps all and each embody national and moral commitments.

For example, within *The 1776 Report's* administrative view, *a priori* external principles exist from which state-based government emerges. "The Commission's first responsibility is to produce a report summarizing the principles of the American founding and how those principles have shaped our country," thus shaping the country's inhabitants. Since an example of a "universal and eternal" and "natural" principle is equality, and since the "basis of the founders' political thought is that 'all men are created equal'. From [this] principle of equality, the requirement for consent naturally follows: if all men are equal, then none may by right rule another without his consent." Rather than focusing on the "natural rulers and ruled" (4), an external transcendent principle of equality governs those humans.

Note here how *The Report's* abstract sense of "Natural equality requires" preserving a constant tension between freedom and order, between liberty and limits. The freedom-based side of equality requires "not only the consent of the governed"—freedom for consent—but also a keen sense of order based on limits, morality, and personal obligations: that there exists "the recognition of fundamental human rights—including but not limited to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—[but also] the fundamental duty or obligation of all to respect the rights of others." By keeping the twin poles of freedom and order in





constant tension, “These principles apply to all men [...and] became the basis for an actual government” (5) because the

truth is that there are fixed laws higher than those enacted by governments. Reason and faith secure limits on the reach of man-made laws, thereby opening up the space for civil and religious liberty (26).

The administrative view opens this space for liberty by expressing how to reason through a rights-based philosophy (freedoms) that guides the later formation of state-based government (order).

The second part of this political strategy—steeped in preserving the twin principles of “our need for order and our love of freedom” (20)—allocates an individual’s dispositions. Reasoning in the name of individual liberty requires intervening in the private sphere to shape the dispositions of free people. By shaping and bending someone’s behavior in specific ways yet not others, *The Report* seeks to regulate the conduct of personal conduct, aiming to shape a political subject’s civic dispositions, moral commitments, and sense of self in the world. That political subject can then become socially responsible, self-reliant, and self-regulating to become the kind of political person Foucault discusses, one who understands how to preserve the constant tension between the “gifts and responsibilities of freedom and self-government.”

This subjectivity, however, is no ordinary person. *The Report’s a priori* principles govern individual conduct through the notion of the morally responsible citizen. “This great project of national renewal,” the Report argues, “depends upon true education—not merely training in particular skills, but the formation of citizens.” Creating an orderly citizenry requires developing an individual’s commitment to freedom in a specific moral direction: “To remain a free people, we must have the knowledge, strength, and virtue of a free people.” Developing the internal qualities of that freedom-loving virtuous citizen means orienting them to a moral order and proper conduct because “We must also prioritize personal responsibility and fulfilling the duties we have toward one another as citizens” (16). A principle of freedom thus emerges by publicly developing the private domain of the citizen’s personal dispositions, sense of civic virtue, and moral obligations. As the Report says, “The American founders understood that, for republicanism to function and endure, a republican people must share a large measure of commonality in manners, customs, language, and dedication to the common good” (4). Consequently, “From families and schools to popular culture and public policy,” “we must teach our founding principles and the character necessary to live out those principles” (16) and thus teaches how one’s moral



identity (personal character) operates based on the same external (founding) principles of the nation.

What the concept of natural equality does—based on *The Report's* aesthetic of balance and harmony steeped in the tension of freedom and order—is act on an alignment-based principle that seeks to anchor that individual's moral identity, character development, and personal conduct within the unity of the whole: “It is our mission—all of us [note the appeal to collectivizing]—to restore our national unity by rekindling a brave and honest love for our country and by raising new generations of citizens who not only know the self-evident truths of our founding, but act worthy of them” (16).

Exploring this first strategy makes visible two operative mechanisms that suggest a difficulty when theorizing a sense of change outside of such administrative reasoning. One mechanism involves how administrative dimensions of control and *governance* can occur before the rise of *government*, such as how First Principles from within the cultural domain exist before a state- or institution-based apparatus arises.<sup>2</sup> Control mechanisms—each understood as perfectly natural, not artificial, not man-made—can occur by a sense of knowledge that already puts things in their place. A second mechanism is how the self-identity of the average citizen imagines themselves in this world, as already freed into that sense of administrative control. One's sense of liberty, which is already viewed as free and independent and part of one's naturally developed personality structure, has already been shaped and allocated to operate in a network of control organized around public obligations and democratic structures. People's self-knowledge of individual liberty, personal character, and economic prosperity can already be integrated and aligned to a morally directed socio-economic democratic order. This moral order requires people to maintain their sense of personal responsibility and principled conduct—and also to intervene in the private lives of others who lack it—based on self-government over one's conduct and internalizing the restraint necessary for a seemingly naturally developed social order, itself tied to national development and eventual global prosperity. Many Western subjects articulate views based on acting in a particular moral fashion to preserve their freedom by linking their livelihood already to public goals.

Once in place, this political strategy can achieve its goal of aligning one's capacities and personality structure with state-based structures. We can see how this administrative view helps secure unity and resolve the problem of individual integration into the sociopolitical order by regulating how the content of the history of the nation's formation and one's

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<sup>2</sup> The connection between government, power, and subjectivization is discussed in Foucault 1982.



understanding of how they developed within that chronology is a strategy that individualizes as it collectivizes, aligning the personal with the political.

### **Aligning the Moral, Political, and Racial Order to Organize Freedom**

I want to turn to the second strategy to solve the Problem of Integration, which involves how *The 1776 Report* ties this moral, national, and political order of organized freedom to a racialized social order. This strategy involves how *The 1776 Report* allocates group identities and social positioning according to white supremacy.

While *The Report's* solution emerges by reasoning through the entangled interplay of diversity and unity—difference and sameness—let me first pause to explain how the term white supremacy is used. Late political philosopher Charles Mills' (2017: 4) interrogation of the racial foundations of a liberal society “distinguish[es] between racism in the ideational sense (a complex of ideas, beliefs, values) and racism in the socio-institutional sense (institutions, practices, social systems).” Rather than “seeing race biologically, and as part of a natural hierarchy,” a view that reasserts explicit white supremacist ideology or relies on vulgar, racist statements, Mills' work instead emphasizes white supremacy as a practice. White supremacy is practiced by positioning “one's structural location in a racialized social system,” a positioning which “shape[s one's] moral standing, civic status, social world, and life chances” (4).

*The 1776 Report's* administrative view uses prefigured racial identities to theorize a unified racialized social order absent any use of *de jure* or overtly ideological racism. This approach becomes visible by focusing attention on *The Report's* practices: of how and where particular prefigured racial identities are (not) located in *The Report's* embedded social order, where racially privileged practices involve ordering the “duties, rights, and liberties [that] have routinely been assigned on a racially 'differentiated basis” (Mills 2022: 93).

As *The 1776 Report* respects the autonomy of individual freedom and as it resolves the problem of integration to secure social unity, the strategy by which the text spatially partitions racial groups on a social field occurs through an “othering” and positioning practice. This practice is based on the entangled interplay of diversity and unity and difference and sameness steeped in logical distinctions and norms and standards. Exploring this practice allows examining *The Report* to consider which prefigured racial identities are present and absent, a practice that organizes how hierarchized disaggregated identities are



dispersed across particular social positions, a classification system that specifies which particular identities carry the social burden for individual and social change and which do not.

Those social burdens matter since they help diagnose within *The Report* who the social problem is and is not, where and how those “who’s” are a social problem, and, based on what *The Report* calls identity politics, how those “who’s” threaten how *The Report* organizes the national imaginary. Overcoming identity politics, says *The Report*, comes by putting people in their place, social stations allocated according to a racial hierarchy, which preserves an overall existing social order based on moral worth, a “situating” or positioning that occurs without discussing European whites as the norm for that positioning. I want to discuss *The Report’s* white supremacist dimensions in this context.

Consider first what *The Report* names as threats to integration and unity. Among the threats discussed within a section called “Challenges to America’s Principles” are Slavery, Progressivism, Fascism, Communism, and threats including Racism and Identity Politics.

Identity politics threatens *The Report’s* endorsement of national unity, social sameness, and integrative goal state. Identity politics values “people by characteristics like race, sex, and sexual orientation and holds that new times demand new rights to replace the old.” This sense of identity politics threatens because it misaligns the individual and the social, which “makes it less likely that racial reconciliation and healing can be attained by pursuing Martin Luther King, Jr.’s dream for America and upholding the highest ideals of our Constitution and our Declaration of Independence.” That idealized goal state arrives where one can “live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of [the] character” that *The Report* seeks to develop in individuals. Even though an earlier unified “national movement composed of people from different races, ethnicities, nationalities, and religions [came together] to bring about an America fully committed to ending legal discrimination” (15) in the 1960s, identity politics instead already “denies that all are endowed with the unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

Identity Politics reappears as a threat in *The Report’s* “Appendix III Created Equal or Identity Politics?” (29). The Appendix’s numerous sections detail the problems with “The Historical Precedent for Identity Politics,” “Intellectual Origins of Identity Politics,” and “The Radicalization of American Politics in the 1960s,” and “The Incompatibility of Identity Politics with American Principles.” “According to this new creed” of identity politics the Report details, “our racial and sexual identities [difference] are more important than our common status [sameness] as individuals equally endowed with fundamental rights” (29). *The Report* exhorts American readers to overcome the threat of identity politics based on a



collective identity, to “see ourselves as one nation united by a common political creed and commitment to Christian love” (31). One source of the problem that threatens *The Report’s* administrative goals of aligning the individual with a notion of collective belonging is how identity politics positions racial, sexual, and class identity above national identity, a mode of subjectivization.

We should pay special attention to how *The Report* determines such threats to unity and sameness based on its sense of difference and logically distinct categories of people in a comparative field. *The Report* works against the 1960s leftist radicalization when

activists constructed artificial groupings to further divide Americans by race, creating new categories like ‘Asian American’ and ‘Hispanic’ to teach Americans to think of themselves in terms of group identities and to rouse various groups into politically cohesive bodies (31).

Here *The Report* locates the presence of “artificial groupings,” logically distinct “new categories like ‘Asian American’ and ‘Hispanic.’” *The Report* elsewhere identifies the presence of Blacks and other “people [identified] by characteristics like race, sex, and sexual orientation” (16; note the striking absence of native/indigenous peoples).

However, the basis, standard, or norm used for comparison is left unsaid when making these logical distinctions. When *The Report* discusses identity politics, little is said about people of Anglo-European descent. Outside of a single scant reference to “the white American worker” (30) or two complaints about how identity politics “portray[s] America as racist and white supremacist” (29) and “sees society in terms of minority racial groups oppressed by the white majority” (30), *The Report* populates its social field primarily with references to distinct racialized groups, but not Anglo-European identities, even though any meaning of identity must include both. In effect, *The 1776 Report’s* social order operates independently of Anglo-European ethnic identities (but also the categories of sex and gender or socioeconomic class).

Consequently, from the administrative vantage point overseeing *The Report’s* social field, one sees “different” marginalized groups, logically distinguished as different because they operate inside the silently present “sameness” of majoritarian Anglo-European white identities. A central complaint in *The Report* is that identity politics and social difference challenge a silently present foundation of social unity and sameness in the nation. Social difference and identity politics threaten collective belonging because “members of oppressed groups are told to abandon their shared civic identity as Americans and [instead] think of themselves in terms of their sexual or racial status” (32); those “artificial” or “new”



categories that *The Report* determines based on its political majoritarian administrative view.

*The Report's* administrative view seeks a solution to the greater problem of integration by regulating the academic content internal to history or civics. In this context, *The Report's* political strategy solves the problem of integrating the individual to achieve a goal state by administratively confronting how to bring various distinct parts—both individuals and (pre-given) group identities—from diverse locations and across multiple levels into a coherent whole. That goal state preserves a backdrop that presumes unity and social stability with internal cleavages and particular divisions to achieve a current social order, formed in opposition to the history-based challenges posed by the *1619 Project* and identity politics with its different cleavages and divisions for a different social order.

Consequently, identity politics threatens *The Report's* administrative project of social integration. *The Report* somehow identifies the presence of social differences among blacks or Hispanics or Asians, or members of the LGBTQ+ community. It does so by placing those groups in oppositional yet relational context-based categories—those “new categories” of people (versus old) based on race (and sex and gender), logically distinguishing those “artificial groupings” from the more “natural” yet absent nation-based ethnic Anglo-European (and masculine-based and Christian) norm.

Second, *The Report's* project then subordinates those artificial identities to an overarching whole civic identity based on a unified spatial arrangement. *The Report* asserts that the artificial categories “divide Americans by race” (31). According to *The Report*, “Proponents of identity politics rearrange Americans by group identities, rank them by how much oppression they have experienced at the hands of the majority culture, and then sow division among them.” Rather than arranging people based on such artificial difference, however, *The Report* seeks collective belonging based on seemingly natural sameness by urging these “various groups that comprise the nation [to] resolve their disagreements” and “come to a deliberative consensus” about what it means to be American, which, according to *The Report*, means white (and heterosexual, Christian, and male).

These social dimensions in *The Report* exemplify the positioning practices and social arrangements that Mills' critique of white supremacy offers. *The Report* relies on logical distinctions to classify “natural” and “unnatural” (artificial) groups. It then ramifies those group categories. It subordinates some “artificial” prefigured categories to other higher “natural” categories of people, privileging the power and status of some while subordinating the power and status of others, each housed under an idealized, abstract, and greater civic identity on an administered, hierarchized social field. What this view of a



future American society does is administer in the minds of people, one's sense of self, a kind of person, how to tell people where they are and where they are not and who they are or who they are not, which is a way of producing social inequality without the role of the state or external policing based on, among others, a racialized classification system.

Moreover, we can see in terms of practices—and not ideology—how *The 1776 Report's* administrative view expresses a sense of white supremacy based on who the problem is. One can tell “who the problem is” because *The Report* assigns the burden for change to minority groups. Those relegated to artificial categories must change their behavior and identities to meet the unnamed, universal norm of majoritarian white male identities, those identities who do not have to change. In short, *The Report's* strategy to resolve the problem of social integration comes by targeting already marginalized people for social inclusion by assigning them—yet not others—the burden for change. Moreover, *The Report's* solution occurs within an overarching cultural narrative that seeks to create a national civic identity, where “they,” those minoritized “Others” require change to be more like who *The Report* says are “us.” This solution occurs discursively in the context of education, narratives of national history, and the administration of individual identity about a social order tied to a racial order tied to the moral order that *The Report* expresses. The silently present racist ideology exists within the administrative reasoning from which visible practices arise.

## Conclusion

In considering contemporary notions of change and resistance, we can see how *The 1776 Report* and its administrative view solve the problem of integration while helping to provide a form of *governance* before the rise of *government*. This administrative sense of governance and control helps construct people's sense of self- subjectivization, which is one way that individuals can judge their station in life as a moral person, as one who fits into a more “just” and “equal” social order based on externally determined “First Principles.” This administrative view simultaneously regulates how someone can see change and feel threatened by appealing to that moral order.

It is important to note that the public problem and administrative dimensions of what knowledge is of most worth are not restricted to purveyors of right-wing causes. More politically liberal and left-leaning educational content can carry a similar social logic of achieving idealized civic identities. One example includes *Man: A Course of Study* (MACOS), a secondary-level science-based social studies curriculum forged to tame children in response to the social tumult of the 1960s (Ivens 2013; Milam 2013). Another includes



more recent attempts to teach children socio-emotional learning (SEL), which can similarly be described as “the acquisition of skills including self- and social awareness and regulation, responsible decision making and problem solving, and relationship management” (Elbertson et al. 2010: 1017). What such pedagogical activities do is act on those most distant from established social norms to bring them into line, which not only is a way of telling people who they are but also who they should be, and which does not emancipate them but rather teaches self-regulation of personal conduct by interring them into expected roles on a hierarchized social field. These alignment frameworks are ubiquitous throughout education, even ones perceived as “progressive” or “science-based.”

Examining these educational processes helps make visible how social positionality and human relations can be invoked to justify governance and control. Processes related to race and racial relations—processes equally amenable to pre-existing class, sex and gender, or other social categories—can be taught to be brought into the self and one’s personality structure in seemingly natural ways that people might not recognize when freeing someone into a greater social apparatus, ways that do not need to mention those categories, but which occur within the logic of the social view.

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