

Chapter Four

UNDERSTANDING THE WHITE MALE CULTURE

Chapter Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- define what it means to be “white” in America.
- explain the Caucasian historical perspective.
- determine what is meant by WASP.
- list ways in which white males have been discriminated in the U.S.
- rationalize why it is important for especially white males to be a part of the diversity discussion.



In 1850, it was relatively simple to describe a White American. In all probability he or she was of Anglo-Saxon background and Protestant. However, after the Civil War, immigrants began coming from Southern and Central Europe. They were not Protestant, not Anglo-Saxon, and had different languages and cultures from those who preceded them. Despite the fact that each still maintains some of its uniqueness and has a different historical perspective, many have assimilated into what is known as the American way or the dominant culture that influences many U.S. workplace cultures.

Historical Perspective*

In 1980, approximately 200 million White Americans could trace some of their ancestry back to the following groups (in descending size order): English, German, Irish, French, Italian, Scottish, Polish, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian, Russian, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, Welsh, Danish, and Portuguese.

The White-American experience from its colonial beginnings is fairly short. It covers a period of approximately 400 years, a period that can be spanned by the overlapping lifetimes of a half-dozen individuals. Yet the roots of the White-American experience go deep into the human past. These roots are traced mostly to the Old World, but not the New.

Individuals who make-up the original White-American people, came to America from three areas of the world. They were:

- a. North Africa related to the Berbers. A Caucasian people, the Berbers are related in physical type to the Mediterranean subgroup of southern Europe. They form the base population of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. Today they are mostly Muslims and much of their culture is "Arabized."

b. Northwestern Europe. Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, and Wales.

c. Southeastern Europe. Austria, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Spain, USSR, and Yugoslavia.

But despite these varying cultures of what we call White it was the Anglo-Saxon and White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) who defined much of what we know today as the American workplace culture. An Anglo-Saxon and White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) male is a person of Caucasoid, northern European, largely Protestant stock whose members constitute one of the most privileged and influential groups in U.S. society. In the New World, they were usually the landlord and their culture and values, with rare exception, were those that defined the culture.

Their culture and values were normally based on:

- Handwork.
- Perseverance.
- Self-Reliance.
- Puritanism.
- Missionary spirit.
- Abstract rule of law.

The White colonists prior to the Revolutionary War though immigrants by one definition, did not consider themselves immigrants; rather, approximately 78% of the English population conceived themselves as Founders, Settlers, and Planters. As the formative population of those colonial societies, theirs were the policy, the language, the pattern of work, settlement, and many of the mental habits to which the post-Revolutionary War "immigrants" would have to adjust.

Even though an immigrant is defined as one who settles permanently in a foreign country or region in colonial America, ONLY those who arrived in America following the Revolutionary War were considered immigrants. In 1607, the first permanent English settlement in America was established in Jamestown, Virginia. The Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620. In 1629, the Puritans came to Massachusetts Bay. Puritan settlers to the New England area differed from the inhabitants of other colonies. Nearly all other colonies were settled without education, driven by poverty or misconduct out of their homeland.

Puritan settlers were British families with respectable social positions. They were educated and financially secure. They came to America so they could live according to their own principles and worship God in freedom.

The unique background of these early Puritan settlers established a foundation for many U.S. cultural norms. The words of the Bible were the origin of many Puritan cultural ideals, especially regarding the roles of men and women in the community. While both sexes carried the stain of original sin, for a girl, original sin suggested more than the roster of Puritan character flaws. Eve's corruption, in Puritan eyes, extended to all women, and justified marginalizing them within churches' hierarchical structures. An example is the different ways that men and women were made to express their conversion experiences.

According to Puritan belief, the order of creation was simple: the world was created for man, and man was created for God. If God had created the world with some beings subordinate to others, he applied the same principle to his construction of human society. Thus the Puritans honored hierarchy among men as divine order; this order presupposed God's "appointment of mankind to live in Societies, first of Family, secondly Church, thirdly, Common-wealth." Order in the family, then, was a fundamentally structured Puritan belief. Puritans usually migrated to New England as a family unit, a pattern different from other colonies where young, single men often came on their own. Puritan men of the generation of the Great Migration (1630–1640) believed that a good Puritan wife did not linger in Britain but encouraged her husband in his great service to God.

The essence of social order lay in the superiority of husband over wife, parents over children, and masters over servants in the family. Puritans in colonial America were among the most radical Puritans and their social experiment took the form of a Calvinist theocracy. Since, the British had been applying pressure on the Puritans for a while to conform to English customs it is no wonder that so many British Puritans ended up in the new land. The 1790 census indicated that 78 percent of the 2.75 million Americans were of British background. In July 1831, Dr. S. F. Smith took the music of the British national anthem and changed the words to create "America." The British had taken the tune from the Germans.

During WWI, millions of people living in the U.S. were seemingly more interested in their former homeland than their newly adopted country. The public labeled such people "hyphenated" Americans, German-Americans, Polish-Americans, and Irish-Americans. But despite the previous hyphens, all of these people eventually melted into the pot and are no longer referred to by their hyphenated homeland but are just considered white.

Caucasians/Whites in America

The term white or Caucasian is represented of many people from various cultures whose common denominator is the lightness of their skin color. But, when we talk about "white" who are we referring to? If you look at the U.S. census definition of "white" discussed in chapter two we find that "White" refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. But, if you asked people in the U.S. if a Middle Eastern was considered white the answer most often would be? "No." The following groups of people who migrated to the New Land (the United States) would have been considered "white" as long as they maintained the dominant culture along with having "white" skin (these are the largest groups some smaller groups are excluded):

Canadian-Americans.

The history of Canada is closely tied to that of the United States. The "Cajun" residents of Louisiana trace their roots back to French Catholic settlements in the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Run out by the English in 1775, they settled in Louisiana in places like Lafayette and New Orleans. With them they brought a unique French influence to the region. Over 4 million Canadians have immigrated to the United States since 1820. The peak for Canadian immigration to the United States was in the 1920s when 920,000 Canadians crossed the border looking for a new way of life. In the 1960's this number decreased to 413,000 and in the last decade, 100,000. Canada is made up of persons primarily of British (45%) or French (29%) descent. Since Canada is a bilingual country, most Canadian immigrants, regardless of French background, assimilate easily into American communities.

French-Americans.

The influence upon American life is disproportionately greater than their actual numbers in the United States. French explorers (e.g., Cartier, Champlain, Marquette, Joliet, LaSalle) were the first to "discover" based upon the definition of discoverer (covered in chapter four) areas in the heartland of America (e.g., the Mississippi River and all lands drained by it); the Great Lakes; the St. Lawrence River; Lake Champlain; Chicago, and Detroit. In 1562, the first group of French Protestants (Huguenots) came to America because of religious persecution and settled in South Carolina. The French fought alongside the colonists in the American Revolution; Rochambeau and Lafayette were great military minds.

Dutch-Americans.

In 1609, Henry Hudson set out to find a Northeast Passage to the East Indies and landed in which is now New York. The first Dutch settlement in America was in

Fort Nassau, near Albany, New York. In 1621, the Dutch West Indies Company was formed. It promoted trade and settlement in America. The first group of permanent Dutch settlers came to America seeking religious freedom in America. The Patroonship System was established in 1629. Land plus ownership rights were given to anyone settling 50 people on their land within four years. To qualify as a patroon, a person had to be a major stockholder in the Dutch West Indies Company since its founding. Although six patroonships were registered, only one was successfully settled.

In 1640, in a renewed effort to bring more settlers to New Netherland, the Dutch West Indies Company developed a charter encouraging persons of limited economic means to settle there. As an early Governor of New Netherland, Peter Stuyvesant changed it from a trading post to a permanent settlement, which permitted a large degree of religious freedom. In 1663, a Dutch Mennonite named Pieter Cornelis Plockhoy established the first socialist community in North America. In 1668, the Dutch Quakers established the first declaration against slavery in the United States. In 1758, they expelled from their membership anyone who bought or sold slaves. The attitudes and behaviors of early settlers to this area (much of what is present-day New York) greatly influenced the current culture and characteristics that are distinctive to this part of America. Unrest in the Netherlands increased immigration between 1829 and 1865. Immigrants settled in Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa, New Jersey, Indiana, and South Dakota.

German-Americans.

The first German immigrants to this country founded Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1683. By 1766, one-third of Pennsylvania was inhabited by Germans. Most were poor farmers who settled along the frontier from Georgia to the New England colonies. The Pennsylvania Dutch were industrious and excellent farmers. They developed the Kentucky rifle and Conestoga wagon. Although many religious sects existed in Pennsylvania, there was a strong belief in religious tolerance and separation of church and state. John Peter Zenger established the concept of "Freedom of the Press." Von Steuben introduced a concept of military discipline during the Revolutionary War, which was instituted throughout the Army. During the first half of the 19th century, German immigration exceeded all other. Germans settled all over the country, especially in Rochester and Buffalo, New York; Cincinnati and Cleveland, Ohio; St. Louis, Missouri; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. German artisans and craft persons established businesses and helped industrial expansion. German guilds marked the beginning of trade unions in this country.

Irish-Americans.

The first Irish person to come to America was William Ayers, who was one of Columbus' crew. Francis Maguire was one of the original inhabitants of Jamestown in 1607. John Dunlap, an Irish-American in Philadelphia, printed the Declaration of Independence. During and after the potato blight in Ireland (1846-48), immigration to the United States increased.

Italian-Americans.

Italians were among the earliest explorers of the country -- Christopher Columbus; Amerigo Vespecci (America was named after him); Verrazano missionaries Marcos de Niza and Eusebio Chino. Philip Mazzei, in 1773, established a plantation next to Thomas Jefferson's in Virginia, where he introduced grapes and olives to America. He also aided the colonists during the Revolution. Italian immigration increased after the failing of a great political uprising in Italy in 1848. The peak of Italian immigration was reached during 1900-1920. The majority of Italians coming was poor and settled in New England, the Great Lakes Region, Florida, and California. Most who could not get work in their specialties concentrated in the heavily urbanized states along the Northeast Seaboard.

Polish-Americans.

Several Poles accompanied the British when they landed in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1608. They were experts and instructors in the manufacture of glass, pitch, tar, and other products England imported from Poland. They did so well that other Poles were invited to come. However, they were not allowed privileges equal to those of the English. As a result of this inequity, the Poles organized the first American popular assembly and labor walkout in 1619 in Jamestown. Many Polish helped in the fight for American independence. Thaddeus Kosciuszko and Count Casimir Pulaski (father of American cavalry) organized some decisive victories. When Kosciuszko left America, he left his will in the custody of Thomas Jefferson. He designated that the proceeds from his estate be used to purchase Black slaves and give them freedom in his name. Prior to 1865, Poles who came to this country were political exiles. Those who came after 1865 were poor peasants. They settled in Chicago, Buffalo, Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Milwaukee. Even though they came from rural backgrounds, they became involved in industry, working in the local and iron fields. Dr. Marie Elizabeth Zakrzewska, a medical pioneer, was active in women's suffrage and the abolition of slavery. She founded the New England Hospital for Women and Children. Caroline Still, one of the earliest Black women doctors, did her internship at the hospital. It was also one of the few White nursing schools to admit Blacks.

Twelve percent of Americans who lost their lives in World War I were of Polish background, even though at no time did the number of Poles in this country exceed four percent of the total population.

Middle-Eastern-Americans.

Middle-Eastern-Americans are estimated to number 2.5 to 3.0 million in the United States where their religious affiliation is both Christian and Islamic. This ethnic group is not closely tracked in the U.S. census and the trail of their immigration to the United States is sketchy. Many Syrians and Lebanese who immigrated to the United States in the last century came under Turkish passports. Although the number of Islamic-Americans is on the rise, there is a large number of the Middle-Eastern population in the U.S. that is made up of Maronite and Melkite Christians of Lebanese descent. The first Lebanese immigrant to the United States on record was Anthony Bishallany in 1854. The first Arabic newspaper in the United States was founded in 1892 as *Kawab Amerika* (The Star of America).

Early immigration of the Arabs to the U.S. took place between 1886 and 1914. Most were of Syrian and Lebanese descent and most lived in New York City. Historically, Syria included Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, and occasionally Iran. In 1919, there were 400,000 recorded Middle-Eastern-Americans living in the United States. The majority was poor, under educated, and had distaste for indoor factory work.

There were many thousands of them working as slaves on plantations. Others were primarily traders, peddlers, industrial workers and farmers. Later some enterprises grew into large businesses such as Haggar and Farah. These early communities cut off from their heritage and families, inevitably lost their Islamic identity as time went by.

Immigration slowed during the period between W.W.I and W.W.II (1915 - 1945) due to immigration laws. Immigration quotas imposed in 1921 and 1924 reduced the allowable number of Middle-Eastern immigrants to less than 1,000. These restrictions were later repealed, but the flow of these immigrants into the United States has still remained at a trickle.

Arabs who immigrated to the U.S. after 1945 were more educated, professional and mainly of the Muslim faith and most came from Egypt, Iran and Palestine. This group has been able to retain more of their culture than the earlier group. Those who arrived during the first group attempted to distance themselves from some of the Arab world by adopting western culture and language

Many of American English words have been borrowed from the Arabs such as algebra, alcohol, alkali and alcove. The word "al" means "the" in Arabic. Some of the names of foods in American are also Arabic such as apricot, sherbet, coffee, sesame and ginger.

*The source of this historical perspective is reprinted with permission from the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute through the Fort Gordon Equal Opportunity Office website.¹

Why Migrate to America?

In early times many European settlers came to this land to avoid religious persecution. However, this was not the only reason to come to this new land: political oppression, economic opportunity, and dreams of freedom and opportunity. However, when they came to America how much freedom did these Europeans really experience?

America's servitude

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a variety of labor market institutions developed to facilitate the movement of labor in response to the opportunities created by American factor proportions.² While some immigrants migrated on their own, many of the immigrants were indentured servants whose journey to the new land was a business exchange. The travel was paid by the "Master" who was the Lord to the indentured servant once they arrived on American soil. One half to two thirds of all immigrants to Colonial America arrived as indentured servants.³ At times, as many as 75% of the population of some colonies were under terms of indenture.⁴

Indentured servitude first appeared in America a little over a decade after the settlement of Jamestown in 1607.⁵ Labor was scarce; land was abundant and transportation costs to America were high compared to wages in England. An early economist noted that ... industry is limited by capital; but, through lack of labor, its limit is not always reached in older communities and seldom if ever in newer countries.⁶ Indentured servitude appeared to have arisen from a combination of the terms of two other types of labor contract widely used in England at the time: service in husbandry and apprenticeship (Galenson, 1981).⁷

In other cases, migrants borrowed money for their passage and committed to repay merchants by pledging to sell themselves as servants in America, a practice known as "redemptioner servitude."⁸

More often than not, the indentured servants were shocked by their new conditions. Rather than finding venues in which they could practice their profession, like gardens and orchards, overseers marched servants out to the fields. Many died, attempted to return, or ran away. In addition to mistreatment, many servants also encountered contract extension, a popular punishment of planters for rowdy indentures.

Indentured Servant Contract
(Courtesy of Northumberland County Virginia Records of Indentured Servants 1650-1795)

Master's Name: Servant's Name(s): Items:

1. The contract stated that the servant was to work for a set term, usually four years, during which time they would receive room, board, and clothing in addition to passage to America.
2. At the end of the term the individual was awarded "freedom dues," in the combination of money, tools, clothes, and/or land.
3. Skilled workmen sometimes added a clause exempting them from field work. Children's indentures, which were usually bound until the age of 21, specified that they be taught a trade or given an elementary education.
4. Many German indentures often entered into servitude on the condition that they be taught to read the Bible in English.
5. Servants were then assembled on deck so planters could interview them and/or feel their muscles. Then they were auctioned to the highest bidder.
6. Soul drivers were those individuals who would buy in mass and then walk the servants from town to town, reselling them.
7. In the early years, masters often drove their servants so hard that the backbreaking regime combined with crude living conditions caused over 50% of the servants to die.
8. Women indentured servants in some colonies had to serve an extra year if they became pregnant. Once their time of service was over, women did not receive land, as did men, and only rarely were given money.

Married couples were rarely indentured, and contract records normally listed each woman who signed on for indentured servitude as either a "single-woman," a "spinster," or a "widow."⁹ Contract holders were referred to as "master" or "mistress," while the indentured woman was called a "bondswoman" or "bound woman." For both men and women, though, the indenture period was strict and highly regulated, with laws protecting each side of the contract. The law specified, for example, the clothing that was due to a servant when his or her term was completed.

On the other hand, women who became pregnant while indentured could have their terms extended to reimburse the master for the loss of time the servant was unable to work and for the economic burden of her child.¹⁰ Because servants were not allowed to marry, some women used this situation to deliberately become pregnant, hoping that the father of her child would buy out her contract. Indentured servant was a way for people to emigrate but did not often lead to the life of economic prosperity that was eventually hoped for.¹¹

Throughout some history books Whites may not have been shown to start in America as servants, as religiously persecuted or as political refugees coming to seek freedom. Yet, this is exactly how many got their start in America.

White Male Perspective

As we look at the systems in the workplace, they most often are based upon the white male culture (those who created and controlled the systems). Women including white women very rarely participated in the workplace and people of color had no power to determine the direction of the workplace. But as we talk about "white males" this is done without ever really stating who is considered part

of the white male group. So, how can we understand the systems they created without understanding the architects?

Over the course of time, the term "White Male" has come to refer to a group of people who espouse all of the following characteristics: (taken from the source: Addressing the Concerns of the White Man as Full Diversity Partners by Erik Oosterwal)¹²

- Northern/Western European descent (although males of southern and eastern European heritage are commonly included)
- Heterosexual, Male and Not Handicapped
- Middle class (more often upper middle class)
- Mainly Christian (Some Jews are now included)

If any of the characteristics are not met, then that person is often grouped with the associated subordinated group, such as gay, disabled, Arab, etc. White males who have the above characteristics in common also tend to have the same value system. This value system is based upon individualistic culture. Individualistic cultures generally value self-reliance and autonomy of the individual.¹³

Believing in fairness and equal opportunities for everyone is critical in more individualistic cultures that often equate hierarchy with rigidity, even if equality is more of a societal ideal than a reality.¹⁴ Furthermore, this individualistic approach tends to value action, efficiency, getting to "the bottom line," while often downplaying social interactions in the interests of achieving goals.¹⁵

People in individualistic cultures emphasize their success/achievements in job or private wealth and are often aiming up to reach more and/or a better job position.¹⁶ In business they try to improve their connections and to gain more value out of them, not for establishing a good relationship but just to be involved in a calculative way. Employees are expected to defend their interests and to promote themselves whenever possible. Ultimately, individualism stands for a society in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family only.¹⁷

This individualistic value system has also transferred to the workplace culture that many participate in. According to the article, *White Men and Diversity: An Oxymoron?* by Bill Proudman, White men in the United States work in organizational cultures that have been created by other white men therefore, the prevailing business culture often looks "normal"-it's the way business has always been done.¹⁸ Common characteristics to be found in organizational cultures based upon those white males who created the organizations years and years ago are as follows: the individual is the most important societal unit and people should take care of themselves because individual achievement is most valued; time is perceived as a quantity and people are expected to save time, spend time, and perform on time; people must dress and be accepted by resembling the European ideal of beauty and status (limited use of color--blues, blacks, gray), smaller sized women, authority in men represents a suit and tie therefore Ethnic hairstyles and religious dress is often seen as unprofessional; also, the workplace's resources belong to the best where access to goods/jobs is determined by competition (the best) as reflected in test scores, etc.¹⁹

But why all the hype you may be asking: is there a problem with those values?

That depends on who you ask.

For those whose values differ—it requires assimilation if the culture of the workplace is based upon those values.

For instance, many people of color such as, African-Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic/Latino and most Asian cultures identify with Collectivism.²⁰ Collectivism stands for a society in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong cohesive in-groups (family, neighborhood or tribe), which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.²¹ What is known about collectivism verse individualism is that these cultures are often at opposite extremes.

Look at some workplace differences on the following page that are based upon race generalizations.

Normative Styles & Values for Cross-Cultural Collaboration

(Adapted from Candia Elliott, Diversity Training Associates, R. Jerry Adams, Ph.D., Evaluation and Development Institute and Suganya Sockalingam, Ph.D., Office of Multicultural Health, Department of Human Resources, Oregon.)²²

Work Style(Focus Group)	Very Little	Little	Medium	Much	Very Much
Task Focused vs. Relationship	Native Am. Hispanic Asian Am.	African Am.			White
Long term history between groups important	White				Native Am. Hispanic African Am. Asian Am.
Perceived right to set rules	Native Am. Hispanic Asian Am.	African Am.			White
Perceived right to speak freely at meetings	Native Am. Hispanic Asian Am.	African Am.			White
Concern with clock time	Native Am. Hispanic	African Am.		Asian Am.	White
Perceived right to represent or speak for group	Native Am. Asian Am.	African Am. Hispanic			White
Collaborators must have community respect and support	White				Native Am. Hispanic Asian Am. African Am.

The chart above titled, *Normative Styles & Values for Cross-Cultural Collaboration* is BY NO MEANS representative of every person in the identified group. These are norms that researchers have found to be common elements of many in the associated groups. But if individuals in the workplace follow these cultural aspects then you can see why the systems that are based upon some aspects of white male culture don't work for everyone.

So, what does this mean? It often means that the challenge with white male culture is not the individual qualities of the culture, but the fact that some assimilate far more easily into the culture than others. White women, people of color, and openly gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals often have to be bi-cultural. They must learn to consciously be seen as competent in the white male heterosexual culture. What complicates the issues is that often times, white heterosexual men are not even aware that such assimilation is part of their colleagues' everyday work experience. This "not knowing" can create difficulties, strained work relationships, and charges of "He just doesn't get it."

Many White men never have to leave their culture; thus they are often unaware of the systemic advantages they receive-from being white and/or male-and how this impacts their partnerships at work with white women, people of color, and other white men.²³ Systemic advantages are often the unspoken and invisible benefits that are received by a person because of their group membership (being white, male, heterosexual, and so forth). These advantages are made to look normal and available to any person who desires them. Systemic advantage is not so much what a person has, but it's more what a person doesn't have to think about on a daily basis. However, receiving systemic advantage does not entirely prevent white men from being the recipients of mistreatment and discrimination. But, systematic advantage can leave people outside of this culture to believe that systems will never advantage those outside of it.

While the highest position in America, President is held by a black man President Barack Obama White males in many respects still have cultural dominance due to the powerful positions they hold in Corporate America. White males hold the majority of top management positions in these companies. These positions are often gained through two main vehicles: hard work and effort or through the *good old boys network*.

A general definition explaining good ol' boy networks basically says it is a social network, or at least the perception of it, which heavily influences local business, government, and legal functions and it is said to be very informal and decentralized, there's no real 'list' or organization, it's just known who is influential and calls the shots locally. It is usually composed of white males that come from local religious or legal organizations that extend opportunities to those who are most like them.²⁴ This allows "the birds of a feather who flock together" to maintain their power structure.

So based upon this definition, does this mean that the good ol' boy network

is negative? Who wouldn't extend favors to their friends, or to friends asking for their friends, or for family members? I've often heard the phrase, 'it's who you know not what you know that's important' spoken in relation to finding jobs and good deals. On the other hand, I've heard the phrase 'big fish in a small pond' used to describe people who like being the big dogs and block things/people that would take away their power, even if those things/people are better for the community or organization. It is this mentality of the power hungry that can make the good old boys' network seem harmful.

But power (if you have it) can be difficult to give up. Apparently if you're connected to the network, you can get perks and deals not offered to the normal population. Membership in the boys' club has some definite advantages for those who can be an associate (not all white males are invited). As a member, you're privy to important information, and many critical business decisions. Club meetings are often held in such places as private golf courses, men's rooms and smoke-filled cigar bars.²⁴ With its unwritten rule, "No women allowed," and the environment not necessarily inviting to men of color the informal good old boys' network continues to bar unapproved white males, women and men of color from top management positions (positions that hold the most power).²⁵

Just as there are white males who have or have had considerable access to power and privilege and only spread that amongst those like themselves, there are also many white males who understand what it means to be white and male in America and have used their influence and power to extend opportunity to those unlike themselves. There have been people of all races, genders and religious groups that have been and are advocates for diversity—but white males are the group that some don't see in this light. Some think that every white male is a part of the good ol' boy network—this is indeed a myth. It is also a myth that white males are not advocates for the ills of society. To destroy these myths is the very reason why we address white male advocacy for diversity.

White Males as Advocates for Diversity

Just as there are white males who participate and benefit from their "whiteness and maleness" in America and from the good 'ol boy network, there are many more white males who have been and are advocates for diversity. Oftentimes, when we discuss the problems of America that transcend into the workplace (as we will later discuss in this text) it is the "white male" as a group who is seen as the perpetrator by women and people of color. This is unfortunate as this does not allow those white males who could be and are advocates for diversity to be viewed as such—instead there can be a preconceived notion by subordinate groups that ALL white males are against equality and diversity initiatives.

As far back as the development of this country, you will find white males who fought for justice and rights of all people. These white males did not believe in the privileges being bestowed upon landowning white men and fought to change this power structure. Even before the declaration of political independence on the part of the British North American colonies, slavery was under attack by a number of religious and political leaders for example, from the Quakers and Evangelicals, such as William Wilberforce (1759–1833), Thomas Clarkson (1760–1846), and Granville Sharp (1735–1813). Antislavery movements flourished both in the metropolis and in the colonies.²⁶ In 1787, Abbé Grégoire (1750–1831), Abbé Raynal (1713–1796), the Marquis de Lafayette (1757–1834), and others formed an antislavery committee in France called the Société des Amis des Noirs, which took up the issue in the convened Estates General in 1789 and later pushed for broadening the basis of citizenship in the National Assembly. Their benevolent proposals, however, were overtaken by other events.²⁷

During the Civil Rights Era on August 4, 1964, in Neshoba Country, Mississippi, the bodies of three civil-rights workers—two white men and one black male—are found in an earthen dam, six weeks into a federal investigation backed by President Johnson.²⁸ James E. Chaney, 21; Andrew Goodman, 21; and Michael Schwerner, 24, had been working together to register black voters in Mississippi, and, on June 21, had gone to investigate the burning of a black church. They were arrested by the police on speeding charges, incarcerated for several hours, and then released after dark into the hands of the Ku Klux Klan, who murdered not just the black man but all the men.²⁹

Then there is Oliver Hill, a Roanoke-raised civil rights lawyer/pioneer. As one of the architects of the *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregation case he recently died at the age of 100 in Richmond, Virginia. Governor Tim Kaine of Virginia spoke of Hill and was quoted as saying "Few individuals in Virginia's rich history have worked as tirelessly as Oliver Hill to make life better for all of our citizens," "His life's work was predicated on the simple truth that all men and women truly are created equal."³⁰

These are just a few white males who fought for the rights of equality, there are so many more. There are also a substantial number of white males who fight today against discrimination and for workplace diversity initiatives. In May 2003, a group of white males known as Angry White Males for Affirmative Action led by Paul Kivel marched on behalf of Affirmative Action. This issue was being addressed at the University of Michigan. Paul Kivel created this group of white males because he states in many of his speeches that he became involved in the

struggle to end racism as a college student more than thirty years ago.³¹ It is then that he began to see the visible and devastating impact that racism had on people of color. He is the founder of the nationally recognized Oakland's Men's Project and has conducted hundreds of workshops on racism and anti-violence for teens and men all over the country.³² He sees affirmative action and diversity programs as one way to address the racism that has benefited some and disadvantaged others.

The bottom-line is that in order to fight the isms, we need all people—white males, women, and people of color, etc. to work against the systems that perpetuate injustice and harm diversity. Yet it is frequently assumed that diversity initiatives should involve only women and people of color. This belief that white males should not participate with diversity is not only false, but also damaging. It keeps white men, who gain just like others from the benefits that diversity provides and white male leaders who represent the largest power base in our culture, from participating in diversity initiatives.³³

So what can white men who are not aligned with diversity initiatives do to aid in the struggle for equality in the workplace?

Cultivate a hunger for new learning. By learning about other points of view, other cultures, even differences in gender perspectives, white males provide themselves a basis for being effective at fostering diversity and gaining for themselves, and others, the benefits diversity provide.³⁴

Learn to speak out about what they've learned. White men should talk to others including other white men on diversity issues instead of leaving it to those people most directly impacted by workplace inequities. White males may need to recognize that speaking out demonstrates publicly their commitment to the value of diversity and helps to diminish the view that diversity is just about women and people of color.³⁵

Recognize that they must be equal partners with members of subordinated groups. Partnering in an organization's diversity activities and initiatives lets it be known that not only does everyone have something to gain by diversity but everyone has something to contribute.³⁶

Recognize that many in their group have not been subjected to the same experiences of discrimination. Subordinated group members have different

experiences and views toward equality, thus leaving differing views toward workplace injustice and perceived opportunity.³⁷

Support diversity initiatives. Change occurs much more easily when it comes from the top down, not bottom up.³⁸

These are a few suggestions that can help address difference in a positive manner. But the real point is that—the building of successful diversity partnerships requires commitment not just from women and people of color but also from white men.

Discrimination against White Males

Just like other groups, many Whites came to America without freedom but the difference is they could eventually buy their freedom. Unlike the institution of slavery that was imposed on many blacks, Native Americans and other people of color—there was never to be any freedom—EVER. But does this mean that whites were without discrimination? We know that white women just like many other women were not given equal rights, as they could not vote, own land or be in control of their own destiny by many respects (which will be discussed in a later chapter). But what about White men? As we discuss this history of discrimination in White America, we will challenge the thought that white males are the sole group that has not experienced discrimination.

A generation ago, the major labor pool in the U.S. was White males, and jobs were designed to meet the needs of these workers. Seven out of ten American workers were men and fathers of families. As a rule, wives did not work outside the home. So, Caucasian men were the “traditional” workers. In 1990, they represented about 75 percent of the labor force. Back then life was so much simpler for management because most in this group held the same values. They held a belief in Christianity, family, were able bodied and adhered to a heterosexual lifestyle. However, today with the increase in diversity in the workplace and lifestyles, we will find that there are more white males as well as others who do not fit the mode of this traditional worker.

Some White males are parts of groups in society who experience discrimination in the workplace. These include older workers, disabled workers, non-Christian workers and homosexuals. But, this is only half of the story, as these aren’t the only accounts of discrimination against White males in America.

The Irish

The Penal Laws, a series of ferocious enactments, dating from 1695, and not repealed in their entirety until Catholic emancipation in 1829, were aimed at the destruction of Catholicism in Ireland.³⁹ These laws were provoked by Irish support of the Stuarts after the Protestant William of Orange was invited to ascend the English throne in 1689, and England faced the greatest Catholic power in Europe – France. At this critical moment the Catholic Irish took up arms in support of the Stuarts.⁴⁰ James the II's standards was raised in Ireland, and he, with an Irish Catholic army, was defeated on Irish soil, at the battle of the Boyne, near Drogheda, on July 1, 1690.⁴¹

This threat to England had been alarming, and vengeance followed. Irish intervention on behalf of the Stuarts was to be made impossible forever by reducing the Catholic Irish to helpless impotence. They were, in the words of a contemporary, to become 'insignificant slaves, fit for nothing but to hew wood and draw water', and to achieve this object the Penal Laws were devised. These laws barred Catholics from the army, navy, the law, and commerce and from every civic activity. Catholics could not vote, hold any office under the Crown, or purchase land, and Catholic estates were dismembered.⁴² Education was made almost impossible especially since Catholics could not attend schools, keep or run schools, nor send their children to be educated in Ireland or abroad.⁴³ They could not purchase land, lease land, keep arms or even receive a gift of land. These Penal Laws even allowed the Protestants to hunt Catholic priests as a sport.⁴⁴

The Penal Laws caused material damage that was great; ruin was widespread, old families disappeared and old estates were broken up; but the most disastrous effects were moral. The Penal Laws brought lawlessness, dissimulation and revenge. The Irish character, above all the character of peasantry, did become degraded and debased. The basis of religion was used to divide the Irish from the English.

The next occurrence, the Great Potato Famine, caused destruction of the Irish and forced them to seek refuge in the Americas. The great potato famines of 1845-51 reduced the population of Irish from 8 million to 6.6 million through starvation, disease and emigration to Britain and America.⁴⁵ The potato was the Irish's agricultural base and their main food product. When the potato crop was destroyed by blight, the result was devastating: the people's only source of food was gone.⁴⁶

Irish Catholics came to this country as an oppressed race. When they were back home these "native Irish or papists" suffered something similar but not as devastating as American slavery under English Penal Laws. Because of this the Irish and African Americans had a lot in common and a lot of contact when the Irish first arrived in America.⁴⁷ They lived side-by-side and shared workspaces. In the early years of immigration the poor Irish and Blacks were thrown together, very much part of the same class competing for the same jobs. In the census of 1850, the term "mulatto" appears for the first time due primarily to inter-marriage between Irish and African Americans.⁴⁸

Furthermore, there was a custom of marrying White (Irish) servants to Black slaves in order to produce slave offspring. The offspring would be slaves because anyone who had more than 1/8 or so of African blood was considered a "Negro".⁴⁹ Many Irish children became slaves through this custom. If a servant is forced to mate with a slave in order to produce slave children for her slave master, is she not a slave?

At this point, you may be wondering what happened that allowed the Irish to finally be accepted into society. Many historians say they gave up their greenness for whiteness. An article by a Black writer in an 1860 edition of the *Liberator* explained how the Irish ultimately attained acceptance into this White protestant world that they were outsiders to.⁵⁰ A Catholic priest in Philadelphia said to the Irish people in that city, 'You are all poor, and chiefly laborers, the blacks are poor laborers; many of the native Whites are laborers; now, if you wish to succeed, you must do everything that the White natives do, no matter how degrading, and do it for less than they can afford to do it for.' The Irish adopted this plan; they lived on less than the White Americans could live upon, and worked for less, and the result is, that nearly all the menial employments was monopolized by the Irish.⁵¹ There were other avenues open to other American white men, and so the threat of the Irish was not taken so harshly.

Once the Irish secured themselves in those jobs, they made sure blacks were kept out.⁵² They realized that as long as they continued to work alongside Blacks, they would be considered no different. Later the Irish became prominent in the Labor movement, free Blacks were excluded from participation.

Now you may be wondering: I have never heard this story told this way. Unfortunately, this is not a myth it is the truth. Many historical accounts of this time however play little significance to race and have presented a biased picture of the events of this time leaving out very important facts. Race was of such

importance in America that one oppressed race, Irish Catholics, learned how to collaborate in the oppression of another race, African Americans, in order to secure their place in the White republic. Was this wrong? Do you think they knew of any other options to change their status in this new land?

In an individualistic society it is often necessary for people to do what is best for them rather than what is good for others. So, the Irish melted into the pot. By giving up a lot of their Irish cultural heritage and the legacy of oppression and discrimination back home, they thus gained acceptance. The Irish came to the U.S. with nothing and were not seen as valuable and so they did what was necessary in their eyes to gain acceptance and value and to end the discrimination they felt here in America. The point is that, in a society where difference is appreciated this would not have been necessary.

German American Wartime Mistreatment

Thanks to federal legislation and effective activism by their ethnic group, U.S. government mistreatment of the 120,000 Japanese & Japanese Americans is well known. Many even know that an additional 2,000 Japanese from Latin America were picked up so that the United States would have prisoners to exchange with families in this country and in Latin America. But, after almost 60 years, the German American experience remains buried. The few surviving, aged internees remember their experiences well, despite years of trying to forget. Many say that these memories haunt them. Mostly, because they are Americans who revere freedom and they want the dreadful saga of their wartime mistreatment told so it will never happen again.

While their numbers are much smaller, the stories are virtually the same. In the days after the Dec. 7, 1941, bombing of Pearl Harbor, some 31,000 "enemy aliens" were swept up—ostensibly because of possible alliances to the Axis forces.⁵¹ Among them were about 10,000 Germans and 3,000 Italians, and the rest were Japanese and smatterings of other European groups. These enemy aliens lost everything.

The 1918 Codification of Alien Enemy Act of 1798, 50 USC 21-24, permitted the apprehension and internment of aliens of "enemy ancestry" by US government upon declaration of war or threat of invasion.⁵² The President was given blanket authority as to "enemy alien" treatment. Civil liberties could be completely ignored because enemy aliens had no protection under this 202-year old law. Government oppression is likely during wartime, but is it appropriate?

Due to this act, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor Roosevelt issued identical Presidential Proclamations 2525, 2526 and 2527 branding German, Italian and Japanese nationals as enemy aliens, authorizing internment, and travel and property ownership restrictions.⁵³ A blanket presidential warrants authorized U.S. Attorney General Francis Biddle to have the FBI arrest a large number of "dangerous enemy aliens" based on the CDI.⁵⁴ Hundreds of German aliens were arrested by the end of the day. The FBI raided many homes and hundreds more were detained before war was even declared on Germany.

From 1942 till 1945 thousands of German aliens and German Americans were arrested, interned, excluded, paroled, exchanged and generally harassed and discriminated against by a suspicious country.⁵⁵ Many of the Germans left Germany because of the Nazis, and then came to the U.S. and were considered Nazis. According to Joseph Fallon, co-author of the five-volume *German Americans in the World Wars*, writes on his Website: "The majority of the best-selling collegiate and secondary school history texts in the United States claim that, unlike Japanese Americans, the German and Italian Americans were not arrested and interned; and both the print and electronic media have propagated this myth. He further states, "that for the most part, the history of internment has been either quieted or distorted."⁵⁶

Italian American Wartime Mistreatment

In November of 1999, Senator Robert G. Torricelli introduced the following bill, "Wartime Violation of Italian American Civil Liberties Act" to provide for the preparation of a Government report detailing injustices suffered by Italian Americans during World War II, and a formal acknowledgement of such injustices by the President.⁵⁷

Based on this bill, Congress has made the following findings⁵⁸:

- The freedom of more than 600,000 Italian-born immigrants in the United States and their families was restricted during World War II by government measures that branded them "enemy aliens".

- During World War II more than 10,000 Italian Americans living on the West Coast were forced to leave their homes and prohibited from entering coastal zones. More than 50,000 were subjected to curfews.
- Thousands of Italian American immigrants were arrested, and hundreds were interned in military camps.
- The impact of the wartime experience was devastating to Italian American communities in the United States, and its effects are still being felt.
- A deliberate policy kept these measures from the public during the war. Even 50 years later much information is still classified, the full story remains unknown to the public, and the United States Government has never acknowledged it in any official capacity.

A particular section in the Act states⁵⁹:

"It is the sense of the Congress that ... (1) the story of the treatment of Italian Americans during World War II needs to be told in order to acknowledge that these events happened, to remember those whose lives were unjustly disrupted and whose freedoms were violated, to help repair the damage to the Italian American community, and to discourage the occurrence of similar injustices and violations of civil liberties in the future."

The noted poet and philosopher, George Santayana, observed that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. This is exactly what North Carolina Representative Melvin L. Watt was saying in the discussion of the bill: You need to confront the truth before you can deal with assuring that that sad chapter is not repeated.

So, have white males experienced discrimination? Yes. I conclude this section with the following myth and fact:

Myth: White males have not experienced discrimination in America

Fact: White males from various ethnicities and backgrounds have and do experience discrimination in America.

Concluding Thoughts

People of all races, genders, religions, etc. have much to gain by effectively managing workplace diversity. This starts with people of color not blaming white males as a group for the ills of the world and ethnic pathology. It starts with white males eliminating their suspicion that people of color and women excel for only "those" traits and not their work ethics, skills and ability. Both of these negative mindsets denude true collaboration and respect. It seems obvious that if White males still hold the majority of top management positions then for diversity initiatives to be successful, it must have white male leadership support.

End of Chapter Questions

1. Name groups of white males who have experienced discrimination and why.
2. How did white women and white men settlers opportunities differ?
3. In America, the Irish, Germans and Italians are no longer referred to as Irish-Americans, German-Americans and Italian-Americans—they are just White/Caucasians, so why are there still groups that have the hyphenation such as Arab-Americans and African-Americans? How does this relate to the melting pot theory from the previous chapter?
4. Why were some White Americans considered immigrants and others not considered immigrants?
5. Do you think that we do not hear about White culture because it is has been the dominant culture and known as American culture? If you agree, then what are the advantages or disadvantages to having a culture you identify with as the "main" culture. If you don't identify with this then explain what would be defined as American culture and whose values, lifestyle, etc. it is based upon.

Internet Exercise

Using the Internet or www.google.com find an article that addresses the role of white men and diversity. Summarize what the article says and state if you agree or disagree with its viewpoint.

Search Key Words: role of white males and diversity

End of Chapter Exercise

Do we have the same perspective?

Directions: Using the chart in the chapter that espouses the workplace style differences between races, answer the questions below. Then find a partner and compare your answers to see if your viewpoints are the same.

1. You are part of a team that has diverse races of individuals. Some people show up late to the meetings even though the times were agreed upon. Others socialize once at the meeting because they are not task oriented but relationship oriented. Who is right? How do you bridge the gap—of the extremes?
2. You are having a community fundraiser and trying to elect a leader of your group, do you elect someone with the same background as that community? Why or Why not?
3. There is a group meeting and an employee comes dressed informally. There is no dress code but you know that people are judging this employee by their personal appearance. You hired this person and know that they are more than qualified to do the job however by their appearance they are not convincing. You have read the chart in this chapter and realize that some cultures do not believe in the European style of formal dress for the workplace. What do you do?