

A Discussion of Individual, Institutional, and Cultural Racism, with Implications for HRD

*Chaunda L. Scott
Oakland University*

The problem highlighted in this qualitative inquiry is that literature in HRD exploring racism in the United States in the forms of individual, institutional, and cultural racism is scant. This inquiry serves to encourage research and dialogue in HRD for the purpose of getting HRD more involved in developing strategies that can be used to dismantle lingering acts of racism in United States in the 21st century. Implications for HRD are offered.

Keywords: Racism, Individual Racism, Institutional Racism,

As diversity research, practice, and dialogue in HRD continues to blossom, literature in HRD exploring racism in the United States in the forms of individual, institutional, and cultural racism is scant. As an associate professor of HRD who teaches a variety of workplace diversity courses at the undergraduate and masters' levels, this matter is of great concern to me because I am often asked several critical questions by students in my classes. These questions often focus on why there is a need for organizational diversity education and training today. For example, questions that students have asked me include the following: 1) Why is diversity education and training needed in institutions and society today? 2) What exactly is racism? 3) In what ways has racism affected individuals and institutions? 4) In what ways does racism affect individuals, and institutions today? and 5) What kinds of strategies can HRD develop to dismantle acts of individual and institutional racism today?

In this paper, I will discuss the above questions by defining and revisiting the broad social construct of racism in the United States. I will also introduce and define specific constructs of individual, institutional, and cultural racism, from a historical and contemporary perspective. The philosophical and theoretical orientation of Critical Race Theory – CRT (Bell, 1993), will also be introduced and suggested as a framework that provides a theoretical understanding for scholars, practitioners, and students who are looking for contemporary ways of dealing with questions regarding race, racism, and identity. The CRT framework lays the foundation to move beyond the civil rights era of activism and towards a more inclusive, fair and equitable U.S. society. Lastly, I will offer implications for research, practice, and dialogue in HRD as it relates to getting the field of HRD involved in developing strategies that can be used to dismantle the lingering acts of individual, institutional, and cultural racism in the United States, in the 21st century.

Problem, Purpose Statement, and Research Question

A recent review of the HRD literature found that exploring racism in the United States in the forms of individual, institutional, and cultural racism is scant. This gap is occurring at the same time that HRD research focused on the topic of diversity is growing. While it is outside the scope of this paper to speculate on why this is the case, it is relevant to acknowledge that there are more publications, in general, that have focused on the “cure” for social problems, (i.e., poverty, and unemployment) rather than the “cause” of them (Aller, 2000). The intent of this discussion is to refocus on racism and to raise awareness of racism as an historical and contemporary social problem. This inquiry also aims to encourage research and dialogue on these topics for the purpose of getting the field of HRD involved in developing strategies that can use to dismantle the lingering acts racism in the United States in the 21st century. The guiding research question for this paper is: What kinds of strategies can the field of HRD develop to dismantle acts of individual, institutional, and cultural racism in the United States in the 21st century?

Methodology

In selecting an appropriate research methodology to explore the concepts of racism at the individual, institutional, and cultural levels, I conducted a review of literature on the various forms of racism that exist, and examined a collection of articles, from variety fields, to explore what is known about historical and contemporary racism in the United States. Based on the review of literature, and aim of this paper, I decided to frame this inquiry as a historical

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analysis of racism in the United States, specifically focused on research-based evidence that supports its historical and contemporary influences on people, institutions, and cultures. This paper concludes with suggestions of strategies that the field of HRD can consider using to dismantle the existing barriers to equality in the workplace.

Review of Literature on Racism in the United States

This section provides a historical and contemporary overview of key literature on racism relevant to HRD scholars and practitioners. There are four categories of information presented; 1) a definition of racism in the United States, 2) individual racism in the United States, 3) institutional racism in the United States, and 4) cultural racism in the United States.

Racism in the United States - Defined and Revisited

The purpose of this introduction is to distinguish the term racism from the term discrimination, in order to lay the foundation for further discussion. The term *racism* was popularized because of its use in the *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (1968). Because of its broader scope and emphasis on institutions as well as individuals, racism has been a common focus of research in African American studies (West, 1993), political science (Klinker & Smith, 1999), sociology (Feagin & Vera, 1995), education (Ladson-Billings, 1995), psychology (Freud, 1924), multicultural education (Banks, 1981a, 1981b), and diversity education and training, in the field of management (Cox, 1993; Thomas, 1991). Numerous topics that these academic fields have investigated include; incremental approaches to achieving racial equality, the analysis of conflict between integration ideals and clients in school desegregation, legitimation of discrimination through anti-discrimination (i.e., color blind) law, and race-conscious districting, just to name a few (Bell, 1993). Racism is also related to concepts such as discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes (Dovidio, Brigham, Johnson, & Gaertner, 1996), but it is more all-compassing than any of these. Discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes refer to unfair social behaviors, attitudes, or beliefs. Discrimination is defined as a selectively unjustified negative behavior toward members of a target group that involves denying “individuals or groups of people equality of treatment which they may wish” (Allport, 1954, p. 51). Prejudice commonly is defined as an unfair negative attitude toward a social group or a person perceived to be a member of that group (Cox, 1993). A stereotype is a generalization of beliefs about a group or its members that is unjustified because it reflects faulty thought processes or overgeneralization, factual inaccuracy, inordinate rigidity, an inappropriate pattern of attribution, or a rationalization for a prejudiced attitude or discriminatory behavior (Cox, 1993; Thomas, 1991).

Racism, on the other hand, is viewed as the coordinated interaction of particular types of stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination (Jones, 1997). Jones (1997), further suggests that racism has three fundamental components. First, racism is rooted in beliefs about group differences (stereotypes) that are assumed to reflect fundamental biological differences. Second, racism involves well-differentiated negative evaluations and feelings about another group (prejudice) in comparison to one’s own. Whether or not the other group is described explicitly as inferior, one’s own group is believed to be superior. Third, racism reflects the disparate treatment of groups (discrimination) by individuals and institutions in ways that are justified by and tend to perpetuate negative beliefs, attitudes, and outcomes.

In its very essence, racism involves not only negative attitudes and beliefs but also the social power that enables these to translate into disparate outcomes that disadvantage other races or offer unique advantages to one’s own race at the expense of others (Feagin & Vera, 1995). As Feagin and Vera (1995) explained, “Racism is more than a matter of individual prejudice and scattered episodes of discrimination” (p. ix). It involves a widely accepted racist ideology and the power to deny other racial groups the “dignity, opportunities, freedoms, and rewards” that are available to one’s own group through “a socially organized set of ideas, attitudes, and practices” (p. 7). Whereas psychologists typically have studied stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination in terms of intra-psyche (e.g., cognitive, motivational, or psychodynamic) processes and interactions between individuals (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), racism operates at significantly broader social levels. Jones (1997) identifies two types of racism at the social levels. The first is individual racism, which relates to the joint operation of personal stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination to create and support disparities between members of different groups. The second is institutional racism, which refers to the intentional or unintentional manipulation or toleration of institutional policies (e.g., poll taxes, admissions criteria) that unfairly restrict the opportunities of particular groups of people. In the next section, individual racism will be examined.

Individual Racism in the United States Defined and Revisited

According to Jones (1997), individual racism is closely affiliated with racial prejudice. Although prejudice generally has been conceptualized as an attitude, prejudice scales often include items concerning the defining

elements of racism. An example is endorsement of statements about innate group differences, the relative inferiority of the other group, and policies that reinforce group differences in fundamental resources (e.g., education or wealth) (Brigham, 1993). According to Brigham, individual racism can be expressed both overtly and covertly. Sometimes individual racism is expressed openly to fulfill one's personal needs and desires. Much of the traditional work on personality and prejudice was based on a Freudian psychoanalytic model that assumed that prejudice was an indicator of an underlying intrapsychic conflict. The consequences of this conflict are projection, displacement, development of an authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Altemeyer, 1998), the expression of individual racism. Alternatively, nonpsychodynamic models have proposed that prejudice and racism are the result of motivations to restore feelings of self-esteem, achieve a sense of superior status, or support a social hierarchy that favors one's group (Brigham, 1993). Social-dominance orientation represents an individual difference in "one's general support for group-based systems of social stratification" (Sidanius, Levin, & Pratto, 1998, p. 138). Therefore, when groups are defined by race, racism is the consequence (West, 1993). Other approaches, which have focused on commonalities across people rather than on individual differences, have viewed prejudice and individual racism simply as attitudes that are acquired through socialization (Allport, 1954).

Many contemporary approaches to individual racism acknowledge the persistence of overt, intentional forms of racism but also consider the role of automatic or unconscious processes and indirect expressions of bias. Devine and Monteith (1993), for example, proposed that through common socialization experiences Caucasian Americans in general develop knowledge of cultural stereotypes of African Americans. Through repeated exposure, these stereotypes become automatically activated by the actual or symbolic presence of African Americans. Devine and Monteith (1993) found that, although both high- and low-prejudice people (identified by self-reports) were equally aware of cultural stereotypes and showed similar levels of automatic activation, only low-prejudice people made a conscious attempt to prevent those negative stereotypes from influencing their behavior. Devine and Monteith further asserted that low-prejudice people were more likely to have personal standards prescribing that they behave in unprejudiced ways toward African Americans and other minorities by internalizing these standards more strongly. Further, they experienced more compunction and guilt when they deviated from these standards, which, in turn, motivated efforts to behave in a less biased way in the future.

As the work of Devine and Monteith (1993) indicated, automatic associations, which may be activated unconsciously, do not necessarily correspond to conscious and deliberate attitudinal expressions. Thus, implicit (automatic and unconscious) and explicit (conscious and deliberate) attitudes and beliefs may be largely unrelated (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). A disassociation between automatic responses and self-reported prejudice is also consistent with other conceptions of the current nature of individual racism among Caucasian Americans. Greenwald and Banaji (1995) stated that two of these conceptions are aversive racism and symbolic (or modern) racism theory. These perspectives suggest that, whereas traditional forms of individual racism are direct and overt, contemporary forms are indirect and subtle.

In contrast to "old-fashioned" racism, which is blatant, aversive racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998) represents a subtle, often unintentional, form of bias that characterizes many Caucasian Americans who possess strong egalitarian values and who believe that they are unprejudiced. Aversive racists also possess negative racial feelings and beliefs, which develop through normal cognitive biases and socialization of which they are unaware, and which they try to dissociate from their unprejudiced self-images. Dovidio and Gaertner (1998) further asserted that, because aversive racists consciously endorse egalitarian values, they will not discriminate directly and openly in ways that can be attributed to racism. However, because of their negative feelings, they will discriminate, often unintentionally, when their behavior can be justified on the basis of some factor other than race (e.g., questionable qualifications for a position). Therefore, Dovidio and Gaertner (1998) concluded that aversive racists may regularly engage in discrimination while they maintain an unprejudiced self-image.

According to symbolic racism theory (Sears, 1988) and its related variant, modern racism theory (McConahay, 1986), negative feelings toward African Americans that whites acquire early in life persist into adulthood. They are expressed indirectly and symbolically in terms of opposition to busing or resistance to preferential treatment, rather than directly or overtly, as in support for segregation. McConahay (1986) further proposed that because modern racism involves the rejection of traditional racist beliefs and the displacement of anti-African American feelings onto more abstract social and political issues, modern racists, like aversive racists, are relatively unaware of their racist sentiments. However, whereas symbolic and modern racism seem to exist among political conservatives, aversive racism seems to be more strongly associated with liberals. Nevertheless, McConahay (1986) and Sears asserted that, as with aversive racism, the negative effects of modern and symbolic racism are observed primarily when discrimination can be justified on the basis of factors other than race. Both traditional, overt forms of individual racism and contemporary, subtle forms can contribute to social policies that form the basis of institutional racism. In particular, blatant racial prejudice relates to support for policies that unconditionally restrict the rights

and opportunities of minority groups, such as in housing discrimination. However, subtle racism is associated with support for the status quo, or for restrictions when other justification (e.g., lack of credentials) is available (Banks, 1981b; Cox, 1993; Thomas, 1991).

Institutional Racism in the United States Defined and Revisited

Institutional racism involves the differential effects of policies, practices, and laws on members of certain racial groups and on the groups as a whole. Institutional racism can develop from intentional racism (e.g., limiting immigration on the basis of assumptions about the inferiority of other groups), motivations to provide resources to one's own group (e.g., attempts to limit another group's voting power), or as a by-product of policies with one explicit goal but with unintended systematic race-based policies, which typically are associated with ideologies developed to justify them. Historically, for example, Caucasian Americans developed racial ideologies that helped to justify the laws that enabled them to achieve two important types of economic exploitation: slavery and the seizure of lands from native tribes (Klinker & Smith, 1999).

Although the belief that race is a biological construct is fundamental to racism, racism is actually a social construction that permits one group's exploitation of another through the development of an ideology that justifies this action (Fields, 1990). According to Fields, which particular groups become racialized (e.g., Africans, African Americans, Italians, Jews) depends on the function this serves for the dominant group. For instance, the enslavement of Africans and African Americans in the United States for hundreds of years was viewed as a solution to the demand for free labor on farms and plantations. During the early 1900s, when there was significant immigration from southern Europe to the United States, Italians were characterized as racially and intellectually inferior. In Nazi Germany, Jews were racialized for economic and political gain.

Furthermore, Fields stated that, although individual racism may produce actions such as political support for laws and policies that lead to institutional racism, institutional racism operates; 1) independent of, individual racism, and 2) it requires the active support of individuals, with an awareness or intention to discriminate. Institutional racism also becomes "ritualized" in ways that minimize the efforts and energy individuals and groups must expend to support it (Feagin & Vera, 1995). However, once laws and policies are established, individual or collective action, intentions, and awareness of unfair consequences are important, mainly for efforts to oppose them (Cox, 1993; Thomas, 1991).

Typically, institutional racism is not widely recognized as being racially unfair, because it is embedded in laws (which are normally assumed to be right and moral), is ritualized, and is accompanied by racial ideologies that justify it (Feagin & Vera, 1995). However, according to Feagin and Vera, what is seen as fair and just can vary according to one's perspective. One such perspective is microjustice (Fields, 1990), which includes perceptions of justice that are relevant to specific individuals and focuses on whether transactions between individuals are fair (e.g., procedural justice). Another perspective is macrojustice (Fields, 1990), which refers to perceptions of fairness that encompass the broader social, historical, legal, and moral contexts and consider whether outcomes over time are fair (distributive justice). Policies and laws that appear to be fair at the micro level may be unfair at a more macro level (Cox, 1993; Thomas, 1991).

Cox (1993) asserted that, because institutional racism is not necessarily intentional or explicitly race based, its operation often is inferred from systematically disparate outcomes between racial groups that can logically be traced back to differential and unfair effects of policies, even those that might appear to be non-race-related. According to Jones (1997), these effects may appear economically (e.g., in loan policies), in workplace settings (e.g., promotional and pay barriers and, racial and sexual harassment), educationally (e.g., in admission and financial-aid policies), in the media (e.g., the overrepresentation of groups associated with violence or poverty), in the criminal justice system (e.g., racial differences in those given the death penalty), and in mental and physical health (e.g., social stress). Jones (1997) further asserted that racial ideologies and values often become so deeply embedded in the fiber of one's culture that they begin to define what is normal and appropriate for the society in general, a phenomenon known as cultural racism, which is summarized below.

Cultural Racism in the United States Defined and Revisited

When one group exerts the power to define cultural values for the society, cultural racism occurs (Allport, 1954). Such racism involves not only a preference for the culture, heritage, and values of one's own group (ethnocentrism), but also the imposition of this culture on other groups. This term cultural racism has been used historically, and to date with increasing frequency to draw attention to racism from physical characteristics such as social customs, manners and behavior, religious, and moral beliefs and practices, language, aesthetic values, and leisure activities (Halstead, 1988). For this reason, cultural racism involves being prejudiced against individuals because of their culture (Thomas, 1991).

Consequences of cultural racism are that minorities are encouraged to turn their back on their own culture and to become absorbed by the majority culture (Halstead, 1988). Cultural racism is furthermore communicated to, and, by

members of all racial groups, in everyday activities, and it is passed on across generations (Banks, 1981b; Cox, 1993; Fegin & Vera, 1995; Thomas, 1991). Jones (1997) identified five fundamental domains of human experience on which cultures differ: time, rhythm, improvisation, oral expression, and spirituality (the TRIOS model). Dominant United States culture has valued a future time orientation, stable and predictable rhythms of activity, planning ahead rather than improvising, written over oral expression, and a belief in personal control instead of an emphasis on spirituality. Beyond this model, cultures differ systematically in their emphasis on individual or collective outcomes. For instance, DeSimone and Harris (1998) asserted that the United States reflects an individualistic culture; if adherence to these cultural standards is valued, rewarded, and defined as normal at the expense of racial groups who express other cultural values, cultural racism may be operating.

Theoretical Framework

While the above sections provided a broad overview of racism at different levels in the United States, it may be challenging to develop a framework for understanding the social and institutional forces acting to generate and sustain various types of racism. To assist the reader in understanding how aspects of racism in the United States has been conceptualized from a more contemporary perspective, I drew upon the philosophical and theoretical orientation of Critical Race Theory – CRT as a helpful tool (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; 2001; Bell, 1993). CRT is the school of thought that holds that race lies at the center of American life. It is an academic discipline that challenges its readers, whether advocates or non advocates, to consider the relationship that exists among race, the justice system, and society from a historical and contemporary perspective (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Bell, 1993). Delgado & Stefancic (2001) further state that critical race theory is a paradigm used to generate insights into the contemporary racial predicament, exposing how racial stratification is more powerful or enduring than it is apparent. The theoretical orientation of CRT is useful for individuals who are looking for ways of dealing with questions regarding race, historical and contemporary forms of racism, and identity, in ways that move beyond civil rights era activism towards a more inclusive, fair and equitable U.S. society (Bell, 1993). CRT is most well known as a body of legal theory stemming from Critical Legal Studies and Critical Theory, which is based on at least six premises (Bell, 1993). These premises are:

- 1) Storytelling is a significant part of the law, and disenfranchised people(s) have different stories and different ways of telling them than enfranchised people(s). For example, *the use of voice*, or naming your reality through parables, chronicles, stories, counter stories, poetry, fiction and revisionist histories are key communications methods that have been used in illustrating the false necessity and irony of much of the civil rights policy (Ladson-Billings, p.12).
- 2) Racist behavior is not an aberration; it is normal practice.
- 3) Elites act against racist behavior in society only when it serves them.
- 4) Race is a social construct, not a biological one.
- 5) Characteristics ascribed to a particular race will change. (For example, African American people were most commonly called "happy-go-lucky and childlike" in the slavery era to rationalize slavery, but now are most commonly called "threatening and criminal" to rationalize increased police intervention.)
- 6) People have intersecting identities; i.e., they belong to more than one demographic group and are consequently affected by disenfranchisement or inequality in more than one way. We all have multiple lenses through which we experience the world, and through which we are experienced by others.

According to Bell (1993), CRT has its roots in the more established fields of African American history, anthropology, sociology, history, education, philosophy, law, and politics. According to West, (1993) the notions of the social construction and reality of race and discrimination are ever-present in the writings of known contemporary critical race theorists, such as Derrick Bell, Mari Matsuda, Richard Delgado, Kimberle Crenshaw, Gloria Ladson-Billings, & William Tate, newly emerging CRT scholars Adrienne Dixson, Celia Rousseau, Thandeka Chapman, as well as in the writings of pioneers in the field, including W.E.B. DuBois and Max Weber. The historical origins of CRT provide a contextual understanding to contemporary legal debates concerning the effectiveness of past civil rights strategies in the current political climate (Bell, 1993).

The earliest writings on CRT can be traced to Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman in the mid-1970s (Ladson-Billings, 1995). According to Delgado, (1995) both Bell and Freeman were deeply concerned with the 'snail's pace' progress of racial reform in the United States. Concerned and dismayed that any gains made by civil rights laws of the 1960s were quickly being eroded in the 1970s, Derrick Bell, a lawyer who served as the executive director of an NAACP branch, began to fashion arguments that were designed to change existing laws (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Over the past decade, several critical scholars have turned their attention to whiteness itself (Bell, 1993). In the field of Critical White Studies (CWS), numerous thinkers, including Toni Morrison, Eric Foner, Peggy McIntosh, Andrew Hacker, Ruth Frankenberg, John Howard Griffin, David Roediger, Kathleen Neal Cleaver, Noel Ignatiev, Cherrie Moraga, Maurice Berger, and Reginald Horsman attack such questions as (Ladson-Billings, 1995); 1) How was whiteness invented, and why? 2) How has the category of whiteness changed over time? 3) Why did some immigrant groups, such as the Irish and Jews, start out as nonwhite and later become white? 4) Can some individual people be both white and nonwhite at different times, and what does it mean to pass for white? 5) At what point does pride in being white cross the line into white power or white supremacy? and 6) What can whites concerned over racial inequity or white privilege do about it?

More recently, within the body of CRT literature, culturally specific subdivisions have been developed, which include the following (Bell, 1995); 1) Latino Critical Race Studies, 2) Critical Race Asian Studies, and 3) Critical Race Tribal Studies. Today, CRT, serves as a useful framework, that provides a theoretical understanding for scholars, practitioners, and students who are looking for a variety of ways to examine questions regarding race, historical and contemporary forms of racism, and identity, that move beyond civil rights era activism towards a more inclusive, fair and equitable U.S. society.

Conclusion and Implications for Research Practice and Dialogue in HRD

There were several key points highlighted in this discussion of significance to the field of HRD. These key points are summarized as follows. First, this review of literature informed us that individual, institutional, and cultural racism remains a lingering social problem in the United States. Second, literature on racism is scant in HRD. Third, because racism is broad in scope, focusing on institutions, as well as individuals, it has been a common focus of research in African American studies (West, 1993), political science (Klinker & Smith, 1999), sociology (Feagin & Vera, 1995), education (Ladson-Billings, 1995), psychology (Freud, 1924), multicultural education (Banks, 1981a, 1981b), and diversity education and training, in the field of management (Cox, 1993; Thomas, 1991). Fourth, the academic discipline of CRT gave us insight into the contemporary racial predicament in the United States by; 1) illuminating how racial stratification, in its many forms, is more powerful and enduring today, than it is initially apparent (Bell, 1993), and 2) making us aware how CRT, over the past decades has expanded, by focusing their attention on examining “Whiteness” along with the cultural specific subdivisions of; 1) Latino Critical Race Studies, 2) Critical Race Asian Studies, and 3) Critical Race Tribal Studies, for the purpose of further exploring how racism in the United States continues to be explained, and understood from diverse perspectives. (Bell, 1993).

Next, there were several fundamental tenets and themes introduced that undergird the research, methods, and pedagogy of CRT. In summary, these tenets (Bell, 1993) informed us of the following; 1) racial stratification is ordinary, pervasive, reproduced in mundane activities, and it critically impacts the quality of life and life chances of racial groups; 2) the race problem is difficult to comprehend, and impossible to remedy because claims of objectivity and meritocracy camouflage the self-interest, power, and privilege on the majority group; 3) the idea of diverse races, and acts of racism, in the United States; i.e., Hispanics, African Americans, Native Americans, individual, institutional, and cultural racism, are categories that society invents, manipulates, and recreates; and 4) minority groups are competently able to communicate, and explain the meaning and consequences of racial stratification, because they have been oppressed; and 5) people have intersecting realities, and multiple lenses through which to experience the world, meaning that they belong to more than one or more demographic group, and are consequently affected by inequality in more ways than one.

Based on the review of literature presented in this paper, primary questions that HRD scholars and practitioners can begin to investigate, through the lenses of CRT, in the areas of research, practice, and dialogue as it relates to dismantling the lingering act of institutional racism in the United States, are as follows; 1) Why do promotional, and pay barriers still persist today in organizational settings for minorities and women? and 2) Why do sexual and racial discrimination patterns still persist today in organizational settings for minorities and women? I suggest that revisiting racism in the United States in the forms individual, institutional, and cultural racism can help organizations attract and retain diverse talent, promote women and minority development, succeed with organizational change (Scott, 2005), and promote social justice. Thus, HRD can contribute towards moving organizations to become more inclusive, fair, and equitable (Bell, 1993) simultaneously. It is crucial that we as HRD scholars and practitioners begin to explore the above topics through our research, curriculum, programs, and dialogue, for the purpose of further informing and enhancing our current and future academic and organizational policies and practices related to diversity education and training.

Another suggestion I offer, is that we as a field could partner with social justice organizations as an alternative way to begin engaging in collaborative HRD related activities and projects addressing the persistent social problem

of racism in organizations the United States. As for me, I have already begun to attack the social ill of racism in the United States through my teaching, scholarship, and service activities. Examples of the types of strategies I have used include: 1) creating a safe, and supportive space for dialogue to occur on topics of racism in my diversity courses; 2) developing a diversity conference for Michigan higher education student voices to be heard as it relates to speaking out in support of valuing all aspects of human diversity today; and 3) conducting research and writing conference papers, such as this one, that aim to bring the persistent social problem of racism in the United States, to the forefront, in the field of HRD. To conclude, as the field of HRD continues to expand its knowledge base on various topics, it is my hope that the constructs of individual, institutional, and cultural racism, in the United States, will be considered by HRD scholars, and practitioners, as a topics of interest, and relevance, for the purpose of getting HRD involved in developing strategies that can be used to dismantle the lingering acts of racism in the 21st century.

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