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Policy Brief: A Comprehensive Overview of Critical Race Theory in America

by CRA Staff

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A 5-page comprehensive overview of Critical Race Theory in America

Synopsis: Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a radical theory espousing that all of society is racialized and properly viewed through a prism of identity groups based on race and color, with minorities being the oppressed while white people serve as the oppressor. Rooted in Marxism, CRT has spread into nearly every facet of American society, culture, education, and government.

The widespread manifestation of CRT into K-12 curricula and “diversity training” around the country has become the focal point of intense backlash from outraged parents, families, communities, and lawmakers. The imposition of state sanctioned racism by progressive ideologues corrupts children and future generations into both self-loathing and hatred toward their fellow countrymen.

Ultimately, the goal of CRT is to utilize militant identity politics and ahistorical narratives to destroy the American idea that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This cultural revolution poses an existential threat to the American way of life. Americans must identify, resist, and defeat CRT wherever it rears its head.

Background: The Evolution and Ideology of Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory can be traced back to the 1970's with the [writings of Derrick Bell](#), who was the first tenured black law professor at Harvard Law School. Bell helped coin the term 'critical race theory' as a derivative of Critical Theory, a Marxist philosophical proposition challenging so-called societal 'power structures' that stand in the way of 'human liberation.' Adherents of Critical Theory focus on society as a whole—or systems—as obstacles that must be abolished.

Richard Delgado, a colleague of the late Derrick Bell, and a current tenured professor at the University of Alabama School of Law, continues to serve as a leading proponent of CRT. His 2001 manifesto, [Critical Race Theory: An Introduction](#), is a blueprint fleshing out the notion of 'intersectionality' in race, which details the victim hierarchies of those supposedly "oppressed" and "marginalized" by white people and alleged white "power structures" like capitalism.

The term 'intersectionality' was [originally crafted](#) by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw as a catch-all philosophy for how so-called "interlocking systems of power" allegedly marginalize various racial, ethnic, gender, and class groups. Crenshaw is currently a professor at the UCLA School of Law and Columbia Law School and is one of the leading influencers of CRT among policymakers.

These intellectual progenitors of CRT heavily influence activist circles and organizations on the far-left to embrace these radical ideas and push them into the public square.

For example, Patrisse Cullors, one of the founders of Black Lives Matter (BLM), described herself in 2015 as a "trained Marxist" in a [video detailing the history](#) and ideology of the BLM movement and CRT.

This radical theory and its ideological adherents have refurbished Marxism's original focus on economic-based distinctions with a new framing around race and militant identity politics. Instead of regurgitating Marx's bourgeois and proletariat class structures, CRT proponents allege that society's ills are ultimately caused by white people and the various "systems" associated with "white culture."

CRT teaches that white people are inherently and irredeemably racist and benefit from various systemically racist "power structures." Furthermore, CRT purports that black Americans will never thrive in America until the racist "spirit" embedded in American societal institutions is destroyed. For CRT adherents, that spirit is identified as "[white middle-class values](#)."

By operating under this framework, CRT argues the only way to establish "justice" is to completely revolutionize society by overthrowing the oppressor's institutions. This necessitates destroying purported white cultural values such as the nuclear family,

delayed gratification, and objectivity; enforcing equal outcomes based *only* on the characteristics of race, gender, and sexuality; and forcing white people to continually and publicly confess their collective and individual “sins” with no hope of forgiveness, redemption, or acceptance in the new revolutionary society.

Just as Karl Marx divided society into the oppressive capitalist bourgeoisie and victimized proletariat, CRT segments society into the “haves” and “have nots” with white people and so-called white power structures serving as the oppressing class and minority identity groups serving as the victimized class.

It is therefore no coincidence that the very systems identified by CRT adherents as oppressive and racist precisely mirror those historically targeted by Marxists: [capitalism](#), [traditional marriage](#), the [nuclear family](#), rule of law, a republican form of government, and organized religion, specifically Christianity.

The Language of Critical Race Theory

Proponents of CRT have effectuated specific terms that adherents utilize to signal their belief in and devotion to the cause. This lexicon not only helps communicate the radical ideas embedded within CRT, but also delivers the broader connotations of the ideology among its practitioners using just a single word or phrase.

In some cases CRT advocates have outright appropriated words and terminology and attached new meaning to them.

Among the most prolific examples is the prominence of the phrase ‘**social justice**.’

This vague terminology sounds good, as justice is widely viewed in nearly all cultures as a virtuous and worthy goal both individually and in a broader societal context. However, as Winston Churchill famously stated, “All the great things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word: freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy, hope.”

However, the attachment of the ‘social’ modifier to ‘justice’ alters the very meaning of justice, turning a concept defined by impartiality and fairness into something other than that.

For proponents and practitioners of CRT, social justice is both a catchphrase and an end. Broadly speaking, it is about reordering the wealth and “privileges” within society away from the oppressing class and toward the victimized class.

To the extent that social justice has any well-defined meaning in terms of public policy, it is an outcome necessitated by the abolition of “white dominant” systems such as prisons, law enforcement, courts, and the rule of law. Radical activists view these

“systems” as white power structures [designed to oppress](#) minorities and preserve the power of white people.

Therefore, in the eyes of CRT’s proponents, social justice can only be attained once these systems have been demolished and equitable outcomes for minority identity groups have been attained through force. In fact, the very notion that “justice is blind” is [explicitly repudiated](#) within CRT’s framework as being an unjust sentiment used to oppress non-white minority groups.

Similarly, words like **‘equity’** are often utilized in place of notions of equality. Both words sound similar, but have vastly different implications and outcomes. CRT proponents use equity to mean the forced equality of outcomes through the transfer of power as opposed to treating people equally or individuals having equality of opportunity. This is a near-perfect mirror of Marxism’s call for forced redistribution of wealth away from the bourgeoisie and toward the proletariat.

Additionally, high-profile CRT authors like Robin DiAngelo, author of the contemporary CRT manifesto [White Fragility](#), helped popularize the phrase **‘white privilege’** by building off feminist Peggy McIntosh’s work. The creation of this phrase is designed to suggest that because white people and systems are “dominant,” their beliefs and values are “made normal” and provide an inherited and undeserving superiority that must be deconstructed and abolished.

But perhaps no phrase has taken off faster than that of **‘antiracist.’**

Radical race provocateur Ibram X. Kendi, who not only embraces CRT, but also [advocates for a Department of Anti-Racism](#) to police citizens’ thoughts and discriminate against white Americans, coined this phrase and wrote a book widely supported by CRT adherents on how to be an ‘antiracist.’

In Kendi’s view, it is not enough to not be a racist. One must actively be an antiracist by working to tear down white power structures and systems that oppress non-whites.

Indeed, Kendi explicitly advocates for present and future racial discrimination as a means of addressing past discrimination:

“If racial discrimination is defined as treating, considering, or making a distinction in favor or against an individual based on that person’s race, then racial discrimination is not inherently racist. The defining question is whether the discrimination is creating equity or inequity. If discrimination is creating equity, then it is antiracist....The only remedy to racist discrimination is antiracist discrimination. The only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination.” -Ibram X. Kendi

Language is often critical for the success of cultural revolutions. The Bolsheviks wielded words as weapons in their successful revolution in 1917 in Russia. Mao's communist Cultural Revolution famously imposed a reengineering of language to successfully install a regime that killed tens of millions when it came to power and continues to terrorize both its citizens and the world through its iron veil of communism.

Such a revolution, however, requires widespread "education" among the masses.

The '1619 Project' and CRT in Education

The launch of the controversial [1619 Project](#) by the *New York Times* in 2019 signaled a new and dangerous front in CRT's war against the American idea. Specifically, the 1619 Project seeks to [redefine America's founding](#) as the year 1619 with the arrival of the first African slaves instead of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Indeed, lead 1619 Project writer Nikole Hannah-Jones [stated that the driving impetus](#) behind the launch of the initiative was, "if you consider 1619 as the foundational date of the country, rather than 1776, it just changes your understanding and we call that a reframing of American history."

Long a bulwark against radicalism, the American founding and the principles embedded within the American Revolution have helped stave off the allure and efficacy of radical ideologies for over two centuries. Thus, the 1619 Project's mission to erase the founding, rewrite history, and eliminate the foundational structures preventing radical revolution from taking root open the door for radical ideologies like CRT to be mainstreamed into the classroom.

The project has been thoroughly [eviscerated by historians](#) for its myriad inaccuracies, [elevation of narrative](#) over fact, and its overall [poor quality](#) of research. For example, the Project's introductory essay [claimed](#) that a central aim of the War of Independence was protecting the British institution of slavery, a claim which was [rebutted forcefully](#) by some of the very historians hired to fact-check the Project's work.

Nevertheless, many [school systems](#) have adopted the 1619 Project's fiction into their social studies, civics, and history curricula. This has only accelerated CRT's reach into classrooms all across the nation.

For example, the Superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia [published a memo](#) in 2020 that stated in part the district's mission as, "acknowledging and dismantling systems of racial inequity. For us, this goes deeper and far beyond focusing on individual acts of prejudice and discrimination, but refers to uprooting policies, deconstructing processes, and eradicating practices that create systems of privilege and power for one racial group over another."

He furthermore declared that, “race is the social construction that set the foundation and built the infrastructure for the United States we know today.”

In Nevada, a single mother [filed a lawsuit](#) against her son’s charter school after he was required to participate in his school’s “social justice” curriculum. The suit alleges the student was compelled to participate in “public professions of his racial, religious, sexual, and gender identities, and would be labeled an “oppressor” on these bases,” thus violating his First Amendment rights.

And recently, a math teacher by the name of Paul Rossi, who taught at the prestigious Grace Church High School in Manhattan, was let go by the school after [writing a public account](#) of the radical CRT indoctrination being imposed on students by the administration.

Among many alarming elements, Rossi revealed that a faculty email chain recommended “flagging” students “who appear resistant” to the “culture we are trying to establish.” Audio suggests the head teacher [admitted](#) that students are being taught white people are inherently evil.

An entire generation of children and future citizens [are being taught](#) that America and its founding are systemically racist, that white people are inherently evil, and that only antiracist activism to tear down existing systems can remedy America’s societal ills.

Broader Societal Impact

The impact of CRT’s injection into mainstream American society can already be seen and felt everywhere: in [churches](#), [corporate boardrooms](#), [classrooms](#), entertainment, [sports](#), media, government, and even [medicine](#). Indeed, the ramifications of an unchecked cultural Marxism and state sanctioned racism will be nothing less than the abolition of the American idea, with Americans divided and bitterly turned against one another based on the false gospel of ‘social justice.’

The examples of CRT’s harm are simply far too numerous to document in a single policy primer. Nevertheless, the reach and speed of CRT’s radical impact on American society is alarming.

High-profile examples from just this year include Major League Baseball’s [decision](#) to move the All-Star Game out of Atlanta after pressure from far-left activists falsely characterized Georgia’s election integrity bill as “voter suppression” and racist. Estimates show the decision [likely cost](#) Atlanta businesses, employers, and workers nearly \$100 million in revenue.

Whistleblowers working for the Walt Disney Company recently [provided internal documents](#) detailing a new CRT “diversity, equity, and inclusion” training that teaches

that the United States “has a long history of systemic racism and transphobia” and that white employees at Disney must “work through feelings of guilt, shame, and defensiveness to understand what is beneath them and what needs to be healed.”

Coca-Cola also [adopted](#) CRT in its new “diversity” training. As part of its approach, Coca-Cola promulgated a stance that, “In the U.S. and other Western nations, white people are socialized to feel that they are inherently superior because they are white,” and encouraged employees to be “less white.”

Blowback against Coca-Cola has seemingly forced the company to “[pause](#)” its diversity training.

However, Cigna, one of America’s largest health insurance providers, was [recently exposed](#) as forcing its employees to undergo CRT training that includes “checking their privilege.” In a slide, privilege is defined as being white, heterosexual, or Christian. Additionally, the company is alleged to actively discourage white men from consideration when it comes to hiring.

The embedding of CRT in government agencies is also both well-documented and growing.

The Smithsonian Institution [published and promoted materials](#) claiming, “Whiteness and the normalization of white racial identity throughout America’s history have created a culture where nonwhite persons are seen as inferior or abnormal.... Whiteness (and its accepted normality) also exist as everyday microaggressions toward people of color.”

Indeed, to the Smithsonian Institution, common characteristics of white people include “master and control nature,” “aggressiveness and extroversion,” “objective, rational linear thinking,” “delayed gratification,” and believing “hard work is the key to success.”

In Arizona, the state Department of Education maintains an infographic [pushing parents](#) to adopt CRT and raise “race-conscious children,” citing studies alleging children as young as three months prefer to “look at faces of their own race” and that racial prejudice “often peaks” in kids when they are four or five years old.

Even the military is not beyond the reach of CRT’s radical Marxist ideology.

Early this year, the U.S. Navy [released a recommended reading list](#) of books for its sailors that included Ibram X. Kendi’s *How To Be An Antiracist*.

And concerned cadets and soldiers at West Point [privately revealed](#) that America’s foremost military institution is pushing radical CRT material from Dr. Carol Anderson on

cadets. Among many of Anderson's radical views is the claim that "white rage" is triggered by "black advancement" and that Republicans "yearn for a white republic."

The harmful consequences of CRT's proliferation are as disastrous as they are predictable:

- A rise in radicalization among the nation's youth as well as increasingly tribal political factionalism pitting Americans against one another.
- Wounded communities impacted by the real-life consequences of forced "equitable" outcomes, institutionalized racial prejudice, and sustained assaults on the nuclear family.
- Increasing lawlessness following calls to "defund the police," leaving neighborhoods and communities less safe and secure.
- Cultivation of hatred and animus toward one's fellow man and fellow citizen following the usurpation of the American idea that all men are created equal in the image of their Creator.
- Increased balkanization and self-segregation based on political, ideological, and racial differences.
- Possible civil conflict as violent militant far-left organizations like Antifa and likeminded groups push cultural Marxism into the streets of American communities.

The Emerging Revolt Against Cultural Marxism

Last year, the Trump administration's Office of Management and Budget [issued a memo](#) instructing all executive agencies to identify and bring to a halt any programs, contracts, and activities that promulgated CRT.

President Trump then signed [Executive Order 13950](#), which prohibited CRT's divisive concepts from being taught, trained, or implemented in the military. Additionally, the EO implemented prohibitions on CRT among federal contractors, created a hotline at the Department of Labor for federal employees to file complaints regarding CRT indoctrination, and required a review of all federal grants to weed out CRT requirements.

While this directive was eventually reversed by the Biden administration, the action moved the issue into the forefront of the political and policy discussion. Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR) [introduced S.968](#), the Combating Racist Training in the Military Act, to attempt to enact the military CRT prohibition into federal statute, while Representative Dan Bishop (R-NC) introduced the House companion to Sen. Cotton's bill as well as the [Stop CRT Act](#) to fully implement the provisions of President Trump's executive order.

As the radical ideology of CRT has moved further into mainstream American society, its exposure has begun to garner the attention of everyday American citizens.

New data and polling shows that a significant majority of Americans reject the underlying premises of CRT and its adherents. A study performed by the American Council on Trustees and Alumni in Illinois revealed that residents of all ethnicities [oppose exposing](#) kids and students to progressive viewpoints on U.S. history as well as oppose encouraging kids to take up social justice activism.

A nationwide sampling by Parents Defending Education in April 2021 found [69 percent of voters oppose](#) schools teaching that America was founded on racism and is systemically racist.

Indeed, concerned citizens are increasingly going on the offense to push back against CRT's radical Marxist ideology. The response from outraged parents, citizens, and taxpayers has helped spring pushback in state legislatures all across the nation.

Lawmakers in Idaho were the first in the nation to [successfully prohibit](#) the teaching and promotion of CRT in all school districts, public schools, public charter schools, and publicly-funded institutions of higher education.

Oklahoma followed suit with a [similar ban](#) while Arkansas legislators, over the passive objections of its governor, were able to [push through](#) a ban on CRT in state agencies.

As of May 2021, there are similar state legislative efforts ongoing in Texas, Tennessee, New Hampshire, Florida, Iowa, Arizona, West Virginia, North Carolina, and Missouri.

Concluding Assessment

Critical Race Theory stems from a foundation in Marxism and ultimately seeks to overthrow capitalism, abolish the nuclear family, eliminate a republican form of government, and erase the American founding. It is fundamentally antithetical to the American creed and classical liberal order. Such racial militancy cannot coexist with the self-evident truth that all men are created equal and endowed with God-given rights that no man, corporation, or government can take away.

Racism should at every turn be condemned—regardless of what race is the subject of discrimination. In the relatively short history of our nation, America has made incredible progress to live up to its ideals as laid out in the Declaration of Independence, furthering human rights, freedom, and prosperity for people of every race, sex, religion, and creed. With every generation, America is closer to creating a society that treats all people with dignity and equality.

Proponents may dishonestly assert that CRT is necessary for institutions to have honest discussions about the racial problems our country has historically encountered. This is not true. Opposition to racism in American institutions or in our culture is entirely

appropriate and teaching history accurately is essential, without the sort of indoctrination inherent in the CRT framework.

Ultimately, CRT is not about educating or healing communities or establishing justice. It is state-sanctioned racism and used as a tool of fear and authoritarian coercion by the most powerful people and institutions in our society to keep Americans divided against each other in order to further enrich and empower those sowing the division.

Communities must not be afraid to forcefully reject CRT wherever it manifests — whether in the workplace, at school, in popular culture, or in the halls of government— and Americans must strongly defend and fight for the self-evident truth that all men are created equal.

A renewal of the American spirit cannot be achieved without all-hands-on-deck resistance to the domestic cultural Marxism seeking to abolish our very way of life. Decent, moral, and patriotic citizens everywhere must reject, oppose, and ultimately defeat Critical Race Theory and its adherents. Our future depends on it.



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