

# **Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory in Education**

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## **Abstract**

The more immediate concern of social injustice should explore the significant barriers Black men face in society. Although White America would like you to believe that things have improved, the current climate proves otherwise. The amount of hate toward people of color has been made obvious because of the Donald Trump administration. And one can even make the argument that most whites have ignored the enormity of racial tension escalating right before their eyes. It is easier for them to ignore the reality of racism, than to address it openly and honestly. But the barriers that Black men face are pushed even further to the outskirts of the minds of society to completely devalue their existence. These barriers may be more challenging to uphold if there's a framework like the cloak of racial oppression theory to identify the systemic barriers that exist in educational institutions. The cloak of racial oppression theory will likely generate discussions to encourage White America to consider how they have weaponized their privilege to oppress people of color, particularly Black men. And out of these discussions may come a solution in shifting the mentality regarding racial oppression. However, the problems arise, when those in the know realize that white privilege only works by oppressing other groups, which appallingly justifies their advantage and to admit such that may compromise their iniquitous privilege. As the Harvard Law Professor Derrick Bell states, "Whites simply cannot envision the personal responsibility and the potential sacrifice inherent in the conclusion that true equality for blacks will require the surrender of racism-granted privileges for whites (Bell, 2012)." But even the staunchest supporter of white privilege recognizes the horrendous abuses perpetrated on the Black man. More likely than not, they can at least see that racial oppression is harmful and has unfairly targeted Black men.

As a form of oppositional scholarship, the cloak of racial oppres-

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## Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory in Education

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sion theory challenges the notion that Black men lack value as illustrated by societies' unfair treatment and grounds its conceptual framework in the idea that the Black man possess unique skills that if channeled properly can be and has been influential on a global scale. This theory describes the burden of racism to point out the disparities that Black men face, but also to identify an approach to overcoming the setbacks, specifically in educational institutions. The cloak of racial oppression theory is grounded in the realities of injustice that Black men face daily. The cloak of racial oppression theory therefore accepts that inequities exist but also challenges the notion of those racial barriers as perhaps a minor setback for a major triumph.

Through unobtrusive measures like observations and lived experiences the author was able to provide a lens into the ways in which Black men internalize the burden of racism. The methodology used to investigate the theoretical framework was phenomenology, which seeks to understand, explore, describe, and know the meaning of a given phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman 2011). Within the phenomenology research methodology, this theory employs several data collection approaches to generate data relevant to the concept of oppression (Creswell, 2007), including: observation and document analysis, interviews, and survey. In qualitative inquiry, three data-gathering techniques dominate: Observation, interviewing, and document analysis (Glesne 2011, p. 142). By adding the quantitative survey instrument, this allowed the theory to consider the lived experiences of Black men in America and the pressure they feel by simply being Black.

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### Introduction

The Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory is a theoretical framework that explores the emotional and psychological weight that racism places on Black people, particularly Black men (Washington, 2019). It was first introduced by this author as a way of imagining the burden of racism in American institutions i.e., schools, businesses, country clubs, etc. It is a multi-level theory loosely based on the concept of Racial Battle Fatigue by William A. Smith to describe the psychosocial stress responses from being a racially oppressed group member in society and on a historically White campus (Smith et al.2011). And similarly, it uses aspects of Derrick Bell's critical race theory because it discusses the way racism has shaped social institutions and stigmatized men of color (Bell, 1990). However, the Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory explores the notion that the practice of White Supremacy is intentionally devaluing Black men in education in order to eradicate their influence in society. As explained by a lawyer and Milwaukee Public School Lobbyist Caesar Stinson says:

Dealing with the racial aspects of schooling is like wearing an over-

## **Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory in Education**

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coat that you can't ever remove. Rain, sleet, or snow you're forced to wear this heavy coat that continues to weigh you down until you can't take it anymore and you slowly start giving up on your goals and aspirations. I've seen it happen so many times in my line of work where these young men can't take the enormous pressure and give up. They don't know how to navigate the education systems nor are they able to build the kinds of relationships necessary to help them get through these systems of inequity (Personal communication, 2017).

For Black men institutional racism that occurs in educational systems, Stinson states, is like wearing an ineradicable topcoat that disrupts progress. This kind of disruption takes the form of oppressive policies and racialized educational programs that subjugate Black men.

The zero-tolerance policy is an example of an educational policy that has targeted men of color since its inception. Much of the data shows that due to the subjective nature of zero tolerance policies, the policy has disproportionately applied to Black males (Ford, 2021). Black male students are consistently suspended at rates six to seven times higher than those for other students. Moreover, Black male students are expelled at a much higher rate than any other student. Black boys represent 8% of the student population but are 25% more likely to be expelled from school. Black males are also more likely to be treated unfairly in school like being talked down to or completely ignored, even if the Black student performs better academically than White students (Gordon, 2018).

Describing the pressure Black men experience as a cloak provides a perspective for people to consider when assessing the disparities in social institutions. Even after laws and policies are enacted to offset racial inequalities Black men continue to be marginalized in every sector of society (Bonds, 2014), and are at a far greater risk of being forced out of schools through referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. The cloak in this instance is a symbol of weighted oppression that Black men carry with them throughout life and never being able to remove the cloak under any circumstance.

Historically, nearly every imperial institution has created narratives to support their position of dominance, in which one or more groups have been marginalized, often an ethnic, religious, national, or racial one is targeted and stripped of their relevance, and in America it seems to be the Black male group. As examples, consider the contentious nature between the Trump presidential administration and the Obama presidential administration, between predominantly White Colleges and Historically Black Colleges or between traditional non-profit organizations or community-based nonprofit organizations in urban areas. In all cases, the story is that the minority organizations

### **Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory in Education**

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underperform and are inferior to White organizations (Washington, 2020). Moreover, white organizations recognize the power of persuasion through propagating false narratives and portray their whiteness as virtuous and synonymous with exceptionalism, whereas Black men are perceived by White supremacists as savages and are even stigmatized as barbaric (Smiley, C.J. and Fakunle, D. (2017). Largely controlled white institutions feature a white male toxicity that leads to oppression, namely them holding disproportionate power and liberties in the form of social capital, and as a result being privileged over all other ethnic groups. The Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory suggests that the institution of White Supremacy describes how white racism forms a weighty cloak (an overcoat) over the shoulders of blacks, especially the Black male. The heavy garment is forcibly worn by blacks every day and every moment of their life if they live in America; from having to adjust to societal hatred and institutional discrimination to emasculation and systemic prejudices.

All these things work together to marginalize the indelible influence of Black men in society (Assari and Lankarani, 2017) and on a larger scale these inaccuracies work to reduce the value of African Americans globally (Curry, 2017). There is substantial research quantifying the impact of discrimination on Black men. For decades researchers have studied how racism toward African Americans is practiced throughout the world (Curry, 2019).

In a recent study Maryam Moghani Lankarani and Shervin Assari et al. 2017 pointed out the psychological effects of oppression on Black men and how it is used to marginalize their contribution to society. In attempting to elucidate the psychological impact of oppression, the effects of both overt and anticipated or perceived experiences of race-based discrimination have been examined. Studies of overt or manifested discrimination typically measure events occurring at the individual level by asking respondents if they have been “treated badly or unfairly,” “differently,” or are somehow “disadvantaged” relative to others based on their gender, racial or ethnic background (Krieger et al. 2005). The foundation of this work came from the earlier stress research paradigm, where individual differences in vulnerability to stress were seen as key to the development of mental health morbidity (Kessler et al. 1999).

Factors that were thought to predispose individuals to negative mental health outcomes include unfair treatment and social disadvantage as well as other social stressors, such as inadequate levels of social support, neuroticism, the occurrence of life events, and chronic role strain (Adler et al. 1994, Brown & Harris 1989, Henderson et al. 1981, Kanner et al. 1991, Lazarus 1993, Pearlin et al. 1981, Thoits

## Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory in Education

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1983). Later studies examining the possible consequences of perceived discrimination began to document that simply the anticipation of being marginalized, treated badly or unfairly had as powerful an impact on individuals as objectively measured experiences (Kessler et al. 1999). Both developments helped move the field toward hypothesizing that chronic experiences of oppression can have long-term psychological effects on the productivity of Black men (Washington, 2021).

Additional factors that led to the research is the fact that Black men are disproportionately shot and killed by police more than any other ethnic group. Black men are stopped, arrested, jailed more, and significantly overrepresented in U.S. prisons. Black men are six times more likely than white men to spend time in prison (Assari & Curry, 2020). Black men are stereotyped as threatening because of an inherent fear society has toward them. Studies show that tall, physically fit or confident Black men face greater discrimination from police officers and elicit stronger judgments of threat. More broadly the study demonstrated how race can influence how people interpret physical traits. This difference in interpretation is a matter not of magnitude but of meaning: The same level of confidence or uprightness can be perceived as a positive for White men but negative for Black men (Hester and Gray, 2015).

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### The Black Feminist Movement

The Black Feminist Movement, also known as Afro-feminism, and the Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory recognizes the intersectionality of racism that both the Black woman and Black man experience through systems of “Imperialist White Supremacy” as described by Bell Hooks (2015). Black feminism philosophy centers itself around the idea that Black women’s liberation like Black men is a necessity and a requirement in the advancement of humanity (Zillah, 1978). Due to their interdependency, the Black Feminist Movement and the Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory combine to create a perspective on the weight of racism and how it should be considered a threat to our very existence. Thus, opening-up conversations in which these two intersecting identities deepen to reinforce one another and possibly lead to better outcomes for the Black woman and man.

Arguably, a critical dimension of the Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory relies on the Black Feminist Movement because of the shared experiences of Black people, and the credibility of their movement in terms of the way it frames racism and the pressure racism places on Black people where man, woman and child can be the victim of institutional racism. In fact, many Black men feel like they only receive

## **Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory in Education**

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empathy from Black women and that is made clear through the expression, “As long as we’re alive we will hold you down.” This expression has become a part of the discussion that separates the Feminist Movement from the Black Feminist Movement that recognizes Black women are protecting the lives of their sons from the sons of the White women they stand in solidarity with. Indeed, many people in America understand that racism exist and that it is used as a weapon toward Black men, but no one understands the weight of racism as much as Black women (Hooks, 2015)

In the end, the Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory contends that the Black Feminist movement adds context to the theoretical framework while providing an additional lens to examine race, in turn, the two work together to further dialogue and provide a radical critique on the way in which it marginalizes people of color. It (racism) is a socially constructed concept used to victimize Black men and prevent them from gaining access and opportunity in society (Smith, 2021).

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### **Inferiority Complex**

The Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory suggests that for Black men to be fully affected by the weight of oppression they must be convinced that they are inferior, not adding up to the standards, confused about themselves, and having a lack of self-esteem. The idea of the inferiority complex is to convince Black Men that they aren’t of value and overall useless to the grand scheme of things. This is what White supremacy is predicated on; the subjection of one’s value system (Smith, 2011). For example, the policy of maintaining control over the black community is by removing the Black Man thereby encouraging dissent and eventually absolute destruction from within. Systemic paradigms are also used to justify the over criminalization of the Black Man, which has perpetuated the narrative of Black Men being untrustworthy or dishonest, again as a way to marginalize their influence and promote white supremacy.

Another major way in which whiteness against Black Males is used to create inferiority is by suggesting that the areas in which we excel don’t require thought. For example, on February 16, 2018, Laura Ingraham of Fox News told arguably the smartest sports player in the history of the National Basketball Association, Lebron James, to “shut up and dribble,” after he commented on the performance of then commander-in-chief, Donald Trump (Maurer & Beiler, 2017). In contrast to the notion that inferiority doesn’t lend itself to the practice of oppression, as would be illustrated by the many examples on every news station across the country, the cloak of racial oppression theory claims

## Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory in Education

that the feeling of inferiority creates feelings of inadequacy. In fact, because inferiority, White supremacy and oppression are interlinked, it provides context to the basis in which the theory was built upon. The Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory emphasizes the heavy toll of carrying white racism around on the shoulders of the Black Man, thereby exhausting him at a much faster pace than any other ethnic group (Smith, 2011) (See Table 1).

### Racial Battle Fatigue

William A. Smith describes the Racial Battle Fatigue as a cumulative result of a natural race-related stress response to distressing mental and emotional conditions. These conditions emerged from constantly facing racially dismissive, demeaning, insensitive and/or hostile racial environments and individuals that have hatred toward you (2011).

Smith believes that racial battle fatigue stems from racism and mi-

**Table 1**  
**Black Men Who Have Attended College Are More Likely Than Those Who Haven't To Say They've Faced Certain Situations Because of Their Race**

% of Black males, by educational attainment, who say each of the following has happened to them because of their race or ethnicity:



Note: Black males are those who only report being one race and are non-Hispanic. “Some college or more” includes those who have an associate’s bachelor’s or advanced degree and those who have attended college but did not obtain a degree. “High school or less” refers to those who have a high school diploma or its equivalent and those who did not complete high school. (Source: Survey of U.S. adult Black males conducted Jan. 22-Feb. 5, 2020)

### **Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory in Education**

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croaggressions, and to view these acts in today's society he says: "One must not look for the gross and obvious. But the subtle, cumulative mini assault is the substance of today's racism."

Racial micro-aggression is a form of psychological trauma and is defined as: (1) subtle verbal and nonverbal insults directed at Black men, often automatically or unconsciously; (2) layered insults, based on one's race, gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent, or surname; and (3) cumulative insults, which cause unnecessary stress to Black men while privileging whites (Smith, Hung, & Franklin, 2011).

Black men disproportionately experience racism, stereotypes, and other forms of discrimination in predominately White spaces and must always be on guard or anticipating the next attack that is inevitably going to occur (Reeves, Nzau, & Smith, 2020).

Racial Battle Fatigue causes Black men to experience various forms of mental, emotional, and physical strain which can lead to psychophysiological symptoms. Similarly to the Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory, Racial Battle Fatigue explains how racism becomes a burden and physically exhausting for Black men. Symptoms of Racial Battle Fatigue are suppressed immunity and increased sickness, tension headaches, trembling and jumpiness, chronic pain in healed injuries, elevated blood pressure, and a pounding heartbeat. And when Black men with Racial Battle Fatigue anticipate racially motivated conflicts, they may experience rapid breathing, an upset stomach, or frequent diarrhea/urination. Other possible symptoms are constant anxiety, ulcers, increased swearing or complaining, insomnia or stress/anxiety dreams, rapid mood swings, difficulty thinking or speaking coherently, and emotional and social withdrawal in response to racial microaggressions or while in environments of mundane racial stressors. These stressors can lead to long-term health issues and cause Black men to lose confidence in themselves and their self-worth (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007). And although many of these stressors negatively impact other groups of oppressed people this theory specifically examines the effects of oppression on Black men to minimize those effects.

Racism is often preserved as a personal threat or battle and after facing that threat or battle continuously in predominately white spaces, Black men may experience Racial Battle Fatigue and are left mentally, physically, and emotionally drained. And when Racial Battle Fatigue goes untreated or dismissed this stress-related psychological and physiological disease can be lethal and can kill gradually and stealthily through hypertension and poor health attitudes and behaviors (Smith, 2007). Studies have consistently shown a higher prevalence of hypertension in Black men than in white men and white women, a main



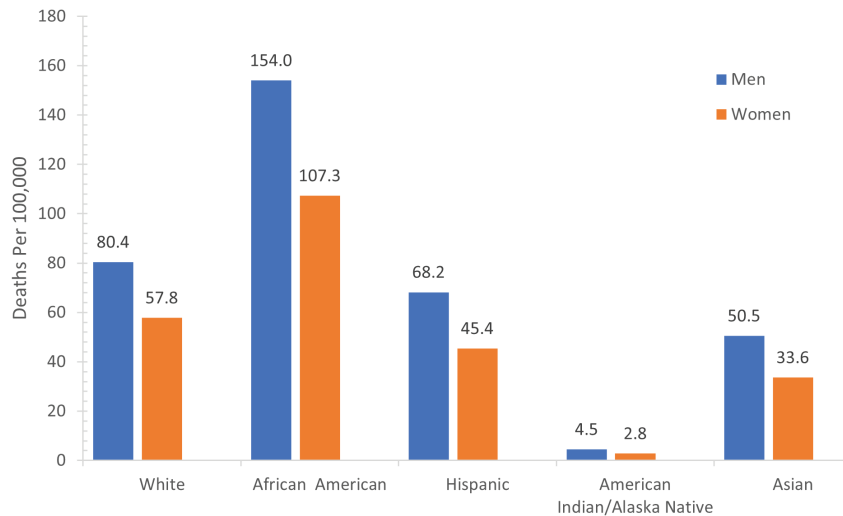
## Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory in Education

reason for the higher incidence of cardiovascular disease in Black Men. The long list of putative causes for this higher prevalence suggests that the real reasons are environmental. The higher prevalence of hypertension in Black Men living in the United States instead of Africa demonstrates that environmental and behavioral characteristics are the more likely reasons for the higher prevalence in Black men living in the United States (Fuchs, 2011) (See Table 2).

### Critical Race Theory

Derrick Bell's Critical Race Theory further explains the burden Black men experience in his groundbreaking work *Race, Racism, and American Law* (1970). Observing the impact that law plays in deciding educational policies, Bell (1970) declared its effects were to "segregate, stigmatize, trivialize, and de-intellectualize" Black men (Bell, 2023). In essence, he argued that laws deliberately maintain and even escalate policies and practices that predictably result in Black men being under educated in public schools. The ironic impact: Quelling the learning process acts to encourage more crime or the vilification of Black men. Bell (1989) explained further:

Table 2  
Minority Groups Have a Higher Burden of Chronic Diseases



The diagram shows that compared with whites; members of minority groups have a higher burden of chronic diseases from hypertension. Diagram provided by Dr. William A. Smith of the Huntsman Medical Institute (2019).

## Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory in Education

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Racial disparities are best controlled when members of the community are educated and have developed opportunity through active participation in the labor market, education system, and the legal system all while having access to valuable resources through concerted participation in societal norms. Healthy societies are societies where people matter and are contributing to the progress of their communities, where the tolerance for ineffectiveness has its limits, where communities prefer to handle their own problems rather than ignore them. ... The rule of thumb for establishing safe communities and overcoming racial barriers is to have equitable access to educational opportunities (Bell, 1989).

Equitable opportunities are substantial in standardizing social order. This is a pivotal concept in understanding the value of Black men and affirming their contribution to society. It is through opportunity that individuals affirm their identity and strengthen their abilities (Smith, 2018).

Critical Race Theory can explain why opportunities are limited for Black men. It argues that social institutions are inherently racist and serve as a tool that perpetuates, limits, and denies institutional access to Black men (Bell, 2005). In construing this Theoretical framework, this article address's the notion of racial stigmas as barriers that limit opportunity for Black men. Racial Stigma surveys the history of American race relations, with a particular focus on how African American men were branded as inferior, not truly belonging to the American social fabric, and a threat to White privilege and to White control. It then examines how stigma interacts with the social psychology phenomenon of implicit bias and how both processes influence and create the troubling phenomenon that African American's, and especially Black men, are disproportionately disrespected by society (Braithwaite, 1989).

Sensing the use of the word, inferiority, shame, may be evocative, John Braithwaite (1989) acknowledges the act of shaming people can be a dangerous endeavor. If overdone, the shaming can be toxic to an individual's self-concept and debilitating to one's spirit. On the other hand, if not utilized to any extent at all, anarchy may ensue where irresponsible citizens repeatedly and indiscriminately trample upon the rights of others (Braithwaite, 1989). Achieving a proper balance necessitates a common purpose to the shaming act; that being, achieving the omnipresent goal of providing equitable opportunities for Black men without humiliating them.

In his reasoning process, Bell (1989) noted the power of labeling which leads to stigmatization. Stigmatization is counterproductive because it leads to out-casting ("dis integration" (p. 55)) which ultimately leads to the humiliation of individuals. He argued that shaming Black people for succumbing to the pressures of discrimination trivializes

their triumphs and marginalizes their contributions. As a crowning statement of his position on racism, Bell (1989) declared it to be an “ineffective weapon of social control partly because it is a degradation ceremony with maximum prospects for stigmatization” (p. 14).

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### **Deligitimizing Myths: Black Men Are Savages**

Since being brought to America on the first slave ship, the term “savage” has been a way to negatively describe Black men. Despite their exceptional physical and mental abilities White America has continuously attempted to disregard the Black man’s contribution to the growth of civilization by using derogatory terms and inflammatory language. For example, the young, unarmed Black man Michael Brown who was brutally killed on August 9, 2014, in Ferguson, Missouri by a White officer Darren Wilson was described by some in the media as a savage. Although he had just graduated from high school and was preparing to start college during the fall semester, his physical presence and attitude toward “authority” was used to describe the seventeen-year-old Michael Brown as a “savage (Romero, 2020).” Additionally, political adversaries of President Obama such as Michelle Bachmann, Karl Rove, and Rush Limbaugh have referred to him as a “political savage; unfit for office.” This term has become the platform to dismiss Black life as less valuable and perpetuates a negative and criminal connotation in forms of micro-insults and micro-invalidations (Fakunle & John Smiley, 2017).

Moreover, the recent killings of unarmed Black men have generated discussions and conversations surrounding the term “savagery” and how this term is used in the context of reshaping perceptions of Black men. At the 2019 National Conference on Education a panel was assembled to discuss terms that should be stricken from educator’s vocabulary primarily because they reinforced negative stereotypes. The term savage was brought up 22 times more than any other word as a word that needed to be eliminated from the lexicon of educators. Delegitimizing myths of the black man being savage, being over sexualized, being unintelligent, together with stereotypic images of them being barbaric become tiresome, and by legitimizing these inaccuracies violates the U.S. Declaration of Independence which states that all men are created equal. It should not be forgotten that even the burden of “delegitimizing” outlandish notions adds another layer of unwanted pressure on the shoulders of the Black man; for example, if a violent crime occurs and gains national attention, the sheer fright of that person being Black can be overwhelming because of the mere thought of White people associating that isolated incident with the behavior of

### **Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory in Education**

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all blacks. Likewise, white people are dismissive of the massive school killings being tied to white males. They are allowed the liberty to separate the behavior of a few from the overall perception of the group (Morrison, 2021).

Recognizing that the irony is not missed, the Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory identifies two broad functional approaches to delegitimizing racial myths and overcoming racial barriers. Positive-Reinforcement (implies giving a positive response when an individual show positive and required behavior) helps build a sense of self and that fraternal support works to destroy the misperception outsiders have toward a particular group. For example, the saying goes, “am I my brother’s keeper” and if so, you won’t hurt your brother or bring harm to him because in doing so you will only be hurting yourself. The way communities gain strength is through the support of one another. To tear each other down only weakens the whole. Creating high expectations and helping one another exceed those expectations builds community influence. So, telling someone that you’re proud of them goes a long way. Stereotypical myths that promote White Supremacy ultimately abates whiteness because eventually those myths will be proven wrong and those perpetuating the myth will be viewed as dishonest, and once trust is breached it is very hard to reclaim. By encouraging the Black Man through positive reinforcements, it improves his confidence and reduces the anxiety that exist when confronted with racism. The last approach in delegitimizing negative myths through the cloak of racial oppression theory is Self-Efficacy.

Self-Efficacy, according to psychologist Albert Bandura who originally proposed the concept, affects every area of human struggle. By determining the belief in oneself, that power holds their ability to affect the outcome of their situation, it strongly influences both the power a person must face challenges competently and the decisions they are likely to make (Bandura, 1982). The implicit view that “you” possess a strength that very few others have and that gives you an advantage in overcoming any obstacle set before you. Psychologists have studied self-efficacy from several perspectives. Educator Kathy Kolbe adds, “belief” in innate abilities means valuing one’s set of cognitive strengths. It also involves determination and perseverance to overcome obstacles that would interfere with utilizing those innate abilities to achieve goals (Kolbe, 2009). So, basically the concept of self-efficacy states that the Black man has it within himself to be great, if only he digs deep to uncover his limitless potential.

Other ways to delegitimize racial myths suggest a more passive approach reserved for only a few, and these approaches require the Black community to act as if the myths don’t exist, which is highly unlikely

## **Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory in Education**

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considering that perception is reality when it comes to race related issues. Myths typically demonstrate inaccuracies in one's perception but serve a profound purpose in providing a lens to look through when examining race and the oppressive practices of White Supremacy. For example, America abolished chattel slavery in around 1865, but quickly instituted peonage, Jim Crow, and mass incarceration to prevent the advancement of colored people; it extended civil rights then proceeded to erode them, especially voting rights; it ended legal segregation but preserved widespread de facto segregation in schools, housing, and jobs; and despite initiating affirmative action, allowed employment discrimination and vast economic inequality to persist (Smith, 2020). And although there are those who have completely assimilated to the dominant ideology of white supremacy, few within the community are comfortable functioning in that space.

The space of being oblivious to the realities of their existence and simply allowing things to be as they are often serves as a defense mechanism that protects individuals from being emotionally consumed by the weight of oppression (Dubois, 1903). Yet for most Black men, ignoring the pressure of racism isn't an option. It is omnipresent. Such that positive-reinforcement or self-efficacy used in delegitimizing racial myths may achieve the intended objective by empowering the subject to endure hardship as a good soldier and overcome all obstacles present. Examples of the approaches include encouraging words (e.g., I believe in you, you can do this, I trust that you're going to make the right decision), which places value on the individual and lifts them up so that they remain confident in all that they do.

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### **The Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory (CROT)**

Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory (CROT) is defined as a theoretical framework that offers researchers, practitioners, and policymakers a realistic approach in understanding the burden of racism and institutional inequities to find solutions that lead to the tearing down of racial barriers. Placing the Black male experience at the center of analysis, CROT provides a critical lens in examining the inhumanity of racism to uncover the overt and covert ways that racist ideologies, structures, and institutions contribute to Black genocide. Generally, people ignore the racial pressures that Black men experience in America because it is assumed that they have thicker skin and are able to endure harsher circumstances (Hoffman, Jordan, & Norman Oliver, (2016)) but in reality, they bleed the same as anyone else, and treating them as if they don't only condone racist acts that reinforce negative stereotypes. CROT correlates negatively with intolerance, inequality, discrimina-

## Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory in Education

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tion, and white privilege. Several scholars have found that these acts of discrimination cause severe psychological damage extending well beyond any individual, whereas people who practice equity and the fostering and protection of others are better contributors to society and enhance overall societal growth and prosperity (Mahoney, 2015). In contrast, like critical race theorists, CROT argues that institutions are “socially constructed, historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices, including assumptions, values, and beliefs, by which individuals and organizations provide meaning to their daily activity, organize time and space, and reproduce their lives and experiences” (Thornton et al., 2012, p. 2). Therefore, if an individual is intolerant or racist at home, he or she will always be racist in whatever space they’re in because their world is constructed as such.

Another important idea in CROT is diplomacy to resist the normative constraints placed upon Black men by engaging in authentic dialogue or having representatives to speak fearlessly on their behalf. This helps to confront the invisible racist bully. For example, communities that promote restorative justice or peace keeping practices are healthier (Zehr, 2005). Dialogue invokes civility and collegiality while empowering people of color by allowing them to be heard and forcing others to listen. So, diplomacy provides advantages to black men, and is ostensibly intended to promote peace among all groups as well as between those within these institutions that don’t realize their oppressive tendencies.

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## Conclusion

Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory implies that the Black man’s struggles are largely due to the burden of racism, and it also points out that institutional factors play an important role in denigrating the influence of Black people in America. Through the creation of this theory, it has become clear that oppression is systemically manufactured to control and maintain White Supremacy, but it also suggests that Blacks can have the ability to overcome any setback. For the reasons explicated in the theory, the use of this framework has many implications for addressing the pervasive racism in society and the harmful effect it has on black people’s mentality. Policies that promote equity must be prioritized and developed with Black men in mind. The Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory does echo the sentiments of the critical race theory in stating that institutions in America are inherently racist but remains more optimistic in believing that even the most indecent person can be shown the wrong in their ways.

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### Cloak of Racial Oppression Theory in Education

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