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## History Untold: A Historical Review of Psychological Harm of Racialized Minorities

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### Cover Page Footnote

We want to acknowledge that we live, work, and study on the traditional and indigenous land of the Ak-Chin American Indian Community, Gila River American Indian Community, Salt River Pima-Maricopa American Indian Community, and Tohono O'odham Nation. As graduate students and researchers, we recognize our privilege and obligation to produce culturally competent research that benefits racially oppressed populations and strive to continue to educate ourselves to maintain that competence. While writing this article, we decided to keep the language from the sources referenced as authentic as possible. This was implicated with the intention of showing the degradation and domination used to subjugate minoritized groups. By keeping the language consistent, we recognize the trauma many racially oppressed individuals have experienced and continue to experience today. We recognize that while certain language may be outdated or offensive, the intention is to validate the harm many minoritized groups endured and show progress in psychological research.

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### **Abstract**

The legacy of social sciences is riddled with examples of harm toward racial minorities. Since its inception, the field of psychology has enforced power imbalances between researchers and research participants (APA, 2021a). Due to this imbalance, there have been violations of human dignity by psychological researchers from disciplines including social, clinical, cognitive, and counseling psychology (Winston, 2020). As the field of psychology continues to expand, it is necessary to redress the harmful legacies of psychological practices hindering help-seeking behaviors for many minoritized groups. As future practitioners and researchers, we recognize the instrumental role of past and current psychologists in shaping the future of psychological knowledge. Therefore, as we explore the detrimental effects experienced by marginalized communities, it is essential to recognize how historical psychological knowledge still influences our methods, production, and replication of knowledge. This paper aims to delve into the historical development and expansion of psychological knowledge from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century to highlight how this era of psychological inquiry impacts racial minorities.

*Keywords:* scientific racism, minoritized groups, BIPOC, intelligence testing, natural sciences

## **History Untold: A Historical Review of Psychological Harm of Racialized Minorities**

The history of psychological practices in the United States (U.S.) has been complex and multifaceted, characterized by both significant advancements (e.g., increased psychological support) and troubling missteps (e.g., pathologizing groups based on racialized assumptions) (Winston, 2020). Often, the narrative surrounding psychological history is incomplete or biased, leading to misrepresentation or omissions in textbooks, teachings, and research articles (Chatters, 2022; Lilienfeld, 2007). For this reason, the history of psychological practices in the U.S. has been idealized or portrayed in ways that downplay the negative impacts and ethical concerns associated with psychological research. This misrepresentation can hinder a comprehensive understanding of the field and the residual effects of harmful practices perpetuated by psychological scientists (Manuel, 1988; Winston, 2020). For a more accurate and nuanced understanding of psychological science, it is crucial to critically examine the historical record that establishes the foundation of the psychological framework that we have today to enhance our critical understanding of our field.

According to Winston (2020), the ethical landscape of psychological scholarship has evolved since the 1800s, from which much of the knowledge about human nature, the etiology of disease, and racialized differences inadvertently promoted violence toward BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color). During the early half of the 19th century, racialized typology was the defining characteristic of natural science researchers (Jackson & Weidman, 2004). Racialized typology was the process of ranking races by order of superiority and intellectual capacity, similar to that of animals on the food chain (Jackson & Weidman, 2004; Lasisi, 2021). Based on this categorization, the "African" race was placed at the bottom, while the "European" race was situated at the top (Jackson & Weidman, 2004, p. 37). Researchers demonstrated a significant

interest in examining the impact of race and social status on functionality, specifically concerning an individual's racial background and position within the societal hierarchy (Mohatt et al., 2014). The studies conducted in the field had negative repercussions that persistently affect the well-being of racialized groups in the present day, as supported by a burgeoning body of research on psychological trauma and the limited involvement of racialized groups in research studies during the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Mohatt et al., 2014).

As perceived in contemporary times, psychology differs significantly from its practice in the 1800s. Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920) and William James (1842-1910), considered two of the founders of modern psychology, initially pursued careers as physicians. Over time, their approach to psychology integrated concepts from the realms of physiology and philosophy (Sinclair, 2017). Their work laid the foundation for the introduction of psychology courses during the 1870s and 1880s, which subsequently led to the establishment of psychological laboratories and the adoption of titles such as psychologists, thereby distinguishing the field from other disciplines within the social sciences (Jackson & Weidman, 2004). As a result, the American Psychological Association (APA) was established in 1892 to support the field of psychology and further differentiate it from other disciplines. In 1947, the Committee on Ethical Standards for Psychologists formulated a set of ethical guidelines, which were officially adopted in 1959.

Despite the APA's establishment of ethical guidelines for researchers, there was a lack of enforcement, resulting in the proliferation of unethical research and practices that have had severe repercussions on racialized communities (Winston, 2020). Several notable studies have reflected the ongoing influence of discriminatory practices on research design and development. These areas of study have been criticized for condoning the racial segregation of people of color

(Roberts et al., 2020), endorsing psychological testing methods that perpetuate racialized hierarchy (Meyer et al., 2021), dismissing research that focuses on institutional racism, and lacking adequate representation within the field of psychology (Vasquez et al., 2006). These shortcomings have contributed to the marginalization and exclusion of diverse voices and perspectives, further exacerbating the systemic inequalities in psychological research and practice. Additionally, there are notable studies in overlapping fields, such as medicine, including the Tuskegee Syphilis experiment conducted in 1932, the 1990 study by Markow that involved blood samples from the Havasupai tribe of American Indians, and the case of Henrietta Lacks and her immortalized cells.

Despite the establishment of APA and the American Medical Association Code of Ethics having guidelines to regulate and ensure the production of ethical and unbiased research, the effects of such discriminatory practices continue to persist. The APA Council of Representatives issued a long-awaited acknowledgment and apology in October 2021. They recognized the role played by the association in perpetuating unethical and harmful psychological research and practices, with a particular focus on the negative impact on communities of color (APA, 2021b). This apology signifies a recent step taken by the APA to confront and address the historical injustices and discriminatory practices within the field of psychology.

This article aims to analyze the historical trajectory of psychological practice and research, spanning from the 1800s to the present day, focusing on the areas where psychological harm has significantly impacted marginalized individuals' social, cultural, and political experiences. We provide a concise overview of the initial contributions made by physicians and psychological scientists in shaping the foundations of the field of psychology as it exists today. In recognizing the historical lineage of psychological praxis, it becomes essential to critically

examine the patriarchal and colonial violence inherent in the propagation of psychological science through research studies and teachings concerning marginalized individuals. By deconstructing these harmful practices, we can strive for a more inclusive and ethical approach to understanding and addressing the experiences of minoritized communities in psychological research.

### **An Introduction to Racialized Typology: 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

As a leading psychologist and historian on scientific racism in the U.S. and North America, Andrew S. Winston defines "scientific racism" as scientific postulation and data created to legitimize and disseminate "biologically based racial hierarchy" (Winston, 2020, p. 1). His work decontextualized early scientific research practices such as the amalgamation of scientific epistemological data of early "hereditarians," including Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and William Sumner, Francis Galton, and Alfred Binet's intelligence testing movement and the I.Q. studies conducted by Arthur Jensen, Richard J. Herrnstein, and Charles Murray. The themes of white supremacy, racialized hierarchy, cranial testing, and the intelligence movement are deeply interconnected and have had significant implications in the history of scientific knowledge (Hatzenbuehler, 2016). The notion of white supremacy, rooted in the belief in the superiority of white people, has influenced various aspects of scientific inquiry, including studies on intelligence and racial differences (Green et al., 2001). For example, cranial testing, which was used to support flawed theories of racial superiority, exemplifies how scientific knowledge has been misused to reinforce racialized hierarchies. Additionally, the movement to measure and categorize human intelligence has been entangled with racial bias and has perpetuated harmful stereotypes and discriminatory practices (Hiermeier & Verity, 2022).



The historical stereotyping of marginalized groups continues to perpetuate oppressive systems and justify racist policies against marginalized communities, contributing to the ongoing subjugation and discrimination faced by racial minorities (Dennis, 1995). As a result, racialized minorities encounter barriers revealing higher public health disparities and disproportionate access to medical care in the U.S. (Thomeer et al., 2023). For example, the latest suicide rates in the U.S. show Indigenous people accounting for 16.74% and Black people accounting for 8.34% of suicides (American Foundation For Suicide Prevention, 2021). If systems continue to marginalize and perpetuate racism, we can expect to see worse public health outcomes for racial minorities in the years to come.

### **A Preview of Racism**

According to Winston (2020, p. 2), the term "racism" did not exist in the U.S. prior to the 1930s. In the early 19th century, there was a prevailing belief that Black and Indigenous people were inherently biologically different from white individuals (Jackson & Weidman, 2004). This perspective was used to explain cultural disparities between racial groups. It led to the development of theories and pseudoscientific justifications that sought to reinforce racial hierarchies and perpetuate notions of racial superiority and inferiority (Armstrong-Fumero, 2014). These beliefs were deeply entrenched in the societal mindset of the time and influenced various aspects of life, including social interactions, legal systems, and scientific discourse on people of color (Trawalter et al., 2020). This conflation of race and culture marked a significant shift, perpetuating the notion of Black and Brown individuals as inferior (Trawalter et al., 2020). This ideology played a role in the growth of slavery and subsequently fueled the abolitionist movements that aimed to end it. The Civil War in the U.S. intensified scientific interest in the

study of race (Perzichilli, 2020). During this time, there was an increased focus on racialized typology as scientists sought to validate their beliefs about racial differences.

For example, Galton's work has been subject to criticism for his involvement in establishing *anthropometric laboratories* that laid the foundation for the development of *mental testing* and *intelligence testing* (Green et al., 2001). Galton's interest in statistics played an important role in providing a sense of legitimacy to eugenic practices (Green et al., 2001). Galton's focus on measuring and categorizing human traits, including intelligence, had significant implications for expanding racialized typology. His efforts to quantify and classify individuals based on these measurements were used to support eugenic ideologies, which aimed to improve the genetic quality of the human population through selective breeding and sterilization of those considered undesirable (Allen, 2011). These practices, justified by pseudoscientific theories, enforced racial hierarchies and perpetuated discrimination (Reyes, 2019). The eugenics movement consisted of racist scientific propaganda and research to promote characteristics favored by white society (Katz, 2022).

## **Eugenics**

Early proponents of the eugenics movement involved biologists, psychologists, sociologists, and intellectual thinkers who promulgated the inferiority of the Black race (Katz, 2022). An illustration of racialized typologies can be seen in the work of physician Samuel Morton. Morton's studies claimed that the cranial volume of white individuals was larger compared to that of Black individuals (Jackson & Weidman, 2004). His books *Crania Americana* (1839) and *Crania Aegyptiaca* (1844) presented comparisons of cranial sizes between Black and multiracial individuals against those of white individuals (Armstrong-Fumero, 2014). These studies assessed intelligence and morality differences among racialized groups and supported his assertion of

white superiority. Although his research lacked statistically significant evidence and made a claim based on visual differences and biased perceptions, the books sparked conversation for social scientists to continue to debate racialized intelligence (Armstrong-Fumero, 2014). This ideology was so widely accepted at the time that members of the American Statistical Society cited craniometry to assert pro-slavery propaganda in which they claimed there were higher rates of mental inferiority among freed Black people than there were among those enslaved based on pseudoscience census data (Deutsch, 1944; Winston, 2020).

The colonial infrastructure outlined by European settlers laid the foundations that established racial hierarchy in the U.S. (Spring, 2021). Therefore, maintaining power and control became essential for the survival and dominance of white supremacy (Spring, 2021). Thus, racism embedded in psychological development became a means to exert social, political, and economic control over BIPOC (Spring, 2021). The enduring consequences of these power differentials are evident today in the disparities in life expectancy among racial minorities in the U.S. This is evident in studies documenting that Black men in the U.S. have the shortest lifespans compared to other racial groups (De Ramos et al., 2022).

### **Intelligence Testing**

Following craniometry, the field of psychology witnessed the emergence of intellectual testing. Psychologist James McKeen Cattell conducted mental tests to assess cognitive abilities such as reaction time, sensory acuity, and memory (Winston, 2020). These tests aimed to measure and quantify aspects of human intelligence and cognitive functioning. Researchers employed standardized procedures and tasks to gain insights into individuals' intellectual capacities and compare them across different populations. The development of mental tests marked a shift toward more objective and systematic approaches to studying human cognition and intelligence.

During this period, some psychologists, including James McKeen Cattell, utilized data from white and Black individuals to make claims linking faster reaction times to "Blackness" or what they described as "primitive racial development" (Winston, 2020, p. 4). These assertions were based on the results of their experiments and the interpretation of the data collected. It is worth noting that professional psychologists and individuals, including R. Meade Bache who was not a trained psychologist, could replicate these studies and publish their findings in psychological journals (Winston, 2020). Such actions indicate that these beliefs and research were not limited to a small group of professionals but were widely accepted within the field at that time. These interpretations and claims made by researchers were deeply rooted in racial biases and the prevailing racist ideologies of the era. They were part of a broader effort to perpetuate racial hierarchies and justify the discriminatory treatment of racialized groups.

Bache's study compared reaction times between Black, First Nation, and white individuals. After discovering the First Nation's participants had a slower reaction time compared to the Black participants, Bache claimed that it must be due to the "...Africans on the list have a larger intermixture of white blood in their veins than have the Indians" (Bache, 1895, p. 484). This conceptualization reflects the prevailing beliefs of the time. Similarly, psychologist James McKeen Cattell conducted reaction tests during the same period, suggesting that faster reaction times were linked to a more primitive racial development. These research studies, including Cattell's work, play a significant role in acknowledging the early mistreatment and segregation of BIPOC individuals from their white counterparts. By examining these studies, we gain insights into the discriminatory practices that were prevalent at the time and how they have contributed to systemic inequalities and injustices experienced by marginalized communities.

### **A New Focus for Psychological Inquiry: 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

The 20<sup>th</sup> century featured a notable shift in psychological inquiry, particularly concerning the social experiences of people of color. This transformation was influenced by World War I and the surge in immigration to the U.S., which served as catalysts for anti-immigration propaganda and research (Winston, 2020). During this time, psychological researchers focused on racialized differences to enforce social hierarchies of whiteness.

In 1904, the APA formed the first committee for testing standards in psychology, consisting of all male psychologists who supported racial hierarchy and the eugenics movement (APA, 2021a). Notably, Charles Davenport's eugenics philosophy gained traction in the U.S., fueling a surge of race-related psychological studies conducted between 1910 and 1930 (Winston, 2020). These studies utilized vulnerable minority populations as research subjects, as exemplified by the psychological testing on incarcerated boys at a juvenile detention facility in California. This research involved comparing hundreds of white, Mexican, and Black children to explore racial differences in their genetic makeup (Winston, 2020). Additionally, numerous psychologists conducted tests and facilitated the involuntary sterilization of thousands of Black women and girls, some as young as ten (Chatters et al., 2022).

The ideas propagated by popular eugenicists regarding racialized intelligence were utilized by the U.S. Supreme Court to solidify sterilization laws in Virginia. In the 1927 case of *Buck v. Bell*, the court dealt with the situation of Carrie Buck, who had been institutionalized in the Virginia State Colony due to being deemed feeble-minded and was ordered by the court to undergo sterilization (Buck v. Bell, 274 U.S. 200, 1927). This landmark case established a legal precedent that enabled states to sterilize inmates of public institutions. The court argued that conditions such as "imbecility," "epilepsy," and "feeblemindedness" were hereditary, and thus, inmates should be prevented from passing these "defects" to future generations (Buck v. Bell,

1927, p. 1). Consequently, this ruling significantly bolstered the eugenics movement in the U.S. and granted legal authority for the sterilization of over 60,000 individuals across more than thirty states (Berry, 1998). Ultimately, the underlying aim of these studies and policies was to construct a society based on a racial hierarchy that monopolized the bodies of racialized individuals.

During this period, there was a notable increase in mental testing conducted on BIPOC individuals. One of the most extensive testing initiatives occurred in 1917 within the U.S. Army, where approximately 1.7 million recruits underwent intelligence testing (Winston, 2020). The primary objective of these tests was to assess the mental competence of recruits for military service. Researchers utilized the collected data to compare BIPOC recruits with their white counterparts, asserting that foreign-born and colored recruits faced the most significant disadvantages (Winston, 2020). Initially implemented within the Army, intelligence testing became a standard for recruitment across all military services by 1941 (Thalassis, 2003). Furthermore, civilian psychologists continued to administer intelligence tests and conduct other experiments on recruits even after their enlistment (Thalassis, 2003).

Furthermore, intelligence tests were being implicated in schools across the U.S. A study by Katz (2022) explored the tests developed by American psychologists Henry Goddard and Lewis Terman, which were eventually renamed the Stanford-Binet scale in 1916. These tests aimed to support the notion that intelligence is hereditary and biologically determined. They were administered to individuals of all ages, including children. However, the tests failed to consider the significant disparities in the quality of education and the environmental factors influencing test scores (Katz, 2022). Consequently, the scores obtained from these tests were used to justify restrictions on immigration and the segregation of social classes. Furthermore, they were used to reinforce claims that BIPOC individuals posed a threat to society and

possessed traits such as *low morality*, *lack of foresight*, and *lack of sexual restraint* (Winston, 2020). Implementing intelligence testing in schools resulted in the separation of white and BIPOC, contributing to ongoing research on racial differences in intelligence and education throughout the later part of the century.

### **Mistrust in the Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century**

One major study that emerged from the legacy of racialized research is the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) syphilis experiment conducted in Macon County in 1932 (McCallum, 2006). This study revealed deep-seated beliefs about the perceived nature of Black individuals in relation to their sexuality and illness. Informed by Darwinism and the eugenics movement with asserted cognitive and psychological differences between Black and white populations, the syphilis experiment functioned to provide additional evidence of the "inferiority" and "illiteracy" of the Black race (Brandt, 1987, p. 23). The official study commenced in 1932, and its groundwork was laid in 1929 with the utilization of the Julius Rosenwald Grant. The survey conducted through this grant highlighted the prevalence of syphilis among Black men in Tuskegee compared to surrounding counties (Brandt, 1987). Although the USPHS intended to collect data on how syphilis impacted the daily lives of those infected and the necessity of treatment, the study's objective did not include providing treatment to the participants (Brandt, 1987). Despite ethical concerns, the study persisted for 40 years, with its findings being reported to the medical community without substantial objection regarding the ethical obligations towards the participants (Scharff, 2010).

The consequences of leaving syphilis untreated were severe for the Tuskegee community, given the highly contagious nature of the disease. Corbie-Smith (1999) reported that approximately 400 Black men were left untreated, leading to the deaths of many participants due

to syphilis and its related complications, even though penicillin treatments were widely available in the 1950s and proven effective in mitigating the symptoms of syphilis. The racialized categorization of this study has far-reaching implications for advancing scientific knowledge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The 1932 syphilis experiment is a potent example of the suffering endured by Black communities at the hands of scientists. Following the public outcry over the revelations of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (Commission) took action. In 1979, the Commission released the *Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research*. The Belmont Report aimed to address concerns surrounding the boundaries of biomedical and behavioral research practices involving human subjects and the acceptable norms in routine medical practice. It provided a framework of ethical principles and guidelines to ensure the protection and well-being of individuals participating in human subject research (Adashi et al., 2018).

Scharff and colleagues (2010) acknowledged that the Tuskegee Syphilis study contributed to the limited participation of Black people in psychological and medical research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Furthermore, Bazargan and colleagues (2021) assert a correlation between perceived discrimination and medical mistrust. They highlight that when racialized clients experience discrimination, it often results in medical mistrust, leading to negative patient outcomes and barriers to establishing meaningful relationships with clients. This finding emphasizes the detrimental impact of discrimination on healthcare experiences and the importance of addressing and mitigating its effects to promote equitable and effective healthcare for individuals of color.



## Exploitation of Racialized People

As scientists distanced themselves from the eugenics movement, they explored alternative dynamics of racial hierarchies, particularly around Black socialization and self-worth compared to white groups. One notable contribution in the early 1950s came from Kenneth and Mamie Clark, who conducted a significant study highlighting the psychological impact of segregation on children. In their renowned experiment, known as the doll test, the Clarks presented Black children between the ages of 3 and 7 with a white and brown doll. They then asked the children which doll they preferred to play with and which doll they considered the "nicer" color. The study's findings indicated that most children chose the white doll in response to both questions, leading the Clarks to interpret this as evidence of low self-esteem among Black children (Clark & Clark, 1950). For the Clarks, racism did not simply conflict with abstract notions of justice. Meaning, that from an early age, Black children were conscious of the racial hierarchy and their place in the social system. As a result, the Clarks noted that by age five, Black children were aware of being racialized in contemporary society (Clark & Clark, 1950). Later, this study played an important role in court cases such as *Briggs v. Elliott* to argue for the desegregation of public schools in South Carolina. Although they lost the case, the argument was revived in 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, where the U.S. Supreme Court Justices unanimously found racially segregated schools to be unconstitutional and in violation of the equal protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment (Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 1954).

While the doll test and similar studies aimed to examine the racialized impact on black and brown individuals and made important contributions to understanding racial experiences, it is crucial to acknowledge that such studies can inadvertently perpetuate racial stigmas (Feinman,

1979). By focusing solely on individual preferences without considering the institutional barriers faced by people of color in participating in predominantly white spaces, this study overlooked the systemic inequalities that contributed to disparities in access and opportunities for Black children. Therefore, a comprehensive approach that considers the larger socio-political context and acknowledges the structural and institutional barriers marginalized communities face is crucial in psychological research to address historical harm.

Despite establishing ethical guidelines to prevent the exploitation of BIPOC groups in psychological and medical research, studies that devalue and exploit racialized individuals persist. While ethical guidelines provide a framework for responsible research, their implementation relies on researchers and institutions upholding these principles in their work (Sinclair, 2017). For example, in 1990, researchers John Martin and Theresa Markow from Arizona State University (ASU) conducted a study on members of the American Indian Havasupai tribe (Pacheco et al., 2013). The study's stated objective was to investigate the prevalence of diabetes within the tribe. Participants were assured that their blood samples would only be used for the study's intended purpose. However, Markow subsequently utilized the blood samples to research schizophrenia, contradicting the participants' original expectations and violating their trust. The Havasupai tribe became aware of the research misconduct and approached (ASU) about the issue. Subsequently, the tribe filed a lawsuit against the university, and in 2010, a settlement agreement was reached to address the harm caused by the study. This case serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of upholding ethical standards and ensuring transparency, respect, and informed consent in research involving marginalized communities.

This example highlights the persistent problem of deception and manipulation of BIPOC participants in research, further exacerbating mistrust among these communities and creating

barriers to psychological research. A study by George, Duran, and Norris (2014) explored the barriers to research participation among African American, Latino, Asian American, and Pacific Islanders. They identified "mistrust" and "lack of access to information" as common barriers across these groups. This result underscores the significant impact of racialized studies, which not only perpetuate historical trauma but also hinder the participation of marginalized individuals in research. Recognizing the shared obstacles faced by various racial minority groups emphasizes the profound impact of racialized psychological studies and the urgency to address these issues in naming psychological instances of harm and acknowledging the historical context and ongoing systemic challenges that contribute to the mistrust experienced by BIPOC communities. Researchers and institutions must take active steps to build trust, provide transparent information, and engage in meaningful dialogue with marginalized communities to address their concerns and ensure equitable participation in research.

### **An Attempt to Rectify Centuries of Harm: 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The APA's public apology in 2021 marked a modest advancement in acknowledging the extensive harm and oppression inflicted upon numerous BIPOC individuals in psychological research. Nevertheless, the apology did not resonate as accountability for everyone within the BIPOC community. In parallel, the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) issued a public statement on their website in the same year, offering their response to the APA's apology. The ABPsi pointed out that the APA had failed in its leadership role within the field of psychology, contributed to systemic inequities, and caused harm through racism, racial discrimination, and the demeaning of people of color. The ABPsi emphasized that the APA fell short of its mission to benefit society and improve lives, particularly by not engaging in meaningful consultation

with the ABPsi and other ethnic associations on matters that directly and indirectly affect marginalized communities (ABPsi, 2021, p. 1).

The concerns raised by the ABPsi are shared by other BIPOC psychologists who have voiced their frustrations with both the APA and the field of psychology as a whole. Desai and colleagues (2023) critically analyze the discipline, highlighting how systemic inequities within psychology contribute to racism. They argue that institutions like the APA have failed to take genuine accountability for their actions, and despite promises of desegregation, the field continues to fall short in addressing these issues. The authors emphasize that this lack of progress poses a significant threat to the integrity and advancement of the psychological sciences. The critiques indicate that apologies alone are insufficient in achieving this goal. It requires a collective effort at both macro and micro levels to dismantle the deep-seated racism ingrained in the psychological discipline. As researchers, it is crucial that we amplify the voices of BIPOC individuals who have already made substantial contributions to our field and those whose contributions have yet to be recognized. Therefore, the following section is dedicated to honoring these individuals who deserve a rightful place in our historical accounts.

In 2001, the U.S. Surgeon General publicly acknowledged the gap between research and practice for racial and ethnic minorities and recognized this as a major problem in the mental health field (U.S. Surgeon General, 2001). While the awareness of racial and ethnic disparities was there prior to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it was not until this century that psychologists began to address and validate these issues. Examples include articles discussing the effects of actual or perceived racial and ethnic differences between client and counselor or articles that directly address the racist ideology embedded in psychological practice in the U.S. (Tucker, 2005; Zane et al., 2005).

Psychology has come a long way from where it began. As the field of psychology has diversified to include more BIPOC voices, research examining the experiences of racial minorities has increased. For example, Mohatt and colleagues (2014) discuss how historical trauma impacts the psychological well-being of minoritized groups in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Similarly, Haynes-Mendez and colleagues (2023) discuss the transformation of psychological practice to diversify, enhance, and include initiatives that support BIPOC individuals. These studies are vital in improving the understanding of the experiences of BIPOC lives and creating a more effective and inclusive system.

### **Significant BIPOC Contributions: Shifting the Field**

Psychology continues to evolve to accommodate more narratives featuring social, cultural, and political factors impacting the lives of minoritized people. These branches of psychology are better known as liberation psychology and multicultural counseling. Singh (2020) describes liberation psychology as moving beyond white, colonial ideology into an integrated approach that includes practices created to support people of color. Lillian Comas-Diaz, a leading psychologist in multiethnic and multicultural scholarship who helped found the Division 45 APA for the psychological study of culture, ethnicity, and race, has produced holistic research centering on the experiences and voices of minoritized groups and how psychological scholars can be more intentional about the research they produce (Comas-Diaz, 2020). A few of her most significant works focus on Latine people's historical trauma and healing in psychotherapy (Comas-Diaz, 2006; 2022). Another significant contributor is Patricia Arredondo, a psychologist and former president of the American Counseling Association (ACA), APA, and NLPA and credited as being one of the original founders of multicultural counseling. Her earliest research highlighted the need for culturally competent practices in counseling that

specifically targeted oppressed populations (Sue et al., 1992; Arredondo, 1999). Because of her work, multicultural counseling has expanded and become an essential component of many counseling education programs today (Bayne et al., 2023).

Given the history of psychology in the U.S., it is unsurprising that many of these individuals are left out of the textbooks. Thus, we are actively engaging in counter-storytelling by designating a section of this article to credit their accomplishments. Often, the histories we are told are from the perspective of the colonizer. Thus, it is vital that those pursuing research in psychology continue to question the racist historical agenda and shed light on the voices of minorities that continue to go unheard.

### **The Future Direction of Psychological Practices**

Concerning the future of research, it is important to balance how research is conducted and how it is applied when working with communities of color. Systemically, institutions can utilize research to diversify and improve cultural competencies in healthcare settings to better care for BIPOC people. In addition, education systems can also play a significant role in the deconstruction of racism in psychological and counseling education. For example, when teaching multicultural counseling students, it is essential to integrate teaching materials that center on BIPOC voices and emphasize deconstructing whiteness so that students can competently practice with minoritized groups (Bayne et al., 2023).

As counselors in training, we understand the importance of our roles in shifting the future of psychological practices with BIPOC groups. Singh (2020) expresses that we must offer minoritized groups the support they need to feel understood by researchers and practitioners to establish trust and deeper connections. As mentioned previously, improving competency is crucial when working with racial minorities. Vera & Speight (2003) define counseling

competencies as beliefs or attitudes, knowledge, and skills that challenge the traditional white counseling model. Additionally, clinicians working with minoritized clients can follow counseling approaches that integrate an antiracist perspective. Lee & Boykins (2022) break down the many antiracist counseling paradigms that can be integrated into practice to produce culturally competent counseling. Examples include trauma-informed counseling, narrative counseling, and counseling incorporating sociocultural and historical factors. Thus, they conclude that the most important takeaway for clinicians is to remain racism-sensitive and work diligently to protect clients and prevent harm.

Lastly, students play an equally important role in shaping an antiracist future of psychology. For students participating, assisting, or conducting psychological research, being critical and hyper-aware of the risks and benefits of research is crucial. It is advised to think about BIPOC people in the context of research and how they may be impacted in the short or long term. For those outside of research, the most important takeaway is to remain hypercritical when reading about research that involves BIPOC groups. Even at the individual level, support for the decolonization and deconstruction of racism within psychology is essential if we intend to change the future.

### **Conclusion**

This paper aims to deconstruct the historical legacies that contributed to the oppression and harm experienced by racial minorities in psychological research. By analyzing the origins and progression of psychological science, we can gain insights into how these practices have influenced the acquisition and dissemination of psychological knowledge when working with human subjects. Recognizing and comprehending this history allows us to confront the consequences of past actions, paving the way for addressing the persisting injustices in

psychology. Moreover, we prioritize acknowledging the contributions of several notable BIPOC researchers working to move the field in a more inclusive direction. While our focus may not encompass every BIPOC contributor in psychology's history, we intend to highlight the significant impact these individuals have had in shaping the future of psychology.

The field of psychology is experiencing a gradual but steady political and social shift as researchers increasingly focus on critically evaluating their approaches to create, produce, and share research. Notably, it is imperative that researchers and mental health practitioners continuously enhance their skills and knowledge to effectively cater to the needs of the expanding population of BIPOC individuals seeking counseling or participating in research studies. Furthermore, psychological journals are responsible for publishing research that recognizes and safeguards the experiences of BIPOC individuals, thus promoting validation and protection of their experiences.

This comprehensive examination provides insights into the negative impact of past psychological research practices and highlights the importance of ethical considerations, informed consent, and safeguards when conducting psychological research. It emphasizes the need for critical reflection, continuous improvement, and a commitment to ethical standards to ensure the well-being and dignity of research participants, especially those from marginalized communities. Above all, we must continue to recognize the historical events, both positive and negative, that have impacted BIPOC history so that we can work towards creating an inclusive future.



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