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**The Debate Around “woke” Culture: A Progressive
Ideology or Another Form of Bigotry?**

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DEDICATION

*I dedicate this to the absolute love of my life, my beautiful mother **Meriem DRIS** whose unconditional love, unwavering support and sacrifice continue to make me feel whole and loved, and whose prayers keep me sane and grounded.*

*To my dear father, **Cheikh**.*

*To my brother, **Tedj**, who has always been my biggest supporter and bestfriend, his kind and generous wife, **Fatima Zahraa**, and their daughters, my dearest **Taline** and **Maria**.*

I love you all

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ABSTRACT

“woke” culture, a term that gained popularity in recent years, refers to a socio-political movement characterized by heightened awareness and activism towards social justice issues. It emerged as a response to systemic inequalities and oppression, aiming to challenge and dismantle existing power structures. “woke” culture encompasses a range of beliefs and practices, often addressing topics such as race, gender, sexuality, and class. It includes intersectionality, cultural appropriation, allyship, and language policing, among other aspects. While some praise “woke” culture for promoting inclusivity and equality, others criticize it for being overly sensitive or stifling free speech. This extended essay seeks to highlight “woke” culture’s multifaceted nature through examining its advantages and disadvantages. It also aims to reveal its impact in addition to the ways in which it is enforced upon society.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the world has witnessed a surge of pressing societal issues that have demanded the attention and active engagement of everyone. From persistent racial inequality and systemic discrimination to gender disparities and inequities, economic stratification, and political polarization, these multifaceted challenges have compelled individuals and communities to critically reflect on the prevailing norms and systems within their society.

The urgent need for change and progress has led to the emergence of a new wave of social justice activism, propelled by passionate individuals advocating for greater inclusivity, equality, and justice. This movement, commonly referred to as "“woke” culture," has gained significant traction, permeating public discourse and reshaping societal expectations.

This research is devoted to shedding a light on “woke” Culture by analyzing its origins and ideologies. It also aims to highlight “woke” Culture’s multifaceted nature and its different impacts.

In order to initiate this research, two fundamental questions have been raised:

- What are the arguments for and against “woke” Culture?
- What Implications does the social phenomenon known as ““woke”Culture” have?
- To what degree is the concept of being “woke” enforced upon society?

In an effort to answer these questions, this research is divided into two chapters taking an analytical approach. The first chapter which is theoretical provides the reader with an overview about “woke” culture, its definition and emergence as a term. It also highlights the key social justice movements that have played a role in shaping “woke” culture, in

addition to mentioning the prominent supporters and opponents of the movement from celebrities and activists.

The second chapter which is the practical part, seeks to highlight the arguments that are raised by supporters of “woke” Culture followed by others that are raised by the critics. It then provides the reader with the negative implications of “woke” Culture at the end.

Chapter 1: Understanding “woke” Culture

1.1 Introduction

In recent years, the term “woke” has become increasingly prevalent in discussions surrounding social justice, activism, and cultural awareness. “woke” culture, with its roots in various social justice movements, has emerged as a powerful force shaping societal narratives and challenging established norms. This chapter aims to provide an understanding of “woke” culture by exploring its origins, evolution, and key influencers. Additionally, it delves into the role of social media in amplifying “woke” narratives and examines both prominent “woke” activists and celebrities, as well as those who push back against the movement.

1.2 Defining “Woke” as a Concept

“woke” is a concept centered on racial and social awareness and justice. The idea encourages individuals to challenge the status quo, speak up against oppression, racism, injustice and champion equality for all people regardless of their race, gender or sexual orientation. (Shennan, 2021)

On a deeper level it asks people to become aware of power structures that exist in society such as systemic racism & privilege (Remnick, 2023). Per Remnick (2023), It has also inspired cultural movements around the world in many places where marginalized populations feel like they do not have equal access to basic rights and freedoms being denied them due to various systematic powers currently existing within societies at large today.

Critics of “woke” culture say it is oversensitive and overly focused on political correctness, causing people to become scared to express their opinion. Critics argue that the concept has led to cancel culture and an increase in "call-out" behavior — in which a persons' words or actions are publicly condemned as oppressive or wrong. Opponents of ““woke” Culture” also point out that it can divide society along ideological lines, leading us toward tribalism rather than unity and understanding (Contributer, 2023).

1.3 Emergence and Evolution of the Term “Woke”

The term is specifically based in African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and has long been utilized in American street and youth culture. The word “woke” and the phrase “remain “woke”” have been used by Black Americans to “literally signify getting “woke” or sensitised to concerns of social injustice (Romano, 2020)

Among the earliest uses of the idea of “woke”ness as a concept for Black political consciousness came from Jamaican philosopher and social activist Marcus Garvey(1887 - 1940)¹, who wrote in 1923, "*Wake up Ethiopia! Wake up Africa!*"

The term was publically used again in a play named *Garvey Lives* by the American writer Barry Beckham in 1971.in which he wrote“I been sleeping all my life. And now that Mr. Garvey done “woke” me up, I’m gon stay “woke”. And I’m gon help him wake up other black folk.” (Barry, 1972)

The term was mostly popularized by singer Erykah Badu, who used the line "I remain “woke”” in her 2008 song “Master Teacher”. According to David Stovall (2016), an African-American studies professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Ms Badu's usage of the word indicated "not being placated, not being anaesthetised.

The term “woke” became a politicized term during 2014-15 as an act of reminder to stay awake, conscious and aware in regard to interaction within different social situations, specifically, police brutality following the killing of Michael Brown, was shot and killed by white police officer Darren Wilson, in Ferguson, Missouri , USA on August 9, 2014The killing of Michael Brown, coupled with the subsequent handling of the case by local authorities, fueled widespread frustration and a sense of injustice. It ignited conversations

¹Marcus Mosiah Garvey Jr. ONH was a Jamaican political activist. He was the founder and first President-General of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League, through which he declared himself Provisional President of Africa

about systemic racism, police violence, and the devaluation of Black lives in America. In response to this incident and the broader issue of police violence against Black individuals, the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter emerged on social media, becoming a rallying cry for activists and supporters.

In recent years, it has expanded into a comprehensive term that currently denotes mainstream progressive left political ideas, used by those on the left as a shorthand to express progressiveness, but weaponized by alt-right and politically conservative organizations as a "sneering, jeering dismissive term "to denigrate those who did not share their beliefs(View, 2023)

As “woke” continues to be a buzzword in contemporary discourse, its meaning and implications will likely continue to evolve. The term stands as a call to action, urging individuals to examine their own biases, engage in critical conversations, and work towards creating a more inclusive and just society.

1.4 Key Social Justice Movements that Played a Role in Shaping “Woke” Culture.

“woke” culture, with its emphasis on social awareness and activism, consists of various social justice movements throughout history. These movements have played a crucial role in shaping the collective consciousness surrounding systemic inequalities and inspiring individuals to challenge oppressive structures.

1.4.1 the Civil Rights Movement

The American Civil Rights Movement designates the various struggles and demonstrations carried out by African-American citizens and by abolitionist white Americans so that African-Americans can benefit like any other American from the civil rights registered and guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States without limitation or restriction whatsoever (Carson, 2010)

During the Civil War of 1863, numerous constitutional amendments provided the most

fundamental civil rights formerly denied to Black Americans. According to Carson (2010), Slavery was abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment on December 6, 1865, and the Fourteenth Amendment of 1868 granted citizenship to those born and naturalized in the United States and prohibited any restrictions on their rights. The Fifteenth Amendment of 1870 guaranteed voting rights to all citizens. Their implementation is complicated in the southern states by Jim Crow laws and numerous legislation that legalize various types of racial segregation

The movement generally aspires to eradicate all forms of racial discrimination such as the impairment of the ability to exercise the right to voting, education, employment, and housing throughout the United States. It first commenced in the 18th century with the foundation of the "Pennsylvania Abolition Society" , the Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage was the first American abolition society, and the "Free African Society", a benevolent organization that held religious services and provided mutual aid for "free Africans and their descendants" in Philadelphia, and gained momentum by the beginning of the twentieth century with the establishment of organizations such as the "National Association for the Advancement of Colored People", the "Conference Southern Christian Leadership", and the "Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee". (Onion et al., 2023)

The American civil rights movement reached its peak between the years 1954 and 1968, resulting in the adoption of various federal laws such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Act of 1968(Definition of Civil Rights Act in U.S. History., n.d.) prohibiting all laws and segregative regulations throughout the United States.

It is important to note that the Civil Rights Movement is not strictly tied to the abolition of slavery; All of forms of protests carried out by African Americans in efforts to combat the

discrimination are regarded as part of this movement since the beginning of slavery in the seventeenth century.

1.4.2 The Black Lives Matter Movement

The Black Lives Matter movement is an international activism group founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch coordinator, on July 13th of the same year, who shot and killed 17-year-old African-American teenager Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida, United States on February 26, 2012 (Alvarez & Buckley, 2013). Per Alvarez & Buckley (2013), The incident was perceived by the Black community in the United States as a hate crime that was not taken seriously, suggesting the unimportance of black lives. Since then, the mission of BLM has been to challenge racism and systematic oppression within local communities while inspiring everyday people across the world to become active participants against police brutality as it affects black individuals everywhere (Alvarez & Buckley, 2013)

It was started by three African American activists: Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi. Alicia Garza wrote a message on Facebook titled “A Love Note to Black People” in which appeared: “Our Lives Matter, Black Lives Matter”. Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi commented by rewriting the hashtag (Anderson, 2016). The hashtag soon spread like wildfire in traditional media outlets. Activists held rallies and marches calling attention to police brutality against communities of color with many fighting to honor lost ones while also seeking policy changes both locally and nationally addressing systemic racism at large and from the summer of 2015, the movement began to hold elected officials or candidates to account, particularly those in the presidential election.

At first, it was just a hashtag that allowed people to express their outrage on social media, primarily on Facebook and Twitter. But in 2014, the movement gained momentum after the deaths of Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old black teenager shot dead by police in

Ferguson, Missouri, and Eric Garner, an unarmed 44-year-old black teenager. died following his muscular arrest by the New York police (Anderson, 2016). On this occasion, Black Live Matter begins to organize demonstrations to denounce the violence and racism of the police per Anderson (2016).

The movement flourishes through awareness initiatives including discussions, protests and online campaigns that work towards ending all forms of anti-black violence perpetuated by law enforcement agents.

To this day, activists continue alternating large public demonstrations with smaller rallies that demand justice for victims like Breonna Taylor - an innocent 26-year-old woman murdered inside her own home due a botched no-knock raid on March 13th 2020 - or countless other slain civilians whose stories deserve equal attention from both journalists & history books alike (Oppel et al., 2023)

In recent years their efforts have drawn significant attention from mainstream media outlets (while also earning praise from prominent figures such as former President Obama) however, per Cooper (2020),they still face opposition even today some governments aim at censoring peaceful marches while far right groups try to discredit them based on lumping together moderate reformists with extreme fringe elements connected to violent extremism - something community organizers swiftly reject every single time in order stand out firmly up for human rights regardless external adversities.(Cooper, 2020)

According to Anderson (2016),Activists have since appeared to expose numerous other cases of police brutality against black people, including the case of 12-year-old Tamir Rice, who was shot dead by police while playing with a toy gun in a park. The movement also denounced violence against black women; more than 1000 actions have already been organized.

Many individuals and activists attempted to change the movement's motto to "All Lives

Matter," alleging it of solely caring about African Americans' lives, however, several celebrities, like Barack Obama² and Mark Zuckerberg³ have opposed the phrase, claiming that it was illegitimate since black people faced exceptional persecution and hence required special protection.

1.4.3 The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Plus Rights Movement (LGBTQ+)

The LGBTQ+ Rights movement seeks to protect the rights of individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer.

Throughout history, LGBTQ+ individuals faced widespread legal and social persecution. They were constantly subjected to harassment, abuse, and denial of fundamental rights like as work, housing, healthcare, and marriage. Consequently, LGBTQ+ activism emerged and rebelled against these issues.

One of the most significant events that altered the LGBTQ+ Rights movement was The Stonewall Riots in New York City in 1969 (Onion et al., 2017). In this event, the police raided the Stonewall Inn, a Greenwich Village gay pub. The police attack was met by vehement resistance from the individuals who were inside. Per Onion et al., This particular incident became a pivotal turning point for the fight against discrimination and landmark in the movement. The event influenced queer people to fight even more and gave rise to organizations such as the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance, which advocated for more visibility, inclusion, and legal rights.

The LGBTQ+ Rights movement has won a number of key triumphs throughout the years. According to Rogin (2020), The American Psychiatric Association eliminated homosexuality from its list of mental diseases in 1973, aiding in the fight against the detrimental stigma

²Barack Obama: American politician who served as the 44th president of the United States from 2009 to 2017. A member of the Democratic Party

³ Mark Elliot Zuckerberg: An American business magnate, internet entrepreneur, and philanthropist. He is known for co-founding the social media website Facebook and its parent company Meta Platforms, of which he is the executive chairman, chief executive officer, and controlling shareholder.

associated with LGBTQ+ identities. The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy was signed into law in 1993 by President Bill Clinton, allowing gay and lesbian citizens to serve in the military with the condition of concealing their sexual orientation, but was revoked in 2011, enabling LGBTQ+ individuals to serve in the military openly (Rogin, 2020).

In 2015, The United States Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in the Obergefell v. Hodges case (Obergefell v. Hodges. (n.d.)), which was a massive leap for the movement towards achieving the desired outcomes. The decision helped grant LGBTQ+ individuals the same legal protections and privileges as straight people.

Despite all the various achievements forward, however, LGBTQ+ members continue to fight for equality while being exposed to the traditional societal hurdles that stand in their way to exercise their right to live how they please. The LGBTQ+ community's advocacy and achievements have undeniably contributed to the rise of "woke" culture. Their experiences and struggles have opened up conversations, raised awareness, and challenged societal norms, ultimately paving the way for broader discussions on systemic inequalities and social justice. The LGBTQ+ movement continues to shape "woke" culture as both movements evolve and work towards a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

1.4.3.1 The Transgender Rights Movement

The transgender rights movement is a sociopolitical movement that advocates for transgender individuals. This movement is inextricably tied to the larger LGBTQ rights movement.

Transgender individuals identify with a gender other than that to which they were assigned at the time of birth. A transgender woman, for instance, is a person who is anatomically male, yet prefers to be referred to as a female ("What Is Transgender?" 2021). Non-binary persons who choose to not adhere to neither genders are also considered transgender. According to Newman (2023), Gender and biological sex are not the same thing. Gender identity and

behavior are formed; masculinity and femininity, for example, are components of gender identity. Biological or anatomical sex refers to a person's reproductive characteristics.

In the United States, according to Bender & Baird (2011), transgender persons are not granted complete legal equality. While most states strongly oppose public workplace discrimination against transgender individuals, less than half ban it in private work, and others have no clear legislation on the subject. Less than half of states criminalize housing discrimination against them, and even fewer restrict conversion therapy, a treatment that seeks to modify transgender people's gender identification, frequently to their detriment.

According to Sagona, Alexia J., et al. (2015), The transgender rights movement seeks to end discrimination and oppression against individuals who identify as transgender, gender non-conforming or non-binary. It seeks full recognition of the dignity and humanity of trans people; legal protection from violence and discrimination in all forms; the right to medical care without conditions based on sexuality, gender identity or expression; access to resources that foster physical health and mental wellness for all generations of trans communities, including youth; equal treatment under law such as housing, employment, education and public accommodations. Additionally, it calls for an intersectional approach towards advocacy work around racism, ableism, homophobia, femmephobia, transmisogyny, body shaming, and more inclusive healthcare systems, and respectful terminology.

The transgender rights movement's activism, and accomplishments have undeniably contributed to the rise of “woke” culture. By challenging gender norms, advocating for legal protections, raising awareness, and fostering community support, the movement has played a pivotal role in shaping conversations around gender, identity, and social justice. As the transgender rights movement continues to evolve and push for equality and acceptance, it will undoubtedly continue to influence “woke” culture and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

1.4.4 The MeToo: Movement for Sexual Harassment Awareness and Prevention

Tarana Burke, a New York-based feminist activist, created the phrase #MeToo in 2006. Her purpose was to give women who had been sexually abused a voice by revealing to them that other women had gone through the same experience (Gordon, 2023)

Harvey Weinstein was named as a sexual abuser in a contentious New York Times article in 2017, actress Rose McGowan and Ashley Judd were unafraid to speak openly about Weinstein's crimes, which inspired many other women to do the same (Kantor &Twohey, 2017)

Actress AlyssaMilano has also used the #MeToo hashtag on social media. "If you've been sexually harassed or attacked, send "me too" as a reply to this tweet," she writes, oblivious to the phrase's origins and how rapidly it would spread soon after.

Twitter users used the hashtag nearly a million times in a span of two days after Milano's message, according to Twitter. The campaign spread to Facebook, where around 4.7 million individuals posted 12 million posts in less than 24 hours. People are still sharing their tales with the hashtag #MeToo on social media years later. According to a Pew Research study done by Monica Anderson and Skye Toor (2018), The hashtag #MeToo has been used more than 19 million times on Twitter since it was used by Milano.

The problem they had been fighting relentlessly to solve was getting popular and attracting international attention. Burke's initiative had now grown to include a network of victims from all backgrounds.

The hashtag #MeToo can still be found today in different media platforms. Posts on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Tiktok with the hashtag #MeToo keep surfacing on a regular basis, demonstrating that the #MeToo movement has raised awareness and built a support network.

1.4.6 The Role of Social Media in Spreading “woke” Narratives

Social media has had a powerful role in spreading “woke” ideology narratives. Popular media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok and Youtube keep serving as fertile opportunities for “woke” supporters and activists to share their views and implement their perspectives.

Social media is also a useful platform for “woke” activists to raise their form of awareness by drawing public attention to social issues such as racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and other types of discrimination, with hashtags such as #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo, and #TransRightsAreHumanRights dominating mainstream media.

The reach of “woke” content to internet users around the world has been massive, in fact, according to Tiktok, a short-form video hosting service owned by ByteDance, videos with hashtags: #”woke”, #”woke”tok, and #”woke”tiktok have over 8 billion views combined in the app.

While social media has given “woke” supporters the ability to connect with other individuals with whom they share common values, this particular use of it has been criticized as well. Critics such as American conservative political commentator and activist, Candance Owens, American columnist, Ben Shapiro and English comedian and director, Ricky Gervais believe social media has produced an echo chamber for “woke” individuals, resulting in a lack of understanding and empathy for those who hold opposing views and exercising "cancel culture," on them which entails promptly denouncing and shunning them for holding different beliefs

1.6 Prominent “woke” activists and celebrities

Numerous individuals have risen to fame for their constant activism, particularly about social issues that are villainized by the “woke” ideology. One of these activists and the most

popular of whom, is Tarana Burke. As the founder of the MeToo campaign, Burke has been a forerunner in the fight against sexual assault and harassment. Burke has worked to create a promote accountability, as well as advocate for the needs of survivors of such issues.

As a co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement, Patrisse Cullors is yet another famous person who tops the list of “woke” activists, having been an outspoken advocate for racial justice, Cullors worked to raise awareness regarding the devastating impact of police brutality on the African American community. Not only was she involved in the support of the BLM movement but has also been a vocal advocate for LGBTQ+ rights.

Several celebrities in the entertainment industry have become linked with the “woke” Movement as well. Jameela Jamil⁴ is an example of these celebrities, as an actress and activist, Jamil has been an outspoken champion for body positivity and has worked to defy unhealthy and unrealistic beauty standards. Jamil has also been an outspoken supporter of LGBTQ+ rights, using her platform to raise awareness about issues impacting marginalized groups.

Lena Waithe⁵, an actress and director, has also been one of the main celebrities who used their voice and fame to call for racial justice and LGBTQ+ rights. Waithe has utilized her position to highlight the struggles and experiences of underrepresented people and to advocate for more inclusion and diversity in the entertainment industry.

Other famous people include:

Killer Mike: Michael Santiago Render, better known by his stage name Killer Mike, has been an outspoken advocate for economic and racial justice as a rapper and activist. Mike has utilized his popularity to speak out against police brutality and other types of systematic oppression, as well as raise awareness among social minorities about the importance of increased political involvement.

⁴Jameela Alia Jamil: British actress, activist, podcaster, and television host and judge

⁵ Lena Waithe : American actress, producer, and screenwriter

Ta-Nehisi Coates: American author and journalist, Ta-Nehisi Coates, has been a blunt upholder for racial justice whose writing often addresses the pervasiveness of systematic racism. Coates has also been an outspoken opponent of and all types of institutional oppression.

Angela Davis: American Marxist and feminist political activist, philosopher, professor, and novelist, Angela Davis, has been an ardent crusader for racial justice and has battled to raise awareness about the linkages of race, gender, and class. Davis has additionally been a vocal advocate for jail abolition and other forms of structural reform.

Emma Watson: As an actress and UN Women Goodwill Ambassador, Emma Watson has been a forthright advocate for gender equality and has worked to raise awareness about the social issues that women face around the world. Watson has also been a supporter of the representation of women and small communities and promote diversity in the entertainment industry.

These are just a few examples of the many famous “woke” activists and celebrities who have used their influence to challenge the status quo and promote social change. Their dedication to social justice issues has helped shape the discourse surrounding “woke” culture, amplifying marginalized voices, and inspiring individuals to take action in the pursuit of a more inclusive and equitable world. As the movement continues to evolve, their contributions serve as a reminder of the power of individuals to make a difference and drive meaningful social transformation.

1.7 Prominent Anti- “woke” Activists and Celebrities

With the rise of “woke” culture, countless individuals faced it with opposition. Critics mainly condemn the “woke” ideology for its tendency to defy traditional values and norms and vilifies those who disagree with it. Critics of this “woke” culture are not only common people, there are numerous famous celebrities and activists that have publicly denounced

“woke” ideals and its extreme reaction to opponents. Some of these famous anti-“woke” figures include:

Jordan Peterson: Canadian psychologist and professor Jordan Peterson has garnered attention for his critiques of political correctness and what he sees as the encroachment of “woke” ideology on free speech and intellectual discourse. Peterson argues against compelled speech and expresses concerns about the impact of identity politics on society. He has become a prominent figure in conservative circles, promoting individualism and challenging aspects of the “woke” movement.

Ben Shapiro: Political commentator and author Ben Shapiro is known for his conservative views and opposition to “woke” ideology. Shapiro is critical of what he sees as the suppression of free speech in the name of political correctness. He often engages in debates and discussions, challenging “woke” ideas and advocating for conservative principles.

Candace Owens: Conservative political commentator Candace Owens has been vocal in her opposition to “woke” culture and identity politics. Owens argues against what she perceives as victimhood mentality and emphasizes personal responsibility and self-empowerment. She has been critical of movements like Black Lives Matter, asserting that they perpetuate division rather than fostering unity and equality.

Dave Rubin: Talk show host and commentator Dave Rubin has been outspoken in his critique of “woke” culture and what he perceives as the stifling of open dialogue and differing viewpoints. Rubin left the progressive movement, citing concerns about its adherence to identity politics and intolerance of dissenting opinions. He has become a prominent figure in the intellectual dark web, advocating for free speech and individual liberty.

Piers Morgan: British television personality Piers Morgan has been known for his outspoken criticism of “woke” culture. Morgan has expressed concerns about what he views as

excessive political correctness and the suppression of diverse perspectives. His opposition to “woke” ideology is often evident in his media appearances and social media interactions.

Tucker Carlson: Tucker Carlson is a conservative political commentator and television host who has gained significant attention for his critiques of “woke” culture. Through his nightly program, "Tucker Carlson Tonight," he often explores topics related to identity politics, political correctness, and the perceived dangers of “woke” ideology. Carlson's incisive commentary has resonated with conservative audiences and sparked widespread discussions on issues such as cancel culture, media bias, and the limits of political correctness.

J.K. Rowling: Author J.K. Rowling, best known for the Harry Potter book series, has been vocal in her criticism of certain aspects of the transgender rights movement. Her views on gender and sex have sparked controversy, with some perceiving her comments as transphobic. Rowling has expressed concerns about the potential erasure of women's rights and the impact of gender self-identification on sex-segregated spaces. Her stance has drawn both support and backlash, leading to debates about the intersection of feminism and transgender rights.

Ricky Gervais: Comedian and actor Ricky Gervais has been vocal about his distaste for political correctness and what he sees as an overly sensitive culture. Gervais criticizes the notion of cancel culture and has defended free speech, arguing against self-censorship in comedy and entertainment. His views have made him a divisive figure, with supporters applauding his boldness and detractors accusing him of insensitivity.

Bret Weinstein: Evolutionary biologist Bret Weinstein gained prominence after an incident at Evergreen State College, where he faced backlash for questioning the implementation of a "Day of Absence" event that called for white students and faculty to leave campus. Weinstein's subsequent criticism of identity politics and cancel culture positioned him as an advocate for open dialogue and free expression. He has become associated with the

intellectual dark web and has since engaged in discussions and public speaking engagements on topics related to “woke” culture, social justice, and free speech.

Steven Crowder: Comedian and political commentator Steven Crowder is known for his conservative views and his satirical approach to criticizing “woke” culture. Crowder often utilizes humor and satire to challenge what he perceives as leftist ideologies and political correctness. His online platform, Louder with Crowder, offers a mix of political commentary, interviews, and comedic sketches that critique “woke” culture and left-leaning politics.

These figures have gained attention for their critiques of “woke” culture and their willingness to challenge prevailing narratives. Their voices contribute to the ongoing debate surrounding issues such as free speech, political correctness, and the boundaries of social activism. As the conversation around “woke” culture continues to evolve, it is essential to consider diverse perspectives and engage in respectful dialogue that allows for a deeper understanding of different viewpoints.

Conclusion

This chapter's conclusion about “woke” culture is that it has become a pervasive force in society and is increasingly being used as a platform to express political and social views. The term “woke” has been around for quite some time, but it has become more popular in recent years as people have become more aware of social issues. “woke” culture is a way for people to express their beliefs about justice and equality and to take a stand against racism and other forms of oppression. “woke” culture has become a powerful tool for social change and has been used to draw attention to various injustices, from the Black Lives Matter movement to the LGBTQ+ rights movement. Although it can be a source of controversy, it is an important part of the current cultural landscape and deserves to be respected and considered. This chapter focused on the theoretical part regarding “woke” Culture, the next chapter will tackle the divergence in perspective regarding this ideology, highlighting its arguments and

counterarguments.

Chapter 2: Exploring the Debate around “woke” Culture

2.1 Introduction

“woke” culture refers to a social and political movement that emphasizes heightened social awareness, intersectionality, inclusivity, and the challenging of power structures. “woke” Advocates argue that it promotes cultural sensitivity, respect, and social justice. However, this cultural shift has also faced criticisms, with opponents highlighting issues such as moral superiority, virtue signaling, call-out culture, double standards, and identity politics. This chapter aims to explore the arguments for and against “woke” culture, considering its social, political, and economic consequences. Additionally, it will delve into the concept of cancel culture as a direct result of the rise of “woke” culture. Furthermore, The question of Rationality will be examined by focusing on specific conflicts within the “woke” culture movement, such as the gender identity conflict, the indoctrination of children, and the gender-neutral language dilemma.

2.2 Arguments for “woke” Culture

“woke” culture represents a movement centered around social justice and equity. It encompasses a range of beliefs and practices such as raising awareness, embracing intersectionality, fostering inclusivity, promoting cultural sensitivity and respect, and challenging power structures.

2.2.1 Increased Social Awareness

Social justice movements and “woke” culture” have significantly helped create awareness around a variety of topics in today’s society. Such issues range from racial discrimination to gender equality, amongst several other areas of advocacy (Ferrari, 2021)

One example that illustrates how ““woke” culture” has increased social awareness is the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment and assault (Murhula, 2022). According to Murhula (2022), What started out as a hashtag on Twitter created by prominent activist Tarana Burke quickly morphed into an international campaign across social media resulting

in major public figures being taken to task for their misdeeds while bringing visibility to victims of abuse who otherwise would not be heard. Murhula (2022) reveals that this global call for responsibility was quite effective at spurring individuals into action, thereby raising greater societal consciousness about such crimes.

Another important cause championed by “woke” culture is education reform particularly towards aiding traditionally disadvantaged communities or those underrepresented in higher educational institutions – think minorities or people with disabilities for instance (Shapiro, 2022). According to Shapiro (2022), organizations such as Represent Education are active members in fighting this issue through initiatives like outreach programs promoting college readiness even among low/middle income households where attending university often seems improbable due to financial restraints alone - all thanks largely to the momentum generated by considerable enthusiasm surrounding this trended conscious conversation driven primarily online via ““woke” culture”.

According to Daily (2020), The goal of all this is not to undermine the significance that those before us have had in bringing awareness surrounding such social causes, however it does speak volumes towards how ““woke” culture” has furthered their cause by giving a platform for anyone and everyone from ordinary citizens who are struggling with poverty to well-known celebrities speaking out against racism be heard. A digital mobilization bolstered largely due to various forms of media quickly solidify any matter at hand as something critically important requiring immediate attention – ultimately raising global consciousness on pertinent issues - making an impact where it counts (Daily, 2020)

2.2.2 Intersectionality and Inclusivity

According to Runyan, (2018), “woke” culture emphasizes the importance of recognizing and understanding intersectionality as a way to promote inclusivity. Intersectionality is the theory that all forms of oppression are interconnected, which allows people to understand how power operates collectively based on multiple aspects including race, class, gender identity,

faith, and sexual orientation.

Intersectionality was first coined by civil rights advocate Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 after she found that black women often faced both racism and sexism simultaneously due to them occupying two marginalized positions (Cooper, 2016, 385–406). Per Cooper, (2016), She argued that this double marginalization combined came at different costs than either would have separately since each victim had no single source but rather were exposed to a variety of everyday oppressions simply because their identities overlapped across multiple dimensions outlined by society including religion, ethnicity, and age. It allows society to see people through what they experience not just what personally held ideas about who they are.

Being “woke” acknowledges oppression exists beyond traditional forms and understands how those hierarchies multiply based on disadvantages within certain power structures depending on where someone falls along lines like class economic status. Furthermore “woke”ness has become more commonly associated with all aspects pertaining to being inclusive such as celebrating diverse cultures recognizing marginalized communities and providing equal resources to those who have been denied them in the past due to systemic oppression (Gonzalez & Butler, 2020).

It is also a tool for expression sharing ideas about causes and showing support across digital platforms such as social media .On platforms like Twitter, #BlackLivesMatter has become one of the most frequently used hashtags among “woke” activists promoting equality eradication of injustice towards black people everywhere globally millions join together through their phones’ screens by using this hashtag while simultaneously seeking justice for acts committed against individual citizens which may not receive regard in traditional venues of advocacy alone.

In an effort to explore prevalent issues , some intersectionality related documentaries provide insight into current topics such as “The Church & The Second Amendment” directed

by Emmy- nominated filmmaker Dawn Porter, following a group of new church members who embark on a journey together after being inspired by sermons focused around educating African Americans on gun rights laws; or Shukri's Shimrit Lee's film "Border Nation" which examines how state authorities target certain groups with oppressive immigration policies.. These films illustrate understanding between each other despite intersecting identities address power dynamics caused by prejudice giving people an accurate portrayal revealing issues from within will help society dismantle structures discriminating lives leading to greater respect wider acceptance bring awareness to how our actions influence and evoke change in turn progressing toward a more equitable world.

“woke” culture is believed by all its followers to emphasise the importance of understanding intersectionality, promoting recognition and equality across many diverse identities by embodying solidarity and inclusion towards individuals whose lives have been affected living under oppressive structures; encouraging people to extend support through digital community platforms or seek changes to traditional advocacy avenues such as documentaries and filmmaking which helps raise the voices of groups experiencing injustice on daily basis ,”woke” culture is believed to call people to stand together against these and create an environment that is free of hate bigotry.

2.2.3 Promoting Cultural Sensitivity and Respect

“woke” culture places a great emphasis on the promotion of cultural sensitivity and respect which lays a foundation for deepening understandings between those of various backgrounds. According to Morgan (2020), It upholds notions such as mutual respect toward other cultures regardless if they have differing values when examining human rights or social dynamics within different societies around the world today. Through encouraging proper representation towards all ethnicities without false stereotypes by emphasizing on facts regarding certain populations while lacking prejudice can demonstrate this powerful initiative taken up by “woke” culture towards creating harmony among disparate groups uniting through discourse

instead of tension causing more issues than solutions this endeavour attempts to vigorously address over time. (Morgan, 2020)

2.2.4 Challenging Power Structures

A key part of being “woke” is understanding how different types of power dynamics can be used to uphold certain ideas or beliefs while simultaneously oppressing others who don't fit into these narrow categories (Collins, 1986). When individuals realize their own personal privileges within a system, they oftentimes gain an even greater understanding of its oppressive nature - this awareness gives them the ability to better challenge said structure when it does not serve everyone equitably or justly rather than remaining quiet due to feeling powerless.

This challenging attitude, then, leads to collective action demanding reformative solutions from those holding power positions in order for true equity-based progress towards social justice movements can be made possible long-term with enough sustained energy dedicated towards enacting institutional/structural changes throughout the pertinent domains involved (i. e. educational, political and economic systems) (Hutchinson, 2011).

“woke” culture encourages individuals to actively question attitudes and beliefs that are hindering progress towards greater justice in society. It challenges people to evaluate their relationships with power structures they may have taken for granted previously - including acknowledging any of the implicit privileges or blind spots they might have personally benefited from without being aware of it before-hand. It seeks to reframe traditional ways of thinking around hierarchies by putting forth an understanding which acknowledges how embedded values can shape our lives as well as those we interact with (or don't).

“woke” culture also provides platforms/spaces for dissenters, outcasts, minorities who otherwise would not find a voice within dominant circles or conversations due to oppression & exclusionary tactics throughout history; these spaces offer support for alternative

views/ideas being discussed openly where constructive dialogue on ideas is encouraged rather than one-sided monoculture perspectives dominating discourse. Additionally many activist campaigns aimed at protecting human / civil rights have been fueled by this newfound self-agency found through “woke”ism or “woke” culture – creating grassroots movements demanding change whilst educating more traditionally privileged citizens about ongoing issues pertinent within the environment too so everyone has access to solutions applicable both locally & globally regardless of race or gender.

2.3 The Arguments Against “woke” Culture

Ever since the advent of “woke” ideology emerged and captured the spotlight, an instant and widespread opposition permeated across a substantial populace, comprising a multitude of individuals who harbored an extensive array of well-articulated arguments, denouncing and challenging the very essence of “woke” ideals and the accompanying societal expectations they entail.

2.3.1 Moral Superiority and Virtue Signalling

Critics of “woke” culture argue that it has the potential to cultivate an environment of moral superiority and virtue signaling. They contend that within this culture, individuals may engage in a competition of sorts, vying to demonstrate their adherence to specific progressive values and beliefs. As a result, there is a concern that a performative culture emerges, placing more emphasis on appearing morally superior rather than fostering genuine empathy, understanding, and taking meaningful action.

In the realm of social media, for example, there have been instances where individuals use platforms like Twitter or Instagram to publicly align themselves with certain causes or issues without necessarily taking substantive action to address them. This behavior, often referred to as "virtue signaling," involves sharing posts or making statements that signal support for progressive ideals, but it may lack depth, personal engagement, or a commitment to tangible

change (Eriksen, 2021). Critics argue that this performative aspect of “woke” culture can overshadow the genuine empathy and understanding needed to address complex social issues effectively.

Moreover, the pursuit of moral superiority within “woke” culture can lead to an environment where individuals engage in call-out culture or publicly shame others for perceived transgressions. While accountability is essential, critics argue that this aspect of “woke” culture can sometimes become excessive or disproportionate, focusing more on individual slip-ups rather than fostering education, growth, and understanding. This can create a toxic environment where people fear expressing their opinions or engaging in meaningful dialogue due to the potential for public humiliation or ostracization.

It is important to note, however, that these concerns do not apply universally to all individuals who align themselves with “woke” culture. Many individuals within this movement genuinely strive for progress and work towards dismantling systemic inequalities. However, according to Eriksen, (2021) critics point out that the performative nature and moral superiority that can arise within “woke” culture may hinder its ultimate goals of creating a more inclusive and equitable society. They argue that it is crucial to shift the focus from performative displays to meaningful actions and sustained efforts that result in tangible positive change.

2.3.2 Call-out Culture:

In recent times, the emergence of call-out culture has become a common occurrence in both online and offline social interactions. Per Lee, (2017), Call-out culture is defined as when individuals publicly report on and humiliate another person for their wrongdoings, frequently without allowing for any subtleties or remorse to be contemplated. Even though it may have been created with the goal of holding people responsible for their behaviour, its effects can severely undercut dialogs and personal progression negatively.

Call-outs are usually conducted publicly so as to increase criticism towards those who did something wrong; this includes on various types of social media platforms such as Twitter/Facebook but also through face to face interaction (Lee, 2017). This form of exposure could significantly damage one's reputation toward employers or even cause threats meaning total insecurity exists due partaking in discussions - growing uneasiness from criticism no matter what platform is used to make said statements.

The most prominent argument against call-out culture arises from its tendency to oversimplify complex situations and overlook the factors that contribute to personal growth, such as education. Instead, it often focuses on isolated instances where certain expressions are assumed to have negative connotations. By suppressing opportunities for self-reflection, seeking understanding, and engaging in any form of constructive action, call-out culture leans more towards punishment rather than fostering a reasonable and compassionate environment. (Stein, 2015).

According to Stein, (2015), Call out culture leads to adverse practices where public humiliation prevails over fostering constructive conversations which lead onto development, hindering growth through discouraging discussion that could potentially foster progress. Instead encouraging an open atmosphere that results from comprehending different opinions without involving fear of repercussions coming from rebukes - constraining interactions that spontaneously appear that evoke thoughts regarding diverse ways of logic so no true personal evolution can take place.

2.3.3 Double Standards

Within the discourse surrounding “woke” culture, one frequent criticism is the allegation of double standards. Critics argue that “woke” culture often applies different standards and expectations to individuals based on their identity, which can lead to feelings of resentment and accusations of hypocrisy. While it is important to approach this topic with nuance and

recognize the complexities of social dynamics, examining instances where double standards may arise can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the concerns expressed by critics.

One aspect where double standards are often discussed within “woke” culture is in the realm of language and humor. Advocates for social justice frequently emphasize the importance of using inclusive and non-offensive language, promoting respect and sensitivity towards marginalized communities. However, critics argue that this focus on language can sometimes lead to a selective application of these standards (Dale, 2020). Critics contend that certain groups or individuals are granted more leniency when it comes to making jokes or using language that may be deemed offensive, while others are held to a stricter standard. This perceived inconsistency can generate a sense of unfairness and contribute to the notion of double standards within “woke” culture.

An example that is frequently cited involves the treatment of public figures and celebrities. Critics argue that “woke” culture tends to be more forgiving and understanding towards individuals who align with its ideals, even when they make controversial or offensive remarks. On the other hand, they assert that those who express dissenting viewpoints or are perceived as not conforming to “woke” ideology face swift and severe condemnation. This discrepancy in the treatment of individuals based on their alignment with “woke” values can be seen as evidence of double standards and can undermine the credibility and legitimacy of the movement.

Another area where double standards are observed is in the evaluation of historical figures. “woke” culture often encourages a reevaluation of historical figures and their actions through a modern lens, emphasizing the need to acknowledge and address the harmful legacies of the past. However, critics argue that this scrutiny is inconsistently applied, with some figures receiving harsher criticism and condemnation compared to others. They contend

that this differential treatment based on factors such as race, gender, or social status can perpetuate biases and create an impression of double standards within “woke” culture.

In the Feminist discourse, Critics such as American attorney, conservative activist, author, and anti-feminist spokesperson for the national conservative movement, Phyllis Stewart Schlafly, often point to specific instances where they believe feminism may exhibit double standards or fail to include all women. For example, some argue that certain feminist campaigns focus solely on women's issues while overlooking or dismissing men's issues, such as custody rights or male mental health. Moreover, detractors highlight instances where feminist discourse predominantly centers on the experiences of cisgender, middle-class, or Western women, potentially neglecting the challenges faced by women from marginalized communities. These examples serve as points of contention, prompting ongoing debates within the feminist movement regarding intersectionality and the need for inclusivity in addressing diverse women's experiences.

Furthermore, according to Dale (2020), critics argue that “woke” culture sometimes demonstrates a tendency to dismiss or downplay valid concerns and criticisms raised by individuals who do not subscribe to its ideals. This dismissal can be seen as a form of intellectual inconsistency, where dissenting voices are silenced or marginalized without a fair hearing. The perception of shutting down opposing viewpoints while simultaneously promoting the importance of open dialogue and inclusivity can be interpreted as evidence of double standards within “woke” culture.

It is important to note that while these instances of perceived double standards within “woke” culture are prevalent, it still yielded countless contributions and effected great societal change. The focus on social justice and equity has undeniably brought attention to important issues and initiated important conversations. However, engaging in a critical examination of potential inconsistencies within “woke” culture allows for a more nuanced understanding of

its complexities and can contribute to a more constructive and inclusive discourse.

The allegation of double standards within “woke” culture raises important questions about consistency, fairness, and the application of principles. By acknowledging and addressing these concerns, the movement can strengthen its credibility and foster greater dialogue and understanding. Striving for transparency, consistency, and open-mindedness within “woke” culture is crucial to ensuring that its goals of social justice and equity are pursued in a fair and inclusive manner.

2.3.4 Identity Politics

Identity politics is a prominent aspect of “woke” culture that has drawn both support and criticism. Critics argue that the heavy emphasis on identity politics within “woke” culture can perpetuate divisions and prioritize group identity over individual merit and character (Bernstein, 2005). By exploring the implications of this focus on group identity, we can gain a deeper understanding of the concerns raised by critics and the potential consequences it may have on equality and fairness.

According to Bernstein, (2005) Many have raised the objection that identity politics can lead to individuals being over-simplified and generalized based on only their identity traits. Critics argue that when “woke” culture places excessive emphasis on group identity, it risks oversimplifying the complexities of individual experiences and perspectives. This oversimplification can contribute to stereotypes and reinforce divisions between different social groups, hindering the potential for nuanced understanding and meaningful dialogue.

Furthermore, critics contend that the heavy focus on identity politics within “woke” culture may prioritize group identity over individual merit and character. By placing significant emphasis on specific social identities, such as race, gender, or sexual orientation, critics argue that there is a risk of overlooking individual qualities and achievements. The emphasis on group identity has been seen as contrary to the principles of equality and

fairness, as individuals may be judged or handled differently based only on their association with a given group.

According to Bernstein, (2005), an example often cited by critics is the discussion around affirmative action policies. Proponents of affirmative action believe that it is necessary to rectify past inequalities and diversify, while critics contend that this preferential policy could lead to group identity being given precedence over individual capability. They contend that when decisions about opportunities or resources are based primarily on identity characteristics, it can undermine the principle of meritocracy and create an environment where individuals are judged primarily on their group affiliation rather than their individual abilities.

Additionally, critics express concern that the heavy emphasis on identity politics within “woke” culture can lead to a fragmentation of society. Critics contend that emphasizing personal social identities can lead to a “them versus us” mindset, thereby creating separations based on individual traits. This in turn could impede the formation of a communal identity that pushes beyond dissimilarities and furthers an awareness of shared humanity. That said, it is likewise worth noting how such attention given to identity politics within progressive circles has raised consciousness regarding the difficulties endured by certain groups, while also furthering inclusion when dialoguing about justice. The intention behind identity politics is often to address historical injustices and promote equality for marginalized groups. However, critics argue that an overemphasis on group identity can sometimes overshadow the importance of individual agency, personal growth, and shared values that can transcend identity categories.

While identity politics initially emerged as a response to societal injustices, it is crucial to critically examine its potential drawbacks. Divisiveness, inequality within identity groups, the neglect of individual merit, inhibiting dialogue, and a potential disregard for people’s shared

humanity are all significant concerns associated with this approach. Striking a balance between acknowledging diverse identities and fostering a cohesive society is vital for creating an inclusive future that transcends narrow categorizations and embraces the collective well-being of all individuals.

2.4 Impacts of “woke” Culture

“woke” Culture and “woke” ideology, while seems like a set of values and ideas, has left a deep mark on different fields and it still continues to have immeasurable and consistent impact on society, politics and the economy.

2.4.1 Social Consequences

One common effect attributed to “woke” culture is heightened levels of paranoia amongst those who might consider themselves “woke” (Shapiro, 2022). People can get so focused on identifying potential sources of injustice or oppression that it leads people down paths of unfounded accusations and unsupported conspiracies. Per Shapiro (2022), This type of thinking may cause strain between individuals if they feel accused by someone for things beyond their control that have been unfairly labeled oppressive or based solely off speculation rather than fact. For example, earlier this year McDonald's faced significant criticism when cries of racism were made against a clothing line they released which featured matching hoodie sets sporting different colors- pink being referred to as 'Cute' while black was deemed 'Cool.' Critics argued this implied blackness was somehow edgier than cuteness—a problem further cemented when McDonalds pulled both color variations from store shelves without offering an explanation for the decision. (Shapiro, 2022)

Another negative associated with “woke” culture is that it shuts down dissenting opinions, which may stifle healthy discourse and authentic dialogue regarding critical issues. “woke” activists will often treat views seen as antithetical to their stances heavily, even resorting to shaming or making those who disagree uncomfortable for expressing different beliefs. For

example, in 2017 Harvard professor Ronald Sullivan was removed from his job as faculty dean at Winthrop House due largely from student protests sparked by him taking on Harvey Weinstein's defense team within a legal case- despite being well within ethical bounds of practice given he did not have direct control over judging the case itself but merely provided counsel during proceedings. “woke”ness had become such an entrenched value amongst college students at this time that simply involving yourself with individuals accused of misconduct was enough to get you deemed unfit for leadership positions regardless if you were trustworthy or not -muting any conversation concerning approaches other than complete exclusion when dealing with uncertainties like these

One more attitude attributed to “woke” culture is its tendency towards identity politics and oversimplification people’s complex differences into standard roles determined solely based off attributes relating race/sex/class., often leading one group gaining visibility over others while distorting representation instead of bettering it overall. Some argue that this can in essence be a form of reverse discrimination, particularly when it excludes individuals belonging to various backgrounds from earning success due to their lack ““woke” points” instead individual accomplishments like any past competitive job applicant.

For instance, JK Rowling had her title as Harvard commencement speaker revoked during the height of 2020s “woke”culture, criticized partly for being labeled transphobic despite having donated nearly \$20 million supporting work focusing on transgender inclusion and support overall (Morgan, 2023). It soon became clear this wasn't simply an issue concerning her feelings about transgender identities but more so about how she believes gender not only existing beyond just 2 binary options but also should go at least somewhat further than what certain other “woke” activists proclaim given suggestion people exclude those with different beliefs—leaving many feeling acknowledgement probably should have been extended regardless even if they don’t agree with her views 100%.

Clearly there are negative aspects associated with “woke” culture which cannot be overlooked. While its intentions might primarily stem out of good will and justice driven reform- it is still important understand its related social consequences before taking action accordingly in order create sustainable change as opposed duplicating tired patterns resulting overzealously the idea evermore equality without properly planning transition period needed make permanent positive impact society.

2.4.2 Political Consequences

Despite potentially having plenty of beneficial implications if adopted by many people – especially ones with existing influence – the concept of “woke” Culture also now appears to be charged with controversy among certain circles due to its increased levels politicization over recent times; something which activists have long sought against so that their points get heard without fear or restriction based vilification or outright ignorance. But what are some examples we've seen that demonstrate how deeply this intellectual journey into “woke”ness might affect our politics?

One clear example could be, American politician and diplomat, Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign nomination back in 2016 when then US President Barack Obama expressed his admiration through labelling her “woke”. That endorsement caused uproar within certain Republican circles due to its implications around race and gender which they perceived as political posturing, despite Obama's intention being continually expressed in a positive light.

Another interesting case is the response towards Marvel’s Black Panther movie when it first came out in 2018. The portrayal of an African nation teeming with technologically advanced societies was unanimously celebrated among audiences; yet some conservatives denounced it for preaching 'black identity politics' simply because it had empowered black characters at its core —which understandably frustrated many people due to their own

experiences or prejudices surrounding this issue.

While not directly related to ‘political consequences’- there has also been plenty of discussion over how “woke” culture could affect pop culture on a larger scale too; like criticism towards Cardi B for performing her latest single without adequately warning viewers about topics such as sexual violence that would obviously be present (even though she later removed those scenes). Or more recently – debates regarding whether Drake needlessly inflated his own position by using North Africans actors/extras during one episode where he accepted his Grammy award wearing traditional Islamic dress.

It should come as no surprise then why so many influential institutions are choosing discretion rather than risk taking sides when adopting “woke” principles—because of the complexity and emotional investment they can create however true or exaggerated these perceived messages may be. This is not to mention too that those deemed aligned with ‘the “woke”st’ crowd don’t accept anything less than absolute commitment either – something that even some dedicated progressive activists might struggle with given potential differences elsewhere in their opinions/ convictions.

No side fully owns this term nor will it stop developing; yet we must acknowledge what current discussions on “‘woke” culture’ really mean if we are to seriously consider its larger impact today. From left-leaning presidential campaigns like Hilary Clinton's right through down to popular movies such as Black Panther - all provide invaluable examples demonstrating how crucial boundaries need remain intact when considering any cases of possible politicization (across all sides) while also promoting solidarity around issues which ultimately seek fairness for everyone involved.

2.4.3 Economic Consequences

The rise of “woke” culture is increasingly evident in many countries, as people embrace more progressive attitudes and speak out against injustice and inequality. This newfound

enthusiasm for social justice can have far-reaching economic consequences that affect businesses, employees and entire nations. Understanding the different ways “woke” culture can affect the economy is essential in order to make informed choices about public policy as well as consumer habits.

One direct consequence of “woke” culture on the economy comes through reduced profits or sales due to boycotts or campaigns aimed at adjusting branding metrics such as logos which may be deemed culturally insensitive by some consumers; an example being Pepsi's branded shirt earlier this year featuring a red kolovratska motif linked with Nazi Germany sparked outrage among customers leading to its immediate withdrawal from shops shelves (Knobbe, 2023) . Per Knobbe (2023), The company not only lost potential profits related directly to those units that would have been sold but also overall brand image could suffer resulting in long run revenue losses too. Similarly, Nike recently received significant backlash when they endorsed Colin Kapernick after he knelt during national anthem before NFL games whilst protesting police brutality -it resulted in the Burning of Nikes products by outraged customers however it was followed shortly afterwards with statements applauding them for standing up for something important customer base was also won over in support & the company received huge upticks in their revenue as a result (Cobb, 2018).

The emphasis on diversity, inclusion, and combating discrimination within “woke” culture has prompted companies to adopt policies and initiatives to address these concerns. While fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace is essential, some argue that excessive focus on “woke” issues may lead to an environment of hypersensitivity and political correctness. This can potentially hinder open dialogue and free expression, which may impact workplace dynamics and productivity.

Moreover, Companies have increasingly sought to align themselves with “woke” values in their branding and advertising campaigns to appeal to socially conscious consumers. While

this can be seen as a positive step, there are instances where such efforts have been criticized as performative or inauthentic. Consumers are becoming more discerning and can perceive tokenistic attempts, which may damage a company's reputation and bottom line.

It is important to note that the economic consequences of “woke” culture are complex and multifaceted. While there are instances where it may result in negative outcomes, it can also drive positive change and encourage companies to be more socially responsible. Balancing the pursuit of social justice with economic considerations remains an ongoing challenge for businesses and society as a whole.

2.5 Cancel Culture as a Direct Result

In recent years, cancel culture has been a hot-button issue in the world of popular media and public discourse. Although its exact definition depends on who is doing the talking, cancel culture generally is used to describe group dynamics where individuals are publicly shamed or punished for their words or actions - often via social media - by peers that have deemed them offensive (Ealasaid, 2013). While there are mixed opinions out there about this phenomenon, it is apparent that many aspects of cancel culture stem directly from claims rooted in “woke”ness. In general terms: Cancel Culture == Considerable subset “woke” Culture

To understand further why cancel culture might accompany “woke”ness so closely one must firstly look at some common traits which both possess . To begin with they both involve a moral superiority – canceling someone serves as a vehicle to demonstrate ethical correctness while simultaneously punishing those seen as insufficiently informed. Herein lies perhaps one most glaring connection between these two phenomena: Each provides groups voicing grievances with tangible means of action within society – without having formal legislative authority or necessary resources traditional protest movements would normally require.

With cancel culture, individuals and groups can immediately express disapproval or displeasure with something they view as unacceptable which allows for the propagation of ideas from minority voices who had previously been unable to easily make their grievances heard. In much the same way, “woke”ness promotes an understanding of the prejudice present in certain facets of society by bringing attention to social justice issues through education and discourse. Therefore, both serve as vehicles for those seeking more overall equitable representation within our world.

Consequently due to these shared attitudes towards creating change one may speak cogently on how “woke”ism fosters a platform where canceling someone no longer carries the mere risk of isolation but serves a purpose - noticeably deterring behaviors that are deemed offensive while publicly urging respectful views onto others . Thus it is worth noting that when examining cancel culture honestly – its ultimate effectiveness depends on moral guidance guided by values which have emanated from ““woke”” ideology. For instance, many people will cite 'cancel-culture-run amok' during instances where personal statements like musical lyrics become interpreted so superficially as hate speech providing fodder for public shaming campaigns – however viewing this solely through reactive optics neglects potential need (coming out if spoke origin) for such a movement.

In this regard, Pippa Norris writes:

On the other, however, critics argue that the movement has gone too far, especially on college campuses, so that it now threatens classical liberal values at the heart of academic life. As exemplified in *On Liberty* by John Stuart Mill, liberalism champions tolerance of non-conformity and freedom of speech, even for, or indeed especially for, especially for the expression of deeply unpopular and contrarian opinions.⁴ Only by questioning dogma and the conventional wisdom can we become aware of our own prior values and beliefs (2020)

Cancel Culture is threaded with “woke” culture as both require an understanding of how systemic injustice has undermined the plights and experiences of certain populations - thus in turn provides individuals and groups the means to oppose what they perceive to be threats towards these developments. However while this may hold some solace of empowerment for those enfranchised by “woke’ness , it is also essential to approach any discussion on cancel culture objectively – understanding that without moderating values therein preempt escalating conflicts or collateral damages that often accompany mass indignation .

2.6 The Question of Rationality

While “woke” Culture gained many adherents and supporters, it managed to also collect a large number of critics and opponents. One major concern that all critics of this “woke” ideology keep mentioning the ways in which it’s enforced upon society in almost “irrational” manner (Lansky, 2023), arguing that it tries to erase traditional ideals and basic terms and replace them with more “woke” alternatives as well as altering and spoiling the conventional way of life.

2.6.1 The Gender Identity Conflict

In the age of “woke” culture, the conflict surrounding gender identities has intensified due to increased awareness and discussions around issues of gender equality and LGBTQ+ rights.

The rise of “woke” culture has had a great impact on increasing awareness of gender beyond the two-gendered binary model. According to the “woke” ideology, gender identity does not fit just into male or female, but can include transgender, nonbinary and genderqueer identities as well. This shift in understanding has resulted in a reexamination of societal norms concerning gender roles. According to National Center for Lesbian Rights⁶, there is currently debate over legal rights for individuals with less conventional genders; such as legal

⁶The National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) is a non-profit, public interest law firm in the United States that advocates for equitable public policies affecting the LGBTQ community.

protection against discrimination, the right to self-identify one's own gender and access to healthcare services specifically suited for them - like being able to use their chosen pronoun or having dedicated health care options for those who experience mental distress due to an incongruous body image between external appearance and inner sense of individual core essence (that may be either more than two gendered). In addition, many people argue about granting these individuals open access to sports events without restrictions according to traditionally assigned biological sex categories.

The conflict surrounding gender identities is not solely limited to legal and political realms; it also involves cultural and religious perspectives. Some cultural and religious traditions adhere to strict binary views of gender and may reject or stigmatize individuals who do not conform to these norms. This clash of values can lead to tensions between different communities and result in legal and social battles over LGBTQ+ rights.

The use of language and terminology surrounding gender identities has become a contentious issue. “woke” culture emphasizes the use of inclusive language and the adoption of gender-neutral terms to create a more inclusive society. However, critics argue that this linguistic shift can be confusing or infringe upon free speech. The conflict over language often reflects deeper disagreements about the nature of gender and the validity of non-binary identities.

One area of concern raised by some individuals is the impact of gender identity on women's spaces and rights. “woke” culture's emphasis on self-identification and gender fluidity has led to discussions surrounding the inclusion of transgender women in spaces traditionally designated for biological women, such as women's sports or women's shelters. Some argue that these discussions can potentially disregard the experiences and concerns specific to biological women, including issues related to sex-based oppression and the protection of women's rights.

The conflict surrounding gender identities has polarized public discourse, with strong opinions and emotions on both sides. Social media platforms have become battlegrounds for heated debates, often leading to online harassment, doxing, and cancel culture. The polarized nature of these debates can make it challenging to find common ground and work towards constructive solutions.

2.6.2 The Gender-Neutral Language Dilemma.

Gender-neutral language use focuses on avoiding the use of gender-specific words and pronouns when referring to people in writing or speech. It is intended to be respectful and inclusive of all genders, regardless of biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression. Activists and “woke” individuals actively promote gender-neutral language as a way to foster an environment free from discrimination for transgender people who may not identify with either traditional binary genders (male/female). In practical terms this might mean using 'they'/'them' instead of he/she; using job titles such as firefighter rather than fireman; replacing “guys” with less gendered references such as “y’all.” Practicing these changes has become increasingly common throughout the English speaking world over recent years – though it remains much rarer in other languages due largely to lack of available terminology.

There are many examples of gender-neutral phrases that are used and supported by “woke” people:

All genders vs. both genders

“woke” individuals believe that gender expressions are manifold; hence, they avoid the use of binary language which suggests only two genders exist. For them, everyone is obligated to replace phrases such as "both genders", “opposite sex”, and “either gender" with the phrase "all genders". When discussing biological sex alone, utterances like female, male and intersex are required to be used instead.

Breastfeeding, chestfeeding

According to the “woke” ideology, the traditional term “breastfeeding” is offensive and should be replaced by “chestfeeding” or “bodyfeeding” to be more inclusive because nonbinary or trans people may not align with the term “breastfeeding” because of their gender or may have a dysphoric relationship to their anatomy i.e. they do not possess biological female breasts that have the ability to lactate.

Everyone vs. ladies and gentlemen or men and women

The use of traditional gendered language is frowned upon and is required to be replaced by gender-neutral and inclusive language. People are required to use “everyone” or “all” instead of “men” and “women” and “distinguished guests” or “folks” instead of “ladies and gentlemen”.

Pregnant women, pregnant people

While both “pregnant women” and “pregnant people” are acceptable, traditional phrases. It is unnecessary to avoid the word women by substituting phrases like “birthing people”, or “people with uteruses”. Neutral terms like “pregnant patients”, “pregnant people”, or other wording, present an inclusive alternative, per the “woke” ideology.

Critics disagree with these alternatives since using more limited and specific language is sometimes important. For instance, if discussing a study that only involves cisgender women, gender-specific language (pregnant women) would be most accurate to reference that study’s findings. If the word women is preferable, but transgender and nonbinary people are also referenced, phrasing like women and other pregnant patients can provide an inclusive alternative.

Other gender-neutral alternatives to “offensive” terms suggested by “woke” activists include:

Spokesman → spokesperson

policeman → police officer

Mothering → parent, parenting, caregiving

chairman, chairwoman → Chair, chairperson

Humankind, mankind → Humanity

Husband, wife → spouse, partner.

Latina, latino → Latinx

Critics of “woke” culture often take issue with the language associated with it. Supporters of gender-neutral language usage see this as progressive and inclusive; critics believe that erasing or ignoring genders is itself bigoted against both men and women who have distinct physical, psychological, spiritual experiences based on their sex organs

2.6.3 The Indoctrination of Children by “woke” Culture

These days, more and more schools are implementing “woke” education programs that focus on controversial topics such as gender fluidity, critical race theory and LGBT issues. Though these initiatives may have good intentions, the reality is they can lead to some negative consequences in school environments. In many cases they are leading to increased immorality amongst students by exposing them to matters which should be reserved for adults only. According to Zilber (2021), “woke” culture is 'infecting schools' and turning education into indoctrination by 'poisoning' children's minds.

One example of this is what happened at Pleasant Grove High School in Elk Grove, California where a mandatory drag show was held for teenage students without any parental input or approval before hand. Parents who spoke out were appalled; one parent noting how this event could “groom” young children into accepting abusers due its explicit nature being presented without any consideration of age appropriateness or moral implications it might bring about within society itself. (Ting, 2023)

Apart from increasing immorality among student's “woke” Education acts as a form of indoctrination resulting in parents not just losing their right over having guidance over their

child's upbringing but also pushes close-mindedness along with censorship onto those who think contrary through creating an echo chamber that shames opposing views instead focusing solely on supporting progressive ideologies while removing alternate perspectives entirely even if peacefully shared and following broader discussion rules . It is important to not ignore the dangers of exposing underage children to these ideas which are very contrite and divisive in society.

It has been argued that “woke” Education can lead to more open-mindedness among students, but this cannot be achieved by pushing certain ideals onto young people without any real guidance on how they should react or apply those beliefs thoughtfully into their lives while incorporating other aspects of moral education along with it. They must also consider alternate perspectives when debating progressive ideologies through meaningful dialogues instead of simply shunning them down, as critical thinking is an integral part associated with learning process in effectively understand current climates around delicate topics such as gender fluidity.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an in-depth exploration of the arguments for and against “woke” culture, shedding light on its multifaceted nature and its implications for society. The arguments in favor of “woke” culture highlight its potential to increase social awareness, promote intersectionality and inclusivity, encourage cultural sensitivity and respect, and challenge existing power structures. On the other hand, the arguments against “woke” culture emphasize concerns regarding moral superiority, virtue signaling, call-out culture, double standards, and identity politics.

The examination of “woke” culture's social, political, and economic consequences reveals its association with cancel culture, which has gained prominence in recent years. Cancel culture, often seen as a direct result of “woke” culture, has generated significant debate

surrounding freedom of speech, accountability, and the impact of public scrutiny on individuals and institutions.

Furthermore, the question of rationality within “woke” culture has been explored through the lens of the gender identity conflict, kids' grooming, and the gender-neutral language dilemma. These topics provide insight into the complexities and potential conflicts that arise when discussing the application of “woke” ideology in various contexts.

Overall, this chapter serves as a foundation for further analysis, encouraging a nuanced understanding of “woke” culture's strengths, limitations, and potential ramifications. By critically examining the arguments for and against “woke” culture, we can foster informed discussions and contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding social justice, equity, and inclusivity in contemporary society.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In recent times, there has been a notable rise in pressing societal concerns that have necessitated the active involvement and attention of all individuals. These complex issues range from persistent racial injustice and systemic bias to gender disparities, economic inequality, and political divisions. As a result, people and communities have been prompted to critically examine the prevailing norms and systems in their societies.

The immediate necessity for change and advancement has sparked the emergence of a fresh wave of activism for social justice. Driven by passionate individuals advocating for increased inclusivity, equality, and fairness, this movement, commonly known as "conscious culture," has gained significant momentum, permeating public discussions and reshaping societal expectations.

This dissertation comprises two chapters; the first of which thoroughly examined the multifaceted phenomenon of "woke" Culture, exploring its conceptual framework, historical evolution, influential social justice movements, the role of social media, and the involvement of prominent activists and celebrities. "woke" Culture involves heightened awareness and activism against social injustices and systemic inequalities. It originated in African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and has evolved beyond its African American roots. Key social justice movements, such as the Civil Rights Movement and Black Lives Matter, have shaped "woke" Culture. Social media has played a significant role in spreading "woke" narratives and mobilizing collective action.

The second chapter delved into the arguments both for and against "woke" culture. This chapter also examined the broader impacts of "woke" culture. It also analyzed the causal conjunction between "woke" culture and cancel culture.

"woke" culture encompasses both positive and negative elements. While it has contributed to some positive changes that are usually used by supporters as arguments for the validity of

“woke” ideals such as increased social awareness, the promotion of intersectionality and inclusivity, calling for cultural sensitivity and respect, and empowering people to challenge oppressive power structures, it is also associated with controversial aspects, usually used by opponents as arguments against “woke” ideology. These aspects include moral superiority and virtue signaling, call-out culture, double standards and identity politics. “woke” culture has also had an important impact on social, political and economic spheres, albeit usually described as negative by opponents, especially through the concept of Cancel culture which serves as a main result of the expansion of “woke” philosophy having tremendous negative impact on social and professional interactions between individuals or groups of people.

“woke” ideals are being increasingly enforced and getting ingrained in society; it aims to rebel against conventional understandings, specifically concerning gender identities, and protests against traditional language and terminologies that suggest the existence of two genders only, as well as working towards indoctrinating the youth by teaching them “woke” values.

These negative elements can undermine the movement's goals and, in some instances, be perceived as bigoted. It is important, however, to critically examine and address these downsides to ensure a more inclusive and equitable society.

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