# Twitter Thread by Professor Fleming is not supposed to be here



**Professor Fleming is not supposed to be here**
@alwaystheself



## Before the civil rights era, ALL presidential administrations in this country were both white supremacist and white nationalist. In the "modern" era, mainstream politicians learned to performatively eschew white nationalism and embrace what I call "rainbow white supremacy".

Some precisions might be helpful. White nationalism claims this country exists for the benefit of white people -- it's the legalization of white political power. White supremacy is closely tied to white nationalism, but is a broader assertion of white superiority and dominance.

From 1776 through the 1960s (roughly 200 years), the U.S. was an explicitly white nationalist and white supremacist society. After the 60s, many politicians abandoned overtly white nationalist rhetoric without redressing or dismantling centuries of white nationalist policies.

The most important thing to understand is that literally nothing was ever done by our political leadership during or after the civil rights movement to systematically uproot and dismantle the ideologies of white nationalism and white supremacy.

Instead, civil rights legislation and rhetoric were co-opted to *disregard* the white nationalist past and to *ignore* - or worse - *deny* the white supremacist present. (Cue the Bakke decision + every MLK quote used to undermine antiracist activism in the name of colorblindness)

So, to recap: After systematically institutionalizing, mainstreaming and normalizing white nationalism and white supremacist extremism for centuries, the modern political establishment decided to do nothing about either of these things after the civil rights movement.

I should clarify: By "doing nothing", modern political elites actively maintained the white supremacist status quo and much of the infrastructure of white nationalism, too.

Meanwhile, because the ideology of white superiority and entitlement to power was never systematically addressed, millions of U.S. Americans--especially but not only whites--simply continued to believe what their nation had taught them: that white lives matter more than others.

What has festered over the last 50 years is growing tension between performative public rhetoric of "multicultural inclusion" and the continued social, political and economic white supremacist norm, along with the cultural impact of centuries-long white nationalist programming.

What has been offered to Black people, Indigenous people and people of color within the current epoch of rainbow white supremacy is "inclusion" within a system that (still) channels most social, political and economic resources to people socially defined as "white".

Furthermore, the presence of said Black, Indigenous and POC individuals in certain positions of power (both in mainstream politics and extremist, fascist movements) is systematically used across the political spectrum to obscure or deny the continued existence of white supremacy.

Both white supremacy and white nationalism remain the ideological norm for millions of people. It might be said that the Republican Party has become the party of overt and whistle-dog white nationalism whereas the Democratic Party has become the party of rainbow white supremacy.

It remains to be seen whether mainstream Dems (both Party leaders and ordinary citizens) can be pushed to acknowledge and divest from white supremacy by supporting policies that systematically address the problem rather than relying on empty rhetoric and identity politics.