

Sensitizing Undergraduate Students to the Nature of White Privilege: A Guide for College Teaching

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Abstract

This paper addresses racism and white privilege in America. Racism is generally discriminatory policy and behavior aimed at oppressing nonwhites whereas white privilege is the advantage gained by whites that is not due to ability or merit. It is argued that white privilege is largely invisible and that this allows the current unacceptable status quo to continue. A survey of items is offered as a tool to be used by college teachers to sensitize students to the nature and effects of white privilege.

Key words: white privilege, racism, racial code words

1. Introduction

While racism has received considerable attention in the social sciences in the U.S., white privilege generally has not. The data revealing racist policies in American history are legion. White privilege, on the other hand, has been largely invisible. The purpose of this paper is to briefly illustrate the concept of white privilege and offer suggestions on how to make undergraduate college students more aware of its effects. White privilege is best conceptualized as the "other side of the racism coin." That is, while the study of racism focuses on the harmful effects of discriminatory policies designed to oppress nonwhites, white privilege is a term used to show how whites benefit from whiteness, regardless of the effects of racism on nonwhites. It is far easier, for example, to speak out against overt racism (e.g., hate speech, discriminatory policies, racial profiling, etc.) than it is for whites to acknowledge the advantages they receive simply because of their color.

2. Examples of Racism

Before addressing white privilege specifically, it is important to summarize the nature of racism and its effects. While this certainly is not an exhaustive discussion of racism in America, it helps get the reader into the mind-set necessary to address white privilege. For a more detailed discussion of racist policies in criminal justice see Walker (2011).

Racism has been pervasive in American society. It has been insidious, harmful and resistant to change as well. Jensen (2012), for example, points out that nonwhites are less likely to enjoy the following characteristics when compared to whites:

- . Attend primary and secondary schools with smaller class sizes;
- . Have access to computer technology in public schools and at home while in school;
- . Graduate college;
- . Earn larger salaries;
- . Keep a job during recessions;
- . Have access to adequate medical care;
- . Live in favorable housing (less dilapidation, less crime, etc.);
- . Spend a lower percentage of income on housing;
- . Have adequate access to home loans;
- . Own stocks;
- . Have retirement accounts;
- . Save a substantial amount of money (Council of Economic Advisers, 1998).

Along the same lines, black income is only about three-fifths that of whites and black joblessness is twice as high. Also, black babies are twice as likely as white babies to die in the first month of life (Jensen, 2012; United for a Fair Economy, 2004). Still others have found that black job applicants with no criminal record are less likely than white applicants with a criminal conviction to get called back by prospective employers (Jensen, 2012; Pager, 2003).

The origin of racism against nonwhites in North America goes back to the 1600s, but much of the recent damage is just as salient. For example, during the New Deal (1930s), the Social Security Act intentionally excluded people working on farms and servants from being covered. This effectively denied nonwhites the benefits that were routinely accorded to whites (Jackson, 1985). This support was generally taken for granted by whites and allowed them to pass down more resources to successive generations. It is not surprising that nonwhites typically had less ability to meet financial responsibilities. This white privilege was a strong boost for whites as they sought to: 1) save money, 2) pass down money to their heirs, 3) provide for their children's education, 4) choose a place to live, etc. Similarly, another New Deal program (e.g., FHA) typically favored whites over nonwhites for home loans. This made it much easier for whites to buy homes and property and to leave them for their children. This type of white privilege gave a huge head start to whites starting out in life (Jackson, 1985).

Also, the U.S. has been loath to enforce fair housing rules on lenders and sellers. As a result, substandard inner-city housing was foisted upon nonwhites with higher rates of crime, pollution, weak and abusive police, etc. As a response, many whites who were averse to living among nonwhites, left for the suburbs and the access to white privileged home loans. This allowed whites to accumulate prime homes and property to be left as inheritances while nonwhites were left in the squalor of the broken inner-city. Eventually, the federal government began urban renewal projects that led to the confiscation of nonwhite=s property for the purpose of office building and highway construction. This resulted in a population decline that led to less political power which in turn led to vulnerability to having prisons, garbage incinerators, and toxic waste dumps being placed in their neighborhoods (Bullard, 1999).

Labor unions during this time also favored whites as well. Unions typically sought to restrict membership to whites while simultaneously seeking lavish benefits for its members (e.g., better working conditions, healthcare, pensions, etc.). This also exacerbated the inequality between whites and nonwhites.

The end result of this vicious and racist cycle of economic violence against nonwhites was that nonwhite neighborhoods were dilapidated, polluted, undervalued, stigmatized, had poor services (and in the case of police, abusive services), were undesirable, politically weak and essentially hopeless. This acted as a major impediment to getting ahead in life while at the same time providing a huge privilege to whites who had the inverse situation in the comfortable suburbs.

Research has shown that of families with incomes of less than \$6000 per year, two-thirds are black while only 36% are white. This is yet another indicator that poverty cannot explain the deleterious effects of being black in America by illustrating the privilege of whiteness (Bunyan and Mohai, 1992). Race is significantly more powerful than socioeconomic class at explaining and predicting who is most likely to live near hazardous waste sites (Lee, 1993). In fact, if American blacks had the same access to nutrition, wealth, healthcare, and protection from environmental pollutants that whites take for granted, 75,000 fewer of them would die every year (Wray, 1992; Lipsitz, 2006).

Another area where it pays to be white concerns the issue of drug use and possession. While the prison population in the U.S. has dramatically increased since the initiation of the latest war on drugs in the early 1980s, the rate of growth has impacted nonwhites more than whites. This is in spite of the fact that a 1990 study by the National Institute on Drug Abuse revealed that 15% of the United States' 13 million chronic drug abusers were black (compared to 13% black in the population) and 77% were white (compared to 68% white in the population). However, blacks were four times more likely to be arrested for drug violations than were whites (Bertram, et al., 1996). More shocking is the trend toward the persecution of blacks by drug law enforcement. That is, in 1984, blacks accounted for 10% of drug arrests, in 1988 the figure was 40% and in 1990 it reached 42%. Either black Americans suddenly decided to become severely chronic drug law violators or law enforcement became substantially more discriminatory toward them. The available data point to the latter. To make matters worse, blacks also are more likely than whites to receive longer sentences even when committing comparable crimes (Bertram et al., 1996). It is not argued here, however, that police, courts and corrections personnel are all consciously choosing blacks to persecute with anti-drug laws while ignoring similarly-situated white offenders.

Nevertheless, the factors discussed thus far have produced financial and social catastrophes in black neighborhoods that whites largely have the privilege of avoiding. These economic catastrophes harm blacks (e.g., joblessness, housing discrimination, mortgage bias, police discrimination, etc.) so that selling and using drugs actually begin to "make sense" to some people. The poor opportunities to work, buy and own land, and accumulate wealth derails many blacks as they seek to better themselves. This, combined with the problem of the lack of intergenerational transfers of wealth, make it nearly impossible for black parents to exercise control over their children. Without the possibility of an inheritance, many black kids begin to respect the wishes of their delinquent peers more than they do their own parents (Lipsitz, 2012).

Even after all of this, the vicious cycle continues. Black communities then become known as the "bad parts of town" whereas the predominately white suburbs are considered respectable. As a result, crime prevention strategies are designed to keep the suburbs protected. To do this, law enforcement vigorously attacks the drug problems in those communities thereby forcing the inevitable and unstoppable drug trade to move into black neighborhoods. The result? Whites drive to black neighborhoods to buy their illegal drugs and then escape back into the white privilege of the suburbs. So long as the suburbs remain pristine, the extreme social and economic stigma of the inner-cities is tolerable. The "dangerous classes" are allowed to sell and use drugs and otherwise victimize each other so long as they stay in their places (Lipsitz, 2012).

This is not to say that urban drug sellers are ignored. In fact, the process of targeting minority communities for drug enforcement is blatant and unapologetic. The police, not wanting to agitate influential members of the white privileged suburbs, cannot direct their arrest activities at the residents in those communities. However, they have arrest quotas that must be met (although most police departments deny this). Therefore, they go to where open market street sales are highly visible and that takes them to inner-city black neighborhoods. These areas are inhabited by politically and economically powerless blacks who have poor job and education prospects and no place to go. Many of them see high risk drug sales as lucrative. The police have an easy time rounding up enough young blacks to meet their arrest and prosecution quotas. As an added benefit to the criminal justice industrial complex is the fact that these are people with few political connections and no money to afford competent defense counsel. They are far less likely to have charges reduced, dropped or ultimately expunged and they are much more likely to plead guilty because they know the system is rigged against them (Lipsitz, 2012).

3. What is White Privilege?

White privilege is the hidden, almost invisible side of racism. Whereas overt racist actions and policies disadvantage nonwhites, white privilege is the latent benefit of being white. In addition to the copious privileges of whiteness discussed above, there are still other types of advantages that benefit whites that are beyond the reach of nonwhites.

First is the privilege of genealogy. It is clear that whites have the advantage of being descended from people who traditionally made the rules. Whites have the privilege of having largely come to the U.S. voluntarily as compared to blacks, able to secure land and homes, and legally able to own other human beings. This has afforded whites a major privilege, that of being able to define normality or of assuming that their perspectives are defined as the norm. All others, especially nonwhites, are different. White becomes normal and all other groups are "raced."

Cohen (1955) alluded to how white normalcy manifests itself in school settings. In his theory of reaction formation, he argued that middle-class people (i.e. whites who are in control) are able to create middle-class measuring rods that define which behaviors are acceptable and those that are to be proscribed. In the U.S., people are taught to believe that if they do not pursue material gain (e.g., the American Dream) then they are lazy or shiftless. People are defined by how much they can earn, spend, consume and the types of materials they can show off. However, the institutional means (e.g., studying, saving, delaying gratification) of attaining the goal of middle-class status are severely blocked among the poor. Whereas the middle-class white child may have: 1) ample space at home, 2) parents to help with homework, 3) a desk, computer, learning software etc., and 4) a stress-free environment in which to study, the lower-class black child often does not. Indeed, the lower-class black youth is confronted with many of the following:

- . Knowledge that the country was intended for whites. Blacks were originally slaves;
- . Weak social controls - e.g., churches, families, clubs, low participation in voluntary organizations;
- . The presence of copious delinquent peers;
- . Dilapidation;
- . Drug-infested low value property that carries a stigma;
- . Weakened parental supervision because welfare laws encourage single parenting by reducing benefits for homes with two adults;
- . Police discrimination;
- . Hopelessness and alienation.

Most importantly, the lower-class black child lacks the cultural capital that is taken for granted in white families. Cultural capital is another form of white privilege. Cultural capital represents social benefits that promote well-being. These include things such as 1) socialization on how to be respectful to white authority figures (e.g., teachers, police, judges, employers), 2) education, 3) intellect, 4) modes of speech (e.g., "Asounding white" instead of using Ebonics), 5) modes of dress (e.g., being neat instead of gangsta/disheveled, and 6) being taught how to resolve disputes diplomatically rather than with insults or aggression.

The problems that disadvantaged lower-class blacks will have in middle-class settings such as schools are predictable. The lower-class black youth has been indoctrinated by the materialistic American culture to have the same aspirations as other kids with reference to achieving middle-class status. He also wants a job, house, car, security, retirement account, adequate health care, and vacation time with a family. When he confronts middle-class/white America, however, he experiences extreme cultural shock and disadvantage (Merton, 1938). Even though many inner-city schools are substandard and located in black neighborhoods, they still largely function according to middle-class rules. This disadvantage illustrates the middle-class measuring rods that white America has imposed on public-school systems. The criteria for success in this atmosphere includes: 1) ambition, 2) individual responsibility, 3) manners and courtesy, 4) neatness, 5) delayed gratification, 6) skills and achievement acquisition, 7) rationality and planning, 8) refraining from violence, and 9) respect for authority (Cohen, 1955).

Middle-class white kids are taught and socialized these values from an early age. This gives them a huge head start in life given that they will be evaluated according to the same standards. In the movie, "Don't Be a Menace," the Wayans brothers illustrate this type of white privilege to perfection. In one scene, A Loc Dogg, an inner-city black ghetto youth, wants to apply for a job in a middle-class firm. He approaches the receptionist, a nicely dressed, proper and prim white lady of moderate temperament. As the pleasant music softly plays in the background, Loc Dogg approaches her to ask about the job. He screeches to her loudly, "Hey! I heard y'all niggers is hiring! Whassup?"

Did Loc Dogg approach the receptionist this way because he is mean-spirited? Has hormonal imbalances? Is genetically inferior? Of course not. He did this because he grew up without white privilege and consequently was deprived of the cultural capital and was devoid of the socialization necessary to teach him the proper way to meet the middle-class measuring rods. In short, he doesn't know how to compete in a middle-class environment following white privilege rules. Whites are the ones who define and decide what proper decorum and etiquette are in this type of interaction.

In another scene, two black teens are innocently shopping in a convenience store owned by an Asian couple. The Asian wife follows the blacks through the store incessantly demanding that they "buy something or get out!" She clearly believes they are untrustworthy and prone to shoplifting. During this time, a professionally dressed white man is stealing items from every aisle but remains undetected by the Asian couple because he simply does not fit the "shoplifter profile." While these two movie scenes are hyperbolic parodies, the point from them is valid. Black males from "the hood" must endure life in middle-class white America without the benefit of white privilege. The constant psychological strain that this causes is enormous and relentless. What is even stranger is that so many whites wonder why they are often angry and rebel by committing crimes at a higher rate.

Given the magnitude of the obstacles placed in the way of lower-class blacks, success in school becomes problematic as well. Middle-class measuring rods created and evaluated by white America are relatively easy for whites to follow. When the rules are made by whites, for whites, it is easy, for example, to believe in individual responsibility while simultaneously eschewing communal responsibility.

Whites have convinced themselves that the playing field is level for everyone and if you have ambition and work hard you will succeed. However, as we have seen, the playing field is not level at all, leaving lower-class blacks at a competitive disadvantage. Blacks are told that if they fail it is because they are defective. The emphasis on individual responsibility makes it all the more painful to seek government assistance in order to survive. This of course helps to explain the self-hating that many poor blacks exhibit because they are told that everyone should make it on their own merit. The worst part is that whites genuinely believe that they make it on their own merit and not with the aid of white privilege. This is another reason college students must be made aware of that privilege.

Even good and evil are defined by whites. For example, white is good and black is bad. Phrases such as "pure as the driven snow" and "dark forces of evil" come to mind. White kids even grow up being taught that Jesus Christ, a Middle-Eastern Jew, was actually white. Even though the first humans probably lived in the continent of Africa, whites are taught that Adam and Eve were white. This prompted Wise (2011) to facetiously refer to the biblical birthplace of humanity as the Garden of Sweden.

3.1 Whiteness Equals Normal

Being white in America means being able to define what is accepted and what is proscribed. Whiteness lets us know who is hireable, housed, receives a home loan, receives adequate healthcare, obtains educational benefits and also tells us which cultural activities are to be promoted. Whiteness also defines the very language and terminology that will be allowed in public (Dyer, 2012).

Historically, whiteness also has helped to create the *myth of the meritocracy*. This is the white delusion that encourages members of society to believe that people have an equal chance at success and will attain it if they follow the Protestant work ethic requiring study, saving, paying one's dues, and following white rules. Part of the meritocratic delusion is the concept of *rugged individualism*. Here, people are duped into believing that since the early westward expanding pioneers made it without the help of the state then everyone today should do the same. No matter one's lot in life, people should pick themselves up "by the bootstraps." If, for example, a person looks to government for help then it is because of personal defects such as learned helplessness, laziness, greed, low self-control, or even genetic inferiority. To accept aid from government is seen as a cause of intergenerational dependency that will emasculate people and destroy the enterprising spirit by turning the masses into wards of the state. In America, people of color, being devoid of white privilege, are keenly aware of the ludicrousness of this reasoning. They already know that the system was created specifically with the intent of keeping resources in the hands of the powerful, predominantly white elitists. By promoting the myth of meritocracy, white America can more easily assuage its collective guilt for creating and perpetuating acute inequality between races. If, after all, people get ahead strictly as a result of their own merit, then people of color who fall behind must obviously be defective and unworthy of our concern. It follows, then, that government social programs for the poor should be both de-emphasized and drastically slashed in order to reduce the surplus population in American society. To continue to redistribute resources to the surplus population is dysgenic in nature and promotes the devolution of the human species. This forms the basis of Social Darwinism (McNamee, 2009).

3.2 Celebrating Diversity!

White America has adopted a ruse as a way of ignoring the problems of inequality and systemic racism called the "celebration of diversity." The ostensible goal of celebrating diversity is to give equal opportunity to everyone regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, handicap status, sexual preference, etc. This is only a superficial goal of course because the real goal of celebrating diversity is to create the impression of fairness and equal opportunity while simultaneously ensuring that there is no meaningful redistribution of resources away from the white ruling elite.

The white privilege scam of celebrating diversity goes like this. The horrible manifestations of racism in the areas of housing discrimination, home loans, racial profiling by the police, the imposition of middle-class measuring rods, inequality of income, early death, and environmental racism, are to all be forgiven because whites are willing to hire a couple of highly educated nonwhites in the workplace. Imagine the CEO of a firm going on the loudspeaker at his place of business to address the workers as follows:

Ladies and gentlemen of White Supremacy Incorporated (WSI), I have spectacular news! In an effort to promote equality and to offset the unfairness of past American policies and government action, we have sought out, screened, and now hired two new employees. These are not just any new employees, however. No indeed; we have hired both a highly educated, upper middle-class black guy as well as an Oriental. As an added diversity bonus, the Oriental is female. We hereby proclaim this corporation and America to be post-racial as this is proof of a level playing field. We will have a Celebration of Diversity party on Friday complete with ice cream, cake and party favors. Feel free to wear blue jeans and a Hawaiian shirt on that day.

It is precisely the reasoning behind the celebration of diversity that allows whites to remain oblivious to racial inequality and systemic racism. Whites can pat themselves on the back for hiring the black guy and the Oriental female and they are able to successfully neutralize the guilt that would be manifest if they were truly race conscious. Not only are whites not race conscious, but they actually pride themselves on being "colorblind." It is not uncommon, for example, to hear white undergraduate college students who become distressed while discussing these issues, say things such as, "I am colorblind. I do not see race," "we are all just human beings," "let's focus on how we are similar," "why are nonwhites so sensitive all the time about race," "why do nonwhites focus so much on racial differences; isn't that racist too?" Whites clearly have a vested interest in ignoring, or at least obfuscating, any distinctions to be made about race. As long as "we are all just humans," and "people who fail do so because they are defective," whites do not have to confront the systemic racism in America and the extremely hard work that must be done to bring about economic and social justice.

3.3 The Bell Curve and Defective Nonwhites

In 1994, Herrnstein and Murray published *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* where they essentially argued that blacks who failed to achieve the American Dream do so because they are genetically inferior and inherit deficient IQs from their defective parents. These types of publications give license to whites to justify the continuation of the racist policies discussed above. After all, if blacks are failing as a result of flawed genetics and defective wiring, then it really makes no sense to seek redistributive policies that will help them and the poor in general. As noted above, to do so would simply be promoting dysgenics. In other words, if we increase welfare spending it is not a way of alleviating the harms caused by centuries of racist policies, but, rather, simply a way of propping up inferior people (i.e., atavists) and will lead to a severe weakening of the U.S. population by relaxing the effects of natural selection. This terrifies white America because redistributive welfare policies will inevitably lead to a proliferation of the "dangerous classes" that will become so numerous that they will swamp the nation, particularly at the voting booths.

3.4 Intergenerational Transmission of White Privilege

White privilege also perpetuates itself through the media, literature, entertainment and language. The raw material to make this happen includes slang terminology (e.g., "he was blacklisted," the Washington Redskins, the Prince of Darkness, etc.), movies, cartoons, ethnic jokes, books, history lessons (e.g., Andrew Jackson as the "Indian fighter") and so forth. Such things help create and reinforce racial hierarchies (Barrett and Roediger, 2012). Whites also are quick to reward nonwhites who have learned how to act white. These "model minorities" are those who have learned and internalized the racial hierarchies and understand that whites are on top of it and so long as they are not as bad as blacks, they too can be deemed acceptable in American society. Asian-Americans currently occupy this role but Hispanics are moving up as well (Carbado and Gulati, 2013).

In 1980, the U.S. Census Bureau created two categories of whites: Hispanic and non-Hispanic. This was the culmination of decades of struggle by Latinos to be accepted in the "white club." Throughout the 1900s, Mexican-Americans fought in courts, legislatures and throughout society to avoid being considered colored. To be tossed in with blacks as colored would have been catastrophic from a social justice standpoint. American society and the courts granted Mexican-Americans the status of "quasi-white." This meant that while they clearly were not equal to European whites, they at least belonged to something of a parallel universe of whiteness. In essence, white privileged America told Mexican-Americans that so long as they accept white supremacist policies and recognize the inferiority of blacks they at least have a chance to be accepted as quasi-white and can enjoy some of the rewards of that privilege (Foley, 2012).

3.5 White Privilege to Divide and Conquer

Being white also gives one the advantage of being able to divide and conquer those who dare upset the white supremacist status quo. For example, the white elite powerbrokers pit union members against average Americans. Americans of all races are warned that victories by organized labor will drive up the cost of products. Unions also are blamed for businesses going bankrupt. The argument is that if unions succeed in improving working conditions, wages and pensions, then businesses will not be able to afford to stay open. Therefore, common folk are to be fearful and oppose unionization when, in reality, unions and nonunion members of middle America would be far better off siding with each other against the elite who cling to obscene amounts of the nation's wealth. Legions of "Reagan Democrats" abandoned progressive policies in the 1980s based upon this type of fear-mongering coming from those who seek to destroy organize labor.

Along the same lines, powerful white classes seek to pit modestly educated whites and people of color against undocumented workers. Terms such as "illegal aliens" are used to scare middle and lower-class whites concerning the brown invaders from south of the border. Anti-immigrant rhetoric blames migrants for importing communicable diseases, gang members, and drugs as well as for Balkanizing communities in the U.S. with their foreign customs and language. Anti-welfare propaganda is used to scare nativist Americans into believing that the social safety net will burst if millions of Mexican and Central American immigrants are allowed to "infest the country." Along the same lines, white culture and media promote images of crime designed to keep the masses divided. Criminals are typically portrayed as street offenders and disproportionately nonwhite. We are taught to be fearful of the aggressive thugs in the streets while simultaneously encouraged to ignore the crimes of the powerful such as white-collar and political crimes. This further guarantees that white supremacist control of wealth is not disturbed. This is what Karl Marx referred to as the "false consciousness" (Tucker, 1978).

3.6 Racists All Wear Pointed Hoods Don't They?

White privilege gives whites the advantage of defining exactly what racism looks like. The goal of whiteness is to create the perception that racism manifests itself in isolated individual acts or the acts of lunatic groups. Whites routinely pride themselves for their "compassionate" and "progressive" opposition to the White Aryan Brotherhood, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Neo-Nazis. By lashing out at these racist villains, whites are "proving" they have identified the enemies and are staunchly seeking to marginalize them. How, after all, can someone accuse whites of being racist if they are so opposed to these white supremacist groups? Excoriating individual members of these fringe racist groups, however, is self-serving to whites. By doing so they are obfuscating the fact that real racism can only survive when there is cultural, social, and legal support for it (Davis, 2012). It also covers up the fact that systemic racism is running rampant and is being unconsciously condoned by otherwise well-intentioned whites. This is another reason why white privilege must be made obvious to the future generation of leaders as well as college students. In one study, 70% of whites thought that blacks have the same opportunities to live a middle-class life as do Caucasians. Similarly, in 1990, more than one-half of whites saw blacks as innately lazy, less intelligent and less patriotic than whites (Landry, 1991). This illustrates the dire need to bring white privilege to the forefront of discussion in the college setting.

3.7 Criminal Justice Stigma and White Privilege

Finally, white privilege gives whites the freedom from the constant fear of being targeted by the criminal justice system based upon the color of their skin. When a black male, for example, is driving (particularly if he is in the "wrong" neighborhood), he has to psychologically maintain a state of hypervigilance. He has to worry about whether each lane change, turn, signal, and speed is within the boundaries of acceptability to white America's hired status quo enforcers (i.e., the police) or whether he will be targeted for enforcement. Whereas whites have the freedom to completely avoid black neighborhoods, blacks inevitably face the stressors of constantly being reminded that they live in a country set up to benefit whites. This takes an enormous psychological toll on blacks and it is a stressor not faced by whites. This again gives a competitive edge to whites and they need to be made aware of their advantaged status (Rothenberg, 2012).

4.0 Sensitizing Undergraduate Students to White Privilege

In light of the above discussion, the question becomes how can we get future generations of students made aware of the impact of systemic racism?

The only way to do this is to continually raise these issues in college classes. Students, particularly whites, have to be made aware not only of the harmful effects of overt racism but must also come to see the privileges they have been given that are completely independent of their merits, abilities, intellect or hard work.

One caveat is in order first, however. It is essential to point out that whiteness, while an unearned privilege that is granted in America, is not the only one available. In fact, there are copious categories of privilege available. For example, a person is privileged over others if the person is: 1) heterosexual, 2) male, 3) Christian, 4) upper-class, 5) physically able, 6) mentally healthy, and 7) educated. A white person, for example, who is gay, atheist, female, handicapped, has a mental illness, and is undereducated, is not better off than a wealthy black who is a college graduate. In sum, we all have times, places, and circumstances where we are the oppressor and at other times we may be the oppressed. Nevertheless, it is indisputable that whiteness confers upon its recipients, advantages, preferences, vital cultural capital and access to resources that simply are not available to those who have not been admitted to the club. This is true even though biologists and geneticists have eschewed the physical existence of races and come to the realization that the concept of race is a social construct created and perpetuated by those with the economic and political power to do so (Painter, 2012).

At any rate, techniques can be developed to initiate class discussions regarding these issues. White students will be very defensive when addressing the advantages they have but it is important to be persistent. One important consideration before administering any of the survey items below is to understand the goal and to frame it properly. The goal is not to make white students feel guilty for past and current systemic racism. Making them feel guilty will simply encourage them to become defensive and polarized. Phrases such as "I have plenty of black friends and they don't think I'm racist" will be uttered. To reiterate, the objective is not to make white students feel guilty or to perceive themselves as oppressors or to coerce them into becoming servile adherents of "progressive enlightened thought." On the contrary, the goal of this exercise is to have white students come to the realization on their own that they have privileges and benefits of whiteness that they have not earned. Contrariwise, it also is important to avoid exacerbating the feeling among nonwhites of victimhood or perceiving themselves as hopelessly oppressed. A guilty perpetrator/oppressor white student versus an oppressed victim/nonwhite student atmosphere will polarize the two groups and make it extremely difficult to get them to engage in meaningful dialogue. The proper atmosphere is one where both whites and nonwhites view themselves as being on the same racism fighting team. Here, the concept of allyship can be used to illustrate that white privilege not only hurts nonwhites by holding them down, but also hurts whites by creating unfairly high expectations in life. Whites who have unrealistic expectations, for example, then fail to live up to those expectations, are more likely to use chemical substances such as drugs and alcohol to cope with stress brought on by the fact that they deceived themselves into believing that they should do well relative to other races (Wise, 2011).

4.1 Goals of the Survey

The goal of the items in the following device is to sensitize students to the prevalence and impact of white privilege. By doing so, whites and nonwhites can form partnerships that will lead to more equitable treatment of nonwhites and thereby undermine the myth of meritocracy and rugged individualism. By seeing that whites do not get ahead purely by ability, students will develop more communitarian attitudes. Here, they will begin to see that without white privilege, whites would be just as dependent on aid from others as are nonwhites. Also, students will hopefully begin to realize that race is an artificial and socially created construct and that it has been assigned to them with nefarious purposes in mind. When we all discard the notion of biological and genetic differences between the races we can get to the root cause of inequality: unfair and unjustified privilege based upon the superficiality of skin color. While the "sameness" of the races biologically and genetically is fact, it should not mask the differences in opportunity between whites and nonwhites.

White students also will begin to see that racism is not simply behavior committed by individuals or lunatic fringe groups. They will be forced to confront the fact that it, along with white privilege, is systemic and cannot continue without widespread ignorance among whites as well as cultural, legal and political support. White students will see that the most harmful effects of racism and white privilege come, not from cross burnings or lynchings, but from the illusion of "colorblindness." They will understand that focusing on cross burnings is simply a way of ignoring the problem while simultaneously benefitting from whiteness. In other words, white students will be forced to confront the racialized policies and practices of the U.S. This will happen when students are exposed to these survey items combined with instructor-facilitated discussion.

4.2 Dog Whistle Racism: Racial Code Words and Phrases

Another goal of this exercise is to sensitize students to an additional form of white privilege: the use of racial code words. Codewords are currently used as a way of avoiding the criticism of being overtly racist. This basically amounts to what is widely referred to as dog whistle racism. Dog whistle racism is the use of coded phrases or terms that are only superficially free of racial animus. However, the terms resonate powerfully with the intended audience. In most cases the intended audience is made up of whites who feel vulnerable by gains made by people of color in society. The objective of dog whistle racism is to increase fear, anxiety, and resentment toward any policy that would help bring about equality as well as social and economic justice.

Undergraduate students of all races need to be sensitized to the use of racialized code words. Racial codes appear neutral but in reality are masking resentment toward nonwhites in general and blacks in particular. Whites, for example, may be lamenting the problems associated with "aggressive panhandling" in the city and the fact that it causes respectable people to avoid downtown areas thereby hurting businesses while attracting criminals. In reality, however, whites often use the phrase because they are simply not allowed to use racial slurs when referring to the homeless vagrants who are "harassing" pedestrians as they ask for spare change.

Similarly, whites take great delight in attacking the "welfare queen" who drives her fine car to the grocery store to use her food stamps paid for by hard-working white folk. In the 1950s, whites may have used the AN-word@ willy-nilly when referring to them but in 2013 the phrase is more likely to go like this: "welfare queens in this country make me so mad."

Another term commonly used by "colorblind" whites is "gang-related behavior." This is usually used rather than "urban youth," "disadvantaged children" and so on. This racial code is used as a way of criticizing young black males for being overrepresented in crime statistics. By focusing on the term gang rather than disadvantaged youth, the person exercising the white privilege is able to cast aspersions onto the individual black youth rather than indict society for allowing the inequality necessary to create the distressed social conditions that give rise to gangs in the first place.

Another racial code phrase also relates to the role of welfare in America. White privilege supporters will typically use "race neutral" terms and phrases such as "we need to reduce dependency on government." Clearly, the goal here is not to save money or improve lives but the objective is to turn the listener against nonwhites in light of the stereotype in the U.S. that a disproportionate percentage of nonwhites are on welfare. Relatedly, we need to be on the lookout for those complaining about "how so many people on food stamps are so obese. How can they be hungry?" Below are some other approaches taken by supporters of white privilege. These generally do not need explanation. Even though on the surface they sometimes appear race neutral, the intent clearly is to racialize the discussion by stigmatizing nonwhites:

- . Affirmative action is racist and sexist. It is a form of reverse discrimination against whites;
- . Forced busing hurts the good academic schools;
- . Poor people need to find a way to get fathers to take care of their kids and keep them off welfare;
- . I never owned slaves so I don't see why my group keeps getting blamed for the problems in the inner-city;
- . Why do nonwhites have to be so angry and sensitive about these issues? Let's just get along;
- . I'm not anti-immigration, I'm anti-illegal immigration;
- . Why don't people in public housing take better care of the property that we give them for free?
- . Welfare parasites keep having more babies so they can get more handouts;
- . Why is it that the bottom 47% of workers in the U.S. pays 0% of the federal tax burden?
- . Why do I have to pay for mass transit when I don't use it?
- . Why do people get to use emergency rooms even when they don't pay?
- . Police should crackdown on street corner drug sales;
- . Now is the time to get tough on crime.

This "survey" is not meant to be administered in its entirety as this would demoralize and fatigue respondents. These items should be sampled by college teachers and used as tools to initiate meaningful debate with students in class. Many of these items have been excerpted from disparate sources (e.g., Wise, 2011; McIntosh, 1990) over a period of several years. Some others were created by the author and students from various criminal justice courses.

Many others were inspired by two recent 2013 events attended by the author: 1) a racial inclusion conference at the Ohio State University, and 2) a cultural competency training seminar sponsored by the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance. Response categories could be created if desired but the questions alone have proven very effective in the past at getting conversations (and many lively debates) started.

5.0 White Privilege Survey

- . When was the first time you were made aware of your race and recognized that it would play an important role in the challenges you faced on a daily basis?
- . How often are you reminded about being the race with which you identify?
- . Tell a story about a recent situation where you were reminded of your race. What caused you to think about it?
- . As a child how often were you given safety instructions on how to walk through a department store or public establishment in a way that did not foster suspicion or attract attention?
- . How often have you been taught by parents, guardians or family members on how to behave or what to say in order to avoid being perceived as dangerous or menacing when confronted by police, teachers or authority figures?
- . Discuss the last time you talked with friends and family members whether or not your racial identity is negatively impacting your daily interactions with others.
- . How often have you wondered if your race negatively impacted a job interview, a grade, or a confrontation with a co-worker or a friend?
- . Discuss the last time that you were the only person of your identified race in a daily activity such as church, school, bars, or nightclubs etc.?
- . Have you ever been tempted to deny your racial identity in order to feel more comfortable in a particular setting or to have an advantage? Describe the situation.
- . Have you ever found yourself feeling frustrated, invisible or ashamed in a history class because you felt your people weren't represented adequately?
- . How much do you believe that history courses should be renamed, "White History 101"?
- . While watching television or movies do you often feel that people who look like you or are racially/culturally connected to you are not represented adequately in the media?
- . How often have you adjusted your behavior out of concern that people might assume or suspect you to be lazy, inarticulate, untrustworthy, criminal, or unintelligent because of your race?
- . How often do you notice that the majority of authority figures in your school or work environment are of a race different than your own?
- . How do you think this affects your performance level?
- . How often do you feel a need to be reassured you are just as good as someone of another racial group because of a negative experience?
- . How often have you wondered if something you said or did in a public setting might reflect negatively on your race?
- . To what extent do you believe that whites are afraid of who is "gaining on them"?
- . To what extent do you worry about what people of other races think about you because of your race?
- . To what extent do you think racial profiling is good police practice given that blacks commit a disproportionate amount of crime?
- . To what extent do you believe the election of Obama means the U.S. is now post-racial?
- . To what extent do you believe that slavery has had a negative impact on the quality of your life?
- . To what extent do you believe that you have to "prove yourself" more than others because of your race?
- . If you were assigned to do a class project involving tracing your family history back hundreds of years, to what extent do you think it would be a source of pride for you based on your race?
- . To what extent do you believe your race is generally known for being hard-working?
- . To what extent do you believe that since no whites living in America today ever owned slaves, it would be inappropriate to pay reparations to the descendants of black slaves?
- . To what extent do you believe that since the vast majority of whites thought slavery was OK in the 1800s, we should not be so critical of them when we evaluating them today?
- . How do you feel about the fact that it was white Republicans who freed the slaves in 1865?

- . To what extent do you believe that if you wished to, you could arrange to be in the company of people of your own race most of the time?
- . If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
- . I can be pretty sure that neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
- . Most of the time when I go shopping I am pretty sure that I am not going to be followed by one of the store employees.
- . Whenever I am pulled over by the police, I am nearly certain that it is not anything to do with my race.
- . I can turn on the TV or open a newspaper and be pretty confident that I will see people of my race widely represented.
- . When I am told about our national heritage I am mostly shown that people of my color made it what it is today.
- . If I had kids I would be pretty sure that the materials that they received in their schools would testify to the contributions of their race.
- . If I were to go into a randomly selected hairdresser's shop I am pretty sure that I could find someone who could cut my hair.
- . When I go into a typical grocery store, I am pretty sure that I can find food that fits my cultural traditions.
- . Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of my economic viability.
- . If I had kids, I would be pretty confident that I could find people to protect them from people who may not like them.
- . I can use profanity in public without having people attribute this choice to bad morals or the illiteracy of my race.
- . I can dress the way I want to and most of the time people I see in public do not look at me as though I am violating middle-class measuring rods or standards.
- . I can make a good point in a public debate without having people refer to me as "a credit to my race."
- . I am rarely if ever asked to "speak for my race."
- . I feel as though American society forces me to learn about the dominant cultural group when I really do not want to.
- . I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behaviors without being seen as an instigator.
- . Typically, I am very confident that if I were to ask to see the person in charge I would see a person of my race.
- . I can easily buy posters, postcards, pictures, greeting cards, toys or magazines featuring people my race.
- . In most social gatherings, I feel as though I am a member of the dominant group, and do not feel like an outsider.
- . I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having co-workers on-the-job suspect that I got it because of my race.
- . I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help my race will not work against me.
- . I can choose a blemish cover or bandage in flesh-color and have it more or less match my skin tone.
- . I believe that one of the major reasons why whites fear blacks is because blacks are so aggressive, angry and crime prone.
- . I believe that one of the reasons so many blacks are in poverty is because of a lack of self-control.
- . I believe that immigrants who come to the U.S. from the continent of Africa are more appreciative about the opportunity to live in this country than are native-born blacks.
- . I believe that blacks born in America who are descendants of slaves are better off than most blacks who were left behind in Africa.
- . Given that so many Hispanics from Mexico and Central America as well as blacks from Africa want to immigrate to this country, this is proof that the U.S. is now a post-racial country.
- . I believe the death penalty is administered in a fair and equitable fashion in terms of race.
- . I believe that murderers who kill middle or upper-class people should be more likely to be executed.
- . I believe that killing a gang member is really not murder; it is a form of community service.
- . I believe there are more blacks on welfare than whites.
- . I believe that murderers from the inner-city should be put to death more than killers who come from middle-class communities because middle-class people have a better chance of being rehabilitated.

- . I believe the word Ebonics is just a euphemism for bad grammar.
- . I believe when school children of my race are put in "enrichment tracks" it is only because they are academically gifted and not because of their race.
- . I think it is unfair that members of certain races can use the "N-word" but members of other races are prohibited from doing so.
- . I believe that forced busing for schoolchildren is unjustified because it weakens some schools academically.
- . I believe that Jesus Christ was the same race as me.
- . I believe that illegal aliens primarily take jobs away from Americans of my race.
- . I believe that we have advanced racial equality about as far as we ever can.
- . If I were traveling to a new city and got advice from a native telling me to "stay away from a certain part of the city," I would tend to believe that the dangerous part of the city of which I was being warned was inhabited overwhelmingly by people of my race.
- . I believe that drug sales are less serious if they take place in the inner-city and do not spread to the suburbs.
- . I believe that college admissions departments should focus on standardized test scores and high school GPA (i.e., merit) when selecting students rather than attempting to racially diversify the student body.
- . With reference to college admissions, I think the children of alumni should get preferential treatment.
- . When I am asked to perform academically, I oftentimes get stressed because I feel as though I am representing my race.
- . I generally don't mind it if people get rich so long as I am not at the bottom.
- . I feel like I have more in common with upper-class people who are of my race than I do with poor people of an opposite race.
- . I think poor people just need to be taught money management skills in order to help them get out of poverty.
- . I think most poor people lack self-control.
- . I think if people would stop choosing to have so many illegitimate children there would be a lot less poverty.
- . I think more abortion clinics should be built in poor inner-city areas to reduce the size of the "thug pool."
- . I think women on welfare should be paid a stipend every year that they do not have illegitimate children.
- . I believe that women on welfare should be given "free abortion vouchers."
- . I think being on welfare makes you lazy.
- . I believe that women on welfare should be given a fairly large payment if they agree to be permanently sterilized.
- . I think being lazy lands you on welfare.
- . I think Congress should pass a Balanced Budget Amendment because this is the only way we will ever be able to reduce entitlement program spending.
- . I think racism hurts people primarily who are of my race.
- . I really don't like it when there is a high-profile criminal in the news of the same race as me because I am afraid that people will cast aspersions onto my race.
- . I feel that members of my race are colorblind and do not constantly worry about race.
- . When I am walking down the street and I pass a person that is the same race as me, I feel a sense of bonding, cohesion and camaraderie with that person.
- . I have never had racist slurs pass through my mind.
- . Given that whites commit most serial killings, abortion clinic bombings, as well as the Oklahoma City Federal Building and Olympic Park bombings, I believe it is fair for the police to profile whites.
- . My race is generally known and thought to be hard-working.
- . I feel what the Indians did to white settlers during westward expansion amounts to acts of terror.
- . I tend to view Christopher Columbus as an invader and not so much of an explorer.
- . I believe my race imposes a form of "perspectivism" on other races in the country. That is, I believe that my race forces others to believe that its viewpoint is the unquestionable truth.
- . I believe Trayvon Martin got exactly what he deserved, a bullet in the chest.
- . I believe the O.J. Simpson trial and acquittal for murdering two white people exposed the fact that the criminal justice system is flawed.
- . If I were to get on an airplane and suddenly notice that the pilot and copilot were both of a race different than my own, this would make me very nervous.
- . I believe that the people who engaged in looting after Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans should be tried and convicted for their crimes.

- . After Hurricane Katrina, I don't believe that New Orleans should be rebuilt because it is below sea level and not worth saving.
- . Using the term African-American instead of black makes me feel progressive and enlightened.
- . I think that people who talk in movie theaters should be banned.

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