



Comment on petitions <[commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)>

## In Support of a Name Change

1 message

To: [commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 1:50 PM

Dear Members of the School Board:

I am writing in support of changing the name of the school district to one of the submitted petition names other than a name that includes "Dixie" in any form. I have stated why this name change is important in verbal testimony at previous board meetings as well as in writing. I will summarize this and add to it here.

1. The Name Itself--Dixie is associated with the confederacy and slavery. While some might argue it can be associated with other, less problematic things, it is undeniable the term 'Dixie' also refers to the anthem of the confederacy and the hateful legacy of slavery. This should be more than enough to have each of you advocating for a name change, especially during a time when the rest of the country--including the South--is denouncing monuments to and glorifications of the lost cause of the confederacy. As I have stated before, 'Dixie' is a form of symbolic racism and has no place representing an educational institution, particularly when slavery was not only about ownership of and violence against a group of people, but it was also very intentionally about keeping African Americans uneducated. This association should at a minimum be embarrassing to everyone in the district.

2. Context--Some would say that changing the name doesn't change anything else, even if there are discussions to be had about race in the district. As I have stated before, empirical research clearly shows that those organizations where the leadership sends a strong message about values and what is acceptable follow that lead. As long as the board takes no action on the name change a very strong message is being sent--that this symbol of racism is acceptable, and thus inequality is as well. How do you propose to diversify the faculty of the district if the name remains? There has only been one African American teacher in the district in its ENTIRE 150+ year history. This isn't surprising given the name. But unless your intent is to maintain this inequity, thereby cheating our children of the diversity of background and perspective a diverse faculty brings, then you must take the proactive step of saying we can do better by first removing an obvious barrier to recruiting a diverse faculty (by changing the name) and then getting serious about implementing a real plan to make the faculty at least as diverse as the student body and committing to an inclusive curriculum. Attempting these latter steps without first changing the name will surely lead to failure, as they will be seen as insincere at best.

3. The False Narrative of Division--Some would argue that everything was fine until a small group started riling people up over a non-existent issue; that racism and discrimination aren't problems here. This type of thinking is the perfect case study in white privilege. The only thing well-intentioned white people need to do to perpetuate a system of inequity is....nothing. Just deny it exists for those 'other' people, turn the other cheek, and keep on keeping on. It's easy to do, and it's made even easier in a predominantly white, financially well-to-do community. We don't need to question whether individuals are racists. The system is racist. It is throughout our country. That's not opinion. That's empirical fact, and we are not immune to it here by any stretch of the imagination. Marin County is the most inequitable county in the state. But instead of feeling guilty about that, our leaders (you) can say, 'We can do better. And that starts--but doesn't end--with a name change.' You can say, 'With a new name comes the recognition that ALL of our kids, not just those of color, need us to be bold in looking at our teaching strategies to make them more culturally responsive to students from different racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups, thereby accomplishing what virtually all of the research shows: All kids (some argue especially the white kids) benefit from learning more than just the dominant cultural perspective. All kids benefit from learning from those not in the dominant culture. We are committed to being the district in the county that changes inequity to equity.' This is your opportunity to unite the residents of the district around a bold effort to do right by all of our kids, not just those who have the luxury of not thinking about or experiencing the impact of an inequitable system.

It is for these and many other reasons that I implore you to change the name. And to own that as your responsibility as elected leaders to do what is right over what is easy or perceived to be politically safe. The status quo begs leaders to play it safe, but the great leaders rise above.

I have attached a selection of academic readings to this message. Each of them supports in some way the points I have raised here. There are countless other research examples I am happy to provide should you wish to see them (I have also pasted below my last written message for your reference). And, as always, I stand ready to assist you in any way possible with your commitment to addressing inequity--which starts with the tangible and symbolic action on your part to disown the symbol of slavery and oppression that inaccurately claims representation of the people in this district.

I thank you in advance for your brave leadership in support of all our children--and especially for those whom this name tells them they matter less.

Jonathan Eldridge  
District resident and parent

#### PREVIOUS COMMUNICATION TO THE BOARD

November 11th

Dear Members of the Board:

As you know, I have attended each of the last several board meetings. Unfortunately, I am unable to do so on Tuesday so I am sharing my concerns as a parent of a student in the district here. I trust you will read them and give them some thought, as I remain committed to the success of the district and all its students, and I am quite concerned, not only about the name change issue, but also about the issue of leadership.

It appears that the board is poised to vote on a resolution authorizing an advisory ballot measure regarding the changing of the name of the district. If this resolution passes, it is, quite frankly, an abdication of the leadership you were entrusted with when you took office.

I say this because the issue at hand is one that is symbolic of the racial stratification found throughout our country--and yes, in our community as well. If you put to a popular vote an issue that has a real impact on non-White residents of the district, you will further marginalize and exclude them. Having a vote at all accomplishes that. Having a vote of this nature in a district that is well over 70% White--where many of these well-meaning folks do not feel the sting of the name Dixie and its hateful history--will likely result in the majority of them thinking the name isn't a big deal. And that will in turn result in slightly over 50% of the voters giving you an advisory vote of 'it's not that important to me' on the name change. And while that gives you cover to maintain the status quo, it sends a strong message to residents of color who feel the sting of being on the wrong end of advantage on a daily basis, and for whom Dixie is a symbol of that dynamic. Namely, that they don't matter, at least not as much as others. In that regard, an advisory vote does real damage to real people. It also, as I said, abdicates your leadership responsibility.

I have attached a document from the Aspen Institute titled 'Ten Lessons for Taking Leadership on Racial Equity.' I implore you to read it--and pay particular attention to the lesson that begins, 'Racial equity work needs the legitimacy, protection, and sense of urgency that the highest level of leadership in an organization or community can provide.'

I have not seen any evidence that racial equity work is important to this board. I--and others--have shared witnessed instances of racial micro-aggressions and other forms of inequity in the schools our children attend. Yet at no point has anyone on the board or from the district reached out to ask for more information, let alone to share any concern. This in itself is strong evidence that racial equity work is needed in this district and indeed needs to be given legitimacy, protection, and urgency by the board. Leadership means taking what you yourselves have seen (including an African American resident/parent having a 'Keep Dixie Dixie' sign shoved in his face in front of you after sharing how such a sign makes him feel particularly marginalized), realizing it lies just under the surface in our community all the time, and saying strongly and with conviction that it must be addressed--not by putting that man's and others' feelings to a vote by those either removed from such behavior or perpetrators of it--but by saying loudly and convincingly that those of us in the majority have a responsibility to those on the receiving end of disparate treatment and outcomes.

It is to this point that I have attached two other documents. One is a definition/model of equity-mindedness. It is short, clearly stated, and largely absent from this district in my experience and involvement. I hope you find it helpful in summoning the courage to do better than an advisory vote and to start acknowledging the real, persistent, systemic issues that exist here just as they do elsewhere.

The second is a reading about creating inclusive and equitable processes. Regarding the advisory vote I ask you consider this excerpt:

Sometimes those individuals who are marginalized or most impacted by a particular issue may not be represented in the same numbers as those who are typically privileged and impacted to a lesser degree by the issue. Consider giving more weight to the recommendations of those who are typically marginalized and/or most impacted by the particular issue.

As you can see, an advisory vote falls into the trap outlined above. Please do not fall into that trap, as it has real consequences--and sends a loud message--to those who are marginalized in this community.

Finally, I give you this excerpt from the empirical study, "'Black Elephant in the Room': Black Students Contextualizing Campus Racial Climate Within US Racial Climate" (George Mwangi, et al, 2018): "Systemic racism is reflected in US

education institutions, and these institutions can act as agents in the social reproduction of inequality as well as act as agents for positive social change."

I ask you to reflect, to consider, and to do whatever further research might be necessary to summon the courage as a board to be an agent for positive social change. The alternative is not only unbecoming, it betrays the wise words of Dr. Cornel West, who said, 'America needs citizens who love it enough to re-imagine and re-make it.' This community, whether we realize it or not, needs you to help us re-imagine this district, and that can begin convincingly with the removal of the symbolic racism that is Dixie.

I stand at the ready to assist in any way I can, personally, professionally, as a parent, as a resident, as a taxpayer, as a contributor to Can Do!, as an educator, as a member of the privileged majority recognizing that privilege must be put to good.

Thank you.

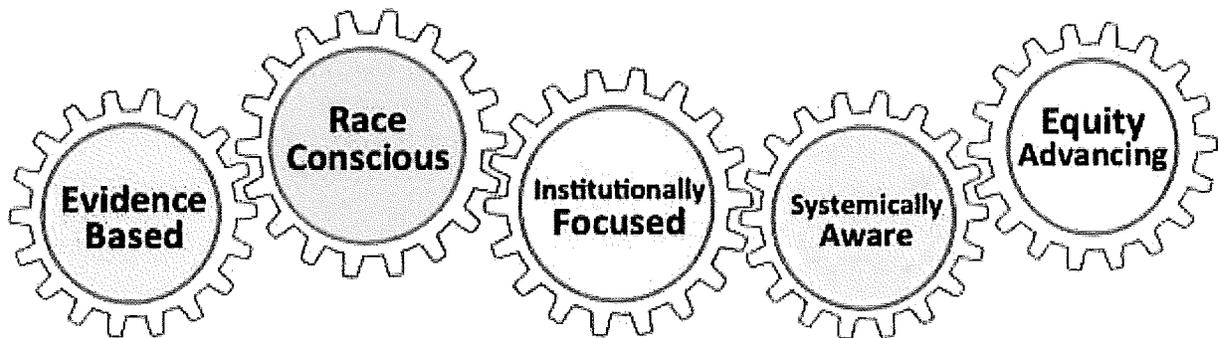
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#### 5 attachments

-  **Young\_FiveFacesofOppression.pdf**  
443K
-  **Banks.pdf**  
336K
-  **Case.pdf**  
548K
-  **Equity-Mindedness CUE.pdf**  
81K
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532K

# What is Equity-Mindedness?

The term “Equity-Mindedness” refers to the perspective or mode of thinking exhibited by practitioners who call attention to patterns of inequity in student outcomes. These practitioners are willing to take personal and institutional responsibility for the success of their students, and critically reassess their own practices. It also requires that practitioners are race-conscious and aware of the social and historical context of exclusionary practices in American education.



In order to understand and become “Equity-Minded”, it warrants that various practitioners (faculty, administration, staff, etc.) assess and acknowledge that their practices may not be working. It takes understanding inequities as a dysfunction of the various structures, policies, and practices that they can control. “Equity-Minded” practitioners question their own assumptions, recognize stereotypes that harm student success, and continually reassess their practices to create change. Part of taking on this framework is that institutions and practitioners become accountable for the success of their students and see racial gaps as their personal and institutional responsibility.

**CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION**

University of Southern California  
Rossier School of Education



*Privilege,  
Power,  
and Difference*

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Allan G. Johnson, Ph.D.



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Allan Johnson is a frequent speaker on college and university campuses. If you would like to arrange an event, you can reach him by e-mail at [agjohnson@mail.hartford.edu](mailto:agjohnson@mail.hartford.edu). For more on his work, visit his Web site at [www.agjohnson.us](http://www.agjohnson.us).

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## DOMINANCE

When we say that a system is dominated by a privileged group, it means that positions of power tend to be occupied by members of that group. Power also tends to be identified with such people in ways that make it seem normal and natural for them to have it.

In a patriarchy, for example, power is culturally gendered in that it is associated primarily with men. To the people living in such a society, power looks “natural” on a man but unusual and even problematic on a woman, marking her as an exception that calls for special scrutiny and some kind of explanation. When Margaret Thatcher was prime minister of Great Britain, for example, she was often referred to as “the Iron Lady.” This drew attention to both her strength as a leader and the need to mark it as an exception. There would be no such need to mark a strong male prime minister (as an “Iron Man,” for example), because his power would be assumed.

This kind of thinking supports a structure that allocates most power to men. In almost every organization, the farther down you look in the power structure, the more numerous women are. The higher up you go, the fewer women you’ll find. That’s what a male-dominated system looks like.

Just because a system is male-dominated doesn’t mean all men are powerful. As most men will tell you, they aren’t, most often because of class or race or disability status. Male dominance does mean, however, that every man can *identify* with power as a value that his culture associates with manhood, and this identification makes it easier for any man to assume and use power in relation to others. It also encourages a sense of entitlement in men to use women to meet their personal needs, whether it’s getting coffee for everyone or taking the minutes of a meeting. Since women are culturally *disidentified* with power, it’s harder for them to exercise it in any situation. When women do find ways to be powerful in relation to men, it’s usually *in spite of* the male-dominated character of patriarchal systems as a whole.

For women to have power in relation to men also makes women vulnerable, because power in their hands lacks the cultural legitimacy of men’s power. As such, it easily arouses suspicion. Female professors, for example, often tell stories of having their authority, expertise, and



## CHAPTER 7

## How Systems of Privilege Work

Like everything else in social life, privilege and oppression exist only through social systems and people’s participation in them. People make systems and their consequences happen through paths of least resistance that shape who people are and how they participate.

To see how all that works, we need to look at how systems are put together. If we look at the game of Monopoly as a system, for example, we can describe it without ever talking about the personalities of the people who might play it. We can do the same thing with a university, a corporation, a family, a society, or a world economic system like global capitalism.

Systems organized around privilege have three key characteristics. They are *dominated* by privileged groups, *identified* with privileged groups, and *centered* on privileged groups. All three characteristics support the idea that members of privileged groups are superior to those below them and, therefore, deserve their privilege. A patriarchy, for example, is male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centered.<sup>1</sup> Race privilege happens through systems that are white-dominated, white-identified, and white-centered, and ableism works through systems that are dominated, identified with, and centered on nondisabled people.

professional commitment routinely challenged not only by colleagues but also by students, men in particular.<sup>2</sup> As a man, I enjoy the benefit of the doubt with students, who usually assume I know what I'm talking about. When a woman walks into the same classroom, however, male students may challenge her credibility and authority from the start, arguing or questioning every point and feeling free to interrupt her. They may go so far as to comment on her physical appearance or turn away, roll their eyes, go to sleep, hold side conversations.

"I'm still routinely asked if I've ever taught the course before," says one seasoned female professor. "They look utterly shocked when I say I've taught most of my courses 15–18 years—sometimes longer than they've been alive."<sup>3</sup>

Similar things can happen with peers. After teaching her first class, a new professor saw a male faculty member poke his head into her classroom after the students left. "Are you a faculty member here?" he asked.

"Yes," she said.

"Do you have a doctorate?"

"Yes."

"Well, at least you're educated," he said, and walked away.<sup>4</sup>

Powerful women are also open to being called bitches or lesbians as a way to discredit and negate their power by attacking them personally. When women gather together, even just for lunch, men may suspect them of "being up to something"—planning some subversive use of power that needs to be monitored and contained. Men's anxiety over this usually comes out as humor ("So, what little plot are you hatching?"), but the gender dynamic underlying male dominance and women's potential to subvert it is clearly there. In the home—the one place where women manage to carve out some power for themselves—their power is routinely seen as problematic in ways that men's power in relation to women is not. The abundance of insulting terms for men who are dominated by women, for example, and the absence of such insults for comparable women show clearly how our culture legitimizes male dominance.

That patriarchy is male-dominated also doesn't mean that most men have dominating personalities and need or want to control others. In other words, I'm not using the term *male dominance* to describe men.

Rather, it describes a patriarchal system in which both men and women participate. It also describes gendered patterns of unequal power and paths of least resistance for both men and women that support those patterns.

For men, paths of least resistance include presenting the appearance of being in control of themselves, others, and events. I'm aware of this path, for example, in how I feel drawn to respond to questions whether I know the answer or not, to interrupt in conversations, to avoid admitting that I'm wrong about anything, to take up room in public spaces. One day some years ago, my life partner Nora Jamieson and I were having a conversation about something that began when she raised a question. I responded almost without hesitation, until she interrupted me to ask, "Do you actually know that or are you just saying it?" I was startled to realize that I was just saying it. The response appeared in my head and that seemed reason enough to say it. But I wasn't saying it as though it was just a thought that happened to be wandering through my mind. I spoke with an unhesitating flow that suggested I knew what I was talking about, that I was an expert in the subject she'd raised.

But I didn't know that what I was saying was true, at least no more true than what anyone else might say, provided, of course, that I gave them the chance. This included Nora, who had been sitting there listening to me in silence. Until that moment, she followed a corresponding path of least resistance for women: silent attentiveness, hesitation, self-doubt, humility, deference, supporting what men say and do, and taking up as little space as possible. When she stepped off that path, she shook an entire structure by revealing its existence and how both of us were participating in it. She also raised the possibility of alternative paths—of men learning about silence and listening, doubt and uncertainty, supporting others and sharing space.

Why call such patterns of control and deference "paths of least resistance"? Why not just say that I and many other men have a problem we might call a "controlling personality" or that women just tend to be "unassertive"? The answer is that we all swim in a dominant culture that is full of images of men seeking control, taking up time and space, competing with other men, and living with a sense of entitlement in relation to women. And each of those is matched by images

of women letting men do all of that, if not encouraging them to or insisting on it. The images permeate popular culture—from film and television to advertising and literature—and shape the news, from the front page to the sports section.

What these images do is place a value on male power and control that is used every day as a standard for evaluating men in almost every aspect of their lives. Men who live up to it are routinely rewarded with approval, while men who seem insufficiently decisive and manly are always vulnerable to ridicule and scorn, primarily from other men. And so if I feel drawn to control a conversation or to always have an answer, it isn't simply because I'm a controlling *person*, no more than greedy behavior happens in a Monopoly game just because people are greedy.

This is what Deborah Tannen misses in her popular books on gender and talk.<sup>5</sup> She describes many gender differences in styles of talking that tend to give men control over conversations. But when she tries to explain why this is so, she almost completely ignores how those differences promote male privilege at women's expense. Instead, she argues that women and men talk differently because as children they played in same-sex groups and learned distinctively male or female ways of speaking from their peers. What she doesn't tell us is how those peers happened to acquire their gendered styles of talking. The answer is that they learned them from adults in families, the mass media, and in school. In other words, they learned them by participating in a society where conversation is a major arena in which male privilege is played out.

Patterns of dominance and the paths of least resistance that sustain them show up in every system of privilege. White dominance, for example, is reflected in an unequal racial balance of power in society and its institutions. The same is true of heterosexuality, although so many lesbians and gay men are still in the closet that it's hard to be sure about the sexual orientation of people in power. There is no ambiguity or lack of clarity in the mainstream culture, however. It's rare to see a film or a television show in which the most powerful character is identified as gay, lesbian, with a disability, working class, or African American, Latino/a, or Asian, or if they are, to have them still be alive when the closing credits begin to roll. Working-class characters

are rarely the focus in films and on television, and when they do appear they are routinely portrayed as criminals or as stupid, ignorant, crude, bigoted, shallow, and immoral.<sup>6</sup> The closest that people of color get to powerful roles is as sidekicks to powerful whites in "buddy" movies. Exceptions like *The Color Purple* and *The Manchurian Candidate* are few and far between. And in a heterosexist culture, a powerful gay man is a contradiction in terms, and powerful lesbians are often dismissed as not being real women at all.

The result of such patterns of dominance is that if you're female, of color, or in some other way on the outside of privilege, when you look upward in all kinds of power structures you don't see people like you. Your interests are not represented where power is wielded and rewards are distributed, and you get no encouragement to imagine yourself as one of those with access to power and its rewards. Those who don't look like people in power will feel invisible and in fact be invisible, because they are routinely overlooked. And this is a major way that patterns of inequality and privilege repeat themselves over and over again.

### IDENTIFIED WITH PRIVILEGE

"It's a man's world" is an expression that points in part to the male-dominated character of society that puts most power in the hands of men. In the same way, one could say, "It's a white world" or "a straight world" or a "nondisabled world." But there's more than power at work here, because privileged groups are also usually taken as the standard of comparison that represents the best that society has to offer. This is what it means to say that a system is male-identified or white-identified.

On most college campuses, for example, students of color feel pressured to talk, dress, and act like middle-class whites in order to fit in and be accepted.<sup>7</sup> In similar ways, most workplaces define appropriate appearance and ways of speaking in terms that are culturally associated with being white, from clothing and hairstyles to diction and slang. People of color often experience being marked as outsiders, to the extent that many navigate the social world by consciously changing how they talk from one situation to another. In shopping for

## CHAPTER ONE

# Five Faces of Oppression\*

IRIS MARION YOUNG

Someone who does not see a pane of glass does not know that he does not see it. Someone who, being placed differently does see it, does not know the other does not see it. When our will finds expression outside ourselves in actions performed by others we do not waste our time and our power of attention in examining whether they have consented to this. This is true for all of us. Our attention, given entirely to the success of the undertaking, is not claimed by them as long as they are docile. . . . Rape is a terrible caricature of love from which consent is absent. After rape, oppression is the second horror of human existence. It is a terrible caricature of obedience.

—Simone Weil

I have proposed an enabling conception of justice. Justice should refer not only to distribution, but also to the institutional conditions necessary for the development and exercise of individual capacities and collective communication and cooperation. Under this conception of justice, injustice refers primarily to two forms of disabling constraints, oppression and domination. While these constraints include distributive patterns, they also involve matters that cannot easily be assimilated to the logic of distribution: decision-making procedures, division of labor, and culture. Many people in the United States would not choose the term *oppression* to name injustice in our society. For contemporary emancipatory social movements, on the other hand—socialists, radical feminists, American Indian activists, Black activists, gay and lesbian activists—oppression is a central category of political discourse. Entering the political discourse

in which oppression is a central category involves adopting a general mode of analyzing and evaluating social structures and practices that is incommensurate with the language of liberal individualism that dominates political discourse in the United States. A major political project for those of us who identify with at least one of these movements must thus be to persuade people that the discourse of oppression makes sense of much of our social experience. We are ill prepared for this task, however, because we have no clear account of the meaning of oppression. While we find the term used often in the diverse philosophical and theoretical literature spawned by radical social movements in the United States, we find little direct discussion of the meaning of the concept as used by these movements.

In this chapter, I offer some explication of the concept of oppression as I understand its use by new social movements in the United States since the 1960s. My starting point is reflection on the conditions of the groups said by these movements to be oppressed: among others women, Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans and other Spanish-speaking Americans, American Indians, Jews, lesbians, gay men, Arabs, Asians, old people, working-class people, and the physically and mentally disabled. I aim to systematize the meaning of the concept of oppression as used by these diverse political movements, and to provide normative argument to clarify the wrongs the term names.

Obviously the above-named groups are not oppressed to the same extent or in the same ways. In the most general sense, all oppressed people suffer some inhibition of their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts, and feelings. In that abstract sense all oppressed people face a common condition. Beyond that, in any more specific sense, it is not possible to define a single set of criteria that describe the condition of oppression of the above groups. Consequently, attempts by theorists and activists to discover a common description or the essential causes of the oppression of all these groups have frequently led to fruitless disputes about whose oppression is more fundamental or more grave. The contexts in which members of these groups use the term *oppression* to describe the injustices of their situation suggest that oppression names, in fact, a family of concepts and conditions, which I divide into five categories: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence.

In this chapter I explicate each of these forms of oppression. Each may entail or cause distributive injustices, but all involve issues of justice beyond distribution. In accordance with ordinary political usage, I suggest that oppression is a condition of groups. Thus before

explicating the meaning of oppression, we must examine the concept of a social group.

### Oppression as a Structural Concept

One reason that many people would not use the term *oppression* to describe injustice in our society is that they do not understand the term in the same way as do new social movements. In its traditional usage, *oppression* means the exercise of tyranny by a ruling group. Thus many Americans would agree with radicals in applying the term oppression to the situation of Black South Africans under apartheid. Oppression also traditionally carries a strong connotation of conquest and colonial domination. The Hebrews were oppressed in Egypt, and many uses of the term *oppression* in the West invoke this paradigm.

Dominant political discourse may use the term *oppression* to describe societies other than our own, usually Communist or purportedly Communist societies. Within this anti-Communist rhetoric both tyrannical and colonialist implications of the term appear. For the anti-Communist, Communism denotes precisely the exercise of brutal tyranny over a whole people by a few rulers and the will to conquer the world, bringing hitherto independent peoples under that tyranny. In dominant political discourse it is not legitimate to use the term *oppression* to describe our society, because oppression is the evil perpetrated by the Others.

New left social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, however, shifted the meaning of the concept of oppression. In its new usage oppression designates the disadvantage and injustice some people suffer not because a tyrannical power coerces them, but because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal society. In this new left usage, the tyranny of a ruling group over another as in South Africa, must certainly be called oppressive. But oppression also refers to systemic constraints on groups that are not necessarily the result of the intentions of a tyrant. Oppression in this sense is structural, rather than the result of a few people's choices or policies. Its causes are embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules. It names, as Marilyn Frye puts it, "an enclosing structure of forces and barriers which tends to the immobilization and reduction of a group or category of people" (Frye, 1983a, p. 11). In this extended structural sense oppression refers to the vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as a consequence of

often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interactions, media and cultural stereotypes, and structural features of bureaucratic hierarchies and market mechanisms—in short the normal processes of everyday life. We cannot eliminate this structural oppression by getting rid of the rulers or making some new laws, because oppressions are systematically reproduced in major economic, political, and cultural institutions.

The systemic character of oppression implies that an oppressed group need not have a correlate oppressing group. While structural oppression involves relations among groups, these relations do not always fit the paradigm of conscious and intentional oppression of one group by another. Foucault (1977) suggests that to understand the meaning and operation of power in modern society we must look beyond the model of power as “sovereignty,” a dyadic relation of ruler and subject, and instead analyze the exercise of power as the effect of often liberal and “humane” practices of education, bureaucratic administration, production, and distribution of consumer goods, medicine, and so on. The conscious actions of many individuals daily contribute to maintaining and reproducing oppression, but those people are usually simply doing their jobs or living their lives, and do not understand themselves as agents of oppression.

I do not mean to suggest that within a system of oppression individual persons do not intentionally harm others in oppressed groups. The raped woman, the beaten Black youth, the locked-out worker, the gay man harassed on the street are victims of intentional actions by identifiable agents. I also do not mean to deny that specific groups are beneficiaries of the oppression of other groups, and thus have an interest in their continued oppression. Indeed, for every oppressed group there is a group that is *privileged* in relation to that group.

The concept of oppression has been current among radicals since the 1960s, partly in reaction to Marxist attempts to reduce the injustices of racism and sexism; for example, to the effects of class domination or bourgeois ideology. Racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, some social movements asserted, are distinct forms of oppression with their own dynamics apart from the dynamics of class, even though they may interact with class oppression. From often heated discussions among socialists, feminists, and antiracism activists in the last ten years, a consensus is emerging that many different groups must be said to be oppressed in our society, and that no single form of oppression can be assigned causal or moral primacy (see Gottlieb, 1987). The same discussion has also led to the recognition that group differences cut across individual lives in a multiplicity of ways that can entail privilege and oppression for the same person in different

respects. Only a plural explication of the concept of oppression can adequately capture these insights.

Accordingly, I offer below an explication of five faces of oppression as a useful set of categories and distinctions that I believe is comprehensive, in the sense that it covers all the groups said by new left social movements to be oppressed and all the ways they are oppressed. I derive the five faces of oppression from reflection on the condition of these groups. Because different factors, or combinations of factors, constitute the oppression of different groups, making their oppression irreducible, I believe it is not possible to give one essential definition of oppression. The five categories articulated in this chapter, however, are adequate to describe the oppression of any group, as well as its similarities with and differences from the oppression of other groups. But first we must ask what a group is.

### The Concept of a Social Group

Oppression refers to structural phenomena that immobilize or diminish a group. But what is a group? Our ordinary discourse differentiates people according to social groups such as women and men, age groups, racial and ethnic groups, religious groups, and so on. Social groups of this sort are not simply collections of people, for they are more fundamentally intertwined with the identities of the people described as belonging to them. They are a specific kind of collectivity, with specific consequences for how people understand one another and themselves. Yet neither social theory nor philosophy has a clear and developed concept of the social group (see Turner et al., 1987).

A social group is a collective of persons differentiated from at least one other group by cultural forms, practices, or way of life. Members of a group have a specific affinity with one another because of their similar experience or way of life, which prompts them to associate with one another more than with those not identified with the group, or in a different way. Groups are an expression of social relations; a group exists only in relation to at least one other group. Group identification arises, that is, in the encounter and interaction between social collectivities that experience some differences in their way of life and forms of association, even if they also regard themselves as belonging to the same society.

As long as they associated solely among themselves, for example, an American Indian group thought of themselves only as “the people.” The encounter with other American Indians created an awareness of difference: the others were named as a group and the first group

came to see themselves as a group. But social groups do not arise only from an encounter between different societies. Social processes also differentiate groups within a single society. The sexual division of labor, for example, has created social groups of women and men in all known societies. Members of each gender have a certain affinity with others in their group because of what they do or experience, and differentiate themselves from the other gender, even when members of each gender consider that they have much in common with members of the other, and consider that they belong to the same society.

Political philosophy typically has no place for a specific concept of the social group. When philosophers and political theorists discuss groups they tend to conceive them either on the model of aggregates or on the model of associations, both of which are methodologically individualist concepts. To arrive at a specific concept of the social group it is thus useful to contrast social groups with both aggregates and associations. An aggregate is any classification of persons according to some attribute. Persons can be aggregated according to any to number of attributes—eye color, the make of car they drive, the street they live on. Some people interpret the groups that have emotional and social salience in our society as aggregates, as arbitrary classifications of persons according to such attributes as skin color, genitals, or age. George Sher, for example, treats social groups as aggregates, and uses the arbitrariness of aggregate classification as a reason not to give special attention to groups. “There are really as many groups as there are combinations of people and if we are going to ascribe claims to equal treatment to racial, sexual, and other groups with high visibility, it will be mere favoritism not to ascribe similar claims to these other groups as well” (Sher, 1987a, p. 256).

But “highly visible” social groups such as Blacks or women are different from aggregates, or mere “combinations of people” (see French, 1975; Friedman and May, 1985; May, 1987, chap. 1). A social group is defined not primarily by a set of shared attributes, but by a sense of identity. What defines Black Americans as a social group is not primarily their skin color; some persons whose skin color is fairly light, for example, identify themselves as Black. Though sometimes objective attributes are a necessary condition for classifying oneself or others as belonging to a certain social group, it is identification with a certain social status, the common history that social status produces, and self-identification that define the group as a group.

Social groups are not entities that exist apart from individuals but neither are they merely arbitrary classifications of individuals according to attributes that are external to or accidental to their identities. Admitting the reality of social groups does not commit one

to reifying collectivities, as some might argue. Group meanings partially constitute people's identities in terms of cultural forms, social situation, and history that group members know as theirs because these meanings have been either forced on them or forged by them or both (cf. Fiss, 1976). Groups are real not as substances, but as forms of social relations (cf. May, 1987, pp. 22–23).

Moral theorists and political philosophers tend to elide social groups more often with associations than with aggregates (e.g., French, 1975; May, 1987, chap. 1). By an association I mean a formally organized institution, such as a club, corporation, political party, church, college, or union. Unlike the aggregate model of groups, the association model recognizes that groups are defined by specific practices and forms of association. Nevertheless it shares a problem with the aggregate model. The aggregate model conceives the individual as prior to the collective because it reduces the social group to a mere set of attributes attached to individuals. The association model also implicitly conceives the individual as ontologically prior to the collective, as making up, or constituting groups.

A contract model of social relations is appropriate for conceiving associations, but not groups. Individuals constitute associations; they come to together as already formed persons and set them up, establishing rules, positions, and offices. The relationship of persons to associations is usually voluntary, and even when it is not, the person has nevertheless usually entered the association. The person is prior to the association also in that the person's identity and sense of self are usually regarded as prior to and relatively independent of association membership. Groups, on the other hand, constitute individuals. A person's particular sense of history, affinity, and separateness, even the person's mode of reasoning, evaluating, and expressing feeling, are constituted partly by her or his group affinities. This neither means that persons have no individual styles, nor are unable to transcend or reject a group identity. Nor does it preclude persons from having many aspects that are independent of these group identities.

The social ontology underlying many contemporary theories of justice is methodologically individualist or atomist. It presumes that the individual is ontologically prior to the social. This individualistic social ontology usually goes together with a normative conception of the self as independent. The authentic self is autonomous, unified, free, and self-made, standing apart from history and affiliations, choosing its life plan entirely for itself.

One of the main contributions of poststructuralist philosophy has been to expose as illusory this metaphysics of a unified self-making subjectivity, which posits the subject as an autonomous origin or an

underlying substance to which attributes of gender, nationality, family role, intellectual disposition, and so on might attach. Conceiving the subject in this fashion implies conceiving consciousness as outside of and prior to language and the context of social interaction, which the subject enters. Several currents of recent philosophy challenge this deeply held Cartesian assumption. Lacanian psychoanalysis, for example, stood by the social and philosophical theory influenced by Cartesian assumptions, which conceived the self as an achievement of linguistic positioning that is always contextualized in concrete relations with other persons, with mixed identities (Coward and Ellis, 1977). The self is a product of social processes, not their origin.

From a rather different perspective, Habermas indicates that a theory of communicative action also must challenge the “philosophy of consciousness,” which locates intentional egos as the ontological origins of social relations. A theory of communicative action conceives individual identity not as an origin but as a product of linguistic and practical interaction (Habermas, 1987, pp. 3–10). As Stephen Epstein describes it, identity is “a socialized sense of individuality, an internal organization of self-perception concerning one’s relationship to social categories that also incorporates views of the self perceived to be held by others. Identity is constituted relationally, through involvement with—and incorporation of—significant others and integration into communities” (Epstein, 1987, p. 29). Group categorization and norms are major constituents of individual identity (see Turner et al., 1987).

A person joins an association, and even if membership in it fundamentally affects one’s life, one does not take that membership to define one’s very identity, in the way, for example, being Navaho might. Group affinity, on the other hand, has the character of what Martin Heidegger (1962) calls “thrownness”: *one finds oneself as a member of a group, which one experiences as always already having been*. For our identities are defined in relation to how others identify us, and they do so in terms of groups that are always already associated with specific attributes, stereotypes, and norms.

From the thrownness of group affinity it does not follow that one cannot leave groups and enter new ones. Many women become lesbians after first identifying as heterosexual. Anyone who lives long enough becomes old. These cases exemplify thrownness precisely because such changes in group affinity are experienced as transformations in one’s identity. Nor does it follow from the thrownness of group affinity that one cannot define the meaning of group identity for oneself; those who identify with a group can redefine the meaning and norms of groups’ identity. Indeed, oppressed groups have sought to confront their oppression by engaging in just such redefinition.

The present point is only that one first finds group identity as given, and then takes it up in a certain way. While groups may come into being, they are never founded.

Groups, I have said, exist only in relation to other groups. A group may be identified by outsiders without those so identified having any specific consciousness of themselves as at group. Sometimes a group comes to exist only because one group excludes and labels a category of persons, and those labeled come to understand themselves as group members only slowly, on the basis of their shared oppression. In Vichy France, for example, Jews who had been so assimilated that they had no specifically Jewish identity were marked as Jews by others and given a specific social status by them. These people “discovered” themselves as Jews and then formed a group identity and affinity with one another (see Sartre, 1948). A person’s group identities may be for the most part only a background or horizon to his or her life, becoming salient only in specific interactive contexts.

Assuming an aggregate model of groups, some people think that social groups are invidious fictions, essentializing arbitrary attributes. From this point of view, problems of prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and exclusion exist because some people mistakenly believe that group identification makes a difference to the capacities, temperament, or virtues of group members. This individualist conception of persons and their relation to one another tends to identify oppression with group identification. Oppression, in this view, is something that happens to people when they are classified in groups. Because others identify them as a group, they are excluded and despised. Eliminating oppression thus requires eliminating groups. People should be treated as individuals, not as members of groups, and allowed to form their lives freely without stereotypes or group norms.

This author takes issue with that position. While I agree that individuals should be free to pursue life plans in their own way, it is foolish to deny the reality of groups. Despite the modern myth of a decline of parochial attachments and ascribed identities, in modern society group differentiation remains endemic. As both markets and social administration increase the web of social interdependency on a world scale, and as more people encounter one another as strangers in cities and states, people retain and renew ethnic, locale, age, sex, and occupational group identifications, and form new ones in the processes of encounter (cf. Ross, 1980, p. 19; Rothschild, 1981, p. 130). Even when they belong to oppressed groups, people’s group identifications are often important to them, and they often feel a special affinity for others in, their group. I believe that group differentiation is both an inevitable and a desirable aspect of modern social

processes. Social justice requires not the melting away of differences, but institutions that promote reproduction of and respect for group differences without oppression. Though some groups have come to be formed out of oppression, and relations of privilege and oppression structure the interactions between many groups, group differentiation is not in itself oppressive. Not all groups are oppressed. In the United States, Roman Catholics are a specific social group, with distinct practices and affinities with one another, but they are no longer an oppressed group. Whether a group is oppressed depends on whether it is subject to one or more of the five conditions I shall discuss below.

The view that groups are fictions does carry an important anti-determinist or antiessentialist intuition. Oppression has often been perpetrated by a conceptualization of group difference in terms of unalterable essential natures that determine what group members deserve or are capable of, and that exclude groups so entirely from one another that they have no similarities or overlapping attributes. To assert that it is possible to have social group difference without oppression, it is necessary to conceptualize groups in a much more relational and fluid fashion.

Although social processes of affinity and differentiation produce groups, they do not give groups a substantive essence. There is no common nature that members of a group share. As aspects of a process, moreover, groups are fluid; they come into being and may fade away. Homosexual practices have existed in many societies and historical periods, for example. Gay men or lesbians have been identified as specific groups and so identified themselves, however, only in the twentieth century (see Ferguson, 1989, chap. 9; Altaian, 1981).

Arising from social relations and processes, finally, group differences usually cut across one another. Especially in a large, complex, and highly differentiated society, social groups are not themselves homogeneous, but mirror in their own differentiations many of the other groups in the wider society. In American society today, for example, Blacks are not a simple, unified group with a common life. Like other racial and ethnic groups, they are differentiated by age, gender, class, sexuality, region, and nationality, any of which in a given context may become a salient group identity.

This view of group differentiation as multiple, cross-cutting, fluid, and shifting implies another critique of the model of the autonomous, unified self. In complex, highly differentiated societies like our own, all persons have multiple group identifications. The culture, perspective, and relations of privilege and oppression of these vari-

ous groups, moreover, may not cohere. Thus, individual persons, as constituted partly by their group affinities and relations, cannot be unified; they are heterogeneous and not necessarily coherent.

## The Faces of Oppression

### *Exploitation*

The central function of Marx's theory of exploitation is to explain how class structure can exist in the absence of legally and normatively sanctioned class distinctions. In precapitalist societies domination is overt and accomplished through directly political means. In both slave society and feudal society the right to appropriate the product of the labor of others partly defines class privilege, and these societies legitimate class distinctions with ideologies of natural superiority and inferiority.

Capitalist society, on the other hand, removes traditional juridically enforced class distinctions and promotes a belief in the legal freedom of persons. Workers freely contract with employers and receive a wage; no formal mechanisms of law or custom force them to work for that employer or any employer. Thus, the mystery of capitalism arises: When everyone is formally free, how can there be class domination? Why do class distinctions persist between the wealthy, who own the means of production, and the mass of people, who work for them? The theory of exploitation answers this question. Profit, the basis of capitalist power and wealth, is a mystery if we assume that in the market goods exchange at their values. The labor theory of value dispels this mystery. Every commodity's value is a function of the labor time necessary for its production. Labor power is the one commodity that in the process of being consumed produces new value. Profit comes from the difference between the value of the labor performed and the value of the capacity to labor which the capitalist purchases. Profit is possible only because the owner of capital appropriates any realized surplus value.

In recent years, Marxist scholars have engaged in considerable controversy about the viability of the labor theory of value this account of exploitation relies on (see Wolff, 1984, chap. 4). John Roemer (1982), for example, developed a theory of exploitation that claims to preserve the theoretical and practical purposes of Marx's theory, but without assuming a distinction between values and prices and without being restricted to a concept of abstract, homogeneous

labor. My purpose here is not to engage in technical economic disputes, but to indicate the place of a concept of exploitation in a conception of oppression.

Marx's theory of exploitation lacks an explicitly normative meaning, even though the judgment that workers are exploited clearly has normative as well as descriptive power in that theory (Buchanan, 1982, chap. 3). C. B. Macpherson (1973, chap. 3) reconstructs this theory of exploitation in a more explicitly normative form. The injustice of capitalist society consists in the fact that some people exercise their capacities under the control, according to the purposes, and for the benefit of other people. Through private ownership of the means of production, and through markets that allocate labor and the ability to buy goods, capitalism systematically transfers the powers of some persons to others, thereby augmenting the power of the latter. In this process of the transfer of powers, according to Macpherson, the capitalist class acquires and maintains an ability to extract benefits from workers. Not only are powers transferred from workers to capitalists, but also the powers of workers diminish by more than the amount of the transfer, because workers suffer material deprivation and a loss of control, and hence are deprived of important elements of self-respect. Justice, then, requires eliminating the institutional forms that enable and enforce this process of transference and replacing them with institutional forms that enable all to develop and use their capacities in a way that does not inhibit, but rather can enhance, similar development and use in others.

The central insight expressed in the concept of exploitation, then, is that this oppression occurs through a steady process of the transfer of the results of the labor of one social group to benefit another. The injustice of class division does not consist only in the distributive fact that some people have great wealth while most people have little (cf. Buchanan, 1982, pp. 44–49; Holmstrom, 1977). Exploitation enacts a structural relation between social groups. Social rules about what work is, who does what for whom, how work is compensated, and the social process by which the results of work are appropriated operate to enact relations of power and inequality. These relations are produced and reproduced through a systematic process in which the energies of the have-nots are continuously expended to maintain and augment the power, status, and wealth of the haves.

Many writers have cogently argued that the Marxist concept of exploitation is too narrow to encompass all forms of domination and oppression (Giddens, 1981, p. 242; Britain and Maynard, 1984, p. 93; Murphy, 1985; Bowles and Gintis, 1986, pp. 20–240). In particular, the Marxist concept of class leaves important phenomena of

sexual and racial oppression are unexplained. Does this mean that sexual and racial oppression are nonexploitative, and that we should reserve wholly distinct categories for these oppressions? Or can the concept of exploitation be broadened to include other ways in which the labor and energy expenditure of one group benefits another, and reproduces a relation of domination between them?

Feminists have had little difficulty showing that women's oppression consists partly in a systematic and unreciprocated transfer of powers from women to men. Women's oppression consists not merely in an inequality of status, power, and wealth resulting from men's excluding them from privileged activities. The freedom, power, status and self-realization of men is possible precisely because women work for them. Gender exploitation has two aspects, transfer of the fruits of material labor to men and transfer of nurturing and sexual energies to men. Christine Delphy (1984), for example, describes marriage as a class relation in which women's labor benefits men without comparable remuneration. She makes it clear that the exploitation consists not in the sort of work that women do in the home, for this might include various kinds of tasks, but in the fact that they perform tasks for someone on whom they are dependent. Thus, for example, in most systems of agricultural production in the world, men take to market the goods women have produced, and more often than not men receive the status and often the entire income from this labor.

With the concept of sex-affective production, Ann Ferguson (1979; 1984; 1989, chap. 4) identifies another form of the transference of women's energies to men. Women provide men and children with emotional care and provide men with sexual satisfaction, and as a group receive relatively little of either from men (cf. Brittan and Maynard, pp. 142–148). The gender socialization of women makes us tend to be more attentive to interactive dynamics than men, and makes women good at providing empathy and support for people's feelings and at smoothing over interactive tensions. Both men and women look to women as nurturers of their personal lives, and women frequently complain that when they look to men for emotional support they do not receive it (Easton, 1978). The norms of heterosexuality, moreover, are oriented around male pleasure, and consequently many women receive little satisfaction from their sexual interaction with men (Gottlieb, 1984).

Most feminist theories of gender exploitation have concentrated on the institutional structure of the patriarchal family. Recently, however, feminists have begun to explore relations of gender exploitation enacted in the contemporary workplace and through the state. Carol Brown argues that as men have removed themselves from

responsibility for children, many women have become dependent on the state for subsistence as they continue to bear nearly total responsibility for child rearing (Brown, 1981; cf. Boris and Bardaglio, 1983; A. Ferguson, 1984). This creates a new system of the exploitation of women's domestic labor mediated by state institutions, which she calls public patriarchy.

In twentieth-century capitalist economics the workplaces that women have been entering in increasing numbers serve as another important site of gender exploitation. David Alexander (1987) argues that typically feminine jobs involve gender-based tasks requiring sexual labor, nurturing, caring for others' bodies, or smoothing over workplace tensions. In these ways women's energies are expended in jobs that enhance the status of, please, or comfort others, usually men; and these gender-based labors of waitresses, clerical workers, nurses, and other caretakers often go unnoticed and undercompensated.

To summarize, women are exploited in the Marxist sense to the degree that they are wage workers. Some have argued that women's domestic labor also represents a form of capitalist class exploitation insofar as it is labor covered by the wages a family receives. As a group, however, women undergo specific forms of gender exploitation in which their energies and power are expended, often unnoticed and unacknowledged, usually to benefit men by releasing them for more important and creative work, enhancing their status or the environment around them, or providing them with sexual or emotional service.

Race is a structure of oppression at least as basic as class or gender. Are there, then, racially specific forms of exploitation? There is no doubt that racialized groups in the United States, especially Blacks and Latinos, are oppressed through capitalist superexploitation resulting from a segmented labor market that tends to reserve skilled, high-paying, unionized jobs for Whites. There is wide disagreement about whether such superexploitation benefits Whites as a group or only benefits the capitalist class (see Reich, 1981), and I do not intend to enter into that dispute here.

However, one answers the question about capitalist superexploitation of racialized groups, is it possible to conceptualize a form of exploitation that is racially specific on analogy with the gender-specific forms just discussed? I suggest that the category of *menial* labor might supply a means for such conceptualization. In its derivation "menial" designates the labor of servants. Wherever there is racism, there is the assumption, more or less enforced, that members of the oppressed racial groups are or ought to be servants of those, or some

of those, in the privileged group. In most White racist societies this means that many White people have dark or yellow-skinned domestic servants, and in the United States today there remains significant racial structuring of private household service. But in the United States today much service labor has gone public; anyone who goes to a good hotel or a good restaurant can have servants. Servants often attended the daily—and nightly—activities of business executives, government officials, and other high-status professionals. In our society there remains strong cultural pressure to fill servant jobs—bellhop, porter, chambermaid, busboy, and so on—with Black and Latino workers. These jobs entail a transfer of energies whereby the servers enhance the status of the served.

Menial labor usually refers not only to service, however, but also to any servile, unskilled, low-paying work lacking in autonomy, in which a person is subject to taking orders from many people. Menial work tends to be auxiliary work, instrumental to the work of others, where those others receive primary recognition for doing the job. Laborers on a construction site, for example, are at the beck and call of welders, electricians, carpenters, and other skilled workers, who receive recognition for the job done. In the United States, explicit racial discrimination once reserved menial work for Blacks, Chicanos, American Indians, and Chinese, and menial work still tends to be linked to Black and Latino workers (Symanski, 1985). I offer this category of menial labor as a form of racially specific exploitation, as a provisional category in need of exploration.

The injustice of exploitation is most frequently understood on a distributive model. For example, though he does not offer an explicit definition of the concept, by “exploitation” Bruce Ackerman seems to mean a seriously unequal distribution of wealth, income, and other resources that is group based and structurally persistent (Ackerman, 1980, chap. 8). John Roemer’s definition of exploitation is narrower and more rigorous: “An agent is exploited when the amount of labor embodied in any bundle of goods he could receive, in a feasible distribution of society’s net product, is less than the labor he expended” (Roemer, 1982, p. 122). This definition too turns the conceptual focus from institutional relations and processes to distributive outcomes.

Jeffrey Reiman argues that such a distributive understanding of exploitation reduces the injustice of class processes to a function of the inequality of the productive assets classes own. This misses, according to Reiman, the relationship of force between capitalists and workers, the fact that the unequal exchange in question occurs within coercive structures that give workers few options (Reiman, 1987; cf. Buchanan, 1982, p. 49; Holmstrom, 1977). The injustice of

exploitation consists in social processes that bring about a transfer of energies from one group to another to produce unequal distributions, and in the way in which social institutions enable a few to accumulate while they constrain many more. The injustices of exploitation cannot be eliminated by redistribution of goods, for as long as institutionalized practices and structural relations remain unaltered, the process of transfer will re-create an unequal distribution of benefits. Bringing about justice where there is exploitation requires reorganization of institutions and practices of decision making, alteration of the division of labor, and similar measures of institutional, structural, and cultural change.

### *Marginalization*

Increasingly in the United States, racial oppression occurs in the form of marginalization rather than exploitation. Marginals are people the system of labor cannot or will not use. Not only in Third World capitalist countries, but also in most Western capitalist societies, there is a growing underclass of people permanently confined to lives of social marginality, most of whom are racially marked—Blacks or Indians in Latin America, and Blacks, East Indians, Eastern Europeans, or North Africans in Europe.

Marginalization is by no means the fate only of racially marked groups, however. In the United States a shamefully large proportion of the population is marginal; old people and increasingly people who are not very old but get laid off from their jobs and cannot find new work; young people, especially Black or Latino, who cannot find first or second jobs; many single mothers and their children; other people involuntarily unemployed; many mentally and physically disabled people; Americans Indians, especially those on reservations.

Marginalization is perhaps the most dangerous form of oppression. A whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life and thus potentially subjected to severe material deprivation and even extermination. The material deprivation marginalization often causes is certainly unjust, especially in a society where others have plenty. Contemporary advanced capitalist societies have in principle acknowledged the injustices of material deprivation caused by marginalization, and have taken some steps to address it by providing welfare payments and services. The continuance of this welfare state is by no means assured, and in most welfare state societies, especially the United States, welfare redistributions do not eliminate large-scale suffering and deprivation. Material deprivation, which can be addressed by redistributive social policies, is not, how-

ever, the extent of the harm caused by marginalization. Two categories of injustice beyond distribution are associated with marginality in advanced capitalist societies. First, the provision of welfare itself produces new injustice by depriving those dependent on it of rights and freedoms that others have. Second, even when material deprivation is somewhat mitigated by the welfare state, marginalization is unjust because it blocks the opportunity to exercise capacities in socially defined and recognized ways. I shall explicate each of these in turn.

Liberalism has traditionally asserted the right of all rational autonomous agents to equal citizenship. Early bourgeois liberalism explicitly excluded from citizenship all those whose reason was questionable or not fully developed, and all those not independent (Pate-man, 1988, chap. 3; cf. Bowles and Gintis, 1986, chap. 2). Thus, poor people, women, the mad and the feeble-minded, and children were explicitly excluded from citizenship, and many of these were housed in institutions modeled on the modern prison: poorhouses, insane asylums, schools.

Today the exclusion of dependent persons from equal citizenship rights is only barely hidden beneath the surface. Because they depend on bureaucratic institutions for support or services, the old, the poor, and the mentally and physically disabled are subject to patronizing, punitive, demeaning, and arbitrary treatment by the policies and people associated with welfare bureaucracies. Being a dependent in our society implies being legitimately subject to the often arbitrary and invasive authority of social service providers and other public and private administrators, who enforce rules with which the marginal must comply, and otherwise exercise power over the conditions of their lives. In meeting needs of the marginalized, often with the aid of social scientific disciplines, welfare agencies also construct the needs themselves. Medical and social service professionals know what is good for those they serve, and the marginals and dependents themselves do not have the right to claim to know what is good for them (Fraser, 1987a; K. Ferguson, 1984, chap. 4). Dependency in our society thus implies, as it has in all liberal societies, a sufficient warrant to suspend basic rights to privacy, respect, and individual choice.

Although dependency produces conditions of injustice in our society, dependency in itself need not be oppressive. One cannot imagine a society in which some people would not need to be dependent on others at least some of the time: children, sick people, women recovering from childbirth, old people who have become frail, depressed or otherwise emotionally needy persons, have the moral right to depend on others for subsistence and support.

An important contribution of feminist moral theory has been to question the deeply held assumption that moral agency and full citizenship require that a person be autonomous and independent. Feminists have exposed this assumption as inappropriately individualistic and derived from a specifically male experience of social relations, which values competition and solitary achievement (see Gilligan, 1982; Friedman, 1985). Female experience of social relations, arising both from women's typical domestic care responsibilities and from the kinds of paid work that many women do, tends to recognize dependence as a basic human condition (cf. Hartsock, 1983, chap. 10). Whereas on the autonomy model a just society would as much as possible give people the opportunity to be independent, the feminist model envisions justice as according respect and participation in decision making to those who are dependent as well as to those who are independent (Held, 1987b). Dependency should not be a reason to be deprived of choice and respect, and much of the oppression many marginals experience would be lessened if a less individualistic model of rights prevailed.

Marginalization does not cease to be oppressive when one has shelter and food. Many old people, for example, have sufficient means to live comfortably but remain oppressed in their marginal status. Even if marginals were provided a comfortable material life within institutions that respected their freedom and dignity, injustices of marginality would remain in the form of uselessness, boredom, and lack of self-respect. Most of our society's productive and recognized activities take place in contexts of organized social cooperation, and social structures and processes that close persons out of participation in such social cooperation are unjust. Thus while marginalization definitely entails serious issues of distributive justice, it also involves the deprivation of cultural, practical, and institutionalized conditions for exercising capacities in a context of recognition and interaction.

The fact of marginalization raises basic structural issues of justice, in particular concerning the appropriateness of a connection between participation in productive activities of social cooperation, on the one hand, and access to the means of consumption, on the other. As marginalization is increasing, with no signs of abatement, some social policy analysts have introduced the idea of a "social wage" as a guaranteed socially provided income not tied to the wage system. Restructuring of productive activity to address a right of participation, however, implies organizing some socially productive activity outside of the wage system (see Offe, 1985, pp. 95–100), through public works or self-employed collectives.

*Powerlessness*

As I have indicated, the Marxist idea of class is important because it helps reveal the structure of exploitation: that some people have their power and wealth because they profit from the labors of others. For this reason I reject the claim some make that a traditional class exploitation model fails to capture the structure of contemporary society. It remains the case that the labor of most people in the society augments the power of relatively few. Despite their differences from nonprofessional workers, most professional workers are still not members of the capitalist class. Professional labor either involves exploitative transfers to capitalists or supplies important conditions for such transfers. Professional workers are in an ambiguous class position, it is true, because they also benefit from the exploitation of nonprofessional workers.

While it is false to claim that a division between capitalist and working classes no longer describes our society, it is also false to say that class relations have remained unaltered since the nineteenth century. An adequate conception of oppression cannot ignore the experience of social division reflected in the colloquial distinction between the “middle class” and the “working class,” a division structured by the social division of labor between professionals and nonprofessionals. Professionals are privileged in relation to nonprofessionals, by virtue of their position in the division of labor and the status it carries. Nonprofessionals suffer a form of oppression in addition to exploitation, which I call powerlessness.

In the United States, as in other advanced capitalist countries, most workplaces are not organized democratically, direct participation in public policy decisions is rare, and policy implementation is, for the most part, hierarchical, imposing rules on bureaucrats and citizens. Thus, most people in these societies do not regularly participate in making decisions that affect the conditions of their lives and actions, and in this sense, most people lack significant power. At the same time, domination in modern society is enacted through the widely dispersed powers of many agents mediating the decisions of others. To that extent many people have some power in relation to others, even though they lack the power to decide policies or results. The powerless are those who lack authority or power even in this mediated sense, those over whom power is exercised without their exercising it; the powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them. Powerlessness also designates a position in the division of labor and the concomitant social

position that allows persons little opportunity to develop and exercise skills. The powerless have little or no work autonomy, exercise little creativity or judgment in their work, have no technical expertise or authority, express themselves awkwardly, especially in public or bureaucratic settings, and do not command respect. Powerlessness names the oppressive situations Sennett and Cobb (1972) describe in their famous study of working-class men.

This powerless status is perhaps best described negatively: the powerless lack the authority, status, and sense of self that professionals tend to have. The status privilege of professionals has three aspects, the lack of which produces oppression for nonprofessionals. First, acquiring and practicing a profession has an expansive, progressive character. Being professional usually requires a college education and the acquisition of a specialized knowledge that entails working with symbols and concepts. Professionals experience progress first in acquiring the expertise, and then in the course of professional advancement and rise in status. The life of the nonprofessional by comparison is powerless in the sense that it lacks this orientation toward the progressive development of capacities and avenues for recognition.

Second, while many professionals have supervisors and cannot directly influence many decisions or the action of many people, most nevertheless have considerable day-to-day work autonomy. Professionals usually have some authority over others, moreover either over workers they supervise, or over auxiliaries, or over clients. Nonprofessionals, on the other hand, lack autonomy, and in both their working and their consumer-client lives often stand under the authority of professionals. Though based on a division of labor between "mental" and "manual" work, the distinction between "middle class" and "working class" designates a division not only in working life, but also in nearly all aspects of social life. Professionals and nonprofessionals belong to different cultures in the United States. The two groups tend to live in segregated neighborhoods or even different towns, a process itself mediated by planners, zoning officials, and real estate people. The groups tend to have different tastes in food, decor, clothes, music, and vacations, and often different health and educational needs. Members of each group socialize for the most part with others in the same status group. While there is some intergroup mobility between generations, for the most part the children of professionals become professionals and the children of nonprofessionals do not.

Thus, third, the privileges of the professional extend beyond the workplace to a whole way of life. I call this way of life "respectability." To treat people with respect is to be prepared to listen to

what they have to say or to do what they request because they have some authority, expertise, or influence. The norms of respectability in our society are associated specifically with professional culture. Professional dress, speech, tastes, and demeanor, all connote respectability. Generally professionals expect and receive respect from others. In restaurants, banks, hotels, real estate offices, and many other such public places, as well as in the media, professionals typically receive more respectful treatment than nonprofessionals. For this reason nonprofessionals seeking a loan or a job, or to buy a house or a car, will often try to look “professional” and “respectable” in those settings.

The privilege of this professional respectability appears starkly in the dynamics of racism and sexism. In daily interchange women and men of color must prove their respectability. At first they are often not treated by strangers with respectful distance or deference. Once people discover that this woman or that Puerto Rican man is a college teacher or a business executive, however, they often behave more respectfully toward her or him. Working-class White men, on the other hand, are often treated with respect until their working-class status is revealed.

I have discussed several injustices associated with powerlessness: inhibition in the development of one’s capacities, lack of decision making power in one’s working life, and exposure to disrespectful treatment because of the status one occupies. These injustices have distributional consequences but are more fundamentally matters of the division of labor. The oppression of powerlessness brings into question the division of labor basic to all industrial societies: the social division between those who plan and those who execute.

### *Cultural Imperialism*

Exploitation, marginalization, and powerlessness all refer to relations of power and oppression that occur by virtue of the social division of labor—who works for whom, who does not work, and how the content of work defines one institutional position relative to others. These three categories refer to structural and institutional relations that delimit people’s material lives, including but not restricted to the resources they have access to and the concrete opportunities they have or do not have to develop and exercise their capacities. These kinds of oppression are a matter of concrete power in relation to others—of who benefits from whom, and who is dispensable.

Recent theorists of movements of group liberation, notably feminist and Black liberation theorists, have also given prominence to

a rather different form of oppression, which following Lugones and Spelman (1983) I shall call cultural imperialism. To experience cultural imperialism means to experience how the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one's own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one's group and mark it out as the Other.

Cultural imperialism involves the universalization of a dominant group's experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm. Some groups have exclusive or primary access to what Nancy Fraser (1987b) calls the means of interpretation and communication in a society. As a consequence, the dominant cultural products of the society, that is, those most widely disseminated, express the experience, values, goals, and achievements of these groups. Often without noticing they do so, the dominant groups project their own experience as representative of humanity as such. Cultural products also express the dominant group's perspective on and interpretation of events and elements in the society, including other groups in the society, insofar as they attain cultural status at all.

An encounter with other groups, however, can challenge the dominant group's claim to universality. The dominant group reinforces its position by bringing the other groups under the measure of its dominant norms. Consequently, the difference of women from men, American Indians or Africans from Europeans, Jews from Christians, homosexuals from heterosexuals, workers from professionals becomes reconstructed largely as deviance and inferiority. Since only the dominant group's cultural expressions receive wide dissemination, their cultural expressions become the normal, or the universal, and thereby the unremarkable. Given the normality of its own cultural expressions and identity, the dominant group constructs the differences that some groups exhibit as lack and negation. These groups become marked as Other.

The culturally dominated undergo a paradoxical oppression, in that they are both marked out by stereotypes and at the same time, rendered invisible. As remarkable, deviant beings, the culturally imperialized are stamped with an essence. The stereotypes confine them to a nature that is often attached in some way to their bodies, and thus cannot easily be denied. These stereotypes so permeate the society that they are not noticed as contestable. Just as everyone knows that the earth goes around the sun, so everyone knows that gay people are promiscuous, that Indians are alcoholics, and that women are good with children. White males, on the other hand, insofar as they escape group marking, can be individuals.

Those living under cultural imperialism find themselves defined from the outside, positioned, placed, by a network of dominant meanings they experience as arising from elsewhere, from those with whom they do not identify and who do not identify with them. Consequently, the dominant culture's stereotyped and inferiorized images of the group must be internalized by group members at least to the extent that they are forced to react to behavior of others influenced by those images. This creates for the culturally oppressed the experience that W. E. B. Du Bois called "double consciousness"—"this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Du Bois, 1969 [1903], p. 45). Double consciousness arises when the oppressed subject refuses to coincide with these devalued, objectified, stereotyped visions of him- or herself. While the subjects desire recognition as human, capable of activity, full of hope and possibility, they receive from the dominant culture only the judgment that they are different, marked, or inferior.

The group defined by the dominant culture as deviant, as a stereotyped Other, *is* culturally different from the dominant group, because the status of Otherness creates specific experiences not shared by the dominant group, and because culturally oppressed groups also are often socially segregated and occupy specific positions in the social division of labor. Members of such groups express their specific group experiences and interpretations of the world to one another, developing and perpetuating their own culture. Double consciousness, then, occurs because one finds one's being defined by two cultures: a dominant and a subordinate culture. Because they can affirm and recognize one another as sharing similar experiences and perspectives on social life, people in culturally imperialized groups can often maintain a sense of positive subjectivity.

Cultural imperialism involves the paradox of experiencing oneself as invisible at the same time that one is marked out as different. The invisibility comes about when dominant groups fail to recognize the perspective embodied in their cultural expressions as a perspective. These dominant cultural expressions often simply have little place for the experience of other groups, at most only mentioning or referring to them in stereotyped or marginalized ways. This, then, is the injustice of cultural imperialism: that the oppressed group's own experience and interpretation of social life finds little expression that touches the dominant culture, while that same culture imposes on the oppressed group its experience and interpretation of social life.

*Violence*

Finally, many groups suffer the oppression of systematic violence. Members of some groups live with the knowledge that they must fear random, unprovoked attacks on their persons or property that have no motive but to damage, humiliate, or destroy the person. In American society women, Blacks, Asians, Arabs, gay men, and lesbians live under such threats of violence, and in at least some regions Jews, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, and other Spanish-speaking Americans must fear such violence as well. Physical violence against these groups is shockingly frequent. Rape Crisis Center networks estimate that more than one third of all American women experience an attempted or successful sexual assault in their lifetimes. Manning Marable (1984, pp. 238–241) catalogs a large number of incidents of racist violence and terror against Blacks in the United States between 1980 and 1982. He cites dozens of incidents of the severe beating, killing, or rape of Blacks by police officers on duty, in which the police involved were acquitted of any wrongdoing. In 1981, moreover, there were at least 500 documented cases of random White teenage violence against Blacks. Violence against gay men and lesbians is not only common, but has been increasing in the last five years. While the frequency of physical attacks on members of these and other racially or sexually marked groups is very disturbing, I also include in this category less severe incidents of harassment, intimidation, or ridicule simply for the purpose of degrading, humiliating, or stigmatizing group members.

Given the frequency of such violence in our society, why are theories of justice usually silent about it? I think the reason is that theorists do not typically take such incidents of violence and harassment as matters of social injustice. No moral theorist would deny that such acts are very wrong. But unless all immoralities are injustices, they might wonder, why should such acts be interpreted as symptoms of social injustice? Acts of violence or petty harassment are committed by particular individuals, often extremists, deviants, or the mentally unsound. How then can they be said to involve the sorts of institutional issues I have said are properly the subject of justice?

What makes violence a face of oppression is less the particular acts themselves, though these are often utterly horrible, than the social context surrounding them, which makes them possible and even acceptable. What makes violence a phenomenon of social injustice, and not merely an individual moral wrong, is its systemic character, its existence as a social practice. Violence is systemic because it is directed at members of a group simply because they are members

of that group. Any woman, for example, has a reason to fear rape. Regardless of what a Black man has done to escape the oppressions of marginality or powerlessness, he lives knowing he is subject to attack or harassment. The oppression of violence consists not only in direct victimization, but in the daily knowledge shared by all members of oppressed groups that they are *liable* to violation, solely on account of their group identity. Just living under such a threat of attack on oneself or family or friends deprives the oppressed of freedom and dignity, and needlessly expends their energy.

Violence is a social practice. It is a social given that everyone knows happens and will happen again. It is always at the horizon of social imagination, even for those who do not perpetrate it. According to the prevailing social logic, some circumstances make such violence more “called for” than in others. The idea of rape will occur to many men who pick up a hitchhiking woman; the idea of hounding or teasing a gay man on their dorm floor will occur to many straight male college students. Often several persons inflict the violence together, especially in all-male groupings. Sometimes violators set out looking for people to beat up, rape, or taunt. This rule-bound, social, and often premeditated character makes violence against groups a social practice.

Group violence approaches legitimacy, moreover, in the sense that it is tolerated. Often third parties find it unsurprising because it happens frequently and lies as a constant possibility at the horizon of social imagination. Even when they are caught, those who perpetrate acts of group-directed violence or harassment often receive light or no punishment. To that extent society renders their acts acceptable.

An important aspect of random, systemic violence is its irrationality. Xenophobic violence differs from the violence of states or ruling-class repression. Repressive violence has a rational, albeit evil, motive: rulers use it as a coercive tool to maintain their power. Many accounts of racist, sexist, or homophobic violence attempt to explain its motivation as a desire to maintain group privilege or domination. I do not doubt that fear of violence often functions to keep oppressed groups subordinate, but I do not think xenophobic violence is rationally motivated in the way that, for example, violence against strikers is.

On the contrary, the violation of rape, beating, killing, and harassment of women, people of color, gays, and other marked groups is motivated by fear or hatred of those groups. Sometimes the motive may be a simple will to power, to victimize those marked as vulnerable by the very social fact that they are subject to violence. If so, this motive is secondary in the sense that it depends on a social

practice of group violence. Violence-causing fear or hatred of the other at least partly involves insecurities on the part of the violators: its irrationality suggests that unconscious processes are at work. I think such unconscious fears account at least partly for the oppression I have here called violence. It may also partly account for cultural imperialism

Cultural imperialism, moreover, itself intersects with violence. The culturally imperialized may reject the dominant meanings and attempt to assert their own subjectivity, or the fact of their cultural difference may put the lie to the dominant culture's implicit claim to universality. The dissonance generated by such a challenge to the hegemonic cultural meanings can also be a source of irrational violence. Violence is a form of injustice that a distributive understanding of justice seems ill equipped to capture. This may be why contemporary discussions of justice rarely mention it. I have argued that group-directed violence is institutionalized and systemic. To the degree that institutions and social practices encourage, tolerate, or enable the perpetration of violence against members of specific groups, those institutions and practices are unjust and should be reformed. Such reform may require the redistribution of resources or positions but in large part can come only through a change in cultural images, stereotypes, and the mundane reproduction of relations of dominance and aversion in the gestures of everyday life.

### Applying the Criteria

Social theories that construct oppression as a unified phenomenon usually either leave out groups that even the theorists think are oppressed, or leave out important ways in which groups are oppressed. Black liberation theorists and feminist theorists have argued persuasively, for example, that Marxism's reduction of all oppressions to class oppression leaves out much about the specific oppression of Blacks and women. By pluralizing the category of oppression in the way it was explained in this chapter, social theory can avoid the exclusive and oversimplifying effects of such reductionism.

I have avoided pluralizing the category in the way some others have done, by constructing an account of separate systems of oppression for each oppressed group: racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, and so on. There is a double problem with considering each group's oppression a unified and distinct structure or system. On the one hand, this way of conceiving oppression fails to accommodate the similarities and overlaps in the oppressions of different

groups. On the other hand, it falsely represents the situation of all group members as the same.

I have arrived at the five faces of oppression—exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence—as the best way to avoid such exclusions and reductions. They function as criteria for determining whether individuals and groups are oppressed, rather than as a full theory of oppression. I believe that these criteria are objective. They provide a means of refuting some people's belief that their group is oppressed when it is not, as well as a means of persuading others that a group is oppressed when they doubt it. Each criterion can be operationalized; each can be applied through the assessment of observable behavior, status relationships, distributions, texts, and other cultural artifacts. I have no illusions that such assessments can be value-neutral. But these criteria can nevertheless serve as means of evaluating claims that a group is oppressed, or adjudicating disputes about whether or how a group is oppressed.

The presence of any of these five conditions is sufficient for calling a group oppressed. But different group oppressions exhibit different combinations of these forms, as do different individuals in these groups. Nearly all, if not all, groups said by contemporary social movements to be oppressed suffer cultural imperialism. The other oppressions they experience vary. Working-class people are exploited and powerless, for example, but if employed and White do not experience marginalization and violence. Gay men, on the other hand, are not exploited or powerless, but they experience severe cultural imperialism and violence. Similarly, Jews and Arabs as groups are victims of cultural imperialism and violence, though many members of these groups also suffer exploitation or powerlessness. Old people are oppressed by marginalization and cultural imperialism, and this is true of physically and mentally disabled people. As a group women are subject to gender-based exploitation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. Racism in the United States condemns many Blacks and Latinos to marginalization, and puts many more at risk, even though many members of these groups escape that condition: members of these groups often suffer all five forms of oppression.

Applying these five criteria to the situation of groups makes it possible to compare oppressions without reducing them to a common essence or claiming that one is more fundamental than another. One can compare the ways in which a particular form of oppression appears in different groups. For example, while the operations of cultural imperialism are often experienced in similar fashion by different groups, there are also important differences. One can compare

the combinations of oppression groups experience, or the intensity of those oppressions. Thus, with these criteria one can plausibly claim that one group is more oppressed than another without reducing all oppressions to a single scale.

Why are particular groups oppressed in the way they are? Are there any causal connections among the five forms of oppression? Causal or explanatory questions such as these are beyond the scope of this discussion. While I think general social theory has a place, causal explanation must always be particular and historical. Thus, an explanatory account of why a particular group is oppressed in the ways that it is must trace the history and current structure of particular social relations. Such concrete historical and structural explanations will often show causal connections among, the different forms of oppression experienced by a group. The cultural imperialism in which White men make stereotypical assumptions about and refuse to recognize the values of Blacks or women, for example, contributes to the marginalization and powerlessness many Blacks and women suffer. But cultural imperialism does not always have these effects.

### Note

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## Diversity, Group Identity, and Citizenship Education in a Global Age

James A. Banks

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# Diversity, Group Identity, and Citizenship Education in a Global Age

James A. Banks

Worldwide immigration and quests for rights by minority groups have caused social scientists and educators to raise serious questions about liberal assimilationist conceptions of citizenship that historically have dominated citizenship education in nation-states. The author of this article challenges liberal assimilationist conceptions of citizenship and citizenship education. He argues that citizenship education should be reformed so that it reflects the home cultures and languages of students from diverse groups, and he contends that group rights can help individuals to attain structural equality. In the final part of the article, he discusses the implications of his analysis for transforming citizenship education.

**Keywords:** citizenship; citizenship education; diversity; globalization; multicultural education

Conceptions of citizenship and citizenship education around the world face challenges from a number of historical, political, social, and cultural developments. Worldwide immigration, globalization, and the tenacity of nationalism have stimulated controversy and new thinking about citizenship and citizenship education (Gutmann, 2004; Koopmans, Statham, Giugni, & Passy, 2005; Torres, 1998).

In this article, I describe *assimilationist*, *liberal*, and *universal* conceptions of citizenship education;<sup>1</sup> state why these concepts should be interrogated; and argue that citizenship and citizenship education should be expanded to include cultural rights for citizens from diverse racial, cultural, ethnic, and language groups. I also state why citizenship education should incorporate recognition of group-differentiated rights (Fraser, 2000; Young, 1989). Liberal assimilationist notions of citizenship assume that individuals from different groups have to give up their home and community cultures and languages to attain inclusion and to participate effectively in the national civic culture (Greenbaum, 1974; Wong Fillmore, 2005). According to these conceptions of citizenship, the rights of groups are detrimental to the rights of the individual. In contrast, using the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s as an example, I argue that groups can help individuals to actualize their rights and opportunities.

I contend that an effective and transformative citizenship education helps students to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values

needed to function effectively within their cultural community, nation-state, and region and in the global community. Such an education also helps students to acquire the cosmopolitan perspectives and values needed to work for equality and social justice around the world (Appiah, 2006; Nussbaum, 2002). In the final part of this article, I argue that schools should implement a transformative and critical conception of citizenship education that will increase educational equality for all students. A transformative citizenship education also helps students to interact and deliberate with their peers from diverse racial and ethnic groups. I describe research that illuminates ways in which just, deliberative, and democratic classrooms and schools can be created.

## Conceptions of Citizenship and Citizenship Education

A citizen is an individual who lives in a nation-state and has certain rights and privileges, as well as duties to the state, such as allegiance to the government (Lagassé, 2000). Citizenship is “the position or status of being a citizen” (Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 250). Koopmans et al. (2005) define citizenship as “the set of rights, duties, and identities linking citizens to the nation-state” (p. 7). These basic definitions are accurate but do not reveal the complexity of citizenship as the concept has developed in modernized nation-states.

Marshall’s (1964) explication of three elements of citizenship—*civil*, *political*, and *social*—have been influential and widely cited in the field of citizenship studies (Bulmer & Rees, 1996). Marshall conceptualizes citizenship as developmental and describes how the civil, political, and social elements emerged in subsequent centuries.

The civil aspects of citizenship, which emerged in England in the 18th century, provide citizens with individual rights, such as freedom of speech, the right to own property, and equality before the law. The political aspect of citizenship developed in the 19th century. It gives citizens the franchise and the opportunity to exercise political power by participating in the political process. The social aspect arose in the 20th century. It provides citizens with the health, education, and welfare needed to participate fully in their cultural communities and in the national civic culture. Marshall viewed the three elements of citizenship as interrelated and overlapping and citizenship as an ideal toward which nation-states strive but which they never completely attain.

## Cultural Rights and Multicultural Citizenship

Assimilationist, liberal, and universal conceptions of citizenship require citizens to give up their first languages and cultures to

become full participants in the civic community of the nation-state (M. M. Gordon, 1964; Young, 1989, 2000). Most cultural, social, and educational policies in nation-states throughout the world, including the United States (Graham, 2005), were guided by an assimilationist policy prior to the ethnic revitalization movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Beginning in the 1600s, missionaries in the United States established boarding schools to assimilate and Christianize Indian youth (Deyhle & Swisher, in press). During the 1940s and 1950s, Mexican Americans were punished in school for speaking Spanish (Crawford, 1999). The histories and cultures of groups such as African Americans, Mexican Americans, and American Indians were rarely discussed in textbooks. When they appeared in textbooks, they were most frequently stereotyped (Banks, 1969). Policy and practice in schools, as in other institutions, were guided by Anglo-conformity (M. M. Gordon, 1964).

Since the ethnic revitalization movements of the 1960s and 1970s, marginalized racial, ethnic, and language groups have argued that they should have the right to maintain important aspects of their cultures and languages while participating fully in the national civic culture and community (Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967; B. M. Gordon, 2001; Sizemore, 1973). These groups have demanded that institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities respond to the groups' cultural identities and experiences by reforming curricula to reflect their struggles, hopes, dreams, and possibilities (B. M. Gordon, 2001; Nieto, 1999). They have also demanded that schools modify teaching strategies to make them more culturally responsive to students from different racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups (Au, 2006; Gay, 2000; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

During the 1960s and 1970s, leaders and scholars in ethnic minority communities in the United States borrowed some of the concepts and language that had been used by advocates and scholars of White ethnic communities during first decades of the 1900s, when large numbers of immigrants entered the United States from Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe. Drachler (1920) and Kallen (1924)—who were advocates for the cultural freedoms and rights of these immigrant groups and who were immigrants themselves—argued that *cultural democracy* is an important characteristic of a democratic society. Drachler and Kallen maintained that cultural democracy should coexist with political and economic democracy and that citizens in a democratic society should participate freely in the civic life of the nation-state and experience economic equality. According to Drachler and Kallen, citizens should also have the right to maintain important aspects of their community cultures and languages, as long as these do not conflict with the shared democratic ideals of the nation-state. Cultural democracy, argued Drachler, is an essential component of a political democracy.

In the early decades of the 20th century, Woodson (1933/1977) made a case for cultural democracy when he argued that a curriculum for African American students should reflect their history and culture. Woodson harshly criticized the absence of Black history in the curriculum and argued that Black students were being "miseducated" because they were learning only about European, not African, cultures and civilizations. In the 1970s, Ramírez and Castañeda (1974) maintained that cultural democracy requires

teaching methods that reflect the learning characteristics of Mexican American students as well as help them become bicultural in their learning styles and characteristics.

Kymlicka (1995), the Canadian political theorist, and Rosaldo (1997), the U.S. anthropologist, make arguments today that are similar in many ways to those made by Drachler and Kallen in the early 1900s and in later decades by Woodson and by Ramírez and Castañeda. Both Kymlicka and Rosaldo maintain that immigrant and ethnic groups should be able to participate fully in the national civic culture while retaining elements of their own cultures. The dominant culture of the nation-state should incorporate aspects of their experiences, cultures, and languages, which will enrich the mainstream culture as well as help marginalized groups to experience civic equality and recognition (Gutmann, 2004).

### Expanding Marshall's Citizenship Typology

The paper in which Marshall (1964) presented his citizenship typology was presented as the Alfred Marshall Lectures at the University of Cambridge in February 1949. The significant post-World War II migrations to the United Kingdom from its former colonies such as Jamaica, India, and Pakistan were just beginning. Marshall was consequently unable to foresee these migrations and their consequences—such as the racialization that occurred in response or the immigrants' quests for equality and inclusion (Solomos, 2008)—and did not incorporate them into his citizenship typology.

Marshall (1964) conceptualizes citizenship as an evolutionary concept that increases equality when it expands. Lipset (1964) states that the "assumption of equality" is perhaps the most important aspect of Marshall's idea of citizenship (p. ix). Marshall viewed citizenship and class as opposing principles and stated that citizenship and the capitalist class system were at war during the 20th century because citizenship and equality expand simultaneously.

Expanding Marshall's conception of citizenship to include *cultural democracy* and *cultural citizenship* is consistent with his view that citizenship evolves to reflect the historical development of the times and expands to increase equality and social justice. Ethnic and language minority groups in societies throughout the world are denied full citizenship rights because of their languages and cultural characteristics, because they regard maintaining attachments to their cultural communities as important to their identities, and because of historic group discrimination and exclusion (Castles & Davidson, 2000; Koopmans et al., 2005; Kymlicka, 1995; Young, 1989). Consequently, the conception of citizenship in a modern democratic nation-state should be expanded to include cultural rights and group rights within a democratic framework.

### Multicultural Citizenship

Global immigration and the increasing diversity in nation-states throughout the world challenge liberal assimilationist conceptions of citizenship. They raise complex and divisive questions about how nation-states can deal effectively with the problem of constructing civic communities that reflect and incorporate the diversity of citizens and yet have an overarching set of shared values, ideals, and goals to which all of the citizens of a nation-state

are committed (Banks, 2007). In the past, the liberal assimilationist ideology guided policy related to immigrants and diversity in most nation-states.

In the liberal assimilationist view, the rights of the individual are paramount, and group identities and rights are inconsistent with and inimical to the rights of the individual (Patterson, 1977). This conception maintains that identity groups promote group rights over the rights of the individual and that the individual must be freed of primordial and ethnic attachments to have free choice and options in a modernized democratic society (Patterson, 1977; Schlesinger, 1991). Strong attachments to ethnic, racial, religious, and other identity groups lead to conflicts and harmful divisions within society. Liberal scholars such as Patterson and Schlesinger also assume that group attachments will die of their own weight within a modernized, pluralistic democratic society if marginalized and excluded groups are given the opportunity to attain structural inclusion in the mainstream society. In this view, the survival of primordial attachments in a modernized democratic society reflects a "pathological condition" in which marginalized groups have not been provided with opportunities that would enable them to experience cultural assimilation and structural inclusion (Apter, 1977). If Mexican Americans are structurally integrated into mainstream U.S. society—argues the liberal assimilationist—they will have neither the desire nor the need to speak Spanish.

A number of factors have caused social scientists and political philosophers to raise serious questions about the liberal analysis and expectations for identity groups in modernized democratic nation-states. These factors include the rise of the ethnic revitalization movements since the 1960s and 1970s, which demand recognition of group rights as well as individual rights by the nation-state and by institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities (Banks, 2006); the structural exclusion of many racial, ethnic, and language groups into the United States and other Western nations (Benhabib, 2004; Castles & Davidson, 2000; M. M. Gordon, 1964); and increasing immigration throughout the world that has made most nation-states multinational and polyethnic (Kymlicka, 1995). Recent estimates indicate that "the world's 184 independent states contain over 600 living language groups and 5,000 ethnic groups. In very few countries can the citizens be said to share the same language, or belong to the same ethnonational group" (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 1).

### **Identity Groups in a Multicultural Democratic Society**

Identity groups can both obstruct the realization of democratic values and facilitate their realization (Gutmann, 2003). Nonmainstream groups, such as Canadian Sikhs and Mexican Americans, and mainstream groups, such as Anglo Canadians and the Boy Scouts of America, all are identity groups. Democracies should treat individuals as civil equals and give them equal freedoms (Gutmann, 2003). Identity groups may try to impose their values on individuals. However, they may also enhance individual freedom by helping individuals to attain goals that are consistent with democratic values and that can be achieved only through group action.

Identity groups provide opportunities for their members to freely associate and express themselves culturally and politically

(Gutmann, 2003). Individuals more successfully attain goals through the political system when working in groups than when working alone. Important examples are the political, cultural, and educational gains that African Americans won through their participation in the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the momentous changes that the movement initiated in U.S. society as a whole, with significant benefits for other racial, ethnic, and language groups, women, and people with disabilities.

The Immigration Reform Act of 1965 (which became effective in 1968) was a consequence of the Civil Rights Movement. The act abolished the quota system based on immigrants' national origins and liberalized American immigration policy (Bennett, 1988). Immigration to the United States from Asian and Latin American nations increased substantially as a result. Primarily because of the Immigration Reform Act, the nation's racial and ethnic texture has changed significantly. Before 1968, most immigrants to the United States came from Europe. Today, most come from Asia and Latin America. A significant number also come from the West Indies and Africa. The United States is now experiencing its largest influx of immigrants since the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The U.S. Census Bureau (2000) projects that ethnic groups of color—or ethnic minorities—will increase from 28% of the nation's population today to 50% in 2050.

Marginalized groups have organized and worked for their group rights throughout U.S. history, bringing greater equality and social justice for all Americans. This was the case with the movements for civil rights, women's rights, and language rights (the last promoting the right of all citizens to speak and learn their own languages in the public schools). Groups in the margins of U.S. society have been the conscience of America and the main sites for struggles to close the gap between American democratic ideals and institutionalized racism and discrimination (Okiehiro, 1994). Through their movements to advance justice and equality in America, marginalized groups have helped the nation come closer to actualizing the democratic ideals stated in its founding documents—the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights (Okiehiro, 1994).

### **Universal and Differentiated Citizenship**

Group differences are not included in a universal conception of citizenship. Consequently, the differences of groups that have experienced structural exclusion and discrimination—such as women and people of color—are suppressed. A *differentiated* conception of citizenship, rather than a universal one, is needed to help marginalized groups attain civic equality and recognition in multicultural democratic nations (Young, 1989). Many problems result from a universal notion of citizenship according to which "citizenship status transcends particularity and difference" and "laws and rules . . . are blind to individual and group differences" (Young, 1989, p. 250). A universal conception of citizenship within a stratified society results in the treatment of some groups as second-class citizens because group rights are not recognized and the principle of equal treatment is strictly applied.

When universal citizenship is determined, defined, and implemented by groups with power and when the interests of marginalized groups are not expressed or incorporated into civic

discussions, the interests of groups with power and influence will determine the definitions of universal citizenship and the public interest. Groups with power and influence often equate their own interests with the public interest. This phenomenon occurs in the debate over multicultural education in the nation's schools, colleges, and universities. Critics of multicultural education such as D'Souza (1991) and Schlesinger (1991) define the interests of dominant groups as the "public" interest and those of people of color such as African Americans and Latinos as "special" interests that endanger the polity.

### **The Challenges of Global Citizenship**

Cultural and group identities are important in multicultural democratic societies. However, they are not sufficient for citizenship participation because of worldwide migration and the effects of globalization on local, regional, and national communities (Banks, 2004a). Students need to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that will enable them to function in a global society. Globalization affects every aspect of communities, including beliefs, norms, values, and behaviors, as well as business and trade. Worldwide migration has increased diversity in most nation-states and is forcing nations to rethink citizenship and citizenship education. National boundaries are eroding because millions of people live in several nations and have multiple citizenships (Castles & Davidson, 2000). Millions have citizenship in one nation and live in another. Others are stateless, including millions of refugees around the world. The number of individuals living outside their original homelands increased from approximately 33 million in 1910 to 175 million in 2000 (Benhabib, 2004).

National boundaries are also becoming more porous because of international human rights that are codified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and by the European Union. These rights are specified for individuals regardless of the nation-state in which they live and whether they are citizens of a nation or not. Explicated in the declaration are the rights to freedom of expression and religious belief, the right to privacy, and the right for an individual charged with a crime to be presumed innocent until proven guilty (Banks et al., 2005; Osler & Starkey, 2005). Serious tensions exist between the conceptions of international human rights and national sovereignty. Despite the codification of international rights by bodies such as the United Nations, nationalism is as strong as ever (Benhabib, 2004).

### **Global Migration: A Challenge to Nations and Schools**

Migration within and across nation-states is a worldwide phenomenon. The movement of peoples across boundaries is as old as the nation-state itself (Luchtenberg, 2004b). However, never before in history has the movement of diverse racial, cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups within and across nation-states been so extensive, so rapid, or raised such complex and difficult questions about citizenship, human rights, democracy, and education. Many worldwide developments challenge the notion of educating students to function in one nation-state. These developments include the ways that people move back and forth across national borders and the rights of movement

permitted by bodies external to nation-states such as the United Nations and the European Union.

Before the ethnic revitalization movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the aim of schools in most nation-states was to develop citizens who internalized their national values, venerated their national heroes, and accepted glorified versions of their national histories. These goals of citizenship education are inconsistent with the citizen's role in a global world today because many people have multiple national commitments and live in multiple nation-states. However, the development of citizens with global and cosmopolitan identities and commitments is contested in nation-states throughout the world because nationalism remains strong. Nationalism and globalization coexist in tension worldwide (Benhabib, 2004; Castles & Davidson, 2000).

When responding to the problems wrought by international migration, schools in multicultural nation-states must deal with complex educational issues in ways consistent with their democratic ideologies and declarations. There is a wide gap between the democratic ideals in Western nations and the daily experiences of students in schools (Banks, 2004a). Ethnic minority students in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France—as in other nations throughout the world—often experience discrimination because of their cultural, linguistic, religious, and value differences. Often, both students and teachers perceive these students as the "Other." When ethnic minority students—such as Turkish students in Germany and Muslim students in the United Kingdom—are marginalized in school and treated as the "Other," they tend to emphasize their ethnic identities and to develop weak attachments to the nation-state.

Multicultural democratic nation-states must grapple with a number of salient issues, paradigms, and ideologies as their school populations become more culturally, racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse. The extent to which nation-states make multicultural citizenship possible, the achievement gap between minority and majority groups, and the language rights of immigrant and minority groups are among the unresolved and contentious issues with which these nations must grapple.

Nation-states throughout the world are trying to determine whether they will perceive themselves as multicultural and allow immigrants to experience multicultural citizenship or continue to embrace an assimilationist liberal ideology (Kymlicka, 1995). In nation-states that embrace multicultural citizenship, immigrant and minority groups can retain important aspects of their languages and cultures while exercising full citizenship rights. Nation-states in various parts of the world have responded to the citizenship and cultural rights of immigrant and minority groups in significantly different ways. Since the ethnic revitalization movements of the 1960s and 1970s, many national leaders and citizens in the United States, Canada, and Australia have viewed these nations as multicultural democracies (Banks, 1986). An ideal exists in these nations that minority groups can maintain important elements of their community cultures and become full citizens of the nation-state. However, there is a wide gap between the ideals of these nations and the experiences of ethnic minority groups. Most ethnic minority groups in nations that view themselves as multicultural—such as the United States, Canada, and

Australia—experience discrimination in both the schools and the wider society.

Other nations, such as Japan (Murphy-Shigematsu, 2004) and Germany (Luchtenberg, 2004a, 2004b; Männitz, 2004), have been reluctant to view themselves as multicultural societies. Citizenship has been closely linked to biological heritage and characteristics in these nations. Although the biological conception of citizenship in both Japan and Germany has eroded within the past decade, it has left a tenacious legacy in both countries. Castles (2004) refers to Germany's response to immigrants as "differential exclusion," which is "partial and temporary integration of immigrant workers into society—that is, they are included in those subsystems of society necessary for their economic role: the labor market, basic accommodation, work-related health care, and welfare" (p. 32).

Since the 1960s and 1970s, the French have dealt with immigrant groups in ways distinct from those of the immigrant nations of the United States, Canada, and Australia. In France the explicit goal is assimilation—called *integration*—and inclusion (Bowen, 2004, in press; Castles, 2004; Hargreaves, 1995; Scott, 2007). Immigrants can become full citizens in France but are required to surrender their languages and cultures. Integration assumes that cultural and ethnic differences should and will disappear (Hargreaves, 1995; Scott, 2007).

### Education for National and Global Citizenship

Multicultural societies are faced with the problem of constructing nation-states that reflect and incorporate the diversity of their citizens and yet have an overarching set of shared values, ideals, and goals to which all of their citizens are committed. In a democratic society, civic equality and recognition are important values (Gutmann, 2004). These values give ethnic and immigrant groups the right to maintain important elements of their ethnic cultures and languages as well as to participate in the national civic culture.

Nationalists and assimilationists around the world worry that if citizens are allowed to retain identifications with their cultural communities they will not acquire sufficiently strong attachments to their nation-states. Such concerns reflect a "zero-sum conception of identity" (Kymlicka, 2004, p. xiv). The theoretical and empirical work of multicultural scholars indicates that *identity is multiple, changing, overlapping, and contextual, rather than fixed and static*—and that thoughtful and clarified cultural identifications will enable people to be better citizens of the nation-state. Writes Ladson-Billings (2004):

The dynamic of the modern (or postmodern) nation-state makes identities as either an individual or a member of a group untenable. Rather than seeing the choice as either/or, the citizen of the nation-state operates in the realism of both/and. She is both an individual who is entitled to citizen rights that permit one to legally challenge infringement of those rights [and one who is] acting as a member of a group. . . . People move back and forth across many identities, and the way society responds to these identities either binds people to or alienates them from the civic culture. (p. 112)

### The Challenge of Unity and Diversity

Balancing unity and diversity is a continuing challenge for multicultural nation-states. Unity without diversity results in hegemony and

oppression; diversity without unity leads to Balkanization and the fracturing of the nation-state (Banks, 2004b). A major problem facing nation-states throughout the world is how to recognize and legitimize difference and yet construct an overarching national identity that incorporates the voices, experiences, and hopes of the diverse groups that compose it. Many ethnic, language, and religious groups have weak identifications with their nation-states because of their marginalized status and because they do not see their hopes, dreams, visions, and possibilities reflected in the nation-state or in the schools, colleges, and universities (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Osler & Vincent, 2002).

The diversity brought to European nations such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and France by immigrants from their former colonies has increased racial, ethnic, and religious tension and conflict (Koopmans et al., 2005). A bitter controversy arose in France regarding the wearing of the *hijab* (veil) by Muslim girls in state-supported schools. In March 2004 the French parliament passed a law that prohibits the wearing of any ostensible religious symbol in state schools. Although this law prohibits the wearing of the Jewish yarmulke as well as large Christian crosses, its target was the hijab. The French policy is a contentious and divisive attempt by a nation with a strong assimilationist ideology to deal with religious expression in the public sphere in a way that is consistent with its ideals of equality, liberty, and republicanism (Bowen, in press). Bowen (2004) describes incisively the different meanings of the headscarf controversy to the mainstream French and to French Muslims:

For many non-Muslim French, [the headscarves] represent multiple dangers to the Republic; the oppression of women, urban violence, international terrorism, and the general refusal of Muslim immigrants to integrate into the broader society. For many of the five million or so Muslims living in France, the scarves represent the freedom of religious expression guaranteed by French law, the toleration of cultural pluralism, the value of modesty, and the general importance of developing ways to be both good Muslims and good citizens. (p. 31)

As worldwide immigration increases diversity on every continent and as global terrorism intensifies negative attitudes toward Muslims, schools in nation-states around the world are finding it difficult to implement policies and practices that respond to the diversity of students and also foster national cohesion (Banks et al., 2005). The four young Muslim men who are suspected of being responsible for the bombings of the London underground on July 7, 2005, had immigrant parents but were British citizens who grew up in Leeds. They apparently were not structurally integrated into British mainstream society and had weak identifications with the nation-state and with other British citizens. The immigrant background of most of the suspects and perpetrators of worldwide violence (Suárez-Orozco, 2006) has contributed to the rise of Islamophobia and racial tensions in Europe.

### The Complicated Characteristics of Student Identifications

Historically, schools in Western democratic nations, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, have focused on helping students to develop commitments and allegiance to the nation-state

and have given little attention to their need to maintain commitments to their local communities and cultures or to their original homelands. Schools assumed that assimilation into the mainstream culture was required for citizenship and national belonging and that students could and should surrender commitments to other communities, cultures, and nations. Greenbaum (1974) states that U.S. schools taught immigrant students *hope* and *shame*. These students were made to feel ashamed of their home and community cultures but were given hope that once they culturally assimilated they could join the U.S. mainstream culture. Cultural assimilation worked well for most White ethnic groups (Alba & Nee, 2003) but not for groups of color, which continue to experience structural exclusion after they become culturally assimilated.

Recent ethnographic research indicates that the narrow conception of citizenship education that has been embraced historically by schools is not consistent with the racial, ethnic, and cultural realities of U.S. society because of the complicated, contextual, and overlapping identities of immigrant students. Research by scholars studying immigrant high school students indicates that these students have complex and contradictory *transnational* identifications. This finding is consistent across studies of Palestinian American youth by El-Haj (2007), of Vietnamese American high school youth by Nguyen (2008), and of working-class Indian American, Pakistani American, and Bangladeshi American youth by Maira (2004). These researchers describe the nuanced and intricate identifications that immigrant youth have with the United States, their countries of origin, and their local communities. This research also indicates that the cultural and national identities of immigrant youth are contextual, evolving, and continually reconstructed.

El-Haj (2007), Nguyen (2008), and Maira (2004) found that the immigrant youths in their studies did not define their national identities in terms of their places of residence but felt that they belonged to national communities that transcended the boundaries of the United States. They defined their national identities as Palestinian, Vietnamese, Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi. They believed that an individual can be Palestinian or Vietnamese and live in many different nation-states. The youth in these studies distinguished between *national identity* and *citizenship*. They viewed themselves as Palestinian, Vietnamese, or Pakistani but also recognized and acknowledged their U.S. citizenship, which they valued for the privileged legal status and other opportunities it gave them. Some of the Vietnamese youth in Nguyen's study said, "I am Vietnamese *and* a citizen of the United States."

Although the immigrant youth in Nguyen's (2008) study viewed themselves as citizens of the United States, they did not view themselves as Americans. They felt that they were not Americans because to be American required an individual to be White and mainstream. Their construction of the criterion for becoming American was a consequence of the racism, discrimination, and exclusion that they experienced in their schools and communities. Both El-Haj (2007) and Nguyen describe how the marginalization that immigrant students experience in schools and in the larger U.S. society reinforces their national identification with distant nations, in which they imagine that they would experience equality and structural inclusion.

Maira (2004) used cultural citizenship to describe the transnational aspects of the citizenship identity held by the South Asian students in her study. These youths maintained contacts and connections with their homeland cultures through popular culture venues, such as websites, films, music, TV serials, cable TV, and DVDs made in their homelands.

### Schools and Citizenship Education in Multicultural Nations

The nuanced, complex, and evolving identities of the youth described in the studies by El-Haj (2007), Nguyen (2008), and Maira (2004) indicate that the liberal assimilationist notions of citizenship are ineffective today because of the deepening diversity throughout the world and the quests by marginalized immigrant, ethnic, and racial groups for cultural recognition and rights. Schools need to work to implement multicultural citizenship (Kymlicka, 1995), which recognizes the right and need for students to maintain commitments to their cultural communities, to a transnational community, and to the nation-state in which they are legal citizens.

Citizenship education should also help students to develop an identity and attachment to the global community and a human connection to people around the world. Global identities, attachments, and commitments constitute *cosmopolitanism* (Nussbaum, 2002). Cosmopolitans view themselves as citizens of the world who will make decisions and take actions in the global interests that will benefit humankind. Nussbaum states that their "allegiance is to the worldwide community of human beings" (p. 4).

Cosmopolitans identify with peoples from diverse cultures throughout the world. Nussbaum contrasts cosmopolitan universalism and internationalism with parochial ethnocentrism and inward-looking patriotism. Cosmopolitans "are ready to broaden the definition of public, extend their loyalty beyond ethnic and national boundaries, and engage with difference far and near" (W. C. Parker, personal communication, July 18, 2005). Cosmopolitans view social justice and equality globally and are concerned with threats to the world community such as global warming, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and war. Students can become cosmopolitan citizens while maintaining attachments and roots to their family and community cultures. Both Nussbaum (2002) and Appiah (2006) view local identities as important for cosmopolitans.

Schools should help students to understand how cultural, national, regional, and global identifications are interrelated, complex, and evolving (Banks, 2004b). These identifications are interactive in a dynamic way. Each should be recognized, valued, publicly affirmed, and thoughtfully examined in schools. Students should be encouraged to critically examine their identifications and commitments and to understand the complex ways in which they are interrelated and constructed.

Citizenship education should help students to realize that "no local loyalty can ever justify forgetting that each human being has responsibilities to every other" (Appiah, 2006, p. xvi). As citizens of the global community, students also must develop a deep understanding of the need to take action and make decisions to help solve the world's difficult problems. They need to participate in ways that will enhance democracy and promote equality

and social justice in their cultural communities, nations, and regions, and in the world.

Increasing diversity throughout the world today and increasing recognition of diversity—as well as the intractable problems that the world faces—require a reexamination of the ends and means of citizenship education if it is to promote inclusion, civic equality, and recognition (Gutmann, 2004). Liberal assimilationist conceptions of citizenship education that eradicate the cultures and languages of diverse groups will be ineffective in a transformed “flat” world of the 21st century (Friedman, 2005). Citizenship education in the United States—as well as in other Western nations—should be reinvented so that it will enable students to see their fates as intimately tied to those of people throughout the world. Citizenship education should help students to understand why “a threat to justice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” (King, 1963/1994, pp. 2–3).

### Mainstream and Transformative Citizenship Education

Citizenship education must be reimagined and transformed to effectively educate students to function in the 21st century. For reform to succeed, the knowledge that underlies its construction must shift from mainstream academic knowledge to transformative academic knowledge. Mainstream knowledge reinforces traditional and established knowledge in the social and behavioral sciences as well as the knowledge that is institutionalized in the popular culture and in the nation’s schools, colleges, and universities (Banks, 1993). Transformative academic knowledge consists of paradigms and explanations that challenge some of the key epistemological assumptions of mainstream knowledge (Collins, 2000; Harding, 1991; Homans, 1967). An important purpose of transformative knowledge is to improve the human condition. Feminist scholars and scholars of color have been among the leading constructors of transformative academic knowledge (Collins, 2000; Harding, 1991; Takaki, 1993, 1998).

*Mainstream citizenship education* is grounded in mainstream knowledge and assumptions and reinforces the status quo and the dominant power relationships in society. It is practiced in most social studies classrooms in the United States (Parker, 2002) and does not challenge or disrupt the class, racial, or gender discrimination in the schools and society. Mainstream citizenship education either does not include each of the four elements of citizenship identified in the first part of this article—*civil*, *political*, *social*, and *cultural*—or includes them at superficial and limited levels. It does not help students to understand their multiple and complex identities, the ways their lives are influenced by globalization, or what their roles should be in a global world. Instead, the emphasis is on memorizing facts about constitutions and other legal documents, learning about various branches of government, and developing patriotism to the nation-state (Westheimer, 2007). Critical thinking skills, decision making, and action are not important components of mainstream citizenship education.

*Transformative citizenship education* needs to be implemented in schools if students are to attain clarified and reflective cultural, national, regional, and global identifications and understand how these identities are interrelated and constructed. Transformative

citizenship education also recognizes and validates the cultural identities of students. It is rooted in transformative academic knowledge and enables students to acquire the information, skills, and values needed to challenge inequality within their communities, their nations, and the world; to develop cosmopolitan values and perspectives; and to take actions to create just and democratic multicultural communities and societies. Transformative citizenship education helps students to develop the decision-making and social action skills that are needed to identify problems in society, acquire knowledge related to their homes and community cultures and languages, identify and clarify their values, and take thoughtful individual or collective civic action (Banks & Banks, 1999). It also fosters critical thinking skills and is inclusive of what DeJaeghere (2007) calls *critical citizenship education*.

### Intergroup Relations Research and Transformative Citizenship Education

In democratic and transformative classrooms and schools, students from diverse groups interact and deliberate in equal-status situations. They also develop positive racial and ethnic attitudes as well as the knowledge, skills, and perspectives to deliberate with students from diverse groups. Deliberation among citizens from diverse groups is essential for a democratic society (Gutmann, 1987; Parker, 2002). Research indicates that equal status among diverse groups in contact situations is an essential condition for effective intergroup interactions and deliberations. Cohen and Roper (1972) found that White middle-class students dominated classroom interactions with African American students unless interventions increased the status of African Americans. Transformative classrooms create conditions in which students from different groups can interact in ways that enable them to view events from diverse perspectives and to deliberate in equal-status situations.

Allport (1954/1979) theorized that contact between groups will improve intergroup relations if the contact has the following characteristics: (a) The individuals experience equal status; (b) they share common goals; (c) intergroup cooperation exists; and (d) the contact is sanctioned by authorities, such as teachers and administrators, or by law or custom (Pettigrew, 2004). Multicultural textbooks and other materials (Banks, 2007; Takaki, 1993) help to create equal status in classrooms by giving voice to the histories and experiences of all students in the class and by enabling all to experience equality and recognition (Cohen, 1994; Gutmann, 2004).

Students have positive attitudes toward different racial and ethnic groups in transformative classrooms and have equal status in classroom discussions and deliberations. Teachers in transformative classrooms use strategies and materials that help students to acquire democratic racial attitudes and behaviors. Since the 1940s, a number of curriculum intervention studies have been conducted to determine the effects of teaching units and lessons, multicultural textbooks and materials, role playing, and other kinds of simulated experiences related to the racial attitudes and perceptions of students. These studies indicate that the use of multicultural textbooks, other related teaching materials, and cooperative teaching strategies can enable students from different racial and ethnic groups to develop democratic racial attitudes and to interact in equal-status situations. Such materials and

teaching strategies can also result in students' choosing more friends from outside their own racial, ethnic, and cultural groups (Slavin, 2001).

These studies provide guidelines that can help teachers to improve intergroup relations, interactions, and deliberations in transformative classrooms and schools. One of the earliest curriculum studies was conducted by Trager and Yarrow (1952), who examined the effects of a democratic multicultural curriculum on the racial attitudes of children in the first and second grades. The curriculum had a positive effect on the attitudes of both students and teachers. The authors gave their study the title *They Learn What They Live* to highlight its major finding: If students experience democracy they will internalize it.

Research indicates that curriculum interventions such as multiethnic readers (Litcher & Johnson, 1969); multicultural television programs (Bogatz & Ball, 1971); simulations (Weiner & Wright, 1973); multicultural social studies materials (Yawkey & Blackwell, 1974); folk dances, music, crafts, and role-playing (Ijaz & Ijaz, 1981); plays (Gimmestad & DeChiara, 1982); discussions about race (Aboud & Doyle, 1996); and discussions combined with antiracist teaching (McGregor, 1993) can have positive effects on the racial attitudes and interactions of students.

### Research on Cooperative Learning and Interracial Contact

Transformative and democratic classrooms foster cooperation rather than competition among students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. Cooperation promotes positive interracial interactions and deliberations. Since 1970, a group of investigators, guided by Allport's (1954/1979) theory, have produced a rich body of cumulative research on the effects of cooperative learning groups and activities on students' racial attitudes, friendship choices, and achievement. Much of this research has been conducted as well as reviewed by investigators such as Aronson (2002) and his colleagues (Aronson & Bridgeman, 1979; Aronson & Gonzalez, 1988), Cohen and her colleagues (Cohen, 1972, 1984; Cohen & Lotan, 1995), Johnson and Johnson (1981, 1991), Slavin (1979, 1983, 1985), and Slavin and Madden (1979). Schofield (2004) has written an informative review of this research. Most of it has been conducted using elementary and high school students (Slavin, 1983, 1985).

This research strongly supports the notion that cooperative interracial contact situations in schools—if the conditions described by Allport (1954/1979) are present in the contact situations—have positive effects on both student interracial behavior and student interactions (Aronson & Gonzalez, 1988; Slavin, 1979, 1983). In his review of 19 studies of the effects of cooperative learning methods, Slavin (1985) found that 16 showed positive effects on interracial friendships. In another review, Slavin (2001) also described the positive effects of cooperative groups on racial attitudes and cross-racial friendships. Other investigators have found that cooperative learning activities increased student motivation and self-esteem (Slavin, 1985) and helped students to develop empathy (Aronson, 2002; Aronson & Bridgeman, 1979).

Equal status between groups in interracial situations has to be deliberately structured by teachers or it will not exist (Cohen & Roper, 1972). If students from different racial, ethnic, and

linguistic groups are mixed in contact situations without structured interventions that create equal-status conditions, then racial and ethnic conflict and stereotyping are likely to increase. Students from both privileged and marginalized groups are likely to respond in ways that will reinforce the advantage of the higher status group. In a series of perceptive and carefully designed studies, Cohen and her colleagues consistently found that contact among different groups without deliberate interventions to increase equal-status and positive interactions among them will increase rather than reduce intergroup tensions (Cohen, 1984; Cohen & Lotan, 1995; Cohen & Roper, 1972).

### Transformative Classrooms and Levels of Citizenship

Transformative classrooms and schools help students to acquire the knowledge, values, and skills needed to become *deep citizens*. Clarke (1996) states that a deep citizen,

both in the operation of [his or her] own life and in some of its parameters . . . [is] conscious of acting in and into a world shared with others . . . [and is] conscious that the identity of self and the identity of others is co-related and co-creative, while also opening up the possibility of both engagement in and enchantment with the world. (p. 6)

I have developed a typology designed to help educators conceptualize ways to help students acquire increasingly deeper citizenship that contains four levels (see Figure 1). Like the categories in any typology, these levels of citizenship overlap and are interrelated. Nevertheless, differentiating levels of citizenship is useful.

- *Legal citizenship*, the most superficial level of citizenship in the typology, applies to citizens who are legal members of the nation-state and have certain rights and obligations to the state but do not participate in the political system in any meaningful ways.
- *Minimal citizenship* applies to those who are legal citizens and vote in local and national elections for conventional and mainstream candidates and issues.
- *Active citizenship* involves action beyond voting to actualize existing laws and conventions. Active citizens may participate in protest demonstrations or make public speeches regarding conventional issues and reforms. The actions of active citizens are designed to support and maintain—but not to challenge—existing social and political structures.
- *Transformative citizenship* involves civic actions designed to actualize values and moral principles and ideals beyond those of existing laws and conventions.<sup>2</sup> Transformative citizens take action to promote social justice even when their actions violate, challenge, or dismantle existing laws, conventions, or structures.

Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a White man on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, on December 1, 1955. Her action was a pivotal event in the Montgomery bus boycott that ended segregation in transportation in the South and thrust Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. into national leadership. A group of African American college students sat down at a lunch counter reserved

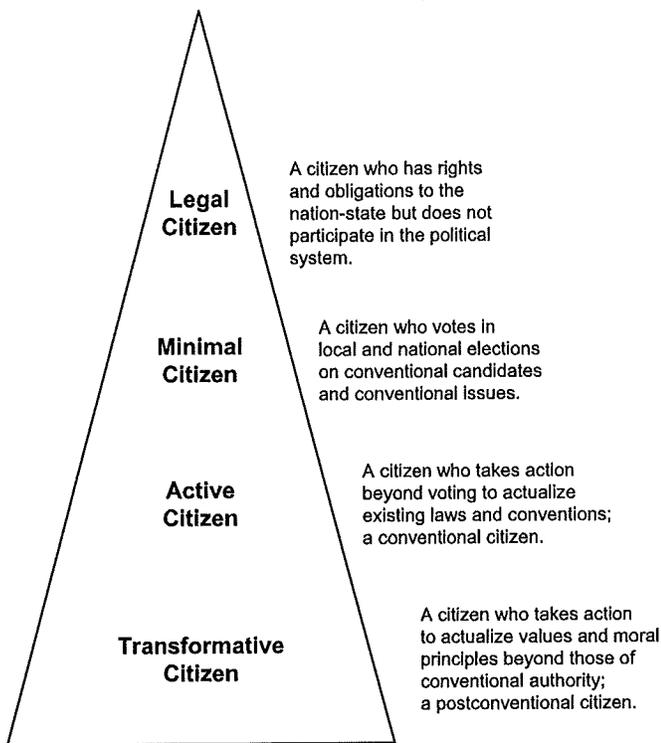


FIGURE 1. *Types of citizens, defined by four levels of participation. Transformative, or deep, citizenship is exemplified by Rosa Parks and the students who started the sit-in movement in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1960.*

for Whites in a Woolworth's store in Greensboro, North Carolina, on February 1, 1960. The students initiated the sit-in movement that ended segregation in lunch counters throughout the South. Both Parks and the students violated existing segregation laws. They were engaging in transformative citizenship because they took action to actualize social justice, even though what they did was illegal and challenged existing laws, customs, and conventions.

The important difference between active and transformative citizens is that the actions taken by active citizens fall within existing laws, customs, and conventions, whereas the actions taken by transformative citizens are designed to promote values and moral principles—such as social justice and equality—and may violate existing conventions and laws. Although transformative educators recognize and respect students at all levels of citizenship, their aim is to help students become transformative and deep citizens.

### Conclusion

Students experience democracy in classrooms and schools when transformative citizenship education is implemented. Consequently, they are better able to internalize democratic beliefs and values and to acquire thoughtful cultural identifications and commitments. The total school, including the knowledge conveyed in the curriculum, needs to be reformed to implement transformative citizenship education. Inequality and stratification within the larger society are challenged and are not reproduced in transformative and democratic classrooms and schools. Transformative citizenship education helps students to develop reflective cultural, national, regional, and global

identifications and to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote social justice in communities, nations, and the world.

### NOTES

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<sup>1</sup>I am using the terms *assimilationist*, *liberal*, *liberal assimilationist*, and *universal* as synonyms in describing conceptions of citizenship education.

<sup>2</sup>My ideas regarding convention and action beyond conventional levels are adapted from Lawrence Kohlberg's (1971) stages of moral development.

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## AUTHOR

JAMES A. BANKS is the Kerry and Linda Killinger Professor of Diversity Studies and Director of the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington, Box 353600, 110 Miller Hall, Seattle, WA 98195-3600; [jbanks@u.washington.edu](mailto:jbanks@u.washington.edu). His research focuses on multicultural education and diversity and citizenship education in a global context.

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## Discovering the Privilege of Whiteness: White Women’s Reflections on Anti-racist Identity and Ally Behavior

Kim A. Case\*

University of Houston-Clear Lake

*In the discussion group White Women Against Racism (WWAR), participants engaged in dialogue promoting self-examination of white privilege and anti-racist social action. Through qualitative analyses of field observations of group meetings and interviews, this study explores their engagement in the deconstruction of white privilege, white identity, and the challenges of anti-racist action for social change. The women examined whiteness through a lens of white privilege that opened new avenues to anti-racist white identity and activism. Participants also explored the influence of multiple identities and intersections with whiteness as sources of influence on their own anti-racism. The women conceptualized struggles with everyday anti-racist action as intertwined with privilege and social norms of silence. Although white privilege research typically focuses on classroom instruction or gaps in awareness, this study emphasizes the voices and experiences of White women to analyze white privilege awareness in relation to white anti-racist identity development and ally behavior.*

In her well-known piece identifying 46 advantages based on her white skin, Peggy McIntosh (1988) defines white privilege as “an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I am meant to remain oblivious” (p. 1). Seemingly everyday entitlements such as being accepted into a new neighborhood, using a credit card without suspicion, or offering one’s views without those opinions being generalized to all members of one’s race are unearned white privileges taken for granted as “neutral, normal, and universally available to everybody” (McIntosh, 1988, p. 10). Whites can rely on their

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\*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Kim Case, University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2700 Bay Area, Boulevard #35, Houston, TX 77058 [e-mail: caseki@uhcl.edu]

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privilege and avoid objecting to the racial oppression that provides the privilege (Frankenberg, 1993; Wildman & Davis, 1997). Recognizing less blatant instances of white privilege, such as receiving friendly customer service at a department store where a Latina would not, requires constant vigilance by anti-racist White women to make privilege visible. Discussion of McIntosh's (1988) list of white privileges was a major theme for the women participating in White Women Against Racism (WWAR) since the discussion group formed. This group formed, via the women's centers at two universities, as a space for White women to develop their anti-racist identities, share and create avenues for anti-racist activism, and explore strategies for challenging racism as allies in their daily lives. WWAR members recognized the complexities involved in defining anti-racist identity and ally behavior as they explored these possibilities in readings and discussions among group members.

### **Invisibility of Whiteness and White Privilege**

Given that whiteness and white privilege, as well as alternate forms of racial and ethnic identity privilege, may operate in similar or sometimes quite distinct patterns globally, it is important to note this research focuses on the cultural context and social constructions of whiteness within the United States. Permeating the fabric of American life, whiteness remains invisible to dominant group members with the luxury of never having to apply race to themselves (Grover, 1997). Although Whites racially categorize other Whites, once white skin identifies social status as a dominant group member, whiteness "fades almost instantaneously from white consciousness into transparency" (Flagg, 1997, p. 221). In fact, the invisibility of whiteness frees Whites to view themselves as individuals (Mahoney, 1997) rather than systematically linked with racial domination and unearned privilege. In an intricate system of white privilege, Whites have the power to ignore and neutralize race when race benefits Whites (Wildman & Davis, 1997).

Making whiteness visible, in order to question the assumption that white defines normal, receives much attention from critical white studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007; Wildman & Davis, 1997). As a fundamental goal, both critical race theory and critical white studies expose the race-neutral charades and myths that perpetuate racial oppression. Making unrecognized white norms explicit exposes the influence of racism on the lives of Whites and people of color. For White women involved in active self-reflection on racism, understanding white privilege and the normalization of whiteness may advance the process of anti-racist identity development. White women can begin to view the world through a filter of race that no longer hides whiteness, but rather highlights white privilege and the centrality of whiteness. Awareness of one's unearned advantages conflicts with anti-racist values and may lead to self-exploration of subtle behaviors that support racism and provide motivation to take anti-racist action.

### **Critical White Studies and White Anti-Racism**

Critical white studies arose as the area of critical legal studies concerned with the legal and social construction of whiteness and its impact on racial oppression. Of particular relevance to this study, critical white studies examines the invisibility of white privilege and whiteness in American culture (Grillo & Wildman, 1995), the unconscious racism of Whites, and the importance of white anti-racist action (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997). The development of critical white studies introduced perspectives on the essential role of White anti-racists in dismantling institutionalized racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997). Those perspectives include “abolishing whiteness” as a race traitor, identifying as a “White anti-racist racist,” and building a positive white identity within anti-racism.

Some critical white scholars also endorse an open acknowledgement that all Whites benefit from systematic white privilege, and are therefore racist (Bailey, 1999; Clark, 1999; Wildman & Davis, 1997). Within this philosophy, effective anti-racism requires admitting that those advantages implicate all Whites in racism, then constructing a white anti-racist racist identity (Clark, 1999; Thompson & White Women Challenging Racism [WWCR], 1997). They advise Whites to admit their internalized racism and take definitive steps toward unlearning and actively dismantling racism. Despite attempts by critical white studies scholars to offer some description of what white anti-racism looks like, little research is based on White anti-racist activists’ own words. Thompson and Neville (1999) suggest this gap in the literature be filled with research on not only the processes through which Whites learn racism, but also the processes involved in unlearning privilege and dominance. In addition, research is needed to address White anti-racists’ struggles with silence in the presence of racism and obstacles to white anti-racist activism for social change.

As an outgrowth of critical race theory, critical white studies’ emphasis on how social constructions of whiteness contribute to racism allows examination of ways White women help support racism and how they may challenge it. Recognition of unconscious racism and the invisibility of whiteness allow the separation of intention to harm from actual harm so that Whites may link themselves to the system of racism and the real world harm that results from that system. Making this personal connection may work as a motivation for creating change. The various models of white anti-racism provided by critical white studies, such as “White anti-racist racist” and “race traitor,” provide a framework for exploring White women’s conceptualizations of their roles in anti-racism.

### **Critical Race Feminism and Intersectional Analysis of Identity**

Feminist movements have long been justifiably criticized for neglecting racial oppression and failing to address the concerns of women of color (Collins,

1990; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983). Feminist anti-racist researchers, such as Alice McIntyre (1997) and Ruth Frankenberg (1993), utilized feminist theory for analysis of whiteness, racism, and anti-racism among White women. In her research with White women student teachers, McIntyre (1997) applied multicultural anti-racist education, feminist theory, and the principles of participatory action research to their understanding of whiteness and racism. Bailey (1999) explored her location as a White woman feminist with awareness of her unearned racial privilege and sex/gender oppression and recognized the social process that prevents White women from noticing racism and white privilege (Bailey, 1999). For White women, socialization not only encourages being competitive with other women for the attention of men, but also involves disowning power and privilege while aligning with powerful White men (Bailey, 1999; Fine, Stewart, & Zucker, 2000; Thompson & WWCR, 1997). Given the gender socialization and sex discrimination that women face, White women's experience of racism and anti-racism may be distinct from that of White men (Fine et al., 2000; Thompson & WWCR, 1997).

In situations where White women find themselves confronted with their identity as the racial oppressor, the unconscious urge to separate from power and privilege may result in centering the self as victim through discussions of sex discrimination (Grillo & Wildman, 1995). In addition, assuming uniformity of oppression implies that all people are equally knowledgeable of every form of oppression, erasing any understanding of the need to listen to subordinated groups (Grillo & Wildman, 1995). As an integration of critical race theory and feminist theory, critical race feminism focuses on issues of concern to women of color, such as intersections of oppression and anti-essentialism, and emphasizes the concepts of "multiple consciousness" (Wing, 2003) and "intersectionality" (Collins, 1990; Dill & Zambrana, 2009). Initially used to acknowledge the complex identities of women of color, intersectionality among White women includes a privileged racial status, a subordinate gender status, and additional intersecting identities. Anti-racist feminist research and critical race feminism are attentive to the effects of non-racial identity on a White woman's anti-racist identity development.

### **A Study of White Women Against Racism**

Members of White Women Against Racism (WWAR) served as the sample pool for this study. Participants voluntarily attended the discussion group for anti-racist, consciousness-raising purposes on one of two university campuses. The WWAR groups were formed and officially sanctioned by the women's center at each university. A staff member and a graduate student founded the first WWAR group, and the second WWAR group was founded at the request of the second university by the same graduate student. Both women's centers supported this group as an avenue for developing anti-racist consciousness and a safe space to explore strategies for anti-racist activism and challenging racism among, for example,

friends and family. In contrast to an educational workshop or diversity-training course with pre-determined learning objectives, these women come together for self-initiated critical reflection on their individual racism, institutionalized racism, white privilege, and white anti-racist activism. WWAR's five main goals posted on flyers and distributed at meetings read as follows: (1) to bring White women together to do self-work around racism, privilege, and responsibility for helping effect change; (2) to develop anti-oppression skills in our personal and professional lives by facing, examining, and decreasing our own racism; (3) to provide support to each other and those doing anti-oppression work. For White people, work on racism can trigger discomfort, fear, and defensiveness; (4) to become practical and emotional Allies to Women of Color; and (5) to provide models for dialogue. Open to any White woman student, staff or faculty member on campus, this discussion group provided a supportive environment for developing anti-racist skills and encouraged taking responsibility for social change through active challenges to racism.

This research examined White Women Against Racism group members' experiences with reflecting on white racial identity, confronting white privilege, and taking anti-racist action for social change. How do these women view their white racial identity and collective white identity? What personal connections do they make to racism? What impact do other aspects of social identity have on White women's anti-racist views and actions? What does anti-racist activism mean in their lives? How do they navigate resistance from family, friends, partners, co-workers, and society when they challenge racist comments? How can White women reach an anti-racist identity strong enough to over-power silencing and negative reactions in order to consistently interrupt, or challenge, everyday racism?

## Method

### *Participants*

Participants were recruited from two Midwestern universities in the United States: Campus A, a large metropolitan university of roughly 30,000 students; Campus B, a state-funded university of approximately 15,000 undergraduate and graduate students in a small college town. After learning of the independent group at Campus A, Campus B started their own group. The women's center on each campus housed WWAR groups that met each week for discussion. As a member of the Campus A group, I was asked to conduct a study on the group by the membership. With this request, I then approached the Campus B group and they agreed to participate as well. A total of 21 WWAR members were involved in the study through observations of group meetings, private interviews, or both.

The 17 White women interviewees consisted of 11 students (six undergraduates and five graduates), four campus staff members, and two faculty members. Ages ranged from 19 to 51 with an average age of 30. With regard to sexual orientation, four women identified as either lesbian (1), homosexual (1), or “queer” (2), and 13 identified as heterosexual. One of the participants who identified as “queer” also indicated a gender identity of “androgynous transgender.” Participants chose their own pseudonyms for confidentiality.

#### *Data Collection and Transcript Clarification*

Field notes for 40 (22 campus A and 18 campus B) group meetings lasting 1.5 hours each were typed for coding. Semi-structured interviews ranged from 1 to 3 hours with an average of 1.8 hours and were taped and transcribed for coding. All interview transcripts were sent back to each participant for approval asking for clarification where needed. The resulting requested changes focused solely on confidentiality such as changing names of family members or workplaces. None of the requested changes included removing quotes or altering previous statements in terms of meaning. Suggested transcript changes were made and field notes were also altered to honor their requests.

#### *Data Analysis*

All coding of observation notes and transcripts was completed using N6 Version 6.0 (2002). This qualitative data analysis software package allows systematic organization of text for complex data management and coding. Data analysis for generating grounded theory proceeded with open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding involved naming and categorizing basic concepts, patterns, and themes from the raw data itself (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). According to grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), open coding allows data based categories to emerge, themes from existing theory may also be used. For the purposes of this study, open coding incorporated concepts from critical white studies, anti-racist feminist research, and critical race feminism (e.g., white privilege, race traitor, white anti-racist identity, multiple consciousness; intersectionality). The next step alternated between open coding and axial coding throughout the data analysis process. Axial coding involves developing main categories of data and establishing relationships between categories. The final and most abstract level of coding, called selective coding, integrates data categories into a story line that becomes a narration of the core category (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Intercoder reliability of 88.2% between two coders was calculated using N6 for 7 of 17 interviews and 33% of the field notes.

## Results

### *Collective White Racial Identity*

When asked whether they personally identify as racist, only Maya reported that she did not want to call herself a racist. The majority of participants discussed experiences of admitting their own racism at various stages in their lives, and Kitty admitted she has “done racist things.” Both Wanda and Olivia pointed out that the difficulty in identifying as a racist comes from the cultural misconception that you “have to be in the Klan to be racist” (Olivia). Several women cited positive outcomes associated with identifying themselves as racist. Pauline framed her ability to claim her own racism in terms of letting go of the fear of being called a racist. She explained “We are all so scared that someone is going to call us racist. I find one of the ways to get over that is to do it yourself first.” Noche and Sasha found admitting their racism made it easier to talk with other Whites about racism. Sasha linked her definition of racism with identifying as racist and discussing racism with Whites:

I have gotten a lot more comfortable with talking to White people about White people being racist. Since I have adopted the definition of racism that I have and I have kind of like owned that I am racist, it's sort of easier to tell other people that they are racist.

A few women said that their experiences in WWAR discussions influenced their willingness to identify as racist.

Many participants felt that a White person must admit his/her own racism before becoming an anti-racist. Zoe's comments provide a good representation of this view. She argued that “without that essential piece, you are living in denial and I don't think any authentic change can occur without that piece first.” A comparison of racism to alcoholism was independently introduced by Beth and Zoe and is characterized by Beth's statement that “the first step to recovery is admitting you have a problem.” Of the women who felt identifying as a racist was not a requirement, several said that recognition of white privilege was absolutely essential for white anti-racism and that some form of self-work on racism was needed. Although Lee fell into this category, she later defined an anti-racist activist as someone who had reflected on being called a racist and admitted personal racial shortcomings.

Participants' views on white identity included recognizing that Whites usually do not think about themselves as having a race, and when they do, whiteness is associated with negative qualities. Pauline and Olivia pointed out that Whites rarely think about race, and Olivia went on to say that they do not think of themselves as White. During a group discussion on Campus A, members discussed whether a self-generated list of three adjectives to describe themselves would include “White.” Wanda, Jessica, and several others responded that they probably would

not include “White” as a descriptor. A group on Campus B also discussed the tendency for Whites to leave out references to their own race when asked to list descriptors. During a meeting, Lee, a college instructor, shared her opinion that “many students don’t like to think about being White because they see nothing good in it.”

Offering an alternative view of white identity, Lee pointed out that WWAR members are “good positive White people providing role models and working for change.” The only other participant to associate white identity with anything other than negative qualities was Molly in reference to her discomfort with the idea of a positive white identity. Molly recognized that our only models for such an identity are intertwined with white supremacy, making it difficult for her to imagine a positive white identity that operates without a racial superiority component.

*“Racism Affects My Life”: Recognizing White Privilege*

All interview participants believed that racism affected their lives on a daily basis and most described being both indirectly and directly impacted by racism. Some White women described being affected by the racism that friends of color encounter daily, especially when they were firsthand witnesses of discrimination. Participants also talked about daily effects of racism in terms of low exposure to people of color or segregated workplaces, strained interactions with people of color, dealing with their anger at racism, and maintaining awareness of one’s own biases. All of the women mentioned white privilege as a daily consequence of racism, even if they were not always aware of its presence.

In addition to identifying white privilege as a major way that racism affects their daily lives, several participants also discussed it as inseparable from responsibility. Zoe expressed her frustration with privileged people “who sort of divorce themselves of responsibility.” Stella realized she does not “get to choose whether [she has] white privilege or not,” but asks herself how she can use it for change. Lee discussed using her white privilege to “make other White people listen” and get Whites talking about racism.

Group discussions and interviews included references to the difficulty in recognizing specific instances of white privilege and some participants’ successes in identifying examples from their daily lives. Sasha felt white privilege is “going on all the time and I am not noticing it” because Whites are “not trained to notice it.” During a group meeting, two participants shared instances where they were pulled over by police, and were let go without a ticket. Both women felt white privilege was at play because they would not have been treated the same if they were Black. Rashani noticed preferential treatment when she was looking at a house to rent at the same time a Black couple were visiting the house. Rashani experienced the landlord’s extra attention to Rashani and her female partner and neglect of

the Black woman and man as a result of her own white privilege and expressed her surprise that “White privilege glossed over sexuality.” In other words, she was surprised that a White lesbian couple received more positive attention than a heterosexual Black couple.

*Intersections of Whiteness, Gender, and Power*

All of the women interviewed acknowledged that being a woman and experiencing gender oppression provides them an avenue for understanding that most White anti-racist men do not possess. The majority of the women explicitly credited their own gender oppression as a resource for a deeper understanding of racism. Pauline illustrates this connection between experiencing sexism and recognizing racism in her comments:

More than anything else it's gender that helps me in my anti-racism interest. I can understand what it's like to go, “Was that a sexist comment?” or “Was that directed at me?” or to feel like I'm not being given credit or respect because of my gender. I can use sort of that understanding of what that feels like to try and have empathy.

Madison, Stella, and Zoe also made references to women being more empathic and having a tendency “to reach out more over boundaries than men” (Stella). The socialization of women as nurturing caregivers was mentioned as one reason that women may be more empathic.

Some women identified gender power differences and stereotypes of women (e.g., women are excessively emotional) as tools used by White men to discredit their anti-racism concerns. In a group meeting, Joanne shared her struggles addressing racism with her White male manager who “already gives less weight” to what she says because she is a woman. Mindy also felt her “voice may not be heard” because she is a woman and that physical safety concerns exist for White women anti-racists that do not exist for White men. Sara and Zoe warned that White women must remain vigilant of focusing too much on sexism and their oppressed identities at the expense of recognizing their own perpetuation of racism as White people. Sara said it was “easy to ignore whiteness” and focus on sexism. Zoe went beyond that to say her “feminist identity may have prevented [her] from seeing the race intersection” because there is an assumption that feminists “get it.”

Participants mentioned other aspects of identity were helpful in their understanding of racism. As an international student, Maya felt her nationality helped her understand experiences of people of color in the United States that led to establishing cross-race friendships. Sasha, Lee, and Rashani cited their oppressed identities as lesbian or “queer” as helpful in recognizing racism. Noche, Sasha, and

Stella also discussed the impact of experiencing discriminatory treatment based on class background in their understanding of racism.

### *Anti-Racist Action for Social Change*

Although most of the women did not identify themselves as “activists,” all interview participants thought of activism as something that expands far beyond the typical conception of rallies, protests, and boycotts. Sasha described this traditional view as “a really limited way to define activism.” Many women explicitly stated that activism is “not just marching and legislation” (Beth). Respondents’ anti-racist activism included daily acts of confronting racism, speaking up to family members, teaching students about racism, or intervening when a store clerk “ignores the African American” (Madison) customer. Although the majority of women interviewed listed everyday challenges to racist comments in their definitions of anti-racist activism, all of them engaged in speaking up as part of their own activism.

The anti-racist activism that the WWAR members engaged in involved taking action within their own families, workplaces, organizations, and other spheres where they perceived the potential for making a difference. Anti-racism affected various aspects of the women’s lives and was often viewed as “a way of life . . . a lifestyle” (Stella). Although some women mentioned attending marches in support of affirmative action or demonstrations against police brutality, the most common forms of anti-racist activism were interrupting the racist comments of family, friends, and co-workers, teaching about racism in classrooms and presentations, and advocating for diversity in their everyday settings.

As faculty members and college instructors, several women incorporated anti-racism content into their courses, but Lee only recently classified her teaching as activism. Beyond the college classroom, most of the women educated others about racism through residence hall programming, diversity education for staff, campus programming for women of color, and organizing conferences or facilitating workshops. One unique anti-racist action by Noche resulted in the purchase and distribution of twenty copies of *40 Ways to Raise a Nonracist Child* (Mathias & French, 1996) to her family members.

Most of the interviewees worked to increase racial diversity among the women’s center staff, women’s studies students, church members, student workers, and in their personal lives. With careers ranging from college teachers to social work and counseling to business, these women found ways to support, mentor, and advocate for people of color. For example, Madison purposely hired a diverse staff of student workers, actively searched for scholarships for students of color, and now plans to become a counselor for under-served populations. Kitty recently decided to turn her business degree into a career in diversity consulting. These daily actions illustrate that these White women wove anti-racism into various settings in their lives.

*Silence versus Interruption of Racism*

Although most of the participants felt they should be speaking up more when they witnessed White people expressing racism, each of them easily recalled a time when silence prevailed. For Sasha, “the incidents I remember are the incidents where I feel I didn’t say enough.” Several years after the event, Zoe still thinks about what actions she should have taken when two elderly White women in a public restroom told her that the Black man standing outside the restroom made them “nervous” and they “don’t think he should be standing there.” Incidents of silence occurred with grandparents, parents, co-workers, classmates, acquaintances at parties, and even strangers in public restrooms. The participants’ reasons for remaining silent in the presence of racist comments and behaviors included avoiding disapproval, avoiding conflict, power differences, perceived ineffectiveness, and feeling exhausted. The majority of the women described silence as an avoidance of disapproval or ostracism such as being labeled “the bitch” (Amelia), being made fun of or taunted, or “getting shut out” of social circles (Rashani). Ostracism contributed to Rashani’s silence in the workplace:

You still risk being ostracized. It’s hard to speak up at a job. I have worked in warehouses and restaurants where racism is rampant. It’s hard to say stuff because you piss the people off that you work with and you have to work with those people. You have to be really careful about what you say and how you say it.

Some women also mentioned that a lack of support influenced silence. Other Whites present in the situation often show disapproval as a sign that silence is the socially sanctioned response. For example, Mindy’s mother pressured her with a “look of horror” to encourage silence, and Lee’s aunt gave her a look of “why do you need to say anything?” when she confronted her uncle’s racism.

Avoiding conflict, tension, and confrontations contributed to silence for many of the women who want “to keep the peace” (Mindy). Themes of picking or “choosing your battles” (Rashani) and discomfort with conflict emerged for many women. Olivia alluded to gender and the influence of “the good girl persona: be nice, good, don’t start trouble, be tactful.” Although the women talked about avoiding tension, conflict, and causing an “unpleasant scene” (Beth) through silence, none of them acknowledged that tension was already present for them due to the racist remarks or behaviors.

Power differences based on age, status, and gender also contributed to silence. A few women found they were silent with older people, such as grandparents, due to their status within the family structure and socialization to respect one’s elders. Some women also addressed power imbalances as a cause of silence with supervisors, professors, and others with power because speaking up “could come back to haunt you” (Mindy). Lee admitted “when I am in a situation when I don’t feel I have any power, and I see something that’s not right, I feel silenced. I don’t

feel safe speaking up.” As a reason for silence, gender dynamics and White men’s power affected most of the interview participants. Several women referred to their comfort with talking to White women about racism and felt gender socialization, sexism, and discomfort interfered when talking with White men. Molly felt that her socialization as a woman made it more difficult for her “to speak up, to be assertive.” Wanda shared that she is “still pretty uncomfortable when it comes to White men just because of the power struggle.” Zoe said she feels “safer with women” and assumes women will hear her, but that White men will be defensive. Some women felt women’s voices may not be heard or taken seriously by men or other women.

Several women offered information on their parents’ silence in reaction to racist remarks, and some of them referred to their mothers’ silence. Although Noche believed her mother disliked her grandfather’s use of racial slurs, mostly her mother “would just let it go . . . because he’s not gonna change.” The mothers of these women presented a female model of silence to their daughters that implies women should not confront racism. Sasha and Rashani connected this model of White women’s silence to a broader historical model. She noted that “White women engaged in a more covert type of racism by tacitly supporting the activities of racist White men or doing things like discouraging [their] children from playing with Black children” (Rashani). Both felt gender differences in silence reflected the historical reality of White women as silent supporters of the racist policies and practices of White men.

The final reason for silence discussed by respondents was avoidance of the consequences of confronting racist remarks or behaviors. Silence resulted from women feeling they were “not in the mood to deal with it that day” (Kitty), did not “feel like being that person” (Rashani), and did not “have the energy for an hour long discussion” (Olivia). Beth admitted the cost of interrupting racism in social situations was “just so not worth it.” These responses indicate participants behaved in ways inconsistent with their stated anti-racist philosophies. The negative consequences associated with confronting racism are powerful social forces that often outweigh any positive rewards the women associate with challenging racial oppression. Pauline recognized that choosing silence is a benefit of white privilege and advised Whites should never “complain about being tired.”

### *Taking Action to Interrupt Racism*

With the exception of Victoria, all of the participants discussed specific times when they interrupted racism. The majority of interviewees and group members shared stories of interrupting racism across several spheres in their lives. For these women, the practice of confronting racism extended to encounters with family members, friends, co-workers, classmates, their students, and strangers. At one group meeting, Beth confessed that she called her “dad a racist and a bigot” for his

prejudices against Palestinians and Muslims. As evident in Beth's interruption of her father's prejudiced expressions, participants' actions went beyond objecting to racist jokes and slurs to confront racism in various forms. This interruption of racism included correcting outdated terms such as "colored people" (Olivia), emailing a professional colleague about his offensive mocking of "funny sounding" Asian names (Pauline), challenging restaurant co-workers' assumptions "that Black people don't tip" (Kitty), and offering alternative perspectives on racial issues such as "the riots or the boycott or affirmative action" (Wanda).

### *Encountering Resistance: Strategies for Interrupting Racism*

Respondents' interruptions of racism were commonly followed by active resistance or defensiveness on the part of the person who was being confronted. Some women brought up the common defense of "I'm not racist" that they feel is commonly used by Whites who act in ways that promote racism. The women also felt Whites being confronted, as well as other White witnesses, attempted to distance themselves from the topic of racism by sending signals of disapproval such as looks, the silent treatment, and accusations of over-sensitivity. Perhaps the most striking examples of "white distancing" (Case & Hemmings, 2005) involved attempts to end the discussion of race or completely avoiding the topic by physically leaving the room. Stella noticed that "people got uncomfortable and edged out" in order to "avoid that conversation" when she challenged a White man on his racism. Participants also reminded each other that reactions are sometimes positive and bring about change in other peoples' behavior. Pauline's colleague who made fun of Asian names and accents responded with an apology and thanked her for making him aware of his actions. The women felt humor "helps soften a message" (Molly), "relax people to discuss a very serious subject" (Noche), and ensure that "the message is not lost from people getting defensive" (Rashani). Respondents felt that talking privately rather than publicly, asking questions, providing information, finding common ground, and using humor could all be effective strategies. The women suggested interrupting racism in a respectful, less confrontational manner to avoid attacking or accusing the person and to reduce defensiveness.

## **Discussion**

### *Self-Work as a Lifelong Process*

In their discussion of self-work and making personal connections to racism and white privilege, many participants felt that White anti-racists must prepare themselves for critical self-evaluation that lasts a lifetime. Several participants underscored the idea that one must be willing to evaluate internalized racism

“for the rest of your life” (Rashani), and warned against Whites ever feeling finished with their efforts to unlearn racism. Trying to remove racism from one’s language, behaviors, and subconscious, while simultaneously resisting the constant bombardment of racist socialization may require a commitment to an ongoing process of self-examination. Two participants independently compared White anti-racism to membership in Alcoholics Anonymous, a model that requires a commitment to recovery for life. Within this metaphor, Whites are addicted to racism and must commit to an ongoing process of unlearning racism. A White anti-racist may feel “cured” only to uncover another lingering racist assumption. Therefore, the goal of dismantling racism means Whites must remain vigilant to their own racism over time. Emmons (1996) refers to goals that are enduring and require more than a single course of action as “strivings.” It may be useful to conceptualize white anti-racism as a personal striving rather than a goal with a definitive ending because unraveling one’s racism never stops. As a life-long commitment of critical self-evaluation, white anti-racism may benefit from the social support that a group like WWAR might provide.

### *Challenging Invisible Racism*

Perhaps the main obstacle in critical self-evaluation in an exclusively white anti-racist setting is that White people are often unable or unwilling to identify their own racism (Flagg, 1997). Just as subordinate group members may internalize prejudices about their groups, dominant group members can internalize cultural messages indicating their group is superior and deserving of special privileges (Hitchcock, 2001; McGoldrick, 2003). Whites have the power to ignore the impact of race when it is beneficial to them (Wildman & Davis, 1997) because white culture protects them from seeing the power it grants them (Katz & Ivey, 1977). The socialization process renders whiteness and white privilege invisible to Whites (Frankenberg, 1993; McIntosh, 1988), including those who genuinely aim to confront their own racism. A valid criticism of conducting an all white anti-racist discussion group is that Whites may fail to detect much of the racism that people of color could easily pinpoint. White anti-racists struggling to deconstruct racism face the possibility that they lack the skills necessary to even properly identify racism. White culture and racism are so intertwined and normalized that white analysis of racism resembles a fish analyzing water. Based on their responses about making personal connections, these White women are struggling to overcome the obstacle of the invisibility of whiteness (Grover, 1997). If the invisibility of whiteness frees Whites from feeling connected to racism, then perhaps the acknowledgement of whiteness links Whites with systematic racial discrimination. Making personal connections to the effects of racism in their daily lives, white privilege, and other aspects of social identity may motivate anti-racist Whites to make cognitive and behavioral changes in the self.

*Social Support, Privacy, and Isolation*

Members of White Women Challenging Racism (Thompson & WWCR, 1997) reported forming their group for support, to re-energize for their continuing work, and to document the existence of White anti-racist activists. The theme of support also surfaced throughout observations and interviews as a need of the study participants within their descriptions of anti-racist influences. According to their references to WWAR as an opportunity for growth and rejuvenation, this discussion group fulfilled a need for connecting with other White anti-racists that few of the women experienced prior to joining the group.

Many Whites may perceive their own anti-racist views as deviant from the norm and therefore keep their struggles hidden because they do not feel comfortable sharing them in everyday interactions. Because discussion of racism remains taboo in our culture (Aveling, 2002; Eliasoph, 1999; Lawrence & Bunch, 1996; Tatum, 1994), silenced White anti-racists are left to traverse a painful and often emotional journey alone. The sensitivity and defensiveness of Whites that often occurs when race enters the conversation (Fine, 1997; Jackson, 1999) may leave White anti-racists to privately cope with an issue that is overwhelming for any one individual. However, one characteristic essential to making a reading or discussion group successful is participants' willingness to learn about race and racism as members of the dominant racial group. More research and writing about White women doing anti-racist activism is needed to explore the connection between support and interruption and to provide resources for starting a discussion group or, at the very least, support through reading other women's stories.

*Using Privilege to Promote Justice*

What motivates someone with privilege and power to work for dismantling the system that provides that privilege? Addressing their efforts to make personal connections to racism through white privilege, several of the White women interviewed expressed their goals of using their own white privilege to challenge racism. WWAR members discussed their goals of using white privilege as a tool for societal change and to "make other White people listen" (Lee). Any dominant group member challenging the very system of oppression that gives him or her power would appear to be behaving in a self-destructive manner. The benefits of white privilege are produced by the same system of oppression that disadvantages people of color. So why do White anti-racists want to challenge racism and destroy their own white privilege? Perhaps the satisfaction that people anticipate would come from living in a racially just community or society outweighs the unearned advantages reaped from racism. Maintaining the unjust system of privileges comes at a cost because it violates their values of equality and fairness. In addition, White anti-racists may conceptualize racial justice as providing

such privileges to all members of society rather than as a loss of benefits for whites.

### *Behavioral Contradiction of Anti-Racist Values*

In their discussion of the cognitive aspects of silence and interruption, WWAR members described weighing their desire to speak up when racist comments were made against the conflict and tension it would probably cause. For example, having overheard the word “nigger” at a party, Beth felt compelled to interrupt the conversation, but then “just ignored it because it’s easier than making a scene.” Contact with remarks and behaviors that one perceives as racist triggers the desire to interrupt racism in order to align private attitudes and public behaviors. Whites interrupting racism face ostracism and rejection by others for breaking social norms of racial solidarity and collusion with white supremacy (Moon, 1999). The urge to interrupt racism causes an internal conflict weighing personal values of racial justice with desire for social acceptance. Although the inconsistencies may induce feelings of guilt or failure, any dominant group member attempting to unlearn and dismantle oppression within the self should expect to encounter such learning opportunities. The key for White anti-racists is recognition of behaviors that perpetuate racism and critical analysis of the causes of such behaviors. A reading or discussion group with other White anti-racists may encourage open questioning of assumptions and behaviors, as well as consideration of the impact those assumptions and behaviors have in terms of race.

### *Limitations and Future Directions*

While this exploration of the experiences of these particular White women included their views on the impact of gender on anti-racism, the experiences of White men were absent. Given that the data analysis required critical examination of white racism and that the researcher was a White woman, the study was conducted from a particular social position that influenced the analyses and interpretations. Although the experiences of these White women may not generalize to all White women, the findings of this study highlight a gap in research on white identity. Psychological research on white identity lacks an analysis of the attitudes, values, causes, processes, and social change components of white anti-racism. Further exploration of white anti-racist strategies for interruption and outcomes associated with those strategies would inform research on white racial identity as well as practical contexts such as anti-racism workshops and diversity trainings.

### **Conclusions**

As members of the dominant racial group, Whites may not recognize all aspects of white privilege, culture, and power. By developing the skills to interrupt

one's own racist thoughts and notice one's subtly racist behaviors, they may move to a deeper analysis of unconscious racism rather than being consumed by the disappointment and guilt that often result from such instances. Facing the oppression that provides privilege to the self involves repeated feelings of guilt and failure when thoughts and behaviors contradict one's anti-racist values. However, dominant group members may reduce the negative feelings by expecting to make mistakes throughout life and by transforming those mistakes into learning opportunities when they occur.

For Whites without anti-racist allies in their own social circles, participation in a reading or discussion group with similar self-reflective goals to White Women Against Racism may aid in maintaining a commitment to the ongoing process of unlearning racism. In the absence of social support, White anti-racists will likely be overwhelmed with feelings of isolation that may result in abandoning their striving for social justice. A reading or discussion group similar to WWAR may provide an opportunity for Whites with anti-racist values to openly question their own thoughts, decisions, behaviors, and most importantly, the racial implications of their choices. Through dialogues with allies in the same situation, White anti-racists may draw on the collective experience and knowledge of the group members and identify aspects of their own racism that would otherwise go unnoticed.

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KIM A. CASE, PHD, is an Associate Professor of Psychology and Women's Studies, Director of the Teaching-Learning Enhancement Center, and Women's Studies Program Chair at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. She also directs the Psychology Master's program Social Issues sub-plan. Her research on prejudice confrontation and ally behavior focuses on dominant group responses to prejudice in social contexts. She also studies strategies for raising awareness of heterosexual, gender-conforming, male, and white privilege in educational and community settings.

an apartment over the telephone, for example, many African Americans know they have to “talk white” in order to be accepted (which may come to nothing once they show up in person and discover that the apartment has “just” been rented).<sup>8</sup>

Because privileged groups are assumed to represent society as a whole, “American” is culturally defined as white, in spite of the diversity of the population. You can see this in a statement like “Americans must learn to be more tolerant of other races.” I doubt that most people would see this as saying that we need Asians to be more tolerant of whites or blacks to be more tolerant of Native Americans. The “Americans” are assumed to be white, and the “other races” are assumed to be races *other* than white. *Other* is the key word in understanding how systems are identified with privileged groups. The privileged group is the assumed “we” in relation to “them.” The “other” is the “you people” whom the “we” regard as problematic, unacceptable, unlikable, or beneath “our” standards.

Note, by the way, how such assumptions operate on a larger scale in my use of the word “American” in the preceding paragraph. People in the United States routinely refer to themselves as Americans, as if “America” and “United States” mean the same thing. But they do not: “America” refers to the entire western hemisphere—South America, Central America, and North America—and “American” includes a wide variety of societies in addition to our own. The assumption in U.S. culture that only citizens of the United States are Americans encourages the perception of everyone else as some kind of “other” and reflects dynamics of privilege and oppression in relations among nations.

In a white-identified system, white is the assumed race unless something other than white is marked—hence the common use of the term *nonwhite* to lump together various peoples of color into a single category of “other” in relation to a white standard. To get a sense of the effect of this practice, imagine a society in which whites were referred to routinely as “noncoloreds.”

White identification means that whether arrested for a crime or winning a Nobel prize, whites are rarely if ever identified *as* white, because that is assumed. Racial tags are common, however, for everyone else, from “black physician” and “Latina writer” to “Asian actor.”

If a small group of white citizens marched on Washington to protest a policy that had nothing to do with race, news reports wouldn't mention their race and certainly wouldn't try to figure out why the group was all white. They would simply be described as protesters or citizens or members of a group that takes a position on that policy. If a group of Chicanas/os did the same thing, they would surely be identified such and be asked why there weren't any whites among them. This isn't because Chicanas/os stand out as a numerical minority since the same pattern would hold for women, who would “stand and be tagged as women even though they outnumber men in population.”

Such patterns of identification are especially powerful in relation to gender. It is still common to use masculine pronouns to refer to people in general or to use *man* to refer both to males and to entire species (as in “mankind” and “the family of man”). In a similar way, men and manhood are held up as standards of comparison. Idea of “brotherhood,” for example, is clearly gendered, since women can't be brothers by any stretch of the imagination, yet it also carries powerful cultural meaning about *human* connection, as in the stirring line from *America the Beautiful*, “And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea.”<sup>9</sup> Brotherhood is defined as a “condition of a ‘quality’ of human relationship (see Box 1) that embodies war and good feeling, especially across social differences. It is linked to idea of *fellowship*—the general human capacity for companionship, common interest or feeling, friendliness, and communion—which is based on being a fellow, which is also clearly and unambiguously defined as male. By comparison, although African American women have made powerful use of the idea of sisterhood, in the dominant patriarchal culture it amounts to little more than the biological idea of being someone's sister, which is to say, being female and sharing the same set of parents. All its other meanings are narrowly confined to groups of women—such as nuns and feminists—even when it refers to the quality of relationships.

In short, men are the cultural standard for humanity, and women are just women. So, when a woman is celebrated at the office and everyone joins in a round of “For She's a Jolly Good Fellow,” no one lauds or objects to the oxymoron, because in a male-identified society

**Box 1**  
**The Word "Brotherhood" as**  
**an Instance of Male-Identified Language**

Sisterhood	Brotherhood
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The state of being a sister.</li> <li>2. A group of sisters, especially of nuns or of female members of a church.</li> <li>3. An organization of women with a common interest.</li> <li>4. Congenial relationship or companionship among women.</li> <li>5. Community or network of women who participate in support of feminism.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The condition or quality of being a brother.</li> <li>2. The quality of being brotherly, <b>fellowship</b>.</li> <li>3. A fraternal or trade organization.</li> <li>4. All those engaged in a particular trade or profession or sharing a common interest or quality.</li> <li>5. The belief that all people should act with warmth and equality toward one another regardless of differences in race, creed, nationality, etc.</li> </ol>
Fellow	Fellowship
<p>A man or boy.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The condition or relation of being a fellow; the fellowship of humankind.</li> <li>2. Friendly relationship.</li> </ol>

an honor to be considered "one of the guys," to be associated with men and the standards by which men are measured. Nor are many people disturbed by the fact that there are *no* words that culturally associate women with a valued quality of human relation in the way that *fellow* and *fellowship* do for men. If someone suggested changing the words of *America the Beautiful* to "and crown thy good with sisterhood," however, imagine the reception that idea would get and you have some idea of the power of male identification.

Male identification is woven into every aspect of social life. Most high-status occupations, for example, are organized around qualities culturally associated with masculinity, such as aggression, competitiveness,

emotional detachment (except for anger), and control. This is what it takes to succeed in law, medicine, science, academia, politics, sport or business. No woman (or man) becomes a corporate manager, gets tenure at a university, or is elected to public office by showing the capacity for cooperation, sharing, emotional sensitivity, and nurturing. This also applies to the most highly rewarded blue-collar jobs, such as police work, firefighting, and skilled construction trades.

This means that a man can make it as a lawyer or a manager while at the same time living up to the cultural standards that define a "real man." A woman, however, is in a bind. If she patterns herself on ideas that are culturally defined as feminine, she's likely to be seen as not having what it takes to get ahead in a male-identified world. But if she pursues a more "masculine" path toward success, she opens herself to being judged as not feminine enough—uncaring, cold, a bitch. Students usually hold their female college professors, for example, to a higher standard of caring and emotional availability than they do male teachers. But if a woman professional comes across as *too* warm and caring, her credibility, competence, and authority are invariably undermined and challenged. In a male-identified system, she can't fit the model of a successful professional or manager and at the same time measure up as a "real woman." It is the kind of classic double bind that is one of the hallmarks of social oppression—she can be devoured no matter what she does.<sup>10</sup>

The world of work is also male-identified in the definition of "career" and the timing of key stages in the route to success. In most organizations, for example, the idea of a career assumes an almost complete commitment to the work, which means that the only way to have both a career and a family is to have someone at home to take care of children and other domestic responsibilities. Despite all that talk about "the new fatherhood," this almost always means a wife and mother. Furthermore, in typical patterns of career timing, the key years for establishing yourself overlap with a woman's key years for starting a family. In this way, "serious" work is structured to fit men's lives far more easily and with far less conflict than it fits women's lives.<sup>11</sup> So *profession* and *career* are words that on the surface don't appear to be gendered one way or the other but are in fact implicitly male-identified.

Male identification shows up in more subtle ways as well, from popular culture to the comings and goings of everyday life. In Ken Burns's PBS documentary on baseball, for example, he tells us: "Baseball defines who we are." Apparently, he didn't give much thought to who is included in *we*. I doubt he meant that the essence of baseball defines who women are in some fundamental way or that it defines what most women experience as their society. But if the statement is likely to ring true for men, then, in a male-identified world, it's assumed that it rings true for everyone, and if it doesn't, so what?

In this way, male identification tends to make women invisible, just as white and nondisabled identification tends to make people of color and people with disabilities invisible. The other day I made an airline reservation and the clerk gave me a confirmation code. "PWCEO," she said, and then, to make sure I'd gotten it right, added, "That's Peter, William, Charles, Edward, Oscar."

### PRIVILEGE AT THE CENTER

Because systems are identified with privileged groups, the path of least resistance is to focus attention on them—who they are, what they do and say, and how they do it. Look at the front page of any newspaper, and you'll find that the vast majority of people pictured, quoted, and discussed are men who also happen to be white and middle or upper class. If white women, Latinos/as, or African Americans are there, it's usually because of something that's been done to them (murdered, for example) or something they've done wrong (rioted, murdered, stole, cheated, and so on). There are exceptions, of course—a Condoleezza Rice as National Security Advisor or a Colin Powell as Secretary of State or black athletes—one of the few areas where they are allowed to excel. As exceptions, however, they prove the rule.

To judge from television and film, most of what happens of significance in the world happens to straight white nondisabled men. To see what I mean, try an experiment: Make a list of the ten most important movies ever made, movies that reflect something powerful and enduring about the human experience, about courage and personal transformation, the journey of the soul, the testing of character, finding

#### Box 2 Academy Award Winning Films in the Category "Best Picture," 1965–2003

2003	<i>Lord of the Rings</i>	1983	<i>Terms of Endearment</i>
2002	<i>Chicago</i>	1982	<i>Gandhi</i>
2001	<i>A Beautiful Mind</i>	1981	<i>Chariots of Fire</i>
2000	<i>Gladiator</i>	1980	<i>Ordinary People</i>
1999	<i>American Beauty</i>	1979	<i>Kramer vs. Kramer</i>
1998	<i>Shakespeare in Love</i>	1978	<i>The Deer Hunter</i>
1997	<i>Titanic</i>	1977	<i>Annie Hall</i>
1996	<i>The English Patient</i>	1976	<i>Rocky</i>
1995	<i>Braveheart</i>	1975	<i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i>
1994	<i>Forrest Gump</i>	1974	<i>The Godfather, Part II</i>
1993	<i>Schindler's List</i>	1973	<i>The Sting</i>
1992	<i>Unforgotten</i>	1972	<i>The Godfather, Part I</i>
1991	<i>The Silence of the Lambs</i>	1971	<i>The French Connection</i>
1990	<i>Dances with Wolves</i>	1970	<i>Patton</i>
1989	<i>Driving Miss Daisy</i>	1969	<i>Midnight Cowboy</i>
1988	<i>Rain Man</i>	1968	<i>Othello</i>
1987	<i>The Last Emperor</i>	1967	<i>In the Heat of the Night</i>
1986	<i>Platoon</i>	1966	<i>A Man for All Seasons</i>
1985	<i>Out of Africa</i>	1965	<i>The Sound of Music</i>
1984	<i>Amadeus</i>		

out who we really are and what life is all about. Once you have your list, identify the key character in each, the one whose courage, transformation, journey, testing, and revelations are the point of the story. Chances are that at least nine out of ten will be white, Anglo, nondisabled heterosexual males, even though they constitute less than 20 percent of the U.S. population.

Consider, for example, the list of films that have been awarded the Oscar for best picture over the last forty years (see Box 2). Of these films, judged better than all the rest in each year, none set in the United States places people of color at the center of the story without their having to share it with white characters of equal importance (*Driving Miss Daisy* and *In the Heat of the Night*). The one film that focuses on Native Americans (*Dances with Wolves*) is told from a white man's point of view with Native Americans clearly identified as the

other. Only two focus on non-European cultures (*The Last Emperor* and *Gandhi*). Although *Out of Africa* is set in Africa, the story focuses exclusively on whites and, without any critical comment, their exploitation of the African continent. This same list of films also contains only four that are female-centered (*Chicago*, *Out of Africa*, *Terms of Endearment*, and *The Sound of Music*) and none with any major characters who are gay or lesbian.

When a film does focus on someone in a subordinate group, it gets little attention unless, like *The Color Purple* (1985), it has a powerful white heterosexual male such as Steven Spielberg behind it. Anything less than that—no matter how good it is—has little chance of drawing much attention, much less winning an Academy Award. Even *The Color Purple*, which was nominated for eleven Academy Awards, didn't win a single one, losing to *Out of Africa*.

The handful of films that do focus on people in subordinate groups are likely to be tagged (and devalued) as "women's films" ("chick flicks") or "black films" or "gay films" or "lesbian films," even though all the rest are never called "men's films" or "white films" or "heterosexual films." In a society identified with dominant groups, such films are supposedly about everyone, or at least everyone who counts.

Films that focus on people with disabilities—*Rain Man*, *Forrest Gump*, and *A Beautiful Mind*—reflect an important aspect of this phenomenon. While the main character in each film has a disability, in every case the story is about the disability, rather than being a human story that happens to be told through the life of a character who has a disability. Similar things happen with films that focus on people of color—*In the Heat of the Night* and *Driving Miss Daisy* both have race as a central focus of the story. And if there is ever an Academy Award winning film whose main character is gay or lesbian, we can be sure that sexual orientation will be its major theme. Not so, however, with films that focus on members of dominant groups.

Because systems of privilege center on dominant groups, those who aren't included have reason to feel invisible, because in an important social sense, they are. Black, Latino/a, and white female students routinely report that instructors don't call on them in class, don't listen to what they say, or don't let them finish without interruption.

Research shows that men receive the overwhelming majority of attention in classrooms at every level of education,<sup>12</sup> a pattern that repeats itself in the workplace and everywhere else that women and men meet. I've been in meetings of thirty people in which the two or three men present talked almost the entire time with no sign from anyone that anything was wrong.

This happens in part because in a world that centers attention on men and what they do and say, the path of least resistance for men to claim attention by calling out answers without being recognized, for example, or by interrupting women. It also happens because the path of least resistance for women is to give way in the face of male privilege to allow men to take up whatever time and space they want and not challenge their right to do so. So, when male students jump in with response—even to the extent of thinking up answers as they go along—teachers and female students will often let them get away with it.

When men don't jump in, teachers tend to gravitate toward them anyway, standing closer to them in the room, looking to them for the most interesting or productive answers, challenging and coaching them more, all the while assuming women don't have what it takes to say something worth hearing.<sup>13</sup> None of this has to be done consciously in order to center attention on dominant groups at the expense of everyone else. It simply flows along down a well-traveled path of least resistance that makes invisibility a key part of the devaluing that lies at the heart of privilege and oppression.

Often the only way marginalized groups can get attention is to make an issue of how social life is centered on dominant groups. Women form their own support groups at work or attend women's colleges where they don't have to overcome the cultural weight of male centeredness. Blacks form their own dorms or clubs on college campuses and sit at their own tables in the dining hall.<sup>14</sup> Schools create special programs that focus on women or peoples of color. Women participate in a "Take Our Daughters to Work" day, or lesbians and gay men organize pride marches to draw attention to the simple fact that they exist ("We are everywhere").

Drawing attention away from dominant groups often provokes a defensive response that reaffirms privilege. In systems of privilege, the focus is on dominant groups all the time as a matter of course,

much that it's never recognized as something special. The slightest deviation, then, can be perceived as a loss of privilege. Some fascinating research, for example, shows that as long as men overwhelmingly dominate the conversation, the participation of women and men is perceived as *roughly equal*. But if women's talk rises to as little as a quarter or a third of the total interaction, men tend to perceive the women as taking over. Such perceived shifts can result in howls of protest over the unfairness of giving subordinate groups "special" attention—"Why not a 'Take Our Sons to Work Day'?" "Why do gays and lesbians have to call attention to themselves?" "When do we get to have a White History Month?"

As so often happens, subordinate groups are in a double bind. If they don't call attention to themselves, the defaults built into systems of privilege make them invisible and devalued. If they do call attention to themselves, if they dare to put themselves at the center, they risk being accused of being pushy or seeking special treatment. This is why women and people of color, for example, are often labeled as "special-interest groups" with biased agendas, whereas men and whites are not.

### THE ISMS

Most of the time, words like *racism*, *sexism*, *ableism*, and *heterosexism* are used to describe how people feel and behave. Racism, for example, is seen as something that exists only inside people as a flawed part of their personalities. It's an attitude, a collection of stereotypes, a bad intention, a desire or need to discriminate or do harm, a form of hatred. From that perspective, doing something about racism means changing how individuals feel, think, and behave (since behavior is connected to how we think and feel).

But racism is also built in to the systems that people live and work in. It's embedded in a capitalist system organized around competition over scarce resources, and organized to be white-dominated, white-identified, and white-centered. This manifests itself everywhere we turn. Given this reality, it doesn't make sense to ignore everything but individual personality and behavior, as if we live in a social vacuum. For this reason, sociologist David Wellman argues for a broader definition

of racism that includes but goes beyond the personal. Racism is patterns of privilege and oppression themselves and *anything*—intentional or not—that helps to create or perpetuate those patterns. If we extend this to other forms of privilege, then sexism and ableism and heterosexism are also more than personal expressions of hostility and prejudice but include everything that people do or don't do that promotes those forms of privilege.<sup>15</sup>

To see what Wellman means, consider not what people do or don't do but what they don't. Consider, for example, the power of silence to promote privilege and oppression. Human beings are highly dependent on one another for standards of what—and who—is okay and who isn't. Although there will always be individuals who don't care what other people think, the vast majority will avoid doing something they believe people around them would criticize. But if people in the community and society are silent, then the perpetrators are free to interpret that as support for what they do.

From the late 1800s through the mid-1940s, for example, white Southerners lynched more than three thousand African American men, women, and children. The actual violence was done by a relatively small number of individuals, but they acted from the assumption that most people in the communities and states either approved of their actions or would do anything to stop them even if they disapproved. Many lynchings were advertised in advance in local newspapers, for example, and pictures taken of the atrocities were often sold as postcards.

Since the lynchings couldn't possibly know everyone in their community or state personally, the only way they could assume they were getting away with it was to see themselves as living in a particular kind of society—white-dominated, white-identified, and white-centered—that placed such a low value on black people's lives that torturing and killing them was unlikely to be made an issue, much less treated as a crime. The real power lay not with the lynchings as individuals but with society and the great collective silence in the face of racist horror that the individuals perpetrated, a silence that spoke as loudly as the violence itself, regardless of how people felt about individuals.

Just as most Southerners (and Northerners) were silent about lynchings, the vast majority of men are silent on the issue of sex

harassment and violence and do nothing more than privately disapprove of it or assure themselves that they'd never engage in it themselves. In the same way, most whites do nothing to raise consciousness about all the ways racism works in their communities or workplaces. They may readily acknowledge overt behavior that permeates privilege and oppression. "Yes," they'll say when asked about discrimination, "it's a terrible thing." And they mean it.

What they don't see most of the time, however, is how silence and not looking and not asking are *in effect* just as racist *because oppression depends on this in order to continue*. White professors or managers who don't go out of their way to ask about race in classrooms or the workplace may be good people who'd never act from ill will toward people of color. But how good or bad they are as people is beside the point. Their motives and intentions are irrelevant to the future of racism as a pattern of inequality and the suffering it causes. What counts isn't just what they do, but even more what they *don't* do.<sup>17</sup>

When I think about this, I imagine a scene in which a gang of white men are beating a person of color in broad daylight on a city street. I'm standing in a crowd of white people who are watching. We aren't hurting anyone. We feel no ill will toward the man being beaten and may feel sorry for him. We aren't cheering the attackers on or showing any outward signs of approval. We're just standing in silence, "minding our own business." And then one of the men stops, looks up, and says, his eyes panning across our faces, "We appreciate your support. We couldn't do this without you."

This is how racism and other forms of privilege really work day in and day out. It results from what is called "passive oppression," which can be defined as making it possible for oppression to happen simply by doing nothing to stop it. Privilege and oppression depend on a social environment that makes it easy for so many to stand by and do nothing. Most white people in the United States engage in racism not by acting from feelings or thoughts of racial hostility or ill will but "because they acquiesce in the large cultural order that continues the work of racism."<sup>18</sup> That's all that's required of most white people for racism to continue—that they not notice, that they do nothing, that they remain silent.

## THE ISMS AND US

It is tempting for members of dominant groups to suppose I could be raised in a society organized around privilege and participate in it day after day without being touched by it on a personal level. But it's a dream that, for everyone else, is a nightmare of delusion. There is no way for a member of a dominant group to escape a kind of immersion unscathed. Nobody is the exception who mindlessly doesn't internalize any of the negative ideas, attitudes, or impulses that pour in a steady stream from the surrounding culture and that privilege and oppression happen as they do.

In other words, on some level, *of course* I've internalized aspects of racism, sexism, ableism, and heterosexism in myself in the same way that I automatically dream in English and prefer certain foods. I know it weren't so, but it is. The assumption that some racism resides in every white person, for example, is a reasonable one in this society. I would assume that everyone I meet in the United States speaks English until I was showed otherwise, not because of what I know about them, but because of what I know about the culture of this society. In the same way, I would assume that racism touches and shapes everyone in one way or another and leaves a mark that cannot be erased. To assume otherwise is to engage in wishful thinking and to live in a world that doesn't exist.

Having privilege doesn't mean someone is a bad person. Badness does mean that there isn't a single member of a dominant group who doesn't have issues of privilege to deal with both internally and externally, in relation to the world around them. It was handed to them when they were children with no sense of what was wise and good to take into themselves and what was not. And so they accepted it, usually, unknowingly, even innocently, but accept it they did. It was their fault. They have no reason to feel guilty about it, because they didn't *do* anything. But now it is there for them to deal with, just as it's there for women, people of color, people with disabilities, lesbian and gay men who *also* didn't do anything to deserve the oppression that so profoundly shapes their lives.