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This chapter discusses racism and racial profiling in employment, the media, and higher education.

White Racist Ideology and the Myth of a Postracial Society

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When America's so-called postracial society is not viewed and assessed through the prism of white racism, the authentic lived realities of people of color become quite clear. The United Nations Human Rights Council Report of April 2008 provides a very clear and concise portrait of the state of our nation. Several of the recommendations are germane to this chapter.

- (a) Congress establish a bipartisan commission to evaluate the progress and failures in the fight against racism and the ongoing process of resegregation, particularly in housing and education, and to find responses to check these trends;
- (b) The Government reassess existing legislation on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in view of two main guidelines: addressing the overlapping nature of poverty and race or ethnicity; and linking the fight against racism to the construction of a democratic, egalitarian and interactive multiculturalism, in order to strengthen inter-community relations;
- (c) The Government should intensify its efforts to enforce federal civil rights laws;
- (d) The Government clarify to law enforcement officials the obligation of equal treatment and, in particular, the prohibition of racial profiling (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2009, p. 1).

Smith and Colin (2001) view “racism as an ideology of racial superiority and inferiority, based upon pigmentation, which was created by Euroamericans and is perpetuated by them for their sociocultural benefit: social, educational; political and economic” (p. 57). The sociocultural world is viewed by whites through what Colin and Preciphs (1991) refer to as the racist lens of perceptual deprivation. They describe this worldview as the “inability to observe experiences, actions, and behaviors without biased interpretation” (p. 63). To be clear, racism and the subsequent attitudes and behaviors reflect more than the results of a racialized socialization process. They reflect the history of a people; as Pence (1982) so aptly states, “The history of racism in this country is white history, we know it, it is the story of our parents, grandparents, and ourselves” (p. 46).

There will be some who will reject the use of the term *white racism*, but the facts are that “(1) racism permeates the roots of American society and is reflected in all its societal institutions, and that (2) racism was created by White Americans and is perpetuated by them” (Colin and Preciphs, 1991, p. 62).

Hayes and Colin (1994) challenged the field of adult education specifically and higher education generally to acknowledge and confront sociocultural racism and intellectual racism and suggested that educators first look inward and identify and challenge their racist assumptions and behaviors (Colin, 1994). Few took the challenge because it was affectively and cognitively more comfortable for people to look at the mirage of a postracial society rather than reality (Asante, 2003; Camacho, 2008; Gilborn, 2008).

Racial Profiling and Employment

Clearly, the current economic crisis has impacted all Americans, but the racial discrepancies that are a result of racial profiling remain an integral part of American society; again, it takes its toll on people of color. Whites still have the lowest unemployment rate of 14.9 percent, but are 73.9 percent of the population. For example, the current unemployment rate for African Americans,¹ who comprise 12.4 percent of the population, is 25.6 percent; Hispanics are 14.8 percent of the population and their unemployment rate is 20.7 percent (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).

Racial Profiling and the Media

One of the most recent examples of racial profiling within the media, framed within the context of “perceptual deprivation” (Colin and Preciphs, 1991) gone wild, is reflected in the arrest of Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in his home, not for being an intruder, but because he was not.

We see another example reflected in the reaction to the nomination of a Latina to the Supreme Court in the public discourse regarding the perceived

negative influence of her ethnicity, authentic lived experiences, and organizational involvement, specifically with the Puerto Rican Legal Defense Fund.

The documentary, “Without Reservations: Notes on Racism in Montana” (Native Voices, 2006) addresses the question: “How is an entire culture degraded through the causal use of racist imagery?” The “other” is defined by those whose power reflects the cognitive privilege of pigmentation.

Racism and Higher Education

The sociodemographic changes that Colin (1994) projected for the 21st century are here, and we ignored the warning. The author suggested that faculty “must begin by acknowledging the fact that racism seriously affects and impacts the lives of America’s non-white populations. They must be willing to confront their personal racism and acknowledge the impact that it has on their practice and perceptions” (p. 54).

Curricula Content. Faculty members of color have assumed the responsibility to assess their own situations and to interpret their authentic lived experiences through their culturally grounded (Colin, 1999, 2007) analytical and interpretative frames relative to the impact of a white racist ideology knowledge base (intellectual racism) and how it is manifested via sociocultural interactions—faculty relationships and instructor and student relationships (sociocultural racism).

This is the mission of the American Indian Studies Program and the Center for Indigenous Media at the University of Washington, Seattle, which has as the goals of its undergraduate and graduate programs “to explore documentary from an Indigenous perspective, to produce programs that speak to critical personal, social and political issues. . . and to provide students a framework in which they develop professional media projects in conjunction with Indigenous theories and methodologies” (Native Voices, 2006, p. 3).

This is reflective of what Colin (1999, 2007) refers to as culturally grounded knowledge (not to be confused with the current descriptor “culturally relevant,” which is a multicultural comparative process relative to the dominant culture of selecting similarities in order to show how we are all alike).

Culturally grounded knowledge involves both an accurate and appropriate sociohistorical and sociocultural contextual meaning in which values, beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors are culturally centered. These principles are reflected in culturally specific paradigms such as Africentrism, LitCrit, and Indigenous and First Nations. Imagine the surprise of an Africentric scholar when a colleague felt the need to enlighten her regarding the meaning and interpretation of Africentrism from a critical theoretical perspective. Her enlightening moment consisted of a presentation of “Critical Theory in Blackface.” It is a source of interest to scholars of color when they are confronted by people who know more about them than they do.

As results of using white racist ideology as the analytical and interpretative frame, Africentrism becomes Critical Theory in Blackface, LitCrit becomes Critical Theory without the ascent, and Indigenous/First Nation knowledge becomes mythical and imaginary. With the infamous bell curve (Hernstein and Murray, 1994) framed by perceptual deprivation being the rule of thumb, the racist assumption regarding the intellectual capabilities of peoples of color to create knowledge remains intact (Colin, 1994; Denbo and Beaulieu, 2002; Klein, 2006; Klug and Whitfield, 2002; Lewis, 2003; Lipp-Green, 1997; Murillo, 2008).

This culturally grounded centering is grounded in both affective and cognitive domains and involves elements of both an accurate and appropriate sociohistorical and sociocultural contextual meaning in which values, beliefs, and knowledge are indigenous to that group. It is a philosophical and cultural perspective necessary for appropriate analysis and interpretation. It is a process of understanding that is embedded with definitions; concepts; theoretical, research, and behavioral models; and protocols for research and action. Its goal is to combat the white racist dehumanization of peoples of color as reflected in stereotypes, and so on (Camacho, 2008; Colin, 2007; Cuadrez, 2005).

Faculty members of color are not waiting for their colleagues in higher education to get their intellectual house in order. These scholars are committed to challenging the pervasiveness of intellectual and sociocultural racism. According to Colin (2007), these scholars are committed to taking their analysis and interpretation beyond the theoretical constraints of Eurocentric theory.

Faculty Retention. The code of white racist ideology is reflected in every area of academia. Faculty are confronted by racist ideology at every stage of academia—recruitment; retention, including but not limited to so-called colleague interactions; research agendas, and promotion and tenure. Smith and Colin (2001) very clearly identified and discussed the impact of white racism on African American members of the adult education professoriate with the caveat that there were distinctive similarities relative to other faculty of color. The issues they raised have also been raised by others relative to their specific racial or ethnic groups (Fong, 2002; Sheared and Sissel, 2001).

But racial or ethnic group membership notwithstanding, all face what is referred to as the two-dimensional nature of isolation, affective and cognitive (Colin, 1999; Smith and Colin, 2001). Affective isolation “speaks in part to the impact of being the ‘only one’ or being the ‘first,’ and cognitive isolation “is expressed as being isolated from ‘like-minded people’” (Colin, 1999, p. 1).

A glaring example of the intersection of racist perceptual deprivation and cognitive isolation (the act of equating color with competence) was the experience of an African American faculty member who was asked to serve

on an institution's leadership council. During the course of the first meeting she prefaced her remarks with the well-known phrase, "It seems that great minds are running together." Before she could continue the university's president stated, "Yes, everyone's but yours," much to the amusement of her white colleagues. The coded point was made; she had been chosen because the institution needed a token. Her colleagues do not believe she has anything of substance to offer, but periodically they will let her speak and then move on. Did they think she did not know the code of white supremacy?

Graduate Students. Smith and Colin (2001) stated that "If the field of adult education is to fulfill its commitment to the goals of 'social change' and 'social justice,' then first and foremost, those of us in the professoriate who espouse such notions must confront, acknowledge, and eradicate racist attitudes and behaviors at the personal, as well as organizational level" (p. 66). Sociocultural and intellectual racism continues to impact the admission and graduation rates of students of color. According to the current government data for 2006–2008, of the 61,700 doctoral degrees bestowed, 56.2 percent were awarded to whites, 6.1 percent to African Americans, 5.8 percent to Asian or Pacific Islanders, 3 percent to Hispanics, and 0.4 percent to American Indians/Alaskans (Digest of Education Statistics, 2008).

Conclusions

As the United Nations Human Rights Council Report concludes in its final analysis: "Racism and racial discrimination have profoundly and lastingly marked and structured American society. . . the historical, cultural and human depth of racism still permeates all dimensions of life of American society" (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2009, p. 24). It is the responsibility of white Americans to invalidate the assumptions embedded in sociocultural and intellectual racism, which is a societal version of Frankenstein. It is their creation and its demise is not the responsibility of the "villagers"; it is the sole responsibility of the creators.

Note

1. *African American* is used because of my belief that terms such as *colored*, *Black*, *Afro-American* (there is no Afrocan continent), and *African-American* are culturally inappropriate and historically incorrect. I feel that any term that identifies a race of people also identifies a land of origin and should be genetically, socioculturally, and historically correct. As such, *African American* describes any person of African descent born in the United States. The use of *African* denotes primary genetic roots and land of origin, *Ameri*-reflects the voluntary assimilation with various Native American/indigenous societies (particularly the Cherokee and Seminole), and *-pean* reflects the

forced assimilation with various European ethnic groups, particularly the British, French, and Irish, during slavery in the United States. I first used this term in 1988 (Colin, 1988).

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