White privilege

For the clothing protocol in the Vatican, see Privilège du blanc.

White privilege (or **white skin privilege**) is a term for societal privileges that benefit white people beyond what is commonly experienced by non-white people in the same social, political, or economic circumstances. The term denotes both obvious and less obvious unspoken advantages that white persons may not recognize they have, which distinguishes it from overt bias or prejudice.[1] These include cultural affirmations of one's own worth; presumed greater social status; and freedom to move, buy, work, play, and speak freely.[2] The concept of white privilege also implies the right to assume the universality of one's own experiences, marking others as different or exceptional while perceiving oneself as normal. It can be compared to and/or combined with the concepts of male privilege, cisgender privilege and Christian privilege.

Academic perspectives such as critical race theory and whiteness studies use the concept of "white privilege" to analyze how racism and racialized societies affect the lives of white people.

Critics suggest that the term uses the concept of "whiteness" as a proxy for class or other social privilege or as a distraction from deeper underlying problems of inequality.[3][4] Other critics of the idea propose alternate definitions of whiteness and exceptions to or limits of white identity, arguing that the concept of "white privilege" ignores important differences between white subpopulations.

History of the concept

In his 1935 *Black Reconstruction in America*, W. E. B. Du Bois introduced the concept of a "psychological wage" for white laborers. This special status, he argued, divided the labor movement by leading low-wage white workers to feel superior to low-wage black workers. Du Bois identified white supremacy as a global phenomenon, affecting the social conditions across the world by means of colonialism.[5] For instance, Du Bois wrote:

> It must be remembered that the white group of laborers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white. They were admitted freely with all classes of white people to public functions, public parks, and the best schools. The police were drawn from their ranks, and the courts, dependent on their votes, treated them with such leniency as to encourage lawlessness. Their vote selected public officials, and while this had small effect upon the economic situation, it had great effect upon their personal treatment and the deference shown them. White schoolhouses were the best in the community, and conspicuously placed, and they cost anywhere from twice to ten times as much per capita as the colored schools. The newspapers specialized on news that flattered the poor whites and almost utterly ignored the Negro except in crime and ridicule.[]

In 1965, drawing from that insight, and inspired by the Civil Rights movement, Theodore W. Allen began a forty-year analysis of "white skin privilege," "white race" privilege, and "white" privilege in a call he drafted for a "John Brown Commemoration Committee" that urged "White Americans who want government of the people" and "by the people" to "begin by first repudiating their white skin privileges."[6] The pamphlet, "White Blindspot", containing one essay by Allen and one by Noel Ignatin (Noel Ignatiev), published in the late 1960s, focused on the struggle against "white skin privilege" and significantly influenced the Students for a Democratic Society and sectors of the New Left. By June 15, 1969, the *New York Times* was reporting that the National Office of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was calling "for an all-out fight against 'white skin privileges.'"[7] In 1974-1975 Allen extended his analysis to the colonial period with his ground-breaking "Class Struggle and the Origin of Racial Slavery: The Invention of the White Race" in 1974/1975,[8] which ultimately grew into his seminal two-volume "The Invention of the White Race" in 1994 and 1997.[9]

In his historical work Allen maintained: that the "white race" was invented as a ruling class social control formation in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century Anglo-American plantation colonies (principally Virginia and Maryland); that central to this process was the ruling-class plantation bourgeoisie conferring "white race" privileges on European-American working people; that these privileges were not only against the interests of African-Americans, they were also "poison," "ruinous," a baited hook, to the class interests of working people; that white supremacy, reinforced by the "white skin privilege," has been as the main retardant of working-class consciousness in the US; and that struggle for radical social change should direct principal efforts at challenging white supremacy and "white skin privileges."[10] Though Allen's work influenced Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and sectors of the "new left" and paved the way for "white privilege" and "race as social construct" study, and though he appreciated much of the work that followed, he also raised important questions about developments in those areas.[11]

In newspapers and public discourse of 1960s United States, the term "white privilege" was often used to describe white areas under conditions of residential segregation. These and other uses grew out of the era of legal discrimination against Black Americans, and reflected the idea that white status could persist despite formal equality.Wikipedia:Citation needed In the 1990s, the term came back into public discourse, such as in Robert Jensen's op ed "White privilege shapes the U.S."[12]

The concept of white privilege also came to be used within radical circles for purposes of self-criticism by anti-racist whites. For instance, a 1975 article in *Lesbian Tide* criticized the American feminist movement for exhibiting "class privilege" and "white privilege". Weather Underground leader Bernadine Dohrn, in a 1977 *Lesbian Tide* article, wrote: "… by assuming that I was beyond white privilege or allying with male privilege because I understood it, I prepared and led the way for a totally opportunist direction which infected all of our work and betrayed revolutionary principles."Wikipedia:Citation needed The term gained new popularity in academic circles and public discourse after Peggy McIntosh's 1987 essay "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack". McIntosh suggests that anti-racist white people need to understand how racial inequality includes benefits to them as well as disadvantages to others.Wikipedia:Citation needed

According to Ella L. J. Edmondson Bell and Stella M. Nkomo "most scholars of race relations embrace the use of [the concept] white privilege". Sociologists in the American Mosaic Project report widespread belief in the United States that "prejudice and discrimination [in favor of whites] create a form of white privilege." According to their 2003 poll this view was affirmed by 59% of white respondents, 83% of Blacks, and 84% of Hispanics.

Aspects

Critical race theory

The concept of white privilege has been studied by theorists of whiteness studies seeking to examine the construction and moral implications of 'whiteness'. There is often overlap between critical whiteness and race theories, as demonstrated by focus on the legal and historical construction of white identity, and the use of narratives (whether legal discourse, testimony or fiction) as a tool for exposing systems of racial power.[13] Fields such as History and Cultural Studies are primarily responsible for the formative scholarship of Critical Whiteness Studies.

Scholars within the legal and sociological studies fields of critical race theory, such as Cheryl Harris and George Lipsitz,[14] have argued that "whiteness" has historically been treated more as a form of property than as a racial characteristic: In other words, as an object which has intrinsic value that must be protected by social and legal institutions. Laws and mores concerning race (from apartheid and Jim Crow constructions that legally separate different races to social prejudices against interracial relationships or mixed communities) serve the purpose of retaining certain advantages and privileges for whites. Because of this, academic and societal ideas about race have tended to focus solely on the disadvantages suffered by racial minorities, overlooking the advantageous effects that accrue to whites.

Whiteness unspoken

From another perspective, white privilege is a way of conceptualizing racial inequalities that focuses on advantages that white people accrue from their position in society as well as the disadvantages that non-white people experience.[15]

Dan J. Pence and J. Arthur Fields have observed resistance in the context of education to the idea that white privilege of this type exists, and suggest this resistance stems from a tendency to see inequality as a black or Latino issue. One report noted that white students often react to in-class discussions about white privilege with a continuum of behaviors ranging from outright hostility to a "wall of silence." A pair of studies on a broader population by Branscombe *et al.* found that framing racial issues in terms of white privilege as opposed to non-white disadvantages can produce a greater degree of racially biased responses from whites who have higher levels of racial identification. Branscombe *et al.* demonstrate that framing racial inequality in terms of the privileges of whites increased levels of guilt among white respondents. Those with high racial identification were more likely to give responses which concurred with modern racist attitudes than those with low racial identification. According to the studies' authors these findings suggest that representing inequality in terms of outgroup disadvantage allows privileged group members to avoid the negative implications of inequality.

Privileges vs. rights

The notion of white privilege raises the question of the difference between rights and privileges. Lewis Gordon rejects the idea of white privilege, arguing that the privileges from which whites as a group are supposed to benefit are, in fact, social goods to which all people aspire. As such, he writes, they are not privileges:

> "A privilege is something that not everyone needs, but a right is the opposite. Given this distinction, an insidious dimension of the white-privilege argument emerges. It requires condemning whites for possessing, in the concrete, features of contemporary life that should be available to all, and if this is correct, how can whites be expected to give up such things? Yes, there is the case of the reality of whites being the majority population in all the sites of actual privilege from prestigious universities to golf clubs and boards of directors for most high-powered corporations. But even *among whites* as a group, how many whites have *those* opportunities?"[16]

Viewing whites as universally privileged constructs "a reality that has nothing to do with [the] lived experience" of the majority of whites, who themselves do not have access to elite institutions. Their "daily, means-to-means subsistence" is a right, of which it makes no sense to feel guilty. Naomi Zack similarly criticizes the term *white privilege* as a misunderstanding of the difference between privileges and rights. Discrimination against nonwhites does not create a privilege in the normal sense of the term, a "specifically granted absolute advantage," a "prerogative or exception granted to an individual or special group."[17] In the United States, Zack writes, discussion of "white privilege" distracts from the discussion of social exclusion of nonwhites, which is the origin of racial disparities.

Limitations

According to James Forrest and Kevin Dunn, the privileges of being white might accrue largely to certain white ethnic and cultural groups, as opposed to white people as a whole. Adam A. Powell, Nyla R. Branscombe, and Michael T. Schmitt argue that people in the least successful white ethnic and cultural groups are often the ones that are disadvantaged the most from any affirmative action that attempts to take into account white privilege.

Lawrence Blum, Professor of Philosophy, writes that white privilege analysis has been too narrow in its focus. Specifically, it has failed to acknowledge important ethnic differences, especially among whites. And it has not adequately distinguished between "spared injustice, unjust enrichment and non-injustice-related" privileges.

The idea that white privilege has functioned as a social tool to divide white and black workers has proved particularly controversial. A Marxist critique of this perspective argues that racial differences are secondary to economic difference, and that white privilege is therefore secondary to class privilege. According to this view, analyzing white privilege is misguided because it distracts from class struggle.[18] Historian Eric Arnesen has challenged this understanding of "whiteness" as ill-constructed historical revisionism. Arnesen calls whiteness a "moving target" in historical studies, writing: "Whiteness is, variously, a metaphor for power, a proxy for racially distributed material benefits, a synonym for "white supremacy," an epistemological stance defined by power, a position of invisibility or ignorance, and a set of beliefs about racial "Others" and oneself that can be rejected through "treason" to a racial category." Arnesen disagrees with the idea that white privilege divided the labor movement, as well as with the underlying concept of inherent labor unity, arguing that many types of difference have divided the working class.

Arnesen's arguments about race and organized labor form the basis for a larger argument about "white privilege" as a concept in the social sciences. Arnesen also rejects the idea of a basic connection between the identity of whiteness and the ideology of white supremacy. The "white privilege" concept creates the image of a person so favored by society that they are unaware of unfairness and domination—yet this may not be the experience of all people with "white skin".[19]

The label "white trash", in particular, has been described as marking off a lower limit of white privilege in the social hierarchy. In the words of anthropologist John Hartigan: "White trash, a lurid stereotype and debasing racial epithet, applies to poor whites whose subordination by class is extreme. This charged label is a reminder that there are important class dimensions to whiteness and that whites are not uniformly privileged and powerful." Hartigan also cites "hillbilly" and "redneck" as contemporary terms that connote whiteness but not privilege.[20] Conversely, there is discussion about whether members of a "model minority", such as Asian Americans can enjoy "white privilege", or something like it, despite their non-European ancestry. Arnesen has also argued that some claims about the psychology of whiteness and white privilege are difficult to prove—or even wrong. He compares whiteness studies with Freudian psychoanalysis because of its rigid pre-determined structure.

Global

White privilege functions differently in different places. A person's white skin will not be an asset to them in every conceivable place or situation. White people are also a global minority, and this fact affects the experiences they have outside of their home areas. Nevertheless, some people who use the term "white privilege" describe it as a worldwide phenomenon, resulting from the history of colonialism by white Europeans. One author argues that American white men are privileged almost everywhere in the world, even though many countries have never been colonized by Europeans.[21][22]

In some accounts, global white privilege is related to American exceptionalism and hegemony.[23]

In the United States

History

Some scholars attribute white privilege, which they describe as informal racism, to the formal racism (i.e. slavery followed by Jim Crow) that existed for much of American history.[24] In her book *Privilege Revealed: How Invisible Preference Undermines America*, Stephanie M. Wildman writes that many Americans who advocate a merit-based, race-free worldview do not acknowledge the systems of privilege which have benefited them. For example, many Americans rely on a social or financial inheritance from previous generations, an inheritance unlikely to be forthcoming if one's ancestors were slaves. Whites were sometimes afforded opportunities and benefits that were unavailable to others. In the middle of the 20th century, the government subsidized white homeownership through the Federal Housing Administration, but not homeownership by minorities. Some social scientists also suggest that

the historical processes of suburbanization and decentralization are instances of white privilege that have contributed to contemporary patterns of environmental racism.

Wealth

According to Roderick Harrison "wealth is a measure of cumulative advantage or disadvantage" and "the fact that black and Hispanic wealth is a fraction of white wealth also reflects a history of discrimination".[25] Whites have historically had more opportunities to accumulate wealth. Some of the institutions of wealth creation amongst American citizens were open exclusively to whites. Similar differentials applied to the Social Security Act (which excluded agricultural and domestic workers, sectors that then included most black workers),[26] rewards to military officers, and the educational benefits offered to returning soldiers after World War II.[27] An analyst of the phenomenon, Thomas Shapiro, professor of law and social policy at Brandeis University argues, "The wealth gap is not just a story of merit and achievement, it's also a story of the historical legacy of race in the United States."

Over the past 40 years, there has been less formal discrimination in America; the inequality in wealth between racial groups however, is still extant. George Lipsitz asserts that because wealthy whites were able to pass along their wealth in the form of inheritances and transformative assets (inherited wealth which lifts a family beyond their own achievements), white Americans on average continually accrue advantages.[:107−8] Pre-existing disparities in wealth are exacerbated by tax policies that reward investment over waged income, subsidize mortgages, and subsidize private sector developers.

Thomas Shapiro argues that wealth is passed along from generation to generation, giving whites a better "starting point" in life than other races. According to Shapiro, many whites receive financial assistance from their parents allowing them to live beyond their income. This, in turn, enables them to buy houses and major assets which aid in the accumulation of wealth. Since houses in white neighborhoods appreciate faster, even African Americans who are able to overcome their "starting point" are unlikely to accumulate wealth as fast as whites. Shapiro asserts this is a continual cycle from which whites consistently benefit. These benefits also have effects on schooling and other life opportunities.[:32−3]

Peggy McIntosh, co-director of the SEED Project on Inclusive Curriculum, posits that white people in the United States can be sure that race is not a factor when they are audited by the IRS.

Employment and economics

Racialized employment networks can benefit whites at the expense of non-white minorities. Asian-Americans, for example, although lauded as a "model minority", rarely rise to positions high in the workplace: only 8 of the Fortune 500 companies have Asian-American CEOs, making up 1.6% of CEO positions while Asian-Americans are 4.8% of the population. In a study published in 2003, sociologist Deirdre A. Royster compared black and white males who graduated from the same

Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers, by sex, race, and ethnicity, U.S., 2009.[28]

school with the same skills. In looking at their success with school-work transition and working experiences, she

found that white graduates were more often employed in skilled trades, earned more, held higher status positions, received more promotions and experienced shorter periods of unemployment. Since all other factors were similar, the differences in employment experiences were attributed to race. Royster concluded that the primary cause of these racial differences was due to social networking. The concept of "who you know" seemed just as important to these graduates as "what you know."

Since older white males predominantly control blue-collar trades, they are more likely to offer varying forms of assistance to those in their social network, often other whites. Assistance can be anything from job vacancy information, referrals, direct job recruitment, formal and informal training, and vouching behavior and leniency in supervision.Wikipedia:Citation needed Royster argues that this assistance, disproportionately available to whites, is an advantage that often puts black men at a disadvantage in the employment sector. According to Royster, "these ideologies provide a contemporary deathblow to working-class black men's chances of establishing a foothold in the traditional trades."

This concept is similar to the theory created by Mark Granovetter which analyzes the importance of social networking and interpersonal ties with his paper *"The Strength of Weak Ties"* and his other economic sociology work.

Other research shows that there is a correlation between a person's name and his or her likelihood of receiving a call back for a job interview. Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan found in field experiment in Boston and Chicago that people with "white-sounding" names are 50% more likely to receive a call back than people with "black-sounding" names, despite equal résumé quality between the two racial groups. White Americans are more likely than black Americans to have their business loan applications approved, even when other factors such as credit records are comparable.[29]

Black and Latino college graduates are less likely than white graduates to end up in a management position even when other factors such as age, experience, and academic records are similar.[30]

Cheryl Harris relates whiteness to the idea of "racialized privilege" in the article *Whiteness as Property:* she describes it as "a type of status in which white racial identity provided the basis for allocating societal benefits both private and public and character."

Housing

Discrimination in housing policies was formalized in 1934 under the Federal Housing Act which provided government credit to private lending for home buyers.:5 Within the Act, the Federal Housing Agency had the authority to channel all the money to white home buyers instead of minorities.:5 The FHA also channeled money away from inner-city neighborhoods after World War II and instead placed it in the hands of white home buyers who would move into segregated suburbs. These practices and others, intensified attitudes of segregation and inequality.

The "single greatest source of wealth" for white Americans is the growth in value in their owner-occupied homes.:32−3Wikipedia:Disputed statement The family wealth so generated is the most important contribution to wealth disparity between black and white Americans.:32−3Wikipedia:Disputed statement It has been argued that continuing discrimination in the mortgage industry perpetuates this inequality, not only for black homeowners who pay higher mortgage rates than their white counterparts, but also for those excluded entirely from the housing market by these factors, who are thus excluded from the financial benefits of both equity appreciation and the tax deductions associated with home ownership.:32−3

Brown, Carnoey and Oppenheimer, in "Whitewashing Race: The Myth of a Color-Blind Society," argue that the financial inequities created by discriminatory housing practices also have an ongoing effect on young black families, since the net worth of one's parents is the best predictor of one's own net worth, so discriminatory financial policies of the past contribute to race-correlated financial inequities of today. They argue, for instance, that even when income is controlled for, whites have significantly more wealth than blacks, and that this present fact is partially attributable to past federal financial policies that favored whites over blacks.

Chip Smith describes some ways he views whites as privileged:

- Whites are offered more choices; 60%–90% of housing units shown to whites are not brought to the attention of blacks.
- 72.1% of whites own their own home opposed to 48.1% for African Americans
- 46% of whites had help from their family in making down payments on homes compared to 12% for African Americans
- Whites are half as likely to be turned down for a mortgage or home improvement loan
- Whites pay on average an 8.12% interest rate on their mortgage, lower than the 8.44% African Americans pay on average
- The median home equity for whites is $58,000 compared to $40,000 for African Americans

Education

According to Wildman, education policies in the US have contributed to the construction and reinforcement of white privilege.[31] Wildman argues that even schools that appear to be integrated often segregate students based on abilities. This can increase white students' initial educational advantage, magnifying the "unequal classroom experience of African American students" and minorities.

It is arguedWikipedia:Manual of Style/Words to watch#Unsupported attributions that the material that black and other minority children are tested on in school is often culturally biased, not taking into consideration dialect and other differences between populations. Williams and Rivers (1972b) showed that test instructions in Standard English disadvantaged the black child and that if the language of the test is put in familiar labels without training or coaching, the child's performances on the tests increase significantly.[32] According to Cadzen a child's language development should be evaluated in terms of his progress toward the norms for his particular speech community.[33] Other studies using sentence repetition tasks found that, at both third and fifth grades, white subjects repeated Standard English sentences significantly more accurately than black subjects, while black subjects repeated nonstandard English sentences significantly more accurately than white subjects.

According to Janet E. Helms traditional psychological and academic assessment is based on skills that are considered important within white, western, middle-class culture, but which may not be salient or valued within African-American culture.[34] When tests' stimuli are more culturally pertinent to the experiences of African Americans, performance improves.[35][36] However, white privilege critics argue that the in K-12 education, students academic progress are measured on nation-wide standardized tests which reflect national standards.[37] African Americans are disproportionately sent to special education classes in their schools, identified as being disruptive or suffering from a learning disability. These students are segregated for the majority of the school day, taught by uncertified teachers, and do not receive high school diplomas. Wanda Blanchett has argued that white students have consistently privileged interactions with the special education system, which provides 'non-normal' whites with the resources they need to benefit from the mainline white educational structure.[38] Educational inequality is also a consequence of housing. Since most states determine school funding based on property taxes,Wikipedia:Citation needed schools in wealthier neighborhoods receive more funding per student. As home values in white neighborhoods are higher than minority neighborhoods,Wikipedia:Citation needed local schools receive more funding via property taxes. This will ensure better technology in predominantly white schools, smaller class sizes and better quality teachers, giving white students opportunities for a better education. The vast majority of schools placed on academic probation as part of district accountability efforts are majority African-American and low-income.[39] However, Congress enacted the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 to address such school performance disparities. That act provides for a large increase in federal school aid to address property tax disparities and gives parents the right to switch schools if their neighborhood school fails to progress to meet national performance standards.

Inequalities in wealth and housing allow a higher proportion of white parents the option to move to better school districts or afford to put their children in private schools if they do not approve of the neighborhood's schools.

Some studies have claimed that minority students are less likely to be placed in honors classes, even when justified by test scores.[40][41][42] Various studies have also claimed that visible minority students are more likely than white students to be suspended or expelled from school, even though rates of serious school rule violations do not differ significantly by race.[43][44] Adult education specialist Elaine Manglitz argues the educational system in America has deeply entrenched biases in favor of the white majority in evaluation, curricula, and power relations.

In discussing unequal test scores between public school students, opinion columnist Matt Rosenberg laments the Seattle Public Schools' emphasis on "institutional racism" and "white privilege":

> The disparity is not simply a matter of color: School District data indicate income, English-language proficiency and home stability are also important correlates to achievement...By promoting the "white privilege" canard and by designing a student indoctrination plan, the Seattle School District is putting retrograde, leftist politics ahead of academics, while the perpetrators of "white privilege" are minimizing the capabilities of minorities.[45]

Conservative scholar and opponent of affirmative action programs, Shelby Steele at the Hoover Institution, believes that the effects of white privilege are exaggerated. Steele argues that blacks may incorrectly blame their personal failures on white oppression. He also argues that there are many "minority privileges": "If I'm a black high school student today... there are white American institutions, universities, hovering over me to offer me opportunities: Almost every institution has a diversity committee... There is a hunger in this society to do right racially, to not be racist."

Anthony P. Carnevale and Jeff Strohl show that whites have a better opportunity at getting into selective schools, while African Americans and Hispanics usually end up going to open access schools and have a lower chance of receiving a Bachelor's Degree.

Military

In a 2013 news story, Fox News reported, "A controversial 600-plus page manual used by the military to train its Equal Opportunity officers teaches that "healthy, white, heterosexual, Christian" men hold an unfair advantage over other races, and warns in great detail about a so-called "White Male Club." ... The manual, which was obtained by Fox News, also instructs troops to "support the leadership of non-white people. Do this consistently, but not uncritically," the manual states."[46]

In South Africa

White privilege was legally enshrined in South Africa through apartheid, which lasted formally into the 1990s. Under apartheid, racial privilege was not only socially meaningful—it became bureaucratically regulated. Laws such as the 1950 Population Registration Act established criteria to officially classify South Africans by race: White, Coloured (mixed), or Black.[47]

Registration certificate identifies a person as white

Many scholars argue that 'whiteness' still corresponds to a set of social advantages in South Africa, and conventionally refer to these advantages as "white privilege". The system of white privilege applies both to the way a person is treated by others and to a set of behaviors, affects, and thoughts, which can be learned and reinforced. These elements of "whiteness" establish social status and guarantee advantages for some people, without directly relying on skin color or other aspects of a person's appearance. White privilege in South Africa has small-scale effects, such as preferential treatment for people who appear white in public, and large-scale effects, such as the over-fivefold difference in average per-capita income for people identified as white or black.[48]

"Afrikaner whiteness" has also been described as a partially subordinate identity, relative to the British Empire, "disgraced" further by the end of apartheid.[49] Some white South Africans fear that they will suffer from "reverse racism" at the hands of the country's newly empowered majority.[50]
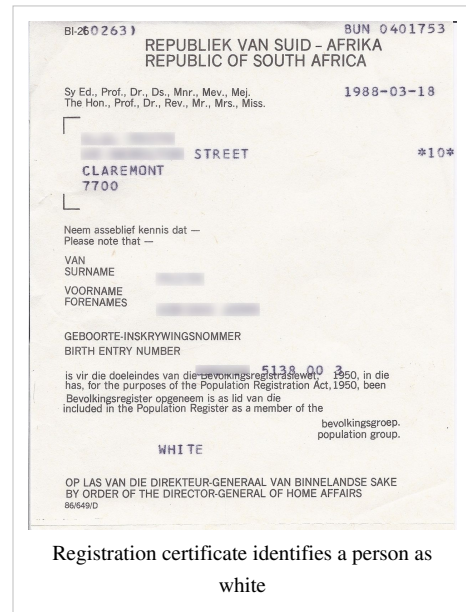
In Australia

White privilege in Australia parallels the pattern of dominance seen elsewhere in colonialism. Indigenous Australians were excluded from the process of creating the Australian Federation, and its early laws restricted the freedoms for non-white people. Indigenous people were governed by the Aborigines Protection Board as a separate class of citizens.[51]

Holly Randell-Moon has claimed that news media are geared towards white people and their interests and that this is an example of white privilege.[52] Michele Lobo claims that white neighborhoods are normally identified as "good quality", while "ethnic" neighborhoods may become stigmatized, degraded, and neglected.[53]

Some scholars claim white people are seen presumptively as "Australian", and as prototypical citizens. Catherine Koerner has claimed that a major part of white Australian privilege is the ability to be in Australia itself, and that this is reinforced by, discourses on non-white outsiders including asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants.[54]

Some scholars have suggested that public displays of multiculturalism, such as the celebration of artwork and stories of Indigenous Australians, amount to tokenism, since indigenous Australians voices are largely excluded from the cultural discourse surrounding the history of colonialism and the narrative of European colonizers as peaceful settlers. These scholars suggest that white privilege in Australia, like white privilege elsewhere, involves the ability to define the limits of what can be included in a "multicultural" society.[55][56] Indigenous studies in Australian universities remains largely controlled by white people, hires many white professors, and does not always embrace political changes that benefit indigenous people.[57][58][59][60] Some scholars also argue that prevailing modes of Western epistemology and pedagogy, associated with the dominant white culture, are treated as universal while Indigenous perspectives are excluded or treated only as objects of study.[61][62][63] One Australian university professor reports that white students may perceive indigenous academics as beneficiaries of reverse racism.[64]

Some scholars have claimed that for Australian whites, another aspect of privilege is the ability to identify with a global diaspora of other white people in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere. This privilege contrasts with the separation of Indigenous Australians from other indigenous peoples in southeast Asia.[65] They also claim that global political issues such as climate change are framed in terms of white actors and effects on countries that are predominantly white.[66]

White privilege varies across places and situations. Ray Minniecon, director of Crossroads Aboriginal Ministries, described the city of Sydney specifically as "the most alien and inhospitable place of all to Aboriginal culture and people."[67] At the other end of the spectrum, anti-racist white Australians working with Indigenous people may experience their privilege as painful "stigma".

Studies of white privilege in Australia have increased since the late 1990s, with several books published on the history of how whiteness became a dominant identity. Aileen Moreton-Robinson's *Talkin' Up to the White Woman* is a critique of unexamined white privilege in the Australian feminist movement.[] The Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association formed in 2005 to study racial privilege and promote respect for Indigenous sovereignties; it publishes an online journal called *Critical Race and Whiteness Studies*.[68]

Notes

[1] Neville, H., Worthington, R., Spanierman, L. (2001).Race, Power, and Multicultural Counseling Psychology: Understanding White Privilege and Color Blind Racial Attitudes. In Ponterotto, J., Casas, M, Suzuki, L, and Alexander, C.(Eds) Handbook of Multicultural Counseling, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

[2] McIntosh, Peggy. "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack." Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study. 2001. Paula S. Rothenberg. New York: Worth Publishers, 2004.

[3] Eric Arnesen, "Whiteness and the Historians' Imagination" (http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.usc.edu/stable/27672732), *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60, October 2001.

[4] Hartigan, *Odd Tribes* (2005), pp. 1−2.

[5] Zeus Leonardo, "The Souls of White Folk: critical pedagogy, whiteness studies, and globalization discourse" (http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13613320120117180), *Race Ethnicity and Education* 5(1), 2002,

[6] Theodore W. Allen, "A Call . . . John Brown Memorial Pilgrimage . . . December 4, 1965," John Brown Commemoration Committee, 1965 and Jeffrey B. Perry, "The Developing Conjuncture and Some Insights from Hubert Harrison and Theodore W. Allen on the Centrality of the Fight against White Supremacy," (http://clogic.eserver.org/2010/2010.html) "Cultural Logic" 2010.

[7] See Noel Ignatin (Ignatiev) and Ted (Theodore W.) Allen, "'White Blindspot' and 'Can White Workers Radicals Be Radicalized?'" (http://www.sds-1960s.org/WhiteBlindspot.pdf) (Detroit: The Radical Education Project and New York: NYC Revolutionary Youth Movement, 1969); Thomas R. Brooks, "The New Left is Showing Its Age," (http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F70F16FE385E1A7B93C7A8178DD85F4D8685F9) "New York Times," June 15, 1969, p. 20; and Perry, "The Developing Conjuncture and Some Insights from Hubert Harrison and Theodore W. Allen. . . "

[8] Theodore W. Allen, Class Struggle and the Origin of Racial Slavery: The Invention of the White Race (http://clogic.eserver.org/2006/allen.html) (Hoboken: Hoboken Education Project, 1975), republished in 2006 with an "Introduction" by Jeffrey B. Perry at Center for the Study of Working Class Life, SUNY, Stony Brook.

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