Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building

MAGGIE POTAPCHUK

MP Associates, Inc.

SALLY LEIDERMAN

Center for Assessment and Policy Development

Contributing Writers

DONNA BIVENS

Women's Theological Center

BARBARA MAJOR

St. Thomas Health Clinic

Published in the United States

MP Associates, Inc.
1 Catoctin Court
Silver Spring, MD 20906
mpotapchuk@comcast.net

Center for Assessment and Policy Development
268 Barren Hill Road
Conshohocken, PA 19428
sleiderman@capd.org
www.capd.org
www.evaluationtoolsforracialequity.org

Version 1.1

Contents

Acknowledgements

There are many people in each of our lives and the communities in which we work who contributed to this monograph in different ways – directly and indirectly. We first want to thank the people who supported our journeys of being activists for racial equity and justice; those who gave us guidance, shared their experiences, and modeled their courage.

We want to express our sincere thanks to the individuals who completed the survey and participated in the interviews. Their stories, observations and questions helped shape the content of this book. Our reviewers were very diligent with their task and were extremely generous with their insights, knowledge, and feedback. We appreciate their time, their candor, and mostly the contributions they make everyday in their lives: Linda Bowen, Ben Butler, Shakti Butler, Rita Hardiman, Laura Harris, Paul Kivel, Keith Lawrence, Rubén Lizardo, Sylvia Puente, and Catherine Wong.

There are several people who supported each of us at different points in writing this monograph – some shared their thinking, others assisted in reading drafts and wordsmithing, some gave us encouragement, and some were all that and more. Our many thanks to: Susan Batten, Dr. Claudia Casteneda, Akeem Crain, Luis Diaz, Desiree George, Marion (Meck) Groot, Cyndi Harris, Curdina Hill, Mareasa Isaacs, Matthew Leiderman, Meredith McElroy, Christopher McMullen, Gene Mitchell, Elaine Slaton, Sam Stephens, Judy Tso, Mike Wenger, Kathy Whelpley, and Gwen Wright.

We would also like to thank our editor, Dalya Massachi, Writing for Community Success, for her first-rate skills and insightful suggestions. Also, our appreciation to Gene Mitchell for his detail work and creativity in designing the publication.

Section 1

STARTING POINT

Chapter 1   Setting the Stage

Chapter 2   Hurricane Katrina:
               Spotlight on Racism and White Privilege

Chapter One

Setting the Stage

Sally Leiderman

Imagine the following:[1]

> *A group of Native Americans is concerned about the well-being of a group of white children whose families live in a city near their reservation. Several leaders of the Native American community—a physician, some teachers, the editor of the local paper and several Board members of a Native American-led philanthropy—feel the children are disadvantaged because their families are at-risk. They think the parents and grandparents of the white children are not able to meet the children's needs, perhaps because the parents are working and are not able to give their children sufficient attention. This Native American group also thinks the white children are isolated and not benefiting from enough cultural experiences. They also feel the parents could use some education about how to better raise their children. This group of Native American community leaders and funders really wants to make a positive difference in the lives of the people living in the other community.*
>
> *What steps do you think the Native American group would have to go through before the parents of the white children would give them access to their children? Who would likely set the terms of the interactions? What safeguards might be put in place to protect the children from any unintended ill effects of the encounter?*
>
> *Now imagine that the children needing assistance were Native American, or African American or Latino/a. Imagine that the people who want to help these children are mostly white or, if they are people of color, they are employed by an institution established by white people of wealth. What might the institution expect concerning its access to the children? What assumptions might the parents of these children have about this institution's intentions, knowledge of their community, worldviews and their concerns about the likely impact of their joint work? What assumptions might the leaders in the institution have about these families regarding their worldviews, values, knowledge, and their choices of lifestyle? Who would likely control the nature and extent of the interaction, its goals and strategies? Where might white privilege and racism come into play, and what might be their impact?*

The story above is about the subject of this monograph: white privilege in community building work. It illustrates one of the major contradictions in our work: the intention to bring resources (people, ideas, time, money) into a community or a neighborhood to make something better, and how the ways we go about this work can maintain or even reinforce the power inequities and

---

[1] This story is inspired by an exercise of the Undoing Racism Workshop of the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond.

racially biased policies and practices that created the problems in the first place. A well-known political quote, "He was born on third base, and thought he hit a triple,"[2] illustrates one of the hardest parts to appreciate about this contradiction for those of us who are white: the extent to which we fail to see our own accumulated privileges and how they influence our worldviews and actions.

Our Goals

The goals of this monograph are to shine a bright light on these issues, to suggest new ways of thinking and acting, to share solutions where there are some, and to raise questions that challenge all of us doing this work. By doing so, we hope it will help those involved in improving communities to work in more equitable and thoughtful partnerships with community residents and other stakeholders, with special attention to issues of privilege, oppression, racism, and power as they play out in this work.[3]

This monograph was developed particularly for community builders who are part of community/foundation partnerships. We were originally commissioned by a national foundation to develop this monograph for its internal use. As it became clear that it had wider applicability, we expanded the document's goal to be a resource for community builders more generally. But given its genesis, the monograph draws heavily on the kind of work that foundations and communities do in partnership. Thus, neighborhoods and communities; leaders and staff of community organizations, institutions and systems; foundation leaders and staff; elected and appointed government leaders and staff; technical assistance providers; evaluators and staff of community building collaborations, coalitions and task forces; and all of the others who work together to make communities easier places for people to thrive.

> One of the unspoken assumptions in the United States is that communities in which families have significant wealth and in which many families are white can take care of their own problems, or ought to be left alone to do so. The reverse is also true.

One of the unspoken assumptions in the United States is that communities in which families have significant wealth and in which many families are white can take care of their own problems, or ought to be left alone to do so. The reverse is also true. Community building as a formal activity often takes place in communities or neighborhoods with high concentrations of people of color and less accumulated wealth. One goal of this monograph is to highlight and question that basic premise. Another is to offer some ideas about how to stimulate more equitable and effective community building work by acknowledging white privilege in this work and seeking to reduce its negative effects.

Premises and Terms

Everyone comes to this work with some knowledge and starting assumptions. We are no exception. To help the reader understand the authors' assumptions, Figure A (page 9) lays out the basic premises that underlie this monograph. While

---

[2] This is often attributed to former Texas congressman Jim Hightower, 1988.

[3] We recognize that these terms are sometimes inflammatory. They have different meanings and bring up different memories and associations for different people, including people with different racial or ethnic identities. Our definitions of these terms, for purposes of this monograph, are discussed in detail in later chapters.

writing the monograph, we also came to agreement on working definitions for its three main concepts, noted below. Each of these concepts is discussed in greater detail later.

Community building: Activities to improve the well-being of people living in a particular place that involve community residents and local and outside entities, including funders, technical assistance providers, government and the non-profit sector. These efforts often pay attention to social, educational, health, economic and physical conditions in a community. They may attempt to build on local leadership, existing efforts to improve community well-being and other community assets. The current rebuilding efforts in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, and Enterprise zones around the country are examples of one kind of community building effort. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Making Connections Initiative and the Project Change anti-racism initiative are all examples of community building efforts that involve community/foundation partnerships.

White Privilege: Having a collection of benefits based on belonging to a group perceived to be white, when the same or similar benefits are denied to members of other groups, not because of what one's individual accomplishments or actions.[4] In the book *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice,* the authors define white privilege as follows: "White privilege is about the concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society which whites receive, unconsciously or consciously, by virtue of their skin color in a racist society."[5]

Racism: There are many different ways that racism is described in this monograph. A basic definition we use is racism is prejudice plus power.[6] This definition captures the idea that racism occurs when a group with the ability to enforce its prejudices does that through laws, institutional policies or practices, and cultural norms or expectations that give greater weight to one group's view of the world over another's. Thus, racism serves to maintain the privileges of one group over another.

The term *white* is used throughout the monograph to refer to people who at this point in the history of the United States are in groups that are generally considered white, in popular thinking and in historical or current laws, policies and practices that define access, opportunities or assign status by the category called 'race'. We use the term *people of color* to refer to people who at this point in the history of the United States are considered "not white"—for example, Africans, African Americans, most Latino/a groups, many Asian groups, some groups from the Middle East, nearly all Native Americans and some others.

As discussed more fully later, these categorizations are somewhat fluid for individuals and groups (for example, Jews and the Irish were once designated in

"White privilege is about the concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society which whites receive, unconsciously or consciously, by virtue of their skin color in a racist society."

---

[4] Allan G. Johnson, *Privilege, Power, and Difference*. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2001), p. 23.

[5] Maurianne Adams, Lee Ann Bell, and Pat Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Source Book*. (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 97.

[6] Thanks to the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (http://www.pisab.org/) for sharing this definition with me.

the U.S. Census as non-white but now are considered white). The exception is that African Americans (as a group) have always been considered "non-white" over the course of the history of the United States.

We are deliberately being careful in our wording, and struggling a bit, because we are so used to thinking of race as something physical, genetic or otherwise inherited (that is, something within the corporeal or biological make-up of a person). It is not that, but rather an invented system to group people for political purposes. In most settings (often institutional), a person's "race" is either what others with the power to enforce the consequences of the distinction define that person as, or, in some settings (often social or within groups of color), it is the identity one claims for oneself.

We also want to note a few major issues on which people have very different perspectives. Some of these are discussed in more detail later, and some we simply want to mention here to acknowledge their importance (even though the monograph does not address them in great detail). The first has to do with using the word racism to refer to the system of oppression (in the form of prejudice plus power) that affects all groups of color in the United States—not just African Americans but also Latinos/as, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans. Some members of those groups do not use the word racism to talk about oppression against their groups. They may be rejecting the characterization of their national or cultural identities as different "races," or may be distancing themselves from what they understand to be a specific form of oppression between whites and African Americans. In this monograph, we use the term racism generally to apply to oppression of peoples of color that maintains white privilege. But we recognize that not everyone is comfortable with using the term racism in that way. For example, we know that many Latino/a scholars and social justice advocates do not see their own struggle in the word, preferring to talk about institutional, cultural or structural inequities (rather than racism).

In addition, we know that some people feel it is very important to understand white privilege through the lens of class, as well as race. Some reviewers of this monograph feel that it does not go far enough in identifying the relationship of race and class in the United States nor in offering a solid critique of capitalism that helps to explain how white privilege operates and for whose benefit. Likewise, one of the authors of this monograph would like to have included a discussion of Christian privilege in order to help readers see more clearly how that particular worldview has created a set of norms that helps maintain white privilege. However, as a group of authors, we feel that both these issues are so complex that we can only acknowledge them as being outside the scope of this monograph.

Methods

This monograph is based on several sources. Major ones include:

- Review of relevant literature on white privilege, structural and institutional racism, community building, internalized racism, the history of race as a

constructed variable, being a white anti-racist, and evaluations of community building work (see the Bibliography in the Appendix).

- The community building, activist and training experiences of the authors in many communities over the past 17 to 30 years.

- Interviews with people (other than community residents) who do community building work, including technical assistance providers, foundation staff and trainers. These interviews asked people to comment on a definition of white privilege and asked about any issues and examples of privilege, thus defined, related to:

  o Convening multi-racial groups;

  o Working with groups to decide on strategies to improve outcomes;

  o When white staff or consultants are working in places whose residents are mostly people of color; and

  o Any other issues or examples of white privilege in community building work.

We then mined these interviews for ideas, illustrations, general themes and recommendations. Of course, we also drew from the ideas and experiences that many individuals in many communities shared with us over the years, including community leaders in Albuquerque, NM; Valdosta, GA; Knoxville, TN; El Paso, TX; New Orleans, LA; St. Louis, MO; Santa Barbara, CA; Selma, AL; Columbus, GA; St. Paul, MN; and Boston, MA. Barbara Major points out in her chapter that people often take the intellectual property of communities for their own purposes, often without acknowledgement and almost always without reimbursement. So we want to try to acknowledge our debt to others here.

The authors also want to acknowledge our own training and support from individuals to teach us about white privilege and racism. We are still learning, of course. But many of the ideas in this monograph were developed through our experiences with organizations such as the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, Hope in the Cities, Dismantling Racism Institute (National Conference for Community and Justice in St. Louis, MO), Healing the Heart of Diversity, Project Change, Americans for Indian Opportunity, Women's Theological Center, and the Institute for Cultural Affairs, and from community building foundation staff at many foundations, including the Babcock Foundation, the William Caspar Graustein Foundation, the Levi Strauss Foundation, the Mott Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and others. After the first draft of this monograph was completed, we asked 10 people (see acknowledgements) to review the contents and provide us feedback about the content and usability of the document. The reviewers provided us significant information, in-depth feedback, and ideas to create a more user-friendly document. We appreciate all of their help, and tried to respond to their comments as fully as possible. Nonetheless, the views expressed are those of the authors, and we are solely responsible for any errors or omissions.

The Authors

Four women were primarily involved in developing this monograph: Donna Bivens (African American), Sally Leiderman (white), Barbara Major (African American) and Maggie Potapchuk (white). While we shared many ideas and understandings, our experiences and perspectives of white privilege and racism vary. With the exception of three, each chapter was written by a particular individual. Each piece expresses its author's unique perspective on a concept or some aspect of structural racism and white privilege, or community building, or community/foundation partnerships. Each of us made decisions about how much to draw on our own experiences, where to bring in research, what examples to use and how to engage readers in reflection or to offer recommendations. We have noted the authorship of each chapter so readers will have a better sense of whose perspective is being offered.

Another consequence of having four authors is that the voice and tone of each chapter is distinct. There are also some differences of language and ideas, as noted above, though we have tried to be consistent in major themes and key definitions. For example, some of us find it more useful to think about white privilege as the cause of racism, and others to think about white privilege as a consequence of racism. However, we agree that at this point in the history of the United States the two are completely intertwined, so each serves to help maintain the other. Therefore, both will have to be addressed to reduce the impact of either. Thus, when we use the terms white privilege and racism together this is not to say that they are the same, but rather that they each need to be addressed in the unique ways they are manifested.

> An analysis of community building through the lens of white privilege and racism suggests many places where we might do our work differently, with different assumptions, behaviors, understandings, actions, roles and relationships.

Final Thoughts

As we will say many times in this monograph, we respect the intentions and goals of community building work. We offer this resource as people deeply invested in this kind of work. The authors of this monograph have spent most of our working and/or personal lives involved in trying to support the well-being of people who are not faring well under current systems in the United States. Some of us have done this work for many years with a great deal of consciousness about the role of privilege and racism in it, and some of us did our work for many years mostly oblivious to the ways in which we have been, and continue to, collude in maintaining systems of privilege and racism. An analysis of community building through the lens of white privilege and racism suggests many places where we might do our work differently, with different assumptions, behaviors, understandings, actions, roles and relationships. It also questions the most basic premises of this work and our roles in it. We assume that the readers of this monograph, like us, are interested in questioning these premises—to more clearly see privilege and racism—so that we can do our work better and so that the system of privilege and racism that has kept so many people from thriving can be eliminated.

Figure A: Monograph Premises

- White privilege and racism exist. Though race is a socially constructed idea, its consequences are real and the privileges it helps maintain are real.

- White privilege and racism are intertwined, but they are not the same thing. White privilege refers to the benefits that white people as a group have accumulated over time by being considered white and belonging to the group with the most power to enforce structures, laws, cultural norms, policies, etc., in their own self-interest. Racism refers to the various ways in which these things ensure that people not defined as white do not have these same benefits to the same degree, and are rewarded for remaining silent and punished for speaking and acting in opposition to white privilege.

- Strategies to maintain white privilege and create differential outcomes by racial classifications are built into the structures and institutions of many societies, including the United States (our focus). The policies and practices of structures and institutions that support white privilege are so embedded at this point that no one any longer has to decide to create inequity so long as we do not decide collectively to eliminate it.

- For purposes of this monograph, we are making a distinction between race and ethnicity. Both are socially constructed, but we believe their consequences, and a group's ability to control those consequences, are different:

    o Not everyone agrees.[7]

    o Most members of groups considered not white face the restrictions of being non-white whether or not they accept the designation.

- It is often difficult for white people to observe institutional or cultural racism, and our own white privilege. The norms, cultures, policies and practices that support white privilege feel natural to us. A common expression is, "Fish can't see the water they swim in."

- Foundations are institutions. Like legal, educational, capital granting, faith and other institutions, they reinforce privilege through controlling access to assets and opportunities and in other ways, and simultaneously are resources to reduce the consequences of accumulated disadvantage and interrupt privilege.[8]

- Individual privilege and racism are outgrowths of structural and institutional privilege and racism and at the same time the worldviews that help maintain it. They do this through the mechanisms of internalized superiority and oppression.

---

[7] Please see the PBS Web site, *Race, The Power of An Illusion:* "What is the difference between race and ethnicity?" (www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-experts-03-02.htm) for other ways of understanding this premise.

[8] To read more, see Paul Kivel, *You Call This Democracy?* (New York: The Apex Press, 2004).

Chapter Two

Hurricane Katrina: Spotlight on Racism and White Privilege

Maggie Potapchuk and Sally Leiderman

During the writing of this monograph, one of the biggest natural disasters in recorded history struck the United States: *Hurricane Katrina.* The physical, economic and spiritual devastation will leave a large wound in our country for a long time. Pictures of people suffering were shocking not only to Americans but to people all around the world. News media seemed to focus on pictures of African Americans, though we know that there were many people with losses— including white people, thousands of Vietnamese, Mexican, Honduran, and Salvadoran immigrants living and working in the Gulf States[1] and several thousands of Native Americans from at least six federally recognized tribes.[2] Many of us had visceral reactions similar to those we had to news footage of police dogs and fire hoses assaulting African Americans and others during the civil rights movement. And for that moment in the autumn of 2005, race and racism were highly visible.

In the extensive coverage of Hurricane Katrina, we noticed that many of the most desperate survivors are people of color. Hearing their stories, we learned of the impact of generations of housing, transportation, employment and other policies that had apparently failed these U.S. residents. We saw a nation that was astonished at the conditions of people in New Orleans before the flooding and high winds. Some of these conditions were revealed in news reports about why people could not leave when they were ordered to do so.

People who have been involved in community building work in New Orleans (including one of the authors of this monograph) have been screaming about the conditions of poor people and people of color in that city for years! We as a nation have not heard, or have chosen not to respond. After all, as a nation, we did not pay attention when people had to live in substandard public housing in New Orleans. We ignored the quality of the schools that did not serve them sufficiently. Transportation, housing and economic policies limited their mobility and thus, their job options.

In fact, we cared so little about these residents that we did not build levees strong enough to withstand completely predictable weather and its consequences. The hurricane protection project, which included repairing the

---

[1] "There are approximately 30,000 Vietnamese who call Louisiana home . . . there were 40,000 Mexican citizens in Louisiana, mostly in New Orleans. There are also approximately 150,000 Hondurans and 9,600 Salvadorans in the larger region." Advancement Project,. "Estranged in a Strange Land." (Community Justice Resource Center Newsletter, Volume 13).

[2] C. Stone Brown, "Katrina's Forgotten Victims: Native American Tribes," (from the Web site, http://news.pacificnews.org, accessed September, 2005).

sinking levees, only received one sixth of what local officials needed.[3] Even though the predicted consequences of a category 4 or 5 hurricane were shared in reports, case studies and requests for funding, the federal government did not respond to the needs. And some still blamed the victims who had not heeded the evacuation orders, without understanding that the system was already in place for their suffering to occur. Through ignorance, indifference, media silence and the systems that promote these conditions, most of America did not know or chose not to acknowledge the impact of our resource allocation decisions.

Why were we so astonished at what Hurricane Katrina revealed about the impact of at least 50 years of public policies that we Americans have created and maintained? White privilege. White privilege is the power to feel bad but not be accountable for the policies in place. It is the power to believe that this is about individual choices, and not a system of advantaging one group over others. It is the ability to blame the group suffering from persistently poor outcomes for creating those outcomes, by ignoring the systemic ways in which some groups are oppressed and some are not. It is the Rip Van Winkle effect: the way we can go back to sleep as a nation for 45 years, as we did after watching dogs and hoses turned on Americans in the 1950's and 1960's, wake up in 2005, and be shocked all over again.

To understand the elusive and sometimes invisible concepts of white privilege and racism, and how they are manifested in the United States, we only need to look closely at the Katrina disaster and its aftermath:

Who benefits from the policy decisions being made, and who suffers?

- The Bush administration initially suspended the Davis-Bacon Act, "which requires that contractors pay workers the prevailing wage of the region, to all federal contracts in the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina."[4] At a time when the reported unemployment rate in the area is 25%[5], the policy suspension will impact families trying to recover lost wages and will also provoke tensions between workers to compete for a small piece of the economic pie. The winners in this arrangement are the large white-owned corporations (Bechtel, Halliburton, and Fluor) who received "no bid, cost overrun" contracts.[6] One evening news program shared a story of Black and Brown tensions describing how Latinos/as are getting the construction jobs that some believed should be going to the majority of African Americans who live in New Orleans. There was no interview with the white-owned

> White privilege is the power to feel bad but not be accountable for the policies in place. It is the power to believe that this is about individual choices, and not a system of advantaging one group over others.

---

[3] Paul Craig Roberts, "How New Orleans was lost," (from the Web site, www.antiwar.com, accessed September, 2005).

[4] Leadership Conference for Civil Rights, Press Release, "Groups Call for the Investigation of Relief's Efforts' Failure to Comply with Civil Rights Protections," (from the Web site, www.civilrights.org, October 25, 2005).

[5] Eric Mann, *Letter in Support of the Movement in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast: Notes on Strategy and Tactics*, (Los Angeles: Frontline Press, 2005), p. 34.

[6] Eric Mann, *Letter in Support of the Movement in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast: Notes on Strategy and Tactics*, p. 32.

corporations that created this competition. After a significant lobbying effort, President Bush agreed to reinstate the policy two months after its suspension, though it will not be retroactive.

- FEMA denied state officials' requests for funding to send displaced residents absentee ballots for the New Orleans February mayoral elections. They also denied local authorities' requests to share data of current addresses of evacuees.[7]

Who gets to frame, define, and name?

- The now well-known Yahoo News pictures and their captions (two different newswire services provided the pictures) made a distinction between Black and white people holding food: Blacks holding the food were "looters," but whites were just "carrying" the food.[8]

- New Orleans' homicide rate has climbed to 10 times the national average.[9] The mainstream news organizations jumped on those statistics and the stereotypes associated with crime and people of color to report uncorroborated stories of looting, rapes, murders, etc. And with these false stories, the media continued to show picture after picture of mostly Black men. There is research that shows that the inflated "crime wave" reported was false,[10] though the mainstream media have not actively reported this information.

- Many have said the fear of violence is what slowed efforts to bring aid to the neediest parts of the city.[11] If this is so, then people's lives were endangered not by the violence of people of color but by the stereotyping of African Americans by people in power (often whites).

- Major media outlets (CNN, USA Today, Fox News) described in various ways the devastation of Hurricane Katrina as similar to that found in the "third world." These specific conditions were viewed as somewhat unique in the United States. However, according to the Brookings Institution, "Despite improvements in the 1990's, nearly every major American city still contains a significant collection of extremely poor, racially segregated neighborhoods. In cities as diverse as Cleveland, New York, Atlanta, and Los Angeles, more than 30% of poor Blacks live in areas of severe social and economic distress."[12] On Native American lands, 14.7% of the homes are defined as

"According to the poll, six in 10 Blacks say that the government responded slowly because the majority of the victims were poor and black, while nearly nine in 10 whites say race and class were not a factor." These differences of perspective will affect the solutions chosen to address the systemic issues highlighted by the disaster.

---

[7] Mike Davis, "Gentrifying Diversity," AlterNet, (from the Web site, www.alternet.org/katrina/27391/, accessed October, 2005).

[8] Jonathan Alter, "The Other America." (*Newsweek Magazine*, September 19, 2005).

[9] "Cities and Crime: New Orleans homicide up as people fear killers, cops," (*Detroit Free Press*, Associated Press, August 22, 2005).

[10] "N.O. Murder Rate Falls Victim to Storm," (*The Times-Picayune*, October 22, 2005).

[11] "Katrina's Aftermath," (*Los Angeles Times*, September 3, 2005).

[12] Alan Berube and Bruce Katz, *Katrina's Window: Confronting Concentrated Poverty Across America*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, 2005), p. 1.

over-crowded, 11.7% lack complete plumbing facilities, and unemployment on or near Indian reservations commonly exceeds 50% and in some areas jumps to over 90%.[13]

- A recent USA Today/CNN Gallop Poll showcased people's different worldviews. "According to the poll, six in 10 Blacks say that the government responded slowly because the majority of the victims were poor and black, while nearly nine in 10 whites say race and class were not a factor."[14] These differences of perspective will affect the solutions chosen to address the systemic issues highlighted by the disaster.

Who gets to decide who is included?

James Loewen is the author of *Sundown Towns,* which provides a detailed exposé of predominately white communities and how they exclude African Americans, Chinese Americans, Native Americans, Mexican Americans and Jews—some permanently and others after sundown.[15] Most whites rationalize the existence of these towns and suburbs as only having to do with market value, lack of jobs, or just wanting to live with those with a similar culture and values and not about covert and overt exclusionary practices. Loewen says the catalysts of these communities were labor strife, perceived criminality, violence, fear, economic pressures, etc. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, we are seeing the beginning of this process (and some would say a continuation of a process[16]) and the use of similar catalysts to exclude people of color in the rebuilding of New Orleans:

> Most whites rationalize the existence of these towns and suburbs as only having to do with market value, lack of jobs, or just wanting to live with those with a similar culture and values and not about covert and overt exclusionary practices.

- Alfonso R. Jackson, secretary of housing and urban development, during a visit with hurricane victims in Houston, said New Orleans would not reach its pre-Katrina population of 500,000 people "for a long time," and "it's not going to be as black as it was for a long time, if ever again."[17]

- Though there have been many discussions about new housing, it is estimated that about 70,000 of New Orleans' displaced can move back to the city. The lower Garden District of New Orleans (89% white) and the French Quarter (90% white), which are two of the driest neighborhoods, have vacancy rates of 17.4% and 37%, respectively, according to the 2000 Census (though some

---

[13] "Time to Reduce Poverty Among Native Americans," *Native Discussion*, (from the Web site, www.native-american-online.org/_disc8/0000000f.htm, accessed, October, 2005).

[14] Judge Greg Mathis, "Until White America 'Gets It,' Racial and Class Divisions will Continue," (from the Web site, www.BlackAmericaWeb.com, accessed September, 2005).

[15] "A sundown town is any organized jurisdiction that for decades kept African Americans or other groups from living in it and was thus 'all white' on purpose." "… many towns passed ordinances to prohibit African Americans from being within the corporate limits of the town after sundown or forbade selling or renting property to them." James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*, (New York: The New Press, 2005), p. 4 and 99.

[16] "The most visible divide between blacks and whites in New Orleans, however, concerned the neighborhoods in which they lived. Between 1980 and 2000, segregation between blacks and whites in the city grew, bucking the national trend. By 2000, the average African American resident of New Orleans lived in a neighborhood where 82 percent of fellow residents were black." Alan Berube and Bruce Katz, *Katrina's Window: Confronting Concentrated Poverty Across America,* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, 2005), p. 3.

[17] "HUD chief foresees a 'whiter' Big Easy," (*The Washington Times*, September 30, 2005).

of these may be second homes, which are sometimes counted as vacant in Census data). Along with other dry neighborhoods, some of these vacant apartments and homes can be converted to affordable housing for evacuees. So far no effort has been made to do this.[18]

- Residents are requesting that mobile trailers be placed back in their neighborhoods so they can begin rebuilding their homes and the community. "Now, with most of the residents of those areas scattered across the country, fear is rising that the government and corporate interests will take advantage of their absence to gain an upper hand. Meanwhile, the limbo status of evacuation feeds the demand for a solution that puts people back in their own neighborhoods as quickly as possible."[19]

- The Department of Homeland Security has pledged, "to arrest and deport any undocumented immigrants 'caught' seeking food stamps, emergency rations, or evacuation from the city."[20] Also, seven naturalization ceremonies scheduled for September 2005 in New Orleans were cancelled and they "won't be scheduling any more there any time soon."[21]

There is so much at stake, and this is magnified as the Gulf Coast residents struggle courageously to rebuild their region.

Written November 15, 2005

---

[18] Naomi Klein, "Now the Real Looting Begins," (*The Nation*, October 10, 2005), p. 16.

[19] "New Orleans Neighborhoods Demands Trailers to Help Rebuild," (from the Web site, http://newstandardnews.net/content/?action=show_item&itemid=2611, accessed November, 2005).

[20] Eric Mann, *Letter in Support of the Movement in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast: Notes on Strategy and Tactics*, p. 37.

[21] "Illegals Hit by Katrina Worry," (from the Web site, www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/09/10/katrina/printable832574.shtml, accessed October, 2005).

Section 2

KEY CONCEPTS

Chapter Three

What is Community Building?

Sally Leiderman

The goal of this chapter is to describe community building work using categories and terms that are prevalent among community building advocates, funders, technical assistance providers and others who are part of the community building 'field.' We hope to share the language of the field, for those unfamiliar with the terminology. We also hope to provide a description of community building work organized in such a way that it becomes easier for people within it to see the places in which white privilege might play a role. A more in-depth analysis of the ways white privilege plays out in community building work and ideas of what could be done differently are covered in the remainder of this monograph.

Community Building as a Set of Power Relationships

These days, the terms "comprehensive community building" and "place-based strategies" refer to approaches to improve the well-being of people in a particular community or other geographically defined area. The terms are also used within the housing and community development field to describe work on the non-physical aspects of community development (education, child care, family supports), as compared to the physical aspects of redevelopment (such as building affordable housing). Further, the term is used by governments at the international level to describe the work of helping a community move toward a particular political ideology, as in "nation building" at the community level.

The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives offers a definition of comprehensive community initiatives that captures what we mean by community building, for purposes of this monograph:

> "Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) are neighborhood-based efforts that seek improved outcomes for individuals and families as well as improvements in neighborhood conditions by working comprehensively across social, economic and physical sectors. Additionally, CCIs operate on the principle that community building—that is, strengthening institutional capacity at the neighborhood (or community or reservation) level, enhancing social capital and personal networks, and developing leadership—is a necessary aspect of the process of transforming distressed neighborhoods."[1]

We are particularly focused on the type of community building that involves a relationship between a foundation or other funding source (or several funding sources) and organizations and residents of a particular place (a community, reservation, neighborhood or similar area). The organizations that become involved may be located within that place or they may be located elsewhere. Some of the local organizations will be run by community residents or developed under their leadership (such as a tribal government, residents' association or

---

[1] For more information, see *www.aspeninstituteroundtable.org.*

locally led organizing effort) but many will not. For these other organizations (local colleges or universities, local service providers, local philanthropies) several variables will define their relationship with the community and its residents, such as:

- The extent to which community residents have authority within the organizations (as Board members, management, etc.);

- The extent to which community residents are viewed as clients or beneficiaries of services, or as resources to the organization;

- Whether or not the organizations employ residents from the immediately surrounding areas;

- The extent to which community residents are welcomed onto the property of the organization and under what conditions; and

- The history of the relationship between the organization and the community (for example, historical town/gown relationships).

All of these factors, and more, influence the levels of trust between organizations situated within a community, reservation or neighborhood and the ways in which they will tend to work together.[2]

In addition, community building often involves people and organizations from outside the community coming into the place to do work or support the work of community residents. Sometimes these people are invited into the community by the community, but many times they are not. Many of the factors above also apply to these relationships, and there are many others. For example, there is always an issue about how long an organization from outside a community will continue its work within that community since it does not have the incentive of being physically tied there (through property ownership or other "bricks and mortar" links).

> Community building always involves a set of power relationships. These relationships play out in terms of resource and governance decisions, decisions about strategy and tactics, opportunities for leadership, criteria and standards for judging progress and success, and in many other ways.

Thus, community building always involves a set of power relationships. These relationships play out in terms of resource and governance decisions, decisions about strategy and tactics, opportunities for leadership, criteria and standards for judging progress and success, and in many other ways.

Evolution of Current Community Building Frameworks

Community building as an idea is not new, of course. The idea of trying to make things better in a place, and the pulling together of resources inside and outside of that place, is as old as charity and self-determination. The most recent incarnation, with which this monograph is concerned, was developed to respond to several perceived weaknesses of past efforts to improve things for children, families and communities.

---

2 Sally Leiderman, Andrew Furco, Jennifer Zapf and Megan Goss, *Building Partnerships with College Campuses: Community Perspectives.* (Conshohocken, PA: Center for Assessment and Policy Development, 2003).

One issue has been comprehensiveness. Efforts to improve outcomes in one area often require efforts to improve outcomes in other areas. For example, improving the well-being of families in a given neighborhood may require attention to issues of economic stability, public safety, health and education. Residents of a neighborhood often do not think about these issues as separate, in part because they are so highly linked in their own experiences.

To work on these types of issues, over time, community builders have come to feel that effective community change efforts need to:

- Work at multiple levels (neighborhood or community, regional, statewide and, in some cases, at the federal level);

- Involve multiple targets for change (civic engagement processes, decision making structures and processes, individual and collective action of residents); and

- Engage multiple people and groups, sometimes with attention to inclusion of different perspectives and interests and the diversity of identity groups.

In addition, the experience of earlier efforts suggests that community building will require a lot of time and resources to make a difference, particularly if it must also be comprehensive with respect to goals, targets for change, strategies and players. Many would say we haven't been particularly successful at achieving the outcomes in previous efforts at any large scale. All of these experiences have led many people to want to concentrate our efforts on a few places, over longer periods of time.

What are typical goals?

As noted above, we are most concerned in this monograph with community building and place-based efforts that take the form of community and foundation partnerships. The goals for these efforts typically build from a broad vision concerned with improving the lives of residents of a particular place. Within that, there are often much more explicit outcomes to which the initiative, the community or (less frequently) the funder holds itself accountable. Examples might be better health outcomes, improved public safety, increased family economic security, improved school readiness, improved access to capital or the like. Sometimes, these goals are set for particular subgroups within a community. For example, some community building work focuses on supporting immigrant and refugee families, some on families with incomes below a fixed level (such as the state poverty line) or people from a particular racial or ethnic group (e.g., urban Native Americans).

Often, one set of goals is established by the funding partner (which may apply to many communities who are part of the same initiative) and additional goals are established for a particular community. Community residents may be involved in setting these goals or they may not. Community building goals often include a stated or implied timetable that indicates things will be demonstrably better over a certain time period. They also often include some goals related to strengthening

the capacity of the community to continue to improve the well-being of residents after the conclusion of the particular community/foundation community building effort.

These types of goals take many forms and are couched in different ways, including:

- Building the capacity of local organizations or institutions to support community building into the future;

- Building the leadership capacity of community residents; and/or

- Building the sustainability of community building efforts (either as structures or in terms of functions being "institutionalized").

What are typical assumptions about how change can happen?

Most community building or place-based efforts are based on a set of ideas about how the world works and what it takes to change things for people in a community or to change the place itself. In the last few years, this set of ideas has often been described as a "theory of change."[3] Articulated theories of change were developed as tools to help people doing comprehensive community building to describe the assumptions behind their work: what they want to accomplish, the strategies they think will work and the outcomes they expect to see as a result of those strategies. The tool was developed to help evaluators understand these assumptions and links, so they could more clearly figure out what people thought success might be in order to measure it.[4]

Below are two examples of theories of change that would be typical of many comprehensive community building and place-based efforts.

A School Readiness Theory of Change

What are the overall assumptions about how change happens?
The school success of children 0-8 can be improved by increasing the role of parents in making decisions about the institutions that affect their children and supporting their development as parent leaders. This change also involves the engagement of other community residents and stakeholders in caring about and knowing what it takes to improve the school success of children. Also key is

> Most community building or place-based efforts are based on a set of ideas about how the world works and what it takes to change things for people in a community or to change the place itself. In the last few years, this set of ideas has often been described as a "theory of change."

---

[3] Ilana Shapiro, *Mapping Theories of Practice and Change: A Comparative Analysis of Interventions and Programs Addressing Racial and Ethnic Tension in U.S. Communities.* (Doctoral Dissertation, Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, 2002).

[4] Theory of change work has been very useful for helping people spell out their assumptions and showing them where their assumptions converge and diverge. However, the kinds of assumptions that are spelled out depend entirely on the set of ideas available to the group doing the articulation. Groups with homogeneous worldviews thus don't get pushed to challenge their assumptions as much as ones with diverse perspectives, and this sometimes limits the "eye-opening" value of creating a theory of change.

collaboration among the various groups involved, such as parents and school systems, or health care providers and early childhood care providers.

What are the assumptions about the role that a foundation can and should play to help this come about?

The role of the foundation is to invite communities to decide whether or not they want to participate in this effort, to offer some specific rules of engagement and to partner with communities that express a willingness and capacity to accept the terms offered (with negotiation possible). Further, the role of the foundation is to provide funding, technical assistance, visibility and clout to this effort.

What are the assumptions about the role the community can and should play to help this come about?

The role of the communities is to figure out what will work in their location to accomplish the goal, to plan and implement strategies, and to build their capacity to promote changes in practices and policies that influence whether or not children succeed in school.

A Community Anti-Racism Theory of Change

What are the overall assumptions about why change is needed and how change happens?

With support from outside, multi-racial and multi-sector groups of people can identify racism and its consequences in their community, including institutional racism within specific institutions. They also can implement strategies to reduce policies and practices of institutions that consistently create different (and worse) outcomes for people of color than for white people of similar characteristics and resources.

What are the assumptions about the role that a foundation can and should play to help this come about?

A foundation can identify places that are ready to tackle these issues openly, and provide supports, clout, encouragement and incentives for those kinds of changes to take place over time. The role of the foundation is to set benchmarks and goals, help the group identify and take advantage of technical assistance, provide funding, and brainstorm with the group in the community about what to do.

What are the assumptions about the role that a community can and should play to help this come about?

A group with the right set of skills, willingness and ability to take risks, technical assistance and resources can identify particular targets for change and can implement strategies that will reduce institutional racism. The role of the community group is to develop or strengthen their skills at understanding and addressing these issues in multi-racial groups, engage partners and identify and implement strategies.

What are typical interventions (stages, processes and strategies)?
From the perspective of funders, community building and place-based efforts typically include the following stages: planning and design (before communities are involved), community selection and engagement, planning within the communities (once they are "on board"), implementation and, often, a winding down, sustainability or close-out phase. At the design phase, funders will often support processes or strategies to gather information about places. They will conduct a process to identify communities that are considered 'ready' to participate in the foundation/community partnership or whose needs and strengths are a good fit with the foundation's strengths, interests and resources. Funders will then often support visioning or planning processes once communities have been chosen to participate, and will help a community develop an inventory of its assets and needs. Figure A (page 28) lists some typical design and planning activities of community building and place-based efforts.

> Most community building efforts in the United States focus on changing the ways people access existing services and support taking advantage of existing power relationships. This method stands in stark contrast to support for wholesale change to the power relationships or the systems themselves.

Comprehensive community building efforts also employ a range of change strategies (often referred to as "interventions"). They include strategies involving strengthening or building the capacity of organizations and individuals to promote certain kinds of community change. These strategies sometimes talk about 'natural helpers' or 'indigenous leaders' and fall into the general category of building social capital. Social capital is a term meant to describe the human resources of a community: individuals whom others trust, individuals who create a sense of community or are at the center of informal or formal networks of support, and the public and private institutions that are charged with providing particular services.

Other typical strategies or interventions involve changing how decisions are made in a community, how system resources are allocated or made available to community residents and how opportunities are made available to community residents to access resources such as employment, wealth, education and transportation. Some strategies use processes to change systems, resources or decision-making from within, including system collaboration or coalitions of public, private and non-profit organizations. Some focus on changes from without, including organizing or civic engagement tactics. A few use both. Most community building efforts in the United States focus on changing the ways people access existing services and support taking advantage of existing power relationships. This method stands in stark contrast to support for wholesale change to the power relationships or the systems themselves. Figure B (page 29) illustrates some of the typical strategies or interventions used in community building efforts.

Relationships and Players

As should be clear from the discussion above, comprehensive kinds of community building and place-based strategies often involve many different groups and individuals, from a variety of sectors, in a wide variety of roles. Some of the key players in these efforts are community residents, staff and management of community organizations and institutions, technical assistance providers, data managers and evaluators, government officials and foundation Boards, management and staff.

Many of these players play multiple roles in a community building effort. For example, the same or different community residents may act as designers, planners, leaders, implementers, beneficiaries, sources of accountability and employees of a community building effort, all at the same time or at different times. Foundation staff members, particularly those of color, face similarly complex and sometimes contradictory roles. As Barbara Major describes in her chapter, staff of color who work in foundations are often rewarded for adopting the worldview of the institution even if it is at odds with their own personal experiences or analyses of privilege and racism. In addition, many foundation staff of color feel that it is part of their role to build relationships with other people of color in their community building work; that is, in essence, to lend their personal and racial credibility and legitimacy to the effort. This puts them in a difficult professional and personal role if commitments they make on behalf of the institution are not maintained by the institution.[5]

Critiques of Current Community Building Efforts

There are several criticisms of community building work, voiced by those whom the work is intended to benefit and its practitioners, as well as by observers. One critique is that the power distribution within these efforts is tilted very much toward the funders, so that the efforts model the same dynamics of privilege as the conditions they are trying to address. The most direct expression of that is a charge that community-based and place-based strategies collude to keep the status quo in place by not fundamentally addressing the power relationships (or, in terms described later, seeking to eliminate white privilege). Some efforts have made deliberate attempts to address this by shifting some decision-making or resource allocation power to the community; by having community residents and funders co-design the effort; or by a funder operating in a "servant leadership" role in which they take direction from the community partners in many aspects of the work.

> Staff of color who work in foundations are often rewarded for adopting the worldview of the institution even if it is at odds with their own personal experiences or analyses of privilege and racism.

However, the critique is that the incentive structures of the efforts still reflect current conditions of privilege. For example, many community building efforts include leadership development activities made available to community residents. One frequent observation is that people who emerge as community leaders from these efforts (that is, they are acknowledged as leaders by the decision-makers for the community building or place-based effort) are supported if they operate within the goals and strategies of the effort and are not supported if they move in other directions.

Another critique is that, until recently, most of these efforts did not pay explicit attention to race, or more particularly, to white privilege and structural or institutional racism. These major factors were overlooked in the distribution of power and resources, or as sources of oppression that influence community well-being and outcomes. So these efforts' analyses of what needs to change, and how it can be changed, could be limited or flawed. One way that plays out, it has been

---

[5] See for examples of how this plays out in campus/community partnerships: Sally Leiderman, Andrew Furco, Jennifer Zapf and Megan Goss, *Building Partnerships with College Campuses: Community Perspectives*. (Conshohocken, PA: Center for Assessment and Policy Development, 2003).

suggested, is that strategies for making change in some efforts focus on change from within, but do not also apply pressure from without (e.g., they focus on collaboration and system change, but not on community organizing actions).

A few community building efforts do explicitly name and address racism in their work, including institutional or structural racism (Project Change and El Centro de la Raza, for example). My conversations with many of the people involved in these efforts suggest they would offer the following self-critique:

Class issues come up among people working on community building; gender issues come up; power issues are there all the time. People involved generally need more support and skills to discuss these issues in cross-race settings.

- Naming race and racism does not necessarily lead to a focus on eliminating privilege, or on having an analysis of what needs to be done that incorporates a sense of institutional or structural racism. Deliberate efforts to name and address white privilege and structural racism are required. People have to understand how these mechanisms work before people's thinking about what to do changes.

- Even people very experienced with these issues have to keep working on deepening their understanding and figuring out how to apply that understanding to community building work.

- Lots of things get in the way of clear understanding. Class issues come up among people working on community building; gender issues come up; power issues are there all the time. People involved generally need more support and skills to discuss these issues in cross-race settings in ways that would lead to more cross-understanding and perhaps, different diagnoses of community conditions and strategies for change.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

We are fairly certain that the concepts of white privilege, racism, internalized racism and community building are not new to readers. At the same time, we hope that putting these concepts together in this section can stimulate some new clarity about where the privilege and racism reside in our work. The questions below helped us think about these things. You might want to spend some time reflecting on them to see what they suggest or help clarify for you. To help identify white privilege and racism in community building, we can ask ourselves and each other the following:

Who decides?

- Who decided the community (place) needs to be different?
- Who decided a community building or place-based effort would happen there?
- Who created the vision for this initiative?
- Did individuals or groups within the community invite people from outside the community to come into the community to work with them?
- Who decided whether or not that was a legitimate invitation?

How are the issues defined and addressed?

- Who sets the goals? Whose values do they reflect?
- Who decides what success is, and how it will be measured?
- What is the theory about why things aren't as good as they could be? For example, what are the assumptions about why some children aren't doing well in school; why a neighborhood experiences a lot of arson; why people don't earn a living wage?
- What kinds of interventions are considered legitimate? Who says so? What are the consequences for straying outside those boundaries?
- What strategies are built into the community building effort to take care of white people? To maintain the status quo?
- Who sets the timetable for things to change?
- Who establishes the consequences for meeting or not meeting the timetable or goals?
- Who decides how resources are allocated?
- Does the effort clearly focus on equity and eliminating white privilege, or is it more about giving some places or groups more access within current systems of privilege or reducing the consequences of white privilege for some groups or places at the expense of others?

Is the process inclusive?

- Who decides who is a leader?
- How transparent are the roles that people of color are expected to play in the effort?
- How transparent are the roles that white people are expected to play in the effort?
- What is built into the effort to encourage effective alliances across racial groups?
- What is built into the effort to encourage people to work on their own issues of internalized superiority and internalized inferiority?

Figure A: Typical Design and Planning Processes

Design

- Research or information-gathering to identify a problem to be addressed, understand how it has been addressed in the past, learn about best practices for addressing it and theories about what underlies the problem, and so on. This work is often done by foundation staff or consultants, who prepare a "white paper" or similar conceptual document giving people ideas about what to do and why.
- A process to develop a vision and the broad framework for an effort that will be implemented. This framework might consider what the foundation wants to accomplish, some of the strategies it thinks are important, how it will find community partners, and what its timeframe and investment level might be. A Board may have asked for this document, or it may be shared with them to see if this is something in which they have an interest and what their issues and level of commitment to the effort might be.
- Strategies to determine the criteria, by which places will be selected, invited and/or asked to compete to partner with the funder. Issues of a community's "readiness" to engage in the work envisioned by the funder, and to successfully show results within a given time, are often discussed at this stage.
- Evaluation planning and early design, including development of a set of outcomes against which the effort will be held accountable, though the consequences of that accountability aren't usually developed at this stage.

Community Selection and Engagement

- Research to identify a pool of communities that meet the demographic (often race and class) categories and other characteristics of most interest to the funder, such as: communities with a prior relationship with the funder, certain types of communities (e.g. rural, urban, border, older) or a special obligation because funds come from a corporation whose employees or customers live there.
- Reconnaissance to find out the "readiness" of the community to engage in the work and the potential fit between what people or organizations in the community are interested in doing and the resources and interests of the funder.
- A process to engage and select places, if they are being chosen from a pool, sometimes through a proposal process and sometimes through other means.
- Strategies to test out the sincerity of the community's interest, "readiness" and capacities: a site visit, a conference, etc.
- A process to identify who in the community will be the leaders of the work, including which groups or institutions will oversee the money (the fiscal agent). Sometimes a community makes this decision, sometimes the funder, and occasionally both.

Community-Level Planning

- Processes to engage community organizations and residents in the effort.
- Community visioning processes.
- Technical assistance to develop local frameworks, goals, outcome statements, budgets, theories of change, logic models and work plans.
- Community assets and needs assessments.
- Community data collection, analysis and sharing.
- Sometimes, power analyses.

Figure B: Typical Implementation Processes and Strategies

- Strategies to identify people within a community who already have formal or informal leadership roles, and strategies to build their capacities and skills related to the community building effort or in furtherance of their own goals. This is sometimes referred to as strengthening indigenous or emerging leaders.

- Collaboration: using collaborative values and creating a collaborative entity or table

- Attention to governance: processes to change how decisions are made within a community or within the community building effort.

- Strategies to change the ways current institutions and systems do their work, including:
  - Strategies to change front-line practice (e.g., how teachers teach or case management)
  - Service integration within and across different systems (education, health, early childhood, housing, criminal justice, etc.)

- Reallocation of funding, refinancing and redirecting public dollars.

- Strategies to link community residents with opportunities (jobs, wealth accumulation via IDA's, education and transportation to get to jobs).

- Policy advocacy and related work to change laws, regulations and policies so as to make changes more likely to be sustained over time (for example, support for participation in a community coalition to create demand for anti-predatory legislation).

- Strategies to connect isolated families with other people and to formal and informal supports.

- Strategies to improve the physical aspects of a community (e.g., housing or public spaces).

- Strategies to deliver technical assistance, sometimes as requested by community residents and organizations and sometimes required as a condition of participation in the effort.

- Communication and other strategies aimed at raising awareness of something of concern to the effort or changing the behaviors of a targeted group (e.g., policy-makers or parents).

- Data gathering, analyzing, sharing and interpreting strategies, such as participatory processes to develop community report cards or external evaluation and monitoring strategies.

- Sometimes, community organizing strategies.

- Often, workshops to help community groups begin a constructive discussion about racism.

- Sometimes, more extensive processes to help residents and community building partners develop common vocabulary, analyses and strategies to address institutional racism.

- Rarely, political education (e.g., to develop an understanding of the history of various groups in the United States with respect to oppression and collective strategies to address it.

- Almost never, processes to help residents and community building partners develop common vocabulary, analyses and strategies to address white privilege.

Chapter Four

What is Racism?

Sally Leiderman, Maggie Potapchuk and Barbara Major

Introduction

The costs and the debilitating reality of racism are substantial and pernicious. Readers of this monograph are probably very familiar with the ways in which the socio-economic conditions of people of color as a group—and for different groups within that broad category—are nearly always worse than for white people as a group. For example, Latinos have the lowest rates of high school graduation (between 70 and 75 percent)[1], African American youth are "overrepresented in 26 out of 29 arrest categories demarcated by the FBI,"[2] and American Indians have the lowest per capita income of any racial or ethnic group in the nation.[3]

In addition, according to researchers at Harvard University, each 1% increase in incidences of racial disrespect (defined as looking down upon, ignoring, underestimating and making assumptions about based on stereotypes) translates to an increase of 350 deaths per 100,000 African Americans.[4] Camara P. Jones, Research Director the Social Determinants of Health work at the Centers for Disease Control explains: "By the time you get into the 25-44-year-old group, you start to see changes … There's a kind of stress, like you're gunning your cardiovascular engine constantly if you're Black, that results from dealing with people who are underestimating you, limiting your options. It results from little things like going to a store and if there are two people at the counter—one Black and one white—the white person will be approached first. If you have stress from other sources, like a bad marriage, it's not something you think about constantly. But the stresses associated with racism are chronic and unrelenting."[5]

One way to understand racism is to consider the ways in which policies and practices of institutions help to create and maintain these differential outcomes and stresses. Another is to consider why we as a nation allow these kinds of differences to persist. A third is to consider who benefits from things as they are and what have been the consequences for groups and individuals who tried to change the racial status quo. The goal of this chapter is to help community builders deepen our ability to answer these questions.

> One way to understand racism is to consider the ways in which policies and practices of institutions help to create and maintain these differential outcomes and stresses. Another is to consider why we as a nation allow these kinds of differences to persist.

---

1 Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Draft Fact Sheet: Racial Disparities in High School Completion*. Unpublished document (Baltimore, MD: 2004).

2 Eleanor Hinton Hoytt, Vincent Schiraldi, Brenda V. Smith, Jason Ziedenberg. *Reducing Racial Disparities in Juvenile Detention*. (Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2004).

3 U.S. Census (2000).

4 Sid Kirchheimer, "Racism Is Harmful to Health "Antiracism" Initiatives Needed, But Slow to Be Recognized, Say Experts" (http://my.webmd.com/content/Article/58/66541.htm, accessed 2005).

5 Kirchheimer, (http://my.webmd.com/content/Article/58/66541.htm).

The chapter explores some of the history and current manifestations of racism in the United States. We hope it elaborates on the idea of racism as prejudice plus power, by talking about the ways racism was developed and continues to operate as a mechanism designed to "deny some people deserved opportunities simply because of their origin, or to accord other people certain undeserved opportunities only because of their origin."[6] This chapter was not explicitly written just for white people. At the same time, it was written from the assumption that people of color are already very familiar with racism in practice. Many white people are as well, though generally not in the same unrelenting way.

Although much of what is covered in this chapter will not be new, we hope that readers will be challenged by some of its concepts. For example, we find that many people are not aware that the whole idea of classifying people into racial groups was developed as a method to justify treating some groups as less human than others, and that the idea of races is more political than biological. Further, many people are not aware of the extent to which racism is embedded in seemingly neutral policies and practices of many of our most fundamental institutions. This chapter will explore these two concepts, and several others.

In looking at racism as prejudice plus power, many people understand how prejudice explicitly operates to benefit some groups and harm others. But adding the word "power" to the definition clarifies one of the ways by which racism reinforces white privilege and how institutions and individuals with privilege are able to maintain racial distinctions. In the United States, people who are allowed to call themselves white[7] have enforced their prejudices through laws, institutions, systems, standards of what is "normal" or "best" and in many other ways. For example, the Constitution of the United States, and laws based on its interpretation, originally defined who was human and who was not and who could own land and who could not. The Constitution and laws based on it then dictated who could use the bathroom in a hotel and who could not. This has continued through today, when the Constitution is being used as the framework against which decisions are being made about whether or not individuals and groups are entitled to redress for the accumulated effects of these past injustices. A group must have power in order to use racism to maintain its privileges. And, simultaneously, groups stay in power most effectively when their accumulated privileges allow them to dominate the institutions that control the distribution of power.

At a recent meeting, Omowalle Satterwaite, President of the National Community Development Institute, cited an analysis of white supremacy by Loretta Ross, Founder of the Center for Human Rights Education. He said,

> "…With a simple explanation, Loretta deepened my understanding of this pervasive phenomenon/problem in all of its insidious dimensions. Loretta

---

[6] Stanley M. Garn, quoted in Theodore W. Allen, *Summary of the Argument of The Invention of the White Race* by its author, Part One (London: Verso, 1997), p. 1.

[7] The phrase "people who are allowed to call themselves white" refers to the idea that racial categorizations are created by those with the power to do so, and are political, rather than biological ideas—often referred to as a "social construct." This idea is explored more thoroughly throughout the monograph.

drew a rectangle and wrote the word "white supremacy" in the center of the figure. In the upper left corner, she wrote the term "religious institutions; in the upper right corner, the term "political institutions"; in the lower right corner, the term "social institutions"; and in the lower left corner, the term "educational institutions." Loretta stated that religious institutions sanitize "white supremacy"…they provide a moral justification. The political institutions legalize "white supremacy"…they codify it into law. The social institutions operationalize "white supremacy"…they inculcate it into the social fabric of our society. The educational institutions proselytize "white supremacy"…they propagandize it from the cradle to the grave."[8]

We believe this analysis can be applied as directly to racism, as a mechanism for maintaining white privilege, as it can to white supremacy itself.

The Development of the Idea of Race

Racial identity is often positive. Race can be a political identity (as described by Guinier and Torres in the *Miner's Canary*[9]), a self-identity, a cultural identity and a source of great personal and group strength. For example, some exploratory research (not yet published) that one of this chapter's authors (Leiderman) is doing (with Patricia Harbour, of Healing the Heart of Diversity) suggests that people of color often refer to the stories of their ancestors for solutions to contemporary workplace and community challenges, whereas white people very seldom do so.

However, for many people, it comes as a surprise that racial categorization schemes were invented by scientists to support worldviews that viewed some groups of people as superior and some as inferior. There are three important concepts linked to this fact. The first is that race is a made-up social construct, and not an actual biological fact: "Scientific studies conclude that race has no biological meaning or significance. The gene for skin color is linked with no other human trait. The genes that count for intelligence, athletic ability, personality type, and even hair and eye color are independent of the gene for skin color."[10]

Second, race designations have changed over time. Some groups that are considered "white" in the United States today were considered "non-white" in previous eras. Karen Brodkin, in her book *How the Jews Became White*,[11] writes about how in the 19th century United States anti-working class and anti-immigrant notions were tied together, and both were deeply tied to shifts in the need for particular kinds of labor. Before that, Southern and Eastern Europeans and Jews were considered white by law and custom, in contrast to Asian American and Pacific Islanders, Mexicans, Native Americans and African Americans. In the late

---

[8] Presentation in Oakland, CA, May 5, 2005. Cited by permission of Omowalle Satterwaite.

[9] Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres. *The Miner's Canary*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

[10] Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, *Structural Racism and Community Building* (Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute, 2004), p. 8.

[11] Karen Brodkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

19th century, Europeans were re-classified and subdivided into inferior non-whites (who would be considered working class) and superior whites, starting with the racialization of the Irish. Brodkin argues that this occurred because people in power in the United States were threatened by a large influx of immigrants. (At that time, immigrants made up 70% of the population of the largest cities in the United States.) One result was that the United States closed immigration from Europe from 1924 through 1927.[12]

Third, the way in which racial categorizations are enforced (the shape of racism) has also changed over time. Keith Lawrence at The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, and an expert in structural racism, often talks about periods of retrenchment following major civil rights victories. Manning Marable, Director of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University, similarly talks about different waves of racism. Both of these scholars describe a path of racism for African Americans in the United States that includes slavery in the 1600's (legitimized in the U.S. Constitution), followed by emancipation, then imposition of Jim Crow laws and their increasing power, and then the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's. Racism in its current form includes a major increase in the removal of children of color from their homes via the child welfare system, and the increasing incarceration of children of color through mandatory minimum sentencing policies and other measures that disproportionately affect children and young adults of color.

The shape of racism has also been fluid for other groups. For example, Europeans who invaded the American land mass treated indigenous peoples as trading partners, sources of food and shelter. At the same time, these Europeans were murdering the indigenous peoples. Negotiated treaties between Native American sovereign nations and the United States were routinely violated by the federal government. United States policy in the 19th and early 20th centuries included taking Native American children from their families and moving them to foster homes and "Indian Schools" to promote their adoption of European languages and cultural norms. Current racism against Native Americans takes many forms, including the idea that the United States federal government has jurisdiction over whether or not to recognize the sovereignty of Native American tribes.

In another example, the racial designation of Asian American and Pacific Islander (i.e., white or not white) changed four times in the 19th century. Asian American and Pacific Islander have been used by whites at different times in history to

> The racial designation of Asian American and Pacific Islanders (i.e., white or not white) changed four times in the 19th century. Asian American and Pacific Islanders have been used by whites at different times in history to compete with African American labor.

---

[12] How have groups that have been allowed to be called white achieved that designation? Mechanisms vary for different groups. Before there were white and non-white designations, Christians (who controlled institutions in the United States) used designations of heathen and Christian. This particularly affected, and continues to affect, the "whiteness" of Jews and other non-Christian groups in the United States. The process of sorting immigrant and refugee groups into white and non-white status occurred by channeling groups into different jobs through various hiring and apprenticeship practices. The largest European immigration coincided with the Industrial Revolution and its class struggles and the de-skilling of many jobs. Dividing people into privileged and non-privileged racial categories is a useful system for keeping competition high and wages low. Many upwardly mobile jobs were closed to large groups based on their white or non-white classification. Brodkin also notes that "organized racial violence against African Americans" helped claims by Irish people of their whiteness, though they did not become white until those claims were recognized by the political and economic elites. Then and only then were the Irish incorporated into major cities' governing structure.

compete with African American labor.[13] From 1882-1965, "Asian immigration was either illegal or so sharply limited to be virtually nonexistent . . . In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, whites passed more than 600 separate pieces of anti-Asian legislation limiting or excluding persons of Asian ancestry from citizenship."[14] Though the median income of Asian American and Pacific Islanders is held up as evidence that the racial group is experiencing minimum economic discrimination, there are several reasons that this is false. For example, most Asian American and Pacific Islander immigrants entered the United States under restrictive laws that were skewed toward workers with higher-level skills. Yet, Asian American and Pacific Islander employees have lower status and less income than comparably educated Americans of every other race.[15]

Why is it so important to know that race is both a made-up idea and that racial designations and the shape of racism change over time? There are a number of reasons, some particularly key for people who do community building work:

- Knowing this provides very powerful evidence of the existence of white privilege in the form of one group having the power to impose a particular worldview on other groups—and evidence of how effective the system of white privilege has been at masking its mechanics.

- It means that community builders must look for explanations other than inherent characteristics once explicitly linked to biological "racial" differences—and now sometimes talked about more obliquely as racial "cultures"—to explain persistent and pervasive differences in outcomes among groups of color.[16]

- The patterns of progress and retrenchment in racism, and the fact that groups (except for African Americans) move in and out of "white" and "non-white" status often pit groups against each other in competition for the benefits of whiteness (access to jobs, college admissions, police protection, etc.). These kinds of "divide and conquer" strategies undermine the development of multi-racial efforts. Community builders need to be much more aware of these patterns, and active in anticipating and addressing them.

- What was done can be undone. That is, if race is a made-up classification, then we can unmake it. This is why it is entirely possible to believe that some day people will find it just as amazing that we once believed that race is a biological or inherent characteristic as that we once thought the world is flat.

> What was done can be undone. ... This is why it is entirely possible to believe that some day people will find it just as amazing that we once believed that race is a biological or inherent characteristic as that we once thought the world is flat.

---

[13] Paul Kivel, *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice* (Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Society Publishers, 2002), p.141.

[14] Kivel, *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*, p. 142.

[15] Andrew Chin,. A Brief History of the "Model Minority" Stereotype (http://www.modelminority.com/article72.html, accessed 2005).

[16] Though race is a social construct, the impact of assigning people to "race" categories has of course been very powerful. Accumulated white privilege affects the outcomes of every group, so that in almost every measure of community well-being (health, education, income, wealth accumulation, access to living wage employment, results of involvement with the criminal justice system) groups of color fare worse than whites observed as a group. This will be discussed in an upcoming chapter.

One of the ongoing discussions about the fluid shape of racism has to do with the different experiences of different cultural, political, immigrant and refugee groups described above. The debate is about many things, but it is partly about framing racism in terms of the experience of Africans and African Americans and whites. Our thought is that if racism is a mechanism to hold white privilege in place, then the black and white paradigm will always exist, for to have whiteness you must have an oppositional identity: blackness. In *The Miner's Canary*, Guinier and Torres describe this dynamic: "By offering this option of whiteness over time to selected non-black non-whites, the racial binary of black and white is preserved and race in the United States is made more manageable for those seeking to hold onto zero-sum power."[17]

However, we recognize that many other groups not currently allowed to be called white identify and think about racism differently. Guinier and Torres once again provide some context:

"Because Latinos are neither a uniform "race" nor a uniform ethnic group but still occupy a non-white political space in this country, they necessarily complicate the task of racial management for those in power. … While no Latin American country has escaped the use of racial categories to manage and discipline various populations, the techniques employed contrast sharply with those of the United States. Unlike the pressure to reduce race to either black or white, the dominant ideological response within Latin America has been to celebrate, to a lesser or greater extent depending on the country, the idea of mestizaje."[18] [19]

Our own sense is that privilege defines racism in terms of a continuum. Groups move along this continuum, being provided a "racial bribe" (again, a term used by Guinier and Torres). They note that this strategy has four goals: "To defuse the previously marginalized group's oppositional agenda; to offer incentives that discourage the group from affiliating with Black people, to secure high status for individual group members within existing hierarchies and to make the social position of 'whiteness' appear more racially or ethnically diverse."[20]

At the same time, Omi and Winant's discussion of the limitations of the black/white paradigm (as it is often called) highlights some of the advantages of making sure community builders bring a multi-racial lens, rather than solely a black-white one, to our work. They point out that policies such as affirmative action, immigration, welfare, bilingual education, and community economic development have different consequences for different racially defined minority groups.[21] Further, they note that policies and politics that are framed from a

---

[17] Guinier and Torres, *The Miner's Canary*, p.227.

[18] Mestizaje is a Spanish word that refers to mixed races, which are common in Latin America.

[19] Guinier and Torres. *The Miner's Canary*, p. 227-228.

[20] Guinier and Torres. *The Miner's Canary*, p. 225.

[21] This point is particularly relevant for community builders. For example, communities that work on intentional integration (e.g., Oak Park, Illinois and South Orange and Maplewood, New Jersey) often use enforcement of zoning laws as one of their community building strategies. These strategies often impact African American homeowners in these neighborhoods very differently from recent immigrants, many of whom are Asian American

black/white viewpoint miss possibilities of conflict or accommodation among different racial minority groups. Policies framed in this way also encourage racial scapegoating of particular minorities who are seen as somehow responsible for U.S. cultural and economic decline. For example, they point to "rising anti-immigrant sentiment directed particularly toward Asians and Latinos. … Bipolar racial discourse tends at best to marginalize and at worst to eliminate other positions and voices in the ongoing dialogue about race in U.S."[22]

Relationship of Racism and Class

One of the issues that comes up in community building is how to think about the powerful connection between race and class. Cultural racism, defined below, plays off of and reinforces stereotypes such that many people in the United States believe that most poor people are people of color, for example, or that every person of color is poor. Coalitions and organizing efforts often run into difficulties trying to separate racism from classism, and many people in this work find it more difficult to work across lines of class than across racial lines.[23] In addition, we find that a lot of research about 'promising practices' in community building work mixes issues of race and class. For example, we often do not know whether a practice is based on knowledge about Latino/a children, or Latino/a children who are also poor. Thus, there is a lack of precision on which we base a lot of our ideas about how to support better outcomes for children and families.

Further, as a political and organizing matter, Michael Omi and Howard Winant note that: "Historically speaking, the call for 'class' unity across racial lines has amounted in practice to an argument that non-whites give up their racially based demands in favor of "class" unity on white terms. This will not be achieved by appeals to "class unity" or by reliance on 'bargaining power theory,' which merely offer an abstraction to minorities confronted by racial inequities in the workplace."[24]

For these reasons, we believe it is critically important for community builders to be fully aware of both racism and classism and to develop analyses of the ways in which these forces interact to create disparate outcomes for groups of color and for poor people. Our work to understand both of these forces, and their relationships, is important to drilling down to strategies strong enough to make a difference. However, it is also at a level of complexity beyond the scope of this monograph.

As community builders, we need to work hard to identify and address our own class issues. We also need to avoid being drawn into protracted discussions about whether race or class is the more powerful force, as these discussions can

---

and Pacific Islander or Latino/a, who are renting and who are sharing space with more people than the zoning laws permit.

[22] Michael Omi and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s.* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 154.

[23] *On the Ground: Struggles from Project Change*, Mark Patrick George, et.al., (working draft).

[24] Omi and Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s.* p. 31.

distract us from the hard work of identifying institutional, structural and cultural racism and taking steps to eliminate them and their consequences. So, at this point, we share just the very brief insight offered by Theodore Allen in his summary of *The Invention of the White Race*. This insight was helpful to us in thinking about race and class, in terms of their relationship to racism in particular. Allen writes:

> *"Racial oppression, gender oppression, and national oppression, all present basic lines of social distinction other than economic ones. Though inherently contradictory to class distinctions, these forms of social oppression, nevertheless, under normal conditions, serve to reinforce the ascendancy of the ruling class. Students of political science, and "world changers," need to understand both the unique nature of each of these forms as well as the ways in which they differ, and the ways in which they interrelate with each other and with class oppression …* **the hallmark, the informing principle, of racial oppression in its colonial origins and as it has persisted in subsequent historical contexts, is the reduction of all members of the oppressed group to one undifferentiated social status, beneath that of any member of the oppressor group** *(emphasis by the author).*[25]

Structural, Institutional, Cultural and Individual Manifestations of Racism

If we are to address white privilege and racism comprehensively, we need to understand not just what racism looks like for different groups, but its various forms. This section focuses on three forms of structural racism: institutional, cultural and individual. While we discuss them separately, please remember that they are interdependent; one would not exist without the others. It is the relationship and behavior of these interdependent elements that has allowed racism to recreate itself generation after generation so that it is now self-perpetuating.

Structural racism includes the aspects of our history and culture that have allowed the privilege associated with 'whiteness' and the disadvantage of 'color' to endure and adapt over time. It points out the ways in which public policies and institutional practices contribute to inequitable racial outcomes. It lays out assumptions and stereotypes that are embedded in our culture that, in effect, legitimize racial disparities, and it illuminates the ways in which progress toward racial equity is undermined.[26] The Aspen Institute's newest publication, *Structural Racism and Community Building,* shares how we can use a structural racism lens in our work:

"The hallmark, the informing principle, of racial oppression in its colonial origins and as it has persisted in subsequent historical contexts, is the reduction of all members of the oppressed group to one undifferentiated social status, beneath that of any member of the oppressor group."

---

[25] Theodore W. Allen, *Summary of the Argument of the Invention of the White Race* (Part 1), (London: Verso, 1997). p. 2-3.

[26] Karen Fulbright-Anderson, Keith Lawrence, Stacey Sutton, Gretchen Susi, and Anne Kubisch. *Structural Racism and Youth Development Issues, Challenges, and Implications*, Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change Working Paper Series. (New York: The Aspen Institute, 2004).

"The structural racism lens allows us to see that, as a society, we more or less take for granted a context of white leadership, dominance, and privilege. This dominant consensus on race is the frame that shapes our attitudes and judgments about social issues. It has come about as a result of the way that historically accumulated white privilege, national values, and contemporary culture have interacted so as to preserve the gaps between white Americans and Americans of color."[27]

For example, we can see structural racism in the many institutional, cultural and structural factors that contribute to lower life expectancy for African American and Native American men, compared to white men. These include higher exposure to environmental toxins, dangerous jobs and unhealthy housing stock, higher exposure to and more lethal consequences for reacting to violence, stress and racism, lower rates of health care coverage, access and quality of care and systematic refusal by the nation to fix these things.

Institutional Racism

Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as non-white.

Examples:

- Government policies that explicitly restricted the ability of people to get loans to buy or improve their homes in neighborhoods with high concentrations of African Americans (also known as "red-lining").

- City sanitation department policies that concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards disproportionately in communities of color.

- The creation of Historically Black Colleges as a way to make sure that talented African American students would not attend other universities and colleges that were predominantly white. In that instance, the institutional racism created a venue for the development of several generations of black leaders. At the same time, the schools were set up in such a way that they are chronically under-funded, in part because they were not included in the systems by which federally funded research supported the development of other higher education institutions.

Cultural Racism

Cultural racism refers to the behaviors that reflect a worldview that overtly and covertly attributes value and normality to white people and whiteness, and devalues, stereotypes, and labels People of Color as "other," different, less than,

"For those of us in the community participating in community building efforts, our work often reflects chaos and confusion because white privilege requires us to create solutions for our community in the midst of opposing worldviews of the community and the foundations that partner with us. In this struggle we are the ones who are perceived as not knowing what we are doing."

---

[27] Keith Lawrence , Stacey Sutton, Anne Kubisch, Gretchen Susi, and Karen Fulbright-Anderson. *Structural Racism and Community Building*, Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change. (Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute, 2004), p. 12.

or render them invisible.[28] Many of the behaviors of institutions and individuals that we call "patronizing" are in fact forms of cultural racism. The culture of a people determines the culture, language, and value systems of the institutions they create. For example, much of the culture and language used in foundations replicates the culture, language and value system of the dominant culture of this society. Barbara Major (one of the authors of this chapter and a long-time community activist) points out that "for those of us in the community participating in community building efforts, our work often reflects chaos and confusion because white privilege requires us to create solutions for our community in the midst of opposing worldviews of the community and the foundations that partner with us. In this struggle we are the ones who are perceived as not knowing what we are doing."

Examples:
- Making English the official language of the United States, and defining some dialects as "standard" English;

- Considering standardized data collected from large numbers of people as more accurate, relevant or rigorous knowledge sources than stories;

- Seeing land as property to be owned and capitalized, rather than as a resource for collective responsibility or stewardship.

Individual Racism

Individual racism, as we use it, refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can be deliberate, or the individual may act to perpetuate or support racism without knowing that is what he or she is doing.[29]

Examples:
- Telling a racist joke, using a racial epithet, or believing in the inherent superiority of whites over other groups;

- Avoiding people of color whom you do not know personally, but not whites whom you do not know personally (e.g., white people crossing the street to avoid a group of Latino/a young people; locking their doors when they see African American families sitting on their doorsteps in a city neighborhood; or not hiring a person of color because "something doesn't feel right");

- Accepting things as they are (a form of collusion).

---

[28] Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 93.

[29] Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook,* p. 89.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What do you notice about how racism looks in the early 21st Century? How is it the same or different from the racism you grew up with?

2. What are some of your own biases or assumptions about groups other than your own? When someone acts in a way that is privileged or racist, how do you try to respond?

3. Recall a time in your work experience involving people of different races in which a negative outcome occurred. How did your behavior contribute to the situation? What assumptions did you bring to the situation? Examine your thought processes. How would you like to replay the situation to bring about a positive outcome?

4. Why does it matter whether or not "race" is a biological characteristic or a political one? How would you explain the difference to someone who is thinking about this idea for the first time?

5. Think about your community: What are the values, assumptions and standards used to decide what is good parenting? Good citizenship? Neighborliness? Use of public spaces? What is public money spent on? What public policies do people talk about and come out to vote on? What areas are segregated and what areas are integrated? How are these areas described?

6. Consider one institution with which you are very familiar. Was there anything in this chapter that suggested new examples of institutional racism in that arena? For example, thinking about public schools:

    *   How are resources allocated across schools? How are those resource allocations explained or justified? How do they impact the schools and the students, regardless of how they are justified or explained?

    *   How is the history of privilege and oppression in the United States taught in the schools? How is the staff prepared to teach about race, ethnicity and racism? Does the teaching allow students to know their own groups' histories from their own worldviews?

    *   What is the racial breakdown of students who are expelled or suspended? Who are in advanced placement classes? What are all of the alternative explanations that you can think of for why the proportions are as they are? Where might cultural or institutional racism be reflected in any of these explanations?

    *   What are examples of "race-neutral policies" that create different outcomes for different racially categorized groups of students? What would have to be different for every group of students to do better?[30]

The following are a couple of specific reflection questions primarily for white people about other racial identity communities, from *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice,* by Paul Kivel:

Native Americans

*   Are there schools, universities, or companies in your vicinity that use Native American names or figures as mascots, slogans, or product or team names?

*   Do textbooks in your local schools accurately and truthfully describe what white settlers and government troops did to Native Americans? Do any romanticize them? Do any speak of a generic Indian? Is the full story of Columbus's and the colonists' practices and policies told?[31]

---

[30] Adapted from the teachers' material of "From Racism to Pluralism, CIBC, 1975.

[31] Kivel, Paul, *Uprooting Racism: How White People can Work for Racial Justice*. Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Society Publishers, 2002. p. 128-129.

African Americans

- What are the contemporary national problems that are blamed predominantly on African Americans? What national policies are being discussed to blame and punish African Americans for these problems?

- What are the specific institutional practices that contribute to de facto segregation in your community (for example, red lining, real estate covenants, school district borders, suburban incorporation). Action step: Think about which one you are going to work with others to change.[32]

Asian American and Pacific Islanders

- What are some of the "positive" stereotypes that you hear about Asian American and Pacific Islanders? What complexities and problems do these stereotypes cover up? What can you learn about white self-images from these stereotypes?

- How has our relationship with particular Asian countries affected the immigration of Asians to the United States and their treatment once here?[33]

Latino/a Americans

- Which groups of Latino/a people provide labor or services on which you personally or the economy are dependent (e.g., farmworkers, low-wage manufacturing workers, or workers in factories near the Mexican border)?

- How has the history of U.S. involvement with Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and El Salvador influenced the status and position of the immigrant communities that arrived here from those countries?[34]

---

[32] Kivel. *Uprooting Racism*, p. 138-139.

[33] Kivel. *Uprooting Racism*, p. 146.

[34] Kivel. *Uprooting Racism*, p. 152.

Chapter Five

What Is Internalized Racism?

Donna K. Bivens

I was recently at a reception honoring a group of prominent African Americans, held at the home of a gracious and generous white woman philanthropist. Many guests arrived before the honorees, and those present included a handful of Black people among the 30 or 40 predominately white guests. The first people to greet me when I walked in were two other African American women I had met briefly over a year before. We struck up a conversation, reminiscing about the event where we'd met.

One of the women walked away for a moment and as she was walking back to our spot the hostess joined her and good-naturedly said to us, "Are all the Black women over here in a corner talking to each other?! Go out and meet people." The three of us froze. And then, very slowly and without speaking of it to each other, we dispersed.

I have no idea what the other women felt, but I was stunned. I was then flooded with feelings and questions. *Irritation.* Would she have made such a statement to a group of white women she neither knew well herself nor knew how they were related to each other? *Embarrassment.* Surely she did not intend to be anything more than a good hostess. Should I let her know that her interruption was offensive? *Confusion.* Was I over-reacting? Under-reacting? *Frustration.* Why did those with white privilege so often racialize trivial matters while avoiding or denying life-and-death, bread-and-butter issues of race and racism? *Shame.* How could I allow her unconscious intrusion to abruptly end my conversation with other Black women?

Though this encounter was pretty inconsequential, it proved to be an effective illustration of the relationship between racism, white privilege and internalized racism. When I shared it a few weeks later during an anti-racism and diversity workshop for a predominantly white group of student leaders at a prestigious college, it resonated deeply with the small group of students of color present. They shared that they often find themselves having to justify to white people on campus their choices to spend time with each other and their need to specifically address the structural racism they experience.

At the end of a simulation designed to raise everyone's awareness of white privilege, an astute African American student pointed out that white privilege is so pervasive that white people do not even notice that they end up together and in the same place: sharing power and privilege that structural racism denies people of color. On the other hand, he noted that people of color are too often left scattered and isolated—afraid, angry, drained or just too far away from each other to explore what we have in common and how best to collectively address the many ways white privilege (a consequence of structural racism) diminishes our lives and our communities.

In pointing out the system of torn relationships, he was essentially describing internalized racism. Just as racism results in the system of structural advantage called white privilege for white people and their communities, internalized racism results in the system of structural disadvantage called internalized racism for peoples and communities of color on inter- and intra-group levels.

Practically speaking, people of color cannot force white people to notice, acknowledge or dismantle racism and the white privilege that results from it. Nor can we continually monitor and check up on their progress. For one thing, a great deal of what happens to hold racism and white privilege in place goes on out of the purview of peoples of color. Ultimately, white people must come to their own understanding of why it is in their interests to dismantle a system that does not work for all humanity and commit to creating something better. The biggest contribution people of color can make to the dismantling of racism and the white privilege it results in is to notice, acknowledge and dismantle internalized racism—that is, to claim and bring forth our full humanity, power and wisdom as co-creators of an anti-racist society and culture. Thus, we will not fully dismantle white privilege until people of color address its counterpart: internalized racism.

To understand and address internalized racism, it is important to be aware of three major things:

1. As people of color are victimized by racism, we internalize it. That is, we develop ideas, beliefs, actions and behaviors that support or collude with racism. This internalized racism has its own systemic reality and its own negative consequences in the lives and communities of people of color. More than just a consequence of racism, then, internalized racism is a systemic oppression in reaction to racism that has a life of its own. In other words, just as there is a system in place that reinforces the power and expands the privilege of white people, there is a system in place that actively discourages and undermines the power of people and communities of color and mires us in our own oppression.

    Individuals, institutions and communities of color are often unconsciously and habitually rewarded for supporting white privilege and power and punished and excluded when we do not. This system of oppression often coerces us to let go of or compromise our own better judgment, thus diminishing everyone as the diversity of human experience and wisdom is excluded. Equally harmfully, the system can trap people and communities of color in an oppositional stance that can undermine creativity as situations are seen through a limited victim/perpetrator lens that cuts us off from the breadth of possibility.[1]

2. Because internalized racism is a systemic oppression, it must be distinguished from human wounds like self-hatred or "low self esteem," to which all people are vulnerable. It is important to understand it as systemic because that makes it clear that it is not a problem simply of individuals. It is structural.

> Just as racism results in the system of structural advantage called white privilege for white people and their communities, internalized racism results in the system of structural disadvantage called internalized racism for peoples and communities of color.

---

[1] For more information, see Barbara Holmes , *Race and the Cosmos: An Invitation to View the World Differently* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002).

Thus, even people of color who have "high self-esteem" must wrestle with the internalized racism that infects us, our loved ones, our institutions and our communities. Internalized racism must, then, be understood as a system to be grappled with by people and communities of color in the same way that even the most committed anti-racist white people must continue to grapple personally and in community with their own and other white people's privilege until our existing racist system is abolished and replaced.

3. Internalized racism negatively impacts people of color intra-culturally and cross-culturally. Because race is a social and political construct that comes out of particular histories of domination and exploitation between Peoples, people of colors' internalized racism often leads to great conflict among and between them as other concepts of power—such as ethnicity, culture, nationality and class—are collapsed in misunderstanding. Especially when race is confused with nationality and ethnicity, internalized racism often manifests in different cultural and ethnic groups being pitted against each other for the scarce resources that racism leaves for people who do not have white privilege. This can create a hierarchy based on closeness to the white norm. At the same time it cripples all of us in our attempt to create a society that works for all of us.

> With internalized racism, this limited sense of self can undermine people of color's belief in our full humanity and disrupt our understanding of our inner life.

Putting forward this definition of internalized racism that is systemic and structural is not intended to "blame the victim." It is meant to point out the unique work that people of color must do within ourselves and our communities to really address racism and white privilege. To live and be affected by racism on a daily basis does not guarantee understanding its systemic nature. This is also true of internalized racism. As experiences of race and structural racism become more confusing, complex and obscured, it is imperative that people of color explore and deepen our understanding of internalized racism. As more anti-racist white people become clearer about whiteness, white privilege and "doing the work" with white people, people of color are freed up to look beyond our physical and psychological trauma from racism. We can then focus on other challenges to our ability and need to create what we want for ourselves, our communities, our larger U.S. society, our world.

In trying to understand internalized racism and work toward its elimination, it is important not to confuse internalized racism with other realities that are frequently used to explain or describe "dysfunction" or inadequacy among people of color. It is crucial to understand that internalized racism is not simply:

- Low self-esteem

- Color prejudice or colorism

- Stereotyping

- Self-hatred

These may be and often are symptoms or results of internalized racism, but they are not the thing itself. Internalized racism is the situation that occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and

dominance of the dominant group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures and ideologies that undergird the dominating group's power and privilege and limits the oppressed group's own advantages. Like systemic racism, it manifests in at least four dimensions:

Inner

Internalized racism affects the inner lives of people of color. Because race is a social and political construct grounded in a history/experience of oppressor-oppressed relationships based on physical characteristics, by definition it offers people of color a very limited sense of self. With internalized racism, this limited sense of self can undermine people of color's belief in our full humanity and disrupt our understanding of our inner life. This manifests in a number of ways, but especially in:

- Having a sense of inferiority to other human beings;

- Being grounded in victimhood—that is, always seeing oneself as a victim and denying one's own power to transform a situation or failing to take responsibility for one's own roles as victimizer or colluder with oppression;

- Being overwhelmed and drained by the emotions we must navigate as a result of having this limited identity thrust upon us;

- Focusing on "reading" and trying to change white people, thus leaving less time, energy and resources for self-development.

One result of internalized racism on the inner dimension is that people of color in the foundation world often feel "damned if they do, damned if they don't," as they try to walk the tightrope between communities of color and the foundation world. It can also show up in a situation like the one I described at the beginning of this chapter, where people and communities of color are temporarily floored by the plethora of feelings we must navigate in our relentless encounter with racism and white privilege.

The inner dimension of internalized racism is investigated and addressed through methodologies that strengthen a sense of personal power and individual responsibility. Developing a clear sense of one's racial identity and learning to value one's ancestry—knowing one's real history and drawing on the strengths of one's culture—support growth in this dimension. Inner wounds from internalized racism can be healed through spiritual and psychological practices like prayer, ritual, meditation and emotional therapy. Because of its systemic nature, internalized racism cannot be addressed merely at the inner dimension, and so an individual must also develop a sense of purpose and commitment around addressing internalized racism on the other three dimensions.

Doing the inner work of being a human being is never easy. Dealing with the stigma of racism that questions and attacks one's full humanity makes it all the more difficult. For white people, not having to deal with this stigma translates as a white privilege.

Interpersonal

Growing out of the inner dimension of internalized racism is the interpersonal dimension. Continually facing racism and white privilege can negatively impact the ability of people of color to maintain healthy and fulfilling relationships with each other or with those who have white privilege. Internalized racism on this level is like being in relationship with someone who cannot see, but internalizing that you and those like you are invisible.

In relationships with those with white privilege, this can manifest in a number of ways, including uncontrolled and inappropriately expressed rage at white people for their unwillingness and/or inability to be aware of and take responsibility for their privilege. Conversely, it can also manifest as putting white people on a pedestal and relating to them as an inferior.

In relationships with other people of color, it can manifest in a myriad of ways, including projecting one's own sense of inferiority and inadequacy onto those of the same race. This results in distrust and a lack of confidence in our ability or acceptance and support of each other's leadership. Another example is an inability to engage conflict creatively—that is, in a way that leads to an expanded sense of self through connection to and interdependence with others. The complexity of community building initiatives demands exceptional conflict resolution and communication skills, as people of color from the foundation world and from the community attempt to work across huge differences of perception and of ways of dealing with (or ignoring!) conflict, learning and transformation.

Further, in interpersonal relationships, it is imperative that people of color practice caregiving with white people—and even other people of color—rather than caretaking. The healing professions make a distinction between the two by pointing out that with caretaking one takes over the care of a person who cannot or will not care for him or herself. With caregiving, on the other hand, the receiver of care remains fully responsible for his/her own process. Through honoring this distinction people of color, among ourselves and in relationships with white people, develop and maintain authentic alliances and equal relationships in our anti-racism work.

Some methodologies that address the interpersonal dimension of internalized racism include finding new ways to engage conflict and communicate across difference, such as Nonviolent Communication (when it is practiced with an understanding of systemic power) and transactional analysis as practiced by some anti-racism trainers. Indigenous cultures—whether Native American, African or Asian—offer tremendous resources for addressing this dimension through technologies for conflict resolution, consensus building and the sustaining of community that are too often overlooked by peoples of color even as white people embrace and appropriate them.

Institutional

A consequence of systemic racism is the fact that people of color do not benefit from, or share ownership and leadership in the institutions that shape our lives. Within this dimension of internalized racism, people of color often question or subvert our own power in white-controlled institutions in the following ways:

- *Decision-making:* Due to racism, people of color too often do not have the ultimate decision-making power over the decisions that control our lives and resources. As a result, we may assume white people know more about what needs to be done for us and for society than our own People do. We may also fail to support each other's authority and power—especially if it is challenges white privilege. Structurally, there is a system in place that rewards people of color who support white supremacy and power and coerces or punishes those who do not.

- *Resources:* Within racist systems, resources (broadly defined to include money, time, salaried work, information, connections, etc.) are unequally in the hands and under the control of white people. As a result of internalized racism, people of color may be stumped as to how to get access to resources for our own communities and confused about our right to control those resources. We may internalize the idea that serving and using resources for ourselves and our particular community is not serving "everybody." With internalized racism there is also often a self-imposed barrier that makes it difficult for us to respectfully access the resources of other peoples, particularly other peoples of color.

> Structurally, there is a system in place that rewards people of color who support white supremacy and power and coerces or punishes those who do not.

One well-meaning foundation, in a promotional pamphlet, praised a community of color for completing a major development project with volunteers and a two-person staff. In the same publication, the foundation told the story of a white activist who had come to the foundation with ideas on slips of scrap paper and had been supported to build a well-staffed nonprofit over a number of years. The "making do" that communities of color are often forced into, due to lack of resources and the lack of respect for and trust in our leadership, often leads to the continuing impoverishment of our communities. To reject internalized racism is to demand to be educated about the larger system and methods for success in it, while holding onto and sharing our own core values, wisdom and understandings. This is a difficult feat at best!

There are many steps to addressing internalized racism within the institutional dimension. First, awareness must be raised to help people be able to see systemic racism and explain its inner workings. Too often, people are not aware of how systems in place trump personal power and make people vulnerable to policies, practices and procedures that violate their deepest values. After this, what is needed are organizational and institutional efforts to create environments where racial disparities are acknowledged and addressed and where there is a lived commitment to creating shared ownership, leadership, and benefit across difference. This is long, hard work for any institution.

Cultural

Because it is based in dehumanizing relationships, systemic racism decimates cultures—clearly those of its victims, but ultimately also those of its perpetrators. This is because ultimately it violates any real culture's deepest values by supplanting it with a false culture created in oppressor-oppressed identities[2]. This goes to the very roots of our culture in the U.S. For example, in his book *The Anti-Social Contract,* political theorist Y.N. Kly writes of the subversion of this country's founding ideals:

> They [Locke, Rousseau, and Hobbes][3] brought the important news that by nature all men are free and equal and that they have rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of property. But the American colonists, having accepted these ideas while at the same time enslaving the Africans and dispossessing the Native Americans, found themselves in a dilemma wherein they wished to continue these ideas, to identify with key ideals, but at the same time to continue to profit from the anti-ideal, which the Lockean belief in self-interest led them to believe in equally. The result was the American 'trick': the surrender of morality and higher aspirations to self-interest… By ignoring the equal humanity of its minorities[sic], America began the long process of denying the reality of its history.[4]

Many of the crises we currently face as a nation, and much of our inability to imagine a future that is just and sustainable, are the results of this long-denied history so comfortable with deceit and self-deception. For people of color, this results in a painful struggle to align our culture with the ideals of U.S. culture, and yet avoid the minefields of a society founded on our oppression. Within this dimension, internalized racism is manifested in two primary ways:

- *Standards:* With internalized racism, the standards for what is appropriate or "normal," which people of color accept, are white people's standards: Eurocentric at best, U.S. popular consumer culture at worst. We have difficulty knowing, naming, communicating and living our own deepest standards and values, and holding ourselves and each other accountable to them. Too often, we grab onto standards set in reaction to the abuse of systemic racism.

- *Naming the problem and defining or framing reality:* There is a system in place that misnames the problem of racism as a problem of or caused by people of color and blames the disease—emotional, economic, political, etc. —on people of color. With internalized racism, people of color might, for example, believe they are more violent than white people and not consider

> Systemic racism decimates cultures—clearly those of its victims, but ultimately also those of its perpetrators. This is because ultimately it violates any real culture's deepest values by supplanting it with a false culture created in oppressor-oppressed identities.

---

[2] For more information, see James Baldwin, "On Being White and Other Lies" (*Essence Magazine*, April 1984).

[3] Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) were political philosophers whose theories combined to put forth the idea of a "social contract" between a government and its citizens that promotes and protects the common good.

[4] Y.N. Kly, *The Anti-Social Contract* (Atlanta: Clarity Press, 1997), p. 8.

state-sanctioned political violence or the hidden or privatized violence of rogue corporations and the systems white people put in place and support.

This dimension is addressed by clarifying the distinction between race, ethnicity and culture and by actively raising awareness about and deconstructing the false culture of race. It demands frank explorations of values and vision and a willingness to engage in healthy conflict to clarify them across difference. Transformation at this dimension requires a commitment to real culture change within communities, within our nation, and across the globe.

In addition to racism and internalized racism, people of color must also be aware of and address cross-racial hostility—a term coined by writer Gloria Anzaldua. Cross-racial hostility is created in a racist system when one oppressed racial group supports the oppression of another oppressed racial group by supporting, benefiting from, maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures and ideologies that undergird the dominating race's supremacy. At the same time that white privilege is white people's problem, cross-racial hostility is a problem peoples of color must address. It is not one that is resolved personally or interpersonally because it is bound up with the racist structures, institutions and ideologies that control people's lives. Peoples of color must work with each other to decenter whiteness in our relationships. We must learn to appreciate and learn from and about each other directly and not through a white medium.

Support for Each Other

The hardest, but most transformational, work for anti-racist white people and people of color is the work within ourselves and our own communities. In the foundation world (and elsewhere), white people who try to use their privilege to end racial disparities and people of color committed to addressing internalized racism must make the leap of faith required to trust and support each other to define the work for our own communities. We must do this even as we share both resources and the struggle for justice, equality and our humanity.

In homogeneous settings, white people can help each other to understand white privilege and to challenge each other to truly accept the leadership of and to equitably share benefit and ownership with people of color. People of color can create spaces to investigate and work toward dismantling oppressive structures—particularly internalized racism and cross-racial hostility—that limit us and we can challenge and support each other to take and develop leadership.

In heterogeneous settings, all must make sure that systemic racism, white privilege and internalized racism are understood and addressed. We can then work to build inclusive and intercultural cultures that refuse to accept racial disparity and that bravely expose the lies of race and racism.

People of color can create spaces to investigate and work toward dismantling oppressive structures— particularly internalized racism and cross-racial hostility—that limit us and we can challenge and support each other to take and develop leadership.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS[5]

1. How do you see internalized racism impacting you personally or the communities or groups that you work with?

2. What challenges are you facing in dealing with or addressing internalized racism in your current work? What are the opportunities for addressing it in your current work situation?

3. The concept of the "false culture of race" suggests that there is a more authentic culture available to us. What new cultural possibilities (if any) does this idea open up for you?

4. In what ways do people of color, as individuals and as a collective, perpetuate racism in your institution?

5. In what ways does internalized racism interfere with the functioning of teams?

6. How does your institution keep people of color divided and competing with one another for access and resources? How can people of color collectively resist these dynamics?

7. Think of a situation in which you (depending on your position) exercised or colluded with white privilege. What would need to change at the inner, interpersonal, or institutional level in order for this to have had a different outcome?

8. What does it mean for people of color to hold their institution accountable?

9. What relationship do people of color have as individuals and as a collective to people of color in communities of resistance?

10. When you consider the four levels on which internalized racism operates (inner, interpersonal, institutional and cultural) where do you imagine the most possibilities for change?

---

[5] Questions 4, 5, 6, and 8 and 9 were adapted from Crossroads Ministry, "Strategy for Building Anti-Racist Collectives" (www.crossroadsministry.org).

Chapter Six

What Is White Privilege?

Maggie Potapchuk

A Case Study

We swim in a sea of white privilege every day. As we were writing about it in this monograph, we too were not exempt from it. It is elusive, yet it surrounds us. It is invisible to those of us who have it and boldly apparent to those who do not. It is systemic, yet enacted at an individual level. When it does become visible, it can feel like taking a solid hit in the gut, the floor dropping away from your feet, and many other experiences that one feels when the enormity of the negative impact of our actions is dropped squarely in our laps.

We (Sally and Maggie) were originally contracted to produce a document for a national foundation to share information about white privilege in the context of community building work. There were several ideas about how this product might be developed, ranging from bringing together a multi-racial group of "experts" to producing an "introduction to white privilege" pamphlet. The deliverable evolved into this monograph focused on white privilege in foundation and community partnerships. We were not concerned at that point about two white women writing this monograph, because we had discussed having people of color contribute to it, we read a lot of literature written by people of color, and we knew several people of color whom we wanted to invite to be reviewers. We believed we were doing the proper research that would add what we needed beyond the perspective and experience we each had as white women dedicated to the elimination of racism. We gave ourselves permission to move forward with this approach and our permission was enough. We live in a system where we didn't have to be accountable to anyone other than each other.

During the data-gathering stage we surveyed and interviewed several white people and people of color, including staff from the national foundation, to augment our own ideas and hear stories from the field. At that point we also contracted with an African American consultant to interview the people of color, while we interviewed the whites. He and one of his interviewees asked why two white people were writing this monograph. There it was: the hit in the gut, even though we had been through discussions of what this product could be; even though we had been reading and discussing white privilege intensely leading up to the writing stage; even though we had been thinking about the involvement of people of color in this process; and now we were in the implementation stage. Once this question was raised, we began to think about our process and how white privilege shaped our conceptualization, design, and implementation of the project.

We were keenly aware that our delay in including people of color meant that they would not have the same level of resources or time to develop their ideas that we had, since the process was well underway and the budget was finite. Donna Bivens from the Women's Theological Center had written an excellent article on internalized racism, and we asked her if she would write a chapter on that same subject. Maggie had met her at a few gatherings and was impressed with the insight and wisdom she shared in each of those experiences. We also invited Barbara Major to share her perspective of being a community builder involved in foundation and community partnerships in New Orleans and other communities, as well as to be a contributor to the "What is Racism" chapter. We both knew Barbara from interactions at various meetings and always respected her crystal clear racial analysis, her frankness and depth of knowledge. We tried to be transparent with them about our concerns, the inequity of time and resources and our process thus far. Barbara and Donna reminded us that the process for developing the monograph reproduced the typical foundation and community partnership: with the white folks having more say, more

time, more resources and bringing on people of color only when the white people decided it was appropriate or necessary.

White privilege is systemic and plays out on many different levels. This is a profile of some of the dynamics of white privilege in this project. This type of analysis can be helpful when we work in communities.

Individual: Our assumptions of our knowledge and awareness on the subject and of our appropriateness as authors on this topic translated into actions or inaction. This resulted in us not having a diverse team at the beginning of the project. We also had to recognize how the opportunity to receive a grant, and our desire to receive a future grant, were unconscious and conscious undercurrents to our decision not to "rock the boat" with the foundation to ask for an extension. *Our responsibility is to question our perspective, discuss the situation with allies, and hold up the mirror to our process consistently – not just when it is convenient.*

Interpersonal: Though we had collegial relationships with Donna and Barbara, we did not take the time to develop our relationships, nor did we take the time to fully discuss our perspectives with each other. There was just enough time to write our chapters. This led to some misunderstandings about expectations, timelines and each other's perspectives. *Our responsibility was to negotiate a new timeline that would include time and resources to do the front-end work with all four writers – including building relationships, discussing our perspectives, and developing our group expectations.*

Cultural: One frequent comment from the reviewers was that the white authors' narrative was missing. We noticed our different comfort and awareness levels in sharing our stories. We (Sally and Maggie) struggled with how to add our own stories and have them be informative and real without being confessional statements that more reflected white guilt than white anti-racist development. *Our responsibility is for our personal stories to be "rigorous," to ask questions, and to discuss how to change our behavior and/or attitude.*

Institutional: This relates to the issue of the perceived and real power of the foundation that is in control of the resources. This is an expansive topic, which will be discussed more deeply in other chapters. We felt institutional pressure to deliver the product. How much of this was institutionally applied and how much was self-applied is a key question. Some of the pressure was created by our own personal concern about the consequences of not meeting the deadline. We believed consequences could include not receiving a future grant and not being considered in the consultant pool. Some of the pressure was based on our desire to support the current equity work within the foundation. If we held up the mirror to this process with the foundation, what would be the implications? What would be the consequences for asking for more time and more resources? We never asked the question directly; instead our actions were driven by our assumptions of the answers. *Our responsibility was to include all four authors in our conversations with foundation staff, to make decisions together on how time and resources would be allocated and to advocate for the integrity of the process.*

A key and critical focus of this monograph on white privilege is the importance of white people consistently holding up the mirror to our actions and decisions, to reveal privilege and the actions and results that ensue. It is through these processes that we can become more aware, and then can use that awareness to act differently. It is extremely important to remember that no one is exempt from this responsibility. White privilege operates systemically as well as on these other levels. Those of us who are committed to equity and justice are no exceptions. We learn and change and must continually remove institutional and learned layers of racism. We must strive consistently to expand our awareness of the reality of white privilege, be diligent in not repeating mistakes, and respond quickly to new ones.

– Maggie Potapchuk and Sally Leiderman

Definition of White Privilege

In the past 10 years, there has been a significant increase in the number of books, conferences and workshops that focus on white privilege, as well as university courses on white studies. We will highlight a few theorists and activists whose research and activism have deepened our understanding of white privilege. In this chapter we are going to focus on three areas:

- Understanding more about how we learned to be white;

- Learning about some of the accumulated advantages that have resulted in whites faring better than people of color; and finally

- Identifying costs of this system to white people and what can we do to change things.

Sometimes in this chapter, we specifically speak to people who identify as white. Readers may have different emotional responses to the definition and discussions of white privilege (sometimes referred to as white skin privilege). This is normal. Whites have benefited over the years from being silent, for ignoring racist acts, for remaining ignorant about the privilege we receive based on our racial identity. Joe Feagin and Eileen O'Brien, authors of *White Men on Race,* enlighten us on living in this cocoon:

> *"The white collective, and particularly the white power structure, currently rewards those who generally conform to its views and standards. There is little motivation or reward within the white collective for those who dare to speak out against discrimination or who seek to develop anti-racist agendas. Instead, the pressure of the collective is toward keeping quiet about racial animus and discrimination in all but extreme cases, that is, to not 'rock the boat,' or question or reveal the 'family secrets.'"[1]*

The definition of white privilege we will use for this monograph is:

> *White privilege is about the concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society that whites receive, unconsciously or consciously, by virtue of their skin color in a racist society.* [2]

Peggy McIntosh, who wrote the seminal article "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,"[3] takes this definition further and describes unearned advantage and conferred dominance. First, we need to acknowledge that there are unearned entitlements—things that *all* people *should* have—such as feeling

---

[1] Joe Feagin and Eileen O'Brien. *White Men on Race: Power, Privilege, and the Shaping of Cultural Consciousness* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), p.237.

[2] Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 97.

[3] Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondence Through Work in Women's Studies" (Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College, Center for Research on Women, 1988).

safe in public spaces, free speech, the ability to work in a place where we feel we can do our best work, and being valued for what we can contribute. When unearned entitlement is restricted to certain groups, however, it becomes the form of privilege that McIntosh calls "unearned advantage." Unearned advantage gives whites a competitive edge we are reluctant to even acknowledge, much less give up. The other type of privilege is conferred dominance, which is giving one group (whites) power over another: the unequal distribution of resources and rewards.[4]

Many of us who are white are oblivious that this system exists, which is one of its successes. We assume this is the norm, we have been taught how to rationalize people being treated differently or faring differently. It is sometimes easier to look to people of color whom we deem 'successful' and wonder why others are not. It is easier for some white people to focus on the times we are treated differently because of belonging to an oppressed identity group (like women, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered, non-Christians or disabled groups) than to notice how we are treated differently because of the color of our skin.

With the concept of white privilege being elusive, we need to understand it more fully so we can truly understand its systemic nature and how it is engrained in what we do every day. Alan Johnson shares some examples in his book *Privilege, Power, and Difference*. As you think about these examples and how they apply to community building work, please also notice the ones that evoke an emotional response for you personally.

Institutional Examples

As whites we are:

- Less likely than Blacks to be arrested. Once arrested, we are less likely to be convicted and, once convicted, less likely to go to prison, regardless of the crime or circumstances. Whites, for example, constitute 90% of those who use illegal drugs, but fewer than half of those who are in prison on drug use charges.

- More likely than Blacks [and Latinos/as] with comparable credit histories and income to have loan applications approved and less likely to be given poor information or the "runaround" during the application process (such as being steered to predatory lenders).

- Charged lower prices for new and used cars than people of color are. This is due in large part to residential segregation, in which whites have access to higher-quality goods of all kinds at cheaper prices.

- Represented in government and the ruling circles of corporations, universities, and other organizations is disproportionally high numbers.

- Clustered in communities with the best access to quality job opportunities, schools, and community services.

> It is sometimes easier to look to people of color whom we deem 'successful' and wonder why others are not. It is easier for some white people to focus on the times we are treated differently because of belonging to an oppressed identity group ... than to notice how we are treated differently because of the color of our skin.

---

4 Allan G. Johnson, *Privilege, Power, and Difference* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2001), p.26-27.

Individual or Interpersonal Examples

Whites:

- Are more likely to control conversations and be allowed to get way with it. We are also more likely to have our ideas and contributions taken seriously—even those that were suggested previously by a person of color and dismissed.

- Can generally assume that when we go out in public, we won't be challenged and asked to explain by white people or people in authority what we are doing. We are also much less likely to be attacked by hate groups simply because of our race.

- Are more likely to be given early opportunities to show what we can do at work, to be identified as potential candidates for promotion, to be mentored, to be given a second chance when we fail, and to be allowed to treat failure as a learning experience rather than as an indication of who we are and the shortcomings of our race.

- Don't have to deal with an endless and exhausting stream of attention to our race. We can simply take our race for granted as unremarkable, often to the extent of experiencing ourselves as not having a race.

- Can reasonably expect that if we work hard and "play by the rules," we'll get what we deserve, and feel justified in complaining if we don't. It is something other racial groups cannot realistically expect.[5]

Having these white privileges has less to do with how we show up as white people and more about how our whiteness is typically affirmed, respected, and accepted. If we are perceived to be white by others, than a particular set of privileges are conferred on us. If we only see white privilege on the individual level and counter with, "I didn't ask for these privileges" or "I don't expect it," that is missing the point. Almost no one—white or person of color—is individually (or even collectively) asking to be privileged or oppressed. We were born into a system that disadvantages African American, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Native American and Latino/a Americans and provides benefits to those who are identified as whites. We may not be responsible for the creation of the system, though we have a responsibility concerning how we respond to it.[6]

Learning To Be White

So how do white people, as individuals and as groups, learn to consider themselves the racial identity group called "white?" If we look closer at our lives, we really started to learn to be white at an early age[7], even though for many

> If we only see white privilege on the individual level and counter with, "I didn't ask for these privileges" or "I don't expect it," that is missing the point. Almost no one—white or person of color—is individually (or even collectively) asking to be privileged or oppressed.

---

[5] Johnson, *Privilege, Power, and Difference*, p 27-30.

[6] Paul Kivel, White Benefits: An Exercise,(www.paulkivel.com, accessed October, 2005), p. 4.

[7] To learn more, see Debra Van Ausdale and Joe R. Feagin, *The First R: How Children Learn Race and Racism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001).

families it was typically not discussed directly among family members or friends. We simply modeled what we saw and heard, unaware of how the world was constructed for the benefit of us and fellow whites. The messages we heard at a very young age were mostly covert, yet crystal clear.

Depending on our ages and income, we may have lived completely segregated lives, going to predominantly white schools, having white teachers, going to completely or nearly all-white social and religious activities. We may or may not have known that African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino/a or Native American students in other schools received our used textbooks or were schooled in more rundown and less well-equipped buildings.

Some of us may have had the experience of being part of planned desegregation of schools. Then, we might have heard a different discussion from our parents. It may have been about the dangers of bussing into undesirable neighborhoods, or of the decline in the quality of our education or why students of color "kept to themselves" or caused trouble in our schools. For some, it was the catalyst for their family to move away. There was sometimes no discussion about our segregated neighborhoods and schools, but rather typically a *covert message conveyed to us: white people live in this neighborhood and people of color are supposed to live over there.*

> Even if we lived in a very integrated world, with role models who were advocates of civil rights, nearly every white person knew other white people who were afraid of people of color.

If we think about the authority figures, the heroes, the entertainers, and newscasters we saw growing up, they were almost always white. When we think of who entertained us on TV, we realize that there were many stereotypes we learned by the roles people of color played: the maid, the sexual object, the criminal, the spy, the jokester, the warrior, etc. Think about the leaders our parents listened to regarding politics, economics, parenting, etc. It is only in the past decade or so that we realized we didn't hear about some of the other heroes in World War II. There is finally recognition for the contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen, code talkers, and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team,[8] etc. *An underlying message we learned is: whites lead and people of color in leadership roles are exceptions.*

Another issue was learning about who we were supposed to date and be friends with. In some cases the message was very clearly stated: "You will *never* marry a Black man." But in most cases we could just observe who was in our parents' social circles. Some of us have stories of when we ventured out and made friends with someone of a different race. A few of us were fortunate to have this type of childhood friendship; for others the friendship was discouraged or forbidden. *The message of whiteness many of us heard was very clear: stay with your own kind or deal with the consequences.*

Even if we lived in a very integrated world, with role models who were advocates of civil rights, nearly every white person knew other white people who were

---

[8] "The 442nd Regimental Combat Team was sent on an intense and dangerous mission to rescue another U.S. Army regiment that was trapped by the Germans during WWII. The 442nd was composed entirely of Japanese Americans and, despite the fact that their families, relatives and friends were wrongfully imprisoned back in the U.S. because of their Japanese ancestry, the 442nd became the most decorated combat unit of its size in the U.S. military during WWII." (www.asian-nation.org/442.shtml, accessed July, 2005).

afraid of people of color. Sometimes we learned to be white by absorbing this message of fear—hold on to your purse on city streets, lock your car doors when you drive downtown, stay alert at the fast food restaurant or the mall, don't go into certain neighborhoods after dark—because those were the places we were most likely to encounter people of color, particularly young males of color. *The strong message many of us heard is: be afraid of anyone who is different.*

"I had an experience that showed how fully my own sense of being white was linked to feeling safer with white people than with people of color and how that was untrue for people of color. I was working on a project in Michigan with an African American female colleague. We were planning to meet at a particular hotel late in the day. I had already arrived at the hotel when my colleague called to say she had gotten caught in a sudden blizzard. The highway patrol was pulling all the cars off the road and my colleague had to find shelter. She was tired, didn't know where she was, and was frightened about being in the "middle of nowhere" in a blizzard by herself. I started to tell my colleague that she shouldn't worry, she was in a very safe, rural area of Michigan. In my mind I was thinking we were in a white area, not one of the dangerous Black neighborhoods in Detroit or Flint. My African American colleague said—incredibly relieved—"Oh, don't worry, I see some Black families and I'll stick with them." That was when I realized that seeing those Black families would have been the signal to me that the area was dangerous; my African-American colleague saw it as the signal that the area was safe."

– Sally Leiderman

On some basic level most whites understand and acknowledge that people of color over the years have been treated unfairly. ... But guilt and shame many times cloud the explanation because it is difficult to accept that one's attitudes and behavior caused another person distress and disadvantage ... It is even more shocking to think how one's government and community institutions have created and reinforced these oppressive policies and laws.

Whites have few public role models and therefore few to look to for guidance and courage to understand what it means to be white and to have privileges. In Becky Thompson's book *A Promise and a Way of Life,* about 39 white anti-racist activists, she focuses on their contributions and the limitations of white anti-racism work in key social justice movements. She speaks to the importance of self-awareness: "This is the essence of self-reflection, a practice that is essential if people are to understand how to contribute to other people's struggle and yet not try to control it; to see when they have institutional power and when they do not; and to deal effectively with the historical relations between different identity groups."[9]

Accumulated Advantages

What gets in the way for whites to recognize this concept of white privilege is guilt and shame. On some basic level most whites understand and acknowledge that people of color over the years have been treated unfairly. We have different explanations, based on our worldviews, life experiences, analyses of power, racism and oppression, knowledge of history, and, often, the amount of contact

---

[9] Becky Thompson, *A Promise and A Way of Life: White Antiracist Activism.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. 370.

we have with people of color. But guilt and shame many times cloud the explanation because it is difficult to accept that one's attitudes and behavior caused another person distress and disadvantage. It is even more shocking to think how one's government and community institutions have created and reinforced these oppressive policies and laws. Part of understanding white privilege is knowing how just having white skin has resulted in accumulating so many advantages, and understanding how it affects what we own and the opportunities we have been given over the years. Larry Adelman, executive producer of *Race – The Power of an Illusion,* has outlined historical accumulative advantages for whites on his website about the film. A few are highlighted here chronologically, along with some current policies:

1830
"The Indian Removal Action forcibly relocated Cherokee, Creek and other eastern Indians to west of the Mississippi River to make room for white settlers."

1862
"The Homestead Act gave away millions of acres of land—for free—of what had been Indian Territory west of the Mississippi. Alien Land Laws passed in California and other states reserved farm land for white growers by preventing Asian immigrants, ineligible to become citizens, from owning or leasing land."

1877
"Jim Crow laws instituted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and not overturned in many states until the 1960s, reserved the best jobs, neighborhoods, schools and hospitals for white people."

1934-1962
"The Federal Housing Administration made it possible for millions of average white Americans—but not others— to own a home for the first time. The federal government backed $120 billion of home loans in which more than 98% went to whites. Today, black and Latino mortgage applicants are still 60% more likely than whites to be turned down for a loan, even after controlling for employment, financial, and neighborhood factors."

1935
"The Wagner Act granted unions the power of collective bargaining; it helped millions of white workers gain entry into the middle class over the next 30 years. The Wagner Act permitted unions to exclude non-whites and deny them access to better paid jobs and union protections and benefits such as health care, job security and pensions. The Social Security Act of 1935 provided a safety net for millions of workers, guaranteeing them an income after retirement. But the act specifically excluded two occupations: agricultural workers and domestic servants, who were predominately African-American, Mexican, and Asian."

1952

Racial barriers to U.S. citizenship were not removed until the McCarran-Walter Act, and white racial preferences in immigration remained until 1965. [10]

1968

Lobbyists for the banking industry drafted the Housing and Urban Development Act, which allowed private lenders to shift risks of financing low-income housing to the government, creating a lucrative and unregulated market for themselves. … The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights investigation later revealed FHA officials collaborated in financing the flight of low-income whites out of inner-city neighborhoods, and then aided unscrupulous realtors and speculators to arrange purchases of sub-standard housing by minorities desperate to own their own homes. . . . Bankers then foreclosed on mortgages of thousands of these uninspected and sub-standard homes, ruining many inner-city neighborhoods. In response HUD red-lined inner cities, making them ineligible for future loans, a decision that destroyed the value of inner-city housing for generations to come." [11]

1990

"A 1990 study of the National Institute on Drug Abuse revealed that while only 15% of the 13 million habitual drug users in the United States were Black [10% were Latino] [12] *and 77 % were white. . . .A Los Angeles Times article in 1995 revealed the 'Black and Latino crack dealers are hammered with 10-year mandatory federal sentences while whites prosecuted in state court face a minimum of five years and often receive no more than a year in jail."'* [13]

1992

A study by the National Law Journal examined the Environmental Protection Agency's response to 1,177 toxic waste cases and found that polluters of sites near the greatest white population received penalties 500% higher than penalties imposed on polluters in minority area. In a review of 64 studies examining environmental disparities, the National Wildlife Federation found racial disparities outnumbered disparities by income. Corporations systematically target Native American reservations when looking for locations for hazardous waste incinerators, solid waste landfills, and nuclear waste storage facilities; Navajo teenagers develop reproductive organ cancer at 17

[10] Larry Adelman, *Race—The Power of an Illusion*, (www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm, accessed June, 2005).Citation for advantages listed from 1830-1952.

[11] George Lipsitz, "The Possessive Investment in Whiteness," a chapter in Paula S. Rothenberg, editor, *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism* (New York: Worth Publishers, 2002), p.66.

[12] Prison Activist Resource Center, "African-Americans and the Criminal Injustice System," 9www.prisonactivist.org/factsheets/racism.pdf#search='native%20americans%20racism%20statistic s, accessed October, 2005).

[13] Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, p. 68-69.

times the national average because of their exposure to radiation of uranium mines."[14]

Beyond just this short list of policies, it is also about understanding our inter-generational white social network that has provided us advantages. Joe Feagin and Eileen O'Brien interviewed over 100 powerful, upper-income white men on their views, opinions and perceptions on racial issues. The researchers explain the unjust advantages many whites have gained and the role that plays in their lives and achievements: "Most whites inherit significant social networks that are heavily or exclusively white and that provide access to important social contacts or capital. Once networking is in place, it tends to persist over the generations. Thus, whites' lives are shaped as much by the racialized system as the lives of those who are oppressed by it."[15] George Lipsitz, author of *Possessive Investment in Whiteness,* reminds us that, "In the U.S. economy, where 86% of available jobs do not appear in classified ads and where personal connections prove the most important factor in securing employment, attacks on affirmative action guarantee that whites will be rewarded for their historical advantage in the labor market rather than for their individual abilities or efforts."[16]

Why is it so important to understand these facts? Because they make it clear that white Americans, as a group, have benefited enormously over the years from a web of laws, regulations, policies and practices, some of which name race and some of which do not. Advantages were passed on and in most cases accumulated in each generation of whites while disadvantages were passed on in each generation of people of color. Having an understanding of the historically accumulated privileges of whites can help us see the racial disparities in education, health, housing, economics etc. in a different light. In community building work, most of the time we do ask why white people are faring better and people of color are faring worse on different outcomes. Many times our response is how we can *make it better* for people of color or communities in which many people of color live. But typically our question is *not* about how white privilege plays a significant role in creating these disparities and how we can dismantle it.

> When others bring race to the surface in decision-making processes, we sometimes ignore, or minimize, or accuse them of "playing the race card," yet we are blind to how the "white race card" is played every day in those same interactions and policy discussions.

Costs of Being White

When others bring race to the surface in decision-making processes, we sometimes ignore, or minimize, or accuse them of "playing the race card," yet we are blind to how the "white race card" is played every day in those same interactions and policy discussions. We whites don't have to think about race on a daily basis, don't have to think about how race is playing into decisions that are being made, and don't have to think about how our access to institutional services is based on privilege. We are also unaware of what the costs of being white are—everyday. Our blindness or disregard for understanding white privilege is reflected in our actions, and this can do real harm at a structural level (at a minimum) by colluding with policies, practices, and systems that dehumanize

---

[14] Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, p. 67-68.

[15] Feagin and O'Brien*, White Men on Race*, p.9.

[16] Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, p. 67-68.

and hurt groups of color, and can individually be insensitive, demeaning, aggravating, and discriminating even if it is not our intent.

As we think about what we can do differently in our work to actively address white privilege, many anti-racism educators suggest focusing on three areas: head, heart, and hand.

- *Head*—having knowledge and awareness of the complexities of structural racism and white privilege.

- *Heart*—understanding how racism manifests itself individually and institutionally through hearing stories and building relationships with people who have different racial and ethnic identities, as well as those who are white.

- *Hand*—using our knowledge, awareness, and skills to work to create racial equity and justice in our communities.[17]

See the next page for just some of the costs of racism for white people in our society and the reasons why whites need to work for racial equity:

---

[17] I first learned of this concept from faculty colleagues of the National Conference for Community and Justice-St. Louis region's Dismantling Racism Institute.

Costs of Racism for White People	Why Should Whites Act ...
We are choosing to believe that Blacks or immigrants or other "groups" are taking our jobs away, and not seeing that we are being manipulated to fight with each other. This leads to corporations and institutions not being held accountable for how they conduct business and their human resource decisions.[18] This translates into lower wages and benefits and less job security for all workers, including white wage workers.	We need to raise wages for all workers and not be manipulated by "divide and conquer" ploys created by corporations, which are loyal to their bottom line and not to communities where they operate. We need to be consistently aware of how our white privileged worldviews keep us separate from important allies of color; we can resist and act collectively for ALL workers' rights.
American whites currently have shorter (4-5 years) and more stressful/less healthy lives than people in more equitable developed countries because of the racially-based inequalities of our society and the stress of the racially-based fears whites live with daily.[19] This fear leads to whites becoming easy prey to white criminals, especially those under the veil of legitimacy (e.g., those associated with corporate or religious institutions) or "white collar" criminals.	These racially-based fears come, in part, from lack of experience with difference, and buying into the stereotypical views—reinforced by the media—of who is violent or "criminal" in our communities. We can decrease our anxiety by understanding how media and others misrepresent crime statistics, rationalize racial profiling, and hide the level of white crime (especially drug use). If we ask questions and deal with the facts, and address our stereotypes, we can better invest our dollars to reduce real violence and improve health care and outcomes for *all* people.
"The education and income level of American workers will decline over the next 15 years if states do not do more to improve the number of college graduates from minority groups."[20]	The quality of life for all Americans will continue to erode if the education and income level of American workers declines. We will have fewer technological innovators, fewer breakthroughs in disease prevention, fewer highly qualified educators and fewer highly skilled craftspeople and engineers to repair our aging physical infrastructure. We are already predicting shortages in these areas, in large part because our current educational systems do not prepare all of our students with the skills they need to succeed in the requisite levels of training and education to do these jobs. Inequitable financing of schools, based in large part on

---

[18] Thank you to Donna Bivens for sharing her wisdom in helping to frame this section.

[19] Richard Wilkinson, *The Impact of Inequality*. (New York: The New Press, 2005). Richard Wilkinson is a professor of social epidemiology and an expert in public health. He sees the world in terms of its physical and psychological well- being, surveying great sweeps of health statistics through sociological eyes. He has assembled a mountain of irrefutable evidence from all over the world that shows the damage done by extreme inequality. However rich a country is, it will still be more dysfunctional, violent, sick and sad if the gap between social classes grows too wide. Poorer countries with fairer wealth distribution are healthier and happier than richer, more unequal nations (www.iacdglobal.org/spotlight.htm, accessed October, 2005).

[20] Anne K. Walters, "Standing of American Workers will Decline Unless Minority Education Becomes a Priority, Report Says," (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 9, 2005).

Costs of Racism for White People	Why Should Whites Act ...
	historic patterns of residential segregation and racist lending patterns (e.g., redlining), have resulted in unequal resources across schools. In addition, there is increasing evidence that many educators at all levels have lower expectations for students of color than for white students. These, and many other issues affecting the likelihood that students of color will succeed in school, need to be addressed.
By our lack of understanding of racism and white privilege and how they operate, we choose leadership that goes against own best interests and deepest values.	By understanding the role of racism we can better lay claim to and demand leaders to be accountable to *all* of their constituents (not just shareholders, but residents, consumers, and workers) and demand that our basic values—fairness, justice, empathy and integrity—be the foundation for all policy-making discussions and decisions.
We have inadequate communication skills and mediocre skills to work with people who are different, due to lack of cross-racial experiences. We have limited ability to respond to being "one of a few" when participating in racially diverse classrooms, social engagements, or workplaces and to figure out cultural practices when confronted with a new situation. This leads to loss of potential relationships, as well as limits our ability to succeed in the global economy.	We can improve our cross-cultural communication skills—which can lead to deeper relationships with people of color, being more successful in our interactions in the workplace, and being role models for our children—by teaching them to not be afraid of difference but to embrace it. On a larger scale, by promoting multi-racial and multicultural relationships and learning different languages, we can be more open about other countries' cultures, norms and practices and promote diplomatic alternatives to international conflicts through the use of collaborative approaches.
By being ethnocentric we have limited cultural understanding, insight about, and acceptance of others. Due to our limited experiences, we typically do not know how cultures of people of color could be offering solutions to our basic human problems. We are also limited due to having a distorted, inadequate and inaccurate sense of history in which the contributions of people of color are diminished, and white people's roles are magnified when positive and hidden and/or modified[21] when negative.	By increasing our contact with people of color and of different ethnicities and investing in learning about different cultures, we can: • Increase our knowledge and awareness; • Use different rituals, and skills when solving problems; and • Learn about our rich history, which can lead to increased understanding and less repetition of mistakes. We have a limited history of re-examining our white-based solutions, but we do have a few ways in which other cultures have been 'mainstreamed.' For example, Native Americans believe it is important to be respectful to the earth and have been important advocates for

[21] Paul Kivel, *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*. (Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Society Publishers, 2002), p. 36.

Costs of Racism for White People	Why Should Whites Act ...
	environmental causes. This has led some companies and communities to adopt environmental practices that are making them better stewards of the earth. Also, western (white-based) medicine was skeptical of Asian American and Native American health practices. Now these practices (acupuncture, use of herbs) are more mainstreamed and some practices are even being reimbursed by health insurance companies.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

The following are reflection questions to help whites explore what it means to be white and to wrestle with the concept of privilege. We encourage you to discuss these questions with others.

Learning To Be White

- When was the first time you *intellectually* realized you were white?

- When was the first time you realized you might be treated differently because you have white skin? When was the first time you realized people of other racial identity groups are treated differently?

- What were the messages you heard growing up about white people? African Americans? Latinos/as? Native Americans? Asian American and Pacific Islanders?

- Look at your friends, family, colleagues, key service people (doctor, dentist, counselor, handyperson, etc.)—what are their racial identities? How and why did you choose to know or work with these people? Which racial groups do the people you socialize with regularly belong to?

Accumulated Advantages

- When you hear the phrase by a person of color, "I have to work twice as hard to be half as good," what are the norms, policies and practices in your organization that could make a person of color believe that this is her/his reality?

- If you identify as white, are any of the following statements true for you and your family? Think about other advantages your family received for being white.

  - Your ancestors were immigrants who took jobs (in the early part of 20th century) in streetcars, construction, shipbuilding, wagon and coach driving, house painting, tailoring, longshore work, brick laying, table waiting, working in the mills, working as a furrier, dressmaking or any other trade or occupation where people of color were driven out or excluded.

  - You live in a school district or metropolitan area where more money is spent on the schools that white children go to than on those that children of color attend.

  - You live in a neighborhood that has better police protection, municipal services and is safer than those where people of color live.[22]

Costs of Being White

- Based on the list of costs in this chapter, what are some other costs you have experienced from being white? What are ways that you can act to address these costs?

- Think about a specific experience you had of (individual, cultural or institutional) preferential treatment, or white privilege. What did you do?[23] Do you wish you acted differently?

- In the past month what are some ways you challenged, pushed or supported other whites in dealing with racism? White privilege? What could you have done? How have you supported other whites who are working to address white privilege? How can you work collectively with other whites?

---

[22] Kivel, *Uprooting Racism*, p. 32.

[23] From Challenging White Supremacy literature, (www.cwsworkshop.org/, accessed June, 2005).

Section 3

WHITE PRIVILEGE IN COMMUNITY BUILDING

Introduction

This section focuses on ways to apply the concepts discussed in Section 1— community building, racism, internalized racism, and white privilege—to partnerships between foundations and communities for community building. The thoughts we offer are based on a review of some of the relevant literature (see Bibliography), information from many conversations with people in the field about these issues and the reflection and analysis we've done individually to develop this monograph. In this set of chapters, we discuss where white privilege and racism[1] surface in doing work in communities, how they impact the outcomes and processes of the work, and some ways for them to be addressed. The chapters included in this section are:

- How does White Privilege Show up in Foundation and Community Initiatives?

- Interventions: Goals, Processes and Strategies;

- Doing Evaluation Differently; and

- Multi-Racial Partnerships and Coalitions.

We are elevating these areas as opportunities for our field to take leadership and action to address white privilege. The question posed throughout this section is:

> *How can we create community and foundation initiatives that clearly focus on equity and the elimination of white privilege, rather than give some places or groups more access within current systems of privilege or reduce the consequences of white privilege for some groups or places at the expense of others?*

Please note that this section of the monograph is very much a work in progress. We are sharing ideas that people have suggested through interviews, writing and conversations, as well as our own ideas. There are many other people, including readers of this monograph, who are thinking about white privilege and racism in the context of community building and community/foundation partnerships, and few (or no) examples of where we have dismantled white privilege or dramatically lessened its impact on communities on a large scale. So we are all at the place of learning. We hope you will find the next chapters stimulating, and will take the ideas and push them, argue with them and apply your own understandings of these issues to your work.

---

[1] When we use the terms 'white privilege' and 'racism' together, this is not to say that they are the same. Rather, they each need to be addressed in the unique ways they are manifested.

Chapter Seven

How Does White Privilege Show Up In Foundation and Community Initiatives?

Barbara Major

It's important to place my observations, comments and experiences of foundations and their relationships with communities in context. These observations are being presented in a way that recognizes foundations as institutions in a nation in which white privilege is deeply ingrained in all of its institutions. From the time Europeans (who later became known as white) colonized this continent, white privilege was established and has been maintained through economic, religious, political and social structures. So I offer these ideas in the spirit of facilitating a conversation in which foundations can come to grips with the intimate, interdependent and yet often contentious relationship with this racist society. White privilege is at work constantly in all of a foundation's institutional levels—personnel, policy and practice, constituency relationship, structure, mission and purpose.

> *I need to clarify my personal relationship with community and foundations. I find it impossible to set myself apart from both the community and foundation. In this chapter, sometimes I refer to the community as 'us' or 'we' and sometimes I refer to the foundation as 'us' or 'we.' So I hope, as you read this piece, you will understand that my allegiance falls solely with the community, but in the struggle for social justice and equity I—along with my community—am a part of a larger social justice community and, in that community, foundations have a place at the table. So as the song goes, "We are family."*

Some foundations are coming to realize that institutional racism, along with white privilege—and not just bigotry and/or discrimination—is a main contributor to why struggling communities are the way they are. It is this understanding that has prompted the development of a new process for foundations to begin examining how racism and white privilege are being manifested internally and how to illuminate them.

I have been fortunate to have met some people in foundations who are both clear and committed, and this is what gives me hope that one day communities and foundations will have the kind of relationship in which both understand that our very existence is dependent on each other. This is not something I expect in the very near future, given the history of the creation of foundations, yet the fact that foundations are now willing to have a conversation about racism and white privilege indicates to me that the transformation has started.

I've had the opportunity to work with many people from foundations and different communities. It is important that we not get stuck in what we might have done differently in the past, but rather reexamine our actions and learn from them. To understand how white privilege is working in foundations, we must eventually struggle to understand racism. Racism and white privilege are

inseparable. For many of us, since our very identity is rooted in the institution, when asked to examine our institution we often feel the examination not only as a critique of the institution but of us as well. We then internalize the institutional examination as a personal and professional threat. As a foundation, if we want to ensure our relevance to social change, we must create new methods of institutional growth and transformation that do not present themselves as threats, but rather what I would call a "lovers' model of institutional examination and transformation." I say this because we must first care about and love the institution we would like to change; if not, we could destroy it.

The missions of foundations often include very hopeful ideas and language. Individuals are drawn to work in foundations because they want to contribute to making things better, and they are often genuinely concerned and thoughtful about their relationships with communities. Many community members feel that foundations have an authentic desire to help. But foundations' own internalization of superiority disallows them from accomplishing what they seem to want.

Project Versus Process

Authority is exercised in foundations, because of white privilege, around the issue of project versus process. In my community we understand projects; we also are clear that you will never have a successful project if you don't have a successful process. The community's world revolves around process and not just a project. Projects come and go, but for us life is always in process. When we want to create a process in our community for change, we are told that we must make it into a project with measurable outcomes and timelines.

Now, we can possibly make a project within the process but we can't make the process into a project. When our outcomes are measured, we might fail according to the foundation's goals. But if foundations learn to look with community eyes, they might come to understand that a great deal has been accomplished. In my community, we might identify and be celebrating something good that was not part of the projected outcome, while the foundation is busy critiquing us for not having reached certain projected benchmarks.

Evaluation

Foundations also have to understand that other cultures often have other ways of measuring success besides the ways that foundations (because of cultural racism) find credible. For example, a foundation may fund something around teen pregnancy prevention. The foundation will send evaluators into a community with a 20% teen pregnancy rate and declare the program a failure when they find only a 2% drop and the outcome objectives predicted a 50% drop.

What the foundation's evaluators are not measuring is the relationship of the community to itself. In this particular community, male violence toward teenage girls may almost have stopped, but because the foundation is not looking at the whole picture they may entirely miss it. In the white foundation model, the community is forced to do what is unnatural because the community's nature is not to list all of what is supposed to happen during a process, but rather to look

> The community's world revolves around process and not just a project. Projects come and go, but for us life is always in process.

at itself in a holistic way (not in pieces). Foundations tend to see communities in fragments, so foundations' relationships with communities are often fragmented.

By definition, white privilege allows one to pick and choose issues. However, foundations rarely measure the answers to questions like: "Where is this community in its understanding of its oppression and its participation in that oppression?" What foundations don't understand is that when you label a program a failure in a community, you have labeled the community a failure. Further, many different types of indicators can be useful, but foundations tend to value most what they can count. We as a community have to show what has been accomplished using the foundation's way of knowing (numbers) and not necessarily our way of knowing (living it and seeing it every day).

Actually, it's even deeper than that. We have to prove what we know in the foundation's institutional language, a language that is foreign to us. There have to be models developed where foundations are put on a more equal footing with communities. If a community has to be evaluated by a foundation, then the foundation has to be evaluated by the community. This is scary for foundations, and difficult for communities.

Cultural Racism

Foundations, like many other institutions, would sometimes like to view themselves as outsiders to the society they wish to change. Foundations, therefore, use their resources to examine and fix other institutions, but not usually themselves. Racism, as it manifests itself institutionally in foundations, is supported by cultural and individual racism. One of the best examples of cultural racism I can think of is the experience I had as a member of a community organization in its relationship with a well-meaning, progressive, national foundation. As an African American community, we quickly realized that it was unquestioned and acceptable on the part of the foundation to send anybody from any cultural group to provide us technical assistance (TA). One manifestation of white privilege is the assumption that you don't have to know anything about communities that you provide services to, because neither your life nor the life of the institution depends on your knowing.

So when a foundation makes an attempt to provide a community with assistance, it does not matter to the foundation whether or not the provider it sends knows us (the community), respects us or gives a damn about us. Foundations often send a person of color to provide technical assistance (TA) to communities of color. White society sees all of us who are Black as one big monolithic cultural group, and foundations often mimic this culturally racist worldview. The understanding was, and I suspect still is, that if you are Black you will know and understand the cultural and social realities of the African American community or any other community considered Black. Not only are you thought to be able to provide technical assistance to these communities, but you are also considered a competent interpreter for that community to the foundation.

This is not to say that other people of color or white people are not able to provide technical assistance to any community. It must be understood, however,

There have to be models developed where foundations are put on a more equal footing with communities. If a community has to be evaluated by a foundation, then the foundation has to be evaluated by the community. This is scary for foundations, and difficult for communities.

that any person not from a particular community could, and often does, see and engage the community with a damaged understanding of who that community is. This misunderstanding is a result of racism, colonialism and all of their manifestations, as well as that person's own life experiences. These providers are most often very competent people in their field, but this does not necessarily mean that they are competent in the way of life of the particular community they are to provide assistance to.

Listening to the Community

White privilege continues to function in foundations often because foundations don't know how to listen to communities. Listening is more than hearing words; it is also having the ability to feel what the community is saying. When a community says to a foundation that something is not right or the community is not feeling the process that is being developed—even if we think the process is being developed in collaboration with the community—the foundation must take the time to develop new ways of listening. The community I come from does not always use words to demonstrate its discomfort with something. There are actions, reactions and nuances that a community might demonstrate that might not be recognized or understood by a foundation. Without genuine mutual respect and sufficient time to build an honest relationship with each other, the foundation and the community can miss signals that end up slowing us down and can alter our plan.

White privilege and time are elements that get in the way of relationships and progress. How foundations value time and how communities value time may be worlds apart. In the foundation world, time is something you save; in the community, time is something you spend. In order to maintain white privilege, we the community are given a certain amount of money for a certain amount of time. This is not necessarily an unreasonable arrangement but, for my community, time is also for people. If we are to work together—foundation and community—then there must also be time for us to build an authentic and human relationship. Foundations value their time, and rightfully so, but historically have not placed value on the time of the community. This does not mean that you should allow a community to have all the time it might want to do whatever it wants, but it does mean that what a foundation would like to accomplish might require more time than might have been predicted for a given process or project.

> If we are to work together—foundation and community—then there must also be time for us to build an authentic and human relationship. Foundations value their time, and rightfully so, but historically have not placed value on the time of the community.

Talents and Gifts of African Americans

In this white-dominant culture the African American is considered the nadir of society. As African Americans, we are asked continuously to prove our ability and intellect, and then we are measured by what has been determined to be success for other ethnic groups. Thus, it has been decided by this society that we are failures. This process is just as common in foundations as it is in all other institutions. It has also caused great tensions between and among people of color. It is demonstrated by whom foundations hire, whom they send as consultants to African American communities, and what initiatives get priority in foundations for funding. I see white privilege in foundations at its ugliest when it uses other

people of color like pawns to keep the myth in place that the African American community can't produce the talent and skill it needs to be self-determining.

I guess, as always, the needs of my community are easy to identify but the talents and gifts are hard to find. Foundations seem to think like most other institutions: if you have Black people on staff or as consultants, then we (all of us Black people) should be satisfied. Communities and foundations must struggle to understand the relationship between colonialism and racism, particularly the damage they have done around the issue of identity. White privilege allows white people and white institutions to be oblivious to the complexities of people being racialized. Having Black people or people of color on staff does not mean that we understand racism or that we are willing to address racism. Even if it were true that foundations could not find competent African Americans or other people of color, it is still the responsibility of foundations to train and equip people in the communities they work with and fund.

One of the purposes of racialization is to diminish and/or destroy the culture of a people and create intra- and inter- community dynamics that many of us are still struggling to understand. These issues of self-identity and group identity cut across every racialized group and interfere with our ability to collaborate and organize for social justice. Foundations, intentionally or unintentionally, participate in maintaining this form of cultural racism (the dominant racialized group having the power to position one subordinate racialized group over another subordinate racialized group). This action is one that all institutions practice in this society, so foundations are no more guilty than any others.

Foundations are a lot like the liberal prep schools of the 60's and 70's: you find one or two people of color who you can train, you train them well, you cream them from their communities, socialize them in the way of the institution and then send them back to us (the community) to help us. I love to see folks from my community do well in life. I only wish there were more opportunities for them to do well at home. Our intellectual capital is being drained by those sent to help build our capacity. White privilege allows this through its institutional control of resources. An alternative is to build systems that allow people to become well-educated and trained within our local institutions and to do their work within our community—in part by shifting control of resources from the foundations out into the places where the work happens. Another is to put the same incentives, recognition and value on having the best and brightest do their work in communities as we do on moving into the foundation, academic and technical assistance worlds.

Gatekeepers

White privilege could not function to the degree that it does in foundations, or any other institutions, if there were not people of color who are active participants in protecting and maintaining current institutional structures. Having worked with people of color in foundations, I have also come to realize what many of us in foundations don't realize that we are participating in maintaining white privilege and power. We have become gatekeepers.

Gatekeepers act as the buffers between institutions and communities. This is not necessarily negative, as communities often need gatekeepers. However, we need gatekeepers who are accountable to the communities and not the institutions they represent. Gatekeepers can keep people and resources in, or they can keep people and resources out. This does not mean that we are stupid or bad people. The socialization process that sometimes happens to us when we are immersed in White Institutional Culture ensures that we become so invested in the institution that our vision and values become one with the institution. Again, the challenge is to shift the incentives, values, status and rewards toward doing well on community terms—not foundation terms— where they vary.

It is also in the interest of the institution that our identity become one with the institution, such that when asked who we are by a community we identify ourselves by the position we hold in an institution. This very response lets the community know to whom we belong and to whom we are accountable. Those of us who maintain our relationship with the community are usually marginalized in the foundation. White privilege gives the foundation the authority to determine who will work with whom. Many of us who have been validated and given legitimacy by a white institution, such as a foundation, now believe that we have the right and the responsibility to regulate the behavior of the community on behalf of that institution/foundation. I'm not saying there's no place for full-time professional activists who work in and with foundations, but so many of us are disconnected from real accountability to the community that we are supposed to be helping and assisting.

Further, just because people have worked in a community, doesn't necessarily mean they have dealt with their own issues. It's always a problem when people superimpose their own confusion or issues back on the community, but especially when they have the power and money of a foundation behind them. We all need to "do our own work" continually in this regard, but it is important for people not to work out their own issues "on" a community. Instead, we need to put our individual confusion about our identities in a racist society on the table as our own: not the foundation's, not the community's, but ours personally. In this way, we can work on institutional and community issues and our own issues together, because they are fully connected, but with clarity about what we need to change about ourselves that is different from what we need to change about our communities and institutions.

Those of us in foundations who question or disagree with the way the foundation might be in relationship with a community, particularly when it comes to the issue of race and power, are often marginalized inside of the foundation. When this happens we (people of color working within foundations) have three choices: (1) stay and do the best that we can to help those on the outside who understand our dilemma and what is really happening; (2) leave because we realize when the foundation speaks of social change in our community, it is not the same thing our community is talking about; or (3) stay, play the game and hope we get a bigger position of power. The use of other people of color to maintain a distant yet controlling relationship between the foundation and the community feels to me a lot like allowing a city to have a Black mayor with no

power to control the economics of the city. It's a good beginning to a story of change, but definitely not the end.

Mutual Accountability

Foundations cannot be held accountable for all of what has or has not happened in the process of social change. If we are to bring about social change and equity in this society and the world, then we all have to make some changes in our behavior. Those of us with the resources must recognize that having control of the resources does not mean that our intelligence level is somehow higher than those who do not have the resources. Unfortunately, many of the people who control resources feel that they have that control because they are smarter.

No-o-o! Racism and white privilege have given them that position, and that's a hard thing to hear! One of the things I often hear and say myself is that you must speak truth to power; foundations are a part of the power, so those in communities must speak truth to that power as well. Those of us who want some of those resources must stop genuflecting to those who have the resources at the expense of our communities. *That means we must be unwilling to take money so that our organization will survive, while our people perish.* I know how difficult this can be, because community organizations that serve people who are poor are usually poor themselves. When decisions have to be made by a community organization on the issue of resources, our ethics get clarified by our actions.

Foundations often ask communities to evaluate their internal strengths and weaknesses. But the foundation must be willing to participate, along with the community, in a mutual examination process. A community organization's board must be what the foundation wants. Yet a foundation's board members, making decisions that affect the community, usually don't see that community, hear its voice, or know its pain. Most foundations operate in a very top-down fashion and impose this top-down model on communities.

Foundations use language—sometimes learned from communities—and very rarely give the community credit. They also rip off processes from communities, but cannot implement them without the communities. For example, many families in communities survive because neighbors look in on them, take over in a crisis, get them connected to help or help them move. Many foundations sponsor the development of such systems of what they call 'natural helpers' or 'indigenous leadership,' without giving credit by name to the place or people from whom they learned this process. Some Native American tribes use specific processes that combine storytelling, group reflection and taking leadership from elders to make community policy decisions. Many foundations support visioning or community "charettes" as a first step in a foundation/community planning process, without acknowledging the groups from whom we learned these techniques.

Once a community's process has been institutionalized and then re-imposed on the community, without the spirit of the community, the results are most often not what the community or the foundation wants. The community has learned to speak the language of the foundations because it must, and has accepted that foundations are not going to take the time to learn the community's language,

> Foundations are a part of the power, so those in communities must speak truth to that power as well. Those of us who want some of those resources must stop genuflecting to those who have the resources at the expense of our communities.

unless the community's language is *intriguing*. It is common knowledge that we have to be very careful with what information, vision, or method we allow a foundation to know about in the community, because foundations have a history of totally ignoring the intellectual property rights of communities. White privilege in foundations allows them, and those who work in or represent them, to steal, rearrange and publish the ideas, concepts and methods they learn from the community. At that point, trust must be re-established.

One of the great dilemmas of white privilege is that it allows white people to not question who they are, as well as see the world only as they wish to see it. So if there is an issue, it must be coming from somewhere else. I used to say, "I don't understand why white people don't understand." Now that I understand racism and white privilege, I understand why some white people don't understand: white people don't have to. When we begin to break out of the mindset of racism and white privilege, then we constantly question ourselves and our institutions. That is scary, because constant questioning of any institution makes it vulnerable. Just like constant questioning of any community makes it vulnerable. But a mutual relationship means we are equally vulnerable because both parties have the right and responsibility to question the other. If we are to create new models of relationship for foundations and communities, foundations must be willing to invest in building the capacity of communities to not only question the power of other institutions, but also to question the power of the foundations.

Next Steps

So how do we move from here? How does a foundation really build a relationship with a community where the foundation plays the role of a peer more than that of an overseer? It's hard. Conscious people of color and white people within foundations are in the same place: they have to struggle to keep their behaviors in line with their values. Many can't, and they move on. As a community, we often ask certain people to stay at their foundations, though we know that has consequences for them, because we need them at the table. But we may see them moving from foundation to foundation or buying into the prevailing system.

Communities struggling for self-determination and social change need allies, and foundations have a history of being allies to struggling communities. The sense I have is that both communities and foundations are questioning the equity of the allied relationship, given the fact that most foundations have not addressed racism and white privilege within their own walls. Here are a few ideas to consider. A foundation can:

- Decide it will go through a transformation process to identify and eliminate racism and white privilege within itself.

- Address racism by looking at all levels: mission and purpose, structure, constituency relationships, policies, procedures, programs and personnel.

> Communities struggling for self-determination and social change need allies, and foundations have a history of being allies to struggling communities.

- Acknowledge that there is no quick fix. It takes time for an institution to move away from its racist construct; only then can it move toward becoming an anti-racist organization.

- Work in collaboration with the community. A foundation can learn from mistakes made by many of us who have learned in our struggle for equity. In order for an institution to transform itself by itself, the community must be part of the process.

- Include racism and white privilege as an indicator. This fear of addressing racism and white privilege has caused the mis-investment of a great deal of resources and energy from foundations and communities.

- Develop tools to identify where racism is embedded in the institution.

- Understand that there will be no answers before you start the journey. *White privilege dictates that you must know exactly what you will end up with and when it will happen.* In the community, we do our best and pray for the rest.

- Prepare to fund processes and concepts—not just projects—including those that an "expert" known to the foundation has not yet proven to work.

- Be open to hearing and feeling what the community is saying, as well as its actions and reactions to the process.

- Participate, along with the community, in a mutual examination process.

Chapter Eight

Interventions: Goals, Processes and Strategies

Sally Leiderman

"It's not that we have tried comprehensive system reform and found it lacking, it's just that we have never really tried it."[1] - Doug Nelson

Doug Nelson, President of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, made this point many years ago to make the case that, until we put in place everything we know needs to be done to make things better, we should not be surprised that things are not getting better—and we should not judge our methods until we have put all of them in place. David Hornbeck, former superintendent of the Philadelphia Public Schools, made the same point in his school improvement 11-point plan, in which he stated that the 11th point was that all of the 10 points above must be implemented if the plan has a chance to succeed. john powell, executive director of the Kirwan Institute for Race and Ethnicity in the Americas, in a meeting of advisors to a foundation that frequently partners with communities to improve community well-being, noted that one of the fundamental ways community building work gets off track is that its goals are generally aimed at reducing something or fixing something, and not a positive vision of what a community could be like when the work is done. Further, he said that the positive goal of racial equity is not explicit enough. The goal needs to be the elimination of white privilege. And he challenged people in the room to think about what that might look like in its specifics.

We raise these comments to make the point that, in the United States at least, we have never implemented a fully realized community building or place-based foundation/community partnership, because we have never explicitly designed one to eliminate white privilege, rather than one to achieve racial equity or to reduce institutional racism. Since we know that white privilege exists and substantially affects the distribution of benefits among groups of people, one could argue that outcomes for people in the United States as a whole (not just relative to another group) can not change in a substantial or sustained way without attention to the issue. Thus, much of the thinking in this section of the monograph is based on imagining (not knowing) what a fully realized community building or place-based community/foundation partnership might be like if the processes that maintain white privilege were an explicit consideration in the partnership's design and implementation.

Earlier, we described some of the typical components of community building efforts, from the perspective of funders, evaluators and others who do this work. In my own work, I sometimes talk about this as an 'initiative-centric' view of community change, because it describes the work in terms of discrete starting and ending points, linked to goals, timetables and resources usually developed by

> Much of the thinking ... is based on imagining (not knowing) what a fully realized community building or place-based community-foundation partnership might be like if the processes that maintain white privilege were an explicit consideration in the partnership's design and implementation.

---

[1] Sally Leiderman, Sam Stephens, Wendy C. Wolf, and Patrick T. McCarthy. *Building Capacity for System Reform* (Conshohocken, PA: Center for Assessment and Policy Development, 1994).

a funder outside of a community. In contrast, Barbara Major talks about community building work as a process that is always happening in a community, in which the people who live and work take advantage of resources being offered while trying to be true to what the community is doing for itself.

The following are questions we posed in thinking about how to reduce or eliminate white privilege in our community building processes and strategies:

- How is white privilege operating in 'initiative-centric' community building premises, processes and actions? What exactly does it look like?

- If we want our community building and place-based work to contribute explicitly to dismantling white privilege and its effects, what would have to be different about the premises, processes and actions of the work?

- How could this thinking be applied in practical ways to community building work? What might it take to build new approaches into our community building work?

Below are some examples of the results of this thinking.

1. Saying that the elimination of white privilege is a goal of the effort

One obvious change would be to name white privilege and racism where they have contributed to current community conditions, and to name the elimination of white privilege as an explicit goal for the work. While this might sound obvious and unimportant, the analogous experience of work on institutional racism has shown that it makes a difference in how some foundations, technical assistance providers, system and institutional players and evaluators think about and carry out their community building work. The Levi Strauss Foundation created Project Change in 1990, a community/foundation partnership that had as one of its four stated goals to "dismantle institutional policies and practices that promote racial discrimination."[2] As far as they knew, theirs was the first community/corporate foundation partnership to name reducing institutional racism as one of its goals. At that time, most corporations and foundations were talking about bias or discrimination, diversity or improving race relations—not racism, and definitely not institutional racism.

The CEO of Levi Strauss and Company and the board of the Levi Strauss Foundation were cautioned by advisors and some staff that naming institutional racism would bring repercussions. For example, it would open corporate employment practices to a higher level of scrutiny. And, in fact, this occurred. However, they expressly decided to "call it racism."[3] The Mott Foundation also began talking about reducing institutional racism as one of its grant-making goals, and several other foundations are now apparently more comfortable with this

---

[2] Sally A. Leiderman and Davido Dupree. *Project Change Evaluation Research Brief*. Unpublished document (Conshohocken, PA: Center for Assessment and Policy Development, 2000).

[3] Sally Leiderman, Mark George and Shirley Strong. *Looking Back: Project Change from 1992-2005* (Working Draft). Unpublished document. (Oakland, CA: Project Change, 2005).

language because they explicitly name it and make it a goal of some portion of their work. The Akonadi Foundation, The Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, the St. Paul Foundation, the Long Island Community Foundation, and others are examples. Their willingness to name the issue reinforces, provides political cover for and influences their grantees and colleagues—inside and outside the funding world.

One consequence of this wider discussion is that is harder to marginalize the people and groups (often groups of color) who were always aware of and raising this issue for consideration. In addition, each successive wave of clarity makes the previous "scary" topic seem much safer, compared to the one in the current spotlight, particularly as white people and institutions of privilege begin to adopt the language. For example, 15 years ago CAPD, a non-profit evaluation group, was told by some funders that it could not use the word "racism" in a proposal if it wanted to be funded; now it hears the same thing about the phrase "white privilege" but less frequently about "racism." We believe that talking explicitly about "white privilege" would eventually have a similar effect.

We also recognize that language gets co-opted and "coded" over time. Powerful words often lose their meaning when the topics they are designed to highlight are threatening. For example, "empowerment" conveyed an important idea for several years, with some useful work done in its name (investments in building community organizing skills, different ways of thinking about business and non-profit leadership, etc.). The term is now considered jargon and doesn't seem to spark a lot of new thinking. We have noticed the same devaluation of the language of diversity, inclusion and race relations. Thus, we hope that people will set goals to "eliminate white privilege" soon, while there is a window for the words to have power—but watch for ways in which the words, and the goal, get subverted if they become too threatening to the status quo.

> We hope that people will set goals to "eliminate white privilege" soon, while there is a window for the words to have power ...

2. Eliminating cultural racism from the goals of community building efforts

The child welfare system in St. Paul, Minnesota is working on an initiative to reduce racial disparities in the system. They are working to understand the extent to which their policies and practices contribute to these disparities and to change them. The effort includes working with their own staff and with contracted providers, as well as listening to several different racial and ethnic communities (Hmong, for example) in St. Paul to try to learn more about their perspectives and experiences of child welfare. In addition, they are trying to create an evaluation and accountability system that can capture what they are learning by using both non-Western methods of evaluation and administrative and other system data in Western ways. They are looking at disparities by racial groups, and also by ethnicity. For example, white families and African American families are disproportionately affected by the system, as are Hmong, Somali and Native American families.

A Hmong consultant who works with Hmong families in St. Paul was explaining to one of the authors of this monograph one reason why the families with whom he works are often at odds with child rearing expectations and family support and

child welfare efforts in St. Paul. He said, "You know Maslow's theory? For the Hmong, you need to flip it on its head. We're not trying to get to self-actualization; that is antithetical to our values and culture. We are trying to create strong, interdependent families and communities. To us, that is success."

How would the implications of his comment change the goals of a community building effort of which his neighborhood is a part? It might change the relative value placed on "overcrowded" housing conditions, for one thing. It might change the ideas about what is considered "mental health" among adolescents, and the kinds of "good parenting" practices offered in family support, early education and family preservation programs and settings. It might challenge a system leader's or funder's idea about how a family organizes itself to simultaneously meet its economic and child-rearing needs, who is considered a family and what constitutes a household. It might fundamentally challenge community builders to consider whether the implicit goal of their effort is to help a group of Hmong families assimilate into the prevailing cultural standards of St. Paul, and what the consequences of that have been for Hmong families and the child welfare system.

3. Using inclusive processes to set community building goals (including recognizing the limitations of inclusive processes)

The process doesn't ensure that white privilege has been eliminated, because of the internalized superiority and inferiority of participants in these processes and the power dynamics at work.

Many community building efforts include processes to involve people from different perspectives and backgrounds, including racial identities, in their goal-setting activities. These strategies include paying attention to multi-racial collaboration in the proposal and design processes, using community visioning and similar processes to set community outcomes and priorities, and establishing specific goals for different racial groups (for example, in school achievement, health outcomes, income and wealth accumulation, etc.). People who put these kinds of processes in place usually try to focus on the variety of perspectives represented, the authenticity and legitimacy of the people who are representing a broader constituency, and making sure that all of the voices in these processes are heard. There are a number of resources available to help people doing community building pay attention to these kinds of issues.[4]

These kinds of processes make sense. But to eliminate cultural racism in the goals of community building efforts, we may also have to scrutinize the results of these processes much more deeply than is common. The process doesn't ensure that white privilege has been eliminated, because of the internalized superiority and inferiority of participants in these processes and the power dynamics at work.

For example, one lesson from the Project Change work is that most of the task forces set boundaries around what they thought the goals and the strategies of their work could be. Though these issues were debated within the groups involved, none of the task forces elected to target the Levi Strauss Company's employment practices or to engage in very confrontational strategies with other institutions. They chose other targets (media, the school system, lending institutions) and, for the most part, negotiating, collaborating, training or other

---

[4] Please see, for example, materials produced by California Tomorrow, the Applied Research Center, and materials available at www.evaluationtoolsforracialequity.org.

"within the system" strategies for change. In hindsight, several task force leaders reflected that this was the message they received from the Foundation. As the evaluator of this effort, I noticed that the Foundation did not give them this message in any direct way. Some task force members put these constraints on the work themselves, responding to their own sense of what was appropriate and what was not, given their understanding of how things work.[5]

I believe we have to become much more skilled, honest and courageous at naming the aspects of the dominant culture that we allow to remain in community building goals, even when we use inclusive processes to set them. Then we need to remove them. This may require, for those of us who are white, 1) taking direction from people of color who often see white privilege or cultural racism before we do; 2) challenging results of inclusive processes—not on the basis of who is included but on the result's consistency with the group's analyses of white privilege; and 3) being among the people who are marginalized for consistently insisting we view our work through a racialized lens.

Below are some examples of what we might have to question:

- What value is placed on white notions of material success? What weight does the community building effort put on how community residents invest their money (for example, using immediate income to support extended family members—"sending money home" —rather than to accumulate wealth among immediate members of one's nuclear family)? Are relationships valued as wealth (as they are in some Native American nations)?

- Are we very clear about the cultural assumptions the initiative makes about what constitutes its key goals? What assumptions does the initiative make about what constitutes a stable family, a well-raised child prepared for success in school and in life, high-quality education, individual or community self-sufficiency, individual or community interdependence, a responsible person, an engaged citizen, effective leadership, and a good steward of the earth? How is good health defined? Literacy? Proof that something works?

- Are we constantly questioning the extent to which the community building effort is working to assimilate community members to white cultural values about these things? Do we know the extent to which various groups within the community support or reject assimilation in specific ways?

- Even in an inclusive process, have we explicitly discussed with residents of the community their histories, various cultural values and individual or group aspirations? Do we know our own racialized or cultural history, values and aspirations, especially if we are white? Do we have processes, vocabulary and analyses that permit us to look at the values underlying our work from different racial and cultural perspectives?

> What assumptions does the initiative make about what constitutes a stable family, a well-raised child prepared for success in school and in life, high-quality education ... a responsible person, an engaged citizen, effective leadership, and a good steward of the earth?

---

[5] Based on background research for Sally Leiderman, Mark George and Shirley Strong. *Looking Back: Project Change from 1992-2005* (Working Draft).

- As white people, are we willing to work just as hard to support community building efforts that 'privilege' the stated aspirations of people whose cultural values are different from our own, as we do for ones that match our own values? That is, are we willing to give up our own cultural racism?

4. Building elimination of white privilege, elimination of cultural racism and effective strategies to reduce institutional racism into our theories of change

When we create a theory of change, we are laying out the assumptions about how we expect change to happen. Theories of change also lay out the strategies that we think are likely to make things better for a community. This means that theories of change are one of the key places to apply our understandings of white privilege, cultural racism and institutional racism, if we want community building efforts to operate differently than they do today. Below are some issues to consider:

- Is the theory of change 'community-centric' (rather than 'initiative-centric')? That is, are we assuming that the community existed long before this particular community building effort and will go on afterwards? For example, does the theory of change acknowledge the community's own agenda for change, and processes in place working toward similar ends? Is there a process to allow the community to test out whether or not it should engage with the proposed community building effort? To decide how to allow it to enter, and how it should leave?

- How serious are we about our effort to make a difference? Is the timeframe for the effort, the level of resources, and the range of direct and indirect strategies sufficient to make a real difference in people's lives? Have we incorporated an analyses of the tenacity of systems that maintain white privilege and resistance to eliminating or reducing the power of these systems?

- What strategies are considered viable and acceptable? Are there implicit or explicit constraints placed on the kinds of strategies that a funder will support based on not embarrassing white people or not upsetting systems of white privilege? Does the initiative rely solely on collaborative or other within-system strategies to create change, or does it also consider efforts to increase pressure on institutions from outside?

- One of the leaders of the Albuquerque Project Change effort to reduce institutional racism credits a lot of their success to a mix of collaborative, coalition and community organizing strategies. She notes that, "We didn't start to see change until we stopped asking for it and started demanding it." One consequence of their work in partnership with many other groups was New Mexico's passage of one of the toughest anti-predatory lending laws in the country, and the ability to defend the legislation when it was under attack in a subsequent legislative session.

As white people, are we willing to work just as hard to support community building efforts that 'privilege' the stated aspirations of people whose cultural values are different from our own, as we do for ones that match our own values?

5. Incorporating political education or community organizing strategies into community building work

Barbara Major and Donna Bivens talk about the confusion of internalized racism and internalized superiority as one of the strategies by which white privilege remains unchallenged. Paulo Friere, in his classic *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,[6] talks about political education as a means of helping people end this confusion. El Centro de la Raza operates a community organization to support the self-determination of residents of a multi-racial neighborhood in Seattle. While it is not a comprehensive community initiative, it embodies the comprehensiveness of community building goals and strategies within the organization. When you visit El Centro de la Raza, it is impossible to tell the people offering services and support from the people receiving services and support. In part, that is because the same people may be both providers and beneficiaries of service. Dignity and respect for the capacities and leadership of people is built into the fabric of the operation. There is a multi-lingual childcare center in which the children learn about community activism and non-violence. There is an attractive and high-quality restaurant in which food is served free. There are a variety of supports for couples experiencing domestic abuse, and poetry classes and an art gallery. And importantly, there are regular political education classes focused on helping people see the relationship among their individual struggles, white privilege and racism, and other forms of oppression.

Individuals and staff are always encouraged to work on their issues at two levels: their immediate individual need, and political remedies to redress the underlying issues that create the immediate need. For example, a person who is currently homeless is likely to be supported to move into one of the apartments that El Centro has developed in the neighborhood over the years. He or she will also be encouraged to become active in community efforts to increase the availability of affordable neighborhood housing. El Centro shows us that paying this constant attention to both levels of work— by the same people—gives them an opportunity to feel their own power, end some of their confusion about how things actually work, and be part of a collective action that has made a difference over the years.

6. Being transparent and addressing racism and white privilege directly.

Many community builders have indicated that they have had to either "pay now or pay later" in terms of the struggles they go through once they begin to work explicitly on their own individual and collective understandings of white privilege and structural, institutional and cultural racism. These groups remind us that there is always struggle, discomfort and conflict in this work, but the issues will always surface at some point—even if groups choose to avoid discussing them. Further, absent the struggle, community building work inevitably stalls. Here are two ideas for community builders to address these struggles:

---

[6] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* (New York: Continuum, 1970).

- It is possible to name privilege and racism explicitly in your work, but it may not always be strategic to name them in terms of particular strategies. Andrea Anderson of the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change gave examples at a meeting she and I recently attended. She called this the "inside and outside game." In thinking about how to support improved early education and care outcomes for children in a state, she asked about the distribution of poor outcomes for young children by race grouping. This had not previously been a guiding analysis for the state or the community building effort, though it was becoming more central to their thinking over time. As is true in most states, people knew about the changing demographics of the state but were having difficulty talking about them in ways that moved the work forward. Anderson then noted that most of the children of color in that state are in family daycare settings, but most of the state's policy and funding for early care and education focuses on center-based care. People in the state felt that universal policies, not racially specific ones, were most effective at gaining political support. Anderson offered that the community building effort in that state could work to refocus the state's policy priorities toward family care, without ever making it about race.

- All of the work of community building does not have to be done by multi-racial groups or in multi-racial settings. Mono-racial work and caucuses are valuable, and can be a sign of the maturity of a community building effort. Barbara Major offers that some communities of color are in so much pain that they need to do some of their healing work apart from other groups. Otherwise, the healing work gets shortchanged in favor of protecting or taking care of people from other groups (usually the white people). We know of some pro-integration advocates who believe that society cannot achieve full integration of opportunities and values using segregated strategies or working in mono-racial caucuses. But with that exception, many community building efforts that are explicitly talking about racism in their work encourage the use of caucuses of white people, African Americans, Latinos/as and other groups as part of their work. (For more information about doing caucus work, see chapter 10: Multi-racial Partnerships and Coalitions.)

7. Staying the course

Whenever communities and funders work together, there will be power and group dynamics at play. Funders have money (and often many other kinds of resources), and community organizations and residents have access to the people, places and actions that can produce outcomes. That is, funders need communities to do community building. Foundation Boards, management and staff often say that they have no reason to exist without "grantees" (people who have ideas, opportunities and reasons to use foundation resources). While this is not entirely true—foundations could give away their money at any time in almost any way for almost any purpose—it is true that foundations rely on others to do the work the foundation feels is important. Thus, the basic power dynamics in community/foundation partnerships are not as one-sided as they sometimes appear.

At the same time, one of the most difficult power dynamics in community/foundation partnerships is that, as the work is currently constructed, the consequences of things going badly are always much more serious for the people in communities than for donors, foundation Boards, management and staff. All of the players in a community building effort who are economically, intellectually and emotionally invested in the work suffer if things don't go well. In the most difficult instances, people in the community or foundation employed by the effort may lose their jobs. But all of the people in communities that participate in these efforts have to live every day with the results—in terms of the conditions of their communities, the kinds of supports and services available to them, the relationships that are built or ruptured, and the opportunity cost of being part of the effort instead of doing something else with the same time and effort. This is not true for people at the foundation in the same way.

Community partners in community building and place-based initiatives can never walk away from what is going on in their communities (unless they can move away), and foundations can (though they may choose not to). In a similar way, most people of color can never walk away from racism, while many white people can. The ability to 'walk away' is one of the ways in which foundations are themselves privileged institutions.[7]

My own impression is that funding partners sometimes leave a community building effort when the opportunity they have unleashed becomes most difficult for them to control or its future success seems least likely. Sometimes the rationale is couched as unacceptable levels of risk or unacceptable returns on investment. Sometimes foundations will say that community partners are ready to go solo, though the problems are not solved and a community's ability to move forward is compromised by the foundation's departure. To me, that is one of the most central examples of white privilege in community building work: the worldview that allows a sense that some levels of risk are not acceptable, though the consequences to others of your opting out are greater for them than for you.

---

[7] Paul Kivel, *Social Service or Social Change?* (Oakland: www.paulkivel.com, 2002).

Chapter Nine

Doing Evaluation Differently

Sally Leiderman

"We measure what we value.[1]"

This chapter focuses on evaluation as a part of community building work. People's ideas about what matters in evaluation are part of their worldviews. And people's worldviews are shaped by white privilege and internalized superiority and racism, by their training and life experiences, and by the credence they give to different ways of knowing. Some people trust data reported from government sources, in the media or by community organizations. Some people trust particular data from some of these sources but not all of them. And some people do not trust these sources at all.[2] Some people can make meaning from what they themselves observe and can generalize from that meaning to broader understandings; some people do not trust conclusions drawn in this way. Some people are more trusting of what they can "feel"; for some people that phrase has no meaning in terms of a way of gaining insight or information. All of these concepts are different ways of knowing.

Our ways of knowing and our trust in others' ways of knowing depend, today at least, in large part on the way our professional and personal lives have been shaped by racism, other methods of oppression, white privilege and access to power. So racism, other methods of oppression, white privilege and access to power always influence evaluation. They influence the questions we choose to ask, the information we trust, which findings we decide are important or unimportant, how we make meaning of results, etc.

> We are using the term 'evaluation' broadly to describe the ways in which community residents, funders and others seek to understand what they are accomplishing, measure their results and hold themselves accountable for doing what they intend. In evaluation jargon, this could include: outcome, impact, process and implementation evaluations, self-assessment, participatory evaluation, learning circles and other ways people gather and share information to see how things are going. Methods can include formal and informal information-gathering and making meaning of information through reflection, qualitative and quantitative analysis, synthesis, storytelling, dialogue, etc.

We also want to note that evaluation as practiced in most community building work today generally reflects Western ideas about cause and effect relationships. That is, most methods are based on a philosophy that change can be understood as a rational and somewhat linear process. For example, most evaluation methods

> Our ways of knowing and our trust in others' ways of knowing depend ... in large part on the way our professional and personal lives have been shaped by racism. ... So racism, other methods of oppression, white privilege and access to power always influence evaluation.

---

[1] Marc Miringoff, *The Social State of Connecticut.* (New York: Fordham Institute for Innovation in Social Policy, 2000).

[2] For example, readers may be familiar with the phrase "Figures don't lie, but liars can figure," which has always tempered my own reliance on quantitative data.

assume that one can predict what is likely to happen in the future based on what is happening now. Evaluators sometimes talk about the trajectory of change, and what we often do is look at short-term outcomes, hoping they will predict "success" against longer-term ones that can often not be measured in the studied time period.

This is particularly problematic for evaluations looking at eliminating white privilege or racism. We can look at behavioral change of individuals and institutions, policy-level change, and many other intermediate steps. But given that we have not yet eliminated white privilege anywhere in the United States, and we do not actually know what it will take to do that, our ability to know what it will take in the short-term to achieve certain results in the long-term is quite limited.

Thus, evaluation in this instance is a pretty speculative notion. So, the first lesson of this chapter is that we should take a long, hard look at what we think evaluation is, and whether its basic premises—that current methods enable us to track progress and measure results, and that it is important to do that—hold up to careful scrutiny.

Even with its limitations, evaluation can be a tool that helps communities and their partners do community building work. The steps people take to design an evaluation can clarify what they hope to accomplish. The upfront evaluation design conversations can also help set reasonable expectations among community building partners for how long and how deep a change is likely. Further, evaluation can be one of the processes that holds the partners in a community building effort accountable for doing what they say they will do.

Reflective kinds of evaluations can surface insights, lessons and opportunities to move work forward. Participatory evaluations and data-sharing can offer another avenue for people to engage with a community building effort. There are also job and career opportunities in evaluation, and many chances to share skills that people who are part of community building work, but not in formal evaluation roles, can incorporate into their work. For example, as they are participating in evaluation conversations, community building practitioners often get better at assessing whether their strategies are sufficient to produce the changes they intend.

Evaluations can provide additional evidence that helps people celebrate what they've accomplished. They can help people make the case for what they've done, support efforts to get more resources to the work and protect parts of the work from being eliminated. We've seen evaluations used in all those ways many times. They can also be a major tool for shifting power among various community building players and partners, based on who decides how success will be defined and measured, which processes are being evaluated, who controls the dissemination of information, and, especially, what gets evaluated and what kinds of evidence are given credence.

Questions, Responses and Suggestions

The ideas in this chapter come primarily from three sources. One is a series of lengthy conversations with Barbara Major about white privilege and cultural and institutional racism in evaluation. Another is work done to develop Evaluation Tools for Racial Equity,[3] a website designed to help communities assess their own progress toward anti-racism and inclusion goals. It is important to note that the website was developed with the help of many advisors and four community-based groups doing anti-racism work: Teaching for Change, IMPACT Silver Spring, ERASE Racism and the South Orange/Maplewood Coalition on Race. The third source is the experience of the author doing evaluations of community building efforts for the past 30 years.

All of these sources inform this chapter. In addition, we considered this information through the lens of the following three questions:

- What are some of the ways in which white privilege and racism are embedded in evaluation as we do it today?

- What would anti-racist evaluation look like? Or, even more strongly, what would evaluation be like if we considered evaluation one of the tools of community building work that could help to dismantle white privilege?

- How would evaluation need to be different from the way it is today to serve that purpose?

The rest of this chapter is divided into two parts. The first lays out some responses to the questions above. We hope these will stimulate thinking among evaluators, community residents, funders and others involved in evaluations about what we can do differently and better. The second part of this chapter provides some specific suggestions that apply these responses to evaluation work.

Responses

What are some of the ways in which white privilege and racism are embedded in evaluation as we do it today?

As Barbara Major points out, evaluations are processes that judge, and in so doing, they explicitly privilege some worldviews over others. She also notes that few evaluations in community building work are reciprocal among communities and the other partners in the work (funders, technical assistance providers, evaluators, state and local systems, government entities, etc.) Even when community residents participate in evaluation, the evaluation is still generally focused on learning about a community's competence, capacity and the fidelity with which community-level participants implement the efforts' plans. Very few evaluations spend equal resources to learn about the competence, capacity and

[Evaluations] can also be a major tool for shifting power among various community building players and partners, based on who decides how success will be defined and measured, which processes are being evaluated, who controls the dissemination of information, and, especially, what gets evaluated and what kinds of evidence are given credence.

---

[3] Please see *www.evaluationtoolsforracialequity.org*. The tipsheets from which sections of this chapter were drawn were cowritten by Sam Stephens.

fidelity of other partners—particularly funders. Lack of reciprocal accountability is one marker of white privilege.

There are many other ways in which white privilege is embedded in the underlying (and often unarticulated) assumptions of typical community building evaluations, their methods and in the ways findings are used. Some examples are noted in Figure A (see p. 101).

What would anti-racist evaluation look like? Or, even more strongly, what would evaluation be like if we considered evaluation one of the tools of community building work that could help to dismantle white privilege?

Below is a series of ideas about what evaluations of community building efforts might look like, or include, if we applied the insights that are implied by the discussion in Section II of this monograph to community building evaluations. Some of these ideas are already being applied in a few evaluations. However, many are just at the idea stage. We hope that readers will expand this list, refine it, put many of the ideas into practice, and share with us the extent to which they are successful.

Evaluations can more directly track and measure progress toward elimination of white privilege by:

- Tracking structural and institutional changes, wherever possible, at the community level;

- Designing evaluations that can look at the separate effects of race and class, or by raising the importance of doing so even if they cannot;

- Maintaining a focus on community-level processes and relationships, in addition to individual-level processes and relationships; and

- Including power analyses and tracking changes in the flow of power and its consequences for various groups.

Evaluations can also help community building partners maintain their focus on the consequences of white privilege and racism by:

- Tracking changes in community-level outcomes for different racial groups over the long-term (report cards)—not just in the short-term and not just for all community residents as a whole;

- Tracking the extent to which race becomes a less powerful predictor, in a statistical sense, of how people fare as a way of looking at changes in racial equity;

- Tracking a community's relationship to itself (per B. Major);

- Tracking progress toward a community's understanding of white privilege and oppression (per B. Major);

Even when community residents participate in evaluation, the evaluation is still generally focused on learning about a community's competence, capacity and the fidelity with which community-level participants implement the efforts' plans.

- Having communities evaluate foundations (per B. Major);

- Shifting the power dynamics in evaluation away from privileged institutions and "experts" in evaluation and toward groups of color and individual communities. These shifts could encompass:

  o Establishing what success will mean;

  o Establishing the timetable for looking at various results;

  o Establishing the theory of change that will essentially define the kinds of short-term and long-term outcomes that the evaluation will measure;

  o Deciding what parts of a community building effort to measure and what questions to ask;

  o Deciding what evidence is credible;

  o When evaluation resources are limited, deciding where to use them to get the most benefit from evaluation;

  o Interpreting results;

  o Framing results (for example, showing how institutional policies and practices influence individual outcomes, by presenting the differences in resource allocation across schools—and residential segregation patterns around schools—on the same page as student outcomes by racial groupings);

  o Sharing results.

- Providing back-up information about statistics and how they are derived. This includes clearly laying out the way various statistics are calculated (including data sources, populations that have been included and excluded from the data, and the specific algorithms used to create the statistic being shown);

- Reviewing findings by racially, ethnically or culturally classified subgroups within major racial categories to get more accurate (and less stereotypical) understandings of what different groups may be experiencing (e.g., how Southeast Asians in a community are faring in terms of health, income, stable and affordable housing and educational measures);

- Using evaluation for learning rather than for setting consequences;

- Not using evaluation at all if we cannot figure out ways to address the issues raised above (and other issues of privilege and racism we haven't listed here).

How would evaluation need to be different from the way it is today to serve that purpose?
There are several ways in which evaluation as a practice (and a field) would need to be different if we were to reduce or eliminate its embedded racism, and use it

as a tool to help eliminate white privilege in our community building work. At the very minimum, more of the people involved would have to have a deep understanding of what white privilege is and how it works, a similarly deep understanding of the various mechanics of racism, and a willingness to bring those understandings more fully to evaluation work.

In addition, we would have to change many aspects of our practice. For example, we would need to understand, and probably change, the extent to which we are "privileging" certain ways of knowing and devaluing others. In my work, I have learned to be very skeptical of government and administrative data, particularly as they apply to people of color. People who are undocumented are almost always undercounted in these kinds of data. Community partners have shared many stories of the ways in which census data, high school completion data, special education designations and domestic violence information are misleading, because of the way seemingly objective definitions are applied differently to people of color than to white people. As a result, I have become much more cautious about using these kinds of data in evaluation, and much more careful to understand exactly how they were collected and what judgments go into the summary information that is most often reported. One practice change that flows from this is to always gather stories about the same issue, and to see where the stories and the data align and where they do not.

Another change would be to require that people involved in deciding what to measure, how, and what the consequences are spend time understanding each other's worldviews, theories of change and analyses of white privilege and structural, institutional and cultural racism. A related change is to make sure that a wide range of perspectives about these things is represented in that discussion, and that the group works hard together to reconcile or agree to live with differences among these perspectives in evaluation design, implementation and the way meaning is made of the results. Two ways to make it more likely that those changes can happen are to broaden the range of people who are considered evaluators (privileging experience and insight as much as academic credentials) and working to bring more people of color into the "professional" evaluation world.

Finally, evaluators would have to decline to participate in evaluations that they believe are structured, intentionally or unintentionally, in ways that maintain white privilege.

Suggestions

Using evaluation to help structure different theories of change
As noted above, people's ideas about how change happens are based on their analyses, judgments and observations about how the world works. Data and other kinds of evidence help people make these judgments. But people often choose the data and evidence they examine, interpret data differently and draw different conclusions about what data from one situation imply about another. These differences will affect people's theories of change about, for example, whether or not anti-discriminatory employment legislation translates into more

open access to high-paying jobs for which people are qualified, or if diversity training of banking executives and loan officers results in a re-examination of credit granting policies of lending institutions.

In developing theories of change for evaluation purposes, it is important to look at all the available evidence about how change happens and for whom. It is also important for people to be open to new or alternative theories of change. This is particularly the case for white people who may be very steeped in dominant culture analyses and explanations that tend to assign most of the responsibility for poor outcomes to individual actions. For example, whites may say that families of color should do more upkeep on their homes to improve community housing stock—rather than look for institutional or structural explanations of outcomes, as people in many communities rent their homes and major upkeep is usually the responsibility of the owner, not the renter. People will also vary in the extent to which they trust systems or leaders to do what they say they will do. It is also important to listen to the voices of people who can talk about whether or not strategies designed to benefit them have benefited or harmed them in the past.

In addition, community change of any type is almost never a straightforward and linear process. Changes in community norms, institutions and patterns not only take a long time to unfold, but within any given time period there are likely to be steps taken toward the desired goal and those in the opposite direction. At any given time, if we took a "snapshot" of the community, we might see progress or retrenchment or stalemate or all three at the same time.

That is why it is important to look for overall trends, to use more than one way of observing and recording changes, and to evaluate strategies at several points in time. Strategies addressing white privilege or racism directly are especially likely to generate resistance in the community, particularly as they become more visible and more challenging to the status quo. For example, school district officials and school board members who initially support sharing of school achievement data may withdraw easy access to that information when it is analyzed to reveal a systematic pattern of assigning more substitutes or fewer credentialed teachers to schools with higher numbers of students of color, and the association of these differences with disparities in student outcomes. Collaborations working on improved access to health care may falter when strategies to insure undocumented workers become crucial to further progress.

> A theory of change to support evaluation of anti-racism work should include strategies for anticipating, identifying and addressing resistance in the community.

A theory of change to support evaluation of anti-racism work should include strategies for anticipating, identifying and addressing resistance in the community. That will not only improve the work's overall effectiveness, but also allow the evaluation to include these strategies in its assessment.

How can we avoid "blaming the victim" when presenting information on poor outcomes for different racial, ethnic, language or immigrant groups in community building work?

Groups working to eliminate or reduce differences (disparities) in how racial or ethnic groups fare compared to other groups on important outcomes (education, wealth accumulation, health, etc.) report these differences to make their case for

change and to track the progress of their work. For example, they may need to show the different rates of graduation from high school for white, African American, Latino/a, Asian and Pacific Islander and Native American students (and they may also need to show differences in rates of graduation within these groups—by school, gender, language primarily spoken in the home, etc.). Groups use these kinds of data to raise awareness and concern, mobilize supporters, call officials and institutions to account and to provide baseline (starting) and follow-up information for evaluation.

In addition to the difficulty in finding accurate and comparable information about outcomes for different groups, there is another major challenge. This is the challenge of making sure people who view the data can see it in the context of an analysis of institutional (or structural) racism, or within the context of white privilege. The reason this is so important is that, without a context for viewing the data, people will create their own explanations. And people without an understanding of the cumulative effects of white privilege, institutional and structural racism will tend to look for individual—rather than institutional or structural—explanations that end up "blaming the victim" for poor group outcomes. That is, people will view persistent and large group differences as being solely the result of attitudes, actions and inherent abilities of the individuals in the group or of a group "culture," and they will tend to discount or ignore the role of government policies (e.g., redlining), mechanics of resource allocation (e.g., basing school resources on local property taxes), intergenerational opportunities for wealth accumulation (linked to educational opportunity) and cultural norms that reinforce disparate outcomes by racial group (e.g., national ideas such as meritocracy and individuality).

> This is the challenge of making sure people who view the data can see it in the context of an analysis of institutional (or structural) racism, or within the context of white privilege. The reason this is so important is that, without a context for viewing the data, people will create their own explanations.

When presenting data that demonstrate differences in outcomes among groups, particularly those that illustrate poor outcomes (such as school dropout rates or business failure rates), it is important to put this information into context. Specifically, it is helpful to provide data supporting an understanding of differences as a result of policies, practices and decisions that are the target for change—consistent with an analysis of white privilege and institutional or structural racism.

For example, high school graduation rate data for white, African American and Latino/a students could be accompanied by information on the number of substitute teachers or credentialed teachers in schools serving high proportions of students of color vs. schools serving high proportions of white students, on the availability (or lack) of opportunities for students to pursue their studies on an alternative schedule that accommodates work, or other structural factors that have been identified as key to student outcomes. Information on small business start-ups and failures for Latino/a-owned enterprises could be accompanied by summaries of the policies of lending organizations on how potential assets and costs are considered in making loans, if those policies are thought to influence the outcomes.

The Project Change groups (and others, we assume) also found it important to "'test-market" the presentation of data (report cards, evaluation reports, summary data tables, etc.) to understand the conclusions that key audiences are likely to draw from the data itself, and from how different data are displayed or

grouped on a page (for example, showing rates of graduation by school and resource allocation to schools on the same page) and from the surrounding text. To be most effective, it can help to test materials with people who are likely to agree with our analysis and people who are likely to disagree. They should also be tested with people from different racial, ethnic, language and cultural groups, to see how they respond to the way the information is framed and what they think it implies about what needs to happen next.

Using evaluation to help set reasonable expectations for what can be accomplished

One of the most important things evaluation can do is to help lay out for others the amount of change to be expected and how long it may take to accomplish. These expectations can be reflected in the questions, outcomes, findings and in the context in which the findings are presented. Putting these expectations on the table for discussion and negotiation, as part of the evaluation process, makes the evaluation more transparent and more of a tool to address privilege and racism. Doing this gives the players in community building an opening to begin to negotiate the consequences for meeting or not meeting these expectations. Groups use their own experience, their analyses of how power, privilege, oppression and racism work and the experiences of other communities and groups working on the same issues to help set these expectations. Two ways to help people do this are to:

1. Ask all partners in the community building effort to comment on their beliefs about the sufficiency of the proposed strategies to lead directly or indirectly to the proposed outcomes before the evaluation even starts. (For example, if the community building effort is designed to improve the family economic status of many people in a community over five years, ask the partners to share their own perspectives, experience or evidence that the range of proposed strategies is deep enough, broad enough and complete enough to get there.) Consider especially whether or not the activities are powerful enough to overcome resistance and strategies put in place by those working to preserve the status quo. Evidence can include common sense, the community's own experiences in the past, research from a wide range of sources and the experiences of other communities.

2. Ask all partners to clarify their beliefs about which outcomes can be affected by strategies under the direct or indirect control of the people doing the work. For example, suppose one goal is to increase the number of a community's high school graduates of color who attend and succeed in college. The group may be able to ensure (with difficulty) that many teachers are engaged in a process to reflect on the white privilege and racism built into their expectations of students of different backgrounds. They may also organize the community to put pressure on the School District to put Advanced Placement (AP) classes in all of the District's high schools, thus opening up access to eligible students regardless of the school they attend.

    These activities could reasonably be expected to lead to the short-term outcome of increasing the number of achieving students of color who

graduate from high school with the expectation that they can attend and succeed in college: a short-term outcome of the strategy to increase the number of students of color in a community who attend and succeed in college.

However, as we all know, many other factors come into play, for example:

- The ability of a community or individual students or their families to finance a student's college education;

- The expectations of the family, the school and the community about whether or not the student is making a good choice to go to college rather than enter the military, take full-time employment or pursue other goals;

- Whether or not the student is accepted into a college in which he or she is likely to succeed;

- National policy regarding college financing, and other policies that affect the opportunities and costs of options for young adults;

- Home responsibilities;

- The health, motivation and resilience of the student; and

- The supports in the community to overcome barriers for individual students.

Expectations about the amount of change and timing of change to reach the desired outcome have to take into account which of these opportunities and challenges a given set of strategies can control or influence, and which they cannot.

Conclusion

It is easy for community builders to want to over-promise what can be accomplished in a given timeframe, especially to key constituencies, because so much needs to be done and the consequences of the status quo are so damaging. In addition, funders who need to justify their support for this work may push communities and grantees to over-promise what they can do—directly or by transmitting their own anxieties. But if all involved in racial equity and inclusion work—groups doing the work, evaluators, funders, constituencies—are willing to put out real and honest expectations about what can be accomplished, and by when, those expectations will eventually become the standard by which our work can be judged.

FIGURE A: Examples of White Privilege and Racism embedded in typical evaluations of community building efforts

Assumptions

- Initiative-centric evaluations reify the notion that community building is a project, not a process, by assuming that it is possible and appropriate to accurately measure a piece of what happens in communities without taking into account context (per Major).

- Evaluation, as it is currently practiced, tends to reinforce dominant cultural values about who is an expert and what is right or best.

- Evaluations tend to measure goals other than the elimination of white privilege—serving as a distraction that helps maintain white privilege.

- Evaluations tend to judge communities as failures (per Major) if they do not meet timetables for change established outside the community, based on incomplete analyses of, for example, potential resistance to change that genuinely threatens the status quo or how power operates in a community.

Methods

- Evaluations often place more weight on findings generated through quantitative data than through qualitative data, without taking into account the validity of different ways of knowing, community assessment of the quality of quantitative data, and what we know about some data that are presented as objective but that are often computed using racialized and subjective algorithms (e.g., how children are classified into special education categories, how credit-worthiness is calculated, which children's test scores are included in high stakes testing results, etc.)

- Evaluations often fail to use methods that would allow us to separate effects of racial categorization from effects of class (or income or wealth accumulation). This makes it harder to identify institutional and other forms of racism as causes of poor outcomes, or to track which changes in institutional policies and practices are most successful at reducing the effects of institutional racism.

How findings are used

- Evaluation results are one of the tools that privileged systems and institutions use to reward certain kinds of behaviors and punish others. One example is when funding decisions reward tangible short-term changes that are not likely to lead to longer-term or more powerful changes.

Chapter Ten

Multi-Racial Partnerships and Coalitions

Maggie Potapchuk

"Partnership has become a buzz word in community development. However, in most cases around the country, "public-private partnerships," in which representatives from low-income neighborhoods are asked to sit at the table with government, business, and other private sector leaders, have led to little gain for the community and sometimes great harm. Sitting at the table is not the same as exercising community power. Communities that are unorganized, have forged little or no consensus as to what they want to see done, and have not yet identified resources to bring to the table cannot be expected to participate as equal partners with government and private sector leaders bringing traditionally recognized resources and planning capacity - and often elitist assumptions - to the process. The result of this premature partnership is almost always failure. To forge an effective partnership, the community must be organized well enough to be an equal partner at table, not a junior partner. It must participate out of strength, so that it can pursue its own agenda and not be suffocated or co-opted by the agenda of others."[1]

— *from* Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood
by Peter Medoff and Holly Sklar

The coalitions and partnerships discussed in this chapter range from multi-racial coalitions composed of residents from a neighborhood working together on a common goal and agreeing to take action together, to multi-racial partnerships composed of diverse organizational leaders who create a shared set of goals and agree to use their personal and institutional power to achieve them.[2] Foundations also play different roles in these coalitions and partnerships: Some request a quarterly report, others are active partners, and some participate as needed. Community residents are placed in awkward and frustrating positions when forced to navigate foundations' expectations and roles, in part because of the power imbalances inherent in their relative positions of privilege.

One thing whites and predominately white organizations must understand prior to working in a community is our historical record of betraying people of color, and how that plays a role in each and every partnership and coalition (see sidebar, next page). It is important to not be tepid or resistant to discussing the issues of race and privilege. By ignoring the issues and letting them emerge, or in many cases explode, it is on one level irresponsible and in some cases reckless. In the publication *Voices from the Field II: Reflections on Comprehensive Community*

> It is important to not be tepid or resistant to discussing the issues of race and privilege. By ignoring the issues and letting them emerge, or in many cases explode, it is on one level irresponsible and in some cases reckless.

---

[1] Peter Medoff and Holly Sklar, *Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood* (Boston: South End Press, 1994), p. 276.

[2] William Potapchuk and Maggie Potapchuk, *Building Effective Community Partnerships,* Toolkit1. Systems Improvement, Training and Technical Assistance Project (Washington D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership, 2002), p. 3.

Change, one of the themes that surfaced from the interviews with community building practitioners, stakeholders and foundation representatives was "Every participant in the change process needs to develop the capacity to talk about the deep and difficult aspects of racial issues."[3]

> ## Methods Used to Neutralize and Destroy Coalitions
>
> While the strength of numbers and the power a coalition or partnership can have to tackle structural racism and white privilege is extraordinary, that strength can also be very threatening for white elites and others committed to the status quo. The following are some of the methods used over the years to "neutralize and destroy coalitions," as compiled by Mark Chesler in the book *Impact of Racism on White Americans:*[4]
>
> - Denying or ignoring issues;
> - Inventing irrelevant tasks or committees;
> - Making token concessions;
> - Distorting issues and information (perhaps through media);
> - Symbolically supporting coalition objectives (rhetoric without action);
> - Diffusing elite accountability;
> - Postponing or delaying meetings/actions;
> - Challenging the competency of members of color;
> - Accepting others as representing organizational or community needs better than coalition members;
> - Co-opting visible coalition leaders;
> - Taking police action to suppress activity;
> - Reminding Latinos they are Caucasians (and not black);
> - Reminding Blacks they are Americans first (and not of Latin descent);
> - Reminding poor whites they are white first (and not Black or Latino/a); and
> - Having coalition groups compete with each other.

This chapter applies some of the concepts in Section II to the work of building effective multi-racial partnerships and coalitions in community building work. The ideas are based on our experiences with coalitions and partnerships that have

---

[3] The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families, *Voices from the Field II: Reflection on Comprehensive Community Change* (Washington D.C.: The Aspen Institute, 2002), p. 59.

[4] Benjamin P. Bowser and Raymond G. Hunt, editors, *Impacts of Racism on White Americans* (Newbury Park, CA 1998), p. 234-5.

been initiated, supported, and/or financed by foundations. The following are the issues that consistently were presented as challenges community builders face:

- How to choose people and organizations to participate in a partnership or coalition that will have decision-making authority;

- Who controls the process and how to address the power dynamics;

- How to address intergroup tensions;

- How to create an inclusive transparent coalition process with ongoing learning; and

- How the coalition is involved in choosing technical assistance providers.

The following items frame each of these issues within the context of white privilege and racism. We also share some ideas on how to address the complexities of creating and maintaining strong multi-racial coalitions and partnerships. Some of the issues may seem obvious, yet some persistently present themselves in community processes.

Ensure there is diverse community representation and significant resident participation within the coalition or partnership.

Time and time again, people come together in communities to work on an issue and routinely one of these scenarios occurs:

- Very diverse organizational leaders gather for the first meeting. As the work progresses toward implementation, people are frustrated that members of different racial identity groups are not getting involved, unaware that having one messenger/leader involved in the coalition is not sufficient to represent or engage individuals from a specific racial identity group.

- At one point during the first meeting, someone looks around the table and observes that the group originally invited to this meeting is not diverse. There is discussion about who is missing, invitations go out for another "first" meeting, and then people are surprised that some representatives from different racial and ethnic groups are still not present. Invitations were sent, but no one did any work to learn more about or reach out to the different groups and leaders.

- A group gathers to work on a community issue, never noticing that a diverse group of residents and stakeholders is not present.

Knowing who lives in the community, understanding the community's racial history, and learning about the different social and service networks that exist in different racial and ethnic communities must be basic steps taken before working in a community. Though we have been using mostly broad racial terms—such as Asian American and Pacific Islander, Latino/a American, African American, and Native American in this monograph—within each of these classifications there

are of course many groups and racial, ethnic, religious, political, tribal, and cultural identities.

Within and across these identities are histories, various forms of solidarity and assorted conflicts and tensions. It is essential to allow each person to self-identify and not to assume another person's race or ethnicity. Michael Jones-Correa, citing a national survey, shares an example of how first-generation Latin American immigrants self-identify: "For example, 63% of the Puerto Ricans and 94% of the Cubans surveyed identified as white." Correa attributes such "self-identification to Latinos' awareness of the social privileges or disadvantages associated with color."[5] There are many other issues, from generational differences to political party, etc., that are important to consider in bringing together an authentically diverse multi-racial group.

Things to Consider

Do your homework. It is important for foundations and coalition members to increase their awareness of different groups' histories, solidarities, conflicts and tensions. Find out about a community's racial history.

Discuss possible participants with several sources. Ideally, it would be helpful to find a few community residents with minimum personal agendas, who are more focused on a broader inclusive community agenda, to assist with your research. Who do people consistently mention as bridge-builders among different constituency groups? Who are the individuals and organizations that make things happen? Who are the people with legitimacy, credibility and authority within a particular constituency group?

Go beyond basic identity group labeling. An organization may represent Asian Americans, but there is more to know about it. Find out about its constituency: Is it working class? Middle class? Does it include Koreans but not Vietnamese? Learn about the organizations, who they represent, what their issues are, and how they work to be accountable to their constituency group.

Notice how personal filters may be used to make decisions on participants. Sometimes we identify a person of a particular race to participate because of our own personal comfort level based on class, education level, or way a person works. Sometimes we choose people based on our past experiences in groups: Will this person be confrontational? Will he or she be a team player (based on my definition)? Will this person do his/her share of the work? We sometimes choose people who have similar conceptual understandings and responses to racism and white privilege.

Ensure that community residents most affected by the issue(s) being addressed in the coalition are the majority in the governance structure. The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, a well-known community building initiative in Boston, learned this lesson very early in their process. Their first design of their

---

[5] Maya D. Wiley, *Structural Racism and Multi-racial Coalition Building,* (Minneapolis: Institute on Race and Poverty, November 2003), p.22.

governance board included 23 members with only four slots for residents. After some initial heated meetings, the governance structure was changed so that: "there would be a 31-member board, with a resident majority, a minimum of 12 community members and 4 additional spots designated for residents . . . Equal minimum representation was provided for the neighborhood's four major cultures—Black, Cape Verdean, Latino, and White—rather than representation based simply numerically on Dudley's population."[6]

Address the power dynamics and keep the process transparent.

In the book *Core Issues in Comprehensive Community-Building Initiatives: Exploring Power and Race,* Butler and Stone discuss power and race issues with different stakeholders (funders, residents, technical assistance providers and managers) and share how foundation behavior sets the tone within many comprehensive community building initiatives:

> *"Foundation behavior can help or hinder that process, depending on to what extent the funder takes responsibilities for redirecting attention from itself and its power position over resources to the other resource sectors. Instead, foundations have begun to promote the idea of being philanthropic "partners" in community initiatives, which tends to emphasize their role as resources rather than redirecting attention away from them. To complicate matters, foundations typically fail to give a good definition of what they really mean by that partnership. Those on the receiving end of the funds tend to point to ways in which foundations act as de facto "senior partners" in these new relationships, continuing to tightly control initiative resources, to insist on approving local leadership, and to pass judgment on whether their community partners are measuring up."[7]*

Foundation administrators may defend this behavior because they believe that the stakes for the foundation are high, especially if the initiative is directly addressing race relations or racial justice issues. Foundation management and staff may have put their own careers on the line, or fear that they have done so, and they become concerned about the foundation's capacity to handle internal discussions of privilege and racism. For the foundation there are risks in investing in this type of initiative, depending on how the foundation addresses racism internally, and whether the discussion on race and white privilege has reached its board level. Also, the foundation's program officers will probably feel pressures from within the foundation to make progress and have deliverables for each reporting cycle.

The highest stakes really rest with the community residents involved, since many of the issues are life-and-death; they have to live with the risks they take in their community, and the potential political fallout. Residents are also taking great risks when they trust individuals and organizations—mostly white—after historically being betrayed by authority figures that make policy decisions, by organizations bearing gifts, and by leaders who can't handle political pressure. They are

Residents are also taking great risks when they trust individuals and organizations—mostly white—after historically being betrayed by authority figures that make policy decisions, by organizations bearing gifts, and by leaders who can't handle political pressure.

---

[6] Medoff and Sklar, *Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood,* p. 57.

[7] Rebecca Stone and Benjamin Butler, *Core Issues in Comprehensive Community-Building Initiatives: Exploring Power and Race.* (Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children, 2000), p. 130.

uncertain whether their knowledge and opinions will be listened to and respected, and if their leadership will be encouraged and supported or if it will be a repeat of "father knows best."

Foundation staff and consultants representing the foundation are faced with a power dynamic in almost any meeting they walk into (outside the foundation): they are the "holders of the funds." This can be a difficult dynamic to manage, which underscores the importance of ensuring that building relationships and trust is part of a long-term process. Too many times, foundations have misused their convening power. They invite community residents to a meeting to discuss the issue or even a defined initiative. Community residents may go to share their viewpoints, but they will often go knowing that there may be consequences to their community if they do not attend. If the foundation has not built relationships in the community or does not make time to do so in the meeting, then it can result in misunderstandings, limited discussions on shared interests, and flawed assumptions that participation equals commitment to the project.

Things to Consider

Establish a set of ground rules and the expectation to name issues. There are sure to be power dynamics, competition, and turf issues; the sooner the coalition can name these issues and discuss them, the sooner they can be addressed. Consider having a multi-racial team of facilitators to facilitate the meetings until at least mutual group norms and expectations can be established.

Decide who has control and how decisions will be made. The foundation needs to be clear if it has final sign-off on any decisions. Butler and Stone recommend, "… Clearly establish in any initiative the definition of 'local control' (i.e., to what extent is it specifically about residents?), its object (i.e., to guide initiative resource allocation, or to create a new force in community decision-making more generally), and the mechanisms through which that local control will be created, sustained, and then passed down to future generations."[8]

Work to make sure norms of predominately white institutions do not take precedence over cultural practices and community processes. Many of these initiatives are tightly wrapped around a timeline with a set of deliverables with no recognition of community context, culture, and rituals. The coalition's responsibility is to consistently work on individual and organizational levels to reduce and eliminate white privilege and to shift the power dynamic within the community, while holding up and honoring the assets of the community. Predominately white organizations/foundations, specifically, must be intentionally working on these issues internally, which will increase their credibility in the community.

Create an accountability system between the foundation and the community residents and between the coalition and the community residents. The foundation has a responsibility to be accountable to the community and create relationships in which their role can be challenged without consequence. Too many times there

> The coalition's responsibility is to consistently work on individual and organizational levels to reduce and eliminate white privilege and to shift the power dynamic within the community, while holding up and honoring the assets of the community.

---

[8] Stone and Butler, *Core Issues in Comprehensive Community-Building Initiatives: Exploring Power and Race,* p. 120-1.

are polite silences or limited challenges of a foundation's behavior, due to concern about the community losing resources. When the foundation evaluates the progress of the initiative, the foundation's role in the community also needs to be evaluated by the residents, as Barbara Major suggests.

An accountability process also needs to be created by the coalition members. Some examples are:

- Organizations and residents work and communicate together effectively and transparently.

- Organizations and individuals will uphold the principles of racial equity and address white privilege.

- Organizations will internally adopt these principles and address white privilege.

- If a few organizations within the coalition choose a radical intervention, there is an agreement that even if another organization cannot support the intervention, it will not challenge or dismiss the intervention publicly.

- The coalition will regularly communicate with and listen to the individuals most impacted by the social justice issue(s) being addressed and support their leadership.

Discuss how to leverage different organizations' assets and to catalyze an issue in a community.

When organizations work together, it is important to consider the actions that provide more strength by acting collectively. For some organizations, working together provides the political cover to take risks they normally could not take. Others may not be able to participate but can play another role in supporting the effort. The Center for Assessment and Policy Development's report, *Some Thoughts About Public Will,* is about creating strategies necessary to alter public feeling and action. The report shares several lessons, including this:

> *"More 'radical' or 'fringe' groups within a movement can be used to strategically place a problem within the public debate. In effect, having both confrontational and mainstream advocates allows decision-makers (at the policymaking level) to view mainstream options as palatable when weighed against the costs of the 'radical' ideal. For example, the AIDS movement uses ACT-UP to bring attention to its causes, but uses other, less vocal groups to negotiate with government and the research community. . . In general, the study of successful American [United States] social movements also indicates that with respect to creating political action, having both confrontational and mainstream groups allows fence-sitting constituents to see the mainstream group's ideas as palatable. . .This helps to make a social movement*

successful because without the fringe group, fence-sitters might see the mainstream group as too radical."⁹

Accountability between organizations is crucial for this practice to work. One trap is that mainstream organizations may create a too-palatable strategy and may miss an opportunity to be a catalyst for change within an institution or the community at large. Another trap is for "radical" groups to be marginalized to the point of being ineffective in different circles within the community. But with a clear understanding of the potential traps, using this strategy is another way to think through ways to leverage different organizations' assets and to catalyze an issue in a community. [10]

Address intergroup tensions through a white privilege lens AND a cultural conflict lens.

Intergroup tension sometimes has to do with white privilege and how white elites may provide economic and political benefits to a particular community of color without dealing with underlying issues or understanding how the decision will instigate conflict between groups. The way privilege is conferred to different groups sets up a competitive process. Gary Delgado describes this concept in *Multi-racial Formations: New Instruments for Social Change:*

> *"This competitive model is often based on the notion that there is only one 'pie,' and a larger piece for one group automatically means a smaller piece for another group. Therefore, despite data like the poll taken by the* Los Angeles Times *that indicates that Blacks and Latinos are the most likely coalition partners, the political reality is that as the two largest racial minority groups in the U.S., African Americans and Latinos are often in competitive conflict over a number of turf and power issues."[11]*

Eric Yamamoto goes further in explaining this racial conflict: "[It focuses] on how these groups' interests and cultural patterns are situated in and determined by a predominately white constructed socioeconomic structure … present[ing] whiteness as the singular agent of non-white conflict."[12] In the publication *Structural Racism and Multi-racial Coalition Building,* Maya Wiley describes some of the tensions between groups:

> *"African Americans see Latinos and Asians as beneficiaries of their civil rights struggles who then undermine their hard-won success. On the other side, legal discrimination against Latinos and Asians is more difficult to prove based on current civil rights laws. Because Latino and Asian groups perceive some African Americans as using their political capital to exclude other*

---

9 Sally Leiderman, Wendy C. Wolf, and Peter York, *Some Thoughts About Public Will* (Conshohocken:Center for Assessment and Policy Development, 2000), p. 12.

10 Maggie Potapchuk, *Cultivating Interdependence: A Guide for Race Relations and Racial Justice Organizations.* (Washington D.C.: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2004), p. 33.

11 Gary Delgado, *Multi-racial Formations: New Instruments for Social Change,* (Oakland, CA: Applied Research Center, 2003), p. 95.

12 Wiley, *Structural Racism and Multiracial Coalition Building,* p. 17.

minorities from civil rights remedies and other protections, they blame African Americans for their lack of civil rights protection."[13]

Things to Consider

Take time to understand the basis of the conflict. The conflict between racial and ethnic groups could be based on access to political power, competition for resources, ideological differences, differences within groups, or the difficulty of accommodating new ethnic subgroups.[14] Groups need to choose their process to discuss and work out the issues together. It also may be a conflict that has to do with the underlying white power structure: how resources are being distributed, whose interests are seen as priorities, and how leaders from different groups are being treated. Be careful not to make assumptions on what is causing the tensions and mistrust. Ask questions and learn what is below the surface to determine or support a suitable response.

Provide opportunities and time for leaders from different communities to develop relationships. Wiley, author of *Structural Racism and Multi-racial Coalition Building,* advises that "… technical support and capacity-building support … should also include opportunities for leaders of different communities to come together and develop relationships in the context of their work, without attempting to force them into a preconceived issue advocacy effort or coalition. The goal of relationship building in and of itself is an important opportunity that is relatively unavailable to many community organizations and leaders."[15]

Be aware of how your [whites'] participation is impacting the formation and sustainability of a multi-racial coalition. Anne Braden, a long-time civil rights activist and founder of the Southern Organizing Committee, shared: "We are so used to running things. Those of us who are white have to be careful that we aren't trying to dominate. We need more whites who are willing to take action and to serve in organizations with people of color in the leadership."[16] This topic is discussed further in the upcoming chapter, "Doing our Work: Unearthing Our Own White Privilege."

Create an inclusive, equitable process within the coalition to accomplish its goals and influence other processes in the community.

Sometimes because of different project management styles, and/or when the stakes are high, a coalition becomes more focused on creating products than on taking action or paying attention to relationships. To meet unachievable timelines, foundation leaders sometimes push through what they believe is the right thing to do and minimize any effort to create an inclusive democratic process that seeks to redistribute power. The message to residents is: "We will give you the money if you do it *this* way—and on *our* timeline." Creating an inclusive process is about

---

[13] Wiley, *Structural Racism and Multiracial Coalition Building,* p. 20.

[14] Delgado, *Multi-racial Formations: New Instruments for Social Change,* p. 96.

[15] Wiley, *Structural Racism and Multiracial Coalition Building,* p. 84.

[16] Delgado, *Multi-racial Formations: New Instruments for Social Change,* p. 94.

developing a different way of doing business that addresses racism and white privilege. The coalition will need to develop equitable practices, including a democratic governance structure, inclusive and transparent decision-making processes and consistent accountability systems.

Things to Consider

Make sure the agenda is jointly created. Though there may be an executive committee that officially creates the agenda, ensure that there are opportunities for all participants to have input (e.g., leaving time at the end of meetings to do a quick brainstorm, or having a small, diverse [race, gender, class, education, etc.] group meet before the next full meeting to help create the agenda). Also, it is important to encourage people not to lobby for agreements outside the meeting process before things are even brought to the larger group.

Be attentive to cultural differences with discussing conflicts and making decisions. It is obviously important to build trust and relationships so people feel comfortable letting others know if they are not being listened to, or if a decision is being pushed too hard, or how white privilege has manifested itself in the dynamics of the coalition. It is essential for the group to have a discussion up front about the decision-making process, as well as how to address conflicts. Take time to learn about different cultural practices and rituals and incorporate them in the process. If there is translation at a meeting, give space for people to enter into the discussion.

Create time for same race/ethnicity caucus meetings within the context of a coalition/partnership. For whites, this provides an opportunity to check in on our assumptions and behavior, or to ask for support in understanding the issues with a white privilege/anti-racism lens, to encourage action, and/or deal with resistance from colleagues within organizations. Some whites may be concerned about this method, as they may see the goal of the coalition as meeting across racial lines and it may feel awkward to self-segregate. In reality in many meetings self-segregation is the norm—though it is usually unspoken. For people of color, meeting in caucus is an opportunity to create a space to discuss issues and to support leadership. For more on using caucus meetings, see Figure A (page 116).

Make the decision-making process transparent. Consistently check to see whose voices are dominating decision-making processes, and make sure that the people most accustomed to controlling these processes (white people with respect to people of color; men with respect to women; wealthier people with respect to poorer people; advocates and system workers with respect to neighborhood residents)[17] are not dominating the processes. Ensure that everyone follows the rules that the group establishes for decision-making and strategy work (since people used to dominating these processes often work outside the rules if the rules require equitable voice, or give more weight to those most affected by the

---

[17] It is also important to ensure that youth are provided an opportunity to share their experiences, opinions and perspectives. Older people can dominate conversations and negate youth voices. Sometimes the reason stated is "because they lack real world experiences." Though it is important to understand that in several cultures the message is that youth should listen to their elders and not speak, the group needs to be aware of both ethnic cultural practices and dominant culture practices.

issue). Balance time spent on process with actions that move the work forward, because group members will have different levels of tolerance and need for each.[18] Be vigilant in identifying outside and internal forces that may be pushing an agenda, a timeline or deliverables.

Discuss some of the process issues upfront. After the coalition does relationship-building work, it will be vital to make some process decisions, set group expectations and discuss structural racism and white privilege and how they may manifest in the group process:

- How are decisions made concerning who gets invited? How do people decide if an organization has the "legitimacy" to be part of the process?

- How will the group address the power differentials among organizations (size, staffing, funding, etc,) that are represented? How will the coalition determine each member's contribution based on differences in size, staffing, and funding?

- Does the group want to create a set of principles everyone must agree to?

- How will groups that use different approaches (advocacy, training, service delivery, organizing, etc.) work interdependently to address an issue?

- How will the fiscal agent be determined?

- How is competency on issues of racism and white privilege determined within the coalition's learning process?

- How is distribution of resources to particular community organizations determined? How can the process avoid creating a hierarchy of organizations ("anointed" organizations) based on the foundation's investment of grants, resources and/or time?

- How will the coalition be accountable to the residents most affected by the issue being addressed?

- How will the group determine their message to the media? How will the spokespeople be chosen?

- How will coalition members be allies for each other (e.g., agreeing to disagree, to not attack, to give feedback, to have different approaches to community change, etc.)?

Ensure that everyone follows the rules that the group establishes for decision-making and strategy work (since people used to dominating these processes often work outside the rules if the rules require equitable voice, or give more weight to those most affected by the issue).

Create an ongoing learning process within the coalition. Project Change, a foundation/community partnership to eliminate racism, was funded by the Levi Strauss Foundation. One step of their five-step process is focusing on the education of the institutional policies and practices that perpetuate racial disparities. Having a common analysis and language to discuss structural racism and white privilege within the coalition is crucial in determining interventions,

---

[18] From www.evaluationtoolsforracialequity.org (accessed June, 2005).

strategies and outcomes, and in addressing intergroup and process issues. Training is one way to create this common analysis, but coalitions should be careful not to equate training with systemic change work. Rather, it serves as an important component in sustaining long-term change.

One of the dilemmas when a coalition decides to participate in training workshops is which training program to use. A recent publication provides assistance to community members by sharing a detailed profile of several national training programs. The author, Ilana Shapiro, provides a checklist to identify a healthy race-related training program. She asks, "Does the training program:

- Clearly explain its theory of practice and change?

- Demonstrate consistency between what it says it does and what it actually does?

- Integrate a structural analysis of racism into its social change efforts?

- Address the different needs of diverse racial, ethnic and cultural groups in both its content and methods?

- Discuss differences among various kinds of racism and explain the relationship between racism and other forms of oppression?

- Recognize and support the variety of spiritual/moral, emotional, political, cultural and social aspects of anti-racism work?

- Help participants translate new awareness and understandings into action?

- Establish clear goals and systematically assess its contribution to changing individuals' intergroup relationships and community structures?

- Provide follow-up or support to participants beyond the training program?

- Cooperate or coordinate its activities with those of other programs working toward racial equity and inclusion?"[19]

> Understand that the TA provider is accountable to the foundation and the community residents. ... If there are comments or complaints about culturally incompetent behaviors, the foundation's first responsibility is to the community—and not the consultant.

Choose technical assistance providers who are culturally competent for the community and understand structural racism and white privilege.

Though this process is beginning to change, funders still typically do not give coalitions access and control over the technical assistance (TA) providers entering a community. Residents of the neighborhood are usually in the best position to assess if a provider can work within a community predominantly of color and if the provider has the following:

- Competency in working with people of different races and ethnicities;

---

[19] Ilana Shapiro. *Training for Racial Equity and Inclusion: A Guide to Selected Programs* (New York: Aspen Institute. 2002), p. 114.

- Basic knowledge about structural racism and white privilege;

- Self-understanding of white privilege and how it manifests itself in their work;

- A willingness to participate in a reciprocal learning relationship; and

- An interest in building the capacity within the community so that the TA needs decrease over time.

When a foundation does not assess consultants' skills or create a process for the coalition to choose providers, then the foundation is once again asking people of color to be the educators or to make a choice not to work with the individual and lose out on services.

Things to Consider

Understand that the TA provider is accountable to the foundation and the community residents. The foundation needs to take this accountability seriously. If there are comments or complaints about culturally incompetent behaviors, the foundation's first responsibility is to the community—and not the consultant.

Go beyond the usual suspects. Too many times, foundation staff choose TA providers by going to people they know the best and trust. This cycle has historically privileged TA providers who are white, or who work for white-owned corporations and non-profit organizations. One strategy to break this cycle is to pay particular attention to who is receiving the most contracts and who is doing what type of work, by race and gender. However, this strategy works best if the foundation backs up this research by committing to changing the ways in which it identifies and vets TA providers.

Consider how residents are being asked to provide assistance. Many times community residents are asked, in effect, to provide technical assistance by sharing stories and information to educate the foundation team. However, these residents are treated as volunteers and not compensated for their expertise. Instead, they should be compensated and appreciated for their contributions.

Figure A: Caucus Meeting Tips

As mentioned, caucus work may seem confusing for some, especially whites, as they may see the point of the coalition as being people of different races and ethnicities working together. [20] A majority of people having that worldview can be a challenging barrier to overcome.

It is helpful to discuss that those in the dominant group (whites) received one set of messages from friends, family, media and teachers about being white. The messages ranged from promoting colorblindness to being told, openly or covertly, that we need to live and go to school in a different place than people of color. People of color also received messages from friends, family, media and teachers. Some were told that the blatant stereotypes of one's race or ethnicity are true. Others learned about their self-worth by going to schools that did not have the same level of community investment as white schools.[21] Crossroads Ministry, an organization that has been using the process of caucusing for the past 16 years, describes these internalized messages that "support and reinforce a kind of 'dance' that helps maintain the race construct."[22]

A few things to keep in mind if the coalition decides to use a caucus process:

- It is important for the coalition to have already had a discussion and awareness-building activities on racism, internalized racism and white privilege so people have a common language and analysis.

- It is important to have facilitators. Racism and white privilege leave many wounds, cause confusion and doubt and can sometimes be difficult to communicate about because of the many emotions underneath. Skilled facilitators can support and challenge participants to hold up a mirror to their actions and thought processes, ensure ground rules are maintained, and provide guidance as needed. Facilitators should be experienced by already having done self-work on racism, and should be familiar with caucus processes and exercises. It's best to avoid having someone learn how to facilitate in the moment; it would be wiser to have an experienced facilitator be a mentor and train others in the group.

- One of the dilemmas can be choosing which group to participate in. As stated earlier in this monograph, race is a social construct. How one is viewed by another person based on this construct sometimes can define one's identity. For example, a Latino/a or African American who is light-skinned may be viewed as white. Multi-racial individuals may find it challenging to have to choose a racial group. And there are some white refugees or immigrants who may feel that they don't receive privilege and identify more with people of color. People may respond to this dilemma by blaming the facilitator for "making them" choose between groups. Take time to discuss these racial constructs and how people are perceived by society. Keep the choice in the hands of the individuals and avoid having the group decide which caucus a person 'should' join.

- For whites, being in caucus can be challenging. Some may believe that these conversations must happen in diverse groups; others may connect caucusing with white supremacist organizations; and for others it is just very uncomfortable. Crossroads Ministry provides an explanation of why the caucus process is helpful in creating just communities and organizations:

  "Caucusing is fundamental for understanding identity development. ... Caucusing enables us to own our 'we-ness'—empowering us to make 'we (the white collective) statements' in place of 'me (the white individual) statements.' Anti-racist white people need the discipline of coming together, just as we go to the doctor for check-ups, and check-ins. Gaining clarity about racism's hooks—how we act out of these narrow and limited identities—is an important part of claiming our anti-racist identity. So too, our health depends upon using the caucus as a place in which we define, design, plan, develop, dream, and envision what it means to be anti-racists whites ... to be anti-racist whites contributing to building an anti-racist community."[23]

---

[20] Thanks to Catherine Wong for suggesting that we include these tips and for providing framing of some of the key points.

[21] It will be helpful to read the chapters from this monograph, '"What is Internalized Racism?" and "Doing the Work: Unearthing our own White Privilege" to understand messages and how they are internalized.

[22] From www.crossroadsministry.org/CaucusInfo.sxml (accessed September, 2005).

[23] From www.crossroadsministry.org/CaucusInfo.sxml (accessed September, 2005).

Section 4

IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY BUILDING WORK

Chapter Eleven

Doing the Work:
Unearthing Our Own White Privilege

Maggie Potapchuk

For once we "know" we have to work to "not know."

Some of us may understand what white privilege and racism cost us as a country and as white people. Some of us may be disturbed that people of color fare differently than whites in our community. Others may be outraged about the obviously inequitable policies that significantly impact people of color's quality of life. And still others may be frustrated with continued awkwardness in our interactions with people of different races or ethnicities and unsure how to create authentic relationships. How can we be effective white allies in our multi-racial society? How can we work together to address the institutional inequities and structural white privilege?

Being a white ally is an ongoing journey with no graduation certificate and no how-to book that will make me or anyone else the perfectly aware or acting white person. We must start by releasing the myth that with focused attention (education, workshops, reading, dialogue, etc.) we can fully release white privilege from our feelings and behavior and be done with it once and for all. The long historical practice of white privilege and the deep societal constructs alive in our world today make this an unrealistic prospect. "Doing the work" is about understanding the theoretical constructs of structural racism, having a power analysis of systems we work and live in, developing the willingness and skills continually to align our intent and action, and dedicating ourselves to being in authentic relationships[1] with people of different races and ethnicities.

In this chapter, I specifically speak to people who identify as white, based on the premise that whites need to learn and teach each other. There are at least four reasons. First, people of color get tired of being placed in the position to teach white people about racism. Second, white people often have access to and credibility with other white people, based on our shared racial identity and family, social, business, faith and organizational affiliations to which people of color are not privy. Third, white people created white privilege and most of the strategies that maintain it. So we have the lion's share of responsibility for ending it. Finally, it will take many people stepping up to eliminate racism and race-based privilege. People who step up get marginalized and punished for doing so. We need to work to have white people be among the waves of people who step up and stand strong for racial equity. If enough of us do that, we are unstoppable.

---

[1] Authentic relationships are grounded in trust, being real, talking through conflicts, and being willing to be there for each other even when the risks may be high.

A Packing List for Our Journey as Whites

There have been many who have said, "To be white in America means not having to think about it." Part of why it is difficult for whites to get their arms around the concept of white privilege is because it can seem to be invisible. It is set up that way. And for many whites, once exposed to the concept of white privilege, it is easier to see it on the individual level than to see how it manifests on an institutional and structural level. As our knowledge and awareness increases, there is less probability of returning to the status quo or the "privilege bubble" in which we typically operate. Once we finally "know," then we are forced to face white privilege and we have to work to "not know." Our journey is about steadily increasing our awareness and taking action. What follows is a list of valuable things I take with me as I continue on that journey, and some thoughts about what they imply.

A willingness to ask questions and face the answers

We must take responsibility to reflect on how we go about our daily activities and interactions, be willing to know and accept that we will make mistakes publicly and will need to continue to take action anyway. We must be open to and ask for feedback even when it is hard to hear it, and remain accountable to our friends and colleagues of color and our white allies.

> A bigger question I have wrestled with is wondering about the role of white privilege in my successes. I need to think about what role white privilege has played in my varied career.

Recently, I facilitated a community meeting with an African American colleague and walked away feeling pretty good about what I contributed and what we accomplished. But then I had to ask the questions: How well did I co-facilitate? And did I co-facilitate? Did I take over the meeting? Did I support and follow my co-facilitator's leadership? Did I make assumptions about how participants responded or perceived her leadership? Did I over-compensate based on how I saw whites interact or not interact with her? Yes and no. I must also ask myself if I am willing to discuss these questions with my colleague. Am I ready to hear her answers?

Knowing what white privilege is and understanding how racism works cannot eliminate the ingrained stereotypes and biases, even for the dedicated white anti-racist change agents of the world. They don't stop the feelings of fear, awkwardness, and uncertainty from showing up in work and in life. I like to believe I am more aware than maybe 10 years ago, can discipline myself to stop the "stereotype tape" in my head, and am more cognizant when my privilege shows up. While I am more thoughtful about these issues, I am not "done."

A bigger question I have wrestled with is wondering about the role of white privilege in my successes. I need to think about what role white privilege has played in my varied career: Did I have the opportunity to present to the university board of trustees, or get into graduate school, or get a promotion, or receive a national grant, because I was white? Did fear, or someone's comfort level, or the so-called ease of me fitting in to the "organizational norms," or institutional practices and policies give me the access and opportunities to have these life experiences? There is a sick feeling in my stomach … because I know the answer is, a resounding "yes." It doesn't mean I don't get to take credit for

my accomplishments, but it does mean that I have to understand the unearned advantages and privileges I had (and have).

A willingness to become uncomfortable, yet stay focused

In this monograph and throughout your journey, you may find reasons to move away from some ideas, or consider some things to be untrue, unfair, or invalid. Lean into this discomfort, as part of the process of individual change is being uncomfortable. It is challenging and sometimes overwhelming to take all of these messages in. Take time to reflect, discuss and struggle with the material and work to not avoid it or dismiss it. You may say to yourself, "But I saw a person of color display that same behavior." And you may have. Try to put the behavior in the context of the organization's norms and culture and not just look at the individual-level behavior. Since most systems are entrenched with the culture of white privilege, then individuals—regardless of their race or ethnicity—will receive affirmation, bonuses, positive performance reviews, and promotions for assimilating to an organization's culture.

The key here is to develop the curiosity and seek to further examine the context of our actions and how others may interpret our behavior. It is not unusual for white people to feel defensive. It is part of a mechanism that protects our image and self-esteem. Being defensive is part of the fear of our behavior being labeled as insensitive, or worse, racist. Part of the success of structural racism is that it systematically indoctrinates us about our roles in society. Each of us may have resisted and questioned those roles at different times but we need to be vigilant in developing a lens for seeing our privilege, to be grateful when we receive feedback, and to not rely solely on people of different races to directly teach us.

It is important to clarify this last statement. Our responsibility is to talk to people of different races and ethnicities and hear their experiences, viewpoints, and ideas for actions to be taken. We also need to keep in mind that, just as with whites, one person does not speak for an entire race. With listening comes the responsibility to "evaluate the content of what they are saying by what we know about how racism works and by our own critical thinking and progressive political analysis."[2]

An understanding of the importance of aligning our intent with impact

We hear so many messages about being white—not always clearly stated but implied, reinforced, and, in some cases, enforced. As each of us takes this journey of becoming a white person who believes and acts for racial equity, we look for affirmation. Some of us are fortunate to be surrounded with individuals who care deeply about creating more equitable communities. And some of us are even more fortunate to find allies in the various circles of life we enter into daily (e.g., our own families, social circles, faith communities, neighborhoods, etc.). Others

---

[2] Paul Kivel, "How White People Can Serve as Allies to People of Color in the Struggle to End Racism," from Paula S. Rothenberg, editor, *White Privilege: Essential Readings of the Other Side of Racism*. (New York: Worth Publishers, 2002), p. 128.

may have a network of allies, but we have family members, colleagues, or friends who *do not* understand white privilege, or don't agree with it, or even may marginalize us because they don't want to get into a "political" discussion.

A "disconnect" can then sometimes occur. If there are people around us who do not share our values or who question our work, we may begin to adopt a self-image that "I am a good white person" or "I get it." Doing the work is not about being a "bad" or "good" white person. We may get confused when we are called out by our colleagues (i.e., told that one of our statements is heard as racist or that our actions reflect our white privilege), especially if this comes from a person of a different race. We may want to run away or go into protection mode. Because there are people in our life who marginalize us because of our work, we may be able to name the challenges we have overcome, or the things we have lost because of stands we have taken. It is difficult to deal with feedback at times. It may make us wonder, "Why am *I* receiving this feedback? I am trying so hard to do the right thing!"

> We may value fairness, equity and justice, but we need to work continuously to ensure that our actions are aligned with those values. *... Our stated intent is not a defense.* Our intent may come from our deepest values, yet it doesn't mean that the impact of our action aligns with our values.

We may value fairness, equity and justice, but we need to work continuously to ensure that our actions are aligned with those values. And we cannot assume that we "get it." *Our stated intent is not a defense.* Our intent may come from our deepest values, yet it doesn't mean that the impact of our action aligns with our values. Sometimes we are blinded by our own ignorance, sometimes by our righteous indignation, sometimes by our assumed "good white person" label. For these and other reasons we can miss the results of our behavior on others. We need to take responsibility and avoid going into immediate defensive mode and focus on *listening* to another person's reality of the situation. Our job is to be diligent in understanding the impact of our choices, our judgments and our behavior, and not assume just because we *meant* no harm that there was none.

An awareness of the possible consequences and risks of the journey

The reality of doing this work is that there will be few other whites who are our allies. Many more will dismiss us; some will ignore us; others will distrust our actions and the same will be true for people of color. And that is the paradox of this journey for white people. We may feel damned if we do and damned if we don't. That is not meant to be a whiney statement. That is, we have to acknowledge that we work in a system that is structured for whites, at the same time that we are working with others to transform it into an equitable institution or community.

At times we will feel pulled, our allegiances will be questioned, and we may wonder if the consequences are worth it. Is this the battle that needs to be fought at this time? Only you can answer that question. I say this not to dissuade or create fear, but to give a reality check of our journey and to encourage us to work *together,* support each other, believe in each other, and affirm each other. This is not about doing something for someone to make his or her world better. When we act as martyrs we are not helping anyone. It is about reclaiming and working toward our vision of inclusive, just and equitable institutions and communities.

People have different beliefs about how change happens. My own is that without working on individual attitudinal and behavioral change, then institutional and policy changes will not typically be sustained. And only working on institutional and policy change, and not also individual-level change, can lead to processes that are privileged and racist, which can result in relationships not being able to be sustained. Working on both levels can lead to communities becoming equitable and inclusive.

A commitment to remain on the journey

Showing up as a white ally is a decision we make every day. The keyword in that sentence is "decision." Even here, my white privilege shows up because I get to "decide" how I will show up, weigh the risks, and determine if I will act. The very fact that I have this choice speaks of the depth of my privilege. I would like to think that knowing this, I would have no choice but to take effective white anti-racist action. But I cannot escape, no matter how much I would like to, the fact that I do have a choice in every moment. I need to remember, and remind myself when I forget, that the consequences I suffer for challenging racism anywhere in my world will always be less than those to which my colleagues of color will be subjected.[3]

With my commitment to check what I am doing and the decisions I make to challenge racism and white privilege—my own and others'—I sometimes feel exhausted and feel like there is no light in sight. In these times, I just want to go and be a hermit somewhere. And then I remember the daily nature of racism and the impact of white privilege on the lives of people of color. I think about the stories, the statistics, and I think about the type of world I want to live in … and then I feel the energy and passion to be a better advocate and ally. I find myself teetering back and forth on a daily basis between pure outrage and the intense belief that the system can be transformed. And yes, I can feel myself get fatigued and take less action at times. These intervals don't last long but they exist, and while I have not yet eliminated them I have made them days rather than weeks and months. One of the key sources of strength must come from us: white people working together, sharing our truths, our vulnerabilities, our lessons and our accomplishments.

Lessons Learned

The following are some lessons I have learned along the way. Some were shared with me over the years by white people on their own anti-racism journeys. Some are my personal learnings. And some are lessons or observations shared by people about how white people show up in community building work. Some of these lessons I learn and re-learn on a regular basis—not because I am forgetful, but because old patterns and racist training are deep and ingrained in me from my education as a white person in the U.S. Though I hope this is a helpful guide to consider as you "do the work," it is by no means "the guide." Each of us must

> Showing up as a white ally is a decision we make every day. The keyword in that sentence is "decision." Even here, my white privilege shows up because I get to "decide" how I will show up, weigh the risks, and determine if I will act.

---

[3] A special thank-you to Cyndi Harris for supporting my journey, sharing her insights, and for contributing her editing skills on this chapter and the case study in the chapter, "What Is White Privilege?"

find the courage through allies to continuously resist the system's oppressive framework and to work toward its transformation.

1. We will experience different emotions: guilt, shame, humiliation, confusion.

All are relevant and normal feelings as white privilege is unveiled, and behaviors and attitudes are named. Our white culture does not always honor emotions, nor does everyone have the resources or the support network to discuss his or her feelings. Many times the common phrase for dealing with emotions is "just get over it." Thinking about past incidents may cause that reaction, as we remember things we said and did. It may be overwhelming at times, but it is important to effectively deal with any feelings we may have.

There will be times when we want affirmation or we are frustrated and would like to hear an empathetic voice of support. Keep in mind that it is not the job of people of color to be caretakers of white people as we work on self-awareness with other white folks. As Donna Bivens discusses in her chapter on internalized racism, one of the traps for people of color in this entrenched system is to "take care of" whites. We need to seek out other whites for support. There may be people of color in our lives with whom we have genuine relationships and who may choose to offer us feedback, but it needs to be done by choice, and not by request or assumption.

2. We need to avoid being paralyzed by people's mistrust or assumptions about our actions.

Trust takes time to be developed, and our actions may be suspected even if we are "doing the work." Some of us, who are driven to "get everything right," or even those who are not, may respond to this by giving up or retreating to do some personal awareness-building work. Being a white change agent is not something we can turn on and turn off when it is convenient. People of color face racism every day. There is not a back door through which they can run and hide. We need to know that we will make mistakes in our work; it is part of the journey. However, it is important to occasionally step back and regroup and recharge. We need to each take care of ourselves and balance our work so we can stay in it for the long haul.

3. We may want to connect to people of color rather than to people who are white.

When I first started facilitating anti-racism workshops, I always felt great if people of color came up to me afterwards and said "Thanks for telling it like it is." It was good to get the unsolicited affirmation and it helped me to deal with some of the criticism from whites (for some, expressing their underlying resistance). But I soon learned that what was most important was for whites to have an "aha" moment, realize how the system works, and be willing to step forward and be change agents. And though it is very nice to receive affirmation from people of color, my job is to work with other whites—not prove to people of color that I "get it."

I sometimes have low tolerance and become frustrated easily when I hear whites believe in colorblindness or choose not to act (despite intellectual awareness). Our challenge is to not dismiss other white people's worldviews or their experiences to date, but rather provide feedback, be willing to support each other's learning, and avoid marginalizing other whites just so we can keep our "good white person" label. This is sometimes very difficult to do. It is one of the areas I continue to work on.

4. We need to create genuine and authentic relationships with people of color.

Becky Thompson, author of *A Promise and a Way of Life,* talked with 39 white anti-racist activists about their individual experiences. Thompson writes about her conversation with activist Sarah Stearns on what Ms. Stearns has learned about interacting with people of color: "Through the years, Sarah has seen many interactions around race in which a white person insists the conversation focus on the personal level of the individual relationship…Sarah believes this reduction stymies many conversations across race." She told Thompson that "Unless I am willing, as the white person, to feel and hold the rage of the cultural and institutional racism, then I am basically exercising my privilege to bring the conversation back to 'What does this have to with me?'"[4]

We need to enter into relationships gently and not assume that our work or our values or the number of marches we participated in gives us a free ticket or access to build a relationship with persons of different races or ethnicities. We must keep in mind our historical record as a group of whites, who time and time again have betrayed people of color. We must be willing to work through the spectrum of emotions and the conflicts, and to be there consistently not just when it is convenient.

5. We need to NOT expect certain conditions to be met before we will do our personal work or act.

In many diversity workshops or dialogue groups, at the beginning the facilitator announces that "we are going to create a safe place." I was one of those facilitators who made this promise. Though there should be an expectation that this is an environment that is based on respect, mutual learning, trust and confidentiality, let's keep in mind that the world *is not a safe place for people of color on a daily basis.* They have to constantly think about what will happen if police conduct a traffic stop; what if today is the day a bigot turns his hate into violence; or how co-workers will respond if they think a promotion was based on race.

We should work to create an agreement to support each other's learning through building relationships, providing feedback, and sharing information and stories. We also have to understand that emotions are part of the learning process: discomfort, confusion, anger and fear. We need to be open to people

> Our challenge is to not dismiss other white people's worldviews or their experiences to date, but rather provide feedback, be willing to support each other's learning, and avoid marginalizing other whites just so we can keep our "good white person" label.

---

4 Becky Thompson, *A Promise and A Way of Life: White Antiracist Activism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. 315.

expressing different emotions. It is important not to marginalize those who are white who may be confused or resisting the process, and to support their journey. For those people of color who are expressing their anger and venting their frustration, whites need to not run away but to understand and support the expression of emotions and understand their context. We need to keep in mind that if we are saying this workshop or dialogue group HAS to meet certain conditions in order for me to participate (e.g., participants have to follow my expectations for how they express emotions), then this is a manifestation of white privilege.

6. We need to check our assumptions and expectations of what can be accomplished when people of color lead.

It is important to do a self-check on our perceptions, stereotypes, and biases about people of different races and ethnicities. Dealing with our stereotypes is knowing about the tapes (life experiences) playing in our heads. Think about what we were taught in school about the leadership of people of different races and ethnicities. What were some of the messages from the American history lessons about Native Americans? Were their cultures described as less fully developed or less 'civilized' than the cultures of the Europeans who displaced them? Were the Europeans described as settlers and the Native Americans as primitive peoples? What did we hear from family and friends about people of different races? Did we hear stereotypes such as: "they are lazy," "they want handouts" and "they look exotic?"

What messages did we hear from the media? Though we may intellectually not believe the stereotypes, it does not mean they automatically disappear from our unconscious and conscious mind. The question is how we respond when we hear these stereotypes internally or from others. Can we suspend our white privilege that says we get to decide who the best leader might be, and simply accept that we might be wrong about what constitutes the best leadership?

> Can we suspend our white privilege that says we get to decide who the best leader might be, and simply accept that we might be wrong about what constitutes the best leadership?

7. We need to figure out how to use our privilege for good.

One story our team heard several times was about white people going to someone in an authority position to "fix" a problem in the community or an organization. It may seem like a perfect solution at face value. But putting an issue in the hands of an authority figure leaves more questions: How will the person get involved? If he or she "fixes it," who will it benefit? This is an example of using privilege: since the white person has the access, he or she is in a position to frame the issue based on his/her viewpoint, and make decisions on how to proceed—instead of supporting residents on how they want to address the issue.

It is a dilemma. Should we use our privilege to get something done? Or, as in the example above, can we admit that our way of getting things done might be wrong or not helpful? And that pursuing our way might be maintaining white privilege in ways we cannot see as white people? One way to check ourselves is to consider the potential consequences to the process and relationships. We can question our intent. Are we helping or pushing an agenda to meet deliverables? Why are

Detour-Spotting for White Anti-Racists, by joan olsson

These lessons are from an article by joan olsson of Cultural Bridges, Detour-Spotting for White Anti-Racists. She has created a list of 18 "detours" of an anti-racist journey, where she also includes clarification of the underlying meaning and consequences of the particular behavior pattern:

"Blame the Victim"

Description: "We have advertised everywhere; there just aren't any qualified people of color for this job." Or "If only he had a stronger work ethic;" "If she just felt better about herself ..." Or "Internalized racism is the real problem here;" "She uses racism as an excuse to divert us from her incompetence." And "He goes looking for racism everywhere." As if racism is so hidden or hard to uncover that people of color would have to search for it.

Reality Check and Consequence: All "blame the victim" behaviors have two things in common. First, they evade the real problem: racism. Second, they delete from the picture the agents of racism— white people and institutions—which either intentionally perpetuate or unintentionally collude with racism. As long as the focus remains on people of color we can minimize or dismiss their reactions, and never have to look directly at racism and our own responsibility or collusions.

"Bending Over Blackwards"

Description: "Of course, I agree with you" (said to a person of color even when I disagree) or "I have to side with Betty on this" (Betty being a woman of color).

Reality Check and Consequence: Our white guilt shows up as we defer to people of color. We don't criticize, disagree, challenge or question people of color the way we would white people. And if we do disagree, we don't do it with the same conviction or passion that we would display with a white person. If this is our pattern, we can never have a genuine relationship with a person of color. Our sincerity, commitment and courage will be rightly questioned. We cannot grow to a deeper level of trust and intimacy with people of color we treat this way."[5]

"BWAME"

Description: "But What About Me... look how I've been hurt, oppressed, exploited ...?"

Reality Check and Consequence: This diminishes the experiences of people of color by telling our own stories of hardship. We lose an opportunity to learn more about the experiences of racism from people of color, while we minimize their experiences by trying to make them comparable or less painful than ours."[6]

---

[5] *Note from author:* The balance is between supporting people of color in leadership and feeling confident about challenging a decision or asking questions about their opinions. It is helpful to ask questions about our interactions and responses: Was the interaction based on stereotypes? Was the response or lack of response due to our uncertainty about what to do? Was our response because we were afraid to make a mistake? Was our response because we think we know what is best? By unearthing barriers, we can create more authentic relationships with people of color.

[6] olsson, joan. "Detour-Spotting for White Anti-racists." (www.eraseracismny.org, accessed May, 2004), p. 3, 5, and 6.

we not introducing the residents of color to this person in authority? Keep in mind the historical context for the residents going to authority figures and the number of times they have been betrayed, ignored or deceived. A different option would be to ask the group of residents about the process they want to use to solve the problem. The group can choose whether to involve those in authority in the problem-solving process. The focus needs to be on building capacity, creating mutually respectful and beneficial relationships, and supporting the leadership of people of different races in the community to begin to shift power.

8. We need to work consistently to be strong, effective, forthright and consistent allies.

The responsibilities of being an ally include being willing to take risks, to speak up, and to increase our own and others' awareness. If we are in a meeting and we hear a racist comment, part of being an ally is to be willing to name the issue, even if there are people of color in the room. Be prepared to be criticized or marginalized by other whites when you resist maintaining the status quo. It may be viewed as more powerful when a white person is the messenger. It will usually be more risky for people of color to be the messenger. That is why it is important for whites to be allies and *offer* to "watch the person of color's back." It is important to know when to suspend our privilege of always "thinking we know what's best" or how to handle a situation. Continuing to take risks, ask questions, and request feedback from white allies will help maintain our clarity in knowing if our judgment is operating from our ego and imposed superiority or if we are making transparent decisions based on integrity.

What I Heard from Leaders of Color at this Conference that They Need from White Anti-racist Allies

At the White Privilege Conference[7] in Pella, Iowa in 2004, white anti-racists were asked what they had heard leaders of color need from white anti-racist allies. The following is an excerpt from the list:

- Understand the anger of people of color.

- Know that you are not the "Great White Hope" for Blacks.

- Our reality is valid; don't question it.

- Don't center your thoughts first to make decisions; check in first with leaders of color.

- Don't come looking for approval or praise.

- Don't be expected to be trusted; be o.k. with this.

- Commit and stay in; don't drop in.

- Don't assume you know what freedom looks like for me, where I want to be heading, or who I am.

- Stop reinforcing the black and white dichotomy; stop silencing Natives, Asians, Latino/a, and Multi-identified people.

- Step up and take risks.

- Educate other white people.

- Be accountable to people of color.

- I don't want to have to "thank" white folks.

- Feel good about yourself and don't act from guilt.

The responsibility of being an ally is not just based on interactions with others, but also with the institutions with which we interact every day. For example:

- *Do I consider racism and white privilege where I shop?* Is the staff diverse? Are the shoppers diverse? Does the shopping mall work to make sure transportation is user-friendly or have they negotiated for bus lines from neighborhoods predominantly comprised of people of color to not stop nearby?

---

[7] "What I Heard from Leaders of Color at this Conference that They Need from White Anti-racist Allies." A list compiled at the first meeting of white Anti-Racist Caucus, White Privilege Conference 5, Pella, Iowa, April 29, 2004, courtesy of Dianne Finnerty. (from the Web site, www.wacan.org, accessed, June 2005). For more information about the White Privilege conference, go to www.whiteprivilegeconference.com.

- *Do I consider racism and white privilege where I live?* Do I see if there are any policies in the homeowner association that would hinder people of different races from living in the neighborhood? Do I review the policies to see if they are inclusive of different cultural practices?

- *Do I look at my bank's record of making loans to see if they use equitable practices?*

Final Thoughts

As we think about how we "do our work" as white people who are committed to transforming our communities and organizations to be inclusive, just and equitable, we need to always remember that *this is not a solo journey, but rather it needs to be a collective effort.* We need to work tenaciously together with courage and resilience. It is important to be patient and not disregard those who do not share our values, but to continuously offer a different worldview and show the impact of racism and white privilege on structural, interpersonal and individual levels. Tim Wise, a white anti-racist activist, author and speaker, succinctly frames the road in front of each one of us:

> *"For it is true, at least in my experience, that whites, having been largely convinced of our ability, indeed entitlement, to affect the world around us and mold it to our liking, are very much like children when we discover that at least for some things—like fundamentally altering the system of privilege and domination that first invested us with such optimism—it will take more than good intentions, determined will, and that old stand-by we euphemistically call "elbow grease." But regardless, there is something to be said for confronting the inevitable choice one must make in this life between collaborating with or resisting injustice, and choosing the latter. Indeed, it is among the most important choices we will ever be asked to make as humans, and it is a burden uniquely ours."[8]*

---

[8] Tim Wise, *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son* (Brooklyn, NY: Soft Skull Press, 2005), p. 154.

Chapter Twelve
Conclusion and Recommendations

Maggie Potapchuk and Sally Leiderman

If we are optimistic about the future, we might recognize that we are in one of those moments when the country is ripe for change. We are five years into the 21st century. When it began, we were worried about technology: the potential disaster of Y2K. Remember that? But since then the wars, natural disasters, terrorism, political divisions and disparate quality of life for people around the world and in our own country—as well as our discussions about religion and moral values—are all challenging us to look at our world differently and begin to ask some new questions.

So just five years after Y2K when technology caught our collective attentions, we are back to some of our most basic human concerns: How should people with very different worldviews share our space? How can we ensure that all of our children survive to adulthood with the strengths and skills to ensure the well-being of the next generation? What do we need to do individually to thrive spiritually, intellectually, economically and in our relationships? What is our collective responsibility to each other? What can we learn from each other's histories that will help us act together with honor going forward? And what can we, and must we, know and change about the system of white privilege to give us a fighting chance to pull off any of that?

There are, of course, no easy answers to any of those questions. But we have a chance, in our community building work, to work on solutions to these very large questions on a more manageable scale. And that is where our optimism lies. What has been suggested about things to consider? First, we start with a summary of some of the ideas offered in the previous chapters:

> What can we learn from each other's histories that will help us act together with honor going forward? And what can we, and must we, know and change about the system of white privilege to give us a fighting chance to pull off any of that?

How does White Privilege Show Up in Foundation and Community Initiatives?

Foundations that want to be partners with communities, particularly communities of color, can:

- Work internally to identify the ways in which their policies, practices and relationships protect or privilege white people or traditionally white institutions.

- Acknowledge that there is no quick fix. It takes time for an institution to move away from its racist construct and toward becoming an anti-racist organization.

- Work in collaboration with communities. In order for an institution to transform itself by itself, the community must be part of the process.

- Include racism and white privilege as an indicator. This fear of addressing racism and white privilege has caused the mis-investment of a great deal of resources and energy from foundations and communities.

- Develop tools to identify where racism is embedded in the institution.

- Understand there will be no answers before we start the journey. White privilege dictates that we must know exactly what we will end up with and when it will happen.

- Prepare to fund processes—not just projects—and concepts (even ones that an "expert" known to the foundation has not yet proven to work).

- Be open to hearing and feeling what communities are saying, as well as their actions and reactions to the process.

- Participate, along with communities, in a mutual examination process.

- Recognize that community building work needs to respect where the community is in its process of change, and not hijack the process or maneuver it to follow the foundation's agenda.

Intervention: Goals, Processes and Strategies

As we design and implement interventions (goals, processes and strategies) of community building work, we can:

- Name the reduction or elimination of white privilege as an explicit goal of community building work.

- Pay special attention to cultural racism – all of the ways in which traditional European and white views dominate our thinking about what is considered "best," "normal" or "appropriate." Be diligent in surfacing the assumptions in our goals, theories of change, strategies and practices that promote these worldviews unthinkingly or uncritically.

- Make sure that people with different worldviews have at least equal decision-making power in selecting, implementing and assessing community building interventions, and are leading whenever possible.

- Use inclusive processes to do community building work, but also recognize the limitations of inclusive processes. Inclusion does not ensure that white privilege has been surfaced or reduced or eliminated.

- Make theories of change focus on the community and its processes, assumptions, assets and needs ("community-centric") not just the particular intervention ("initiative-centric").

- Consider the timeframe in which change is expected, the range of strategies that are considered useful, including whether or not confrontational or "hardball" strategies are considered okay.

- Look at all of these things in light of the tenacity of systems that maintain white privilege and resistance to eliminating or reducing the power of these systems.

- Incorporate strategies that are used by the most racially conscious and successful efforts we know about (for example, political education and community organizing).

- Recognize that white privileged power arrangements and worldviews are embedded throughout our institutions and internalized within us as individuals, so they are always present in our community building work. Consider how to address these issues, remembering that even if the discussions are avoided, the mechanics still play out.

- Stay the course. Consider the consequences to communities of creating community building relationships, making commitments and creating expectations and not meeting them as promised.

Doing Evaluation Differently

In the process of assessing our community building work, we can:

- Value multiple ways of understanding: storytelling, quantitative data from multiple sources, shared wisdom from long-time community residents or elders, actions ("voting with our feet") and other information as evidence.

- Avoid "initiative-centric" evaluation models whenever possible.

- Consider what would need to be different about evaluation if we envisioned it as one of the tools to eliminate or reduce white privilege.

- Work to highlight culturally racist assumptions in evaluations, and, if that is not possible, refuse to participate in them.

- Anticipate, identify and address resistance in the theory of change that guides evaluation.

- Track and measure progress toward elimination of white privilege more directly.

- Shift the power dynamics in evaluation away from privileged institutions and experts and toward groups of color and individual communities.

- Present evaluation findings in ways that make it easy for people to see our analysis of why community conditions are as they are, and difficult to "blame the victim."

- Make clear where data come from, including any culturally racist assumptions built into the algorithms by which statistics are computed or the data produced.

> Make theories of change focus on the community and its processes, assumptions, assets and needs ("community-centric") not just the particular intervention ("initiative-centric").

- Use evaluation to help set reasonable expectations about change—in terms of difficulty, timing and sustainability—given what is known about the prevalence of structural racism.

Creating Multi-Racial Partnerships and Coalitions

When we create multi-racial partnerships and coalitions in our work in communities, we can:

- Ensure community residents most affected by the issue(s) being addressed are the majority in the governance structure.

- Establish the mechanisms through which local control will be created, sustained, and then passed down to future generations.[1]

- Work to make sure norms of predominately white institutions do not take precedence over cultural practices and community processes.

- Create an accountability system between the foundation and the community residents and between the coalition and the community residents.

- Discuss how to leverage different organizations' assets and to catalyze an issue in a community.

- Provide opportunities and time for leaders from different communities to develop relationships.

- Be aware of how whites' participation is impacting the formation and sustainability of a multi-racial coalition.

- Create time for same race/ethnicity caucus meetings within the context of a coalition or partnership.

- Make the decision-making process transparent. Consistently check to see whose voices are dominating decision-making processes, and make sure that the people most accustomed to controlling these processes are not dominating the processes.

- Understand that the TA provider is accountable to the foundation and the community residents. The foundation's first responsibility is to the community—not to the consultant.

> Present evaluation findings in ways that make it easy for people to see our analysis of why community conditions are as they are, and difficult to "blame the victim."

---

[1] Stone and Butler, *Core Issues in Comprehensive Community-Building Initiatives: Exploring Power and Race,* p. 120-1.

Some Final Thoughts: Recommendations for the Field

Just as we said at the beginning, there are no easy answers to fully address white privilege and structural racism. We believe this monograph is a "living" publication. That is, we hope the content will be discussed, debated, updated and added to as each of us becomes clearer and more experienced at seeing and reducing the privilege or racism in our work. Below we offer some final thoughts. These are recommendations to the community building field, in the hopes that we can work together differently.

We must create equitable organizations and commit to ongoing internal organizational work.

For some organizations, their mission and vision statements declare their commitment to creating equitable communities and a just society. Other organizations have created programs or portfolios that focus on racial or justice issues, and in some cases on appreciating and promoting diversity. Our visions, missions, and programmatic goals must be aligned with our policies, practices, and the culture of our organizations. Very simply, we must walk our talk.

Within many organizations, diversifying staff, offering diversity training and advertising positions in diverse networks are typically the three basic steps taken. But becoming inclusive and equitable organizations goes *significantly* deeper. Those deeper steps include: assessing policies, practices, and procedures with a white privilege and racial equity lens; examining how decisions are made; identifying not just the diversity of the organizational leadership but also assessing its level of influence within the organization; and noting whether these are staff-driven activities or if they are being discussed by the Board and eventually led by the Board. California Tomorrow and the Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth reported their learnings from their community foundation partners in *Leading By Example: Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity in Community Foundations,* which also applies to other types of organizations:

> *"Efforts to address diversity, inclusion, and equity cannot be separated from other foundation processes. They cannot be add-ons. They cannot be the work of just a few people, or even a few departments. Instead, these efforts must be integrated into everything people are doing, thus becoming a set of values, policies, practices, and habits that make organizational work more effective. … Across the foundation, decisions— large and small— must be viewed through a diversity and equity lens."[2]*

---

[2] California Tomorrow and Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth, *Leading by Example: Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity in Community Foundations.* (Oakland, CA: 2004), p. 24. To download a copy of the report, see www.californiatomorrow.org.

Within the context of comprehensive community initiatives and place-based strategies discussed in this monograph, foundations and other organizations will continue to lose credibility or will have difficulty building authentic relationships with community residents if their organizational practices do not align with their values. It is important to assess an organization's readiness and commitment—at all levels of the organization—so the process designed will be supportive, consistently challenging and include indicators of success.

We must be willing to act collectively, hold each other accountable, and share what we learn— especially the mistakes.

Though sometimes organizations talk about working collaboratively, our behavior resembles being more defensive and protective. This leads to resistance to sharing our best practices and lessons learned. While sometimes there is openness to showing our best side, we definitely are wary about revealing our vulnerabilities, flaws, and areas in which we are still growing. We have a grand vision of creating just and equitable communities, yet we typically discuss our strategic plans with our partners only after the plans have been established. We must work to become a learning community and act collectively.

There are some organizations that are just beginning their internal conversations about white privilege, and some are just starting discussions on racial equity. What is our responsibility to provide support to these organizations, as well as peer pressure to initiate these conversations? When we look at different annual conferences and meetings, how can we ensure there are several opportunities for this discussion to happen and action to be taken collectively?

A clearinghouse is needed so we can better identify, collect, and share lessons learned, and convene forums of activists, academics, funders, residents and practitioners to learn about trends in places across the country. We must also be willing to hold up a mirror to each other's practices and process, share feedback on how to be more effective, and not marginalize those whose intent is aligned with equity values but whose tactics may be inappropriate.

Part of our responsibility is to continue to hold our anti-racism work to a high standard. We should expect our work to be rigorous, use research and data to make our case, and know how to share information in ways that make our analysis apparent. But we must also defend our ways of knowing and methods, the assumptions embedded in our research—and be willing and able to counter unreasonable expectations, research that is flawed and assumptions based on privileged worldviews.

> Part of our responsibility is to continue to hold our anti-racism work to a high standard. We should expect our work to be rigorous, use research and data to make our case, and know how to share information in ways that make our analysis apparent.

We must talk about race and white privilege and not suppress it or hide from it.

We no longer operate from the viewpoint, "If we don't talk about it, it doesn't exist." Hopefully this monograph and other publications have made it clear that we swim in structural racism and white privilege every day. We need to support the ability of people to be competent in understanding these issues, having the hard conversations with others about them, and applying anti-racist and anti-privileged concepts to their work. We need to help our colleagues consistently have these issues on their radar screens. Organizations need to invest in providing the training and coaching for all staff members to have the needed knowledge and skills—as well as the confidence that comes from knowing that the institution is backing them up as they address these issues firmly and directly.

We also need to be ready to bring resources to the table as these issues surface in the community. We suspect that some foundations may prefer to walk away from place-based strategies because of their concern about not addressing these issues well, or their belief that their Boards are not ready. We have found that sometimes that is only a perception about a Board's readiness to address the issues. We need to remember it is worth taking the risk to see if this is an accurate perception. If the Board is not ready, instead of walking away from the issues, we need to create a strategy to increase their readiness.

If we are to take seriously the implications of white privilege in our work, then we must make ourselves and our institutions the targets for change.

Everything we do needs racial analysis with a white privilege filter.

We need to use the toughest political analysis possible, and bring it to discuss with everyone at the table. We need to always make sure the community tells us what it really thinks is going on and leads the effort. A foundation or other type of organization never should impose its own theory of change or strategies on a community; we need to support the community's leadership, priorities and how they think change happens in their community. As we do grantmaking, change work and community partnerships, we must examine our assumptions and theories against a rigorous analysis with significant attention to racism, power and privilege.

We need to accept the consequences of doing our work differently:

- The individual and institutional discomfort;

- The visibility;

- The possible risk of failure; and

- The possible economic loss from refusing to participate in community building as it is currently done.

Many of us who do community building work are familiar with the adage, "Everybody likes reform so long as nothing has to change." We talk with our community building partners about "flying the plane while we are building it" and we have lots of tricks of the trade to help people change their individual attitudes and behaviors, or to stimulate changes in community governance, resource allocation, decision-making processes and so on.

If we are to take seriously the implications of white privilege in our work, then we must make ourselves and our institutions the targets for change. And, if we do that, we will surely react with the same kinds of acting out, resistance, anxiety and retrenchment we observe in our community building work when we are not the targets for change but the 'change agents.' In addition, institutions and individuals with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo will devalue our methods, question the accuracy of our assumptions, resist and sabotage our strategies, and divide us from our allies. That is the price of change and, as a field of work, we have to be willing to pay it.

The same is true of us as individuals. We must live with the discomfort of change—the self-consciousness about everything we say, the acceptance of different ways of knowing, the feeling that we are not the experts—while we are in the process of changing our worldviews. If we are willing, we can also accept discomfort as a very useful learning tool. Can we feel the confusion when what we were taught and what we now see and experience don't line up? Can we use that new understanding about what it is like to always have to second guess our gut instincts in our community building work? (That is how many people of color describe being a student in school, or an immigrant or refugee from Central America to the United States, or an intern in a foundation, or many situations where they need to operate in privileged institutions that may not validate or respect their worldviews.)

> What will help us as individuals and, probably more importantly, as institutions and a field of work? For one thing, we don't have to do this work alone. The more we make visible the changes we want to contribute to, the more allies can gravitate toward us, and the more we can be allies to others.

What will help us as individuals and, probably more importantly, as institutions and a field of work? For one thing, we don't have to do this work alone. The more we make visible the changes we want to contribute to, the more allies can gravitate toward us, and the more we can be allies to others. The foundations, technical assistance providers, community organizations, academic institutions, evaluators, anti-racism advocates and training groups that stand up to say they are working on white privilege internally can form the strongest kind of support group to each other, and will eventually influence the field as a whole. If we are honest about our struggles (we are all learners), we are likely also to attract organizations of color to help us, or at least to wait for us to catch up.

In addition, we can work hard to understand each other's worldviews and assumptions. As a field, we can challenge each other, work to reconcile differences where possible and appropriate and agree to disagree. We can acknowledge our different understandings of how the world works, and stop trying to smooth them over. If we are white, we can take leadership from people of color in this work—even if, as white people, we don't follow their reasoning or ideas. We can suspend our individual judgment long enough to consider if there really is a different way of looking at things based on the lived experience of

people of color. We can find out if we can see what they see before we jump to our own conclusions.

We can also put more effort into knowing our own institutional and group histories, and the history of other institutions and groups from their own perspectives. What does resistance and retrenchment look like and how are they best countered? What strategies have helped groups survive and thrive (Native Americans, Africans)? Our work as a field to know the specific experiences of different national, racial, ethnic and cultural groups (internally and in relationship to others groups, and to the dominant culture in the United States) can be a powerful part of healing and reconciliation as well as a source of ideas and strategies to survive and thrive.

We can collectively develop a positive vision of where we are heading. What would a just or equitable community look like, and how can our work contribute? All of those strategies can take our community building work forward – with humility and humanity.

"Any attempt to change a situation either politically or otherwise should be based on the transformation of our own consciousness … You have to understand yourself to some extent, and to the people in the communities, to their deepest desires, their suffering. That kind of deep looking will bring about more understanding of self and of the community … You learn to look not with individual eyes, but with the community eyes. Because the collective insight is always deeper than individual insight."

– Thich Nhat Hanh, internationally renowned Vietnamese Buddhist monk

Section 5

APPENDIX

Bibliography

Authors' Biographies

Bibliography

Books

Adams, Maurianne, Warren J. Blumenfeld, Rosie Castañeda, Heather W. Hackman, Madeline L. Peters, and Ximena Zúñiga, editors. *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Adams, Maurianne, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Allen, Theodore W. *The Invention of the White Race: The Origin of Racial Oppression in Anglo-America*. London: Verso, 1997.

Bell, Derrick. *Afrolantica Legacies*. Chicago: Third World Press, 1998.

Blackwell, Angela Glover, Stewart Kwoh, and Manuel Pastor. *Searching for Uncommon Common Ground*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2002.

Bowser, Benjamin P. and Raymond G. Hunt, editors. *Impacts of Racism on White Americans*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1998.

Brodkin, Karen. *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998.

Brown, Michael K., Martin Carnoy, Elliott Currie, Troy Duster, David B. Oppenheimer, Marjorie M. Shultz, and David Wellman. *White-Washing Race: The Myth of Color-Blind Society*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003.

Bush, Melanie E. L. *Breaking the Code of Good Intentions: Everyday Forms of Whiteness*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004.

chideya, farei. *Don't Believe the Hype: Fighting Cultural Misinformation about African Americans*. New York: Plume, 1995.

Clark, Christine and James O'Donnell, editors. *Becoming and Unbecoming White: Owning and Disowning a Racial Identity*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1999.

Cose, Elli. *Color-blind: Seeing Beyond Race in a Race Obsessed World*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1997.

Delgado, Richard and Jean Stefanic, editors. *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997.

Derman-Sparks, Louise and Carol Brunson Phillips. *Teaching/Learning Anti-Racism: A Developmental Approach*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1997.

Doane, Ashley W. and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. *White Out: The Continuing Significance of Racism*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Edley Jr., Christopher. *Not All Black and White: Affirmative Action and American Values*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1996.

Feagin, Joe and Eileen O'Brien. *White Men on Race: Power, Privilege, and the Shaping of Cultural Consciousness*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2003.

Feagin, Joe R. *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, and Future Reparations*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Feagin, Joe and Vera Hernán. *White Racism*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Fine, Michelle, Lois Weis, Linda C. Powell, and L. Mun Wong. *OffWhite: Readings on Race, Power, and Society*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Frankenberg, Ruth. *The Social Construction of White Women, Whiteness Race Matters*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum, 1970.

Goodman, Diane J. *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2001.

Guinier, Lani and Gerald Torres. *The Miner's Canary*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Gunaratnam, Yasmin. *Researching 'Race' and Ethnicity: Methods, Knowledge, and Power*. London: Sage Publications, 2003.

Helfand, Judy and Laurie Lippin. *Understanding Whiteness Unraveling Racism: Tools for the Journey*. Cincinnati, OH: Thomson Learning, 2001.

Helms, Janet E. *A Race is a Nice Thing to Have: A Guide to Being a White Person or Understanding the White Persons in Your Life*. Topeka, KS: Content Communications, 1992.

Hill, Mike, editor. *Whiteness: A Critical Reader*. New York: New York University Press, 1997.

Hitchcock, Jeff. *Lifting the White Veil.* Roselle, NJ: Crandall, Dostie & Douglas Books, Inc., 2002.

Hobgood, Mary Elizabeth. *Dismantling Privilege: An Ethics of Accountability.* Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2000.

Holmes, Barbara. *Race and the Cosmos: An Invitation to View the World Differently.* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002.

Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University of Press, 1998.

Johnson, Allan G. *Privilege, Power, and Difference.* Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2001.

Katz, Judith H. *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training.* Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003.

Kivel, Paul. *You Call This Democracy?* New York: The Apex Press, 2004.

Kivel, Paul. *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice.* Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Society Publishers, 2002.

Kly, Y. N. *The Anti-Social Contract.* Atlanta: Clarity Press, 1997.

Kovel, Joel. *White Racism: A Psychohistory.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.

Leondar-Wright, Betsy. *Class Matters: Cross-Class Alliance Building for Middle Class Activists.* Gabriola Island, British Columbia, 2005.

Lipsitz, George. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.

Loewen, James W. *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism.* New York: The New Press, 2005.

Martinez, Elizabeth. *De Colores Means All of Us: Latina Views for a Multi-Colored Century.* Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998.

Medoff, Peter and Holly Sklar. *Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood.* Boston: South End Press, 1994.

Norrell, Robert J. *The House I Live In: Race in the American Century.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

O'Brien, Eileen. *Whites Confront Racism: Antiracists and Their Paths to Action.* New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001.

Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s.* New York: Routledge, 1994.

Rothenberg, Paula S. *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism.* New York: William Paterson University of New Jersey, 2002.

Ryan, William. *Blaming the Victim.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1971.

Roy, Beth. *Bitters in the Honey.* Fayetteville, AK: University of Arkansas Press, 1999.

Segrest, Mab. *Memoir of a Race Traitor.* Boston: South End Press, 1994.

Shearer, Jody Miller. *Enter the River: Healing Steps from White Privilege Toward Racial Reconciliation.* Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1994.

Takaki, Ronald, ed. *From Different Shores: Perspectives on Race and Ethnicity in America.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Tatum, Beverly. *"Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria" and Other Conversations about Race.* New York: Basic Books, 1997.

Terry, Robert W. *For Whites Only.* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975.

Thompson, Becky. *A Promise and A Way of Life: White Antiracist Activism.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Thompson, Cooper, Emmett Schaefer, and Harry Brod. *White Men Challenging Racism: 35 Personal Stories.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.

Three Rivers, Amoja. *Cultural Etiquette: A Guide for the Well-Intentioned.* Indian Valley, VA: Market Wimmin, 1991.

Van Ausdale, Debra and Joe R. Feagin. *The First R: How Children Learn Race and Racism.* New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001.

Wijeyesinghe, Charmaine L. and Bailey W. Jackson III, editors. *New Perspectives on Racial Identity Development: A Theoretical and Practical Anthology.* New York: New York University, Press, 2001.

Wilkinson, Richard. *The Impact of Inequality.* New York: The New Press, 2005.

Williams, Linda Faye. *The Constraint of Race: Legacies of White Skin Privilege in America.* University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003.

Wise, Tim. *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son.* Brooklyn, New York: Soft Skull Press, 2005.

Zinn, Howard. *People's History of the United States.* Rev. edition. New York: HarperCollins, 1995.

Unpublished Documents and Organizations' Publications, Articles and Reports

Annie E. Casey Foundation, The. *Draft Fact Sheet: Racial Disparities in High School Completion.* Unpublished document, 2004.

The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, Keith Lawrence, Stacey Sutton, Anne Kubisch, Gretchen Susi, and Karen Fulbright-Anderson. *Structural Racism and Community Building.* Washington D.C.: The Aspen Institute, 2004.

The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families. *Voices from the Field II: Reflections on Comprehensive Community Change.* Washington D.C.: The Aspen Institute, 2002.

Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, Alan Berube and Bruce Katz. "Katrina's Window: Confronting Concentrated Poverty Across America." October, 2005.

Chang, Hedy Nai-Lin. *Community Building and Diversity: Principles for Action.* Oakland, CA: California Tomorrow, 1997.

Chisom, Ronald, and Michael Washington. *Undoing Racism: A Philosophy of International Social Change.* New Orleans: The People's Institute Press, 1997.

Delgado, Gary. *Multiracial Formations: New Instruments for Social Change.* Oakland, CA: Applied Research Center, 2003.

Fulbright-Anderson, Karen, Keith Lawrence, Stacey Sutton, Gretchen Susi, and Anne Kubisch. *Structural Racism and Youth Development Issues, Challenges, and Implications, Roundtable on Community Change Working Paper Series.* New York: The Aspen Institute, 2004.

George, Mark, Sally Leiderman, and Shirley Strong. *On the Ground.* Unpublished document. Project Change, 2005.

Hoytt, Eleanor Hinton, Vincent Schiraldi, Brenda V. Smith, and Jason Ziedenberg. *Reducing Racial Disparities in Juvenile Detention.* Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2004.

Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. *A Community Builder's Tool Kit: 15 Tools for Creating Healthy, Productive Interracial/Multicultural Communities.* Claremont, CA: Claremont Graduate University, 2001.

Leading by Example: Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity in Community Foundations. A project of California Tomorrow and the Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth and. Oakland, CA: California Tomorrow, 2004.

Leiderman, Sally, Mark George, and Shirley Strong. *Looking Back: Project Change from 1992-2005.* (working draft). Unpublished document, Project Change, 2005.

Leiderman, Sally, Andrew Furco, Jennifer Zapf and Megan Goss. *Building Partnerships with College Campuses: Community Perspectives.* Conshohocken, PA: Center for Assessment and Policy Development, 2003.

Leiderman, Sally A., and Davido M. Dupree. *Project Change Evaluation Research Brief.* Unpublished document. Conshohocken, PA: Center for Assessment and Policy Development, 2000.

Leiderman, Sally, Wendy C. Wolf, and Peter York, *Some Thoughts About Public Will.* Conshohocken: Center for Assessment and Policy Development, 2000.

Leiderman, Sally, Susan Stephens, Wendy C. Wolf, and Patrick T. McCarthy. *Building Capacity for System Reform.* Conshohocken, PA: Center for Assessment and Policy Development, 1994.

Love, Barbara J. "Pillars of Oppression." Internalized Racism Workshop Handout, National Conference for Community and Justice – St. Louis Region, Dismantling Racism Network, August, 1997.

Mann, Eric. *Letter in Support of the Movement in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast: Notes on Strategy and Tactics.* Los Angeles: Frontline Press, 2005.

McIntosh, Peggy. "*White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondence Through Work in Women's Studies.*" Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College, Center for Research on Women, 1988.

Miringoff, Marc. *The Social State of Connecticut.* New York: Fordham Institute for Innovation in Social Policy, 2000.

MultiCultural Collaborative. *Race, Power and Promise in Los Angeles: An Assessment of Response to Human Relations Conflict.* Los Angeles: MultiCultural Collaborative, 1995.

National Conference for Community and Justice. *Intergroup Relations in the United States: Seven Promising Practices.* New York: National Conference for Community and Justice, 1999.

Potapchuk, Maggie. *Cultivating Interdependence: A Guide for Race Relations and Racial Justice Organizations*. Washington D.C.: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2004.

Potapchuk, Maggie. *Holding Up the Mirror: Working Interdependently for Just and Inclusive Communities*. Washington D.C.: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2002.

Potapchuk, Maggie. *Steps Toward an Inclusive Community*. Washington D.C.: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2001.

Potapchuk, William, and Maggie Potapchuk. *Building Effective Community Partnerships. Toolkit 1*. Systems Improvement, Training and Technical Assistance Project. Washington D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership, 2002.

Scheie, David M. with T. Williams and Janis Foster. *Improving Race Relations and Undoing Racism: Roles and Strategies for Community Foundations*. Minneapolis: Rainbow Research, Inc., 2001.

Schoene, Lester P. and Marcelle E. DuPraw. *Facing Racial and Cultural Conflict: Tools for Rebuilding Community*. Washington, D.C.: Program for Community Problem Solving, 1994.

Shapiro, Ilana. *Mapping Theories of Practice and Change: A Comparative Analysis of Interventions and Programs Addressing Racial and Ethnic Tension in U.S. Communities*. Doctoral Dissertation. Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, 2002.

Shapiro, Ilana. *Training for Racial Equity and Inclusion: A Guide to Selected Programs*. New York: Aspen Institute. 2002.

Stone, Rebecca, and Benjamin Butler. *Core Issues in Comprehensive Community Building Initiatives: Exploring Power and Race*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, 2000.

Sue, Derald Wing. "Whiteness and Ethnocentric Monoculturalism: Making the 'Invisible' Visible." *American Psychologist*, November, 2004.

Wiley, Maya D. *Structural Racism and Multiracial Coalition Building*. Minneapolis: The Institute for Race and Poverty, 2003.

Newspapers, Magazines and Newsletters

Advancement Project, Community Justice Resource Center. "Estranged in a Strange Land." Newsletter Volume 13, October, 2005.

Alter, Jonathan. "The Other America." *Newsweek*, September 19, 2005.

Baldwin, James. "On Being White and Other Lies." *Essence Magazine*, April, 1984.

Debose, Brian. "HUD chief foresees a 'whiter' Big Easy." *The Washington Times*, September, 30, 2005.

Klein, Naomi. "Now the Real Looting Begins." *The Nation*, October 10, 2005.

National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. *The Changing Face of Immigration and Race*. Network News, Spring 2001.

Sayre, Alan. "Cities and Crime: New Orleans homicide up as people fear killers, cops." *Detroit Free Press*, Associated Press, August 22, 2005.

Tizon, Tomas Alex. "Katrina's Aftermath." *Los Angeles Times,* September 3, 2005.

Walters, Anne K. "Standing of American Workers will Decline Unless Minority Education Becomes a Priority, Report Says." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 9, 2005.

Young, Tara. "N. O Murder Rate Falls Victim to Storm." *The Times-Picayune*, October 22, 2005.

Web Sites

Adelman, Larry. Race–*The Power of an Illusion* (video documentary), "A Long History of Racial Preferences – For Whites," www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm (accessed July, 2005).

Azulay, Jessica. "New Orleans Neighborhood Demands Trailers to Help Rebuild," http://newstandardnews.net/content/?action=show_item&itemid=2611 (accessed November, 2005).

Brown, C. Stone. "Katrina's Forgotten Victims: Native American Tribes," http://news.pacificnews.org (accessed September, 2005).

CBS News "Illegals Hit by Katrina Worry," www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/09/10/katrina/printable832574.shtml (accessed October, 2005).

Center for Assessment and Policy Development and MP Associates, www.evaluationtoolsforracialequity.org.

Center for the Study of White American Culture, A Multicultural Organization, www.euroamerican.org.

Challenging White Supremacy Workshop, www.cwsworkshop.org

Chin, Andrew. *A Brief History of the "Model Minority" Stereotype.* www.modelminority.com/article72.html (accessed 2005).

Clark, Kendall. www.whiteprivilege.com

Crossroads Ministry. "Strategy for Building Anti-Racist Collectives." www.crossroadsministry.org/ (accessed May, 2005).

Davis, Mike. "Gentrifying Diversity." AlterNet, www.alternet.org/katrina/27391/ (accessed October, 2005).

International Association for Community Development, "Inequality Kills." www.iacdglobal.org/spotlight.htm (accessed October, 2005).

Kirchheimer, Sid. "Racism Is Harmful to Health 'Antiracism' Initiatives Needed, But Slow to Be Recognized, Say Experts." http://my.webmd.com/content/Article/58/66541.htm (accessed July, 2005).

Kivel, Paul. "Social Service or Social Change?" www.paulkivel.com (accessed May, 2005).

Kivel, Paul. "White Benefits: An Exercise." www.paulkivel.com (accessed September, 2005).

Leadership Conference for Civil Rights. "Groups Call for the Investigation of Relief's Efforts," press release. www.civilrights.org (accessed October, 2005).

Lynn, Evelyn. "An Anti-Racist Coalition? We Have a Long Way to Go." www.blythe.org (accessed October, 2005).

Mathis, Greg Judge. Commentary: "Until White America 'Gets It,' Racial and Class Divisions will Continue." www.BlackAmericaWeb.com (accessed September, 2005).

Native Discussion. "Time to Reduce Poverty Among Native Americans," www.native-american-online.org/_disc8/0000000f.htm (accessed October, 2005).

olsson, joan. "Detour-Spotting for White Anti-racists." www.eraseracismny.org (accessed May, 2005).

Prison Activist Resource Center. "African-Americans and the Criminal Injustice System." www.prisonactivist.org/factsheets/racism.pdf#search='native%20americans%20racism%20statistics (accessed October, 2005).

Roberts, Paul Craig. "How New Orleans was lost," www.antiwar.com (accessed September, 2005).

Takeuchi, Burt Masao. "Bravery Comes in Many Colors," www.asian-nation.org/442.shtml (accessed July, 2005).

"What I Heard from Leaders of Color at this Conference that They Need from White Anti-racist Allies," White Privilege Conference 5, Pella, Iowa, April 29, 2004, (courtesy of Dianne Finnerty). www.wacan.org (accessed, June 2005).

Wise, Tim. www.timwise.org

Authors' Biographies

Donna K. Bivens

As Co-Director of Women's Theological Center (WTC) in Boston, Donna has consulted with scores of organizations around the country to facilitate their creation of shared ownership, leadership and benefit across divides of racism and other systemic oppressions. Her work on internalized racism has included Loves Herself Regardless programs for women of African descent, as well as training and consulting with individuals and organizations. Recently, Donna's work at WTC has focused on spiritual leadership development. Complementing other aspects of leadership, spiritual leadership interrupts practices that crush the human spirit and is defined as the practice of living on purpose, in spirit, and for justice. WTC has designed a five-part curriculum on spiritual leadership development that is the foundation of its programs, trainings and consultations for individuals and organizations. The curriculum offers tools for transformation and spiritual leadership practices on the internal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural dimensions.

Donna's published articles include "The Possibility of Transformation: 25 Years Later," "Internalized Racism: A Definition" and "Struggling Through Injury in the Work of Love" (co-written with Nancy Richardson and Elizabeth Bettenhausen). Donna has received numerous awards and extensive recognition for her social justice and community building work, including Woman of the Year from Irish Immigration Center, Woman of Justice award from NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby, Drylongso from Community Change, and an honorary doctorate from Episcopal Divinity School. She has been with WTC since 1985. The mission of the organization is to engage and support women's spiritual leadership.

Contact Information: Donna Bivens, WTC, P.O. Box 1200, Boston, MA 02117-1200, (617) 585-5655, dbivens@thewtc.org, www.thewtc.org.

Sally Leiderman

Sally Leiderman is President of the Center for Assessment and Policy Development, an 18-year-old nonprofit policy, research and evaluation organization. She takes the lead on many of CAPD's evaluations of community building efforts and community/foundation partnerships. Her work has included evaluations of The Common Ground Fund of the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region, which supports efforts to improve outcomes for people of color; The Discovery and Children First Initiatives, community building efforts of the Graustein Memorial Fund in partnership with Connecticut communities; and Project Change, a 10-year anti-racism initiative in four communities funded by the Levi Strauss Foundation. Other work has focused on the Community Leadership Program in New Haven, Healing the Heart of Diversity, and the Americans for Indian Opportunity Ambassadors Program: three different values-based leadership development/personal transformation efforts that pay explicit attention to issues of power, oppression, privilege and racism.

Sally partnered in the development of "*Training for Racial Equity and Inclusion: A Guide to Selected Programs*" with the Alliance for Conflict Transformation, the Aspen Institute Roundtable on

Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families, and Project Change. She co-authored "*A Community Builder's Toolkit: 15 Tools for Creating Healthy, Productive Interracial/Multicultural Communities*" with the Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change. In addition, she co-led the development of a web site, (www.evaluationtoolsforracialequity.org) with Maggie Potapchuk. Sally serves as an advisor to foundations in several areas of antiracism work, design of community/foundation partnerships and initiatives to improve community outcomes.

Contact Information: Sally Leiderman, CAPD, 268 Barren Hill Road, Conshohocken, PA 19428, (610) 828-1063, sleiderman@capd.org, www.capd.org.

Barbara Major

Barbara Major is a community organizer and activist with over 30 years' experience in local, national, and international community development efforts. Her work has included everything from nurturing leadership development efforts within local communities to assisting institutions in developing strategies to de-institutionalize racism. Barbara is a native of New Orleans, where she formerly served as the chair of the community-driven St. Thomas/Irish Channel Consortium—a nationally acclaimed model for holistic community and institutional transformation. She is a core trainer for The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, and for Crossroads Ministries.

Presently, Barbara is the Executive Director of the St. Thomas Health Clinic, a nonprofit health clinic providing services to the underserved and uninsured residents of New Orleans. The Clinic now plays a vital role in the recovery of that city and its health care system from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Barbara has channeled her social activism into providing anti-racist, culturally competent and comprehensive health care to improve the wellness of the New Orleans community. Her innovative approach to community-guided health care delivery, founded on the principles of community self-determination and accountability of providers to the community, has moved much of the discourse of health care services to another level of understanding. Barbara was recently appointed by Mayor Ray Nagin of New Orleans to co-chair the Bring New Orleans Back Commission, the local panel guiding the recovery of that city from Hurricane Katrina.

Contact Information: Barbara Major, St. Thomas Health Services, 1020 St. Andrews St., New Orleans, LA 70130, (504) 529-5558, bmajor2891@aol.com, www.stthomasclinic.org.

Maggie Potapchuk

Maggie Potapchuk is the president of MP Associates, a consulting firm that works with individuals, organizations, and communities to build their capacity to address racism, power, and privilege issues. She designs programs, provides assessments of organizations and communities, conducts research, develops tools, and offers coaching and training. Her recent work includes co-developing the web site www.evaluationtoolsforracialequity.org with the Center for Assessment and Policy Development; conducting research with Carolyne Abdullah on the state of race relations in Columbus, Georgia; working with the Race Relations Center of East Tennessee to create a program matrix for a nine-county region to address racial inequities and build an inclusive region; and piloting a workshop series, "Being White in a Multiracial Society," for IMPACT Silver Spring's educational equity work.

From 2000 – 2003, Maggie served as Senior Program Associate with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies' Network of Alliances Bridging Race and Ethnicity (NABRE) program, a national effort to facilitate communication and provide support for 185 community-based race relations and racial justice organizations. Her publications include *Cultivating Interdependence: A Guide for Race Relations and Racial Justice Organizations; Holding up the Mirror: Working Interdependently for Just and Inclusive Communities;* and *Steps Toward an Inclusive Community,* which includes the "Inclusive Community Assessment Tool." Maggie was also Director of the Dismantling Racism Program at the National Conference for Community and Justice – St. Louis Region. The program received national recognition for the Community-St. Louis initiative and Dismantling Racism Institute. The St. Louis YWCA honored Maggie with its 1999 Racial Justice Award.

Contact Information: Maggie Potapchuk, MP Associates, Inc., 1 Catoctin Court, Silver Spring, MD 20906, (301) 460-1063, mpotapchuk@comcast.net.