Sociology by Any Other Name: Teaching the Sociological Perspective in Campus Diversity Programs

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Abstract

This article suggests that the way in to sociology may not always be through the front door. The authors demonstrate how students in a three-day campus diversity program develop a sociological imagination despite not having a formal affiliation with the sociology department. In particular, students demonstrate a move from color blindness into racial consciousness and a shift from individual prejudice into institutional privilege when understanding both diversity issues and their own personal biographies. In short, despite not knowing the phrase, they develop a sociological imagination. While the goal is not to diminish the significance of traditional sociology classrooms, the authors argue that programs like theirs may diminish resistance to learning about privilege and inequalities once students enter the classroom. Such programs may also have the benefit of attracting students to the discipline and creating a more welcoming environment for related programs and events on campus. It is one model of public sociology that other campus communities may mirror outside of the traditional classroom environment.

Keywords: sociological imagination, diversity, inequalities, interdisciplinary courses, public sociology

In a culture structured by individualism, sociology can be a discipline met with ambivalence and resistance. Our emphasis on institutions, privilege, and power directly counters the myth of meritocracy that shapes political discourse in the United States and can be especially challenging for students from privileged or homogeneous backgrounds. As such, overcoming student resistance to sociology and to much of our content and perspective can present a significant challenge both in the classroom and in course enrollments. Yet doing so provides not only the greatest challenge in our careers but also the greatest joys. As Burawoy (2007:255) notes, "Students should not be seen as a drag on our professional careers but as our first public." Committing ourselves to teaching in ways that pique the sociological imagination has the potential to transform not just our classrooms but our campuses and our communities as well.

Given that recognition, this article suggests that the way in to sociology may not always be the front door. While the goal is not to diminish the significance of traditional, semester-long sociology courses, we suggest that there may be other opportunities on campus to provide students with an entree into the discipline and evoke a sociological imagination that will serve them both inside our classrooms and out. We specifically discuss a campus orientation program that we designed for first-year white students to learn about and prepare to engage diversity on our campus. Cotaught by us, an assistant professor of sociology and an associate professor of psychology, this program was not specifically linked to any discipline in our marketing or during the program. However, one of the strongest outcomes of the program was the ability for students to understand the role of institutions, ideologies, and privileges in their personal biographies and everyday lives. In short, our students had begun to develop a sociological imagination.

We argue that programs like ours, which could be invited or replicated on college campuses across the country, are impactful not just for our direct goals, the fostering of a campus climate that supports and attracts a diverse community, but also for the development of a sociological imagination among students. This may attract students to sociology and related disciplines, and indeed on our campus it already has. But more significantly, it creates a campus climate that is beneficial to all. As Risman (2006:287) notes in a recent anthology about public sociology, "Education is a powerful tool for social change, especially for sharing the ideas and analyses that a new generation may adapt and use in their own way." Integrating an orientation session like ours, or incorporating it into existing campus models, prepares incoming students to engage not just diversity but the sociological perspective before their first college courses begin. Students not only enter our classrooms with the first, and often most difficult, hurdle—the development of a sociological imagination—already behind them but also contribute to a more meaningfully diverse campus and local community.

SOCIOLOGICAL RESISTANCE AND INVITING STUDENTS IN

It is difficult to teach sociology without exploring the realities of privilege and disadvantage that have structured students' lives. It has even been suggested that teaching white privilege, particularly to white students, can have a negative impact on course evaluations (Boatright-Horowitz and Soeung 2009). As a large body of literature demonstrates, encountering and overcoming student resistance to topics of inequality and privilege is a challenge for many sociology instructors. A long list of articles are devoted to the tricks of this trade, the means, and methods of overcoming student resistance and moving students into a sociological mindset.

For example, there has been much discussion about the causes of student resistance. Hedley and Markowitz (2001:195) suggest that students "who resist discussions that critically examine social life sometimes do so because they (1) tend toward reductionism in moral analysis and (2) misconstrue empirical and theoretical information provided in class as moral argument." Kleinman and Copp (2009) have considered resistance in relation to students' perceptions of social harm; in essence, students tend to believe that harm is the result of bad people with bad intentions, who must be blamed without unsettling the beliefs and practices that students enjoy. Applebaum (2009) has examined the perception that teaching about social justice presents a liberal bias, urging a refocus of our energies away from that question and toward methods that promote engagement and diminish resistance. Forbes and Kaufman (2008) also suggest that perceptions of political bias can disrupt critical pedagogy, as can the suppression of student voices and an unwillingness to address the "free-rider" problem. Student ideologies and misperceptions can also foster resistance to the sociological perspective. As Goldsmith (2006:263) notes, "Unless instructors employ strategies to deliberately discredit those misconceptions, students likely will continue to hold them after they leave college."

Resistance, however, is not the only response nor the only constraint on our teaching. Students also can become paralyzed by their new knowledge, or they can experience rage (Davis 1992). Paralysis is typically experienced when the student is overwhelmed with the new information and the scope of institutional limitations, often deciding that the problems are too large to fix, thus reifying the status quo. Rage occurs when students react to the information in an unfocused manner, usually remaining blind to the complexities inherent in the problems of privilege and inequality. As Davis (1992:233) notes, "Sociology courses often hit too close to home; consequently some students resist by remaining on an abstract, intellectual level when discussing stratification. They often want to avoid introspection, examination of one's own life." Further, there may be institutional constraints beyond student resistance. Forbes and Kaufman (2008) note that instructor vulnerability, the bureaucratic university

system, and pressure to adhere to institutional structures and norms can all inhibit critical pedagogy in our discipline.

The pedagogical literature in sociology and related disciplines is filled with articles offering tips and tricks for overcoming student resistance. Moore (2007) has incorporated many of these suggestions and writes specifically about strategies to overcome multiple forms of resistance occurring in the same classroom through cognitive mapping, which is overlaid with a series of more traditional approaches such as working with key concepts, small-group work, and in-depth semester papers. Some other useful suggestions are to ask students to discover and demonstrate fallacies of scientific racism (Haddad and Liberman 2002); to use "encountered situations," which "compel [students] to reflect on the concepts of power and privilege so that they can recognize their role in either maintaining or changing the status quo" (Lechuga, Clerc, and Howell 2009:229); to incorporated experiential learning; and to have advanced students function as discrimination testers in a local environment and present their findings to introductory students (Pence and Fields 1999).

While these ideas are certainly helpful, we suggest that there may be opportunities on college campuses outside of the traditional classroom setting where students may learn to engage the world around them as sociologists or, in other words, to do public sociology. As Dandaneau (2009:9) notes, "[T]oday's standard issue classrooms are about the last place one would want to attempt to transform everyday consciousness into sociological self-consciousness," citing the formality and the isolation of our classrooms from "live experience." Our combination of content, discussion, and interaction in this three-day intensive program provoked deep learning among students and is likely not replicable in three 50-minute sessions per week.

Perhaps more importantly, programs like ours may lower resistance to sociology curricula and other related programs and events on campus. Students entering sociology classrooms after undertaking such an experience are less likely to resist the sociological imagination and may seek out our majors and programs in greater numbers. And even if they do not, they are more likely to practice public sociology. As Korgen and White (2010:253) note, "[W]e should be teaching our students to recognize injustice in our world and their power to organize effectively against it."

THE ENGAGING DIVERSITY PREORIENTATION PROGRAM

While not overtly disciplinary in nature, we used our skills as teachers in sociology and psychology to develop, in 2010, a three-day intensive program designed to emphasize the continuing significance of race in U.S. society. We called the program Engaging Diversity and invited all students who identified as white in their university application materials to apply to come to campus early, at the same time as our ALANA (African, Latin, Asian, and Native American) and international students. These preorientation programs take place before the traditional first-year orientation, making this the first formalized contact that these students have with our university upon moving in. As such, they were immersed in a three-day diversity training as their first act as college students.

It should be noted that we are a small, residential, highly selective liberal arts institution in the Midwest. Our student body is growing in terms of all forms of diversity, yet in 2010 our 2,094-member student body was still 75 percent white, 5 percent black non-Hispanic, 0.3 percent Native American, 3 percent Hispanic, 0.2 percent multiracial, 4 percent international, plus an unidentified 8 percent other. Of the students in our incoming class, 44 percent were in the top 10 percent of their high school graduating classes, and they held an average ACT score of 28 and SAT score of 1,267. At over $40,000 annually for tuition, room, and board, only 56 percent receive need-based assistance. While we have students from all over the country and world, many come from the Chicago suburbs and from middle-

class and above families. Our students are bright and eager to broaden their horizons but without opportunities like ours may not have the confidence or competence to meaningfully engage diversity on our campus.

Our new program, offered for the first time in August 2010, began with a formal lunch with students and their parents, followed by some time to say farewell. The afternoon of our first day was spent discussing their conceptions of prejudice, diversity, race, stereotyping, and inequality. Students brainstormed their associations with a variety of terms related to race and inequality (e.g., *person of color, color blindness, prejudice, racism),* and we discussed those associations and from where students think they come. We then showed a short video on the realities of bias and how it is misused in intergroup relations. We worked to challenge the students' ideas about inequality in the United States as well as to better understand their incoming perceptions about race and equality in the United States. That evening, they joined the ALANA students for an informal dinner and activity time.

Day 2 was perhaps the most intensive, consisting of a myth-busting session about affirmative action and college admissions, a history of racial inequality as it relates to housing and wealth, and the daily manifestations of white privilege. The morning began with personal reflection on the homework, which involved examining their multiple identities and the matrix of privilege, along with processing the experience of interacting with the ALANA students. Subsequently, a traditional lecture on the history and progression of affirmative action was followed by a discussion of how the basic presentation of the historical data differed from the stories and legends they had learned. That afternoon, through interactive discussion we continued to deconstruct what the students implicitly and explicitly had learned about what it means to be white, and we provided historical and contextual information about the concept of whiteness. The students had dinner with the ALANA students again and then participated together in a privilege walk, where students physically embody their advantages and disadvantages by taking steps forward or backward as statements are read. After this, we had a dialogue with all students about the activity and their reactions.

On Day 3, we taught students about communication styles and cross-racial dialogue. A brief video clip on communication helped spur their thinking about their own styles, and we discussed how cultural differences might influence communication. Students practiced dialogue in the context of their friendships and how that might impact their college experience, and they subsequently engaged their communication skills through a consensus-building exercise. They had lunch with white faculty and staff on campus whose curricula or service activities have been supportive of social justice and diversity, and together they planned their next steps as both a group and as individuals to act upon and make meaningful what they had learned. The program ended with a dinner with the incoming international students and then with social time.

Many universities indicate in their mission statements a desire to prepare students for a diverse world. Yet many students come to college having experienced little interaction with individuals from different backgrounds, hailing from homogeneous communities and lacking the ability to analyze and evaluate multiple perspectives (Gurin, Nagda, and Lopez 2004). Thus, it is unlikely that students arrive at college with the tools to engage in diversity. As such, given the changing racial demographics of our society, it is critical that institutions of higher education act intentionally to prepare students to engage in a diverse society.

This is especially difficult given the prevalence of color-blind ideologies in the United States. The students in our program, as we discuss below, indicated a strong adherence to these ideologies, which deemphasize the significance of race in shaping social outcomes and individual opportunities. As Bonilla-Silva (2003) demonstrates, the central frames of what he terms "color-blind racism" are the specific minimization of racism, the explanation of continued segregation in "natural" terms, an

emphasis on cultural strengths and failures, and strict individualism based on the belief of already-achieved equal opportunity.

These ideologies can create particular hurdles for white students, who often do not articulate their own white identity and fail to see the role that their race has played in shaping their lives (Perry 2001). Especially on a college campus, white students are often unsure of how they fit into the concept of diversity (Banks 2009; Myers 2005). They have reported feeling left out of diversity initiatives or unsure where they can enter the conversation, and rather than engaging, they tend to opt out (Quaye, 2008). Researchers have worked hard to document the benefits of diversity and have found that white students' participation in diversity-related activities leads to greater openness to and appreciation of diversity and increased awareness of racial privilege (Hurtado 2005; Lopez 2004; Spanierman et al. 2008; Worthington et al. 2008). Taken together, this research underlines the importance of finding ways to intentionally engage white students in campus diversity efforts, as white students play a critical role in shaping campus climate.

Traditionally, preorientation programs have focused on providing support and time for ALANA students to get acclimated to campus. Following the end of legal segregation, higher education in the 1960s was filled with changes in institutional policies and practices resulting in an influx of students from diverse backgrounds (Musil 2008). Subsequently, colleges and universities searched for ways to serve this new population, and programming often included preorientation programs. However, in addition to preparing and supporting ALANA students for participation on predominantly white campuses, we also must be intentional about preparing and supporting white students for engaging in diverse campuses. It is not enough for the ALANA students to be comfortable. White students also need to be supported in developing competencies to participate in diverse campus communities. Given the prevailing climate of color blindness (i.e., the assertion that race does not matter), students can benefit from guidance that focuses on the value of diversity rather than the minimization of differences (Apfelbaum et al. 2010).

Our study examines a new preorientation program created specifically for white students to educate and engage them in diversity on campus. Our goal was to provide a separate space for white students to learn about diversity and develop self-awareness, although this process was supplemented with interactions with ALANA and international students, who were on campus at the same time. Despite hesitation on the part of some to separate groups, research suggests that it is possible to engage in within-group processes without increasing intergroup bias (Deffenbacher et al. 2008). In the end, our students appreciated the safe space to ask difficult questions and learn about institutional racism and privilege in a closed environment. When we asked them how the program was like or unlike their expectations, most commented on this safe space. One representative comment is as follows:

> It was not exclusively a multicultural forum, but allowed for private and open discussions without the awkwardness that could arise with a mixed race forum. I think a mixed race forum would have created an environment in which everyone would have been less likely to be honest and open with how they felt about the topics.

The students also commented in that same response section that they appreciated the time with ALANA and international students to process and build a diverse personal network. While we did not survey ALANA or international students to get their perspectives in an anonymous or confidential format, anecdotal responses have been positive. We were supported in part by the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, and both this director and the director for International Students eagerly incorporated our students into their orientation schedules. Feedback from graduating ALANA students taken in another recent forum also was positive about our program; they felt that this program

has the potential to go a long way in supporting increased diversity on our campus and in taking some of the onus off of their shoulders to "bring diversity" to the campus. Finally, students in all three programs were new to campus and eager to make friends with one another. We heard stories of ping-pong games at night, dorm room decorating parties, walking trips to nearby stores, and the like happening during the evenings after the official program for the day was completed.

This preorientation program is innovative for its focus solely on preparing white students for a diverse campus but also in that most programs and preorientations focused on diversity occur at large institutions where a critical mass of students from diverse backgrounds is present (e.g., Gurin et al. 2004; Hurtado 2005). Lacking this critical mass, smaller liberal arts institutions by and large have not created such programs. However, the intimate and residential nature of these institutions makes them suitable, perhaps even ideal, for intensive programs. This program addresses that gap, capitalizing on the intimate dynamics of a small liberal arts institution and the preorientation format, which can also be adapted for larger institutions.

METHOD

We were interested in student outcomes for this program and as such devised a combined qualitative and quantitative measure of student thinking around race, diversity, and inequalities.[1] Our quantitative measures were (1) the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale, which measures the willingness of participants to consider the significance of race in given situations; (2) a racial identity scale, which measures the extent to which participants consider their own race a significant factor in their own lives; (3) the Attitudes Toward Diversity scale, a measure that captures the extent to which participants support an institution's diversity initiatives; (4) a perspective-taking measure, which considers how often participants consider others' perspectives when taking actions; (5) a measure that captures racial composition of previous domains such as friendships and neighborhood environments; and (6) a scale that measures openness to experience. We chose these measures because we theorized them to be potential outcomes and useful for longitudinal study. We also asked a series of open-ended questions that served as the basis for our qualitative data.

Students were anonymously surveyed before beginning the program and at the program's end. While there is the risk that students were providing answers that were designed to please us, the anonymity of the responses plus their consistency with anecdotal responses gives us confidence in their dependability. We are also continuing to survey students as they progress in their college careers, and early longitudinal testing reveals a sustained impact, which is that a significant shift from an individual, meritocratic perspective into a sociological perspective was stark, significant, and lasting at the end of this program. Although this was not a sociology program per se, it significantly enhanced the sociological imagination among students, made them feel more prepared to meaningfully support and engage diversity on our campus, and we hope, laid the foundation for public sociology on our campus and in our community.

FINDINGS

If there is an overarching theoretical framework to our work, it is that of color-blind ideologies and the need to overcome them. While our program was not exclusively focused on race and took instead an intersectional framework that scrutinized the interrelated nature of social inequalities and the complex of social identities that situate all of our lived experiences, the prevalence of color-blind ideologies both patterned students' understandings of diversity and presented the most significant hurdle for student learning. *Color-blind racism* is the most recent name for a long trajectory of literature that

identifies a shift in racial ideology in the post-civil rights era. In short, and best articulated in the work of Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2003), it favors explanations for continuing racial inequality that are race neutral. We saw many of the common frames of color-blind racism in the early sessions of our program, even among students who essentially self-selected into our program. That is, even those students who chose to participate in an intensive diversity program did not indicate a strong level of racial literacy (Twine and Steinbugler 2006) at the beginning. Instead, they emphasized the hard work of whites like themselves, essentially the abstract liberalism frame; the cultural failings of nonwhites, the cultural racism frame; the minimization of racism given the election of Obama; and the adoption of self-segregation as a theory for personal networks, the naturalization frame (Bonilla-Silva 2003).

This presented the biggest challenge in our program and, as the data below indicate, the greatest success. Students abandoned the color-blind framework and adopted instead a lens through which to understand white privilege. This was the core outcome of our study, but it relates strongly to two other outcomes: an increase in white identity and a shift from understanding problems at the individual level (as in prejudice) to understanding ideologies and institutions. It may seem at first glance that a strengthened white identity is not the desired outcome for a prodiversity framework; however, this common conception, echoed in a critique of whiteness studies from a public sociology framework (Niemonen 2010), ignores the intersectional reality that we are all recipients of both privilege and oppression.

Niemonen (2010:64) writes that "by suppressing intra-group divisions and contradictions, whiteness studies ignore how multiple statuses work together in people's lives." While we think that his is a misreading of the whiteness studies literature, it is precisely this intersectional framework, experienced on a deep-learning level in our privilege walk activity with the ALANA students and discussed in democratic dialogue afterward, that allowed students to see the complexity in their own identities and the diversity that exists within nonwhite identity groups. This very insight allowed them to own their whiteness in ways that do not provoke guilt or shame but, rather, an honest and direct read on our society and our places within it. As Thompson (2010:225) has written, "None of the White activists I know of (or have read about) have come to their activism without accepting themselves as white people." That acceptance and that activism are not possible without an essentially sociological framework that transcends individual experience and overcomes the power of color-blind ideologies. That same framework is one that creates and, ideally in student actions, reproduces public sociology.

Quantitative Outcomes

Quantitative results include pretest responses from 12 participants and 13 posttest responses, out of 15 total students. While these numbers are small, given that this was a pilot program, the results are significant and encouraging. Typically, the concerns with small sample size include insufficient power to detect a real difference or too many outliers, which affect the results. Fortunately, the pattern of our data does not indicate outliers, which can affect the data analysis. Therefore, we can conclude that the significant results are due to the strength of the findings, which were detectable despite the small sample size. Specifically, our quantitative measures indicated a decrease in color-blind racial attitudes and an increase in racial identity. Paired sample t-tests were conducted to compare responses on key variables at Time 1 (pretest) and Time 2 (posttest). Color-blind racial attitudes significantly decreased from Time 1 (M = 59.0, *SD* = 13.6) to Time 2 (M = 39.1, *SD* = 5.3); t(10) = 6.24, $p < .0001$. As seen in Figure 1, there are no outliers, and the average trend is downward. Racial identity significantly increased from Time 1 (M = 5.3, *SD* = 3.4) to Time 2 (M = 9.0, *SD* = 3.2); $t(11) = -3.48$, $p < .005$. As seen in Figure 2, there are no outliers, and the general trend is upward. No significant differences were found between pre- and posttest responses for the other measures, as can be expected given the short time span. These

data will be useful as our longitudinal assessment continues. The survey data also revealed that the majority of students came from neighborhoods (75 percent), schools (66.7 percent), and friendship circles (75 percent) that were solely or predominantly white.

Qualitative Outcomes

While a reduction in color-blind racial attitudes and an increased awareness of how race has played a role in students' own lives are already indications of a developing sociological imagination, the qualitative results are perhaps the most revealing. They also illustrate a diminished reliance on color-blind frames for understanding inequalities and a move from prejudice to privilege that is central to the sociological imagination.

From color blindness to racial consciousness. Perhaps the biggest shift between our pre- and postprogram qualitative data was from color-blind frames into frames that willingly acknowledge race and its role in individual lives and modern institutions. We asked students several questions about race prior to their participation in the program. In particular, we asked, "What does race mean to you? How do you identify racially?" "How do you define race?" and "Does race affect your life? Why or why not? If so, in what ways?" Color-blind ideologies, including several frames of color-blind racism, were prevalent in these responses. Responses to the question, "How do you define race?" were either technical, related to their understanding of genetics or ancestry, or moral, such as, "Unimportant, except as a way of belonging to a culture set." Another student answered, "While society might define race as skin tone or visible ethnicity, I define it differently. I think of race as being more cultural."

This emphasis on culture was also present in response to our question "What does [race] mean to you? How do you identify racially?" Seven out of 10 respondents used frames of color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2003) in their answers. The cultural racism frame was most pronounced in the following statement: "I'm white. . . . I identify with other suburban kids who worked hard, went to school, and had parents who wanted them to succeed. I identify with the other honors kids who tried hard." This respondent went on to say that this meant that she or he was "less racist than the very idea of diversity today," indicating a common, color-blind perception that to support diversity is in itself to be racist. A significant number of responses to this question, 4 out of 10 overall and 4 of the 7 color-blind frames, made use of the minimization of racism frame. Answers like "For me, race has only ever mattered as a question on standardized testing" or "Because of the world we live in, society makes us identify the race of the people around us. I just try to live the way I live without judging because, in the end, the only person I can change is myself" were representative. Abstract liberalism was also present: "Race is a label. I am a Caucasian, but before that I am an American, and before that I am a person," in particular, reveals this frame.

Finally, when we asked students if race affects their lives, 3 said no, 3 were uncertain or gave a yes-and-no answer (Bonilla-Silva 2003), and 5 said yes. However, 1 of the 5 said, "Yes. It is harder for Caucasians to get into prestigious colleges," but also went on to say, "People have prejudices about every single race which distort our interactions with those races." Other yes answers included "[S]ometimes it is how people view me" and ". . . I make different choices because of it," and 2 asserted that race affects everyone's lives, with 1 respondent who went on to say, "I try to look past racial differences." As such, even the yes answers are not necessarily breaking from the color-blind frames that were common in the rest of the responses: the 3 who said no and the 3 yes-and-no answers that Bonilla-Silva (2003) has identified as part of the "talk" of color-blind racism. It should be noted that in the 11 responses to this question, 8 made some mention of individual prejudice and personal choice.

By the end of the program, students had radically altered their perceptions of race, racism, and its role in their own lives. When we again asked "How do you define race?" 5 out of 12 responses

emphasized race as a social construct, as in the comments "I define race as the ethnic background of an individual as perceived by society and individuals and institutions" and "A social construct that stratifies society based on appearance, and which defines stereotypes for individuals within each race." Two of those 5 comments were particularly race conscious: "It's just something that people made up to divide themselves into 'us' and 'them'" and "Race has evolved throughout the past couple of centuries from something purely constructed to promote the growth of European white skinned males, and empower them to hold superiority over those who looked different because of skin color."

Students were also racially conscious when answering the question "What does [race] mean to you? How do you identify racially?" Given the question, it is significant that 6 out of 13 responses mentioned power and perhaps also that 5 of the remaining 7 answers were some simple variation of "I'm white." Of the 6 who discussed power, 4 specifically advocated against color blindness, such as this one: "At the beginning of this program I said that race does not matter because I just see people and I realize that race matters to me because I want to understand it. . . . I do experience white privilege so I classify myself as white." An interesting variation in the race conscious responses was, "Race means so much less to me now. One of the videos claimed that it was biologically nonexistent, and if you can't trace it to science, as far as I'm concerned, it's not very valid." We consider this racially conscious because it seems to be an unraveling of a prior color-blind frame rather than the insistence that race does not matter.

Students were perhaps most racially conscious when we asked them if race affects their lives. Whereas prior to the program only 5 students said yes, postprogram 11 out of 12 said yes, with the 1 student commenting, "Currently race does not. I am sure it will in the future." The yes answers ranged in reflection, with 7 of the yes responses specifically mentioning privilege. As one student noted,

> Before this program I may have said no, it doesn't affect my life in that big of a way, but as of now I feel that it truly does. White privilege is obviously prevalent in society, and whether I like it or not, I'm included in that. If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.

Students were cognizant of the role of opportunities, discrimination, institutions, and advantages that shape and structure their lives in ways they had not previously seen or examined.

Such outcomes are the hallmarks of most undergraduate, especially introductory, sociology courses, and the hurdles to achieving them, as we noted above, are the subject of many teaching-related articles. They are core ingredients of the sociological imagination, which helps students see how their lives are shaped by the unseen forces of history and the cumulative advantages and disadvantages afforded us by socially constructed differences. It is perhaps especially pronounced in the following section, where we examine the differences pre- and postprogram around larger questions of diversity and privilege.

From prejudice to privilege. Related to the shift from color-blindness to racial consciousness described above was the second major shift in student thinking, from individual prejudice to privilege and institutions. We had asked students "What is your general perception of stigma, prejudice, and privilege?" before the program, and student answers either centered on the individual-centered notion of prejudice or viewed privilege in what we call "civic" terms. The prejudice-focused answers acknowledged the unfortunate presence of prejudice and stigma and asserted them to be immoral. Students noted that they "harm people and relationships," are "fueled by ignorance and fear of the unknown," and are often ignorant or uninformed. Some students placed themselves inside of this journey, and one student remarked, "I have taught myself an attitude where I dismiss my first/perceived judgment of a person/group at my first exposure, and then hold a neutral opinion until I have been

provided with information to judge otherwise." Another student said, "I like to think that I accept all people for who they are, not what color their skin is or what economic background they come from." While noble, these responses indicate prejudice and stigma as individual characteristics, particularly for individuals of poor moral character.

Morality also played into students' "civic" perceptions of privilege. One student said, "Privilege should be earned, not taken for granted, especially on the basis of a race, etc. We are all human, therefore we are all equal." Students also tied privilege to luck and blessings, such as in the comments, "I get told every day how lucky I am to come from a privileged background" and "Every single person attending this [program] has been blessed by circumstance and is privileged beyond measure." While not individually focused, such sentiments are still not seeing the role of power and institutions. Another student, clearly fresh out of high school, defined privilege as "something that a person is allowed to do but can be taken away." Postprogram, when we asked how their perceptions of stigma, prejudice, and privilege had changed, privilege stood out in the responses far more than prejudice and stigma, which only received mention in 4 of the 13 responses. In all of those 4, the comments were along the lines of "individual racism is not the only problem" or expressed an increased awareness of the power of stigmas. All 13 of the responses emphasized privilege. One comment was especially candid about the distinction between pre- and postconceptions of privilege: "White privilege was crazy to me. I had no idea that those kinds of things existed, even though I was already aware that white people have more 'luck' than other races." Indeed, astonishment was a common theme, appearing in 8 of the 13 responses, often in comments like "I finally understand white privilege" or "This program has really brought to light the invisible side of prejudice and white privilege."

This understanding of privilege also heightened their racial identity as whites. One student, postprogram, remarked, "Being a white person, it is easy to forget to see the privileges we are given everyday, and simply take for granted. I think that because of this program I will . . . be able to realize that many people don't have these luxuries." Other students similarly said, "I never really acknowledged that we white people have so many privileges that we dismiss as 'the norm.' It saddens me because if I didn't join this group, I probably wouldn't even know my 'advantages'" and "Realizing how we, as white people, go through life without truly comprehending how privileged we are was astounding to me." Finally, "I thought it was more the other groups were getting discriminated against and we were being treated normally when in actuality the other races are being treated differently but so are we. It was very eye opening to realize I've gotten things in life because I was part of the majority." Perhaps most importantly, students were able to own their whiteness and their privilege without feeling guilt. We did not want students to dismiss their racial privilege. Rather, we discussed the helpful framework provided by Wise (2010): "Guilt is what you feel because of the kinds of things you've done. Responsibility is what you take because of the kind of person you are." Another student talked about how she initially felt guilty when learning about her privileges, but when she saw that the ALANA students in our large-group dialogue were not blaming her, she could move from guilt to empowerment and see that "we shouldn't" feel guilty. As Thompson (2010:225-26) writes, "[I]t may not be possible to do antiracist work as White people in this country and not see oneself as White. This reality requires getting past—or at least trying to confront—the denial, avoidance, and fear that many people experience about being identified as White." Time will tell if students go on to meaningfully work for structural change. But what can we do other than hope and encourage them after they have made this very first step?

This development in student learning and perspective is congruent with the sociological imagination in a number of ways. Students are able to link history to their own biographies, particularly in seeing how historical advantages given to whites accumulate in their lives today. They are able to

expand their vision and see their private troubles, both successes and failures, in the context of broader social forces, such as white privilege. Indeed, this articulation of their white identity was an outcome of a developed sociological imagination. Students can no longer adhere strictly to the ideologies of meritocracy and color-blind racism without being able to marry an individual sense of self with the broader social contexts in which they are immersed. Further, as Mills ([1959] 2000:5) indicates, this is not only a "terrible lesson," as students process their complicity and unearned advantages previously unseen in their everyday lives, but also a "magnificent one." Students learn that understanding their place in the world can be empowering and that they can take responsibility for their campus and communities in new ways.

PLANTING A SEED: THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION BY ANY OTHER NAME

We continue to gather data on our students to examine whether or not their shift in perspective during our program has a lasting effect. Early results indicate that it has. They remain resistant to color-blind ideologies and have become quite active in urging us to continue the program next year. Many applied to be mentors for incoming students the following year, indicating their continued strong support for and interest in the program. Students left the program very positive, almost exclusively saying that every student should have such an experience, that they would absolutely recommend the program to other students, and that they felt it would have a lasting change on their lives and prepare them to more meaningfully engage diversity on our campus. Our program can be mirrored in a number of ways on campuses across the country, and given our success, we encourage scholars on other campuses to explore additional ways to pique interest in a sociological perspective in settings outside a traditional sociology course.

Further, while the goal was never to recruit students into a sociology or psychology program, we have seen a significant number of our students seek out sociology or other social sciences in their early course work, minors, or intended majors. While we have not systematically collected data on their attendance or activities, we can say with confidence that roughly half of our students have also frequently attended campus events centered on diversity and social justice and have joined groups on campus related to supporting diversity. They also have been working to reinvigorate a student group called WISER: Whites Interested in Self-exploration and Eradicating Racism and voluntarily attended a day-long conference on white privilege at a nearby university. We are working to facilitate small reading groups, field trips, and other such activities to sustain their interest and support their new perspective. As Burawoy (2006:15) notes, "This is labor-intensive teaching, but it builds organic connections to marginalized communities and long-lasting experiences, deeply etched in the student's sociological habitus."

Certainly our hope is that programs like ours help to support diversity on college campuses, where the climate is created not just by the presence of diverse groups but significantly also by the attitudes and behaviors of privileged groups. Key to this attitudinal shift is the intersectional framework and focus on the reduction of color-blind ideologies that our program entailed. This shift in campus culture cannot help but also make its way into our classrooms, where we continue to face the hurdles of student resistance around topics of privilege and inequality. Even if students do not become sociology majors or call their new perspective a "sociological imagination," programs like ours may have the same net impact: awareness without guilt or resistance, empowerment and a desire to change social institutions, and a manner of thinking that extends beyond individual intentions and choices. Risman (2006:287) says, "I see the goal for teaching public sociology . . . to produce critical thinkers who understand both the structural bases of inequality, but also understand the social construction of reality,

and the role of human agency in social change." We feel our program, with its development of the sociological imagination specifically through a contextual understanding of race and white identity, has done exactly that.

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BIOS

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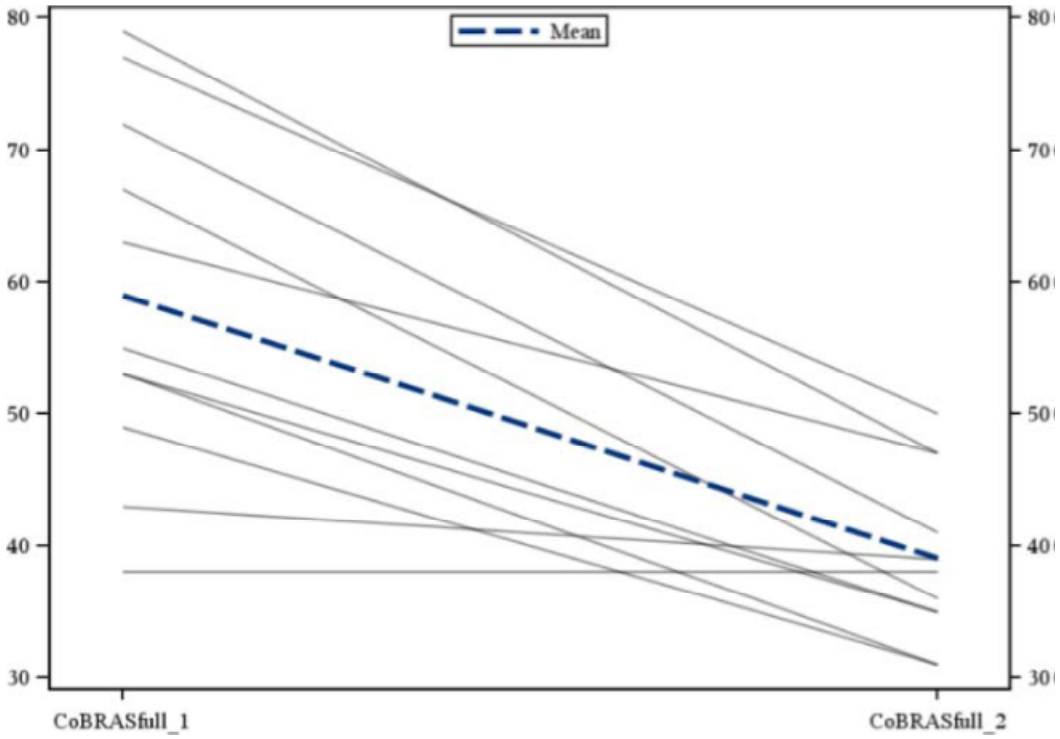

Figure 1. Plot of paired profiles of Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) scores at Time 1 and Time 2

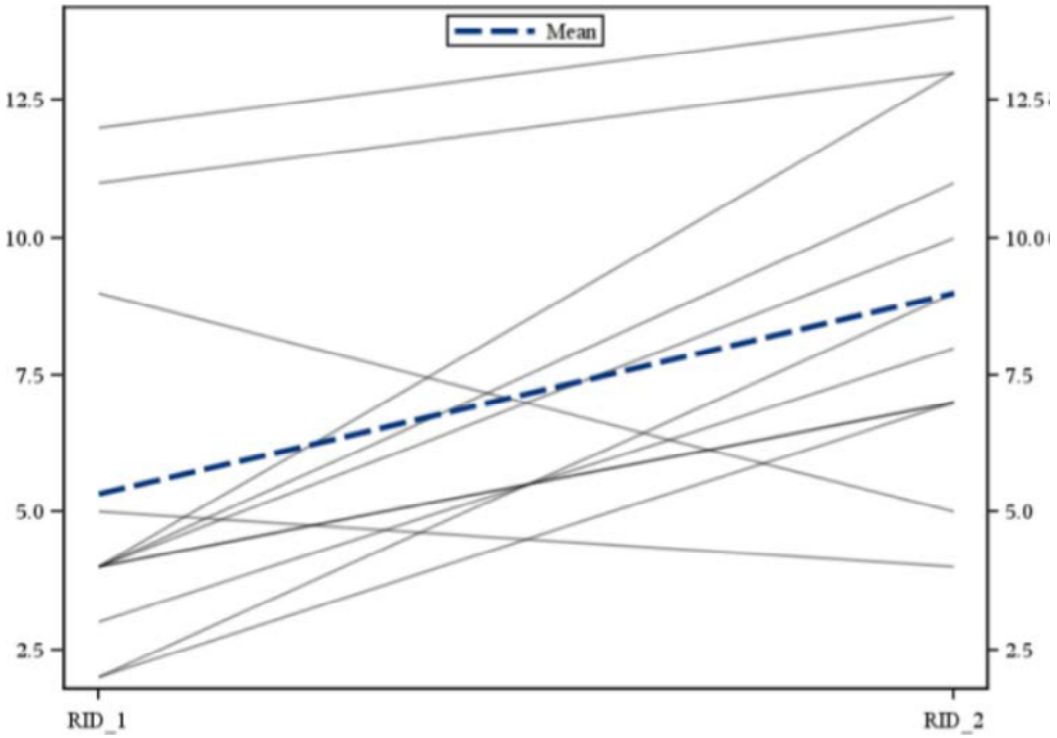

Figure 2. Plot of paired profiles of racial identity (RID) scores at Time 1 and Time 2