

Previous research on White Privilege has investigated emotive responses from participants when exposed to various stimuli and found that participants reported an array of affect varying from anger to guilt (DiAngelo, 2011; Pence & Fields, 1999). The present research examined how framing affects cognitions and emotions. Based on recent cultural events, presenting the word "privilege" may activate negative connotations and evaluations of others. Conversely, the word "opportunity" may seem less threatening and not cause the same negative evaluations by the compensation of increased personal guilt. It was hypothesized that those in the White Opportunity condition would demonstrate lower levels of racism and higher levels of guilt compared to those in the White Privilege and Black Disadvantage conditions. Ninety-six participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups that read semantically identical excerpts that differed only by the embedded terms of White Opportunity, White Privilege, and Black Disadvantage. Participants were then prompted to answer questions measuring racism and collective guilt. Results indicated no statistically significant difference between the three conditions. Implications and future research are discussed.

References

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