

Race/Ethnicity Case Studies – Fall 2017 MCJ 175, Media Stereotypes

Racism in Brazilian toilet paper ad

By Iracema Duran

In October 2017, a Brazilian company, by the name of Santher, published a racist and controversial toilet paper [ad](#). This ad displayed a Caucasian model wearing the luxury black toilet paper wrapped around her body along with the famous slogan “Black is Beautiful”. The Santher company was criticized by civil rights supporters through social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for appropriating a famous black empowerment slogan.

The Santher company did not receive the positive feedback it expected; in fact, this ad got so much [backlash and criticism](#) that spread like wildfire. We must show our opposition to these types of ad campaigns that promote stereotypes by reporting them immediately. If you encounter or see any type of racism visit [ireport](#) and stop a racist act from spreading any further. *[Reporting racism is just one click away.](#)*

Unintended Racism?

By Skylar Hallman

It was reported that in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, a racist class photo was taken at Mitchell Elementary School, picturing a what is said to have been the [daily life of Pilgrims](#). In the picture, there is a [young black girl on her knees with a leash of some sort around her neck](#). [Some say the photo looks like the young girl was a slave to her classmate who were assigned the role of pilgrims](#). Clearly, race is the elephant in the room when it comes to this photo because school officials said that the “leash” around the young girl’s neck were supposed to be like lead strings which were used in the seventeenth century to “keep children from wandering” or to “help them learn how to walk”. Even though this may be the case, one parent commented, saying that those were probably not the intentions of the school, however, they should have known it would appear the wrong way to some people and the idea was not considered before the photo was taken. [Although reports say the young girl asked to be a part of the lesson, she did not specifically ask to be pictured as a slave.](#)

While some believed that the issue is the fact that the young girl on the leash was black, others felt that the problem is the child appears to be enslaved. The school district apologized claiming that it was never the intent to degrade any one person or group since the program that teaches the children about pilgrims has been an ongoing issue. However, the skit has never included a ethnicity appearing to be degraded or the role that the child plays as misinterpreted.

The theory used in this story would be **cultural racism** because the thought of the little black girl appearing to be enslaved was considered. It is possible that the school or instructor took on the opportunity of using having a little black girl in their class an advantage. Had the instructor not used this “benefit”, the pilgrims would appear to own white slaves which is not accurate in history. Not to mention, the young girl is on her knees. Why would she not be standing like the rest of the children? And two of the children are pictured holding the leash while she hugs the other two children that are standing behind those holding the leash. This is specifically more like an overt example of **cultural racism**.

[School Apologizes for Photograph Appearing to Show Black Slave Girl On Leash](#)

Does the Color of Your Skin Keep You from an Equal Education? By Audrey Maze

Recently Stephanie McKellop, a teacher from the University of Pennsylvania, admitted to only calling on [white](#) men if she has to. McKellop is now undoubtedly under investigation to see if her style of teaching is [discriminatory](#). As a student who is paying for an education, you should never have to worry that the color of your skin may keep you from getting to participate in class, especially in today's culture that is so focused on race, gender, and cultural issues.

This incident is a prime example of stereotyping and racism. McKellop's style of teaching is discriminatory because she is purposely not choosing on students to participate, solely based on the color of their skin. Teachers are paid to teach, students pay to get taught, and that most definitely includes getting to speak your thoughts in class.

African Americans Can't Fly By Nina Lee

On October 24th, 2017, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, also known as NAACP, reported incidents where blacks were forced off their flights by American Airline employees. The NAACP is an organization that strives to eliminate racial discrimination and bring equality to all people no matter their race. This [organization](#) warned black travelers about flying with American Airlines due to the multiple incidents that have occurred, relating to African Americans who were mistreated and removed from the plane for being black. One of the incidents that the NAACP recorded was when [Rev. William Barber](#), an African American civil rights leader, was taken off an American Airline flight because he responded to a derogatory remark from two white individuals. Another incident was when [Tamika Mallory](#), an African American woman, complained to a travel agent about her seat being changed without her consent. This led her to being scolded by the pilot and resulted in her getting kicked off the plane. In both of these incidents, both individuals were kicked off the plane and mistreated because they were black, but if they had been white, the outcome of the situation might have been different.

The NAACP highlights these incidents to raise awareness that individuals should speak up for themselves and exercise their first amendment. Had these individuals not spoken up about their incident, awareness of racism and discrimination with American Airlines would not have been highlighted and blacks would be continuously mistreated by American Airline employees. If you're affected by a similar incident on your flight with American Airline you can report the incident to the [NAACP](#), or for further information on this organization, you can visit the [NAACP website](#) or find a [local place](#) in your area.

L'Oreal's First Trans-Model Fired After Calling Out White America's Racism and Privilege By Easton Kerby

What happened?

Just days after making history with the L'Oreal company, transgender model Munroe Bergdorf was let go from the brand after posting comments on Facebook calling out America's "white racism" and blindness to the issue. Bergdorf was hired onto the L'Oreal True Match Foundation campaign, which was targeted at celebrating both diversity in skin tones, as well as appreciating the diversity in all people. As both a woman of color and a trans-woman, Bergdorf was perfect as a representative of the True Match campaign.

However, a few days after the announcement of her participation in this campaign, Bergdorf posted the comments:

[“Honestly I don’t have energy to talk about the racial violence of white people any more. Yes ALL white people..](#) Because most of ya’ll don’t even realize or refuse to acknowledge that your existence, privilege and success as a race is built on the backs, blood and death of people of color. Your entire existence is drenched in racism,” Bergdorf continued, “Come see me when you realize that racism isn’t learned, it’s inherited and consciously or unconsciously passed down through privilege,” she added. “Once white people begin to admit that their race is the most violent and oppressive force of nature on Earth... then we can talk.”

Fighting Racial Stereotypes with Racism?

Bergdorf stated her comments were targeted at the protests and riots in Charlottesville Virginia, after many white nationalist hate groups including the “American Nazis” and the KKK were protesting. Although this is the first occurrence of these parties publicly speaking out about their beliefs since the civil rights era, America’s racism and white privilege has still been apparent in the decades following civil rights. In fact, it is still apparent today.

BUT WAIT..

Bergdorf, who states to stand for equality and understanding of all races, decided to make a comment stating ALL white people are racist? Is that not a racist comment in itself?

Media stereotypes of all races lead media audiences to form racial biases and stereotypes from the news we watch, television and movies, music, and many more outlets. However, as audiences, we look towards public figures, activists, and leaders to sway how we feel or think about whether these stereotypes are true or false. According to the Racial Formation Theory, American society falls into this “white racial frame” where racial stereotypes, racial narratives, racial images, languages, and racialized behaviors are used to discriminate in order to show white people in a more positive portrayal. We see this many times in media to the point where it is almost normalized, as white hate groups were normalized in these protests by President Donald Trump as “fine people”. Due to this normalization, Bergdorf used her platform to call out this systematic racism, but did she go about it the right way? Bergdorf stated her comments were taken out of context and is now calling for the boycott of L’Oreal products.

Interested in knowing more? [Click here.](#)

FALSE HOPE FOR DREAMERS

By Luis Vargas-Rosas

On September 5, 2017, the Trump Administration decided to terminate DACA. [What is DACA?](#) It is a program that was created by Former President Barack Obama which was meant to protect Dreamers. These so called Dreamers are individuals who came into the United States illegally as minors to live a better life. We all know that President Trump is tough on immigration therefore, I believe that this can be the reason why he decided to put an end to DACA. [How many DACA recipients are affected?](#) According to the article approximately 800,000 minorities are affected by the termination of DACA. This means that everything that the Dreamers ever hoped for is now gone. Whoever knew that an executive order which is a written piece of paper had the ability to judge the faith of a future generation. Let’s put ourselves in the shoes of a DACA student or any student which is imagine going to school in a foreign country in hopes of one day getting a better job and giving your parents and yourself a better way of living, but that program that guaranteed you a future by protecting you from immigration is now terminated.

[Ending DACA was a race related issue](#) since the majority of the DACA recipients are Latinos, which make up 84 percent of the total DACA recipients whereas 9 percent are Asians, 2 percent are Black and the other make up 2 percent. If the majority of DACA recipients were White or Asian, then President Trump’s Administration would have taken a different course of action instead of terminating it. Since President Trump decided to put an end to DACA this gives

the impression that this is a race related issue due to the statistics showing that the majority of DACA recipients are Latinos and not the other way around such as Whites. The majority of people affected by President Trump's decision are people of color and we all know that his main focus during his presidential campaign was about constructing a wall and have more control over immigration.

The Racial Formation Theory can apply to this issue since there are DACA students who view non DACA student differently since the DACA students are getting their right to get a higher education abridged by the government. Even though some DACA and non DACA students are the same race they still view each other differently since one has an advantage which is not being affected by DACAs termination whereas the other ones are affected by DACAs termination. For example, one of my friends is a Latino DACA recipient and ever since President Trump's administration announced that it would terminate DACA my friend has been excluding himself from us and has lost hope in continuing with his education. Imagine there's a pyramid and all the students are at the top, but ever since the termination of DACA it has caused society to put DACA students at the bottom of the pyramid since their chances of graduating from a university are slim whereas non DACA students are at the top of the pyramid since they aren't affected by DACA. Overall, this issue has caused students and DACA students of the same race to view each other differently in society.

Eminem stands up for the black community and political issues during the BET Awards By Rigoberto Fuentes

On October 10, 2017, Marshall Mathers (best known as [Eminem](#)) released a freestyle rap about President Donald Trump during his performance on the BET awards. Eminem's heated [freestyle](#) rap acknowledge the disruptive race divisions happening in the U.S. It also, targeted Trump's slow response to the hurricanes Irma and Maria, his disruptive remarks to NFL players, and his failure to approach the white supremacist's actions.

Eminem's freestyle had a strong impact on the black community because of the BET platform he used. As a white individual in the rap industry, Eminem stood up to represent the black community and Reginald Reggie Noble best known as [Redman](#) supported and gave thanks to Eminem for the statements he gave in his rhymes ([Redman reacts to Eminem](#)). Redman says "He used his platform as a white artist to stand up for us!" Redman states that Eminem used his power as a white individual to make a statement on BET a prominent television network targeting African American audiences, it was not obligated for him to do so but choose to stand for them.

Eminem also challenges his fans to choose sides, when he rapped, "And any fan of mine who's a supporter of his, I'm drawing in the sand a line, you're either for or against, and if you can't decide who you like more and you're split on who you should stand besides, I'll do it for it for you with this. F--- you." [Eminem](#) statement ends with a note telling his own fans to choose to stand with him or with Donald Trump. Essentially, he chooses for them raising his middle finger and yelling "Fuck You."

Racism Condoned: Trump's Failure to Condemn White Supremacists By Soren Laney

During the first couple weeks of August of 2017, white supremacists, white nationalists, neo-Nazis, and Klansmen came together in Charlottesville, Virginia, to protest the removal of a Confederate statue of Robert E. Lee. This event became known as the [Unite the Right rally](#). At the peak of these protests on the 12th of August, a car slammed into a group of minority protesters who were at the rally to challenge white supremacists.

In response to this shocking action, which was spawned by sick, racist ideals, President Donald Trump made a [statement](#) denouncing "this egregious display of hatred, bigotry, and

violence on many sides”. Trump’s inability to focus on and specifically condemn the white supremacists and racism that led to unnecessary deaths at the Charlottesville protest shows how little he values the lives of the minority protesters who died. The statements made by the president were said in a way that takes strength away from the minority protesters and instead condemned them alongside the white supremacists.

This kind of treatment coming from the President of the United States has far reaching effects on the way that the public envisions minorities. The words of a United States president hold a great amount of power, and to have a president who chooses to place white supremacists on the same level as minority protesters is immensely damaging to minorities and society as a whole . By comparing the anger felt by these minorities to the hatred being spread by white supremacists, Trump Is false myth that minorities are angry in general, or lack self control. Also, by placing blame on the minority protesters who are already the victims of discrimination, Trump is in turn re-victimizing these minority protesters.

Trump followed up these statements by tweeting that the protesters needed to unite. Unity may sound nice, however, to have a President not only fail to condemn white supremacists by name, but also to call for unity between white supremacists and minority protesters and to place the blame “on many sides”, shows how little this president truly cares for the minority protesters, some of whom lost their lives at the hands of an individual who was filled with hatred. This type of response from the President of the United States could be read as a stereotype, which has even more far-reaching effects.

A Kneel in the Right Direction

By Anthony Velasquez

From kneeling for the national anthem, to boycotting a visit to the White House, the days of athletes being silenced are over. For years, they have had to stay quiet in fear of losing their job, endorsements, or looking bad to the public. The status quo was for athletes to keep to themselves to avoid scrutiny, however now they are using their platform to bring to light the injustices faced by minorities. We can thank social media such as twitter or other platforms for people to say what’s on their mind, rather than do it in front of a bunch of cameras. Being that most of the athletes in America's top sports are minorities, it is fitting for them to speak up in these times of racial injustice.

This leads us to look at this issue through the lens of cultural studies, which investigates ways in which “culture” creates and transforms individual experiences, everyday life, social relations and power. The people in this world oppressing minorities and asking them not to speak up in the media have completely different world views than the people they are oppressing. Minorities have dealt with injustice for their entire lives solely because of the color of their skin or where they were raised. These minorities make up a large part of our sports teams and the fact that they are now rising up to fight for what is right is very significant. Today, [it is impossible to watch or follow sports without seeing or hearing our athletes take a stand](#). A recent development in this issue has been addressed recently, there were rumblings that NFL owners would change the pregame ritual, and keep players inside the locker room during the national anthem in order to stop the kneeling on the field. However, after talks, owners have vowed to donate [89 million](#) dollars over the next few years to African American communities in need. This is a giant step in the right direction and we can thank athlete protests.

Is it Difficult to be White in 2017?

By Chelsea Boone

What happens when people who hold the most power, also known as [hegemony](#), in society can't live up to the expectations? Within the media, situations all around the country are brought up on how specific races are stereotyped and discriminated against. And in recent media cases, such as an [article from NPR](#) even white Americans feel as if they are being discriminated against. It is possible that in the push for equality amongst the races, has resulted in such a drastic change of power roles.

NPR takes a more political point of view, describing how Trump catered to the grievances of white Americans who felt like in the media their voices weren't being heard. While the article does talk about a majority of white Americans feeling discriminated against, there is actually a small percentage of them who admit to actually experiencing discrimination. But an example of a white American who feels this way is [Tim Hershman](#), interviewed by NPR who basically said when applying for a job, blacks get the advantage and if you want government help and "you're white, you don't get it. If you're black, you get it". But we need to ask ourselves, is it an issue because white Americans don't have the degree of power in society that they were raised to believe they would have? Maybe we should shift the point of view from looking it from a discriminatory perspective and focus solely on differences between white and black Americans experiences, and the way people mature and develop to make our society.

If white Americans feel discriminated against but haven't been in situations here they can clearly point out discrimination like their non-white counterparts then should it still matter? The answer is yes, the Trump administration is taking on [Affirmative Action](#) in colleges set there for Civil Rights and to allow held back minorities to finally be able to move forward. However it is important to see both points of view. In order to make progress all sides need to be evaluated, so if white Americans feel discriminated against then we should reevaluate rules set in place that may have unintentionally went against them in the attempt to seriously help other discriminated groups.

Perhaps these white Americans are mistaking feelings of discrimination for the feeling of being ignored by a media they thought would idolize them. On a racial scale white, straight men are said to still hold the most hegemony in America. However, since we're all humans trying to succeed in life and to find contented happiness, also known as [Eudaimonia](#) America needs to decide on proper ways to give every person in the country a truly equal opportunity. It's not impractical to consider that if someone can't live up to the status society and media put on them that it could lead to some confused feelings on their part.

In this game we call life, hegemony has been of great importance and so has the criticism of hegemony in America and reconstructing power roles. In the end, people just want to live their best lives and since everyone's experiences are different we need to all share and learn from one another.

Is ESPN trying to silence a black female anchor?

Jemele Hill is quickly rising in the ranks as a public figurehead for the sports network ESPN. She co-hosts Sportscenter at 6 p.m. with Michael Smith. She is known for having a firm opinion and is not afraid to publically state it on social media.

ESPN has recently suspended her second violation of ESPN's social media guidelines. Her first offense was publicly [criticizing President Donald Trump](#) and characterizing him as a white supremacist. While this caused a lot of backlash and public outcries for her dismissal, ESPN just apologized on her behalf and left the situation alone. Her second offense though involved Jerry Jones owner of the Dallas Cowboys. Jerry Jones stated that any players disrespecting the flag by kneeling during the national anthem would be benched. She retorted:

[“Change happens when advertisers are impacted. If you feel strongly about JJ’s statement, boycott his advertisers.”](#)

ESPN saw this a call to boycott the NFL, who is one of their prime partners, and then quickly suspended her for two weeks. She claimed it was not a call to boycott the NFL; instead, she was expressing it was a burden on the African-American players by making them decide to whether to stand up for what they believe in or make a living.

It was a surprising move from ESPN because after all, they pay Jemele Hill for her opinion which is unique since she is a Black feminist who is strongly supported by the African-American viewers. She openly expressed her individualism of how she decoded the actions of African-American players kneeling during the anthem and was censored.

Was it right to suspend her? ESPN should review its stances on social media guidelines and rules and be able to let their employees express how they feel as long as it doesn’t discriminate or spew hate.

Why Be Black When You Can Be White.

By Elisabeth Parra

Dove has recently come under fire for their 3 second advertisement featuring an African American woman stripping her dark colored shirt to reveal a “cleaner” white woman in a white shirt. Though it was not their intention to imply that lighter skin tones are preferred to darker tones, viewers were quick to point out the issue.

The issue of “black is dirty and white is pure” dates back to the 1950’s. Soap companies would advertise soap that would “lighten your skin tone” and “improve your complexion.” This is a clear example of Racial Project. The images that are being portrayed are unintendedly telling you that why be black when you can be white.

Dove has been recognized for their [#RealBeauty](#) Campaign where they promise to feature women of all shapes, sizes, skin color, and age, yet they still have issues when it comes to race issues and though there has been an improvement with the ad that they put out, they still have issues that they need to work through because this is not the first time that they have had this idea that [white is clean](#).

This is a clear example of [mass media hegemony](#). This creates a social norm for a way for the majority, white, to control the minority, people of color. This type of commercials who how economically force their power over the minority. The way this works is if you continue to portray people of color as less than, this creates a sense of superiority and power within people with lighter skin tones, which also pushes Racial formation Theory.