

Building Critical Consciousness

Controlling Images and Dog Whistles

Definition of Critical Consciousness

Paulo Freire Pedagogy of the Oppressed

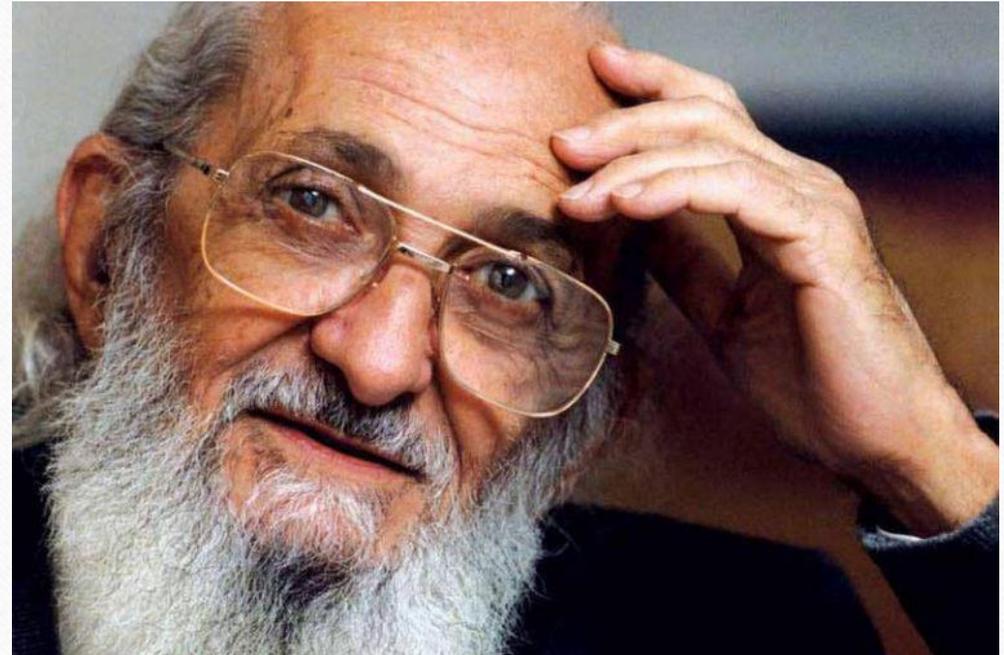
Understanding how the world works and how you fit into the system.

Critical Reflection- Who am I in the social system?

Critical motivation- What should I do and why?

Critical Action- What am I doing and who am I doing it with?

Basis for analyzing, organizing, and transforming self, relationships, and systems



More on Critical Consciousness

- **Developmental process** that makes people aware of social, economic, and political systems that oppress people.
- **Awareness leads to action to against oppressive systems.**
- **Frees both oppressors and the oppressed**

“A politics of deep solidarity is beginning to emerge— the only form of politics that holds any hope for our collective liberation” Michelle Alexander

Goals of EIJ Program and EAJ Commission

- Legal community will develop a critical lens to analyze problems in the legal community, justice system, and society.
- Legal community will understand how white supremacy is embedded in the social structure, the law, and the justice system.
- Legal community will address issues of inequity, exclusion, and injustice head on to create lasting change in the system and the profession.

Today's Goals

- Foundational definition of structural racism
- Foundational understanding of controlling images and how they have changed over time to serve white supremacy
- Learn about the impact of these images
- Introduction to key critical thinking questions

Definition of Race and Racism

- Shaped by a centuries-long conflict between white domination and resistance by people of color (Omi and Winant, 2015 p. 3).
- Began with whites constructing notions of **biological racism** (Omi & Winant, 2015).
- Biological racism is the notion that people from various groups have biological differences and whites were biologically superior to people of color.
- White people used “biological” race to justify economic and political inequalities (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Frankenburg, 1993; Omi & Winant, 2015).

Race and Racism Continued

- Biological racism no longer acceptable
- Now we use what Bonilla-Silva calls cultural racism.
 - “cultural” differences explain social positioning
 - just as entrenched in our institutions
- Because race is a social construction:
 - people are racialized through social and institutional processes
 - although racial formations change throughout time, it has always led to white domination
- The shared racial identity of whiteness comes with white power and privilege over people of color
- Whiteness:
 - defined and protected by law since whiteness was constructed by Europeans during colonization
 - Not an abstract notion

Domains of Power

Structural

How Society is Structured

residential discrimination,
interlocking, large scale
institutions, laws

Hegemonic (cultural)

How ideas circulate in culture

controlling images, media
representations

Disciplinary

How People are impacted by institutions

institutional practices, social
services, surveillance, accessing
state aid, schools

Interpersonal

How personal
consciousness upholds
subordination of others:
relational power, hiring,
marriage, daily treatment

Southern Strategy: Lee Atwater Quote

- Y'all don't quote me on this. You start out in 1954 by saying, "N*****, n*****, n*****." By 1968 you can't say "n*****"—that hurts you. Backfires. So you say stuff like forced busing, states' rights and all that stuff. You're getting so abstract now [that] you're talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you're talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is [that] blacks get hurt worse than whites. And subconsciously maybe that is part of it. I'm not saying that. But I'm saying that if it is getting that abstract, and that coded, that we are doing away with the racial problem one way or the other. You follow me—because obviously sitting around saying, "We want to cut this," is much more abstract than even the busing thing, and a hell of a lot more abstract than "N*****, n*****."

Southern Strategy: Nixon

- “He [President Nixon] emphasized that you have to face the fact that the whole problem is really the blacks. The key is to devise a system that recognizes this while not appearing to.” Similarly, John Ehrlichman, special counsel to the president, explained the Nixon administration’s campaign strategy of 1968 in this way: “We’ll go after the racists.” In Ehrlichman’s view, “that subliminal appeal to the anti-black voter was always present in Nixon’s statements and speeches.”
 - *Michelle Alexander (The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness)*

Dog whistles and the Southern Strategy

- “The Southern Strategy introduced cultural memes every bit as powerful as the Confederate flag or a lynch mob’s noose. Only now, their buzzwords were “entitlements,” “big government,” and “the undeserving poor.”
- *William J. Barber II (The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement)*

2016 example- How did this quote influence policy?

- “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending the best. They’re not sending you, they’re sending people that have lots of problems and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists... And some, I assume, are good people,”
- Former President, Donald Trump

Controlling Images Defined

- Controlling images vs Stereotypes
 - Patricia Hill Collins Black Feminist Thought
 - Cultural tools that use repetition to shape interactions, policies, and law that are used against people of color
- All groups have been racialized differently to serve white supremacy
 - Innocence to Criminalization (Sambo to Criminal)
 - Asian Americas- Yellow threat to Model Minority
 - Indigenous peoples (“civilizable” under Jefferson but inferior under Jackson)

Examples of Controlling Images

- Black women
- Jezebel, Mammy, Sapphire, Welfare Queen, and Matriarch
 - Can be played separately or simultaneously
- Impact of Strong Black Woman
 - Prescribed less pain medicine
 - Thomas Jefferson



Women's History Month — York College / CUNY

Racializing and Criminalizing Poverty

Vagrancy Laws

Drug War

Redlining and Urban Development

“Culture of Poverty”

“Oppositional Identity”

Controlling Images of Black Men

- Criminal, Rapist, Athletic (body-focused)
- Results
 - Mass incarceration
 - Profits for injury- football
 - Cements notions of value of bodies over minds
 - School to Prison Pipeline post Columbine

Controlling Images of Latinos

- Menial laborers, unauthorized immigrants, criminals, gang members, rapists, seductive, and athlete
- Impact on Latinos
 - Increased incarceration
 - Lower wages
 - Value of body over mind
 - Insecure citizenship rights

What does this look like in the Courtroom?

- Ahmaud Arbery
- George Floyd
- Tamir Rice





How does this impact
Black Attorneys?

Questions for Critical Consciousness

- What other controlling images can you think of?
- How do these images influence policy?
- Who does this image serve?
- How can we value impact over intention?
- How does this impact the way the way you see yourself and your work?

References

- Alexander, M. (2010). *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003). *Racism Without Racists: Colorblind Racism and the Persistence of Inequality in the United States*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Center on Law and Poverty (2014) *Racial Justice in New Mexico: A Ten Year Plan*.
- Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Frankenburg, R. (1993). *White women, race matters: The social construction of whiteness*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press
- Ferguson, A. A. (2001). *Bad Boys: Public schools in the making of black masculinity*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press .
- Friere, P. (1970;1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Gomez, L. (2020) *Inventing Latinos: A story of American racism*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Haney Lopez, I. (2006) *White by Law: The legal construction of race*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Harris, C. I. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, 1710-1769.
- Jones, C (2000) Levels of Racism: A theoretical framework and a gardener's tale. *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol 90, No. 8, 1212-1215.
- Omi, M., & Winant, H. (2015). *Racial formation in the United States*. New York, NY: Taylor and Francis.
- Judith H. Katz. (1978). *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training* (pp. 70 – 72).