Article

The Failure of White Male Privilege Theory and a Color/Gender-Blind Alternative (Part 2)

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Introduction

This article is the second in a series which contends that while White Male Privilege theory (WMP) and related conceptual frameworks such as Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) have the honorable intention of attempting to overcome prejudice and discrimination against people on the basis of gender, race, and other factors, they are proving to be woefully inadequate in addressing the root causes of racism and sexism and, in fact, often end up promoting racist, sexist, and other biases of their own, which serve to exacerbate rather than overcome tensions between racial and gender groups.

The overall thesis, to be argued for in more detail in subsequent articles, is that there is a need for scholars and practitioners in these and related fields, including Intercultural Communication where WMP has become increasingly influential (see Chen and Simmons 2015; Nakayama 2017; Wächter 2021; Mudambi et al. 2022; Freelon et al. 2023), to completely rethink their core ideas and develop an alternative color- and gender-blind paradigm that is consistently antiracist and antisexist, not only with respect to so-called "minority" groups but also with respect to "majority" groups.

The present article is concerned with the claim that it is impossible for minority group members to be prejudicial, discriminatory, or racist/sexist against majority group members simply because they lack the power to do so (DiAngelo 2018, chap. 2). It will be argued that this claim relies on a number of untenable double standards in how terms such as *prejudice, discrimination, racism*, and *sexism* are used and applied in

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WMP, CRT, and DEI discourse.

The contention is that members of both minority and majority groups are capable of holding prejudicial attitudes and discriminating against each other and that structural racism and sexism may be directed against either group as well. In a Color/Gender-Blind (CGB) framework, the primary dividing line is not between majority group members (e.g., Whites and males) who are prejudiced, discriminatory, and racist/sexist and minority group members (e.g., non-Whites and females) who are not, but rather between those of all races and genders who are prejudiced, discriminatory, and racist/sexist and those who are not.

The methodological approach taken is philosophical rather than social-scientific. Arguments made for or against particular positions are supported on the basis of empirical evidence, interpretive evaluation, theoretical analysis, and rational argumentation. For a broader look at transdisciplinary approaches in the field of Intercultural Communication which embrace both social scientific and philosophical methodologies, see Evanoff (2025a, pp. 71–73).

FRAMEWORKS FOR UNDERSTANDING RACISM AND SEXISM

The White Male Privilege Framework

The White Male Privilege (WMP) framework subsumes individual selfhood under collective "identity" categories based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, education, social class, ability, religion, and other factors (McIntosh 1989; 2010; DiAngelo 2016; 2018; Deguchi 2021; 2023). Persons are then placed into one of two broader identity groups: (1) a "dominant" majority group consisting of those who are "overprivileged," White, male, cisgender, heterosexual, college-educated, upper/middle class, abled, and Christian, or (2) a "subordinate" minority group consisting of those who are "underprivileged," non-White, female, transgender, homosexual, high school-educated or less, lower class, disabled, and non-Christian.

Members of so-called "subordinate" groups are characterized as experiencing prejudice and discrimination, including structural (systemic/institutional) and cultural discrimination, while "dominant" group members are not. "White males" in particular are stereotyped as "privileged racist sexist oppressors" (Deguchi 2021, 20:15, summarizing the views of Peggy McIntosh in 1989; 2010). Claims such as these are clear examples of prejudgments (prejudice) made solely on the basis of race and sex.

Neither the actual privileges enjoyed or not enjoyed by individual persons nor the degree to which they embrace racist or sexist attitudes are taken into consideration.

Rather than looking at which specific privileges are actually enjoyed or not by specific individuals in specific social contexts, WMP theorists assume that persons can be automatically lumped together into "privileged" or "underprivileged" groups on the basis of their racial, gender, and other identities. While statistical differences may indeed exist between different identity groups *as groups*, the stereotype that individual members of dominant identity groups are by definition "privileged racist sexist oppressors" while members of subordinate identity groups are inexorably the "underprivileged victims of oppression" is an unsustainable overgeneralization. Such stereotypes may, moreover, be construed as derogatory to and by persons placed in either category.

The term *grievance studies*, originally introduced by Collini (1999), has been used by Pluckrose, Lindsay, and Boghossian (2018; see also Pluckrose and Lindsay 2020) to refer to academic studies aimed at expressing social grievances on the basis of identity politics rather than the rigorous pursuit of truth. While genuine victimization indeed exists, persons with a *victim mindset* tend to see themselves as targets of oppression even when they are not and to blame their own problems and faults on others (Kaufman 2020). Casting White males as an external oppressor seen as inherently evil and the primary cause of all social ills makes it easy for non-Whites and women to see themselves as aggrieved victims and to fall into what Nietzsche termed *ressentiment* over privileges—a critique which was developed not by a conservative White male but by the prominent left-wing feminist political theorist Wendy Brown (1995).

The great tragedy of a culture of victimization is that it "…rewards people for taking on a personal identity as one who is damaged, weak, and aggrieved" (Haidt 2015, commenting on Campbell and Manning 2014). Rather than empowering the "underprivileged," it may simply instill the notion that they lack the agency to do anything on their own without help from "privileged" allies. Virtue-signaling "White saviors" reinforce this mindset when they patronize non-Whites as "less privileged" and in need of their assistance—a move which simultaneously assuages any feelings of "White guilt" they may have.

Since there is in fact no isomorphic relation between identity groups and privilege, the two simply cannot be conflated. Once we stop thinking of some identity groups as "privileged" and others as "underprivileged," focus can be shifted back to overcoming

clear-cut cases of prejudice and discrimination against any individual regardless of which identity group(s) they belong to. Such a move not only results in a more highly differentiated understanding of prejudice but also enables a genuinely structural analysis of hierarchical societies, which can examine the social positions of those who occupy dominant positions of privilege and power and those who occupy subordinate positions, across all races and genders.

A Color/Gender-Blind Framework

Applied consistently, an alternative Color/Gender-Blind (CGB) framework avoids stereotyping one particular race or gender as "racist, sexist, and oppressive" and others as not. A more effective way to eliminate gross disparities between those who are "privileged" and those who are not is to focus on documented instances of prejudicial attitudes, discriminatory acts, and social structures which advantage members of some racial and gender groups over others.

The dividing line is not, as in the WMP framework, between (1) non-Whites and females who suffer prejudice, discrimination, and racism/sexism and (2) Whites and males who do not. Rather, in the CGB framework the dividing line is between (1) people of all races and genders who suffer prejudice, discrimination, and racism/sexism and (2) those of all races and genders who do not. Moreover, persons of any race or gender may, in varying degrees, also engage in and benefit from prejudice, discrimination, and racism/sexism. In other words, both majority and minority group members may be either "oppressors" or the "oppressed." While often conflated by WMP theorists, the terms *prejudice, discrimination*, and *racism/sexism* may also be more clearly demarcated, as follows:

Prejudice is primarily a psychological attitude which may be either held personally (subjectively) or shared (intersubjectively) with other members of a given group (the *ingroup*) against members of a different group (the *outgroup*), typically by prejudging people on the basis of identity categories, including race and gender (Allport 1954; Tajfel and Turner 1979; Franco 2024). As such, members of any ingroup are capable of holding negative stereotypes about the members of any given outgroup. If double standards are to be avoided, the term cannot be exclusively used to refer to the prejudicial attitudes which some (not all) Whites and males hold against non-Whites and females but must be equally applied to cases in which some (not all) non-Whites and females hold prejudicial attitudes against Whites and males.

Discrimination refers not to *attitudes* but to *actions* which give preferential treatment to one group over another. Prejudice, in and of itself, does not result in discrimination unless it is acted upon and, indeed, many people who are prejudiced may not act on their prejudices, either through their own choice or because they lack the power to do so. Discrimination occurs when individuals make conscious decisions to act on their prejudices, either by taking personal actions which disparage or disadvantage others or by engaging in social action intended to favor their own group. The WMP framework often promotes the double standard that while practices and policies favoring Whites and males are unacceptable, those favoring non-Whites and females may be openly advocated for in the name of *equity*, which accords with the dictum that the only way to address discrimination against minority groups is to openly discriminate against majority groups (see Kendi 2019).

Racism and *sexism* are more encompassing terms, which may be used to refer either solely to prejudicial attitudes or more broadly to instances in which prejudice and discrimination work in combination with each other to produce overt acts of discrimination on the basis of race and gender. Such acts may be either *interpersonal*, as when some individuals maltreat other individuals on the basis of their race or gender, or *structural*, as when specific policies are advocated for or enacted which favor some racial and gender groups over others. Underlying racist and sexist social structures may, moreover, advantage some groups over others even when the persons affected have no prejudicial attitudes whatsoever. While the WMP framework sees social structures as solely discriminating against non-Whites and females, the CGB framework sees them as enabling some people (of all races and genders) to unfairly enjoy privileges which others (of all races and genders) are denied.

Rather than perpetuate ingroup–outgroup distinctions on the basis of racial, gender, and other "us–them" identities, the CGB approach seeks to reduce biases and overcome divisions through the creation of a superordinate "us." This overarching identity genuinely includes everyone regardless of whatever subgroups individuals choose to identify with, consistent with the principle of *recategorization* in the Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner et al. 1993). In this framework, persons need not identify exclusively with a single superordinate group but may maintain subordinate identities, provided that the subgroups they belong to remain nested within the larger collective and do not attempt to elevate themselves into superordinate groups that dominate other subgroups. Subgroups are then capable of sharing a superordinate identity,

following the original intent of multiculturalism (“different veggies in the same bowl”), rather than isolating themselves into exclusive identity groups, as multiculturalism is frequently interpreted today (“different veggies in different bowls”).

EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT FORMS OF PREJUDICE

Explicit biases among majority and minority group members

While *overt* forms of racism and sexism—such as prejudicial comments and hate speech, intentional discrimination against and exclusion of others, intimidation and physical violence—are visible expressions of explicit biases, *covert* forms are more complex. Covert bias may manifest itself as *hidden* explicit biases, in which prejudices are held consciously but disguised to maintain “plausible deniability,” or as *implicit biases*, in which prejudices are held unconsciously, allowing individuals to truthfully claim that they are not consciously racist or sexist.

Many of the studies which purport to examine explicit forms of racism and sexism are specifically designed to focus on the prejudicial attitudes Whites and men have against non-Whites and women rather than vice versa. These scales are explicit in the sense that they elicit self-reported biases in which the respondents rate their conscious agreement or disagreement with specific statements, usually on a Likert scale. Examples include the Modern Racism Scale (McConahay et al. 1981), the Symbolic Racism Scale (Henry and Sears 2002), the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence and Helmreich 1972), and the Modern Sexism Scale (Swim et al. 1995), all of which remain influential and sometimes serve as the basis for modified and updated surveys.

A more balanced approach would look at prejudices and discrimination from the standpoint of any ingroup *vis-à-vis* any outgroup, regardless of the race, sex, or other characteristics of ingroups and outgroups in question. The scarcity of symmetrical studies suggests a paradigmatic bias which sees Black and female prejudice against Whites and males as non-existent, or at least less important, resulting in a partial and incomplete treatment. Nonetheless, some of the results of the studies that do exist are surprising. Minimally, they challenge the stereotype that only Whites and males are racist and sexist while non-Whites and females show no such tendencies.

Axt (2018) reports that while roughly 34–40% of Whites show an explicit preference for Whites, approximately 50% of Blacks exhibit an explicit preference for Blacks. Iceland, Silver, and Goff (2025) show that Blacks hold higher levels of

anti-White stereotypes (e.g., viewing Whites as indifferent to racial problems), while Whites hold higher levels of anti-Black stereotypes (e.g., blaming social inequalities on failings among Blacks). While a minority of members of both groups hold negative stereotypes about the other group, the vast majority do not.

Glick and Fiske (1996; 1999) found that women are just as capable of holding "hostile" and "benevolent" sexist stereotypes against men as men are against women. Men may regard women as pure and morally superior, but fundamentally fragile creatures who need protecting. Conversely, women may see men as inherently power-hungry, sexually predatory, and interpersonally childish, but nonetheless also as "protectors and providers."

Implicit biases among majority and minority group members

The Implicit Association Test (IAT; initially developed by Greenwald et al. 1998) measures implicit biases with respect to race, gender, sexuality, age, religion, and other factors and is intentionally designed to overcome some of the perceived shortcomings of tests that measure explicit biases. Since explicit bias tests rely on self-reported responses, respondents may provide answers that conflict with their actual biases, either because they are unable to consciously recognize them or unwilling to publicly disclose them (a phenomenon known as *social desirability bias*).

While the evidence from implicit bias surveys is ideologically neutral, it is frequently used by scholars to highlight racism by Whites against non-Whites and sexism by men against women while either ignoring or downplaying the reverse (see DiAngelo 2021; Liu and Jones 2024). Skewing the evidence in this way is consistent with the tendency among WMP theorists, such as McIntosh (1989) and DiAngelo (2021), to bemoan the extent to which Whites and males remain unconscious and in "denial" of their "oppressiveness," a view Deguchi summarizes with the statement, "You can still be extremely well-intentioned, a really nice person, and be oppressive if you haven't acknowledged or if you are unaware of the privileges that you have" (2021, 21:00).

Based on IAT data involving 3.3 million Americans for the years 2007–2020, Morehouse and Banaji (2024, p. 32) compared the respondents' implicit and explicit racial biases. The results show that 71% of White Americans exhibit a pro-White implicit bias, 12% a pro-Black implicit bias, and 17% no implicit bias, compared with 34% who exhibit an explicit preference for Whites, 4% an explicit preference for

Blacks, and 62% no explicit preference. The results for Black Americans show that 41% exhibit a pro-Black implicit bias, 33% a pro-White implicit bias, and 25% no implicit bias, compared with 56% who exhibit an explicit preference for Blacks, 5% an explicit preference for Whites, and 39% no explicit preference.

Utilizing both explicit and implicit measurement scales, Rudman and Goodwin (2004) found that women exhibit an implicit ingroup bias roughly 4.5 times stronger than that of men, indicating that women possess a stronger automatic preference for their own group than men do for theirs. This finding also suggests women may possess a stronger gender identity. One explanation for this disparity noted by the authors may be the stereotypical association of men with violence and aggression. While this characterization no doubt has some statistical support, it is nonetheless still a stereotype since manifestly not all men are violent and some women may exhibit similar aggressive tendencies.

These results challenge the asymmetrical focus of WMP theorists, who regard racist and sexist prejudices as exclusive to White males as the dominant group in the United States. This claim is itself a biased overgeneralization based on an ideological double standard. The evidence demonstrates that biases in favor of one's own ingroup and against outgroups can be found among the members of both dominant and non-dominant groups. Because members of all racial and gender groups are capable of holding explicit and implicit biases, an adequate analysis cannot focus exclusively on discrimination by Whites and males against non-Whites and females, as the WMP framework does. The CGB framework gives due consideration to cases in which minority group members hold biases or engage in discriminatory acts against the majority.

PERSONAL AND STRUCTURAL DISCRIMINATION

From prejudice to personal discrimination

In the same way that prejudicial biases may be held by members of any group against those of other groups, acts of discrimination may also be committed across group lines, regardless of race or gender. A consistent framework for antiracism and antisexism would uphold the ethical principle that all forms of prejudice and discrimination are morally wrong, regardless of the groups they are directed towards.

There is in fact strong support in the United States for both racial and gender

equality as an ethical ideal. With regard to racial equality, 93% of Asian Americans, 92% of Whites, 86% of Blacks, and 85% of Hispanics agree with the proposition that "all people deserve an equal opportunity to succeed, no matter their race or ethnicity" (Public Agenda 2023). Fully 97% of Americans agree that women should have the same rights as men, compared with a global median of 94% across 34 surveyed countries, showing that gender equality is a core American value (Pew Research Center 2020).

Despite these endorsements of equality as an ethical *principle*, Americans largely agree that as a matter of *fact* discrimination against minority groups is more widespread and serious than discrimination against majority groups. The share of Americans who believe each group faces "a lot" or "some" discrimination is 74% for Blacks, 72% for Hispanics, 66% for Asians, and only 38% for Whites (Pew Research Center 2025). The same report indicates that 64% believe that women face discrimination compared to only 34% for men. Notably, while perceptions of discrimination remain much higher for non-Whites and women, the percentages of Americans who believe that Whites and males experience discrimination are not insignificant, refuting the stereotypical assumption that discrimination against them is nonexistent.

Moving from *perceptions* of discrimination to *actions* that may serve as proxies for overt discrimination, the empirical evidence reveals a similar pattern. While discriminatory acts targeting non-Whites and women may be more prevalent, discriminatory acts against Whites and men, though fewer in number, are also significant. Statistics on hate crimes, for example, show that in the year 2024, of the 7,285 victims of racially motivated hate crimes recorded in the United States by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 3,672 were committed against Blacks, 1,091 against Hispanics, 1,017 against Whites, 342 against Asians, and 1,163 against other groups (FBI 2025).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States provides similar proxy statistics, which show that 47.3% of women experience incidents of "intimate partner violence victimization" (domestic violence) throughout their lifetimes, slightly more than the 44.2% of men who do (Leemis et al. 2022, p. 3). The number of men (6.5 million) who reported cases of physical violence by an intimate partner in the twelve months prior to the survey actually exceeded the number of women (5.6 million) (ibid., p. 5). The report also noted that 49.4% of women (61.7 million) and 45.1% of men (53.3 million) reported having experienced psychological

aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime (ibid., p. 6).

Backed by this data, organizations such as the Coalition to End Domestic Violence (2026) actively challenge policies and laws, such as the *Violence Against Women Act* (U.S. Congress 1994), which they argue focus attention primarily on female victimization while often overlooking cases involving men, in favor of a genuinely inclusive approach which is gender-neutral and based on rigorous scientific evidence rather than gender ideology. This stands in contrast with other advocacy groups working to end domestic violence, such as the National Network to End Domestic Violence (2026) and the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2026; funded in part by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice), whose mission statements focus almost exclusively on violence against women, with virtually no mention of violence against men.

From personal to structural discrimination

The forms of prejudice and discrimination considered thus far are primarily instances in which individuals hold prejudicial views at the intrapersonal psychological level or engage in discriminatory acts at the interpersonal social level against members of other groups. As such, they involve attitudes or actions of *persons* against other *persons*. *Structural discrimination*, by contrast, denotes any form of discrimination embedded in social institutions, systems, and practices (including organizations, laws, language, and culture) that favors some racial and gender groups over others, regardless of whether the individual persons involved hold prejudicial attitudes or commit overt acts of discrimination.

While the term *macroaggressions* refers to overt and intentional personal acts of bias, prejudice, discrimination, and racism/sexism against entire groups of people, the term *microaggressions* designates covert slights that express denigrating attitudes toward socially marginalized individuals (Levchak 2018). Although both forms of aggression may be regarded as forms of structural discrimination on the ground that they reinforce the domination of some groups over others, Lilienfeld (2017) cautions against conflating personal malice and individual actions with structural discrimination itself.

Since Whites and males are considered by WMP theorists to be members of the “oppressive” majority group by definition, they are also regarded as the sole perpetrators and never the victims of structural discrimination. The CGB framework

does not deny that institutional, systemic, and other forms of structural discrimination against non-Whites and females exist but instead asserts that race- and gender-conscious ways of trying to remedy them can result in parallel forms of discrimination against Whites and males.

Institutional discrimination refers to discrimination within particular organizations, such as universities and corporations. Granting legacy admissions to students related to alumni or donors, and using race or gender as a deciding factor in the name of affirmative action, are both examples of institutional discrimination in education, regardless of the races or genders of the applicants. Hiring based on meeting diversity quotas typically favors minority applicants, while differences in earnings and promotions based on race or gender rather than merit can affect individuals of all races and genders, creating "glass ceilings" that exclude not only non-Whites and females but also highly qualified Whites and males. (See Feagin and Feagin 1978, which formalized the definition of *institutional discrimination* in sociology, and Bernstein 2022 for a more recent perspective related specifically to race.)

Systemic discrimination refers to discrimination across public or social systems, such as the financial and criminal justice systems. While government policies that explicitly discriminate against non-Whites and females have been dismantled, numerous initiatives specifically designed to aid minorities in securing grants, business loans, and government contracts were later implemented (see Carl 2024). Many of these programs have been struck down by judicial rulings which hold that race- or gender-conscious criteria exclude Whites and males from equal eligibility. Men are more likely than women to receive harsher prison sentences for the same crimes, to pay higher rates of alimony and child support after a divorce, and to be denied custody of children (Goldberg 1976; Farrell 2001; Benatar 2012). Such practices are part of a broader ongoing trend of systemic discrimination against males (Reeves 2022).

Structural discrimination, broadly construed, refers to the entire interconnected web of social and cultural systems which mutually influence each other across history to intensify racial, gender, and other inequalities, and thus encompasses both institutional and systemic discrimination. Examples of interlinked factors include a lack of employment opportunities, higher levels of poverty, reduced tax revenue, inadequate social services, underfunded school systems, breakdowns in families, poor health and nutrition, and increases in crime and substance abuse. The WMP framework reinforces the stereotype that "underprivileged" racial and gender minorities are primarily

affected by these disadvantages while “privileged” majority group members can largely avoid them. In reality, some individuals from every racial and gender group experience such problems, while others may be able to avoid them. The CGB approach suggests that breaking these cycles of disadvantage involves providing assistance to people not on the basis of race or gender regardless of actual need, but on the basis of actual need regardless of race and gender.

There is no doubt that historical forms of structural discrimination in the United States have more seriously affected non-Whites and women than Whites and men. Slavery, Jim Crow, segregation, and redlining are obvious examples in race relations. Struggles for the right to vote, equal credit, and equal pay, while also overcoming traditional gender roles, are obvious examples for women. Both non-Whites and women continue to face barriers to full equality in political and corporate settings and ongoing discrimination in employment, promotion, wages, and many other areas. It is equally evident, however, that even though structural discrimination against non-Whites and women is more prominent, it exists against Whites and men as well and, therefore, warrants attention.

The claim is sometimes made that even if Whites and males hold no prejudicial views and do not engage in discriminatory acts against non-Whites and females, they are still “racist” in the sense that they benefit from oppressive social structures, which the WMP framework posits were constructed by majority groups for their own benefit and to maintain their dominance over minority groups. Non-Whites and females are concomitantly discriminated against by these systems, which they, as minority group members, lack the power to change. As DiAngelo writes, “When I say that only whites can be racist, I mean that in the United States, only whites have the collective social and institutional power and privilege over people of color. People of color do not have this power and privilege over white people” (2018, p. 22).

Some WMP theorists contend that the way to redress this situation is not to adopt color- or gender-blind ethical norms which oppose racism and sexism in all their forms but rather to promote practices and policies which intentionally favor minority groups to the detriment of majority group members. In Kendi’s words, “The only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination” (2019, p. 19). In other words, the best way to rectify discrimination against non-Whites and females is to openly discriminate against Whites and males.

Reverse discrimination

Discrimination directed against Whites and males is sometimes labeled *reverse discrimination*, although the term is dismissed by WMP theorists who contend, as previously noted, that minority groups simply lack the power to be able to discriminate against majority groups, consistent with the formula: Oppression = Prejudice + Power (see the critique in Scott 2022). The term is also contested by some majority group members, however, who argue that instances of racism and sexism against Whites and males are better classified as *racism* "pure and simple" rather than *reverse racism* since current (as opposed to past) social structures do in fact give minority group members the power to discriminate (Cohen 1995, pp. 15–18; see also Sowell 2004; Hughes 2024). In any case, the theoretical assumption that minority groups lack access to positions of power in society is contradicted by the fact that they play increasing roles in government, business, and the media (see Kennedy 2021).

Initiatives promoted by WMP theorists which favor the interests of some racial and gender groups over others are, in the United States at least, in clear violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which specifically prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, and other factors with respect to voting, public accommodation, federal assistance programs, and employment. Whereas affirmative action was initially intended to ensure equal opportunities and equal treatment before the law regardless of race or gender, the principle of *equality* was gradually replaced by the principle of *equity*, which permits favoritism based on group identity.

The logic is basically the same as that of the pigs in George Orwell's *Animal Farm:* "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others" (1945, p. 100). A consistent moral and legal principle would hold that if it was ethically indefensible for Whites and males to claim preferential status in the past, it is equally indefensible for non-Whites and females to claim preferential status in the present and future.

What has been called *White backlash* (Yancy 2018), *male backlash* (Faludi 2020), or jointly *White male backlash* (Wolton 2024) may be less about Whites and males fearing that they will lose their majority position in society and more about the plausible concern that they are no longer being treated equally before the law. In addition to being openly vilified as "racists" and "sexists," they themselves have now become the targets of prejudice and discrimination. Equity initiatives inadvertently

generate the very divisiveness, inequality, and exclusiveness they were ostensibly designed to overcome.

Court cases related to reverse discrimination are not entirely new. For instance, Riccucci and Saldivar (2014) documented that the majority of lawsuits related to discrimination over promotions in police and fire departments in the United States between 2000 and 2011 were not brought by minority group members but rather by White men charging reverse discrimination. The number of lawsuits brought over reverse discrimination in education and employment has increased significantly since then (Morris 2025). While White males comprise 46% of the labor force, they nonetheless file approximately 9% of racial discrimination cases, 10% of sex discrimination complaints, and 11% of sexual harassment charges (Tomaskovic-Devey and Boutcher 2025).

The surge in the number of legal cases involving reverse discrimination came in the wake of several landmark judicial decisions. In *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* (2023), the U.S. Supreme Court struck down race-conscious affirmative action admissions programs, holding that the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution applies equally to all persons regardless of skin color.

In *Ames v. Ohio Department of Youth Services* (2025), the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that, under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (the section specifically devoted to equal employment), majority group members may not be held to a higher standard for demonstrating discrimination than minority group members. William Jacobson, a law professor at Cornell University, commented, "The ruling certainly put employers on notice that discrimination against 'majority' employees is just as unlawful as discrimination against minority employees. There is no safe haven or carve-out for so-called 'reverse discrimination'" (quoted in Guynn 2025).

In 2026, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency which oversees employment regulations, updated its enforcement guidelines to prioritize cases in which racial or gender biases result in systemic discrimination against workers from majority groups.

The WMP framework fails to acknowledge the extent to which unfair social structures negatively impact individuals from all racial and gender groups. The CGB framework does.

RACISM AND SEXISM AGAINST MAJORITY GROUPS

Is racism and sexism limited to White males?

> "If BIPOCs stand in the streets and scream at the top of her lungs, 'I hate all White people' 'I want all White people to go die,' 'Die White devil, you cracker bitch,' that's still not racism." (Anonymous speaker in Cheon 2023 at 6:57; for more examples and analysis, watch the entire video)

The contention that only members of "majority" groups can be prejudiced, discriminatory, and racist/sexist while members of "minority" groups are invariably the victims of "oppression" is a characteristic stereotype made by defenders of the WMP framework. The theses are (1) it's impossible for non-Whites to be racist or females to be sexist, and (2) it's impossible for Whites not to be racist and males not to be sexist. While it may be true that members of minority groups experience statistically higher levels of prejudice and discrimination than members of majority groups in the United States, the essentialist claim that Whites and males are the sole "oppressors" while only non-Whites and females are "oppressed" is simply unsupported by the empirical data (see Evanoff 2025b).

The intention here is *not* to suggest that racism and sexism against White males are as prevalent or more urgent than racism and sexism against non-White females; nor to portray White males as "victims" in a manner similar to how non-Whites, females, and others are portrayed in the WMP literature; nor to dismiss all forms of redress such as DEI as inherently flawed. Rather, the aim is simply to produce empirical evidence which dismantles the stereotype that only Whites and males—and never non-Whites or females—can be racist and sexist.

Whereas overt expressions of racism and sexism on the part of Whites and males against non-Whites and females are in most cases immediately recognized and called out, instances in which non-Whites and females express racist and sexist views against Whites and males are routinely overlooked and, indeed, often defended as legitimate countermeasures for combatting racism against minority groups. Double standards result when the same ethical precepts are not applied equally to all, regardless of race and gender. In addition to the racist and sexist claim made by WMP theorists (Deguchi 2021; McIntosh 1989; 2010, cited above) that White males are "privileged racist sexist

oppressors," consider the following racially charged statements, all made by non-Whites who also happen to be women:

> "Asian women can single-handedly cause the White genocide that they [Whites] are so afraid of….In two generations there would no longer be any blonde-haired blue-eyed brats." (Anonymous speaker in Cheon 2023 at 3:22)

> "All White people are racist. I really want any White person in this room to know, up front, that this is what we're dealing with. That it's not going to be this coddling of White tears and what that looks like. We're not going to discuss, 'Oh, maybe some of us have worked it out.' No, you're always going to be racist actually. I believe that White people are born into not being human." (Ashleigh Shackelford in Stossel 2023 at 19:48)

> "White people are committed to being villains in the aggregate….Their thinking is so morally and spiritually bankrupt about power that…they fear viscerally, existentially letting go of power because they cannot imagine that there is another way to be. It is either that you dominate or you're dominated…. The thing I want to say to you is we gotta take these motherfuckers out." (Brittney Cooper in Cooper 2021 at 12:25, 16:08, 18:15; previously cited in Evanoff 2025b, p. 19)

As these quotes show, non-Whites and females are perfectly capable of making macroaggressive racist remarks against Whites and males. If similar dehumanizing comments were made by White males against non-Whites and females, there is no doubt that they would be immediately condemned and the persons making them censured. Yet Deguchi, McIntosh, Shackelford, and Cooper all remain highly regarded within WMP and DEI circles. Even if such statements represent the views of only a small minority of supporters of these frameworks and not the majority, the unwillingness of the majority to openly challenge and condemn them is also morally reprehensible.

Can both males and females be sexist?

> "It is impossible for women to be sexist towards men….Women cannot be 'as sexist as men' because that would suggest that women would somehow benefit from sexism, that they are the ones who hold the political, economic, and cultural power in our society." (O'Neill 2017)

> "Sexism is a form of oppression. If you think of it in the form of a hierarchy, you'll see that yes, *all people* can experience stereotyping (assumptions that all people in one group are similar), prejudice (dislike toward a group based on those stereotypes), and discrimination (refusing access to resources based on that prejudice). However, only *oppressed people* experience all of that *and* institutionalized violence and systematic erasure. See, and that's why it's not possible to be sexist against men." (Fabello 2015)

The extent to which males and females respectively "hold the political, economic, and cultural power in our society" and may both be the perpetrators and victims of oppression has already been addressed in the discussion of structural discrimination above. The intent here is simply to document the fact that it is just as possible for women to harbor sexist attitudes against men as it is for men to harbor sexist attitudes against women.

An example is the hashtag #KillAllMen, which first appeared on social media around 2013. The phrase "Kill All Men" was influenced by the book *S.C.U.M. Manifesto* (the acronym stands for Society for Cutting Up Men), written by Valerie Solanas, a radical feminist who gained fame for her attempted murder of Andy Warhol in 1968, the same year the book was published by Olympia Press. A sample quote from the book: "Life in this society being, at best, an utter bore and no aspect of society being at all relevant to women, there remains to civic-minded, responsible, thrill-seeking females only to overthrow the government, eliminate the money system, institute complete automation, and destroy the male sex" (Solanas 1968, p. 1).

While sentiments such as these and the resulting #KillAllMen hashtag have been defended as rhetorical hyperbola by some, they have been widely condemned by others as constituting genuine hate speech (Leung 2020). According to the Coalition to End Domestic Violence (2025), the #KillAllMen hashtag registers "over 3 billion engagements across all social media platforms," while the hashtag #KillAllWomen

has virtually no presence on social media, suggesting a double standard in which calls to “kill women” are regarded as hate speech to be immediately flagged and removed, while calls to “kill men” are not. This discrepancy further suggests that the severity of gender-targeted animus is treated asymmetrically between men and women.

It is clear, in any case, that the open expression of sentiments such as “Kill All Men” is malevolent and highly offensive, even if only intended as ironic or satirical. They can, moreover, have a harmful effect on the mental health of males (Mitchell 2021). Coppolillo (2025) concludes that in toxic social network communities, while misandrist hate speech of women against men and misogynist hate speech of men against women display equally concentrated levels of hatred, “misandric communities express more negative sentiments than misogynistic ones” (p. 7). In other words, the “femosphere” can in some respects be even more sexist than the “manosphere” (the term *femosphere* was first coined in Kay 2024). Coppolillo concludes:

> Our findings therefore indicate that online gender-based hate speech, whether directed at women or men, should be regarded with equal seriousness. It is crucial to recognize that hate speech harms individuals regardless of gender, and therefore, interventions aimed at mitigating such behavior should be gender-neutral. Implementing effective, gender-agnostic solutions can ensure that all forms of hate speech are addressed consistently and fairly, preventing any group from being overlooked. By adopting this approach, platforms and policymakers can foster a more inclusive and respectful digital environment for everyone, promoting equality and safeguarding individuals from gendered abuse. (p. 4)

Journalist Lisa Britton (who self-identifies as non-partisan and politically independent) writes, “Female-led misandry is mainstream, and it’s in our schools, our media, our Hollywood blockbusters, and our university lecture halls. Podcasts hosted by women casually trash men as toxic, incompetent, sexist or irredeemable… The hatred isn’t just on the fringes. It’s everywhere.” While contested by scholars in the field of Gender Studies, Britton’s claim is supported by other academic studies, which document the extent to which men and boys are portrayed as inherently toxic, incompetent, and villainous in the media and education (Nathanson and Young 2001; 2006; Synnott 2009; Benatar 2012).

Here are some of the more extreme statements made by feminist authors, which, if not entirely embraced by feminists, largely go unchallenged:

> "The moral basis for outlawing hate speech is that it causes harm, but in a patriarchal system, it's hard to see how 'men are trash' could gather the power or pervasiveness to harm men. On the contrary, 'men are trash' combats hate; its target is misogyny." (Suzannah Weiss, sexologist and writer, in Weiss 2019, para. 10)

> "I hate men. I really do. I have no desire anymore to waste my time and my energy pretending to be sweet and pleasant. Misandry is a completely normal, healthy response to systemic oppression." (Pauline Harmange, author and activist, in Harmange 2020, p. 12)

> "I feel that 'man-hating' is an honourable and viable political act, that the oppressed have a right to class-hatred against the class that is oppressing them." (Robin Morgan, author and activist, in Morgan 2014, p. 171)

> "If life is to survive on this planet, there must be a decontamination of the Earth. I think this will be accompanied by an evolutionary process that will result in a drastic reduction of the population of males." (Mary Daly, philosopher and theologian, in Daly 1999, p. 115)

No doubt it would be possible to compile any number of comparable misogynist quotes by males, even if most men are not misogynist. The point being made here is not the gross overgeneralization that all feminists hold sexist attitudes towards men. Most feminists (the vast majority in fact) are no more predisposed to hostility towards men than non-feminists (Hopkins-Doyle et al. 2023). The claim instead is the more limited anti-stereotypical one that *some* feminists (a relatively small minority) do in fact hold sexist attitudes towards men. The ethical import is that these latter cases of sexism against men need to be called out and addressed, just as much as cases of sexism against women.

Discrimination and eliminationism

As may be surmised, some of the remarks quoted in the previous two sections are openly *eliminationist* (Goldhagen 2009). The term, originally coined by Goldhagen (1996), is generally defined as rhetoric, ideologies, and/or policies advocated by both state and non-state actors aimed at neutralizing specific groups of people on the basis of their racial, ethnic, religious, or other social identities through various means, including repression, forced assimilation, segregation/separatism, expulsion/removal (ethnic cleansing), or, in the most extreme case, erasure/extermination (genocide) (Garrity and Mylonas 2026).

When eliminationist remarks such as those cited above, which rival—and, indeed, sometimes exceed—the more rabid claims of White and Male Supremacist groups, are pointed out to supporters of WMP, DEI, and CRT, the likely response is that such views are held only by extremists within these movements and are not characteristic of the movements as a whole. The same may be said, of course, of the equally rabid remarks of White and Male Supremacist groups, which hardly represent the views of Whites and males as a whole, despite the racist and sexist stereotypes promoted by some DEI scholars that Whites and males are inherently racist and sexist (e.g., Deguchi 2021, cited above, and DiAngelo 2018, p. 149–150: "White identity is inherently racist; White people do not exist outside the system of White supremacy").

The point, however, is that seemingly innocent claims to the effect that some social groups are more "privileged" than other social groups in some cases can and actually do lead to eliminationist acts. Examples include the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution (against the "privileged" aristocracy), anarchist "propaganda by the deed" (against the "privileged" capitalist ruling class), the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire (against the "privileged" Christian minority), Lenin's "hanging order" and massacre of kulaks (against "privileged" property-owning peasants), the Holocaust in Germany (against "privileged" Jews), the Cultural Revolution in China (against "privileged" bourgeoisie and traditionalists), the Killing Fields of Cambodia (against "privileged" professionals, intellectuals, and dissidents), and the Rwandan Genocide initiated by Hutu extremists (against "privileged" Tutsis). The rhetoric of historical domination and "privilege" also figures in some contemporary religious conflicts, such as those between Catholics vs. Protestants in Northern Ireland, Jews vs. Palestinians in Israel/Gaza, Hindus vs. Muslims in India, and Buddhist nationalists vs. non-Buddhists in Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

Eliminationist tendencies begin, quite simply, by dividing people into different identity groups on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, or other factors. Members of one's own ingroup are encouraged to internalize a view of themselves as "oppressed" while members of outgroups are enjoined to internalize a view of themselves as "oppressors." Depersonalization and dehumanization then follow as a justification for excluding or harming the outgroup. Should White males refuse to go along with how they are portrayed in WMP discourse, they may be accused of exhibiting "white fragility," defined as an inability to face up to their purported unconscious prejudicial views (DiAngelo 2018).

The slippery slope towards eliminationism starts with othering, proceeds to stereotyping, and ends with conflict. The Conflict Escalation Tornado (Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice 2018; see also Glasl 1982) delineates the following stages: (1) Cooperation, (2) Competition, (3) Assume Deliberate Actions, (4) Get Defensive, (5) Look for Support, (6) Attribute Motives, (7) Rely on Assumptions, (8) Group Think, (9) Beliefs Feed Observations, (10) Become Moralistic, (11) Personalize and Stereotype, (12) Hurt Before Being Hurt, and (13) Mutual Self-Destruction. Having passed through the earlier ten stages, WMP has reached the eleventh stage (Personalize and Stereotype): "Sexism (Men are oppressive) / Racism: (Whites are oppressive)" (Deguchi 2021, 20:15). Without overstating the case, it can minimally be claimed that such categorizations do not bridge divisions between social groups but aggravate them.

CONCLUSION

The WMP framework perpetuates stereotypes to the effect that White males are "privileged racist sexist oppressors," while non-Whites and females are not. The extent to which members of any racial or gender group can harbor prejudice and hold discriminatory attitudes remains unacknowledged. To be sure, some Whites and males are racist and sexist but not all are; some non-Whites and females are also racist and sexist but not all are. In any case, the problem is not *people*, whether White or non-White, male or female, but *prejudice* and *discrimination* among people of any race or gender group. The solution suggested by the CGB perspective is not only to eradicate personal biases among people of all racial and gender groups, but also to work together across racial and gender divides to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

Scapegoating Whites and males for all of society's problems and then asking them

to support non-Whites and females in their campaigns for equity is probably not the best way to win allies and influence people. The CGB framework suggests that people of all races and genders can join together as allies to condemn racism and sexism in all their forms, regardless of the identity group to which they are directed. To be color- and gender-blind does not mean being blind to racism and sexism. It means being blind to identity while keeping one's eyes wide open to prejudice and discrimination and trying to overcome them.

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