

# Whites understand their privilege

Continued from page 1A explaining why Whites are better off than other racial groups."

Hartmann said: "Whites recognize white privileges in a lot of individualistic domains but they still think that American laws and institutions are fair and treat everyone equally."

The researchers did a telephone survey of more than 2,000 homes nationwide. Of the participants, 1,000 were white, while the remaining participants were a combination of blacks, Hispanics and other racial groups.

The study also showed that Republican, white males are "less likely to believe laws and institutions are important and more likely to believe laws and institutions are not important in explaining white advantage."

That finding doesn't surprise Julia Hare, executive director of the San Francisco-based Black Think Tank.

"Any whites denying white privilege are either in total denial or pathological liars," Hare said.

"We know that everyday, anyone at any age would be able to see that. All you have to do if you would pass a newspaper stand, if you pass a magazine rack, you turn on your television at anytime of the day or anytime of the night, visit any cooperation and see who has the top jobs... those who are making the decisions are white."

"When we see that most mayors, most governors, most sheriffs, most of the people with the high jobs in our society, you don't call that white privilege? What else could that be?"

Eddie Moore Jr. should know. He is the director of diversity at the Bush School

in Seattle and organizer of the annual "White Privilege Conference."

The conference, to be held next April 18-21 at the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, is heading into its 8th year and draws hundreds of scholars, students and people who study race.

"It's not a 'Kumbaya' diversity conference, everybody's not in full agreement on issues, but we really worked hard to create a space where folks could come and talk about tough issues and do it in a way that's positive and productive," Moore said.

Like Hale, Moore was also interested in the study's ability to narrow the views of white, Republican males.

"Once you begin to break down the variables of how people are responding and who they are responding I think that becomes very interesting to me because it allows us to see where some of the challenges lie in continuing to do the work into the 21st century," he said.

Another key element of the study, Hartmann said, was whites and how they viewed their racial identity.

The study showed that 77 percent of whites reported that their racial identity was important to them and their racial group has a culture that should be preserved, a statistic that also surprised researchers, according to Hartmann.

Southern whites tended to hold those views the most, said the study.

"Seventy-five percent of whites answering affirmatively sounds like a big number—it is—but it's also way less (than) like 85-90 percent of African-Americans and Hispanics (who) say 'absolutely its important, absolutely

we have a culture worth preserving.' So it's a big number for whites compared to the fact that we thought whites didn't think about it at all," Hartmann said.

Generally, Hartmann said sociologists believe whites don't want to associate themselves with a race, or just preferred to consider themselves as American.

He said there have been two responses to the study so far, one that reads the statistics as white Americans looking to find their place in the "American Mosaic," while others believe the numbers show white Americans afraid of the darkening of America as other ethnic groups rise in population and political power.

Hartmann, who is white, believes it's a little of both and this study is just the beginning of a greater examination of how white people think about their own race.

"The larger implication of all of this and of the study as a whole is realizing the problem of race is not just the problem of communities of color but in fact is an issue. If we're going to think about it properly, much less benign, to solve those problems, we've got to have the majority white group fully informed, invested and involved in recognizing how they're implicated in racial dynamics."

Moore also agrees that this study is the beginning of a good dialogue among the races, and "part" of him is excited that white people "are beginning to show an indication that their awareness and knowledge around these issues are improving."

But he is also disheartened that many "don't see the connection to the systemic, institutional design." Moore, an African-

American, said it is not enough for white people to just recognize their advantages, but to take it another step further and take action to equal the playing field for all Americans.

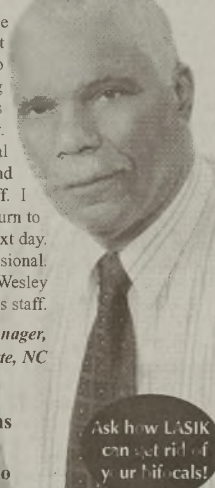
"I want to give you some praise for getting to that point," he said. "But for me that is not enough."

The Charlotte Post

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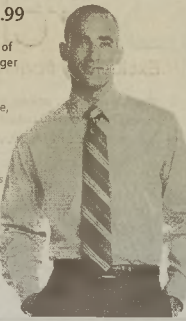
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