In Neil Foley’s article “Becoming Hispanic,” he explains the history behind how Hispanics became classified as such in the eyes of society as well as the legal system. Foley goes through how Hispanics became categorized, the push of other nationalities trying to be classified as “white,” and the societal interactions of Hispanic people that are either in favor of whiteness or against it, embracing their nationality. With the NPR Planet Money “The Cost of Crossing” podcast, the hosts of the talk show spoke to an immigrant from Honduras named “Patty” that had been smuggled across the border, explaining the processes she went through to get into the US. She explained the actual price of the trip itself as well as the dark turn that her journey had taken when she was trying to go there. Both articles relate to immigration, showing what the process was from earlier American history to more recent times.

Throughout the class, I learned three main things about inequality and privilege in relation to racialized social groups: whiteness, the treatment of those who aren’t white, and how society functions accordingly. Whiteness is less about having white skin, but more of what privileges come along with it in American society. Those who had white skin but weren’t classified as white yet had been treated differently when they immigrated, such as people from Ireland or Western Europe. Individuals that aren’t classified as white have been thought of as lesser human beings, given less privilege with social as well as financial aspects. This results in it being harder to climb up the social later if someone is not white, making it more difficult getting a job which earns them less. Because of this uneven playing field of privilege for different racialized social groups, it creates discrimination amongst each other, forming tensions between “races.” There are groups of people that are trying to bring the racialized social groups to a more equal level, making no one better than the other so that everyone has a fairer chance of being able to succeed in life and to be treated equally.

Using this information to think in a sociological perspective, it plays hand in hand with what the reading and podcast were talking about. With the reading, as it explained more of the historical process of how Hispanics had become classified in the US, it first shows how the Hispanic community formed to be like whites in the way of viewpoints of other “races.” They would discriminate against African Americans, just as Caucasians did, as they wanted to blend into the privilege of being white. Over time, Hispanics got their own category, but for quite some time, they were trying to latch on to “whiteness,” as it gave them opportunity in America that was better than African Americans, Japanese Americans, and even Asian Indians. In relation to the podcast, it shows the more current struggles of people that are trying to get into the country to seek financial opportunity. This is just one of many examples of how difficult it can be if someone is in a poor financial standing or in a hard lifestyle to try to come to America. Even if someone was trying to get into America that isn’t classified as “white,” it can still be hard to make a living, as there are less privileges that are given to those who are not Caucasian. With the generation that is coming of age today, we could make a difference by stopping this sort of uneven distribution of privilege, making it more fair for everyone, but only if we get involved enough to get our voices heard.