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Intro to Sociology

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Readings on Privilege

In society, social privilege is something that is inherited in a variety of ways, influencing how people act towards others and ideals. Individuals like to take the “path of least resistance,” so then people have an easier time with fitting into groups in society. Because of this, people tend to follow along with others in behaviors and ideals such as sexism or racism, which they may not agree with it. Even though they may not agree, however, they are a part of it and are lumped into a viewpoint or practice that can be oppressive over people in different groups or social classes. With this, people tend to not see privilege as the lines seem to be blurred for those who have it. On the other hand, it is very prominent to those who do not have privilege. For those that do have privilege, however, since they can be blind to having this, they can be miserable.

An example that these readings relate to Johnson’s article about men opening doors for women are due to the blurring of privilege, becoming blind to an assertion of dominance. In this article, men feel that they are obligated to open doors for women, as that is the polite thing to do, but it shows an undertone of privilege for men to show dominance. When the men are doing this, however, they don’t see it this way, as it just seems like the right thing to do. In relation to the two article read, this shows gender privilege that is accepted around the male community as something that is “normal.” The male community, in this study, don’t see these undertones at all because it was just accepted and taught to men as they were growing up.

There are several types of privilege amongst our society today. Some of which are privileges that have to do with money, jobs, access to resources, and several others. Usually, people are born into privilege due to skin color, and gender, which are main aspects to how privilege is given in society. Others are also inherited by the families people are brought up in, such as people who are in a rich family. They may have access to more resources or are viewed more highly than those who do not have this kind of wealth.