

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo, and David Embrick. 2007. “‘Every Place Has a Ghetto...’: The Significance of Whites’ Social and Residential Segregation.” *Symbolic Interaction* 30:323-345.

PRIMARY ARGUMENT: The authors argue that white people’s segregation and isolation from minorities creates ‘white habitus’ and creates white people’s racial taste, perceptions, feelings, emotions and view on racial matters. They argue this isolation makes white people oblivious to racial issues.

IMPORTANT DEFINED CONCEPTS:

- White Habitus: Sets of feelings, beliefs, and cognitions that are wired into White people’s upbringing that limit their chances of developing fair, genuine, and meaningful relationships with BIPOC.
- Residential Segregation: The degree to which various racial groups are distributed throughout a city or other residential environment in a way that differently shapes access and opportunities.
- Social Segregation: The state of mutual isolation and lack of communication between different social groups due to cultural, economic, racial, and religious factors.

PRIMARY FINDINGS:

1. Only 4 of 41 (10%) White people interviewed reported living in a neighborhood with a significant Black or minority presence. Very few interviewees reported having a close relationship with a Black or minority person, even if they had grown up with them.
2. White people are incredibly isolated and segregated from Black people, from childhood into adulthood through education and workplace, and most of them don’t feel this is related to race at all and more so just ‘how it is’. This reinforces their beliefs that they are “colorblind”.
3. White people interviewed did not think that their isolation from Black people or minorities was a problem. Many reported that they hadn’t thought about race in regard to their neighborhood at all. Many used their not having grown up around black people as the reason for not having a current close relationship with one, stating that black people tend to hang out with other black people.

KEY QUOTE: “The social psychology produced by the white habitus leads to the creation of a positive self-view and a negative other-view. The more distant the group in question is from the white “norm,” other things being equal, the more negative whites will view the group.” (341)

QUESTION: What is the best way a White person can begin to unwire what is already rooted within their habitus as a result of the residential and social segregation the authors describe?