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Sociology 101

Period 9/January 5th

For this project, I wanted to examine the use of the N-word. In order to complete this task, these following questions guided me:

Why is it more acceptable for hispanics to use the N-word than whites?

Is saying the N-word more acceptable for athletes of predominately black sports?

Are white people justified by using the N-word in rap/hip-hop music?

Can a white person use the N-word if a black person says it to him/her first?

I believed that after completing all of my research I would find that blacks and hispanics are more willing to admit that they say the N-word than whites and and Asians. Also, I thought that most people of all races would find a white person saying the N-word specifically to a black person is wrong, whether or not the black person said it to him/her first. Many people think that the use of the N-word is acceptable to minorities, but Asians are minorities as well and not too many use the N-word as frequent as the other races. Asians are considered a model minority, so the acceptance of the N-word usage is more of a social class thing

To conduct my research, I used articles, documentaries, surveys, and observation. The questions that I used in my survey were:

What race do you identify yourself with?

Do you or have you used the N-word or any slang form of it?

How often do you use the word?

Who would you be more likely to use the word around?

Where would you be more likely to use the word?

Would you say the N-word if it was said to you first?

Would you say the N-word back if the person who said it first was not of the same race? If he/she was?

Does a white person have the right to say the N-word in conversation if his/her group of friends use it?

If no, which race(s) saying the N-word in that group acceptable?

Which race(s) is it okay for a rapper to use the N-word?

I handed out my survey to 80 people. Of these 80 people, 20 were black, 20 were white, 20 were hispanic (I know its not a race for the sake of the question), and 20 were Asian. I chose this group of people because I wanted to see the difference in different races’ uses and views on the N-word. Also, I included Asians in the survey although it was more focused on black, white and hispanic, to show that the N-word is not accepted among all minorities.

To my question of: “What race do you identify yourself with?”

* 100% of blacks said black
* 100% of whites said white
* 100% of Asians said Asian
* 100% of hispanics said hispanic

My Analysis

People know which race they are. (Sorry I had to, thought it was funny)

To my question of: Do you use the N-word or any slang form of it?”

* 95% of blacks said they do/have and only 5% said they do/have not.
* 75% of whites said they do/have and only 25% said they do/have not
* 55% of Asians said they do/have and 45% said they do/have not
* 100% of hispanics said they do say or have said the N-word

My Analysis

Examining the data, the use of the N-word is not only spoken by blacks. In fact, all hispanics (whether black or white hispanics) admitted to saying the N-word while almost all blacks did. Not much else it to analyze of this question, except the fact that one black person wrote on the server next to the question “of course nigga” which caused him/her to complete a self-fulfilling prophecy that black people are “ratchet” or whatever. Either way it was unnecessary sort of obnoxious to do.

To my question of: “How often do you use the word?”

* 15% of blacks said they rarely/never use the N-word while 60% of whites, 70% of Asians, and 10% of hispanics said the same
* 20% of blacks said they sometimes use the N-word while 25% of whites, 15% of Asians, and 20% of hispanics said the same
* 20% of blacks said they often use the N-word while 0% of whites, 5% of Asians, and 5% of hispanics said the same
* 20% of blacks said they frequently use the N-word while 5% of whites, 5% of Asians, and 20% of hispanics said the same
* 25% of blacks said the N-word is in their every day vocabulary while 10% of whites, 5% of Asians, and 45% of hispanics said the same

My Analysis

This proves that the stereotype that all black people say the N-word all the time and that'll they say is false. More hispanics use it in their every day vocabulary and less use it rarely/never. Some people would think that the N-word is a minority thing, but they forget that Asians are a minority. This shows that Asians being the model minority are much closer to whites in both their socio-economic status and their usage of the N-word.

To my question of: “Who would you be more likely to use the word around?”

* 15% of blacks said a black friend, 0% said a white friend, 5% said nobody, and 80% said anybody
* 25% of whites said a black friend, 35% said a white friend, 20% said nobody, and 20% said anybody
* 5% of Asians said a black friend, 5% said a white friend, 40% said nobody, and 50% said anybody
* 25% of hispanics said a black friend, 0% said a white friend, 0% said nobody and 75% said anybody.
* Nobody said a hispanic friend

My Analysis

This survey question shows many interesting things. The fact that a plurality of the whites said they would share with a white friend was expected. However, the fact that many people that said they do/have not use the N-word of all races did not pick “nobody,” but a group of people. If you do not say the word, wouldn’t you say it to nobody? Are people lying about this or did not fully understand, I will never know. But the evidence leads me to believe that whites and Asians are almost afraid to say the N-word to their black friends unless they are very close to their black friends. Also, its seems admitting it, even when anonymous, is very scary too.

To my question of: “Where would you be more likely to use the word?”

* 90% of blacks said school, 0% said home, sports, club, and 10% said other
* 25% of whites said school, 5% said home, 50% said sports, 0% said clubs, and 20% said other
* 70% of Asians said school, 0% said home, sports, club, and 30% said other
* 100% of hispanics said school

My Analysis

The purpose of this question was to see if a certain location makes it okay for races other than black to use the N-word. I am almost 100% certain that the whites that said sports are either on the football team, basketball team, or lacrosse team. These 3 teams for Sewanhaka are predominately black and the white people that are on these teams are treated as if they are accepted into the “I can say the N-word club.” I would know being on the football team for a couple of years. The amount of times I heard the N-word used on the football field is insane. In fact, if the referee hears you say the N-word in the NFL it is a 15-yard penalty. Many, particularly black, players were enraged. Richard Sherman of the Seattle Seahawks stated that “This is atrocious. It almost seems racist to do this. Why not ban all the curse words then?” On the other hand, all hispanics choosing school shows that they feel accepted to say the N-word in a very diverse society that Sewanhaka is. This may be due to the fact that the socio-economic status of hispanics and blacks are fairly close.

To my question of: “Would you say the N-word if it was said to you first?”

* 95% of blacks said yes, while 75% of whites, 45% of Asians, and 100% of hispanics said the same
* 5% of blacks said no, while 25% of whites, 55% of Asians, and 0% of hispanics said the same.

My Analysis

A majority of all races except Asian said yes to this question. This shows that the other 3 races, and particularly whites, would not just go up to a friend and say, preferably have them break the ice with the N-word instead. Whites to do not want to racially profile blacks and assume that they use the N-word. If they do not, it may seem racist to the black person.

To my question of: “Would you say the N-word back if the person who said it was not of the same race as you? If he/she was?”

* 75% of blacks said yes/yes, 5% said yes/no, 10% said no/yes, 10% said no/no
* 20% of whites said yes/yes, 60% said no/yes, 20% said no/no
* 35% of Asians said yes/yes, 25% said yes/no, 10% said no/yes, 30% said no/no
* 80% of hispanics said yes/yes, 20% said no/no

My Analysis

This question is fairly similar to the previous, this just further displays the comfort level white people feel that they need to have in order to use the N-word. Hispanics and blacks seem to care less about who they say it to and where they say it as a bunch of these questions proved.

To my question of: “Does a white person have the right to use the N-word if his/her group of friends use it?”

* 30% of blacks said yes and 70% said no
* 50% of whites said yes and 50% said no
* 35% of Asians said yes and 65% said no
* 60% of hispanics said yes and 40% said no

My Analysis

I probably should have worded this question better, I should have said “Does a white person have the right to use the N-word if his/her group of friends is black?” I wanted to see if blacks and hispanics would consider the white person one of them since his/her friends are all black. However, the results may have been decently similar, but not entirely. The reason I think so is that people would think that the white person’s friends that use the N-word are white as well, which makes the question completely different. However, the fact that a majority of blacks said no and a majority of hispanics said yes, is important. I believe this is because most blacks think that it is their word and they don’t have the right to say it because they aren't one. On the 60 minutes special about *Huckleberry Finn* a black male says he “loves that younger black people use nigger all the time and white people are mad because they can’t say it.”

To my question of: “If no, which race(s) saying the N-word in that group is acceptable?”

* 88.8% of blacks said blacks only, 11.2% said blacks and hispanics
* 62.5% of whites said blacks only, 37.5% said blacks and hispanics
* 70.5% of Asians said blacks only, 29.5% said blacks and hispanics
* 7% of hispanics said blacks only, 93% said blacks and hispanics

My Analysis

Not as many people answered this question because of the “if no” to the last question. However the percentage of people who chose black only instead of black and hispanic is tremendous. If a majority of non-hispanics think that only blacks can say the N-word, why is it accepted more for hispanics to say it than whites? I most likely should have asked a question about a hispanic saying the N-word as well to see if they match these results.

To my question of: “Which race(s) is it okay for a rapper to use the N-word?”

* 5% of blacks said all races, 70% said blacks only, 5% said whites, blacks and hispanics, 20% said blacks and hispanics
* 5% of whites said all races, 90% said blacks only, and 5% said blacks and hispanics
* 95% of Asians said blacks only, and 5% said blacks and hispanics
* 10% of hispanics said all races, 80% said blacks only, and 10% said blacks and hispanics.
* Nobody said whites, hispanics, or Asians only.

My Analysis

No white rapper uses the N-word, or at least that I have listened to. But why is this? If it is a mostly black industry, why don’t the white rappers say the N-word in their songs? I believe it is because whites are a majority of the consumer base for rap/hip-hop music. They want the white consumers to feel comfortable reciting their lyrics in any situation with black friends or not. The comfort level of a white person saying the N-word around black friends is very low, however, quoting rap lyrics makes it a bit better.

The documentary *The N-Word*, helped me see the change in the use of the N-word and how the meaning of it changed when it went from a word mostly used by whites to a word mostly used by blacks.

In the *60 Minute* piece “Huckleberry Finn and the N-Word,” the use of the N-word in a book considered one of the greatest pieces of American literature is changed and how is changes the meaning completely.

Works Cited

*The N-Word*

*60 Minutes* “Huckleberry Finn and the N-Word”

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