

<b>THE PRIVILEGES-TEST</b>
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*prepared by Susanne Baer based on ideas from Barbara Lesch McCaffry, Peggy McIntosh, Daniela Hrzan and students at Humboldt-University in Berlin for use in educational and trainings settings, in Western Europe and the U.S.*

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*If you have suggestions to alter the test, or want to share experiences with it, please mail to [baer@rewi.hu-berlin.de](mailto:baer@rewi.hu-berlin.de).*

**Instructions:**

*Do not explain much about this exercise before you do it, but think about whether you can do that with the group, and make sure you have time afterwards to discuss it.*

*If you think it is productive to do it, start:*

*All participants stand in a row, in the middle of the room, hand in hand.*

*The facilitator (you) instructs all participants to respond to the questions without discussion, or asking questions – there will be time for discussion afterwards! Tell participants that they have to go one step forward if they answer “yes”, and one step back if they answer “no”. The line may break at some point.*

*You, the only one who should know the questions, read them out aloud; you may face the participants, or not, to preserve a sense of not being observed from outside.*

**Questions:**

- *If your ancestors do not come from this nation-state, please take a step back.*
- *If you ever have been confronted with derogative terms relating to your ethnicity, nationality, class, wealth or poverty, appearance, sex, gender or sexual orientation, please take a step back.*
- *If in your home, people of different skin color or origin than your family have been employed as staff member, as gardener, or as cleaning help, take one step ahead.*
- *If your parents were employed or self-employed, you are one step ahead.*
- *If you grew up in an area in which prostitution, drug trafficking, etc. were present, please take a step back.*
- *If you ever tried to change your appearance or your routine behaviour in order not to be judged or ridiculed, please take a step back.*
- *If you have learned something about the culture of your ancestors, people of your sexual orientation, or the everyday life of women, or about different masculinities in primary school, get one step ahead.*

- If you have visited a school in which your native language was generally not spoken, please take a step back.
- If there were more than 50 books in your home when you grew up, get a step ahead.
- If you, as a child, ever had to miss a meal or were hungry because there was not enough money to buy food, get one step back.
- If you have visited museums, galleries and theaters with your parents, one step ahead.
- If your parents were unemployed or fired from their jobs, step back.
- If you attended a private school, a children's recreation camp or a summer camp step ahead.
- If your family ever had to move because they could no longer pay the rent, get back.
- If you were ever told by your parents that you are beautiful, clever and able to achieve what you desire, step one ahead.
- If you have ever been discouraged from studying or choosing a profession because of your ethnicity, nationality, class or social status, your sex, gender or your sexual orientation, step back.
- If your parents ever encouraged you to go to college or university, step ahead.
- If you spent, as a child, a holiday abroad, step forward.
- If one of your parents has no formal school degree, step back.
- If your family owns a home, step forward
- If you ever saw people of your ethnicity, nationality, class, sex, gender or your sexual orientation in degrading roles on television, step back.
- If you were ever offered a good or interesting job because you have a friend or family member you knew someone there, step ahead.
- If you were ever not given a job because of your ethnicity or looks, your nationality, your class, your sex, gender or sexual orientation, step back. If you were ever not given a job because of two or more of these characteristics at the same time, take another step back.
- If you have ever earned less, or have been treated unfairly in employment or education because of your ethnicity, nationality, your class, your sex, gender or sexual orientation, step back. If that ever happened because of two or more of these characteristics at the same time, take another step back.
- If you ever inherited money or property have come before.
- If you, in your childhood and youth, largely depended on public transport, step back.

- If you were ever stopped by the police or have been questioned for no obvious reason but your ethnicity or looks, your class, your sex, gender or sexual orientation, please step back.
- If you ever felt not to freely move around in a shop, because someone followed you around, harassed you or even accused of theft, please step back.
- If you were ever afraid of violence because of your ethnicity or appearance, your class, your sex, gender or sexual orientation, step back.
- If you were able to basically avoid places that seemed dangerous to you, step forward.
- If you ever felt uncomfortable because of a joke, based on your ethnicity, nationality, class, sex, gender or sexual orientation, step back.
- If you ever became a victim of violence because of your ethnicity, nationality, class, sex, gender or sexual orientation, step back.
- If you have ever been accused of cheating or lying because of your ethnicity, skin color, or ethnicised looks, your accent, your nationality, your class, poverty or wealth, your sex, gender or sexual orientation, step back.

*Let people breathe. Take note of who is where in the room. Announce a few additional questions to consider, then open the floor for discussion.*

**These questions could be raised in light of the test:**

- What are your thoughts and feelings about this exercise?
- Were you surprised? If so, why?
- Why do you think you are where you are in the room? When did you have to let go of the hands right and left? Why?
- Would your position be different if there would have been questions regarding disability or ability, both physical and mental, or questions related to your faith, religion or atheism, or political convictions?
- How would affirmative action measures affect your position? Which exactly?