

Racism

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Racism

This paper focuses on the concept of racism. It will discuss the different types of racism such as stereotypes, prejudice, and racial discrimination. The paper will also discuss how to eliminate acts of social deviance such as discrimination. Some of the concepts discussed in the paper include the labeling theory, colonialism, and symbolic interactionism.

The first idea that comes to people's minds when they hear the term racism is the marginalization of people of color based on socially constructed racial categories that seem to give the white an advantage. The United States has been the worst victim of racial issues and has led to the implementation of many policies to curb racism. The country is among the nations with the highest number of the white population in the world. However, it is also associated with a substantial number of people of color, which makes it an integral point of reference in discussing racism. Despite many efforts to wage war against 'racism,' which seem to be succeeding, the world has misinterpreted the term racism, and the war is one-sided, ignoring several aspects of real racism. The oversimplification of the concept has seen many countries deal with only one part of discrimination while assuming the others. The word racism combines various race-based inequalities, including stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and racism, which need to be addressed wholly to overcome racism since white privilege is just a section of a bigger problem.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes refer to generalizations about members of a community who have some perceived socially relevant characteristics. The main parties that communicate stereotypes are individuals and social media and are based on education and workplaces. Many human beings use stereotypes to understand the social world around them, either consciously or unconsciously.

They occur when people see other people and classify them to belong to particular groups or statuses and thus, associate all the members in the category with the identified statuses. There are positive, negative, and neutral stereotypes. The identified features change from one society to another and with time.

There exist two different types of stereotypes in society. The first is descriptive stereotypes, which refer to the physical characteristics of what people are like (Craze & Smithers, n.d., p. 111). An example of this stereotype is the belief that black people are better in sports as compared to their white counterparts. The belief is traced back to the 1990s when racism was at its peak in society. The whites were the superior group across the United States and dominated games. However, as blacks got the opportunity and started excelling in sports like basketball, the whites would come up with explanations on relative intelligence. The stereotypes have persisted even today, with authors writing books on the different sets of skills by the two groups. The other type of stereotype is prescriptive stereotypes and is based on what people should be like. Those who fail to meet the expected criteria face negative sanctions.

Stereotypes are also associated with social statuses, gender, sexuality, and other categorizations. The colonization of most countries is also associated with stereotypical beliefs, whereby one group of people believes the other is inferior and cannot govern themselves. Colonialism is defined as the establishment of foreign rule and control over a distant land and its occupants (Craze & Smithers, n.d., p. 159). Colonizers believed that colonies were better off when ruled by a single government, directly by a foreign state or making the territories' leaders answer directly to foreign states.

Prejudice

Prejudice refers to prejudgments made against someone based on socially recognized characteristics. Many people use the term racist attitudes to mean prejudice. The two main types of prejudice are explicit and implicit. Explicit prejudice is used when referring to conscious negative attitudes concerning beliefs of the inferiority of people (Craige & Smithers, 112). On the other hand, implicit prejudice occurs when people deny holding prejudiced beliefs, even when their daily actions and interactions with people prove otherwise. Studies have revealed that implicit prejudice is the most common type of prejudice. This makes it difficult to fight stereotypical beliefs, as many believe they are innocent of the vice.

Racial Discrimination

Unlike stereotypes and prejudice, discrimination is behavioral, and it involves treating people from particular groups differently. In most cases, the victims are members of a less influential group or minorities. Individual-level racism is what most people mean when describing racism (Craige & Smithers, n.d., p.144). It is defined as the act of an individual discriminating against another based on their race. Other forms of discrimination are intentional, unintentional, and institutional, whereby the management of an organization may have policies that favor one group of people and discriminate against another. Therefore, the concept of racism is a result of discriminatory acts and organizations, or simply a system of oppression.

The problem of using only one form of racism to mean the whole idea could be explained through the lens of labeling theory. The theory suggests that individuals' self-identity and behavior may be determined by the words used to classify them (Craige & Smithers, 79). Individual-level racism was the most common form of racism in the United States. As a result, most people associated all forms of discrimination with the type of racism. As time went by, all

other forms of discrimination, including stereotypes and prejudices were converged under the umbrella term racism.

The three elements of racism can also be explained using the concept of symbolic interactionism. It focuses on the relationships among people coexisting in society and the connection between individuals and society. Issues such as stereotypes, prejudices, and racial discrimination occur when people attach symbols to meanings. Individual behaviors are believed to be a result of attaching meanings to things when different people interact, and people using their interpretations of the symbols to understand the world. Eventually, the symbols shape people's behaviors.

Racism is a form of negative deviant behavior that needs to be eliminated from society. The labeling theory offers a solution on how to overcome the types of racism. The theory is described as investigates the phenomenon of how an act and the person get labeled as deviant (Craze & Smithers, n.d., p. 79). How society identifies particular behavior contributes to whether the person who engaged in it changes or not. For example, when a group of Whites act in a manner that is considered racial and are punished for it, the repercussions of the act may be felt years after the incident. This is because their actions end up being labeled as racial, and the individuals are also called racists. With time, the group is likely to behave in ways that conform to what society thinks they are. The situation worsens when an entire community is labeled as racist for the mistakes of a few individuals. Society members need to refrain from actions of generalizing situations, as they may cause more harm than good.

The idea of social control also guides people on how to deal with deviant behaviors such as forms of racism in society. People in society generally focus on stereotypes as negative even though some may be good. As a result, all actions considered deviant or associated with

stereotypes are categorized as negative and attract sanctions. Consequently, it is important to analyze different forms of stereotypes before passing judgment.

References

Crage, S. M., & Smithers, J. (n.d.). *Introduction to Sociology: Canada and the World*.

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