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**Racism in the United States**



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## **Racism in the United States**

Racism is one of the existing issues that affect most societies and particularly the United States although since 1960 race discrimination became illegal. In every society, individual's communication, attitudes, and behavior are shaped by their own culture or another culture. In the following lines, we will try to answer the following questions. What is culture and patterns of culture? What are the characteristics of culture in the United States? What is racism and what group is most affected in the United states. What is our cross-cultural experience in the United States or other countries? How can we contribute to reduce racism in the United States?

‘Culture is usually defined as the way that nonmaterial objects like thoughts, action, language, and values come together with material objects to form a way of life. Cultural environment comprises some values, norms, and beliefs. The values refer to cultural standards that people use to decide what seems to be right or wrong, what is good or bad. The specific ideas about what people think is true about the world are called beliefs. Psychologists and sociologists’ study human behavior and try to identify what is normal or abnormal. Norms and values are cultural patterns that play an important role in society. Norms can be defined as’’ rules and expectations that guide behavior within a society.’’ (13). Norms comprise folkways, laws, mores, and taboos. (13). Every country or society has its own norms and values but almost everywhere some norms and values are common. The similarity is more seen in the laws since every society struggles to maintain justice, equality, and liberty to all members. For example, aggressing somebody, hitting, stealing, killing, are punished in the society. Folkways, mores and taboos can be similar, but they are often different from one country to another as they are subject to change. For example,’’ in Yoruba, itutu, a state of personal coolness facilitating productive conversation and cooperation, has evolved into the African American imperative’ “keep your

cool.” (3). Depending on how people broadly align to some patterns of culture, we can recognize a dominant culture compared to a subculture which is not popular. Countercultures are a type of subculture that rejects some of the larger culture’s norms and values. In contrast to subcultures, which operate smoothly, within the larger society, countercultures might actively defy larger society by developing their own set of rules and norms to live by, some even creating communities operating outside of greater society.” (10)

There is a diversity of culture in every country or society because individuals are born and raised in specific or restricted areas with certain beliefs, standards, and habits. Sometimes, when an individual is confronting patterns of a new culture, the difference of culture may cause discomfort, doubt, discouragement, and the individual does not know how to deal with the new situation. This new situation is described as cultural shock.

Ethnocentrism can be defined as the evaluation of other cultures according to preconceptions originating in the standards and customs of one’s own culture. For example, a woman who is judging the way Muslim women are dressed because he/she does not know why somebody would wear those clothes since it was not taught to her in her culture. This is an example of ethnocentrism. Today, The United States is referred to as a melting pot or Salad bowl.

According to the dictionary Oxford Languages, “melting pot” is a pot in which metals or other materials are melted and mixed, a place where different peoples, styles, theories, etc. are mixed”.

The United States is a place where over 800 languages are spoken and is the quintessential melting pot. Despite their differences, Americans manage to coexist and live together as one nation. In the salad bowl model, different cultures are brought together—like salad ingredients—but do not form together into a single homogeneous culture; each culture

keeps its own distinct qualities. This idea proposes a society of many individual cultures, since the latter suggests that ethnic groups may be unable to preserve their heritage. New York is an example of Salad bowl. Whether a melting pot or a salad bowl it affects race and ethnicity in the United States with the existence of minority and majority groups. Race and ethnicity are used to categorize certain sections of the population. In basic terms, race describes physical traits, and ethnicity refers to cultural identification. Race may also be identified as something you inherit while ethnicity is something you learn. (12) Sociologist Louis Wirth (1945) defined a minority group as “any group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination.”(12).

The term minority connotes discrimination, and in its sociological use, the term subordinate group can be used interchangeably with the term minority, while the term dominant group is often substituted for the group that is in the majority. These definitions correlate to the concept that the dominant group is that which holds the most power in each society, while subordinate groups are those who lack power compared to the dominant group. Merriam -Webster dictionary defines racism as a belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and those racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race. (7). More than 50 years have passed since the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and many Blacks in the U.S. remain marginalized and disenfranchised by public policies and public institutions.

“Blacks residing in residentially segregated communities across the U.S. are faced with a myriad of social, economic environmental, and political factors that negatively affect their lives

and communities alike. As a result, quality of life indicators reveals diminished educational attainment, disparaging health outcomes, limited employment opportunities, and stifled political participation for low-income Blacks. Furthermore, residentially segregated communities exemplify the ways in which institutional racism and structural inequality stifle community development.” (12) It is argued that during the time of urban development in the mid-twentieth century, millions of dollars flowed into and out of communities, however the stakeholders with the most political, social, and economic power received the vast majority of public policy benefits. The use of language (political and public discourse), public and private institutions (local development and housing authorities), and resources (tax abatements or incentives subsidized by federal and state governments) significantly aided in the perpetuation of inequality along the lines of race and class (12).

Immigration in the United States played a major role in creating a multicultural environment. Racism has been developed along with immigration. From our own experience, we always watch individuals whose behavior is purely racist. For instance, in transit, several times, we saw white people leaving their seats on train and buses when black people just sat next to them. Most often, when we go to pick up our children at school and find them uncomfortable because nobody wants to play with them. Today in United States, there is an evidence of association between racism and police brutality. Among those examples, the case of Georges Floyd killed in Minnesota by police. His final autopsy findings, issued June 1, found that Floyd's heart stopped while he was being restrained and that his death was a homicide caused by "cardiopulmonary arrest complicating law enforcement subdual, restraint, and neck compression". This horrible death caused a popular unrest and clashes in American

cities and impacted the political, social, and cultural life with the creation of Black Life matters Movement.

Racism causes a lot of psychological, physical, and sociological trauma in individuals, families and the entire society. Racism experienced at school is dropping a heavy psychological burden upon so many children and it becomes the main hurdle for them to achieve their educational dreams. Kids and racism document shows how young black children are experiencing racism in the different schools. It is unbelievable to hear little black kids at school saying, “if you have not the same color, you cannot play together” (4). A lot of kids confirm that parents strictly recommend their kids not to play with black kids. This is a stressful situation that so many black kids experience at school and it affects their learning outcomes. As I already mentioned above, our son is experiencing such situation. However, our cross-cultural experience in Japanese as is clearly different from the American one. Even if there is racism in this country, it might be latent, and not known to so many people in the society. Based on our cross-cultural experiences, Japanese people are so kind, not xenophobe. Wherever some people live in this world, cultural shocks are part of life in society. To fight and reduce racism in all its forms, we are formulating the following recommendations: socialization is the best way that helps people to live in harmony.

“Socialization is the process through which people are taught to be proficient members of a society. It describes the ways that people come to understand societal norms and expectations, to accept society’s beliefs, and to be aware of societal values’’. (5) Socialization can help people learn and adopt cultural relativism, the idea that practices in another person’s culture should not be judged by the norms of your culture. Since our childhood, we have been raised and educated in a Christian family and even though we do not dislike the other religions, we consider ours as

the best and we wish everybody follows it. Since our childhood, the family education, school education including other agents of socialization have shaped us in a way to accept and understand the difference of the religions other people might have. Socialization and cultural relativism are important to individuals because it allows people to become progressively able to see themselves through the eyes of others. Also, to effectively function in the society, individuals need to learn from each other the basics of both material and nonmaterial culture. One of the reasons why racial discrimination persists is that so many people misunderstand what is socialization and its importance.

Through the agents of socialization people learn to adopt the beliefs, values and norms that represent its nonmaterial culture. Agents of socialization include family (the most important), schools, peers, the mass media, and to some extent religion.

Some people do not understand what socialization is and among those who have knowledge, only few people know its importance. This can be one reason why is it difficult for many people from another culture to adapt into other cultures. But the most important reason is the diversity of beliefs norms and values that prevent many people from another culture to adapt into other cultures. Individuals who experience culture shock and understand it can easily minimize its effects. It is extremely difficult for rejecters living in foreign country to adapt a new culture as they consider the new culture is from their opponents.

Accepting cultural diversity can help reduce racism in our society. We understand by Cultural diversity, appreciating that society is made up of many different groups with different interests, skills, talents and. needs. It also means that you recognize that people in society can have differing religious beliefs and sexual orientations to you. The world is filled with people who have different beliefs, religions, traditions, and ways of living. It is within



our differences that we can find beauty. Both in educational and professional environments, cultural diversity benefits everyone. Cultural diversity is when different races, ethnicities, ages, abilities, languages, nationalities, socioeconomic statuses, genders, religions, and/or sexual orientations are well represented within a community. The group is diverse if a wide variety of groups are represented.

Multicultural education is a mean by which racism can overcome I our society. Its major goal of multicultural education is to restructure schools so that all students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function in an ethnically and racially diverse nation and world. Multicultural education uses multicultural Curriculum which include teaching and learning material, perspective, critical inclusivity, social and civic responsibility. and delivery. Delivery must acknowledge and address diversity of learning styles while challenging dynamics of power and privilege in the classroom. Lastly, we recommend that people study race relation. Race relations attempts to explain relate to each other, and to give an explanation of violence connected to race how racial groups racial groups relate to each other, and in particular to give an explanation of violence connected to racism. Overcoming division is the best recipe to a world without racism: Respectful and tolerant societies are typically he most harmonious. To get through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we are going to need to lean to overcome racism and bigotry.

The present research was a great opportunity for us to talk about the relevant topic, racism in the United States. To better understand why it still persists despites it became illegal, we studied culture, the patterns of culture, knowing that every human being behavior is shaped by culture. We learned a lot about the characteristics of American culture whether a salad bowl or a melting pot, classmates individual cross-cultural experiences and based on new sociological

concepts we have formulated some recommendations. We believe that these recommendations can significantly reduce racism in our society and strengthen the relationship between individuals and even between societies. Our own cross-cultural experiences played an important role in the development of this topic. We remain confident and commit ourselves to seize every opportunity to talk and educate communities to accept the diversity in culture by showing tolerance, overcoming division. We believe that the present research has its limits and therefore, other research would reinforce its findings and then contribute to fight racism in America and in the world.

### **Summary of topic: Racism in the United States**

Though Racism became illegal since 1960, It still exists in the United States. More than 50 years have passed since the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and many Blacks in the U.S. remain marginalized and disenfranchised by public policies and public institutions. “Blacks residing in residentially segregated communities across the U.S. are faced with a myriad of social, economic environmental, and political factors that negatively affect their lives and communities alike. As a result, quality of life indicators reveals diminished educational attainment, disparaging health outcomes, limited employment opportunities, and stifled political participation for low-income Blacks. The reason why racism persists resides in its relationship with culture There is a diversity of culture in every country or society because individuals are born and raised in specific or restricted areas with certain beliefs, standards, and habits. Every country or society has its own culture, and there is an interaction between cultures of different societies. Today the United States is a place where over 800 languages are spoken, referred as a melting pot or a salad bowl affecting race and ethnicity and creating minority and majority groups. It is important for individuals to accept diversity in culture, its variation over the time. Therefore, socialization, cultural relativism, multicultural education, race relation and overcoming division will help significantly reduce racism in the United States.

## Annotated Bibliography

**Brandi, B, Vanessa L. Examining the Impact of Institutional Racism in Black Residentially Segregated Communities.** Retrieved from <https://digitalscholarship.tsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1032&context=rjpa>

Brandi, in his document, is examining the impact of institutional racism in black residentially segregated communities. Relevant information from Brandi shows why racial and ethnic inequalities still persist in the United states: 'The intergenerational effects of racial inequities are problematic for individuals, families, and communities. The inability (or unwillingness) of government officials to thoughtfully consider and implement new strategies to reverse a legacy of adverse policy outcomes legitimizes the long-standing and divergent realities for Blacks in comparison to their White counterparts.' This is important to our topic as we are looking for solutions to end racism and its consequences. Usually, government officials received higher education including cultural diversity, multicultural education that could help them be good leaders fighting division and inequities. But here Brandi points out their behavior, unwillingness.

**Elijah Jones - Diverse Education for a student in the Education System.** Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7TEsThis>

In this video, Elijah Jones describes the importance of diverse education, racism at college and urges his listeners to stand, fight racism in all its forms. His conclusion was about overcoming division so individuals can accept each other culture. This is one of our important recommendations and we stand for that knowing that through diverse education individuals can accept the multicultural aspect of society.

Encyclopedia.com (2019). *African American Folklore and Folkways*. Retrieved from <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/news-wires-white-papers-and-books/african-american-folklore-and-folkways>

This encyclopedia helps readers by showing what is African American culture. We can understand that African American culture is a combination and therefore, there is no single African heritage to be found in African American folkways. African words as well as concepts have taken their place in the tradition.

***Kids and Race youtube video retrieved from***  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPVNJgfDwpw>

This video show how black kids are experiencing racism at school. Children are experiencing racism in the different schools. It is unbelievable to hear little black kids at school saying, “if you have not the same color, you cannot play together”. A lot of kids confirm that parents strictly recommend their kids not to play with black kids. This is relevant for our topic As I already mentioned above, our son is experiencing such situation.

**Prelude to Socialization. (2021, February 20). Retrieved June 12, 2021, from**  
<https://socialsci.libretexts.org/@go/page/1022>. Retrieved from  
<https://socialsci.libretexts.org/link?>

In this document the author describes a series of social issues in the news. In one horrible issue described the author wonders” Why did three teenagers in a small town beat a gay man and hurl him to his death a quarter-century ago? We may never know, but it seems obvious that they had learned to hate gays from community norms back then and perhaps also from some of the many people with whom they interacted every day.” That is relevant to our topic because socialization is important and can reduce social injustice and racism.

**Mahatma. G. *Ch. 11: Challenges of Intercultural Communication - Managing Differences - Ch 11. oxps.***

**[https://bbhosted.cuny.edu/webapps/discussionboard/do/conference?toggle\\_mode=read&action=list\\_forums&course\\_id=\\_1983145\\_1&nav=discussion\\_board\\_e](https://bbhosted.cuny.edu/webapps/discussionboard/do/conference?toggle_mode=read&action=list_forums&course_id=_1983145_1&nav=discussion_board_e)**

In this document, the author uses the Renaissance philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli statement.” Whoever desires constant success must change his conduct with the time.”

Recognizing the differences in our norms, beliefs and behavior is important pathway to succeed in life. Today supporters of social injustices and racism should refer to time and realize that it it time to end such things.

**Milenko. M (June 16, 2017): Race and Ethnicity. Stanford Report. Retrieved from**

**<https://news.stanford.edu/2017/06/16/report-finds-significant-racial-ethnic-disparities/>**

This source is a report on significant racial and ethnic disparities in the United States and Milenko states that despite improvements in education, social mobility and many critical areas, large racial and ethnic disparities still exist – and are sometimes even increasing – for other important outcomes. This is very relevant to our topic as it shows that profound racial and ethnic inequalities that persist in many domains are notably in housing, employment, and health. According to this report less than half of black families (41 percent) and Hispanic families (45 percent) live in owner-occupied housing, as of 2014. For white families, that figure is 71 percent.

**Griffith et al, (2015). *OpenStax Sociology, 2e. Cultural Relativism page 3.pdf***

**Retrieved from <http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d@13.13>.**

OpenStax the author of this document describes humans’ beings as societal creatures. Focusing on cultural relativism, he uses the example of French people and Americans who have different ways of shopping. Like socialization, Cultural relativism is very important. Socialization can help people learn and adopt cultural relativism, the idea that practices in another person’s culture should not be judged by the norms of your culture.

**Blessett, Brandi and Littleton, Vanessa (2017). "Examining the Impact of Institutional Racism in Black Residentially Segregated Communities," Ralph Bunche Journal of Public Affairs: Vol. 6 : Iss. (1) 3.**  
<https://digitalscholarship.tsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1032&context=rbjpa>

The article is relevant to our topic as it focuses on clear definition of racism, institutional racism. Racism is defined as any action, intentional or unintentional, that is based on race or skin color and subordinates a group or individual based on their skin color or race (Sue 2005). Institutional racism is defined as institutional inequality based upon race (Hardie and Tyson 2013). More specifically, Sue (2006) indicates that institutional racism refers to a policy by an entity, organization, school or business that makes decisions unfairly based on race. Examples of these practices include red lining, school segregation and unfair lending laws.

### **Symbols, Values & Norms: Crash Course Sociology #10**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGrVhM\\_Gi8k&t=512s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGrVhM_Gi8k&t=512s)

In this video, the author tries to bring her audience to understand what is culture, norms, and values. It is important to distinguish in norms, folkways, laws, mores, and taboos. This is relevant to our topic because today, Black, and poor people are more frequently convicted of committing crimes. However, the specific role played by skin color and social class in convicting a person has yet to be clarified.

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<https://cnx.org/contents/vIDmUViZ@3/Pop-Culture-Subculture-and-Cultural-Change>

Reshawna L. Chapple, George A. Jacinto, Tamica N. Harris-Jackson, and Michelle Vance *Do #BlackLivesMatter? Implicit Bias, Institutional Racism and the fear of the Black Body.*

<https://digitalscholarship.tsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1032&context=rbjpa>

Symbols, Values & Norms: Crash Course Sociology #10

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGrVhM\\_Gi8k&t=512s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGrVhM_Gi8k&t=512s)