

Is racism a permanent feature of american society? essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Slavery](#)



Throughout Slavery (1619-1865), Americans faced prejudice, segregation and racism. In today's world, we as African Americans still face prejudice due to the mere color of our skin, segregation due to how we communicate with each other and racism because of our painful history. Racism can be defined as a prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior. In this case, the antagonistic race who believes that their race is superior would be whites and the race being discriminated against, is the black race. But is this so though? Are blacks still being preyed on today as in our past? Derrick Bell, a prominent African-American Professor of Harvard Law School, believed that "the prospects for achieving racial equality in the United States are "illusory" for blacks".

Bell argues that "few whites are able to identify with blacks as a group" and tend to view them through "comforting stereotypes". This maybe so, Derrick Bell has supporting evidence and good reason to believe that blacks will never be equal to whites. However Dinesh D'Souza of the American Enterprise Institute begs to differ. Dinesh D'Souza believes that there are three things that can cause segregation; whether it is culture, genes or discrimination. He rejects the liberal views which states that black failure is due to discrimination or that it is due to genes. He believes that blacks have developed a culture which represents an adaptation to historical circumstances which in today's world is dysfunctional. Both arguments are solid but which one answers the question of racism being a permanent feature of the American Society? If we approach the situation from Derrick

Bell's point of view, we can understand that there is some logic from where he stands.

Derick Bell gave examples of how racism was when he was growing up and compared it to the racism in today's society and also that will be in the future. One example Derick Bell gave was that when he was growing up, the African American Slavery heritage was more a symbol of shame than a source of pride. It burdened black people with an indelible mark of difference as they struggled to be like whites. This more or less still happens in today's society especially in black communities. Blacks who were raised in a purely black community struggle with the history of their family and have difficulties accepting whites into their lives. They carry the scars of slavery that were passed on from generation to generation. Their frame of mind dictates whites as being evil, unjust, racist people. These blacks believe that whites care nothing about their race and that they are there to tear them down when they try to be successful. This scenario reflects more or less what it was like in the days of slavery.

Derick Bell also believed that whites had many chances to stop the segregation and be more integrated with blacks and just accept blacks for who they are and not judge them by their skin color. Obviously in today's society we are not integrated as much as we should because we still have purely white schools and purely black schools in America. The government is still very much biased or racist against blacks because even to invest in something as essential as education, white schools are invested in far more than in black schools. Dinesh D'Souza argues that this is because blacks are

busy blaming whites as being racists for not providing the material needed for them to excel in their studies, which is why the government does not see the need to invest in people who will not contribute positively to the building up of our society. It is as a result of lack of investment and hope that Derick Bell argues that the unemployment rate for blacks is 2.5 times the rate for whites. Black's per-capital income is not even two thirds of the income for whites.

With all of this being said I do stand firmly with Dinesh D'Souza point of view that blacks have developed a culture and a set mind frame which blames every black failure on white racism. Racism still exists in our modern society but the level of racism is nowhere as close to the level it was at in slavery or in the period of the civil rights movement. The level of racism that we experience is somewhat slight in comparison to what it was before. African Americans are affected when banks are reluctant to invest in their dreams, pedestrians are treated as security risks especially when certain garments are worn, and the most famous racist act is the non-investment in black neighborhoods. I do believe that some of these actions are brought on by how the black community portray themselves.

For example, banks and institutions fail to invest in black communities due to the fact that in these communities, people have the mindset that there is no way out of this "life". "I cannot do anything with my life apart from what I am doing currently", which normally is either drugs or an honest low paying job. We all know that education is the key to life. If we all, as African Americans, could suppress our feelings of white people being the source of

all evil and blaming them for everything, then we could work with what we have as a group and prove to the white community that we deserve more attention and we are worthy of being invested in. Why is it that some African Americans can rise above their racist belief and do well in a white community but the majority cant? Aren't we tired of being called the "minority" group?

We are still called the minority group because most of our black girls and boys are not being taught that yes white people are to be blamed for our scars that we carry as a burden of what our ancestors went through, but it should be with these scars should we prove to the whites that we were created as equals. That should be our goal. Instead, we created a culture that dictates we cannot be better than the generations before. As a result of this culture, white people feel the need to continue to treat us accordingly. Dinesh D'Souza also made another valid point stating that racism does not explain the main cause of black on black crime. The typical African American would blame whites for young men and women of our society for being in the streets because white racism drove them out of school and on to the streets. We say white racism is to be blamed for blacks having illegitimate children and this is because the white community failed to provide black males with steady jobs. These things happen because a large percentage of our African Americans lack ambition. We do not want to work for whatever we envision for ourselves.

Everyone wants a big house, fancy car, successful career, but we do not put in the blood, sweat and tears to get there. We blame racism for the crimes

that our blacks as a whole commit. We then try to justify it by saying our “brothers” were pressured into committing these crimes due to economic hardship. Racism is not the sole reason for these events happening in today’s society. It is just sad that because there is such a large number of African Americans promoting this new “black culture”, that the actual successful black Americans are being stereotyped into that group as well. Hence the reasons why African Americans still face slight racism even when they are extremely successful. If we compare what African Americans go through now in comparison to what our ancestors used to go through during the civil rights movement, we would realize that we have come a long way.

An activist and leader of the African American Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King Jr. shouted to the African American nation of 1963, “I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and realize that all men were created equal; that one day we will not be judged by the color of our skin but by the contents of our characteristics”. His dream became a reality over time. This is why I do not believe that racism is a permanent feature of American Society, because America has come such a far way from the days of slavery to the civil rights movement and from the civil rights movement to where we are now. We now have a Black President serving his second term, and a white Vice President. That is the highest level of integration; a white and a black man working together on improving the working and living conditions of everyone in today’s society. That was just a vision 50 years ago and wasn’t even a thought in the days of slavery.

African Americans do have every right not to forgive the whites for burdening us with such a painful history, but it is because of our rich history should we press forward and prove to the white nation that we are just as smart and competent as they are. I do believe that one day racism will completely be abolished everywhere but the "black culture" has to be abolished first before the abolition of racism can be discussed or before the nation can move to the "end of racism".