

Social issues: racism essay

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



Racism refers to the act of ascribing certain traits and stereotypes to individuals based on their race. It also includes the belief that certain races are superior to others and should be treated differently (Anti-Defamation League par1). Racism is a global issue that has been debated for many years.

For example, racism is rife in Europe and it is a serious issue. According to Shah, " In the century of total war, and the new millennium, Europe sees an alarming resurgence in xenophobia and racial hatred" (par4). Racism promotes hatred and resentment among people, especially during wars and conflicts. Racism is a two-sided issue, with one group arguing that talking about certain races comprises free speech, which is a constitutional human right.

The other group argues that expressing such sentiments does not comprise free speech, as it violates the rights of other people by fuelling hatred and prejudice (Anti-Defamation League par3). Over the years, racism has promoted inequality and discrimination in society. It has caused disintegration of social groups, and reduced interactions between different races. Racism was conspicuous during colonial times. However, the situation has improved significantly, although it is still present in today's society.

Causes of racism include stereotypes, unfamiliarity, and ignorance.

Stereotyping is the most common cause of racism around the world.

Stereotypes are ascribed to certain races through different forms of media such as radio, television, music, books, and the internet. Stereotyping

involves ascribing certain characteristics to different races, thus rendering them either inferior or superior to other races (Cohen par3).

The problem is aggravated by the exposure of such sentiments to children whose cognition is not sufficiently developed to understand the consequences of holding certain beliefs. Also, the portrayal of certain races in a negative light for prolonged periods causes resentment and hatred against the race, which fuels racism (Cohen par3).

Unfamiliarity is another cause of racism. Individuals who lack exposure to other races are more likely to believe in stereotypes because they lack any familiarity with the race. Moreover, individuals who have not had a chance to interact with people from other races are likely to believe anything they hear concerning those races. It is important for individuals to interact with other races in order to learn and understand them.

Ignorance refers to lack of awareness regarding a certain subject. Lack of knowledge and information about human diversity contributes to racism because some people grow up with the knowledge that everyone should act, behave, and live like them. However, when they encounter people with different skin color and who behave differently, they resent them. They consider them as inferior because of their unusual ways of doing things. Harris argues that ignorance makes people unaware of obvious things. He thus states that,

Although popular and scientific understandings tend to portray ignorance as a lack of knowledge, this work emphasizes that ignorance itself is a form of

knowledge that makes it possible to ignore or remain unaware of things that might otherwise be obvious. (Harris par5)

Types of racism observable in different cultures include discrimination, prejudice, harassment, and stereotyping. Types of discrimination include racial discrimination, institutional discrimination, and economic discrimination. Racial discrimination refers to disintegration of all-inclusive social groups based on the races of individuals (Aboriginal Human Resource Council par9).

It is common in workplaces where it affects job applicants who belong to certain racial groups. For example, racial discrimination is widespread in America and Europe against Black Americans and people from other continents such as Asia. Natives of certain countries treat people from other races differently and show contempt and disrespect.

Institutional discrimination refers to racism directed towards certain individuals by governments, religions, institutions of learning, corporations, and organizations (Aboriginal Human Resource Council par11). For example, in certain countries, people of certain races are denied government privileges, or administrators in educational institutions treat students from certain races inappropriately.

Prejudices are either positive or negative. In many cases, they create stereotypes that result to racism. For example, if a positive trait is attributed to a certain race, people belonging to other races might develop prejudices against that race because of being considered as better (Shah par9).

Both negative and positive prejudices promote racism in various ways.

Harassment is another form of racism. It involves mistreating individuals because they belong to a certain race (Aboriginal Human Resource Council par10). Examples of harassment include denial of job opportunities and sexual harassment. Finally, stereotyping is a common type of racism observed in different cultures around the world. It involves ascribing certain traits to certain races, which renders them either superior or inferior to other races (Cohen par5).

Racism in educational institutions is one of the most common types of racism in today's society. It mainly affects international students who move to foreign countries in search of quality education and better life opportunities (Shah par5). For example, the United Kingdom government has established harsh immigration policies that make it difficult for international students to live peacefully in the country. Harsh policies have led to deportation of many international students whose hopes for quality education vanish with deportation.

In certain universities, discrimination against international students has been overt. For example, international students at the London Metropolitan University faced deportation threats from the government. The UK Border Agency denied the university permission to admit international students. Reasons such as poor English and poor class attendance were cited for the unfair actions.

According to a report titled Race for Equality, the National Union of Students revealed that 1 in 6 black students experience racism in their educational

institutions (Pearce par4). In addition, 30 % feel that their institutions do not handle their complaints effectively, and that the educational environment does not facilitate personal expression during lectures and tutorials.

The report presented the findings of a study conducted over a period of two years. In many educational institutions, international students are isolated and experience hostility from administration teams (Pearce par6). The report noted that the situation is very severe, and more students suffer silently in their institutions. These sentiments were echoed by NUS president, who said that:

We have a long way to go to close the participation gap for Black students in education. If Black students feel unwelcome in classrooms, this must be addressed by tackling the very real racism that still exists on our campuses. (Pearce par8)

Racism is a belief that some races are more superior or inferior to others because of factors such as skin color, economic status, physical characteristics, as well as beliefs and cultural practices. Racism comprises several types that include discrimination, harassment, prejudice, and stereotyping.

Racism is caused by ignorance, negativity towards certain cultures, unfamiliarity, and stereotyping. The issue has been debated for many years, and it has been the cause of hatred and conflicts in many countries. Educational discrimination is a common type of racism. In the United Kingdom, international students experience racism through unfair treatment.

Many of them often face deportation after unmerited revocation of their visas. Deportation affects them severely because they return to their countries without achieving their educational goals. The situation has worsened in the recent past, with international education lobby groups calling upon governments to take immediate action.

Aboriginal Human Resource Council: the Seven Most Common Types of Racism. 7 Sept. 2013. Web. 24 Oct. 2013. <http://www.aboriginalhr.ca/en/programs/RFWS/nl4/2>.