

# Relationship between institutionalized racism and marxism essay

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



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The theory of institutional racism is frequently used in the field of sociology to explain any type of system of inequity that is based on race. The theory explains how race is used to differentiate society, particularly the institutions of government, private enterprises and institutions of higher learning, such as universities and colleges.

An activist group led by Stokely Carmichael, referred to as Black Power, first used institutional racism in 1960s. A report investigating the death of a black citizen defined institutional racism as the collective failure of an organization, particularly governmental organizations, to offer adequate and specialized services to citizens mainly because of their skin color, civilization and ethnic background.

Since then, sociologists have used the theory to establish the effects of ethnicity in society. For instance, material and social resources are distributed based on racial lines, something that hinders the fulfillment of goals and objectives among a section of the population. In 1990s, the theory took a new shape when blacks and other minority groups pressurized the government to exercise fairness in the labor market.

Currently, the theory is used to explain racial injustices in organizations, given the fact that institutions have failed to stem out racism. This paper will attempt to analyze how institutional racism affects an individual's opportunities in life. This means that the theory influences other subjects, particularly economics. The paper will go ahead to explain how the theory is used in the field of political economy.

Institutional racism can be defined as the degree of difference to access of goods, services and opportunities in society. In the American society, the practice is common in the institutions of government, making it hard to rectify the mess. The situation is worsened by the acts of conformers and newcomers since they do not think of other strategies that would help stem out the vice.

In the American society, the government cannot claim to fight racism, given the fact that a single or identified perpetrator cannot be traced. Therefore, it could be concluded that racism has turned out to be a collective action of the American society. Scholars observe that three forms of racism exist, including personally mediated racism, internalized racism and institutionalized racism.

Mediated racism consists of specific social perspectives that are inborn, which facilitate racially prejudiced acts (Dupre 56). This would include differences in abilities, motives and aspirations. It would also incorporate discrimination whereby an individual develops certain forms of actions towards others, considering that they belong to different races.

Racism has led to the emergence of some antisocial acts such as stereotyping, which is defined as commission and omission social acts. This may perhaps entail disregard, distrust, depreciation and dehumanization of other individuals in society who do not belong to one's race. Internalized racism is a scenario whereby members of the inferior race accept their position in society, as people with low social statuses.

This acceptance is characterized by negative acuties concerning their own capabilities, fundamental values characterized by low confidence, and little respect of other members belonging to his or her race. Such form of racism amounts to stratification based on skin complexion, self-devaluation, such as cultural insults, monikers, negative response towards own culture, acquiescence, defenselessness and despondency.

For school going children, they might end up dropping out of school while other members of black race might end up boycotting political processes such as voting (Naughton 68). Another section of society consisting of inferior races may end up engaging in health-risk practices such as rape, drug abuse and kidnapping. This paper will analyze how all these affect economic prosperity of the nation.

Institutional racism stems from importunate pessimistic stereotypes, which would as well as affect interpersonal relations in social interactions. It is proved beyond doubt that social labeling amounts to racial residential segregation, meaning those believed to be from superior races would have better chances of living comfortable lives that is, in well-established residential areas.

State authorities usually neglect those perceived to be from inferior races meaning they might find themselves living in remote areas with appalling conditions. Minority races are associated with social evils such as rape, kidnapping, mugging and drug trafficking. Furthermore, policy formulators

and implementers are usually influenced by race in their process of policymaking.

White Americans have a tendency to believe that blacks and Latinos are lazy individuals, who are less intelligent preferring to engage in shortcuts, such as robbery, instead of working hard to achieve their dreams. This makes it hard for Whites to associate well with both blacks and Latinos.

Institutional racism is different from racial bigotry because institutional racism is supported by the government through formulation of policies that infringe on the rights of minority races.

In the US, the government has propagated the formation of policies that would always subjugate the minority races economically and politically. For example, the government has always exercised racial discrimination, particularly in the education sector. The public school budgets have always been discriminatory because the government has been assigning quality teachers to schools perceived to be with many white students.

The education policy recommends that schools should be allocated resources based on property values. It is expected that rich neighborhoods would have many whites hence schools in such areas are allocated quality teachers and enough resources. This would have an implication to the economic lives of individuals because students from such public schools are expected to excel.

Those from poor neighborhoods are given inferior services, including undertrained teachers and few resources. This would definitely lead to

dismal performance among students from minority races. Such students will end up in mid-level colleges that would only guarantee them low paying jobs, as compared to their white counterparts who join prestigious universities, offering well paying courses in the labor market.

Institutionalized racism borrows heavily from the system theory, which argues racism stems from a number of mutual cumulative aspects. Systems theory does not subscribe to the postulations of reductionists but instead believes in the interactions among institutions, which leads to widespread structural racism.

From the systems theory, it is true that social class theory, as formulated by scholars such as Karl Marx and Max Weber, is directly related to racism. In the US, property appraisal system was formulated in 1930s and was incorporated into the government's lending system.

The system was purely based on race meaning members from the minority race could not access loans using the same techniques as the whites, who were the majority.

This could be interpreted to mean only whites were eligible to apply for governmental loans since their properties were rated highly, as compared to those of blacks and Latinos.

In economics, financial aspects are usually taught in isolation meaning that politics is to be separated from economics. However, economic life cannot be

understood without understanding social and political forces that affect the lives of the minority races in the US and other parts of the world.

Economists could not predict the 1997 economic meltdown in the Asian continent because they failed to incorporate other theories from other disciplines in their investigations. The 2007 global cash crunch was not exceptional because economists did not predict it at all. For economists, they believed capitalism would go on uninterrupted.

In fact, economists gave wrong results in 1998 since they predicted that financial growth of the Asian continent would expand. Economists misled investors to believe that their stocks would generate more profits, which would be used to expand their business elsewhere. In fact, many people lost their capital through defective economic predictions.

Economists utilize mathematical figures and statistics to predict the performance of financial systems. Mostly, they would use graphs and charts to show how economic aspects would be realized. Marx however formulated a theory that would predict economic performance from a human perspective. Marx analyzed the relationships between people and classes.

In this regard, he interpreted the economy to mean a struggle between races, classes and age groups. The economy, according to Marx, is full of contradictions and uncertainties meaning that it is subject to constant changes. In this paper, the theory of Marx shows that economics is not about goods, prices or supply and demand but it is all about people, as well as their social relationships.

It is established that a section of society owns wealth while the other section owns nothing, apart from their labor (Hallman 44). The owners of the means of production are referred to as the bourgeoisies while the working class is the proletariat.

The owners of the means of production utilize their power to subjugate and dominate the inferior class, which is the minority race in the US. Life is all about production and distribution of scarce goods and resources. From the above analysis, it is true that economics should be understood to mean political and social struggles in life.

Marx started his analysis of economic aspects by first appreciating the existence of classical economic theories. Adams Smith and David Ricardo supported new industrialization and the banking system. However, they did not appreciate the fact that the two sectors were dominated by a single race. Other races were incorporated into the two sectors as underdogs.

They came up with a labor theory of value suggesting that the working class was an important element in any production system. The two economics scholars observed that the value of a product would be determined by the amount of time spent in producing it. In this regard, all commodities would be sold based on the labor applied in producing it.

Smith never explained some of the important concepts because he only suggested that the commodity or a service would be sold based on its production costs. However, he did not explain the relationship between the



worker and the capitalist. Ricardo came up with another concept that affected the lives of workers in the 19th century.

He argued that workers were spending little time in producing goods and services hence their wages had to decline (Lockheed 19). Marx capitalized on the findings of Ricardo to claim that workers were being robbed of their skills. Following widespread complaints concerning exploitation, economists rejected the labor theory of value, given the fact that it exposed the secrets of the bourgeoisie to the proletariat.

Marx conducted a private and extensive research to define the concept ‘labor’. Marx came up with a perfect answer to issues to do with socio-economic and political economy. Just like other commodities, labor possesses a use-value meaning various types of labor exist.

Some of the forms of labor are important and rigorous training is needed to achieve such forms while others are simple forms of labor, which is readily available in the labor market. In the US, the readily available labor is more than the skilled labor (Chappell 78). The minority races possess this cheap labor meaning they cannot achieve their dreams through employment.

Marx noted that theoretical aspects and the amount of labor applied in the production process influence the exchange of values of commodities. Marx believed that wages are not determined by the expertise of an individual or the skills applied in the manufacture of the product.

Marx differed with other scholars such as Smith and Ricardo because he believed that use value and exchange value could only be applied in the context of labor. According to this scholar, what mattered most was the ability to work not the skills possessed by an individual. He referred to this as the labor power.

Social classes determine the labor power. Those belonging to the white race have higher labor power as compared to peasants belonging to the inferior races, such as African, Asian and Latino.

Racial and ethnical discrimination and stereotypes are some of the issues that affect economic capabilities of individuals. In this section, we are going to address the issues of race and ethnicity and define and analyze the components of discrimination and stereotyping.

Contemporary discrimination practices have their roots in the history of development of the United States and closely related to American anti-Semitism that was part of the late-nineteenth century racism emigrant from all parts of the world, as well as African Americans, Native Americans and Mexicans.

The discriminatory treatment included closing the doors to immigration from Europe and Mexicans, between 1882 and 1927. Contemporary discriminatory practices are similar for African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans; they include denying equal access to opportunities, certain housing areas or membership in social organizations.

In the contemporary society, there is still a room for hidden forms of racism against ethnic groups mentioned earlier. The situation has changed since the early 1990s, when blatant racism was more common for them.

Various interpretations of the terms “ race” and “ ethnicity” can lead to the types of discrimination identified in the first section. Thus, “ race” is often associated with physical specifications such as skin color, and “ ethnicity is defined through the background, historical or cultural aspects of an individual. Historically, people created various forms of prejudices about race and ethnicity.

Thus, the prejudice that African Americans are “ low-intelligent” race leads to the institutional and employment discrimination. There are two models (social and biological), according to which race and ethnicity are defined. Both of them state that there are dominant and subjective race. However, they have considerable gaps.

For example, from the biological perspective, all people have the same construction and functions of the body and it is ridiculous to distribute people into different races. From the social perspective, all people are members of the society they live in and live according to the same social rules, thus, this gap in the sociological model cannot properly reflect race and ethnic identity.

There are voluntary and involuntary models used to promote discrimination. Separatism model suggests that racial groups should be segregated from the rest of society. Assimilation model is associated with the issue of racial

supremacy. For example, it defines what races are allowed to assimilate with the dominant culture, and what races will not fit social and political standards of the dominant race.

Pluralistic model define a racial group as a distinguished one and, according to Naughton (14), “ groups will not dissolve into an anodyne melting pot, but individuals will have considerable leeway in deciding how and how much group identity matters to their lives”.

Thus, racial profiling contributes to personal, spiritual, political, and procedural conflicts identified in the previous chapter. For example, as it has already been mentioned, the PATRIOT Act’s provisions are discriminatory and leave many individuals especially aliens vulnerable to harassment and torture (Ewing 12).

The race of the individual becomes “ an identification” used to attribute him/her to terrorists. Moreover, federal agencies have right to freeze bank accounts of persons perceived as terrorist, it a form of racial discrimination as well. This analysis can be helpful in addressing the issue racism in the United States.

It is necessary to consider the diverse nature of employees within organizations, as well as people in communities, schools and other organizations. Racial prejudices should not be issues for classifying people in “ bad” and “ good” ones. In addition, international relations should be improved with diplomacy being preferred instead of military confrontations based on racial diversity.

Race and ethnic identity of a person is often a reason for social discrimination. The PATRIOT Act should find different approaches to international relations so that prevent racial and ethnic discrimination.

The problem of Ethnicity and race is a big challenge to the policymakers both in private and public organizations. It is an issue that has threatened to divide the country into various subcultures because every ethnic group and race identifies itself with certain distinct features.

The government officials have found it hard to come up with strategies that are all encompassing mainly because of the continued resistance from some groups feeling that their interests are well catered in the plans. In general, the government is trying but more effort has to be put for there to be equality and equity in distribution of both material and non-material resources.

It can be concluded that ethnic and racial groupings cannot be eliminated in the country but instead it can be engaged to function positively. The policymakers should conduct an extensive research to identify how racial groupings have affected the development of the country.

Upon the findings, the government should design policies based on the findings. The issue of extending favors to racial members at workplaces should be discouraged and severe measures ought to be formulated to deal with the problem.

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