

Race reflection paper

Sociology



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Anthropology: Race and Ethni For a person to fit in any given society there has to be an element with which he or she can associate. This brings about the aspect of race and ethnicity when embarking in anthropology. This concept has proven to be very sensitive in the recent past to the extent that it elicits tension in certain parts of the world. Samuel Arthur and his fellow writers in their book examine the US society and its cosmopolitan nature and how the people in this live together.” The United States is a multicultural society with many different races, ethnic groups and cultural lifestyles” (Color of Justice: Race, Ethnicity and Crime in America, Second Edition). The above definition, however, does not only apply to the US alone but it is indeed what is there in almost all parts of the world, regardless of the location. The plague of civilization has been said to be race. In carrying out an examination of the issues pertaining race and ethnicity it is imperative to disregard the cultural biases that are already in existence. The reason for this is because some of this biases are usually made on misjudged assumptions and may actually bring up the deep feelings that people have when it comes to this subject. Doing away with these attitudinal barriers is however worth the effort. It will be important to understand what brings about these social distinctions. Race is the classification of people basing on their physical appearance in association with certain geographical regions. On the other hand, ethnicity is majorly centered on the human experiences and the association of people in the environment in which a person is in. ethnicity incorporates language, religion, territory and also cultural traits and should be viewed as subjective and dependent on human identity and perception. The discussion on race and ethnicity brings to light certain indexes, which are worth noting. Number one most important in this case is <https://assignbuster.com/race-reflection-paper/>

the issue of “ Minority groups”. This refers to a group of individuals inferior to the rest of the population and even though the members of these groups are nationals to the state, their members possess certain distinct characteristics, which distinguish them from the rest of the population. Typically, the members of such groups have similar ideologies and would strive to preserve their culture and the members of these groups suffer certain disadvantages at the hands of the greater population. The issue of labeling has been there for quite some time now. Even though some people will not have a problem with it, this labeling based on race or ethnic inclination is usually found to be offensive by some people. Of great importance is the realization that people will always want to find a place in society where they are comfortable and from where they can be able to have a rather secure life. It is however difficult to understand how people categorize themselves into the social groups in which they are in. Over the years, there have been realignments in the previous popular socio-cultural beliefs. For example in the US, it is offensive to refer to an African-American as ‘ Negro’. The formation of ethnic or racial identity depends on the process of exploring and questioning the pre-existing ethnic attitudes and beliefs and finding a link between the past and present experiences of an individual’s group and its association with another different group.(Jean S. Phinney) The process mentioned leads to the development of a secure and positive sense of identity as a member of a given ethnic or racial group. Accompanying this is the consolation that other different groups will accept this association. It is important to note that a person’s future may actually be shaped by the circumstances of his existence. This includes his or her social inclination and in particular focus the race or ethnicity. Richard de Lone writes that “ A child’s future is largely

<https://assignbuster.com/race-reflection-paper/>

determined by social status.” We can borrow this idea and elaborate it in relation to the discussion in question. There are certain geographical regions where people from particular places of people of a certain association will tend to thrive more than others are. This clearly explains how racial issues are controversial due to the way they can affect a person’s position in the social hierarchy. There are certain factors that add a major contribution to this race and ethnicity issue. Key among these is the issue of colonialism. Most countries in the world were at some point under colonization. This act had significant changes in the societal formation of the countries that were colonized. The greatest effect in this case was in the African continent. The notion of superiority of races took effect in this continent during the colonial period. What brought about this belief is simply the physical appearance. The African complexion was different from that of their colonizers. The nation that suffered greatly because of this was the Republic of South Africa. This was up to and until the early 1990s when the country got its independence. The racial conflict in South Africa was so bad that in 1977 Andrew Young, the Chief US Representative to the UN said a race war in South Africa could precipitate into racial conflicts in the US. One reason that might have made him make this observation may be the fact that at that time the African-American, even though a minority group had a population in the US, which was quite significant. The witnessing of their fellows’ suffering could have triggered a feeling of pity and hence compelling them to take action, which might be uncalled for. This is because of the characteristic ‘ oneness’ which minority groups tend to have. The existence of groups that bring about racial and ethnical differences is beyond people’s control. The American society, for, example has always had immigrants coming into the country from all

<https://assignbuster.com/race-reflection-paper/>

over the world. The French political thinker and analyst Alexis de Tocqueville saw the United States as “ a society of immigrants each of whom had begun life anew, on an equal footing. This was the secret of America: a nation of people with the fresh memory of old tradition who dared to explore new frontiers.” This statement on critical evaluation proves to be true. This is because the American society comprises people from all over the world who met at a common place and opted to exist together. The initial people who made up the American civilization were the Red Indians and European immigrants. These were people of diverse social backgrounds but they still existed under the same environmental setting. It is perceived that the different ethnical groups have different levels of development. The Hispanic, Asian and Black population in America is continually growing and so are the inequalities that come about. A recent study by the Pew Hispanic Center in a study conducted in the year 2004. The following is extracted from the study: “ The median net worth of Hispanic households in 2002 was \$7932. This was only 9% of \$88, 651, the median wealth of non-Hispanic White households at the same time. The net worth of non-Hispanic Blacks was only \$5, 988. Thus, the wealth of Latino and Black households is less than one tenth the value of White households even though Census data show their income is two-thirds again as high” The discussion on the race and ethnicity issue is one that seems not to be leaving peoples’ forums anytime soon. The only thing that will change is the approach to this issue. It is important to understand the elements that make up the identity of people in the society in order to avoid being judgmental while basing our arguments on misunderstood ideas. There are underlying factors, which have to be well elaborated and understood in order to understand the identity people in a given society have. The

cosmopolitan nature of the American society makes easy to conduct a research to bring out the question of race and ethnicity. In this case, the perfect case study is that of the Latin American community and that of the African American community, which over the years has well established its footing in the US. It is pleasing to note that the society is slowly transforming from the initial practice of segregation or seclusion into a society that is more liberal and accommodative of the diverse cultures and practices that are in existence. This road however has not been an easy one but has witnessed significant events taking place over the years as these groups seek to have an equal right and opportunity in the society. Works Cited Andersen, Margaret & Taylor Howard (2010). *Sociology: The Essentials*. Wadsworth Publishing Ferguson, Susan (2009). *Mapping the Social Landscape: Readings in Sociology*. McGraw-Hill