

Racism without racists essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the first chapter of his book *Racism without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva argues that color-blind racism, a new racial ideology which emerged in the late 1960s (16), has become “ a formidable political tool” for “ the maintenance of the racial order” and “ white privilege” in the “ post-Civil Rights era” (3). According to his argument about color-blind racism, in contemporary America, although few whites appear like racists, racial inequality does exist everywhere (2).

Racism changed from “ overt means” of discrimination to “ subtle and institutional practices” (3). “ Nonracial dynamics” become “ white common sense” about explanations of racial inequality, and many whites not only oppose “ race-based programs” like affirmative action but blame the racial status quo on “ minorities’ morality, values and work ethic” (4). All of these caused the “ strange enigma” of “ racism without racists” (1). Bonilla-Silva gives his explanations of color-blind racism and supports his ideas with four kinds of evidence.

First, he uses a lot of instances in daily life to illustrate that nowadays in the United States most whites claim that race is no longer a problem (2), but in fact blacks and other minorities, who receive impolite treatment both economically and politically, are “ at the bottom of the well” and suffering from racial inequality (2). Instead of Jim Crow racism, which enforced racial inequality by overt means such as calling blacks “ niggers” (3), today color-blind racism behaves in a covert way, “ subtle institutional and apparently nonracial”, in order to keep minorities in a subordinate position and maintain “ white privilege” (3).

For example real estate agents do not show all the available units to minorities in the housing market to “ maintain separate communities” (3). Second, Bonilla-Silva compares the four ways in which the “ survey community and commentators” explained about changes in whites’ racial attitudes in the post-Civil rights era (4), and demonstrates his arguments by expressing his agreements and disagreements with their thoughts.

He argues like them that color-blind racism is characterized by “ traditional liberalism”, which criticizes blacks for not working hard (7), and explanations of blacks’ position in terms of culture (7). But in addition he also expresses “ one central theoretical disagreement” with others because his model is based on “ a materialist interpretation” and views racism at the “ systemic location” level rather than “ affective dispositions” (7). Next, Bonilla-Silva states three key terms “ race, racial structure and racial ideology” as “ theoretical assumptions” to examine his arguments about color-blind racism (8).

He insists that race is socially constructed with a social reality which produces “ real race effects” through social structure that “ reinforces racial privilege” (9), and he also analyzes the racial ideology which is used to justify the “ status of various races” (9). Finally, he relies on interview data as methodology to make cases and uses two survey research data to strengthen his arguments (11). Bonilla-Silva believes color-blind racism is a new ideology that now many whites believe in to maintain their privilege, and results in racial inequality accomplished by covert behaviors.

It inspires me to explore a profound question: how do we define equality. Does equality mean that everybody earns the same amount of money? Or does it mean the equal opportunity for people to make a living? When we talk about pursuing social equality, what kind of equality is considered? I wonder whether it will cause true equality if we give blacks and other minorities extra opportunities and support to help them overcome difficulties. I hope to have a deep understanding about the meaning of equality, fairness, justice and impartiality.