Sociological imagination: racism in america

Robert Kim May 2011Sociological ImaginationRacism in AmericaIs America in a Post Racial Era? What sort of impact does racism have in our society? In America, it's quite well known that we finally have the first black president in, it is also generally agreed upon that racism is unacceptable in society, and most of us would consider ourselves equal to one another regardless of race. Obviously, we still have people who are racist and the idea that these people will go away completely is almost unbelievable.

Racism is the belief that races have distinctive cultural characteristics determined by hereditary factors and that this endows some races with an intrinsic superiority over others. And it can also mean abusive or aggressive behavior towards members of another race on the basis of such a belief. Racism means that people have negative and condescending thoughts about others based on their race. Some of the most infamous acts of racism in the United States occurred in the 1800s and 1900s which involved thediscriminationagainst Indians and African Americans.

In the 1800s, Americans believed that the Native Americans should be removed off their land or forced to assimilate into American society. The many Native Americans who chose not to assimilate were forced off their land into " reserves" so they would remain separate from society. " The concept became policy in 1825, with the creation of an Indian Country between the Red and Missouri Rivers… followed by the Removal Act of 1830, leading to the relocation of many eastern tribes.

Continuing non-Indian expansion, however, caused the so-called " permanent" Indian Territory to dwindle in size" (Waldman, Carl). The removal act attempted to remove Indians off their land and segregate them from

each other and then, " The difference was that instead of one large Indian Country, lands were divided up piecemeal, with tribes confined to separate parcels with specific boundaries" (Waldman, Carl). And because of these acts, American Indians started to fight back for their land and their rights, which led to several American Indian wars.

Eventually, American Indians were pushed so far away from society that they appear today as almost non-existent. It's very rare nowadays to meet a legitimate Native American because of these acts of discrimination against their race. The other well known historical event involved the African Americans in America who were discriminated against harshly, considered as property, and used primarily as slaves. Slavery was based on racist beliefs and thoughts that African Americans were inferior to white Americans. The three-fifths clause is the most infamous part of the Constitution in so far as black Americans are concerned. This is because it formalizes racism and white supremacy in the document, reflecting the debased, dehumanized status of African peoples in the minds of the Constitution's framers" (Smith, Robert). This act was used for political reasons in order to account for how many African people are living in the United States so that they could be taxed and represented in congress.

This just shows that even the government believed that racism was acceptable and they were barely considered people. Southern states believed that these slaves were considered property and didn't want to include them as part of the population, but for political purposes, congress wanted to add them into the count in population for political power. Racism has probably impacted African Americans the most because of how much

they had to suffer during the time of slavery. Even still today, African Americans suffer from some forms of racism.

After African Americans were freed from slavery and considered as " equal" citizens, no one would accept them as equal and they were still being discriminated against. African Americans were still being mistreated, terrorized against, and unable to participate in the same schooling oreducationas white Americans. African Americans weren't considered equal and because of racism, people still thought of them as inferior and unequal just because they believed that they were born and meant to be servants.

Even the government refused to accept African Americans as equals and the government created laws to restrict the rights of African Americans so that they wouldn't be able to interact in society equally. After segregation had finally ended, African Americans were considered equal in society and are able to live without as much discrimination against them. We are not yet in a Post Racial Era because racism and race are still playing a role in our judgment and categorization of how we interact with other people.

Barrack Obama is the first and only African American President to sit in office, even with America accepting and voting in the first non-white President, there are still many issues with racism in the United States. We are not in a Post Racial Era because people still have hatred against other people solely based on race and although they may not be able to express their ideas publicly, it still exists in people's minds and their actions may even reflect those thoughts. Bibliography Smith, Robert C. " three-fifths clause in the U. S. Constitution. Encyclopedia of African-American Politics. New York: Facts On File, Inc. , 2003. African-American History Online. Facts

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