

Different skin colors
languages religions
sociology essay



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A race is a group of people who see themselves and are seen by others, as having hereditary traits that set them apart. Race can be understood as a classification system that assigns individuals and groups to categories that are ranked or hierarchical. It is generally depends on the differences in human physical characteristics used to categorize large numbers of individuals. The process by which people use understandings of race to classify individuals or groups is racialization. Most of the time, races are characterized not by fixed, clear cut differences, but by fluid, continuous differences and these differences also change considerably with time.

For example, we readily recognize that groups of Norwegians, Chinese and Ugandans look different; people in various parts of the world differ in certain hereditary features, including the color of their skin, the texture of their hair, their facial features, their stature, and the shape of their head.

Racism

An important concept based on race is racism. Racism did not come into use until the 1930s. This term can be defined in many ways because there are different definitions of what constitutes racism in different national contexts.

Some people see racism as a system of domination operating in social processes and social institutions; others see it as operating in the individual consciousness. Racism can refer to explicit belief in racial supremacy-such as the system established in Nazi Germany. Yet many have argued that racism is more than the ideas held by individuals. Rather, it is embedded in the structure and operation of society such as police, health care industry, and educational system. Racism exists at two levels - individual and institutional. At the individual level, racism is the belief that some racial groups are naturally superior and others are inferior.

Individual racism. It depends on two ideas that have been discredited in contemporary scholarship: (1) that people may be reliably classified into biologically meaningful racial group. (2) that these groups are inherently different in regard to ability, character, intelligence, social behavior, and culture. Generally, this form of racism gives rise to attitudes of aversion and hostility toward others based on their race. It is also related to prejudice.

For example, one considers that Black people as a group are inferior to whites because of physical (genotypical and phenotypical) traits. He/she further believes that these physical traits are determinants of inferior social behavior and moral or intellectual, and ultimately presumes that this

inferiority is a legitimate basis for inferior social treatment of Black people (or people of color) in American society.

Institutional level. Racism involves discriminatory policies and practices that result in unequal outcomes for members of different racial groups. It often being discussed together with discrimination.

For example, “ those established laws, customs, and practices which systematically reflect and produce racial inequalities in American society... whether or not the individuals maintaining those practices have racist intentions”

Prejudice

Prejudice refers to attitudes of aversion and hostility toward the members of a group simply because they belong to it and hence are presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to it. As such, prejudice is a subjective phenomenon- a state of mind. Racial prejudices generally have three components

A cognitive component that provides a description of members of the target group, often including negative stereotypes such as “ lazy”, “ thoughtless,” “ criminal”

An affective component that involves negative reactions and emotional feelings about the group;

A behavioral component that may include the tendency to discriminate/ behave negatively toward members of the group.

Discrimination

Discrimination is action as compared to prejudice who see it as a state of mind. Discrimination is a process in which members of one or more groups or categories in society are denied the privileges, prestige, power, legal rights, equal protection of law, and other societal benefits that are available to members of other groups. Discrimination is forms of racism when those discriminated against are a racial minority.

Symbolic Racism From “ old racism” to “ new racism”

As traditional racial prejudice declined, a new forms of prejudice emerged. This new complex of attitudes is termed symbolic racism, modern racism or racial resentment. It has been increasing in recent years. It stereotypes African American as people who do not share the American work ethic, who would rather be on welfare than work, who would be as well off as whites if they would “ try harder”. The concept of biological racism based on differences in physical traits is rarely expressed today. Racist attitudes have not disappeared from modern societies. Rather, some scholars argue, they have been replaced by more sophisticated “ new racism”. According to this view, hierarchies of superiority and inferiority are constructed according to the values of majority culture. Groups that stand apart from the majority can be marginalized for their refusal to assimilate. It is alleged that new racism has a clear political dimension and increasingly based on cultural grounds.

Problem Statement/Significant of Study

Racism is the main discussion in this report and perceive as an important social issue to be study as a Malaysian because our country is a multi-races

country with Malay, Chinese, Indian and other minority groups. According to the research in Nakamura, there are nine hundreds eighty-four articles contain the term racial and two hundreds sixty eight articles contain the term ethnic were published in the heading of English newspaper since 1975. Therefore, we can see that the racial issue is a very common discussed topic in Malaysian since more than three decades ago. As we are living in a multiracial and multicultural country, being more understanding of racism can help us to avoid conflicts and quarrels among the races and ethnics which move forward to achieve solidarity among Malaysian.

Psychological/Developmental theories

Social learning theory. The theory that we learn social behavior by observing and imitating and by being rewarded and punished. This was first being proposed by Albert Bandura (1997) to explain how aggression was being learnt. People can learn by observing others. As with most social behaviors, we acquire aggression by watching others act and noting the consequences. It was believed that everyday life exposes us to different social behavior in the family, in one's subculture and also mass media. Family influence appears in higher violence rates in cultures and in families who disciplined their children by modeling aggression.

Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGCT). RGCT is one of the most established theories about inter-group hostility. In-group identification is the process of basing self-identity and self-interests on group membership. The fundamental proposition of RGCT is that conflict is produced when multiple parties contest common goods, ideas, or perceived resources. Conflict can only be reduced through inter-group cooperation and sharing control over <https://assignbuster.com/different-skin-colors-languages-religions-sociology-essay/>

the desired item. RGCT hypothesizes that majority population will restrict the Roma's rights, out of fear that the privilege the dominant group holds will be lost; majority populations fear loss of state and sponsored benefits, advantages in employment, and preferential treatment in housing.

RGCT explains when and why prejudice will arise. The theory is based on two primary assumptions. The first is that real groups actually exist and have a history of shared identity and shared fate. Second, it is assumed that groups believe themselves to be in zero-sum competition over valued resources. Theoretically, inter-group conflict leads to negative stereotyping and prejudices,

which give rise to greater intra-group solidarity.

Social Identity Theory (SIT). According to SIT, attitudes toward inequality result from specific social identity concerns that arise from the position of the in-group or majority in the social structure. SIT takes into account the differential powers held by privileged and disadvantaged groups and the different psychological issues that arise from these groups interpreting and responding to the social context from the in-group's unique perspective. The theory claims that it is the group that interprets the social standing of groups and identities. This interpretation creates more discrimination towards those groups that are "culturally inferior."

People show inter-group differentiation partly to exalt their group and elevate themselves. 41 Low status groups will find alternative means to achieve positive distinctiveness.

Nonetheless, SIT does not simply suggest that people always favor their group over others, nor does it assume that group-based inequality is inevitable; rather, this social identity perspective suggests that a number of factors moderate how people define their group membership. For example, disadvantaged groups are more likely collectively to resist their disadvantage when they perceive social reality to be organized along group lines; they perceive alternatives to the status quo as plausible and legitimate, and they have enough collective power to affect social change.

Contact hypothesis. Allport first proposed the notion of the contact hypothesis. The contact hypothesis stated that under certain conditions, intergroup contact can reduce negative attitudes toward different groups. Situations in which this reduction in prejudice did not occur include when “the inner strain within the person is too tense, too insistent, to permit him to profit from the structure of the outer situation” (Allport, 1958, p. 267), suggesting that when an individual’s own preconceived notions and opinions were strongly and deeply ingrained within his or her identity, that contact may not be successful in reducing prejudice. The four key conditions for the reduction of prejudice through contact were: (1) equal group status in the situation, (2) sharing common goals, (3) intergroup cooperation, and (4) support of authority, law and/or custom. Equal group status occurred when in any situation two groups had the same power, authority, and rank. Sharing common goals and intergroup cooperation were closely related and occurred when two groups must work together to achieve a mutual objective. Lastly, support of authority, law, and custom established norms and rules in how two groups should have behaved and interacted with each other (Pettigrew

& Tropp, 2005). When these four key conditions were integrated and used together, prejudice should have been dramatically decreased.