

# Racial stereotypes

Business



Racism refers to the discrimination or prejudice of a person or a group of people based on their skin color, language, religion, customs and/or beliefs.

Racism cause resentment towards the crowd considered and in many cases has led to acts of violence. This paper attempts to understand the birth and causes of racism, racial profiling and racial stereotypes in general. For, without an understanding of why, and in what conditions, racism arises, we will certainly not be able to successfully eliminate it. Nor will we be able to establish a society where division and enmity between groups of people are substituted by unity and equality (Fredrickson. pg 99).

Racism in the United States and around the globe is not an uncommon thing. It is evident in the media, learning institutions, churches, places of work and business that racism is an active entity in our society (Shakespear. pg. 23).

Racism, in the United States particularly began in the pre colonial era when immigrants of all nationalities, but mostly Africans, came to work as slaves in America. During the climax of the slavery era, slave masters were very brutal to the African slaves and often forced them to endure long, hard hours often in dangerous territory, surrounded by disease and often hostile settlers.

Tilling land and performing strenuous construction jobs without advanced machinery proved extremely hard labor, especially in the hot, humid climate of the South when slaves were forced to plant, nurture and harvest the crops for profit and subsistence purposes. By 1860 rising tension within the enslaved communities caused Whites to begin freeing slaves in the southern region. Slaves of African descent, through strengthened family ties, deep

religious devotion, education, and reduction in their labor force, forced the slave drivers to compromise however their white masters still retained their power. Nevertheless, within their enslaved lives, captives were able to create a life that allowed many of them to retain their human dignity and courage. When freedom came, they were ready to be free men contrary to their former masters who were not.

After the emancipation of these slaves, Blacks became accepted members of the American society but that difference between them and indigenous Americans still existed till today. It is well known that the slave trade was instituted by Europeans who considered Africans as heathen who deserved to toil for the white man. This train of thought was further confirmed by the teachings of the bible which many interpreted as blacks being inferior to whites (Shakespeare, pg101). The Europeans thus brought this culture to America during the immigration era and it was thus considered law.

This discrimination and suffrage of blacks brought about great division within the entire globe and it is well known that some Caucasians still consider black people inferior. Skin color is one of the major causes of racism (Salih, pg 55). The world is comprised of billions of people with different skin color i. e. black, white and mixed. When these people intermingle and their differences are shown, different parties tend to have different feelings towards each other.

It is thought that people with darker skin are considered inferior and less fortunate in the society (Salih, pg 55). Dark skin also associates someone to the slavery era in the United States. Even in other regions around the world,

people within the same tribe or ethnicity still discriminate against each other due to the difference in their skin tone. For example in the Indian society, those with a darker skin tone are discriminate and looked down upon by those with a lighter skin tone. Another useful example is the difference between the indigenous Australians and the immigrant ones.

The indigenous have a darker skin tone and are there for discriminated against. Skin tone is a major determinant and issue that fuels racism around the globe. Many groups, minorities included, do not recognize the hypotheses they make based on race. The different languages that exist around the world also play a major role is fuelling racism. Both in America and globally, a variety of languages exist and groups which don't understand each other tend to discriminate against each other.

In communities where many languages are in use, it is not uncommon to find different tribes stereotyping and profiling each other due to a number of reasons (Salih, pg. 93). Drawing examples of America, it is obvious that that people from the north, south east and west all have different accents when they speak therefore an unusual situation often arises when these people converse. Religions, as mentioned before can be blamed for the racism that exists in the world today. For centuries, it has been assumed that the Christian religion belongs to the white man and all blacks were hooligans that were required to follow the biblical laws.

It was preached that the whites were superior to black people in education, social status and class. For centuries this was the norm in America and Europe until activists such as Rev. Jesse Jackson sought to change it.

Abolitionists such as him were common during the 1800's their crusade did not garner enough clout until the 1830's when more slaves began demanding for their rights. Numerous activists both religious and human began releasing statements and print works such as Uncle Tom's cabin by Harriet Beecher that demanded the emancipation of slaves and equality. All this activism provoked negative reactions to the southern slave drivers and saw them hold violent processions that prevented any form of anti-slavery activism (Fredrickson.

pg7). They even went further to pass a bill at the House of Representatives that prevented any form discussion or action regarding anti-slavery. This is what is popularly referred to as the Kansas-Nebraska act. Customs and beliefs tend to divide people around the globe. Things like work ethic, discipline and morals divide many.

When immigrants from different countries come in search of employment, they are time and again accused of stealing and denying Native Americans the right to employment. They are blamed for taking over the entire labor force and white Americans are left jobless. This is however untrue but ignorant Americans choose to dwell on this fact despite it being false. The reasons discussed above frequently go hand in hand with racial profiling. Racial profiling refers to the stereotypes that are placed on persons of a particular group. In various countries, racial profiling is against the law.

This nonetheless does not mean that it is nonexistent. There are numerous accounts of people of certain racial or cultural groups being stereotypically suspected of felonies based on race. Regrettably, racial profiling often

contains untrue assumptions about populace of different races or ethnic groups (Spriggs. par. 3). For instance, it could be assumed that blacks are more likely to be drug users, which to a federal officer might validate arresting more black individuals on the contrary there are much more Caucasian drug users than Blacks.

Another stereotype directed at particular cultural groups includes the alarm that Americans of Middle Eastern descent are more likely to be terrorists. Since the 9/11 terrorist occurrence, increased fears about another attack has led to some people and organizations using Arab ethnicity to justify the possibility that an individual could be a terrorist. The reality that most Middle Eastern Americans are not terrorists makes this kind of racial profiling false. The short coming of racial profiling in general is that although a cultural or ethnic group is likely to be involved in particular crimes, most law enforcement units operate based on the rights of the individual. One cannot be considered suspect simply due to race or cultural background, furthermore the justice system in America largely depend on acquiring proof in order to find someone guilty of a crime.

Cultural identity is not evidence of illegal conduct, and should not be measured as a reason for those alleged to commit crimes. Many believe racial profiling is simply an extension of old racist actions that exists in law enforcement and justice systems. There are many who argue that particular occasions call for racial profiling. For instance, when officers attempt to convict one for a particular crime, they usually try to identify the felon's ethnicity in order to narrow down the search. Serial killers, for example, are

for the most part Caucasian males, and with this in mind, it might help in the elimination process.

On the other hand, this might lead to conviction of the wrong person or eliminating the criminals who have committed crimes but don't fit label. Legislation advises that when one suspects that they have been wrongly stopped by an officer by driving, they are to; firstly be familiar with their rights and informatively weigh the situation, secondly, one should never argue with the officer as this may ultimately lead to more problems and possibly an arrest, thirdly, get the identity of the officers including name, badge number and/ or license plate number and finally lodge a complaint if you feel that you have been ill-treated. This is in accordance with the 2007 Racial Profiling Act that was passed by Congress (Salih, pg 58). Another notable subset of racial profiling is intelligence. This issue had been debated by many people worldwide.

To begin with, there is no assurance about the nature of intelligence. Is it an ability to take in and easily process large amounts of information in order to grow and develop physically and in turn impact your surrounding positively. This throws a special light on the difference in IQ scores not just amid, but inside distinct groups such as whites, blacks, South Americans and Middle Eastern groups. Stereotypes in America have often suggested that particular groups are cleverer than others. For instance, it is considered that South Americans are less intelligent as compared to White people, this is false because intelligence is not determined by ones race, culture or ethnicity but by ones ability to capture information. If we argue that an individual's skin

color or ethnicity makes them hereditarily of lower intellect, this deprives intelligence to bet of any usefulness in any scientific assessment.

There is need for a deeper understanding of the term racial profiling as a broad issue and not just a phenomenon in the law enforcement agencies. The relation between the stereotypical profile and public perception is mandatory. In federal departments, officers use ethnic and racial stereotypes against racial minorities, particularly black citizens but in the media, the racial profiles exerted are indirectly related to corrective public policies, thus giving the mainstream media deniability. Despite various pains to defeat racial profiling in our society, we are continually flooded with detrimental and discriminatory images and thoughts. When watching local news and reading the newspapers, racial minorities are the essential spotlight of criminal activities and are viewed as the leading cause of crime in America (Fanon, par. 4).

Similarly, sufferers of criminal operations who are of a cultural minority are hardly ever reported, as Caucasian victims dominate the highlight in media discussions. As an unfortunate consequence, a flawed representation of fault and criminals has resulted which leads to the continuation of damaging ideas in our nation. When news agencies misinform about the ethnicity that is at issue, the question becomes ethnic stigmatization. By looking at the ways in which the media houses have informed or failed to inform on several various stories involving culture, ethnicity and race, we begin to get clear comprehension of this vice as portrayed by the fourth estate. As mentioned the ideologies portrayed by the media determine people's perceptions in



racial profiling. The stereotypes that are assumed through interaction with the fourth estate, fuels the problem of racial profiling.

Ideologies, even less than their element attitudes, are not individual, but societal. This thought is applicable to our comprehension of racial profiling because ideologies are constantly poured into our society, and if ideologies are societal and remain unaltered, it is not hard to know how racial profiling continues to survive. As illustrated, the problem of racial profiling is greatly knotted with culture and social roles and the continuation of these thoughts over time. The holistic view is therefore a useful approach to this vice as it significantly highlights how the media serves to generate, endorse and emphasize attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and ideologies (Fanon. pg71).

While this hypothetical approach is crucial in shedding light to racial profiling as a whole, it has a range of limitations that stop it from being handy and relevant to several racial situations. As illustrated, racial profiling in the media is of greatest concern. Racial profiling and stereotyping is undeniably a concern that exists in the US and the world over. If all unite against this social issue, it is definite that we shall be able to reduce and control this hateful act. Fortunately there have been efforts to eradicate it through social forums and discussions but it is unknown when it will be completely extinct.