

Reading response essay



**ASSIGN
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There is no doubt that racism has a great influence on the African-American families. This article makes several assertions regarding the influence of racism on the African-American family by making an analysis of the historical African-American family and the contemporary African-American family. It then proceeds to make an analysis of these periods and how they intertwine and influence the African-American behavior. The author asserts that the African-American family is characterized by a feeling of kinship, which means that members of the African-American community for the most part depend on the family as a buffer against racial discrimination and humiliation. The feelings of kinship that characterize the African-American families, however, have both positive and negative effects on the family. While the family offers support and acts as a buffer, the family also suffers from this relationship. The discrimination of the African-American results in a transfer of the humiliation and discrimination to the members of the family. In order to maintain the strong kinship ties it is important that the family has a strong collective sense of identity, most of which results from the shared experiences. Painful recollections of such experiences, however, result in collective amnesia. The consequence of this is that the younger members of the family will feel a lot less affiliation to the family resulting in a lack of shared vision and culture among the African-American community.

On the other hand, the African-American family has experienced a decline in their cultural extended family structures, which have weakened the family support systems and kinship and result in an African-American community that is culturally deficient and thus is weak in offering support to the members that are victims of racial abuse. Contemporary work role reversal has

also resulted in weakening of the family structures, since they have resulted in a destruction of cultural values regarding sexual roles, the consequence of which is negative behavior such as infidelity and divorce. Historical racial relations also had a role in shaping the response of African-Americans as it has been shown that cultural and racial oppression has resulted in family tensions due to misplaced anger.

It is important to note that the feelings of kinship of the African-American community result from a cultural heritage drawn from Africa. This cultural heritage has been destroyed by the history of slavery, which broke up families resulting in a community that was very weak culturally. While the African-American family has deep kinship ties which offer a lot of family support to members in times of racial discrimination, the contemporary setting has resulted in an erosion of the extended family framework of the African-American. While the extended family still holds a strong hold over the cultural identity of its members, the African-American family becomes a source of negativity. The racism and discrimination, which is transferred to the members of the family ultimately results in resentment and despair in the family as a whole. Shared experiences in the African-American community thus become experiences of racial hatred and discrimination against the family. This will ultimately result in a situation in which the younger members are not proud to be affiliated with the family. The African-American family will thus find it very hard to transmit its culture and values to the younger members of the community.

Weakened support systems on the other hand result into negative reactions to racial discrimination. Racial discrimination and lack of support systems are

reponsible for young African-American turning to crime as a reaction to discrimination. Young people do not have kinship ties and do not know their history and cultural heritage and hence they form their own conceptions of their culture. This is thus defined by how the contemporary world views African-Americans most of which is informed by the stereotypes. With the reversed work roles, it is important that more attention is paid to the African-American man, who finds it even harder to get a job due top stereotypes resulting in more dysfunctional families.