

Fallacy



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

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To look at racism through the Individualistic Fallacy is to look at racism as an individual's own actions rather than a systematic problem. Throughout the day, choices that many make are dependent upon the beliefs they hold. For example, going to the store and asking the white employee for help rather than the black, to "feel more comfortable. This act is racist, however as per the Individualistic Fallacy, many who make these simple acts do not think of them as racist because their act was in the subconscious and "unintentional", and they believe they held no malice in the act. However, one's actions do not need to be intentional to be racist; racism is often "habitual, unintentional, commonplace, polite, implicit and well-meaning" (27).

The Individualistic Fallacy focuses on the individual level of racism, where racism only exists in certain people and actions, rather than a systematic level, where racism exists in our "schools, political institutions, labor markets, and neighborhoods" (27). The problem with the Individualistic Fallacy is that although asking a white employee for help is one individual's actions, that action is influenced by which school they attended, the neighborhood they live in, and by the stereotypes given to different races.

The school one attends reflects the neighborhood they live in, and because of the segregation in many neighborhoods, some people do not interact with people of other races often, thus feeling more "comfortable" with the white dominant race. The stereotypes given to certain races are a result of the systematic level of inequality and oppression that that race has had to endure. Thus, the choices that many make throughout the day, though

dependent upon the beliefs we hold, those beliefs are ultimately influenced by the systems of racism. Feagin, who has his Ph. D. in sociology, said “racism is not in society, racism is of society”. In reference to the Individualistic Fallacy, it is difficult to look at racism as the “psychology” of persons, their beliefs, habits and prejudices, rather than the foundation (system) of society (Juge, 2013). If racism is in society, it should be easy to pick out racist individuals and stop racism, but when racism is of society, it means it is embedded into the systems of America. The Legalistic Fallacy is the belief that racism doesn't exist because there are laws in place that make racism illegal.

However, just as how laws against theft do not stop people from stealing, laws against racism does not mean that racism does not occur every day (28). There are laws set to ensure a fair and “colorblind” process of hiring employees in a business; however, statistics show nonwhites are much less preferred than whites, and more specifically, black men with no criminal record fared no better than whites with a criminal record when looking for jobs (Juge, 2012). Another problem with the legalistic fallacy is that laws are often political in nature.

Many laws passed today, although do not explicitly state “racist”, give way for racism to exist i. e. The War on Drugs, New York's “broken window” policy, Arizona's immigration laws. The War on Drugs and “broken windows” policy both were passed to reduce deviance in the forms of drugs and criminal acts, however, there have been unequal enforcements of the law by the police department, which is reflected in the incarceration rates of blacks and Hispanics compared to whites.

Arizona's senate bill created to reduce the number of illegal immigrants has led to many unfair detainments and harassment of Hispanic citizens who live in Arizona. These government policies and laws not only refute the Legalistic Fallacy that racism does not exist because there are laws against it, but contradicts it a sense that there are now laws that fuel inequality and allow racism to exist. Schools are also segregated and unequal despite laws set against segregation (28). The area in which you live determines the type of education you will receive.

Schools are used to ensure who will be doctors and lawyers compared to janitors and gardeners, thus, those who can afford to live in nicer neighborhoods where there are funds for better public education have better chances of future economic success. Consequently, those who live in poorer neighborhoods such as East L. A. where high school dropout rates reach 70-80% have less chances of reaching economic success. However, for those who graduate high school there are more obstacles in finding money to attend a university.

This alludes to the fact that the cost of education is not to only get the best people in schools, but to keep some individuals out (Juge, 2012), which is racism in a certain form. School and education in one's early life can determine a lot about the chances and obstacles an individual would have as he got older. For me, going to a private Armenian school in my younger years gave me the capital I needed to be successful throughout my high school and college years, which I otherwise would not have received going to the public school in my neighborhood.

The Armenian culture stresses respect of elders, being close-knit to your family, and putting school and education of utmost priority. These ideas provided me with the knowledge I needed to be successful in the “real world”. Being respectful of your elders, an idea that would seem to be quite obvious, is not practiced by many teenagers in this generation, but because respect was so important for me to have when I was younger, I have the “know-how” to know how I should approach professors, law enforcement officers, and job employers, giving me an advantage when dealing with certain situations.

High school and college are the years where you have fun and go crazy, which can result in less focus in school, and the domino effect of too much fun, terrible grades, using too much drugs, and then dropping out. Being raised in an Armenian family where your family is extremely close to you, although can't prevent you from having fun, can prevent you from going too far down the hole to where you can't get back out. When I transferred from the Armenian school to Pasadena High School in 10th grade, I spent the first year finding out of my surroundings, and in 11th grade, I was ready to experience things I hadn't growing up in a private school.

Through the end of my 11th grade year and halfway through my senior year, the levels of deviance I had reached had begun to get serious, and had it not for how I was raised and the support of my mom, I would have not graduated. Religion, specifically Christianity, is also a big part of Armenian culture. No matter which religion you follow in your current life, the religion you grew up with has certain effects on you. For me, the hope and the

understanding of myself I learned through Christianity as I was growing up stuck with me even when I stopped following the religion.

The same values I was taught from my culture as a child, along with the religious anecdotes, helped my transition from high school to college to be balanced. I know how to interact with different people, I understand myself in ways most people have not been able to find yet, and I have my family to push me back in the right path when they see I have strayed too far. In terms of Eurocentrism, the fact that there are many private Armenian schools in southern California, and because of what I know about the pride of Armenian people, I can see that what I was taught growing p reiterates the belief many Armenians hold that the Armenian culture is “ better” than others. Many times when discussing things such as moving out from the family home, recent crime in our neighborhood, or the troubles many youths find themselves in, my mom would point out how other races do no support their family how Armenians do, certain crimes Armenians wouldn't do that other races would, and how I should be thankful for being part of the Armenian culture for those reasons.

My mom's statements show her favor of Armenians before whites and nonwhites alike. References Desmond, M. , & Emirbayer, M. (2010). “ Race in the 21st Century. ” Racial domination, racial progress: The sociology of race in America (1st ed, pp. 27-28). New York: McGraw-Hill Juge, T. (2012-2013) Class Lecture Notes.