

How are racial issues such as stereotyping, centrality and stacking related to th...

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There are different examples in the Olympics, which deal with racist issues. Stacking, centrality and stereotyping are just three. Stereotyping is defined as when the athletes are said to be good or bad at certain sports due to their race or ethnicity. An example of the stereotyping is that "white men can't jump". Stacking is where players are put into positions and sports based on their ethnic background. An example of stacking is the North Americans in the marathons. A linked theory is called centrality; this is where the dominant group in society does the dominant role in a team or sport, (in the UK and USA this tends to be WASP's (White Anglo Saxon Protestants)). An example of centrality is the Olympic Committee being mostly white.

Every race is stereotyped where people label a group of people as all having the same image or characteristics for example people say that black people are faster at sprinting than white people. This isn't a racist comment as it is the truth. Scientists have found that Athletes of West African descent which include most African American, Caribbean and black British athletes have a physique that is suited to explosive events, requiring sprinting and jumping. Such athletes possess what biologists call a mesomorphic physique with bigger, more visible muscles including a larger chest. Their muscles contain a higher proportion of fast-twitch fibres than do whites or East Africans. Athletes of West African descent also possess less body fat, a higher centre of gravity, narrower hips, and higher levels of testosterone in their blood. There are myths that are formed based on this information that isn't true like 'Black men can't swim'.

These myths can lead to putting a person off a certain race from entering the Olympics. They may start the particular sport because of the stereotype.
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However, there is also the negative stereotype that people will not take up a certain sport as they are channelled towards certain sports due to their ethnic background or race. They also might want to take up a sport that they haven't seen anyone from their racial background competing and therefore will not take up that sport. There is a lot of over representation at the moment but only in specific sports, for example there are lots of Afro-Caribbean's competing in boxing and sprinting, Asians competing in badminton and hockey, and lastly the Far East compete mostly in table tennis and gymnastics.

There has always been racism in the Olympics. One of the biggest issues was in 1936 at the Berlin games. Jesse Owens, one of the greatest track and field athletes of all times came to the Games holding two world records. In all four events, Owens either equalled the existing Olympic record or broke world records. He went home with four gold medals. His three other African Americans teammates also won Olympic medals. But Hitler refused to recognize the achievements of Owens and his "black auxiliaries" as he called them. Hitler walked out of the stadium when the time came to congratulate and present them with their well-won medals. He did not want to shake hands with black people who he considered inferior to his Aryan race.

In another case of racism in the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, two African American sprinters, Tommy Smith and John Carlos raised a black-gloved fist (the Black power salute) while on the victory stand to protest U. S. racial policies, causing acts of hooliganism and fighting among the Americans in

the stadium. Both athletes were expelled from the Games and they were sent home like criminals. Carlos claimed that " Ours was not a political act; it was a moral act-and that's all right."

Also at these Games was the expulsion of South Africa due to the Apartheid, which has also been a major factor in Olympic history. They were not allowed to compete in the Olympics from 1964 to 1992 due to the discrimination between Black and White races. This showed that strong racist issues such as these were not being tolerated, the Olympics were starting to reflect world union, and everyone is equal. It caused major problems in the Montreal games 1976 because many African nations boycotted the games. They were in protest at New Zealand entering, because the New Zealand rugby team, the 'All Blacks', had toured South Africa, where apartheid was taking place. Finally though in 1992 South Africa abolished Apartheid and was allowed back into the Barcelona games.

As time as gone on roles of black people have changed. Nowadays there are many black role models for example there is Denise Lewis. She encourages young black girls to partake in athletics. More and more people of different origins are taking part in sports that they are expected not to take part in.

Stereotyping, centrality and stacking are still happening in the Olympics now. Take the 100m final in the Athens Games; there was not one single white man in that race just black men.