

# Black death in dixie

Sociology



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s Black Death in Dixie According to micro-level theories of social interactions, an individual's interaction is trichotomized into the following perspectives that is interpretive, normative and conflict. Normative perspective states that stratification in the society is important to establish social order, interpretive highlighted the establishment of social relationships on the basis of how an individual interacts with other people and conflict actually referred to the distribution of chances and freedom on the basis of one's social class and status.

Therefore, the aforementioned perspectives mark key differences in the manner an individual interacts with other people and in this regard how people interact with each other in a prison setting that will be the highlighted in the substance of this prose in light of the evidences presented in the documentary “ Black death in Dixie” and Phillip G. Zimbardo's prison simulation experiment. “ Black death in Dixie” gives insight into a completely different aspect of prisoners on death row highlighting the inequality that prevailing in the American prison facilities, which largely directed towards the racial minorities and poor segments of the population.

The racially discriminative make-up of the prison population and convictions on questionable grounds are some of the issues dealt in the documentary, which also discusses the psychological and emotional repercussions the prison environment has on its inmates. Though racism remains a pressing issue in the facilities, the emotional ordeal that the individual has to go through is more complex. To further understand the psychology and interaction pattern in prisons Zimbardo's study used a sample of 24 male subjects with no history of misdemeanors were recruited in to a 24 week prison simulation program, divided into two groups that is of guards and <https://assignbuster.com/black-death-in-dixie/>

prisoners.

The study examined their behavioral changes as a result of the harsh structure and rules of the program and the conclusions drawn from the experiment were confounding and shed light on to some intriguing aspects of the human psyche. The individuals in the mock prison were subjected to the standard routine checks that take place in real prison and were made to wear smocks with no undergarments and a cap made of female stockings. Whereas, guards enjoyed full freedom and liberty that had some astounding affect on their personalities as a result of the role they were playing in the mock prison.

The subjects exhibited some intense emotional turmoil and disturbances that was only seen in real prisoners, there was widespread conformity and depersonalization amongst the prisoners and they even started to identify themselves with their ID number instead of their names. On the other hand, the guards exhibited a spectrum of behaviors; with certain guards who adopted a lenient stance and then there were guards, who were really harsh with the prisoners and the ones who strictly complied with the mock prison rules were in the middle.

There was widespread internalization on part of both prisoners and guards that reiterates the concept of roles in our society along with the demands that come along with these roles that the individual consciously or unconsciously fulfills. The fact that the guards were given authority over the prisoners, they became victims to a psychological situation that is known as the “ Pathology of power”; whereas, the prisoners showed signs of learned helplessness and began conforming themselves to the demands of their current situation. This led to the loss of personal identity and widespread

feelings of emasculation amongst the prisoners.

The study not only gives insight in to the disturbing interaction and social layout of prisons but also describes as to why people adopt certain characteristics in real life to fulfill the demands of the social role they are playing. Madeline Karmel further reiterated the findings of these studies with her theory regarding the internalization of social roles that is responsible for establishing conformity and depersonalization in people. Regardless of how much an individual despises that character, the societal and peer pressure may cause him or her to behave in a way that compliments their social role. Therefore, on a personal it is highly unlikely to not get involved in the environment but is not impossible either. As an individual, at first it would have been possible to maintain one's identity but prolonged involvement in to that situation or environment would have lead to absorption into the surroundings.

#### Works Cited

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