

Hate crimes committed by white against african american essay

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



Hate crimes may be influenced by economic competition and even resentment towards a particular group rather than a generalization about a particular group of people. It is the case that hate crimes are a result of prejudice on the part of the offender against the victim of hate crime. This paper argues that this economic strain and the concomitant resentment that may be felt towards certain minority group as the African-Americans in our case here is mostly based on false generalizations.

The topic on hate crimes committed by Whites against African-Americans in the United States is connected to two criminological theories namely: the Robert Merton's strain theory and Barbara Perry's structured action theory of "doing difference". In the strain theory, Merton argued that the criminal behavior is a result of a disequilibrium or imbalance caused by the gap between culturally prescribed goals and the means and opportunities of achieving these goals in a legitimate manner. He argued that owing to the capitalistic economic system, as is the case in the United States, and the inequalities in education, income and other personal capacities, individuals are unable to attain these goals. There is a strain on these individuals as they desire the material possessions so as to be touted as successful. It is in response to this strain to attain success that individuals pursue illegitimate means such as violence against other minority groups so as to gain the material success and the respect they yearn. The violence or hate crimes against the black minority groups by the whites according to this theory may thus be rooted in the perception that the socio-economic instability faced by the Whites is the fault of the minority black group. The second theory is that propounded by Barbara Perry of the social construction of difference where

she seeks to plug the gap left by Merton's strain theory. It is indeed true that not all hate crimes can be attributed to socio-economic disadvantage. This is so especially in the instances where some hate crimes are committed by the most powerful and economically endowed people in the society. Indeed, though most of the offenders are of the lower economic strata, some of them can be employers or even leaders. Perry argued that the difference has been used to construct social hierarchies on the basis of gender, race and class. As such, people get bound to their cultural and ethnic identity owing to the similar characteristics and those who fall outside of this are seen as different and therefore resisted.

The policy on sexual harassment, racial discrimination and prevention of youth crime is related and relevant to the topic on hate crimes. This is because most of the hate crimes are as a result of prejudice against one's gender, class or race. In addition, most of the hate crimes are perpetrated by the youths and as such, the policy on prevention of youth crime, racial segregation and sexual harassment becomes pertinent.