

# Foundational Knowledge

## Explaining Racism: Past and Present

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### PART ONE

#### Race/Racism—Origins

#### Why and How It All Began

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#### Introduction

The readings below in this PART ONE come from the online website on race, hosted by [www.PBS.org](http://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm) at [http://www.pbs.org/race/000\\_General/000\\_00-Home.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm), that was created as a companion resource for the three-part documentary produced by California Newsreel and titled *Race: The Power of an Illusion*.

#### Statement from the Executive Producer

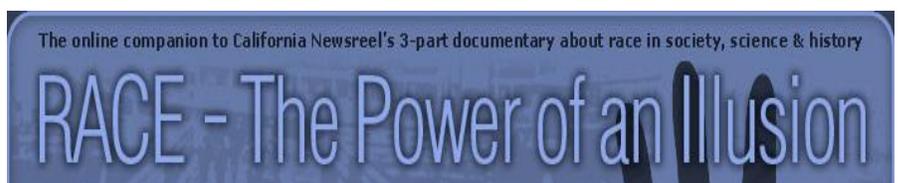
Race is one topic where we all think we're experts. Yet ask 10 people to define race or name "the races," and you're likely to get 10 different answers. Few issues are characterized by more contradictory assumptions and myths, each voiced with absolute certainty.

In producing this series, we felt it was important to go back to first principles and ask, What is this thing called "race?" - a question so basic it is rarely raised. What we discovered is that most of our common assumptions about race - for instance, that the world's people can be divided biologically along racial lines - are wrong. Yet the consequences of racism are very real.

How do we make sense of these two seeming contradictions? Our hope is that this series can help us all navigate through our myths and misconceptions, and scrutinize some of the assumptions we take for granted. In that sense, the real subject of the film is not so much race but the viewer, or more precisely, the notions about race we all hold.

We hope this series can help clear away the biological underbrush and leave starkly visible the underlying social, economic, and political conditions that disproportionately channel advantages and opportunities to white people. Perhaps then we can shift the conversation from discussing diversity and respecting cultural difference to building a more just and equitable society.

**April 2003**



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## SECTION ONE

# Ten Things Everyone Should Know About Race

SOURCE: [http://www.pbs.org/race/000\\_About/002\\_04-background-01-x.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-background-01-x.htm)

Our eyes tell us that people look different. No one has trouble distinguishing a Czech from a Chinese. But what do those differences mean? Are they biological? Has race always been with us? How does race affect people today?

### **There's less - and more - to race than meets the eye:**

**1. Race is a modern idea.** Ancient societies, like the Greeks, did not divide people according to physical distinctions, but according to religion, status, class, even language. The English language didn't even have the word 'race' until it turns up in 1508 in a poem by William Dunbar referring to a line of kings.

**2. Race has no genetic basis.** Not one characteristic, trait or even gene distinguishes all the members of one so-called race from all the members of another so-called race.

**3. Human subspecies don't exist.** Unlike many animals, modern humans simply haven't been around long enough or isolated enough to evolve into separate subspecies or races. Despite surface appearances, we are one of the most similar of all species.

**4. Skin color really is only skin deep.** Most traits are inherited independently from one another. The genes influencing skin color have nothing to do with the genes influencing hair form, eye shape, blood type, musical talent, athletic ability or forms of intelligence. Knowing someone's skin color doesn't necessarily tell you anything else about him or her.

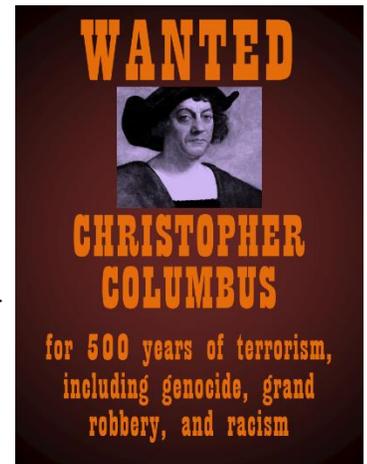
**5. Most variation is within, not between, "races."** Of the small amount of total human variation, 85% exists within any local population, be they Italians, Kurds, Koreans or Cherokees. About 94% can be found within any continent. That means two random Koreans may be as genetically different as a Korean and an Italian.

**6. Slavery predates race.** Throughout much of human history, societies have enslaved others, often as a result of conquest or war, even debt, but not because of physical characteristics or a belief in natural inferiority. Due to a unique set of historical circumstances, ours was the first slave system where all the slaves shared similar physical characteristics.

**7. Race and freedom evolved together.** The U.S. was founded on the radical new principle that "All men are created equal." But our early economy was based largely on slavery. How could this anomaly be rationalized? The new idea of race helped explain why some people could be denied the rights and freedoms that others took for granted.

**8. Race justified social inequalities as natural.** As the race idea evolved, white superiority became "common sense" in America. It justified not only slavery but also the extermination of Indians, exclusion of Asian immigrants, and the taking of Mexican lands by a nation that professed a belief in democracy. Racial practices were institutionalized within American government, laws, and society.

**9. Race isn't biological, but racism is still real.** Race is a powerful social idea that gives people different access to opportunities and resources. Our government and social institutions have created advantages that



disproportionately channel wealth, power, and resources to white people. This affects everyone, whether we are aware of it or not.

**10. Colorblindness will not end racism.** Pretending race doesn't exist is not the same as creating equality. Race is more than stereotypes and individual prejudice. To combat racism, we need to identify and remedy social policies and institutional practices that advantage some groups at the expense of others.

*RACE - The Power of an Illusion* was produced by California Newsreel in association with the Independent Television Service (ITVS). Major funding provided by the Ford Foundation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Diversity Fund.

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## SECTION TWO

### Origin of the Idea of Race

By *Audrey Smedley* Anthropology Newsletter, November 1997

SOURCE: [http://www.pbs.org/race/000\\_About/002\\_04-background-02-09.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-background-02-09.htm)

Contemporary scholars agree that "race" was a recent invention and that it was essentially a folk idea, not a product of scientific research and discovery. This is not new to anthropologists. Since the 1940s when Ashley Montagu argued against the use of the term "race" in science, a growing number of scholars in many disciplines have declared that the real meaning of race in American society has to do with social realities, quite distinct from physical variations in the human species. I argue that race was institutionalized beginning in the 18th century as a worldview, a set of culturally created attitudes and beliefs about human group differences.

#### **Slavery and the Coming of Africans**

Race and its ideology about human differences arose out of the context of African slavery. But many peoples throughout history have been enslaved without the imposition of racial ideology. When we look at 17th century colonial America before the enactment of laws legitimizing slavery only for Africans and their descendants (after 1660), several facts become clear.

- 1) The first people that the English tried to enslave and place on plantations were the Irish with whom they had had hostile relations since the 13th century.
- 2) Some Englishmen had proposed laws enslaving the poor in England and in the colonies to force them to work indefinitely.
- 3) Most of the slaves on English plantations in Barbados and Jamaica were Irish and Indians.
- 4) Many historians point out that African servants and bonded indentured white servants were treated much the same way. They often joined together, as in the case of Bacon's Rebellion (1676) to oppose the strict and oppressive laws of the colonial government.

In the latter part of the 17th century the demand for labor grew enormously. It had become clear that neither Irishmen nor Indians made good slaves. More than that, the real threats to social order were the poor freed whites who demanded lands and privileges that the upper class colonial governments refused. Some colonial leaders argued that turning to African labor provided a buffer against the masses of poor whites.

Until the 18th century the image of Africans was generally positive. They were farmers and cattle-breeders; they had industries, arts and crafts, governments and commerce. In addition, Africans had immunities to Old World diseases. They were better laborers and they had nowhere to escape to once transplanted to the New World. The colonists themselves came to believe that they could not survive without Africans.

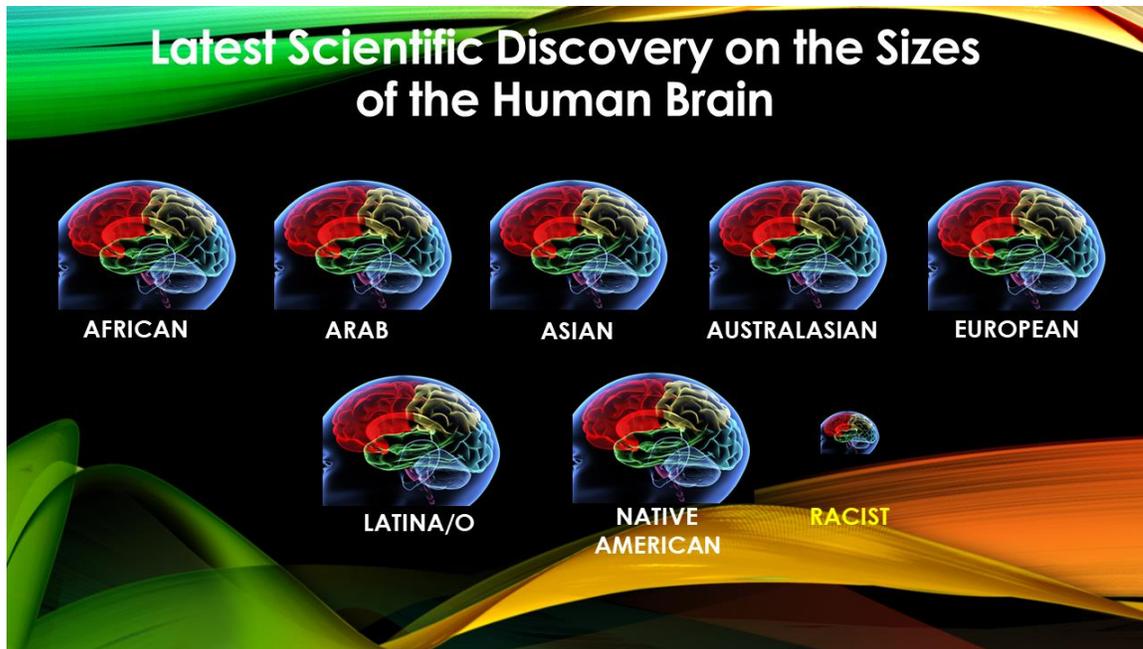
When some Englishmen entered slave trading directly, it became clear that many of the English public had misgivings about slave-trading and re-creating slavery on English soil. It was an era when the ideals of equality, justice, democracy, and human rights were becoming dominant features of Western political philosophy. Those involved in the trade rationalized their actions by arguing that the Africans were heathens after all, and it was a Christian duty to save their souls. By the early part of the 18th century, the institution was fully established for Africans and their descendants. Large numbers of slaves flooded the southern colonies and even some northern ones. Sometimes they outnumbered whites, and the laws governing slavery became increasingly harsher.

### **A New Social Identity**

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the image of Africans began to change dramatically. The major catalyst for this transformation was the rise of a powerful antislavery movement that expanded and strengthened during the Revolutionary Era both in Europe and in the United States. As a consequence proslavery forces found it necessary to develop new arguments for defending the institution. Focusing on physical differences, they turned to the notion of the natural inferiority of Africans and thus their God-given suitability for slavery. Such arguments became more frequent and strident from the end of the eighteenth century on, and the characterizations of Africans became more negative.

From here we see the structuring of the ideological components of "race." The term "race," which had been a classificatory term like "type," or "kind," but with ambiguous meaning, became more widely used in the eighteenth century, and crystallized into a distinct reference for Africans, Indians and Europeans. By focusing on the physical and status differences between the conquered and enslaved peoples, and Europeans, the emerging ideology linked the socio-political status and physical traits together and created a new form of social identity. Proslavery leaders among the colonists formulated a new ideology that merged all Europeans together, rich and poor, and fashioned a social system of ranked physically distinct groups. The model for "race" and "races" was the Great Chain of Being or Scale of Nature (*Scala Naturae*), a semi-scientific theory of a natural hierarchy of all living things, derived from classical Greek writings. The physical features of different groups became markers or symbols of their status on this scale, and thus justified their positions within the social system. Race ideology proclaimed that the social, spiritual, moral, and intellectual inequality of different groups was, like their physical traits, natural, innate, inherited, and unalterable.

Thus was created the only slave system in the world that became exclusively "racial." By limiting perpetual servitude to Africans and their descendants, colonists were proclaiming that blacks would forever be at the bottom of the



social hierarchy. By keeping blacks, Indians and whites socially and spatially separated and enforcing endogamous mating, they were making sure that visible physical differences would be preserved as the premier insignia of unequal social statuses. From its inception separateness and inequality was what "race" was all about. The attributes of inferior race status

came to be applied to free blacks as well as slaves. In this way, "race" was configured as an autonomous new mechanism of social differentiation that transcended the slave condition and persisted as a form of social identity long after slavery ended.

### **Humans as Property**

American slavery was unique in another way; that is, how North American slave-owners resolved the age-old dilemma of all slave systems. Slaves are both persons and things---human beings and property. How do you treat a human being as both person and property? And what should take precedence, the human rights of the slave or the property rights of the master? American laws made clear that property was more sacred than people, and the property rights of masters overshadowed the human rights of slaves. Said Chief Justice Roger B. Taney in the famous Dred Scott case of 1857, "Negroes were seen only as property; they were never thought of or spoken of except as property" and "(thus) were not intended by the framers of the Constitution to be accorded citizenship rights."

In order to transform people solely into property, you must minimize those qualities that make them human. Literature of the early nineteenth century began to portray "the negro" as a savage in even stronger terms than those that had been used for the Irish two centuries earlier. This was a major transformation in thought about who Africans were. Historian George Fredrickson states explicitly that "before 1830 open assertions of permanent black inferiority were exceedingly rare" (*The Black Image in the White Mind*, 1987). By mid-century, the ideology of "negro inferiority" dominated both popular and scholarly thought.

### **Science and the Justification for "Races"**

What is so striking about the American experience in creating such an extreme conception of human differences was the role played by scientists and scholars in legitimizing the folk ideas. Scholarly writers began attempting to prove scientifically that "the Negro" was a different and lower kind of human being. The first published materials arguing from a scientific perspective that "negroes" were a separate species from white men appeared in the last

decade of the eighteenth century. They argued that Negroes were either a product of degeneration from that first creation, or descendants of a separate creation altogether.

American intellectuals appropriated, and rigidified, the categories of human groups established by European scholars during the eighteenth century, but ignored Blumenbach's caution that human groups blend insensibly into one another, so that it is impossible to place precise boundaries around them.

When Dr. Samuel Morton in the 1830s initiated the field of *craniometry*, the first school of American anthropology, proponents of race ideology received the most powerful scientific support yet. Measuring the insides of crania collected from many populations, he offered "evidence" that the Negro had a smaller brain than whites, with Indians in-between. Morton is also famous for his involvement in a major scientific controversy over creation.

The very existence of a scientific debate over whether blacks and whites were products of a single creation, or of multiple creations, especially in a society dominated by Biblical explanations, seems anomalous. It indicates that the differences between "races" had been so magnified and exaggerated that popular consciousness had already widely accepted the idea of blacks being a different and inferior species of humans. Justice Taney's decision reflected this, declaring, "the negro is a different order of being." Thus slave-owners' rights to their "property" were upheld in law by appeal to the newly invented identity of peoples from Africa.

Scientists collaborated in confirming popular beliefs, and publications appeared on a regular basis providing the "proof" that comforted the white public. That some social leaders were conscious of their role in giving credibility to the invented myths is manifest in statements such as that found in the Charleston Medical Journal after Dr. Morton's death. It states, "We can only say that we of the South should consider him as our benefactor, for aiding most materially in giving to the negro his true position as an inferior race" (emphasis added). George Gliddon, co-editor of a famous scientific book *Types of Mankind*, (1854) which argued that Negroes were closer to apes than to humans and ranked all other groups between whites and Negroes, sent a copy of the book to a famous southern politician, saying that he was sure the south would appreciate the powerful support that this book gave for its "peculiar institution" (slavery). Like another famous tome (*The Bell Curve*, 1995) this was an 800-page book whose first edition sold out immediately; it went through nine other editions before the end of the century. What it said about the inferiority of blacks became widely known, even by those who could not read it.

During discussions in the U.S. Senate on the future of "the negro" after slavery, James Henry Hammond proclaimed in 1858 "somebody has to be the mudsills of society, to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life." Negroes were destined to be the mudsills. This was to be their place, one consciously created for them by a society whose cultural values now made it impossible to assimilate them. In the many decades since the Civil War, white society made giant strides to "keep the negro in his place." Public policies and the customs and practices of millions of Americans expressed this racial worldview throughout the twentieth century.

These are some of the circumstances surrounding the origin of the racial worldview in North America. Race ideology was a mechanism justifying what had already been established as unequal social groups; it was from its inception, and is today, about who should have access to privilege, power, status, and wealth, and who should not. As a useful political ideology for conquerors, it spread into colonial situations around the world. It was promulgated in the latter half of the 19th century by some Europeans against other Europeans and reached its most extreme development in the twentieth century Nazi holocaust.

All anthropologists should understand that "race" has no intrinsic relationship to human biological diversity, that such diversity is a natural product of primarily evolutionary forces while "race" is a social invention.

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Audrey Smedley is a professor of anthropology at Virginia Commonwealth University. She is author of the American Anthropological Association's position paper on 'race,' and the new millennial edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica's entry on 'race.'

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## SECTION THREE

### Interview with Audrey Smedley

Edited transcript SOURCE: [http://www.pbs.org/race/000\\_About/002\\_04-background-02-06.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-background-02-06.htm)

Audrey Smedley is a professor of anthropology at Virginia Commonwealth University. She is author of *Race in North America: Origins of a Worldview*.

#### **What is race?**

Race is an ideology that says that all human populations are divided into exclusive and distinct groups; that all human populations are ranked, they are not equal. Inequality is absolutely essential to the idea of race. The other part is that the behavior of people is very much part of their biology.

And then the idea that all of this is inherited. People don't only inherit their biological features, but they also inherit their moral and temperamental and intellectual features. And it stays with us right into the 21st century. Not only are all of these features inherited, but they are not transcendable. You can't change. Racial populations, individual races, and individual people cannot change their race. So there's no way in which you can transcend this identity. Once you are identified as a socially low-status race, you remain so forever.

Race wasn't invented because it is a set of beliefs and attitudes about human variation. It has nothing to do with the biological variation itself. You can have many societies with great diversity in physical features without the idea of race. Race represents attitudes and beliefs about human differences, not the differences themselves.

#### **How did life in early colonial Virginia set the conditions for race?**

What's important to remember is that when the English established the colonies, they were motivated by greed. We don't talk about that very much in our history, that people are motivated by greed. But the earliest colonists came and took over whatever land they could get from the Indians. And by the 1620s or so, it was very clear they needed laborers to work that land. And that's when they established indentured servitude. Most of the indentured servants

were Europeans, often Irish, Scots, English. Sometimes they were people who were captured in wars with the Irish - a phenomenon again that we also don't talk about very much. But the very first slaves that the English made in the Caribbean were Irish. And there were more Irish slaves in the middle of the 17th century than any others.



### The Columbian Project and its Aftermath: A Native American Perspective

But there was really no such thing as race then. The idea of race had not been invented. Although "race" was used as a categorizing term in the English language, like "type" or "sort" or "kind," it did not refer to human beings as groups.

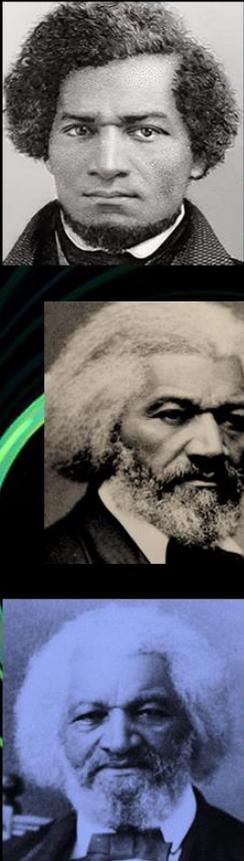
And what's important to understand is that the laborers and the poor fraternized together. They socialized together. They worked together, they played together, they drank together, they slept together, they lived together. The first mulatto child was born in 1620 [one year after the arrival of the first Africans]. When you read descriptions of the period you get the picture that color doesn't make much difference, physical features don't make much difference to these people, because they were all in the same boat. They saw themselves as having in common how they were related to the planters, the big owners. Servants were subjected to all sorts of cruel forms of punishment. They ran away together when they were unhappy about their situation.

Some Africans who got their freedom were able to buy land. They were able to establish themselves in a homestead, engage in trade and other activities with white farmers. They lent money to their white neighbors, for example, and they were involved in court cases. And this is where you see the equality clearly. Those Africans don't seem to be treated different from the white planters and other landowners. Once a person has land, then you have status.

But at first, there weren't many opportunities for anyone to move up the ladder. The first indentured servants who came into the Americas, half of them died. They died before they served their 4 to 7 years' period of indenture. Others didn't get much land when they became free, or they didn't get tools with which to make a living. It was a devastating situation for a lot of people. The poor remained poor, essentially. And that's why you see these rebellions occurring. By the time you get into the 1660s people are showing a great deal of dissatisfaction with their

circumstances. Bacon's Rebellion would never have occurred had it not been for the fact that the poor were treated so badly.

It was not until late in the 17th century that you see the colonial leaders start separating out the Africans from the other servants. Mind you, the masses of people in those colonies were all poor. In fact, this may be at the base of some of the changes that took place in the late 17th century. The colony leaders, the big planters who owned most of the



"This Fourth of July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, [is] inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony.... What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are, to Him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States, at this very hour.

**Frederick Douglass**  
(Escaped African American slave, Abolitionist, Writer, and Orator)  
From an address delivered on July 5, 1852, in Rochester, New York

land, were often afraid that the poor would get together - poor blacks and whites and mulattos by this time. And there were several rebellions before Bacon. But the most important one was Bacon's Rebellion. That was 1676. Bacon's Rebellion was one catalyst that caused the leaders of the colonies to try to separate the poor and keep them from being united.

### **Why were Africans the slaves of choice?**

By 1680, you see the beginning of the changes. What had happened - and this is a complicated story - was that colonial leaders had to deal with Bacon and that rebellion. The British sent a fleet of three ships and by the time they got to Virginia, there were 8,000 poor men rebelling who had burned down Jamestown - blacks, whites, mulattos. And it was quite clear that this kind of unity and solidarity among the poor was dangerous.

After that, they began to pass laws, very gradually. They passed laws that gave Europeans privileges while they increasingly enslaved Africans. They passed a number of laws that prevented blacks, Indians, and mulattos from owning firearms, for example. Everybody had firearms. Everybody in Virginia still has firearms!

Then there was another change: There was a decline in the number of European servants coming to the New World. At the same time, there was an increase in the ships bringing Africans to the New World. By the 1690s or so,

the English themselves had outfitted their ships to bring Africans back from the continent, and this is the first time that they had had direct connections.

But the Africans also had something else. They had skills which neither the Indians nor the Irish had. The Africans brought here were farmers. They knew how to farm semi-tropical crops. They knew how to build houses. They were brick makers, for example. They were carpenters and calabash carvers and rope makers and leather workers. They were metal workers. They were people who knew how to smelt ore and get iron out of it. They had so many skills that we don't often recognize. But the colony leaders certainly recognized that. And they certainly gave high value to those slaves who had those skills.

After 1690 things begin to change. All of the Europeans become identified as "white." And Africans take on a different kind of identity. They are not only heathens, but they are people who are perceived as vulnerable to being enslaved. And that's a major point. Africans were vulnerable because it became part of the consciousness that they had no rights as Englishmen. Even the poorest Englishman knew that he had some rights. But once a planter owns a few Africans, the idea that the Africans had no rights that they had to recognize became very clear. And that's why they were vulnerable to being enslaved, and kept in slavery. The laws that were passed after that all tended to diminish the rights of African people. But between 1690 and 1735, even those Africans who had been free and who had been there for many generations, had their rights taken away from them.

Once you magnify the difference between the slaves and the free, then it was possible to create a society in which the slaves were little better than animals. They were thought of as animals. And the more you think of slaves as animals, the more you justify keeping them as slaves.

After a while, slavery became identified with Africans. Blackness and slavery went together in the popular mind. And this is why we can say that race is a product of the popular mind, because it was this consciousness that blackness and slavery were bound together, that gave people the idea that Africans were a different kind of people.

Think of the early 17th century planter who wrote to the trustees of his company and he said, "Please don't send us any more Irishmen. Send us some Africans, because the Africans are civilized and the Irish are not." But 100 years later, the Africans become increasingly brutalized. They become increasingly homogenized into a category called "savages." And all the attributes of savagery which the English had once given to the Irish, now they are giving to the Africans.

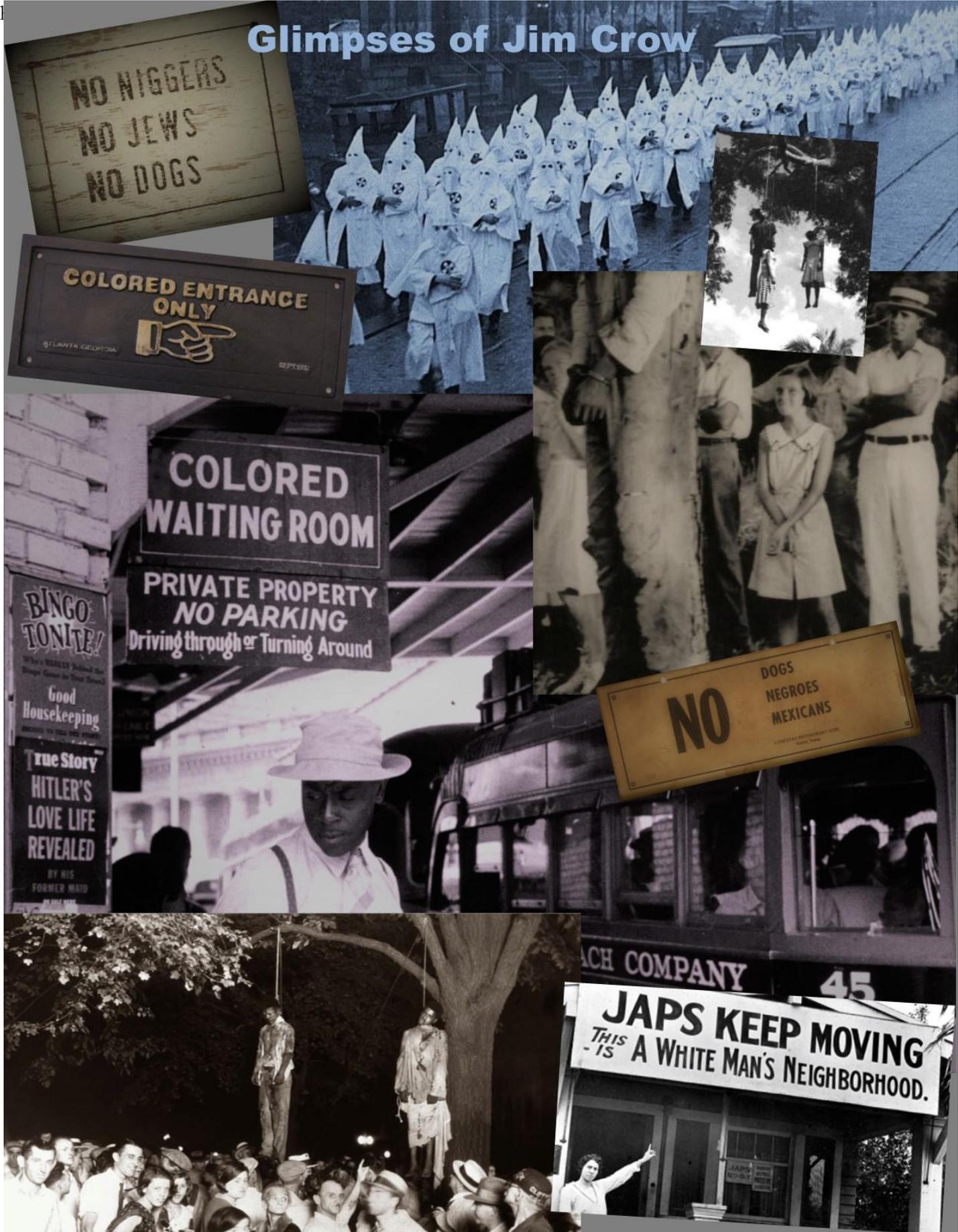
### **How do the revolutionary ideas of liberty and the rights of man also harden ideas of race?**

One of the things we have to recognize is that slavery existed virtually everywhere. It existed throughout the Mediterranean, for example. Slavery was thousands of years old by the time the colonists in America established slavery. There was no need to justify slavery because the Spanish had slaves; the Portuguese had slaves. In other words, slavery was part of the normal state of affairs of the colonizing nations. It was part of their world.

But this was a time when the English themselves were expanding their own sense of freedom. Their ideas about liberty and equality and justice were part of the Enlightenment period that the English went through. That's the period from about 1690 to 1790. And even the poorest Englishman knew he had rights, which is part of that Enlightenment philosophy.

So the problem then became how to justify slavery, especially as the anti-slavery movement got started. At first it was heathenism. You could say, "Well, yeah. We could keep these people enslaved because they were heathens." But

# Glimpses of Jim Crow



presumably have souls?

During the Revolutionary period you get the birth of these new ideas of equality, fraternity and the American Revolution and the French Revolution. And opposition to slavery grows. In the light of this opposition to slavery, the pro-slavery people, especially those big planters who owned hundreds of slaves, they really had to find a way of justifying and rationalizing what slavery was all about, to those people who mattered to them.

Jefferson's statement in Notes on the State of Virginia is seen by many historians as not only the major statement about black inferiority, but as the first statement that really propels the colonies into trying to justify slavery. Jefferson actually says he's not sure but hazards the guess that Africans are naturally inferior. But, he says, "We will not be able to know this until science gives us the answers." And so he calls on science to examine human populations and determine that blacks are naturally inferior. And that's exactly what science does. Within a generation after Jefferson writes this, scholars are writing about the natural inferiority of Africans.

### **How does early 19th century science fit into the picture?**

The whole idea of racial science at that time was largely to search for differences between blacks and whites and Indians. But science didn't make race. Race was already part of popular culture because it's the way our society was stratified. Science only came in after Jefferson called upon science to come and confirm the idea of race. It helped to justify the treatment of Africans and Indians.

From the beginning of the 19th century, you find a number of scientists, who begin to look for differences between racial populations. Most important was Dr. Samuel Morton, who in 1839 and 1845, produced a couple of major books that wouldn't have been read by the people at large, but were read by other scholars. And in these books he argues that there are physical differences that can be measured; there are differences in the brains of different populations who are called races.

By the time you get to Morton and then later Louis Agassiz and a number of other people, they are arguing that blacks are not only inferior but they're a separate species altogether; that they were not created by God at the same time as other human beings, but they were a lower form of human - which is a fascinating kind of thing when you think about it. Coming from the 17th century, where Africans were at least considered civilized by some people, and now in the 19th century, Africans are not only considered not civilized, but they're considered a separate species from other human beings? It's a remarkable transformation in thought.

### **What did Samuel Morton do?**

In the 1820s and '30s, a physician by the name of Samuel Morton, who lived in Philadelphia, began to collect skulls. And he collected skulls from populations around the world, and began to measure the internal capacities of these skulls. He devised a mechanism for using mustard seed and other materials to measure the internal capacity. He discovered that African skulls were smaller on average than European skulls, and that different populations had different average measurements in their skulls. This provided confirmation of the belief that Africans were less intelligent than other people.

It was assumed, both by the population at large and by scientists, that people with larger heads and larger brains presumably were more intelligent than people with smaller ones. We now know that this isn't true. There are many people who have small skulls who are highly intelligent. But the fact is that there was a need to have scientific confirmation of the existence of races. And since races had to be different from one another, one of the ways of measuring these differences was essentially to say that the average skull size of races were different.

Now, it's clear that Morton didn't always use similar skulls for comparative purposes. For example, he had some populations such as Indian populations, that were overrepresented by only female skulls. And female skulls are smaller, on average, than male skulls. That's because females are on average smaller in stature than males. Of course, intelligence has nothing to do with brain size.

### **Who were some of the other ethnologists of the period?**

After Morton, there were many other significant and well known scholars in America. One of these was Josiah Nott, who was a physician from Mobile, Alabama, who had studied with Morton. Josiah Nott had some really strange beliefs. He believed, for example, that blacks and whites should not intermarry, and that their progeny (that is, the children of such intermarriages) were abnormal. He also believed that different races were different species.

Nott was the author, or editor actually, of a book called *Types of Mankind*, that was published, interestingly enough, in 1854, the year the Republican anti-slavery party was formed. You see this constant development of scientific confirmation of races as more and more anti-slavery institutions come into being, as the influence of the anti-slavery forces grows. The argument that the pro-slavery people used was to increasingly demonize and dehumanize the people who were slaves.

*Types of Mankind* went through nine editions before the end of the century. It was widely read. But even people who were not literate knew what the findings were. And the findings demonstrated, or at least supposedly confirmed, that Africans were naturally inferior and they should be kept in slavery. They could not function independently of slavery. That's the whole gist of the *Types of Mankind*.

Louis Agassiz became convinced by Morton that Africans were a separate species. And once he became part of Morton's clique, he became the most active spokesman for separate creations of the races. Agassiz came to the Americas from Switzerland. He came to Harvard. He became part of the upper crust society in Cambridge. He was Harvard's most prominent professor. He founded the Museum of Paleontology. He founded all of the biological sciences at Harvard. He was touted as a great man. He gave lectures all over the place. But most importantly, he trained the next generation of scientists in America. And these scientists spread out over America teaching the same kinds of attitudes about racial differences to other people.

### **Why should white people care about this history?**

I think all Americans have to recognize that what has happened to African Americans and to Indian Americans and other people is a terrible thing that has to be righted. It has to be transformed. We have to transform our society and allow everybody to have equal rights and equal access to opportunity and equal education.

But the whole history of racism has been, especially after the Civil War, one in which the popular majority has felt that blacks should occupy the lowest rung of the ladder. They were prevented from getting an education. They were prevented from acquiring land and other forms of property. And all of these terrible forms of repression had a major impact on the way African Americans realize their lives today.

After the Civil War, black Americans had hoped that they would achieve some degree of success and become just like other people. And this is expressed in their writings. They expected to have opportunities, to be equal to other people. But that didn't turn out. And so the next generations were people couldn't acquire the education to develop themselves, they weren't allowed to acquire skills. The vast majority of white Americans are descendants of

immigrants who came here in the 1890s and afterwards. They're not original Americans in that sense. But they were allowed to have access to skills, to jobs, to opportunities which black Americans were denied.

If you give up racism, you're not giving up privileges. What you're doing is expanding privileges. You're not giving up your rights. You're not losing anything. What you would be doing is gaining something. White Americans don't realize how much has been lost by their failure to integrate blacks into the community. A great deal of talent, a great deal of skills and wonderful creativeness has been lost, simply because we've not allowed black Americans to become part of this total society.

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## SECTION FOUR

### The Historical Origins and Development of Racism

By *George M. Fredrickson*

SOURCE: [http://www.pbs.org/race/000\\_About/002\\_04-background-02-01.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-background-02-01.htm)

Racism exists when one ethnic group or historical collectivity dominates, excludes, or seeks to eliminate another on the basis of differences that it believes are hereditary and unalterable. An ideological basis for explicit racism came to a unique fruition in the West during the modern period. No clear and unequivocal evidence of racism has been found in other cultures or in Europe before the Middle Ages. The identification of the Jews with the devil and witchcraft in the popular mind of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was perhaps the first sign of a racist view of the world. Official sanction for such attitudes came in sixteenth century Spain when Jews who had converted to Christianity and their descendents became the victims of a pattern of discrimination and exclusion.

The period of the Renaissance and Reformation was also the time when Europeans were coming into increasing contact with people of darker pigmentation in Africa, Asia, and the Americas and were making judgments about them. The official rationale for enslaving Africans was that they were heathens, but slave traders and slave owners sometimes interpreted a passage in the book of Genesis as their justification. Ham, they maintained, committed a sin against his father Noah that condemned his supposedly black descendants to be "servants unto servants." When Virginia decreed in 1667 that converted slaves could be kept in bondage, not because they were actual heathens but because they had heathen ancestry, the justification for black servitude was thus changed from religious status to something approaching race. Beginning in the late seventeenth century laws were also passed in English North America forbidding marriage between whites and blacks and discriminating against the mixed offspring of informal liaisons. Without clearly saying so, such laws implied that blacks were unalterably alien and inferior.

During the Enlightenment, a secular or scientific theory of race moved the subject away from the Bible, with its insistence on the essential unity of the human race. Eighteenth century ethnologists began to think of human beings as part of the natural world and subdivided them into three to five races, usually considered as varieties of a single human species. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, an increasing number of writers, especially those committed to the defense of slavery, maintained that the races constituted separate species.

The Nineteenth century was an age of emancipation, nationalism, and imperialism--all of which contributed to the growth and intensification of ideological racism in Europe and the United States. Although the emancipation of

blacks from slavery and Jews from the ghettos received most of its support from religious or secular believers in an essential human equality, the consequence of these reforms was to intensify rather than diminish racism. Race relations became less paternalistic and more competitive. The insecurities of a burgeoning industrial capitalism created a need for scapegoats. The Darwinian emphasis on "the struggle for existence" and concern for "the survival of the fittest" was conducive to the development of a new and more credible scientific racism in an era that increasingly viewed race relations as an arena for conflict rather than as a stable hierarchy.

The growth of nationalism, especially romantic cultural nationalism, encouraged the growth of a culture-coded variant of racist thought, especially in Germany. Beginning in the late 1870s and early 1880s, the coiners of the term "antisemitism" made explicit what some cultural nationalists had previously implied--that to be Jewish in Germany was not simply to adhere to a set of religious beliefs or cultural practices but meant belonging to a race that was the antithesis of the race to which true Germans belonged.

The climax of Western imperialism in the late nineteenth century "scramble for Africa" and parts of Asia and the Pacific represented an assertion of the competitive ethnic nationalism that existed among European nations (and which, as a result of the Spanish-American War came to include the United States). It also constituted a claim, allegedly based on science, that Europeans had the right to rule over Africans and Asians.

The climax of the history of racism came in the twentieth century in the rise and fall of what might be called overtly racist regimes. In the American South, the passage of racial segregation laws and restrictions on black voting rights reduced African Americans to lower caste status. Extreme racist propaganda, which represented black males as ravening beasts lusting after white women, served to rationalize the practice of lynching. A key feature of the racist regime maintained by state law in the South was a fear of sexual contamination through rape or intermarriage, which led to efforts to prevent the conjugal union of whites with those with any known or discernable African ancestry.

Racist ideology was eventually of course carried to its extreme in Nazi Germany. It took Hitler and his cohorts to attempt the extermination of an entire ethnic group on the basis of a racist ideology. Hitler, it has been said, gave racism a bad name. The moral revulsion of people throughout the world against what the Nazis did, reinforced by scientific studies undermining racist genetics (or eugenics), served to discredit the scientific racism that had been respectable and influential in the United States and Europe before the Second World War.

Explicit racism also came under devastating attack from the new nations resulting from the decolonization of Africa and Asia and their representatives in the United Nations. The Civil Rights movement in the United States, which succeeded in outlawing legalized racial segregation and discrimination in the 1960s drew crucial support from the growing sense that national interests were threatened when blacks in the United States were mistreated and abused. In the competition with the Soviet Union for "the hearts and minds" of independent Africans and Asians, Jim Crow and the ideology that sustained it became a national embarrassment with possible strategic consequences.

The one racist regime that survived the Second World War and the Cold War was the South African in 1948. The laws passed banning all marriage and sexual relations between different "population groups" and requiring separate residential areas for people of mixed race ("Coloreds"), as well as for Africans, signified the same obsession with "race purity" that characterized the other racist regimes. However the climate of world opinion in the wake of the Holocaust induced apologists for apartheid to avoid, for the most part, straightforward biological racism and rest their case for "separate development" mainly on cultural rather than physical differences.

The defeat of Nazi Germany, the desegregation of the American South in the 1960s, and the establishment of majority rule in South Africa suggest that regimes based on biological racism or its cultural essentialist equivalent are a thing of the past. But racism does not require the full and explicit support of the state and the law. Nor does it require an ideology centered on the concept of biological inequality. Discrimination by institutions and individuals against those perceived as racially different can long persist and even flourish under the illusion of non-racism, as historians of Brazil have recently discovered. The use of allegedly deep-seated cultural differences as a justification for hostility and discrimination against newcomers from the Third World in several European countries has led to allegations of a new "cultural racism." Recent examples of a functionally racist cultural determinism are not in fact unprecedented. They rather represent a reversion to the way that the differences between groups could be made to seem indelible and unbridgeable before the articulation of a scientific or naturalistic conception of race in the eighteenth century.

George M. Fredrickson is Edgar E. Robinson Professor Emeritus of United States History at Stanford University.

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## SECTION FIVE

### Africans, Slavery, and Race

*By John Cheng*

SOURCE: [http://www.pbs.org/race/000\\_About/002\\_04-background-02-03.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-background-02-03.htm)

#### **Was it inevitable that Africans would be imported to the Americas to become slaves? Did European views about racial inferiority contribute to the fact of New World African slavery?**

Although today we might think that racial attitudes have always existed, and that they influenced or contributed to the emergence of the transatlantic African slave trade, the reverse is, in fact, true. Modern ideas about race, racial difference and inferiority emerged to explain the societies that arose in the New World as a result of slavery.

#### **Different Colonies, Different Societies**

The earliest European colonizers of the Americas, the Spanish, did not develop significant slave societies in its colonies. Columbus tried to grow sugar for profit, forcing indigenous people on the island of Hispaniola to work his fields, but his efforts were unsuccessful. Cortés and Pizarro's conquest of the Aztec and Incan empires in the early 16th century, however, gave the Spanish an alternative source of wealth. The Spanish assumed control of these large Central and South American empires' systems for tribute. Using existing arrangements for indigenous *corvée* labor, they extracted gold and silver from established mines, filling the coffers of a quickly emerging global Spanish empire and providing specie and currency for its trade and economy.

The Europeans who followed found no similar natural wealth in the regions they settled - the Portuguese in Brazil, then later, the Dutch, French and British on the coasts (including what is now Louisiana) and in the islands of the Caribbean. Instead, continuing Columbus' lead, they tried to establish colonies to produce agricultural goods to sell and trade, again using indigenous peoples as a workforce. These attempts failed because natives were not familiar with European farming methods and because they escaped and fled into territories they knew well. Portuguese

outposts on the western coast of Africa, established as way stations for their fleets to travel into the Indian Ocean and further east, provided an alternative supply of labor. African slaves - initially captured in intertribal warfare but later directly for sale in what became a lucrative slave trade - were sold and shipped to the Americas to be the workforce for European colonial enterprises. This African enslavement was driven, not out of a sense of racial inferiority, but to satisfy labor needs. Although initially not profitable, the value of the African slaves themselves as well as the emergence of new European tastes - and a market - for American-produced luxuries such as chocolate and tobacco, eventually resulted in an enormous and profitable system of trans-Atlantic trade. European ships carried supplies to African slave ports. From there, cargoes of recently captured slaves were shipped to the Americas from Africa, where those who survived the horrific journey were sold as chattel. Plantations, part of a new form and system of agricultural production, purchased these slaves in large numbers to work fields that grew rice, indigo, cacao, tobacco, and sugar for the return trade back to Europe. Slaves became such a large part of the population and their work such a large part of the economy in these colonies that historians now call them as "slave societies." "Race," as it developed in these colonial slave societies was different from how it developed in the United States.

## **Colonial America**

The situation was different in the British colonies that became the United States. The New England colonies were established as places for followers of Protestant dissenters to live and practice their religious faith. The Chesapeake colonies, Virginia and Maryland, established in the early 17th century, and later the Carolinas, were settlement colonies where land was initially given to colonists in exchange for their efforts to cultivate and work it. Those colonists who fared well in the harsh conditions could accumulate enough land to require additional labor to work their holdings. After unsuccessful attempts to use native groups as workers, wealthy colonists imported indentured servants from Britain - an available supply of workers because of population growth. In the first century of Virginia's existence, 100,000 of the 130,000 British arrivals to the colony were indentures. Beginning in the 1620s, colonists also began to import slaves, although most were from the Americas and not directly from Africa. While slaves were present in these British colonies, the larger presence of European settlers and servants meant that their societies and economies were mixed, or what historians, "societies with slaves."

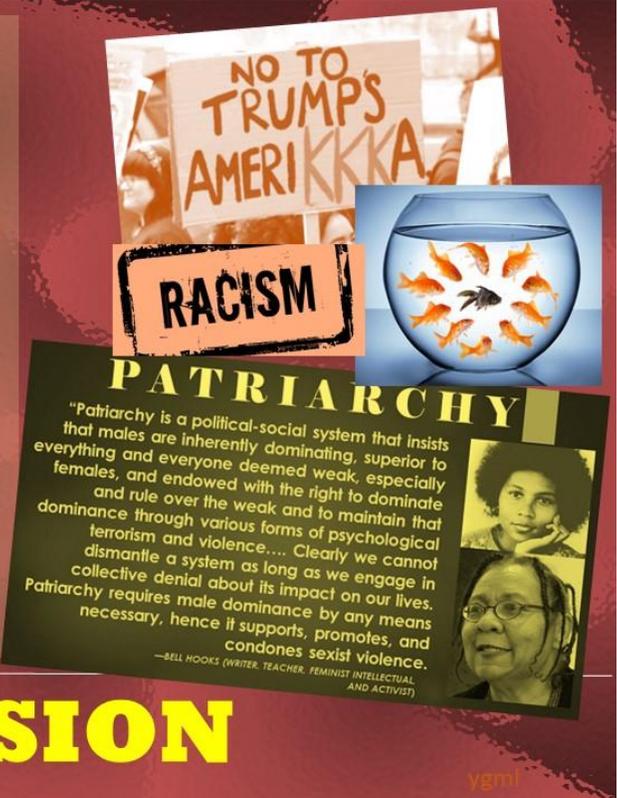
Although it was permanent servitude, slavery in the 17th century Chesapeake was not like slavery as it later developed and in some ways, was difficult to distinguish from indentured servitude. In an era where few laws defined slavery, slaves enjoyed limited rights including the ability to work land for themselves, to own property, including other slaves, and to marry. Children of slaves did not inherit their parents' bondage. Although it was not generally the case, slaves could earn or save enough money to purchase their own freedom. While indentured servants worked under temporary, as opposed to permanent, terms of service, the life expectancy in the early decades of the Chesapeake colonies was so low that almost two-thirds did not survive to the end of their contracts. Indentured servants often worked with slaves under the same conditions - one reason why there was occasional intermarriage between the two groups, European and African.

## **How Did Race Develop in This Context?**

The harsh conditions and low life expectancy of colonists in Virginia eventually changed as settlers became more familiar with its climate and their environment. Increased survival and a continued influx of colonists brought population growth and an increasing demand for land, which became more scarce and further removed from access to roads and water transportation, both vital for agricultural commerce. Landholdings in Virginia expanded from the Tidewater region of fertile lands and easily navigable rivers into the less fertile lands of the Piedmont foothills and beyond, where they collided with the territorial interests of native groups. An emerging planter class of colonists who had succeeded in accumulating land and money shared few and fewer interests with newly arrived immigrants, more and more of them indentured workers who survived long enough to want to claim land for themselves, and many of whom continued to share interests and concerns with African slaves and freedmen.

The volatility of the tensions grew as the colony grew and decades passed, exploding in 1676 in what became known as Bacon's Rebellion. Initially a conflict between William Berkeley, the governor of Virginia, and Nathaniel Bacon, a wealthy settler in the Virginia upcountry, over land and Indian relations in the western part of the colony,

**“Human beings are sufficiently altruistic, intelligent, and rational to preclude oppression solely for the sake of oppression. In other words, at the root of all forms of oppression (classism, disablism, ethnicism, racism, sexism, etc.) is exploitation for purposes that range from material aggrandizement to scapegoating to empire-building.**



**OPPRESSION**

ygml

the rebellion sparked concerns about class and race when Bacon went east to Jamestown, the colonial capital. Arrested, then pardoned by Berkeley, Bacon returned with a small army and promised to grant freedom to slaves and indentured servants who rallied to his cause - as did Berkeley, less successfully. His followers seized and set fire to Jamestown and temporarily gained control of the colony. The rebellion itself proved short-lived when Bacon died suddenly a month later and many of his followers were executed, but its larger implications remained. Beyond Bacon's specific issues, the coalition between poor whites and African slaves and freedmen in his rebellion produced a larger concern that such a coalition might remain a continuing source of further revolts and class uprisings.

Such concerns, however, were mitigated by intervening circumstances. In the years following Bacon's Rebellion, the distinction between indentured servitude and slavery grew into a pronounced difference. Indenture became less attractive as a source of labor because servants now lived long enough to claim land - as the rebellion had demonstrated violently - and improved economic conditions in Britain reduced the supply of workers willing to come to America and increased the price of their contracts. Africans continued to be readily available, and because many were not Christian, they could be enslaved and regulated in a manner that indentures could not. Virginia enacted a series of laws, constituting a formal slave code that removed many of the rights slaves had previously enjoyed and added further restrictions to slavery including anti-miscegenation statutes. Previously one of several labor sources, slaves became Virginia's primary workforce for its plantations, and slavery an integral institution within its society.

With the hardening of slavery came the emergence of race. Previously, people's appearance and origins had not mattered as much before socially, particularly among the working class. The physical distinctiveness of African slaves - now absent similar European indentured servants - however, not only marked their newly created

subordinate position within Virginian society, it became the justification and reason for that position. Virginia's example, in turn, became a model that other British colonies with slaves, when they were created, followed with a mutually reinforcing dynamic. "Race" explained why Africans were slaves, while slavery's degradation supplied the evidence for their inferiority. When Thomas Jefferson observed almost a century later that Africans were slaves, the apparent naturalness of their position had erased the actual social history that had produced it.

John Cheng is a historian who teaches at George Mason University. This background reading is an original summary of key scholarly articles, many of which are listed in our Resources.

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## **PART TWO**

# **The Special Case of Modern European Racism in the 20th Century, and Its Legacy in the 21st Century**

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## **SECTION SIX**

### **Universality of Race and Racism in the Early Twentieth Century**

By Jeffrey E. Cole

SOURCE: *Europe Since 1914: Encyclopedia of the Age of War and Reconstruction*. Ed. John Merriman and Jay Winter. Vol. 4. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2006. p2147-2153. Copyright: COPYRIGHT 2006 Gale

Racism is an ideology that holds the human species is composed of discrete subpopulations or "races" whose distinctive traits are attributable to common ancestry, and that so-called races are characterized by different and unequal physical and mental endowments; racism can also refer to related exclusionary and discriminatory practices, and their effects. While the term *racism* dates to the anti-Nazi struggles of the 1930s, racist ideology and practice emerged earlier in the context of European colonialism and slavery. While race may appear to be an undeniable characteristic of individual persons, scholars have demonstrated that racial categories themselves are cultural

products rather than accurate reflections of biology. Racism finds multiple expressions, from individual talk and thought to political mobilization to government intervention. Because it views biology and culture as inextricably linked, racist ideology invokes an idealized nation and makes appeals to the state. Finally, as a theory of history, a prescription for relations between races, and an agenda for the future, racism as ideology and practice must be understood in the context of political and economic competition. The history of racism in Europe since 1914 clearly demonstrates that: (1) racial classification is a contested and variable process, (2) racist thought and action takes many forms, (3) racism and nationalism are closely linked and that the most forceful racist movements rely on state power, and (4) racism is a means and byproduct of domination and conflict.

*Race* was a term used quite loosely in the early twentieth century. The term could refer to the major divisions (black, brown, red, yellow, white) of the species identified by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach in the late eighteenth century, to regional subpopulations, or even to nationalities, linguistic families, coreligionists, or economic classes. Various physical features and even psychological dispositions, assumed to be ancient and unchanging, were identified as racial traits. While some maintained that pure races still existed, most scholars described contemporary populations as composed of a mixture of racial elements. Europeans, for example, were commonly said to represent a mixture of long-headed, fair-haired Nordics; round-headed Alpines; and long-headed, brunette Mediterraneans.

Racist hierarchies generally accompanied racial classification. In an age in which Europeans dominated the globe, science promised to reveal the laws of nature, and political and economic might were viewed as evidence of evolutionary fitness, the physical and mental superiority of whites over nonwhites, and of rich over poor, was widely accepted as indisputable fact. While there was broad agreement that culture and heredity were linked, opinion differed as to the nature of the connection. Those who saw environment shaping human potential argued that education could exercise a beneficial effect on the less fortunate. For those who maintained that biology was destiny, the intrinsic superiority of whites justified colonialism and the appropriation by force of others' labor, resources, and territories. The constraints imposed by nature meant that nonwhites should not experience the same opportunities for education and self-governance enjoyed by whites. Advocates of Nordic supremacy likewise attributed the noblest elements of European civilization to ancient warriors and claimed special privileges for their descendants. A similar line of argument held that within European society workers and minorities were destined to serve the upper classes, who ruled by virtue of superior blood.

This line of reasoning found scientific expression in the eugenics movement. The goal of eugenics, a term coined by Francis Galton in 1883, was the improvement of the human species through selective breeding. Galton claimed that mental ability was a fixed, measurable entity, and that heredity shaped behavior in a simple and direct fashion. The key to improving the English population therefore lay in promoting beneficial traits by encouraging childbirth among the more able and in suppressing deleterious traits by preventing childbirth among the less able. According to Galton, Christian charity and government assistance for the poor, handicapped, and mentally ill were misguided because they stifled the competition that defined evolutionary success.

Eugenics quickly gained institutional recognition and, in the United States and Germany especially, political support.

The rediscovery in 1900 of Gregor Mendel's research on genetics appeared to validate Galton's claims, as did August Weismann's theory of an immutable "germ plasm" of hereditary material. The first International Eugenics Conference was held in 1912, and for the next thirty years eugenicists figured



**German propaganda poster c. 1944.** The poster shows captured black American troops and reads "Among the prisoners of the first day of the German offensive in the west, humiliated negroes."

### **Nordamerikas Kulturträger an der Westfront**

Unter den Gefangenen der ersten Tage der deutschen Offensive im Westen befanden sich auch zahlreiche Neger

prominently in genetic research and intelligence testing, and they

proposed social engineering schemes, including sterilization of the "unfit." While eugenicists ranged across the political spectrum, they believed the scientific management of human populations would result in progress. For its advocates, eugenics offered a hard but scientific perspective into intense competition among countries and the social turmoil associated with industrialism and urbanization. European eugenicists took white superiority for granted, but their focus lay in improving national stock. The English were especially concerned with correcting the perceived defects of the working class. Prominent German scientists sought to identify and promote "superior" traits through the practice of "racial hygiene," the German variant of eugenics established by Alfred Ploetz in the early twentieth century.

## **SECTION SIX-A**

### **Racism in Nazi Germany**

The Weimar years (1918–1933) were characterized by social turmoil, political violence, and economic depression. Vocal anti-Semites blamed the German defeat in World War I on Jews, and there were calls for a renewed German nation under the firm command of a strong leader. Scientists increasingly sought biological causes for social phenomenon. Publications sang the praises of ancient Nordics and their German descendants. The nationalist publisher J. F. Lehmann brought out a series of very popular books promoting racial theories of history. Hans Gunther's *Racial Studies of the German People* (1923) claimed mixing was bad and that the Nordic race was pure and superior to others. *Human Heredity and Racial Hygiene* (1923), written by leading scientists Erwin Baur, Eugen Fischer, and Fritz Lenz, argued for the creation of an improved German nation through selective breeding. Advocates of racial hygiene, drawing inspiration from the political success of eugenicists in the United States, proposed limiting childbirth among the "unfit."



forced sterilization programs, lent racial expertise to resettlement plans for the occupied east, and helped to plan and execute mass murder. Represented as rigorously scientific, the Nazi racial project was in fact characterized by flawed assumptions, suspect methods, flimsy evidence, and political expediency.

In their radical effort to reshape society in accordance with racist theory, the Nazis sought to take control of sexuality, reproduction, and life itself. The Germanic or Aryan elements of the population were identified and promoted through loans and other subsidies for young couples, honors for mothers of many children, certificates to marry, and other measures. Abortion, homosexuality, and sexual relations or marriage with a Jew were defined as race treason. At school and in ubiquitous youth organizations, children and young adults learned that the ideal man was vigorous and pitiless, the ideal woman a faithful wife and fecund mother. The elite SS prided itself on extensive background checks guaranteeing racial purity, and observed elaborate rituals for marriage and childbirth.

The Nazis immediately set out to purge what they regarded as impurities within the German population. The biracial children of African French occupation troops and German mothers, much maligned as "Rhineland bastards," were tracked down and sterilized. Institutionalized mentally ill and handicapped persons were subjected to



**Antisemitism, still alive today**

forced sterilization and harsh conditions. From 1933 to 1939 another three hundred thousand men and women were forcibly sterilized on the grounds that they carried "hereditary diseases" such as "feeble-mindedness," schizophrenia, blindness, physical deformities, and alcoholism. The Nazis also imprisoned, terrorized, and sometimes sterilized those they denigrated as "asocial." This vaguely defined category included women who

changed partners regularly, vagrants, criminals, communists, unionists, prostitutes, and anyone who failed to demonstrate adherence to Nazi ideology. "Gypsies" (Sinti and Roma) were hounded into special camps and kept under observation. Jews, identified as the racial enemy of the German people, were subjected to systematic discrimination and dispossession. Laws in 1933 and 1935 barred Jews (and their spouses) from government jobs, professions, and other occupations; restricted their access to education; forbade marriage and sexual relations with non-Jews; and reduced Jews to second-class citizens. Increasing violence and discrimination, especially after 1938, stripped Jews of their possessions and compelled many to emigrate.

With the invasion of Poland in 1939, the Nazi racist project became increasingly brutal and systematic. Mobile death squads of the SS rampaged, murdering communists, intellectuals, political opponents, and whole Jewish communities. Nazi scientists sorted the conquered by racial type. Children judged to have Aryan blood were taken from their families and shipped to special SS residential centers within Germany. Slavs were forced to work in Poland, and millions were sent to Germany as slave labor. Within months 1.5 million Jews from Germany, Poland, and Austria were herded into ghettos in occupied Poland. Under cover of war, the Nazis also began a "euthanasia" program known as T4, killing some seventy thousand terminally ill and "incurably feeble-minded" individuals from 1940 until the program was terminated the following year amid popular protest. Following the advancing army into the Soviet Union in 1941, SS units again murdered political opponents and Jews; within the first six months of the campaign the SS alone had slaughtered some seven hundred thousand. For Hitler, control of the Soviet Union would secure the space and resources required for lasting Aryan supremacy. As racial inferiors, Slavic peoples would serve the master race; as race enemies, Jews would be forced out or eliminated. In 1942 the Nazis began to implement the Final Solution, drawing on the personnel responsible for and techniques from the T4 program. Jews from the occupied areas were transported to five massive death camps, where they were murdered in gas chambers or worked to death along side "Gypsies," Soviet prisoners of war, and "asocials." The death toll from the death and work camps was without precedent, and included 5 million to 6 million Jews, half of the 5.5 million Soviet prisoners of war, and most of the Sinti and Roma populations.

## SECTION SIX-B

### Repudiation of Racism and Demise of the Race Concept

The virulent racism of the 1920s and 1930s did not go unchallenged. In a series of books published in the early 1930s the British biologist Lancelot Hogben criticized the class bias and simplistic biological determinism of eugenics. His studies demonstrated the complexity of heredity, the reciprocal effect of environment and genes, and the complexity of behaviors such as intelligence. At the same time many anthropologists in Britain and the United States were abandoning the construction of racial typologies based on the measurements of the head and other body parts; developing the methods of ethnography, or long-term residential research, they instead accounted for cultural diversity in terms of social and environmental factors.

But it was the Nazi eugenic project and the specter of a bellicose Germany that galvanized the antiracist critique. In Britain, Julian Huxley and Alfred Haddon's *We Europeans* (1935) exposed the fallacy of pure races, pointed out the arbitrary divisions of racial classifications, dismissed the idea of a Jewish race as a conflation of religion and biology, and rebutted the claims of Nordic or Aryan supremacy. In the United States, Franz Boas, a German-born Jew and leading figure in anthropology, organized students and colleagues in the battle against racism. In *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1911; expanded and updated in 1938), he showed how supposedly stable features such as head

form changed, called for the analytic distinction between race, culture, and language, and argued for the primacy of environment in the development of behavior and mental capacities. He delighted in describing the long history of migration and intermingling of populations within Europe, and stressed the creativity born of such heterogeneity. The Nazis ordered his book burned.

Racism lost scientific and political legitimacy with the revelation of Nazi atrocities. In the postwar period, European governments espoused egalitarian principles and eventually criminalized anti-Semitism, Holocaust denial, and other forms of racism. Ashley Montagu, a former student of Boas and also an immigrant to the United States, assembled an international cast of scientists and in 1950 and 1952 oversaw the composition of statements on race by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). According to these statements, while humanity may be classified into major groups, no pure races exist nor have they ever existed; populations constantly change because of migration and the mechanisms of genetic transmission; race mixing presents no biological danger, and there are no proven differences in intelligence between races; because heredity has no necessary connection to language, geographical area, or nationality, it is incorrect and misleading to describe such populations as races.

Drawing on the "new synthesis" of Mendelian genetics and Darwinian natural selection pioneered by biologists before the war, C. Loring Brace, Frank Livingstone, and others joined Montagu's attack on the race concept in the 1950s and 1960s. They argued that racial typologies poorly describe human diversity because classification hinges on one or a few traits and because traits such as skin color or blood types do not come in neat packages corresponding to traditional racial categories but are instead distributed along a cline or continuum. Rather than merely grouping populations on the basis of a few traits, students of human biology and natural history now sought to understand how and why genetic frequencies changed within and across populations. After initial resistance, most physical anthropologists turned away from the study of race and embraced population genetics. Social scientists also engaged in the postwar reevaluation of race. Studies traced the career of the race concept in the context of colonialism, slavery, and anti-Semitism, and demonstrated the presence and effects of racism in popular culture and institutions.

## SECTION SIX-C

### New Forms of Racism

If racism in Europe was directed primarily at Jews, Slavs, and minority populations before and during World War II, immigrants became the principal targets later. The postwar rebuilding effort and subsequent economic boom required massive inputs of labor, and governments and business interests across Western Europe sought additional workers in (former) colonial possessions and the Mediterranean basin. While most governments imposed restrictions after 1973, the foreign-born population has continued to rise because of family unification, asylum seekers, unauthorized entry, and the transformation of former countries of emigration such as Italy, Spain, and Greece into immigrant destinations. Amid great diversity in legal status, occupational profile, and ethnic origins, many immigrants confront substandard, often segregated housing, limited opportunities for advancement, and negative stereotypes. Children of African and Asian ancestry in particular experience the legacy of old racial hierarchies in subtle and overt forms; they worry that their skin color disqualifies them from full participation in European society even as they struggle to articulate their experience in a political context in which racism does not officially exist.



Anti-immigrant political mobilization and violence have gathered momentum since the 1980s. Because espousing openly racist ideology in a public forum is considered immoral if not illegal in most European countries, anti-immigrant political entrepreneurs denounce racism, distance themselves from neo-Nazis and other violent extremists, and avoid the language of race. Instead, they claim that foreigners constitute an economic burden, provoke social discord, and threaten national culture with their non-European customs; uncaring elites more interested in money than their own citizens have, they say, betrayed national culture. While the first examples of this attack on immigrants appeared in Britain in debates that led to restrictions on Commonwealth immigration, the most able and influential anti-immigrant politician has been Jean-Marie Le Pen. Le Pen describes immigrants as the ruin of France and has been repeatedly convicted of inciting racial hatred for his characterization of the Holocaust as a "detail" of World War II. He long served in the European Parliament and has garnered significant electoral support in his perennial bids for the French presidency. His Front National has served as a model for later populist-nationalist parties across the European Union. This ideology may be regarded as a new form of racism in that culture has replaced former racial terms. Like traditional racism, this view represents social groupings as unchanging entities, places peoples implicitly or explicitly in a hierarchy, condones and encourages popular expressions of intolerance, and calls for exclusionary policy. Such ideologies commonly gloss over class and other divisions to portray the nation simplistically as the enduring, homogeneous legacy of a people.

Several strands of racism and antiracism were evident in Europe in the final years of the twentieth century and the first years of the twenty-first. Under the euphemism "ethnic cleansing," Serbian forces committed mass murder and systematic rape against other nationalities in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. To the west, neo-Nazis continued

to assault Jews, Roma, and people of non-European ancestry. Populist-nationalist parties enjoyed success at the polls in virtually every Western European state, and terrorist attacks by Muslim fundamentalists heightened anxiety about the integration of the Continent's large and growing Muslim population. At the same time immigrants and their descendants continued to contribute to a vibrant multicultural Europe, while scholars and organizations investigated racism in everyday culture, public discourse, and institutions, and the European Union and its member states monitored racism and upheld antidiscrimination laws.

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## SECTION SEVEN

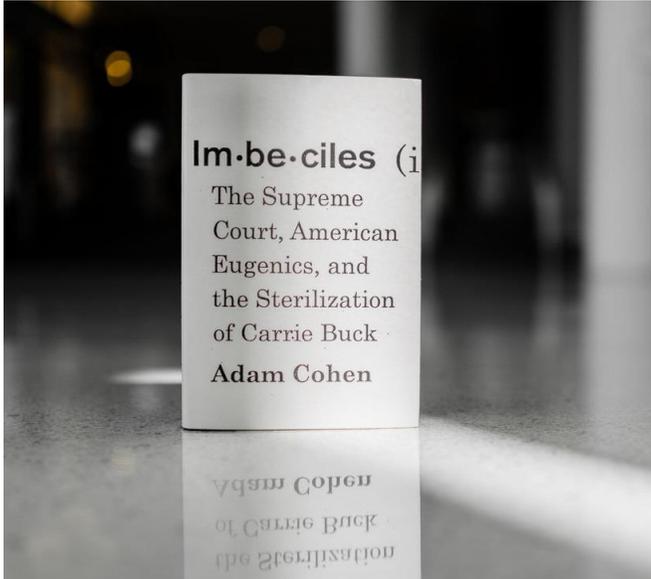
### The Eugenics Movement in the U.S.

Heard on [Fresh Air](#)

SOURCE: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2016/03/07/469478098/the-supreme-court-ruling-that-led-to-70-000-forced-sterilizations> March 7, 2016 1:22 PM ET

## The Supreme Court Ruling that Led to 70,000 Forced Sterilizations

In 1927, the U.S. Supreme Court decided, by a vote of 8 to 1, to uphold a state's right to forcibly sterilize a person considered unfit to procreate. The case, known as *Buck v. Bell*, centered on a young woman named Carrie Buck, whom the state of Virginia had deemed to be "feeble-minded."



Author Adam Cohen tells *Fresh Air's* Terry Gross that *Buck v. Bell* was considered a victory for America's eugenics movement, an early 20th century school of thought that emphasized biological determinism and actively sought to "breed out" traits that were considered undesirable.

"There were all kinds of categories of people who were deemed to be unfit [to procreate]," Cohen says. "The eugenicists looked at evolution and survival of the fittest, as Darwin was describing it, and they believed 'We can help nature along, if we just plan who reproduces and who doesn't reproduce.'"

All told, as many as 70,000 Americans were forcibly sterilized during the 20th century. The victims of state-mandated sterilization included people like Buck who had been labeled "mentally deficient," as well as those who were deaf, blind and diseased. Minorities, poor people and "promiscuous" women were often targeted.

Cohen's new book about the Buck case, *Imbeciles*, takes its name from the terms eugenicists used to categorize the "feeble-minded." In it, he revisits the *Buck v. Bell* ruling and explores the connection between the American eugenics movement and the rise of the Nazi party in Germany.

Cohen notes that the instinct to "demonize" people who are different is still prevalent in the U.S. today, particularly in the debate over immigration.

"I think these instincts to say that we need to stop these other people from 'polluting us,' from changing the nature of our country, they're very real," Cohen warns. "The idea that those who don't remember the past are condemned to repeat it — it's very troubling that we don't remember this past."

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### Interview Highlights

#### On the case of Carrie Buck

This is this poor young woman, really nothing wrong with her physically or mentally, a victim of a terrible sexual assault, and there's a little hearing, she's declared feeble-minded and she gets sent off to the colony for epileptics and feeble-minded. ...

When she's at the colony, the guy who is running the colony, Dr. Albert Priddy, is on the prowl. He's looking for someone to put at the center of this test case that they want to bring, so he's looking for someone to sterilize, and he sees Carrie Buck when she comes in, he does the examination himself, and there are a lot of things about her that excite him. She is deemed to be feeble-minded, she has a mother who is feeble-minded, so that's good because you can show some genetics, and then they're hoping that [her] baby could be determined to be feeble-minded too,

then you could really show a genetic pattern of feeble-mindedness. The fact that she had been pregnant out of wedlock was another strike against her. So he fixes on her and thinks Carrie Buck is going to be the perfect potential plaintiff. ...

He chooses her, and then under the Virginia law, they have to have a sterilization hearing at the colony, which they do and they give her a lawyer (who is really not a lawyer for her; it's really someone who had been the chairman of the board of the colony and was sympathetic to the colony's side) and they have a bit of a sham hearing where she is determined to be a suitable person for sterilization; they vote to sterilize her, and that is the order that then gets challenged by Carrie as the plaintiff first in the Virginia court system and then in the Supreme Court.

### **On why he considers *Buck v. Bell* to be one of the worst Supreme Court decisions in American history**

If you start by just looking at all the human misery that was inflicted, about 70,000 Americans were sterilized as a result of this decision, so that's an awful lot of people who wanted to have children who weren't able to have children. Also, we have to factor in all the many people who were being segregated, who were being held in these institutions for eugenic reasons, because they were feeble-minded, whose lives unfolded living in places like the colony, rather than living in freedom. Beyond the human effect though, there was something just so ugly about this decision and when [we] think about what we want the Supreme Court to be, what the founders wanted the Supreme Court to be, it was supposed to be our temple of justice, the place that people could go when all the other parts of our society, all the other parts of the government, were not treating them right.

### **On how eugenicists sought to address the "threat" to the gene pool**

The eugenicists saw two threats to the national gene pool: One was the external one, which they were addressing through immigration law; the other was the internal one — what to do about the people who were already here. They had a few ideas.

The first eugenics law in the United States was passed in Connecticut in 1895, and it was a law against certain kinds of marriages. They were trying to stop certain unfit people from reproducing through marriage. It wasn't really what they wanted, though, because they realized that people would just reproduce outside of marriage.

**[Click on this link for a visual text \(images\):  
Found In The Archives: America's  
Unsettling Early Eugenics Movement](#)**

So their next idea was what they called segregation. The idea was to get people who were deemed unfit institutionalized during their reproductive years, particularly for women, keep them there, make sure they didn't reproduce, and then women were often let go when they had passed their reproductive years because they were no longer a threat to the gene pool. That had a problem too, though. The problem was that it would be really expensive to segregate, institutionalize the number of people the eugenicists were worried about. ...

Their next idea was eugenic sterilization and that allowed for a model in which they would take people in to institutions, eugenically sterilize them, and then they could let them go, because they were no longer a threat. That's why eugenic sterilization really became the main model that the eugenicists embraced and that many states enacted laws to allow.

### **On deeming people "feeble-minded"**

"Feeble-minded" was really the craze in American eugenics. There was this idea that we were being drowned in a tide of feeble-mindedness — that basically unintelligent people were taking over, reproducing more quickly than the intelligent people — but it was also a very malleable term that was used to define large categories of people that again, were disliked by someone who was in the decision-making position. So, women who were thought to be overly interested in sex, licentious, were sometimes deemed feeble-minded. It was a broad category and it was very hard to prove at one of these feeble-mindedness hearings that you were not feeble-minded.

### **On the involuntary sterilization procedure**

For men it was something like a vasectomy. For women it was a salpingectomy, where they cauterized the path that the egg takes toward fertilization. It was, in the case of women, not minor surgery and when you read about what happened, it's many, many days of recovery and it had certain dangers attached to it, and a lot of the science was still quite new. ...

When you add onto all that, the fact that in many, many cases the women involved were not told what was being done to them, they might be told that they were having an appendectomy, they weren't being told that the government has decided that you are unfit to reproduce and we're then going to have surgery on you, so that just compounds the horror of the situation.

### **On how the Nazis borrowed from the U.S. eugenics sterilization program**

We really were on the cutting edge. We were doing a lot of this in the 1910s and 1920s. Indiana adopted a eugenic sterilization law, America's first in 1907. We were writing the eugenics sterilization statutes that decided who should be sterilized. We also had people who were writing a lot of what might be thought of as pro-Aryan theory. So you have people like Madison Grant who wrote a very popular book called *The Passing of a Great Race*, which really talked about the superiority of Nordics, as he called them, and how they were endangered by all the brown people and the non-Nordics who were taking over.

### **On a 1924 immigration law, which was inspired by eugenicists, that prevented Anne Frank's family from entering the U.S.**

Under the old immigration laws where it was pretty much "show up," they would've been able to emigrate, but suddenly they were trapped by very unfavorable national quotas, so this really was a reason that so many Jews were turned away.

One very poignant aspect of it that I've thought about as I was working on the book is in the late '90s some correspondence appeared, was uncovered, in which Otto Frank was writing repeatedly to the State Department begging for visas for himself and his wife and his two daughters, Margot and Anne, and was turned down, and that was because there were now these quotas in place. If they had not been, it seems clear that he would've been able to get a visa for his whole family, including his daughter Anne Frank.

So when we think about the fact that Anne Frank died in a concentration camp, we're often told that it was because the Nazis believed the Jews were genetically inferior, that they were lesser than Aryans. That's true, but to some extent Anne Frank died in a concentration camp because the U.S. Congress believed that as well.

## SECTION SEVEN-A

# Unwanted Sterilization and Eugenics Programs in the United States

By Lisa Ko

SOURCE: <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/unwanted-sterilization-and-eugenics-programs-in-the-united-states/>

Coerced sterilization is a shameful part of America's history, and one doesn't have to go too far back to find examples of it. Used as a means of controlling "undesirable" populations – immigrants, people of color, poor people, unmarried mothers, the disabled, the mentally ill – federally-funded sterilization programs took place in 32 states throughout the 20th century. Driven by prejudiced notions of science and social control, these programs [informed policies on immigration](#) and segregation.

As historian [William Deverell explains](#) in a piece discussing the "Asexualization Acts" that led to the sterilization of more than 20,000 California men and women, "If you are sterilizing someone, you are saying, if not to them directly, 'Your possible progeny are inassimilable, and we choose not to deal with that.'"

According to Andrea Estrada at UC Santa Barbara, forced sterilization was particularly rampant in California (the state's [eugenics program even inspired the Nazis](#)):

Beginning in 1909 and continuing for 70 years, California led the country in the number of sterilization procedures performed on men and women, often without their full knowledge and consent. Approximately 20,000 sterilizations took place in state institutions, comprising one-third of the total number performed in the 32 states where such action was legal. (from [The UC Santa Barbara Current](#))

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"There is today one state," wrote Hitler, "in which at least weak beginnings toward a better conception [of citizenship] are noticeable. Of course, it is not our model German Republic, but the United States." (from [The L.A. Times](#))

Researcher [Alex Stern](#), author of the new book *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in America*, adds:

"In the early 20th century across the country, medical superintendents, legislators, and social reformers affiliated with an emerging eugenics movement joined forces to put sterilization laws on the books. Such legislation was motivated by crude theories of human heredity that posited the wholesale inheritance of traits associated with a panoply of feared conditions such as criminality, feeble-mindedness, and sexual deviance. Many sterilization advocates viewed reproductive surgery as a necessary public health intervention that would protect society from deleterious genes and the social and economic costs of managing 'degenerate stock'."

**Eugenics** was a commonly accepted means of protecting society from the offspring (and therefore equally suspect) of those individuals deemed inferior or dangerous – the poor, the disabled, the mentally ill, criminals, and people of color.



But California is far from being the only state with such troubled practices. For a disturbing history lesson, check out [this comprehensive database](#) for your state's eugenics history. You can find out more information on state-by-state sterilization policies, the number of victims, institutions where sterilizations were performed, and leading opponents and proponents.



While California's eugenics programs were driven in part by anti-Asian and anti-Mexican prejudice, Southern states also employed sterilization as a means of controlling African American populations. "[Mississippi appendectomies](#)" was another name for unnecessary hysterectomies performed at teaching hospitals in the South on women of color as practice for medical students. This [NBC news article](#) discusses North Carolina's eugenics program, including stories from victims of forced sterilization like [Elaine Riddick](#). A third of the sterilizations were done on girls under 18, even as young as 9. The state also targeted individuals seen as "delinquent" or "unwholesome."

For a closer look, see Belle Bogg's "[For the Public Good](#)," with [original video](#) by Olympia Stone that features Willis Lynch, who was sterilized at the age of 14 while living in a North Carolina juvenile detention facility.

Gregory W. Rutecki, MD writes about the [forced sterilization of Native Americans](#), which persisted into the 1970s and 1980s, with examples of young women receiving tubal ligations when they were getting appendectomies. It's estimated that [as many as 25-50 percent of Native American women were sterilized between 1970 and 1976](#). Forced sterilization programs are also a part of history in Puerto Rico, [where sterilization rates are said to be the highest in the world](#).

## Landmark Cases

The film [No Más Bebés](#) follows the story of Mexican American women who were sterilized under duress while giving birth at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center in the 1960s and 1970s. *Madrigal v. Quilligan*, the case portrayed in the film, is one of several landmark cases that's affected the reproductive rights of underserved populations, for better or for worse.

Here are some other important cases:

[Buck v. Bell](#): In 1927, Carrie Buck, a poor white woman, was the first person to be sterilized in Virginia under a new law. Carrie's mother had been involuntarily institutionalized for being "feebleminded" and "promiscuous." Carrie was assumed to have inherited these traits, and was sterilized after giving birth. This Supreme Court case led to the sterilization of 65,000 Americans with mental illness or developmental disabilities from the 1920s to the '70s.

(Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote in reference to Carrie: “Three generations of imbeciles are enough.”) [The court ruling still stands today](#). [Note: This story was also the subject of a 1994 [made-for-TV movie starring Marlee Matlin](#).]

From the documentary *Fixed to Fail: Buck vs. Bell*.

[Relf v. Weinberger](#): Mary Alice and Minnie Relf, poor African American sisters from Alabama, were sterilized at the ages of 14 and 12. Their mother, who was illiterate, had signed an “X” on a piece of paper she believed gave permission for her daughters, who were both mentally disabled, to receive birth control shots. In 1974, the Southern Poverty Law Center filed a lawsuit on behalf of the Relf sisters, revealing that 100,000 to 150,000 poor people were being sterilized each year under federally-funded programs.

[Eugenics Compensation Act](#): In December 2015, the [US Senate voted unanimously to help surviving victims of forced sterilization](#). North Carolina has paid \$35,000 to 220 surviving victims of its eugenics program. [Virginia agreed to give surviving victims \\$25,000 each](#).

## Reproductive Justice Today

While the case in *No Más Bebés* occurred forty years ago, issues of [reproductive justice](#) are still relevant today, as state laws continue to restrict access to abortion and birth control. [Deborah Reid of the National Health Law program writes](#):

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*Popular Science Monthly*

# Registering Human Pedigrees

How Kansas Develops Fitter Families;  
A Remarkable Experiment in Eugenics

By Arthur Capper, U. S. Senator from Kansas



Mrs. Mary T. Watts,  
Audubon, Iowa

**T**HE average American family of today is the result of haphazard mating. Men and women marry with little scientific thought as to their physical and mental fitness for bearing and rearing children. When the children come they too often are brought up in the same haphazard fashion in which their parents chose each other. Is it any wonder that the number of mentally and physically unfit increases?

For years, American farmers and breeders



The Eugenics Building at the Kansas Free Fair, where families are judged and registered. Seated in the center is a “fitter family” surrounded by examiners



Dr. Florence B. Sherbon,  
University of Kansas

member of a family. Another sheet of the record shows the results of the intelligence test, and an examination by a psychiatric specialist of the nerve reflexes, emotional and intellectual responses. A thorough structural examination is made, including strength tests and measurements. The medical record gives the results of a complete physical and organic examination, with blood pressure, hemoglobin blood test and the Wasserman blood test. Every member of the family is examined

“The concept of reproductive justice, which is firmly rooted in a human rights framework that supports the ability of all women to make and direct their own reproductive decisions. These decisions could include obtaining contraception, abortion, sterilization, and/or maternity care. Accompanying that right is the obligation of the government and larger society to create laws, policies, and systems conducive to supporting those decisions.”

For organizations such as the [National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health](#), reproductive justice involves not only access to affordable birth control, abortion, and health care, but also providing access to women who are [being held in immigration detention centers](#).

It’s work that connects the dots between power inequities and bodily self-determination – something the eugenics movement sought to limit. As *No Más Bebés* director Renee Tajima-Peña says in an interview with [Colorlines](#): “The reproductive justice framework is to make sure that people listen to the needs and the voices of poor women, women of color and immigrant women who’ve been marginalized.”

**For Further Reading:**

[Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America](#), by Alex Stern

[States of Delinquency: Race and Science in the Making of California’s Juvenile Justice System](#), by Miroslava Chavez-Garcia

[Fit to Be Citizens: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939](#), by Natalia Molina

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## PART THREE

### Race/Racism—The Present

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## SECTION EIGHT

### Colorblind Racism; Institutional Racism; Systemic Racism; Structural Racism; They are all the Same Animal

#### **How Colorblindness Is Actually Racist**

By [Dani Bostick](#) Jul 12, 2017

SOURCE: [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/dani-bostick/how-colorblindness-is-act\\_b\\_10886176.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/dani-bostick/how-colorblindness-is-act_b_10886176.html)

Colorblindness is a common response to racism. More specifically, it is a common response from white people attempting to reject racism. “I am colorblind. I see people, not color. We are all the same.” You might even teach your kids this perspective with the best intentions.

Here are ways colorblindness is actually racist:

**Colorblindness foists whiteness on everyone.** It is another way of saying, “I view everyone as if they were white.” Your default color for sameness is white.

**Colorblindness strips non-white people of their uniqueness.** Your default culture for sameness is white culture. When you encourage your child to be colorblind and view everyone as “the same,” you are projecting white on people of who aren’t white, negating their experiences, traditions, and uniqueness.

**Colorblindness suppresses critically important narratives of oppression.** Once you view everyone through a colorblind, white lens, you deny the reality that non-white people face. After police shot and killed Philando Castile, a black man, [the Governor of Minnesota asked](#), “Would this have happened if those passengers, the driver here were white? I don’t think it would have.” Philando Castile’s blackness is essential to an honest narrative of his death. Colorblindness assumes that a white man would have been shot in a similar manner that day.

**Colorblindness assumes everyone has the same experience here in America.** When you fail to see color, you fail to recognize injustice and oppression. [Comedian Louis CK explains the fallacy of this assumption brilliantly](#). “I love being white,” he says. “Here’s how great it is to be white: If I would have a time machine, I could go to any time and it would be awesome when I get there! That is exclusively a white privilege! Black people cant f— with time machines!”

**Colorblindness promotes the idea that non-white races are inferior.** When you teach your child to be colorblind, you are essentially telling them, “If someone isn’t white, pretend they look like you so you can be friends.” Stripping people of a fundamental aspect of their identity by claiming not to see color is dehumanizing.

Race is not the only factor that defines people. Gender, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, ability, trauma history, and socioeconomic status (to name just a few) are factors that can result in marginalization, injustice, and oppression.

Promoting colorblindness is easy. In such conversations with children, colorblindness eliminates the need to recognize and discuss extremely uncomfortable realities while perpetuating a culture of racism, injustice, and oppression. Be brave. Have the tough conversations. Acknowledging differences is not racist; it is the opposite of racist.

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## SECTION NINE

### The Danger of Teaching Children to Be ‘Colorblind’

By [Valerie Strauss](#) March 30, 2016

SOURCE: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2016/03/30/the-danger-of-teaching-children-to-be-colorblind>

Teaching young people about race and its role in the history, present and future of this country is as important as any other subject — but, as this post explains, one that many whites still grapple with. This was written by Marie-Anne Suizzo, an associate professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Texas at

Austin and a Public Voices Fellow with the [OpEd Project](#), a non-profit working to increase the range of public voices and ideas. Suizzo's research focuses on parenting and child development across cultures and ethnicities.

*By Marie-Anne Suizzo*

In a [recent episode of "Grey's Anatomy"](#), two doctors, one black and one white, have a conversation about racism. The white one is asking the black one for advice. She fears she may have appeared racist because she chose a white intern over a black intern for a surgery.

The part I liked most about this scene is how it portrayed the confusion of the white doctor. She was confident that race had played no part in her choice, and she was horrified that she might have been perceived as a racist by the black intern. It became the black doctor's job to reassure her that she was not racist. Her anxiety about being judged racist dominated the conversation. And that white anxiety, not guilt or shame, may be the single biggest obstacle to eroding racism and building meaningful cross-racial relationships.

But white anxiety starts during childhood when white children are often taught that all skin colors are equal and should therefore be ignored. This is called "colorblind socialization" and many white parents practice it with their children early on in a well-intentioned but highly damaging attempt to prevent racism. The way colorblind socialization plays out is to avoid any conversations about skin color. If a child brings it up, you must quickly correct and silence them and explain that mentioning someone's skin color is rude, and even racist.

The problem with this strategy is that instead of nurturing children's natural curiosity about differences, it teaches them to be wary and to feel ashamed if they even notice their friends' skin color.

In one of the [only studies on white parents' conversations about race](#), my colleagues and I at the University of Texas at Austin invited 84 white mothers to read two children's books with their preschoolers.

[One was about zebras](#) and asked readers to ponder what might happen if some zebras lost their black stripes and others lost their white stripes. Would they still be friends? The [other book was about an African American boy](#) drawing a picture with the help of his diverse friends. Despite prompting readers to talk about skin color, these books yielded amazingly few conversations about racism.

In fact, 89 percent of the mother-child pairs talked about the zebras' colors without ever bringing up race, ethnicity, or diversity in humans. And nearly 94 percent read the second book without ever mentioning the fact that the main character was African American.

The problem is that regardless of what happens at home, when children go to school they find themselves in classrooms with other children who may not be their color. And they notice. [Research](#) shows that most children can distinguish between skin colors before they can walk, and by the age of 6, they understand that some colors are considered superior to others and may themselves engage in stereotyping.

Despite all our best intentions to avoid and mute any mention of racism, children learn about it from their environments. In fact, in [our study](#) of white mothers, we found that the colors of the mothers' friends made a difference in their children's perceptions. Moms with a higher percentage of non-white friends had children with more positive attitudes towards African Americans. So even if we openly condemn racism, our children's attitudes are affected by the color of the company we keep. Not talking about color or teaching children to ignore it because diversity is only skin-deep will not stop the spread of racism.

African American parents have known this for a long time. They teach their children about racism through a process called "racial socialization." [Racial socialization](#) involves talking to children about the color of their skin and preparing them to live in a world where people will treat them differently and sometimes unfairly because of their

skin color. Racial socialization also involves positive lessons such as sharing stories about cultural and family heritage and telling children that they are equal to everyone else despite what racists think.

In a [study of African American mothers of young children](#), my colleagues and I found that mothers talked with their children about what it meant to be black, both the positive aspects of cultural pride and the negative aspects of dealing with racist people, as early as age 4. These mothers expressed deep concern with how to balance these two opposite poles, and also with knowing when is the right age and the right moment to present these issues to their babies. They worried that teaching them too young might damage their growing self-esteem or make it harder for them to feel comfortable with their white peers.

But research suggests that talking about racism with young children of color is worth the risk. [Many studies show](#) that for African Americans, teaching children about racism and how to defend against it actually buffers them from the most harmful psychological effects of racist experiences. Because for African Americans, as for most members of ethnic minority groups, experiencing racism is an inevitable fact of life that starts as early as elementary school.

But white children do not share this experience – so is it really that necessary to talk about it with them, especially when they are young? Yes.

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## SECTION TEN

### 5 Examples of Institutional Racism in the United States

#### **What is the definition of institutional racism?**

by [Nadra Kareem Nittle](#) Updated March 18, 2017

SOURCE: <https://www.thoughtco.com/examples-of-institutional-racism-in-the-u-s-2834624>

Institutional racism is defined as racism perpetrated by government entities such as schools, the courts or the military. Unlike the racism perpetrated by individuals, institutional racism has the power to negatively affect the bulk of people belonging to a racial group.

While individual Americans may harbor racist feelings about certain groups, racism in the United States would not have thrived if institutions hadn't perpetuated discrimination against people of color for centuries. The institution of slavery kept blacks in bondage for generations. Other institutions, such as the church, played roles in maintaining slavery and segregation.

Racism in medicine has led to unethical medical experiments involving people of color and to minorities still receiving substandard treatment today. At present, a number of groups—blacks, Latinos, Arabs and South Asians—find themselves racially profiled for a variety of reasons. If institutional racism isn't wiped out, there's little hope that racial discrimination will ever be erased in the United States.

## [Slavery in the U.S.](#)

Arguably no episode in U.S. history has left a greater imprint on race relations than slavery, commonly referred to as the “peculiar institution.” Slavery continues to fuel racist attitudes and racial discrimination across the globe.

Despite its far-reaching impact, many Americans would be hard-pressed to name basic facts about slavery, such as when it began, how many slaves were shipped to the U.S. and when it ended for everyone. Slaves in Texas, for example, remained in bondage two years after [President Abraham Lincoln](#) signed the Emancipation Proclamation. The holiday Juneteenth celebrates the release of Texas slaves.

Before legislation was passed to end slavery, slaves across the world fought for freedom by organizing slave rebellions. What’s more, the descendants of slaves fought against attempts to perpetuate racism after slavery during the [civil rights movement](#). [More »](#)

## [Racism in Medicine](#)

Racism has influenced U.S. health care in the past and continues to do so today. The most shameful chapters in American history involve the U.S. government funding studies that allowed poor black men in Alabama to succumb to syphilis or Guatemalan prison inmates, mental health patients and soldiers to be afflicted with the disease and other sexually transmitted infections.

Government agencies also played a role in sterilizing black women in North Carolina, Puerto Rican women and Native American women. Today, health care organizations appear to be taking steps to reach out to minority groups, such as the Kaiser Family Foundation’s landmark survey of black women in 2011. [More »](#)

## [Race and World War II](#)

World War II marked both racial advancements and setbacks in United States. On one hand, it gave underrepresented groups such as [blacks](#), [Asians](#) and Native Americans the opportunity to show they had the skill and intellect necessary to excel in the military. On the other hand, Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor led the federal government to evacuate Japanese Americans from the West Coast and force them into internment camps for fear that they were still loyal to the Japanese empire.

Years later the U.S. government issued a formal apology for its treatment of Japanese Americans. Not one Japanese American was found to have engaged in espionage during World War II. [More »](#)

## [Review of Racial Profiling](#)

Everyday untold numbers of Americans are the targets of racial profiling because of their ethnic background. People of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent report being routinely profiled at the nation’s airports. Black and Latino men have been disproportionately targeted by the New York City Police Department’s stop and frisk program.

Moreover, states such as Arizona have faced criticism and boycotts for attempting to pass anti-immigrant legislation that [civil rights activists](#) say has led to racial profiling of Hispanics. [More »](#)

## **Race, Intolerance and the Church**

Religious institutions have not been untouched by racism. A number of Christian denominations have apologized for discriminating against people of color by supporting Jim Crow and backing slavery. The United Methodist Church and the Southern Baptist Convention are some of the Christian organizations that have apologized for perpetuating racism in recent years.

Today, many churches have not only apologized for alienating minority groups such as blacks but have also attempted to make their churches more diverse and appoint people of color in key roles. Despite these efforts, churches in the U.S. remain largely racially segregated.

## Wrapping Up

A number of 21st century social movements, such as Black Lives Matter, seek to address institutional racism across the board--from the legal system to schools. Activists, including abolitionists and suffragettes, have long had success in overturning some forms of institutional racism.

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## SECTION ELEVEN

### Definition of Systemic Racism in Sociology Beyond Prejudice and Micro-Agressions

by [Nicki Lisa Cole, Ph.D.](#) Updated January 26, 2018

SOURCE: <https://www.thoughtco.com/systemic-racism-3026565>

Systemic racism is both a theoretical concept and a reality. As a theory, it is premised on the research-supported claim that the United States was founded as a racist society, that racism is thus embedded in all social institutions, structures, and social relations within our society. Rooted in a racist foundation, systemic racism today is composed of intersecting, overlapping, and codependent racist institutions, policies, practices, ideas, and behaviors that give an unjust amount of resources, rights, and power to [white people](#) while denying them to people of color.

#### Definition of Systemic Racism

Developed by sociologist Joe Feagin, systemic racism is a popular way of explaining, within the social sciences and humanities, the significance of [race](#) and [racism](#) both historically and in today's world. Feagin describes the concept and the realities attached to it in his well-researched and readable book, *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, & Future Reparations*. In it, Feagin uses historical evidence and demographic statistics to create a theory that asserts that the United States was founded in racism since the Constitution classified black people as the property of whites. Feagin illustrates that the legal recognition of racialized slavery is a cornerstone of a racist social system in which resources and rights were and are unjustly given to white people and unjustly denied to people of color.

The theory of systemic racism accounts for individual, institutional, and structural forms of racism.

The development of this theory was influenced by other scholars of race, including Frederick Douglass, [W.E.B. Du Bois](#), Oliver Cox, Anna Julia Cooper, Kwame Ture, Frantz Fanon, and [Patricia Hill Collins](#), among others.

Feagin defines systemic racism in the introduction to the book:

Systemic racism includes the complex array of antiblack practices, the unjustly gained political-economic power of whites, the continuing economic and other resource inequalities along racial lines, and the white racist ideologies and attitudes created to maintain and rationalize white privilege and power. *Systemic* here means that the core racist realities are manifested in each of society's major parts [...] each major part of U.S. society--the economy, politics, education, religion, the family--reflects the fundamental reality of systemic racism.

While Feagin developed the theory based on the history and reality of anti-black racism in the U.S., it is usefully applied to understanding how racism functions generally, both within the U.S. and around the world.

Elaborating on the definition quoted above, Feagin uses historical data in his book to illustrate that systemic racism is primarily composed of seven major elements, which we will review here.



### **Impoverishment of People of Color and Enrichment of White People**

Feagin explains that the undeserved impoverishment of people of color (POC), which is the basis of the undeserved enrichment of white people, is one of the core aspects of systemic racism. In the U.S. this includes the role that Black slavery played in creating unjust wealth of for white people, their businesses, and their families. It

also includes the way white people exploited labor throughout the European colonies prior to the founding of the United States. These historical practices created a social system that had racist economic inequality built into its foundation, and were followed through the years in numerous ways, like the practice of "[redlining](#)" that prevented POC from buying homes that would allow their family wealth to grow while protecting and stewarding the family wealth of white people.

Undeserved impoverishment also results from POC being forced into [unfavorable mortgage rates](#), being channeled by [unequal opportunities for education](#) into low-wage jobs, and [being paid less than white people for doing the same jobs](#).

There is no more telling proof of the undeserved impoverishment of POC and the undeserved enrichment of white people than [the massive difference in average wealth of white versus Black and Latino families](#).

### **Vested Group Interests among White People**

Within a racist society, white people enjoy [many privileges denied to POC](#). Among these is the way that vested group interests among powerful whites and "ordinary whites" allow white people to benefit from a [white racial identity](#) without even identifying it as such. This manifests in support among white people for [political candidates who are white](#), and for laws and political and economic policies that work to reproduce a social system that is racist and has racist outcomes.

For example, white people as a majority have historically opposed or eliminated diversity-increasing programs within education and jobs, and [ethnic studies courses that better represent the racial history and reality of the U.S.](#) In cases like these, white people in power and ordinary white people have suggested that programs like these are "hostile" or

**"If you can convince the lowest white man he's better than the best colored man, he won't notice you're picking his pocket. Hell, give him somebody to look down on, and he'll empty his pockets for you." *-President Lyndon Baines Johnson***

Off-the-cuff remark in a hotel in Tennessee in 1960, and reported by Bill D. Moyers in his article in *The Washington Post*, November 13, 1988, p. C05

**Comprehending the Class-Race Nexus: The Political Functions of "Whiteness"**

examples of "[reverse racism](#)." In fact, the way [white people wield political power in protection of their interests and at the expense of others](#), without ever claiming to do so, maintains and reproduces a racist society.

### **Alienating Racist Relations Between White People and POC**

In the U.S., white people hold most positions of power. A look at the membership of Congress, the leadership of colleges and universities, and the top management of corporations makes this clear. In this context, in which white people hold political, economic, [cultural](#), and social power, the racist views and assumptions that course through

U.S. society shape the way those in power interact with POC. This leads to a serious and well-documented problem of routine discrimination in all areas of life, and the frequent dehumanization and marginalization of POC, [including hate crimes](#), which serves to alienate them from society and hurt their overall life chances. Examples include [discrimination against POC and preferential treatment of white students among university professors](#), more frequent and severe punishment of Black students in K-12 schools, and [racist police practices](#), among many others.

Ultimately, alienating racist relations make it difficult for people of different races to recognize their commonalities, and to achieve solidarity in fighting broader patterns of inequality that affect the vast majority of people in society, regardless of their race.

### **The Costs and Burdens of Racism are Borne by POC**

In his book, Feagin points out with historical documentation that the costs and burdens of racism are disproportionately borne by people of color and by black people especially. Having to bear these unjust costs and burdens is a core aspect of systemic racism. These include [shorter life spans](#), limited income and wealth potential, impacted family structure as a result of mass incarceration of Blacks and Latinos, limited access to educational resources and political participation, [state-sanctioned killing by police](#), and [the psychological, emotional, and community tolls of living with less, and being seen as “less than.”](#) POC are also expected by white people to bear the burden of explaining, proving, and fixing racism, though it is, in fact, white people who are primarily responsible for perpetrating and perpetuating it.

### **The Racial Power of White Elites**

While all white people and even many POC play a part in perpetuating systemic racism, it is important to recognize the powerful role played by white elites in maintaining this system. White elites, often unconsciously, work to perpetuate systemic racism via politics, law, educational institutions, the economy, and via racist representations and underrepresentation of people of color in mass media.

[\(This is also known as white supremacy.\)](#) For this reason, it is important that the public hold white elites accountable for combatting racism and fostering equality. It is equally important that those who hold positions of power within society reflect the racial diversity of the U.S.

### **The Power of Racist Ideas, Assumptions, and World Views**

Racist ideology—the collection of ideas, assumptions, and worldviews—is a key component of systemic racism and plays a key role in its reproduction. Racist ideology often asserts that [whites are superior to people of color for biological or cultural reasons](#), and manifests in stereotypes, prejudices, and popular myths and beliefs. These typically include positive images of whiteness in contrast to negative images associated with people of color, such as civility versus brutishness, chaste and pure versus hyper-sexualized, and intelligent and driven versus stupid and lazy.

Sociologists recognize that ideology informs our actions and interactions with others, so it follows that racist ideology fosters racism throughout all aspects of society. This happens regardless of whether the person acting in racist ways is aware of doing so.

### **Resistance to Racism**

Finally, Feagin recognizes that [resistance to racism](#) is an important feature of systemic racism. Racism has never been passively accepted by those who suffer it, and so systemic racism is always accompanied by acts of resistance that might manifest as [protest](#), political campaigns, legal battles, resisting white authority figures, and speaking back against racist stereotypes, beliefs, and language. The white backlash that typically follows resistance, like countering "Black Lives Matter" with "all lives matter" or "blue lives matter," does the work of limiting the effects of resistance and maintaining a racist system.

## Systemic Racism Is All Around Us and Within Us

Feagin's theory, and all of the research he and many other social scientists have conducted over 100 years, illustrates that racism is in fact built into the foundation of U.S. society and that it has over time come to infuse all aspects of it. It is present in our laws, our politics, our economy; in our social institutions; and in how we think and act, whether consciously or subconsciously. It's all around us and inside of us, and for this reason, resistance to racism must also be everywhere if we are to combat it.

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## SECTION TWELVE

### Racialization

SOURCE: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/cared/racialization>

#### Everyone is Racialized - Yes, White People Too

*As long as race is something applied only to non-white peoples, as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norm. Other people are raced, we are just people....The point of seeing the racing of whites is to dislodge them/us from the position of power, with all the inequities, oppression, privileges and sufferings in its train, dislodging them/us by undercutting the authority with which they/we speak and act in and on the world. (Dyer, pp 1,2)*



### WHITE FOLKS ON RACE (IN A CAPITALIST DEMOCRACY)

#### **Liberals:**

The "darkies" can be seen, but should not be heard.

#### **Conservatives:**

The "darkies" should neither be seen nor heard.

#### **Progressives:**

All, regardless of their color, should be seen and heard.

Historically, it has been white people who have had/have the social, political, and economic power to 'name' and 'categorize' people of colour and Indigenous peoples according to white people's categories of 'race.' As a result, in popular, dominant discourse, the word 'race' has typically been used to refer to people of colour and Indigenous people (i.e., people who were seen by white people as 'not like us'/not white). White-skinned people

or, they may have thought of themselves as people, as 'raceless,' as 'normal,' and this 'normalcy' was defined by the assumed otherness or 'abnormality' or difference. In either case, the position of 'white' has remained dominant and self-sustaining.

This process/history is with us today. And you may find, the white people you are working with may seem to express contradictory ideas such as:

- understanding the ideological (and false) foundations of 'race,' they may declare that people are 'all the same' ( thus erasing/denying the real effects of racism;
- and/or, they may identify themselves as 'white'(perhaps with some discomfort) but not *really* know what that means--power? a skin colour? They may be caught between the problematic biological categories and an awareness of whiteness/race as a social construction. (See [Whiteness](#), below, as well as [Colour blindness](#)).

As well, people of colour and Indigenous people may also use the historical/dominant terms regarding 'race,' to define themselves, and others, because they, too, have been born into this system and discourse. (See [Internalized Racism](#).)

The term 'racialization' is very helpful in understanding how the history of the idea of 'race' is still with us, impacts us all, profoundly, though differentially, as well, especially as the term emphasizes the ideological and systemic, often unconscious processes at work. It also emphasizes how racial categories are "constructed", including whiteness, but socially and culturally very real.

Racialization is the very complex and contradictory process through which groups come to be designated as being of a particular "race" and on that basis subjected to differential and/or unequal treatment. While white people are also racialized, this process is often rendered invisible or normative to those designated as white, and as such, white people may not see themselves as part of a 'race' but still as having the authority to name and racialize 'others'.

The process by which people are identified by racial characteristics is a social and cultural process, as well as an individual one. That is, a social order might "racialize" a group through media coverage, political action, and the production of a general consensus in the public about that group. An individual might "racialize" another individual or group by particular actions (e.g., avoiding eye contact, crossing the street, asking invasive questions) that designated the target individual or group as "other" or "not-normal." Racialization is a fluid process. A particular community might be "racialized" at a point in history but then later "pass into" whiteness (e.g. Italian Canadians). Whiteness and Whites can also be racialized but this process must incorporate anti-racist and alliance principles so that whiteness is perceived as a power-base, not a target.

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## SECTION THIRTEEN

### Understanding Whiteness

SOURCE: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/cared/whiteness>

**To understand the history of the ideology of 'race,' and combating racism today, involves understanding (and challenging) 'whiteness' as the foundation of racial categories and racism.**

At first glance, it may seem that in common usage in Alberta, the word 'white' is used to refer specifically to 'skin colour' or 'race.' Initially, this might seem like reverting back to, or reinforcing, the old (and racist) categories of European imperialism, and in some cases, it may in fact be meant that way! (We are profoundly concerned, for example, by the increase in neo-Nazi/white supremacist activity in our province.) In our experience, however, we have found that when people refer to 'white people' (either in self-identifying, or identifying individuals/groups), it is in fact being used as a shorthand reference to **whiteness**, about which people may have varied understandings you will need to clarify. In other words, it is being used as a shorthand for the privileges/power that people who appear 'white' receive, because they are not subjected to the racism faced by people of colour and Indigenous people.

As with the term 'race,' it is important to clarify the differences between "white" (a category of 'race' with no biological/scientific foundation) and "whiteness" as a powerful social construction with very real, tangible, violent effects. Here are some useful definitions of 'whiteness,' followed by a list of its key features:

Racism is based on the concept of whiteness--a powerful fiction enforced by power and violence. Whiteness is a constantly shifting boundary separating those who are entitled to have certain privileges from those whose exploitation and vulnerability to violence is justified by their not being white ([Kivel, 1996, p. 19](#)).

'Whiteness,' like 'colour' and 'Blackness,' are essentially social constructs applied to human beings rather than veritable truths that have universal validity. The power of Whiteness, however, is manifested by the ways in which racialized Whiteness becomes transformed into social, political, economic, and cultural behaviour. White culture, norms, and values in all these areas become normative natural. They become the standard against which all other cultures, groups, and individuals are measured and usually found to be inferior ([Henry & Tator, 2006, pp. 46-67](#)).

Drawing on the important work of [Ruth Frankenberg](#) (1993), the authors of [\*Teach Me to Thunder: A Manual for Anti-Racism Trainers\*](#), write that whiteness is

a dominant cultural space with enormous political significance, with the purpose to keep others on the margin....white people are not required to explain to others how 'white' culture works, because 'white' culture is the dominant culture that sets the norms. Everybody else is then compared to that norm....In times of perceived threat, the normative group may well attempt to reassert its normativity by asserting elements of its cultural practice more explicitly and exclusively. (21)

## The Meaning of Oppression in a Capitalist Democracy

The oppressed have to work twice as hard, to get half as far. The reverse is true for the oppressors: they can work half as hard, to get twice as far.



An example of this normative whiteness was the furor concerning [Baltej Singh Dhillon's fight](#) to wear a turban, for religious reasons, as part of his RCMP uniform. The argument that the Mountie uniform was a 'tradition' that should not be changed belied white Canadians' perceptions of Sikh people and communities of colour as 'threatening' their position of privilege in Canada.

### Key Features of Whiteness

Whiteness is multidimensional, complex, systemic and systematic:

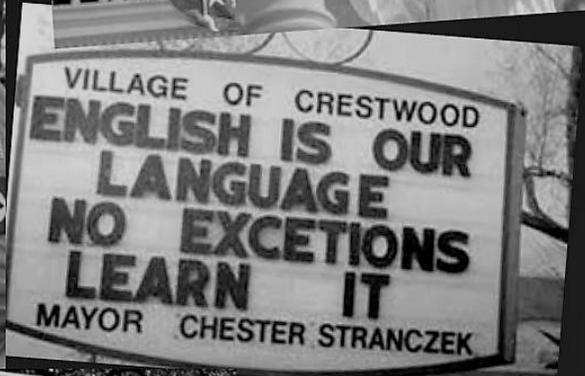
- It is **socially and politically constructed**, and therefore a learned behavior
- It does not just refer to skin colour but is **ideology** based on beliefs, values behaviors, habits and attitudes, which result in the unequal distribution of power and privilege based on skin colour ([Frye, 1983](#); [Kivel, 1996](#))
- It represents a **position of power** where the power holder defines the categories, which means that the power holder decides who is white and who is not ([Frye, 1983](#))
- It is **relational**. "White" only exists in relation/opposition to other categories/locations in the racial hierarchy produced by whiteness. In defining 'others,' whiteness defines itself.
- It is **fluid** - who is considered white changes over time ([Kivel, 1996](#))
- It is a **state of unconsciousness**: whiteness is often invisible to white people, and this perpetuates a lack of knowledge or understanding of difference which is a root cause of oppression ([hooks, 1994](#))

- It shapes how white people view themselves and others, and places white people in a **place of structural advantage** where white cultural norms and practices go unnamed and unquestioned ([Frankenberg, 1993](#)). Cultural racism is founded in the belief that "whiteness is considered to be the universal . . . and allows one to think and speak as if Whiteness described and defined the world." ([Henry & Tator, 2006, p. 327](#))

### **White versus Whiteness**

- race is scientifically insignificant.
  - race is a socially constructed category that powerfully attaches meaning to perceptions of skin colour; inequitable social/economic relations are structured and reproduced (including the meanings attached to skin colour...) through notions of race, class, gender, and nation.
  - whiteness is a set of normative privileges granted to white-skinned individuals and groups; it is normalized in its production/maintenance for those of that group such that its operations are 'invisible' to those privileged by it (but not to those oppressed/disadvantaged by it); it has a long history in European imperialism and epistemologies (for those who are of mixed ancestry and 'pass' as white, this normativity, I would assume, would not occur).
  - distinct but not separate from ideologies and material manifestations of ideologies of class, nation, gender, sexuality, and ability.
  - the meaning of 'whiteness' is historical and has shifted over time (ie Irish, southern European peoples- Italian, Spanish, Greek; have at times been 'raced' as non-white).
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# The Faces of "Jim Crow" Today



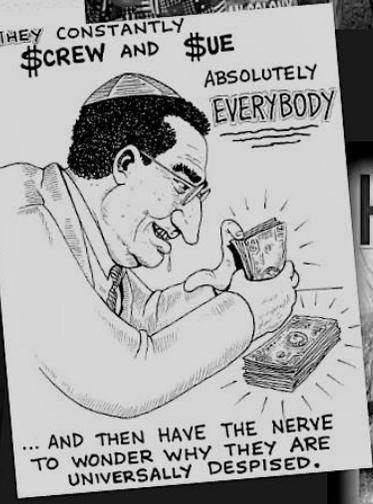
FOR OVER 2 DECADES  
**CHICAGO POLICE TORTURED OVER 100 PEOPLE.**  
 MOSTLY MEN OF COLOR  
 SURVIVORS NEED TO HEAL  
 #RAHMREPNOW



**BLAMING ISLAM FOR TERRORISM IS LIKE BLAMING CHRISTIANITY FOR COLONIAL-ISM**

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS  
 SLAVERY  
 PATRIARCHY  
 GENOCIDE  
 WORLD WARS  
 FAMINE  
 OPPRESSION

EVERY RELIGION HAS ITS EXTREMISTS.  
 END ISLAMOPHOBIA.



Nazism, Nativism, Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, Jingoism, Racism...

## SECTION FOURTEEN

### Examples of Subtle Racism and the Problems It Poses

#### **How Racial Microaggressions Do a Number on People of Color**

by [Nadra Kareem Nittle](#) Updated January 11, 2018

SOURCE: <https://www.thoughtco.com/examples-of-subtle-racism-2834960>

When some people hear the word "[racism](#)," the subtle forms of bigotry known as racial microaggressions don't come to mind. Instead, they imagine a man in a white hood or a burning cross on a lawn.

In reality, most people of color will never encounter a Klansman or be casualties of a lynch mob. They won't even be killed by police, although blacks and Latinos are common targets of police violence.

Members of racial minority groups are much more likely to be the victims of subtle racism, also known as everyday racism, covert racism or racial microaggressions.

This sort of racism has a pernicious effect on its targets, many of whom struggle to see it for what it is.

So just what is subtle racism?

#### **Defining Everyday Racism**

A [study](#) conducted by San Francisco State University Professor Alvin Alvarez identified everyday racism as "subtle, commonplace forms of discrimination, such as being ignored, ridiculed or treated differently." Explains Alvarez, a counseling professor, "These are incidents that may seem innocent and small, but cumulatively they can have a powerful impact on an individual's mental health."

Annie Barnes further illuminates the matter in her book "Everyday Racism: A Book for All Americans." She identifies such racism as a "virus" of sorts exhibited in the body language, speech and isolating attitude of racists, among other behaviors. Due to the covertness of such behaviors, victims of this form of racism may struggle to determine for certain if bigotry is at play.

#### **Examples of Racial Microaggressions**

In "Everyday Racism," Barnes tells the story of Daniel, a black college student whose apartment building manager asked him not to listen to music on his earphones while strolling the premises. Supposedly other residents found it distracting. The problem? "Daniel observed that a white youth in his complex had a similar radio with earphones and that the supervisor never complained about him."

Based on their own fears or stereotypes of black men, Daniel's neighbors found the image of him listening to earphones off-putting but made no objections to his white counterpart doing the same thing. This gave Daniel the message that someone with his [skin color](#) must adhere to a different set of standards, a revelation that made him uneasy.

While Daniel acknowledged that [racial discrimination](#) was to blame for why the manager treated him differently, some victims of everyday racism fail to make this connection. These people only invoke the word "racism" when

someone blatantly commits a racist act such as using a slur. But they may want to rethink their reluctance to identify something as racist. Although the notion that talking about racism too much makes matters worse is widespread, the SFSU study found the opposite to be true.

"Trying to ignore these insidious incidents could become taxing and debilitating over time, chipping away at a person's spirit," Alvarez explained.

### **Ignoring Certain Racial Groups**

Ignoring people of certain races is another example of subtle racism. Say a Mexican American woman enters a store waiting to be served but the employees behave as if she's not there, continuing to rifle through store shelves or sort through papers.

Soon afterward, a white woman enters the store, and the employees immediately wait on her. They help the Mexican American woman only after they wait on her white counterpart. The covert message sent to the Mexican-American customer? *You're not as worthy of attention and customer service as a white person is.*

Sometimes people of color are ignored in a strictly social sense. Say a Chinese American man visits a mostly white church for a few weeks but each Sunday no one talks to him. Moreover, few people even bother to greet him. Meanwhile, a white visitor to the church is invited out to lunch during his very first visit. Churchgoers not only talk to him but supply him with their phone numbers and email addresses. In a matter of weeks, he's fully enmeshed in the church's social network.

The church members may be surprised to learn that the Chinese American man believes he was the victim of racial exclusion.

After all, they simply felt a connection with the white visitor that they lacked with the Chinese American man. Later, when the topic of increasing diversity at the church comes up, everyone shrugs when asked how to attract more parishioners of color. They fail to connect how their coldness to the people of color who do occasionally visit makes their religious institution unwelcoming to them.

### **Ridiculing Based on Race**

[Subtle racism](#) not only takes the form of ignoring people of color or treating them differently but of ridiculing them. But how can ridicule on the basis of race be covert? Gossip writer Kitty Kelley's unauthorized biography "Oprah" is a case in point. In the book, the talk show queen's looks are excoriated--but in a particularly racialized way.

Kelley quotes a source who says, "Oprah without hair and makeup is a pretty scary sight. But once her prep people do their magic, she becomes super glam. They narrow her nose and thin her lips with three different liners...and her hair. Well, I can't even begin to describe the wonders they perform with her hair."

Why does this description reek of subtle racism? Well, the source isn't just saying she finds Oprah unattractive without the help of a hair and makeup team but criticizing the "blackness" of Oprah's features. Her nose is too wide, her lips are too big, and her hair is unmanageable, the source asserts. Such features are all commonly associated with African Americans. In short, the source suggests that Oprah is mainly unattractive because she's black.

How else are people subtly ridiculed based on race or national origin? Say an immigrant speaks English fluently but has a slight accent. The immigrant may encounter Americans who constantly ask that he repeat himself, speak to

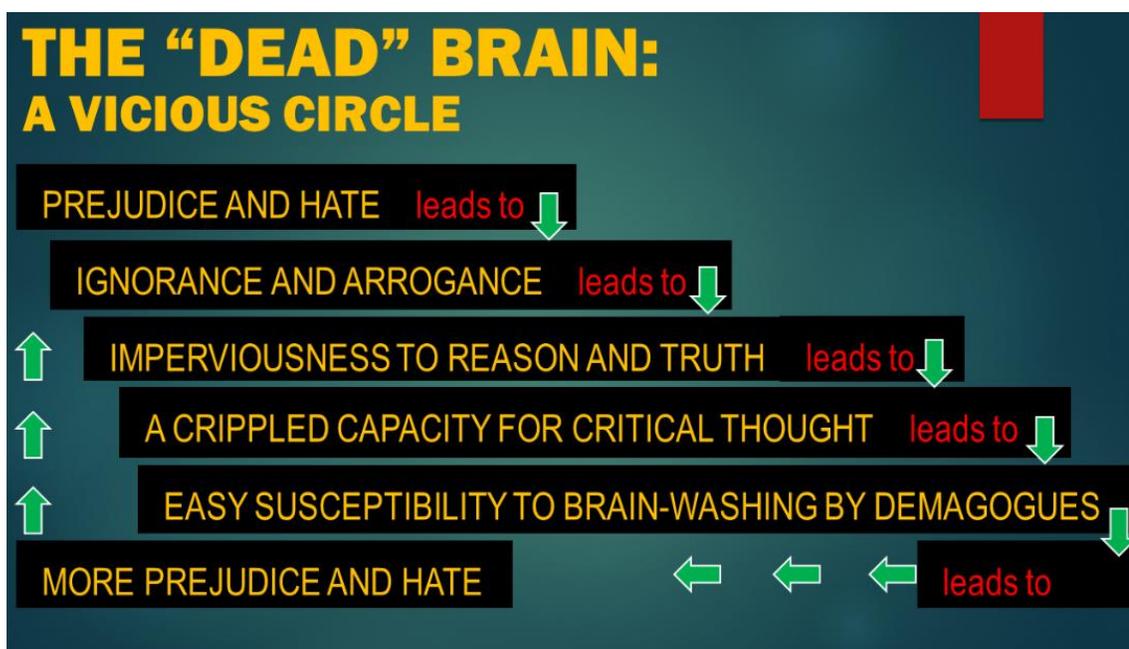
him loudly or interrupt him when he tries to engage them in discussion. These are racial microaggressions that send a message to the immigrant that he's unworthy of their conversation. Before long, the immigrant may develop a complex about his accent, despite the fact that he speaks fluent English, and withdraw from conversations before he's rejected.

### How to Cope With Subtle Racism

If you have proof or a strong hunch that you're being treated differently, ignored or ridiculed based on race, make it an issue. According to Alvarez' study, which appears in the April 2010 issue of the Journal of Counseling Psychology, men who reported incidents of subtle racism or confronted those responsible, lowered amounts of personal distress while boosting self-esteem. On the other hand, the study found that women who disregarded incidents of subtle racism developed increased levels of stress. In short, speak out about racism in all its forms for your own mental health.

### The Cost of Disregarding Everyday Racism

When we think of racism only in extremes we allow subtle racism to continue wreaking havoc in people's lives. In



an [essay](#) called "Everyday Racism, White Liberals and the Limits of Tolerance," anti-racist activist Tim Wise explains, "Since hardly anyone will admit to [racial prejudice](#) of any type, focusing on bigotry, hatred, and acts of intolerance only solidifies the belief that racism is something 'out there,' a problem for others, 'but not me,' or anyone I know."

Wise argues that because everyday racism is much more prevalent than extreme racism, the former actually reaches more people's lives and does more lasting damage. That's why it's important to make an issue out of racial microaggressions.

More than racial extremists, "I'm more concerned about the 44 percent (of Americans) who still believe it's all right for white homeowners to discriminate against black renters or buyers, or the fact that less than half of all whites think the government should have any laws to ensure equal opportunity in employment, than I am about guys running around in the woods with guns, or lighting birthday cakes to Hitler every April 20th," Wise says.

While racial extremists are no doubt dangerous, they are largely isolated from most of society. Why not focus on tackling the pernicious forms of racism that affect Americans regularly? If awareness about subtle racism is raised, more people will recognize how they contribute to the problem and work to change. The result? Race relations will improve for the better.

## SECTION FIFTEEN

### Understanding 4 Different Types of Racism

#### **Racism is a complex issue with a variety of effects**

by [Nadra Kareem Nittle](#) Updated August 06, 2017

SOURCE: <https://www.thoughtco.com/4-different-types-of-racism-2834982>

Say the word “racism” and many people imagine someone in a white hood, but discrimination, which comes in different types, is much more complex. In reality, ordinary people perpetuate racism daily.

Moreover, racism doesn’t just concern a dominant racial group overtly oppressing minorities. There’s [subtle racism](#)—slight snubs or racial microaggressions based on race. There’s also colorism within minority groups in which lighter-skinned people discriminate against their darker-skinned counterparts.

Internalized racism is an issue as well. It occurs when minorities experience self-hatred because they’ve taken to heart the ideology that dubs them as inferior. And in the 21st century, claims of reverse racism are growing, whether or not they're valid.

#### **[Does Reverse Racism Exist?](#)**

Reverse racism is arguably the hottest form of racism in the 21st century. It’s not that reverse racism is a huge problem in the U.S., it’s that people keep claiming they’ve been victims of this form of racism in which whites fall prey to [discrimination](#).

So, do whites ever face racial bias? The U.S. Supreme Court has decided so in a few landmark cases, such as when white firefighters in New Haven, Conn., were prohibited from being promoted because their minority counterparts didn’t qualify for promotions as well.

All in all, however, whites are rarely on the receiving end of racial discrimination. As a growing number of states ban [affirmative action](#), it has become even harder for whites to say they’ve been [reverse racism victims](#). [More »](#)

#### **[Examples of Subtle Racism](#)**

Subtle racism, or racial microaggressions, doesn't make the headlines that, say, reverse racism does, but it's likely the form of discrimination that people of color most often experience.

ACKNOWLEDGING

# RACIALIZATION

“Race continues to play a defining role in one’s life trajectory and outcomes. A complex system of racial bias and inequities is at play, deeply rooted in our country’s history, culture and institutions. This system of racialization — which routinely confers advantage and disadvantage based on skin color and other characteristics — must be clearly understood, directly challenged and fundamentally transformed. If our nation is to live up to its democratic ideals — that all people are created equal and treated fairly — then racial equity and inclusion must be at the forefront of how we shape our institutions, policies and culture.”

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, United States. *Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide*, 2014, p. 2.

Victims of subtle, or covert, racism may find themselves snubbed by wait staff in restaurants or salespeople in stores who believe that people of color aren't likely to be good tippers or able to afford anything expensive, as Oprah Winfrey has described about a shopping experience abroad.

Targets of subtle racism may find that supervisors, landlords, etc., apply different rules to them than they do to others. An employer might run a thorough background check on an applicant of color, while accepting a job applicant from a prospective white employee with no additional documentation.

[Racial prejudice](#) is the driving force behind subtle racism. [More »](#)

## [Defining Internalized Racism](#)

In a society in which blonde hair and blue eyes are still widely regarded as ideal and stereotypes about minority groups persist, it's not hard to see why some people of color suffer from internalized racism.

In this form of racism, people of color internalize the negative messages spread about minorities and come to loathe themselves for being “different.” They may hate their skin color, their hair texture and other physical features or intentionally marry interracially so their children won't have the same ethnic traits that they do.

They may simply suffer from low self-esteem because of their [race](#)—performing poorly in school or in the workplace because they believe their racial background makes them inferior.

Michael Jackson was long accused of suffering from this kind of racism because of the changing color of his skin and plastic surgeries. [More »](#)

## What Is Colorism?

Actress Lupita Nyong'o has struggled with colorism. Monica Schipper/WireImage/Getty Images

Colorism is often viewed as a problem that's unique to communities of color. It occurs when minorities discriminate against those with darker skin than they have. For years in the black community, lighter skin was viewed as superior to darker skin. Anyone with skin color that was lighter than a brown paper lunch bag was welcomed into elite organizations in the black community, while darker skinned blacks were excluded.

But colorism doesn't exist in a vacuum. It's a direct offshoot of a white supremacist ideology that values whites over people of color and equips Caucasians with what's known as white skin privilege.

Colorism also exists outside of the African-American community. In Asia, sales of skin whitening products remain sky high. [More »](#)

### **Wrapping Up**

To eradicate racism, it's important to understand the different types of racism that affect society. Whether you're experiencing racial microaggressions or helping a child to overcome internalized racism, staying educated on the issue can make a difference.

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## SECTION SIXTEEN

### 21 Racial Microaggressions You Hear On A Daily Basis

**A photographer at Fordham asked her peers to write down the microaggressions they've encountered. Here is what they had to say.**

[Heben Nigatu](#) Posted on December 9, 2013

SOURCE: <https://www.buzzfeed.com/hnigatu/racial-microaggressions-you-hear-on-a-daily-basis>

Photographer [Kiyun](#) asked her friends at Fordham University's Lincoln Center campus to "write down an instance of racial microaggression they have faced."

The term "microaggression" was used by Columbia professor Derald Sue to refer to "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color." Sue borrowed the term from psychiatrist Dr. Chester Pierce who [coined](#) the term in the '70s.

While the term "microaggressions" has been a part of academic discourse for some time ("micro-inequities" was coined by an MIT Ph.D. in 1973), it became better known through the popular Tumblr [Microaggressions](#).

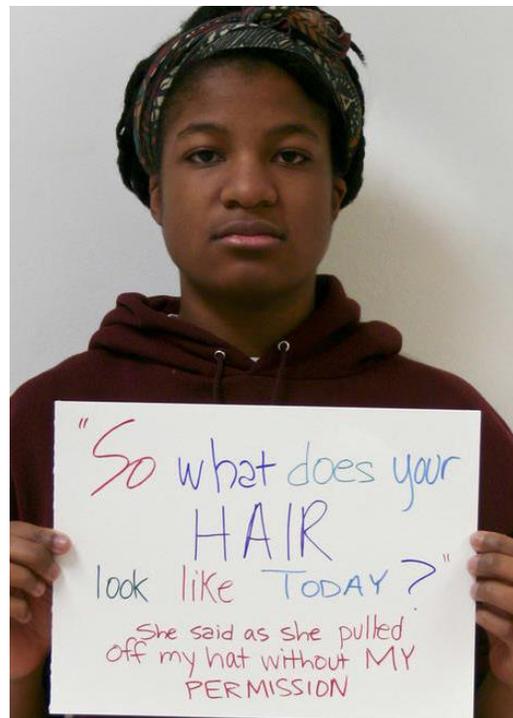
The Tumblr is a project that aims to highlight the daily microaggressions people encounter through user submitted stories.

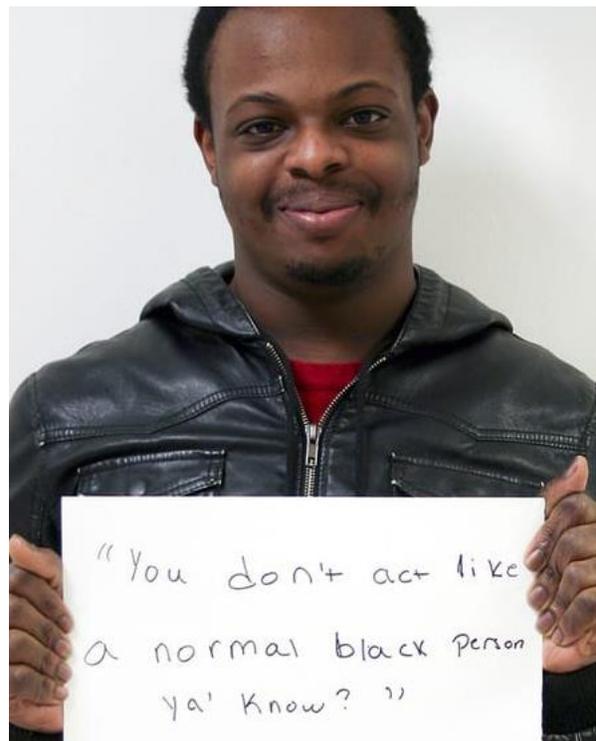
"This blog seeks to provide a visual representation of the everyday of "microaggressions." Each event, observation and experience posted is not necessarily particularly striking in and of themselves. Often, they are never meant to hurt - acts done with little conscious awareness of their meanings and effects. Instead, their slow accumulation during a childhood and over a lifetime is in part what defines a marginalized experience, making explanation and communication with someone who does not share this identity particularly difficult. Social others are microaggressed hourly, daily, weekly, monthly.

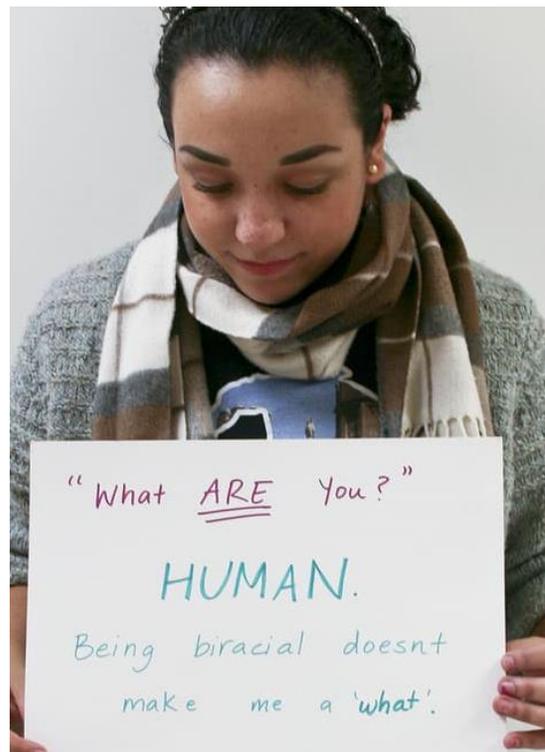
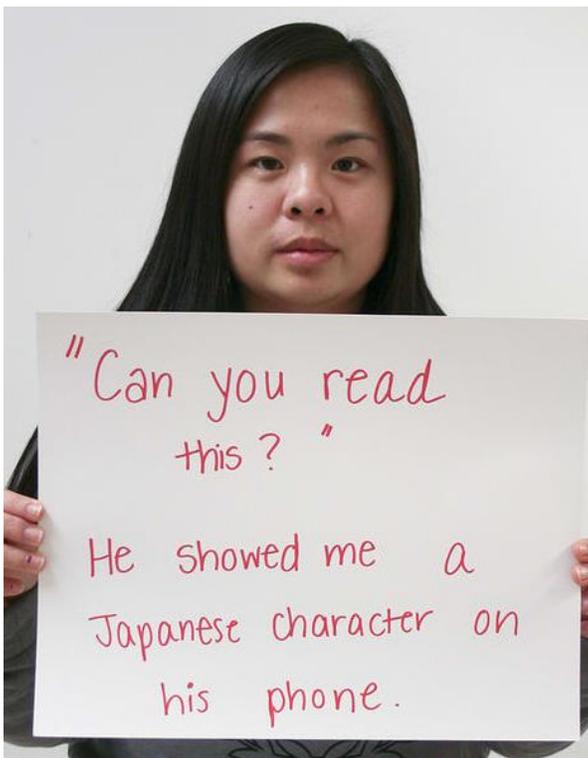
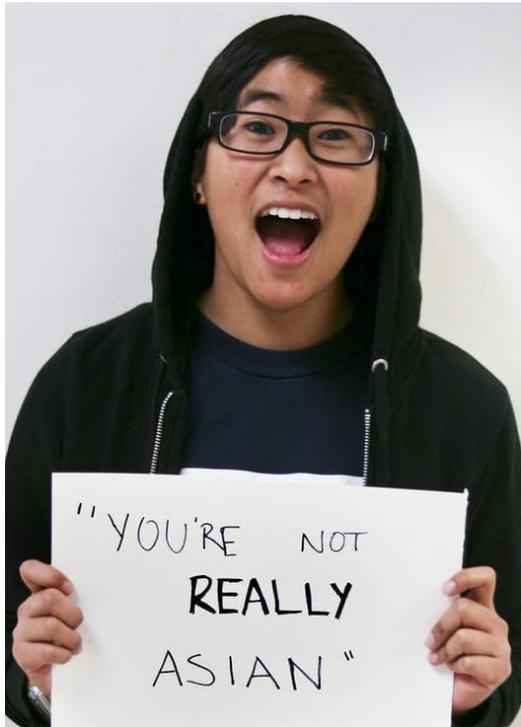
This project is NOT about showing how ignorant people can be in order to simply dismiss their ignorance. Instead, it is about showing how these comments create and enforce uncomfortable, violent and unsafe realities onto peoples' workplace, home, school, childhood/adolescence/adulthood, and public transportation/space environments."

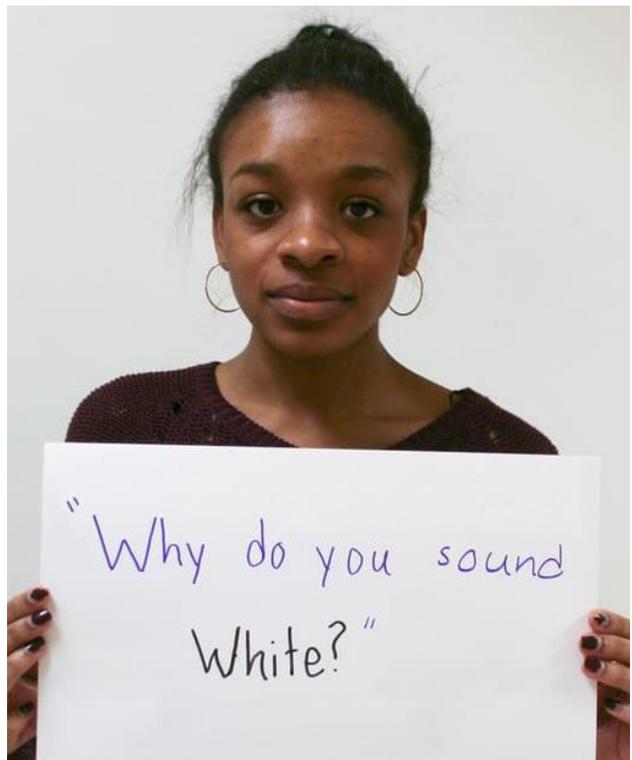
Here are a few of the microaggressions Fordham students identified as a part of their lives:

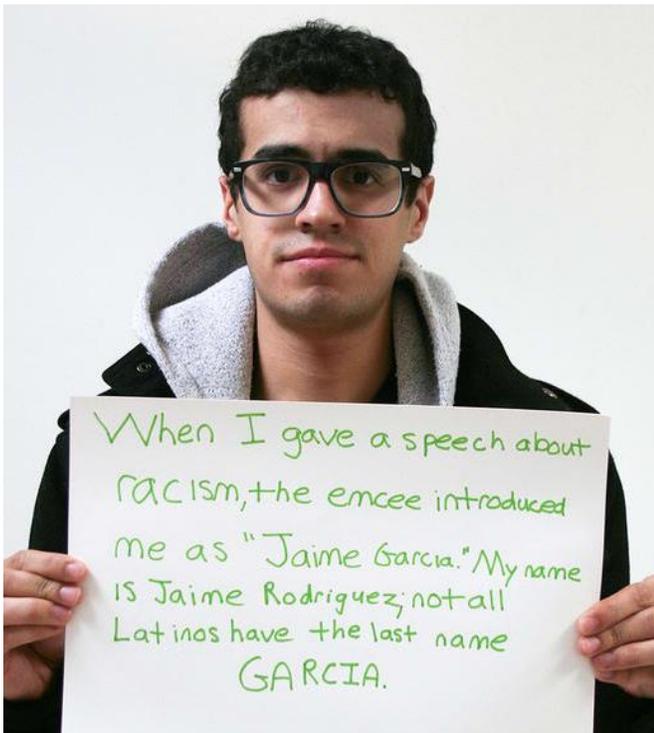
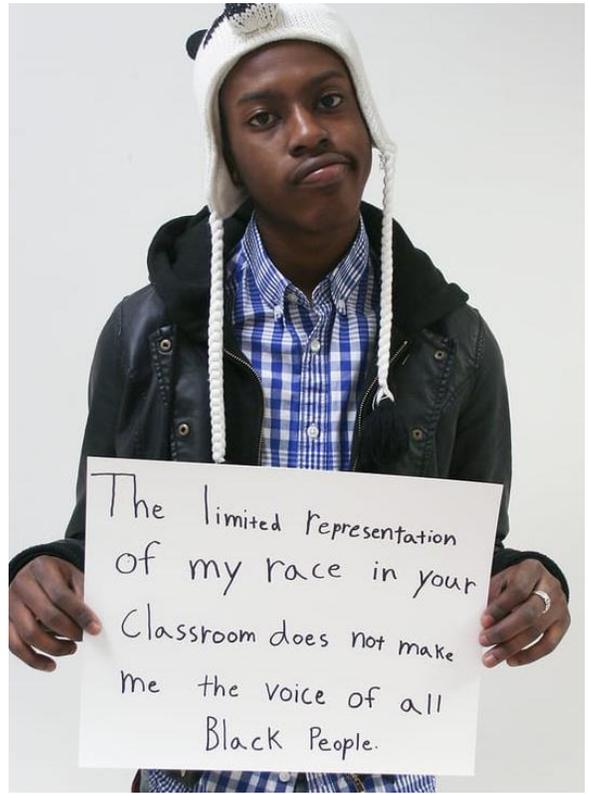
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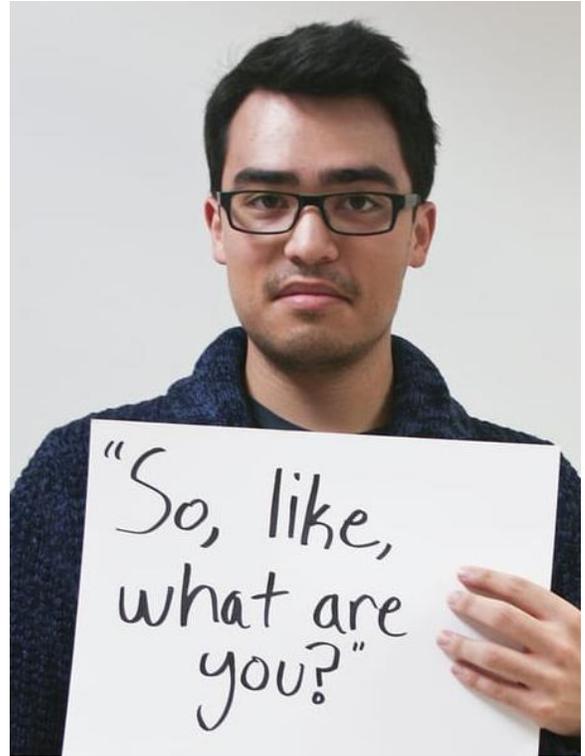












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## SECTION SEVENTEEN

### Aversive Racism

*By John F. Dovidio and Samuel L. Gaertner*

SOURCE: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/aversive-racism>

Aversive racism is a form of contemporary racism that manifests at the individual level. Compared to the traditional form of racism, aversive racism operates, often unconsciously, in subtle and indirect ways. People whose behavior is characterized by aversive racism (aversive racists) sympathize with victims of past injustice, support the principle of racial equality, and regard themselves as non-prejudiced, but at the same time they possess negative feelings and beliefs about blacks or other groups. It is hypothesized that aversive racism characterizes the racial attitudes of many well-educated and liberal whites in the United States, as well the attitudes of members of dominant groups toward minority groups in other countries with strong contemporary egalitarian values but discriminatory histories or policies. Despite its subtle expression, the consequences of aversive racism are as significant and pernicious as those of the traditional, overt form (e.g., the restriction of economic opportunity).

#### **Nature of the Attitudes**

A critical aspect of the aversive racism framework is the conflict between aversive racists' denial of personal prejudice and the underlying unconscious negative attitudes and beliefs about particular minority groups. Because of current cultural values in the United States, most whites have strong convictions concerning fairness, justice, and racial equality. However, because of a range of normal cognitive, motivational, and sociocultural processes that promote intergroup biases, most whites also develop some negative feelings toward or beliefs about blacks. They are often unaware of these feelings, however, or they try to dissociate such attitudes from their nonprejudiced self-images. The negative feelings that aversive racists have toward blacks do not reflect open hostility or hatred. Instead, aversive racists' reactions may involve discomfort, uneasiness, disgust, and sometimes fear. That is, they find blacks "aversive," while at the same time they find any suggestion that they might be prejudiced "aversive" as well. Thus, aversive racism may often involve more positive reactions to whites than to blacks, reflecting a pro-in-group rather than an anti-out-group orientation, thereby avoiding the stigma of overt bigotry and protecting a nonprejudiced self-image. Recent research in social cognition has yielded new techniques for assessing both unconscious (implicit) and conscious (explicit), attitudes and stereotypes, and these methods provide direct evidence of the dissociated, often ambivalent, attitudes that characterize aversive racism.

In contrast to traditional approaches that emphasize the psychopathology of prejudice, the feelings and beliefs that underlie aversive racism are rooted in normal, often adaptive, psychological processes. These processes include both individual and intergroup factors. Individual-level factors involve cognitive biases associated with social categorization. For instance, when people categorize others as members of specific groups, which often occurs automatically, people evaluate in-group members more favorably than out-group members, remember positive information better about in-group than about out-group members, and dis

# What is Aversive Racism?

Aversive racism is racist discrimination that works primarily at the individual level (but which may also be manifest, aggregatively, at the societal level) where, in contrast to traditional forms of racism, there is an **aversion** to associating with the target of the discrimination, the **racial Other**, but the perpetrator all the while claiming that he/she is not a racist and in fact firmly believes in such progressive values as: all persons are created equal; racist discrimination is inherently wrong; racial/ethnic diversity everywhere should be the natural state of affairs; and so on. While this dissonance between belief and actual behavior may, at first, appear to be a case of nothing less than blatant hypocrisy, it is not really so because the belief may be quite genuine given the subjection from infancy to adulthood to the socializational imperatives of a socio-cultural-political environment that *ostensibly* (repeat, ostensibly) champions these values, as in the case of Western capitalist democracies. What, then, is the source of this dissonance, which for the racial Other can be just as injurious as dominative racism? To put it very concisely: the historically determined persistence of institutional racism against the backdrop of a legislative environment that attempts to prohibit it.

## A Few Examples of Aversive Racism

- Not objecting to attending a multiracially diverse educational institution, yet always avoiding interacting with the racial other (in the classroom, in the cafeteria, in the dorms, in hallways, on commuter busses, etc.).
- Avoiding eye-contact while speaking to the racial other in the workplace, and other similar interpersonal behaviors.
- Supporting the prohibition of racist discrimination in housing while all the while—in practice—accepting, and participating in residential segregation (a pervasive phenomenon, for example, in United States).
- Rationalizing racially discriminatory conduct in employment *in terms other than obvious racism*.
- Subjecting the racial other to different and hence debilitating standards of evaluation in places where evaluations are a norm (e.g. for purposes of promotions in the workplace, when grading coursework in educational settings, when determining pay rates, and so on).

## Aversive racists

genuinely believe in racial equality and justice but are unwilling to work to abandon their subconscious racist behavior because of growing up in a society that continues to be plagued by institutional racism.



count negative actions by in-group members more than those by out-group members. In terms of motivation, people have needs for power and status, not only for themselves but also for their groups, and bias can help foster a sense of status and esteem, both individually and collectively. Sociocultural influences also contribute to aversive racists' negative feelings and beliefs. For example, upon categorization, cultural stereotypes are spontaneously activated. Intergroup processes, such as system-justifying ideologies, perceived competition over material resources, or conflict between cultural values, can also form a basis for the negative component of aversive racists' attitudes.

Other forms of contemporary racial biases, such as symbolic racism and modern racism, also recognize the complex nature of whites' racial attitudes. Like aversive racism, Modern Racism Theory posits that whites' attitudes toward blacks have both positive and negative components, but the role of ideology is different. Aversive racism is presumed to reflect the racial biases of political liberals, whereas modern racism is hypothesized to represent the subtle bias of conservatives. Although both aversive racists and modern racists strongly endorse egalitarian values, what they mean by "equality" differs. Whereas aversive racists are concerned about equality of outcomes, modern racists, because of their conservatively based ideologies, emphasize equality of opportunity. Thus, beliefs associated with conservative ideologies, such as the perception that blacks' lack of motivation accounts for racial disparities, can justify discriminatory behaviors.

What distinguishes the aversive racism framework from Symbolic Racism Theory is the nature of the relationship between the components. The aversive racism position proposes that the attitudes of aversive racists involve separate, dissociated positive and negative components, which are in conflict and thus may, at times, be experienced as ambivalence. The concept of symbolic racism, which has evolved over time, emphasizes the blending of the

different components into a single orientation. Specifically, symbolic racism reflects the unique assimilation of individualistic values and negative racial affect. It involves both the denial of contemporary discrimination and negative beliefs about blacks' work ethic, which produces resentment of blacks' demands for special benefits because of their race. Thus, although aversive racism and symbolic racism perspectives often predict similar behaviors, such as resistance to policies designed to benefit blacks, they are the result of different underlying processes.

### **Subtle Bias**

The aversive racism framework also helps to identify when discrimination against blacks and other minority groups will or will not occur. Whereas old-fashioned racists exhibit a direct and overt pattern of discrimination, aversive racists' actions may appear more variable and inconsistent. Sometimes they discriminate (manifesting their negative feelings), and sometimes they do not (reflecting their egalitarian beliefs).

Because aversive racists consciously recognize and endorse egalitarian values and because they truly aspire to be nonprejudiced, they will not discriminate in situations in which strong social norms would make discrimination obvious to others and to themselves. Specifically, when people are presented with a situation in which the normatively appropriate response is clear (i.e., in which right and wrong is clearly defined), aversive racists will not discriminate against blacks. In these contexts, aversive racists will be especially motivated to avoid feelings, beliefs, and behaviors that could be associated with racist intent. To avoid the attribution of racist intent, aversive racists will either treat blacks and whites equally or they will respond even more favorably to blacks than to whites. In such a situation, wrongdoing, which would directly threaten their nonprejudiced self-image, would be too costly. However, because aversive racists still possess feelings of uneasiness, these feelings will eventually be expressed, but they will be expressed in subtle, indirect, and rationalizable ways. For instance, discrimination will occur in situations in which normative structure is weak, when the guidelines for appropriate behavior are vague, or when the basis for social judgment is ambiguous. In addition, discrimination will occur when an aversive racist can justify or rationalize a negative response on the basis of some factor other than race. Under these circumstances, aversive racists may engage in behaviors that ultimately harm blacks, but they will do so in ways that allow them to maintain their self-image as nonprejudiced and that insulate them from recognizing that their behavior is not color-blind.

Evidence in support of the aversive racism framework comes from a range of paradigms. For instance, white bystanders who are the only witness to an emergency (and thus are fully responsible for helping) are just as likely to help a black victim as a white victim. However, when white bystanders believe that others also witness the emergency (distributing the responsibility for helping), they are less likely to help a black victim than a white victim. In personnel or college-admission selection decisions, whites do not discriminate on the basis of race when candidates have very strong or weak qualifications. Nevertheless, they do discriminate against blacks when the candidates have moderate qualifications and the appropriate decision is therefore more ambiguous. In these circumstances, aversive racists weigh the positive qualities of white applicants and the negative qualities of black applicants more heavily in their evaluations. Analogously, aversive racists have more difficulty discounting incriminating evidence that is declared inadmissible when evaluating the guilt or innocence of black defendants relative to white defendants in studies of juridic decisions. In interracial interactions, whites' overt behaviors (e.g., verbal behavior) primarily reflect their expressed, explicit racial attitudes, whereas their more spontaneous and less controllable behaviors (e.g., their nonverbal behaviors) are related to their implicit, generally unconscious attitudes.

Aversive racism also contributes to opposition to policies designed to benefit blacks, such as affirmative action, but also primarily in rationalizable ways. Whites generally support the principle of affirmative action more than specific policy implementations, which contain elements that allow them to rationalize opposition on the basis of factors other than race (e.g., unfairness). Thus, aversive racists' responses to public policies are substantially influenced by how these policies are framed. They express general support for affirmative action when addressing historical and

contemporary discrimination, but they tend to oppose a policy when it is portrayed as benefiting blacks in particular, or when the description implies it involves quotas or reverse discrimination.

Generally, then, aversive racists may be identified by a constellation of characteristic responses to racial issues and interracial situations. First, aversive racists, in contrast to old-fashioned racists, endorse fair and just treatment of all groups. Second, despite their conscious good intentions, aversive racists unconsciously harbor feelings of uneasiness towards blacks, and thus they try to avoid interracial interaction. Third, when interracial interaction is unavoidable, aversive racists experience anxiety and discomfort, and consequently they try to disengage from the interaction as quickly as possible. Fourth, because part of the discomfort that aversive racists experience is due to a concern about acting inappropriately and appearing prejudiced, aversive racists strictly adhere to established rules and codes of behavior in interracial situations that they cannot avoid. Fifth, their feelings will get expressed, but in subtle, unintentional, rationalizable ways that disadvantage minorities or unfairly benefit the majority group. Nevertheless, in terms of conscious intent, aversive racists do not intend to discriminate against people of color—and they behave accordingly when it is possible for them to monitor the appropriateness of their behavior.

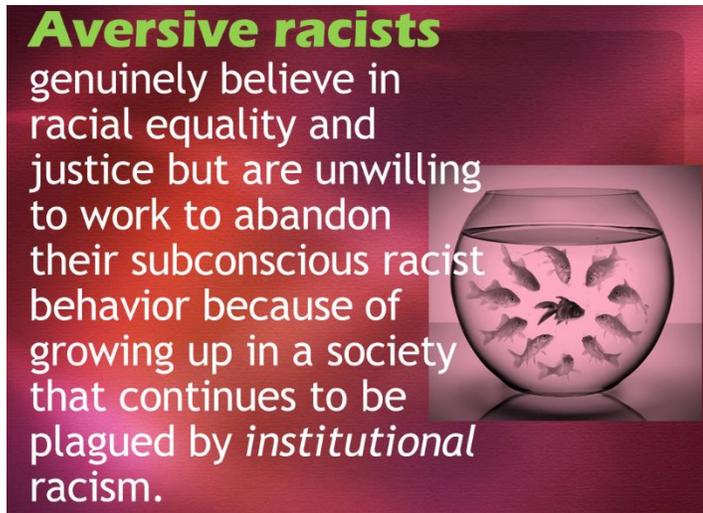
### **Combating Aversive Racism**

Traditional prejudice-reduction techniques have been concerned with changing conscious attitudes (“old-fashioned racism”) and blatant expressions of bias. Attempts to reduce this direct, traditional form of racial prejudice have typically involved educational strategies to enhance knowledge and appreciation of other groups (e.g., multicultural education programs), emphasize norms that prejudice is wrong, and involve direct (e.g., mass media appeals) or indirect (dissonance reduction) attitude-change techniques. However, because of its pervasiveness, subtlety, and complexity, the traditional techniques for eliminating bias that emphasized the immorality of prejudice and illegality of discrimination are not effective for combating aversive racism. Aversive racists recognize that prejudice is bad, but they do not recognize that *they* are prejudiced.

Nevertheless, aversive racism can be addressed with techniques aimed at its roots at both the individual and collective levels. At the individual level, strategies to combat aversive racism can be directed at unconscious attitudes. For example, extensive training to create new, counter-stereotypic associations with social categories (e.g., blacks) can inhibit the unconscious activation of stereotypes, an element of aversive racists’ negative attitudes. In addition, aversive racists’ conscious attitudes, which are already egalitarian, can be instrumental in motivating change. Allowing aversive racists to become aware, in a nonthreatening way, of their unconscious negative attitudes, feelings, and beliefs can stimulate self-regulatory processes that not only elicit immediate deliberative responses that reaffirm conscious nonprejudiced orientations (such as increased support for policies that benefit minority groups), but that also produce, with sufficient time and experience, reductions in implicit negative beliefs and attitudes.

At the intergroup level, interventions may be targeted at processes that support aversive racism, such as in-group favoritism. One such approach, the Common In-group Identity Model, proposes that if members of different groups are induced to conceive of themselves more as a single, superordinate group, or as subgroups within a more inclusive social entity, rather than as two completely separate groups, attitudes toward former out-group members will become more positive through processes involving pro-in-group bias. Thus, changing the basis of categorization from race to an alternative dimension can alter perceptions of “we” and “they,” thus undermining a contributing force to contemporary forms of racism, including aversive racism. For example, black interviewers are even more likely to obtain the cooperation of white respondents than are white interviewers when they emphasize their common group membership (e.g., shared university identity, as indicated by insignia on their clothes) than when they do not. Intergroup interaction within the guidelines of the Contact Hypothesis and anti-bias interventions with elementary school children that emphasize increasing their social inclusiveness can also reduce bias through the processes outlined in the Common In-group Identity Model.

Despite apparent and consistent improvements in expressed racial attitudes over time, aversive racism continues to exert a subtle but pervasive influence on the lives of black Americans and members of other disadvantaged groups. Although the expression of this form of bias is more subtle than are manifestations of old-fashioned racism, aversive racism has consequences as significant as blatant bias. Even though it is expressed in indirect and rationalizable ways, aversive racism operates to systematically restrict opportunities for blacks and members of other traditionally underrepresented groups.



In addition, because aversive racists may not be aware of their implicit negative attitudes and only discriminate against blacks when they can justify their behavior on the basis of some factor other than race, they will commonly deny any intentional wrongdoing when confronted with evidence of their bias. To the extent that minority-group members detect expressions of aversive racists' negative attitudes in subtle interaction behaviors (e.g., nonverbal behavior) and attribute the consequences of aversive racism to blatant racism, aversive racism also contributes substantially to interracial distrust, miscommunication, and conflict. Nevertheless, aversive racism can be addressed by encouraging increased awareness of unconscious negative feelings and beliefs, emphasizing

alternative forms of social categorization around common group membership, and providing appropriate intergroup experiences to support the development of alternative implicit attitudes and stereotypes and to reinforce common identities.

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**SEE ALSO** [Affirmative Action](#); [Social Psychology of Racism](#); [Symbolic and Modern Racism](#).

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