

Table Of Content

Journal Cover	2
Author[s] Statement	3
Editorial Team	4
Article information	5
Check this article update (crossmark)	5
Check this article impact	5
Cite this article	5
Title page	6
Article Title	6
Author information	6
Abstract	6
Article content	8

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Structural Racism and Institutional Inequality: A Historical and Discourse Analysis

Rasisme Struktural dan Ketidaksetaraan Institusional: Sebuah Analisis Sejarah dan Wacana

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Abstract

General Background: Racism is a deeply entrenched social phenomenon shaped by historical, cultural, economic, and political structures. Its manifestations are complex, extending from colonial expansion and the transatlantic slave trade to contemporary institutional discrimination. **Specific Background:** Existing literature predominantly focuses on racism as a historical consequence or a socio-political issue, yet there remains a need for comprehensive analyses that integrate its structural, ideological, and systemic dimensions. **Knowledge Gap:** Limited research has explored how economic systems, political structures, and cultural institutions perpetuate racial inequalities, particularly within healthcare, education, and professional environments during crises like COVID-19. **Aims:** This study employs qualitative and analytical methodologies, including content analysis and critical discourse analysis, to examine the historical foundations and modern implications of racism. **Results:** Findings reveal persistent ideological structures that reinforce racism, with economic and institutional frameworks sustaining social inequalities. Critical discourse analysis highlights how racist ideologies are embedded within policies and institutional narratives. **Novelty:** Unlike previous studies, this research integrates historical texts, contemporary sociological data, and intersectional analyses to provide a multi-dimensional perspective on racism's structural perpetuation. **Implications:** The study contributes to academic discourse and anti-racism initiatives by offering a deeper understanding of racism's systemic nature, fostering policy recommendations, and supporting equitable institutional reforms.

Highlights:

Racism is historically entrenched, influencing institutions and societal structures.

Analyzing systemic racism through history, institutions, and discourse.

Supports anti-racism policies and equitable institutional reforms.

Keywords: Racism, discrimination, race, Origins of Racism, Impact of Racism, Paths to Resolution.

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Introduction

Racism is the systematic explanation of social incompetence and inefficiency of certain ethnic groups and the belief that this infection is attributed to biological factors. It is a discrimination that has taken place throughout history, with examples dating back as far as racisms against Romans seen by Greeks as uneducated barbarians and many histories leading discrimination, domination, oppressions[1]. Racism covers a wide range of actions, from expressing racist perspectives to refusing to hire someone because of their race. This situation can be seen in that priority is given to whites in education and business life in a society and they have privileges in the legal process[2]. The Atlantic slave trade, in which black Africans transported by Europeans to America and they work under inhuman conditions, is a clear example of racism. In this trade system supported by the law, it is seen that white people were increasingly superior according to their color. By treating Africans as business goods, an understanding that ignores human rights emerged. In this way, there is an implication that being a slave is something physical. At the same time, a thought system claiming that white should manage and black should be managed came out. It is seen that white-American owners of white power are using black slaves in order to achieve their own goals[3].

The term "race" is used to explain ethnic, sociological, social groups and the perceived superficial differences that are not scientifically accurate. The race is not a scientific fact, it is a myth. Even so, racism is not just a myth, but a life-threatening myth. It is a kind of pestilence fed by baseless ideas on the identities of people, their histories, their characters and behaviors[4]. As stated, treating not based on scientific accuracy, unaffected by superficial differences means discrimination based on phenotypic characteristics such as skin color and eye shape. Racist perspectives consider these differences such as the group represents the hatred and enmity to the group of these differences.

Customs should not be considered as evidence of the biological nature of social and cultural qualities and as evidence of the success of the group. In this context, racism is also related to ethnic discrimination. It is a belief that social practices and ethnic culture are a sign of the cultural appropriateness of the group. Moreover, the cultural properties of different groups are usurious, unaccepted and inferior. This should not be misinterpreted as being different, as it is not in the form of inheritance, science, and technology. It is a vast generalization made by suppressing minorities and using the imprudence of their own group. According to such ideas, Homo sapiens must be accepted as the most developed species of humanity, i.e. whites. It is a thought system that tries to explain gulags and incapability by projecting biological and ethnic reasons[5]. It causes whites to accept violence and intolerance to ensure their superiority. This, in turn, introduces dichotomies between racism and non-whites. That is, it keeps the main tension between the superior race and minorities. On the other hand, it is thought that any negative behavior, rebellion, and reaction of the minor, such as physical inferiority and a barbaric understanding of life, are evaluated[6].

Methods

This study uses qualitative and analytical methods which primarily depend on existing literature interpretation and historical accounts alongside present-day anthropological and sociological data on racism. The analysis of the study depended on a detailed evaluation of foundational materials specifically historical texts with scholarly articles and critical theories and international reports which focused on racism and discrimination as well as socio-political inequalities to develop a thorough understanding of these concepts. Research examined racial discrimination throughout European colonization and transatlantic slave trade eras together with ongoing examples that include institutional discrimination and social Darwinism and contemporary capitalist systems. Please note that this statement contains two parts: first, the researcher studied primary documents and secondary materials through content analysis while also identifying recurring structural elements and ideological systems that continue racism. The research analyzed racial intersectionality by studying how economic systems and political structures and cultural institutions create global social inequality with special emphasis on the Western world. The research analyzed racism specifically within healthcare delivery together with domestic education settings and professional situations particularly in relation to the current COVID-19 crisis. The researcher also employed critical discourse analysis to examine the ways in which racist ideologies are inscribed into stories, directives and institutional procedures. Through this research methodology the study acquired multiple aspects and grounded insights about racism together with its foundational influences on vulnerable communities. The authors performed detailed reflective research intending to provide knowledge which supports academic theory and practical anti-racism initiatives.

Results and Discussion

Racism can arise or does arise in different histories and societal environments that correspond to different theoretical frameworks and those who live within different cultures and societies. These may interact and reinforce each other within a given society, since they may be compatible, and together, they may reinforce racist beliefs[7]. At the same time, they have in common their emphasis on notions of people as essentially different and unequal.

Here, this contributes to differences that divide and separate them more radically than with other groups that are relatively less "other."

The more general kind are colonial domination involving extermination or ethnic cleansing and the theft of land underpinned by more or less explicit form of racist ideology or societal organization favoring one ethnic or national group over others. In a more diffuse and pervasive form, one can speak of different types of economic exploitation and or social stratification that is legitimized and reproduced through racist ideology and institutional practice[8]. This is mostly informed by the European experience of colonization and phenotypical differences, but the same dominant group managed to develop a broadly coherent and monolithic discursive frame through which to justify and legitimize their domination over. Social Darwinism became the scientific racism upon which this ideological and self-serving justification was based. The spread and misuse of several hypotheses in the then young field of physical anthropology were envisaged as both providing empirical evidence of the "low" development of the indigenous population in relation to their health, virtues, and mental and moral capacities, and making it possible to explain such shortcoming in terms of their alleged descent from "backward" races of mankind now bound to gradually disappear, when not murdered by white civilized man[9]. These ideas contributed to the shaping of a hegemonic worldview that influenced social, economic and demographic, and political policy towards the indigenous population. The five dimensions of racism may help further depict racism: - famously overt display such as epithets, hostility, rape, beatings, murder by individuals or organizations, - hostility and malign discrimination by health-care providers, employers, institutions discriminating on racial grounds, - internalized forms of self-dreading, self-loathing and insidious trauma from racist incidents, - acknowledging of inadvertently benefitting of systemic racism and last doors opened to impact change for an individual or collective. Slavery, Apartheid, and White Australia policy.

This is a discussion of the lasting and far-reaching impacts of racism on individuals and societies. From its origins in slavery and colonization to its continued presence in social systems, the effects of racism are deep and widely felt, from diminished self-worth and economic marginalization to perpetuating broader cycles of violence, division and exclusion. These effects question any distinction between "structural" and other forms of racism, revealing how personal racism is embedded in broader patterns and cycles of discrimination, structural inequality and intergroup conflict[10].

Racism has devastating impacts on individuals and communities. The ongoing trauma that victims and survivors of racism encounter can appear in different forms, such as feelings of anxiety or a constant sense of threat, diminished self-worth or powerlessness, or the need to avoid particular situations or people. Economically, racism can result in significant disadvantages when it comes to employment or education. In health outcomes too, racism can lead to worse results, due to poorer pre-existing conditions or worse curative treatments. Through its social impact, racism can produce greater conflict and division between different groups. This impacts the degree to which communities can come together to resolve complex issues. Moreover, racism extends beyond the everyday, producing structural inequalities that can trap marginalized groups in cycles of disadvantage and discrimination[11]. Importantly, these effects do not merely run one way. Racism has a strong tendency to reproduce itself in collective cycles of violence, fears, division and exclusion, often generating broader structural conditions that can further maintain and reproduce patterns of racialized discrimination, conflict and marginalization in interdependent ways[12].

In the wake of a divisive political atmosphere and recurring displays of racism, it is crucial to understand its origins, concept, impacts, and ways it affects society. White superiority and the promotion of racism can be traced back to the European colonization of Africa and the Americas, as well as the slave trade emerging in the late 19th century. Furthermore, more in-depth research is needed to expose the complex web of delusion, taxation, and crisis that enables countries and institutions to continue fostering systems and practices that create alienation and injustice. Social and monetary disparities have arisen due to the deeply established Western hegemonic capitalist culture that pervades daily politics and culture and reveals people's prejudices and avant-garde racist manifestations. The recognition of the roots of racism in this study implies acknowledging properties of discrimination in the policies that generate deep-rooted racial monetary disparities that expose racialized people to further abuse and fatalities, which is a tribute to fight for and against it. Although racism is a global issue deeply inherent in the policies and practices of all nations and governments, the practical research focuses on the permissive aspect of government responsibility in emphasizing the crisis to explain discrimination in the prevention of Covid-19 during the pandemic due to its urgency and relevance[13]. To address it regarding the formation of public health plans, combat strategies, and the installation of international agreements, taking the UN conventions on eliminating all forms of racial discrimination and on bioethics and human rights into consideration is one of the main points emphasized in this study. Among some affluent nations, an altruism plan was filed with a petition to the consultative law-making organ of the UN on the activities of some officials in the racism protocols, which accepted the disapprobation of Australia, China, and the UK due to its sinister policy agreement[14]. It means that collected and transformed data have become a "weapon" widely used by governments in crisis situations as a result of recognizing the crisis. Clearly, it underlines the need for high-quality research via simple yet informative visual graphics, focusing on the Covid 19 pandemic crisis and racial monetary disparities by socio-political-religious classifications, to harmonize the combat and heighten the fight against racism[15].

Conclusion

Racism is a multifaceted and intersecting web of historical, cultural, economic, and intrapersonal philosophical phenomena. Its origin, effects, and potential remedy are manifold and entwined with foundational aspects of society and the distribution of power in the broader world. Ongoing challenges continue to warp and evade the comprehension of racist oppressions, just as manifold means of equitable abnegation are arising. Both throughout this particular discussion and in broader societal dialogues, racism is widely depicted as a monolithic and consequential happening.

The particular genealogies of this setting of antithetical beliefs and actions, as well as the fused institutional powers and hegemonies backing it, crave more inspection and vindication than is generally seen. Nevertheless, the deep-seated beliefs and customs co-created by means of racist policies have structured a great diversity of entities and proceeds. Fundamentally, the investigating and eradicating of societal beliefs and actions co-created by means of racist policies stands as a material that has inaugurated to maturely take root on an extensive level. It is a substance that grows in motive and need and one that greenhorns must contemplate and partake in, whilst the old-timers are bonded to catch on and help lead the way.

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