

Black Society as Discouraged Version of the White

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Abstract

The black who settled down in the United States of America are discouraged in all aspects to enjoy the rights and privileges given to them. Still today Americans treat them as second class citizens and segregate them and treat them as aliens and opine that they are not the part of American society. Dorothy West who is the last leaf of Harlem Renaissance highlighted these issues in her works. She is a prolific writer and even great journalist. She focused on racial, class, gender and social issues in her works and turned attention of the world to realize that really African Americans going through darkest phase of oppression even in this post modern era. However, the negative feelings the white have on the black are not deep rooted one rather come from the environment and the air all around them and probably the passing white generation teaching such things to their children and legacy continues as unending issue

Detailed study

The black society considered as a discouraged version of the white. The black Diaspora settled in America facing many problems. The white discouraged them in all aspects. African Americans settled in America were under slavery up to 1965. They were denied equal rights with Americans. American government upheld 'separate but equal' racial segregation as constitutional doctrine. After the Civil War, the United States expanded the legal rights of African Americans. Between 1965 and 1970, during the historical era known as Reconstruction, the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution were ratified to establish political equality for all Americans. Congress passed, and United States ratified, an Amendment ending slavery in 1865—the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution. This Amendment abolished involuntary servitude in the United States except as a punishment for crimes. However, this amendment only outlawed slavery; it provided neither citizenship nor equal rights. The fourteenth amendment is the lengthiest of the Reconstruction Amendments. It explicitly declares that states may not deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. The fifteenth Amendment guaranteed that no citizen would be denied the right to vote on the basis of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Instead of all the Amendments, Americans ignore social identification of African Americans. It is argued that social identification is a perception of oneness with a group of persons. Social identification stems from the categorization of individuals, the distinctiveness and prestige of the group, the salience of out groups, and the factors that traditionally are associated with group formation. This perspective is applied to organizational socialization, role conflict and intergroup relations. African Americans are being rejected by the dominant group of the white. This results in direct and negative

effect on their well being. Social identity of African Americans is linked to their racial and cultural identities which give them a sense of purpose in life.

Dorothy West in her book *The Richer, The Poorer: Stories, Sketches, and Reminiscences* projects real condition of the black in the United States of America. In this book in her short story “Mammy” she focuses on how the white undermine the black. As a black investigator approaches elevator for service the elevator boy argues with the investigator in the presence of a white woman like this:

“Service entrance’s outside,” he said sullenly. The investigator said steadily,

“I am not employed here. I am here to see Mrs. Coleman on business.”

If you’re here on an errand or something like that,” he argued doggedly,

“you still got use the service entrance.” She stared at him with open hate,

despising him for humiliating her before and because of a woman of an

alien race. (Page 44)

Most of the white in America project African Americans as criminals and amoral human beings, which challenges their humanity and their right to a legitimate social and racial identity. Since their subjection as slaves they don’t have healthy identity in the society. More over there is a significant wealth gap between black and white Americans. The wealth gap between black and white in America is wider than ever, according to recent report one in four African Americans live in poverty. The median income of African American households is less than that of the white households.

There is Residential segregation in the American society. Residential segregation can be defined as the separation of racial groups in urban space. Blacks have been excluded from the white neighborhoods. White households appear to avoid not only integrated neighborhoods but also racially mixed school districts or municipalities. Historically, whites used racially restrictive covenants and violence to exclude blacks from white areas. While many studies suggest that blacks continue to face subtle discrimination by real estate agents and in access to mortgage finance. Many studies have found that blacks who live in segregated metropolitan areas have lower educational attainment and lower earnings than their counterparts in more integrated areas. This difference appears to reflect the causal effect of segregation on economic outcomes and not simply the fact that white residents are more likely to move away from poor black neighborhoods. Isolating the mechanisms that generate the association between segregated environments and minority disadvantage is an important input into effective public policy. The two most prominent explanations are the physical isolation of black neighborhoods from employment opportunities and the harmful social interactions within black neighborhoods due to concentrated poverty. Potential policy solutions to residential segregation can be classified as place-based policies, people-based policies, or indirect solutions. Place-based policies focus on neighborhoods, either improving minority neighborhoods in order to attract more white residents or requiring white suburbs to add

housing options affordable to lower-income blacks. People-based policies instead assist black homeowners or renters directly, through either stronger enforcement of fair housing laws, housing vouchers, or improved access to mortgage finance. Indirect approaches target the symptoms of residential segregation rather than the root causes—for example, by improving public transportation to reduce the isolation of black neighborhoods. William H. Banks, Jr. in his edited book *Beloved Harlem* focused on these issues. He stated their living condition like this:

The first place in New York where Negroes had a segregated community was In Greenwich Village, but as the years passed and their numbers increased they soon moved northward into the twenties and west of Sixth Avenue until they finally made one big jump and centered around West 53 Street. About 1900

looking for better housing conditions, a few Negroes moved to Harlem. The Lenox Avenue subway had not yet been built and white landlords were having difficulty in keeping white tenants east of Seventh Avenue because of the poor transportation facilities. Being good businessmen they eagerly accepted the suggestion of a Negro real estate agent that these properties be opened to color tenants. Then it was discovered that the few houses available would not be sufficient to accommodate the sudden influx. Negroes began to creep west of Lenox Avenue. White property owners and residents began to protest and tried to find means of checking or evicting unwelcome black Negroes . (Page 86)

Growth of unemployment in the United States of America is another significant issue. The African American community has suffered a dramatic increase in unemployment and a staggering loss of income since the onset of the great recession. Despite increasing hires of black workers, the employment gap between African Americans and whites remains high. There are biases in decision making. Research shows that African American students, and especially African American boys, are disciplined more often and receive more out of school suspensions and exclusions than white students. One of the well known facts is that negative messages about blacks have been portrayed in the media. The white impose crimes upon the blacks and treat them as aliens and show forth them as untrustworthy. Most of the white and the black consume drugs and create nuisance in the society. But the white claims that the black consume drugs and treat them as immoral in all aspects. In the sight of the white, black people create violence in the society and that way they portray them as dangerous people to the society. The white Americans claim that because of laziness of the black people poverty increases in the American society and emphasize that even they are not deserved candidates to receive any welfare scheme.

The culture and social inequality between the white and non white races has always been present and profoundly institutionalized in the American health public system. By 1965 it was becoming more obvious that there were class factors in sickness and in utilization of medical services. This phenomenon was linked often to disadvantages of ethnic minorities in society and to structure of the health care system. Even today these disparities between the health status of whites and blacks remain. Racism is a reality in public health system in United States of America. Based on this availability and accessibility of health care services are poor for blacks in the American society.

It is very well known fact that On August 28, 1963, a crowd estimated at between 2, 00,000 and 5, 00,000 Americans of all races had marched on Washington, D.C., petitioning the federal government to make good on its commitment to equal and fair treatment under the law. This was designed to redress the devastating effects of slavery and racial segregation was on the horizon. The blacks have been insulted and beaten in theatres and in public places. The African Americans were attacked by the white because they were black. Even till date they have been going through darkest phase of oppression in all aspects.

Dorothy West's two prominent novels focus on social stratification of Africans in America. They are differentiated on the basis of power, prestige, and wealth. That's why the ambitious figure Cleo Judson in the novel 'the living is easy' strives to achieve high social status in the society. She encourages her husband Bart Judson to earn more and more money and he worked very hard and eventually this family attained middle class status in the United States of America. Still they have been treated as second class citizens. The white never treat Africans as their equals in any matter. Dorothy West in her novel *The Wedding* projects on interracial marriages. Although the novel is set in 1953, Dorothy's narration supplies reading through flashbacks with more than one hundred years of history. Shelby Coles, a light-skinned woman, daughter of Clark Coles and Corinne Coles planned to marry white jazz musician named Meade. People in the neighborhood thought it is nothing but breaking caste of color rule in American society. However, the only member of this family who has no reservations about Shelby's marriage is Gram, Shelby's white great-grandmother who dreams of regenerating the white branch of her family, which was cut off when her daughter Josephine married Hannibal, the son of a woman who was formerly enslaved at Xanadu, the plantation owned by Gram's family. Many socialists tried to reconcile the black and the white and bring peace and harmony among people in American society. Though there are interracial marriages in America and a significant growth in economy of Africans and progressed in all aspects, still the black have been treated as despised version of the white. One of the characters in the novel *The Living Is Easy* named Simeon Binney has a class conscience and is concerned with the plight of blacks in America. He struggles to keep his pro-black newspaper in circulation thinking that the black need a Negro newspaper to show forth the problems Negroes facing settled down in United States of America to the entire world. His news paper is more proletariat than bourgeois; the young man wants the black middle class to face the facts of their second class citizenship. He opines that all blacks, no matter what class, are subject to discrimination in America. That is why Washington calls Simeon the most admirable character in the novel and notes that African Americans who worked nobly on behalf of civil rights earned Dorothy West's greatest respect. West shows forth that some individuals in the society are concerned with more than an address in the right neighborhood.

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