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STUDY OF RACISM: A SNAPSHOT

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ABSTRACT

The definition of racism is controversial both because there is little scholarly agreement about the meaning of the concept "race", and because there is also little agreement about what does and doesn't constitute discrimination. It has also been a major part of the political and ideological basic of genocides such as *The Holocaust*, but also in colonial contexts such as the *rubber booms* in South America and the Congo, and in the European conquest of the Americas and colonization of Africa, Asia and Australia.

Key words: Attitude, language, prejudice, race, group

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INTRODUCTION

Many scholars and dictionaries have sought to define racism and all definitions have elements in common. Racism, according to Fredrickson, is *the hostile and negative feelings of ethnic group or people toward another and the action resulting from such attitudes*. Some sociologists have defined racism as a system of group privilege.

Discussion

Racism has been one of the most widespread problems around the world since the beginning of the human species. Racism influenced the major trades in the history. It was a driving force behind the transatlantic slave trade and behind states based on racial segregation such as the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and South Africa under apartheid. Practices and ideologies of racism are universally condemned by the United Nations in the Declaration of Human Rights.

Many scientists of the 19th century subscribed to the simple belief that human populations are divided into separate races. This was often used to justify the belief that some races were inferior to others, and that differential treatment was consequently justified. Such theories are generally termed as *scientific racism*.

Institutional racism (also known as structural racism, state racism or systemic racism) is racial discrimination by governments, corporations, religions, or educational institutions or other large organizations with the power to influence the lives of many individuals. Institutional racism is a practice of a nation-state

that is grounded in racist ideology—has played a major role in all instances of settler colonialism, all over the world.

Legislative state racism is known to have been enforced by the National Party of South Africa during their Apartheid regime between 1948 and 1994. Here a series of Apartheid legislation in South Africa was passed through the legal systems to make it legal for white South Africans to have rights which were superior to those of non-white South Africans. Non-white South Africans were not allowed involvement in any governing matters, including voting; access to quality healthcare; the provision of basic services, including clean water; electricity; as well as access to adequate schooling. Non-white South Africans were also prevented from accessing certain public areas, using certain public transportation and were required to live only in certain designated areas. Non-white South Africans were taxed differently from white South Africans and were required to carry on them at all times additional documentation, which later became known as “Dom passes”, to certify their non-white South African citizenship. All of these legislative racial laws were abolished through a series of equal human rights laws passed at the end of Apartheid in the early 1990s.

While 19th century racism became closely intertwined with nationalism, leading to the ethnic nationalist discourse that identified the "race" to the "folk", leading to such movements as pan-Germanism, Zionism, pan-Turkism, pan-Arabism, and pan-Slavism, medieval racism precisely divided the nation into various non-biological "races", which were thought as the consequences of historical conquests and social conflicts.

Marxists also seized this discourse founded on the assumption of a political struggle that provided the real engine of history and continued to act underneath the apparent peace. Thus, Marxists transformed the essentialist notion of "race" into the historical notion of "class struggle". Rudyard Kipling's poem *The White Man's Burden* (1899) is one of the more famous illustrations of the belief in the inherent superiority of the European culture over the rest of the world, though also it is also thought to be a satirical appraisal of such imperialism. However, during the 19th century, West European colonial powers were involved in the suppression of the Arab slave trade in Africa, as well as in suppression of the slave trade in West Africa.

In 2001, the European Union explicitly banned racism, along with many other forms of social discrimination, in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the legal effect of which, if any, would necessarily be limited to Institutions of the European Union

UNESCO marks March 21 as the yearly International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, in memory of the events that occurred on March 21, 1960 in Sharpeville, South Africa, where police killed student demonstrators peacefully protesting against the apartheid regime.

Conclusion

There are key elements that clarify the roots of racism. First, the inequality between people is determined by the race they belong to. Second, each race has specific traits and characteristics which lead either to consider him\her a superior or inferior. There are many resolutions have been made to eradicate the racism. First step is to give the right of equal opportunities.

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