

Race As A Social Construct

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Introduction

In this diverse world, people from different ethnicities, cultures, norms, and languages live together to form a versatile community. Race is part of someone's ethnicity, and it refers to a specific culture, which gives a broad definition and identity to all the people of the world (Smith, 2006). In this regard, people having a common culture, language, social attributes, activities, and appearance are categorized into one race. The race is also associated with the speakers of a common language who form a community or a country. Following the general perception, most people speculate that people from distinct races exhibit behavioural uniqueness and differences. But this perception has become very debatable recently.

For instance, according to Cornell & Hartmann (2007), several human traits, such as character, nature, spirit, temperament, intelligence, and other attributes, are characterized by race and ethnicity. However, many theorists and scientists consider that only genetic variations such as complexion, hair colour, and other physical appearances exist between two different races, while human intelligence is only developed by the environment. However, Naomi Zack adopts a quite different approach when describing race in her book "Philosophy of Race: An Introduction" (Zack, 2018). She calls race a social construct that is a very dangerous phenomenon and does not possess any biological taxonomy.

In this regard, the following essay analyses her approach to describing race as a social construct and how she addresses the different social challenges that emerge due to people's perceptions of race and ethnicity. Moreover, I have provided my personal review of this social construct to highlight the different potential issues that may arise when people put emphasis on race.

Racism As A Social Construct

Racism and its implications have become a major research topic in the 21st century for psychologists and philosophers due to its controversial notion. Racism is mostly considered a biological phenomenon that has a major impact on a person's cognitive attributes apart from colour and appearance. However, Naomi Zack, a Lehman College philosophy professor, does not consider race a mere biological phenomenon and thus provides major contributions to the theoretical research of racism, racial politics, philosophy of racism, and feminism. In her book, "Philosophy of Science and Race", she has declared a clear consensus about the social construction of race and the negative outcomes of racism. According to her, race as a social construct refers to the concept that race is not linked to human nature and other attributes but depends on society's view of race and its implications

(Zack, 2018).

Zack's Arguments About Social Construction

The main argument of Professor Zack in her book is to give a basic notion about the non-existence of racism in biological sciences. In other words, she argued that race possesses no real referent while real refers to the scientifically explained concept used by society. According to her, race should be analyzed based on biological sciences to observe the behaviour of different races, not their appearances. She has provided powerful arguments by explaining the biological laws and human nature to prove that race is indeed a social construct. Her arguments are very dense and strongly interleaved up to a greater extent. She has analyzed the foundation of race to strengthen the idea of the biological taxonomy of race by explaining that the common notion of race is not a biological concept. For instance, all Americans and all Blacks do not have the same genes that make their attributes.

She argued that the biological taxonomy of race does not exist in contemporary biological sciences. She has explained the four notions, geographical origin, heredity, phenotypes, and genealogy, to clarify her idea about race. Moreover, she has also demonstrated the outcomes of abolishing the race from the scientific perspective. According to her, the abolishment of the concept of race will change the world entirely by bringing justice. The concept and realization of the unreality of race demand that race should not be considered an attribute anymore. Her writing possesses scientific logic and a strong analysis of the philosophy of science and race, followed by the examples and concepts of other theorists. She has provided distinct examples of communities, countries, and cultures to describe her idea effectively.

Opinion

I find the arguments of Zack (2018) very appealing, especially when she refers to the prevailing injustice in the United States in terms of race. I have observed many times how my black friends are treated differently in many social and political gatherings. I think what we perceive of others is mostly influenced by our environment. For instance, if children are told that people of a particular colour don't have comparative cognitive skills as compared to others in their homes by their parents, in schools by teachers, and in the media by many influential people, they will ultimately begin to believe this. This is what makes race a social construct.

Therefore, from the above arguments, it can be inferred that the taxonomy of race is not independently supported by the biological sciences. In other words, race is less likely to be the result of feelings and human thoughts, but it has been generated as the consequence of political practices in society. Therefore, the absence of biological taxonomy and political origin of the race shows that race is associated with racism, and these two notions are ideologically related. In short, race does not

imply the intrinsicity of humans; it is just linked to human actions and perceptions.

Finally, it can be summarized that **race and racism** are strongly related, generated as a result of historical and political powers and policies that support the idea that race is a socially constructed notion. On the other hand, many empirical studies have proved that people from different races behave equally and possess the same skills and talents without any interference from race (Jackson & Weidman, 2006).

Outcomes Of Emphasis On Race

The social construction of race and other aspects are not recent concepts. In fact, most of the social theorists were also familiar with social construction in the early 21st century. However, a clear consensus on socially constructed race has not been proposed by any theorist, so it cannot yet be considered a general idea. The concept of the social construction of race has not been accepted universally because the belief of biological race still exists. It depicts that human psychology, intelligence, and character attributes are influenced by race. Therefore, the emphasis on the notion of race is dangerous for the just and peaceful world as the realization of race generates a sense of superiority and inferiority among the people and significantly disturbs the harmony in society.

Therefore, the existing racial division and discrimination in many regions of the world have led to many dangerous outcomes spread throughout the globe. In the lack of biological reality of race, racial divisions will continue to harm people based on their ethnicity, and society will remain the same as the false concept of race leads to inequality and racism in the world. Historically, people from different ethnicities possessed common attributes and appearances, but they were not categorized as having a rigid perception of race. On the other hand, discrimination and equality existed in the past, but they were based on religion, culture, and ethnicity rather than scientific distinctions (Smith, 2006).

Race is the basis of Micro-discrimination, which is almost imperceptible: it exists in soft-spoken whispers, in small mockery; there are many subtle differences in the treatment of different people, which can be regarded as subtle discrimination based on race. Similarly, when people of different colours are treated differently, they perceive a sense of discrimination. As a result, micro-discrimination cannot be measured or resolved and also leads to inequality in the end. Racism has affected this world badly by promoting a sense of superiority that led to inequality and brutal discrimination. Now, the whole world is suffering from the bad impacts of racism in the form of human rights violations, beginning from the biological fallacy of race (Saini, 2019). Therefore, the emphasis that people put on race is very dangerous and demands proper actions from all sectors of society to make their collaborative efforts to eradicate this false notion to promote justice and equality.

Conclusion

Race is a socially constructed notion from the perspective of common sense and other related attributes, and it does not possess any biological taxonomy. The eradication of the 'race' can lead to a very peaceful world by removing the traces of racism and discrimination. The rigid concept of race followed by scientific validity can become dangerous for global peace because race is merely a political consequence rather than a biological nature of humans. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify the concept of race to the whole World by explaining the facts and political foundation of race.

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