

## **Race, Racism and Human Biological Variation**

Race and racism have been significant and complex issues in the United States, deeply tied to biological variation, genetics, health, and social inequality. It is essential to understand these concepts and their historical context to understand their impact on our society. In this essay we need to cover briefly the above mentioned issues as anthropology.

**Race** is a collective build that classifies people based on physical characteristics such as skin color, facial features, and hair texture. The concept of race has no biological origin, as humans share more than 99.9% of their DNA. Nevertheless, race has been historically used to justify discrimination and unequal treatment of certain groups, particularly African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, and other minority populations.

### **How racism and discrimination make race become biological reality?**

#### **According to gravlee**

**Racism** is the faith that some of the races are superior or inferior to others and the discrimination or prejudice against individuals based on their perceived racial identity. Racism has been deeply implanted in American history, leading to slavery, ghettoization, and systemic oppression, which have had far-reaching consequences for various racial and ethnic groups.

### **If race is not biology but becomes biology through the process of discrimination!!**

**Biological Variation and Genetics:** While race is a social construct, there are genetic differences among individuals and populations due to evolutionary processes and genetic drift. However, these genetic variations account for a small fraction of human genetic diversity compared to

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individual variation within racial groups. In other words, genetic differences among individuals are often more significant than differences between racial groups.

It is crucial to highlight that genetic variation does not correspond to racial superiority or inferiority. It does not determine intelligence, behavior, or moral character, as these complex traits are influenced by a combination of genetic, environmental, and social factors.

**Health disparities** refer to differences in health outcomes between different populations, often linked to social determinants of health. In the United States, racial and ethnic minorities experience higher rates of various health problems, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, certain cancers, and infant mortality, compared to the majority population.

These disparities arise from a combination of factors, including unequal access to healthcare, socioeconomic status, discrimination in the healthcare system, environmental factors, and stress related to experiences of racism and discrimination.

**Social inequality** is the unequal distribution of privileges, opportunities and resources within a civilization. It incorporates economic disparities, educational entree, employment opportunities, housing, and more. Ancient and contemporary racism has played a substantial role in extending social inequality in the United States.

Generations of discriminatory policies and practices, such as redlining, unequal educational opportunities, and employment discrimination, have contributed to the persistent wealth gap and unequal distribution of resources between racial and ethnic groups.

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### **What Students are saying about Race and Racism in America???** (The New York Times)

“As a black girl, I have dealt with a lot of comments from others over the years pertaining my skin color and other features that make me a person of color” (*Naomi, Georgia said in NYT*)

“Today, I am very pro-black; I love my hair, and I love my skin. But it’s still hard to find beauty in the mirror when I go to look”. (*KJ from Texas said in NYT*)

“I am white, and I live in a predominately white suburban town. I have never been treated differently for the color of my skin because I am a product of white privilege”. (*Annie from New Jersey Said in NYT*)

The idea behind race as a biological classification has a long history deep-rooted in pseudoscientific theories, such as scientific racism. During the 18th and 19th centuries, European invaders used these theories to justify their misuse and domination of other races. These ideas were often used to support practices like slavery, colonization, and forced integration.

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### References

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