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American National Government

9 September 2024

Comparative Civil Rights

Many different people groups within our society have had to deal with varying types of discrimination. These groups have had to overcome these prejudice to assist them in reaching their current level of progress. They have had to rise above the societal laws that helped disparage them in the past and persevered to be able to overcome them. The two types of segregation that both African Americans and Latino Americans faced are de facto and de jure segregation.

The first type of discrimination is called de jure segregation. De jure segregation is segregation that is caused by an intentional action by the government with the implementation of legislation or a law harming a group of people. Both Jessi Silva's article and the MLK article show different types of discrimination that were caused by the government. In Jessi Silva's article, it discusses how they were forced into segregated schools and how that had a negative effect on her, and how they tried to tear down her culture. We see a similar thing happen in Martin Luther King's speech but to a much greater extent. In the South, they tried everything to keep African Americans down with Jim Crow laws and making it illegal for black and white people to come together as equals. These laws were the South's state governments would use to keep

African Americans down and ensure that they would be able to undermine them in any way that they wanted to.

The second type of discrimination is de facto segregation. De facto segregation is when people are being put down due to circumstances in society, the people's attitude towards them, and socioeconomic factors. I believe that this type of segregation is most evident within the readings and in Jessi Silva's article, it is talked about in the very beginning. For instance, Silva recalls a time when she was a kid and her mother was using a shopping cart in a store. A white woman simply walked up to her and gave her a look and she promptly gave up her cart. It is important to note that this was a common occurrence was a normal occurrence during this time. They also were segregated in different schools, forcing them into a more disempowered position. As a result, the schools for Latinos would often be forced to use second-hand textbooks and the schools would be given old, worn furniture, while the white schools would receive brand new textbooks and furniture. With segregation came the attempted destruction of Latino culture among the children, with strict rules against speaking Spanish at the school. They would receive harsh punishment for disobedience. For example, there was a teacher that had a grave for Mr. Spanish which was a buried box where each student was made to write a note renouncing Spanish as a language. African Americans experienced similar situations as Jessi Silva and other Latinos, with their being a culture that favors white people and looks down upon African Americans. However, they also had to deal with more violence towards them as we see with what happened in Birmingham, Alabama. In this event, the police released dogs to attack protesters and then sprayed them with fire hoses to make them leave, and faced backlash on a

national level for doing this. The southern government had no real issue with what had taken place in Birmingham, which shows how hated they were as a group by southerners.

In many ways, these two groups are very similar in how they have suffered discrimination. Both faced very intensive segregation from Southern Americans being looked at as lower class. The one key difference between the two articles is what was emphasized by destroying their culture and taking away from them with banning their language from schools to having them renounce it all together. This seemed to be the biggest offense to her and her culture, whereas the same thing happens in the MLK article that mentions that they were focused on how they were considered sub-human. But in the end, both group's segregation had the same effect: it united both by strengthening their cultures and fighting for equal rights.

There have been many things done to help both of these groups since all this has happened. For example, many southern states have been forced to change their laws, and segregation as a whole has been banned. There have also been anti-discrimination laws that have been put in place to ensure that no one can be turned away from a job or anything like that because of race or gender. The Jessi Silvas School where they were made to renounce their language, has now been turned into a national park to commemorate all that they have been put through and help show all that Latinos have contributed to this country. After all the work that has been done, we still need for public awareness campaigns such as Black Lives Matter because there are still plenty of people who are still very prejudiced over something as trivial as the color of your skin. Through education and awareness campaigns, specific initiatives,

and community development, we will continue to move forward to combat bias and discrimination.

References

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