

ELTU1002 English Communication for University Studies

Essay Proposal

(Word limit: 1050 +/- 10%, excluding reference list)

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Part 1. Topic & Audience Analyses and Essay Outline

(not more than 750 words)

Topic: Institutional racism

Essay Title: Institutional racism in the United States: Why it persists and its contemporary impacts on ethnic minorities (READ THE FEEDBACK VERSION TOO)

Pattern of Organisation: Cause and effect

Documentation Style (e.g. APA, Chicago, MLA): APA

Target Audiences:

- Policymakers and government officials
- Members of the general public who are concerned about equality and social minorities

Information Collected to Help the Audience Understand the Topic:

- Relevant academic journals
- Relevant reports from government authorities and NGOs
- Experiment reports of related studies

Essay Outline:

A. Introduction

Context & Background (in point form):

- Institutional/Systemic racism refers to discrimination that “is structured in the organisational culture, fabric and practices within institutions” (Patel,

2022), or in other words, it is discrimination that manifests at the societal level instead of from the actions of select individuals.

- Although institutional racism exists in many countries, the primary focus of this essay would be on America since it most apparently exhibits this phenomenon among developed countries. Hence, terminology as “black” and “white” population should primarily refer to African-Americans and Caucasian Americans, respectively.

Thesis Statement (in one complete sentence, in your own wording):

- This essay aims to analyse how institutional racism in the United States originated, why it persists, and how it affects racial minorities’ social mobility.

Purpose for Writing (in point form):

- To uncover the underlying reasons for institutional racism in America and how its prominence came to be
- To illustrate the impacts and severity of this issue
- To raise public awareness about the issue

B. Main Ideas by Key Paragraphs

MAIN IDEA #1

1st Topic Sentence:

- Historical ideologies of American racialisation influenced the institutionalisation of discrimination.

Elaboration:

- Seventeenth-century ideologies promoted social hierarchy based on race and biological characteristics (Patel, 2022).
- The devaluation of “inferior races” was justified by slavery and colonisation, which further consolidated discrimination into the social construct. (Patel, 2022).
- Colonialisation -> Slavery
- Whiteness (Patel entire chapter)

MAIN IDEA #2

2nd Topic Sentence:

- Institutional racism persists in the US because there is little incentive to abolish discriminatory conventions beneficial to the dominant community.

Elaboration:

- Racism “[advances] the interests and privilege of dominant groups in society” by way of “material determinism” (Patel, 2022). QUOTE PAGE NUMBERS
- The dominant race tends to protect its privileges to maintain the “racial order” (Bonilla-Silva, 2021).
- Cultural and societal values incline people not to desire high social mobility too much (Corak, 2013).
- Less than 1 percent of top management of US government organisations is comprised of non-whites (Powell & Butterfield, 1997), thus the voices of minorities are seldom reflected in policies.
- Few policies that significantly address inequality-related issues have been instituted.

MAIN IDEA #3**3rd Topic Sentence:**

- Segregation policies in housing and education have resulted in intergenerational gaps between American racial groups, even long after the policies had been abolished.

Elaboration:

- Housing areas were divided into sections (“redlining”) during suburban development to separate racial minorities from the rest of the population as a form of eugenics (Lovett, 2020).
- Housing agencies show that 11 percent fewer housing units have gone to black house-buyers (The Urban Institute, 2013), since neighbourhoods with higher black populations show a lower gentrification rate, deterring other investors (Hwang & Sampson, 2014).
- 76 percent of school segregation stems from neighbourhood segregation (Monarrez et al., 2020), thus transferring the disparities from residence allocation to education funding and quality.
- School segregation arises from parents being more inclined to choose schools with “lower-percentage black” (Sikkink & Emerson, 2008), since they perceive schools with higher-percentage black as having lower quality (Goyette et al., 2012).
- Funding the advantaged tends to be a more worthwhile investment for the government thus it spends less money on the disadvantaged than on other students (Corak, 2013). Predominantly non-white schools received 23 billion USD (when? 2016) less funding despite serving the same number of students (Edbuild, 2019).
- Able teachers tend to only teach in advantaged (white) schools (Corak, 2013).

- Non-white students have a lower chance of pursuing higher education (Muller et al., 2010).
- Minority groups are marginalised even in higher education academies (Arday, 2020).

MAIN IDEA #4

4th Topic Sentence:

- Racial stereotypes and inequalities hinder the job opportunities and prospects of ethnic minorities in the US, thus lowering their social mobility.

Elaboration:

- Employers are prejudiced against offering interviews to applicants with names typically correlated with ethnic minorities; their education levels are also less impactful on the employers' decisions (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2003; Kline et al., 2021). Conversely, "whitening" resumes can augment ethnic minorities' chances of acquiring job offers (Kang et al., 2017).
- 99 percent of black men have a significantly lower individual income than white men of the same income rank, with the disparity worsening for men of higher income levels (Akee et al., 2019; Chetty et al., 2019).
- Government programmes tend to favour the advantaged, furthering the inequalities (Corak, 2013).
- The income mobility of black men has declined despite their educational mobility improving (Bloome & Western, 2011) since a significant amount of economic advantage and disadvantage is propagated intergenerationally (Corak, 2013).

C. Conclusion

Summary (in point form):

- Due to unequal policies, institutional racism persists long after its historical origin ceased to exist.
- Institutional racism manifests itself in housing, education, and the labour market, which propagate intergenerationally.
- Inherited disadvantages significantly limit the opportunities of minority groups and hinder their social mobility.

Final Message (in point form):

- The government and companies should enact solutions to address the underlying reasons for this issue.
- The American public should try to be more sensitive to this issue, acknowledge their inherent advantages over other races and eliminate the discrimination embedded in their culture.

Part 2. References

A. Lists of Sources

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- Bertrand, M., & Mullainathan, S. (2003, July). Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination. doi:10.3386/w9873 (Working paper citation)
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- Kline, P., Rose, E., & Walters, C. (2021, July). Institutional discrimination among large U.S. employers. doi:10.3386/w29053 (Missing information)
- Lovett, Laura L. (2020, Spring/Summer). Eugenic Housing: Redlining, Reproductive Regulation, and Suburban Development in the United States. *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*, 48(1&2), 67-83. doi:10.1353/wsqr.2020.0019
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- Patel, N. (2022). Dismantling the scaffolding of institutional racism and institutionalising anti-racism. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 44(1), 91– 108. doi:10.1111/1467-6427.12367
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- Sikkink, D., & Emerson, M. O. (2008). School choice and racial segregation in US schools: The role of parents' education. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31(2), 267-293. doi:10.1080/01419870701337650
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B. Justification of Sources

(not more than 300 words in total for explanations)

Source 1

Patel, N. (2022) Dismantling the scaffolding of institutional racism and institutionalising anti-racism. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 44(1), 91– 108.
doi:10.1111/1467-6427.12367

Explanation

This research article suggested that various historical reasons have catalysed the institutionalisation of discrimination. The article also spotlighted the challenges and gave suggestions to improve racial equity. The author noted that racism started back in the seventeenth century and had inspired discriminatory stigma and policies. It was also proposed that despite equality movements (e.g., the “Black Lives Matter” campaign) and increasing awareness, discrimination is so deeply rooted in American culture that it inevitably influences our decisions. This research is useful since it highlights one of the most significant reasons for the existence and propagation of institutional racism. (90 words)

Source 2

Corak, M. (2013). Income inequality, equality of opportunity, and intergenerational mobility. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 27(3), 79–102.
<https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.27.3.79>

Explanation

This paper illustrated how inequality could lower social mobility by being propagated intergenerationally. The author listed social connections, job opportunities, genetic traits deemed favourable, and culture as important catalysts for the snowballing effect of disparity. Corak also proposed that social mobility is seldom addressed due to those in positions of power (e.g., policymakers) being among the beneficiaries of inequal policies and the cultural values of some countries not regarding social mobility as being desirable. This study is useful since it displays how the many aspects of inequality create social immobility and unveils an often-overlooked reason for inequality and why it has lingered. (109 words)

Source 3

Bertrand, M., & Mullainathan, S. (2003, July). Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination.
doi:10.3386/w9873

Explanation

This experiment was conducted to investigate American companies' racial preferences of applicants and demonstrated that applications with typically "white" names received 50 percent more call-backs for interviews than those with "black" names. The authors also reported that possessing more advanced education or experience yielded less significant improvements in "black" applicants, suggesting that the discrimination barrier was not merely related to education level. This research illustrates the racial bias employers possess and can act as supporting evidence for the difficulties that racial minorities face in the American labour market. (82 words)