

Social constructs such as race and gender are strengthened and spread by the development of a collective consciousness. Perceived social differences between races have no basis in genetics, they are solely phenotypes and have no relation to behavior. Therefore, many modern and historical arguments surrounding race are not truly evidence-based. Omi and Winant describe how the concept of race evolved in America to cause discrimination and societal differences, as a collective consciousness was formed and reinforced through the development of American society.

According to Omi and Winant, the conversation among experts surrounding race has shifted from finding a scientific explanation, to labeling the concept as a sociohistorical phenomenon. The categorization of race as a sociohistorical phenomenon fits well with the idea that the collective consciousness also has an influence on this concept. The concept of race as it exists today in America evolved from historical events such as slavery, which spread throughout social institutions through the collective consciousness. The authors of “Racial Formations” contrast social ideas about race in Latin America with the United States; which exemplifies the influence of a collective consciousness, or the spread and reinforcement of ideas among groups, as related to the concept of race. They also mention how ideas about race influence how we present ourselves, view and stereotype others. This aligns with James’ and Cooley’s ideas that our self image is heavily influenced by social interaction.

In conclusion, race is a concept that was strengthened by collective consciousnesses, evolved from historical social events, and influences our perceptions of ourselves and others. Each of these aspects intersect to create a societal idea that has become prominent and important, yet harmful to society. With hope, this concept will continue to evolve, but in a more positive manner.