

We Shouldn't Adopt Conservationism on The Definition of Race

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Abstract: The definition of race and how the definition brings influence to us are the topic that we are mainly discussing today. Race is the concept which is a social identity and can be influenced by the past. We are going to explain it in ontological and social constructionist perspective to discuss whether there is biological meaning in race, the factor which can change the definition of race and the reason that the concept of race should be eliminated.

1. Introduction

We should not adopt conservationist approach to the concept of race. This article will explain this problem in ontological problem and social constructionist perspective. Many people think that race no longer has the meaning of racial discrimination, and does this improvement suggest that we should put conservationist on race? The answer is no. The definition of race cannot be retained because it will have negative effect to the society.

2. The ontological explanation

Humanity needs the ideology of race under no circumstances as long as the “race” existed. There would be racial discrimination, which will provoke or at least ease racial conflicts which might cause social problems.

First, race do not exist in biological meaning. In the article How to decide if race exist, Appiah attemptsto prove biologically that race does not rely on biological classification, and in the article The metaphysics of race, it mentions that there are many and equally correct ways of classifying race today. Figure1 is the most authoritative racial classification mentioned in the article. The concept of ‘Asian’ is not the concept that most people think. Which means ‘Asian’ is just a folk concept with no biological evidence. In some classification, Indian and American are being classified as the white. In Britain, ‘Asian’ refers to Indians and Pakistanis, but in America it refers only to East Asians. These examples showed that there is no specific classification of race, and even the most popular classification method is still different form the division of race we thought to be. Also, Not only does race have many reasonable classifications, but the concept of race flows - it changes at any time, because humans don't follow the habit of breeding according to the race, so as long as global travel is not banned, all individuals are likely to share the same group of ancestors, which meaning that race will not exist. And can the disappearance of the concept of race bring an end to racial strife? It is possible to look at propositions, but this is not feasible, because in addition to biological significance, in the article How to decide if race exist the same is said to be a noun for human social identity, so even if biological significance proved to be non-existent, it is still impossible to prove that the concept of race does not exist, although some social identities are sometimes guided by misunderstood biological distinctions, for example, In World War II, the ultra-racist Nazis tried to prove biologically that Jews were genetically flawed to lead people to believe that the slaughter of Jews was right, and to this day there are still those who believe that some people have advantages and disadvantages. Which also prove that the concept of race we are now disagreed can easily make people to set the classes based on it and brought the conflict between people.

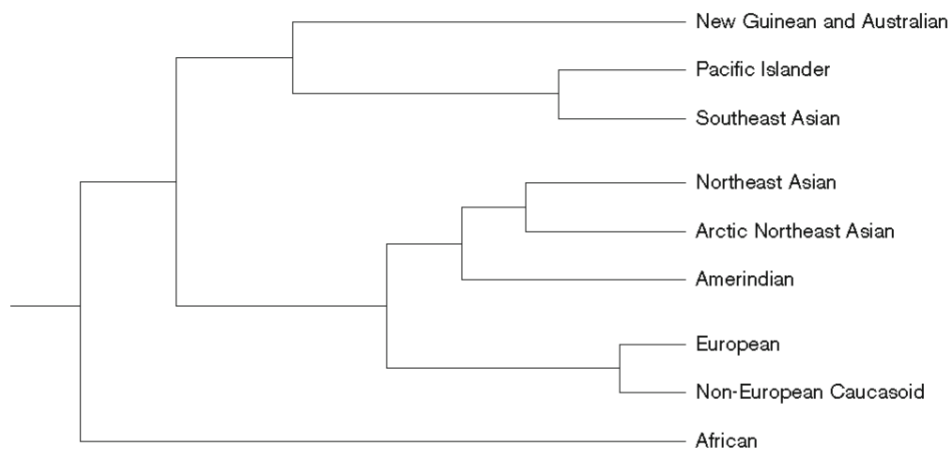


Figure 1. The most authoritative racial classification.

Also, quoted an example from Allan Hazlett’s textbook to help explain how to achieve to metaphysical balance: suppose we are satisfied that merely fictional entities – like Pegasus – do not exist and that the entities described by natural science – like horses – do. Now consider marriages. To which category do they belong? It seems plausible to say that race don’t exist, in the manner of Pegasus. Race is a real phenomenon, not a mere fiction like Pegasus. But, in the manner of horses which has just mentioned in the previous sentence. Race do not exist independently of our social practices, institutions, and conventions – as John Searle puts it, marriages seem to exist only because we believe them to exist. So, what sort of entities are marriages or race then? They are both socially constructed, and only exists in one’s head as a long-standing ideology due to society influence. In the other word, this kind of ideas happen to here can be changed. Discrimination existed as the flip side of coin as race exists, consequently we should not adopt a conservationist idea approach to question of ‘race’ because it leads to racial discrimination. That could be the way how humanity find the root of the problem and solve it nicely and entirely.

3. The social constructivist explanation

3.1. Impact form the history

There is no need to retain the situation where the existence of races will cause some races to be oppressed and fall into an endless loop. As we discussed before in the part 2, race, as a concept with no actual object. We can only build the concept of race by the impression of the society. However, there are mainly factor will affect the concept of race is history of the race form the past and the impression of race nowadays. Therefore, the concept before which are affected by the politics and religion, are now considered as the “wrong”ideas, actually keep affecting the people nowadays and will bring the racism to the vicious circle. Which means the phenomenon of “racism” are mainly caused by the history of the definition of different race. For instance, segregation of race at the middle of 19centry, many things the black people and other minority race were being considered wrong and illegal even it is normal nowadays. In the past which the white people were officially dominating the country, they were being considered as the higher classes people than the other. Therefore, they can have better living quality and higher opportunity to be success in their life, and they will also think the black people are inferior races and do not deserve to better life and respect. This thinking will also affect the next generation even the segregation is over. Most Black people are in the lower class in the society based on the history background, but the past existence of race make the other people have a stereotype before seeing a black people, they will impose their definition of black people on them, many black people will be subconsciously affected by the previous history, and unconsciously will have some negative stereotypes for themselves sometimes. The impression that even if these Black have the ability to match their positions, they will lose better employment opportunities due to these

preconceived concepts, and the black people who lose better employment will not get a considerable income, and their next generation will be difficult to get a good education. And such a vicious circle is difficult to break.

Also, races are still being quietly oppressed. White Ignorance written by Charles Mills used to hold the opinion that nowadays the people who were oppressing others now have limited knowledge and aware about their oppression. On the contrary, the people who were being oppressed are the 'people who study anthropology' in daily life. For instance, when the American continent was colonized the colonists had massacred the Native Indians, but now they have concealed and downplayed part of the history, so that they know this history. So, the most people which is the descendant of the colonizer may not know the true history. Also, the people that are being colonize were forced to lose the right to know the true history and could not speak up for the fact that they were oppressed. Also, this situation will bring out another phenomenon called 'colorblindness' which is the concept that mentioned by Mills, assuming that whites and people of color are in the same position as people of color and refuse to take steps to fix inequality. Therefore, even the problem of racists is still existing, the oppressor with the 'colorblindness' phenomenon will refuse to change because they think they are the people who think and behave as a race equal person. Which make the race problems get worth off because different from the normal people who were being affect the past history, these 'colorblindness' people first need to know the fact that they are still being racist and have to change, which is very hard to persuade.

3.2. Race discrimination do not have limitation

However, racism do not only happen to the minority or the black people I have mentioned in the precious discussion. In some countries which higher classes dominate the country, it doesn't matter if the dominate power are the minority race or not. Also, it doesn't mean that a person who is being oppressed in some areas cannot being bias to other. In some cases, like: Asian people are being considered as "nerd", but sometimes Asian people also think other people are stupid at the mean time, which bring the conflict between races become more intense than we thought. As we have discussed at the 3.1 and part 2, these kinds of racism also can affect the later concept of all different types of race, and the concept I have mentioned in this paragraph like 'Asian people' does not exist in biological meaning, it is just a concept have the meaning the impression of the people in specific geographical area adding together though the time, so as other race, which shows how many negative impact it brought to the society.

3.3. Can the definition of race being changed though the time

It seems plausible to say that if the concept of race at the pastime can influence the future concept, we can eventually have a definition that we will all satisfied, because the impression of race are still changing though the time. However, as the part 2 mentioned before, race is a kind of social identity, it is purely the concept known by the structure, which is the society as a whole. The definition of race cannot being change by individual or small group, therefore, it is hard to change all the people's ideas in short time period, at least we cannot predict the time limit now. Also, In the part 3.1, which has discussed about the concept of white ignorance, the situation that white people know less about the history and the oppression that the black and other race are facing, and the races which are being oppressed on the other hand, have more knowledge about the oppression shows that we are deeply rooted in the society in which we live, sometimes simply by pretending to solve the problem through cover-up, which in fact leads to the re-oppression of oppressed races, their inability to speak out and exacerbate the problem. As a result, it is really hard to get rid of the influence from the past.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, race as a social identity do not have any biological meaning. Which makes the history even from the past very easy to influence the definition of race, because the only determinant that can change the definition of race is social's impression and it is always based on the past history. This race

concept will make many people being oppressed and is very hard to change. As a result, the concept of race should be eliminated.

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