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Racial Discrimination in the Past and Present: A Comparison Between US and France

Racial discrimination has been a global issue that mainly affects nations habituated by the white; for instance, Russia, America, and France. However, America has been troubled for such a long time, considering that it massively practiced slavery in the earlier centuries. Slavery made the whites feel superior to African Americans, and this mentality has steadily been passed from generation to generation to date. Even though America is seen as a racially biased nation due to slavery, it is crucial to consider that the country has significantly progressed in fighting racial discrimination due to the involvement of social movements, media, and government intervention but have not reached the level at which other nations are dealing with Racism. For instance, France is habituated by lots of people of color, but racial discrimination is unheard of in this nation. Considering that France men and women are not much aggressive in social movements like Americans, yet racial discrimination is unheard of in the nation, it raises questions why America has not yet attained such success. This paper seeks to compare the racial vice between France and the US in the past and present, focusing on the involvement of social movements, media involvement, and government in both nations correctly, giving the difference between the country in terms of history and the present laws.

**The notion of Race in France and America**

Racism is discrimination against color; however, accurately defining Racism is complex considering that it encompasses white supremacy and white privilege. The way people in France and America view race are pretty different. In France, the word ‘race’ refers to animals insinuating that it is not used for humans. Race in France is not a problem considering that the French constitution regards the French population as a singular population that is not composed of individuals of different ethnic origins, religions, or beliefs, making it an inseparable population that cannot be differentiated (Simon). The French constitution says, "France is an indivisible, secular, democratic and social republic. It ensures equality before the law for all citizens without distinction of origin, race or religion. It respects all beliefs." Therefore, the constitution makes it very difficult for one to hear the blacks in French terming themselves as 'African Frenchmen or Asian Frenchmen.' In contrast, Americans extensively refer to themselves depending on their ethnic background like Asian American, Arab American, African American, etc. (Simon). This regard by the French constitution makes every French person, no matter the color, religion, and background, be viewed as French, ultimately reducing racial prejudice.

Accompanied with the notion is racial statistics. Unlike in America, where we have a lot of data about skin color, ethnic origin, and religion of the population in France, racial statistics is illegal as the government is not allowed to conduct this type of population analysis. It makes the French have a different kind of data. They cannot accurately tell the percentage of the population from Africa or Asia, considering there is no data. In America, the government systematically conducts a census after every ten years and has always questioned racial identity. Consider the census performed in the recent year; it mainly focused on identifying African Americans, Native whites, Asian Americans, Arab Americans, etc. Considering that there are no racial groups in France, the police have a right to pull over any car whenever they want, whereas, in America, the police have to have a reason and mainly end to capture the blacks. Lack of statistical data in French allows people from other ethnic backgrounds to feel like French men and are not considered a minority (Simon). Being minor group results in fear among people from the minority group and often barres the people from such groups to engage in certain activities.

**History of Racial Diversity in the Nations**

Even though America has racial statistics, it is essential to note that American's racial history is much broader than France's. People of other colors found themselves in America due to slavery. America was a powerful slave nation; by the nineteenth century, more than half a million slaves habituated in America, insinuating that most black people in America today are directly linked to the slaves captured from Africa in the previous centuries (Acharya et al.). In contrast, France was slightly different considering that they were a colonial empire; they had territories worldwide, and they had slaves in some of their colonies. However, slavery in the nation was greatly forbidden as early as the late eighteenth century, and slaves in the French colonies could not be transported to metropolitan France.

Contrary to America, most of the Black population came to France after World War II after the nation was destroyed and desperately searched for works. It was an excellent opportunity for the Blacks people in the French colonies to go to France to learn and work. This allows any Blacks living in French to go back to their nation of origin if they feel discriminated against. On the other hand, Black Americans cannot go back to their nation considering that the country is their home as they are descendants of the slaves.

**Progress made in Both nations in Fighting Racism.**

Even though France and America have different histories, both nations have made great progress in eliminating the vice. The progress made has mainly been championed by social movements like Black Lives Matter (BML), Media involvement, and Government interventions allowing the black community to feel part of the nation. In America, Social Movements and Individual effort are the main methods that have championed reforms. For example, consider Malcolm X's speech, *The Ballot or the Bullet*, which greatly emphasized Black Americans to capitalize on voting to gain equality and encouraged the government to focus on equality (Zakaria). Also, consider the recent protests by BLM that advocated for a policy shift that will reduce the police department's power to protect the Black from police brutality. The demonstration was successful as the police were barred from using chokeholds while confronting people. Whereas, in France, the government has directly made policies that seek to protect all its people consider.

In France, Social Movements exist but are not much aggressive as the movements in America, which truly fight for the black, raising questions why France is successful in fighting Racism. Yet, the citizens are not much aggressive in fighting it. At the same time, in America, individuals have put much effort, yet the problem seems permanent.

In France, the government is different as compared to the American's. For example, while voting in America, the democratic party represents the Black Americans, while the Republica party represents the whites. In France, all parties in the elections seek to represent the French man considering that there is no grouping of the population in terms of ethnicity. Therefore, it has allowed the government to formulate laws representing all people, successfully eliminating Racism in the nation.

By examining how both France and America have progressed in fighting racial discrimination, it is evident that government support is the main factor that can reduce the vice. Consider that France has made great advancements in equalizing its citizens by majorly relying on the law. Despite this, America can be considered to have made great advancements in fighting racial discrimination considering that nation's history. However, the government can still create laws that will reduce the present discrimination, reducing social movements.

Works Cited

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