

Racism without Racists Study Guide

The Strange Enigma of Race in Contemporary America

“Color-blind racism became the dominant racial ideology as the mechanisms and practices for keeping blacks and other racial minorities “at the bottom of the well” changed. (Pg. 3)

Have you perpetrated color-blindness or witnessed it? How do you change that and call it out? Did you dismiss someone’s experiences?

Was there a time when you addressed a racist interaction or wish you stepped up and said something as an ally? What would you have done differently?

Why do you think that “young, college-educated whites are more likely to be racially tolerant than any other segment of the white population”? (pg. 12)

The New Racism

Bonilla-Silva outlines some discriminatory practices starting on page 23 until the end of the chapter. Which of these sections that he talked about surprised you most or that you didn’t know about before?

“The decline in Blacks’ income vis-a-vis Whites has been attributed to the decline in enforcement of antidiscrimination laws and affirmative action policies by the federal government” (Pg. 45)

The author writes about “Residential Segregation” as well as “Wealth” and “Income and Wage Differentials”. How do you see these play a role in our own communities, especially here in Portland?

“In all areas of social life Blacks and Whites remain mostly separate and disturbingly unequal. A close examination of research in the areas of housing, education, and everyday social interaction reveals startlingly little progress since the 1960s” (pg. 23)

Do you agree with this statement, why or why not?

The Central Frames of Color-Blind Racism

What stood out most to you about chapter 3? Chapter 4? What were your top takeaways?

What do you think about the following statement on page 63, "...Thus, if minority groups face group-based discrimination and whites have group-based advantages, demanding individual treatment for all can only benefit the advantaged group."

The Style of Color Blindness

The writer gives multiple examples of color-blind racism throughout this chapter. Are there any statements made throughout the chapter that frustrated you or that you found surprising? Which ones? What are some things that could be said to counter some of the statements made by survey participants?

"I Didn't Get That Job Because of a Black Man"

Which of these narratives surprised you most or made you most emotional after reading?

How do you notice testimonies versus story lines in your own life?

Peeking Inside the (White) House of Color Blindness

How has "the culture of segregation" shown up in your life personally or professionally? (page 121, paragraph 2)

Are All Whites Refined Archie Bunkers?

What are your thoughts about the statement: "White's lack of true empathy for or interest in interracial marriage with blacks should not be a shock or a mystery to readers. People cannot like or love people they don't see or interact with. This truism has been corroborated by social psychologists, who for years have maintained that friendship, and love emerge when people share activities, proximity, familiarity, and status." (pg. 141)

Beth's interview (pg. 144) - Beth is a SE Portland resident. Do you feel like she represents an accurate portrayal of most outlooks in our community now? How do you think her upbringing shaped her opinions?

Are Blacks Color Blind, Too?

What stood out most to you about each chapter?

The following statement is made on page 167 that says, "Blacks choose to live with blacks and whites choose to live around whites." Do you agree with this and why?

"The most interesting finding on prejudice research is that blacks are almost as likely as whites to believe many of the antiblack stereotypes." (Pg. 180, last sentence on the page)

Why do you think that is?

E Pluribus Unum, or The Same Old Perfume in a New Bottle?

Do you see the examples or comparisons of racial stratification and "Latin Americanization" that's present in Latin America that Bonilla-Silva writes is happening to the US? Where or how is this showing up?

Do you agree with Bonilla-Silva's Map of Triracial Order in the US (Figure 9.1 on pg 184). The author briefly addresses the criticisms to these but do you foresee any changes being made in this hierarchy?

From Obamerica to Trumpamerica

What are your thoughts about the "increasing" wealth gap? What are your thoughts on the term "smiling discrimination"?

We've seen the insurgency of #BlackLivesMatter throughout both Obama's and Trump's presidencies. How do we keep this movement and mobilize on the push for change? How are you going to help do this?

On the flip side, we have seen how the Trump presidency played out and the “Rise of Trumpamerica” according to the author. However he states that he “disagrees with the notion that he has facilitated the reemergence of racism” (pg. 222) and further explains this reasoning.

Do you agree with Bonilla-Silva? Why or why not?

Conclusion

Starting on pg 242, the author outlines some personal changes Whites need to consider. Of these, is there one in particular that you will be doing after this book study ends?

Similarly, beginning on pg 245, he outlines ways to “change the world.” Of his examples, are there any that you think that are more impactful than the others?

What are some new actions you will take moving forward to further your education regarding anti-race work?