

I'm not a bot



What does oppression mean

By Destiny Jones Lack of power, lack of privilege, and inequality are all characteristics of oppression. Oppression impacts the realities of individuals' daily lives, and as many may think that it is invisible, it is very obvious and noticeable to those who experience it. According to Deutsch (2006), oppression is defined as the experience of repeated, widespread, systemic injustice, that takes on many forms. Not only has oppression impacted my experiences and daily life moments, but it also a concept within community psychology that has transformed my understanding on injustice and its impact on African American communities. While oppression takes many forms within African American communities, this post focuses on moral exclusion, cultural imperialism, and retributive injustice and their impacts on the lives of African Americans. Moral exclusion focuses on who is and is not entitled to fair outcomes and fair treatment based on an individual's moral community and is considered the most dangerous form of oppression (Deutsch, 2006; Young, 1990). For African Americans, being morally excluded creates barriers that hinder communities from advancing, whether it is political, economic, or personal realms. One example of how moral exclusion negatively impacted the lives of African Americans was during the Great Depression. African Americans suffered the most, as they were forced to leave unskilled jobs that they were initially disdained for by Whites before the depression began (Sustar, 2012). Furthermore, African Americans were faced with 50% of unemployed workers in comparison to 30% of unemployed workers for Whites. Furthermore, during this time, African Americans were also excluded from union membership (Great Depression and the New Deal Reference Library, 2002). This moral exclusion led to lack of resources, financial struggles, hardships, and negative health outcomes for many African American families. Another form of oppression faced by African American communities is cultural imperialism. Cultural imperialism establishes the dominant (in this case white) group's experience and culture as the norm and standard way of life (Young, 1990, p. 59). Cultural imperialism creates a pressure to conform and internalize the dominant group's images as aspirations for one's own racial group. Cultural imperialism dates back to the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade, in which African Americans were forced to migrate to the United States and acculturate the dominant culture. Colonizers dismissed the culture and norms of Africans brought over as slaves, forcing them to adapt to new norms, some of which are evident today. In addition, many Africans were forced to practice Christianity, since it was the dominant religion within the country (Raboteau,1992). Cultural imperialism thus forces African Americans to live up the dominant culture and the images that are forced upon the community. This suggests that privilege and power allow one to create the standard norm while ignoring others' cultures, experiences, and traditions. Furthermore, cultural imperialism gives insight as to how power and privilege also allows the dominant community to create these everlasting images of communities even though these images are false representations or have negative impacts on a particular group. Retributive injustice is a form of oppression that focuses on the attitudes and the behavior of individuals, especially those in authority, in regard to moral rule breaking (Deutsch, 2006). Retributive injustice is seen within the arena of crime among the African American communities. It is evident that when it comes to crimes, African Americans receive the worse punishment. According to the United States Sentencing Commission, African American men who commit the same crime as white men receive prison sentences that are 20% longer than white men's sentences. This disparity falls upon the judges as they make their sentencing choices at their own discretion (Ingraham, 2017). Furthermore, judges are not likely to voluntarily decrease sentences for African American men, and if so, they may do so in small increments (Ingraham, 2017). Another example of retributive injustice among African Americans is through arrests for marijuana possession. According to Staff (2018), ninety-three percent of people who were arrested for marijuana possession in between January and March within New York City were people of color. Out of the 4,081 arrests for marijuana, only 287 of those arrested were white people, while 2,006 African Americans were arrested for the same crime. This form of retributive injustice is embedded and ingrained within the system, leaving African Americans to endure even more hardships and struggles. While it is important to identify how these forms of oppression impact the realities of African American communities, it is also important to engage in meaningful processes that to overcome oppression and systemic injustice. According to Watts and Serrano-Garcia (2003), a critical consciousness is needed to overcome oppression. Critical consciousness allows those of the oppressed group to deconstruct existing ideologies and foundations and develop a perspective of liberation and equality (Watts & Serrano-Garcia, 2003). Critical consciousness involves expansion of knowledge, skills, and faculties that gives the oppressed the ability to move forward toward an effective live. Another key tool to overcome oppression is empowerment. Empowerment can be thought of as a gateway to self-efficacy, self-confidence, and control over one's life and settings (Watts & Serrano-Garcia, 2003). Empowerment will not only contribute to self-worth and integrity of African American people, but it will also give the community the control to engage in communal acts that are beneficial for the culture and the future of the community. With the force of, African American communities will advance forward with life even though there are still oppressive forces that are against the community. Even as oppression and its many forms plays a role within African American communities, there are possibilities embedded in empowerment and critical consciousness raising. References Beauboeuf-Lafontant, T. (2007). You have to show strength: An exploration of gender, race, and depression. *Gender and Society*, 21(1), pp. 28-51 Cochran, D. L., Brown, D. R., McGregor, K. C. (199). 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The quest for a liberating community psychology: An overview. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 31(1), pp.73-78 Young, M. I. (1990). Justice and the Politics of Difference. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. From Longman Dictionary of Contemporary Englishoppressionop-pres-ion /ə'preʃən/ ●○○ noun [uncountable] CONTROLwhen someone treats a group of people unfairly or cruelly and prevents them from having the same rights as other people havepolitical/racial/sexual etc oppression They suffered years of political oppression. the struggle against oppressionExamples from the Corpusoppression The same sense of gloom and oppression. And isn't that just the case with everything you gone and done over the centuries of black oppression? Am I a man who fears oppression or death? It is written in every cell of my body and, most of all, in thirty years of oppression. What matters are the structures of power, the institutions and the social practices that produce racial oppression and discriminatory outcomes. Marxist writers vary quite substantially in their interpretations of the reason for women's oppression. the oppression of women Did he do it with oppression?political/racial/sexual etc oppression The first problem is the dispassionate judgement of compositions that emerge from, and in some cases directly express, political oppression. What matters are the structures of power, the institutions and the social practices that produce racial oppression and discriminatory outcomes. Or an end to racial oppression? The following is a list of many UMass Lowell student, faculty and staff written blogs. We hope you enjoy them. If you have any questions or comments please email webcontent@uml.edu or contact us. Read our blog policy. Blog Spotlight:Canals: A Blog For College-Bound Students, Parents and Counselors Get a behind the scenes look at UMass Lowell! You'll get an inside look as Liz attends campus events, eats food in downtown Lowell and interacts with the students who go here. 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The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. noun [uncountable] jump to other results cruel and unfair treatment of people, especially by not giving them the same freedom, rights, etc. as other people victims of oppressionthe struggle against racial oppressionThey have freed themselves from oppression.Topics War and conflict2 oppressionOppression is a situation where an individual or group in a position of power unjustly exercises authority or control over another individual or group, causing them harm or hardship. This encompasses systemic, pervasive inequality and mistreatment, and can manifest in various forms such as social, economic, political, or institutional injustice. It may include discrimination, exploitation, marginalization, or violence based on race, gender, class, religion, sexual orientation, or other social factors. 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