

Critical Race Theory

AN INTRODUCTION



A green brushstroke graphic with a rough, hand-painted edge, containing the text 'CRT Origins' in white.

CRT Origins

- Evolved in the 1970s by several legal scholars, but highly influenced by Derrick Bell Jr.
- Emerged from the study of law
- CRT evolved as a response to stalling civil right gains of the 1960s and an increasing repeal of civil right advances
- Informed by 6 main tenets that posit race is a social construct that has resulted in social and legal biases against people of color (e.g. redlining)

Usage of CRT

- CRT is a lens used to analyze policies and systems that lead to inequitable outcomes for people of Color.
- CRT is often taught in graduate-level courses, predominately within legal studies and the social sciences.
- CRT does not accuse people of wrongdoing, rather it interrogates and critiques systems that perpetuate inequalities on the basis of race.

1. Permanence of Racism

- Racism is a commonplace experience for Black individuals and Black communities in the U.S.
- Racism is difficult to address because it is not widely acknowledged.
- Color-blind approaches or impartiality only address the most obvious forms of racism.
- Racism is structural, systemic, and built into the social fabric of U.S. society.

2. Interest Convergence

- Advances in race relations have primarily occurred, not from altruistic reasons, but because all parties gain something from promoting diversity and equity.

3. Race is a Social Construction

- Race is not based on biological or genetic difference. Race is a socially constructed concept.
- Demonstrates that science refutes the idea of biological social differences (e.g., Human Genome Project).

4. Whiteness as Property

- Different minority groups are "racialized" differently at different times to meet social and economic needs.
- Progress in race relations will be followed by atavism.

5. Intersectionality

- All people have multiple identities that inform their reality and lived experiences.

6. Counter Storytelling

- People of Color have different experiences that are informed by race and counter stories can convey those experiences.
- Counter storytelling can be used as a method for highlighting racial discrimination and injustice.

References & Additional Resources

- Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).
- Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property" *Harvard Law Review*, June 10, 1993.
- David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).



Questions?