

Black Decolonization

Humans of the Black race have come to understand the unfair racial, political, sociocultural, and economic power dynamics that plagued their respective worlds. However, many they have and continue to resist and embrace their Black identity and rebel against white supremacist and Eurocentric ideals. This kind of decolonization has come to have a deep meaning to Africans and those across the African diaspora. In different ways and on multiple levels they express these ideals of colonial deconstruction. Such levels include indigenous forms of spirituality and communal kinship. As Black people, it is important to educate oneself regarding Black history. Most people, including Black people, only educate themselves about slavery, whereas there are many facets of the rich and extensively researched past of the Black race. Dr. Sydney Freeman, Jr., a higher education scholar, professor, and pioneer of the Black History Research Lab at the University of Idaho, defines Black decolonization as “the holistic process of letting go of colonial practices, values, and culture. Adopting and returning to indigenous ways of knowing and being.”¹ Additionally, colonial practices often aim at political and economic dominance, inversely subduing the culture and society of a particular regional area. It is not a surprise that the community and socio-cultural ethos of Black people have experienced the unfair effect of colonial practices. The question of the deprivation of the fundamental human rights of Black people and people of color is a historic intellectual creation that is the result of colonial practice—an intentional imbalance of power based on race. Historically, Black people of power understood this and attempted to fight against it domestically, nationally, and internationally. For instance,

¹ University of Idaho, "Bruce M. Pitman Center." University of Idaho College of Education <https://www.uidaho.edu/ed/about/spaces/bhrl>

The civil rights movement in the United States was not just a few brief events. It included the centuries-long struggles of African Americans for civil liberties and racial equality. Those efforts reached a peak in the 1950s and 1960s. Meanwhile, decolonization was developing across many territories on the African continent. Africans were fighting to gain freedom and independence from European colonial rule. The two struggles mirrored each other. Many Africans and many African Americans in this period embraced the idea that Africans and their descendants in other parts of the world had shared histories of racial oppression. Those historical bonds produced a spirit of racial solidarity (Sackeyfio-Lenoch).

During that time of decolonization of Black people, many things went on historically, including the civil rights movement in the United States. European colonialism was suppressing the African continent and moving around the continent to rule Black people while pushing economic dominance. Even though the Europeans were aiming toward colonizing African territories, Black people did not stop fighting for their land or country.

Decolonization, the civil rights movement, and the Black nationalist movement of the late 1960s and 1970s linked African Americans and the African continent. Those links paved the way for continued cultural connections between African Americans and the events in Africa, raising the self-worth of Black people globally. African Americans recognized the magnitude of those revolutionary energies. Many now sought to align themselves with Africans and their struggle against European domination (Sackeyfio-Lenoch).

Even though Black colonization has been and continues to have negative effects. Black people have continued to link together across different continents and connect through shared experiences that was/are similar and reminded them who they truly were/are with other people. It

is important to learn about Black decolonization because many were affected by this time of history, and many countries are the way they are due to European colonization.

Black decolonization has existed for decades and still does in today's society, where Black people are oppressed within the American system. This brings the idea of when, two decades later into the 21st Century, a Black man by the name George Floyd was killed in the streets by a police officer, even though he was unarmed and not dangerous. Black people became increasingly fearful of the system, fear of death without direct issues or reasoning. This creates a racial gap between the Caucasian race and the Black race due to the fact there are many Black people dying in the streets even at their own homes without a valid rule. This can easily cause mental health issues for those who are representatives for minorities that do not have a voice or are too afraid to speak. This limits Black folks from striving to succeed in life, and it can also affect those who have been pressed by someone higher up, whether it's in education or in the work field. "This not only keeps underrepresented minority groups from empowering themselves but also refuses to acknowledge the cultural and scientific contributions they've made to the mental health practice" (Choudhury). Therefore, it is a common issue that many underrepresented minorities in America are facing today's world where they are working twice as hard to prove themselves worthy.

Black decolonization has a great impact on higher education in America and the people who are a part of higher education, specifically Black students and educators.

The goal of any institution is to preserve itself at all costs. Colonial colleges were educational institutions designed for the implementation of colonialism and the politics, business affairs, and morality of colonists. Their systems of learning were created to administer the policies and practices of acquiring control over a space by occupying it

with settlers and exploiting it economically. They offered courses leading to a degree (such as a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree) for the direct or indirect purpose of reproducing Eurocentrism, modernity, colonialism, imperialism, and all other iterations of white supremacy (Lattimore).

Lattimore defines and describes Black decolonization in higher education in a great manner that captures the experience in higher education and what it is like attending white institutions in the United States. It can be very dull and discouraging to attend post-secondary education in the country due to racism and inequality among Black people. Black decolonization is the all-encompassing method of letting go of colonial customs, principles, and culture, and returning to and adopting indigenous methods of being and knowing. It has created a gap for Black people to prove themselves worthy in many situations, including in higher education. That gap has created a norm where it is not as common to see Black people in higher education or higher positions such as directors or professors.

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