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Course

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Brown v. the Board of Education

A case *Brown v. Board of Education* was the landmark of United States Supreme Court that declared the establishment of separate public schools for White and Black students as unconstitutional. This decision was against the Plessy v. Ferguson legislation which had provisions allowing state-sponsored separation in 1896. This legislation developed on May 17, 1954 by the Warren Court and in a decision it was stated that separate educational facilities were unequal (Letter From Birmingham Jail). This ruling led to the de jure racial separation in the United States being outlawed with an argument that it was a breach of the Equal Protection Clause which was found in the fourteenth amendment of the United States. This case was first filed against the Board of Education by thirteen Topeka parents. The enactment of this legislation had so many psychological, sociological and political implications. This paper discusses these effects exhaustively in the quest to evaluate the functional necessity of this legislation in the US.

There is a remarkable consideration on several social-cultural factors during the making of this ruling by the Supreme Court. The social implication of this legislation cannot be overlooked. In the United States, the treatment of Black Americans and White Americans brought about mixed reactions from people in the society. This unfairness stipulated in the schools emphasized the heights of racial segregation that were prevailing in the United States. Considering the mandate of the Brown decision, it is not easy to understand

the continuing challenges, which African-American people face during their education period in the American society. The Brown decision was highly significant, since it overturned the separate but equal policy adopted by the Plessy decision.

It enhanced the equality before the law for the children of both African-American students and the Americans. This legislation declared that all separate facilities based on race were unequal. The African-Americans did not usually receive a quality education like other American students. This was an intentional weapon by the Americans to limit the level of education for the Black Americans so that they remain an inferior society. In the study of society, it is observed that any strain in the society causes a lot of changes. For this reason, this society experienced strain due to the racial segregation in schools. The enactment of this law solved so many predicaments in the society of the United States. For example, it may be right to say that it reduced rates of crime in this society. The reason of that is crime which is a product of some uneven distribution of resources according to Karl Max. Before 1954, during the enactment of this law, the Black Americans did not get equal education as the white Americans. This segregation resulted to Black Americans having low levels of education. They got jobs by Americans who were more educated than them. Scrutiny to this society shows that this was an unfair provision in the Constitution.

Considering that Black Americans also had the capability to perform well and achieve high and quality levels of education. It was an unscrupulous provision that was hindering the development of the Black American Society. When Black Americans had completed their studies, their educational levels were poor considering the quality of the efforts inputted in these schemes to educate them. This brought about some strain in the society, an equal distribution of resources and suspicion between the White Americans and Black Americans. This suspicion tampers with the peace and

tranquility that should be there in any stable society. The enactment of this legislation luckily rectified this mess when it joined the gap between the educational provisions of Americans and Black Americans. It served to save the entire American society from social conflict between Americans who owned the means of production after achieving high educational levels, and Black Americans who had low levels of education and could only offer their labor. The experiences of Linda Thompson Brown to whom this case is inherently enshrined are so touching. Her dad did not get a chance in Negro school just because her daughter was black. This is a factor that contributes to the backsliding of any society.

The social life for Black Americans was no different than in other aspects of life in the 1950s, they were not treated as the other White Americans until the *Brown v. Board of Education* reviewed all these discriminations. When this law enacted the Blacks could now attend the schools that the whites were attending, and they study and could learn the same things. This brought about some sanity in the American society, and the same was reflected in areas such as the rates of crime and the general state of the American economy. In the social context, the segregation on a racial basis argued that even though physical facilities were not equal, it has a detrimental effect to the discriminated Black children. This impact is even worse when it has some support from the law, the law on segregation that existed before *Brown v. Board of Education*. A sense of inferiority affected the social relationship of children in school. This resulted to a great effect on their perception of reality. Their ways of thinking, especially the confidence with their scene color was corrupted by this law. It is for these social reasons that the Supreme Court considered ensuring the provision of equal rights from the same physical institutions.

The political interpretations of the *Brown v. Board of Education* should begin with an understanding of the political state of the United States in the

1950s. This legislation was so powerful in the political arena of the United States. The current president of the United States, Barack Obama is African-American; consequently, this shows the political implication of this law. In politics, racism should not prevail because it only serves to divide the people and break the social bond of unity in a society. In fact, the decision of the Supreme Court in 1954 set a precedent used in many other states to counter racist ideas in school and politics. Also, in 1953 during the hearing of this case, Justice Vinton had a serious stumbling block. Since, the judges, who were against desegregation of schools, spent a lot of efforts to convince the people who had initially dissented to join a unanimous opinion.

The Supreme Court judge had noticed that congress did not advocate for desegregation of the school systems. In the political state of the American Society, not everyone had the satisfaction with desegregation that was prevailing through *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. For example, Harry F Byrd, Sr., who was a senator at that time, organized movements against desegregation. As a matter of fact, he organized movements that were so massive, and they advocated the closing of schools of the Negro group. This was an extremely brutal political reaction from a leader, but luckily it did not gain so much support. In 1957, Arkansas, who was the governor of Orval Faubus, commanded his state's national guards to prevent Black students from entering the Little Rock High School. These responses from political figures in the United States after the *Brown v. Board of Education* shows that most of these leaders were so racist, and only change could counter racism.

The Brown v. Board of Education has implications pertaining to the relationships between the pupils from different races. These are psychological implications, considerations and factors surrounding the *Brown v. Board of Education*. The African American students who were

studying in these schools before the enactment of this legislation suffered tremendously. They suffered poor self-esteem, because they were excluded high quality of education that was offered in other American schools. In most of the South American parts, Black Americans were treated as secondary citizens. They were denied the rights that other Americans had, just because of their skin color. The Blacks in America were prevented from using some facilities that were only placed for the Whites. This also had a psychological implication to the Black Americans. They felt abandoned and this developed inferiority complex among them. Because of this, they were not even productive to the economy of the United States considering that they had low self-esteem because of the degrading treatments they received from the White Americans.

The psychology of children who face brutal treatment was a key factor during the arguments for the favor of this legislation. It is unfair for individual racial groups to feel inferior and segregate themselves. Also, the United States' interests should be put first before the interest of any racial group. This would ensure harmonious co-existence of people from different states. The decision of the Supreme Court articulated that separating educational facilities was inherently unequal. They did this to protect Black children from stigmatization that comes along racial lines. This was so unfair considering the fact that it is beyond anyone's control to decide their skin color. Because of suffering extreme extents of stigmatization, the Blacks retaliated by actions of showing their psychological torturing experiences.

Before the enactment of this law by the Supreme Court, there were high rates of crime and suicide in the Black American community. This is usually reflected in the society when a certain group is experiencing mistreat from a more powerful group, as it appears in the study of psychology. There could also be a psychological interpretation explaining the states of mind and relationships of the White Americans in the south. The Americans were so

proud and they believed their race was more intellectually superior than the Black Americans. An equal reflection was also in their relationships with Black Americans. They treated Black Americans as animals just because of their skin color. In fact, during the enactment of this legislation, a psychological analogy was used in the argument towards its favor. The plaintiffs used two dolls. One doll was white while the other one was black. When an innocent kid was asked to choose between those two dolls, he chose the white one, because white appears to be a more attractive color. This argument criticizes the racial segregation in schools arguing that this was an excellent analogy to show that skin color does not necessarily matter, especially when it comes to education.

From the foregoing, it is undisputable that the sociological, psychological and political factors surrounding the *Brown v. Board of Education* are immensely being felt in the American society. The American society was markedly healed by this legal instrument, since segregation did not promote any form of equality in the American community. Also, the psychological implications, surrounding the study environment, should be given the first priority in a child's health. Skin color is a factor beyond anyone's control and discrimination on such grounds only serves to undermine human dignity. Human beings are the unique creatures in the universe, their activities and policies governing them should, therefore, be guided by reason at all time. For that reason, any social organizations should consider the pros and cons of any legislation passed by their law making entities. These law making agencies should have the interests of the entire United States at heart.