

Glossary

We are starting with words relating to “race”; other words follow.

Race

- Race is a social and political concept, not a scientific one.
- Even though this is true, race is a powerful political, social, and economic force. Race was and is constructed for social and political purposes, in large part to divide and conquer poor and working White people from poor and working People/Communities of Color.
- The term “White” was constructed to unite certain European groups living in the U.S. who were fighting each other and at the same time were a numerical minority in comparison to the numbers of enslaved African and Native peoples.
- In order to justify the idea of a White race, . . . institutions in this country were used to prove that race exists and to promote the idea that the White race is at the top of the racial hierarchy and all other races are below, with the Black race on the bottom.
- All European immigrants did not and do not become “White” at the same time (Irish, Italians, Jews). Becoming White involves giving up parts of your original culture in order to get the advantages and privileges of belonging to the White group.
- This process continues today.

Dismantling Racism, <http://www.dismantlingracism.org>

Racism (There are many useful definitions, so we are including a few here.)

- Racism = race prejudice + social and institutional power
 - Racism = a system of advantage based on race
 - Racism = a system of oppression based on race
 - Racism = a white supremacy system
- Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.

Dismantling Racism, <http://www.dismantlingracism.org>

System of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (which is what we call ‘race’) that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and *saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources*.

American Academy of Pediatrics, The Impact of Racism on Child and Adolescent Health, Aug. 2019. Our emphasis.

Individual Racism

Individual racism can include face-to-face or covert actions toward a person that intentionally express prejudice, hate or bias based on race.

The Aspen Institute, Roundtable on Community Change

<https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/files/content/docs/rcc/RCC-Structural-Racism-Glossary.pdf>

Systemic / Institutionalized / Institutional / Structural Racism (We are not differentiating these, though many people do.) Racism that is embedded in the structure of society, in its organizations and government and social institutions. It reflects the values and assumptions of the dominant ["White"] group, rendering the values of other groups either subordinate or invisible. Many people working within, and making decisions on behalf of, this societal structure do not see themselves as racist, and yet their unconscious actions serve to reduce opportunities for members of marginalized groups.

<https://www.benjerry.com/whats-new/2017/03/racial-justice-glossary>

Racial Justice / Racial Equity

Racial equity refers to what a genuinely non-racist society would look like. In a racially equitable society, the distribution of society's benefits and burdens would not be skewed by race. In other words, racial equity would be a reality in which a person is no more or less likely to experience society's benefits or burdens just because of the color of their skin. This is in contrast to the current state of affairs in which a person of color is more likely to live in poverty, be imprisoned, drop out of high school, be unemployed and experience poor health outcomes like diabetes, heart disease, depression and other potentially fatal diseases. Racial equity holds society to a higher standard. It demands that we pay attention not just to individual-level discrimination, but to overall social outcomes.

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Acknowledges inequalities; focuses on the just and fair distribution of resources and access to opportunities (equality is a shoe store that has only size 8; equity is a store that has a shoe size that fits everyone)

(source unknown)

Antiracist

One who is expressing the idea that racial groups are equals and none needs developing, and is supporting policy that reduces racial inequality.

Kendi, Ibram X. *How to be an Antiracist*. NY: One World, 2019. Print.

Color-Blindness

The idea that ignoring or overlooking racial and ethnic differences promotes racial harmony. Actually, it is a form of racism because it centers the White perspective and does not acknowledge the identities of People of Color.

Good/Bad Binary

The idea that racism is conscious bias held by mean people. . . . a person is either racist or not racist; if a person is racist, that person is bad; if a person is not racist, that person is good. Although racism does of course occur in individual acts, these acts are part of a larger system that we all participate in. The focus on individual incidences prevents the analysis that is necessary in order to challenge this larger system. The good/bad binary is the fundamental misunderstanding driving white defensiveness about being connected to racism. White people simply do not understand how socialization and implicit bias work.

DiAngelo, Robin, "White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism," The Good Men Project, April 9, 2015.
<https://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/white-fragility-why-its-so-hard-to-talk-to-white-people-about-racism-twlm/>

Civil disobedience

Purposely disobeying the law based on moral or political principles. Civil disobedient acts manifest as peaceful and nonviolent protests. They are crimes but they differ in that the individual committing the illegal act is knowingly doing so in the hopes of making a political, social, or economical change.

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-civil-disobedience-definition-acts-examples.html>

Discrimination

Action based on prejudice. Actions may include ignoring, exclusion, threats, ridicule, slander, and violence. . . . Everyone has prejudice, and everyone discriminates.

DiAngelo, Robin. *White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2019. Print, p. 20.

Implicit Bias

Everyone is biased in some way. We can't avoid it, and having biases doesn't mean we're bad people. The key is to try to recognize them and push back against them. Implicit (or unconscious) bias, however, can be challenging to spot and respond to—it's

the kind of bias a person is not aware of. It's not easy to root these biases out, and meanwhile they continue to influence how we feel about other people (often with respect to race, sexuality, gender, etc.) and situations. If we notice a disconnect between what we believe and say and how we actually behave, then implicit bias may be at work—and it's on us to do something about it.

<https://www.benjerry.com/whats-new/2017/03/racial-justice-glossary>

Intersectionality

Intersectionality first emerged in the context of feminism (acknowledging that while all women face sexism, the sexism that black women face is uniquely challenging, because it also involves racism), but has more recently come to refer to the complex and ever-shifting way that many different varieties of discrimination overlap, accumulate, and intersect. The term is also now being used to discuss how different causes (such as racial justice and environmental justice, for example) are joining forces in the recognition that they share common values and face common threats.

<https://www.benjerry.com/whats-new/2017/03/racial-justice-glossary>

“isms”

A way of describing any attitude, action or institutional structure that subordinates (oppresses) a person or group because of their target group, color (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), older age (ageism), religion (e.g., anti-Semitism), sexual orientation (heterosexism), language/immigrant status (xenophobia), etc.

<http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/idr.pdf>

Prejudice

An attitude based on limited information, often on stereotypes. Prejudice is usually, but not always, negative. Positive and negative prejudices alike, especially when directed toward oppressed people, are damaging because they deny the individuality of the person. No one is free of prejudice.

Dismantling Racism, <http://www.dismantlingracism.org>

Segregation

Separation of people on the basis of their race, or some other inappropriate characteristic. Desegregation is simply the ending of that practice - it doesn't mean that integration of "the conscious mixing of people on the basis of race" has been achieved.

Guo, Winona and Vulchi, Priya, *Tell Me Who You Are*, NY: Penguin Random House, 2019.

Stereotype

An oversimplified generalization about a group of people without regard for individual differences. Stereotypes may be untrue or only partly true. Even stereotypes that seem positive can have negative consequences.

White Fragility

White people in North America live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. This insulated environment of racial protection builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress, leading to what I refer to as White Fragility. White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium

DiAngelo, Robin. "White Fragility," *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (2011). <http://libjournal.uncg.edu/ijcp/article/view/249>

White Privilege

White privilege, or "historically accumulated white privilege," as we have come to call it, refers to whites' historical and contemporary advantages in access to quality education, decent jobs and livable wages, homeownership, retirement benefits, wealth and so on. The following quotation from a publication by Peggy Macintosh can be helpful in understanding what is meant by white privilege: "As a white person I had been taught about racism that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage. . . White privilege is an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in every day, but about which I was meant to remain oblivious." (Source: Peggy Macintosh, "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.")

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White Supremacy

The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. While most people associate white supremacy with extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis, white supremacy is ever present in our institutional and cultural assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness, and humanity to the white group while casting people and communities of color as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, and inhuman and "undeserving." . . . the term "white supremacy" also refers to a political or socio-economic system where white people enjoy structural advantage and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not, both at a collective and an individual level.

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