

DEFINITIONS AND KEY CONCEPTS

Race: A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics, such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation or history, ethnic classification, and/or the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Scientists agree that there is no biological or genetic basis for racial categories.

Racial Formation: The process by which social, economic, and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings. Crucial to this formulation is the treatment of race as a *central axis* of social relations that cannot be subsumed under or reduced to some broader category or conception (Omi & Winant, 1989).

Racism: A system of advantage based on race and supported by institutional structures, policies, and practices that create and sustain advantages for the dominant white group while systematically subordinating members of targeted racial groups. This relative advantage for whites and subordination for people of color is supported by the actions of individuals, cultural norms and values, and the institutional structures and practices of society.

Individual Racism: The beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can occur at both unconscious and conscious levels and can be both active and passive. Examples include telling a racist joke, using a racial epithet, or believing in the inherent superiority of Whites.

Active Racism: Actions that have as their stated or explicit goal the maintenance of the system of racism and the oppression of those in targeted racial groups. People who participate in active racism advocate the continued subjugation of members of targeted groups and protection of “the rights” of members of the advantaged group. These goals are often supported by a belief in the inferiority of people of color and the superiority of white people, their cultures, and values.

Passive Racism: Conscious and unconscious beliefs, attitudes, and actions that support the system of racism, racial prejudice, and racial dominance and contribute to the maintenance of racism without openly advocating violence, discrimination, or an ideology of white supremacy.

Post-racial era: This term is often used to convey the belief that race and racism are no longer critical factors in determining life chances in the U.S. Rather, racism is understood as an act of individual bias and bigotry that can be practiced by both whites and people of color (Haney Lopez, 2011).

Xenophobia: Expressed hatred of others because of foreign appearance (Adams & Joshi, 2007).

Ethnicity: A social construct that divides people into social groups based on characteristics, such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical location. Examples of different ethnic groups are Cape Verdean, Haitian, African American; Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese; Cherokee, Mohawk, Navajo; Jamaican, Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican; Polish, Trinidadian Irish, French.

Racial and Ethnic Identity: An individual's awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; the racial and ethnic categories that an individual chooses to describe himself or herself based on such factors as genealogical or ancestral heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience (Hardiman & Jackson, 1980; Omi & Winant, 1989).

White Privilege: The concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society that Whites receive, tacitly or explicitly, by virtue of their position in a racist society. Examples include the luxury to be unaware of race, the ability to live and work among people of the same racial group as their own, the security of not being pulled over by the police for being a suspicious person, the expectation that they speak for themselves and not for their entire race, the ability to assume that a job hire or promotion will be attributed to their skills and background and not to affirmative action (McIntosh, 1992).

Collusion: Thinking and acting in ways that support the system of racism. White people can actively collude by joining groups that advocate white supremacy. A person from any racial group can collude by telling racist jokes, discriminating against a person of color, or remaining silent when observing a racist incident or remark. We believe that both white people and people of color can collude with racism through their attitudes, beliefs, and actions (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997).

Internalized Racism: When people from targeted racial groups believe, act on, or enforce the dominant system of beliefs about themselves and members of their own racial group. Examples include using creams to lighten one's skin, believing that the most competent administrators or leaders are white, feeling that they cannot be as intelligent as white people, believing that racism is the result of people of color not being able to raise themselves up "by their own bootstraps."

Horizontal Racism: When people from targeted racial groups believe, act on, or enforce the dominant (white) system of racial discrimination and oppression. Horizontal racism can occur between members of the same racial group (an Asian person telling another Asian wearing a sari to "dress like an American," a Latina telling another Latina to stop speaking Spanish) or between members of different, targeted racial groups (Latinos believing stereotypes about Native Americans; African Americans not wanting Asian Americans to move into a predominantly black neighborhood).

Empowered Person of Color: A person of color who understands racism and its impact on her/his life and who can respond strategically to the events and circumstances she/he encounters through living in a racist society. Being empowered includes having pride in oneself and in one's social group, understanding racism as systemic and asserting one's rights in strategic and persistent ways.

Ally: A white person who actively works to eliminate racism. Whether motivated by self-interest, a sense of moral obligation, or a commitment to foster social justice, an ally is not patronizing and is not trying to "help" people of color in paternalistic ways. A white ally may engage in anti-racism work in collaboration with other white people and/or in coalition with people of color.

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