

## GLOSSARY

Words and their multiple uses reflect the tremendous diversity that characterizes our society. Indeed, universally agreed upon language on issues relating to racism is nonexistent. We discovered that even the most frequently used words in any discussion on race can easily cause confusion, which leads to controversy and hostility. It is essential to achieve some degree of shared understanding, particularly when using the most common terms. In this way, the quality of dialogue and discourse on race can be enhanced.

Language can be used deliberately to engage and support community anti-racism coalitions and initiatives, or to inflame and divide them. Discussing definitions can engage and support coalitions. However, it is important for groups to decide the extent to which they must have consensus and where it is okay for people to disagree. It is also helpful to keep in mind that the words people use to discuss power, privilege, racism and oppression hold different meanings for different people. For instance, people at different stages of developing an analysis tend to attach different meanings to words like discrimination, privilege and institutional racism. Furthermore, when people are talking about privilege or racism, the words they use often come with emotions and assumptions that are not spoken.

Many of the terms in this glossary have evolved over time. For example, given the changing demographic trends in the United States, the word “minority” no longer accurately reflects the four primary racial/ethnic groups. The terms “emerging majority” and “people of color” have become popular substitutes. Also, the terms used to refer to members of each community of color have changed over time. Whether to use the terms African American or Black, Hispanic American, Latinx or Latino, Native American or American Indian, and Pacific Islander or Asian American depends on a variety of conditions, including your intended audiences’ geographic location, age, generation, and, sometimes, political orientation.

**SOURCE:** Project Change’s “The Power of Words.” Originally produced for Project Change Lessons Learned II, also included in [A Community Builder’s Toolkit](#) (Appendix I) – both produced by Project Change and The Center for Assessment and Policy Development with some modification by RacialEquityTools.org.

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## Ableism

The system of oppression that disadvantages people with disabilities and advantages people who do not currently have disabilities. Like other forms of oppression, it functions on individual, institutional, and cultural levels. Ableism is not solely about the experiences of people with disabilities as targets of discrimination, but rather about the interaction of institutional structures, cultural norms, and individual beliefs and behaviors that together function to maintain the status quo and exclude people with disabilities from many areas of society.

**SOURCE:** [Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook](#), edited by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, with Diane J. Goodman and Khyati Y. Joshi (Routledge, 2016), p. 304.

## Abolition

1. The action of abolishing a system, practice, or institution. Abolition centers on getting rid of prison, jails, police, courts, and surveillance. Abolitionist practice is also about establishing a system that is rooted in dignity and care for all people. A system that does not rely on punishment as accountability.
2. Prison industrial complex (PIC) abolition is a political vision with the goal of eliminating imprisonment, policing, and surveillance and creating lasting alternatives to punishment and imprisonment. From where we are now, sometimes we can't really imagine what abolition is going to look like. Abolition isn't just about getting rid of buildings full of cages. It's also about undoing the society we live in because the PIC both feeds on and maintains oppression and inequalities through punishment, violence, and controls millions of people. Because the PIC is not an isolated system, abolition is a broad strategy. An abolitionist vision means that we must build models today that can represent how we want to live in the future. It means developing practical strategies for taking small steps that move us toward making our dreams real and that lead us all to believe that things really could be different. It means living this vision in our daily lives. Abolition is both a practical organizing tool and a long-term goal.

**SOURCE:**

1. Patrisse Cullors, [12 Steps to Changing Yourself and the World: An Abolitionist's Handbook](#) (St. Martin's Press, 2021), pp. 6–8.
2. [Critical Resistance](#) (accessed July 2022).


## Accountability

In the context of racial equity work, accountability refers to the ways in which individuals and communities hold themselves to their goals and actions, and acknowledge the values and groups to which they are responsible.

To be accountable, one must be visible, with a transparent agenda and process. Invisibility defies examination; it is, in fact, employed in order to avoid detection and examination. Accountability demands commitment. It might be defined as “what kicks in when convenience runs out.”

Accountability requires some sense of urgency and becoming a true stakeholder in the outcome. Accountability can be externally imposed (legal or organizational requirements), or internally applied (moral, relational, faith-based, or recognized as some combination of the two) on a continuum from the institutional and organizational level to the individual level. From a relational point of view, accountability is not always doing it right. Sometimes it's really about what happens after it's done wrong.

**SOURCE:** [Accountability and White Anti-Racist Organizing: Stories from Our Work](#), Bonnie Berman Cushing with Lila Cabbil, Margery Freeman, Jeff Hitchcock, and Kimberly Richards (2010).


 **Related Resources:** [Accountability](#)  
Location: PLAN / Change Process

## Affirmative Action

1. A term describing policies adopted since the 1960s that require “affirmative” (or positive) actions to be taken to ensure people of color and women have opportunities equal to those of white men in the areas of promotions, salary increases, school admissions, financial aid, scholarships and representation among vendors in government contracts. Although they have been effective in redressing injustice and discrimination that persisted in spite of civil rights laws and constitutional guarantees, the policies have been attacked because of perceived “reverse discrimination.”
2. On June 29, 2023, the Supreme Court set the United States back decades, invalidating the policy that enabled institutes of higher learning to pursue diversity and equity through admissions: affirmative action. In the majority opinion for *Students for Fair Admission (SFFA) v. Harvard* and *SFFA v. UNC*, two cases brought by an organization founded by the architect of litigation that all but gutted the Voting Rights Act in 2013, the six-justice super-majority concluded that the Fourteenth Amendment, a bill enacted to rectify discrimination faced by African Americans, must be interpreted in a “colorblind” manner and thus affirmative action is prohibited.

**SOURCE:**

1. Race Forward, “[Race Reporting Guide](#)” (2015).
2. Alliance for Justice, “[We Don't Yet Know the Consequences of Ending Affirmative Action](#),” Kalsang Dolma, August 2023.

 **Related Resources:** [Laws and Policies](#)  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / History of Racism and Movements

## Ally

1. Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice. Allies understand that it is in their own interest to end all forms of oppression, even those from which they may benefit in concrete ways.
2. An action, not an identity. Members of the advantaged group recognize their privilege and work in solidarity with oppressed groups to dismantle the systems of oppression(s) from which they derive

power, privilege, and acceptance. Requires understanding that it is in their own interest to end all forms of oppression, even those from which they may benefit in concrete ways. It means taking intentional, overt, and consistent responsibility for the changes we know are needed in our society, and often ignore or leave for others to deal with; it does so in a way that facilitates the empowerment of persons targeted by oppression. This framework can be used to imply that one does not feel directly implicated by the oppression.

**SOURCE:**


1. OpenSource Leadership Strategies, "[The Dynamic System of Power, Privilege, and Oppression](#)" (2008).
2. *This definition was found on the White Noise Collective webpage "[Shared Understandings](#)" with this source note:* Definitions, quotes and examples compiled from many sources, including Andrea Ayvazian, Andrea Smith, Black Girl Dangerous, Class Action, Kathryn Mathers, Dr. Wade Nobles, Peggy McIntosh, *Love, Race and Liberation*, Barbara Love, OpenSource Leadership, Racial Equity Tools, Robin DiAngelo, Colors of Resistance, *Challenging White Supremacy*, Isaac Giron, Anne Braden, Wikipedia, and Barbara Major, & *People's Institute for Survival and Beyond*. **Please do not directly credit WNC with these definitions.**

## Anti-Black

The Council for Democratizing Education defines anti-Blackness as being a two-part formation that both voids Blackness of value, while systematically marginalizing Black people and their issues. The first form of anti-Blackness is overt racism. Beneath this anti-Black racism is the covert structural and systemic racism which categorically predetermines the socioeconomic status of Blacks in this country. The structure is held in place by anti-Black policies, institutions, and ideologies.

The second form of anti-Blackness is the unethical disregard for anti-Black institutions and policies. This disregard is the product of class, race, and/or gender privilege certain individuals experience due to anti-Black institutions and policies. This form of anti-Blackness is protected by the first form of overt racism.


**SOURCE:** The Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), "[Glossary](#)."

 **Related Resources:** [Racism](#) (in the box for "Anti-Blackness")  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Anti-Racism

Anti-Racism is defined as the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach, and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts.

**SOURCE:** Race Forward, "[Race Reporting Guide](#)" (2015).

 **Related Resources:** [Theory](#) (in the box for "Anti-Racism")  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Anti-Racist

An anti-racist is someone who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing antiracist ideas. This includes the expression of ideas that racial groups are equals and do not need developing, and supporting policies that reduce racial inequity.

**SOURCE:** Ibram X. Kendi, [How To Be An Antiracist](#), Random House, 2019.

## Antisemitism

Antisemitism has deep historical roots and uses exploitation, marginalization, discrimination, and violence as its tools. Like all oppressions, the ideology contains elements of dehumanization and degradation via lies and stereotypes about Jews, as well as a mythology. The myth changes and adapts to different times and places, but fundamentally it says that Jews are to blame for society's problems.

Antisemitism and Islamophobia are not only entangled, but deeply rooted in the same systems of white supremacy and Christian hegemony that have also driven ongoing genocide against indigenous people, and bigotry toward non-Christians from other parts of the world.

**SOURCE:** [Understanding Antisemitism: An Offering to our Movement](#), A Resource from Jews for Racial & Economic Justice (accessed July 2022).

## Assimilationist

One who is expressing the racist idea that a racial group is culturally or behaviorally inferior and is supporting cultural or behavioral enrichment programs to develop that racial group.

**SOURCE:** Ibram X. Kendi, [How To Be An Antiracist](#), Random House, 2019.

## Bigotry

Intolerant prejudice that glorifies one's own group and denigrates members of other groups.

**SOURCE:** National Conference for Community and Justice, St. Louis Region. Unpublished handout used in the [Dismantling Racism Institute](#) program.

## BIPOC

A term referring to "Black and/or Indigenous People of Color." While "POC" or People of Color is often used as well, BIPOC explicitly leads with Black and Indigenous identities, which helps to counter anti-Black racism and invisibilization of Native communities.

**SOURCE:** [Creating Cultures and Practices for Racial Equity: A Toolbox for Advancing Racial Equity for Arts and Cultural Organizations](#), Nayantara Sen & Terry Keleher, Race Forward (2021).

## Black Lives Matter

A political movement to address systemic and state violence against African Americans. Per the Black Lives Matter organizers: “In 2013, three radical Black organizers—Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi—created a Black-centered political will and movement building project called #BlackLivesMatter. It was in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin’s murderer, George Zimmerman. The project is now a member-led global network of more than 40 chapters. [Black Lives Matter] members organize and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks’ humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.”


**SOURCE:** Black Lives Matter, “[Herstory](#)” (accessed October 2019).

## Caucusing (Affinity Groups)

A caucus is an intentionally created space for those who share an identity to convene for learning, support, and connections. Caucuses based on racial identity are often comprised, respectively, of people of color, white people, people who hold multiracial identities, or people who share specific racial or ethnic identities.

To advance racial equity, there is work for white people and people of color to do separately and together. Caucuses provide spaces for people to work within their own racial/ethnic groups. For white people, a caucus provides time and space to work explicitly and intentionally on understanding white culture and white privilege and to increase one’s critical analysis around these concepts. A white caucus also puts the onus on white people to teach each other about these ideas, rather than placing a burden on people of color to teach them. For people of color, a caucus is a place to work with peers to address the impact of racism, to interrupt experiences of internalized racism, and to create a space for healing and working for individual and collective liberation. At times, people of color may also break into more specific race-based caucuses, sometimes based on experiences with a particular issue, for example police violence, immigration, or land rights. Groups that use caucuses in their organizational racial equity work, especially in workplaces and coalitions, generally meet separately and create a process to rejoin and work together collectively.

**SOURCE:** RacialEquityTools.org, MP Associates, Center for Assessment and Policy Development, and World Trust Educational Services.

 **Related Resources:** [Caucus and Affinity Groups](#)  
Location: ACT / Strategies

## Centering Blackness

1. Considering the Black experience as unique and foundational to shaping America’s economic and social policies:



- Centering Blackness demands that we create and design policies and practices that intentionally lift up and protect Black people.
  - Anti-blackness doesn't only impact Black people; it holds back and harms [all Americans](#) and necessitates collective healing.
  - Centering Blackness allows for a completely different worldview to emerge, free from the constraints of white supremacy and patriarchy.
2. White supremacy—which has harmed everyone, including robbing white people of their own humanity—needs anti-blackness to thrive. Centering blackness removes both the fuel and the constraints of white supremacy, allowing everyone to be free of its tyranny. Doing so acknowledges the historical root of this racial hierarchy that has intentionally placed black people at the bottom of society and gives us the opportunity to see the world through the lens of the black experience. It requires us to imagine how our rules and structures would be reorganized and envision a world where we all thrive because the bottom is removed. When we remove blackness from the bottom, everybody gets to be seen.

**SOURCE:**

1. ["Centering Blackness,"](#) Insight Center.
2. Alicia Walters, Black Thought Project, interviewed by Siraad Dirshe in ["What Does it Mean to 'Center Black People?'"](#) *The New York Times* (2020).

## Cisgender

A term (pronounced *sis-gender*) used to refer to an individual whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth. The prefix cis- comes from the Latin word for "on the same side as." People who are both cisgender and heterosexual are sometimes referred to as "cishet" (pronounced *sis-het*) individuals. The term cisgender is not a slur. People who are not trans should avoid calling themselves "normal" and instead refer to themselves as cisgender or cis.

**SOURCE:** [PFLAG National Glossary of Terms](#), June 2022 (accessed July 2022).

## Cissexism

A discriminatory system that oppresses and marginalizes people whose gender identity and/or gender expression (e.g., transgender, non-binary, etc.) fall outside the normative social constructions of gender (i.e., the gender binary). This system confers advantages to those aligned with normative gender norms, roles, expressions, and identity by privileging the binary social structure through representation, policies, practices, and structures that reflect and accommodate their rights, needs and lived experience. An example of cissexism is refusing to recognize the rights of transgender people to use the bathrooms appropriate for their gender identity while structuring bathrooms to accommodate cisgender people.

**SOURCE:** S. Killermann, *A Guide to Gender: The Social Justice Advocate's Handbook*, Austin, TX: Impetus Books, 2017.





**Related Resources:** [Intersectionality](#)

(navigate alphabetically to the box for “**Intersections of Race and Other Identities**”)

Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Classism

Differential treatment based on social class or perceived social class. Classism is the systematic oppression of subordinated class groups to advantage and strengthen the dominant class groups. It's the systematic assignment of characteristics of worth and ability based on social class. Policies and practices are set up to benefit more class-privileged people at the expense of the less class-privileged people, resulting in drastic income and wealth inequality... and the culture which perpetuates these systems and this unequal valuing.

**SOURCE:** [Class Action](#) (accessed July 2022).

## Collusion

When people act to perpetuate oppression or prevent others from working to eliminate oppression.

Example: Able-bodied people who object to strategies for making buildings accessible because of the expense.

**SOURCE:** [Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook](#), edited by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin (Routledge, 1997).

## Colonization

Colonization can be defined as some form of invasion, dispossession, and subjugation of a people. The invasion need not be military; it can begin—or continue—as geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban, or industrial encroachments. The result of such incursion is the dispossession of vast amounts of lands from the original inhabitants. This is often legalized after the fact. The long-term result of such massive dispossession is institutionalized inequality. The colonizer/colonized relationship is by nature an unequal one that benefits the colonizer at the expense of the colonized.

Ongoing and legacy colonialism impact power relations in most of the world today. For example, white supremacy as a philosophy was developed largely to justify European colonial exploitation of the Global South (including enslaving African peoples, extracting resources from much of Asia and Latin America, and enshrining cultural norms of whiteness as desirable both in colonizing and colonizer nations). See also: [Decolonization](#).

**SOURCE:** Emma LaRocque, PhD, “[Colonization and Racism](#),” (Aboriginal Perspectives). Also see [Racism and Colonialism](#), edited by Robert Ross (1982), and Andrea Smith, “[Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy](#)” (*Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*, 2012).



**Related Resources:** [Diaspora and Colonization](#) (navigate alphabetically to the boxes for “**Global History of Colonialism**” and “**Neo-Colonialism and Settler Colonialism**”)

Location: FUNDAMENTALS / History of Racism and Movements

## Color-Blindness

We recognize the problematic ableist language of this term, but we reference it as used by scholars to describe an important social phenomenon. Color-blind ideology (or color-evasiveness – purporting to not notice race in an effort to not appear be racist). Asserts that ending discrimination merely requires treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity. Color-blindness, by overlooking the cumulative and enduring ways in which race unequally shapes life chances and opportunities for people from different groups, actually reinforces and sustains an unequal status quo. By leaving structural inequalities in place, color-blindness has become the “new racism.” It also ignores cultural attributes that people value and deserve to have recognized and affirmed.

**SOURCE:** [Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook](#), edited by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, with Diane J. Goodman and Khyati Y. Joshi (Routledge, 2016), p. 138.

## Colorism

Using white skin color as the standard, colorism is the allocation of privilege and favor to lighter skin colors and disadvantage to darker skin colors. Colorism operates both within and across racial and ethnic groups.

**SOURCE:** Burton, Linda M et al., “[Critical Race Theories, Colorism, and the Decade’s Research on Families of Color](#),” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72 (2010), pp. 440–459.

## Critical Race Theory (CRT)

1. The Critical Race Theory movement considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies take up, but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, and even feelings and the unconscious. Unlike traditional civil rights, which embraces incrementalism and step by step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and principles of constitutional law.
2. CRT is not a noun, but a verb. It cannot be confined to a static and narrow definition but is considered to be an evolving and malleable practice. It critiques how the social construction of race and institutionalized racism perpetuate a racial caste system that relegates people of color to the bottom tiers. CRT also recognizes that race intersects with other identities, including sexuality, gender identity, and others. CRT recognizes that racism is not a bygone relic of the past. Instead, it acknowledges that the legacy of slavery, segregation, and the imposition of second-class citizenship on Black Americans and other people of color continue to permeate the social fabric of this nation.

**SOURCE:**

1. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, [Critical Race Theory: An Introduction](#), NYU Press, 2001 (2nd ed. 2012, 3rd ed. 2017).
2. Kimberlé Crenshaw, [American Bar Association](#) (accessed July 2022).



**Related Resources:** [Theory](#) (navigate alphabetically to the box for “Critical Race Theory”)

Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Cultural Appropriation

Theft of cultural elements—including symbols, art, language, customs, etc.—for one’s own use, commodification, or profit, often without understanding, acknowledgement, or respect for its value in the original culture. Results from the assumption of a dominant (i.e. white) culture’s right to take other cultural elements.

**SOURCE:** Colours of Resistance Archive, “[Cultural Appropriation](#)” (accessed June 2013).

## Cultural Misappropriation


Cultural misappropriation distinguishes itself from the neutrality of cultural exchange, appreciation, and appropriation because of the instance of colonialism and capitalism; cultural misappropriation occurs when a cultural fixture of a marginalized culture/community is copied, mimicked, or recreated by the dominant culture against the will of the original community and, above all else, commodified. One can understand the use of “misappropriation” as a distinguishing tool because it assumes that there are 1) instances of neutral appropriation, 2) the specifically referenced instance is non-neutral and problematic, even if benevolent in intention, 3) some act of theft or dishonest attribution has taken place, and 4) moral judgement of the act of appropriation is subjective to the specific culture from which is being engaged.

**SOURCE:** Devyn Springer, “[Resources on What ‘Cultural Appropriation’ Is and Isn’t](#)” (2018, accessed October 2019).

## Cultural Racism

Cultural racism refers to representations, messages and stories conveying the idea that behaviors and values associated with white people or “whiteness” are automatically “better” or more “normal” than those associated with other racially defined groups. Cultural racism shows up in advertising, movies, history books, definitions of patriotism, and in policies and laws. Cultural racism is also a powerful force in maintaining systems of internalized supremacy and internalized racism. It does that by influencing collective beliefs about what constitutes appropriate behavior, what is seen as beautiful, and the value placed on various forms of expression. All of these cultural norms and values in the U.S. have explicitly or implicitly racialized ideals and assumptions (for example, what “nude” means as a color, which facial features and body types are considered beautiful, which child-rearing practices are considered appropriate.)

**SOURCE:** RacialEquityTools.org, MP Associates, Center for Assessment and Policy Development, and World Trust Educational Services

 **Related Resources:** [Racism](#) (navigate alphabetically to the box for “**Cultural Racism**”)  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Culture

A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors and styles of communication.

**SOURCE:** Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative, [A Community Builder's Tool Kit](#), Appendix I (2000).

## Decolonization

1. Decolonization may be defined as the active resistance against colonial powers, and a shifting of power towards political, economic, educational, cultural, psychic independence and power that originate from a colonized nation's own indigenous culture. This process occurs politically and also applies to personal and societal psychic, cultural, political, agricultural, and educational deconstruction of colonial oppression.
2. Per Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang: "Decolonization doesn't have a synonym"; it is not a substitute for 'human rights' or 'social justice', though undoubtedly, they are connected in various ways. Decolonization demands an Indigenous framework and a centering of Indigenous land, Indigenous sovereignty, and Indigenous ways of thinking.

**SOURCE:**

1. The Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), "[Glossary](#)."
2. Eric Ritskes, "[What Is Decolonization and Why Does It Matter?](#)"



**Related Resources:** [Decolonization Theory and Practice](#)

Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Diaspora

Diaspora is "the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions ..." There is "a common element in all forms of diaspora; these are people who live outside their natal (or imagined natal) territories and recognize that their traditional homelands are reflected deeply in the languages they speak, religions they adopt, and the cultures they produce."

**SOURCE:** Leong Yew, "The Culture of Diasporas in the Postcolonial Web" (quoting Ashcroft et al., [Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies](#), and Cohen, [Global Diasporas: An Introduction](#)).



**Related Resources:** [Diaspora and Colonization](#)

Location: FUNDAMENTALS / History of Racism and Movements

## Disability Justice

Disability justice activists, organizers, and cultural workers understand that able-bodied supremacy has been formed in relation to other systems of domination and exploitation. The histories of white

supremacy and ableism are inextricably entwined, created in the context of colonial conquest and capitalist domination. One cannot look at the history of US slavery, the stealing of Indigenous lands, and US imperialism without seeing the way that white supremacy uses ableism to create a lesser/"other" group of people that is deemed less worthy/abled/smart/capable. A disability justice framework understands that:

- All bodies are unique and essential.
- All bodies have strengths and needs that must be met.
- We are powerful, not despite the complexities of our bodies, but because of them.
- All bodies are confined by ability, race, gender, sexuality, class, nation state, religion, and more, and we cannot separate them.

**SOURCE:** Sins Invalid, "[What is Disability Justice?](#)," June 2020.



**Related Resources:** [Intersectionality](#)

(navigate alphabetically to the box for "**Intersections of Race and Ability**")

Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Discrimination

1. The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories.
2. [In the United States] the law makes it illegal to discriminate against someone on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit. The law also requires that employers reasonably accommodate applicants' and employees' sincerely held religious practices, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business.

**SOURCE:**

1. Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative, [A Community Builder's Tool Kit](#), Appendix I (2000).
2. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "[Laws Enforced by EEOC](#)" (accessed June 2013).

## Diversity

Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender—the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used—but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

It is important to note that many activists and thinkers critique diversity alone as a strategy. For

instance, Baltimore Racial Justice Action states: “Diversity is silent on the subject of equity. In an anti-oppression context, therefore, the issue is not diversity, but rather equity. Often when people talk about diversity, they are thinking only of the “non-dominant” groups.”

**SOURCE:**

1. UC Berkeley Center for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity, “[Glossary of Terms](#)” (page 34 in [2009 Strategic Plan](#)).
2. Baltimore Racial Justice Action, “[Our Definitions](#)” (2018).

## Elder Oppression

Systematic subordination and mistreatment of young people and elders based on age through the restriction and denial of opportunities to exercise social, economic, and political power. Youth and elder oppressions both include restricted access to goods, services, and privileges of society, along with loss of voice and limited access to participation in society. The subordination of young people and elders is supported by institutional structures and practices of society, networks of laws, rules, policies, and procedures, along with the attitudes, values, and actions of individuals that combine to ensure the subordinated status of members of these socially constructed identity groups. Young people and elders are marginalized and excluded by practices that give middle-aged adults the power to act on and for them, often without their agreement or consent. (See also **Youth Oppression**.)

**SOURCE:** [Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook](#), edited by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, with Diane J. Goodman and Khyati Y. Joshi (Routledge, 2016), p. 342.

## Equity

To treat everyone fairly. An equity emphasis seeks to render justice by deeply considering structural factors that benefit some social groups/communities and harm other social groups/communities. Sometimes justice demands, for the purpose of equity, an unequal response.


**SOURCE:** YWCA, “[Our Shared Language: Social Justice Glossary](#)” (2016, accessed July 2022).

## Ethnicity

A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.

Examples of different ethnic groups are: Cape Verdean, Haitian, African American (Black); Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese (Asian); Cherokee, Mohawk, Navaho (Native American); Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican (Latino); Polish, Irish, and Swedish (White).

**SOURCE:** [Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook](#), edited by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, Routledge, 1997.

 **Related Resources:** [Race, Ethnicity, and Indigeneity](#) (navigate alphabetically to the box for “**Ethnicity**”)  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Fascism

An especially virulent form of far-right populist ultra-nationalism that celebrates the nation or the race as an organic community transcending all other loyalties. It emphasizes a myth of national or racial rebirth after a period of decline or destruction. To this end, fascism calls for a “spiritual revolution” against signs of moral decay such as individualism and materialism and seeks to purge “alien” forces and groups that threaten the organic community. Fascism tends to celebrate masculinity, youth, mystical unity, and the regenerative power of violence. Often, but not always, it promotes racial superiority doctrines, ethnic persecution, imperialist expansion, and genocide. Fascism first crystallized in Europe in response to the Bolshevik Revolution and the devastation of World War I, and then began to show up in other parts of the world. If it is a post-WWII occurrence it should be called neofascist or neofascism unless it solely involves participants in older movements.

**SOURCE:** Political Research Associates, “[What is Fascism?](#),” December 2016.



**Related Resources:** [Voting Justice and Democracy Building](#) (in the box for “**Democracy Building**”)

Location: PLAN / Issues

## Gender

Broadly, gender is a set of socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate.

**SOURCE:** [PFLAG National Glossary of Terms](#), June 2022 (accessed July 2022).

## Gender Identity

A person’s deeply held core sense of self in relation to gender. Gender identity does not always correspond to biological sex. People become aware of their gender identity at many different stages of life, from as early as 18 months and into adulthood. Gender identity is a separate concept from sexuality and gender expression.

**SOURCE:** [PFLAG National Glossary of Terms](#), June 2022 (accessed July 2022).

## Genderfluid

Describes a person who does not consistently adhere to one fixed gender and who may move among genders.

**SOURCE:** [PFLAG National Glossary of Terms](#), June 2022 (accessed July 2022).



## Great Replacement

A far-right conspiracy claim that Jews—or Left and progressive politicians and thought leaders, in less explicitly racist and antisemitic versions—are using immigration policy and non-enforcement of existing laws to encourage non-White immigration and eventually replace a given country’s majority-White population with non-Whites and in many cases non-Christians. For the White nationalist movement, the demographic replacement of White people is the most urgent political issue, considered tantamount to White genocide. In less openly White nationalist settings, it is sometimes referred to as “Replacement,” and focuses on the leadership of the Democratic Party attempting to replace “legacy voters” (as some far-right pundits code their language) to ensure a permanent Democratic majority. In whatever version, Great Replacement claims draw on the fears of many White voters of being eclipsed to argue for the need for a less democratic society. For open White nationalists, the solution is ethnic cleansing and massive disenfranchisement. For the broader MAGA movement and its key constituents, the solution is to seize the powers of government and use them to rewrite voting and representation rules to ensure permanent rule by a White minority and its allies.

**SOURCE:** Political Research Associates, [Glossary](#) (accessed November 2023).

## Hate Crime

A legal term that describes criminal acts where the victim was targeted due to their actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, as defined by the federal Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act and similar state-level laws. Because this usage can reinforce notions of bigoted political violence as an isolated product of individual psychology, rather than the result of systems and cultures of discrimination and oppression, the term *hate crime* is discouraged unless discussing particular laws and policies.

**SOURCE:** Political Research Associates, [Glossary](#) (accessed November 2023).

 **Related Resources:** [Addressing Hate and White Supremacy](#)

Location: PLAN / Issues.

## Hegemony/Hegemonic

To be hegemonic, or to achieve hegemony, means to be dominant in an overarching way, defining the atmosphere of a particular time and place. The term ‘hegemony’ is often used to describe dominant ideological frameworks of knowledge and understanding that work to conceal power while upholding existing power structures and hierarchies.

**SOURCE:** Abolitionist Futures, “[Abolishing the Police: Glossary](#),” co-written by Chris Rosedale, Koshka Duff, Connor Woodman, Joseph Kisolo-Ssonko, Tom Kemp, and Greg Mason (accessed November 2023).

## Heteronormativity

The assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. This includes the often implicitly held idea that heterosexuality is the norm and that other sexualities are “different” or “abnormal.”

**SOURCE:** [PFLAG National Glossary of Terms](#), June 2022 (accessed July 2022).

## Heterosexism

Structural, interpersonal, or other forms of discrimination or prejudice against anyone who does not conform to binary gender norms based on the assumption that heterosexuality is the normal/correct sexual orientation.

**SOURCE:** *This definition was found on the White Noise Collective webpage “[Shared Understandings](#)” with this source note:* Definitions, quotes and examples compiled from many sources, including Andrea Ayvazian, Andrea Smith, Black Girl Dangerous, Class Action, Kathryn Mathers, Dr. Wade Nobles, Peggy McIntosh, *Love, Race and Liberation*, Barbara Love, OpenSource Leadership, Racial Equity Tools, Robin DiAngelo, Colors of Resistance, *Challenging White Supremacy*, Isaac Giron, Anne Braden, Wikipedia, and Barbara Major, & *People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond*. **Please do not directly credit WNC with these definitions.**

## Implicit Bias

Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals’ attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals’ stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is often used to measure implicit biases with regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other topics.

**SOURCE:** Cheryl Staats, [State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review 2013](#), Kirwan Institute, The Ohio State University.



**Related Resources:** [Implicit Bias](#)

Location: ACT / Communicating

## Inclusion

Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

**SOURCE:** [OpenSource Leadership Strategies](#)

## Indigeneity

Indigenous populations are composed of the existing descendants of the peoples who inhabited the present territory of a country wholly or partially at the time when persons of a different culture or ethnic origin arrived there from other parts of the world, overcame them and, by conquest, settlement, or other means, reduced them to a non-dominant or colonial condition; who today live more in conformity with their particular social, economic, and cultural customs and traditions than with the institutions of the country of which they now form part, under a State structure which incorporates mainly national, social, and cultural characteristics of other segments of the population which are predominant.

(Examples: Maori in territory now defined as New Zealand; Mexicans in territory now defined as Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, and Oklahoma; Native American tribes in territory now defined as the United States.)


**SOURCE:** United Nations [Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues](#) (2010, page 9), originally presented in the [preliminary report of the Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights](#), José Martínez Cobo (1972, page 10).

 **Related Resources:** [Race, Ethnicity, and Indigeneity](#) (navigate alphabetically to the box for “Indigeneity”) Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Indigenous Sovereignty

It is distinguishable from Tribal Sovereignty in that it is not a nation-state recognition of inherent sovereignty under nation-state dominion. Rather, it arises from Indigenous Traditional Knowledge, belonging to each Indigenous nation, tribe, first nation, community, etc. It consists of spiritual ways, culture, language, social and legal systems, political structures, and inherent relationships with lands, waters, and all upon them. Indigenous sovereignty exists regardless of what the nation-state does or does not do. It continues as long as the People that are a part of it continue.

**SOURCE:** Indigenous Environmental Network, [“What is: Indigenous Sovereignty and Tribal Sovereignty,”](#) June 2020.

 **Related Resources:** [Decolonization Theory and Practice](#) Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Individual Racism

Individual racism refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can be deliberate, or the individual may act to perpetuate or support racism without knowing that is what he or she is doing.

Examples:

- Telling a racist joke, using a racial epithet, or believing in the inherent superiority of whites over other groups.
- Avoiding people of color whom you do not know personally, but not whites whom you do not

know personally (e.g., white people crossing the street to avoid a group of Latino/a young people; locking their doors when they see African American families sitting on their doorsteps in a city neighborhood; or not hiring a person of color because “something doesn’t feel right”).

- Accepting things as they are (a form of collusion).

**SOURCE:** [Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building](#) by Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens, and Barbara Major (2005).


## Institutional Racism

Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.

Examples:

- Government policies that explicitly restricted the ability of people to get loans to buy or improve their homes in neighborhoods with high concentrations of African Americans (also known as “red-lining”).
- City sanitation department policies that concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards disproportionately in communities of color.


**SOURCE:** [Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building](#) by Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens, and Barbara Major (2005).

 **Related Resources:** [Racism](#) (navigate alphabetically to the box for “Institutional Racism”) Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Internalized Dominance

Occurs among white people when they believe and/or act on assumptions that white people are superior to, more capable, intelligent, or entitled than people of color. It occurs when members of the dominant white group take their group’s socially advantaged status as normal and deserved, rather than recognizing how it has been conferred through racialized systems of inequality. Internalized dominance may be unconscious or conscious. A white person who insists that anyone who works hard can get ahead, without acknowledging the barriers of racism, is consciously or unconsciously expressing internalized dominance. Whites who assume that European music and art are superior to other forms are enacting internalized dominance.

**SOURCE:** [Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook](#), edited by Maurianne Adams and Lee Anne Bell, with Diane J. Goodman and Khyati Y. Joshi (Routledge, 2016), page 137.

 **Related Resources:** [Internalized Racism](#) (navigate alphabetically to the box for “Internalized Racial Superiority”) | Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Internalized Racism

Internalized racism is the situation that occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures, and ideologies that undergird the dominating group's power. It involves four essential and interconnected elements:

1. *Decision-making* - Due to racism, people of color do not have the ultimate decision-making power over the decisions that control our lives and resources. As a result, on a personal level, we may think white people know more about what needs to be done for us than we do. On an interpersonal level, we may not support each other's authority and power – especially if it is in opposition to the dominating racial group. Structurally, there is a system in place that rewards people of color who support white supremacy and power and coerces or punishes those who do not.
2. *Resources* - Resources, broadly defined (e.g. money, time, etc), are unequally in the hands and under the control of white people. Internalized racism is the system in place that makes it difficult for people of color to get access to resources for our own communities and to control the resources of our community. We learn to believe that serving and using resources for ourselves and our particular community is not serving “everybody.”
3. *Standards* - With internalized racism, the standards for what is appropriate or “normal” that people of color accept are white people's or Eurocentric standards. We have difficulty naming, communicating and living up to our deepest standards and values, and holding ourselves and each other accountable to them.
4. *Naming the problem* - There is a system in place that misnames the problem of racism as a problem of or caused by people of color and blames the disease – emotional, economic, political, etc. – on people of color. With internalized racism, people of color might, for example, believe we are more violent than white people and not consider state-sanctioned political violence or the hidden or privatized violence of white people and the systems they put in place and support.

**SOURCE:** Donna Bivens, [Internalized Racism: A Definition](#) (Women's Theological Center, 1995).



**Related Resources:** [Internalized Racism](#)

Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Interpersonal Racism

Interpersonal racism occurs between individuals. Once we bring our private beliefs into our interaction with others, racism is now in the interpersonal realm.

Examples: public expressions of racial prejudice, hate, bias, and bigotry between individuals

**SOURCE:** [Chronic Disparity: Strong and Pervasive Evidence of Racial Inequalities](#) by Keith Lawrence and Terry Keleher (2004).



**Related Resources:** [Racism](#) (navigate alphabetically to the box for “Interpersonal Racism”)

Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Intersectionality

1. Exposing [one's] multiple identities can help clarify the ways in which a person can simultaneously experience privilege and oppression. For example, a Black woman in America does not experience gender inequalities in exactly the same way as a white woman, nor racial oppression identical to that experienced by a Black man. Each race and gender intersection produces a qualitatively distinct life.
2. Per Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw: Intersectionality is simply a prism to see the interactive effects of various forms of discrimination and disempowerment. It looks at the way that racism, many times, interacts with patriarchy, heterosexism, classism, xenophobia — seeing that the overlapping vulnerabilities created by these systems actually create specific kinds of challenges. “Intersectionality 102,” then, is to say that these distinct problems create challenges for movements that are only organized around these problems as separate and individual. So when racial justice doesn't have a critique of patriarchy and homophobia, the particular way that racism is experienced and exacerbated by heterosexism, classism etc., falls outside of our political organizing. It means that significant numbers of people in our communities aren't being served by social justice frames because they don't address the particular ways that they're experiencing discrimination.

### SOURCE:

1. Intergroup Resources, “[Intersectionality](#)” (2012).
2. Otamere Guobadia, “[Kimberlé Crenshaw and Lady Phyll Talk Intersectionality, Solidarity, and Self-Care](#)” (2018).



**Related Resources:** [Intersectionality](#)

Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Islamophobia

A form of religious bigotry, with strong racial components, that scapegoats and demonizes Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim. Since the War on Terror era, Islamophobia has intensified as a central narrative and policy agenda for the Right in the U.S. and Europe, and often dovetails with anti-immigrant xenophobia, Christian nationalism, and a broader conspiratorial worldview. Islamophobia frequently leads to Islamophobic violence. Islamophobia can be structural, institutional, interpersonal, and/or internalized. Note that although *Islamophobia* is in common usage, the -phobia suffix tends to suggest individual bigotry to the exclusion of systemic and structural forces. The form *anti-Muslim* is generally preferred.

**SOURCE:** Political Research Associates, [Glossary](#) (accessed November 2023).

## Kyriarchy

The structures of domination working together as a network—not just one group dominating another. Its branches include, but are not limited to, racism, sexism, cissexism, heterosexism, ageism, and ableism. In a kyriarchy, different forms of supremacy on different axes are independent and

interdependent. The word considers all parts of the oppressive structure we live in evenly—no one oppression is worse or better or more important than another. We are all subject to kyriarchy, and we all benefit from it; we all share the burden and the blame in different measures and proportions.

**SOURCE:** The Anti-Oppression Network, "[Terminologies of Oppression: Comprehensive List of Working Definitions](#)" (accessed November 2023).

## Land Back Movement

Land Back is the intersectional movement for racial justice by Indigenous peoples, with the end goal of having our lands returned to Indigenous stewardship. Land Back addresses the root of colonization—the theft of Indigenous lands (including their destruction through resource extraction), the violence committed against Indigenous peoples to build capitalism across the country, and the effects that our communities still experience today. The movement for Land Back began over a decade ago. No single group owns or controls the movement, which has spread throughout Turtle Island—the Indigenous name for the lands of North and Central America—and surrounding island Nations. The phrase *land back* emerged from culture bearers and artisans popularizing the idea through artwork.

**SOURCE:** Nikki Pieratos and Krystal Two Bulls, "[Land Back: A Necessary Act of Reparations](#)," *Nonprofit Quarterly*, October 2021.

 **Related Resources:** [Community Planning: Land and Transportation](#) (navigate alphabetically to the box for "Land Back and Stewardship")

Location: PLAN / Issues

## Language Justice

Language justice calls us to disrupt colonization, to challenge Western dominance, and to break down the ways injustice silences, erases, and dehumanizes us. It calls us to create spaces where all people are welcomed to communicate in the languages and accents that they feel most comfortable and whole, and where we support the meaningful participation of people whose identities, experiences, wisdoms, and languages stretch beyond Standard American English.

**SOURCE:** [Move to End Violence](#) (accessed November 2023).

 **Related Resources:** [Language Justice](#)

Location: PLAN / Issues

## LGBTQ+

An acronym that collectively refers to individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer, sometimes stated as LGBT ([lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender](#)) or, historically, GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender). The addition of the Q for queer is a more recently preferred version of the acronym as cultural opinions of the term queer focus increasingly on its positive, reclaimed definition. The Q can also stand for questioning, referring to those who are still exploring their own sexuality and/or gender. The "+" represents those who are part of the community but for whom LGBTQ does not



accurately capture or reflect their identity.


**SOURCE:** [PFLAG National Glossary of Terms](#), June 2022 (accessed July 2022).

## Liberation

1. The creation of relationships, societies, communities, organizations, and collective spaces characterized by equity, fairness, and the implementation of systems for the allocation of goods, services, benefits, and rewards that support the full participation of each human and the promotion of their full humanness.
2. A state of being grounded in one's evolving identity, free movement, free from bias, imposed expectations, control, and violence towards one's place in the world, including the policing of it. Liberation is an ongoing process and practice of self-governance, accountability, responsibility, and transparency with oneself and within one's community. It requires ongoing acknowledgement of oppression in all its forms and on all levels of society, reparations, meaningful reconciliation directed by those targeted by oppression, and transformational changes on personal, positional, institutional and systemic levels of society.

**SOURCE:**

1. [Critical Liberation Theory](#), Barbara J. Love, Keri DeJong, and Christopher Hughbanks (UMASS, Amherst, 2007).
2. The Anti-Oppression Network, "[Terminologies of Oppression: Comprehensive List of Working Definitions](#)" (accessed November 2023).

 **Related Resources:** [Racial Equity](#) (navigate alphabetically to the box for "Racial Justice and Liberation")  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts


## Liberatory Consciousness

A liberatory consciousness enables humans to:

- Live their lives in oppressive systems and institutions with awareness and intentionality, rather than on the basis of the socialization to which they have been subjected.
- Maintain an awareness of the dynamics of oppression characterizing society without giving in to despair and hopelessness about that condition, to maintain an awareness of the role played by each individual in the maintenance of the system without blaming them for the roles they play, and at the same time practice intentionality about changing the systems of oppression.
- Live "outside" the patterns of thought and behavior learned through the socialization process that helps to perpetuate oppressive systems.

Four elements in developing a liberatory consciousness are awareness, analysis, acting, and accountability/ally-ship.

**SOURCE:** Barbara J. Love, "Developing a Liberatory Consciousness," [Readings for Diversity and Social Justice](#), edited by Maurianne Adams et. al., pages 599–600.

 **Related Resources:** [Racial Equity](#) (navigate alphabetically to the box for "Racial Justice and Liberation")  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Marginalization

A social process by which individuals or groups are (intentionally or unintentionally) distanced from access to power and resources and constructed as insignificant, peripheral, or less valuable/privileged to a community or “mainstream” society. This term describes a social process, so as not to imply a lack of agency. Marginalized groups or people are those excluded from mainstream social, economic, cultural, or political life. Examples of marginalized groups include, but are by no means limited to, groups excluded due to race, religion, political or cultural group, age, gender, or financial status. To what extent such populations are marginalized, however, is context specific and reliant on the cultural organization of the social site in question.

**SOURCE:** The University of British Columbia’s [Equity & Inclusion Glossary of Terms](#), citing [The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods](#)

## Microaggression

The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

**SOURCE:** Derald Wing Sue, PhD, “[Microaggressions: More than Just Race](#)” (*Psychology Today*, 17 November 2010).



**Related Resources:** [Racism](#) (navigate alphabetically to the box for “**Interpersonal Racism**”)  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Misogyny

An aggravated form of sexism. Misogyny is a primary motivation for the Right, both as a vehicle for recruitment and justification for its agenda that seeks to maintain traditional gender roles, limit reproductive and bodily autonomy, and situate marginalized genders as lesser than men.

**SOURCE:** Political Research Associates, [Glossary](#) (accessed November 2023).



**Related Resources:** [Intersectionality](#)  
(navigate alphabetically to the box for “**Intersections of Race and Gender**”)  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Model Minority

A term created by sociologist William Peterson to describe the Japanese community, whom he saw as being able to overcome oppression because of their cultural values.

While individuals employing the Model Minority trope may think they are being complimentary, in fact the term is related to colorism and its root, anti-Blackness. The model minority myth creates an understanding of ethnic groups, including Asian Americans, as a monolith, or as a mass whose parts

cannot be distinguished from each other. The model minority myth can be understood as a tool that white supremacy uses to pit people of color against each other in order to protect its status.


**SOURCE:** Asian American Activism: The Continuing Struggle, "[Glossary](#)" (2016).

## Movement Building

Movement building is the effort of social change agents to engage power holders and the broader society in addressing a systemic problem or injustice while promoting an alternative vision or solution. Movement building requires a range of intersecting approaches through a set of distinct stages over a long-term period of time. Through movement building, organizers can:

- Propose solutions to the root causes of social problems.
- Enable people to exercise their collective power.
- Humanize groups that have been denied basic human rights and improve conditions for the groups affected.
- Create structural change by building something larger than a particular organization or campaign.
- Promote visions and values for society based on fairness, justice, and democracy.

**SOURCE:** Julie Quiroz-Martinez, [From the Roots: Building the Power of Communities of Color to Challenge Structural Racism](#) (Akonadi Foundation, 2010).

 **Related Resources:** [Movement Building](#)  
Location: PLAN / Change Process

## Movement Ecology


Interconnected individuals, groups, and communities who are working towards liberation. Being in a movement ecology means you are aware of your role within social change efforts and are connected to other communities working for justice and liberation locally, regionally, and beyond.

**SOURCE:** RESIST, [Glossary](#) (accessed November 2023).

## Multicultural Competency

A process of learning about and becoming allies with people from other cultures, thereby broadening our own understanding and ability to participate in a multicultural process. The key element to becoming more culturally competent is respect for the ways that others live in and organize the world and an openness to learn from them.

**SOURCE:** Paul Kivel, "[Multicultural Competence](#)" (2007).

 **Related Resources:** [Multicultural Competency](#)  
Location: ACT / Strategies

## Nonbinary

Refers to people who do not subscribe to the gender binary. They might exist between or beyond the man-woman binary. Some use the term exclusively, while others may use it interchangeably with terms like genderqueer, genderfluid, gender nonconforming, gender diverse, or gender expansive. It can also be combined with other descriptors e.g. nonbinary woman or trans masc nonbinary. Language is imperfect, so it's important to trust and respect the words that nonbinary people use to describe their genders and experiences.

**SOURCE:** [PFLAG National Glossary of Terms](#), June 2022 (accessed July 2022).

## Oppression

The systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group. Rita Hardiman and Bailey Jackson state that oppression exists when the following 4 conditions are found:

- the oppressor group has the power to define reality for themselves and others,
- the target groups take in and internalize the negative messages about them and end up cooperating with the oppressors (thinking and acting like them),
- genocide, harassment, and discrimination are systematic and institutionalized, so that individuals are not necessary to keep it going, and
- members of both the oppressor and target groups are socialized to play their roles as normal and correct.

Oppression = Power + Prejudice

**SOURCE:** "[What Is Racism?](#)" – Dismantling Racism Works (dRworks) [web workbook](#).

## Pansexual

Refers to a person whose emotional, romantic and/or physical attraction is to people inclusive of all genders. People who are pansexual need not have had any sexual experience: It is the attraction and self-identification that determine the orientation. Pansexuality and bisexuality are different; pansexuality includes all genders equally, whereas bisexuality can favor some genders over others.

**SOURCE:** [PFLAG National Glossary of Terms](#), June 2022 (accessed July 2022).

## Patriarchy (Institutional/Structural/Systemic Sexism)

An historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression in which those assigned male, or those exhibiting characteristics that have been assigned male, hold ultimate authority and privilege central to social organization, occupying roles of political leadership, moral

authority, and control of property. It implies and entails female subordination. Can result in gendered outcomes even without specific gendered animus articulated between individuals.

**SOURCE:** This definition was found on the White Noise Collective webpage "[Shared Understandings](#)" with this source note: Definitions, quotes and examples compiled from many sources, including Andrea Ayvazian, Andrea Smith, Black Girl Dangerous, Class Action, Kathryn Mathers, Dr. Wade Nobles, Peggy McIntosh, *Love, Race and Liberation*, Barbara Love, OpenSource Leadership, Racial Equity Tools, Robin DiAngelo, Colors of Resistance, *Challenging White Supremacy*, Isaac Giron, Anne Braden, Wikipedia, and Barbara Major, & *People's Institute for Survival and Beyond*. **Please do not directly credit WNC with these definitions.**

## People of Color

Often the preferred collective term for referring to non-White racial groups. Racial justice advocates have been using the term "people of color" (not to be confused with the pejorative "colored people") since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racial groups that are not White, to address racial inequities. While "people of color" can be a politically useful term, and describes people with their own attributes (as opposed to what they are not, e.g., "non-White"), it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and may be more appropriate.

**SOURCE:** Race Forward, "[Race Reporting Guide](#)" (2015).

## Power

1. Power is unequally distributed globally and in U.S. society; some individuals or groups wield greater power than others, thereby allowing them greater access and control over resources. Wealth, whiteness, citizenship, patriarchy, heterosexism, and education are a few key social mechanisms through which power operates. Although power is often conceptualized as power over other individuals or groups, other variations are power with (used in the context of building collective strength) and power within (which references an individual's internal strength). Learning to "see" and understand relations of power is vital to organizing for progressive social change.
2. Power may also be understood as the ability to influence others and impose one's beliefs. All power is relational, and the different relationships either reinforce or disrupt one another. The importance of the concept of power to anti-racism is clear: racism cannot be understood without understanding that power is not only an individual relationship but a cultural one, and that power relationships are shifting constantly. Power can be used malignantly and intentionally, but need not be, and individuals within a culture may benefit from power of which they are unaware.
3. (A) The ability to name or define. (B) The ability to decide. (C) The ability to set the rule, standard, or policy. (D) The ability to change the rule, standard, or policy to serve your needs, wants, or desires. (E) The ability to influence decision makers to make choices in favor of your cause, issue, or concern. Each of these definitions can manifest on personal, social, institutional, or structural levels:
  - *Personal Power* - 1. Self-determination. 2. Power that an individual possesses or builds in their personal life and interpersonal relationships.

- *Social Power* - 1. Communal self-determination. 2. A grassroots collective organization of personal power. 3. Power that social groups possess or build among themselves to determine and shape their collective lives.
- *Institutional Power* - 1. Power to create and shape the rules, policies, and actions of an institution. 2. To have institutional power is to be a decision maker or to have great influence upon a decision maker of an institution.
- *Structural Power* - To have structural power is to create and shape the rules, policies, and actions that govern multiple and intersecting institutions or an industry.

## SOURCE:

1. Intergroup Resources, "[Power](#)" (2012).
2. Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre, "[Racism and Power](#)" (2018) / "[CARED Glossary](#)" (2020).
3. YWCA, "[Our Shared Language: Social Justice Glossary](#)" (2016, accessed Oct 2021).

## Prejudice

A pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.

**SOURCE:** Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative, [A Community Builder's Tool Kit](#), Appendix I (2000).

## Privilege

Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g. white privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because we're taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

**SOURCE:** Colours of Resistance Archive, "[Privilege](#)" (accessed June 2013).

## Race

For many people, it comes as a surprise that racial categorization schemes were invented by scientists to support worldviews that viewed some groups of people as superior and some as inferior. There are three important concepts linked to this fact:

1. Race is a made-up social construct, and not an actual biological fact.
2. Race designations have changed over time. Some groups that are considered "white" in the United States today were considered "non-white" in previous eras, in U.S. Census data and in mass media and popular culture (for example, Irish, Italian, and Jewish people).

3. The way in which racial categorizations are enforced (the shape of racism) has also changed over time. For example, the racial designation of Asian American and Pacific Islander changed four times in the 19th century. That is, they were defined at times as white and at other times as not white. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, as designated groups, have been used by whites at different times in history to compete with African American labor.

**SOURCE:**


- 1–2. PBS, "[Race: The Power of an Illusion](#)" (2018–2019 relaunch of [2003 series](#)).
3. Paul Kivel, [Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice](#) (Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Society Publishers, 2002), page 141.

 **Related Resources:** [Race, Ethnicity, and Indigeneity](#) (navigate alphabetically to the box for "Race")  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## 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 him or herself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience.

**SOURCE:** [Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook](#), edited by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, Routledge, 1997.


 **Related Resources:** [Race, Ethnicity, and Indigeneity](#) (includes "Resources by Specific Racial/Ethnic Groups")  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Racial Capitalism

If capitalism is intended to maximize profit, its operation inherently divides workers and extracts labor from communities of color, including enslaved people, Indigenous people, and immigrants.

If you think of race as assigning meaning to whole groups of people, ideologically convincing others that some people are inferior to others, that some people are designed as beasts of burden, then what you end up getting is a system of extraction that allows for a kind of super-exploitation of Black and brown people. And racial capitalism also relies on an ideology or racial regime, and the racial regime convinces a lot of white people, who may get the crumbs of this extraction through slavery, through Jim Crow, convinces them to support or shore up a regime that seems to benefit whiteness based in white supremacy but where their own share of the spoils is actually pretty minuscule. So if you think of capitalism as racial capitalism, then the outcome is you cannot eliminate capitalism, overthrow it, without the complete destruction of white supremacy.

**SOURCE:** Robin D.G. Kelley, "[The Rebellion Against Racial Capitalism](#)," interviewed by Jeremy Scahill, The Intercept (2020).

 **Related Resources:** [Theory](#) (navigate alphabetically to the box for "Racial Capitalism")  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts



## Racial Equity

1. Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or that fail to eliminate them.
2. "A mindset and method for solving problems that have endured for generations, seem intractable, harm people and communities of color most acutely, and ultimately affect people of all races. This will require seeing differently, thinking differently, and doing the work differently. Racial equity is about results that make a difference and last."

### SOURCE:


1. [Center for Assessment and Policy Development](#).
2. [OpenSource Leadership Strategies](#).

 **Related Resources:** [Racial Equity](#)  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Racial Identity Development Theory

Racial Identity Development Theory discusses how people in various racial groups and with multiracial identities form their particular self-concept. It also describes some typical phases in remaking that identity based on learning and awareness of systems of privilege and structural racism, cultural, and historical meanings attached to racial categories, and factors operating in the larger socio-historical level (e.g. globalization, technology, immigration, and increasing multiracial population).

**SOURCE:** [New Perspectives on Racial Identity Development: Integrating Emerging Frameworks](#), edited by Charmaine L. Wijeyesinghe and Bailey W. Jackson (NYU Press, 2012).

 **Related Resources:** [Theory](#) (navigate alphabetically to the box for "Racial Identity Development Theory")  
| Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Racial Inequity

Racial inequity is when two or more racial groups are not standing on approximately equal footing, such as the percentages of each ethnic group in terms of dropout rates, single family home ownership, access to healthcare, etc.

**SOURCE:** Ibram X. Kendi, [How To Be An Antiracist](#), Random House, 2019.

## Racial Justice

1. The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity—goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.
2. Essentially the action of operationalizing racial justice is an invitation to reimagine and co-create a racially just and liberated world that includes:
  - understanding the history of racism and the system of white supremacy and addressing past harms,
  - working in right relationship and with accountability in an issue, sector, or community ecosystem for collective change,
  - implementing interventions that center dismantling structural racism, use an intersectional analysis and impact multiple systems,
  - centering Blackness and building community, cultural, economic, and political power of all People of Color, and
  - applying the practice of love along with disruption and resistance to the status quo.

### SOURCE:

1. Race Forward, “[Race Reporting Guide](#)” (2015).
2. Maggie Potapchuk, “[Transforming Organizations by Operationalizing Racial Justice](#)” (MP Associates, July 2023). This definition is based on and expanded from the one described in Rinku Sen and Lori Villarosa, “[Grantmaking with a Racial Justice Lens: A Practical Guide](#)” (Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity, 2019).

## Racial Reconciliation

Reconciliation involves three ideas. First, it recognizes that racism in America is both systemic and institutionalized, with far-reaching effects on both political engagement and economic opportunities for minorities. Second, reconciliation is engendered by empowering local communities through relationship-building and truth-telling. Lastly, justice is the essential component of the conciliatory process—justice that is best termed as restorative rather than retributive, while still maintaining its vital punitive character.

**SOURCE:** [The William Winter Institute](#) for Racial Reconciliation, [Position Statement on Reconciliation](#) (2014).



**Related Resources:** [Racial Reconciliation](#)

Location: ACT / Strategies

## Racial Resentment

Defined as the convergence of anti-black sentiments with traditional American views on effort, hard work and individualism. People who express affirmative beliefs like this: “Irish, Italian, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any

special favors,” and or disagree with beliefs like this: “Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class,” express high racial resentment.

**SOURCE:** *This definition was found on the White Noise Collective webpage “[Shared Understandings](#)” with this source note:* Definitions, quotes and examples compiled from many sources, including Andrea Ayvazian, Andrea Smith, Black Girl Dangerous, Class Action, Kathryn Mathers, Dr. Wade Nobles, Peggy McIntosh, *Love, Race and Liberation*, Barbara Love, OpenSource Leadership, Racial Equity Tools, Robin DiAngelo, Colors of Resistance, *Challenging White Supremacy*, Isaac Giron, Anne Braden, Wikipedia, and Barbara Major, & *People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond*. **Please do not directly credit WNC with these definitions.**

## Racial Trauma

The trauma of racism refers to the cumulative negative impact of racism on the lives of people of color. Encompassing the emotional, psychological, health, economic and social effects of multigenerational and historical trauma, trauma of racism relates to the damaging effects of ongoing societal and intra-social-group racial micro aggressions, internalized racism, overt racist experiences, discrimination and oppression within the lives of people of color. When repetitive and unresolved, these experiences rooted in racism can create severe emotional pain and distress that can overwhelm a person’s and community’s ability to cope, creating feelings of powerlessness.

**SOURCE:** [Facts Matter! Black Lives Matter! The Trauma of Racism](#), co-written by Dottie Lebron, Laura Morrison, Dan Ferris, Amanda Alcantara, Danielle Cummings, Gary Parker & Mary McKay. McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research, New York University, 2015.



**Related Resources:** [Trauma, Violence, and Healing](#)

Location: PLAN / Issues

## Racialization

Racialization is the very complex and contradictory process through which groups come to be designated as being of a particular “race” and on that basis subjected to differential and/or unequal treatment. Put simply, “racialization [is] the process of manufacturing and utilizing the notion of race in any capacity.” While white people are also racialized, this process is often rendered invisible or normative to those designated as white. As a result, white people may not see themselves as part of a race but still maintain the authority to name and racialize “others.”

**SOURCE:** Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre, “[Racialization](#)” (2018) / Calgary Anti-Racism Education, “[CARED Glossary](#)” (2020).

## Racism

Racism = race prejudice + social and institutional power

Racism = a system of advantage based on race

Racism = a system of oppression based on race

# GLOSSARY

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.

**SOURCE:** “[What Is Racism?](#)” – Dismantling Racism Works (dRworks) [web workbook](#).

 **Related Resources:** [Racism](#)  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Racist


One who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or interaction or expressing a racist idea.

**SOURCE:** Ibram X. Kendi, [How To Be An Antiracist](#), Random House, 2019.

## Racist Policies

A racist policy is any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between or among racial groups. Policies are written and unwritten laws, rules, procedures, processes, regulations, and guidelines that govern people. There is no such thing as a nonracist or race-neutral policy. Every policy in every institution in every community in every nation is producing or sustaining either racial inequity or equity between racial groups. Racist policies are also expressed through other terms such as “structural racism” or “systemic racism”. Racism itself is institutional, structural, and systemic.

**SOURCE:** Ibram X. Kendi, [How To Be An Antiracist](#), Random House, 2019.

 **Related Resources:** [Laws and Policies](#) | Location: FUNDAMENTALS / History of Racism and Movements  
For specific topics, **also see** [PLAN / Issues](#)

## Religious Oppression

The systematic subordination of minority religious groups, such as Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Native American spiritualities, and those who are atheists, agnostics, or freethinkers. The subordination of non-Christian religions occurs at all levels of society through the actions of individuals (religious prejudice), institutional policies and practices (religious discrimination), and cultural and societal norms and values associated with Christianity. *[This definition refers to religious oppression in the United States.]*


**SOURCE:** [Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook](#), edited by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, with Diane J. Goodman and Khyati Y. Joshi (Routledge, 2016), p. 255.

## Reparations

States have a legal duty to acknowledge and address widespread or systematic human rights violations,

in cases where the state caused the violations or did not seriously try to prevent them. Reparations initiatives seek to address the harms caused by these violations. They can take the form of compensating for the losses suffered, which helps overcome some of the consequences of abuse. They can also be future oriented—providing rehabilitation and a better life to victims—and help to change the underlying causes of abuse. Reparations publicly affirm that victims are rights-holders entitled to redress.


**SOURCE:** [International Center for Transitional Justice](#).

 **Related Resources:** [Reparations](#)  
Location: PLAN / Issues

## Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice is a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by crime and conflict. It places decisions in the hands of those who have been most affected by a wrongdoing, and gives equal concern to the victim, the offender, and the surrounding community. Restorative responses are meant to repair harm, heal broken relationships, and address the underlying reasons for the offense. Restorative Justice emphasizes individual and collective accountability. Crime and conflict generate opportunities to build community and increase grassroots power when restorative practices are employed.

**SOURCE:** The Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), "[Glossary](#)."


 **Related Resources:** [Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice](#)  
Location: ACT / Strategies

## Settler Colonialism

Settler colonialism refers to colonization in which colonizing powers create permanent or long-term settlement on land owned and/or occupied by other peoples, often by force. This contrasts with colonialism where colonizer's focus only on extracting resources back to their countries of origin, for example. Settler Colonialism typically includes oppressive governance, dismantling of indigenous cultural forms, and enforcement of codes of superiority (such as white supremacy). Examples include white European occupations of land in what is now the United States, Spain's settlements throughout Latin America, and the Apartheid government established by White Europeans in South Africa.

Per Dina Gillio-Whitaker, "Settler Colonialism may be said to be a structure, not an historic event, whose endgame is always the elimination of the Natives in order to acquire their land, which it does in countless seen and unseen ways. These techniques are woven throughout the US's national discourse at all levels of society. Manifest Destiny—that is, the US's divinely sanctioned inevitability—is like a computer program always operating unnoticeably in the background. In this program, genocide and land dispossession are continually both justified and denied."

**SOURCE:** Dina Gilio-Whitaker, "[Settler Fragility: Why Settler Privilege Is So Hard to Talk About](#)" (2018).

 **Related Resources:** [Diaspora and Colonization](#)  
(navigate alphabetically to the box for "Neo-Colonialism and Settler Colonialism")  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / History of Racism and Movements

## Sexual Orientation

The sexual attraction toward other people or no people. While sexual activity involves the choices one makes regarding behavior, one's sexual activity does not define one's sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is part of the human condition, and all people have one. Typically, it is attraction that helps determine orientation.

**SOURCE:** [PFLAG National Glossary of Terms](#), June 2022 (accessed July 2022).

## Social Oppression

Refers to oppression that is achieved through social means and that is social in scope—it affects whole categories of people. This kind of oppression includes the systematic mistreatment, exploitation, and abuse of a group (or groups) of people by another group (or groups). It occurs whenever one group holds power over another in society through the control of social institutions, along with society's laws, customs, and norms. The outcome of social oppression is that groups in society are sorted into different positions within the social hierarchies of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. Those in the controlling, or dominant group, benefit from the oppression of other groups through heightened privileges relative to others, greater access to rights and resources, a better quality of life, and overall greater life chances. Those who experience the brunt of oppression have fewer rights, less access to resources, less political power, lower economic potential, worse health and higher mortality rates, and lower overall life chances.

**SOURCE:** Canadian Race Relations Foundation, [Glossary of Terms](#).

## Socialization

The process of consciously and unconsciously learning norms, beliefs, and practices from individuals, media, and institutions about who does/does not have power and privilege as it relates to social identities and how the self is positioned in relationship to these identities. "How we are supposed to act."

**SOURCE:** *This definition was found on the White Noise Collective webpage "[Shared Understandings](#)" with this source note:* Definitions, quotes and examples compiled from many sources, including Andrea Ayvazian, Andrea Smith, Black Girl Dangerous, Class Action, Kathryn Mathers, Dr. Wade Nobles, Peggy McIntosh, *Love, Race and Liberation*, Barbara Love, OpenSource Leadership, Racial Equity Tools, Robin DiAngelo, Colors of Resistance, *Challenging White Supremacy*, Isaac Giron, Anne Braden, Wikipedia, and Barbara Major, & *People's Institute for Survival and Beyond*. **Please do not directly credit WNC with these definitions.**

## Structural Racialization

Structural racialization connotes the dynamic process that creates cumulative and durable inequalities based on race. Interactions between individuals are shaped by and reflect underlying and often hidden structures that shape biases and create disparate outcomes even in the absence of racist actors or

racist intentions. The presence of structural racialization is evidenced by consistent differences in outcomes in education attainment, family wealth, and even life span.

**SOURCE:** [Systems Thinking and Race: Workshop Summary](#) by John A. Powell, Connie Cagampang Heller, and Fayza Bundalli (The California Endowment, 2011).

 **Related Resources:** [Structural Racism](#)  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Structural Racism

1. The normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal – that routinely advantage Whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of White domination, diffused and infused in all aspects of society including its history, culture, politics, economics, and entire social fabric. Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism – all other forms of racism emerge from structural racism.
2. For example, we can see structural racism in the many institutional, cultural, and structural factors that contribute to lower life expectancy for African American and Native American men, compared to white men. These include higher exposure to environmental toxins, dangerous jobs and unhealthy housing stock, higher exposure to and more lethal consequences for reacting to violence, stress, and racism, lower rates of health care coverage, access, and quality of care, and systematic refusal by the nation to fix these things.

### SOURCE:

1. [Chronic Disparity: Strong and Pervasive Evidence of Racial Inequalities](#) by Keith Lawrence, Aspen Institute on Community Change, and Terry Keleher, Applied Research Center, for the Race and Public Policy Conference (2004).
2. [Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building](#) by Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens, and Barbara Major (2005).

 **Related Resources:** [Structural Racism](#)  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Systemic Racism

1. This is an interlocking and reciprocal relationship between the individual, institutional and structural levels which function as a system of racism. These various levels of racism operate together in a lockstep model and function together as a whole system. These levels are:
  - Individual (within interactions between people)
  - Institutional (within institutions and systems of power)
  - Structural or societal (among institutions and across society)
2. In many ways “systemic racism” and “structural racism” are synonymous. If there is a difference



between the terms, it can be said to exist in the fact that a structural racism analysis pays more attention to the historical, cultural, and social psychological aspects of our currently racialized society.


**SOURCE:**

1. Canadian Race Relations Foundation, [Glossary of Terms](#).
2. Aspen Institute, "[11 Terms You Should Know to Better Understand Structural Racism](#)" (2016).

## Targeted Universalism

Targeted universalism means setting universal goals pursued by targeted processes to achieve those goals. Within a targeted universalism framework, universal goals are established for all groups concerned. The strategies developed to achieve those goals are targeted, based upon how different groups are situated within structures, culture, and across geographies to obtain the universal goal. Targeted universalism is goal oriented, and the processes are directed in service of the explicit, universal goal.

**SOURCE:** [Targeted Universalism: Policy & Practice – A Primer](#) by John A. Powell, Stephen Menendian, and Wendy Ake (Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, 2019).

 **Related Resources:** [Theory](#) (navigate alphabetically to the box for "Targeted Universalism")  
Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Tokenism

Tokenism is, simply, covert racism. [Racism](#) requires those in power to maintain their privilege by exercising social, economic, and/or political muscle against people of color (POC). Tokenism achieves the same while giving those in power the appearance of being non-racist and even champions of diversity because they recruit and use POC as racialized props. Examples include:

- Recruit POC to formal leadership positions, but keep all the power.
- Only hire POC for POC "stuff."
- Convene Special "Diversity Councils" but don't build POC leadership on your main Board.
- Use POC as your mouthpiece and shield against other POC.

**SOURCE:** Helen Kim Ho, "[8 Ways People of Color are Tokenized in Nonprofits](#)," The Nonprofit Revolution (2017).

## Transformative Justice (TJ)

A political framework and approach for responding to violence, harm, and abuse. At its most basic, it seeks to respond to violence without creating more violence and/or engaging in harm reduction to lessen the violence. TJ can be thought of as a way of "making things right," getting in "right relation," or creating justice together. Transformative justice responses and interventions 1) do not rely on the state (e.g. police, prisons, the criminal legal system, I.C.E., foster care system (though some TJ responses do rely on or incorporate social services like counseling)); 2) do not reinforce or perpetuate violence such

as oppressive norms or vigilantism; and most importantly, 3) actively cultivate the things we know prevent violence such as healing, accountability, resilience, and safety for all involved.

**SOURCE:** [Mia Mingus](#) (accessed July 2022).

## Transgender

Often shortened to trans, from the Latin prefix for “on a different side as.” A term describing a person’s gender identity that does not necessarily match their assigned sex at birth. Transgender people may or may not decide to alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically to match their gender identity. This word is also used as an umbrella term to describe groups of people who transcend conventional expectations of gender identity or expression—such groups include, but are not limited to, people who identify as transsexual, genderqueer, gender variant, gender diverse, and androgynous. “Trans” is often considered more inclusive than transgender because it includes transgender, transsexual, transmasculine, transfeminine, and those who simply use the word trans.


**SOURCE:** [PFLAG National Glossary of Terms](#), June 2022 (accessed July 2022).

## Tribal Sovereignty

Refers to the legal recognition in the United States of America law of the inherent sovereignty of American Indian Nations. The law applied to American Indians by the US government is called Federal Indian Law. Although undermined by various Acts, legal decisions, and policies, it still stands to this day. Indian reservations are recognized as what can be termed “nations within.” Each has its own government and sovereign powers to make laws, tax, etc. and most also have their own tribal justice system, also based upon their inherent powers. As a result of this status, many programs of a general nature to states and their subdivisions do not apply to Indian nations unless specifically mentioned or for which there is specific legislation directed toward Indian nations. When issues like healthcare, housing, and clean water, for example, are brought up in a multicultural, marginalized community context, the solutions offered will only apply to Indian nations if there are specific provisions for Indian nations.

It is important to understand that tribal sovereignty is not delegated from the US government. Treaties do not create tribal sovereignty. Treaties are an affirmation between Indian nations and nation-states. They are not contracts executed solely under nation-state laws and frameworks. When we speak of treaty rights, we are not saying our rights come from the relevant treaty, but rather, that the relevant treaty is a mutual recognition of rights that already existed and continue to exist under the terms of the treaty.

**SOURCE:** Indigenous Environmental Network, “[What is: Indigenous Sovereignty and Tribal Sovereignty](#),” June 2020.

 **Related Resources:** [Decolonization Theory and Practice](#)

Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Two Spirit

1. The term Two Spirit has been present in Native communities for countless generations that predate LGBTQ terminology. For generations, Two Spirit Native culture went underground to avoid detection and persecution. While the term Two Spirit was coined in 1990 in Winnipeg, Canada, as a means of unifying various gender identities and expressions of Native American/First Nations/Indigenous individuals, the term is not a specific definition of gender, sexual orientation, or other self-determining catch-all phrase, but rather an umbrella term. Two Spirit people have both a male and female spirit within them and are blessed by their Creator to see life through the eyes of both genders.
2. Two-Spirit is an umbrella pan-Native American term. It describes gender identity, gender expression, and/or sexual orientation. Some Two-Spirits may align with colonial LGBTQ+ identities while others may not. However, keep in mind that Two-Spirit is not for non-Native people. You can't appropriate our culture because our identities as Two-Spirits on Turtle Island have always been.

### SOURCE:

1. Tony Enos, "[8 Things You Should Know About Two Spirit People](#)," *Indian Country Today*, Sept 13, 2018.
2. [Two-Spirit Program: Niizhojichaagwijig Niganawenimaanaanig Ezhichigewin](#), Native Justice Coalition (accessed July 2022).

## White Fragility

A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable [for white people], 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.

**SOURCE:** Robin DiAngelo, "[White Fragility](#)" (*International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 2011).



**Related Resources:** [System of White Supremacy and White Privilege](#)

Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## White Nationalism

A social movement based on a belief in biologically determined racial hierarchies, often with the ultimate goal of establishing an all-White nation state. For example, White nationalist movements in the U.S. increased in response to the end of legal segregation. Core to contemporary White nationalist ideology is the "Great Replacement" conspiracy, which alleges that a global cabal of (usually Jewish) liberal elites are deliberately fostering non-White immigration in order to erode White demographic majorities and ultimately, to cause "White genocide"—the cultural and biological destruction of the White race. The White nationalist movement is at least implicitly violent, as its goals can only be realized through removals, extermination, and death. While the most expansive goals of White nationalism remain unrealized, it has directly and indirectly influenced policies ranging from immigration enforcement, to voter disenfranchisement/suppression, and state disinvestments that continue to marginalize and repress communities of color.

**SOURCE:** Political Research Associates, [Glossary](#) (accessed November 2023).

## White Privilege

1. Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it.
2. *Structural White Privilege:* A system of white domination that creates and maintains belief systems that make current racial advantages and disadvantages seem normal. The system includes powerful incentives for maintaining white privilege and its consequences, and powerful negative consequences for trying to interrupt white privilege or reduce its consequences in meaningful ways. The system includes internal and external manifestations at the individual, interpersonal, cultural and institutional levels.

The accumulated and interrelated advantages and disadvantages of white privilege that are reflected in racial/ethnic inequities in life-expectancy and other health outcomes, income and wealth, and other outcomes, in part through different access to opportunities and resources. These differences are maintained in part by denying that these advantages and disadvantages exist at the structural, institutional, cultural, interpersonal, and individual levels and by refusing to redress them or eliminate the systems, policies, practices, cultural norms, and other behaviors and assumptions that maintain them.

*Interpersonal White Privilege:* Behavior between people that consciously or unconsciously reflects white superiority or entitlement.

*Cultural White Privilege:* A set of dominant cultural assumptions about what is good, normal or appropriate that reflects Western European white world views and dismisses or demonizes other world views.

*Institutional White Privilege:* Policies, practices and behaviors of institutions—such as schools, banks, non-profits or the Supreme Court—that have the effect of maintaining or increasing accumulated advantages for those groups currently defined as white, and maintaining or increasing disadvantages for those racial or ethnic groups not defined as white. The ability of institutions to survive and thrive even when their policies, practices and behaviors maintain, expand or fail to redress accumulated disadvantages and/or inequitable outcomes for people of color.

### SOURCE:

1. Peggy McIntosh, "[White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women Studies](#)" (1988).
2. [Transforming White Privilege: A 21st Century Leadership Capacity](#), CAPD, MP Associates, World Trust Educational Services (2012).




**Related Resources:** [System of White Supremacy and White Privilege](#)

Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## 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.” Drawing from critical race theory, 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.

**SOURCE:** “[What Is Racism?](#)” – Dismantling Racism Works (dRworks) [web workbook](#).

 **Related Resources:** [System of White Supremacy and White Privilege](#) and [Addressing Hate and White Supremacy](#) | Locations: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts and PLAN / Issues

## White Supremacy Culture

1. White Supremacy Culture refers to the dominant, unquestioned standards of behavior and ways of functioning embodied by the vast majority of institutions in the United States. These standards may be seen as mainstream, dominant cultural practices; they have evolved from the United States’ history of white supremacy. Because it is so normalized it can be hard to see, which only adds to its powerful hold. In many ways, it is indistinguishable from what we might call U.S. culture or norms – a focus on individuals over groups, for example, or an emphasis on the written word as a form of professional communication. But it operates in even more subtle ways, by actually defining what “normal” is – and likewise, what “professional,” “effective,” or even “good” is. In turn, white culture also defines what is not good, “at risk,” or “unsustainable.” White culture values some ways of thinking, behaving, deciding, and knowing – ways that are more familiar and come more naturally to those from a white, western tradition – while devaluing or rendering invisible other ways. And it does this without ever having to explicitly say so...
2. An artificial, historically constructed culture which expresses, justifies, and binds together the United States white supremacy system. It is the glue that binds together white-controlled institutions into systems and white-controlled systems into the global white supremacy system.

**SOURCE:**

1. Gita Gulati-Partee and Maggie Potapchuk, “[Paying Attention to White Culture and Privilege: A Missing Link to Advancing Racial Equity](#)” (The Foundation Review vol. 6: issue 1, 2014).
2. Sharon Martinas and the [Challenging White Supremacy Workshop](#), 4th revision (1995).

 **Related Resources:** [Organizational Change Process](#) (in the box “**Addressing White Dominant Culture**”) | Location: ACT / Strategies

## Whiteness

1. The term white, referring to people, was created by Virginia slave owners and colonial rules in the 17th century. It replaced terms like Christian and Englishman to distinguish European colonists from Africans and indigenous peoples. European colonial powers established whiteness as a legal concept after Bacon's Rebellion in 1676, during which indentured servants of European and African descent had united against the colonial elite. The legal distinction of white separated the servant class on the basis of skin color and continental origin. The creation of 'whiteness' meant giving privileges to some, while denying them to others with the justification of biological and social inferiority.
2. Whiteness itself refers to the specific dimensions of racism that serve to elevate white people over people of color. This definition counters the dominant representation of racism in mainstream education as isolated in discrete behaviors that some individuals may or may not demonstrate, and goes beyond naming specific privileges (McIntosh, 1988). Whites are theorized as actively shaped, affected, defined, and elevated through their racialization and the individual and collective consciousness formed within it ... Whiteness is thus conceptualized as a constellation of processes and practices rather than as a discrete entity (i.e. skin color alone). Whiteness is dynamic, relational, and operating at all times and on myriad levels. These processes and practices include basic rights, values, beliefs, perspectives, and experiences purported to be commonly shared by all but which are actually only consistently afforded to white people.

### SOURCE:

1. PBS, "[Race: The Power of an Illusion](#)" (2018–2019 relaunch of [2003 series](#)).
2. Robin DiAngelo, "[White Fragility](#)" (*International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 2011).



**Related Resources:** [System of White Supremacy and White Privilege](#)

Location: FUNDAMENTALS / Core Concepts

## Xenophobia

Any attitude, behavior, practice, or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that immigrants are inferior to the dominant group of people. Xenophobia is reflected in interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels oppression and is a function of White supremacy.

**SOURCE:** Lee Cokorinos, "[The Racist Roots of the Anti-Immigration Movement](#)," The Black Agenda Report (2007).

## Youth Oppression

Systematic subordination and mistreatment of young people and elders based on age through the restriction and denial of opportunities to exercise social, economic, and political power. Youth and elder oppressions both include restricted access to goods, services, and privileges of society, along with loss of voice and limited access to participation in society. The subordination of young people and elders is supported by institutional structures and practices of society, networks of laws, rules, policies, and procedures, along with the attitudes, values, and actions of individuals that combine to ensure the subordinated status of members of these socially constructed identity groups. Young people and elders are marginalized and excluded by practices that give middle-aged adults the power to act on and for them, often without their agreement or consent. (See also **Elder Oppression**.)

**SOURCE:** [\*Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook\*](#), edited by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, with Diane J. Goodman and Khyati Y. Joshi (Routledge, 2016), p. 342.