

# Institutional Racism

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**Institutional racism** describes any kind of system of inequality based on race. It can occur in institutions such as public government bodies, private business corporations (such as media outlets), and universities (public and private). The term was coined by Black Power activist Stokely Carmichael in the late 1960s. The definition given by William Macpherson within the report looking into the death of Stephen Lawrence was “the collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin”.

Institutional racism is the differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society. When the differential access becomes integral to institutions, it becomes common practice, making it difficult to rectify. Eventually, this racism dominates public bodies, private corporations, and public and private universities, and is reinforced by the actions of conformists and newcomers. Another difficulty in reducing institutionalized racism is that there is no sole, true identifiable perpetrator. When racism is built into the institution, it appears as the collective action of the population.

Professor James M. Jones postulates three major types of racism: (i) Personally-mediated, (ii) internalized, and (iii) institutionalized. Personally-mediated racism includes the specific social attitudes inherent to racially-prejudiced action (bigoted differential assumptions about abilities, motives, and the intentions of others according to), discrimination (the differential actions and behaviours towards others according to their race), stereotyping, commission, and omission (disrespect, suspicion, devaluation, and dehumanization). Internalized racism is the acceptance, by members of the racially-stigmatized people, of negative perceptions about their own abilities and intrinsic worth, characterized by low self-esteem and low esteem of others like them. This racism can be manifested through embracing “whiteness” (e.g. stratification by skin colour in non-white communities), self-devaluation (e.g. racial slurs, nicknames, rejection of ancestral culture, etc.), and resignation, helplessness, and hopelessness (e.g. dropping out of school, failing to vote, engaging in health-risk practices, etc.).

Persistent negative stereotypes fuel institutional racism, and influence interpersonal relations. Racial stereotyping contributes to patterns of racial residential segregation, and shape views about crime, crime policy, and welfare policy, especially if the contextual information is stereotype-consistent. A great percentage of white Americans rate Black Americans and Latino Americans as less intelligent, preferring to live from welfare benefits rather than work, and “more difficult to get along with socially”.

Institutional racism is distinguished from racial bigotry by the existence of institutional systemic policies, practices and economic and political structures, which place non-white racial and ethnic groups at a disadvantage in relation to an institution’s white members. One example is public school budgets (including local levies and bonds) and the quality of teachers, which in the U.S. are often correlated with property values: rich neighborhoods are more likely to be more 'white' and to have better teachers and more money for education, even in public schools. Restrictive housing contracts and bank lending policies have also been listed as forms of institutional racism. Other examples are racial profiling by security guards and police, use of stereotyped racial caricatures (e.g. "Indian" sport mascots), the under- and mis-representation of certain racial groups in the mass media, and race-based barriers to gainful employment and professional advancement. Additionally, differential access to goods, services, and opportunities of society can be included within the term institutional racism, such as unpaved streets and roads, inherited socio-economic disadvantage, “standardized” tests (each ethnic group prepared for it differently; many are poorly prepared), et cetera.

Some sociological investigators distinguish between institutional racism and "structural racism" (sometimes called structured racialization). The former focuses upon the norms and practices within an institution, the latter upon the interactions among

institutions, interactions that produce racialized outcomes against non-white people.[citation needed] An important feature of structural racism is that it cannot be reduced to individual prejudice or to the single function of an institution.

## Institutional racism in the United States

Structural racialization also underscores many of the institutional arrangements that are often identified as “American exceptionalism” — such as the non-existence of a labor party, weak labor unions, and a fragmented government system. Structural racialization borrows from system theory, which examines the interactions among institutions and entities and rejects reductionist thought; thus, there is a mutual, cumulative causation instead of a single cause. Using the system's approach for structural racialization calls into question whether or not race or social class is more important in the US. Instead, it suggests an interaction, between race and social class, and their consequences upon institutional design and institutional meaning.

The U.S. property appraisal system, created in the 1930s, tied property value and eligibility for government loans to race — thus, white-majority neighborhoods received the government's highest property value ratings, and white people were eligible for government loans, thus, between 1934 and 1962, less than 2 percent of government-subsidized housing went to non-white people.

Governmental, social, and educational policies also have been charged with institutional racism, i.e. it affects general health care and AIDS health intervention and services in non-white minority communities. The over-representation of minorities in disease categories (including AIDS), is partly related to racism. The federal government's national response to the AIDS epidemic in minority communities has been slow, showing insensitivity to ethnic diversity in preventive medicine, community health maintenance, and AIDS treatment services.

The under-representation of Latino and Asian American males in mass media such as TV and movies has also been charged as institutional racism. Although Hispanics make up over 15% of the American population and Asian Americans make up 5%, they individually make up less than 3% of all characters in prime time. Racism against Hispanic males and Asian American males is even more accentuated by the fact that there are very few instances of Hispanic male/White female or Asian male/White female pairings, while the opposite White Male/Female Hispanic or Asian is almost universal.

Standardized testing also has been considered to be institutional racism, because it is an academic assessment believed to be significantly biased in favor of people with a given socio-cultural background, with the supposed result that some racial minorities tend to score poorly. Being considered more of a socioeconomical form of discrimination - schools are funded mostly with property taxes of the surrounding areas, a school in a low-income community cannot readily buy new textbooks as can a school in middle - or high-income communities. Therefore, “poor” school districts are forced to use old textbooks (discarded by other institutions), further aggravating the extant socio-economic differential established with institutional racism. Some groups believe that the prevalence of used texts in seemingly black schools supports the contention that standardized texts are inherently racist and that non-white student knows outdated information that is not tested in standardized examinations; creating a test score bias.

*For more information, do your own research . . . Wikipedia is the reader's digest version and not an academic paper. In other words, this is not being put forth by a professor, Harvard or USC graduate — this is being put forth by the I AM presence* ☺'♥'♡', '¬'. . ., ♥ (-♥') °. °., ♡, ☆'

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