
DEFINITIONS OF RELEVANT CONCEPTS

- Structural discrimination
- Racism
- Neo-racism
- Everyday racism
- Structural racism (relating to institutional racism)
- intentional (person-based) vs. unintentional racism
- White privileges

Below are brief definitions and clarification of terms that are relevant when working with antiracism or feminism. Be aware that in the literature and media there are many interpretations and understandings of these concepts - and many definitions with more or less the same meaning. The important thing is to get the overall meaning of the structural element of everyday racism or unintentional racism and discrimination.

Included in the text below are short definitions that may be used to write on flipchart when introducing the concepts.

Structural discrimination

Structural discrimination is a general and indirect form of discrimination. Structural discrimination is seen as normative, discursive and formative. It is implicit in the norms and expectations of the behavior of others. Structural discrimination is embedded in the institutional and language practices and discourses about "the other".

The character of structural discrimination is unintentional, but the intention does not change its consequences.

Structural discrimination can be hidden in what is perceived as "normal" or "natural". In this way it helps to influence how practices are established and reproduced - often the aim is to be inclusive or well-meaning.

Unlike racism, discrimination can occur in many types of majority and minority (power) relationships. It is therefore not just about ethnicity, religion or the idea of race, but also about other minority positions, such as gender or sexuality.

Racism

Short definition of racism, to use for flipchart:

Racism is the idea of certain single group's biological or cultural superiority compared to other groups in the society.

Racism is expressed through a hierarchical division of people which results in social inequality

The definition is divided into two:

1. The idea that some groups of people are biologically or culturally superior to others.
2. This idea creates the hierarchical division of people, which leads to social inequality.

Biological superiority has been more dominant throughout world history, e.g.: slavery in USA, colonies of Denmark etc. Today the cultural superiority is the dominant form of racial discrimination which leads to the concept of neo racism.

Racism is ideological and based on the false idea that people are divided into biological races. The racism as an ideology perceives "race" as the reason for the differences between people: this be physical features as well as behavior, habits or 'criminal traits'. The idea that certain races are for example lazy, especially good at certain sports or particularly rhythmic is also expressions of racism.

Racism is an ideology but racist acts (or racial discrimination) are committed by most of us, most often unintentionally.

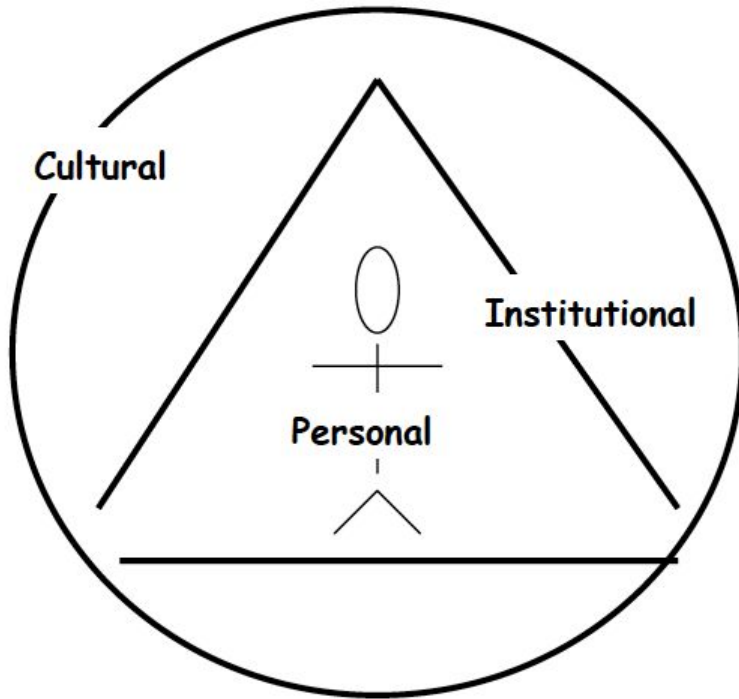
Neo racism: refers to the idea of cultural superiority: when discrimination happens based on ethnicity, religion, culture or origin.

Everyday Racism (relating to structural racism or unintentional racism)

It may be useful to use the word *everyday racism* when relating it to master suppression techniques. The essence of everyday racism is that it is unintended, and it may be defined as referring to *the specific subtle racist everyday acts* we all unintentionally may do. It establishes how it is relevant for all of us, to take responsibility for understanding the ways structural racism works.

Everyday Racism is caused by the historical division of white and people of colour. Everyday racism is reproduced by and allow institutional racism in society and in media.

Everyday Racism is not personal, "open", intentional racism where a white person, i.e. shout discriminating words at a person of colour. Everyday Racism is based on the concept of structural discrimination (see above) and is the act that expresses structural racism.



Above model illustrates three levels or expressions of racism: Personal, cultural and institutional (See the model and descriptions in 'Dismantling racism - a resource book').

Personal (refers to Everyday racism, though also to explicit open acts of racism):

The way in which we perpetuate racism on an individual basis.

Examples: calling someone a racist name, making a racist assumption.

Cultural (refers to structural racism):

The norms, values, or standards assumed by the dominant society which perpetuate racism.

Examples: thin, blond, white women as the basis for western society's standard of beauty; women on welfare are assumed to be black or brown and are portrayed as irresponsible.

Institutional: The way in which institutions – Housing, Government, Education, Media, Business, Health Care, Criminal Justice, Religion – perpetuate racism.

Examples: In western societies people of color are underrepresented and misrepresented on television, racially biased standardized tests used to determine who will be admitted to higher education programs and institutions, criminal justice system sentences people of color harder than white people etc.

(Model and definitions on this page are inspired by 'Dismantling racism - a resource book' p.38)

Short definition of intentional vs. unintentional racism, to use for flipchart:

Intentional (person based) racism: A motive to hurt another individual

Everyday racism - unintentional racism: Acting on ignorance or unconscious prejudice

White Privileges:

Privileges are special rights of economic or political nature. For example: rights, power, money, education and job opportunities or good places to stay. The idea of white privileges is based on a norm critical understanding of majorities and minorities.

Gender, ethnicity, social background, age, education, sexuality, religion, language, geography (where in a country you reside) etc. - All these social categories have influence on the structural access to the society's privileges. People have different starting points from which to obtain privileges. White privileges illustrates the idea that white people (on a structural level) has different preconditions to achieve social privileges than people of colour. The neutral (and most powerful) position in western society is male, white, heterosexual, middle class and well educated.

Privileges may be illustrated through an intersectionality exercise or as in the video below, which is also a possible exercise:

The Privilege walk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hD5f8GuNuGQ>

MORE BACKGROUND LITERATURE

Allan G. Johnson (2001): *Privilege, power and difference*, New York

Western States Centre: *Dismantling Racism: A resource book for social change groups*

References (text in danish):

Mira C. Skadegaard Thorsen: 'Strukturel Diskrimination i hverdagen', in 'Rettigheder, Empowerment og Læring': Bilfeldt, Jensen og Andersen: 2014 p. 160-183

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