

# Defining racism

Sociology



## Defining Racism

Racism is a word that majorities of persons do not comprehend, or they have different perceptions about it. Racism has been considered as a term meant to stereotype people. Racism has had a major effect on society with individuals and organizations rising up against it. Racism can exist in various forms such as economic racism, institutional racism and racial discrimination. This essay aims to define what racism is as various definitions do exist. The definition according to the Oxford English Dictionary is an ideology or belief that members of each race have distinctiveness or skills specific to their own race, particularly to differentiate it as being superior or inferior from another race (Brown 10). The Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines it as a belief in the idea that race determines the traits of a person, as well as his capacities, and that difference in race produces inferiority or superiority of a racial group (Brown 10). By looking at these two definitions, believing that one race is dominant over the other race as far as appearance, abilities and traits can be considered as racism.

Racism affects society in a variety of ways. A research study in the US showed that almost all white Americans have some negative assumptions and stereotypes about African Americans, ethnic minorities, and other races that were defined as silent racism (Brown 15). This example shows that color acts as a vital determinant of the way in which people would socialize with other people. Three types of racism occur, with the first being racial discrimination. Racial discrimination involves dividing society into groups that are not all related to race than treating them according to it. This category of racism is the most common and is connected to stereotyping. Research by researchers from the University of Chicago and MIT conducted a <https://assignbuster.com/defining-racism/>

study that found out that there was widespread discrimination against those applying for jobs with names that sounded black (Brown 16). Apparently, people in this category have less than fifty percent of a chance of being called to an interview. The research concluded that bias does exist in American society even without the people themselves realizing it.

Institutional racism is yet another category of racism that can also be referred to as systematic, state, or structural racism. Educational institutions, religious groups, companies and governments who possess the power to influence a wide swath of people carry out this form of racial discrimination (Brown 16). While most institutions will deny the existence of this form of racism under their watch, some of them, if not most, practice this form of racism via their policies or the people that they have working for them.

Lastly, we have economic racism. Economic racism is a result of past historical reasons that affected a particular generation because of the lack of preparation during the generation of their parents, lack of formal education, and via racist actions and attitudes that are done without their knowledge (Brown 20). Governments in the past were run on these categories of policies in economic allocation of resources, although this sort of racism has subsided over the years with increased transparency in government.

Based on these examples and definitions of racism, it is clear that while stereotyping and racism are similar, they are not the same. The belief that one's race can produce better people in terms of physical appearance and skill is considered racism in almost every corner of the world. Knowingly or not, every single person, apparently, has a racist side. In one way or another, an individual can be a victim of racism at some point of his or her life. The practice of racism only begets more racism and, as such, it is imperative that

the cycle ends.

#### Works Cited

Brown, Malcolm. Racism. London: Routledge, 2010. Print.