

Institutional Racism

Institutional Racism - is any socially endorsed practice which disadvantages a group of people, based solely on their skin color or cultural background.

Definitions of **Institutional Racism**:

- The collective misuse of power that results in diminished life opportunities for some racial groups.¹
- The embeddedness of racially discriminatory practices in the institutions, laws, and agreed upon values and practices of a society.²
- Those forces, social arrangements, institutions, structures, policies, precedents and systems of social relations that operate to deprive certain racially identified categories of equality.³
- Institutional racism (or structural racism or systemic racism) is any form of racism that occurs specifically within institutions such as public government bodies, private business corporations, and universities (public and private).⁴
- Institutional discrimination is described as the discrimination that is incorporated into the social structures and norms of our society... made possible by historical injustices.⁵

Places where Institutional Discrimination plays out in society:

Residential Segregation – Most neighborhoods are either white or black; in white neighborhoods as black families arrive some whites will leave (white flight). If enough white families leave, the neighborhood is earmarked as black, causing some or all of the following events to occur:

- Property values to decrease
- Less tax revenue for public schools
- Increased difficulty receiving credit to purchase things
- Reluctance for businesses to serve the “bad part of town”
- Rising insurance costs for businesses due to the neighborhood
- Loss of jobs⁶

¹ *Divided by Faith*, by Michael O Emerson & Christian Smith, p 9, Oxford University Press 2000.

² www.understandingrace.org/resources/glossary.html.

³ www.socialpolicy.ca/i.htm.

⁴ www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutional_racism.

⁵ *Beyond Black and White*, by George A Yancey, p 43, Published by Baker Books 1996.

⁶ *Beyond Black and White*, by George A Yancey, p 46-7, Published by Baker Books 1996.

NO WALLS

MINISTRY

Segregated Schools & Education Systems – residential segregation leads to inferior schools. As school facilities suffer access to quality teachers and administrators suffers as well. Public education is compromised causing students to be subject to the following:

- Inferior education
- Inferior jobs due to lesser education
- Inferior neighborhoods due to lesser opportunities⁷

Systems of Seniority – seniority laws benefit whites more than blacks because of the historic advantage that whites have enjoyed. Blacks have not been in well paying jobs for very long, making the most senior employees mostly white.⁸

- Labor Unions
- Governmental jobs
- Teachers Unions

Churches – Rather than attributing congregational homogeneity to white prejudice or the need of minority groups to create places of refuge in the dominant society; in the face of social and religious pluralism, the organized of American religion powerfully drives religious groups toward internal similarity.⁹

- 92.5% of Catholic and Protestant churches are “monoracial,” meaning that 80% of the individuals who attend are of the same ethnicity.¹⁰
- Often people draw benefits from their church affiliation and **use worship as a means to inject meaning into ones life.**
- As churches constitute themselves agents to produce social change, they are likely to lose, rather than gain social strength. Social solidarity is sacrificed, and the group loses its energy and strength.¹¹

⁷ *Beyond Black and White*, by George A Yancey, p 46-7, Published by Baker Books 1996.

⁸ *Beyond Black and White*, by George A Yancey, p 47, Published by Baker Books 1996.

⁹ *Divided by Faith*, by Michael O Emerson & Christian Smith, p 136, Oxford University Press 2000.

¹⁰ *Building s Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church*, by Mark DeYmaz, p 4, Published by Jossey-Bass 2007.

¹¹ *Divided by Faith*, by Michael O Emerson & Christian Smith, p 144, Oxford University Press 2000.