ThoughtCo.

The Definition of Institutional Racism
The History and Implications of Institutional Racism

by Tom Head
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The term "institutional racism" describes societal patterns that impose oppressive or otherwise negative conditions on identifiable groups on the basis of race or ethnicity. Oppression may come from the government, schools or the court.

Institutional racism shouldn't be confused with individual racism, which is directed against one or a few individuals. It has the potential of negatively affecting people on a large scale, such as if a school refused to accept any African Americans on the basis of color.

The History of Institutional Racism

The term "institutional racism" was coined at some point during the late 1960s by Stokely Carmichael, who would later become known as Kwame Ture. Carmichael felt that it was important to distinguish personal bias, which has specific effects and can be identified and corrected relatively easily, with institutional bias, which is generally long-term and grounded more in inertia than in intent.

Carmichael made this distinction because, like Martin Luther King Jr., he had grown tired of white moderates and uncommitted liberals who felt that the primary or sole purpose of the civil rights movement was white personal transformation. Carmichael's primary concern – and the primary concern of most civil rights leaders at the time – was societal transformation, a much more ambitious goal.

Contemporary Relevance

Institutional racism in the U.S. results from the social caste system that sustained – and was sustained by – slavery and racial segregation. Although the laws that

enforced this caste system are no longer in place, its basic structure still stands to this day. This structure may gradually fall apart on its own over a period of generations, but activism is often necessary to expedite the process and provide for a more equitable society in the interim.

Examples of Institutional Racism

Opposing public school funding is not necessarily an act of individual racism. One can certainly oppose public school funding for valid, non-racist reasons. But to the extent that opposing public school funding has a disproportionate and detrimental effect on minority youth, it furthers the agenda of institutional racism.

Many other positions that are contrary to the civil rights agenda, such as opposition to affirmative action, can also have the often unintended effect of sustaining institutional racism.

Racial profiling occurs when any group is targeted for suspicion based on race, ethnic origin, or because they belong to another recognized protected class. The most well-known example of racial profiling involves law enforcement zeroing in on African American males. Muslims have also been subjected to racial profiling after 9/11, including anyone with a Middle Eastern appearance regardless of that individual's true religious beliefs.

Looking to the Future

Various forms of activism have famously fought institutional racism over the years. Abolitionists and suffragettes are prime examples. The Black Lives Matter movement was launched in the summer of 2013 after the 2012 death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin and the subsequent acquittal of his shooter, which many felt were based on race.

Also Known As: societal racism, cultural racism

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Rethinking Islamophobia

Islamophobia is far more than merely 'dread or hatred of Muslims', or 'fear or dislike' of the faith and its followers.

by **Khaled A Beydoun**
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Reckoning with Islamophobia requires situating it within the American context that feeds and foments it, writes Beydoun [Khaled A Beydoun]

"Why is a Black woman on your book cover?" asked the middle-aged, South Asian

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American Islamophobia: Understanding the Roots and Rise of Fear, manifesting a dissonance about how Muslim identity is perceived, and misperceived, beyond and even within Muslim American communities.

The narrow racial framing of Muslim identity, deeply embedded in the American imagination and still potent today, not only converges with the rising tide of anti-Muslim animus we now understand and know as Islamophobia - but indeed, an integral part of it. Islamophobia in the United States is, in great part, a racial project, spawned by a master discourse that drove European supremacy and today powered by popular views and state policy seeking to safeguard its domestic progeny, white supremacy.

Race and racism are central to any understanding of Islamophobia, as brilliantly examined by sociology scholar and author Erik Love, and they configure in myriad ways with the advancement of the aggregate enterprise of Islamophobia in the United States, and beyond its borders. While racism is central, there is more at play - Islamophobia is anchored in an Orientalist underbelly that precedes the creation of the formative American racial enterprise and its modern form, and a protracted War on Terror that extends it through formal law and policy.

Islamophobia is far more than merely "dread or hatred of Muslims," or "fear or dislike" of the faith and its followers, and these prevailing definitions tend to fixate on explicit or irrational animus, and far too often, the activity of private actors. The role of the state, and its vast network of agencies and agents, and the fluid exchanges and interaction between the state and its polity, is central to understanding Islamophobia.

Islamophobia is also law, expressly found in its letter and hidden in facially neutral terms intended to discriminate, affixed with the state seals of approval that obliges the polity to adhere to the message that Muslim identity is presumptive of terror threat, and Islam a civilisational foil that must be confronted, or contorted in a form palatable to the state. Approaching a definition and framework for understanding Islamophobia, in all of its complexity, enables an appreciation of its numerous tentacles, and how these tentacles intersect with other forms of racism and bigotry, are extended by law and policy, and reach to colour the perspectives of not only non-Muslims, but also Muslims, and everybody and anybody conditioned by the American Islamophobia that prevails today.

Tracing the history of Islamophobia

In 2015, I embarked on the project of redefining Islamophobia, during a moment when explicit bigotry and hate violence against Muslims in the United States were emboldened by (then candidate and now president) Donald Trump. My search for a new definition, however, was less motivated by contemporary animus, but rather, my examination of "legal Orientalism," and the centuries' long position of US civil courts that ruled that Muslim identity was antithetical to whiteness. From 1790 until 1952, American naturalisation law mandated whiteness as a prerequisite for naturalised citizenship, and until the Ex Parte Mohriez decision 1944, Muslims were viewed as a distinct racial group that was not only non-white, but members of a faith held out to be the civilisational antithesis of whiteness.

The tropes that drove the formative legal position that Muslims were non-white, and oriented Islam as antithetical to whiteness, were "redeployed" after the 9/11 attacks. That moment that spurred the bleak aftermath that gave rise to Islamophobia as we know it today, spearheaded by the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the initiation of the war on terror. Therefore, the ideas and images, distorted narratives and misrepresentations thrust to the surface after 9/11 that steer Islamophobia today were sowed and legally sealed by Orientalism, which must be understood as the mother of modern Islamophobia. In short, any discussion of Islamophobia must be prefaced by a synopsis Orientalism, and the definitions of the former grounded in its precedent system.

American Orientalism was, in large part, a white supremacist project that collaborated with anti-Blackness and Manifest Destiny to determine whiteness and define citizenship (both formal and substantive), and underneath this all, respond to the underlying existential question: who we are (as Americans), and who we are not? A question that rings at the heart of presidential slogans and immigration policy, a best-selling book by Samuel Huntington and a protracted War on Terror that provides the engine for Islamophobia in America today. Investigating this question, and the myriad actors that seek to answer it by the force of slurs, weapons or policy, steers us towards a more robust understanding of Islamophobia.

A new definition and framework

This historical context, coupled with its modern complexity, inspired my new definition and framing of Islamophobia. Above all, Islamophobia is founded upon the presumption that Islam is inherently violent, alien, and unassimilable - driven by the belief that expressions of Muslim identity correlate with a propensity for terrorism. In addition to this foundational definition are three attendant dimensions: 1- private Islamophobia; 2- structural Islamophobia, and; 3- dialectical Islamophobia.

First, private Islamophobia is the fear, suspicion, and violent targeting of Muslims by private actors. These actors could be individuals or institutions acting in a capacity not directed to the state. Craig Hick's murder of the three Muslim America students in Chapel Hill, North Carolina in 2015 is a clear example of private Islamophobia, as are arsons on mosques or attacks on visible Muslims. Acts of private Islamophobia, oftentimes driven by caricatured understandings of Muslims and Islam, also menace non-Muslim individuals and institutions thought to be Muslim, such as South Asian Americans or Sikh temples.

Structural Islamophobia, the second dimension, is the fear and suspicion of Muslims on the part of government institutions. This fear and suspicion are manifested and enforced through the enactment of and advancements of laws, policy, programming, or formal pronouncements by state agents. Laws like the US PATRIOT Act or Countering Violent Extremism, the vile anti-Muslim rhetoric of President Trump and the campaigns of state congressmen to pass anti-Sharia legislation distinctly and diversely illustrate structural Islamophobia. Structural Islamophobia has been openly extended by statesman on the Right, including Presidents George W. Bush and Trump, but also democrats like President Barrack Obama, who established counter-radicalisation policing as his signature counterterror policy. Unlike private Islamophobia, structural Islamophobic policy and positions are just as often driven by rational motives as they are irrational, strategically deployed to carry forward specific domestic and international state objectives.

Third, dialectical Islamophobia is the process by which structural Islamophobia shapes, reshapes and endorses views or attitudes about Islam and Muslim subjects. State action legitimises prevailing misconceptions and misrepresentations of Islam and communicates these damaging ideas through state-sponsored policy, programming or rhetoric. Law is not merely policy, but also a set of messages and directives disseminated to broader society, instructing them to partake in the project of policing, punishing and extra-judicially prosecuting Muslims. We see this process functioning most vividly during times of crisis, such as the direct aftermath of a terror attack, when hate incidents and violence towards Muslims and perceived Muslims are pervasive.

Beyond the Cover

This definition enables an understanding of the epistemological and legal roots of American Islamophobia, and its ferocious rise during the past several decades. Just as critically, this framework enables analyses of Islamophobia as it interacts and converges with other systems of stigma and subordination, and indeed, the most ominous among them.

Beyond its popular cover, Islamophobia is everything from law to Hollywood misrepresentations, violent assaults on conspicuous Muslims and innocent bystanders wrongly profiled as Muslims. Islamophobia is all of this, but also far more. It is, above all, a fluidly shifting and intricate system that cannot be reduced to mere "fear or dislike" of Islam and its followers, who occupy a range of distinct stations in society and experience it differently, and for the most vulnerable, disproportionately.

Reckoning with Islamophobia requires situating it within the American context that feeds and foments it, which perils a broad population of could-be victims that manifest the multi-layered diversity of the country they strive to call home - against the collaborative efforts of the state and elements in society that fight to keep Muslims at the margins.

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera's editorial stance.

Socratic Seminar

Source: Facing History

Available at:

Rationale

In a Socratic Seminar activity, students help one another understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in a text through a group discussion format. Students are responsible for facilitating their group discussion around the ideas in the text; they shouldn't use the discussion to assert their opinions or prove an argument. Through this type of discussion, students practice how to listen to one another, make meaning, and find common ground while participating in a conversation.

Procedure

1. **Select an Appropriate Text**
   The Socratic Seminar strategy is based on close textual analysis, so it is important to select a text that provides ample avenues for interpretation and discussion. If you choose a simple text where the meaning is fairly straightforward, there won't be much for students to discuss. Also, the text should not be too long to read closely in the allotted amount of time. Often, teachers select a text ranging from one paragraph to one page. An example of texts often used as the basis of Socratic Seminar activities include the preamble to the US Constitution, Dr. Martin Luther King's Letter from Birmingham Jail, or the reading No Time to Think from our resource *Holocaust and Human Behavior*.

2. **Give Students Time to Prepare**
   Before beginning the seminar, it is essential that students have time to prepare ideas. Students should annotate the text before the start of the class discussion. Teachers often assign a discussion leader who generates a few open-ended questions that can be used to begin the seminar.

3. **Develop a Classroom Contract**
   These seminars have rules that may not apply to other forms of discussion, so before beginning the seminar, it is important that everyone is aware of the norms. Below are typical rules used to structure a Socratic Seminar activity. Of course, you can adapt these to fit the needs of your students.
   - Talk to each other, not just to the discussion leader or teacher.
   - Refer to evidence from the text to support your ideas.
   - Ask questions if you do not understand what someone has said, or you can paraphrase what another student has said for clarification ("I think you said this; is that right?").
   - You do not need to raise your hand to speak, but please pay attention to your "airtime"—how much you have spoken in relation to other students.
   - Don't interrupt.

- Don't "put down" the ideas of another student. Without judging the student you disagree with, state your alternate interpretation or ask a follow-up question to help probe or clarify an idea.
- Common statements or questions used during a Socratic Seminar activity include:
  - Where does that idea come from in the text?
  - What does this word or phrase mean?
  - Can you say that in another way?
  - Is this what you mean to say…?
  - What do you think the author is trying to say?
  - What else could that mean?
  - Who was the audience for this text? How does that shape our interpretation of these words?
  - Who was the author of this text? What do we know about him/her? How does that shape our understanding of these words?

Before beginning the seminar, it is also important to remind students that the purpose of the seminar is not to debate or prove a point but to more deeply understand what the author was trying to express in the text.

If you have never done a Socratic Seminar activity with your students before, you might spend a few moments brainstorming the qualities that would make for a great seminar. These qualities or criteria can be explained on a rubric and used to evaluate the seminar at the end of the class period. Criteria you might use to evaluate a Socratic Seminar activity include engagement (everyone listening and sharing), respect (no interruptions or put-downs), meaning-making (students understand the text more deeply at the end of the seminar), and use of evidence (comments always refer back to the text).

4. **The Socratic Seminar**
   A Socratic Seminar activity often begins with the discussion leader, a student or the teacher, asking an open-ended question. A typical opening prompt is: What do you think this text means? Silence is fine. It may take a few minutes for students to warm up. Sometimes teachers organize a Socratic Seminar activity like a Fishbowl activity, with some students participating in the discussion and the rest of the class having specific jobs as observers. At least 15 minutes should be allotted to the activity, and it can often last 30 minutes or more. As students become more familiar with the Socratic Seminar format, they will be able to discuss a text for longer periods of time without teacher intervention.

5. **Reflect and Evaluate**
   After the Socratic Seminar activity, give students the opportunity to evaluate the process in general and their own performance specifically. Reflecting on the seminar process helps students improve their ability to participate in future discussions. Here are some questions you might discuss or have students write about when reflecting on the seminar:

- At any point, did the seminar revert to something other than a dialogue? If so, how did the group handle this?
- What evidence did you see of people actively listening and building on others' ideas?
- How has your understanding of this text been affected by the ideas explored in this seminar?
- What parts of the discussion did you find most interesting? In what parts were you least engaged?
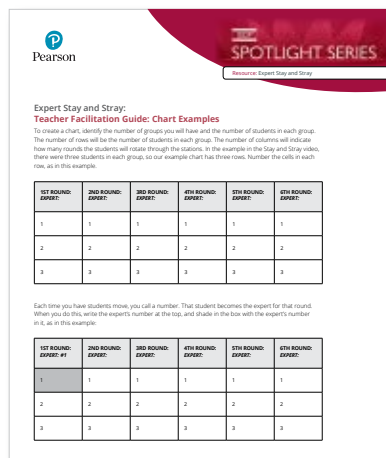- What would you like to do differently as a participant the next time you are in a seminar?

Expert Stay and Stray:
Classroom Directions

1. Get in small groups.
2. In your group, work together on your assigned topic. Make sure everyone in your group understands the topic and can explain it to someone else!
   a. Ask clarifying questions
   b. Restate the main ideas
   c. Check your understanding
3. Assign each person in your group a number.
4. When I call your number, you become the expert on your assigned topic.
5. Everyone except the expert moves to the next station.
6. Experts present your topic to your new group members.
7. Everyone who is not an expert:
   a. Listen carefully
   b. Ask clarifying questions
   c. Restate the main ideas
   d. Be ready to be the expert
8. When I call your number, you become the expert on the topic you just learned about!
9. Repeat steps 5-8.

Expert Stay and Stray:
Teacher Facilitation Guide

To help facilitate the Expert Stay and Stray activity, you can use a chart to keep track of how many groups each student has visited and how many times each student has been the expert. This is useful if you want to make sure that every student visits every group, or that every student has the same number of opportunities to be the expert.

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Expert Stay and Stray:
Teacher Facilitation Guide: Chart Examples

To create a chart, identify the number of groups you will have and the number of students in each group. The number of rows will be the number of students in each group. The number of columns will indicate how many rounds the students will rotate through the stations. In the example in the Stay and Stray video, there were three students in each group, so our example chart has three rows. Number the cells in each row, as in this example.

1ST ROUND: EXPERT:	2ND ROUND: EXPERT:	3RD ROUND: EXPERT:	4TH ROUND: EXPERT:	5TH ROUND: EXPERT:	6TH ROUND: EXPERT:
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3

Each time you have students move, you call a number. That student becomes the expert for that round. When you do this, write the expert's number at the top, and shade in the box with the expert's number in it, as in this example:

1ST ROUND: EXPERT: #1	2ND ROUND: EXPERT:	3RD ROUND: EXPERT:	4TH ROUND: EXPERT:	5TH ROUND: EXPERT:	6TH ROUND: EXPERT:
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3

Once students have moved a few times, you can look at the chart to see how many groups each student has visited.

- Count the white boxes in each *row* to see how many groups students have visited.
  If there are two white boxes with the number one, then Ones have visited two groups.

- Count the shaded boxes in each *row* to see how many times students have been experts.
  If there are two shaded boxes with the number one, Ones have been experts two times.

The chart below shows the student movement after four rounds.

1ST ROUND: EXPERT: #1	2ND ROUND: EXPERT: #2	3RD ROUND: EXPERT: #3	4TH ROUND: EXPERT: #1	5TH ROUND: EXPERT:	6TH ROUND: EXPERT:
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	ROUNDS NOT COMPLETED 2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3

- Looking at the first row in the chart above, we see that the Ones have been to two groups (two white boxes with 1's in them) and they have been the expert two times (two shaded boxes with 1's in them.)

- Looking at the second row, we see that the Twos have been to three groups (three white boxes with 2's in them) and they have been the expert once (one shaded box with a 2 in it).

- Looking at the third row, we see that the Threes have also been to three groups (three white boxes with 3's in them) and they have been the expert once (one shaded box with a 3 in it).

After six rounds, all students have been to all four groups, and all students have been the expert twice.

1ST ROUND: EXPERT: #1	2ND ROUND: EXPERT: #2	3RD ROUND: EXPERT: #3	4TH ROUND: EXPERT: #1	5TH ROUND: EXPERT: #2	6TH ROUND: EXPERT: #3
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3