



AntiRacism by
Ad Astra x OSA

Steps Towards Antiracism **A Workbook** For the University **Community**

Overt racism vs
covert racism

Meso level - My
institution

Macro level - My
community/society
(Finland)

Nordic and Finnish
exceptionalism

Overt racism vs
covert racism

Meso level - My
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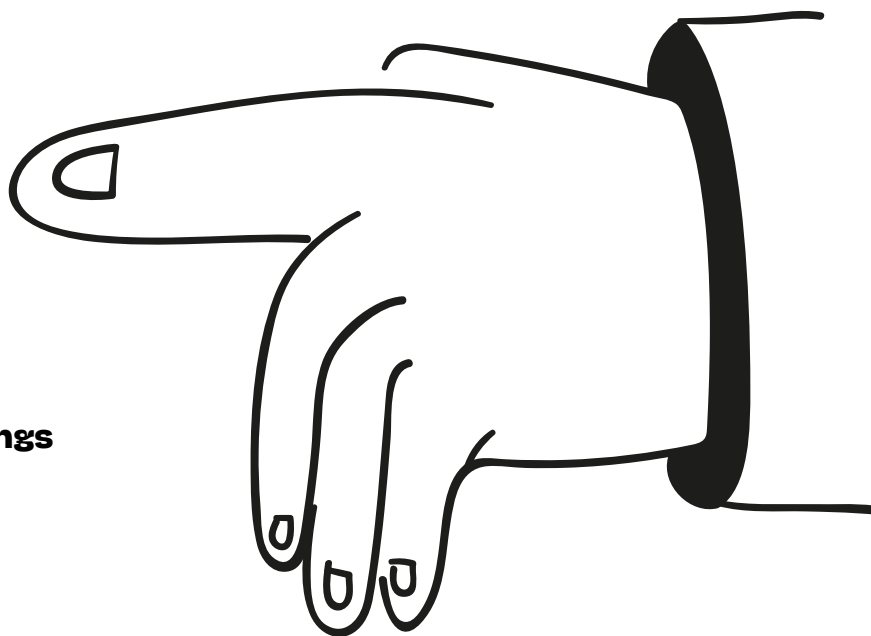
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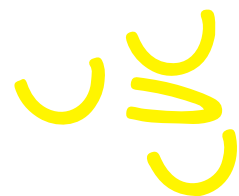
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Introduction

We are a team of youth and students from the two organizations: Ad Astra rf. and One Step Ahead ry. (OSA). Together we have created this digital resource on racism and antiracism for anyone and everyone within the university community who wants or needs to learn more about these important topics. It is our goal to work with others to create a university space free from individual and systemic racial discrimination. To do so we need to critically examine our own positions and start speaking openly about racism, to better be able to support one another. This resource is an instrument for self reflection and for getting one step closer to that goal. We encourage you to read it carefully and with an open mind. If you find it helpful, go ahead and share it with your peers, colleagues, or tutor - with anybody who comes to mind

Test your knowledge with our glossary





About us

Ad Astra rf, founded in 2009, is an NGO promoting dialogue and children's culture and offering workshops on antiracism, storytelling and interfaith dialogue for kids, youth, and adults, as well as for educational institutions on all levels. During 2021 students from Ad Astra have been conducting workshops in Antiracism and equity for staff at the University of Helsinki.

One Step Ahead (OSA) ry is a student organization founded by students of the Changing Education master's programme at the University of Helsinki. OSA's goal is to create a community based on the research-based improvement of education through original content and educational events. Last year, OSA hosted a series of antiracism workshops for students in the Changing Education programme which resulted in the formation of OSA's Antiracism and Equity Committee. The committee will continue to work on new antiracism initiatives in the following year.

This resource is part of the project "Anti-racism and Equal treatment at the University of Helsinki 2021" which is funded by the Ministry of Justice and the Regional State Administrative Agency in Southern Finland.



1 Prereflection, myself and my society

Before you start reading this resource, it's important that you stop and reflect on a few things. Firstly, why are you reading this resource?

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Are you reading it because you are interested in learning more about anti-racism?

YES NO MAYBE

Why are you interested?

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How willing are you to challenge your pre-existing beliefs?

VERY WILLING

CAN TRY

COMPLETELY AGAINST



How would you respond if someone questioned the way you see the world?

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How willing are you to try to see the world from someone else's perspective?

Are you willing to admit to your own biases?

YES NO MAYBE

Let's start with some self-reflection.

Have you ever thought about what implicit biases you may have? Implicit biases are attitudes towards people or stereotypes associated with certain groups that you are not consciously aware of.

This means that even if you feel that you do not have prejudices against others, racial stereotypes and assumptions may still creep into your mind and affect your actions. Since you may not be aware of these implicit biases, they might be causing you to engage in discriminatory behaviors without realizing it because these attitudes are embedded deep into your subconscious. So even if you are not someone who intentionally discriminates against people based on race, you could still have implicit racial biases. For example, have you ever found yourself assuming that someone who doesn't look white isn't Finnish?

Our hope for you while reading this resource is that you can approach it with an open mind. If you encounter information that you don't fully agree with, we hope that you do not reject it outright, but rather take it as an opportunity to reflect on why you disagree with this information, seek out other resources to better understand the topic, and discuss the issue with other people. If you would really like to learn and engage in anti-racist behavior, we hope that you approach each reflection activity with intention and find people who may have different opinions or perspectives with whom to discuss the material. Finally, we hope that you push past simply reading the information presented and make tangible commitments to take anti-racist action.

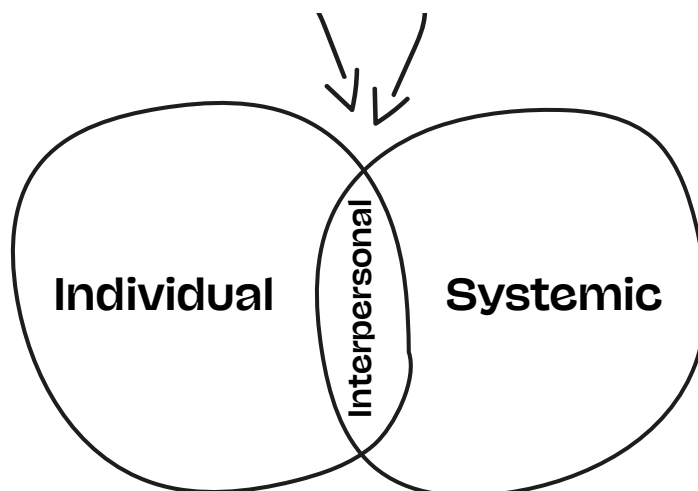
2 Introduction to racism

This resource will attempt to use the lens of systemic oppression to help define racism. While racism is a complicated and historically rooted concept with multiple layers, breaking down the different parts may make it easier to understand the whole picture. Skin colour, religion, language skills, class, gender and many more aspects will determine how much privilege each of us has in society. The more privilege we have, the more societal policies and practices will work in our favour.

It is important to understand both personal and institutional racism before you can understand how they intersect to create an overbearing societal system of racism. Personal racism can be defined as the explicit and implicit personal racist beliefs that an individual has. On the other hand, institutional racism is focused on the policies and practices within different structures such as: education, healthcare, and job markets that uphold racism in society which is what dictates racist structures. Personal racism and institutional racism interact and constantly shape and reproduce societal policies, and norms (National Equity Project, n.d.).

“Personal racism can be defined as the explicit and implicit personal racist beliefs that an individual has.”

One reason that systemic racism continues to exist is because systems that are centered around whiteness are pervasive throughout society. Whiteness is a tool that is used by the “mainstream whites” to maintain their privilege in society and as a result oppress people that do not benefit from whiteness as a source of power¹. Finland has not always been considered white historically. Research has shown that this narrative is instrumentalised to deflect claims that the Finnish society ever had a problem with racism, even though there is well-documented evidence of the Finns’ aspirations to ‘become white’². Whiteness, however, is not necessarily defined by individual phenotypes. Instead, it is a privileged space in society that is defined by who benefits from the dominant ideology that exists in the West and arguably



all over the world³. Therefore, Finland has not always been considered white, but today it benefits from the privileges attached to “mainstream whites,” making it a country where whiteness shapes the policies and practices within the structures. What is considered white is constantly redefined to fit the need of the governing class⁴ and while Finns have had their struggle to be defined as white in a European context, racism has always been present in our country, targeting e.g., groups of “old minorities” such as Roma, Jews, Tatars, Sami, Carelians, Russians⁵.

In the following sections, you will learn about how racism and whiteness is expressed on different levels in Finnish society.

Remember to keep an open mind as you read the next few sections.

There are reflection questions scattered throughout the resource to help you reflect on your own implicit biases and how you may benefit from certain structures. If you feel uncomfortable or uneasy while answering some of these questions, that is perfectly okay! These questions are meant to challenge the way you think about the structures and institutions in your life. Racism is a complex system, that goes by the devise, divide and govern, and we all have layers of whiteness within us (access to dominance and power). This level of whiteness might vary depending on the context you are in.



¹Atabong & Mafi, 2016

⁴Ahmed 2007

²(Sudenkaarne & Blell, 2021)

⁵Kurki 2019

³(Atabong & Mafi, 2016)

3 Different Levels of Racism

PERSONAL(MICRO)

This section looks at racism on a personal level. In other words, we examine how individuals contribute to racism. More specifically, we examine hate crimes, hate speech and microaggressions, which help define concepts such as explicit racism and implicit bias. This section also hopes to help you reflect on your own behavior, recognise individual forms of racism around you, and find some tools to act against these. Biases are views and perceptions we internalise from the surrounding world. These perceptions are taught to us through media, public discourse, literature etc. Since we are fed with bias every day, we need to make an active effort of identifying and deconstructing it in order to be free. Racism is a machinery that keeps the status quo of a society's power hierarchies. All of the below mentioned examples are tools for making it happen.

HATE CRIMES & SPEECH

In a discussion about explicit racism, the most obvious examples are hate crimes and hate speech. Hate crimes are offences motivated by prejudice or hostility towards the victim's ethnic or racial origin, religion, gender etc. First let us take a brief look at what qualifies as hate crime. Instigating violence, assault, damage to property, and harassment motivated by race, ethnicity, and other identifying factors are examples of hate crimes. According to statistics provided by the Finnish police, a significant increase in hate crimes was recorded between 2015 and 2018.

A report by equality.fi noted that 20-30% of victims that reported incidents of hate crimes in Finland in 2016 encountered harassment more than once a month. The report further states that about 70% of the hate crimes were motivated by the ethnicity of the victim. This is an indication of hostility towards the ethnic minority who is perceived inferior and not deserving of residence in Finnish society.

It is important to consider your own personal biases at this point. Feelings and attitudes are central to engaging in hate-oriented activities. If you only have negative ideas about minorities and you feel they deserve to be targeted by hate, evaluate the source of this thinking. Hate for a group of people originates from negative stereotypes that are reinforced by misinformation about the minority group. Some common arguments are:

“They come here for social benefits”, “They are taking opportunities away from us” or “They are undesirable, and they commit crimes”.

These xenophobic arguments are politically fuelled especially among those who are unemployed or feel neglected by the government and those who are misinformed and ignorant. The best remedy is information. So, make sure you are informed about someone's situation before you pass judgment and make them an object of your hate. Race is not biological, and ethnicity is not optional. You could easily be the one in the minority's position.

Organisations that work against hate crimes:

[Together against hate](#)

[Victim support](#)

MICROAGGRESSIONS

An example of explicit microaggressions are **microassaults** that can e.g. be evident in marketing⁶. In the Finnish context, the N-word is still not recognised as a racist term by some groups and individuals⁷. Black Pete (in Finnish ‘Mustapekka’) was for long a famous caricature in Finnish marketing, used to advertise liquorice and chocolate⁸, and even played the villain in children’s games⁹. Since the use of slurs such as the N-word and Black Pete is normalised already in childhood, people may never learn that the use of these derogatory terms is explicit racism. For example, even in university contexts, Finnish students have struggled to recognise that games or caricatures from their childhood are racist and have therefore taken part in, or passively enabled, racial microassaults^{10,11}.

A more implicit microaggression, such as a **microinsult**, would be denying a minority an opportunity due to reasons such as “you don’t meet our standards” or “this is a highly demanding task, and you might not cope”. It can also be practices such as relegating a group of people to certain jobs simply because “they are culturally suited to these jobs”. A microinvalidation can be even more subtle, and the perpetrator may not be aware of their own racial biases.

Examples of a **microinvalidation** can be asking a person of colour why they speak Finnish so well, avoiding eye contact (or constantly gazing at them), or alternatively, stating that you do not notice their skin colour (i.e., colour-blindness). These kinds of comments negate the person’s life experiences and cultural heritage, and signal to them that they are foreign, yet must assimilate to the dominant culture¹².

⁶ Sue et al., 2007

¹⁰ YLE, 2018

⁷ YLE, 2021

¹¹ Helsingin Sanomat, 2021

⁸ Helsingin Sanomat, 2020

¹² Sue et al., 2007

⁹ Helsingin Sanomat, 2018

How would you feel if someone constantly asked you why you can speak your native language so well?

FEEL OKAY

NOT COOL

SERIOUSLY VERY SAD



What if you told a friend about a time when you were verbally or physically assaulted for your skin colour, and they respond that they do not even notice your skin colour - would this make you feel better?

A large rectangular area defined by a dotted black border, intended for a written response to the question above.

How would you feel if, while you are walking, somebody driving by slows down their car to insult you and then drives away?

DON'T CARE

CONFUSED

REALLY HURT



A large rectangular area defined by a dotted black border, intended for a written response to the question above.

4 Different Levels of Racism:

INSTITUTIONAL (MESO)

In this chapter we will investigate how racism works on an institutional level. Institutional racism works through an organisation's policies and practices that treat racial groups differently. Institutional racism is very often invisible to the people who do not experience it themselves, and the institution practicing it won't directly mention it either. This makes racism on this level especially hard to get a grip of. As an example, institutional racism is an obstacle that international students face when looking for work in Finland. Many workplaces might not hire a candidate simply because of their 'foreign' sounding name or insufficient Finnish skills. This could result in unemployment after graduation and as a result, many international students choose to leave the country after completing their degree¹³.

EDUCATION SORTING

According to a study by the OECD in 2018 first- and second-generation immigrants in Finland were clearly under-represented among university graduates. Overall, this group accounted for only eight percent of all university graduates – a situation that is more unequal than in any other EU country in the study¹⁴. This is partly due to institutionalised practices within the Finnish education system such as racially motivated guidance counseling or tracking. For example, non-white students may be placed in Finnish as a Second Language courses, even if their first language is Finnish. This disproportionately harms the language performance of these students, as downward placement can hinder language development and opportunities to continue into higher education¹⁵.

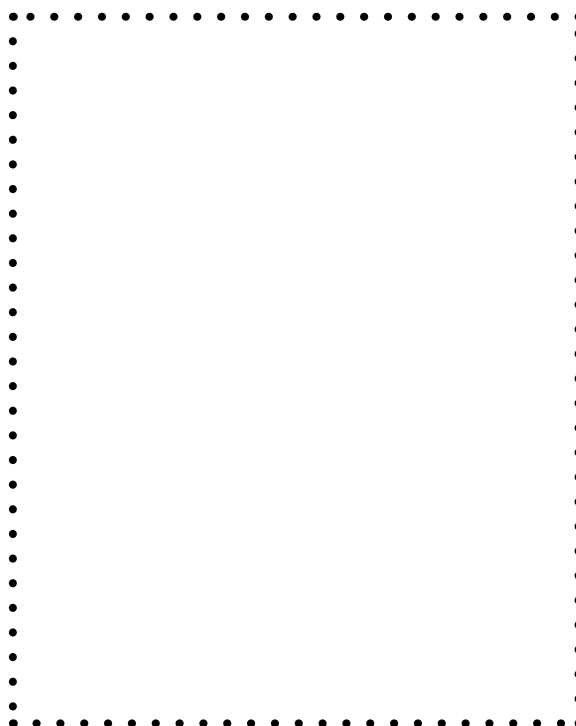
INSTITUTIONAL HAPPINESS /HAPPY DIVERSITY

Racism within institutions and organisations is often perpetuated by so-called “Happy diversity”, which is a concept discussed by researcher Sara Ahmed¹⁶. Happy diversity is used by institutions who push forward happy stories of diversity, rather than unhappy stories that involve racism. Diversity is seen as a happy sign, a sign that racism has been overcome. You can see happy diversity playing its part in many advertisement pictures for the university and on the university’s social media platforms. However, when looking at pictures of the university management and the board, you will quickly realise that the people who are in power of the decision-making of the university are all white-skinned people with Finnish or Swedish-sounding names.

LACK OF PROTOCOL

Within most institutions there is a lack of sufficient protocols and knowledge on how to act when someone reports an act of racism. Since there is no protocol, none or only minimal action is taken to resolve the oppressive situation. The lack of protocol is connected to the idea of Finland as a “non racist” country which has been reproduced generation after generation as a big part of Finnish national self-image¹⁷. A common statement could be: “We are not racist, so we don’t need any protocols to handle racism”.

Would you know how to act when witnessing an act of racism at your institution or if someone told you they’ve been subjected to racism? (see chapter 6)



¹³ Aho 2020

¹⁶ Ahmed 2007

¹⁴ YLE, 2020

¹⁷ Keskinen et al 2021

¹⁵ Kataja, 2020

5 Different Levels of Racism:

SOCIETAL (MACRO)

In this section we zoom out from the institutional level and make society as a whole fit into our lens. It is time for us to investigate racism on the societal level. Here we focus on how racism is expressed through law and order in society; how institutions' interactions between each other play a role in supporting racist structures. Historical, political and geographical contexts are considered in understanding racism in society. Racism on a societal level is often referred to as structural or systemic racism.

CONSTRUCTING EQUALITY IN FINNISH IDENTITY

In Finland, equality is historically a value that is central to national identification and social ordering¹⁸. In the Finnish education system, equality is seen as a foundational pillar as education with the same quality is guaranteed free of charge for all pupils. Equality in this context implies that all students are equal, yet this belief falls short when approaching equality critically. Recent studies regarding equality in the Finnish Education system have shown that school is a place of reproduction of difference and the enforcement of Finnishness^{19 20}. Considering your nation an equal one is easier when that nation is depicted as a victim instead of a perpetrator, which is the case for Finland. This is called white innocence: remembering the past one-sidedly. Some examples are the denial of the oppression of the Romani minority or the Indigenous Sami peoples or seeing the Holocaust as the epitome of racism.^{21 22}

What does equality mean to you?

Who benefits from equality?

¹⁸ Menard, 2016

²² Keskinen 2019

¹⁹ Hummelstedt et. al, 2021

²⁰ Menard, 2016

²¹ Wekker 2016

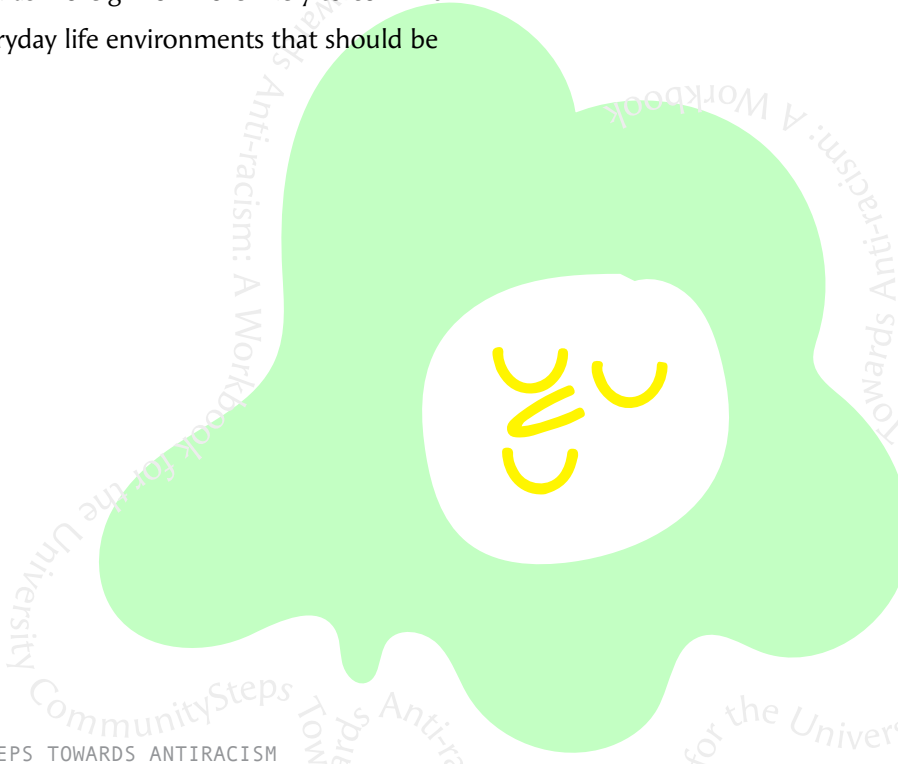
ETHNIC PROFILING

An example of systemic racism that occurs in many societies, including Finland, is ethnic profiling. Ethnic profiling happens when a person's ethnicity or race is used as a reason to exercise law enforcement or to investigate whether someone has been involved in criminal activity. Simply put by the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), ethnic profiling is when people are viewed as suspicious not because of what they have done but because of who they are, what they look like or where they pray.

In a research study of ethnic profiling in Finland, young persons of Somali backgrounds reported being targeted by security guards nearly ten times as often, and young persons with Middle Eastern backgrounds nearly six times as often as Finnish majority youth, without any apparent reason. These experiences are often humiliating because you are singled out from the crowd and searched in front of others²³.

When you are stopped by security, police or customs officers significantly more often than the white majority, you become aware that you are not part of the majority, but rather you are part of a group of "others" that does not belong, even in a country where you live or were born. You become aware of how people see you as "foreign" or more likely to commit crimes and this can make you uncomfortable in everyday life environments that should be safe spaces.

²³ Keskinen et al., 2018



BIOETHICS IN HEALTHCARE

The Nordic welfare states have high aims in terms of providing universal healthcare and achieving good public health which can be considered the societal backdrop for some of the happiest self-reporting nations²⁴. Within discourses on nativity and reproduction in Finland, racism is a central issue. The low birthrate of white Finns is seen as a concern, while on the other hand the birthrate of non-white people is constructed as a threat²⁵. According to research, racial minorities are treated differently and often more disrespectfully in health care than patients from the majority population²⁶. Experiences of racism are dismissed and their active objection to racism is constructed as a problem²⁷. The idea of ‘scientific rationality’ in the medical field leads to the dismissal of (structural) racism within health care²⁸.



²⁴ Sudekaarne & Blell, 2021

²⁵ Sudekaarne & Blell, 2021

²⁶ Hamed et. al, 2020

²⁷ Hamed et. al, 2020

²⁸ Hamed et. al, 2020

²⁹ Atabong 2021

³⁰ Atabong 2021

³¹ Atabong 2021

³² Ahmed 2004, 3

³³ Atabong 2021

³⁴ Atabong 2021

6 Anti-racism and Concluding Reflection

In this resource we have gone through different levels at which racism takes place in our society. To systemically work against racism requires a lot of internal work, we must be able to visualise surrounding structures and dare to think critically about our own role within them. We must dare to act antiracist.

Anti-racism is not diversity, multiculturalism or equality²⁹. Anti-racism forces racism into our consciousness³⁰.

Anti-racism means to actively stand against racism, Non-racism is to not question racist behaviours³¹.

Putting anti-racism into speech or writing is not in itself an anti-racist action³². On the other hand, actions can be anti-racist without explicitly being called that³³. Remember that you can act **antiracist** in the morning and **non-racist** in the afternoon and **racist** in the evening. Anti-racism is not a label or something you are, it is something you act according to³⁴.

²⁴ Sudekkaarne & Blell, 2021

²⁵ Sudekkaarne & Blell, 2021

^{26,27,28} Hamed et. al, 2020

^{30,31} Atabong 2021

^{30,31} Atabong 2021

³² Ahmed 2004, 3

^{33,34} Atabong 2021

Four stages on the antiracist journey (L, Glenise Pike³⁵)

Anti-racist work differs for each of us based on our power and privilege: the journey for those who identify as white might be different than for those who identify as non-white. Important to note is also that an anti-racist journey is not linear.

AWARENESS

Acknowledging the fact that not only does the problem exist, but that YOU are a part of it.

EDUCATION

This is where you become a student and begin to study history, present day manifestations of racism, and the terms and concepts that go along with them.

SELF-INTERROGATION

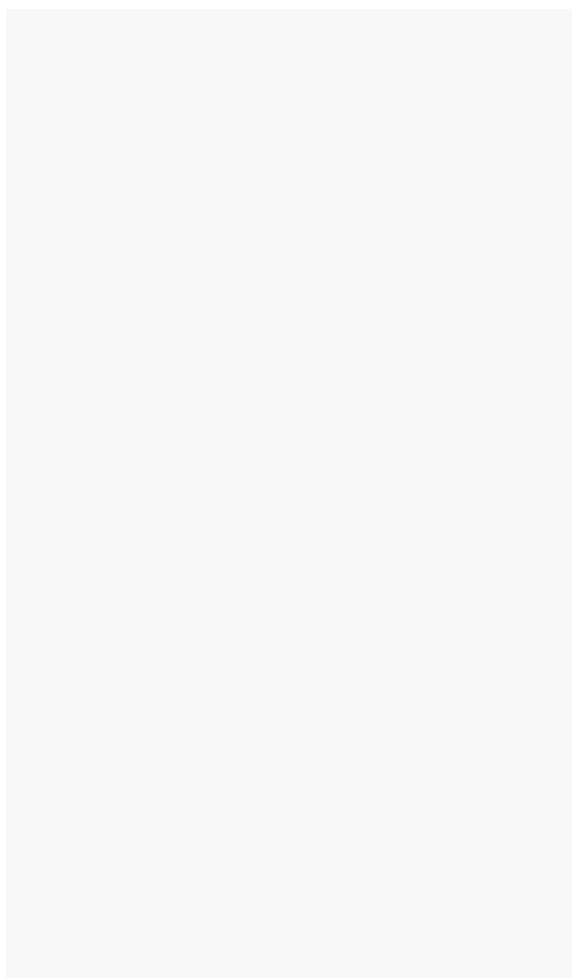
You acknowledge your own position within these structures, you ask yourself the hard questions and answer them with honesty. This helps you take responsibility for things you can do and affect.

ACTION

To actively and consistently work to redistribute power more equitably and to challenge racist structures. For example, through change of policy or by speaking up when an act of racism occurs.

Always act with your safety in mind! Every situation is different, judge the situation to establish if it's safe enough for you to intervene.

Where are you right now on your antiracist journey?



³⁵ Glenise Pike, L. 2019

7 When you encounter racism

When you encounter racism in your everyday life at the university, no matter if you have been a witness or if you yourself have been a victim to racism, we advise you to report. If you're part of the majority you are likely to be in a stronger position to speak up.

We encourage you to find one or two colleagues, peers or friends within the institution who are ready to support you through the process. When interacting with the institution/authorities make sure to always write everything down e.g. in an email, so that it can be used as evidence. Phone calls are therefore not recommended.

²⁴ Sudekkaarne & Blell, 2021

²⁵ Sudekkaarne & Blell, 2021

^{26,27,28} Hamed et. al, 2020

^{30,31} Atabong 2021

^{30,31} Atabong 2021

³² Ahmed 2004, 3

^{33,34} Atabong 2021

The official guide line tells you to contact your supervisor, employer or institution first, as well as the non-discrimination representative of the university, or if you're employed - the occupational safety and health representative of the university. Unfortunately authorities and institutions in Finland have difficulties recognizing racism according to research³⁶. Following reactions will likely follow: a) no response b) gas-lighting c) you get in trouble d) denial.

It's important to know how to protect yourself from secondary oppression, which can be expressed through institutional denial or belittlement.

Before you report the incident to the institution we advise you to:

1. Make sure that you have support from peers, colleagues or friends
2. Be sure that you are able to explain how the incident in question is discriminatory according to the law. To get more knowledge/advise you can contact the non-discrimination ombudsman or a lawyer/law student.
3. Inform the non-discrimination representative at your institution that you are starting this process.
4. Always have support with you when you go and talk to the institution. Remember that every meeting and the whole timeline should be documented (protocols and emails etc).
5. If you succeed with your plight, be sure that there is a clear plan for how the institution is going to handle the incident with a clear timetable, and that you get written feedback throughout the process. This should also be forwarded to the Non-discrimination ombudsman.

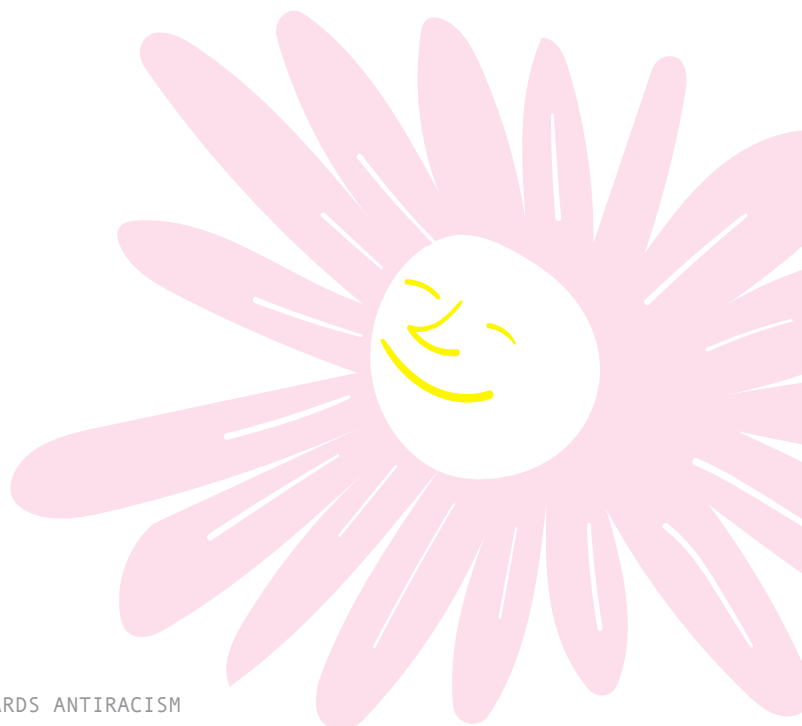
These are the juridical steps available beyond the university structures, that we recommend:

Contact [the Office of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman](#) through phone, email or chat. This can be done anonymously. The Non-discrimination Ombudsman will help to assess the situation and can contact the institution and start an investigation. They will also be able to advise you on how to move forward. If their investigation shows that a racist offense has been committed they will ask for an official response/restoration/mediation from the university which the latter can then either comply with or decline. If the university complies, one outcome could e.g. be financial reparation – if they deny you can take the case onwards to the [National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal of Finland](#). Note that both institutions have a lack of resources which means that processing a case can take years.

If you are employed by the university you can get help from your trade union and their lawyer. You can and should contact the occupational safety and health authorities of the Regional State Administrative Agencies (tyosuojelu.fi) that monitor discrimination in working life, or the Ministry of Justice.

There is also a possibility to contact the police (of course, as a governmental institution the police have a long history of racism).

A private lawyer can be helpful and quick. The first consultation is often for free. Many home insurances include legal support.



³⁶ Nieminen et al. 2020

8 Myths and facts

Myth no 1: “What about racism against white people (reverse racism)?”

While white people can experience racial prejudice it is not to be confused with the historically rooted systemic and institutionalised racism experienced by non-white/indigenous people. Racial prejudice directed at white peoples can have an individual or personal effect but does not have the power or authority to affect the white person’s social/economic/political power and privileges³⁷. Racism as such is thus not reversible, since it is a system of power where whiteness is seen as structurally and systemically superior.

Myth no 2: “Racism doesn’t exist in Finland we were never a part of colonialism”

Compared to colonial powers the Nordic country’s role in colonising non-European territories was relatively small. However, as research has shown, they were complicit to colonialism which made them benefit from colonial economic and cultural endeavors and ideologies, positioning Europe as superior to the ‘non-western’ world, making the Nordic region part of the colonial world order. These historical structures remain today, framing the Nordic region’s outsider position reproduces blindness in this matter. Finland also has its internal history of racism towards local minorities, a history that is as silenced³⁸.

Myth no 3: “There is nothing wrong with positive stereotypes”

While there is nothing wrong with celebrating the achievements of people and giving credit where it is due, it becomes a problem when this is used as a way of measuring the value of a racial or cultural group. Certain groups are considered ideal citizens and can easily be allowed settlement in certain places or easily given opportunities in certain fields due to the perceived competence of their racial group.

Positive stereotypes are problematic since they can have undesired consequences because they create certain expectations that every member of an ethnic group is expected to meet. Those who fail to meet the expectations end up feeling inadequate and may feel pressured to do something that is not within their ability. Like all stereotypes, they are based on uninformed generalisations with no scientific basis.

Here are a few common stereotypes that have become widely accepted:

³⁷ Sherover-Marcuse, R. Revised 7/88. “[A Working Definition of Racism.](#)”

³⁸ Keskinen & Andreassen, 2017

“Asians are good at mathematics and science subjects.”

This stereotype originates from the 1960s in which some analyses showed that some Asian groups scored higher than other population-groups in mathematics and the sciences. However, this concept has not been statistically proven and thus creates an unnecessary pressure in Asian students to excel in mathematics and science, leading to negative feelings that can take a toll on a person's psyche.

“Black people make better athletes”

This originates from popular culture which shows black people as being dominant in certain sport codes compared to other races. The perceived dominance comes from preference and available opportunities. Sport codes are, at best, mixed. Just because certain groups of black people place emphasis on sports does not mean it is a natural thing for black people. Statistically, most black people are not athletes. Just like any racial group, black people can take up career opportunities in any career field of their choice.



³⁶ Nieminen et al. 2020

9 Glossary

Almost all concepts and terms are borrowed from the Anglo-Saxon discourse that has another racial landscape than we do in Finland. Further research on our own realities, racial landscape and history is needed in order to be able to name and talk about Racism in a Finnish context.

Race

Socially and culturally constructed categorisations of humans based on shared physical or social qualities. Racism makes the ideology and concept of race real. It creates a norm where inequality is considered natural and unavoidable and race as something visible and distinguishable ³⁹.

Racialisation

It is the process of being “raced” or seen as someone belonging to a particular race. Everyone is racialised, even white people, though this process is often understood as invisible or normative. As a result, white people may not see themselves as part of a race but still maintain the power to name and racialise “others.” ⁴⁰.

Racism

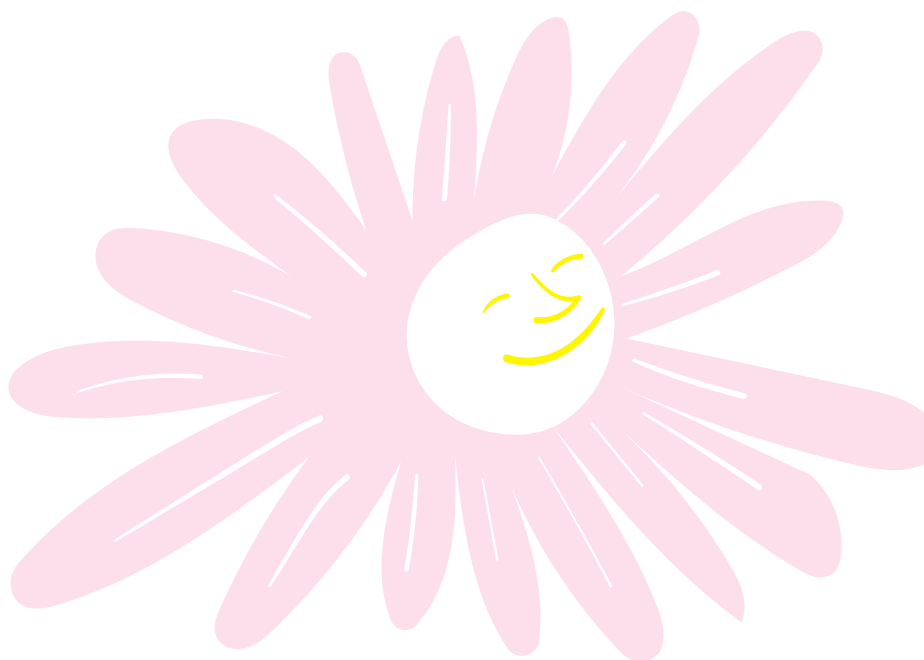
Racism is a historical system of power and privilege based on the idea of “us” vs “the other”. It can be understood as the thoughts and actions that treat people differently, based on ascribed racial characteristics or belonging. Whiteness is at the top of this hierarchy, at its foundation lies unequal power distribution and colonial history. Anti-Semitism, Anti-Roma ideology, and oppression of indigenous peoples (e.g. Sámi), are also deeply rooted practices of European racism⁴¹. This hierarchical system is constantly evolving and adapting with society. The given “reasons” for racialising a group does not matter, they can be interchanged when needed - it is the up-keeping of the system that matters.

Microaggressions

Microaggression is subtle derogatory behaviour in words, actions or attitudes directed at people who are discriminated against. It is often disguised as humour or compliments but is often perceived as threatening, insulting or dismissive by the people who are targeted. Behaviour may appear harmless to the viewer, but for people subjected to microaggression it is exhausting and stressful⁴².

Anti-racism

Anti-racism means acknowledging and understanding that racism exists and that it is connected to how we approach and treat others, racism is an idea and ideology as well as structure in society. Anti-racism is to actively stand against racist action, racist structures, institutions and organisations. It's not enough to “not be a racist”, it's important to actively work against exclusion and discrimination⁴³.



³⁹ Keskinen & Andreassen 2017

⁴⁰ Dalal 2002

⁴¹ Goldberg 1993

⁴² Näthatshjälpen 2022

⁴³ Atabong 2016

White and Whiteness

White refers to people who by virtue of skin colour or nationality or way of being can claim whiteness and be perceived as white. Being white is a social construct not a biological one.

Whiteness refers to the specific dimensions of racism that serve to elevate white people over people of colour. Whites are theorised as actively shaped, affected, defined, and elevated through their racialisation. Whiteness also often includes religion, language, culture.

In short: White people = a socially constructed identity based on physical features

Whiteness = a racial discourse

Those who are white wear an invisibility cloak, they don't have to think about the colour of their skin or their race. They have the ability to say that everyone is the same while those who are black or brown (non-white) cannot ^{44,45,46}.

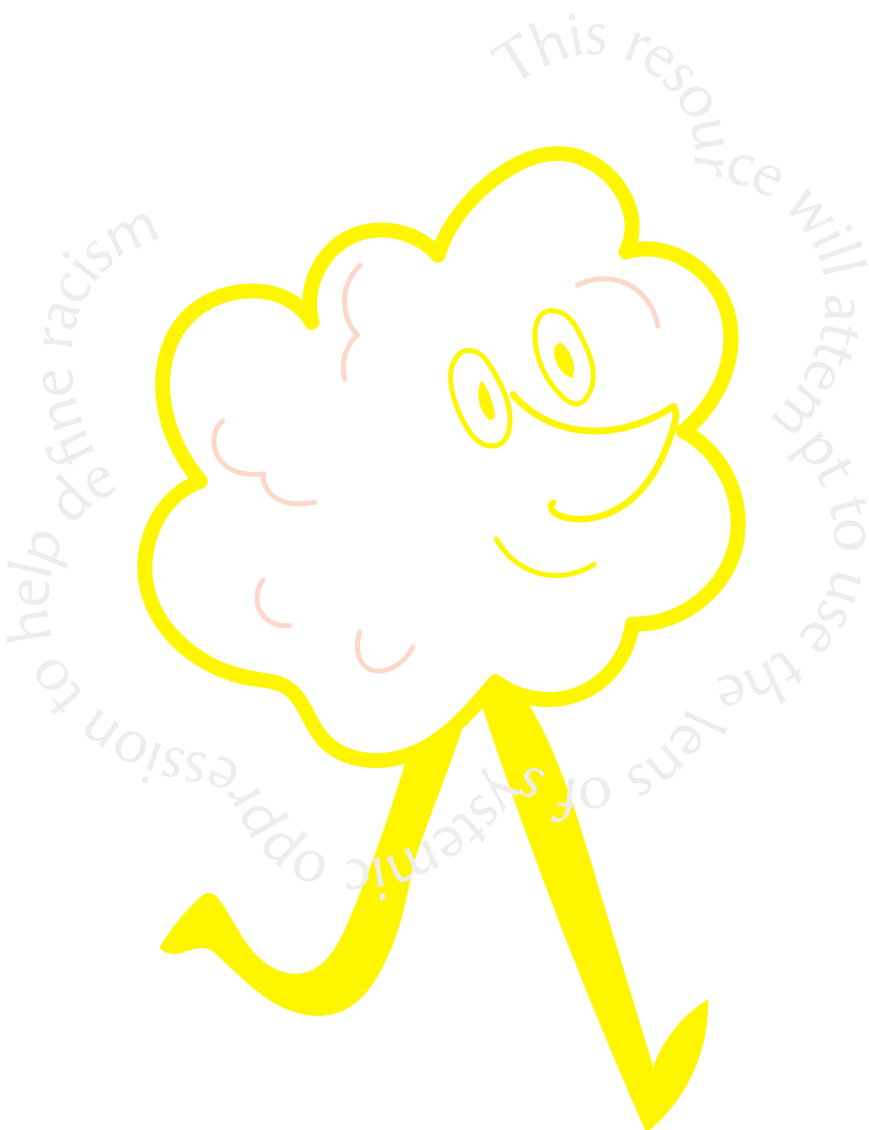
Nordic and Finnish exceptionalism

Nordic exceptionalism is how we in the Nordic countries consider ourselves outside of colonial and racist history even if we both directly and indirectly have been a part of it. Central to Finnish exceptionalism is that we don't consider ourselves racist. This can be understood as the separation of Finland and Finnish people from other nations based on an idea of moral superiority, e.g., the Finnish school system (educational exceptionalism) and the myth about the fantastic Finland that is difficult to criticise and challenge ^{47,48}.

Intersectionality

When multiple forms of oppression based on different social categories (such as gender, sexuality, class and race) overlap and enforce each other thus creating new forms of oppression.

The concept originated within the justice system and was coined by professor Kimberlé Crenshaw during the 1980s, when she was defending black women who had been fired while their black male colleagues and white female colleagues were allowed to keep their jobs ⁴⁸.



⁴⁴ Ahmed 2007

⁴⁵ McIntosh 1990

^{46,47} Atabong 2016

⁴⁸ Keskinen 2019

⁴⁹ Crenshaw 2016

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