

# Annual Reconciliation in American National Symposium

Reconciliation Terms

5/18/2020

John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation



## **Sociological Perspective, Theories, or Concepts Related to Race Relations, Reconciliation, and Civic Engagement**

*This collection of thoughts and terminology is not intended to encompass every issue related to Reconciliation and Civic Engagement in our current Society.*

*It is hoped that the items listed will foster conversation that leads us all toward a more harmonious world. Many items below may be specific to race; however, our hope is that you explore how these ideas are interrelated and can inspire collaboration to build the community we desire.*

The following content regarding reconciliation is from “One America in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Forging a New Future, The President’s Initiative on Race, The Advisory Boards report to the President, September 1998): <https://clintonwhitehouse2.archives.gov/Initiatives/OneAmerica/PIR.pdf> This reconciliation Advisory Board was chaired by John Hope Franklin.

### **Ten Things Every American Should Do To Promote Racial Reconciliation**

- 1. Make a commitment to become informed about people from other races and cultures.**
- 2. If it is not your inclination to think about race, commit at least one day each month to thinking about how issues of racial prejudice and privilege might be affecting each person you come in contact with that day.**
- 3. In your life, make a conscious effort to get to know people of other races.**
- 4. Make a point to raise your concerns about comments or actions that appear prejudicial, even if you are not the targets of these actions.**
- 5. Initiate a constructive dialogue on race within your workplace, school, neighborhood, or religious community.**
- 6. Support institutions that promote racial inclusion.**
- 7. Participate in a community project to reduce racial disparities in opportunity and well-being.**
- 8. Insist that institutions that teach us about our community accurately reflect the diversity of our Nation.**
- 9. Visit other areas of the city, region, or country that allow you to experience parts of other cultures, beyond their food.**
- 10. Advocate that groups you can influence (whether you work as a volunteer or employee) examine how they can increase their commitment to reducing racial disparities, lessening discrimination, and improving race relations.**

During the Advisory Board meeting on July 14, 1997 John Hope Franklin is quoted:

But people of good will, those who wish to live in a community of racial peace and harmony, well understand that the road to racial peace is not without its problems and even pain. But the journey is worth taking, for in the end, we can forge institutions and adopt practices that will help us build communities, communities that are absent of fear, suspicion, and even paranoia, that all too often characterize our present communities.

#### **Additional Frameworks/Definitions for Reconciliation:**

**Reconciliation** –a term that evokes varied purposes and frameworks, so we offer a starting point for interpretation, an excerpt from the “Position Paper on Reconciliation” shared by the William Winter Institute, noting the reconciliation involved three ideas:

1. First it recognizes that racism [and similar injustices grounded in bigotry] in America is both systemic and institutionalized, with far-reaching effects on both political engagement and economic opportunities for minorities.
2. Second, reconciliation is engendered by empowering local communities through relationship-building and truth-telling. Dialogue between individuals and groups that have been historically divided encourages action based on redressing historical wrongs.
3. Lastly, justice is the essential component of the conciliatory process – justice that is best termed as restorative rather than retributive, while still maintaining its vital punitive character.

(**Restorative Justice** is a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused or revealed by criminal behavior. It is best accomplished through cooperative processes that include all stake holders.)

While reconciliation ultimately seeks to restore what Stanley Hauerwas terms the “living tissue of connection that has been cauterized,” it does not simply deign to “forgive and forget,” eschewing the responsibilities and culpability of both perpetrators of historical wrongs and those who continue to benefit from the cyclical nature of oppression.

So while reconciliation is often a dialogue surrounding the issues of race, tangential and inseparable issues surrounding poverty, mental health, gender, age, and a myriad of other systemic inequities rely on the line of human consideration that the topic of reconciliation and race encompass.

(<http://winterinstitute.org/about-us/position/paper/>)

<b>Questions to ask yourself.</b>
-----------------------------------

**Are there items that could be added to the list?**

**Can the items on the list be extrapolated to other areas of social injustice that require reconciliation?**

**Are all the items still relevant now that 11 years have transpired since the report was published?**

**Civic Engagement** - means working to make a difference in the **civic** life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.  
[www.nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial2/coll\\_aascu\\_defi.html?mcubz=3](http://www.nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial2/coll_aascu_defi.html?mcubz=3)

**Dominant and Subordinant Groups** – groups characterized by their political power and access to resources. Sociological terms which are not meant to describe any other positive or negative attributes of a racial or ethnic group. (Kendall, 2017)

**Race** – A social construct where people are categorized or singled out as inferior or superior, often on the basis of real or alleged physical characteristics such as skin color, hair texture, eye shape, or other subjectively selected attributes. (Kendall, 2017)

**Ethnicity** – a collection of people distinguished, by others or by themselves, primarily on the basis of cultural or nationality characteristics. (Kendall, 2017)

**Racism** – a set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices that is used to justify the superior treatment of on racial or ethnic group and the inferior treatment of another racial or ethnic group. (Kendall, 2017)

**Sexism** – the subordination on one sex, usually female, based on the assumed superiority of the other sex. (Kendall, 2017)

**Homophobia** – extreme prejudice and sometimes discriminatory actions directed at gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender persons and other who are perceived as not being heterosexual. (Kendall, 2017)

**Ageism** – prejudice and discrimination against people on the basis of age, particularly against older persons. (Kendall, 2017)

**Ethnocentric Thinking/Ethnocentrism** – The practice of judging all other cultures by one's own culture. The assumption that one's own way of life is superior to all others. (Kendall, 2017)

**Prejudice** – a negative attitude based on faulty generalizations about members of specific racial, ethnic, or other groups. (Kendall, 2017)

**Frustration Aggression Hypothesis** – states that people who are frustrated in their efforts to achieve a highly desired goal will respond with a pattern of aggression toward others. The object of their aggression becomes the **scapegoat**. (Kendall, 2017)

**Authoritarian Personality** – described by Psychologist Theodor W. Adorno and his colleagues to often be highly prejudice. A personality type characterized by excessive conformity, submissiveness to authority, intolerance, insecurity, a high level of superstition and rigid stereotypic thinking. (Kendall, 2017)

**Individual Discrimination** – behavior consisting of one-on-one acts by members of the dominant group that harm members of the subordinate group or their property. May be intentional or unintentional. Dominate and Subordinate groups are separated by political power dynamics and access to resources. (Kendall, 2017)

**Ethnic Pluralism** – the coexistence of a variety of distinct racial and ethnic groups within one society. (Kendall, 2017)

**Segregation** – the spatial and social separation of categories of people by race, ethnicity, class, gender, and/or religion. (Kendall, 2017)

**Institutional Discrimination** – the day to day practices of organizations and institutions that have harmful effect on members of subordinate groups. May be intentional or unintentional. (Kendall, 2017)

**Split Labor Market** – a division of the economy into two areas of employment, a primary sector or upper tier, composed of higher-paid (usually dominant-group) workers in more secure jobs, and a secondary sector or lower tier, composed of lower-paid (often subordinate group) workers with little security and hazardous working conditions. (Kendall, 2017)

**Gendered Racism** – the interactive effect of racism and sexism on the exploitation of women of color. (Kendall, 2017)

**Theory of Racial Formation** – the idea that actions of the government substantially define the racial and ethnic relations in the United States. (Kendall, 2017)

**Critical Race Theory** – the belief that racism is such an ingrained feature of U.S. society that it appears to be ordinary and natural to many people. According to this theory, the best way to document racism and ongoing inequality in society is to listen to the lived experiences of people who have encountered such discrimination. (Kendall, 2017)

**Contact Hypothesis or Intergroup Contact Theory** - the contact hypothesis suggests that intergroup contact under appropriate [conditions](#) can effectively reduce prejudice between majority and minority group members. (Kendall, 2017)

**Relative Deprivation Theory** – refers to the discontent that people may feel when they compare their achievements with those of similarly situated persons and find that they have less than they think they deserve. This theory also suggests that people who are satisfied with their present condition are less likely to seek social change. (Kendall, 2017)

**Political Opportunity Theory** – states that people will choose those options for collective action that are most readily available to them and those options that will produce the most favorable outcome for their cause. (Kendall, 2017)

**New Social Movement Theory** – Looks at the intersection between a multitude of social issues and the ability to coalesce those issues. For example, Environment Racism. (Kendall, 2017)

**Environmental Racism** – the belief that a disproportionate number of hazardous facilities (including industries such as waste disposal/treatment and chemical plants) are placed in low-income areas populated primarily by people of color. (Kendall, 2017)

**Assimilation** – a process by which members of subordinate racial or ethnic group become absorbed into the dominate culture. (Kendall, 2017)

**Structural Assimilation** – occurs when members of a subordinate racial or ethnic group gain acceptance in everyday social interactions with members of the dominant group. (Kendall, 2017)

**Biological Assimilation** – occurs when members of one group marry those of other social or ethnic groups. (Kendall, 2017)

**Psychological Assimilation** – involves a change in racial or ethnic self-identification on the part of an individual. (Kendall, 2017)

**Internal Colonialism/Blauner Hypothesis** – Groups that have been subjected to internal colonialism remain in subordinate positions longer than groups that voluntarily migrated to the United States. Internal Colonialism occurs when members of a racial or ethnic group are conquered or colonized and forcibly placed under the economic and political control of the dominate group. (Kendall, 2017)

## Resources

Kendall, Diana. Sociology In Our Times. Cengage Learning, 2017.

New Your Times, [www.nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial2/coll\\_aascu\\_defi.html?mcubz=3](http://www.nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial2/coll_aascu_defi.html?mcubz=3)

Winter Institute, (<http://winterinstitute.org/about-us/position/paper/>

“One America in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Forging a New Future, The President’s Initiative on Race, The Advisory Boards report to the President, September 1998)

<https://clintonwhitehouse2.archives.gov/Initiatives/OneAmerica/PIR.pdf>