

Anti-racism Guide

Comité Interculturalité, discrimination et racisme
systémiques au travail et en éducation (IDRSTE)

Fédération nationale des enseignantes
et des enseignants du Québec-CSN



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Preamble

In Québec, people are gradually becoming more aware of racism in society, particularly systemic racism. The factors that have precipitated this new level of understanding include media reports on the events surrounding Joyce Echaquan's death and the discovery of unmarked graves at the sites of former residential schools. The growing awareness of the systemic barriers faced by members of certain communities, such as the Black, Arab, Muslim, and Asian communities, which are not the same as those faced by everyone else, has also been reinforced by the findings of investigations and commissions of inquiry in Québec, such as the Viens Commission and the report by Coroner Kamel, who investigated the death of Joyce Echaquan¹.

In this context, the trade union movement is starting to address racism more directly. The recognition of racism as a major social issue has led labour organizations to become more active and take concrete action against racism, such as efforts to promote equal opportunity in employment, the well-being of all in the workplace, and recognition and equal rights for all workers. At the 32nd Convention in 2018, FNEEQ members voted to create the Comité Interculturalité, discrimination et racismisme systémiques au travail et en éducation (IDRSTE), a first step towards greater acknowledgement of the issues facing racialized people in the field of education and in society more generally. Examples include the positions that have been taken on academic freedom, on Bill 96 concerning the Charter of the French Language, and on academic success. This work will continue with the incorporation of an anti-racism lens into the work of the committee and the FNEEQ².

It is important to note that, while the Federation and its affiliated unions are showing openness to these concerns, anti-racist work entails actions more challenging than the simple eradication of ignorance through education and information. This guide is intended to support a political project: reforming often-concealed institutional and cultural practices that are discriminatory, and transforming the power relations from which they arise. It aims to facilitate anti-racism work, both within the Federation and in the local unions, schools, colleges and universities.

While not intended to be exhaustive, this document can serve to :

- Guide anti-racism work at the FNEEQ;
- Equip members who want to participate in this effort with concrete tools;
- Incorporate an anti-racist lens into the work of other committees;
- Complement other documents previously produced by federal committees (feminist lexicon, LGBTQI2SNBA+ glossary, etc.);
- Support the political positions taken by the FNEEQ and the development of future projects.

In the introduction, we present some basic definitions that frame this guide's conceptual (and political) approach. In the second section, we introduce keywords that we believe are useful for anti-racism work in our workplaces. In the last section, we provide a more detailed description of the ways in which racism manifests itself in settings relevant to our union and discuss terms deemed relevant to current anti-racism activism at the FNEEQ, particularly in education and the workplace.

It should be noted that, like racism itself, anti-racist theory is contested ground. This guide takes an anti-oppressive and decolonial approach. The choice of terms and definitions is not guided by a desire for "neutrality" nor "universality", but rather by responsiveness to minority voices from various spheres of society. This text offers an anti-racist analysis based on theoretical and intellectual sources that, among other things, recognize and value the experiences of racialized people.

1 For more information, see : <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/info/dossier/1007399/joyce-echaquan-ati-kamekw-sante-racisme>

2 See the FNEEQ's briefs : <https://fneeq.qc.ca/fr/memoires-662/>
For policy positions, see Section 5 below.

Introduction to “racism”

What is racism?

Racist ideology, or racism, postulates that certain populations are inferior. Racist ideologies often embrace prejudices and stereotypes that degrade, caricature and dehumanize some populations. They use binary oppositions: Western/non-Western; White/non-White; modern/traditional. Historically, racist ideologies have connected “biological” distinctions with cultural and religious elements to construct “racial” categories. Throughout history and even today, racist ideologies have been considered a legitimate or “true” science in large part because of the way they invoke scientific, religious and other knowledge.

Racism is a form of domination motivated by individual and collective beliefs about the physical, ethnic, cultural and/or religious characteristics of a minority group. While prejudices can exist in all groups and indeed all individuals, they become racism when a group or an individual has the power and the ability to act on their prejudices. Racism occurs when prejudice or bias is able to harm marginalized and/or minority individuals or groups. Oppressive practices arising from racism can take various forms, such as land dispossession and cultural assimilation. Racism is also at the root of other practices of domination that are sometimes more difficult to identify, such as the appropriation of work, non-recognition of the knowledge of other cultures and lack of representation.

Racism past and present

Racism is specific to each society and shaped by its own history, although it has some common features across borders. In Québec and Canada, contemporary racism largely arises from the history of colonialism and institutional racism. This history includes the dispossession of Indigenous nations’ lands, the enslavement of Indigenous and Black people, the economic exploitation of Chinese people during the building of the railway and, more recently, the exploitation of Mexican and Caribbean farm workers. There is also the little-known history of segregation in the schools and statutory exclusion from certain types of occupations. For example, until after World War II, Jews in Montréal faced tall hurdles if they wanted to be hired as engineers, lawyers or bankers. McGill University had quotas to limit or even bar Jewish students from some programs. In medicine, the quota for Jewish enrolment was 10%³.

This history has long been erased or ignored, leading to a widespread belief that Canada, including Québec, is a White country, built and inhabited by Europeans, and all other groups are either newcomers or, in the case of Indigenous peoples, extinguished⁴.

It is tempting to imagine that racism is a thing of the past. But racism does exist today and is found in all structures of society, on a small or large scale. Our contemporary common culture was founded on racist ideologies, and this is manifested in language, political discourse, conceptions of nationhood and identity, and popular media representations.

What about systemic racism?

Systemic racism refers to the set of societal structures composed of institutions, laws and policies that create and maintain a socioeconomic hierarchy. The inequalities generated by these systems confer privileges on the majority group (in Québec, the White population) at the expense of groups labelled as minorities, including members of Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities.

There is a tendency to associate racism with a clear and deliberate intention to do harm. Definitions of racism that emphasize only its personal and intentional dimensions obscure its systemic dimension. Indeed, talk of systemic racism in Québec sometimes elicits defensive reactions. Some members of the majority group feel unfairly accused. But recognizing the existence of systemic racism makes it possible to see how, beyond the good intentions of the majority of Quebecers, there are broader mechanisms at work that cement and perpetuate injustices against certain groups. Realizing this helps us understand the concept of systemic racism and why people believe we need to talk about it in order to fight it

3 TULCHINSKY, Gerald (2008). *Canada's Jews : A People's Journey*. Toronto. University of Toronto Press. 132-133, 319-321 et EDDE, A, RAMAKRISHNAN, V and CASSIDY, C. (2018, 2 septembre) « McGill's 1926 Jewish Ban.» The McGill Daily. <https://www.mcgilldaily.com/2018/09/mcgills-1926-jewish-ban/>

4 DUCHEMIN, Parker (Octobre 1988). « Stealing History.» Briarpatch. 17(8). 19-28.

5 Radio-Canada (2021, 18 décembre) « 48 % de la population féminine des prisons est autochtones ». <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/espaces-autochtones/1848592/justice-canada-scc-femmes-autochtones-prison-moitie-population>

The social inequalities spawned by our neoliberal / capitalist economic, legal and political systems serve to reinforce and even to justify racist ideas. For example, Indigenous women make up 50% of inmates in women's prisons⁵. This is part of the legacy of colonial measures and prejudices against Indigenous people, including violence against women and girls. However, it is often cited as evidence that Indigenous people are prone to criminality or inclined to a criminal lifestyle.

Systemic racism is also embodied in legislation. The Indian Act is an obvious example. It is interpreted and enforced by institutions (federal and provincial/territorial) in a way that perpetuates stereotypes, maintains the social and political marginalization of Indigenous communities, and facilitates denial of their fundamental rights. Although Québec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms bans racial discrimination, many laws old and new continue to perpetuate clear forms of discrimination. Sometimes the discrimination is overt, as in the case of the Act respecting the laicity of the State (formerly Bill 21). In other cases, it is more insidious, as in some of the laws that govern policing.

What about hate ?

In a society where racist ideology and racial discrimination are systemic, hate transcends individual prejudices and feelings. Often, the othering of racialized groups is expressed in violence. These "others" and their values are held to threaten the culture, cohesiveness and social well-being of society as a whole. We have seen that political and popular discourse that reinforces the perception of the Other as a threat leads to more acts motivated by hatred. Examples include the terrorist attack at the Grande Mosquée de Québec on January 29, 2017 and violent incidents in Montréal since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords

Note : We have chosen to arrange the keywords to build towards an understanding of the concepts they describe rather than in alphabetical order.


Discrimination

Discrimination includes words and deeds, as well as laws, policies, etc., that are harmful and create disadvantages for an individual or group. In Québec, section 10 of the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms stipulates:

“Every person has a right to full and equal recognition and exercise of his human rights and freedoms, without distinction, exclusion or preference based on race, colour, sex, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, sexual orientation, civil status, age except as provided by law, religion, political convictions, language, ethnic or national origin, social condition, a handicap or the use of any means to palliate a handicap. Discrimination exists where such a distinction, exclusion or preference has the effect of nullifying or impairing such right.”⁶

Such discrimination results in the curtailment or denial of rights and freedoms. So discrimination can have only negative effects. Measures such as equal employment opportunity programs are anti-discrimination initiatives that seek to undo the effects of discrimination, and are not cases of “reverse discrimination.”

6 Government of Québec, Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, Section 10. <https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/document/lc/C-12>



Systemic racism in the police

Some racialized populations in Canada, such as the Indigenous and Black populations, experience forms of surveillance and violence such as racial profiling. Based on a sociological study, Amnesty International notes that “in Montréal, racialized people are four to five times more likely to be stopped by the police than White people.”⁷

While racial profiling receives considerable attention, there are many other practices and institutional norms that give rise to social inequalities for certain racialized populations,⁸ such as :

- The lack of independent investigative processes to look into incidents of racism
- Difficulties in making complaints against the police
- Underpolicing for racialized communities, the most obvious example being missing and murdered Indigenous women, a national issue in Canada
- Under-representation of racialized people in police departments
- Poor relations between police and racialized communities
- Over-surveillance of neighbourhoods populated by racialized communities
- The tendency to use excessive force against racialized people

7 Amnesty International (February 6, 2023) “Racismes systémique” <https://amnistie.ca/campagnes/racisme-syste-mique>

8 HENRY, Francis et TATOR, Carol (2010). The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society (4th Edition). Toronto. Nelson.

Racialization

Racialization means attempting to understand and explain the behaviours and attitudes of a person or group through the lens of “race.” It is the tendency of the majority group to ascribe real or imagined differences in minority groups to their “racial” affiliation. The social construction of these categories is called racialization. The process of racialization establishes a hierarchy among humans by devaluing certain groups and “naturalizing” the categories it posits.

Racialization does not refer only to skin colour. Definitions of racism also include minority cultural and religious practices as markers of difference that fuel the racialization process. This process leads to generalizations, essentialism and racism. Racialization attributes the behaviour of individuals to their real or perceived membership in a group. Racialization also holds groups responsible for the behaviour of individuals. Throughout history and to this day, racialization has justified discrimination in interpersonal, institutional and legal practices.

The process of racialization interacts with other ideologies of domination, such as those based on gender, class, sexual orientation, etc., to produce

specific intersections of discrimination. For example, racialization intersects with gender and social class to produce relationships of domination that have historically kept some groups in a subordinate position.

Racialization of Indigenous women

When French missionaries encountered Indigenous peoples in the 17th century, they found matrilineal societies in which the roles and social positions of women were different than in their own society. Indigenous women were more equal, freer and more active in economic life. The missionaries called Indigenous people “savages” for putting women in this position and launched a campaign of denunciation and assimilation. The Indian Act was an important instrument in this campaign.⁹

⁹ STEVENSON, Winona (1999). « Colonialism and First Nations Women in Canada ». In ENAKSHI Dua ROBERTSON, Angela (Eds.). *Scratching the Surface: Canadian Anti-Racist Feminist Thought*, Canadian Scholars. Toronto: Women's Press, 49-80.



Racialized people

According to the Ligue des droits et libertés,

“...the term ‘racialized’ highlights the socially constructed nature of differences and their essentialization. It emphasizes that race is neither objective nor biological but rather a construct that serves to represent, categorize and exclude the Other. The term “racialized” challenges the refusal to take the social impact of the concept of race seriously, a refusal based on neither blindness nor lack of understanding but rather one that serves precisely to sustain racial discrimination and hierarchies.”¹⁰

Stéréotypes

“Girls are gentle and kind” is a stereotype.

“They can’t be good managers because they are gentle and kind”
is a prejudice, a judgment about women.

“I won’t hire a woman as a manager because she’ll be too nice”
is a form of discrimination.¹¹

Stereotypes are reductive ideas that lead to generalizations and ultimately the dehumanization of a group of people. They are generated and propagated by cultural representations and political and media discourses. Stereotypes are connected to but different from prejudices and biases, which are personal opinions.

Stereotypes lead to prejudice and prejudice leads to discrimination.
Stereotypes are representations, while discrimination is behaviour.

¹⁰ Alexandra Pierre, feminist activist and member of the board of the Ligue des droits et libertés (Fall 2016)., «Mots choisis pour réfléchir au racisme et à l’anti-racisme». Droits et libertés. vol.35(2).15-17.https://liguedesdroits.ca/wp-content/fichiers/revue_racisme_automne_2016_final_201612.pdf

¹¹ Example taken from FÉDÉRATION WALLONIE-BRUXELLES (2023). « Stéréotype, préjugés et discriminations sexistes ». <http://www.egalitefillesgarcons.cfwb.be/realite-ou-fiction/sexe-genre-et-stereotypes/stereotypes-prejuges-et-discriminations-sexistes/#c361>

Biases

Biases give rise to prejudices (preconceived ideas) and stereotypes (the simplification of reality through categories and classifications). Biases are pervasive and manifest themselves in the behaviours of individuals and institutions.

Biases are false or partial beliefs that we have internalized, often unconsciously, about members of a group other than our own, and that are rarely based on anything other than brief experiences or clichés. In addition to individual biases and group biases, there are prevalent descriptions of “foreign” populations that are often negative or even absurd. Historically, these biases were largely conveyed by literature, particularly travel narratives by Europeans. Artistic works such as paintings and later films also helped to shape and spread Western conceptions (for example, images of the Far East).

At the same time, the lack of representation of certain groups in textbooks, in film, on television and elsewhere has also contributed to the persistence of misconceptions about the members of these groups. The problem isn't only negative representations but also the lack of positive representations.

It is important to recognize that biases exist in everyone and that it is impossible to seriously think that we have escaped the internalization of at

least some biases, when our personal and collective beliefs have been forged by the institutions that generated them. However, while biases exist in all communities, some groups are in a better position to harm others when they act on their biases. As mentioned above in the definition of racism, power is a very important factor. Bias becomes racism when people have the power to act and do harm on the basis of their biases, prejudices and stereotypes.

Institutional biases are more than the sum of the individual biases within an institution. Institutional biases include practices and norms that disadvantage certain groups, giving rise to discrimination. Sometimes these biases are not even based on prejudices or stereotypes. For example, fees for school activities tend to discourage the participation of economically disadvantaged students. The fact that racialized communities are often economically marginalized has a cumulative effect in disadvantaging them.

Micro-aggressions¹²

Micro-aggressions are subtle acts that affect marginalized people. They stem from prejudices and stereotypes, both conscious and unconscious, and can be individual, social or political. Micro-aggressions consist of discriminatory words or behaviours that, at first glance, may appear harmless, but with repetition and time can hurt people. It is difficult to protest against them without being accused of hypersensitivity or exaggeration, because they often seem trivial at first sight. While they may sometimes stem from good intentions and a desire, however awkward, to be open to difference (such as cultural differences), micro-aggressions are degrading and humiliating. They can lead to isolation and questioning one's identity, as well as more serious consequences such as anxiety and depression. The solution to micro-aggressions is equally subtle and requires listening and openness to marginalized peoples.

“What country are you from?”
“But where are you really from?”
“You’re from here, but where do you come from?”

These questions evoke certain sensitivities for many racialized people because they are often asked in a situation where “Canada” or “Québec” is not accepted as a valid answer, even if the person was born here and their family has lived here for generations. This non-acceptance reinforces the idea that some people can never be true Quebecers or Canadians unless they are white or have a Québec accent.¹³

Such questions may be legitimately motivated by curiosity about a person's cultural origins. However, nationality and identity are more than a person's cultural heritage; they also mean citizenship and belonging. Doubting or denying the possibility of a person being a “true” Quebecer or Canadian calls into question their rights and privileges as citizens and their membership in our society.

12 LEDUC, KyVy (2020). «Leracismesystème». Briserlecode. Pic-bois productions. <https://briserlecode.telequebec.tv/LeLexique/51526/le-racisme-systemique>

13 SHIP, Susan Judith (1994). « But What is Your Nationality? » dans JAMES Carl E. et SHADD Adrienne (dir.) Talking about Difference: Encounters in Culture Language and Identity. Toronto. Between the Lines.

Othering

The Other is the person who is not us. The group that is outside our own. Othering (identifying a person or group as different or alien to us) is a common human reflex that has led to racism, sexism, homophobia, genocide, etc. Defining “us” in distinction to the Other is a discriminatory historical and cultural impulse.

Eurocentrism/Western-centrism

Eurocentrism is the tendency to regard the West as the cultural vanguard of humanity and to ignore or diminish the importance of non-Western cultures, often cast in binary opposition to Western culture¹⁴. For example, the West is presented as civilized and the non-West as less civilized or even savage. In the Western intellectual tradition, non-Western cultures are regularly identified as “other,” “underdeveloped,” the antithesis of civilization, progress and modernity, the thing against which European civilization is or was defined. The idea of the Other played and still plays an important role in defining the West’s self-understanding as a society that is progressive, enlightened and modern.



14 See for example, SAID, Edward W. (2003) *Orientalism*. 25th Anniversary edition. New York: Vintage.

Colonialism

The colonialist project sprang from a supremacist vision based on the idea of the White man's burden, which was the "responsibility to civilize and Christianize." Looking at history enables us to draw the connections with contemporary structures and understand why and how they came to be so powerful. Contemporary societies were founded on historical injustices such as genocide, including cultural genocide, and the economic dispersal of entire societies.

Winona Stevenson¹⁵ discusses Robert Blauner's definition of "classic" colonialism, which arose when metropolitan nations appropriated new territories and/or peoples through the use of force, including war, conquest, capture and other forms of violence and manipulation. According to Stevenson, this type of colonialism is distinguished by economic exploitation, forcible takeover of land and cultural imperialism, which imposes new institutions and ways of thinking.

As an Indigenous theorist, Stevenson draws an important distinction between this type of colonialism and what occurred in the Americas: "What differentiates our experience from those in the Third World is the fact that we, like Australian, New-Zealand, American and other Indigenous Peoples, are minority populations in our own lands. To identify our shared experience, the concept of Fourth World is useful."¹⁶

Stevenson cites Noel Dick's description of the common experience of Fourth World communities: "They are minority populations that have no hope of ever prevailing in their respective national societies on the basis of numbers; they are recognized as different from other segments of the national population by virtue of their Aboriginal or indigenous status; they tend to suffer from a lack of political power, economic subjugation, and social and cultural stigmatization..."¹⁷ Dick notes that these colonized populations live in nation states that did not consider it necessary to provide protections for their rights beyond those offered by the colonial legal system.

According to Dick, quoted in Stevenson, the process of colonization of the land now called Canada was not linear; it progressed in waves propelled by different European imperial regimes. Stevenson identifies four main periods in relations between Whites and Indigenous peoples: French colonization, English colonization, the pre-Confederation period and the post-Confederation period.

The Doctrine of Discovery

The Doctrine of Discovery served as the legal and moral justification for the colonial dispossession of sovereign Indigenous nations, including First Nations, in what is now Canada. According to the Assembly of First Nations, “The Doctrine of Discovery emanates from a series of Papal Bulls (formal statements from the Pope) and extensions, originating in the 1400s... During the European ‘Age of Discovery,’ Christian explorers ‘claimed’ lands for their monarchs who felt they could exploit the land, regardless of the original inhabitants.”¹⁸ This is a racist doctrine rooted in the concept of terra nullius, which erased the very existence of the inhabitants of those lands. It held that it was legitimate for European powers to claim lands inhabited by non-Christian populations.

The Doctrine of Discovery is an important concept for understanding the history of colonialism. Its principles have been incorporated into systems of international law as well as the U.S. and Canadian legal systems. The Indian Act, which continues to govern the lives of these communities, grew directly out of it.

The Doctrine’s continuing sway was clear when Pope Francis visited Canada in the summer of 2022 and refused to recognize the Church’s role in the genocide of Indigenous peoples (in particular through the residential schools). Groups from various Indigenous communities had called on Pope Francis to renounce the Doctrine on behalf of the Church. Despite its initial refusal to do so and the difficulty of acknowledging the genocidal side of colonization, the Vatican finally rejected the Doctrine of Discovery in the spring of 2023.

15 STEVENSON, Winona (1999). « Colonialism and First Nations Women in Canada ». p. 50.

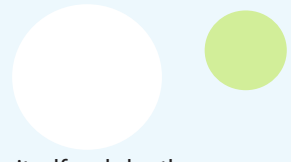
16 STEVENSON, Winona (1999). « Colonialism and First Nations Women in Canada ». p. 50.

17 STEVENSON, Winona (1999). « Colonialism and First Nations Women in Canada ». p. 50.

18 Assembly of First Nations (January 2018). “Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery.” <https://www.theindigenousfoundation.org/articles/the-doctrine-of-discovery-and-terra-nullius>



White supremacy



To define White supremacy, we must discuss the ideology itself and also the power relations it spawns. White supremacy isn't just a matter of individual or even collective biases within a particular society; it is a system of values and a worldview that promotes, implicitly or explicitly, the historical and contemporary contributions of Western societies to philosophy, political theory, medical and scientific knowledge, economic systems and religious beliefs. The White supremacist view overestimates the contributions of one limited segment of humanity at the expense of all the other societies that do not belong to this small group.

White supremacy is a type of chauvinism sustained by historical narratives that tend to sanitize the ravages of colonialism and imperialism. Colonization yielded astronomical economic gains for the colonizing nations (and continues to benefit their structures and institutions to this day), and for families of European origin, which were able to secure multigenerational fortunes. Many of the contributions of the colonized societies/peoples, and the legacies they passed on to European and North American societies, have been erased from the narrative. The history written by the victors depicts the conquered populations as barbarous and ignorant, confirming and perpetuating the myth of Western superiority.

The African-American feminist critical theorist bell hooks⁹ often used the term "imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" to name the structure of domination and the interlocking systems of oppression that concentrate power and privilege in the hands of some at the expense of others. hooks' word choice highlights how White supremacy depends on, and works in tandem with, other vectors of privilege in our societies.

White supremacy is not embraced solely by White nationalists, such as alt-right supporters, or indeed only by White people. It is a dominant value system (inscribed in concepts such as meritocracy, standards of beauty, upward social mobility, etc.) that is pervasive and accepted as the norm. It is embedded in the collective imagination and so entrenched that many of the people it excludes, i.e. racialized populations, have little choice but to strive to join it. Members of dominant groups find it difficult to imagine that the institutions of which they are so proud, and by which they measure their own success in life, could be problematic. This is why, for example, it is so difficult to gain recognition of the existence of systemic racism.

¹⁹Gloria Jean Watkins, known by her pen name bell hooks, born September 25, 1952 in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, died December 15, 2021 in Berea, Kentucky, was an American intellectual, academic, activist and theorist of "black feminism." https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_hooks

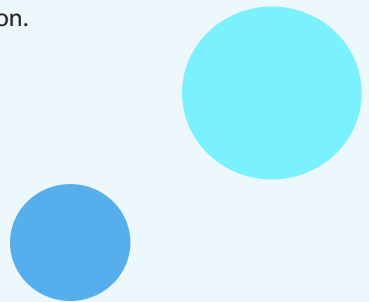
Whiteness

“White” or majority culture is often not named, except to contrast it with “foreign” and/or racialized cultures. In North America, political and legal exclusion on racial, ethnocultural, religious and other grounds has been foundational to White majority culture. This historical background helps us understand contemporary manifestations of Whiteness.

Many people bristle when they hear references to Whiteness, but most societies have words to designate Black people, Asian people, etc., and these populations are commonly associated with “cultures,” which comprise beliefs, attitudes and behaviours, as well as social and economic conditions. But in predominantly White societies with histories of colonialism and slavery, notably in North America and some European countries, the beliefs, behaviours, attitudes and social and economic conditions of the White majority are not racially qualified, as they are the dominant culture.

In fact, it is rare to hear “White culture” mentioned, except in the discourse of White nationalists and their sympathizers. White culture is taken for granted as the standard, seen as “neutral.” It is presented as universal, or at least aspires to universality. Speaking of Whiteness calls attention to this fact, to the implicit and explicit foregrounding of the experiences, needs and goals of the White majority. It also calls attention to the historical and contemporary power relationships that run through all spheres of society: the concentration of wealth, the production and recognition of knowledge, artistic creation, historical narratives and much more.

When we talk about Whiteness, we’re not just talking about skin color; a person can be White but not seek to perpetuate Whiteness. A person can be racialized and still measure themselves against the values that underpin Whiteness. Whiteness refers more to a value system and to socio-political and economic power relations. Even in societies that are open to diversity, such as Québec, Whiteness still dominates institutions and defines the community’s social vision.



Power relations

Identifying power relationships provides insight into racism-related issues in institutional and social settings. Power relations give rise to occupational, economic and political inequalities, and also to cultural inequalities.

For example, the lack of representation of some communities within institutions, past and present, means that their perspectives and experiences are erased, perpetuating their institutional marginalization. Where this is the case, anti-racist initiatives often fail, for institutional power relations prevent the inclusion and prioritization of the experiences and knowledge of racialized people in the design and implementation of these initiatives.

Representativeness

Representativeness is a target group's level of representation in an institution compared with its presence in the general population. In Québec, the representativeness guidelines for purposes of equal employment opportunity are based on the availability of qualified workers from the target group, according to compilations by the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (CDPDJ) using data supplied by Statistics Canada.

In anti-racist work, equitable representation of racialized people is both a means and an end. It is an essential condition for the fight against systemic racism, not just a mere question of equal opportunity. Few anti-racist initiatives can succeed without the presence of racialized people. However, their presence alone does not guarantee the absence or eradication of racism. That requires measures that challenge discriminatory practices and the power relations that facilitate them. As an end, representativeness can serve as a target to ensure fair and non-discriminatory employment opportunity.

Assimilation

Assimilation means the attempt to erase the cultural heritage of a person or group in the name of integration. Racist ideology reinforces often violent assimilation by culturally degrading the targeted person or group. Canada's Indigenous residential schools are a good example of how the Canadian state sought to erase Indigenous cultures.

The process is similar for immigrants. Newcomers are required to conform to the language, values and mores of the host country, with no assurance of preserving their own history. The "good immigrant" is often the one who best meets these criteria.

The Indian Act: An example of assimilation and systemic racism

Originally passed in 1876, the Indian Act was designed to control Indigenous peoples and force them to adopt Euro-Canadian culture. The process of assimilation aimed to erase Indigenous social, political and cultural structures. The measures in the Act included :

- Imposition of band councils as the system of governance ;
- Control over the determination of Indigenous identity: loss of Indian status meant relinquishing one's culture of origin and losing the right to participate in the political life of the community. Women lost their status if they married a non-Indigenous man. This had the effect of subjugating Indigenous women to men. They became dependent on the men in their lives—their fathers before marriage, and their husbands afterwards. When their husband died, they lost their status and had to leave the home. Children were taken into care by the state. Graduating from university also resulted in loss of Indian status.
- Prohibitions on property rights: development required the permission of a government-assigned "Indian agent." Reserve lands are still owned by the federal government;
- Prohibitions on the right to vote: members of Indigenous communities were not granted the right to vote until 1960 at the federal level and 1969 at the provincial level. Before that, they had to renounce their Indian status to obtain the right to vote.
- Prohibition of cultural practices: for example, the potlatch, a ceremony with both cultural and political dimensions used by many First Nations to celebrate important occasions such as weddings or conferring a status on an individual or clan, was banned from 1884 to 1951.²⁰

The Indian Act remains in force to this day. While the most coercive measures have been repealed, assimilationist provisions remain.

20 GADACZ, René R. (2019). "Potlatch." The Canadian Encyclopedia.
<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/fr/article/potlatch-1>

Interculturalism

Interculturalism seeks to reconcile the common culture with cultural diversity through interchanges between cultures. It refers to initiatives to promote knowledge of other cultures and improve inter-community relations. Interculturalism is a model for managing diversity that is used in Québec. In the rest of Canada, the term multiculturalism is used. There are some shades of difference.²¹

In institutions, interculturalism projects are often used to guide anti-racism work. The logic behind this approach is that racism is largely caused by ignorance of other cultures; so to overcome racism, we only need to know more about the Other. The drawback to this approach is that it does not recognize racism as primarily a matter of discrimination. As a result, this approach puts little effort into exposing and eradicating discriminatory tendencies and practices, such as systemic barriers, inequalities and so forth.

Immigration and immigrants

Immigrating means settling in another country and becoming a permanent resident. We know that Canada is a country of immigrants, but it is less well known that our immigration history is highly racialized. Before the 1970s, immigration policies were explicitly racist; the excluded groups were identified by name (Blacks, Jews, Chinese, Japanese, Indians, etc.).²² Contemporary immigration policies are not so explicit but still contain racist elements.

Anti-Chinese immigration laws

From 1885 to 1923, a head tax was imposed on all Chinese immigrants. At the end of the period, the amount was \$500. In 1923, Canada passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which banned the entry of all Chinese people into the country. The Act was repealed in 1947.

21 The distinction between interculturalism and multiculturalism is subtle and “there is no scientific consensus.” (Comité école et société-FNEEQ-CSN (2022). *L’avenir du français au Québec*, p. 10). However, multiculturalism is officially enshrined in Canadian law. Given the similarity between the two ideas, the analysis and critique of the term “interculturalism” presented in this guide applies equally to “multiculturalism.”

22 JAKUBOWSKI, Lisa Marie (1997). *Immigration and the legalization of racism*. Halifax. Fernwood.

Migrant workers

Migrant workers have a different status than immigrants and are subject to more restrictive rules. Canada has made a major shift in its approach to immigration and immigration policy: instead of relying on immigration to alleviate the country's labour shortage, the government is increasingly turning to migrant workers, who are granted fewer political and legal rights. Under the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program,²³ migrant workers do not have the right to stay in the country permanently or to change employers and have no access to social benefits, even though they pay federal and provincial taxes and Employment Insurance contributions. This system subjects workers to abuse and exploitation.²⁴

Antiracist allies

An ally is someone who has not directly experienced racism but wants to oppose racism and participate in the anti-racist struggle. Allies are essential, for without the support of the majority, it will be impossible to eradicate racism.

Sometimes, it takes an ally to break the ice for an anti-racist initiative. But it is desirable for anti-racist allies to recognize their limitations (in terms of knowledge and experience) and be prepared to cede leadership to a racialized activist when the opportunity arises. Allies can also help amplify the voices of people who experience racism. To do so, it is useful for them to know how to listen, to stay open and to familiarize themselves with analyses of systemic racism, the experiences of racialized people and their perspectives on racism before taking action.

23 The Temporary Foreign Worker Program allows Canadian employers to hire foreign workers for temporary positions when no qualified Canadian is available. It is governed by the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, and is administered through a partnership between Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). See Employment and Social Development Canada (2023), "Temporary Foreign Worker," <https://www.canada.ca/fr/emploi-developpement-social/programmes/travailleurs-etrangers-temporaires.html>

24 For more details, see the "Racism and work" section.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the interlocking of multiple systems of oppression and the various forms of discrimination that occur as a result. While the concept was posited by generations of Black women, from slavery-era abolitionists such as Sojourner Truth to the queer Afro feminist Combahee River Collective of the 1970s, the term itself is attributed to African American legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw.

In her article “Demarginalizing the Intersections of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,”²⁵, Crenshaw clearly illustrated the limitations of the feminist and antiracist movements of the time: racism was defined by the experiences of Black men, and sexism by the experiences of White women. Crenshaw’s analysis shed light on the legal no man’s land in which Black women and other marginalized groups find themselves when we insist on using universal definitions of racism and/or sexism, since those universal definitions are the product of a White and/or male lens. Using case studies of lawsuits filed by Black women, Crenshaw demonstrated that the failure to recognize how racism and sexism interact to produce a form of discrimination specific to these women left them powerless against employment discrimination.

As it has gained common currency, the term has been oversimplified, to the point where it becomes a mere addition of oppressions. But this reductive understanding is dangerous because it tends to lead to a kind of competition of oppressions. Indeed, pushback against the intersectional approach is often based on the idea that it has fuelled identity-based activism to the detriment of wider social movements. But what Crenshaw and others working on intersectionality are proposing is that we recognize how the interplay of different structures of power perpetuates social, political, economic and legal injustices. They ask us to recognize the indivisibility of oppressions, and thus, of the struggles against them. Intersectionality offers an essential lens and analytical tool for political action—one that embraces a range of oppressions, including as classism, ableism and homophobia.

25 CRENSHAW, Kimberle. (1989) “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics.” *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, vol. 1989 (no. 1), 1-31.

Racism and Society

Racism and sexism

Like racism, sexism occurs in combination with other systems of oppression. Sexism is a system of gendered values that feed into our norms and laws and interact with other value systems, such as racism. This means that Black, Indigenous, and other racialized women experience discrimination on two fronts: as women and as visible minorities.

The overrepresentation of Indigenous women in Canadian prisons, for example, is due both to their vulnerability as women and to the racist foundations of the penal and prison system. This modern phenomenon is a direct result of the racist colonial histories of Canada and Québec. The overrepresentation of these women in the prison system cannot be explained solely by the fact that they are women, nor by the fact that they are Indigenous. Both systems of oppression have a constant impact on the lives of these women, and efforts to remedy these injustices can only be successful if they act on both fronts at once.

Another very telling example in Québec today is how Muslim women who wear an Islamic scarf, or hijab, are treated. Ironically, much of the discourse aimed at banning the practice revolves around notions of gender equality and even feminism. But this discourse also relies on many backward and toxic assumptions about Muslims and so called Muslim culture, particularly where women are concerned. The discourse is racist, but also sexist, since laws such as the Act respecting the laicity of the state (Bill 21) cement the state's control over women's bodies.

A further example of the intersectionality of racism and sexism is media representations of racialized women, particularly the portrayal of Black women as having animal traits, East Asian women as geishas or in other servile roles, and Indigenous princesses ready to do the bidding of—and get into bed with—White settlers. This objectification is both racist and sexist because it is inspired by fantasies about women as well as by cultural stereotypes of Black, Indigenous and Asian communities.

Racism and LGBTQIA2+ communities

Members of racialized LGBTQIA2+ communities experience both racism and homophobia, the racism of the dominant society and heterosexism and homophobia within their own communities. In the case of Indigenous communities, it is not uncommon for LGBTQIA2+ people to be overlooked or even excluded from conversations about residential schools and anti-Indigenous violence more generally.

The discrimination produced by racism operates sometimes through invisibilization, sometimes through hypervisibilization. Members of LGBTQIA2+ communities experience both.²⁶

People from LGBTQIA2+ communities are weaponized for all sorts of purposes. For example, reference is often made in mainstream discourse to the persecution of LGBTQIA2+ people in some Muslim countries. The focus on this violence serves to link an entire community to “barbaric” practices. Racialized people who display their minority sexual identity in the public space become emblems for the defects ascribed to their culture of origin. This weaponizes and invisibilizes people experiencing persecution, while fuelling racist discourse about entire communities to which the persecuted people themselves belong. The appropriation of their hardships is detrimental to the victims, who then experience two-pronged discrimination. Homophobic persecution of sexual minorities exists and must be recognized, but its political weaponization serves neither racialized communities nor members of LGBTQIA2+ communities.

It can be very difficult for racialized people to find safe and welcoming spaces within LGBTQIA2+ communities. Coming out, the traditional act of public affirmation, is a virtual prerequisite for feeling welcome in LGBTQIA2+ spaces. People who don't do it run a significant risk of being excluded from these spaces. For members of communities in which lifestyles associated with sexual diversity are still frowned upon or rejected, coming out can mean renouncing one's cultural allegiances. It is a wrenching choice that not everyone wants to make. Belonging and recognition thus remain reserved for White people, or for those who accept White norms of queer identity. There are, however, other paths to acceptance: in Indigenous communities, for example, people speak of “coming in,” returning to Indigenous people's values of acceptance and sexual diversity. In this way, some people are able to reclaim their place in the circle by embracing all facets of their identity.

26 CHEHAITLY, Sébastien, RAHMAN Momin et CHBAT Marianne. (2021) “Est-ce que c'est parce que j'ai l'air trop fffou trop brun?... On a plusieurs raisons de se faire détester!” Être musulman-e LGBTQ+ au Québec et vivre à l'intersection de multiples oppressions. Récits de quelques parcours militants. *Nouvelles pratiques sociales*. 31 (2), 182-205.

Cultural identity and racialization

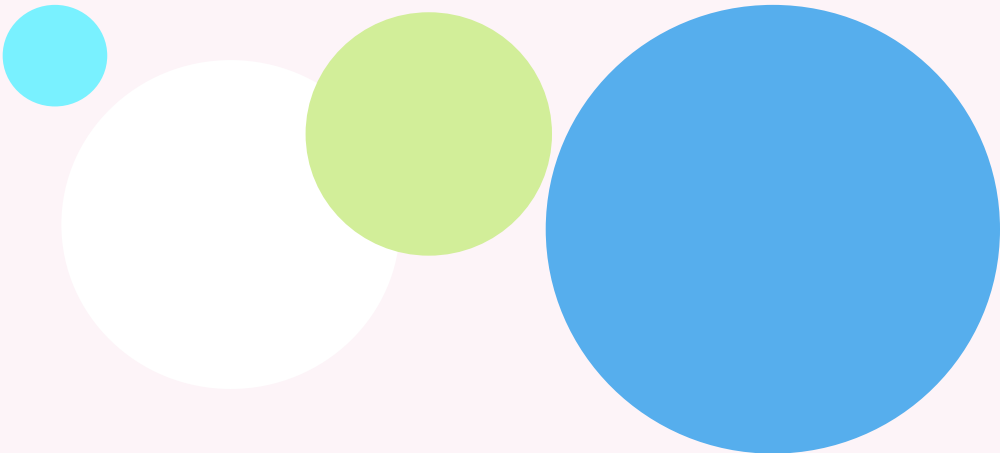
Stereotypical cultural and religious differences were and are often used in the racialization process as proof of the inferiority of certain groups. In Canadian and Québec history, this has happened to Indigenous, Jewish and Asian populations. The intersection of racialization with cultural and/or religious identity leads to the infiltration of racist ideology into popular representations of different cultures and religions. It also poses challenges for intercultural work, in which understanding cultural differences plays an important role.

The case of Islam and Muslims is a good example of this phenomenon. Islamophobic representations depend heavily on the idea that the values promoted by Islam are not universal. They highlight differences between “Muslim culture” and “Québec culture” to show the incompatibility between Muslims and Western lifestyles, and modern life more generally. Muslims are often portrayed as an invasive community, seeking to dominate wherever they go. Domination and violence are seen as inherent characteristics of Muslims.

Racism and work

Racism in the workplace largely derives from the history of capitalism and colonialism in Canada, throughout which job categories were highly racialized. This racialization operated through, among other things, the enslavement of Blacks and Indigenous peoples, the statutory exclusion of certain racialized groups from some job categories, exclusion from post-secondary education, and differential treatment in the workplace according to “race.” The latter is a practice that still exists today. It is facilitated by the federal Temporary Foreign Worker program. In 2021, 777,000 migrant workers were recruited under the program.²⁷ The majority work under a legal framework which provides scant protection for their rights and freedoms. They have no recourse against abuse and mistreatment.²⁸ These practices are particularly widespread in the agricultural sector, where many workers come from Mexico, the Caribbean and other countries of the South. Among domestic workers, Filipinos are over-represented.

The history of racialization and exclusion has produced institutional cultures and power relations unfavourable to racialized people in the workplace. The resulting practices create barriers to hiring and to promotion. These systemic dimensions of racism and discrimination remain largely unrecognized by the institutions in question, leading to a lack of corrective measures.



²⁷ Statistics Canada (June 22, 2022), “Immigration as a source of labour supply,” The Daily. [HTTPS://WWW150.STAT-CAN.GC.CA/N1/DAILY-QUOTIDIEN/220622/DQ220622C-FRA-htm](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220622/DQ220622C-FRA-htm)

²⁸ Boti, Marie and Guy, Malcolm (directors) (2012). The End of Immigration (Documentary film). Montréal. Diffusion Multi-Monde.

Racism and Marxism

The relationship between critical race theory²⁹ and Marxist theory is complex. Sometimes rejected, sometimes adopted, the Marxist approach alone does not seem to provide an adequate framework for analyzing racism and discrimination.³⁰

The Marxist approach is useful for analyzing inequalities based on the exploitation of proletarian labour power and the alienation of labour. It provides tools for challenging capitalism and the unequal distribution of wealth through differential treatment based on social class. From the point of view of critical race theory, therefore, the Marxist approach is consistent in part with the concerns of racialized and discriminated groups that belong to a dominated social class, insofar as they are discriminated against on the basis of their membership in that class.

However, as the sociologist William E.B. Du Bois argued, the Marxist approach, being centred on materialist analysis of society, is insufficient for explaining the systemic inequalities to which minorities and discriminated groups are subject.³¹ Political scientist and Indigenous activist Glen Sean Coulthard also believes that Marxist analysis has made a contribution to understanding the situation of Indigenous peoples but that it cannot fully apply to Indigenous struggles, as these spring from territorial dispossession.³²

In the United States, Jim Crow laws (having similar effect to the Indian Act) were enforced in the Southern states between 1877 and 1964 despite the constitutional rights acquired by Blacks during the Civil War.³³

29 See for example, Aubert, Isabelle (2021). "La Critical Race Theory confrontée à Marx." *Droit et société*, 108(2), 303-318

30 AUBERT, Isabelle (2021). « La Critical Race Theory confrontée à Marx ». *Droit et société*. 108 (2). 303-318.

31 DU BOIS, W. E. B. (1903, 1933), « Marxism and the Negro Problem ». *The Crisis*, 40(5), 103-104, 118..

32 Coulthard, G. S. (2014). *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 256 p.

33 Aubert, op. cit.

Inequalities based on racial classifications cut across all social categories. People can be racialized or discriminated against whether they belong to the working class, middle class or upper class. From a perspective that understands oppression as taking plural forms (see intersectionality), racial categories supplant class, for racism and discrimination either compound the stigma attached to social class or persist despite changes in social class. The work of psychiatrist and activist Frantz Fanon supports this view. Fanon analyzes how Black people are dispossessed of their identity, for they are doubly alienated from their labour and from the White-dominated culture to which they must conform.³⁴ On this view, the Marxist understanding of social class as the basis of inequality fails to account for racism as a fundamental factor of differentiation. In other words, in Marxism, class domination erases racial domination and its systemic power relations.

Racial segregation is widespread in many job sectors in Canada. Black men and women have historically been relegated to the service sector—barbers, waiters, janitors, train porters, labourers, domestics, waitresses, laundresses—regardless of their level of education. White business owners, and even federal and provincial government agencies, traditionally don't hire Blacks, and if they do, don't promote them.³⁵

Québec unions have traditionally used a Marxist theoretical framework to guide their struggles. Today, however, the issue of racism and discrimination demands more than a materialist analysis of inequality in order to understand the experiences of racialized and discriminated groups. Decolonial and anti-racist analysis calls for a reexamination of our analytical frameworks to recognize inequalities specific to discriminated groups and to fight racial discrimination and structural privilege within our unions.

34 FANON, Frantz (1952, 2015)). *Black Skin, White Masks* (R. Philcox, Trans.). New York: Grove, 240 p.

35 Henry, N. (2021). "Racial Segregation of Black People in Canada." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/racial-segregation-of-black-people-in-canada>

Racism and education

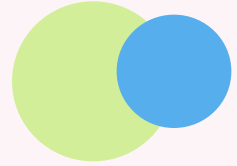
Racism (and its intersections) is a complex, multidimensional problem that can manifest itself in different ways, including in the schools. It is a stubborn issue. In Québec, prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion and culture exist. The Québec education system has been criticized for its lack of diversity and inclusion, particularly in terms of the representation of ethnic minorities in textbooks. It has long been argued that the textbooks and the curriculum do not reflect the diversity of Québec society, and this can contribute to the marginalization of and discrimination against minorities.

In Québec and the rest of Canada, schools have also played a role in the assimilationist project. The most striking example is, of course, the residential schools for Indigenous children that continued to operate until 1996. Another example would be the issues surrounding the integration of Vietnamese and Haitian immigrants in Montréal. The desire to integrate them was often bound up with the Eurocentric ideology of the schools and resulted in assimilation and/or exclusion. For example, Steinbach has found that transition programs in high schools caused marginalization³⁶. Anthropologist Denis Blondin observes that “for many teachers, integrating and hence effectively educating these young immigrants meant assimilating them into the culture and know-how of the ‘host society’ and erasing the ‘barbaric referents’ from their ethnic background.”³⁷

While the school can enable a certain critique of racist ideology, it cannot, as an “organic” institution of capitalist society, develop a theory and practice that transcend racial ideology within the school, let alone in society as a whole. The critique of racism is generally the work of teachers who are aware of its systemic nature, but their efforts are limited by structural obstacles within the institution (racist attitudes of some people, teaching materials, etc.). Schools have tried to reflect on their biases in order to avoid perpetuating stereotypes and prejudice, but despite their efforts the weight of a history tainted by racial exclusion continues to be felt at all levels of education.

36 STEINBACH, Marilyn (2010). « Quand je sors d'accueil : linguistic integration of immigrant adolescents in Quebec secondary schools ». *Language, Culture and Curriculum*. 23(2).

37 BLONDIN, Denis (1990). *L'apprentissage du racisme dans les manuels scolaires*. Montréal. Éditions Agence d'Arc.



There have been, and still are, concrete cases in Québec schools of racism towards Indigenous people, Blacks, Arabs, Asians and anyone considered different. Québec schools have also been criticized for the lack of cultural diversity among teachers and staff, which contributes to the perpetuation of racialization and stereotyping in the system. In higher education, racist stereotypes and Eurocentric ideas were and are generated and cultivated in many fields, both scientific and cultural. These ideas are subsequently transmitted to all other levels of education. Here are just a few examples: history and civics curricula and textbooks have often spurned a comprehensive account of history that gives women, Indigenous people, slaves, waves of immigrants and their descendants, who have also forged our history, their due. From primary school and high school to post-secondary institutions, Western-centric and Eurocentric ideas are reproduced. In her recent book *L'école du racisme*, historian Catherine Larochelle describes the school as a site of socialization, "a window on the world and a place of learning, including stereotypes and prejudices."³⁸ She argues that Québec schools, both French and English, taught and endorsed colonial domination and racism from their beginnings and continued to do so for decades. Her research shows how the faces of the Other have been constructed through multiple discourses, based on various cultural and physical characteristics, and analyzes the functions they have served in forming the collective identity of civilized White Québec students.

It can therefore be said that today's schools, which are the settings for racist acts, contribute to racism by transmitting the prejudices that are inscribed in curricula and learning content (knowledge, values, skills and attitudes that are often reductive or suggest comparisons). Stereotypes are repeated and disseminated among young people through many paths, which makes it difficult to combat racism in our schools and perpetuates systemic racism, as it does sexism and discrimination of all kinds.

38 LAROCHELLE, Catherine (2021). *École du racisme: La construction de l'altérité à l'école québécoise (1830-1915)*. Presses de l'Université de Montréal. (4e de couverture)

Authors Chantal Ismé and Alain Saint-Victor paint a clear picture of the situation in our schools:

“The face of Québec schools has changed dramatically. In 2011-2012, students from immigrant backgrounds made up nearly a quarter of Québec’s student population (23.7%). In Montréal, the proportion was 67.3% in the public system in 2019 (including 25.7% first-generation immigrants and 30.9% second generation immigrants). In some Montréal neighborhoods, the numbers are higher.

“There are also Indigenous students in Québec schools, although the majority attend schools located in Indigenous communities. The data is incomplete, as most Indigenous students in the Québec school system are not declared as such. In 2017-2018, 11.4% went to a school outside their community. Diversity is now a fact in the schools, but the question is how inclusion and community life play out in the schools, which are a space for both socialization and instruction.”³⁹

Racist acts take place in today’s schools and the schools still perpetuate racist ideologies and even language.

School curricula still channel and reproduce a history tainted by misrepresentation and racial exclusion. According to Denis Blondin,⁴⁰ these Western-centric and Eurocentric ideas engender rejection of the Other :

“Understanding the culture of the Other, cultivating tolerance and fighting the ignorance that breeds prejudice are important but are not enough to curb racist ideology within the school system. Because it is systemic, this ideology reproduces itself structurally, i.e. it conditions student-teacher relations and gives rise to an unconscious perception of the Other as a perpetual foreigner (foreign to culture and civilization), the Other being non-Western or, more precisely ‘non-White’.”⁴¹

39 ISMÉ, Chantal et SAINT-VICTOR, Alain (2021), “L’école publique au temps du néolibéralisme : système scolaire et racisme au Québec.” Nouveaux Cahiers du socialisme (no. 26). 91-96.

40 BLONDIN, Denis (1990) L’apprentissage du racisme dans les manuels scolaires. Montréal. Éditions Agence d’Arc.

41 ISMÉ, Chantal et SAINT-VICTOR, Alain (2021), « L’école publique au temps du néolibéralisme : système scolaire et racisme au Québec ». 91-96.

What is to be done? Unions and associations have put in place policies to combat racism but there is still a long way to go before it is eliminated. In response to these concerns, the Québec government has tried to promote diversity and inclusion in the schools and in textbooks. In 2018, the Ministry of Education launched a pilot project to develop educational resources that reflect Québec's cultural and linguistic diversity. Recently, there have been debates about the treatment of issues of racism and discrimination in textbooks. In 2020, despite its refusal to recognize systemic racism, the CAQ government set up an action group on racism, which made 25 recommendations. Only two related to the schools. One was to add new content to courses such as the ethics and religious culture course, which could serve as a pilot project.⁴² The goal was to inform young people about racism and discrimination throughout their schooling, but there were few specifics. It remains to be seen how this recommendation will be applied in practice and what training teachers will receive on the subject. In January 2021, a controversy erupted after a history textbook used in the schools was criticized for, among other things, downplaying the slave trade and failing to acknowledge the existence of systemic racism.⁴³

The measures discussed above aim to raise awareness among young people but fail to address the root causes of racist behaviour and acts. They do not tackle the mechanisms by which racism is maintained and reproduced, or the systemic barriers faced by Indigenous and ethnic minority students. They also ignore the imbalance of power between students and teachers—who are often important figures in students' lives but are also in a position of power. They are silent too on the circumstances of racialized students, on the objective conditions that place them at a disadvantage and make them vulnerable to negative perceptions and prejudice.⁴⁴

42 GROUPE D'ACTION CONTRE LE RACISME (2020). Le racisme au Québec : Tolérance zéro. Gouvernement du Québec. https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/politiques_orientations/Groupe_action_racisme/RA_GroupeActionContreRacisme.pdf?1607961665

43 FORTIER, Marco (2022, 14 avril). « Controverse autour du mot en n dans une école de Longueuil ». Le Devoir. <https://www.ledevoir.com/societe/education/699738/controverse-autour-du-mot-en-n-dans-une-ecole>

44 GROUPE D'ACTION CONTRE LE RACISME (2020). Le racisme au Québec : Tolérance zéro. Gouvernement du Québec.

The same schools can therefore be racist and, at the same time, fight racism by teaching tolerance, inclusion and intercultural or mutual understanding. The same school system can maintain and disseminate racist ideologies and prevent racism by teaching equality and respect for diversity. As Normand Baillargeon puts it: "The Québec school of the future will have to 'teach' how to fight racism. But while the purpose of this institution is learning, the acquisition and transmission of knowledge, and the development of skills and competencies (both social and cognitive) that counteract dogmatism, its role also includes socialization and integration or inclusion to promote harmonious coexistence among citizens in the making."⁴⁵ Baillargeon goes on to quote Hannah Arendt:

"Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and young, would be inevitable. And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world."⁴⁶

Some examples of racial segregation in Canadian schools:

From 1850 to 1965, a number of Ontario municipalities, mainly in Essex and Kent counties (including the city of Windsor), segregated Black students. Most of these schools closed before the First World War. The last segregated school, in Colchester, closed in 1965.⁴⁷

In the early 20th century, many Asian students in British Columbia were partially segregated, placed in segregated classes within racially mixed schools. In 1922, the Victoria School Board passed a resolution that decreed the complete segregation of Chinese students. These children were placed in fully segregated schools. The exclusion of Asian students ended in 1923 following protests and a year-long strike by Chinese families.⁴⁸

45 BAILLARGEON, Normand (2020, 19 décembre). « L'école et le racisme ». Le Devoir. <https://www.ledevoir.com/opinion/chroniques/592042/l-ecole-et-le-racisme>

46 Arendt, Hannah (1961). *Between Past and Future*. New York: Viking, p. 196

47 Bradburn, Jamie (February 26, 2018). "The Story of Ontario's Last Segregated Black School." TVO Today. <https://www.tvo.org/article/the-story-of-ontarios-last-segregated-black-school>

48 Wallace, S. I. (2018). "Racial Segregation of Asian Canadians." The Canadian Encyclopedia. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/segregation-of-asian-canadians>

Conclusion

The issues raised by the entries in this guide are complex and multi-factorial. It is not possible to offer quick and easy solutions to problems that have existed since the beginnings of our society, and which run through all our institutions. This document is therefore intended as a tool to help FNEEQ members delve deeper into these issues. When we recognize the complexity of the question, we are better able to find suitable long-term answers.

It is also useful to approach anti-racist work by looking at what is absent: human absences, narrative absences, procedural absences. In other words, when we ask “Who’s missing from the table?” or “What stories are rarely or never told?” or “How did these exclusions come to be?” we begin the work of recentring the experiences of marginalized populations.

Intersectional theorists speak of “centering the margins,”⁴⁹ i.e. starting political work not from the majority but from the minority. The political struggles that emerge from the battles of the most marginalized populations yield greater justice for all.

In conclusion, openness to the Other is not enough; we must change our practices if we are to achieve political mobilization that reflects wider scholarly, educational and occupational realities. Looking for absences and identifying, with the help of the affected populations, the mechanisms that perpetuate them will enable us to start transforming our places of learning and work to achieve greater justice, without which solidarity remains a slogan.

49 HOOKS, bell (1984). *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*. Boston: South End Press, 174 p.

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Recommendations of FNEEQ bodies

Recommendation adopted at the 2018 Convention

Whereas Québec is home to Indigenous nations, welcomes nearly 100,000 immigrant workers per year, and racialized people make up a tenth of its population;

Whereas Québec's public policies and institutions, including institutions of higher education, contribute to issues of systemic discrimination in the workplace;

Whereas many newcomers experience professional deskilling and the qualifications acquired in their country of origin are not recognized;

Whereas the CSN and the Conseil central du Montréal métropolitain have both set up immigration and intercultural relations committees;

It is moved:

If the "Interculturality and Systemic Discrimination and Racism in the Workplace and in Education Committee" is created,

1. That the committee's first mandate be to produce a picture of the difficulties encountered in the workplace by members of the Federation who belong to racialized groups and the representation of these groups in the Federation's unions and their statutory bodies;
2. That the committee work with organizations involved in fighting discrimination, including community, government and Indigenous organizations;
3. That the committee take stock of hiring policies and practices, and recommend discrimination-free practices, including:
 - a. in selecting applicants;
 - b. in onboarding new staff members.

Recommendation adopted by the Federal Council, December 2019

Progress report from the Interculturality and Systemic Discrimination and Racism in the Workplace and in Education Committee

Whereas the 32nd Convention mandated the Interculturality and Systemic Discrimination and Racism in the Workplace and in Education Committee to “produce a picture of the difficulties encountered in the workplace by members of the Federation who belong to racialized groups and the representation of these groups in the Federation’s unions and their statutory bodies”;

Whereas the 32nd Convention called for cooperation with organizations involved in fighting discrimination, including community, government and Indigenous organizations;

Whereas, among other things, the committee’s report confirms the decline in the representation of racialized groups in the various job categories represented by the Federation;

It is moved that the FNEEQ:

1. Reaffirm its commitment to equal opportunity and therefore actively support corrective measures;
2. Call on its affiliated unions to explain and defend these measures in education, and to demand the necessary means to implement them (including access to information, training on these issues for members of union committees, appointment of coordinators in schools and unions, etc.);
3. Mandate the Interculturality and Systemic Discrimination and Racism in the Workplace and in Education Committee to develop a training program tailored to each Regroupement in order to better equip the unions and their members to deal with issues of equal opportunity in hiring and the representation of people from racialized groups on union bodies.

Recommendation adopted at the 2021 Convention

Recommendation on Indigenous realities

Whereas the United Nations has adopted a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

Whereas the Viens Commission has called for action, particularly with respect to the education and higher education sectors;

Whereas the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) has appealed to Quebecers, organizations and groups to join forces with First Nations to improve inter-community relations;

Whereas the AFNQL Action Plan on Racism and Discrimination includes priority actions with respect to education;

Whereas the FNEEQ has positions against systemic discrimination and racism;

Whereas teachers play a fundamental role in promoting cooperation and tolerance, and in fighting prejudice and discrimination;

Whereas the FNEEQ Women's Committee is involved in raising awareness of the conditions of Indigenous women;

It is moved:

1. That the FNEEQ promote the demands in the AFNQL's Action Plan on Racism and Discrimination in its opinions and briefs on education and higher education;
2. That each of the FNEEQ's Regroupements commit to implementing the recommendations in the AFNQL's Action Plan on Racism and Discrimination for each level of education during the next three-year term and to disseminating them to the membership, and that a progress report be made at the May 2022 meeting of the Federal Council;
3. That the FNEEQ Women's Committee ally with Quebec Native Women during the next three-year term to sensitize FNEEQ members to the issues affecting First Nations women, particularly with regard to sexual violence and the reporting of sexual violence.

Recommendation on Executive Committee mandates

Whereas mandates have been issued by the 32nd Convention and by the Federal Council meetings held since then;

Whereas the coronavirus pandemic impacted the ability to carry out these mandates;

Whereas political developments have included the work on the educational success action plan and the Québec university of the future;

It is moved:

[..]

3. That special attention also be paid to the interactions and consequences of these transformations with/on the following issues:

- Teacher training
- Academic freedom
- Collegiality
- Funding of education and higher education
- Mental health of teachers
- Privatization, outsourcing and the role of private enterprise
- Inter-institutional partnerships
- Fighting inequality and discrimination in the education and higher education networks

4. That special attention also be paid to the following issues relating to union organization:

- Impact of psychological harassment cases
- Representation of racialized groups, women and LGBTQ+ people in provincial and local union structures
- Communications strategies of the Federation and its affiliated unions

[..]

Recommendation adopted by the Federal Council, December 2022

Presentation of report on the future of French in Québec

It is moved

[...]

That, in preparation for the next Convention, the Executive Committee and the Federal Bureau follow up on Orientation 8 in the report of the Constitution and By-laws Committee tabled at the 33rd Convention, namely that they “should reflect on the practical means to be put in place to improve the representation of these diverse groups, particularly historically marginalized and discriminated groups. This process should also involve the local unions”;

That the FNEEQ improve its practices by turning to the expertise of the Indigenous communities themselves to guide its policy positions and work, and by promoting greater representativeness on its bodies and making them more inclusive.



Anti-racism guide

Comité Interculturalité, discrimination et racisme systémiques au travail et en éducation (IDRSTE) - FNEEQ-CSN