

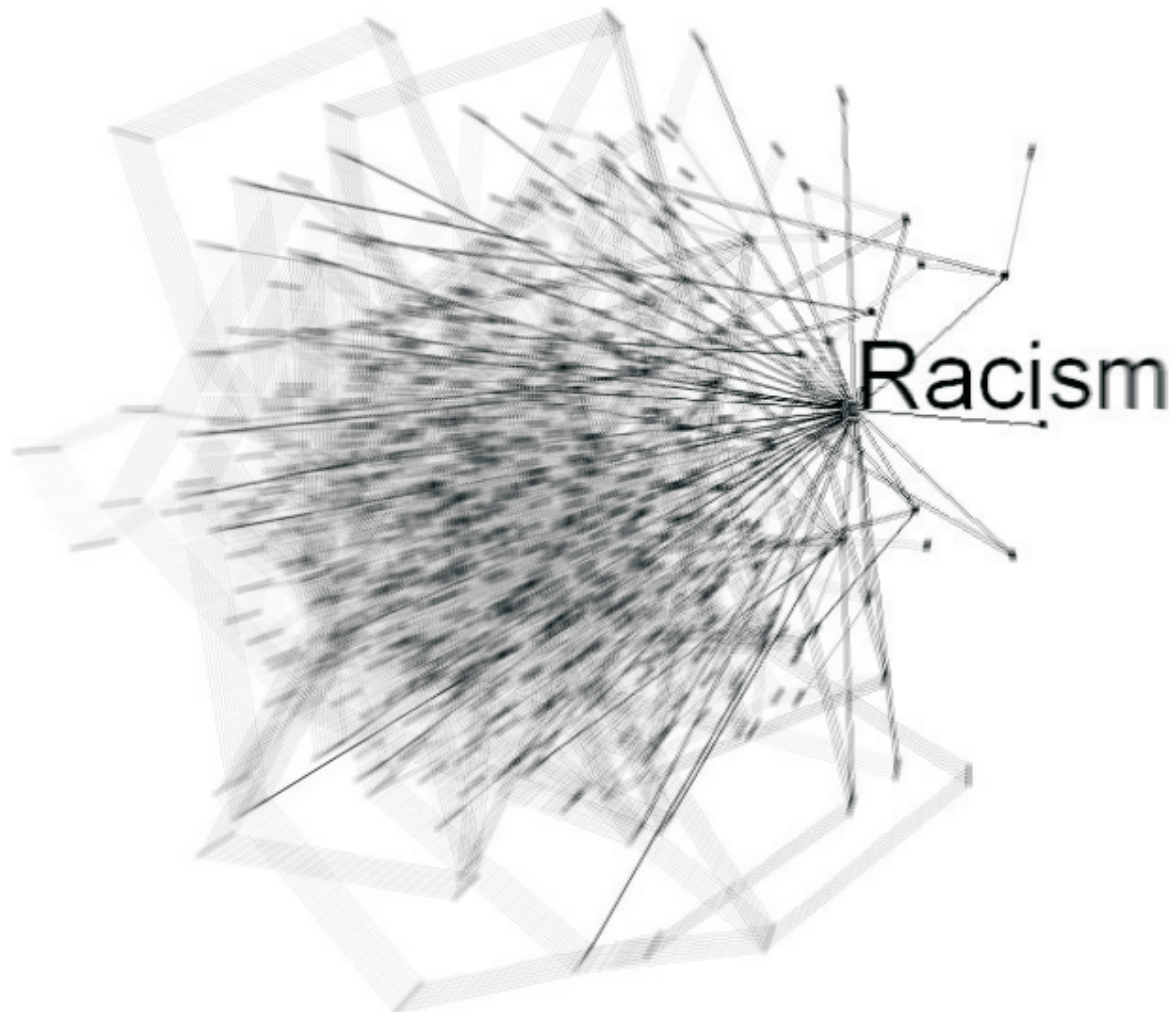
Figure 10.2.14. Racism

Database: World Problems and Issues

Link type: aggravates problems

Network nodes: 300

UIA database: <http://db.uia.org/scripts/sweb.dll/uiaf?DD=PR&DR=B1047>



Racism and racial discrimination are in practice used in a range of overlapping ways. The ambiguity of their use often causes political and even scientific discourse to become confused and itself prevents progress towards constructive solutions. Racial discrimination can be considered as the broader concept following its definition in the international Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination as any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in political, economic, social, cultural or any other fields of public life. Such discrimination may be based upon ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, which may be used to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in a wide variety of forms. Such action may encourage acts of violence or incitement to such acts against groups of persons of another colour or ethnic origin. Racism has been the subject of several declarations by UNESCO. In 1978 it was defined as including racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behaviour, and institutionalized practices, resulting in racial inequality, as well as the fallacious notion that discriminatory relations between groups are morally and scientifically justifiable. Racism as a doctrine attributes the determination of human capacities to specific inherited physical traits that are considered to distinguish a race. Prejudice and discrimination on the ground of race, colour or ethnic origin occur in a number of societies, where physical appearance - notably skin colour - and ethnic origin are accorded prime importance. "Racism" has increasingly come to mean the hostility that one person feels for another because of his or her colour alone. These racist beliefs have been so widespread that although authoritatively and consistently proved to be erroneous, they still continue to be an important cause of prejudice. Racism, which takes a number of forms, is a complex phenomenon involving a whole range of economic, political, historical, cultural, social and psychological factors. It is generally a tool used by certain groups to reinforce their political and economic power, the most serious cases being those involving apartheid and genocide. Racism exists in all parts of the world. Violence, even genocide against indigenous groups, has become endemic in many countries. Racism is often aggravated by international systems backed by powerful economic and military factors. Land rights claims of indigenous peoples are often rejected in the name of development and national security. Immigration policies and practices discriminate on the basis of race in many parts of Europe, Asia and North America. Education policies deny equality of opportunity and employment on the ground of race. Although maintaining the conception of a socially unified society, racial divisions may be preserved but expressed in other terms, so that in reality there is racial differentiation. Some characteristics of society favour a racial differential, incorporated in polity, and expressed as cultural barriers, de-facto segregation, inequality and demographic recognition of racial and ethnic categories. Conflict may be acknowledged but the significance of racial and ethnic difference for the conflict may be denied.