UNVEILING THE CHAMELEON: EXPLORING THE ADAPTIVE NATURE AND THE EVOLVING PATTERN OF RACISM BEYOND THE COLOR OF SKIN

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Abstract

Racism, a pervasive and insidious force, has demonstrated a debilitating and unsettling ability to adapt and evolve to a form transcending the confines of skin color. This paper interrogates the dynamic and protean nature of racism, revealing its capacity to morph and reconfigure in response to changing social, cultural, and political landscapes. The paper delves into historical and contemporary contexts to explain how racism has adapted to maintain its grip on power and privilege. From the subtle yet pernicious effects of micro aggressions to the overt violence of hate crimes, this paper examines the evolving pattern of racism, its intersection with other forms of injustice and oppressions. The paper interrogates how racism has co-opted seemingly progressive discourse, exploiting language and ideology to perpetuate inequality. The paper also, by unmasking the chameleon-like nature of racism, aims to beam a searchlight on the complex hydra-headed phenomenon, in the process, informing strategies for resistance and counteraction. By understanding racism's adaptive and evolving patterns, we offer a better path to dismantle its manifestations and create a more just and equitable society.

Keywords: Adaptive-nature, evolving-pattern, injustice, oppression, and racism.

1. Introduction

Racism is one of those persistent social issues that has come to stay despite many advocacy efforts that will not go away, no matter how much we critiqued it, protested against it, or tried to change it through policies. Traditionally, we have looked at racism through the lens of skin color, perceived biological inferiority, and physical characteristics, especially when considering the dark histories of slavery, colonialism, and apartheid (Fredrickson, 2002; Omi & Winant, 2015). But recent research shows that racism isn't a static concept; it's actually quite adaptable, evolving, and capable of manifesting in ways that go beyond just skin color (Carlo et al., 2022; Reece, 2024). This flexibility allows racism to act like a "chameleon," changing its colors to blend into new cultural, political, and technological environments.

The real issue here is that while legal reforms and global awareness efforts have made strides in reducing overt racial discrimination, more subtle and structural forms of racism are still very much alive. These include things like cultural exclusion, xenophobia, economic marginalization, and epistemic racism, which favors certain ways of knowing while pushing others to the sidelines (Grosfoguel, 2013; Ruwuya, 2025). The persistence of racism presents significant hurdles for justice, democracy, and the idea of global multiculturalism.

This paper aims to take a closer look at how racism adapts and evolves beyond just skin color. It will explores the historical changes in racism, how it shows up in today's world, media, education, and digital technology. It discusses what this means for social development.

The importance of this study lies in rethinking racism as a complex issue that goes beyond biological traits, incorporating cultural, linguistic, and epistemic aspects. By using frameworks like Critical Race Theory, Postcolonial Theory, and Intersectionality, this paper aims to add to the ongoing discussions about race and justice. Structurally, it starts with some conceptual and theoretical groundwork, traces the historical path of racism, and examines its contemporary implications. This text explores how issues manifest beyond just skin color and wraps up with some strategies for breaking down these concepts, along with suggestions for future research.

2. Conceptual Clarification

Scope of Racism

Racism has long been understood as the prejudice, discrimination, or hostility directed at individuals or groups based on their racial or ethnic backgrounds. This often stems from the belief that one group is inherently superior to another (Fredrickson, 2002). While earlier definitions of racism focused mainly on biological factors and visible traits like skin color, racism has evolved into more intricate and often subtle forms. Exploring racism beyond just skin color reveals how it has evolved from a simple biological difference to a complex web of symbolic and cultural hierarchies. As Stuart Hall pointed out back in 1996, race acts like a "floating signifier", its meaning changes depending on the context, but it consistently helps to organize differences and power dynamics. In today's global landscape, racism has expanded to include factors like religion, accent, nationality, sexuality, and even our digital identities (Omi & Winant, 2015).

Racism is fundamentally an ontological issue; it's a disruption in the very essence of our being. Fanon (1967) describes the racialized individual as trapped in a "zone of non-being," where their humanity is perpetually postponed. This means that racism isn't just a social bias; it's a way of existing that creates a fundamental difference in how people are perceived. It determines who gets to be seen as a complete human being and who is pushed into the shadows or deemed disposable.

Mbembe (2020) takes this further with his concept of necropolitics, the politics surrounding life and death. In this framework, racism serves as the moral code that dictates which lives are deemed valuable and which can be sacrificed. The racialized body becomes the battleground where power, violence, and exclusion collide. The chameleon metaphor beautifully illustrates the deep-rooted nature of racism and how it persists over time. Just like a chameleon changes its color to blend in, racism shifts and adapts to fit the moral, political, and intellectual climate of each era. Back in the colonial days, racism was often framed in biological terms; in the twentieth century, it took on a cultural guise; and nowadays, it presents itself as meritocracy, data, and supposedly "neutral" systems. Foucault's (1977) concept of power as something that's productive, meaning it doesn't just vanish but reshapes itself through discourse, helps us grasp this evolution. Racism endures not through direct confrontation but by transforming: it morphs to maintain its legitimacy

In today's world, this kind of ontological control is maintained through various new tools, like digital surveillance, border policies, economic marginalization, and algorithmic sorting (Smith & Dastin, 2024). The sneaky nature of racism allows it to disguise this exclusionary metaphysics under the guise of technology and governance. Recent philosophical discussions, like those by Butler (2022) and Mills (2022), refer to this transformation as epistemic camouflage. Racism persists not through overt aggression but by influencing what we see and understand. It lurks behind moral concepts like objectivity, universality, or "color-blindness." This clever disguise allows racism to continue.

Racism isn't just about blatant claims of superiority; it operates as a fundamental framework that shapes how we value, recognize, and legitimize human life. As Mbembe (2020) points out, in postcolonial and neoliberal settings, the processes of racialization have increasingly focused on individuals like foreigners, migrants, or refugees, whose very existence is often questioned and made vulnerable. This is clearly illustrated in Molefi's (2024) research on African migrants in Tunisia, which shows how racialized exclusion is perpetuated through seemingly neutral bureaucratic labels like "illegal" or "refugee." These terms mask deeper inequalities while justifying marginalization.

Similarly, modern technological systems only deepen these exclusionary patterns. Algorithmic decision-making, often based on historically biased data, continues to fuel structural discrimination while giving off an illusion of objectivity and efficiency. Ruha Benjamin captures this issue with her idea of the "New Jim Code," highlighting how digital technologies and automated systems subtly reinforce racial hierarchies, echoing past forms of institutionalized racism, making them less visible but no less impactful. Shaping our thoughts, even in societies that claim to uphold equality.

Charles Mills (2022) brought forth the concept of the racial contract, an unspoken agreement that shapes our social reality through a lens of ignorance. This suggests that racial injustice continues not because people are unaware of the truth, but because the very structure of knowledge is designed to

overlook certain truths. The way racism adapts is fundamentally about knowledge: it changes by altering what we deem rational, objective, or even human.

Racism is an Epistemic and Moral Order. This perspective is echoed by Mignolo (2011) and Maldonado-Torres (2007), they frame racism as intertwined with the coloniality of being and knowledge. They contend that Western modernity carved out its identity by portraying others, the African, the Indigenous, the Muslim, as "less rational" or "less human." Therefore, racism isn't just about actions; it's embedded in the very framework of our thinking. Recent studies (Hamilton et al., 2022; Oyelowo & Richards, 2025) reveal how colour-blind rhetoric and institutional narratives continue to fuel this epistemic blindness in the 21st century. For example, universities and digital platforms often claim to be neutral, yet they still reinforce hierarchies of access, belonging, and voice. In this way, racism cleverly disguises itself as rationality and fairness, thriving in the shadows of our societal structures.

Therefore, racism has ethical and technological dimensions. When we look at racism through a philosophical lens, it prompts us to think about our connections with others and our ethical responsibilities. Heidegger's idea of Milstein, or being-with-others, gives us a way to understand this: racism disrupts the true essence of being-with, reducing the Other to an object instead of recognizing them as a fellow participant in existence. In this light, racism becomes an ontological mistake, an obstacle to genuine coexistence. Mbembe (2020) notes that in postcolonial and neoliberal settings, racialization increasingly focuses on the foreigner, the migrant, or the refugee. For example, Molefi's (2024) research on African migrants in Tunisia shows how racialized exclusion now plays out through bureaucratic labels like "illegal" or "refugee." Likewise, algorithmic systems perpetuate bias by relying on data that reflects historical inequalities; leading to what Benjamin (2019) refers to as the "New Jim Code." Judith Butler brings in an important ethical perspective by describing racism as a failure to recognize others as equally human. In this context, ethical awareness goes beyond just feeling empathy; it's about the ability to perceive things differently.

So, the "color" of racism has broadened, it's no longer just about skin tone; it now encompasses symbolic markers of identity, visibility, and belonging. The way we think about race has adapted to fit the needs of modern governance and the realities of digital capitalism. In our digital world, as noted by {Smith & Dastin (2024) and Paradies & Ture (2024)}, racism is woven into technological frameworks, transforming data and algorithms into moral tools that determine who gets seen, valued, and included. This new shape-shifter operates under the guise of code, metrics, and innovation, what Mbembe (2020) refers to as the "techno-racial complex."

Peeling back the layers of the chameleon means diving into the philosophical depths of modernity, revealing how it morphs to sustain racism. This exploration encourages a decolonial perspective on human existence, what Mbembe (2017) refers to as recognizing our shared vulnerability. Philosophy's role, then, isn't just to outline the various forms racism takes but to uncover the underlying metaphysics of domination that allow it to thrive, often unnoticed, within the framework of modern rationality. In essence, the chameleon-like nature of racism tells the story of modernity itself: a constantly shifting structure of exclusion that lurks within the very institutions that profess progress and enlightenment

The concept of "adaptive racism" describes how racist ideologies and practices can change and persist over time and in different contexts. Much like a chameleon, racism adapts its tactics in response to shifts in social, political, and technological landscapes (Carlo et al., 2022). For example, while blatant forms of racism, such as segregation, have decreased in many places, more hidden forms like micro aggressions, cultural exclusion, and algorithmic bias continue to reinforce racial hierarchies (Hofmann et al., 2024).

The phrase "beyond skin color" highlights how racism has expanded into cultural, linguistic, and knowledge-based areas. Epistemic racism, for instance, favors Western ways of knowing while sidelining Indigenous and non-Western perspectives (Grosfoguel, 2013; Ruwuya, 2025). This shift indicates that we need to view racism not just as a biological issue but as a structural one, deeply woven into our systems of knowledge, governance, and technology.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) posits that racism is not an anomaly but a regular, systemic, and persistent aspect of society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). It emphasizes how laws, policies, and institutions perpetuate racial inequality while presenting themselves as neutral. Recent studies have also expanded CRT to include the concept of epistemic justice, illustrating how attempts to ban CRT can be seen as a form of suppressing knowledge (Gonzales Rose, 2024).

Postcolonial theory shines a light on the lasting impacts of colonialism on race, culture, and identity. It highlights how the racial and knowledge hierarchies established during colonial times continue to influence global relationships today (Said, 1978; Mbembe, 2001). By placing racism within the context of colonial history, post colonialism offers insights into how racism evolves alongside modern globalization and migration.

The term intersectionality, introduced by Crenshaw (1989), points out that racism doesn't exist in a vacuum; it intersects with gender, class, sexuality, and various other forms of oppression. This concept is crucial for understanding adaptive racism, as it reveals how people face multiple layers of marginalization in intricate and changing ways.

By weaving these perspectives together, this study views racism as a dynamic, multifaceted system that transforms from biological prejudice into cultural, structural, and epistemic exclusion. Critical Race Theory (CRT) lays the groundwork for examining systemic racism, while postcolonial theory places it within a historical and global context, and intersectionality captures its complex, layered effects. This comprehensive framework enables a deeper investigation into the evolving nature of racism that goes beyond just skin color.

3. Historical Evolution of Racism

When we look back at history, it's clear that racism has often been linked to visible differences, especially skin color. During the transatlantic slave trade, enslaved Africans were unfairly labeled as inferior, a narrative that served to justify their exploitation and the social dominance of others (Fredrickson, 2002). Colonialism only deepened this mindset, creating a racial hierarchy where Europeans positioned themselves as superior and pushed colonized peoples into lower-status roles (Mudimbe, 1988). This kind of thinking led to systems like apartheid in South Africa and Jim Crow laws in the United States, which made skin-color discrimination a part of the legal and political framework (Fredrickson, 2002; Mandela, 1994).

The Shift toward Institutional Racism

By the mid-20th century, overt racial discrimination began to lose its grip on society, largely due to global anticolonial movements, civil rights activism, and the formal end of apartheid. But racism didn't just disappear; it evolved, weaving itself into institutional and structural practices (Omi & Winant, 2015). Policies that appeared to be race-neutral, like redlining in housing, mass incarceration in the U.S., or immigration laws in Europe, continued to reinforce racial hierarchies while masquerading as fair and legal (Bonilla-Silva, 2018)

Racism has also taken on different forms across the globe. For instance, in Latin America, "colorism" tends to favor lighter-skinned individuals within Black and Indigenous communities (Telles, 2014). In Europe, xenophobia aimed at migrants and religious minorities (such as Muslims) reveals a kind of racism that transcends skin color, zeroing in on cultural and religious differences (Balibar, 1991). Meanwhile, in Africa, internal ethnic conflicts sometimes adopt racialized dimensions, underscoring that racism isn't solely a Western problem but a global system of inequality (Mbembe, 2001).

The late 20th and early 21st centuries brought about a notable change: biological racism fell out of favor in mainstream conversations, while cultural and epistemic racism gained prominence. Cultural racism depicts certain groups as outdated or at odds with "modern" values, while epistemic racism undermines non-Western knowledge systems (Grosfoguel, 2013). For example, the exclusion of African philosophies, indigenous sciences, or non-Western ways of knowing from global academic standards illustrates how racism has morphed into a form of knowledge-based domination (Ruwuya, 2025).

4. Chameleonic Adaptive Nature of Racism

Racism is incredibly adaptable, shifting its shape over time and across different contexts while still serving its main purpose: upholding hierarchies and privilege. Much like a chameleon, it changes its "look" in response to evolving social, political, and economic environments (Carlo et al., 2022). Take, for instance, the period following the abolition of slavery; racism didn't just vanish but morphed into Jim Crow segregation in the United States. After that system fell apart, it re-emerged as mass incarceration and systemic inequality (Alexander, 2012). This ability to change form underscores racism's resilience.

Racism finds ways to embed itself within policies and institutions. Politically, nationalist and populist movements often lean on cultural or religious identifiers to create exclusionary lines (Balibar, 1991). Economically, discrimination continues to thrive in hiring practices, wage gaps, and limited access to capital, even when explicit racial language is nowhere to be found (Pager & Shepherd, 2008). Legally, "color-blind" laws, those that ignore race, often end up reinforcing inequality instead of breaking it down, as they obscure systemic disadvantages (Bonilla-Silva, 2018).

Racism also adapts by infiltrating cultural and social spheres. It shows up through stereotypes in media, omissions in educational curricula, and unequal representation in cultural stories (Hall, 1997). Nowadays, digital platforms expose new forms of racism, like algorithmic bias in AI systems that unfairly penalize people based on their dialect or appearance (Hofmann et al., 2024). These subtle shifts make it even harder to spot and confront racism.

The racial landscape in the U.S. reveals a pattern of evolving methods for maintaining racial control. After the Civil War, the end of slavery didn't wipe out racial hierarchy; instead, it morphed into Jim Crow laws that institutionalized discrimination and exclusion (Du Bois, 1935). When segregation was officially dismantled during the Civil Rights Movement, new forms of racial control emerged, often more subtle yet just as harmful, particularly seen in the surge of mass incarceration. Alexander (2012) highlights in her book, The New Jim Crow, how the criminal justice system operates like a racial caste system, and unfairly targeting Black communities under the pretense of crime prevention. This illustrates how racial systems adapt to changing social and political landscapes while still upholding structural inequality.

In Europe, racism has increasingly morphed into a cultural and religious issue, moving away from just biological differences. Balibar (1991) brings up the idea of "neo-racism" or "racism without races," where exclusion is based on perceived cultural incompatibilities like language, religion, or lifestyle. A notable example is the debate surrounding headscarf bans in France, which frames Islamic identity as at odds with European secular values (Scott, 2007). These practices show how racism evolves, shifting from biological classifications to notions of cultural and civilizational superiority.

In Africa, we can observe how colonial racial categories have stuck around even after independence. Mbembe (2001) points out in his work, On the Post colony, colonial power didn't just disappear; instead, it transformed and became woven into local governance and identity. For example, the divisions between ethnic groups and the hierarchies created by colonial racial thinking often linger in postcolonial states (Mamdani, 1996). This shows that racial adaptation isn't just a Western issue—it can also take hold in non-Western settings where colonial classifications continue to shape political and social dynamics.

5. Racism beyond the Color of Skin

While overt biological racism may be on the decline, cultural racism is still very much alive, often targeting individuals based on their cultural practices, religion, language, and values. Unlike the more visible exclusion based on skin color, cultural racism frequently masquerades as a defense of "national identity" or "civilization" (Balibar, 1991). Take, for example, the bans on religious attire in various European countries, like the hijab or turban, which frame certain cultural expressions as threats to social unity (Modood, 2007). These actions effectively racialize cultural differences, portraying them as fixed and inferior.

5.1 Xenophobia and Migration-Linked Racism

The global movement of people has intensified various forms of racism aimed at migrants and refugees. In Europe, xenophobia directed at Africans, Asians, and Middle Eastern communities often shows up in political discourse, strict border policies, and even violent reactions (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2014). In South Africa, the xenophobic violence against fellow African migrants underscores how racism operates not just across continents but also within the Global South (Crush & Ramachandran, 2015).

Xenophobia and migration-linked racism are among the most subtle yet harmful forms of racial prejudice that have evolved. Traditionally, racism was often tied to visible traits like skin color, but in the twenty-first century, we're seeing a shift. Now, factors like ethnicity, nationality, and migration status are becoming the new markers of racial distinction. As Balibar (2020) points out, this change leads to what he calls "racism without races," where exclusion is based not on biology but on cultural and national identities.

Xenophobia goes beyond just a fear of those who are different; it's a politically charged emotion that turns feelings of insecurity into reasons for exclusion. Mbembe (2021) notes that "the stranger becomes a mirror through which a society projects its anxieties about sovereignty and belonging." In this context, migration-linked racism represents a new form of racial hierarchy, where borders take precedence over individual identities as the main site of discrimination. De Genova (2020) also highlights how border policies "racialize mobility itself," branding migrants as perpetual outsiders whose movements challenge the established order of the nation-state.

The racism centered around migration often camouflages itself behind the language of security and legality. The way refugees and asylum seekers are criminalized, especially in Europe, North America, and South Africa, highlights what Essed and Hoving (2024) refer to as "the new racial grammars of belonging." In this context, xenophobia merges with neoliberal nationalism, creating what Grosfoguel (2021) describes as "epistemic borders", the intellectual and cultural barriers that uphold material and political exclusion.

5.2 Classism and Economic Exclusion as Racialized Forms

Economic exclusion can also be viewed through a racial lens. Marginalized communities frequently face barriers to fair access to jobs, land, credit, and resources, even in environments where legal equality is supposedly upheld (Pager & Shepherd, 2008). For instance, systemic wage disparities and biased hiring practices create racialized class divisions, leading to what Bonilla-Silva (2018) refers to as "color-blind racism," where inequality continues to thrive under the guise of neutral market conditions. Classism fundamentally refers to the discrimination or bias that arises from someone's socioeconomic status. Yet, in many societies, you can't really talk about economic exclusion without considering race, as historically marginalized racial groups have often been pushed into lower economic tiers. This means that class hierarchies frequently double as racial hierarchies, often without us even realizing it.

Take the United States, for example. Black and Latino communities encounter systemic obstacles when it comes to building wealth, thanks to the long-lasting impacts of slavery, redlining, and biased labor practices. Research by Oliver and Shapiro (2006) highlights that the wealth gaps tied to race are passed down through generations—not just because of class differences, but because racism has historically shaped who gets access to housing, credit, and jobs. Additionally, mass incarceration creates significant barriers to economic mobility for African Americans, leading to what Western (2006) describes as a "prison reentry poverty trap."

In South Africa, the connection between class and race is just as strong. Even though apartheid officially ended, most Black South Africans still find themselves economically marginalized due to a history of land dispossession and labor exploitation. Here, economic exclusion is racialized, as wealth and land remain heavily concentrated in the hands of the white minority (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005).

Looking at Europe, classism also intersects with racial exclusion, particularly for migrants and minorities. Migrants often find themselves stuck in low-wage, unstable jobs while facing systemic hurdles to social mobility. For instance, migrant workers from North Africa or South Asia in countries like France, Italy, and the UK experience exclusion that isn't just about class, but is also deeply racialized (Wrench, 2016).

5.3 Epistemic Racism

One of the more subtle yet equally harmful forms of racism is epistemic racism, which involves the suppression and devaluation of non-Western knowledge systems. The legacies of colonialism have ensured that African, Indigenous, and other ways of knowing are often left out of academic discussions and scientific narratives (Grosfoguel 2013). In today's world, we still see examples like the ongoing global anti-doping research, where viewpoints from non-Western cultures are often brushed aside as unworthy (Ruwuya, 2025). This situation highlights how racism goes beyond just biology and culture; it seeps into our ideas, intellectual traditions, and even the scientific frameworks we use.

6. Contemporary Manifestations of Racism

The media plays a crucial role in shaping how we view race. Unfortunately, it often reinforces stereotypes about marginalized groups, linking them to deviance, poverty, or violence (Hall, 1997). In films and TV shows around the world, whiteness is typically portrayed as the standard, while Black, Indigenous, and other minority ethnic (BIPOC) identities are frequently sidelined or pigeonholed (hooks, 1992). Even though today's media landscape is becoming more diverse, it still faces challenges in breaking down deep-rooted racial hierarchies.

Our education systems often perpetuate inequality by leaving out non-Western histories and ways of knowing, which reinforces what's known as epistemic racism (Grosfoguel, 2013). Discrimination in the job market is also a significant issue: research shows that people with African, Arab, or Asian names tend to have a harder time getting hired compared to those with names that sound European (Pager & Shepherd, 2008). These systemic obstacles highlight how racism can morph into disadvantages in both professional and academic settings.

In our digital world, new forms of discrimination are emerging. Artificial intelligence systems and online platforms often mirror the biases found in the data they're trained on. Hofmann et al. (2024) point out that dialect prejudice can affect AI decisions related to job prospects, criminality, and trustworthiness. Additionally, social media platforms can become hotbeds for hate speech, online harassment, and racially charged misinformation (Mason & Ammari, 2025). These forms of algorithmic and digital racism show how modern technology can perpetuate old biases in subtle ways.

Racism shakes the foundations of democratic institutions by embedding systemic inequality into laws, policies, and institutions. Color-blind policies might appear neutral on the surface, but they often hide deeper inequities and can erode citizens' trust in justice systems (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). Democracies that ignore the issue of adaptive racism risk falling into exclusionary politics and populist nationalism, which can threaten the very essence of pluralism.

The ongoing presence of cultural and xenophobic racism disrupts the integration of multiculturalism by portraying diversity as a cause for division rather than a source of enrichment (Modood, 2007). On a global scale, the unequal treatment of migrants and refugees only worsens instability (Achiume, 2020). The adaptability of racism, therefore, stands in the way of fostering intercultural dialogue, peace, and sustainable coexistence.

The ethical dilemmas posed by the adaptive nature of racism are significant. For example, algorithmic discrimination raises serious questions about fairness and accountability in the realm of emerging technologies (Hofmann et al., 2024). Additionally, epistemic racism brings up moral issues regarding the exclusion of non-Western knowledge systems from global discussions, effectively denying intellectual equality (Ruwuya, 2025). Tackling these challenges means rethinking justice not just in political and economic terms, but also in cultural and epistemic contexts.

7. Conclusion

As this paper has illustrated, racism it is not a fixed concept nor is it solely defined by skin color. It is more like a chameleon, constantly changing and adapting to the historical, cultural, technological, and political landscapes around it. From its early roots in slavery and colonial systems to its more subtle forms found in digital algorithms, cultural exclusion, and the erasure of knowledge, racism continues to morph in ways that defy simple explanations.

One of the key issues we have identified is that many people today mistakenly believe that the decline of overt racism, those blatant acts based on skin color, means we've made significant racial progress. This perspective often overlooks the more subtle and systemic forms of racism that still exist. By doing so, we allow racism to persist, as it cleverly embeds itself in policies, institutions, and our daily lives.

The goals of this paper are to delve into the adaptable nature of racism and to examine its expressions beyond just skin color, which have been achieved through a thorough analysis of historical trends, theoretical frameworks, and modern case studies. Our findings show that racism is adept at shifting its focus and justifications: it moves from physical traits to cultural aspects, from bodies to language, and from direct exclusion to biases embedded in algorithms. These insights reinforce the idea that racism is deeply rooted in structures and knowledge systems, rather than being just a matter of personal interactions. The contribution of this paper lies in rethinking racism as a dynamic system of oppression that calls for equally flexible strategies of resistance. This viewpoint broadens the horizons of Critical Race Theory and postcolonial studies by framing racism as a complex, global, and ever-evolving issue.

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