A number of concepts relating to racial/ethnic discrimination have been used inconsistently in academic and policy literature. Whilst direct racist discrimination is perhaps the easiest type to understand, as rooted in racism and ethnic prejudice, many other types — e.g. ‘structural’ or ‘institutional’ discrimination — have little to do with an identifiable perpetrator, and are more contested in their meaning. Focusing primarily on the sphere of employment, the paper begins by describing the types of ethnic discrimination that are most commonly found in the literature. Through a process of cross-classification, ways are suggested of reducing the ambiguities surrounding many of these concepts, with a proposed clarification of the conceptual boundaries of each type. It is also proposed that some new ‘types’ may be usefully added to the more recognised categories of discrimination.

Finally, a number of further questions are raised regarding the implications of the typology for ways of investigating and combating ethnic discrimination in employment.

The presentation will be based on a working paper which is available at: http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/42806