



Structural Racism: How We're Here and Where To Go

Racism is about power and the elevation of some populations to positions of domination and the subordination of others. It is about who is deemed worthy/unworthy of a place in a society/territory; who will receive the protection of the law; and who will be subject to unusual punishment and control.

Systemic injustice is rooted deep in societal norms, has many oblivious participants, and will take continuous work to dismantle. Structural racism is a systemic injustice.

The United States is once again being forced to reckon with its white supremacist foundations that persist in all realms of existence. And the rest of the world cannot absolve themselves given that ALL our economic and social systems are a direct byproduct of colonial legacies centered on racism, exploitation and violence.

Given history's critical role in establishing the undefinable norms and power dynamics always at play, it is imperative to understand how exactly we are where we are today.

Recently, the murders of Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and other Black Americans have cast a spotlight on systemic racism, pushing it to the forefront of many minds around the world. And while we have previously seen collective activism rise and fall with little change to the system itself, this time the call feels different. There is increasingly recognized and widespread emphasis on dismantling the system itself. To achieve this, within a system of injustice, it will take continuous work. The COVID-19 pandemic's amplification of racial disparities has been consistently nauseating, infuriating and exhausting. And so this uprising feels even more fitting given the endless shortcomings of the status quo that are being blatantly exposed.

There is no comprehensive conversation to be had on this. Given the centuries of context we must dismantle, no single action feels like it can suffice. However, this document compiles a few starting points to help actualise the work that needs to be done for an unrelenting, persistent dismantling of systemic racism. This is a live document and will be added to regularly.

Understand historical and contextual background for some of these issues driving structural racism.

[How the Europeans Divided Africa](#) explains the covert and overt exploitation of the people and division of the continent by European colonial powers.

[Why is Africa so Poor? You asked Google – here's the answer:](#) This is a direct result of western colonialism, slavery, and financial entrapment.

[Types of Colonialism](#) explains that colonialism is multi-faceted and more complex than one realizes.

[Human zoos: When real people were exhibited](#) examines the roots of othering.

[Notes on the Study of Language: Towards Critical Race Criminology](#) provides insight into how language used in modern criminal justice systems criminalizes BIPOC.

[The significance of Sarah Baartman](#) again documents the dehumanization of African people by Europeans.

[Stanford historian uncovers the dark roots of humanitarianism](#) showing the inextricable links between imperialism and humanitarianism.

Understand what is happening and the context in which it is happening, without burdening those whom it is happening to.

[Black Lives Matter](#) has many resources available on their website. There are also resources [here](#) along with petitions and places to donate.



[Resources and information on the Black Lives Matter movement](#), including a list of accounts you can follow on social media



Informative Videos

[George Floyd and the Dominoes of Racial Injustice](#) by Trevor Noah (The Daily Show)

[How Can We Win](#) by Kimberly Jones

[We Cannot Stay Silent About George Floyd](#) by Hasan Minhaj (Patriot Act)

[The Broken Policing System](#) by Hasan Minhaj (Patriot Act)

[Police](#) by John Oliver (Last Week Tonight)

Have conversations with family, friends, and coworkers in a constructive way. Now is the time to speak up: use your voice to support those that systemic racism harms.

[#TalkAboutTrayvon](#): A toolkit for white people (and others who do not have firsthand experience with being Black in the United States) to talk about Trayvon Martin's death.

"White silence about race allows racism and white supremacy to be maintained and normalized. It's important for those of us who are white to break white silence and have honest conversations with our friends, family, and neighbors. These conversations can help us find others to build with and change the minds of people who disagree with us about racial justice."

[How to Talk Trauma & Protests at Work. The \(very non-definitive\) Guidelines.](#) Conversations about race are uncomfortable and fraught with potential pitfalls, particularly for Black people and other BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color). These guidelines provide advice for individuals looking to support BIPOC at work in an appropriate and helpful manner.

[What to do \(in the workplace\) to help further cultural and systemic shift?](#) Once the initial reaction has occurred, what then? Perhaps creating an anti-racist library is the next step.

Work to understand the demands of the protesters and activists in your community.

In the **United States**, many protests are calling to defund the police. Below are resources to better understand this demand.

[“What does police abolition mean?”](#)

A [cop’s perspective](#) on defunding the police and the movement in general

Informative podcasts

[The Systems That Protect the Police](#)

[The Case for Defunding the Police](#)

[What abolish the police means](#)

[Podcast: Brene Brown interviews Ibram Kendi on How to Be An Anti Racist](#)

In **Europe**, many protests are calling to reexamine history, particularly which viewpoints are highlighted in mainstream history. Below are resources to better understand this demand.

[Compilation of resources that looks at demanding racial justice in the UK](#)

[Black history is British history](#)

[Removing Statues Doesn't Erase History – It Makes It](#)

[Britain's Record On Racism Is No Less Bloody Than America's](#)

[George Floyd killing opens racism wounds for European blacks](#)

[The racism that killed George Floyd was built in Britain](#)

Challenge your own beliefs and commit to continually educating yourself.

To dismantle systemic racism, it is not enough to be ‘not racist.’ Individuals and groups have to actively work *against* racism.

Anti-racism resources at the individual level (what YOU can do!)

[Tools](#) to begin your journey towards anti-racism

[Accomplices Not Allies](#): Abolishing the Ally Industrial Complex

[Anti-racism resources for white people](#): Both a starting point and deeper dive

[If the BLM conversation makes you uncomfortable; good. Here's what to do next](#)

[Turning Away From The Pain Of This Moment Is A Privilege. Instead, Turn Your Discomfort Into Action](#)

Anti-racism resources at the organisational level (what GROUPS can do!)

[A Framework for Action](#) in Response to Moments of Outrage & Crisis

[AWAKE to WOKE to WORK](#): Building a Race Equity Culture

[Stepping up at work](#): fight anti-Black racism and inequality in the workplace

[Color Brave Space](#) — How to run a better equity focused meeting

Additional Resources

[A Radical Library](#) List of PDF books, texts, podcasts, articles

[Necessary Reading List](#) Compiled by @gravewine on Instagram

[Black History Month Library](#) A compilation by authors, genres, subject, and individual resources

[Are Prisons Obsolete - Angela David Book](#)

[The End of Policing](#) Book by Alex S. Vitale

[How To Be Anti Racist In Aid](#) Video conversation about racism in the aid sector

[Resource Pack on Anti Racism](#) Put together by the Fifty Shades of Aid community

About LensShift

The case to reassess the global development realm and social impact work is not new. But, few talk about why we often get it so wrong in the first place. The history we (don't) learn, the (problematic) language we hear, and the (single-narrative) media around us all play a fundamental role in how we perceive reality, norms and 'other'-ness. That's where we come in.

LensShift is a space that facilitates learning, critical reflection and discourse on social change. Rather than replicating the compelling work of others, we bring together their wisdom to push beyond the status quo. We don't claim to have all the answers. Instead, we hope to provide enough information to get everyone in the habit of asking more questions.