

**Racial Justice Study Group**

Our topic this month is Structural Racism. We have already studied structural racism in the group, but will be returning to it since it is such a key topic.

Here is what is in this document.

**Base readings on structural racism** (2 resources) - start here! If you have attended a previous RJSG on structural racism, you may have already seen these… review them or skip them if this applies to you.

**Additional readings on immigration** (2 resources) - these are new to everyone and will inform our discussion this month.

**Optional additional readings** (5 resources) - if you want to dig deeper, check out these additional resources.

**Discussion questions:**

1. Think about your personal history. In what ways have some of the institutions, structures, and historical policies described in the reading touched your personal history and that of your family?
2. Shifting to immigration - do you see a thru-line between our country’s history with immigration and the policies of the current administration?

**Base Readings on Structural Racism:**

These are our primary readings on structural racism. If you have attended a RJSG about structural racism before, you may have already looked at these, but feel free to review.

**(1 of 2) Racialization and Forms of Racism**

(Excerpt below from [Race, Power, Policy Workbook: Dismantling Structural Racism](https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/race_power_policy_workbook.pdf))

Racialization shapes an institution so that as part of its normal functioning, and without anyone having a consciously racist intention, it produces disparities in outcome by race. A prime example of this is the way in which our criminal justice system has evolved. In general, officials avoid saying or doing things that are overtly racist. As long as the system appears to be operating ‘normally,’ many people do not perceive racism in the system, and many will resist any arguments that point out racial bias in criminal justice practices. And yet, racial disparities abound, in policing, in sentencing, in attitudes about the criminality of youth of color, and in profiling.

**Different forms of racism**

• *Interpersonal:* This refers to prejudices and discriminatory behaviors where one group makes assumptions about the abilities, motives, and intents of other groups based on race. This set of prejudices leads to cruel intentional or unintentional actions towards other groups.

• *Internalized:* In a society in which all aspects of identity and experience are racialized, and one group is politically, socially and economically dominant, members of stigmatized groups, who are bombarded with negative messages about their own abilities and intrinsic worth, may internalize those negative messages. It holds people back from achieving their fullest potential. It also obscures the structural and systemic nature of racial oppression, and reinforces those systems.

• *Institutional:* Where assumptions about race are structured into the social and economic institutions in our society. Institutional racism occurs when organizations, businesses, or institutions like schools and police departments discriminate, either deliberately or indirectly, against certain groups of people to limit their rights. This type of racism reflects the cultural assumptions of the dominant group.

• *Structural:* This refers to the accumulation over centuries of the effects of a racialized society. Think again about the creation of the white middle class and what it means today to have been left out of that process of wealth-creation, home ownership, college education, etc.

The critical aspect of racism that we must address today is the accumulation and incorporation of long-standing racialized practices into all of our social and economic structures, or structural racism. Think again about that ‘post-racial society’ idea. If race no longer matters, how do we explain persistent disparities among groups, and disproportionate levels of poverty, incarceration, unemployment, etc. in communities of color. We can’t. Not without a structural racism analysis.

**(2 of 2)** [**Structural Racism and American Democracy (2001)**](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpAuxPages)/4DAC9FF0A00C10F680256B6D0057879C/$file/dmarable.pdf)

Read:

* Page 3 through the end of the completed paragraph at the top of Page 4
* “[...] legal scholar Randall Kennedy [explained] “America’s paradigmatic racial pariah, the Negro . . . . Racist perceptions of blacks have given energy to policies and practices (such as racial exclusion in housing, impoverished schooling, and stingy social welfare programs) that have facilitated the growth of egregious, crime-spawning conditions that millions of Americans face in urban slums and rural backwaters across the nation.11” Thus it is not the objective reality of difference between “races” that produces disparities and social inequality between groups; it is structural racism that reproduces “races”.”
* Page 7 (Section II) through the top of Page 17 (end of Section IV)
  + Section II: Pre-America through the 1950s (pg 7-11)
  + Section III: 1960s through 2000 (pg 11-15)
  + Section IV: Laissez-Faire Racism (pg 15-17)

**Additional readings on immigration for this month:**

This month we will discuss structural racism with a focus on immigration policy. Here are three base readings on this topic:

[Behind the Criminal Immigration Law: Eugenics and White Supremacy](https://www.propublica.org/article/behind-the-criminal-immigration-law-eugenics-and-white-supremacy)

Article from Pro-publiica.

[Trump wants to pit black Americans against Latino immigrants. Don’t fall for it.](https://www.vox.com/the-big-idea/2018/2/21/17036134/black-immigration-latino-jobs-unemployment-low-wage-trump)

Vox Article

[America Was in the Business of Separating Families Long Before Trump](https://www.aclu.org/blog/racial-justice/america-was-business-separating-families-long-trump)

Article from ACLU

***Optional readings on immigration and structural racism…***

[Institutionalized Racism for Dummies](https://youtu.be/k1IgoKlLmbg) - six minute video summary on institutionalized racism

[Racism and Immigration timeline](http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/racismimmigration-timeline.pdf) - PDF timeline of US history

[What how immigration has changed in America in the last 200 years](https://www.vox.com/2016/1/4/10709366/immigration-america-200-years) - Interactive graphic and article from vox

[The Price of the Ticket](https://www.raceforward.org/research/reports/price-ticket) **NOTE: this article is from 2006.** Article from Race forward, discussing the relationship between the immigration rights movement and black americans.

[A US immigration history of white supremacy and ableism](https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/immigration-history-white-supremacy-ableism-180122111928695.html) - Article from Al Jazeera