



#BlackLivesMatter Protest in Berlin Alexanderplatz on 6 June 2020 © Nasima Selim



In Solidarity with #BlackLivesMatter and Call for Dismantling Structural Racism in Germany

Public Statement Issued by the Working Group Public Anthropology, German Anthropological Association Drafted on 6 June 2020

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In the aftermath of the brutal police killing of George Floyd, nation-wide protests have erupted against police violence and structural anti-Black racism in the United States. In most major cities in Germany, massive demonstrations organized by BIPoC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) and a supporting public are taking place. As engaged actors and witnesses of the contemporary, anthropologists in Germany cannot and should not stay silent and passive in the wake of one of the most significant anti-racist social movements in recent history. Neither can we afford to look away from Germany's homegrown racism, systemic oppression, and structural discrimination against BIPoC communities intersecting with other minorities, vulnerable and underprivileged people.

While the German media are condemning police violence in the US, the unresolved cases of police violence, persistent racial profiling, and everyday racism in Germany (as well as in other European countries) and its central institutions hardly make it to the front page. Critical voices, for instance, have pointed out that the process that started in Germany with the NSU trial is unlikely to be finished until institutional racism in the country is faced and addressed accordingly. Spectacular acts of right-wing terrorism and populist politics have triggered public condemnation in recent years. But the everyday structural racism that BIPOC communities confront throughout their lives remains the hardest to disentangle from everyday white privilege. Institutionalized forms of racism have, for instance, systematically excluded BIPOC communities from employment and subjected them to racial discrimination, which has endured in Germany since colonial times. Decolonization calls for attention to the fact that coloniality is not over - that it is not 'post-' but rather continues to permeate almost all aspects of our lives.

As members of the German Anthropological Association, we condemn police violence and structural racism everywhere and stand in solidarity with the #BlackLivesMatter movement and BIPOC protests in the US, Germany, and elsewhere. We take this opportunity to call on the general public to intensify a critique and dismantling of white privilege maintained in Germany. We emphasize the need to reinforce the longstanding and unfinished project of decolonizing the colonial and imperial legacies. We demand a renewed commitment to affirmative action in supporting the BIPOC and other minority communities in Germany at all levels.

Each epoch of social movements has reconfigured the mainstream society as much as it has shaped anthropological theory and practice in the history of our discipline. Anthropology in Germany was rooted in colonialism, like elsewhere, and complicit with the Nazi regime supported by many German anthropologists and their unquestioned white privilege. German universities and our own discipline have largely failed in institutionalizing affirmative "inclusion" of BIPOC communities. Reworking our epistemologies and engaging in more collaborative forms of research are necessary steps in this direction. However, rhetoric gestures, methodological reforms, and "discursive" solidarity on social media, in classrooms and academic texts are not sufficient. In the wake of current events, we call on fellow members of the German Anthropological Association to express solidarity with the #BlackLivesMatter protestors and to recommit to the task that we demand from German society. Through a dual critique of the white privilege perpetuated in society and within our discipline with a renewed commitment to affirmative, practical action of solidarity in executing concrete plans of action can we, as anthropologists, join the public in their call for systemic change.

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See [here](#) also the statement against police violence and anti-Black racism issued by the Association of Black Anthropologists (ABA), a section of the American Anthropological Association, and published on 6 June 2020.

Acknowledgments

We thank the Association of Black Anthropologists (ABA), a section of the American Anthropological Association, for allowing us to post here their statement against police violence and anti-Black racism. The original [google document](#) based on which our public statement has been crafted is closed now. We thank everyone for supporting the statement and the valuable feedback we received. It is possible to sign the document at a later period. Please contact us if you wish to do so:

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