

WHAT IS INSTITUTIONAL RACISM?

"The establishment recognised a dog's life was more important than Stephen's"

Institutional racism was first coined in 1967 by Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton who said that institutional racism is more subtle in it's nature as it originates from and manifests in the operations of established and respected forces in the society. The most pernicious aspect of institutional or systemic racism is the lack of any one individual to be held accountable, which makes it hard to persecute, especially within the UK justice system that's designed to prosecute individuals that commit crimes.

In 1993, Stephen Lawrence and his friend Duwayne Brooks were waiting at a bus stop when they were attacked by a group of six men who stabbed him several while calling him the most racist slurs. Following this the metropolitan police failed Stephen, his family, his friends (including Duwayne), and the Black community generally. After a complete fumbling of the case, a public inquiry was launched resulting in the Macpherson report of 1999 which highlighted that the police – as a system – were institutionally racist and that their mishandling of this case was not the result of “a few bad apples”.

Here are some examples of systems that are institutionally racist and how:

- The Police – Black people stopped and searched 9 times more than White people in Hampshire.
- The Education System – Black children on average have the lowest grades at every level of education due largely to unconscious bias, discrimination, and a system built to exclude them.
- The Healthcare System – Black women are 4 times more likely to die during childbirth than White women due to cultural assumptions around Black people being more “resilient”.
- The Justice System – Black people are sentenced longer and more often for the same crime than White people, and also their cases are more likely to be abandoned and not looked into.