



## Background

As an object of sociological research there has been little scholarly attention paid to the study of “anti-racism” (Lentin, 2004; Lloyd, 1998). Themes related to “race,” “racism,” “discrimination” and “ethnicity” tend to make up the bulk of the literature. Bibliographic evidence, from library catalogs as well as knowledge structures, such as the schemes of organization and control that are used to describe information resources, confirms this.

Library/WWW	Dates	Anti-racism	Racism
King Library (SJSU)	10/05/2015	15	2,037
	06/17/2016	16	2,143
Library of Congress	10/05/2015	108	5,349
	06/17/2016	183	7,766
WorldCat	10/05/2015	-	-
	06/17/2016	2,834	53,942
Google	10/05/2015	12,400,000	70,200,000
	06/17/2016	4,550,00 (curious decrease)	485,000,00

In the *Library of Congress Subject Headings*, one of the critical knowledge structures in global use in libraries for more than a century, the entry for “anti-racism” is brief:

### **Anti-racism** (*May Subd Geog*)

Here are entered works on beliefs, actions, movements, and policies adopted or developed to oppose racism

UF Antiracism

BT **Social justice**

RT **Multiculturalism**

**Racism**

There are far too many subject headings for “race” and “racism” to be included here but a sample is shown below; these categories often have authorized sub-headings as well.

### **Race**

NT

Political theology and race

### **Race – Religious aspects**

UF Religion and race [Former heading]

- **Baptists, [Catholic Church, etc.]**

- **Buddhism, [Christianity, etc]**

- **Christianity**

UF Race (Theology) [*Former heading*]

### **Race (The English word)**

Race (Theology)

USE Race – Religious aspects – Christianity

## **Race awareness**

## **Race discrimination**

## **Race relations**

Race relations in religion

USE Race – Religious aspects - Christianity

## **Racially mixed people – Religious aspects – Christianity**

## **Racism** (*May Subd Geog*)

BT Prejudices

RT Anti-racism

    Race relations

NT Psychoanalysis and racism

-- **Religious aspects**

I did not find any studies on “anti-racism” in the library and information science literature; furthermore Ann Agee, Library and Information Science Librarian at SJSU, and I found that the term anti-racism is not used in many of the thesauri for the electronic databases. Anti-racism appears to be conflated to racism!

## **Literature Review**

There has long been an awareness of the challenges subjects pose to providing intellectual access, but the evidence for bias only started to build with the publication in 1971 of Berman’s *Antipathies and Prejudices: A Tract on the LC Subject Headings Concerning People*. It has continued to do so until recently (Clack, 1979; Furner, 2004, 2007; Olson and Schlegel, 2001; Olson, 2002). Bias was found in the names for people groups (e.g., Gypsies instead of Roma) and complex topics such as gender, race, and class. Problems of bias include faulty generalization, inappropriate terminology, the privileging of universalism, white as normative, and hegemony over diversity in order to achieve efficiency, ghettoization, treating as exceptions, omission, being procrustean, and more. Often, the bias was unknowing and headings changed once they were made aware but not always. In the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* “Yellow peril” and “Jewish question” were removed and the “Race question” was changed to “Race relations.” “Racism,” suggested as a remedy for “Race discrimination” was added. They remain together (Knowlton, 2005).

Many problems continue to exist. Olson (2002), for example, has discussed the representation of Angela Davis’s *Women, Race & Class*. The subject headings assigned to the book showed no mention of class. More damagingly, the assigned subject headings failed to make explicit Davis’s treatment of the inter-related nature of race, class, and gender. That is, the three facets of

gender, race, and class were only represented through separate headings when in reality the concatenation of these three facets dates back to at least 1981. In other words, the three facets are a discrete, identifiable interrelated concept; a single subject heading could have been established for them.

Similarly, 40 years after Clack showed how African American history was marginalized the problems have not gone away. New, separatist headings such as “Black Theology” continue to be used without deeper relationship analysis. The most explicit treatment of the challenges posed by race, specifically in the context of racially mixed people, to library service has been discussed by Furner (2004, 2007). Furner applied Critical Race Theory (CRT) for a case study of the Dewey Classification system’s Table 3 “Racial, Ethnic, National Groups.” CRT which originated in legal and educational institutions shares much in common with librarians’ commitment to the *Library Bill of Rights*, especially the principles of intellectual freedom and diversity. Individual and institutional racism are separated in libraries, and Furner traces the history of “just library service” as “antiracist library service” and highlights instances of institutional racism that produce a “binary divide --- a divide between the information rich and the information poor ... or simply between the white and the nonwhite population.” Globally used classification schemes like the Dewey Decimal are information institutions in their own right and are structures of institutional racism. Furner suggests that the designers of knowledge structures have the moral obligation to do what they can to eradicate the racism with which they are infected simply by way of being Western institutions. The language of race and racism, he concludes is “not simply a matter of eradicating the terminology... [it] require[s], at the very least, recognition of the reality of race, and of the overarching significance of race as a social construct devised in order to exercise and maintain conditions of power, control, dominance and oppression” (Furner, p. 26).

### **Research Objectives, Limitations and Possibilities**

My research proposes the alternative of studying “anti-racism” as it has historically emerged and been practiced within religion and related inter-disciplines. The goal is to build a new anti-racist vocabulary, an *International Anti-racism Thesaurus* much like the *Pathways Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Thesaurus* project (Pathways, 2015) and the United Nations International Thesaurus of Refugee Terminology (United Nations, 2003). Both of these are tools meant to be used by organizations processing information on these topics. I explore the treatment of the *Library of Congress Subject Heading* “anti-racism” in order to understand its strengths and limitations. Many people I spoke with were puzzled by the term “anti-racism” and how bias in subject headings might affect library service. We need a robust vocabulary, a subject thesaurus that exhibits the major concepts and relationships inherent in the topic of “anti-racism” if we want to provide “anti-racist” intellectual access and “just library service.”

I am using a critical race theory perspective and hence, this is not just a project to change the language or controlled vocabulary but also a development project that engages people to build a digital library.

It may not be easy to eradicate the terminology of race because of its social construction but the discourse and literature of disciplines such as anthropology, biology, and theology show little evidence for either the physical or spiritual reality of race. Instead, they exhibit anti-racist (or critical race) perspectives, and question the use of multi-culturalism as an effective approach to racism. For example, Mukhopadhyay, Henze, and Moses (2014) systematically cover the myth of race as biology and the reality of race as a cultural invention, drawing on biocultural and cross-cultural perspectives. Hot-button issues that arise in tandem with the concept of race, such as educational inequalities; slurs, and racialized labels; and interracial relationships, are presented, shedding light on the intricate, dynamic interplay among race, culture, and biology. Nowhere are these inter-, multi-, and trans-disciplinary relationships reflected in the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* used to describe the book. Similarly, sociological and theological accounts of race also lack the faceted subject classification that link multidisciplinary concepts such as antisemitism, anti-Judaism, class, cosmopolitanism, diversity, exnomination, *hypostasis*, nation-state, nationalism, *Other*, *Shoah*, and “swamping” etc. with “anti-racism.” (Bantum, 2010; Carter, 2008; Cone, 1969; Jennings, 2010; Lentin, 2004; Lloyd, 1998).

The role of religion and associated disciplines - in the creation of “race” and in defeating its various expressions as Nazism, *la Résistance* or anti-slavery, and the success of the Civil Rights movement, which was an active collaboration among disciplines and diverse discourse and practitioner communities, cannot be understated; religious peacebuilding has a long tradition in conflict resolution. Thus, research that is investigating a new “anti-racism” vocabulary is best served with a critical examination that starts with Christian theology and expands to inter-faith, inter-cultural, interdisciplinary fields (e.g. emerging positive peace studies and real-life initiatives such as Alternative Violence Project). Ultimately, it must also accommodate multi-lingual resources and be grounded in real-life geographical communities.

## **Methods Used**

Research and scholarship to support a universal and socially responsible just and anti-racist library service that is also coming from a faith and interfaith perspective suggests a multi-pronged approach. Hence, three approaches were planned and I outline the first two below.

### **Stage 1. Library Catalog and Domain Analysis Study:**

I examined how “Anti-racism” is treated in the library catalog and in selective and recent classic texts in the domain of theological accounts about race. Using classificatory analysis (principles such as warrant – literary, organizational and user) some of the major “anti-racism” categories, concepts, and relationships were identified and compared with current representations available in the *LCSH*.

## Stage 2: Development of Prototype Using Community Participation:

I did not find a single digital library that integrates the perspectives of the various faith traditions and scriptures about “race,” “racism,” and “anti-racism” although I found many groups and collections online on issues around race and racism and diversity training and education. There was also no full-blown thesaurus for “anti-racism.” Interfaith, inter-cultural, interdisciplinary anti-racism approaches, however, have been shown to be critical in Global Justice Movements. Teachers, learners, and practitioners need reflections, confessions, antiracism tool kits, video, personal stories. Often these are materials that traditional libraries don’t collect. The ADL and IAT aim to fill this gap by using an ever-expanding circles-of-inclusion approach; first, by identifying texts and key partners in select local communities, expanding to regional and national, and finally international. These communities include faith-based as well as civil society groups, A proof-of-concept *Anti-Racism Digital Library* is at <http://tinyurl.com/antiracedl>. Terms have been extracted from a few key texts and the preliminary categorization of “anti-racism” concepts is listed alphabetically on the *ADL Discover the Vocabulary* page.

## Findings

### Theological and Political Origins of Race:

Race, as we know it, was constructed in medieval Europe by the unholy marriage of Christian theology with empire and was driven by a need to justify economic domination (Carter, 2008; Jennings, 2010). Today, no two people will agree about the definition of race, but most scholars are agreed that race is a socio-political category. Race divides humans. Race was unknown in China or India before the coming of the Europeans although both India and China have traditions and prejudices discriminating against dark color skin. Race does not unify our country or world.

Race is not a concept that is found in the Bible. Yet, many faithful American Christians continue to use racial categories to describe people for many reasons. One, we are deceived by the physical differences we see among people. Two, we are enslaved by powerful political forces, the media, and our culture. Race makes good drama and great news, and the USA’s economic strength was built on it! Finally, and most importantly, for the faithful, we also do so because many English translations of the Bible conflate or interpret the Greek words of *ethnos*, *laos*, *phylē*, and *genos* into the English word *race*. For an example, let’s look at Revelation 7:9 (ESV): *After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands . . .*

These words can be translated as follows, and, as you will see, there is no race!

Nation = *ethnos*

Tribe = *phylē*

People = *laos*

Language = *glossa*

What’s more, biblical attempts to construct race are often foiled by God. In Genesis 11, God destroys the Tower of Babel because its creators wanted to “make a name for themselves,” and establish their power as a singular, undiversified race of people. We have to wonder who was

going to be left out! God confounds their attempt to reach into the heavenly realms by sowing seeds for linguistic diversity. Now, new research has now shown that diverse languages and cultural expressions are critically beneficial to human growth, adaptation, and both individual and social development.

Yet, here we are, millennia later, still constructing race.

In 2020, the US Census will undergo changes, yet again, in the government-defined categories of race; apparently, many people don't feel they fit well into the five current categories. Since it first began in 1790, the census categories have continued to change, reflecting our nation's confusion about race.

From 1790 to 1840, the categories were: free white males, free white females, all other free persons, free colored males and females, slaves, and Indians (that is, Native Americans). From 1850 to 1890 the census attempted to enumerate color categories such as Mulatto and Quadroon, a practice they soon abandoned. But it was only in 1870, in the first post-Civil War census, that the word *race* was used. The next 110 years, from 1900 to 2010, brought more changes:

- 1) 1930: "color races" introduced, and Mexicans counted for the first and only time as a separate race
- 2) 1870: two new immigrant categories, Chinese and Japanese, added
- 3) 1960: people choose their own race as census takers (enumerators) no longer assign race
- 4) 2000: people choose two or more races, reflecting mixed ancestry
- 5) 1970/1980: Hispanic is determined to be an ethnicity, not a race

The changes proposed for the 2020 US Census include:

- 1) Eliminating the word *race*
- 2) Eliminating "Negro" from the Black/African American category
- 3) Adding a new category, Middle Eastern and North African (MENA)

The United Nations makes no recommendation for collecting data about race or ethnicity, and most countries don't collect race data. India, for example, eliminated the race category in 1951. (Aside: Interestingly, the Indian news media and social media are both reporting more racism!)

The rationale here in the United States is that we need it to create a more just society, especially for those historically oppressed and marginalized. However, racial discrimination and injustice have not disappeared. Despite our best attempts to build the beloved community with varying approaches such as multi-culturalism, color-blindness, and pluralism, our language about race is neither biblical nor Christ-like. Insignificant visible differences of skin color and phenotypic variations have become important identity labels, while innate human traits and spiritual gifts, such as faith, love, hope, and compassion, are neglected. We cannot dismantle racism while accepting and voicing its essential tenet: that we are divided into races.

Instead of descriptors of color and hyphenated Americans, we need to identify and develop an anti-racism, vocabulary that rejects the language of race and instead uses human diversity—created, affirmed, and beloved by God—that grounds identity in the *imago dei* (image of God).

**Footnote:** 1) In civil society groups actively seeking justice, the Golden Rule – do to others as you would have them do to you – is predominant. 2) Intersectionality is better accommodated.

**Anti-racism Genres:** The types of literature that are important anti-racism genres in Christian circles are:

- Classics
- Confessions
- Liturgies
- News
- Reflections
- Sermons
- Stories
- Tools
- Vision statements and reports

**Anti-racism Vocabulary:** A preliminary framework emerged as follows:

**Core concept:** Anti-racism

**Preliminary Facets:**

**Beliefs/Values** (e.g. Community, Diversity, Equality, Equity, Faith, Hospitality, Human Rights, Humanism, Inclusion, Justice, Non-violence, Peace, Spirituality, Tolerance, Unity);

**Actions – Practices - Strategies** (e.g. Advocacy, Anti-racism training, Anti-violence training, Awareness training, Community building, Conflict resolution, Cultural action, Cultural democracy, Cultural transformation, Educational events, Dialogue/discussions, Organizational change, Youth activities, Skill-building training); Political participation; Identity politics;

**Movements** (e.g. Civil Rights movement; Interfaith movement)

**Policies** (affirmative action; includes laws too, e.g. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Genetic Information Non-discrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) USA);

**Organizations** (e.g. UN; Catalyst Project; Anti-racism for collective liberation),

**People** (e.g. groups such as African Americans,);

**Periods** (e.g. modern, 1492 onwards, etc.);

**Space** (e.g. United States);

**Concepts of anti-racism:** Anti-racist education; Bystander anti-racism; Integrative anti-racism; Tolerance; Inclusivity;

**Closely related concepts:** Diversity, Racial categories/taxonomies/typologies, Racial equity, Racial healing, Restorative justice; Competitive advantage; Innovation

**Related concepts:** Race; Racism; Racialization, Multiculturalism (narrow term); Social justice (broad term)

**Domains/Disciplines:** Cultural/Ethnic studies, Education, International Indigenous studies, Positive peace, Theology;

**Peripheral areas:** Biology, Cultural anthropology, Genomics, Psychology, Sociology;

**Anti-racist policies (examples):**

- inclusivity
- neutrality or “colorblindness”;
- cooperative (rather than hostile) workplace environment;
- affirmative action initiatives and scholarships directed towards increasing diversity;
- multi-culturalism / pluralism /solidarity

**Anti-racist actions (examples of how people are actively practicing anti-racism):**

- Practicing Cultural Humility – LCSH: Cultural humility
- Acknowledging White Privilege – LCSH: White Privilege
- Interfaith Dialog – LCSH: Interfaith dialog

- Christian Witnessing - LCSH: Witness bearing (Christianity)
- Faithful Rhetoric – LCSH: Faith; Rhetoric; Civic Engagement
- Standing in Solidarity – LCSH: Solidarity
- Original Purpose/Divine Calling (for everybody not just clergy) – LCSH: Vocation

#### **Anti-racist movements (examples):**

- Anti-apartheid movements; Civil Rights Movement; Indigenous or Self-development of People movement; Interfaith movement; Spirituality movements; Sustainability movements (e.g. campus sustainability); crowdsourced syllabi (campus activism movement)

#### **Anti-racism Digital Library Collections** under construction include:

- A Mote in Minerva’s Eye: Seeing without categorizing (personal faith and culture stories)
- Progressive Christians Uniting (faith group activism)
- Orange County Cities for CEDAW (an UN initiative undertaken by a voluntary group)
- Reflections (short meditative faith based essays written by faith leaders)
- Golden Rule (Round Table for Interfaith dialog)
- American Identity (How Americans are constructing their identities)
- The Christian Imagination (A series of 3 studies on Christian - *imago dei* - identity)

A screenshot of the Anti-racism Digital Library is shown in Fig. 1 and these web addresses can be used to access it: Endracism.Info / Anti-racism.site. The direct url is <http://sacred.omeka.net/>.

#### **An Invitation to Participate, Acknowledgements, and Credits**

The Anti-Racism digital library is dedicated to the nine victims in the Charleston shooting at Mother Emmanuel AME Church. I want to see the end of racism in my lifetime. And, through my work I seek to honor all the victims but most especially the **Rev. Sharonda Coleman-Singleton**, 45 year old pastor at Emmanuel AME, speech therapist and high school girls track coach, and **Cynthia Hurd**, a 54 year old librarian and manager of the St. Andrews regional (public) library. I invite you to join me; help us flesh out ‘anti-racism’ and build the library.

The *Theological and Political Origins of Race* section of the paper has been shared previously in local talks and classes and in a blog column (Coleman, 2016).

I am grateful for these awards: Racial Dialog grant from the Presbyterian Women of the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii; CASA/RSCA salary grant from San Jose State University; Travel Grant from the American Theological Librarians Association.

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*Yesuvikke thuddi!*

# Anti-Racism Digital Library

Charis Research

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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

California, with its diverse regions and communities, is a microcosm of the world. People from almost every nation and culture, major language groups, and faith traditions — Atheists, Buddhists, Christians of all denominations and non-denominations, Hindus, Muslims and more — are represented. The Anti-racism Digital Library seeks to serve as a clearinghouse for information resources about people, groups and projects who are adapting 'anti-racism' strategies and building inclusive communities. [Read more...](#)

### FEATURED ITEM

#### The Brief Statement of Faith

This is a brief theological statement in simple confessional language that ordinary people can use about the most important beliefs that Presbyterians...

### FEATURED COLLECTION

#### A Mote in Minerva's Eye: Seeing without categorizing

A blog about the intersections of culture and faith. Posts can be used to have intimate conversations about wide-ranging issues of identity,...

### FEATURED EXHIBIT

#### Comfort Women at CSW60

At UN CSW60 there was a parallel event on Thursday, March 17, that denied the truth of the 'comfort women.'...

## Recently Added Items

### Deeper Love: Faithful Rhetoric for Progressive Social Change

The Deeper Love web pages, also available as a print book from Amazon, provide resources to congregations to help embody Jesus' way of compassion and...

### Seeing beyond race: A mother's prayer for her son and her church

A short blog post that weaves personal stories with bible attempts to construct race, often foiled by God, and argues that there is nothing...

### Prince's Slave, Piccard's Solar Impulse and Beyonce's Lemonade

What popular culture can teach us about individual faith and the Christian church; Includes a quick video.

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