



Acknowledgements

The staff of the Anti-Racism Policy Journal are humbled and thankful to so many people who helped bring this vision to light. The murder of George Floyd was the catalyst for this this journal. His death laid bare for the world to see the logical conclusion of 400 years of oppression, systemic racism, and colonization in the United States. It made many countries around the world face their own racist policies and legacy. But there were so many more before him that we must also acknowledge -- Amadou Diallo, Tamir Rice, Brianna Taylor, Walter Scott, Sandra Bland and so many more. They were not the first and sadly they have not been the last.

This journal was also a creation by students and faculty who saw a need after the death of George Floyd to discuss racism, white supremacy, colonialism, and other anti-racist topics with an honest and open lens at the premiere academic policy institution in America. Without students like Luisa Pena Lyons, Samantha Greiff, Darold Cuba, and Benjamin Abtan this journal would not exist. Without Professors Like Ronald Heifetz, Susan Sandra Smith, Khalil Gibran Muhammad, and Cornell Brooks these conversations would not exist at Harvard Kennedy School. There are many others we have not mentioned who helped or inspired this journal. It is with love and admiration that we say thank you.

“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

— James Baldwin



Contents

- 1 Anti Racism Policy Journal Logo
- 2 Fake Love: White Allyship Dissipation in the Shadow of the 2020 Black Lives Matter Protests
- 6 You've committed to DEI now what?
- 12 En-Visible Women at Harvard
- 21 It's time for Massachusetts to pay reparations to close the racial homeownership gap
- 24 A Lexicon for Climate Justice
- 27 Rewind, Remind, and Reset: A Guide for Organizational Leaders to Navigate Wicked "isms"
- 33 Poetry: Words I keep on Repeat!
- 35 Foster Care Crisis: When Black Children are Taken Out of Their Homes, Many Don't Make It BACK
- 39 Necessary Trouble
- 43 ARPJ Policy Demands
- 44 Credits



The Anti-Racism Policy Journal Logo



Why the Crane?

A Japanese legend says that any person who folds a thousand cranes will receive their heart's true desire. The ARPJ adopted the paper crane with the wish to live in a more just and equitable world. We hope to contribute to that change.

We also adopted this logo because we believe that racism and colonialism is a global phenomenon and we don't want to limit our work to only talking about American anti-racism work, because this work is global. Our crane is broken into segments that come together into one beautiful shape. There are seven parts to our origami crane. Each part represents one of the seven continents folded together into a world more beautiful than the one that existed before they came together.

Our Colors

Gold represents the resources stolen from indigenous people around the world. Through centuries of injustice the people have never lost their luster.

The color Purple reminds us of Alice Walker's book of the same name. It represents the violence, terror, and injustice women face around the world. It is the color of the bruises they hide and our vow never to hide them in the work that we do.

The pink color of our crane represents the Harvard community. Harvard's crimson color is an "arterial red" that represents our community during competition. Pink represents the heart of our community.

Anti-Racism Policy Journal Editorial Staff

Fake Love: White Allyship Dissipation In The Shadow Of The 2020 Black Lives Matter Protests

Rico
Washington

I've been down so long, it look like up to me.
I got fake people showin' fake love to me.
Straight up to my face.

—Drake, *Fake Love* (2016)

Solidarity can be quite a fickle sentiment. It suggests a sense of ideological alignment and a desire for shared outcomes, engendering camaraderie and trust. Yet left unnurtured, solidarity can become tenuous and fragile within the blink of an eye. And without a certain level of discernment, the resulting dismay and disillusionment often become fertile ground for cynicism and mistrust. If there's anyone with an intimate understanding of this dynamic, it's Drake.

Throughout his decade-long career as a multi-platinum recording artist, Drake has spent a great deal of time waxing poetic on the woes of disloyalty and the aftermath of emotional turmoil. As the above lyric suggests, Drake has experienced unrelenting adversity to the extent that he has normalized it as his baseline. That withstanding, he has become adept at discerning insincerity that can often be veiled with a thin patina of fellowship. In Drake's case, the impetus for *Fake Love* is the proximity to fame and wealth.

However, there is a parallel here that traverses

the chasms of mere hip-hop histrionics and melodrama. As in Drake's case, a multitude of Black Americans have normalized a certain level of unrelenting adversity. Centuries of socio-economic oppression, political suppression, and various forms of state-sanctioned violence have produced a vicious cycle of intergenerational trauma. It can be argued that performative solidarity, or performative allyship, functions in a parallel fashion.

It can also be argued that the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests of 2020 exhibited a wellspring of fake love from individuals who labeled themselves as allies. Much of the rationale for their circumspect position in the face of the disappearing act of that white allyship cannot be negated. So why did the groundswell of support during the 2020 protests dwindle within mere months? The space between the two is worthy of examination.

Less than three months into 2020, the world found itself confronted with a widespread health crisis that recognized no borders. COVID-19 claimed the lives of citizens in cities all over



Credit: Rico Washington

enforcement had been taught in the households of Black American families for generations.

In this way, Minneapolis is virtually indistinguishable from cities like Washington, DC, New York City, Milwaukee, Chicago, Detroit, or Los Angeles. These metropolitan areas, steeped in a sordid criminal justice history largely unabated by Black municipal leadership or progressive policy, became battlegrounds for social justice reform and virulent civil unrest. In response to the viral video, concerned citizens, organizers, and activists around the world took to the streets in unprecedented numbers. According to nationwide polls conducted by Pew, N.O.R.C., Civis Analytics, and Kaiser Family Foundation, the number of American adults who mentioned that they'd taken part in a Black Lives Matter protest as of June 2020 ranged from 15 to 26 million. It was not lost on the Black organizers, activists, and attendees at the forefront of these protests that an overwhelmingly large number of these protestors were white.

According to a [Pew Research](#) poll in June of 2020, 46 percent of white adults polled said they attended at least one protest in the prior month. White allyship in Black American social movements, however, is far from a new development. White Americans helped push the slavery abolition agenda of the 19th century. They hosted stops along the integrated network of safe spaces known as the Underground Railroad, ushering many enslaved Blacks along the pathway to self-manumission. During the Civil Rights Movement, they also participated in sit-ins, marches, and organized Freedom Rides.

In April of 1965, [76 percent of adults polled by Pew Research Center](#) (findings not segmented by race) were in support of the Voting Rights Act that would be passed just four months later. It can be argued that the violent images and footage from the march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, known as "Bloody Sunday," caused a spike in public support for the bill. Pew also found that 46

the world at a rapid pace. The fear and paranoia surrounding this new pestilence were palpable. The threat was very real.

In May of 2020, however, the dark reality that Black Americans lamented, struggled against, and perished under in most major cities across the country was thrust upon the world stage. The heinous and intentional murder of unarmed 46-year-old George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin cast a wide net when a video of the act went viral. From Bangladesh to Brisbane, the video elicited international shock and disbelief at this gruesome and reprehensible act. However, the looming threat of violence at the hands of law

percent of white adults sided with the marchers on Bloody Sunday. Did the viral video of Floyd's death function in a similar fashion, activating the silent majority in cities across the country and the globe?

It was likely a confluence of events. By March of 2020, we were a populace trapped in amber. The world was sheltered in place indefinitely and faced an uncertain future, a state Black citizens know all too well. Could the Black Lives Matter protests have been merely the perfect antidote to rampant cabin fever amid a shattered world? There's little doubt that the desire to be around other people intensified the longer we remained indoors. While inside, we were confronted with ourselves and the sobering reality of life during a pandemic.

Like fodder for the 24-hour news cycle, we had force-fed on infinite loop the slow and horrifying public lynching of yet another unarmed Black person for nine minutes and twenty-nine seconds. Those who believed that a failure to comply was the culprit in similar fatalities were faced with the sobering reality. And as the protests in the aftermath of Floyd's murder began to catch fire in major cities across the United States, it became increasingly clear that a large cross-section of the country had declared a side in the matter.

The clarion call this time was not restricted to simply criminal justice and law enforcement reform. The national conversations centered on race were dynamic and pivoted daily, from racial equity and restorative justice to abolition of prisons and police. Black squares and social media hashtags were an early sign that the initial outrage was becoming an actual movement. Corporations and institutions were publicly challenged to critically rethink or develop racial equity and inclusion/ diversity strategies. Aside from those who showed up at marches, there were white folks who donated generously to bail funds and wealth redistribution projects and also had difficult conversations during family zoom meetups and holiday dinners.

By July of 2020, *The New York Times* declared Black Lives Matter the largest movement in the history of the United States. But by September, there was a sharp decrease in the attendance of these protests by non-Black protestors. As a team leader with the New York City-based cycling activist group Street Riders NYC, the dearth of support on the front lines of the movement was noticeable. This waning support was labeled allyship fatigue. While a Pew poll from September of 2021 determined that 47 percent of white adults either somewhat supported or strongly supported the Black Lives Matter movement, largely unchanged from findings in a poll the year prior, the boots on the ground support told a very different story.

In addition to the protests serving as an excuse to revel in the spring and summer sun amongst other bodies, could it be that many allies were simply bandwagoning? It's unlikely that Floyd's death alone could have sustained allyship. Particularly in a country where violence visited upon the Black body and psyche is routine, mundane, and in many instances commodifiable. It is also very possible that many were both appalled and mesmerized by the very public demise of George Floyd and others like him.

Costuming the Black struggle has been a practice in many social movements throughout the decades. Blackness is an Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat to be marveled at, adorned, and swaddled in at will. It can be taken off when the colors glare too loudly, clash unabashedly with new trends or lose their shine. It flows and moves with grace and is armored in parts to protect while leaving fleshy parts exposed to danger. There are also frayed edges that can be contextualized as a fashion aesthetic as opposed to signs of needed maintenance.

A more critical look at the Drake tune reveals an often-overlooked meta-study in appropriation. According to a Genius.com annotation, the first lyric in the song's chorus, "I've been down so long, it looks like up to me," is often credited to the title of Cornell University-educated

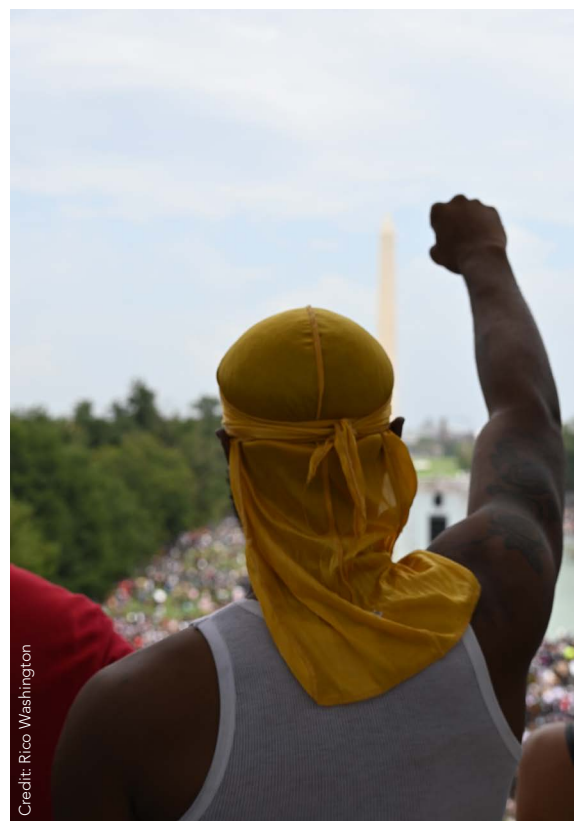
folk singer/ author Richard Fariña's 1966 novel *Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up To Me*. Inspired by Fariña, classic rock band, The Doors, also used the line in their 1971 song "Been Down So Long." But the progenitor to both these works lies in the Black American blues singer Furry Lewis's 1928 song "I Will Turn Your Money Green," where he croons "I been down so long, it seems like up to me." It can be argued that the titles of these works by Fariña and The Doors show love to Lewis, who died poor. Yet that love is merely implicit. The footnotes are conveniently left out.

There is an inherent value in the proximity to Blackness, largely manifested in a currency of cool. The Black iconography of figures such as Angela Davis and Malcolm X have cachet decades after their respective castigation and murder at the hands of the state. Yet despite the lofty proclamation from *The New York Times*, perhaps 2020 was not "Fire Next Time" that James Baldwin had prophesied.

So what becomes of the hordes of well-meaning white people who marched, donated, bought BLM shirts, binged *The Good Lord Bird*, bought tickets to see *Slave Play* and *Jesus and the Black Messiah*, streamed *Antebellum*, downloaded Candice Benbow's Lemonade syllabus, subscribed to Deray McKesson's *Pod Save The People* podcast, bought Robin DiAngelo's *White Fragility* and Ibram X. Kendi's *How To Be Antiracist* (as well as his children's book *Antiracist Baby* for the young ones in their lives), poured over Nikole Hannah-Jones's *The 1619 Project* and watched YouTube videos of Jane Elliot and Tim Wise? Many may have simply had a profound expe-

rience, akin to a gap year or a semester abroad. They are more informed on the evils of white supremacy, but not necessarily more inclined to act on it over the long haul.

Baldwin's text was released in 1963, the year of the Birmingham campaign where Bull Connor maliciously used water cannons to beat back Black protestors fighting for desegregation. Public histories are fragile when not maintained. Allyship fatigue is a luxury to those who do not suffer the consequences of oppression. It floats off the tongue like a condition listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, it's very branding serving as a salve to shame. We as a nation must look more critically at ourselves and decide if we are ready to show up for each other or simply comfortable showing fake love.



Credit: Rico Washington

You've Committed To DEI, Now What?

Kori
Ricketts
and
Mekka
Smith

In the summer of 2020, footage of George Floyd's murder while in police custody went viral amid the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Much of America was at home, and many organizations interpreted the tragedy as a catalyst to take symbolic and public steps toward recognizing racial inequities in America and, by extension, at work. The wave of increased solidarity offered an opportunity to deepen... social justice awareness through the creation of equity roles and policies that will ensure organizations are meeting the moment.

As equity practitioners, we questioned what it will take for equity principles to live permanently in organizations, rather than being a Band-Aid response to tragedy. We asked ourselves, "What are the enabling conditions to ensure that equity work is truly sustained?" In this article, we answer that question through the research and construction of the ACTT (Accountability, Community, Training, Transparency) Model. The Accountability, Community, Training, Transparency, or ACTT, Model is designed for leaders working in organizations with, at minimum, a stated commitment to equity. It guides leaders to focus their energy as they move organizations from a solidarity stage to a sustaining one. The model is most useful for organizational leadership starting their equity journey, who have a professed desire for change, but are unsure of what that means and where to start.

Many organizations are working to live up to their stated missions and values by engaging in internally focused diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and antiracism work. We believe that DEI implementation as a culture-change strategy, based on the research of [Cynthia Coburn](#), [Ronald Heifetz](#) and [John Kotter](#), must

be urgent and impactful. Senior leadership must believe that focusing on DEI practices — not as an attempt to stay relevant, but as vital to running a successful organization — is urgent and important. Our research is clear that without backing from leadership, DEI work does not reach the needed breadth or depth to bring about effective change within an organization.

Leaders legitimize the importance of DEI and are the gatekeepers to implementation. We balance this truth with the reality that too few organizations transition from naming equity as a priority to successfully acting on it.

For many organizations, operating through an equity or DEI lens is awkward and new. It requires leaders to conduct an honest excavation of how their personal (in)actions impact organizational culture. It demands that decision-makers invest significant resources to aid the change process. It insists on envisioning and working toward a different future.

Our research indicates that leaders tend to choose a set of trending decisions to move from initiating equity work to sustaining it. Four of the most common choices are hiring an equity lead (Chief Equity Officer), placing equity work under the Human Resources Team, leading equity work exclusively from the executive suite, and moving forward without facing history. On face value, these may be logical moves that bridge from initiation to implementation. However, in many cases such decisions happen in isolation as "the fix" and thus result in confusion, stalled progress, and inaction. We describe the opportunities and challenges of these decisions and propose how to approach DEI work, so it actually leads to sustainability.

The ACTT Model: A Path Toward Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Sustainability



ACTT Model
SUSTAINABLE DEI IMPLEMENTATION

A.C.T.T. defines the critical components that lead to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion sustainability.

This model is grounded in the fundamentals of John Kotter's *Leading Change* methodology, and the research pioneered by Cynthia Coburn on implementing scale and spread as a pathway to sustainability.

The power of this model is the distributed responsibility across multiple levels of an organization to achieve long term cultural change.

Imprint Education

**ACCOUNTABILITY**
LEADERSHIP INVESTMENT

- Ensures resources (time, money, information, people) are appropriately allocated
- Promotes cross functional communication and ownership of the work
- Each person in the org embraces they are a change agent; especially leaders
- Measures DEI outcomes

**COMMUNITY**
COALITION OF CULTIVATORS

- Group of thought leaders comprised of employees across the organization at varying levels
- Senior Leaders are advisors and/or co-leaders

**TRAINING**
CONTENT EXPERTS

- Differentiated training delivered by external partner organizations
- Every person in the organization is trained on normed content relative to their positional impact

**TRANSPARENCY**
CREDIBILITY THROUGH CLARITY

- Acknowledge past mistakes and harm
- Clear and consistent communication of all processes and potential impacts
- Communication of all findings in attempt to build confidence and credibility



Our solution is to provide organizations seeking DEI support with a framework outlining the overarching elements for successfully operating through a DEI lens. We find that many organizations are learning bits and pieces of what works through trial and error, and since leading for equity is often unfamiliar, they are moving forward blindly without a comprehensive plan. We aim to provide clear guidance, so organizations know broadly what it takes to move from initiation through implementation.

We propose four elements that are critical for equity to persist in an organization: **accountability, community, training, and transparency**. What makes the ACTT Model effective is the application of **all** the elements simultaneously, instead of in silos. The ACTT Model is designed with practitioners in mind focusing on functionality and ease of use.

Accountability is both personal and organizational. Personal accountability starts with leadership and means each person in the organization takes ownership as an agent of change. This commitment must also be diffused throughout the organization. Organizational accountability refers to the committed resources and goals that will fuel the work's progress.

Hiring a Chief Equity Officer (or similar position) is an example of a symbolic move toward accountability. It signals that equity is an organizational priority and will share air space in conversations about financial health, operations, people leadership and development. If the Chief Equity Officer commands the power to operate unencumbered to champion equity work throughout the organization, then they have a high probability of success.

Before rushing to create an equity leader job description, we suggest that organizations answer these questions:

- How will current leadership practices shift in response to equity commitments?

- What could equity leadership look like at multiple levels of this organization?
- How are we allocating resources to demonstrate commitment to DEI across the organization?

Creating an equity leadership role is a sign of organizational investment; however, not setting up the leader for success is itself an equity issue. They need real authority in the strategic planning process, a team to distribute the work, and ongoing professional development. When organizational leaders demonstrate accountability, they take ownership of their personal and organizational responsibility to ensure that equity leadership is shared instead of siloed. True sustainability is achieved when all leaders in the organization see DEI as a part of their work.

Community refers to a group of thought leaders who are the engine of the work — they are a coalition of members collectively tasked with keeping the train on the tracks. They bring perspectives from various vantage points throughout the organization and share information outwardly. The community is the hub of thought leadership for all the DEI work.

Explicit commitment from the top is critical for facilitating forward movement on equity priorities. However, when conversation and ownership of the equity work is contained to only one level of an organization, it loses relevance. The top-down leadership trap takes two forms. The first is when senior leaders constrain goal ownership to their ranks. While it is tempting to situate equity fully under executive leadership for legitimization purposes, if leadership has a spotty track record of furthering important initiatives, or if they have a history of (intentionally or not) promoting racist policies, then complete ownership of equity work lands somewhere between laughable and dangerous. When people in authoritative roles are the only ones responsible for envisioning and implementing equity work, they are by definition not representing the full staff and

are not locating the work with people most affected by their decisions.

The second trap is when leaders fully abdicate their participatory role in DEI and delegate all of the power and work to a coalition that does not include leadership. When senior leadership takes a hands-off approach, it signals to other leaders in the organization that DEI operates outside of organizational priorities and creates the space for DEI to compete with, instead of drive, stated priorities. Mid-level leaders, for example, must make the decision to focus their teams on organizational priorities led by senior leadership or DEI priorities led by a guiding coalition. This separation casts the work of the coalition as optional or initiative-worthy, rather than anchoring work that impacts all staff. Mid-level leaders obfuscate the work, and the power of the coalition is seen in opposition to the mission instead of driving the mission.

Leaders must adopt the mindset that equity work is everyone's business. Here are some questions for leaders as they map out their community involvement:

- Which perspectives are represented in a broad and diverse coalition, and which are missing?
- How will various members share their perspectives if they are not part of organizational leadership?
- What is the current and ideal state of the messages that leadership sends about the importance of the equity work?

Strong equity leadership engages a community of thought leaders from various aspects of an organization to provide insight into implementation work and garners the support and resource allocation from senior leadership.

Training is the intentional development of skill and will for the organization, led by experts in the field. Though experts may be within the organization, it is a best practice that initial

work be conducted by external partners so that everyone can benefit from adopting a learning stance. At times, training is eschewed in favor of placing equity work under an established department to ensure it “has a home” and will continue beyond a few facilitated sessions.

Human Resources (HR) is often a logical choice to house equity work because it is a gateway for new team members through the recruiting and hiring process. The HR team has the power to link equity to performance competencies, evaluations, and pay structure. For equity work to thrive in this department, an organization needs an HR team leader whose mandate is to honestly report data, model internal changes, and closely support other departments to reflect and adjust their practices.

The trap of placing DEI under a department like HR rests on the implicit assumption that equity imperatives will trickle down through people policies. A number of realities may hamper intended progress. First, very rarely do we find that HR leaders receive ongoing equity training to understand what they should do with this responsibility. As a result, their team is not fully equipped with the knowledge, skills, or mindsets to lead organizational change. Relatedly, it is important to examine how equity is absorbed into a department like HR. If there is no discernible change in how the HR team operates, for instance, by starting to probe for missing perspectives in decision-making conversations, then the department itself perpetuates a culture that lacks key DEI principles. It is unrealistic to expect a department that is not learning and changing to turn around and lead meaningful equity changes across an organization.

We offer these questions to leaders grappling with the implications of training:

- What does our ideal DEI partnership look like?
- What are our training goals?

- Who on our staff do we want involved in training?
- How will we ensure ongoing training and facilitation for staff?

Leadership must make a long-term investment in people by providing external facilitation and ensuring training is an explicit imperative for all staff.

Transparency is the vehicle by which to build credibility through a historical reckoning and clear, consistent communication. An essential element of committing to equity work is unearthing and reviewing organizational data that illuminate the problem. Relevant data includes student achievement results, staff culture surveys, performance reviews, and interpersonal observations. Placing this information in the hands of many can be a humbling and scary experience for leaders.

Our respondents shared the power of transparency as a lever for credibility. Staff appreciate when leaders are honest about why progress needs to happen. Leaders tend to be comfortable sharing recent organizational data, yet leapfrog over personal ownership for the current cultural state. If pursuing equity is a priority and the leadership remains stable, then leadership is responsible for why equity has not yet happened. Discussing data in absence of senior leader responsibility is telling an incomplete story. Data sharing should be accompanied by framing, context, and ownership of results. Organizations fall into the transparency trap when they forge ahead with declarations of future plans and fail to share the organizational history of past mistakes and harm.

As leaders take the brave steps toward transparency, here are some guiding questions to consider:

- What are the risks and advantages to sharing our data internally?
- What are the multiple avenues through which we will communicate our learning and progress?
- How have we previously caused harm that needs to be publicly addressed?

Transparency builds credibility. When leaders share clear and consistent communication of the evolution of equity work, they open a space for honest dialogue about how to move forward as a learning organization.

We see ample energy spent on initiating conversations and making declarations of solidarity and change. We also see a lot of uncertainty with what sustainability looks like. Some organizations fall prey to thinking naming the issue or speaking more forcefully about their intentions to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion will organically open up the solution box. An effective treatment plan includes having a clear-eyed understanding of the problem, committing self and resources to drive results, and engaging a team of supporters and experts to rely on for guidance and support.

Accountability, community, training, and transparency create a powerful combination to redesign organizational culture. As organizations embark on the hard work of transforming into more equitable places for their staff, students, and community at-large, they should prepare to not simply state their renewed priorities, but also to confidently ACTT.



KORI RICKETTS
DOCTORAL CANDIDATE
HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

A proud Black, queer, immigrant, womxn, Ricketts brings over 14 years of leadership experience to the diversity, equity and inclusion space. Her doctoral studies combine her leadership experience, passion for DEI, womxn in leadership, and fight to ensure that all people-- student, staff and leaders alike-- are able to show up as their whole selves. In a space where differences are lauded, she asserts, is where learning spaces can be transformative and affirming.

MEKKA SMITH
DOCTORAL CANDIDATE
HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Mekka grew up wondering why all the quality schools were located an hour's bus ride away from her home in southwest Atlanta. Her 14 years of experience in public schools heightened her keen focus on DEI, leadership training, community and engagement, and ensuring families are at the core of all learning communities. Mekka's experience as a teacher and trainer informs her desire to ensure leaders understand their commitment to *and* participation in DEI is needed to make lasting personal and institutional change.



En-Visible Women at Harvard



Envisible
Woman

Thomas
Bishop

Invisibility is the state of being unseen. For much of our lives as people of color, we are unseen.

Invisible to the world around us. We are also invisible when we are mis-seen. Seen as a problem. Seen as less than. Seen as a threat. Seen as a sexual object.

At Harvard, it's hard to see yourself when you don't see yourself. En-Visible Women at Harvard is a photojournalism project that pushes Harvard to place women of color in the foreground instead of the background. The prefix "en" means "to go into." All subjects' faces are obscured in some way except for one.

This project is an attempt to create our own narrative of how we want to be seen. It is an introduction that says, "hello, I am a person of color and I deserve to be here. Stand beside me, and we can walk together as equals. Stand behind me and follow me. I will lead you. Do not stand in front of me. For if you stand in front of me you will never get the opportunity to see me and how beautiful I am."

The En-Visible Women at Harvard is not just a photojournalism project. These images were printed, framed, and used on exhibitions at the Kennedy School's Center for Public Leadership and the School of Education's Gutman Library. These images are a conversation into Harvard's need for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion among students and faculty. It is an attempt to foreground the women and make sure they are no longer invisible.



Covered





I Am My Ancestors



Locked Up In the
Ivy League

HARVARD

Eyes
on the
Prize



Out of
the Shadows
I am Here



Technicolor Dreamcoat





Eyez

A Humble Meditation



With
Nature



INS WIDENER MEMORIAL LIBR



It's Time For Massachusetts to Pay Reparations to Close the Racial Homeownership Gap

By Aneesa
Andrabi

reparation [rep-uh-rey-shuhn]

noun

- 1 a the making of amends for wrong or injury done:
In reparation for the injustice, the king made him head of the agricultural department.
- b something done or given to make amends:
The prosecutor has requested a reparation of \$32 million to victims of the crime.
- 2 Usually **reparations** .
 - a compensation in money, material, labor, etc., payable by a defeated country to another country or to an individual for loss suffered during or as a result of war:
The U.S. government eventually disbursed reparations to Japanese Americans who had been interned during World War II.
 - b monetary or other compensation payable by a country to an individual for a historical wrong:

Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker is hoping to bridge the racial homeownership gap in his state. While his plan is promising, it's not enough.

Massachusetts has the sixth-highest racial homeownership gap in the country.¹ White

1 "MassHousing, Baker-Polito Administration Launch Commonwealth Builder, a Landmark Initiative to Expand Homeownership and Wealth-Building Opportunities in Communities of Color Across Massachusetts." Accessed December 19, 2021. https://www.masshousing.com/en/press/2021-01-04_commonwealth-builder. This study was conducted in 2015 with a relatively small sample size, however, the data found in this study tracks with other studies on the wealth gap between black and white Americans.

citizens are nearly twice as likely to own homes as Black citizens in the state. Within Boston specifically, the average networth of a Black family is \$8 while it is \$247,500 for white families.²

Governor Baker proposed spending \$1 billion of COVID-relief funds towards affordable housing and \$300 million to expand homeownership opportunities to first-time homebuyers in communities hurt most by the pandemic.³

2 Akilah Johnson, "That Was Not A Typo" Boston Globe, 12/11/2017.

3 Nik DeCosta Klipa, "How the Baker administration wants to use COVID-19 relief funds to close the racial homeownership gap," Boston.Com, 7/7/2021.

This is a great start. But it doesn't address the root causes of the Black-white homeownership gap. As Mehrsa Baradan explained, "Wealth is where past injustices breed present suffering".⁴ So let us look back to the origins of this racial disparity.

In the 1990s, economists at the Boston Federal Reserve authored a paper confirming that racial discrimination in lending practices was rampant in 20th century Massachusetts. The researchers evaluated mortgage market data and interrogated lenders' claims that lower mortgage rates of Black people were due to credit histories. The data showed a denial rate for Black and Hispanic applicants that were two to three times higher than the denial rate for white applicants. In fact, high-income minority applicants were more likely to be turned down than were low-income white applicants.⁵

Nationwide, Black Americans have historically been disenfranchised by public and private institutions in the housing market. This pattern of racist lending practices began much earlier in the 20th century, explicitly existed for at least 35 years, and drastically curtailed the ability of Black Americans to accumulate generational wealth.

From the 1930s to the 1960s, the new Federal Housing Authority (FHA) provided mortgages for "non-risky" homes. The federal government reinscribed and sponsored racism by calculating risk by race. Black neighborhoods were "red-lined" and banned from receiving mortgages. Redlining went beyond FHA-backed loans; the real estate industry also prevented Black families from accessing loans, masking these decisions as mitigating "mortgage risk." Restrictive covenants and predatory agreements further excluded Black Americans from the market. During this time, white homeowners and Homeowners Associations enacted racially restrictive covenants, contractual agreements

to not sell to Black people, further preventing wealth accumulation. White real estate agents also sold homes to Black families "on contract", an exploitative agreement that combined the responsibilities of homeownership with the disadvantages of renting.⁶⁶

The accumulation of these policies extorted Black Americans' aspiration to acquire homes through *predatory inclusion*. The accumulation of these policies extorted Black Americans' aspirations to acquire homes. Through predatory inclusion, policy makers strategically allowed Black Americans to participate in homeownership without building generational wealth. Professor Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor puts it well: "The quality of life in U.S. society depends on the personal accumulation of wealth, and homeownership is the single largest investment that most families make to accrue this wealth. But when the housing market is fully formed by racial discrimination, there is deep, abiding inequality."⁷⁷

Although the Fair Housing Act was passed in 1968 to ultimately prohibit such exclusionary laws, this was no immediate fix and racist lending policies exist to this day. Most recently, during the Great Recession, major banking institutions like Wells Fargo doled out a new predatory loan: subprime mortgages. Large banks steered Black borrowers into these dicey mortgages, which led to vast amounts of foreclosures.⁸

Today's real estate industry and homeowners' associations still perpetuate racial housing inequity by lobbying for exclusionary zoning that prevents density and puts bans on rent control that displaces residents. The 21st-century real estate lobby combined with the power of homeowners' associations is symptomatic of ongoing settler colonialism.

If Black households were historically denied

4 Explained: The Racial Wealth Gap, Netflix, 4/23/2018.

5 Larry Bean, "Landmark Boston Fed paper confirmed racial discrimination in Boston's mortgage market," Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, 10/7/2021.

6 Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations", 9.

7 T Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, "Race for Profit" 261.

8 Nakano Glenn, "Settler Colonialism as Structure: A Framework for Comparative Studies of U.S. Race and Gender

the ability to acquire wealth, one might believe, like our Governor does, that providing Black households with mortgages now could reverse-engineer the resulting inequity. But the sheer amount of wealth accumulation lost by Black Americans who were legally excluded from obtaining one of the only assets to reach the American dream in the 20th and 21st century is **significant**.

In the past few years, local and state governments began trying to address the nation's racial homeownership gap. Just this summer, two Boston City Councils issued an ordinance calling to assess reparations and their impact on the civil rights of Black Bostonians. The cities of Amherst⁹ and Cambridge¹⁰ in MA are

9 The Associated Press. "Amherst Creates Fund To Pay Reparations To Black Residents." Accessed December 19, 2021. <https://www.wbur.org/news/2021/06/24/amherst-reparations-fund-approved>.

10 Kingdollar, Brandon. "Cambridge City Council To Explore Reparations for Slavery, Restitution for War on Drugs | News | The Harvard Crimson." Accessed December 19, 2021. <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2021/9/14/city-council-sept-14/>.

researching reparations as is the State of California.¹¹ The city of Evanston, Illinois is already providing reparations to Black families¹² (and their descendants) who faced government-based housing discrimination.

Governor Baker's down-payment assistance and discounted mortgages to lower-income households doesn't account for the wealth lost during decades of racist housing policies and does little to close the racial homeownership gap. As Ta-Nehisi Coates writes, "It is as though we have run up a credit-card bill and, having pledged to charge no more, remain befuddled that the balance does not disappear. The effects of that balance, interest accruing daily, are all around us". Without paying reparations to Black families and their descendants who experienced housing discrimination, the balance will not disappear.^{10¹³}

11 Holcolombe, Madaline. "California Governor Signs First-of-Its-Kind Bill Forming a Slavery Reparations Task Force - CNN." Accessed December 19, 2021. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/01/us/california-bill-slavery-reparations-trnd/index.html>.

12 Treisman, Rachel. "In Likely First, Chicago Suburb Of Evanston Approves Reparations For Black Residents." NPR, March 23, 2021, sec. Code Switch. <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/23/980277688/in-likely-first-chicago-suburb-of-evanston-approves-reparations-for-black-reside>.

13 The policy recommended solely assesses reparations for housing discrimination. This does not include the reparations that should be evaluated towards Black Americans impacted by two hundred years of slavery, ninety years of Jim Crow laws and sixty years of segregation.

A Lexicon for Climate Justice

David
Corbie



Humanity can't solve the climate crisis without first resolving systemic inequity. This includes race, sex, gender, age, ability, language, sexuality, and migration inequality. Without resolving the disparate outcomes each faces; the climate disaster will persist. Inequality birthed this system. The enslavement of Africans expedited the growth of American industrialization and ideologies that underlie the treatment of American workers. Elements of sexism determine wages and treatment which serves to systematically exclude womxn from leadership and economic sufficiency. What's devastating about this realization is that these groups, who represent a majority of the population, are affected more by climate change.

Cities are the battlefield in the fight against climate change. According to UN Habitat, cities consume 78 percent of the world's energy and produce more than 60 percent of greenhouse gas emissions.¹ Yet, they account for less than two percent of the Earth's surface. The influence cities have on global climate change cannot be understated. Moreover, China and the United States consistently rank at the top of the list of bad actors in climate change. Being two of the greatest emitters and holding more than half of the world's emissions combined, they play pivotal roles in the existential crisis

¹ Nations, United. "Cities and Pollution." United Nations. United Nations. Accessed December 17, 2021. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/climate-solutions/cities-pollution>.

we face.² Action from these two countries will be pivotal.

To ponder this question on a local level, let's investigate the city of Boston, a city that has made advancements in climate resiliency and mitigation but suffers from startling inequities. I worked in the Environment Department for the City of Boston from 2018 to 2021. I served as the engagement manager for an initiative called Greenovate Boston. Its mission is to educate, engage, and mobilize Bostonians to engage in climate action. Seeing firsthand the work being done in the department, I can attest to the great strides made by the city to prepare for climate change. From recycling and composting programs, to retrofitting city buildings, to environmental and historical conservation, to climate resilience, the City of Boston has its hands in many different pockets to address the climate crisis.³

What became apparent in my work, however, was the general lack of factoring of climate equity for communities of color. The solutions didn't consider what the community was and has historically gone through - rampant gentrification and housing instability;⁴ unresolved trauma of busing and domestic terrorism;⁵

economic divestment,⁶ and a cavernous racial wealth gap.⁷ Being one of the few people who understood the dynamics of race and climate change in Boston, I worked to meet these gaps until departing the position. Today, there continues to remain huge gaps between the solutions and the people who need them, especially in Black and other marginalized communities. This remains a problem not just in Boston, but throughout the United States.

The vision to address climate change and social inequality must be inseparable. In this new world of climate justice, we must use the tools of racial justice to resolve climate change. We need to think about resolving the climate from two ends - what's good for humanity and what's good for the earth. They must be aligned, and the benefit must work for the environment and the marginalized because we can't live while destroying the environment that makes our lives possible. As the authors of our narrative, we can create a new lexicon for climate change. We must create climate justice cities - cities that contribute to the proliferation of the environment. Where humanity and the environment harmonize. Where mitigation and resilience are naturally built-in. Where more things are compostable and very little goes to trash. Where biodiversity is allowed to persist and green spaces are available for mental and environmental health.

In tandem with these benefits for the earth, anti-racism must be baked into these cities. That the intersections of race, gender, age, ability are factored into what is needed to address the harm that is being done to people. When we think about the solutions for climate change, we tend to overlook the human aspect

2 Rapiert, Robert. "The World's Top 10 Carbon Dioxide Emitters." *Forbes*. Accessed December 17, 2021. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rapiert/2019/12/04/the-worlds-top-10-carbon-dioxide-emitters/>.

3 Boston.gov. "Environment," February 1, 2016. <https://www.boston.gov/departments/environment>.

4 Staff, Deanna Pan Globe, Updated July 10, 2020, and 4:19 p m Share on Facebook Share on TwitterView Comments165. "Boston Is the Third Most 'Intensely Gentrified' City in the United States, Study Says - The Boston Globe." *BostonGlobe.com*. Accessed December 17, 2021. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/07/10/metro/boston-is-third-most-intensely-gentrified-city-united-states-study-says/>.

5 Delmont, Matthew. "The Lasting Legacy of the Busing Crisis." *The Atlantic*, March 29, 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/03/the-boston-busing-crisis-was-never-intended-to-work/474264/>.

6 <https://mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/entrepreneurs-color-boston-lacks-access-and-capital>

7 Staff, Akilah Johnson Globe, December 11, 2017, and 4:24 p m Share on Facebook Share on TwitterView Comments. "That Was No Typo: The Median Net Worth of Black Bostonians Really Is \$8 - The Boston Globe." *BostonGlobe.com*. Accessed December 17, 2021. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2017/12/11/that-was-typo-the-median-net-worth-black-bostonians-really/ze5kxCljJek24M3pugFFN/story.html>.

of the solution. The vernacular that we utilize to describe the problems usually disregard the intersectional nature of these problems of racial justice, economic justice, and gender equality, opting for two segments of these initiatives when they would be stronger together. As we work to heal the earth, we work to heal humanity. Economic, housing, wage justice are central to this healing of humanity. We must make the effort to address these issues while making cities bastions of climate action. They are our greatest hope in addressing the climate issue.

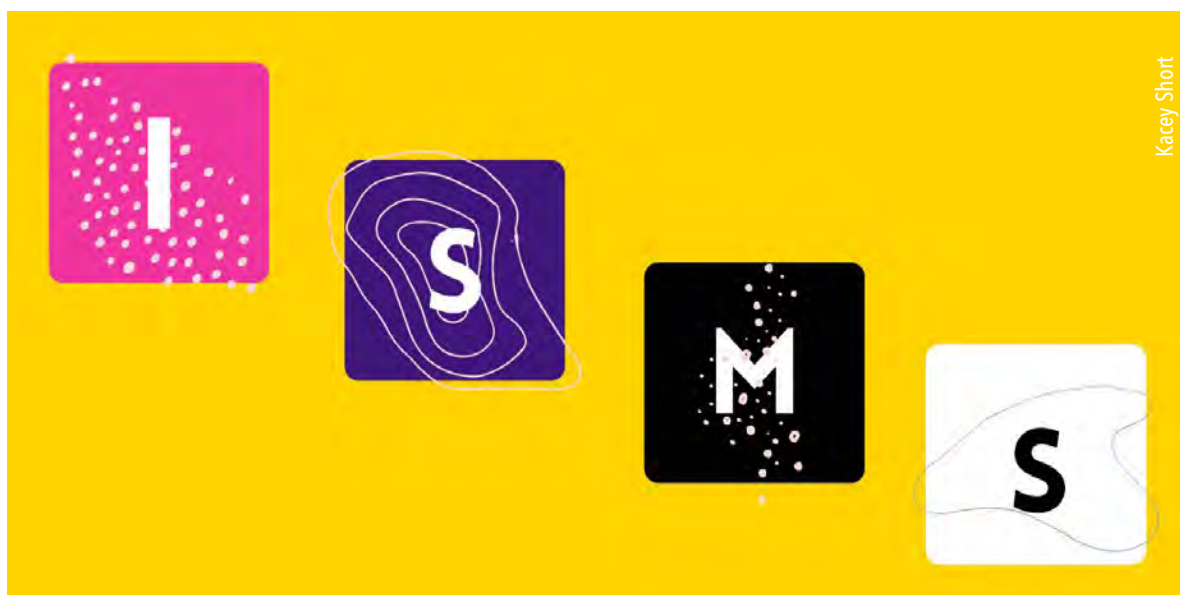
To be clear, climate change is the ecological manifestation of systemic racism. It is man-made, dictated by human consumption, having the greatest impact on the poor, Black, Latinx, womxn, youth of the world. It is born from the unmitigated growth of human development. From productions of goods that came in large part from the slave labor that built this country and continues to prosper off the backs of vulnerable, non-white communities.

We don't have the tools to address climate change because we are not speaking about it and its proper context. We need to call climate

change what it truly is - racism. We need a new lexicon - a new way to speak about climate change to ensure that equity for the environment includes equity for the people. Diasporic Anti-Racism, or the application of a systemic perspective on the action to support people of African descent, must be applied to global efforts to resolve climate change. We must apply this global perspective to support the climate justice efforts to overturn the impacts that climate change is already having in Black communities in the Caribbeans, Latin America, Europe, and Africa, and connect it to the local. Boston is already a melting pot of African Diasporans from all ethnicities. The wealth of experience, knowledge, and passions will advance anti-racism efforts in the climate movement at the local level. This will not only impact progress efforts against environmental racism but also all the greatest impacts of systemic racism in Boston. This new lexicon for the climate plight experienced by the marginalized will bring the unity and organization needed to line all these issues together to create comprehensive actions against systemic racism. The only question is what is the will of the Diaspora to make this happen in Boston, and across the world?

Rewind, Remind, and Reset: A Guide for Organizational Leaders to Navigate Wicked "isms"

Chaveso
Cook and
Abdullah
Clark



In a speech to cadets at West Point, retired General and current Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said that living as a person of color was analogous to swimming in an ocean with sharks. He then added that, “Racism is not the sharks; it is the water.”

External stresses are mirrored in internal group dynamics, many times through more individually focused *isms* (i.e., sexism, racism). Regardless of industry or field people are an organization’s number one resource, so this begs a few key questions: what actions should leaders take to successfully navigate such a difficult organizational atmosphere? When presented with situations on the topics of the main negative (or referred to here as

wicked) *isms* that deal with a diverse workforce - ageism, classism, ableism, sexism, extremism, and racism – what can be done?

Taking into account the recent support of and outcry against critical race theory (in both the halls of Congress and in the Pentagon), this article focuses on the negative *ism* of racism (and the corresponding lens of antiracism) to propose a guide for organizational leader actions navigating these difficult challenges. To navigate wicked *isms*, leaders must Rewind, Remind, and Reset. Instead of just defining each step, this guide shows what a detailed approach to each step could look like when addressing racism.

Rewind to move forward

Catalyzed by 2020's events including a global pandemic, murders of George Floyd, a disputed presidential election leading to the violent insurrection on January 6, 2021, leaders of industry, non-profits, academia, and government began stepping into challenging conversations and actions regarding racial topics such as social justice, biased policies, and equity. Despite the politicization of race, inclusive leadership is apolitical. Thoughtful leaders energetically approached these topics via two imperatives - utilitarian and moral. It is a *utilitarian imperative* since organizations must fully leverage each of its employees' talents to succeed in our hyper-competitive environment. McKinsey & Company's 2018 "Delivering through Diversity" study indicates that embracing difference makes companies 21% more likely to outperform their peers in short-term earnings and 27% more in long-term value creation.

It is also a *moral imperative*, as everyone is equally human and deserves to be fully respected, included, and have similar access to opportunity. DE&I efforts will not be fully successful without an anti-racist agenda that both edifies and catalyzes change. Defining anti-racism and anti-racist leadership is an important step:

Anti-Racist Leadership

Ibram Kendi's work defines a person to be antiracist if they are supporting the construction of antiracist policy through their actions and words. Organizations are looking for methods to induce real (and rapid) change. Individual antiracism limits the speed and potential infectious power of diversity, equity, and inclusion at-scale.

Building on the work of Ibram Kendi, the concept of anti-racist leadership seeks to influence others to support antiracist policies through their actions and ideas. Thus, an an-

tiracist leader is one that influences others to support antiracist actions, policies, and procedures. Leadership is a process, so one cannot extricate the fact that there is a transaction occurring between the leader and follower and both their respective perspectives and experiences. Antiracist leadership encourages those that subscribe to Kendi's construct to move beyond individual actions and into the realm of influence to overcome the damaging organizational inertia associated with the wicked *ism* of racism. As such, anti-racist leaders can reduce racism and its effects by building more cohesive teams. They start by asking two fundamental questions:

Am I leading myself to be anti-racist? The best leaders have a deeper sense of clarity, self-awareness, and what is important by first leading themselves before they attempt to lead others. A failure to first lead oneself allows unconscious and implicit bias to control and derail our actions. And when leaders fail to see their own biases, their leadership can unconsciously (or consciously) catalyze personal and organizational microaggressions, slights, inappropriate judgments, prejudices, insensitive policies, and abuses of power.

Am I leading my organization to be anti-racist? Leadership has many definitions, but many definitions of the word involve influencing others. Leaders must navigate complex spaces to help themselves and others identify where biased policies and oppression may still exist. Leaders also help others see how their own biases, blind spots, and actions that may contribute to racism without them even knowing it. It takes influence to help people understand how racism can manifest in a system, and not just as an isolated event. To get there, anti-racist leaders need to push conversation past normal boundaries. Twentieth century scholars French and Raven defined three possible follower outcomes to leaders' influence attempts: resistance, compliance, or commitment. Understanding each of these helps an anti-racist leader to be more effective.

- Follower resistance includes direct push-back or passive aggression.
- Follower compliance includes temporary acceptance, but without internalization.
- Follower commitment includes internalization, which may lead to initiative and assistance.

Remind to Refresh

Leading yourself and your organization to be anti-racist typically starts with difficult conversations that remind people of the challenges ahead and refresh the dialogue about what right looks like. Below is a list of a few potential landmines that anti-racist leaders need to be able to navigate as they facilitate these discussions:

- *“I don’t see color.”* This can sound like, “I grew up in an environment where we were taught to just see each other as people and not see race,” or simply “I’m not racist.” Whereas race is a social construct, unless we are actually blind, we absolutely notice differences in skin color. Research indicates that racial colorblindness propagates existing racial inequities. Not seeing a person for who they are can undermine their identity and value, leading to less commitment on their part. Some minority groups choose to blend in visually with the majority population at times, yet people of color don’t have that option. Anti-racist leaders see people for who they are, where they are, where they come from, and how they can contribute to the team.
- *“I can appreciate the peaceful protests, but the looting and rioting are what really bothers me.”* This is a place where anti-racist leaders have an opportunity to discuss the history of government and business policies that directly discriminated against Blacks, indigenous people, and

other people of color. One may also want to compare the riots at the Capitol with previous incidents as President Joe Biden and VP Kamala Harris did. Leaders can help their teams understand that when a group of citizens perceive that powerful representatives of the government are able to commit dangerous acts against certain groups without prompt accountability, it is logical for some members of that group to believe their social contract of being treated fairly (and thusly, law and order) is also invalid. Even though organizational leaders can’t typically justify rioting and looting against government and private property, they can be outwardly supportive of peaceful protests and help others to understand deeper sources of discontent. A technique to address this landmine could be to host a writing and discussion workshop with a prompt that asks employees to agree or disagree with the Martin Luther King quote, “A riot is the voice of the unheard,” and to then list what those voices might say if they were listened to and truly heard.

- *“Don’t all lives matter? Isn’t it reverse racism to primarily say that black lives matter?”* The landmine here is one of equivalence. If all lives mattered equally to everyone, much of our nation’s current inequality probably wouldn’t exist. A leader who says “all lives matter” may intend to bring diverse people together, but it can be interpreted as deliberately dismissing the legacy discrimination against the Black community. Strongly acknowledging that black lives matter in no ways pushes other lives to the background. Leaders should learn more about and communicate an understanding of these perspectives if they want to gain the commitment of a diverse set of stakeholders. Anti-racist leaders could also emphasize that throughout American history, Black people have been vastly underrepresented in almost all positions of power. A technique to deactivate this

landmine is to craft a partnership with a local or national non-profit or school that primarily serves underrepresented populations. Invite them to present their issues and ideas to the organization and consider allowing employees the occasional use of company time to volunteer with them (such as four hours a month).

- “*Police like the ones in the George Floyd case are just bad apples.*” This landmine fails to remember that one “bad apple” can do more than just spoil a whole barrel, it can wrongly incarcerate or kill. Imagine an orchard of 100 trees producing 50 apples each, totaling 5,000 apples a season. If each tree only had one bad apple, that is still a lot (100) of bad apples. And while standing outside the orchard no one can see which apples are bad. Most of our black colleagues have received “the talk” from a loved one- telling them to be extra cautious when being pulled over by a member of our law enforcement community. Historically, there are many true stories of bad apples abusing people like them. People never know if they are encountering a “bad apple” or not. As a leader we must imagine how many of our minority subordinates and direct reports live every day with this fear and consider the cumulative effects of this stress on their emotional well-being and physical health. A technique to deactivate this landmine is to have employees watch various available documentaries on the unique challenges that Black Americans can sometimes face when interacting with law enforcement in America, while also offering a discussion on the challenges of policing in general. The follow-on discussion facilitator could use Wharton Professor Stephanie Creary’s R.A.C.E. Framework to facilitate.

Reset to reflect, redirect, and react

In addition to reacting deftly to landmines as they appear, great leaders are proactive.

Proactivity requires resetting the direction of the organization. Leaders that want to be actively anti-racist should take the following steps to make more inclusive organizations.

- *Conduct a deliberate self-assessment.* The late leadership scholar Warren Bennis once said, “you can never know too much about yourself.” Research indicates that increased self-awareness directly contributes to more effective leaders and more profitable companies. Leadership begins with whom you are, not what you do. Before someone can direct subordinates, he or she must lead themselves first, and to do so, leaders must know their strengths, weaknesses, biases, prejudices, experiences, and values. Carving out time for introspection and reflection is difficult with the swarm of email, 24-hour news cycles, and buzzing notifications. Introspection alone does not improve self-awareness, so anti-racist leaders seek both internal and external feedback from trusted critics, including people of color. Leaders can best build this self-awareness through the use of a myriad of tools, such as the VIA Character Strengths Survey, an Enneagram Test, or the Self Consciousness Scale. Additionally, authors Raymond Kethledge and Michael Erwin have illuminated the research behind the need for moral courage required of today’s leaders. Finally, anti-racist leaders should recognize the subconscious tendency to gravitate towards those like themselves, so leaders should actively diversify their friend, work, and social (including social media) groups.
- *Create brave spaces.* Psychological safety is paramount to having productive difficult conversations. Brave spaces differ from safe spaces in that they go beyond exploration and expression of ideas without marginalization and judgment. They encourage shared experiences that may end up leading to uncomfortable dialogue for the purpose of crafting new understandings. Anti-racist leaders can use brave spaces to

validate and challenge one another rather than just providing support. Creating the psychological safety required for brave spaces can increase trust and commitment in teams and leverage diversity, leading to what studies indicate are the highest performing teams and market breakthroughs. Google's Project Aristotle research identified the dynamics of teams who listed psychological safety as the most important factor for team effectiveness. Carving out the space, whether it be on a calendar or in a physical room, to build the habits and routines supportive of critical dialogue is a way for anti-racist leaders to help create the psychological safety needed for difficult discussions.

- *Develop the next generation of anti-racist leaders.* Former President Barack Obama has called on a new generation of leaders to take on the mantle of changing oppressive systems. Younger generations born near the turn of the century have now entered the workforce. They have matured in an environment of inclusive language, marriage laws, advocacy, justice, activism, and not just “Dr. Seuss kindness.” Lisa Fain and Lois Zachary of the Center for Mentoring Excellence identify this intersubjectivity by stating that “we often see someone and think they’re different, but people are not inherently different: our differences lie between us, not within us.” As such, leaders can choose to mentor, develop, and lead people who don’t look like them.
- *Become an upstander.* The importance of intervention cannot be overstated. If everyone can adhere to the Department of Homeland Security’s national campaign of “if you see something, say something” concerning an errant bag in a subway station or an airport, everyone can certainly identify, address, and prevent microaggressions, offenses, and blatant injustices against their fellow human beings as they are happening. Studies show that people of color need White allies to lead to make a difference—both individually and long term. Some of the many ways anti-racist leaders can enact change is by calling out discriminatory hiring practices and enacting diverse and inclusive hiring practices, and displaying professional personal example when unfairness arises in the workplace. Leaders can also be an upstander from their frontlawn, too, investing in diverse neighborhoods across town, by inviting people of difference to dinner tables and playdates, and doubling down on corporate social responsibility (CSR) (especially within minority populations) by becoming members of local institutions, small businesses, and donating funds to organizations to support and uplift those who have and continue to face discrimination. Though there is a moral imperative for this corporate action, Forbes’ studies indicate that 82 percent of U.S. consumers indicate that CSR factors into their decision-making process when buying goods and services.

Whereas most believe that upward mobility is possible for anyone who works hard, research indicates that social status, privilege, and affluence drives who reaches the top of the ladder. Kotter International has pioneered leadership research which indicates that connecting with, including, and mentoring subordinates and direct reports who are not clones of the board of directors or the existing organizational leadership will extend opportunity for the mentees and help positively transform the organization.

Final thoughts

Poet Maya Angelou has a simple reminder for all those that will navigate these tenuous spaces and uncomfortable conversations, “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” With the proposed guidelines above the hope is that leaders and their organizations now know better, so we all can do better. Rewind to get ready to move forward, remind yourself and others of

the speedbumps and potholes ahead, and reset to encourage reflection, grow organizational inertia, and enact your plan.

Having difficult conversations allows leaders to gain some control over organizational culture. The steps mentioned above offer methods for leaders to get ahead of negative shifts in collective consciousness, which impacts cohesiveness and ultimately the bottom line. These steps can be enacted against each of the other wicked *isms* and each of the reset sub steps offered here for anti-racism remain relevant in anti-sexism, anti-ageism, anti-ableism, anti-classism, and anti-extremism approaches. Moving forward, organizational leaders have a social responsibility to obtain new ways of thinking, acting, and influencing. To mend our fissured society, the next generation of leaders should operate on embedded assumptions of equity supported by active measures of inclusivity as standard protocol.

Multiple vaccines are helping us address COVID-19 and its Delta and Omicron variants. Leadership, at the individual and organizational level, will help inoculate our society against prejudice, discrimination, and bigotry by proactively navigating wicked *isms* before

and after they arise. It will never be easy, but leaders who are committed to doing better as individuals and, in turn, leading by example in their organizations will help our society stem the tide of harm.

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Abdullah H. Clark is an active-duty Army officer and doctoral student at George Washington University, with a focus on human and organizational learning. He holds a masters in policy management from Georgetown University and a masters in public administration from Columbus State University.

The views expressed here are their own and do not represent those of the Army or the Department of Defense. The authors would like to thank Everett Spain for helping to shape this article.

"Words I keep on Repeat!"



Dr. Sharon
Attipoe-Dorcoo

A colonial smasher
An equity pusher
The words that describe my fight
The fight I grew up hearing Mandela fighting
The fight I heard Yaa Asantewaa fighting
My own ancestry carries the story of Corporal Attipoe
My maternal grandma who instilled fire and grit + community
in me
My paternal grandma whom I heard will not let the class of
a bursa's wife
Stop her from organizing other women perceived as not well
off to state their pride in their collective
One where I watch the life of Harriet Tubman in a movie
Blown away by the portrayal of destiny
A feeling of a sense of my own leadership
Wondering where am I called to lead?
The daily tugging in my heart of something bigger unfolding
A practice to practice that makes my current situation
Blessings!
Because it is through these nuggets that my destiny will unfold
for me
A path carved with purpose
Even in the most egregious circumstances
It is why when I see Harriet's master in the movie
I am reminded that every single dot on the page of our lives
is meant for the unveiling of our purpose
Even the most horrific ones!
My liberation story is connected to every dot on the page of
my life
And unless each dot recognizes that it's liberation is connected to
another dot Freedom eludes it!

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Foster Care Crisis: When Black Children are Taken Out of Their Homes, Many Don't Make It Back



Sondra Strong

Leah
Kessler

Policy as a mechanism for public service can lead to a world of ethnography and data so far removed from people that it can be jarring to look at the issue up close. Despite my academic background in child welfare policy and receiving intensive social work training, nothing prepared me to be a case planner in New York City's foster care system or the emotional toll it would take. Before starting, I knew that poverty-related neglect was the impetus for the majority¹ of child removals and family separations in foster care. A much smaller percent of removals are classified as abuse cases and better represent a system working to protect children that need it rather than one that criminalizes and punishes poor families. I also knew that America's foster care system legalizes the separation of Black families at disproportionate rates. Today about 21 percent of all children in foster care nationwide are Black, even though Black children constitute only about 14 percent of the nation's youth.² In New York, the gap is wider: a majority³ of children in New York's foster care system are Black or Latinx but Black kids account for only 15 percent of the state's youth.⁴ Black families are separated quickly when compared to white

1 Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. "The AFCARS Report," (AFCARS), n.d., 6.

2 Ibid

3 <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/reports/maps/counties/New%20York%20City.pdf>

4 "Child Population by Race | KIDS COUNT Data Center."

families due to cultural competency issues on the ground-level and policy measures that target the Black community. Black children in foster care also fare poorly under the state’s supervision. They receive fewer supports, have higher occurrences of placement changes, remain in care for longer periods, and are less likely to be reunited with their families or adopted.⁵ I knew all this, but paradigms quickly gave way to thirteen kids on my caseload, each with their own needs, interests, fears, and aspirations.

Molly,⁶ a 16-year-old on my caseload, is a funny, resilient, and bright kid with a unique edge to her. As an older youth, Molly’s challenges are different from other kids in the system. Research finds that duration in foster care causes worse outcomes for children – including, but not limited to, lower educational attainment, high rates of homelessness, joblessness, teen pregnancy, PTSD, and incarceration.⁷ Of the children waiting to be adopted in 2020, 17 percent had spent three or more years in the system.⁸ In New York, that number 78.8 percent.⁹ Molly exemplifies how the system works for children of color. Despite having no adoptive resources, she was legally “freed” for adoption before I started working with her. As a child with higher needs, more behavioral issues, and severe trauma, she shuttled between foster care placements at a speed typical for older youth. Molly has spent over a decade in the system. She has lived in more than ten separate homes, each under the supervision of different caregivers with their own particular set of rules. For Molly, I acted in place of parents, making decisions, and offering support or discipline when she needed it. We grew to love one another during our time together and saying goodbye to

her was one of the harder things I’ve had to do. But at that point, she was accustomed to goodbyes – the worst of which being the ones she made to her parents.

In January 2021, I transferred Molly to one of these new homes—her sixth placement change in our 18 months of working together. Her former foster guardian Ms. May—the adult Molly had been closest to in the world—kicked Molly out because Ms. May felt she didn’t have control and received too little agency support. Molly’s new foster guardian, Ms. Dee, is well-known at the agency because she accepts teen girls when there is no one left in their kinship network. She’s the last step before the agency resorts to placing teens in group homes. Ms. Dee doesn’t get discouraged by the little things, doesn’t hover, doesn’t try to change the kids. But she also doesn’t parent.

Every child in care is assigned a planned permanency goal (PPG). Youth 16 and older, like Molly, can be assigned a PPG named another planned permanent living arrangement (or “APPLA”). This is a bureaucratic term for emancipation that was created by the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997¹⁰ to replace the phrase “long-term foster care.” With APPLA, which accounts for about four percent of foster care permanency goals nationwide,¹¹ older youth are discharged to themselves. In my pre-job training, we were advised to discourage and prevent older youth from pursuing an APPLA goal. We were taught APPLA means having no legal family, no financial or emotional support, no one to call after a promotion or a break-up. It’s a goal for kids who have spent years being raised by a racist and traumatizing system devoid of unconditional love. It’s one of the loneliness existences someone can have. Molly has a goal of APPLA.

It’s a funny thing to introduce a child to their

5 Roberts, Dorothy E. *Shattered Bonds: The Color of Child Welfare*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.

6 Molly is a fictitious character based on several children I used to work with. All names have been changed to assure confidentiality and anonymity.

7 “Child Maltreatment 2019.” <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/report/child-maltreatment-2019>. (Child Maltreatment Report).

8 AFCARS.

9 Children’s Bureau, New York.

10 “Summary of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-89) | Adoption in Child Time.” Accessed December 17, 2021. <https://adoptioninchildtime.org/bondingbook/summary-of-the-adoption-and-safe-families-act-of-1997-pl-105-89>.

11 AFCARS.

caretaker. Molly was an expert in these introductions. This would be Molly's first time living in public housing, making her the exception from many youth in her position. Her new caregiver goes over some ways to be safe in the area. Her new room is packed with items that don't belong to her. We show her how to make the much longer commute to her school. The only adults she had to call on for support were Ms. May, who was waiting outside with the rest of Molly's stuff, or me—the face of an agency she had grown to loathe.

Three out of five caseworkers do not make it a year on the job. I knew that my colleagues and friends would leave—worn down by long hours, lack of pay, and secondhand trauma. I knew professional failures would far outweigh successes, but I could never imagine how painful it would be to leave Molly, once again, in a stranger's home. This was my worst day at work—worse than hours spent in pediatric psychiatric wards, worse than trying to convince a mother her husband sexually abused their daughter, and worse than testifying in court that a mother's parental rights should be terminated as she sat at the table next to me. And while these anecdotes convey the human costs and systemic violence of this system, these stories are also dissociative and enable front-line workers—like me—to use trauma as a currency to justify burnout. The truth is I contributed to a system that was not set up to succeed. “Cover your ass” (or “CYA”) is the workplace mantra of the child welfare system, repeated ad nauseum to incentivize workers to protect the agency from blame at the expense of clients' well-being. Peace is always prioritized over justice, so we offer people only two options: bad and worse.

It can be hard to rationalize the impenetrable decision a government makes when separating parents from children, babies from mothers, siblings from one another, especially when you see it up close. I wasn't there when Molly was separated from her parents or siblings. I never had a good answer when kids asked why they couldn't go home with their mom.

“Not today,” while honest, was satisfying for no one. Human logic, however, is both strange and estranged from those who call upon it to vindicate their actions. *Racecraft*,¹² the practice of racism producing the illusion of race, can help explain what is happening in foster care. Just as this ideology was once used to justify slavery in a republic founded on doctrines of liberty and natural rights, racecraft now sustains a system that actively harms children it is tasked with caring for. Foster care operates by blaming parents for structural harms borne out of racism and poverty. It's founded on the philosophy that we “protect” children by taking them from their families; that success means “fixing” parents through a cocktail of mandatory services completed under the threat of losing their parental rights. Creating a child welfare system true to its name will not only come from a complete dismantling of foster care but also a complete dismantling of these logics and philosophies.

As it stands, “child welfare” is a misnomer, but we can work towards transforming the child welfare system from a family regulation system into a community-based service provider. We can start redefining child welfare to mean ending poverty for kids and holistically supporting families of color. We can push our federal and state governments to address the present-day manifestation of settler colonialism in American foster care institutions and the harm being inflicted on individuals, families, and communities. A major reason foster care agencies can operate so violently is that they do so with little public notice. Creating public discourse and activism around this topic will help accelerate change in an entrenched system that dictates the lives of children—children who deserve better than they are getting.

All names and identifying information has been changed to protect the privacy of all parties.

¹² This is a term coined by [Barbara Fields](#), a Professor of American History at Columbia University.

Necessary Trouble: A Conversation on the Life and Legacy of Congressman John Lewis



Tisa Smart
Washington

Presented by the Anti-Racism Policy Journal and hosted by Houser Professor of Practice, Professor of the Practice of Public Leadership and Social Justice Cornell William Brooks, Necessary Trouble: A Conversation on the Life and Legacy of Congressman John Lewis featured panelists Elmyra Powell, Michael Collins and Dawn Porter who all learned from and worked with Lewis at three distinct times in his life – as a young activist, during his time as a congressman and in his last days. The discussion was held on the 35th anniversary of Congressman Lewis’ first election to Congress. Powell worked alongside Lewis as a solider with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Collins served as Lewis’ Congressional Chief of Staff and worked closely with him during his tenure. And award-winning filmmaker Dawn Porter captured Lewis’ private moments and public triumphs in the 2020 documentary John Lewis: Good Trouble, which she produced and directed.

When the late Congressman John Lewis spoke about his life, his work, and his dedication to civil and human rights, he repeatedly spoke of a “Beloved Community” – one in which every human being is valued and treated with dignity. For the Congressman, building the Beloved Community represented an opportunity to redeem the soul of our nation and the world, an opportunity he leveraged often throughout his life, whether he was being arrested for protesting in 1961 or staging a sit-in on the Congressional floor in 2016. In an op-ed published in *The New York Times* on the day of his funeral, Lewis spoke of the “Beloved Community” one final time. “Democracy is not a state,” Lewis said. “It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build what we called the Beloved Community, a nation and world society at peace with itself.”

The Anti-Racism Policy Journal hosted an event at the Harvard Kennedy School called, *Necessary Trouble: A Conversation on the Life and Legacy of Congressman John Lewis* and brought together individuals who knew Lewis well and themselves were the embodiment of that “Beloved Community.”

“There are so many students, so many activists, so many advocates, certainly the people on this panel who are in this moment, in the midst of this trying hour of our democracy, who are literally walking in the legacy, the words, the work of John Lewis,” said Professor Cornell Brooks, who moderated the panel.

The conversation was a trek through history, bringing to the audience personal accounts of the life of Lewis. Elmyra Powell recalled meeting Lewis in 1960 when she joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and trained in the teachings of non-violent resistance. From her stories, it was clear that Lewis’ commitment to building the “Beloved Community” began long before the spotlight shone on his life.

“Many people in the civil rights movement were there for all kinds of reasons. Some were

just there for the civil rights. Some were not committed to non-violence at all, except for the times that they were present in the movement,” Powell said. “John was committed religiously to the path of nonviolence. I knew I was in the presence of a heavyweight. I did not know what he would become. But I knew he had a calling far beyond what most of us students had at that time.”

Just 3 years after meeting Powell, Lewis’ calling would take him to the podium at the Lincoln Memorial for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. From the same microphone that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his “I Have a Dream” speech, Lewis delivered one of his own as the youngest speaker at the march. Two years later in 1965, the calling would take Lewis to the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, on what is now known as Bloody Sunday, the Civil Rights Movement was catapulted on the world stage.

“John, you could tell just by being around him, there was a gravitas to him. I did not have any idea that he would have become a politician. I would have thought he would have remained outside the political system as a moral leader somewhat in the manner of Dr. King,” said Powell. “I didn’t know where he was going to end up, but I knew he had that internal strength and groundedness, and at the same time a vision of accomplishment and high heights.”

Michael Collins, who served as Lewis’ Chief of Staff, spoke to the way the Congressman was guided by his own moral compass and how it showed up in the way he connected with everyone he met.

“He was just always a giving individual. He was just somebody – he had a heart of gold and he just wanted to always give,” Collins said. “I was just one as I found after working for 21 years, that he wanted to extend that to everybody that he met. He just had that spirit and he expected all of us that worked with him to do the very same thing as an extension of who he was.”



Fernanda Papa

to speak at that night. Kennedy's other white aides were saying 'you can't speak', 'it's going to be a riot', 'it's too dangerous,' and a 20-something year old John Lewis said, 'you must speak to them tonight; you have to speak to them,' Porter said. "Indianapolis was one of the only cities that did not have rioting that night. And it is one of the, if not the only time, that Senator Kennedy referred to the bitterness and anger in his heart over his brother's killing as the hands of a white man. And that's how he said it. He said, 'my brother was killed by a white man, and so I understand your anger.' A very very powerful moment in history and there's John Lewis again. The youngest aide and that's who Kennedy chose to listen to."

Lewis spent most of his life fighting for civil and human rights. He was just a teenager when he dedicated himself to the work, meeting Dr. King when he was 18 years-old, becoming a Freedom Rider at 21 and speaking at the March on Washington at 23.

"When I talk to my students, you think of John Lewis as the elder statesman not like a high schooler trying to grapple with his own moral calling and moral ambitions, and call to leadership," Brooks said.

He continued the fight, working for community organizations until he began his government career at 27 serving in President Jimmy Carter's administration. Lewis was elected to Congress at 46, where he served until his death at 80.

"The thing that I think is really important to understand about the Congressman is nonviolence is not turning the other cheek. That's a misunderstanding of what it is. It is an active acceptance that I will not allow violence, which is a sin against God, I will not become the person who seeks to make me his enemy. And that's important because John Lewis wasn't looking for enemies. Others were seeking to make him an enemy and the tool of nonviolence was the resistance to that. I will not let you take my humanity from me; my effort to imitate God, to be godly." Porter said. "Nonviolence

Filmmaker Dawn Porter agreed that he was also a brilliant political strategist. "On the day that Dr. King was murdered, Mr. Lewis was working for (Bobby) Kennedy. And had organized the rally that Kennedy was supposed



is hard. It's not a tactic; he was baptized in it by Rev. [James] Lawson, by studying Gandhi, by studying South African movements. By studying the movements that included violence as an option and rejecting it".

This commitment was the driving force behind everything he did, not only personally, but professionally in his work in politics and government, and as an author and speaker.

In the film *John Lewis: Good Trouble*, Porter dedicates a scene to Lewis' extensive legislative work, which, was a reflection of his moral convictions. The film crew sought to catalog legislation that was authored or co-authored by Lewis but decided to take another route.

"We found so many that we had to narrow them down; we couldn't fit them all in the scroll. But you see a pattern to that legislation. You see a consistent pattern of showing up for rights. For LGBTQ rights, for women's rights, for all minorities, voting over and over and over. You see a moral path to the legislation that he would affix his name to and he was just always showing up," Porter said. "He really

did believe in government and did believe that the government should take care of those who need some help."

Even in his last days, gravely ill and fighting pancreatic cancer, Lewis was still working to redeem the soul of the world. Moved by the protests around the country after the killing of George Floyd, Lewis made a private visit to Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington, D.C. organized by Collins at the request of the Congressman.

"The moment that he had to stand on that plaza was a full circle moment for him. It was a connection to what he had witnessed, to the work that he had done, to his life," Collins said. "We had no idea that was his last public appearance; that was actually his last public appearance. And we had no idea just shy of a month from that moment he [would not be] with us."

Lewis passed away in July 2020, while still serving in Congress. He left a legacy of fighting for civil rights and charged the next generation to pick up the mantle and continue the fight.

Anti-Racism Policy Journal

Policy Demands

The Anti-Racism Policy Journal believes that thoughtful research and policy proposals should include immediate demands for action from Harvard.

- Increase representation for a diverse student body and faculty
- Divest from for-profit prison investments
- Release Renty Taylor and associated daguerreotypes to the Museum of African American History and Culture or other Black History Museum that isn't associated with Harvard
- Conduct investigation of African, Asian, Latin American, and Indigenous art at Harvard University Museums.
Return of stolen, looted, or art without proper provenance
- Use of Harvard's vast land acquisitions to affordable housing for students and the unhoused
- Transparency on endowment spending in widely distributed report to all students
- We believe women. Harvard's mishandling of sexual harassment/assault allegations are disturbing. We demand justice for anyone who comes forward with allegations against faculty, staff, or students
- Increase need-based financial aid



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Special Note: The cover of the journal was the brainchild of Emma Sprague her painting and collage work created the beautiful art direct you see throughout this journal.



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