FORMING A RACIALLY-INCLUSIVE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION:

Becoming a Racial Equity Learner, Racial Equity Advocate, and Racial Equity Broker*

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*CITATION
On Wednesday, June 17, 2015, Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church was having Bible Study. Hours later, the church, the city of Charleston, and the United States of America would never be the same. Dylann Roof, a twenty-one-year-old White male, entered the church and shot to death nice Black church members. After being welcomed into the church as a guest, Roof sat in the church for one hour before opening fire on Bible study attendees, which included 87-year-old Susie Jackson (who was killed) and a five-year-old girl (who survived by playing dead). In addition to Jackson, some victims were old enough to be Roof’s grandparents including Ethal Lance (age 70) and Daniel Simmons (74). Other victims included Myra Thompson (age 59), Cynthia Hurd (age 54), Reverend DePayne Middleton-Doctor (age 49), Reverend Sharonda Singleton (age 45), Tywanza Sanders (age 26), and Senior Pastor State Senator Clementa Pinckney (age 41). Roof purposely spared one church member to apparently bear witness to others of his terror. Roof was apprehended days later for being an armed and dangerous mass shooting suspect. After being arrested, police officers stopped Roof at Burger King to get some food because he was hungry. Many people saw the mass shooting and the Burger King stop as a direct affront to racial progress. Authorities also discovered Roof’s manifesto, which was laced with White supremacists’ jargon. Roof was convicted of several murder and hate crime charges, and sentenced to corporal punishment at the federal and state level.

While the number of mass shootings in the United States has increased substantially over the past couple of decades, the AME Church Massacre stands out for its connection to racism and domestic terrorism (Ray 2015). The AME Church Massacre also brings other incidents to our public consciousness such as the 2017 murder of 2nd Army Lt. Richard Collins III. Collins was standing with friends waiting for an Uber at the University of Maryland, College Park
campus when Sean Urbanski stabbed him to death. Collins, who was African-American, was set to graduate from historically Black Bowie State University three days after his murder. Lt. Collins’ parents accepted his diploma on his behalf, while an empty chair sat where he would have been. Urbanski, who is a White male, was a University of Maryland student. Authorities later found that Urbanski had ties to White supremacy groups on social media. Urbanski is awaiting trial for murder and hate crime charges.

Collectively, these two horrific incidents speak to the prevalence of domestic terrorism. Domestic terrorism is when U.S. citizens engage in incidents that use violence or force to intimidate a large segment of U.S. citizens. These particular incidents were meant to instill fear and terror throughout Black communities. Churches and universities are some of the few places where Blacks have found refuge and the space to learn how to engage in racial uplift activism in order to progress the United States to a more equitable place. Accordingly, it is important to note that these incidents are not simply perpetuated by lone wolves. Rather, Roof’s and Urbanski’s behavior have been created, supported, and maintained by social institutions; not limited to, family, education, and media, which all of us are embedded within. In this regard, their hate murders have ramifications seeped in structural racism (Ray 2015a).

In addition to hate crimes, officer-involved shootings have increased over the past two decades. After reaching an all-time low in the last 1990s and early 2000s, deaths by legal intervention (i.e., justifiable homicides or police killings) have substantially increased. Officer-involved killings of Black men such as Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Tamir Rice, Philando Castille, Eric Garner, John Crawford III, and Laquan McDonald have all captured global attention. Statistically, these killings are part of a troubling trend. African-Americans, compared to Whites, are 3.5 times more likely to be killed by the police when they are not attacking nor
have a weapon (Krieger et al. 2015). Among youth, Black teenagers are 21 times more likely than White teenagers to be killed by police (Gabrielson, Jones, and Sagara 2015).

While most of the officers in these incidents are rarely convicted, cities and municipalities pay millions of dollars in civil settlements to the families of people killed by police. Similar to malpractice lawsuits in medical settings, responsibility of death or injury is established by the civil suit. And, who ultimately pays the civil suit for the death of civilians by police officers? Taxpayers. Taxpayer funds are used to cover civil payouts. Some cities like Chicago actually have funds set aside for civil payouts for police officer-related incidents.

In addition to the incident of Sandra Bland who died while in police custody after being arrested during a traffic stop, one of the most egregious incidents involved another Black woman—Korryn Gaines, she was a resident of Baltimore. She reported being followed and stalked by the police. Gaines would post videos on social media to create a documented record of what she perceived as racial discrimination. In 2016, the police served a warrant for a previous traffic violation. After a six-hour standoff at Gaines’ home, police shot and killed Gaines. Gaines’ five-year-old son, Kodi, was also shot, suffered an elbow injury, and had bullet fragments in his face.

I remember reading a news article after this incident. The article stated that Kodi was expected to make a full recovery. In what world do we live in where we expect a child to make a full recovery, after he has been shot while witnessing his mother killed police officers? In 2018, the City of Baltimore settled with the Gaines’ family for $37 million because the courts ruled that the first shots fired by an officer, which killed Gaines, were unreasonable and violated her civil rights. Thirty-seven million dollars is an enormous amount of money. Though no amount of money can ever replace a person’s life, $37 million would go a long way in Baltimore to
redevelop southwest neighborhoods and invest in schools and social programs to improve employment opportunities and health outcomes.

Extending beyond officer-involved shootings, policies such as stop and frisk disproportionately discriminate and marginalize racial minorities. A study conducted in New York City in 2011 analyzed nearly 700,000 police stops. Of those stops, 51% was Black, despite the fact that Blacks only represent 13% of the New York City population, a third was Latino, despite the fact that Latinos only represent 16%, and 9% was White. Nearly 60% of stops involved frisk and a high percentage of those stops actually involved physical force. Yet, only 2% of stops led to the discovery of contraband with about 8% being arrested, mostly for resisting arrest. This means 98% of the people who were stopped were not doing anything wrong (see Gilbert and Ray 2015).

The enforcement of stand your ground laws show similar disparities. Whites are significantly more likely than Blacks to be found not guilty when using stand your ground as a defense. Studies on felony trials for similar crimes also show similar racial disparities. A study of 700 felony trials in Florida showed that a lack of racial diversity in the jury pool leads to Blacks being significantly more likely to be convicted relative to Whites. Jury selection and how prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges might corroborate to suppress evidence and maintain the police “blue wall of silence” can be extensive (Gonzalez Van Cleve 2016). When people are released from prison, racial disparities continue. Devah Pager (2007) looked at this. In her study, she sent out two different groups of job applicants, one group that had a criminal record, and one group that did not. The other difference was that some applicants were White, while some were Black. Pager found that, on average, not only did Whites without a criminal record get called
back and hired more than Blacks, but Whites with a criminal record were more likely to get called back and hired than Blacks without a criminal record.

Ferguson, MO as well as Baltimore were sanctioned with Consent Decrees from the Department of Justice for engaging in racial discrimination. Besides the corruption in Baltimore, Ferguson had a documented track record of aiming to stop more motorists and penalize them with larger fines in order to generate funding for the city. These motorists were more likely to be African-American. So, while Michael Brown became the apex for the Black Lives Matter Movement, the structural racism embedded within the Ferguson Police Department and the city was the impetus. These issues are why nearly 85% of Blacks and slightly over 50% of Whites believe there is a difference in the way that police treat African-Americans relative to Whites (Pew Research Center 2016).

VITALITY OF CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Similar to other chapters throughout this book, I aimed to document—via policing and the criminal justice system—how pervasive structural racism is in the United States and how it continues to shape life chances and social and economic outcomes. However, there is little discussion about what we do about structural racism. The “what do we do about it” is the focus of the rest of this chapter. Hoda Mahmoudi started this book by challenging Whites to end structural racism as we know it. This logic is similar to women’s rights activists who recognize that if sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape are to decrease, men must take it upon themselves to hold other men accountable for the ways that toxic masculine culture may seep into our social institutions to marginalize women. The same logic applies to race. If structural racism is to really go from a pillar that holds American society up to a crumbling foundation
never to be rebuilt or regrown in a different form, White Americans must take the onus to ratify a procedural justice perspective.

Critical race theory recognizes that racism is ingrained in the fabric and system of American society. Now, what is important here is that the individual racist need not exist for structural racism to be dominant (Bonilla-Silva in this book). What it does mean though is that if structural racism is pervasive then Whites often benefit from social, economic, and cultural privileges in a racialized society. Critical race theory identifies that these racialized power structures are based on White privilege and White supremacy, which perpetuates the marginalization of people of color.

Most people only see racism as operating in individuals rather than in structures that facilitate or inhibit movement through social institutions (like from a neighborhood to a school to a college to a job). Despite the over-individualization of racism, it operates primarily on three main levels. First, racism operates on an individual level via attitudes and face-to-face social interaction. We see this in schools where teachers in McKinney, Texas, Camden County, North Carolina, and Atlanta, Georgia were recently recorded making racist statements about Blacks (Ray 2015a). We also saw when a group of Black and Latino teenagers were accosted by police after a group of mostly White adults called about a disturbance. During the encounter, now former McKinney police officer Eric Casebolt was recorded on video and in uniform throwing down 15-year-old Dajerria Becton, who was in a bathing suit for a pool party. The city of McKinney settled the case for $184,850 using its self-insurance risk pool (Uhler 2018). Former McKinney elementary school teacher Karen Fitzgibbons was fired after stating the following about the incident: “This officer should not have to resign. I’m going to just go ahead and say it...the Blacks are the ones causing the problems and this ‘racial tension.’ I guess that’s what
happens when you flunk out of school and have no education” (Klein 2015). This teacher is supposed to teach all children equally. How can she, or others, do this with the level of bias and hate embedded within them? Imagine how many students Fitzgibbons has not called upon to answer a question or has not helped and given equitable attention because she perceives that when her Black fourth graders get to high school they will drop out? Potentially just as important, imagine how many other teachers, administrators, and family members knew she held these racist views and did nothing. They were complicit in allowing racism to proliferate.

Second, racism operates via processes and mechanisms such as racial composition, which are boundaries that shape social interaction and establish control over social environments (Ray and Rosow 2012). For example, my research on physical activity among middle class Blacks and Whites finds that Black men are less likely to exercise in predominately White neighborhoods (Ray 2017a). My results suggest that middle class Black men in predominately White neighborhoods, compared to middle class Black men in predominately Black neighborhoods, are more likely to be criminalized, profiled, and monitored (Ray 2015b). As in McKinney, there is a strong link between neighborhoods and schools. Some of the same people who work at the schools live in the local neighborhoods. When incidents with racist intent occur in these two social institutions, they are not isolated. They are highly linked.

Third, racism operates on a structural level via social institutions. For example, Blacks (and Black women in particular), compared to Whites, receive fewer income returns in the labor market for having a bachelor’s degree (Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey. 2012). In healthcare, they are less likely to be administered medication and provided adequate healthcare because providers perceive their pain threshold is higher (Hutson 2014). In education, Black preschoolers are more likely than Whites to be suspended for normal childlike actions (Hefling and Holland
Racism on a structural level is rooted in policies, laws, and legislation that allow differential treatment of individuals based on socially-ascribed racial categories. I noted some recent incidents in schools above. On the opposite side of the equation, an Arizona teacher was fired for defending a student being racially ridiculed by another group of students (Dia 2014). The policies in place allowed for her removal because they do not include legislation that protects teachers for speaking out against injustice. Unfortunately, these policies led to other teachers, just like some cops, to committing one of the ultimate acts of solidarity with racists—silence as acceptance. Calling something racist is not an abomination against all White people. It is to highlight the prominence of structural racism. Yet, Whites who take offense to the mentioning of the words racism or race might need to look in the mirror, or at least take a sociology race relations course, to better understand what racism is and how it operates on multiple levels to provide opportunities and constraints simultaneous to different people depending on their socially-ascribed race.

When racism is viewed in its totality, the incidents highlighted in this chapter are connected to a larger narrative about how America’s most important social institutions operate. For instance, the presiding judge over Roof’s initial hearing was removed due to information indicating that he may hold stereotypical views about Blacks and Whites (McKay 2015). The perception that judges are somehow impartial and above reproach is naive. How might this judge handle cases based on who he thought was a “nigger” or “redneck?” The next section discusses what we can all do to address incidents such as these.
RACIALLY-INCLUSIVE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION FRAMEWORK

What do we as individuals to obliterate structural racism and deal with individuals who have the power and influence to make decisions with racist intent that have institutional ramifications? *Atlantic* writer Joe Pinsker asked me a similar question about inequality as a whole. I told him that when I lecture and give workshops on diversity, inclusion, equity, and implicit bias to business, non-profit, political, and public safety leaders, I get asked this question all the time. I think targeting racial inequality specifically, which is a main pillar of inequality, should be a primary focus.

This book has discussed how structural racism seeps into our everyday lives to impact social interactions and life chances in education, housing, policing, and economic development. In fact, structural racism is a part of America’s DNA. Not because there are biological or genetic traits that separate races and have implications for intelligence, physicality, and emotional well-being; a long list of scholars have shown this not to be the case (see Ray 2017b). There is no gene for race. Actually, a gene for race has never been found. If there was a gene for race, racist would have found it by now. Rather, structural racism is a part of America’s DNA because it is a foundational pillar that is embedded in the roots that constructed the United States. These roots socialize us to think that races are genetically different and thus justify racial inequality. These roots also did not simply disappear with the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865 that ended slavery. Unfortunately, these racist roots continued through Jim Crow laws, convict leasing, redlining, predatory lending, housing and school segregation, political and voting disenfranchisement, the prison industrial complex, and over policing (Gilbert and Ray 2016; Gilbert and Goodman 2019; Ray 2017b).
To obliterate structural racism, I have three specific suggestions. First, people can become a “racial equity learner” by educating themselves about the fact that racial inequality is still very much alive and well. Even if people think they do not experience race, they live it and may benefit from it and maintain it even if they do not feel its tormented wrath directly. Second, in people’s everyday lives, they should aim to be a “racial equity advocate” by holding friends, family, and co-workers accountable for what they think, say, and do about inequality. Most inequality is festered when marginalized groups are not present. Speak up for them. Third, instead of simply asking for quota-type diversity, people can be a “racial equity broker” with their employers, children’s schools, churches, and home owners associations by advocating for more policies and practices that allow for accountability, objective evaluation, and transparency. The evaluations will highlight embedded forms of racial discrimination and their sources. Then, new practices and policies can be implemented to vehemently attack those sources with solutions to remove racism from all aspects of life.

In order to be a racial equity learner, racial equity advocate, and racial equity broker, it is important to implement a “racially-inclusive sociological imagination framework.” The racially-inclusive sociological imagination framework builds on the work of others who push for the importance of centering racial justice (Potapchuk 2014; Meehan, Reinelt, and Perry 2009). Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s non-violent campaign serves as a baseline for the importance of implementing a racially-inclusive sociological imagination. In Letters from a Birmingham Jail, King (1963) laid out the four basic steps of a nonviolent campaign—“collection of facts to determine whether injustices exist, negotiation, self-purification, and direct action.” Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront racism. Non-violent, direct action programs
aim to create a situation and environment that inevitably opens the doors to negotiation between groups and/or parties who previously could not come to an agreement.

I add to this line of work by starting with the fundamental premise that in order to center and engage in racial justice work, procedural justice must be at the forefront of the theoretical model and implementation plan. It is very important for people to begin by understanding and embracing the fact that social justice is “the premise that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities.” (Jimenez et al. 2015: 1). Justice, then, is typically broken down into two main categories—distributive and procedural. On one hand, distributive justice is the belief in equity and fairness. Most people believe this. Procedural justice, on the other hand, is the belief in an equitable procedure to create equitable distributions. The equitable procedure typically requires some sort of redistributive, recommodification, or correction to fix how past wrongs impact the present. If people believe the overwhelming evidence presented at the beginning of this chapter and throughout this book, embracing procedural justice should be easy. If people still question the extent to which this must happen in order for America to properly grapple with its racist roots based on structural racism, then, “God help them,” as my southern grandmother would say.

The racially-inclusive sociological imagination framework includes five components—1) Developing a diversity achievement ideology; 2) Identifying trust points; 3) Reducing implicit bias; 4) Creating brave spaces; and 5) Engaging in racial uplift activism. These steps help to change our everyday social interactions as well as the policies and practices that augment hate speech and racial discrimination.
Develop a Diversity Achievement Ideology

First, people have to develop a diversity achievement ideology. The diversity achievement ideology includes four important components: 1) self-awareness; 2) social awareness; 3) global awareness; and 4) agency. Becoming self-aware involves thinking critically about the ways that a person views the world and why, and developing a holistic life perspective. This is really a personal endeavor. People have to come in touch with what they believe morally, spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically. They have to deal with issues that might disrupt the ability to properly develop a diversity achievement ideology. Often times, this means grappling with major life events and being able to separate one individual’s actions from the social identities and groups they embody. I should also note that in order to engage in this transformative work it is important to stay fit for justice. Self-care and healing is very important for dealing with the daily stressors, microaggressions, and overt forms of discrimination that one might encounter while transitioning from being a racial equity learner to a racial equity advocate.

Becoming socially aware is learning the way that people view social identities. How do people view race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability? Then, once a person gains the empirical knowledge about how marginalization among these social identities operate, they must think critically about how their own social identities influence how others interact with them. Next, people become globally aware by realizing how people treat others differently based on their social identities. Finally, people then have to manufacture agency to enact change. Becoming a racial equity learner is really captured by going through this process. It involves much education, reading, studying, learning, and self-reflection.
Identify Trust Points

Second, people have to identify trust points in order to properly be a racial equity learner. In particular, people have to identify trusted and objective media sites. Admittedly, media is a competing curriculum. Competing curricula challenges our ability to obtain empirical data on trends and distorts our ability to interpret events as generalizable, valid, and reliable. No matter which mainstream news or alternative media news outlets one watches, there are political slates that cater to the main base of viewers. One way to potentially dilute certain agendas of media outlets is to identify at least three sources about a current event. Then, there is an opportunity to compare and contrast and relate to learned information about social theory and empirical trends. Outlets such as *Contexts Magazine: Sociology for the Public* is an important source of information for its rigor and empirical analysis. As seen in Figure 1, Fox News far outpaces other mainstream cable news channels as far as viewership.

[Figure 1 about here]

Nonetheless, if people are not diversifying their viewership across media outlets, it will be difficult to have candid conversations about race relations. While people may be talking about the same topics, they are discussing them in different ways and may even be using a different language to have conversations. Altogether, people should not simply trust what they hear and see. In the current media market, being first and getting ownership credit rather than being correct is a premium; viewers must be careful and patient to collect information from multiple sources rather than just one. Then, the information gathered can be compiled and analyzed with existing trends to determine if the event is an outlier or within the norm. If this process is not thorough, people are examining events in a vacuum, which can be dangerous.
In addition to mainstream media, social media can operate as a competing curriculum. Social media allow for everyone to function as experts on a topic even when they are not. Additionally, most algorithms on social media platforms operate to give users content they create based on what they like, click, and read. This means that most people are only seeing content they would normally want to see. In turn, they are not seeing information that might counter what they think, or may even be objective content if they already have predisposed attitudinal slants in their algorithm.

Social media platforms, such as Twitter, allow for the observation of the creation and housing of metadata and echo chambers. Echo chambers lead to territorial segregation, polarization, and isolation due to how people get information to build communities where their majority position is represented (Ray and Gilbert 2018). In the context of Twitter, users can distinguish themselves from other users by classifying their tweets (or messages) using hashtags. Hashtags often allow users to join with others in a form of solidarity of collective action. The observed repetition of this information legitimizes the group, and the type of information in the messages or tweets becomes a distinct characteristic of the group via the hashtag.

In this regard, social media can be used as tool for social change to combat prejudicial narratives as well as maintain existing power structures. Social media have a unique material history that shows and tells us what people say and do in real-time. They also bring voices to those who traditionally do activist work in silence (Ray et al. 2017). Social media circumvent traditional forms of publicity to place the power in the hands of individuals who collectively join in solidarity for a common cause or goal. Social media provide portals into how people are organizing and communicating to create narratives that survive over time and become engrained in the social consciousness of society (Ray and Gilbert 2018).
Ray and colleagues (2017) conducted a study using 30 million tweets on Ferguson following the killing of Michael Brown. In addition to the prominence of #BlackLivesMatter, which most people might expect, Top Conservatives on Twitter (TCOT) was one of the most popular used hashtag besides the name Michael Brown. TCOT takes credit for helping to establish the Tea Party and revitalize the alt-right (i.e., White supremacy). Though conversations in mainstream media about the Tea Party has decreased substantially, the tea party did not simply disappear. Rather, it is formally engrained in the Republican party. The United States’ simplistic two-party system obfuscates the development of major and public fissures within the parties.

Now, there is an competing curriculum beyond mainstream cable news and social media. Where people instantly obtain their information, particularly from various internet sites, can be problematic. In an analysis, I performed using the General Social Surveys, confidence in television and the press has decreased over time. Still, people primarily rely on those two outlets as their main sources of information. As far as high confidence, the public is more likely to believe in the science, community, medicine, and education. On the contrary, the public has rarely trusted Congress or the executive branch of government in high numbers. Table 1 should be an open challenge to scientists and educators to be more public and bold about sharing their expertise with the public.

[Table 1 about here]

**Reduce Implicit Bias**

Third, people need to aim to reduce implicit bias and become better racial equity learners and advocates. Results from millions of people who have taken implicit association tests (IATs) show the pervasiveness of prejudice about a host of outcomes. As it relates to race and skin tone,
people are more likely to have positive preference towards Whites and people with lighter-skinned tones relative to Blacks and people with darker-skinned tones (Ray 2015b). An example from my research with colleagues at the University of Maryland is noteworthy here. For the past several years, we have studied policing in America. Part of this research program is conducting implicit bias training with officers. We gave some of the officers IATs, including the Race and Weapons test. By clicking a series of images on a computer quickly, the test measures whether people have more bias toward Whites with weapons or Blacks with weapons. Among a very diverse group of police cadets, we found that a majority of participants had a strong to moderate bias for Blacks with weapons while no cadets had a strong or moderate bias for Whites with weapons (see Figure 2).

[Figure 2 about here]

These findings have grave implications for racial disparities in policing and relate to broader trends showing that African-Americans are more likely to be killed by police relative to Whites even when they do not have a weapon. They show how Blackness becomes weaponized and viewed as a threat (Ray 2015b; Gilbert and Ray 2016). For example, former police officer Darren Wilson, who shot and killed Michael Brown, reported during grand jury testimony that Michael Brown looked like a demon. Wilson also reported that he felt like a five-year-old child, while Brown looked like Hulk Hogan. Both men, the 18-year-old Brown, and 29-year-old Wilson, were 6’4 and well over 200 pounds.

Similar to the diverse group of officers, everyone has biases. These biases have implications for how we treat others and the decisions that we make. Though these decisions have the potential to turn deadlier during policing encounters, we all must work to ensure that our implicit biases do not influence our social interactions and decision making.
Create Brave Spaces

Fourth, people have to transform racist spaces into brave spaces by having candid racial conversations without racist intent. This is often times difficult for people, but it is critical for people being racial equity advocates. The reason why it is difficult is because people have a small amount of conversations about race with people who are not of their same racial group. By creating brave spaces, people can build bridges for people who might have different views than themselves. Though universities mimic the racial segregation that people experience in schools and neighborhoods (Ray and Rosow 2012), it is one of the rare spaces where people are encouraged to interact with those who think completely differently than themselves.

Our lives are so segregated by race and class that we rarely have more than superficial conversations with individuals of different social statuses. However, these homogenous spaces are often the spaces where people can have the most impact. Most people have a racist uncle, cousin, friend, or parent who frequently make derogatory or discriminatory comments about other groups. We have an obligation to speak up. “If not us, who? If not now, when?” This statement is attributed to Jewish leader Hillel the Elder. This is important because silence is acceptance. Correspondingly, if people can gain the courage and words to stand up and speak out against people they love, they can then have the courage to do it with anyone.

Cautiously though, we cannot change people’s engrained attitudes overnight. Yet, we can plant seeds of change and water them over time. This means sending family and friends empirical research to clarify a point. It means posing questions to better understand where people and coming from and why. Collectively, these steps may seem small, but over time, these steps are seeds of change that have an impact on people’s attitudes and behaviors.
Engage in Racial Uplift Activism

Finally, people have to engage in racial uplift activism. This component of the racially-inclusive sociological imagination framework highlights what it means to be a racially equity broker.

There are four main practical approaches to engaging in racial uplift activism. First, people can engage in civil rights by promoting the rights of individuals/groups through protest, strategizing, litigation and education. Second, people can engage in public policy by promoting the rights of individuals/groups through acts designed to influence legislative decision making. People can call and email their local politicians and policy makers to advocate for racially equitable policies, and bring attention to policies that may have racialized unintended consequences. For example, a state may want to change the financial thresholds for qualifying for educational funding or increase the number of months that someone is given a mandatory minimal sentence. The racial implications for these policies may be grave considering the racial wealth gap and the role of stop and frisk in racial disparities in policing.

Third, people can participate in community service by engaging in hands-on activities to better communities and individuals. This does not simply mean serving at a local soup kitchen, though this is important. This type of focused community service means identifying thresholds where racial inequality exists and then using one’s skill set to help. For example, a local school may not have computers or computer training for basic skill development. A person could volunteer to provide computer skill training for students one day a week after school. Or, someone may want to start a school or community garden. These programs are shown to have community and educational benefits by increasing math, science, and reading test scores, while
also moderating the race and social class composition of the school (Ray, Fisher, Fisher-Maltese 2016).

Fourth, people can engage in philanthropy by raising and giving money to better the lives of others. People can also help raise funds for important causes. For example, a local community center that has outdated equipment and services a lot of youth a person can raise funds for upgrades. Funding can be raised to refurbish the library and common space that community members use for local events. Philanthropy does not always mean giving one’s own money if resources are limited. Rather, it means thinking of ways to expand how we think about philanthropy to include social and cultural capital. There are a host of potential opportunities for people to make structural differences in people’s lives to mitigate structural racism.

CONCLUSION
If we really want to get past structural racism, we have to directly address it. We have to walk into it and dismantle it. We cannot go around it. We cannot dodge it. We cannot continue to interpret non-isolated events in a vacuum when they are part of the American roots of structural racism. And honestly, we have to question the attitudes and motives of people who cannot admit that incidents like the AME massacre and the murder of Lt. Collins were acts of domestic terrorism.

This chapter was aimed to establish a framework for people to play a role in ameliorating structural racism. By implementing a racially-inclusive sociological framework, people can become racial equity learners, racial equity advocates, and racial equity brokers. Shifting from colorblindness to color bravery is vital. The social psychology of race is a major root of the problem, which has been perpetuated via racist policies that then drastically jumped to colorblind
policies without properly addressing the continuation of racism into the Post Civil Rights Era and 21st century. As Jamelle Bouie (2014) said, “A generation that hates racism but chooses colorblindness is a generation that, through its neglect, comes to perpetuate it.” Creston Lynch, who is an administrator at George Mason University, said it best: “People can't see it [racism] for what it is because seeing it for what it is and doing nothing about it will conflict with their self-perception of loving kind human beings. Seeing it for what it is would require anyone to do something about it. People aren't ready to do that” (Ray 2015a).

Hopefully, this book has challenged people to do something about structural racism by providing a framework and pathway for various entry points of social change. We cannot get a better tomorrow if we have not rightfully and critically acknowledged and addressed yesterday. Employ a racially-inclusive sociological imagination and be willing to be color brave rather than colorblind. So, how do you plan to address structural racism in the 21st century?
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Figure 1: Cable News Viewership by Year

Cable TV Viewership

Source: Nielsen Media Research, used under license
Pew Research Center
Table 1: Percent of Americans who have High Trust in Social Institutions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>13.12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>30.56%</td>
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<td>Medicine</td>
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<td>Press</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>43.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>13.63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2: Implicit Association Tests Results for Police Recruits

- **Strong Preference for Blacks with Weapons**: 14.29%
- **Moderate Preference for Blacks with Weapons**: 30.61%
- **Slight Preference for Blacks with Weapons**: 16.33%
- **No Preference for Blacks or Whites**: 30.61%
- **Slight Preference for Whites with Weapons**: 8.16%
- **Moderate Preference for Whites with Weapons**: 0.00%
- **Strong Preference for Whites with Weapons**: 0.00%