

## WMAIA COTE : Race and Climate Change/ Race and Architecture

June 18, 2020

- This is intended to be an **open discussion** about how we as a designers, and **advocates for sustainability**, must include in our efforts, designs which **address social injustice**, and work towards **creating a profession that represents the diversity** of our country.
- You may simply **listen**, you may have **questions**, you may have **ideas about actions** we may take. I only ask that you **listen and speak with an open mind**, and an understanding that **we are not all perfect**. We may not have answers, and we **may say the wrong thing**. The important thing is to have the **conversation, listen, share and learn**.
- These are **huge topics**, and I hope that this is the **first of many more conversations**, because **today will barely scratch the surface**.

Norma Merrick Sklarek

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### AIA Board statement on systemic racial injustice

To our members,

America's list of racially motivated murders demand action...

What do these statements say to you?

Do they it compel you to want to make any changes?

**The fact is mere words are insufficient** salve to bind the wounds created by centuries of brutality and injustice. No single statement can adequately address the United States of America's 400-year legacy of enslavement and violent marginalization of black, indigenous, and other people of color. It is also a fact that **what you say is what you do. In that regard, AIA's words and actions have failed to live up to our highest ideals and values.** AIA understands the disappointment of our past inaction and inadequate attention to the issue of systemic racial injustice. **We were wrong not to address and work to correct the built world's role in perpetuating systemic racial injustice,** including the use of slave and forced labor, designing housing that marginalized communities of color, helping to design communities that excluded people of color, and participating in municipal projects that destroyed or weakened thriving African American, Hispanic, and Native American communities...

That important works starts with each of us. It is our responsibility to work together to **break down the barriers that start in architecture school and continue into the firm and workplace that exclude far too many.**

Read full statement: <https://www.aia.org/pages/6301167-aia-board-statement-on-systemic-racial-ini>

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### Everyone deserves universal respect and human dignity.

WASHINGTON - May 30, 2020 - The American Institute of Architects (AIA) 2020 President Jane Frederick, FAIA, issued the following statement:

"As Americans, **we are mindful** of this nation's dark history of racial inequality. **We are appalled** by any actions that further threaten the universal respect and human dignity that everyone deserves. As architects, **we remain committed** to advancing civil rights protections, fair housing policies, and accessibility in the built world to help achieve the more perfect union we all seek. The fact is that architects and AIA, in our more than 160-year history, **have not always felt compelled to share our perspectives**. But the times we live in, the horrific nature of the events we witness, and the role we see for every member of our society **demands that we speak out.**"

What do these statements say to you?

Do they it compel you to want to make any changes?

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**Here is why you can't talk about sustainability without talking about race.**



**Environmental racism has left Black Americans three times more likely to die from pollution.**

**We can't continue to talk about environmental issues without talking about environmental justice.**

@jhanneu

**Race is the biggest indicator in the US of whether you live near toxic waste.**

@jhanneu

**African-Americans are more likely to live near landfills and industrial plants that pollute water and air and erode quality of life. Because of this, more than half of the 9 million people living near hazardous waste sites are people of color, and Black Americans are three times more likely to die from exposure to air pollutants than their white counterparts.**

@jhanneu

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## Why Race Matters When We Talk About the Environment

An interview with Dr. Robert Bullard

Lauren Reid: **In your view, why does race matter when we talk about the environment?**

**Robert Bullard:** I think it matters when we deal with the environment because the **environment impacts everything**— where we live, where we work, where we play, where we learn and where we worship. When certain populations are somehow provided less protection from say pollution, it's because of race. Or at different times when locally unwanted land use is targeted for different reasons, like refineries and pipelines, it's because of race and this becomes an issue around justice. Protection should not be distributed because of the color of your skin. Everyone deserves a clean, healthy, sustainable and livable environment.

**That's why race matters.**

Can you think of examples in our community or the country where environmental protection, or lack thereof, has unfairly impacted communities of color?

<https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/why-race-matters-when-we-talk-about-the-environment/>

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### **I'm a black climate expert. Racism derails our efforts to save the planet.**

Ayana Elizabeth Johnson

**If we want to successfully address climate change, we need people of color.** Not just because pursuing diversity is a good thing to do, and not even because diversity leads to [better decision-making and more effective strategies](#), but because, [black people are significantly more concerned about climate change than white people](#) (57 percent vs. 49 percent), and Latinx people are even more concerned (70 percent). To put that in perspective, it means that more than 23 million black Americans *already* care deeply about the environment and could make [a huge contribution to the massive amount of climate work that needs doing](#).

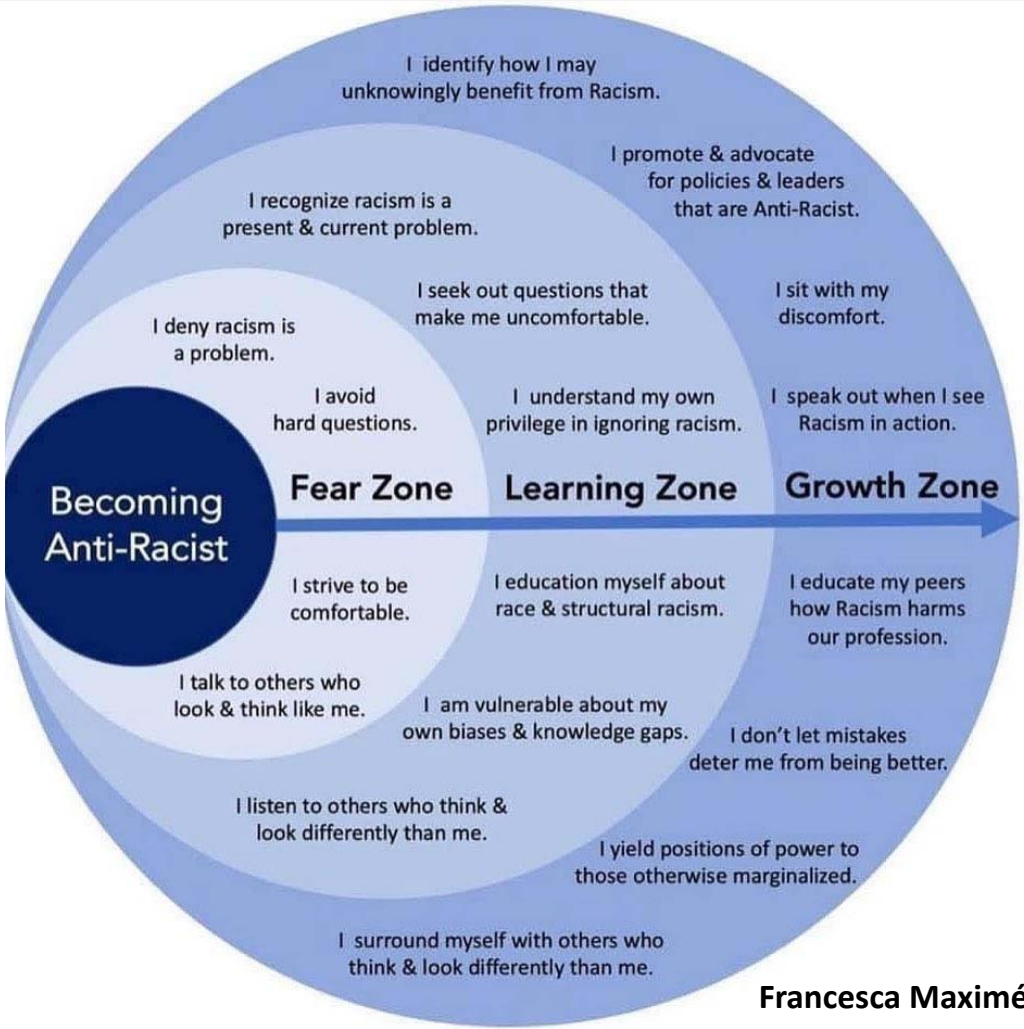
So, to white people who care about maintaining a habitable planet, I need you to [become actively anti-racist](#). I need you to understand that our racial inequality crisis is intertwined with our climate crisis. [If we don't work on both, we will succeed at neither](#). I need you to step up. Please. Because I am exhausted.

Why is racism impacting our ability to address climate change?

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/06/03/im-black-climate-scientist-racism-derails-our-efforts-save-planet/>

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# PYRAMID of ACCOUNTABILITY



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### There's No Reason for an Architect to Design a Death Chamber

As the country grapples with racial justice, architects should finally take a stand on the most barbaric aspects of a biased prison system.

By [Michael Kimmelman](#)

Several years ago, I [wrote](#) about a petition filed with the A.I.A. by an organization called [Architects/Planners/Designers for Social Responsibility](#). A Bay Area architect, Raphael Sperry, leads the group.

The petition asked the A.I.A. to **censure architects who designed death chambers and solitary confinement facilities**, which, as constituted and employed in countless American prisons, often function as **instruments of psychological and physical torture**. As Mr. Sperry pointed out, while the death penalty is legal in the United States, the United Nations and other human rights organizations have determined that it violates human rights. **The A.I.A.'s code of ethics instructs its members to “uphold human rights in all their professional endeavors.”** Last year, [Pfizer](#), the pharmaceutical giant, became the latest among [dozens of drug companies](#) to ban the use of its products in executions; and the American Medical Association instructs doctors not to participate in execution and torture.

**So why not architects, too?**

Why are prisons designed to punish and not to reform?

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/arts/design/architects-prison-death-chamber.html>

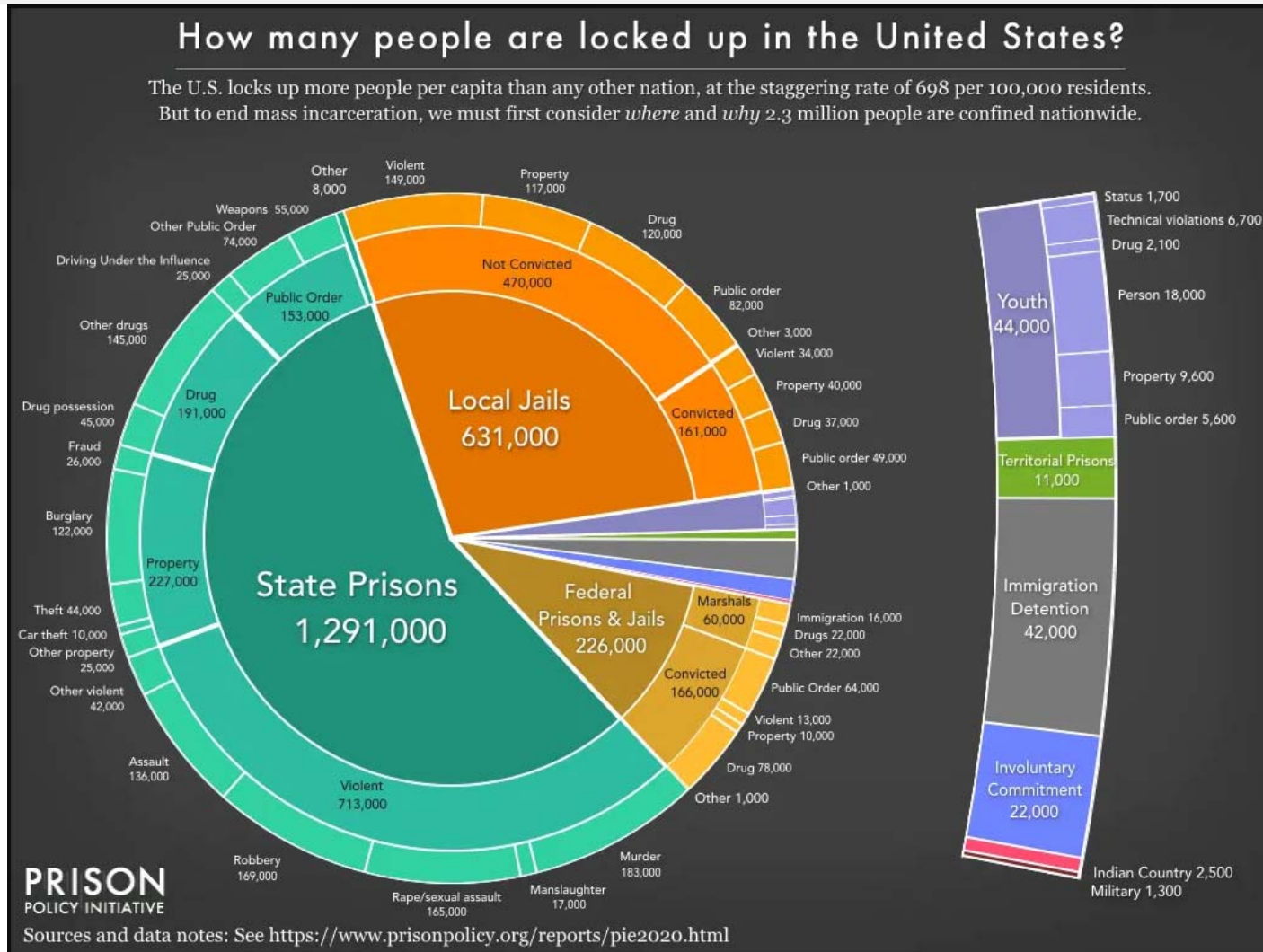


*Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, **except** as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.*

*-13<sup>th</sup> Amendment*

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## U.S. incarceration rates by race and ethnicity, 2010

Number of people incarcerated per 100,000 people in each racial or ethnic category

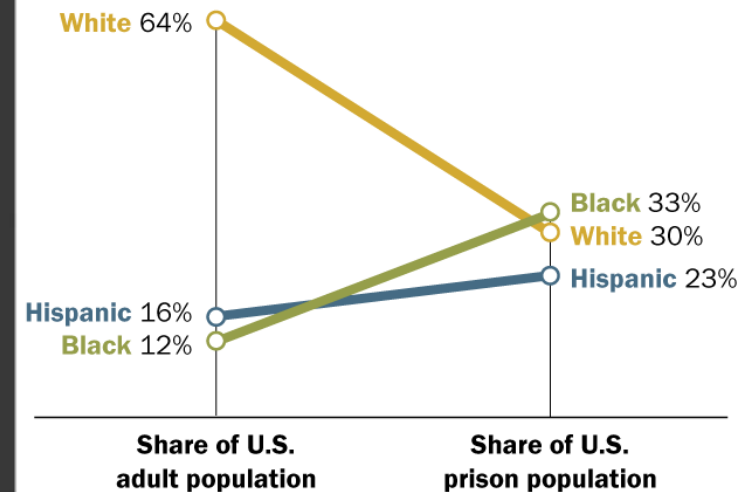
The United States has over 2.3M people incarcerated, more than any other country in the world. We are 5% of the world population and we hold 20% of the world prison population.

Black Americans make up 12% of the US general population, but account for 33% of the prison population. Black Americans are imprisoned 5 times more than White Americans.



## Blacks, Hispanics make up larger shares of prisoners than of U.S. population

U.S. adult population and U.S. prison population by race and Hispanic origin, 2017



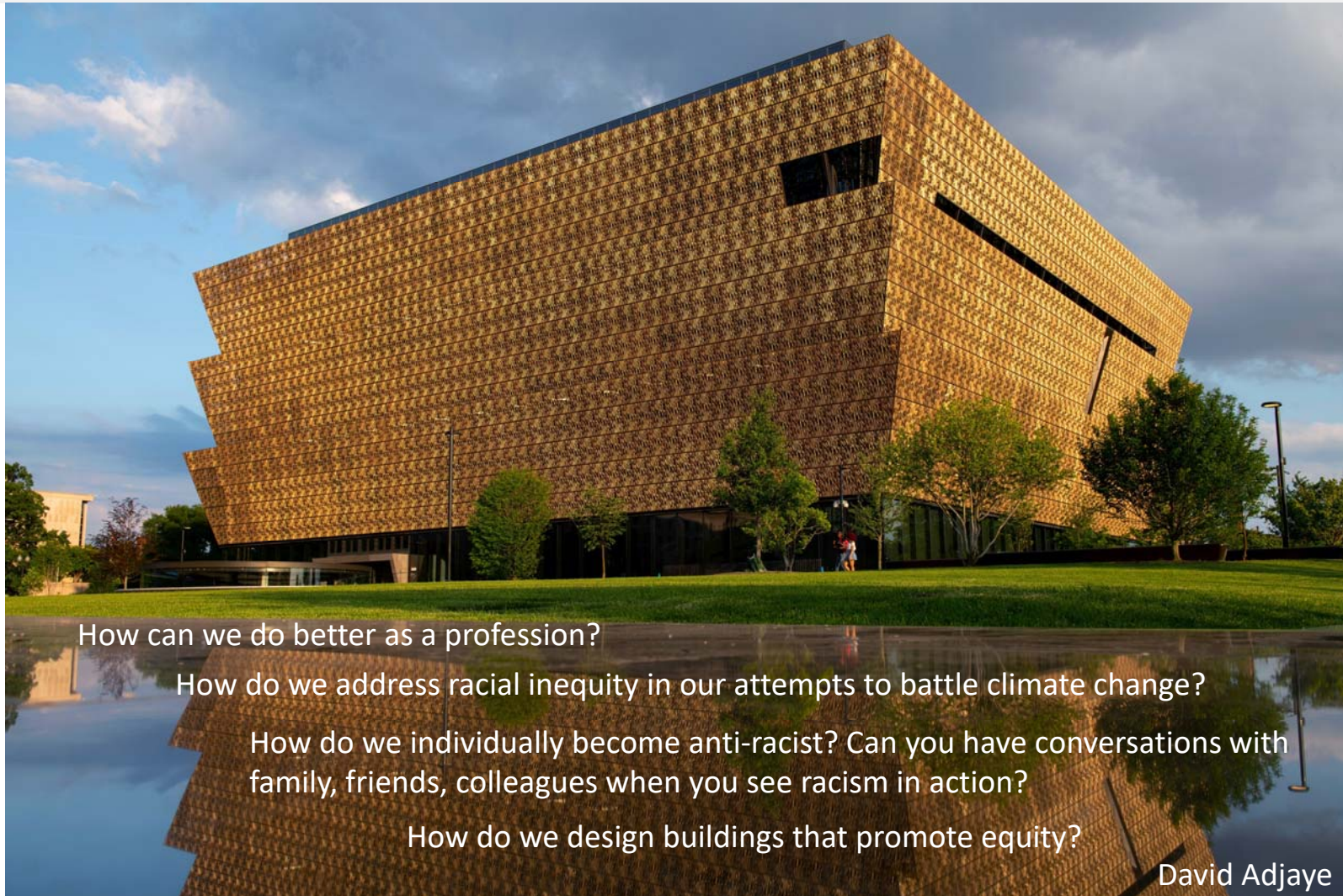
Note: Whites and blacks include those who report being only one race and are non-Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Prison population is defined as inmates sentenced to more than a year in federal or state prison.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

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How can we do better as a profession?

How do we address racial inequity in our attempts to battle climate change?

How do we individually become anti-racist? Can you have conversations with family, friends, colleagues when you see racism in action?

How do we design buildings that promote equity?

David Adjaye