# Defining Accountability among Black and White Women Accomplices

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## Introduction

Over the past years, we authors have been having conversations about what it means to be an accomplice, particularly what accompliceship means between Black and white women. In 2021, we theorized (using Black Feminist Epistemology) that accomplice behavior can be understood in terms of power and dialogue; accompliceships are characterized by sharing power and engaging in dialogue with one another[1]. This paper extends power and dialogue into the realm of accountability, exploring how accountability helps to form and sustain accomplice relationships.

Black in Engineering's (BIE) 2020 Call to Action (CTA) "On Becoming an Anti-Racist University" offers five actions with two focusing on accountability. BIE defines *personal accountability* as "commitment to understanding the effects and evidences of racism within your institution and to becoming anti-racist, as an individual[2]". Rather than outsourcing anti-racism work to a committee or task force, leaders and policymakers must do the difficult work of being anti-racist. *Institutional accountability* is defined as "corresponding incentives for success" and "clear consequences for failure." The CTA refers to measures and implications that promote change and racial equity.

Despite the call of numerous organizations calling for visible anti-racist accountability measures after the murder of George Floyd, accountability needs further definition and discrete, clear actions that operationalize the term. In this paper we use Stone and Moore's[3], [4] framework for understanding coalitions to theorize the relationship between institutional and personal accountability, arguing that a coalitional framework is most effective in working towards accountability. Then, we offer three principles for making accountability central to accomplice behavior.

## Impetus for this Theory: Coalitions, Accountability and the Historical Trouble with White Women

We write about the need for accountability from a particular tension: the historical and contemporary trend wherein white women benefit from the work of feminism to the exclusion and erasure of Black women (specifically) and other women of color (more generally). We have observed this same white feminism within the academy, as white women benefit from race privilege while still embattled in the fight for gender equality. These benefits show up in programs for women in engineering, in efforts to recruit women into engineering, and in scholarship that explores gender to the exclusion of other intersectional oppressions. We think higher education should engage actively in accountability and, importantly, that white feminism (and its white feminists) need a particular focus on building coalitions and accountability among other women, particularly women of color. In *The Trouble with White Women,* Schuller [5] explains that "The trouble with white feminist politics is not what it fails to address and whom it leaves out. The trouble with white feminism is what it does and whom it suppresses" (p. 4). Schuller's description suggests that inclusion isn't really the key to addressing the problems that emerge from white feminism: that, as might be obvious, is why we're not writing about inclusion or equity in general terms. Instead, we're writing about accountability as a specific form of what Nigel Golden[6] might call "harm reduction."

In his 2020 Ambrose Jearld, JR., Lecture, Golden articulates the need for harm reduction in the academy and in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) more specifically because of the history of harm to scholars of color. He explains that given the long history of inequitable treatment of people of color by the university system, a “first do no harm” approach is deeply insufficient. Instead, he argues for a politic of harm reduction: a political stance that acknowledges the need to repair and heal from historical harms, to reduce existing harms, and to stave off the instinct to simply prevent new harms from happening. A politic of harm reduction is needed to do accountability and equity work, and it is particularly necessary as we build (intersectional) feminist coalitions that have any hope of breaking down the barriers facing all women (i.e., women of color, trans women, white women) within STEM. Schuller[5] describes white feminism as “an active form of harm, not simply a by-product of self-absorption”; this harmful approach “liberates privileged women while keeping other structures of injustice intact” (p. 4). These are the harms we aim to prevent.

Someone reading this may think the use of the word harm is an extreme choice in engineering education. After all, we, as engineers, are members of a privileged discipline highly esteemed in society. Ethics is at the core of what we do because our actions protect and keep people safe. We engage in extensive training to prevent deaths in the air, sea, and land. Our disciplinary brand revolves around reliability, precision, and consistency. We are rational. Engineering departments, colleges, and professional societies are populated by educated people who have the ability to sit down when there are conflicts and discuss what resolution looks like. Yet we observe a pattern in our lived experiences: Black women and other women of color enter into these contexts with demands that are not made of other members of the unit and discipline: they navigate their own professional identity formation at the risk of being denigrated, dismissed or erased by an organizational culture that unwittingly ascribes to white feminism.

What goes through the mind of a Black woman who must choose her gender and downplay or erase her racial identity? She may feel betrayed by a workplace that doesn’t embrace who she is completely. This workplace betrayal increases her fear of retaliation for sharing her true feelings and concerns[7]. Freyd[8] refers to such fear as betrayal trauma, resulting in increased harm and violation of trust from a close relationship (in this case a colleague). Smith and Freyd [9] offer insights about harm as they explain institutional betrayal, a concept that refers to an organization’s misalignment with the values and principles it professes (e.g., the promotion of diversity, equity, inclusion, and sisterhood). Couple this betrayal with issues of power and privilege that accompanies white supremacy and patriarchal oppression, and the breeding ground for harm has been created.

When defining harm, we are compelled by depictions of harm that acknowledge the many faces of oppression. IM Young[10] (1990) explains that oppression may include "violence," but that it also shows up as cultural imperialism, marginalization, exploitation, and/or powerlessness. From this perspective, harm might also present through any/all of these faces, including violence. When we think about violence, it's tempting to think only about direct physical violence. Yet many scholars agree that violence in and of itself takes many forms. For example, Clark (2021) explains that both interpersonal and institutional racism has physiological effects on the Black body[11]. In our framework, we consider the impact of racism a form of harm and violence because it is unequivocally linked to "high prevalences of hypertension, heart disease, and cancer" (p. 772). This is a form of harm and oppression. But we also depict harm as any form of epistemic violence, marginalization, and powerlessness.

Epistemic violences often occur disciplinarily, interpersonally and institutionally when Black women engage with white women. Dotson[12] explains that "Epistemic violence ... is a refusal, intentional or unintentional, of an audience to communicatively reciprocate a linguistic exchange owing to pernicious ignorance. Pernicious ignorance should be understood to refer to any reliable ignorance that, in a given context, harms another person (or set of persons)" (p. 238). Dotson ties this form of violence and ignorance to harm explicitly, sharing that ignorance isn't necessarily harmful but that ignorance can be come pernicious. Moore et al[13] nod to this in their observation that engineering education often fails to cite Black women when they invoke or integrate theories of intersectionality. Regardless of whether scholars purposefully omit Black women from their scholarship, the ignorance of those adopting intersectionality and not citing Black women has pernicious effects. It is a form of erasure and, in turn, epistemic violence. Dotson aids us in articulating harm because she suggests that "an analysis of power relations and other contextual factors" can help determine whether the "ignorance identified in that particular circumstance or set of circumstances [is] harmful" (p. 238). Our focus on Black and white women identifies a repeated set of power relationships and context factors that seem to reliably produce harm: a Black women working at a PWI with many white women is very likely to be harmed in that situation.

Although the definition of harm differs based on who initiating or receiving the harm, it may include:

- Remaining silent.
- Speaking when you need to be silent.
- Using your privilege to sway people's opinions against someone with less power, privilege, or positionality.
- Upholding bad behaviors.
- Focusing more on one's success than on one's ethics.
- Pushing someone out of a workplace because people don't want that space to change.
- Checking performative diversity, equity, and inclusion boxes without caring about what happens after those boxes are checked.
- Waiting for someone to act so you don't have to take the heat for those actions.
- Using one's vulnerabilities against people when they are weak.
- Rewriting history so accountability for negative actions aren't addressed.

Despite this long list, we note that harm is most readily and effectively defined and described by those who've experienced harm. While it is *not* the sole or even primary responsibility of those at the margins (read: not straight, white, male, able-bodied) to share their experiences of harm, we suggest that those in dominant positions proactively examine their approaches to identify if their words and ways set marginalized people up for loss and violence.

In this paper, we notice the reliability of certain actions causing harm against Black women particularly. In building a case from our lived experiences (see Collins, 2008), we also draw attention to the situations wherein white women might have plausible deniability because epistemic violence often falls under the radar. Dotson informs us here because she implores us to understand that some forms of ignorance are benign and others "given a particular social location and power level" function perniciously. The pernicious ignorance that emerges in academic settings are reliably harmful. As we probe cases the composite case below, we find a form of epistemic violence that requires institutional and personal accountability.

**A Sample Case**

To further demonstrate what harm might look like between Black women and white women, the following case highlights the workplace relationships of Amanda, a white woman, and Chloe, a Black woman. Both are tenured engineering professors who serve as associate deans in the college under the leadership of a white male dean, a hands-off leader known for delegating his responsibilities to others. We should note that this case is a composite case, representing experiences from both authors, but with non-specific details, names, and descriptions that do not refer to any specific person.

> *Chloe was hired as the associate dean of research in a prominent College of Engineering. Her primary task is to serve as the liaison to the six multidisciplinary engineering research centers on campus. Four of the center directors were hired before Chloe's arrival. They were accustomed to working without oversight over their budget and personnel, often to the detriment of center operations. Her unspoken job is to "fix" the racist and sexist culture in the centers given her no nonsense leadership style*[1].
>
> *Chloe wore a large afro, was unapologetically Black, and professed publicly her advocacy for authentic diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. Such advocacy was new in the college and made many people uncomfortable. Several of the disgruntled center directors held the viewpoint that Chloe was a diversity hire and was not qualified to be the associate dean for research. At times, people alluded to that in meetings where Chloe and other college leaders were present. One director went so far as to say that Chloe's leadership was untested and questionable when a junior faculty candidate applied to work in the research center he led.*
>
> *Amanda is a white woman and administrator in the college of engineering who oversees the college's executive leadership program, which offers support for research center directors. Chloe asks Amanda for advice about her difficulties with the center directors. Amanda tells Chloe the center directors have never behaved the way she is describing them.*
>
> *When Chloe probes Amanda for more insights, Amanda admits that several people have told her that Chloe is too emotional and demanding. In fact, the center directors had presented a laundry lists of suggestions to Amanda and the dean about Chloe in a private meeting. The dean delegated all complaints about Chloe to Amanda thereafter.*

Here, it's worth noting that Amanda (as a white women) has been empowered to work either in support of Chloe or not; this power is not only because the dean has chosen to delegate to Amanda as a leader in an organization, but also because Amanda possesses whiteskin privilege that Chloe does not have. This privilege allows Amanda to move through the organization in ways Chloe cannot.

> *After several weeks of observing Amanda's interactions with others in the organization, Chloe began to suspect that Amanda was not an advocate and was, in fact, undermining her leadership. Despite having observed the discrepancy between the center directors' treatment of Chloe and*

[1] Such unspoken responsibilities are often placed on the shoulders of Women of Color leaders, particularly Black women (see Ahmed's *On Being Included*[26] for more details about how isolating this can be and why the responsibility for addressing racial inequities should not be solely the responsibility of BIPOC organizational members). In other words, this is a systemic problem, one encountered by many Black women.

*their treatment of previous (white) leaders, Amanda did little to create public (or, it seemed, private) visibility about this discrimination. In fact, Amanda had been read into private decision-making emails that omitted Chloe from pertinent discussions that sought to undermine Chloe's leadership. Although it's not clear what Amanda's role in these conversations were, it* ***is*** *clear that Amanda didn't work to intervene to identify the behaviors as inequitable or work to support Chloe as an leader.*

*Although Amanda's actions may not have been deliberate, they pitted Chloe against center directors. Amanda dismissed Chloe when she said no one had complained before. She also didn't let Chloe explain what was happening with her interactions with the center directors. Amanda used her power and privilege to craft a narrative to their mutual supervisor, thereby positioning herself as the authority and as an influencer of Chloe's career. Without intervention, there is no way for Chloe to trust Amanda as a colleague.*

As we have worked collaboratively, we have explored the kinds of structures of injustice upheld by white feminism within the academy. Our lived experiences suggest that white women within the academy are often engaged in an ongoing struggle that in many ways parallels the historical struggles of white women. We turn to Schuller[5] again to describe them:

- White feminists "fight for the full political and economic advantages that wealthy white men enjoy within capitalist empire"
- "Approach...the lives of Black and Indigenous people, other people of color, and the poor as raw resources that can fuel women's rise in status"
- "Promise..that women's full participation in white-dominated society and politics will not only improve their own social position...their leadership will redeem society itself."

We can't help but see the parallels in the academy, where white women (whether white feminists or not) benefit the most from women in engineering efforts, perhaps because "white" is a silent or implied descriptor in front of women. Women of color choose from women in engineering or minority in engineering efforts, neither of which are designed specifically for them in mind. As such, this fails to unite women despite efforts to build diversity and inclusion into the field of engineering (broadly) and engineering education (more specifically).

Following Jones and Williams[14] and Royster and Kirsch [15], we see the need for a more critical imagination about the work we can do in the academy if we are to create just and equitable spaces for and with one another. That's why we are so direct about the work white women and Black women must do together and the need for coalitions and accountability: in contending with specific contexts, we see the potential for a more just future within the academy. Such imaginations require us to resist the male dominated nature of the field of engineering, but it also requires us to pursue coalitions that move beyond patriarchal resistance. We wonder, "What would the field of engineering education look like if it was as committed to resisting white supremacy as it is to resisting the patriarchy?" Or, more directly, "What do coalitions of women focused on anti-racism and the support of Black women look like?"

Coalitions serve as a foundation for accountability because they are rooted in shared efforts, shared power, and shared pursuit of justice, and they function in contradistinction to the politics that undergird

White feminism. Chavez [16] describes coalition as a replacement for "normative/inclusionary and utopian politics" (p. 147). According to her, coalition is

- a present and existing vision and practice that reflects an orientation to others and a shared commitment to change;
- ... the 'horizon' that can reorganize our possibilities and the conditions of them
- ...is a liminal space, necessarily precarious, and located within the intermeshed interstices of people's lives and politics;
- A possibility for coming together within or to create a juncture that points toward radical social and political change" (p. 246)

These coalitional tenets provide a framework for accountability among Black and white women because they direct us to: orient ourselves towards others, commit to change (personal and institutional), engage with precarity, and embrace the messiness of life and politics. We introduce coalitions because harm reduction and trust building will be necessary to work with accomplices; working coalitionally has helped us listen more carefully and engage more humbly as we work to show up for one another towards an intersectional (or as Chavez describes it, interactional) feminism. Intersectional feminism acknowledges the impact of oppressions as they intersect. Variously a theoretical perspective [17], [18], a methodological approach [19], and a movement, intersectional feminism "pushes back against white feminism and advances new horizons of justice" (p. 5). It is in this spirit that we forward a frame for accountability.

**On a Black Feminist Approach to Accountability**

In *Black Feminist Thought,* Patricia Hill Collins articulates an "ethic of accountability" as a central principle for Black Feminist Epistemology[20]; her vision of knowledge-making includes a space where we make commitments to one another and follow through on them. Accountability is not a retrofit to the work of knowledge-making built through dialogue and lived experiences. Accountability asks us to "account for" the things we have committed to as individuals and institutions. In order to be effective tools of coalition building, the mechanisms for accountability in equity and inclusion must be articulated. That is the purpose of this section: to articulate the relationship between personal and institutional accountability and to offer some approaches to develop accountability measures that work coalitionally. Stone and Moore[3] articulate the ways that coalitions must work across policies, procedures, pedagogies, and practices to ensure their communities are effectively and equitably engaged (see Figure 1).

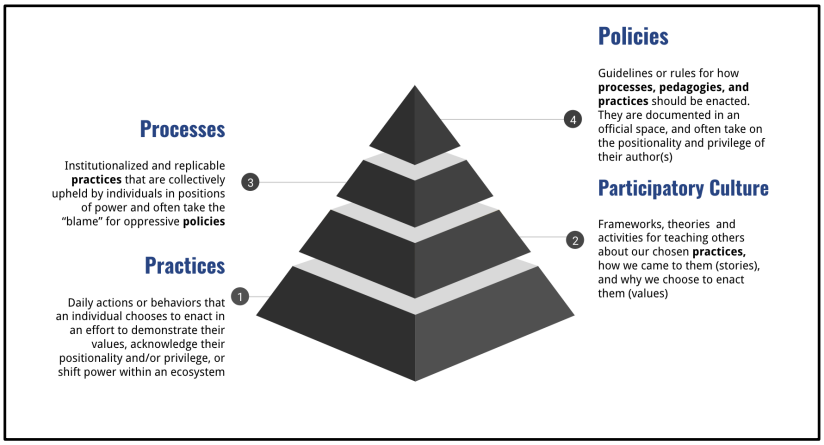


Figure 1. Stone and Moore's (2021) framework for aligning coalitions and organizations.

We articulate practices and pedagogies as the domain of personal accountability. Those of us seeking personal accountability must commit to addressing the harm we do through both our daily practices as well as the organizational storytelling that teaches others how "we" behave. Policies and procedures, on the other hand, are often the domain of institutional accountability. Importantly, the two work together: coalitions cannot build institutional accountability without demanding personal accountability.

The absence of both may help explain the failed DEI efforts after the Racial Reckoning of 2020, after which many individuals and institutions signed on for anti-racist and inclusive commitments, but never aligned those commitments across policies, processes, participatory culture and individual practices. Many Black scholars are waiting for a demonstration that the outpouring of support after George Floyd's killing was more than merely performative. Yet across the US, few institutions have been held accountable for their commitments, few are reporting out, and even fewer are demonstrating that they have followed through on their statements of solidarity.

These are institutional problems: e.g. a department posts a mea culpa about the treatment of Black colleagues only to fail to support the tenure and promotion of their Black colleagues on the basis of "objective metrics." Yet, as we hope we've demonstrated, they are also personal, relational problems. We observe white women particularly stuck in the midst of these kinds of situations, sometimes uncertain how to advocate for an anti-racist response to the "objectivity" game. Since these situations often emerge as a form of epistemological violence, we offer three strategies for accountability that white women might adopt as they work to redress the inequities that imbue the academy.

Three strategies for accountability might support Black and white women as they build coalitions. We argue that both institutional and personal accountability ought to consider:

- Protection of the most marginalized members of the organization;
- Restoration and repair in the wake of harm;
- Transparency about the ways harm and protection are dealt with.

These recommendations emerge from a range of scholarly conversations about what can and should be done to encourage the retention and success of women of color in the academy. We observe that white women--perhaps more than any other social group in engineering education--are well positioned to advocate for these organizational, coalitional accountability measures and further we argue that these measures can shape both individual and institutional accountability. Accountability sounds (perhaps because of its root word "account") like an objective act; yet when we connect individual and institutional accountability, it emerges as fundamentally political and relational. The individual must commit to being held accountable in their relationships with other coalition members; we see a need for white women to be more overt in their personal accountability to Black women--personal accountability makes way for a more intentional approach to institutional accountability.

*Strategy 1: Protection and Sponsorship of the Most Marginalized*

Building accountability requires that the most marginalized members of an organization or dyad are prioritized in decision-making. Here, we draw on the wheel of privilege and power to guide our articulation of marginalization (see Figure 2). Such a framework drives white women to understand and

own up to their own privilege *and* reminds us to think intersectionality about the role of privilege. Certainly cisgender women are more marginalized that cisgender men; but
when we ask questions about who should be prioritized, our first strategy is one of resistance: we resist the entropy of oppression by deciding to prioritize those in the margins.

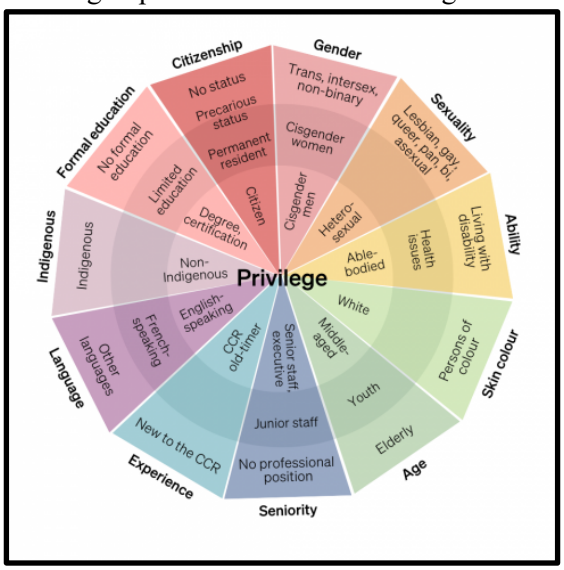

Figure 2. Wheel of Privilege as articulated by ccr.ca

This harm reduction approach anticipates the harm that's likely to come about for Black women (among other marginalized groups) and build a system of support and sponsorship. From an institutional perspective this might look like:

1) building mentoring outside of the institution
2) compensating for anticipated invisible work
3) establishing open lines of communication about issues of race, gender, class, etc.,
4) identifying an advocate for Minoritized, Marginalized and Underrepresented (MMU) individuals

But on an individual level, the accountability is a humbling of one's own position to see that those from privileged positions are likely to struggle to see their own privilege. That is, in the face of gender discrimination and the challenges that come with oppression tied to gender, a white woman might struggle to see the ways racism imbues the system. This strategy suggests that white women anticipate their ignorance and commit to being accountable for it before it becomes pernicious and in turn does harm. As a white woman, author 2 is accountable to author 1 on a personal level and therefore assumes a need to anticipate the way white supremacy creeps into institutions and relationships.

In the case of Chloe and Amanda, accountability would involve Amanda stepping back from the conflict between Chloe and the center directors and taking a broader approach to the issues at hand. Instead of drawing on the historical behavior of the directors, Amanda needs to hear Chloe out without judgement or a need to problem solve immediately. As an accomplice, Amanda must acknowledge Chloe's reality even if it isn't her own. This requires Amanda to let Chloe define the kind of support she is requesting from Amanda and to offer suggestions for the resolution of blatant attacks from the center directors. Amanda and the dean must allow Chloe to lead as she needs in her position as associate dean even if it makes them uncomfortable. Any discomfort Chloe feels shouldn't center Amanda or allow Amanda to "save" the

people harming Chloe. True accountability occurs with Amanda refers to policies for sabatoge and insubordination with unjust cause. Amanda must dig into policies regarding all parties and share a final story that is true and just even if harm will come *her* way. She must elevate the execution of policies equitably more than cover ups to advance her career.

*Strategy 2: Restoration and Repair in the Wake of Harm*

Both systems and individuals cause harm to Black women (and all marginalized groups). When (not if) Strategy 1 fails, restoration and repair can aid in upholding accountability commitments. We draw on a restorative justice framework here, which suggests that more than punishing a wrongdoer, justice is achieved when equity is restored, when relationships are repaired, and when collective decision-making has been invoked. We follow Braithewaite[21] in imagining that restoration focuses on the victim, taking the harmed individual as the central driver of decision-making.

The case described above offers an example of epistemic violence, and demonstrates the need for restoration and repair that is driven by the victim (i.e., Chloe). As Walton et al[22], [23] (2019) articulate, this is one strategy for moving from *recognizing* injustices to *replacing* those unjust practices with new ones that have been co-constructed with coalition members or victims. Their applied theory of inclusion suggests that an important step on the road to redressing inequities is communicating about them, naming them, and building a shared sense of purpose as those harmful practices are rejected. From an interpersonal perspective, this is important: accountability requires dialogue, open lines of communication, and honest, authentic ethics of care. This suggests that harm is often repaired relationally--not only institutionally.

Institutional accountability might keep this strategy at the ready as it determines what the next best steps should be. Specifically, the willingness to move and reshape resources (including money, time and policy) is required when we adopt this strategy. When we allow the harmed individual to articulate the needs and drive decision-making, the institution become deferential and responds to the actual losses accrued throughout harm.

In the case above, the victim might articulate losses tied to money--these are straightforward complaints that can be solved with a move of resources that may or may not exist (e.g., in training not created and facilitate by Chloe). But they might also seek to be compensated for time lost (e.g., Chloe's responding to directors' complaints and educate her colleagues and supervisor about microaggressions and how their are harming her). How can institutions offer Black women reparations for their time, particularly as it relates to foundational work the organization has not done to protect Black women?

*Strategy 3: Transparency about Processes and Procedures for Addressing Harm*

The two strategies above are useful but insufficient for building accountability among Black and white women. In addition to centering the most marginalized and developing restoration practices, the processes and procedures for addressing harm within an organization must be made transparent. This transparency, we argue, extends from best practices in participatory decision-making, but it also redresses the forms of epistemic violence that emerge from institutions. Where epistemic violence is a form of silencing,

transparency exposes the procedural and organizational steps that aim to teach people how to uphold accountability and therefore resist systems of oppression.

In the case of Chloe and Amanda, transparency might take several forms. Amanda could make her accompliceship status public such that center directors know she expects them to take a direct approach airing their complaints. This can be done via emails were everyone is copied or via a meeting with all parties are present to discuss concerns about Chloe. At the end of such a meeting, Chloe and Amanda can co-create measures to ensure their expectations are aired along with a plan to resolve issues in the future. Space should be created to outline consequences for causing harm and to discuss what that means in their work space. HR, equity, and DEI professionals may be inviting to discuss policies and practical ways to move forward as proposed.

Although our suggestions for Amanda's accompliceship sound noble, we acknowledge that the execution of such accompliceship in a system doesn't happen without sacrifices and occasional resistance and retaliation. Since white women are marginalized because of their gender, they might be treated equal to or worse than the Black women they seek to protect. That's what makes accompliceship so radical in higher education and in the DEI space. An accomplice enters their role not knowing what the final outcome might be for them. A true accomplice speaks up anyway, choosing to shine a light on oppressive systems to present harming to others in the future.

**Conclusion**

We recognize the oddity of working in such a narrow lane: Black women and white women; but we suspect there is a pressing need to understand the impact of white feminism on the field of engineering education. As Zakaria[24] articulates, "white women must reckon with just how much white privilege has influenced feminist movements and continues to influence the agenda of feminism today" (p. 14). We observe the same barriers to change that Zakaria observes: the reliance on white feminism to make change in the field of engineering education makes us collectively likely to reify the white supremacist foundations of white feminism.

Although this sounds like a leap, data suggests that, in fact, it's not. According to the ASEE the number of Black women has stayed steady at 2.5% even after a *decade* of working to diversify the field (ASEE, 2022). In defining accountability between Black and white women, we are recommending a critical, careful, and sustained look at the impact of white feminisms and white feminists on the field and offer a call to action that can occur at the individual and institutional level. Crenshaw has called for feminism to "excised of the dominating agendas of whiteness" (ctd in Zakaria[24])This paper suggests one way forward. Engineering education has followed in the footsteps of white feminism and its focus on "issues facing upper middle class white women" (p. 187). We articulate this trend in [author citation]. We follow up with some hope, sharing in Zakaria's dream that women can work in solidarity, not through eliminating whole women from feminism but through eliminating "'whiteness' from feminism, in the sense that whiteness has been synonymous with domination and with exploitation." This requires accountability and commitments from white women that we have yet to see at the institutional and interpersonal level.

Too often, these discussions exist only in the abstract. When harm occurs to Black women, white supremacy normalizes looking the other way and continuing the work at hand. There are no formal discussions of what happened or why harm occurred. There's not a public acknowledgment of hurt, even within the engineering community, which prides itself of ethics, professionalism, and inclusivity. It's often left up to Black women to recognize harm and deal with it, continuing their work as if an institution or professional society touting its diversity prowess didn't betray their trust and use them to advance its capitalistic missions.

Engineering education expects Black women who have been harmed in engineering to be both Mammy ("motherly, loyal, self-sacrificing, servant, nurturing") and Superwoman ("overachiever, intelligent, articulate, professional, assertive") [24 p. 136]. Rarely do white women in engineering share and execute a blueprint denoucing those stereotypes. There is little positive messaging supporting Black women who call engineering out and speak against oppression against Black women. Allowing Black women to be their authentic selves even if it isn't comfortable for engineering education is one step to mitigate harm. White women can speak up and endorse that.

Our case study situates the discussion in context, placing the onus on white women *just for a moment.* We imagine what would happen if all white women in engineering education committed to examining their whiteness and more specifically examining the systems, theories, and decision-making processes as fundamentally wrapped up in white supremacy that *white women benefit from*. We see white women leading organizations, departments, editorial boards, and professional societies; we hope the examinations we offer in this paper might help build solidarity, coalitions, and more secure accompliceships among the Black and white women in engineering.

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