

ANDREW FOX

RACIST



In this book I explore the links between the egregious murder of George Floyd, with the abuse and trafficking of girls and woman in India, and the slave trade in Africa used to harvest a significant percentage of the worlds cocoa used in the chocolate industry. I also link these to what is and isn't happening in organisations today and finally relate some of these to personal experiences. I hope my deliberate controversial views spark at least some debate, ideally, significant change.

I end with my thoughts on what needs to be done.

Contents:

About the Author	4
Let's explore what might really be going on	5-6
Black Lives Matter	7-10
Racism and Prejudice	11-14
The Global Theft of Human Lives	15-18
Affirmative Action	19
Gender Diversity Programmes	20-21
What is the Solution	22-23
In Conclusion	24
References/notes	25-26

About the Author

Andrew Fox is a seasoned HR Director, NED and Organisational Development practitioner, combining his formal qualifications and extensive Global Experience as an HR Director in order to craft, co-create and deploy solutions for clients and organisations. An experienced top team facilitator and executive coach, Andrew has a passion for development in whichever shape is appropriate. Andrew has extensive experience in Financial services, professional services, health care, the Insurance industry and the public sector. His experience has been built through working in and with many geographies across the world.



Andrew left HSBC in January 2019 to start his own company. His last role at HSBC was the Group Head of HR for Retail, Wealth and Insurance, and during his time at HSBC he developed and deployed Global change initiatives which have had a significant positive impact on the culture and values of the business.

Life Philosophy: *"The heart of the leader is manifested through service to others."*

Andrew Fox has a proven track record of delivering change growth in complex, global organisations. He is a passionate, practical and highly commercial HR practitioner – combining theory and strategic implementation to enhance business performance and enable people development.

Andrew's ability to influence senior leaders, boards, remuneration committees, and regulators, and solve problems, whether navigating significant change or delivering technological advancements, has characterized his career to date.

Prior to joining HSBC, Andrew worked for Santander in the UK where he was a key part of a substantial change plan which resulted in both a reduction of rescoring costs and contributed to an additional £500m revenue in the Retail and Wealth business.

Previously registered with the regulator as a material risk taker for HSBC Group, Andrew has for a number of years been subject to enhanced vetting and had exposure to UK and USA regulators.

Andrew has a degree in Social Science, and Honors degree in Occupational Psychology and is a Chartered Fellow of the CIPD. He has also completed a number of formal Coaching courses and Strategy Programmes. In his spare time, Andrew is a Martial Arts enthusiast and enjoys reading, travelling, watching movies and riding his Harley. He is also on the Board of the charity Fight for Peace International and since December 2019 a Trustee for Richmond West Schools Trust.

I have always believed in social justice. That the world should be a fair and just place. And my attention has often focused on animal rights, the vulnerable and the underrepresented.

Let's explore what might really be going on

As a native South African I grew up as a child in blissful ignorance of the atrocities of apartheid, as the state deployed media and propaganda to hide the truth. And the police and army to keep people separate. During military service I was fed a particular rhetoric that supported the status quo. Finally, when I went to university and began to question everything, I was woken to the horrors of my country's history and present.

I saw Nelson Mandela freed and elected as president in the first democratic election in the country.

Later in my working career I was responsible for developing and deploying affirmative action strategies and plans in alignment with the new elected governments black economic empowerment legislation. Sophisticated targets not only applied to large organisations but also in the awarding of purchasing agreements and ultimately also all government tenders. The new government was determined to see work places transformed giving Black, Indian, Coloured and Female South Africans access to roles and opportunities that were previously, in the most part, reserved for white South Africans. And in one sense transformation happened and workplaces quickly started to look different. They became more diverse although not necessarily inclusive. And at the time we worked not only at hitting the targets but also at ensuring that the culture within organisations also adapted and changed. This was facilitated by the fact that South Africans are able to have robust dialogue about difficult issues without being "offended". We could talk about being black and being white and what that meant, openly and honestly for the most part. I have found that elsewhere in the world these debates do not happen with the same depth as people tip toe around fears about being so called politically correct. The process started with Mandela's Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, and went forwards from there. This cultural change work was often but not always done under the banner of Ubuntu – See note #2 – Ubuntu essentially means - to behave well towards others or acting in ways that benefit the community. We did significant work to try and ensure that true integration at least in the workplace took place.



On the other hand, however, this economic empowerment meant very little to millions of South Africans, where access to economic opportunity, education, housing and health care remained elusive. (unemployment in SA is still in the region of 30% although difficult to accurately calculate). The development of a Black so-called middle class was and remains relatively slow but steady. And finally, the system which I had helped to design, build and implement, meant that opportunities for me were greatly reduced and this was one of the many reasons I immigrated to the United Kingdom.

To understand why we are where we are today it is in part at least useful to look at our history. Especially as we are a relatively "new species" on the planet. In our history, fear of "the others" was often a matter of survival. Being part of the so called "in group" was one way of increasing your chances of survival. And whilst this may no longer be true for the most part at least, we are in many ways still hard wired to "fear" those who are different from ourselves. We are still in many respects a tribal species although there are of course many tribes and each of us holds membership of multiple tribes.



"The earth of a hundred millennia ago was walked by at least six different species of man. It's our current exclusivity, not that multi-species past, that is peculiar- and perhaps incriminating" (Sapiens, pg 9)

Our very existence today is evolutionarily built on the fact that we "exterminated" all other species of primitive humans. Our fear of "the others", those different to us, ultimately led to the extermination of other species of humans and ensured our survival to this day. I believe that in part this hard-wired fear of those not like us is at least a contributor to both the racism and prejudice we still see in the world today. We need to rise above this. And we can rise above this.

Black Lives Matter

The world watched in horror and expressed its outrage at the murder of George Floyd filmed live and broadcast across the world. Protests in over 350 cities followed in the weeks after Floyds death.

“George Floyd was not famous. He was killed not in the capitol city. Yet in death he has suddenly become a keystone of a movement that has seized all of America. Still more remarkably, he has inspired protests abroad, from Brazil to Indonesia, and France to Australia” (Economist, June 13-19th, pg7)

One of the things I noticed when news stations showed the history of protests in the USA was that for the first time, at least to be seen on film, the protests were multiracial. The protests of years gone by were with predominantly black protestors. This time the crowds in the US were multiracial. And together with protests in all the other cities in all the other countries everybody is saying – enough. There appears to be a growing tide rejecting racism, spurred on by the fact that Floyds murder was shared so widely on social media.

Despite the fact that Floyd clearly had a troubled past (ironically, he was turning his life round before COVID-19 pushed him into financial hardship again) there can never ever be any justification for the way he was treated and murdered.

“Black Lives Matter (BLM) is an organized movement advocating for non-violent civil disobedience in protest against incidents of police brutality against African-American people. An organization known simply as Black Lives Matter exists as a decentralized network with about 16 chapters in the United States and Canada, while a larger Black Lives Matter movement exists consisting of various separate like-minded organizations such as Dream Defenders and Assata's Daughters. The broader movement and its related organizations typically advocate against police violence towards black people, as well as for various other policy changes considered to be related to black liberation. In 2013, the movement began with the use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on social media after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of African-American teen Trayvon Martin in February 2012. The movement became nationally recognized for street demonstrations following the 2014 deaths of two African Americans: Michael Brown—resulting in protests and unrest in Ferguson, a city near St. Louis—and Eric Garner in New York City. Since the Ferguson protests, participants in the movement have demonstrated against the deaths of numerous other African Americans by police actions and/or while in police custody. In the summer of 2015, Black Lives Matter activists became involved in the 2016 United States presidential election. The originators of the hashtag and call to action, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, expanded their project into a national network of over 30 local chapters between 2014 and 2016. The overall Black Lives Matter movement is a decentralized network of activists with no formal hierarchy. The organisation seems to have been relatively inactive at least from a media coverage perspective, between 2018 and 2020.

The movement returned to national headlines and gained further international attention during the global George Floyd protests in 2020 following Floyd's murder by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin. An estimated 15 million to 26 million people participated (though not all are "members" of the organization) in the 2020 Black Lives Matters protests in the United States, making Black Lives Matters one of the largest movements in U.S. history. The movement has advocated to defund the police and invest directly into Black communities and alternative emergency response models. "

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Lives_Matter

Its decentralised structure means that the leaderless organisation has struggled to bring about true systemic change and was "quiet" in the two or so years leading up to Floyd's murder.

And inevitably BLM gave rise to a number of splinter groups trying to prove they matter too because BLM is ultimately not a unifier. In Pride week (June 2020) we saw banners saying Black Trans Lives Matter, and at Trump rallies in the USA and football matches in the UK, we saw banners saying white lives matter.

Even Terry

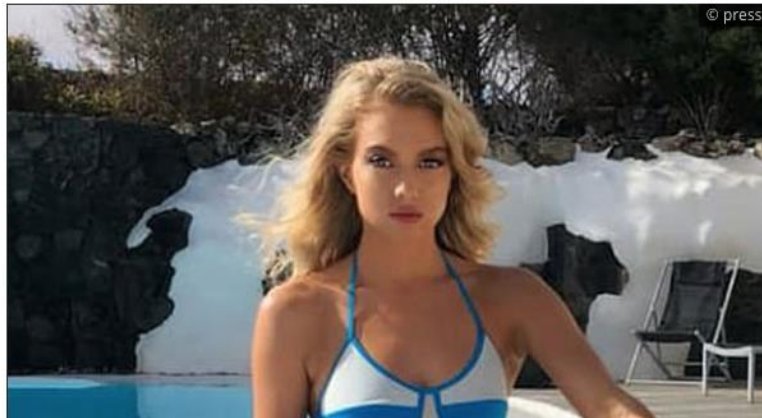
Crews (famous American TV personality) has become swept up in one of those meaningless on line twitter debates after he tweeted BLM must not become "Black Lives Better". This response is I think to be expected, because everybody wants to feel that their lives matter. And although BLM does not attempt to even suggest that other lives don't matter as well, people will be people. And actually, we do need a unifier under which to agitate for change.



UK's Miss Swimsuit Stripped of Title for Posting 'All Lives Matter'

Miss Swimsuit UK scrambled to disassociate from model after posts

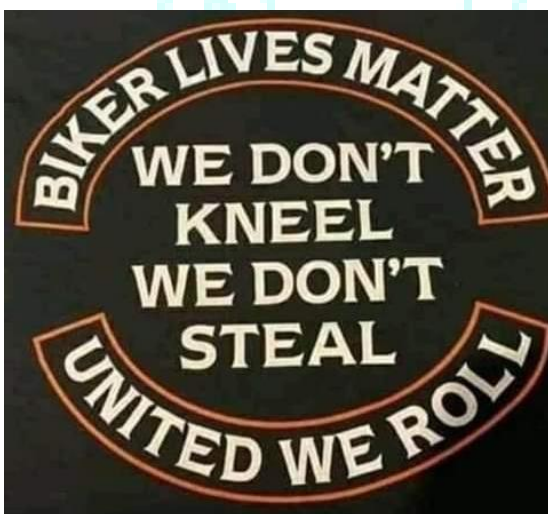
By: [Paul Whitehead](#) | [@NeonNettle](#) on 17th July 2020 @ 9.00pm



And finally, the inevitable senseless backlash....



And of course, then we had the inevitable and unhelpful memes/spoofs which in my view are a passive aggressive way of commenting.



Even the Economist took liberty with an article subsection entitled Black Livelihoods Matter. Because in the end we cannot compromise, all lives matter, and we need to take care in the world wherever this is not the case. And to say one group matters, the inference is “it matters more” and therefore becomes divisive. Even though I am confident that is **not** the intent of BLM. Whereas what we need is togetherness to face these issues. It is true that “America’s police kill more people than those of any other rich democracy, but cops in some developing countries are much more lethal” (Economist June 13 2020, pg 49). In the USA the police may discriminate against Black people, but racism and prejudice exist in many forms all over the world. (As a related aside since 2012 there have been more than 40 000 complaints against the South African police for alleged crimes including rape and murder. Since SA’s COVID 19 lockdown security forces have killed 11 people and the President merely suggests they are guilty of being over enthusiastic). There is evidence suggesting that British police may also have racial prejudices like their American counterparts as Black people make up 3% of the population in England and Wales but account for 12% of prisoners (Economist June 13 2020).

This is one of the reasons I am not supportive of the burgeoning industry of employee representative groups in organisations. Because in essence they allow people to congregate in their separate tribes. It is not a unifier or integrator at all. See my comments in this podcast <https://soundcloud.com/thebtn/diversity-inclusion-and-belonging-with-andrew-fox>

The truth though, for me at least, is that outrage over Floyds murder, whilst wholly justified, actually detracts from other atrocities and prejudice which takes place in the world today, and every day. And many people around the world were enslaved, raped, murdered, and detained because of underlying prejudice, in the 8 minutes and 48 seconds it took to murder Floyd. And we need somehow to be outraged at all of these if we are to make the world a better place.

And the risk from BLM is that once the protests have died down, and a few statues removed, that they will fade from the forefront of our consciousness, as in fact they have done in the past. And that the **social widespread pervasive change** that we need will still not have taken place. Because what we really need is ongoing full-time pressure aimed at changing the institutions and cultural elements which support both prejudice and racism. “The cycle of injustice, protest, riot, and conservative reaction has come around many times since 1968” (Economist June 6th,2020, pg 7)

Racism and Prejudice

“For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”

— Nelson Mandela

For me Racism and Prejudice go hand in hand. I am not sure you can be racist without being prejudiced, but of course you can be prejudiced without being racist – where your prejudice might be directed towards other characteristics like gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, religious beliefs etc.

In 2019 I visited India to do work on trafficking and abuse of women and children In India on behalf of and as an associate of the Bridge Institute, part of Bridge Partnership. <https://bridge-partnership.com/>

The trip was a real eye opener and trying to understand the complex Indian society and culture with the caste system and multitude of religions, was a real education. But hearing first hand testimony from woman and girls about the abuse and harassment they had suffered was humbling. And it was very difficult to hear school age girls tell me horrendous stories of abuse and suffering and ask me in the very India way, “Sir, is this right?” I wasn’t sure how to answer except to say no, of course it was not right. And it made me angry. Angry to know that in India, and my home country of South Africa, together with many other places in the world, woman and girls were not safe. They should be. But they are not. We have to open our eyes and make ourselves aware of all prejudice and stand up for the injustice and suffering it causes. Not knowing is no excuse. And knowing and doing nothing is not acceptable. Learn more here;

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2020/07/23/even-as-india-urbanises-caste-discrimination-remains-rife>

And yes, I believe this is all part of the broader discussion about racism and prejudice in the world today.

More than a year on and I reflect on what I observe in today’s world. I also touched briefly on this topic in a talk I gave and the in the BTN EIL 2019 conference organised and hosted by the BTN. <https://www.thebtn.tv/>

During the presentation, I spoke about the estimated 20 to 30 million slaves across the world today. More in total than were enslaved at the height of the so-called slave trade in the 1700 and 1800’s. It is hard to count the exact numbers of a hidden population. 90% of women and children who end up as Sex Slaves were victims of childhood sexual abuse before they were “recruited”. You are in greater risk of being hit by a bolt of lightning than you are of going to jail, if you enslave a person in South Asia. And an estimated number of 800,000 people are illegally trafficked across international borders every year. These stats should cause us all to stop dead in our tracks and wonder what kind of world we are living in. We have created, even if unwittingly.

We frequently talk about slavery in the historical context, often without a true understanding of how slaves were procured, how they were transported, how the industry was financed and without knowing who benefitted. But although these issues are important, for me, it kind of misses the point.

Despite the atrocities of slavery in our past, it is also and still a problem in today's world.

And here is a recent article exploring slavery during the pandemic, in red below. Source:

<https://apple.news/A528K55maTzyQSaGmLexcMw> on Apple News



Under lockdown, trafficked people usually forced to work in brothels and nail salons are being moved further from the public eye.

When the statue of Edward Colston was **wrenched from its plinth** and rolled into Bristol Harbour, the historic role of slavery in Britain's economy became front-page news. What hasn't garnered the same level of attention is the fact that modern slavery in Britain is trapping more people than ever, many of whom are now hidden even deeper within the black-market economy because of the coronavirus lockdown.

Since 2011, The Salvation Army has helped 10,000 people escape from modern slavery in Britain. Many arrive expecting legitimate work and are trafficked into slavery; others might owe debts and become enslaved by a paymaster. In the year up to June of 2019, the charity helped 2,251 victims – born in 99 separate countries – escape from slavery. Of those, 1,072 were trafficked for manual labour, 881 were trafficked for sex and 274 for domestic servitude. The charity also reported that four people have been trafficked to the UK for organ removal.

A huge number of the women saved have been sexually exploited, says Major Kathy Betteridge, director of anti-trafficking and modern slavery at The Salvation Army. "Out of the 1,247 women who entered our support services [last year], 236 [19 percent] told us they were pregnant or suspected they might be pregnant during their initial assessment," she says.

Weed farms, nail salons, takeaways, sex work, car washes, agriculture, domestic work and food processing are hot spots for modern slavery. But during lockdown, these industries have ground to a halt as face-to-face industries disappear and people stay at home.

With the lockdown lifting, the public can play an active role in rescuing modern slaves hidden in plain sight, says Rob Richardson, head of the National Crime Agency's modern slavery and human trafficking unit.

"If you are getting your nails done super cheaply or your car is getting professionally washed for £5, is it because the people are not being paid properly to do that?" he says. "Cheap takeaway food is another area of concern. The public need to ask, 'Is somebody suffering somewhere along the line?' There is a huge amount of information about sweat shops abroad, but there is less awareness of things happening here."

"One victim was told they would remove his kidneys if he didn't keep quiet"

Once businesses closed due to the pandemic, organised crime gangs had been expected to simply dump trafficked victims in the street, causing a spike in homelessness. Instead, they have been dragged from street level – where it's more likely their situation will be discovered – into more distant reaches of the economy.

"Organised crime moves to where there is an opportunity to make money – if it cannot make money where it is, it will move elsewhere," says Richardson. "These crime groups see these people as a commodity, so they have kept hold of them and moved them out of view."

For instance, the NCA believe many trafficked sex slaves have been forced into performing on camming sites, where gangs can watch them and prevent them calling for help. Those previously working in car washes or restaurants may have been dragged into agriculture or food preparation, away from public view.

Many of these trafficking gangs are immensely sophisticated. Operation Fort, put together by West Midlands Police, discovered a Polish trafficking ring that had an inside man working at a legitimate recruitment agency. There, he recruited trafficked workers to work on farms and in recycling plants and turkey-gutting factories, where they were paid just £20 a week.

The ring was believed to have had 400 victims living in squalid, rat-infested homes, with some washing in canals because they had no running water. One died in captivity and another was told the gang would sell his kidneys if he didn't keep quiet. Many of the farms where the trafficked people were placed had no idea their workers were not taking home their own pay, as victims were forced to hand over everything to the gang after it landed in their accounts.

There has been a dramatic spike in reports of human trafficking and modern slavery since The Salvation Army officially partnered with the Home Office to care for victims. In 2011, they received 378 cases; by 2019, this was up to 2,251 cases.

Part of this rise is down to the fact that word has got out to vulnerable individuals that help is available – but the other factor is how appealing modern slavery is for organised crime. If you import drugs, you can only sell that product once. A human cargo can be sold and abused over and over again. This is shown in the 807 percent increase in child slavery cases in the past five years – boosted by the rise of county lines.

"For sex workers in debt bondage, they will not be able to run away, even if they have no work because of the virus," says Richardson. "The gang will then change the rules, and they never pay it off, and they are in servitude for the rest of their lives. They will be under so much control and be so keen for work, a lot of these people will move themselves around the country under the crime group to wherever the work is."



The Global Theft of Human Lives

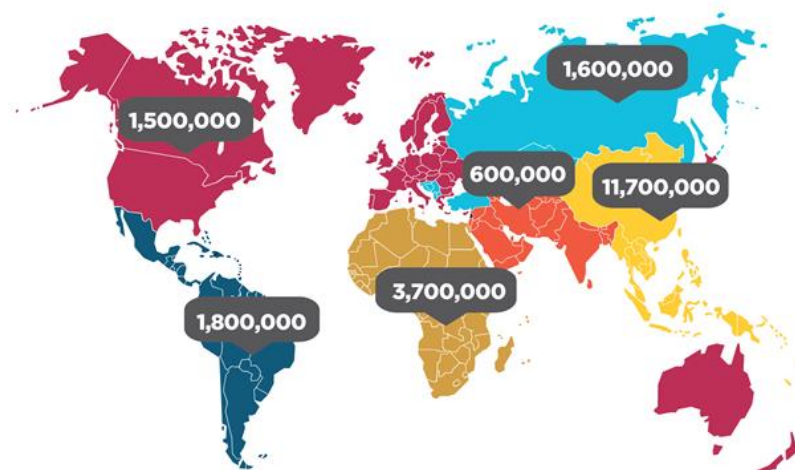
According to The Salvation Army's 2019 report, nearly a quarter of those supported were from Albania. Most were women who had been sexually exploited, with Albanian men ending up enslaved in manual work.

For the third year running, the highest number of male slaves came from Vietnam: some 209 Vietnamese were rescued from slavery in 2019. According to the NCA and The Salvation Army, a huge number of those are put to work in cannabis farms. As VICE reported last year, organised crime groups had systematically been fraudulently renting flats across big cities and the countryside – 144 in total – for the purposes of sex work and marijuana farms. The Vietnamese workers who tended the marijuana farms said they had been trafficked.

If their enslaved life here is terrible, for trafficked individuals the journey is no better. Until this week, the methods of getting to the UK legally or illegally – passengers flights, ferries and on lorries via the Eurostar – had been mostly shut down, meaning traffickers sought other ways of getting people into the country, leading to a dramatic spike in illegal dinghy crossings during lockdown + Modern day Slavery.



21 million people victims of forced labour



<http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/policy-areas/statistics/lang--en/index.htm>

The Rutherford recently published a report on the sexual abuse and trafficking of children in the USA today. It is not just happening in India and Africa and other developing countries. It goes on to say;

“Children are being targeted and sold for sex in America every day.”—John Ryan, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Children, young girls—some as young as 9 years old—are being bought and sold for sex in America. The average age for a young woman being sold for sex is now 13 years old. “This is America’s dirty little secret”.

Sex trafficking—especially when it comes to the buying and selling of young girls—has become big business in America, the fastest growing business in organized crime and the second most-lucrative commodity traded illegally after drugs and guns.

As investigative journalist Amy Fine Collins notes, “It’s become more lucrative and much safer to sell malleable teens than drugs or guns. A pound of heroin or an AK-47 can be retailed once, but a young girl can be sold 10 to 15 times a day—and a ‘righteous’ pimp confiscates 100 percent of her earnings.” Consider this: every two minutes, a child is exploited in the sex industry.

According to *USA Today*, adults purchase children for sex at least 2.5 million times a year in the United States. It is estimated that at least 100,000 children—girls and boys—are bought and sold for sex in the U.S. every year, with as many as 300,000 children in danger of being trafficked each year. Some of these children are forcefully abducted, others are runaways, and still others are sold into the system by relatives and acquaintances.

“Human trafficking—the commercial sexual exploitation of American children and women, via the Internet, strip clubs, escort services, or street prostitution—is on its way to becoming one of the worst crimes in the U.S.,” said prosecutor Krishna Patel.

https://www.rutherford.org/publications_resources/john_whiteheads_commentary/the_essence_of_evil_sex_with_children_has_become_big_business_in_america?fbclid=IwAR1B0otbBKR2VfF5hKmHoRhUgIVPbHMrP8nJNlosHptyhxjzhWBZXOt4R-Y

Throughout our history, we have fought wars, traded and kept slaves and tortured and killed those who do not fit in with our sense of “like us”. The sad truth is that **it is all still happening every day.**

Discussing reparations for historical slavery injustice is in my view a complete fallacy and hugely disrespectful to all those suffering in the modern world of slavery. Just because they may not where shackles, means we have to look harder and work with greater determination to find them and free them. Seeking historical reparation seems callous and opportunistic against the fact that more people are enslaved today than were ever in the era we refer to when we talk about the slave trade.

At the end of 2018 I was in the USA, West Virginia and visited the Booker T Washington memorial. In 1856, Washington was born into slavery in Virginia as the son of Jane, an African-American slave. After emancipation, she moved the family to West Virginia to join her husband Washington Ferguson. West Virginia had seceded from Virginia and joined the Union as a free state during the Civil War. As a young man, Booker T. Washington worked his way through Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (a historically black college, now Hampton University) and attended college at Wayland Seminary (now Virginia Union University). He went on was an American educator, author, orator, and adviser to multiple presidents of the United States. Between 1890 and 1915, Washington was the dominant leader in the African American community and of the contemporary black elite.

It was humbling to see where Washington had grown up on a tobacco farm, to walk the grounds and ponder what it must have been like. And what would Book T Washington say if he saw the latest data on human slavery and human trafficking. How could we explain to him that despite the lessons of the past and laws hard won through struggle and battle, that human slavery in different forms was more prevalent now (in absolute numbers) than it was in his time. He celebrated the abolition of slavery in the United States but would I suspect be puzzled, mortified, and angry, if he could see what had become of the abolition movement.

The organisers of these crimes live among us. The users of these "services" are our brothers, sons, fathers, neighbours. And the billions of dollars the industry generates enters the formal financial services sector generating profit for those financial institutions.

As I started to write this, the well published trial of Harvey Weinstein is finally underway closely watched no doubt by the "Me Too" movement and many others. And in the same time frame I have just watched a documentary on Peter Sutcliffe the infamous Yorkshire Ripper. Whilst watching the documentary I did not focus on the horrendous and cruel crimes that he was convicted of in the 1980's. I focused instead on the attitudes of the police, press, and prosecutors involved at the time. Which it appears, if I am kind, was misogynistic and chauvinistic. And I can forgive Netflix for the shameful series Joe Exotic Tiger King, because of their excellent docuseries, Jeffrey Epstein: Filthy Rich, and Athlete A, highlighting the widespread abuse of young vulnerable women by wealthy men and women who think they should be able to get away with it. Even if you want to allow for media hype "inflation" clearly the systemic abuse of young vulnerable girls by Epstein and Gymnastics US is just simply shocking. And let's not get started on Jimmy Saville. The issue is in all these examples like with so many, we are not just dealing with one bad actor. We are dealing with institutional prejudice and institutionalised physical and sexual abuse. And that is for me the real issue.

So, with this as the backdrop, I wonder just how much the attitude of senior male leaders have really shifted? How enlightened are we (and I say we because I am one of them)? And how much of this lingering chauvinistic attitude is at the heart of both the worlds current challenges described above and the glacial progress at which organisations are diversifying the gender make up of their senior leadership. And in saying this I caution the reader to distinguish between the increasing rhetoric, social media protestations and marketing spend to convince you that companies are taking this seriously, and actual specific progress. For the two are very different. There is a great deal of the one, but very little of the other.

And what do child molesters, modern day slavers, have in common with Floyd. At the root cause of the problem is a deeply held institutionalised prejudice.

CEO's, and CHRO's, working with the education sector, and the recruitment sector, and internal Learning and Development, (at least), need to drive change that ensures a sustainable shift at all inflection points where bias may drag decisions away from the stated goal of true transformation. Until organisations truly transform, rather than simply saying they have, then cultures will not be inclusive, decisions will likely not be balanced, trust and psychological safety will remain low, as will discretionary innovation. And organisations will remain exposed to the risks which have historically caused corporate scandals including in some cases loss of life. In other words, a systemic holistic approach needs to be taken. This is I believe a big opportunity for many organisations. Watch a video I recorded on the matter a few years ago. <https://www.thebtn.tv/exclusive-content/video/diversity-and-inclusion-stop-messing-about-andrew-fox>

All those years ago, perhaps Bob Marley and Wailers were right when they sang their song simply titled "**War**";



Until the philosophy
which hold one race superior
And another
Inferior
Is finally
And permanently
Discredited
And abandoned
Everywhere is war
Me say war.

Affirmative Action

Here I draw on my experience in South Africa and the USA.

"Affirmative action originally referred to a set of policies and practices preventing discrimination based on race, creed, colour and national origins, now often refers policies positively supporting members of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups that have previously suffered discrimination in areas such as education, employment and housing. Historically and internationally, support for affirmative action has sought to achieve goals such as bridging inequalities in employment and pay, increasing access to education, promoting diversity, and redressing apparent past wrongs, harms, or hindrances."

<https://www.bing.com/search?q=affirmative+action&form=ANSPH1&refig=f3a6af1065aa460e991bdf6c1481b064&sp=-1&pq=affirmative+action&sc=8-18&qsn=&sk=&cvid=f3a6af1065aa460e991bdf6c1481b064>

Affirmative action as practiced in South Africa and the USA at least, strives to promote opportunities for the target groups of people. In this example essentially Black people (Black Americans, and Black, Indian and Coloured people in South Africa)

And linked to this is Positive discrimination (in the context of the allocation of resources or employment) the practice or policy of favouring individuals belonging to groups known to have been discriminated against previously. **Positive discrimination** is generally unlawful in the UK. For example, an employer recruiting a person because he or she has a relevant protected characteristic rather than because he or she is the best candidate would be committing **discrimination** under the Equality Act 2010.

<https://www.bing.com/search?q=positive+discrimination&form=ANSPH1&refig=ddca18b32670404fb0d9eab0d3603cd3&sp=-1&pq=positive+discrimination&sc=8-23&qsn=&sk=&cvid=ddca18b32670404fb0d9eab0d3603cd3>

Many people speak out against affirmative action programmes saying that positive discrimination in favour of minorities is "wrong". And many also speak out against having quotas or hard targets.

But I am going to argue that that this resistance is based on false premises and that in fact we exactly need positive discrimination if we are to see real actual measurable change.

"Despite efforts to improve boardroom diversity, if you are a FTSE 100 CEO, you are more likely to be named Steve or Stephen than you are to be female. There are only six female CEOs in this year's analysis and they were paid 32% less than their male counterparts." CIPD report August 2019.

It is clear that AA programmes where they have existed (SA and USA for example), have not really succeeded in making meaningful sustainable change at scale. What is interesting is that many Scandinavian countries have fared better in transforming the gender balance of their boards, and they have done so by passing supportive legislation, setting hard targets and getting on with it.

As we shall see in the section below, our avoidance of hard targets has given birth to an industry of ineffective self-congratulatory programmes and schemes which seek to boost reputations in the absence of meaningful actual progress.

Gender Diversity Programmes

Since moving to the UK my focus in this space has tended to focus on promoting gender diversity at senior levels within the organisation.

When I think of diversity I actually think about inclusivity, and when I think about inclusivity I think about culture. It is my personal and direct experience that, in at least the major Banks I have worked in, nowhere near enough time is spent by the CEO and executive on the issue of culture. And as we know whether you manage it or not, you have a culture. It can be the largest competitive advantage or the destroyer of value – and not something I would argue that should be left to chance.

Organisations know at some level at least that they have to transform. They have moved Diversity up on the list of things they speak about and corporate social media is awash with commitments and celebrations dealing with diversity and inclusion. Teams have been appointed. Millions of dollars spent (literally) as CEO's and CHRO's espouse the fact that this is a top priority. Except it not. Not really.

"Despite efforts to improve boardroom diversity, if you are a FTSE 100 CEO, you are more likely to be named Steve or Stephen than you are to be female. There are only six female CEOs in this year's analysis and they were paid 32% less than their male counterparts." CIPD report August 2019.

Our boardrooms and executive teams are colluding to ensure that things stay the same more than they change, despite what they may say or write in their press releases and carefully crafted internal coms and LinkedIn posts.

An industry has in fact sprung up certainly in the UK and USA, with external consultants and internal teams spending millions of dollars trying to help leadership teams and organisations "transform". They have generated an industry around their activity.

See my video and podcast comments here;

<https://www.thebtn.tv/exclusive-content/video/diversity-and-inclusion-stop-messing-about-andrew-fox>

<https://soundcloud.com/thebtn/diversity-inclusion-and-belonging-with-andrew-fox>

The McKinsey& Company report on the subject says, "The culture of work is equally important. All employees should feel respected and that they have an equal opportunity to grow and advance. Employees care deeply about opportunity and fairness, not only for themselves but for everyone. They want the system to be fair." #1

I worry that cliché's about leadership and culture will be to LinkedIn what cat videos are to Face Book. That's not to say that the subjects of culture and Leadership are not important. (or that some cat videos aren't cute). They are. In fact, I would argue they are the key elements to ensuring sustainable organisational performance within sustainable communities.

Rhetoric in corporate annual reports and corporate social media abounds telling us about how organisations are changing, how they are driving diversity and inclusion. How they support wellness and mental health issues. And they are saying the same things to staff, investors and regulators. But the reality is, the fact is, that progress in all these spaces is painfully and inexcusably slow. The short-term pressure for profits causes organisations to take actions which often destroy trust. See the work by Sinek, Blanchard and Frey who talk about this far more eloquently than I am able to. See the Francis Frey Ted Talk here:

https://www.ted.com/talks/frances_frei_how_to_build_and_rebuild_trust

I have been privileged to work with and close to a number of senior CHRO's. Honestly, few if any have a real passion for genuine transformation of the organisations in which they work when it comes to diversity and inclusion. And one of the reasons for this is because their CEO's are primarily paying lip service to the issue – giving them permission to do similar. The Economist (June 13, 2020, pg. 51) asks are corporate bosses to be taken seriously as they have expressed various degrees of outrage for racism and support for change? There is says the Economist "a long history of corporate waffle". We have had false dawns before on these issues and we must not let that happen again.

And finally, if your organisation is doing business in, and your bonus is partly as a result of doing business in countries where human rights are not guaranteed according to the WHO, where human trafficking is rife, where FGM and child marriages are forced, where honour killings are even a thing, and where police disproportionately target certain groups over others – then, should you be?

See my additional comments on video, podcast and written articles, published by the Business Transformation Network.

<https://www.thebntn.tv/exclusive-content/video/problem-sexual-abuse-and-trafficking-andrew-fox>

<https://www.thebntn.tv/exclusive-content/article/challenge-gender-parity-and-abuse-and-trafficking-vulnerable-children-and>

<https://soundcloud.com/thebntn/diversity-inclusion-and-belonging-with-andrew-fox>

What is the Solution?

At RhinoHR our solutions may by necessity have an HR slant to them but at the very least this overview of solutions, based on our practical experience, must be a decent place to start.

Racism and prejudice still stain the earth giving rise to wars, ethnic cleansing, modern slavery, all on a grand scale and on a less obvious scale in policies, attitudes, culture, and laws.

We require a number of things for real genuine change to take place.

1. Our institutions (legal systems, policing systems, judiciaries etc) all need to be examined for the biases that exist as well as for the unintentional negative consequences they have for certain groups of people. And then they simply need to be changed.
2. Each one of us has to undergo a soul-searching process whereby we uncover our own prejudices and biases and work hard, with help, to erase them. We need to be able to talk openly about all issues which relate to racism and prejudice without fear of being sanctioned for being politically "incorrect". And we will usually need help in this journey, it is not one we can take without a guide.
3. We have to adopt a zero tolerance for ourselves. From how we behave, what we say, who we mix with, how we act as consumers, and how we show courage in speaking out when we see something that looks wrong to us.
4. Transfer this same zero tolerance for everyone and every organisation we deal with/do business with. This includes changing policies and practices which are racist and or prejudicial.
5. This includes educating our children, who left to their own devices learn negative stereotypical beliefs about race and prejudice, eg by watching porn and becoming desensitised to an industry that we know traffics and abuses children and women.
6. We need to accept that an inclusive society, and world, will in general be a better place for everybody.

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7. HR Directors/CHRO's must stop **colluding** with their CEO's and ensure that real change actually happens. The problem is that many HR Directors lack true independence, and so collusion takes place, including around the illusion that change is happening at the right pace.
 8. Know your data really well – be data led at least at the start of your journey. And then if you genuinely view the issue of transformation as business critical; treat it like every other business critical objective, with resources, targets, measurement, reward etc
 9. As a CEO I would look long and hard at any department called D&I and at anyone with Diversity and or Inclusion in their job titles. Chances are they are not powerful enough to create real change and fanning your corporate ego on social media should no longer be an acceptable answer to the challenge of why organisations are not transforming fast enough.
 10. We need to examine, understand, and adopt the WHO's Sustainable Development goals (see below for full list) which to a great although not complete degree, strive as an ambition to make the world a safer healthier more just place for everyone, rather than just a few.

This is achievable, but it will not happen by accident.

In Conclusion

“The Only Thing Necessary for the Triumph of Evil is that Good Men Do Nothing.” As Burke said, ‘When bad men combine, good men must organize.’ (October 1916)
We often see things that are not in accordance with this vision, but doing nothing is simply not an option if we are to evolve.

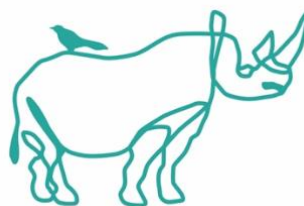
Our generation and the generations before us have not made the world a better place. On the contrary, all the facts suggest we have made it worse. But its not too late. That’s not to negate the progress and advancements made but when you look at the world through this lens I am using, we need to be **collectively horrified**.

We have to create a shift away from a male dominated, testosterone fuelled, misogynistic culture with people playing a finite game, demanding winners and losers. (Sinek, 2019)

My sincere wish is that every individual and institution in the world, starts to play a broader role as global citizen and steward of the future.

And we must remember the wise words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor”



References and Notes

Cover art and editorial by Ellie Harriss

Reference Sapiens, A Brief History of Humankind, Yuval Noah Harari, (2011)

Reference The Economist, June 6-12th; June 13-19th, (2020)

Reference The Infinite Gama, Simon Sinek, (2019), Penguin Business

Notes #1 The full McKinsey report

<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/women-in-the-workplace-2019?cid=other-eml-alt-mip-mck&hlkid=8c620d0d78f64a52aae323ca52e3e7f4&hctky=11471973&hdpid=6002483b-21c7-4ff8-8fed-f8ae10badb7d>

Gender microaggressions are defined as brief and everyday verbal and nonverbal behaviors and environmental conditions that communicate demeaning, hostile, and otherwise sexist insults towards women (Nadal, 2010)

Note #2 Ubuntu

Ubuntu is a complex word from the Nguni language with several definitions, all of them difficult to translate into English. The Nguni languages are a group of related languages that are spoken in Southern Africa, mostly in South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe: each of several languages share the word, and, at the heart of each definition, though, is the connectedness that exists or should exist between people.

Ubuntu is best known outside of Africa as a humanist philosophy associated with Nelson Mandela (1918–2013) and Archbishop Desmond Tutu (born 1931). Curiosity about the name may also come from it being used for the open source operating system called Ubuntu.

Meanings of Ubuntu

One meaning of Ubuntu is correct behaviour, but correct in this sense is defined by a person's relations with other people. Ubuntu refers to behaving well towards others or acting in ways that benefit the community. Such acts could be as simple as helping a stranger in need, or much more complex ways of relating with others. A person who behaves in these ways *has* ubuntu. He or she is a full person.

For some, Ubuntu is something akin to a soul force—an actual metaphysical connection shared between people and which helps us connect to each other. Ubuntu will push one toward selfless acts.

There are related words in many sub-Saharan African cultures and languages, and the word Ubuntu is now widely known and used outside of South Africa. <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-meaning-of-ubuntu-43307>

Note #3 Global Sustainable Development Goals 2015



Goal 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10 Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*

Goal 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development