A History of Harms: Organizational Accountability and Repair for Past and Continuing Injustices

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Abstract

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Some organizations considering tackling racial injustice are engaging in historical accountability processes for past harms. Here, I explore three cases of organizational historical accountability: APA’s public apology and action plan to address its history of perpetuating racism, Georgetown University grappling with its history of slavery, and the land transfer from Yale Union to the Native Arts and Culture Foundation as an act of land re-matriation. Using an exploratory case study approach based on analysis of publicly available documents, 16 interviews with involved stakeholders and 10 interviews with academics and activists, I explore these organizations’ processes of historical accountability, the facilitating factors and challenges these organizations encountered, and the elements stakeholders saw as particularly essential to these projects. These case studies exemplify ways these processes can connect past patterns with present and future dynamics, deconstruct destructive dynamics, reconstruct constructive dynamics, and also maintain existing patterns. These case studies reveal stakeholders often have different aims and lenses for viewing these processes. Given these differences, I propose five orientations for the ways organizations can take on historical accountability projects: perform, reform, repair, dismantle, and realign. These orientations are not mutually exclusive, but may help distinguish different aims, logics, theories of change, and elements that undergird historical accountability projects aimed at racial justice.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Following the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other Black Americans, several organizations around the United States posted apologies and acknowledged the ways these companies contributed to and perpetuated racism. This is part of a larger pattern of energy and momentum for social justice: In the past years, it has become common for organizations to make statements denouncing racism (Marshall & Pardes, 2020), CEOs to post about politics (Gaines-Ross, 2017), and employees to embrace activism in the workplace (Wingard, 2020). The diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) field is rapidly growing, and Glassdoor named diversity and inclusion as the #2 workplace trend in 2021, noting that organizations are “being pushed to make progress on diversity and inclusion like never before” (Chamberlain, 2020, p.10). Some organizations are being asked to move beyond considering representation and inclusion, and to consider how organizations have both been shaped by and play a role in shaping systems of oppression, shifting from diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) to a broader focus on tackling racial injustice. Part of this systemic perspective can involve critically examining how histories of harms such as colonization, slavery, and discrimination have shaped patterns within organizations today, and moving from thinking about internal diversity dynamics, to also think about how organizations play a role in shaping societal inequity and oppression (Acker, 2006; Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Ray, 2019).

While DEI and anti-oppression work in organizations often tackles multiple ‘isms (i.e., racism, sexism, heterosexism, ablism), in this thesis I focus particularly on practices centering racial injustice, not because this is the only dimension of inequity or harm that can be addressed through historical accountability, but because of the organizations that I outreached to
participate, those that agreed to participate were focused on historical harms centering race and racism. DEI interventions within organizations can often be ahistorical and focused entirely on contemporary internal dynamics. DEI trainings and interventions tend to focus on hiring, promotion, bias, discrimination, and harassment, often without exploring the historical organizational roots of these patterns and how they have evolved (or failed to evolve) over time, and without exploring how an organization itself may perpetuate patterns of historical oppression. Those more critical of DEI practices which focus mainly on interpersonal dynamics and virtue signaling within White dominant institutions, point to the ways that this serves the interest of mainly White leadership by deflecting scrutiny of the power hierarchies within organizations, asking people of color and other historically-oppressed groups to assimilate into a culture not designed for them, and erasing questions of how organizations may contribute to oppression (Coastan & Lopez, 2019; Saxon, 2021; Tran, 2020; 2021). David Ragland (2021), for example, has highlighted how “corporations pushing for diversity and releasing statements that Black Lives Matter are simultaneously exploiting low-wage workers, using underpaid prison labor, and benefiting from the exploitation of workers from developing nations” (p. 33).

These criticisms are in line with a larger argument that understandings of oppression, and racism in particular, centering around individual and interpersonal interactions can serve the interests of those in power, and can direct efforts “toward changing individual hearts and minds or promoting intergroup harmony rather than struggles against structural oppression and material injustice” (Adams et al., 2018, p. 340; Adams et al., 2008; Dixon et al., 2010). An organization which is transforming to become anti-racist or anti-oppressive thus moves beyond diversity and inclusion, and “Redefines and rebuilds all relationships and activities in society” and ultimately
“actively works in larger communities (regional, national, global) to eliminate all forms of oppression” (AORTA, 2021).

Revisiting history can play a major role in understanding and tackling systemic injustice. Empirical evidence from across the globe suggests that more critical histories examining the inequitable distribution of harms and benefits have the potential to increase awareness of injustice and support for policies geared towards anti-oppression (e.g. Kurtis et al., 2017; Muckerjee et. al, 2017). In the United States, for example, one study around how Black History Month is portrayed in schools showed that history which specifically acknowledges oppression is more effective in promoting awareness of racism and support for anti-racist policy than history which celebrates heroes fighting oppression (Salter & Adams, 2016). Another study looking at how stories of Thanksgiving were told, found that people exposed to a history that mentioned the genocide of Indigenous Americans were more likely to support Indigenous rights than people exposed to a history of Thanksgiving that did not acknowledge genocide (Kurtis et al., 2010). These same studies, however, also showed that participants preferred histories which emphasized triumphs over histories which were more critical, suggesting that critical histories are not necessarily popular even as they play an important role in increasing awareness of injustice and supporting change.

There are large bodies of literature which emphasize the importance of a historical lens when understanding issues of oppression in a range of fields such as education (e.g. Blount, 2008; Bogotch, 2011; Horsford & D’Amico, 2015), law (e.g. Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), and psychology (e.g. Martin-Baro, 1986; Adams et al., 2018), and while many scholars have highlighted the importance of a historical lens in organizational research (see Godfrey et al. 2016; Carroll, 2002; and Usdiken & Keiser, 2004 introducing journal issues on the topic), there
is a dearth of research on historical accountability and racial justice at the organizational level. This research gap may be due to a dependence on a “managerial sensibility to shape research questions” in organizational research (Gulati, 2007, p. 780; Voronov & Coleman, 2003), leading to a scant focus on history within the field, and particularly of histories which emphasize harms perpetuated by organizations, such as complicity and participation in war, slavery, and racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and classism (Godfrey et al., 2016). Exceptions include research which emphasizes how modern organizational management has historic ties to oppressive structures- for example, how modern management has historical ties to slavery (Cooke, 2003; Rosenthal, 2018)- and research which explores how organizations obscure or take accountability for histories of harms (e.g. Federman, 2017; 2018; 2021a; 2021b; Mena, 2016). This research gap, paired with existing scholarly work across fields highlighting the importance of a historical lens, suggests there is a need to better understand processes of historical accountability at the organizational level for addressing racial injustices.

Despite this gap in academic research, some organizations have embarked on truth processes, historical audits, reparation and reclamation projects to acknowledge how they have contributed to or benefited from past and continuing oppressions, and take steps towards future healing. Examples include Volkswagen’s efforts to address it’s Nazi past, where auto-workers were often forcefully enlisted from occupied countries or concentration camps such as Auschwitz (Smale & Ewing, 2016); Georgetown University’s accountability process tackling a history of enslaved African-Americans sold by the college (Swarns, 2016); Dr. Seuss Enterprises’ acknowledgment of the harm of racist caricatures in some of the authors books, and decision to discontinue publication of these books (Pratt, 2020); Dutch museum Rijkmuseums efforts to open talks with former colonies about repatriating looted art (Hickley, 2019); and the

Many times these historical processes have been undertaken in response to public accusations and to widespread demand for organizations to face their complicity in systems of oppression. For example, following the murder of George Floyd and accusations of a toxic workplace for Black employees, clothing brand Reformation’s CEO publicly reflected on its own more recent history, posting an “I’ve failed” (Aflalo, 2020) Instagram post. This post included a letter apologizing for past workplace mistreatment of Black employees, practicing diversity through a ‘white gaze,’ and not leveraging their platform for racial justice, and a promise to incorporate DEI into its board and structures, and a donation to Black charities. This post is emblematic of many company statements released in the weeks following the murder of George Floyd, some which even announced top executives stepping down (Segran, 2020). While many of these posts were criticized as branding stunts, this flurry of public apologies suggests that reflecting on how organizations commit harms is becoming increasingly normalized, and perhaps even strategically necessary for brand survival and relevance.

Other organizational initiatives have been more geared towards accountability for societal crimes that occurred before the organization’s founding: in 2020 for example, an Oregon contemporary art center, Yale Union, dissolved and transferred ownership of its land and building to the Native Arts and Culture Foundation. This move was described “as an act of repatriation in recognition of the fact that the land on which Yale Union operated was taken from Native Peoples” (Cascone, 2020). Actions of organizations that have initiated historical accountability processes, suggest interrogating, exposing, and reckoning with organizational histories of oppressions can offer a pathway for systemic changes geared towards shedding light
on the ways organizations maintain systems of oppression, and can even be starting points for redistributing power and resources.

Given the evidence suggesting that a historical lens can help bolster awareness of injustices and increase support for tackling these issues, and given the recent increase in organizations initiating accountability processes to examine historical harms, scholarly research has the potential to help practitioners better understand these historical accountability processes, their antecedents, and ultimately, their impact. Through this thesis, I examine three case studies of historical accountability processes: Georgetown University seeking to reckon with its history of slavery; the American Psychological Association initiating a process to apologize for the ways it has historically perpetuated and contributed to racism; and the transfer of land from Yale Union to the Native Arts and Culture Center (NACF). Through interviews with organizational stakeholders and communities affected by these organizations, as well as analysis of relevant texts and documents, I investigate the processes and actions taken in these three cases studies. I also interview activists and academics specializing in historical accountability processes such as apologies, truth and reconciliation commissions, and reparations. Through this research, I investigate the historical accountability projects these three organizations initiated. I ask, What did these organizations do in their processes? What were some of the facilitating factors and challenges they encountered? What elements of their projects did participants see as particularly essential?
Chapter 2: Literature Review

In the following literature review, I explore how 1) forms of oppression are systemic in nature with organizations not only influenced and shaped by society, but also influencing and shaping society; 2) the historical context, both inside and outside an organization, contributes to current patterns of oppression within organizations; 3) the ways history is told and presented has important implications for understanding these patterns, and 4) how historical audits and accountability processes offer a pathway to scrutinize these patterns of oppression, and perhaps even work towards structural change.

2.1 A Systemic Lens

Racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, classism and other forms of oppression can be viewed as systemic in nature, and a fundamental factor in the ways institutions are organized. A basic tenet of Critical Race Theory (CRT), for example, is the acknowledgment of racism as pervasive and as the norm, rather than as an aberration (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). From this lens, these ‘isms are often understood to be embedded within structures, and maintained through deeply ingrained patterns in a range of institutions and processes such as the law, economics, academics, politics, culture, and the unconscious, rather than solely through the actions of a few bad actors (Coastan & Lopez, 2019). The field of psychology has been criticized, for example, for failing to incorporate the voices of those who are not white, Western, men on their own terms: even when others are included, this research often accommodates others as an “add-on” to traditional Western-centric models, rather than fundamentally transforming the field of discourse (Sampson, 1993).

Research in organizational psychology has shifted from mainly focusing on individual level explanations and interventions for inequities and discrimination in organizations (e.g. a
focus on bias, values, and behaviors of individuals), to include more systemic approaches that show how harmful cultures, structures, and hierarchies are maintained and perpetuated (see Block & Noumair, 2017; Hyde, 2003; Gonzales, 2010). The Constructive Multicultural Organizational Development (CMOD) Model (Coleman et al., 2017), for example, uses insights from complexity science to illustrate how organizational cultures related to diversity and discrimination can be viewed as attractors, or “entrenched, dynamic, and multiply determined patterns in systems that resist change” (pp. 3-4). This approach highlights how a myriad of factors interact to create stable patterns related to exclusion and inequity, making them difficult to tackle and disrupt. The model emphasizes both interpersonal dynamics around conflict and identity, as well as more structural dynamics such as power hierarchies.

This model mirrors insights around how certain patterns can be embedded within the deep structure of an organization, making these patterns highly stable over time (Syvantek & Brown, 2000). Deep structure refers to “the set of fundamental ‘choices’ a system has made of (1) the basic parts into which its units will be organized and (2) the basic activity patterns that will maintain its existence” (Gersick, 1991, p.16). Connie Gersick argues that deep structures are particularly enduring in part because “the activity patterns of a system's deep structure reinforce the system as a whole, through mutual feedback loops” (p.16). She notes that, “As long as the deep structure is intact, it generates a strong inertia, first to prevent the system from generating alternatives outside its own boundaries, then to pull any deviations that do occur back into line” (p. 19). The deep structure of an organization, or its attractor patterns, can be important for understanding dynamics related to racial justice, and offer insight into why these dynamics can be difficult to change or shift.
These internal patterns also can reproduce societal harms. Organizations are not just shaped by societal racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, etc., they also play a role in shaping, reproducing, and maintaining these forms of oppression and the efforts to counter these destructive forces (see Ray, 2019; Acker, 2006; Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Voronov & Coleman, 2003). As illustrated by Joan Acker, all organizations contain inequality regimes, or “loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations” (Acker, 2006, p. 245). These inequality regimes can also be thought of as attractors, or deep structures, and are in part so difficult to disrupt, because they are maintained through an intentional invisibility of inequality - for example, through norms around not discussing wages (Acker, 2006).

As organizations are shaped by societal economic inequality, they also reproduce societal economic inequality through hiring, role allocation, promotion, compensation, and organizational structuring (Amis, et. al, 2020). Similarly, Victor Ray’s (2019) theory of how organizations reproduce (and challenge) racialized processes highlights how organizations are “racial structures consolidating resources and social power” (p.35), and moves organizational research beyond using race as a demographic variable, to consider how organizations are core structures in the social construction of race. As he outlines:

At the macro level, segregation between organizations allows for the consolidation of resources in the hands of dominant racial groups. Meso-level internal hierarchies and occupational segregation contribute to the mundane reproduction of racial stratification. Individual racial attitudes and discrimination are enabled or constrained by organizational routines. More than a mere “link” between macro- and micro-level processes, organizations are key to stability and change for the entire racial order. Organizations magnify the power and depth of racial projects and are a primary terrain of racial contestation (p. 30).

These works offer insight into how institutions both serve to maintain and challenge oppressive patterns in organizations and beyond.
2.2 History Matters

The origins of such systems can be particularly important for understanding how and why they function as they do. Theoretical insights around the deep structure of an organization show how “the trail of choices made by a system rules many options out, at the same time as it rules mutually contingent options in,” (Gersick, 1991, p.16) as supported by research on the persistence of initial choices and conditions (Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 1990; Gersick, 1988; Ginnett, 1987; Gersick, 1991; Stinchcombe, 1965; Syvantek & Brown, 2000), and in this perspective, the history of an organization inherently directs and limits how an organization evolves.

This is in line with theories of path dependence, which suggests that an organization’s future choices and current circumstances are shaped by the path an organization has traveled (Booth, 2003; Teece et al., 1997). Specific resource configurations (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991), organizational culture (Rhenman, 1973), and other characteristics are seen to originate from an organization’s particular history (Brunninge, 2009). Historical choices thus limit and structure the possibilities of an organization, leading to a kind of “lock-in” where past choices dictate the range of current and future options (Arthur, 1989). In this way, change processes which veer too far from an organization’s origins can be particularly difficult to enact (Kimberly & Bouchikhi, 1995). While path dependency theory can lead to a deterministic view of history, or “a cage that severely constrains the possibilities for organizational change” (Brunninge, 2009, p. 11), interrogating these initial choices, and particularly how historical context and oppressive norms shaped these choices, can be critical to understanding how deep structures of oppression are baked into many organizations from the beginning.

Revisionist Histories
While a focus on path dependency or the importance of initial choices can lead to an essentialist and deterministic view of history, other organizational theorists view history as more subjective, as an act of sense-making, based in memory and interpretation, or as rhetoric, and as something which can be manipulated for strategic purposes (Suddaby et al., 2016). From these views, organizations are not bound by the past and the history is more malleable, as organizations have the opportunity to re-interpret and re-negotiate their pasts according to current needs and aims (Gioia et al., 2002).

According to social constructionism, beliefs, goals, and values influence how meaning is made from reality, making reality subjective and purposeful (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Gergen, 1985). In this view, memory of the past is not neutral, rather it is often contested and selective, shaped by the perspectives and understandings of those doing the remembering. In this way, the past is shaped by the present, and remembrances are selected on the basis of current needs, beliefs, and goals (Eber and Neal, 2001; Ross and McFarland, 1988; Schwartz, 1982; Shotter, 1990; Tint, 2010). As such, “Memory is therefore not a passive process or simple recall of facts but an active process, calling for its participants to engage selectively with objects and experiences of the past” (Tint, 2010, p. 242).

Organizational memory, or “stored information from an organization’s history that can be brought to bear on present decisions” (Walsh & Ungson, 1991, p. 61), can have very real impacts on the present day and on the future, enabling or constraining new directions (Rowlinson et al., 2014; Casey & Olivera, 2011; Casey, 2018). The ways the past is presented has implications in shaping organizational identity (Anteby & Molnar, 2012; Chreim, 2005; Ravasi, Rindova & Stigliani, 2018), knowledge management (Barros et al., 2015), and organizational learning (Sun
& Anderson, 2010; Argote, 2013; Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez, & Trespalacios, 2012; Schwandt & Marquardt, 2000).

Many organizations have engaged with their history in diverse ways in order to validate, determine, and signal change processes: Adidas, for example, embarked on a process of uncovering and remembering the philosophies of its founder, using this history to then legitimate strategic choices for its brand (Iglesias et al., 2019). The US Postal Service took a different approach and retired its name, repainted trucks, and took on a new logo to signal a clear break with their history and usher in new changes (Biggart, 1977). William Ocasio, Michale Mauskopf, and Christopher Steele (2016) have argued that when changes in the collective memory of past events become widespread, this can serve as an indicator of a changing meta-narrative, and in turn, the transformation of institutional logics. A more subjective interpretation of history thus suggests that revisiting and reframing history can not only signal changes, but can be a powerful tool in shaping organizational change (Suddaby et al., 2016), as it is not only the actions of the past which are important, but how that history is selected, remembered, and told which matter.

Selected memories can then become the basis for social representations of history, the basis for knowledge of the past. Political and cultural power wield enormous influence in the production of knowledge, shaping who creates dominant narratives, what purposes knowledge is intended to serve, and how knowledge is constructed (Freire, 1968; Kincheloe, 2008). This allows further opportunities for bias and agendas to infiltrate social representations of history, which in turn provide shared beliefs legitimizing the arrangement of society, particularly as it concerns intergroup dynamics (Liu & Hilton, 2005; Liu & Atsumi, 2008). For example, one study conducted with university students found that historical knowledge of racism mediated group differences of perceptions of racism within current contexts (Nelson et al., 2013). Often
historical narratives favor in-groups, “emphasizing either positive aspects or important lessons from the group’s past, and concealing the group’s shameful deed or focusing on its own victimhood while denying that of others” (Liu & Atsumi, 2008, p. 330; Branscombe & Doosje, 2004).

To not examine disturbing, problematic, or inconvenient histories, is what Noam Chomsky calls “intentional ignorance,” or “the willful result of national myth-making and truth-shrouding” (in Brinker, 2015), and what Charles W. Mills (2007) calls “epistemologies of ignorance.” Through ignoring problematic histories, they argue people and institutions are able to escape responsibility and accountability. An ahistorical approach to defining problems can “leave the spores of discrimination intact and able to reproduce” (Horsford & D’Amico, 2015). For example, many have suggested that resistance to critical stories around race stem from a desire to protect white comfort, manage white fragility, and maintain power hierarchies (Adams et al., 2018; Delgado, 2013; Ioanide, 2013; Lipsitz, 2016). It is thus often in the interest of powerful groups to offer congratulatory histories rather than more critical accounts of the past.

In addition to not engaging with history, offering celebratory histories which overlook other perspectives can also be used as a tool to escape accountability, or justify the status quo. History can often play a role in structuring “legitimizing myths” which can disguise or make acceptable harms (Pratto & Stewart, 2012). When organizations do take on creating historical accounts, these narratives can be purposefully shaped to serve the interests of stakeholders: for example, Bryan Taylor and Brian Freer delineate the ways that an organization involved in the production of nuclear weapons had strong impulses when shaping its historical narrative to minimize the “traumatic actualities” (p. 584) of the plant’s operations (Taylor & Freer, 2002). In fact, within the organizational space, a number of scholars have focused on the “forgetting work”
that institutions engage in (Casey & Olivera, 2011; Lopez & Sune, 2013; Mena et al., 2016). Sebastien Mena, Jukka Rintamaki, Peter Fleming, and Andre Spicer also examine how organizations use a variety of strategies to forget incidents of corporate irresponsibility, where stakeholders are harmed. Strategies can include manipulating the immediate conditions of a harmful incident, silencing those who voice memories, and undermining collective mnemonic traces by, for example, fabricating or destroying evidence. They show how even public apologies and acknowledgment of past harms can serve as strategic shows of remorse which can then lead to subsequent forgetting. The process of forgetting work often involves a multitude of actors such as employees, consumers, civil society organizations, the state, and the media, and not only has implications for the organization in question, but also for larger society. They argue that forgetting can hinder the ability to learn from past mistakes, and encourage repetition of harms, and “might even serve as a sort of resource for perpetuating questionable behavior in a systematic fashion” (p.734).

In other fields many scholars have emphasized how speaking truths that are often outside the dominant narrative can be a tool to counter the silencing and oppression of harmed groups, arguing that voicing truth is essential to advancing towards a more equitable world. According to David Ragland (2021), “truth-telling speaks the mundane into the sacred, honoring the lived experience of people who are not valued by mainstream society” (p.21). In Talking Back, bell hooks argues that “true speaking” is “a political gesture that challenges the politics of domination that would render us nameless and voiceless” (hooks, 1989, p.8). hooks suggests that the act of marginalized people speaking out is in itself an act of transformation, writing: “Moving from silence into speech is for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, and those who stand and struggle side by side, a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth
possible. It is that act of speech, of “talking back,” that is no mere gesture of empty words, that is the expression of moving from object to subject, the liberated voice” (hooks, 1989, p. 9).

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paolo Freire discusses how speech/voice is the process through which change occurs. He writes, “to speak a true word is to transform the world” (Freire, 1970), arguing that the process of “naming the world,” or honestly articulating one’s perspective, is the basis for dialogue, and through an iterative process of naming, actors are able reshape and improve reality. From a liberation psychology perspective, excavating and recovering history is viewed as a necessary step for decolonizing consciousness:

> The prevailing discourse puts forth an apparently natural and ahistorical reality, structuring it in such a way as to cause it to be accepted without question. This makes it impossible to derive lessons from experience and, more importantly, makes it impossible to find the roots of one’s own identity, which is as much needed for interpreting one’s sense of the present as for glimpsing possible alternatives that might exist . . . The recovery of historical memory supposes the reconstruction of models of identification that, instead of chaining and caging the people, open up the horizon for them, toward their liberation and fulfillment. (Martin-Baro, 1986, p. 229)

Uncovering and privileging “subordinated knowledge” offers a foundation for resistance towards the “standard ways of knowing and being that—often regardless of individual intention or awareness—reproduce racial and colonial violence.” (Adams et al., 2018, p.342)

The idea of examining history to understand and challenge racism is deeply entwined with ideas of decoloniality and decolonization. There are many definitions of what constitutes decolonization. Franz Fanon described “a violent process of unlearning and undoing the harms of colonization” (cited by Asadullah, 2021, p. 28). It has also been framed as disrupting the legacy of colonial structures based in an “entangled triad of structure of settler-native-slave” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 1) where Europeans colonized geographic regions around the world becoming
settlers, killing and exploiting native peoples on their own lands, and en-slaving people from Africa to work on these lands for the profit of European settlers. As such, decolonization is inherently a process that involves a historical lens, as “it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content” (Fanon, 1963, p. 36). Decolonization has been described as the process of creating systemic and institutional change, for example, in the forms of self-governance, wealth-redistribution, the transfer of land back to Indigenous peoples, the restoration of language, and restitution (Fanon, 1963; Ngugi, 1986; Monchalin, 2016; Alfred, 2009; Jacobs, 2017); as well as occurring on a more individual level, for example, the liberation of the mind and intellect (Fanon, 2008; 1963).

Others frame the concept of decolonization as more limited to forming sovereign nation states, and suggest the aims of “decoloniality” are to “delink from the colonial matrix of power” (Mignolo, 2018, p. 125), or to the “exercise of power within the colonial matrix to undermine the mechanism that keeps it in place requiring obeisance” (Mignolo, 2018, p.114). This is thus based in delinking from what Anibal Quijano (2000) outlines as the “coloniality of power”, which is built upon and re-enforced by social classification based in the idea of race and the division of labor, which he outlines as intimately linked and mutually reinforcing. Maria Lugones (2007; 2010) expands the idea of coloniality of power to include gender, and describes how colonialism “imposed a new gender system that created very different arrangements for colonized males and females than for white bourgeois colonizers” (2007, p. 186). Within these conceptions, an acknowledgement and understanding of the history of colonization becomes critical to understanding hierarchical conceptions of power within modernity/coloniality.
Critical race theorists also emphasize the importance of history, highlighting the ways that history is often told from the lens of the majority. Revisionist history is a major theme within critical race theory, where “comforting majoritarian interpretations of events” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017) are replaced with versions of history that are more representative of the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Revisionist histories are often intended to bolster current reform efforts, and are seen as a piece of “counter story-telling,” one of five tenets of CRT.

Challenging selective and congratulatory histories and incorporating more inclusive accounts of the past is not only seen as important for liberation, and challenging violent structures, it is also often seen as critical to shaping more positive intergroup dynamics moving forward. Conflict resolution literature, for example, often emphasizes the importance of acknowledging differing perspectives of the past (Galtung, 2001; Galtung, Jacobsen, & Brand-Jacobsen, 2002; Kelman, 1997, 2004; Kriesberg, 2007; Montville, 2001). Recognizing differing narratives and integrating these narratives to develop a new and shared view of the past has been highlighted as a key element for moving forward from protracted identity-based conflict, for opening new possibilities for future relationships, and for healing (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004; Lederach, 1997; Tint, 2010). Truth-telling processes where parties share their stories are thus often initiated in attempts towards reconciliation or forgiveness. Many, however, highlight how this should not be the aim of opening truth-telling processes, particularly when confronting asymmetrical atrocities, as “the burden of forgiveness and reconciliation is not the primary responsibility of the oppressed and marginalized” (DeWolf & Geddes, 2018, p. 82). Making reconciliation and forgiveness the objective of truth-telling can be especially problematic while certain groups experience ongoing trauma, as there can be detrimental effects in forcing people
to forgive perpetrators (Ragland, 2021). Rather than opening spaces for forgiveness and reconciliation, some advocate for truth-telling as an opportunity to instigate change, healing, and justice.

Delving into history thus can offer an opportunity to better understand systems and patterns of oppression in organizations. The CMOD model, for example, gives particular weight to the ways historical oppression shapes organizational cultures related to multiculturalism, emphasizing how both the historical societal context, and the history of multicultural dynamics within an organization contribute to shaping the culture (Coleman et al., 2017). The model highlights how promoting awareness of historical legacies of injustices serves as a way to increase and sustain tension on those with power in an organization, pressuring them to institute reforms. Excavating the past (as well as the present) offers a way to not only clarify how structures and inequities came to be, they can also bring covert interpersonal dynamics or hidden transcripts that serve to enact and protect these socio-historical patterns to light, offering opportunities for greater awareness and change (Foldy & Buckley, 2017; Noumair et al., 2017). Looking at history thus can be a powerful tool for gaining explanatory power, allowing us to question and more deeply understand why things are the way they are today (Blount, 2008; Horsford & D’Amico, 2015).

2.3 Historical Accountability

At the societal level, several truth-telling processes have been instituted to confront historical harms. Over the past decades, several nations have initiated truth commissions, sometimes known as truth and reconciliation commissions, or truth and justice commissions. A truth commission is “a temporary body established with an official mandate to investigate past human rights violations, identify the patterns and causes of violence, and publish a final report
through a politically autonomous procedure” (Bakiner, 2015, p.24). Some examples include South Africa’s efforts to grapple with apartheid, Argentina’s commission to investigate people “dissappeared” by the state, and Sierra Leone’s commission around its civil war (see Bakiner, 2015, pp. 27-29). Many truth commissions have focused around more recent conflict, and the only truth commission to date that has been established explicitly to deal with a colonial past is Mauritius’ Truth and Justice Commission to “undertake an inquiry into the legacy of slavery and indentured labor in Mauritius” (Parliament of Mauritius, 2008). Alongside these state-based truth commissions, many “unofficial truth projects” (Bickford, 2007) have also arisen driven by human rights NGOs, victims’ groups, and universities. These civil society projects are based on the premise that “elucidating the truth concerning human rights abuse and atrocity that occurred during specific periods in the recent past, societies can build more just, stable, and democratic futures” (Bickford, 2007, p. 994).

Reconciliation literature often emphasizes the importance of acknowledgment of past harms, but also of apology, justice, and reparations (Tint, 2010). Many have argued that truth commissions can only pave the path for a more peaceful and just future if they are accompanied with further actions. Lisa Laplante and Kimberly Theidon (2007) argue, “…the truth is not enough. Truth commissions begin a process that limits the range of permissible lies, raises expectations for justice, and promises to repair some of the damage done either through crimes of commission or omission. To fulfill the expectation that truth can be the bridge to a future that does not repeat the past, then the expectations of those who provided testimony to the violence they suffered and endured must inform post-conflict policies. Thus reparations may be essential to constructing that bridge” (p. 250).
According to the United Nations, reparations should include *restitution* (i.e. restoring victims to the situation before violations), *compensation* for economic damage, *rehabilitation* (e.g. medical and psychological care), *satisfaction* (e.g. cessation of all harms, public apology, sanctions towards perpetrators, commemoration for victims), and *guarantees of non-repetition* (OHDCR, 2005). Both official and unofficial truth projects often include processes which explore reparations. For example, the Japanese American Citizens League helped push forward the Civil Liberties Act, where President Ronald Reagan apologized for the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, and paid $20,000 to each survivor; and both South Africa and Chile paid reparations to victims following truth commissions.

When it comes to healing societal historical harms, some have advocated for a restorative justice approach (Johnstone, 2008), while others argue that truth commissions are transitional justice or truth-seeking mechanisms and should not be considered restorative justice (Daly, 2016). A restorative justice approach to addressing harms centers around three key pillars: 1) addressing victims harms and needs; 2) holding offenders accountable to putting right these harms; and 3) promoting engagement or participation and involving victims, communities, and offenders in these processes (Zehr, 2002). Key to this approach is the idea that people who have a stake within the offense collectively come together in order to “address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible” (Zehr, 2002, p. 37). Restorative justice is a highly contested with topic, with different scholars advocating different definitions, aims, and origins (Daly, 2017; Johnstone, 2002). While a common claim is that restorative justice is based in indigenous approaches to justice, using examples such as Navajo or Maori peacemaking as examples of restorative justice (Zehr, 1990; Johnstone, 2013), others say this does not align with the evidence (Daly, 2016) and frame restorative justice as “a Euro-north
American concept concerned with reforming what remains an essentially Western paradigm of justice reform” (Blagg & Anthony, 2019, p.133). Some have suggested that restorative justice can serve as a catalyst for social change (Braithwaite, 2003), and can be utilized to address the historical harms of colonization (Asadullah, 2021; Stewart, 2018).

Research suggests processes which incorporate a historical perspective can have significant effects. Examining both individual histories and shared histories can impact individual level attitudes: school leaders who reflected on their own histories of race through racial autobiographies found the experience personally transformational (Gooden & O’Doherty, 2015). A program called Facing History and Ourselves, which emphasizes the complexities of histories and introduces curriculum around the histories of peoples who have been oppressed, found that the program promoted student respect and tolerance for the rights of others, fostered awareness of dangers of prejudice, and increased their sense of civic efficacy (Reich et al., 2015). In addition to these individual level outcomes, the programming also promoted a more open classroom and school climate (Facing History and Ourselves, 2019). At the national level, research on the impact of historical processes is still nascent: there is evidence to suggest that truth commissions promote political and judicial change through both direct impact and through the mobilization of civil society (Bakiner, 2014); though the impact of guarantees of non-repetition is understudied, many scholars suggest this is likely an important tool for peacebuilding (Roht-Arriaza, 2016; McGonigle Leyh, 2020); and research on the impact of reparations on reconciliation is inconclusive (Firchow, 2017), though there is evidence to suggest reparations promote economic growth (Richards, 2019), and there have been many arguments making the case for reparations (e.g. Darity & Mullen, 2022).
While there is significant scholarship that explores the processes of historical accountability at the societal level, there is scant academic literature geared towards these projects at an organizational level. Exceptions include research which explores how organizations interact with their history of harms— for example, how organizations undertake “forgetting work” and the societal consequences of these processes (Mena et al., 2014), and historical accountability processes.

Notable work in the area of organizations grappling with historical harms also includes the research of Sarah Federman, who has studied in-depth the case of the French National Railway (SNCF) addressing its history during the Holocaust, and its attempts at atonement (Federman, 2017; 2018; 2021a; 2021b). Through her research, she demonstrates the ways that SNCF had a complicated role within the Holocaust, with members being victims, heroes, and perpetrators (Federman, 2021a; 2021b). Despite the complexity inherent in its multiple roles in the Holocaust, SNCF was in some ways the “ideal perpetrator” since its actions deporting 75,000 Jews and others to death camps were representative of the nature of the crimes of the Holocaust as a whole, and since SNCF is a strong and abstractable entity with victims who were keen to focus attention on SNCF as a perpetrator (Federman, 2018). SNCF’s journey to accountability involved several legal battles and ironically, a more involved relationship with survivors and descendants than other railways which immediately agreed to payment. This accountability process ultimately led to the opening of archives, a commemoration, increased transparency and education around SNCF’s history, and a multi-million dollar settlement, paid by the government of France (Federman, 2021b). She argues that ethical corporate leaders have a moral responsibility to atone for both past and current harms, and calls for more scholarship on the topic, noting that corporate executives “usually grapple in isolation with the complex or
downright sordid histories they inherit. As a result, their focus often becomes a public relations and legal strategy rather than a deeply thought out approach to moral leadership. Without international institutions to help, scholarly engagement is all the more pressing” (Federman, 2021, p. 421).

While there is limited work addressing specific organizations who have undertaken the work of addressing historical harms, there is significant scholarship relating to the work of decolonizing certain industries, which directly relates to unraveling harms associated with colonization. For example, there is literature addressing decolonizing higher education (e.g. Achille, 2016; Mirza, 2014; Shahjahan, 2022; de Oliveira Andreotti et al., 2015), philanthropy (e.g. Villanueva, 2021; Scott et al., 2020); and healthcare (e.g. McGibbon, 2019). Some of this work has helped explore ways organizations may respond to calls for decolonization; for example, Sharon Stein and colleagues (2021) have mapped the ways higher education institutions may respond to calls for decolonization ranging from “recessive reform” where institutions “actively work to impede/challenge/reverse decolonization efforts in an effort to protect existing systems of privilege and inequality” to “major reform” where institutions might “center and empower communities and perspectives; ensure more equitable processes of resource distribution in consideration of systemic, historical, and ongoing marginalization,” and even when institutions move “beyond reform” which would require “the end of higher education as we know it” (p. 15)(see also Andreotti et al., 2015).

Literature on decolonization also outlines paths and steps that may be required for industries to take on the work of addressing the lasting harms of colonization. For the field of philanthropy, for example, Edgar Villanueva (2021) outlines seven steps to healing, which include 1) grieving, or creating space for sorrow; 2) apologizing; 3) listening; 4) relating, which
involves power sharing and moving from transactional exchanges to relationships; 5) representing, or ensuring shared ownership and full inclusion of affected communities; 6) investing, which related to ensuring all investments are mission aligned and divesting from harm; and 7) engaging in repair, which he defines as closing the racial wealth gap.

Additionally, many platforms have called for historical processes specifically from organizations. For example, the Movement for Black Lives (2021), the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (2021), and Coming to the Table (2021), specifically call for institutions and organizations who have harmed or benefited from the past or present harm of Black people in America to become involved in reparations. The Movement for Black Lives (2021, webpage) lists reparations as one of eight demands: “We demand reparations for past and continuing harms. The government, responsible corporations and other institutions that have profited off of the harm they have inflicted on Black people — from colonialism to slavery through food and housing redlining, mass incarceration, and surveillance — must repair the harm done.”

In an interview with Quartz, peace researcher David Ragland (Merelli, 2020) was asked whether organizations such as Chase Bank owe reparations for their history of underwriting slavery, and he proposed “multi-sector truth-telling from impacted communities across the United States and truth-seeking within local, state, regional and national governments, for-profit and non-profit organizations, and families that benefited from slavery and the world it created” (Ragland, 2021, p. 34). This suggests that despite the scarcity of academic literature regarding how organizations might take on historical processes to address past and ongoing harms, there is energy and momentum for organizations to take on this work.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

For this research, I utilized a case study approach, examining three organizations that have undertaken historical accountability processes, and learning from their experiences. A case study is an empirical inquiry that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and addresses a situation in which the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1989, p. 59). Case studies are widely used in organizational studies in disciplines such as sociology, industrial relations, psychology and anthropology, and offer an avenue for exploratory research studying processes or behaviors which are new or not well understood, and for descriptive research presenting rarely encountered situations (Hartley, 2004; Yin, 2012).

As there is limited academic research specifically concerning how organizations incorporate a historical perspective into initiatives aimed at addressing racial injustices, and while organizations which have initiated such processes exist but are not widespread, this topic is particularly suited to case study research. Yin has suggested there are three main types of case studies: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory, though he suggests the boundaries between these three modes of case study research are not always sharp, and there “are large overlaps among them” (Yin, 2018, p.8). For this study, I used an exploratory descriptive approach, where I aimed to explore an under-theorized area of research, and describe how organizations take on the task of incorporating a historical perspective into racial justice work.

Case study research in organizational settings is normally inductive, though not necessarily so. As noted by Jean Hartley in her chapter on case study research, “Because the case study strategy is ideally suited to exploration of issues in depth and following leads into new
areas or new constructions of theory, the theoretical framework at the beginning may not be the
same one that survives to the end” (p. 328). This occurred during this project. I started by
investigating the processes these organizations used, what participants perceived to be the
facilitating factors and challenges which influenced these projects, and what they perceived to be
the most critical elements of organizational historical accountability processes. Questions were
open-ended and I did not have a theoretical framework in mind to organize responses. As the
project evolved, however, the theoretical lens of attractor patterns in the Constructive
Multicultural Organizational Development (CMOD) model introduced by Coleman et al. (2017)
seemed to fit particularly well with the themes and codes I identified. It is important to note that
the CMOD model is focused on organization reform for more constructive multicultural systems,
but what emerged from my interviews often moves beyond organizational reform to consider
alternative structures and parties outside the organization. Despite this discrepancy, the ideas
around leveraging tension for change, and around deconstructing destructive dynamics and
reconstructing constructive dynamics resonated with the data from interviews. At this stage,
because my existing codes and themes matched almost exactly to elements mentioned in the
CMOD model, with the exception of codes related to the theme of articulating patterns by
“Connecting Past, Present and Future” (see Table 3 for full list of themes and codes), I decided
to use themes from the CMOD model to organize my codes, and include an additional theme
about connecting the past, the present, and the future in order to articulate long standing
patterns.

In my findings, I thus address the processes used by each case study organization through
case study overviews, and then I use the CMOD model to explore the levers of change that
helped facilitate these processes, and the ways in which participants perceived historical

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accountability processes to 1) replicate or sustain existing patterns, 2) identify and deconstruct harmful systems, and 3) reconstruct more constructive systems.

3.2 Data Collection

A case study approach often utilizes a combination of data collection methods such as reviewing archives, conducting interviews, questionnaires, and observations (Yin, 1989; Creswell, 2007), though “there are virtually no specific requirements guiding case research” (Meyer, 2001, p. 329). This flexibility can serve as a strength because it provides an opportunity to tailor the research design to the specific questions at hand, but can also result in poor case studies, leaving case studies as a research methodology open to criticism (Cook and Campbell, 1979).

For this dissertation, I examined multiple cases rather than a single case, as limiting research to a single case study leads to inherent limitations in research generalizability, and introduces information-processing biases (Eisenhardt, 1989). For this study, the emphasis is on describing individual cases rather than comparing the three cases as each case addresses a different sort of harm, and had differing sorts of involvement in the harms they intend to address. Examining multiple cases helps to bolster external validity, can protect against biases, and can help add confidence to specific single-case findings, grounding it within the particular context in which it occurred (Leonard-Barton, 1990; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Cases were selected using purposive sampling, as qualitative sampling aims to seek information richness rather than relying on random sampling (Crabtree & Miller, 1992). Having already been engaged within a historical accountability process connected to racial justice is the principal criteria that I used for case study selection. Because this is not yet a widespread practice, this limited organizations that would be suitable candidates for case studies.
Within these cases, I sought out organizations which offer variation in contextual factors and the processes they use, in order to highlight some different ways organizations are engaging in processes of historical accountability. For this reason, I selected three cases: 1) Yale Union/Native Arts and Culture Foundation, an art center based in Portland, Oregon that in 2020 acknowledged it was built upon stolen lands and underwent a feasibility study and transferred its land and assets to a non-profit led by and for indigenous peoples in the arts; 2) Georgetown University which has been engaged in a process of reckoning with its history of slavery; and 3) the American Psychological Association which in 2021 issued an apology for the ways it has contributed to and been complicit to racism within the United States.

I would also like to highlight that it was difficult to find organizations willing to serve as case studies. I believe this serves as a data point illustrating that historical accountability work can be risky for organizations. In addition to the three case studies presented in this dissertation, I reached out to seventeen organizations who were publicly engaged in some sort of historical accountability work who ultimately declined to participate. Some of these refusals were forwarded to me by legal teams or compliance offices. One company president wrote to say they were “too early in our journey” to participate, despite having an entire company webpage dedicated to publicly featuring this work. In this work, there are often people who actively resist or are not on board with this work, and a limitation of this study is that many of these perspectives are not included in this thesis. It was difficult for me to identify and access participants from within organizations who were willing to publicly share views which directly counter organizational narratives.

To me, this reticence to participate points to a risk inherent in this sort of work: I believe there is a fear on the part of many organizations that this work will expose them to accusations of
harm, whether this may be the historical harms being addressed or flaws in the current process, I am unsure, but the fact that it was legal teams who ultimately reached out to refuse to participate is significant. And because of this vulnerability necessary to participate, I believe it is important to acknowledge the transparency the organizations featured in these case studies displayed, and participating in and of itself evidences a certain level of openness.

For each case study, I used a variety of data collection procedures including interviews and analysis of publicly available texts referencing the historical accountability process. Interviews were semi-structured (see Appendix A, B, and C for interview questions) and participants were selected via purposive sampling. I sought interviews with 4-8 people per case study who had been directly involved in the historical accountability process- i.e. organizational leadership, involved organizational staff, and representatives of affected communities (e.g. harmed communities, those seeking accountability and repair, those that an organization hopes to learn from or partner with), recognizing there may be overlap between these positions. While organizational research tends to focus on the perspectives of people who are within the organization of focus, given that questions of organizational accountability inherently involve affected communities, I believe it is critical to include perspectives of community members in this process, especially since inequitable access to the research process often undermines findings, as community wisdom can be lost when representatives are not meaningfully included within the research process (Doucet, 2019). For this reason, for each case study, I sought to also include the perspectives of those who were understood by the organization to be a harmed party. Finding members of harmed parties was sometimes difficult as it was not always apparent who exactly harmed parties were in some of these cases. I also sought interviews with people I perceived to be members of harmed parties who were not included in these processes (e.g.
members of local tribes in Portland as connected to the YU/NACF case), but my requests for participation were declined. I also would have liked to interview people in jail or with diagnosed mental illnesses who perhaps have been most directly affected by APA’s historical harms, but I could not contact these groups under the terms of my IRB. All participants provided informed consent, and no participants received remuneration for their participation. Interviewees had the option to be de-identified. All interviews were between 30 minutes and 1 hour and were conducted over the phone or on a video chat platform such as Zoom. All interviews were transcribed. In addition to interviews, I collected other publicly available textual data related to these historical accountability processes (e.g. news articles, organizational histories, organizational web pages explaining this work).

Table 1: Case Study Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Participant Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APA</td>
<td>Cathy Faye</td>
<td>Executive Director of the Cummings Institution, responsible for leading the historical research for APA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evan Auguste</td>
<td>Student Circle Chair of the Association of Black Psychologists and critic of APA apology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>De-identified A</td>
<td>APA staff member involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>De-identified B</td>
<td>APA staff member involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td>Ayodele Aruleba</td>
<td>Past student activist and Working Group member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Candace Milner</td>
<td>Past student activist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>David Collins</td>
<td>Leader of Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation, History Department Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elizabeth Thomas</td>
<td>Descendant and alum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory Stahl</td>
<td>Director of Development, Georgetown College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcia Chatelain</td>
<td>Professor and Working Group member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melisande Short-Colomb</td>
<td>Descendant and Alum, Board of Advisors for the Georgetown Memory Project, founding Council Member of the GU272 Descendants Association, and was on the GU272 Advocacy Team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochell Sanders Prater</td>
<td>Descendant, Vice President and Membership Committee Chair of Descendants Truth &amp; Reconciliation Foundation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yale Union/NACF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flint Jamison</td>
<td>Co-Founder and President of the Board, Yale Union</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De-identified C</td>
<td>Former staff member, Yale Union</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Martin</td>
<td>Former Director of Operations, Yale Union</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuben Tomas Roqueni</td>
<td>Director, Transformative Change Programs, Native Arts and Culture Foundation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I should note that some potential interviewees were hesitant to participate in the process, and many people involved in these processes, particularly involved in the APA case, declined requests to be interviewed. Some people additionally chose to be de-identified because they were concerned about facing repercussions for speaking about these processes. These barriers to free communication about these processes again speak to some of the risks in this work, and highlights how even among the transparent organizational outliers who agreed to participate, for some of these organizations, full transparency is perhaps still unwelcome.

These barriers to sharing certain information are also important when considering the validity of this research. Many crucial pieces of information may have been omitted, or obscured in interviews, and not all data shared in these interviews may be completely reliable. For this reason, I believe interviewing multiple people involved in each case was particularly important. I often was surprised as I interviewed second or third interviewees for a given case, receiving
information that sometimes contradicted or reframed incidents I had heard of or read about earlier. It became clear to me how there are wide gaps in perspectives in considering these cases, and I do hope that these different perspectives come through in this research. I believe this complexity and nuance is one of the most interesting and important pieces of this work: the acts described in this dissertation had different meaning and significance to different stakeholders, sometimes even contradictory meanings.

Beyond interviews with participants from case study organizations, I also interviewed a selection (n=10) of academics and activists calling for historical accountability processes. Participants were again purposefully selected, based on their public involvement in advocacy for such processes. There are, for example, many organizations and organized groups that champion and advance truth-telling, reparations, or accountability processes for past and current organizational harms, and many researchers have pointed to the importance of such projects being led by members of harmed parties (see Ragland, 2021).

**Table 2: Academic and Activist Interviewees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Briayna Cuffie</td>
<td>Racial Equity Advisor, Reparations4Slavery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Ragland</td>
<td>Co-Executive Director, Truth Telling Project; Director, Grassroots Reparations Campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De-identified D</td>
<td>Founder, advocacy group for Indigenous rights and Social Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Gherson</td>
<td>Faculty, Harvard Business School; Former Chief Human Resources Officer at IBM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsa Stamatopoulou</td>
<td>Director, Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Program, Columbia University; Former Chief of the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce Hope Scott</td>
<td>Clinical Professor, African American Studies, Boston University; scholar of transitional justice, reparations, and restitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirt von Daacke</td>
<td>Co-Chair, University of Virginia President’s Commission on Slavery; Assistant Dean and Professor of History, University of Virginia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Laura D. Hill | President/Executive Director of the Virginia Racial Healing Institute; Founder/Director, Coming to the Table Virginia’s Historic Triangle

Lotte Lieb Dula | Founder, Reparations4Slavery

Lynda Davis | Co-Chair of Reparations Working Group, Coming to the Table

Sharon Stein | Assistant Professor, University of British Columbia, scholar of decolonizing higher education

### 3.3 Data Analysis

Interviews and textual data were then coded according to a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017) which involves identifying ideas and patterns within the data, i.e. themes, rather than using a more quantitative approach of counting words, as a way to capture complexity in textual data (Guest et al., 2012). Key events from each case were surfaced in order to create a summary of the process for each case, as were cross-case themes as is customary in case study research (Creswell, 2007). Coding was an iterative process following Braun & Clark’s (2006) 6-step approach: first, I read the data multiple times to become familiar with the data and patterns within the dataset. Based on these patterns, I created initial codes, which I then connected to the research question. These codes were then grouped into themes. At this stage, I realized that several themes had great overlap with the existing CMOD theoretical framework (Coleman et al., 2017), and decided to fit these themes to the theoretical model, slightly re-adjusting some codes to fit this new framework.

Coding is an interpretive and ultimately subjective process (Saldaña, 2021), and to help enhance the validity of this research, I then gave participants the option to review draft copies of findings related to their interviews. These “member checks” have been proposed as a way to enhance the accuracy and credibility of qualitative research (see for example, Crabtree & Miller, 1992; King, 1994; Kornbluh, 2015; Lo, 2014). While there is not a robust empirical foundation
for member checks increasing the quality of research, having participants review findings can help ensure the accurate representation of participants’ perspectives or experiences and can be particularly useful in case study research (Thomas, 2017).

3.4 Reflexivity and Positionality

Additionally, many have pointed to the importance of reflexivity and positionality in qualitative organizational research (see Cassell & Symon, 2004 for an overview), which involves being transparent about the position of the researcher and considering the responsibilities of the researcher. Cultural and standpoint feminist theories in particular have pointed to the importance of acknowledging positionality in research, highlighting how “race, culture, and gender of the researcher relative to the participants affect methods for getting access to the participants, the relationship with the participants, and the data collection and analyses processes.” (Given, 2008, p. 333). By directly addressing the identities and positions of the researcher, the inherent subjectivity within research can be more directly assessed and accounted for (Given, 2008). With this understanding, I use the first-person in order to avoid a pretense of objectivity.

Additionally, I acknowledge that my own identity, biases, worldview and experiences as a biracial Chinese-White American woman and PhD student, who is in the process of exploring my complicity in continuing colonial violence and my beliefs in the importance of historical accountability processes within the current context of racism and other forms of oppression in the United States, influences my drive to do this research, my blind spots, and all stages of this research process, from the framing of questions, to rapport with interviewees, to the interpretation of results. Part of what drew me to this work was my desire to explore the ways I am currently participating in occupying lands stolen from the Ohlone, examining both my desire
for change and my resistance to giving up privileges and comforts stemming from inequity and oppression, and trying to find my place in what will come next.

I also believe it is important to highlight that the model I use to analyze my results, the CMOD model, is entwined in other aspects of my life: I use this model in consulting work, I have worked on research related to the CMOD model in the past, and I teach a graduate course on the CMOD model. Even though I had no intention of using the CMOD model in this research when I began, I couldn’t help but notice the overlaps as I began coding, and ended up using this model to frame my findings. My deep familiarity with this model no doubt influenced my choice to include it in this project.

As a researcher, I would also like to highlight the ways that even “the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism” (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012) through a long history of collecting, classifying, and interpreting information to justify, support, and uphold Western imperialist agendas and practices (Said, 1978). As academia has been responsible for many historical harms, I am in the process of deeply considering the ways my own research helps to perpetuate colonizing structures and practices, and I aim to be transparent about the ways I see this project as part of a social justice research agenda, aimed at exploring ways people in different institutions are engaged in practices of decolonization and equity work.

Additionally, I want to highlight the ways the topic of this research intersect with my own institutions. I am currently in a doctoral program in Social-Organizational Psychology - as such, I am familiar with APA and while I am not officially a member, do use some of their frameworks in my own work (e.g. APA style citations). Additionally, although I do not identify as a Jesuit, as I came to the end of this research, I accepted a job at the University of San Francisco, which like Georgetown University, is a Jesuit institution. As several interviewees also pointed out, I am
completing this dissertation as a student at Teachers College, Columbia University, which along with histories of scholarship and activism in support for racial justice and anti-oppression, also has its own legacy of historical and ongoing harms to many groups, including the use of stolen lands from the Lenape people, a history entwined with slavery, the production of research which has been used to justify racism and oppression of different peoples, an organizational hierarchy of faculty, administration, and facilities staff that often replicates and reinforces race and class hierarchies, and the continued displacement of residents of the historically Black neighborhood of Harlem. It is in this larger context that this research is taking place.
Chapter 4: Case Study Overviews

4.1 American Psychological Association

The American Psychological Association (APA) is “the leading scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States, with more than 133,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students as its members” (APA website, 2022). APA has a staff of over 500 people who work to “track trends in the field of psychology; create content to educate the public about mental health, behavior and psychology's scientific basis; publish peer-reviewed journals, books and other products; maintain PsycINFO® and other databases; identify and advocate for key federal policies and legislation; staff APA's many boards and committees; and strive to provide members with excellent customer service and benefits” (APA website, 2022).

APA also has a history entrenched in racism and white supremacy, as does the field of psychology in the United States. In 1851, doctor and psychologist Samuel A. Cartwright suggested enslaved Africans running away was a disease called ‘drapetomania’ and the cure was “whipping the devil out of them” (Szasz, 1971). The founding President of APA, G. Stanley Hall, published influential work calling Native Americans and Black people childlike and less evolved, claiming nonwhite people needed to be cared for by white people as children need to be cared for by adults (Muschinske, 1977). APA was entwined with eugenics and in scientific racism, which theorized there were innate qualities that made white people superior and others inferior (Cummings Institute, 2021). Thirty-one presidents of APA were in the leadership of eugenics organizations (Yakushko, 2019).
Psychological assessments, tests, and publications developed by white people privileging a WEIRD (western, educated, industrial, rich, democratic approach) bias (Henrich et al., 2010) were used to justify white superiority and had wide ranging impact, including forced sterilization that disproportionately impacted people of color, the promotion of segregation, and support for anti-miscegenation laws in order to prevent “race-mixing” (Cummings Institute, 2021).

Psychological research was used to justify “acculturation” within boarding schools where Native American children were forcefully separated from their families. The SAT is based on earlier assessments developed by APA president and eugenicist Robert Yerkes as IQ tests, which from their inception had large gaps between Black and white respondents, and continues to have large racial gaps to this day, influencing acceptance into colleges across the country (Cummings Institute, 2021; Reeves & Halikias, 2017). These are some of the ways in which APA and psychology connect to racism within the United States, but there are many more links and connections (see Cummings Institute, 2021).

While APA has a long history of white normativity, and for failing to represent communities of color, there have been many members of APA who are people of color, who have continually pointed to racism within the field, and who have contributed research aimed for the needs of communities of color. As of 2019, however, people of color remain underrepresented within APA (Cummings Institute, 2020).

In 2020, after the murder of George Floyd and widespread Black Lives Matter protests, APA initiated a “series of efforts aimed at dismantling racism in psychology,” including hiring a chief diversity officer, Dr. Maysa Akbar, and initiating a historical accountability process.

This historical accountability process is not the first time attention has been called to APA and its history of racism. Many people both inside and outside the organization have called
attention to the harms APA has had on different communities of color. Significantly, in 1968, a group of Black psychologists founded the American Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) in response to “(1) the American Psychological Association’s failure to relate to the needs of the Black community, (2) APA’s abuse of the Black community as a research resource, and (3) APA’s failure to expend any of its resources to eradicate racism within the White community” (Obasi, et. al, 2012; Williams, 1974). Throughout APA’s history, there have also been several calls to diversify the field and integrate a multicultural lens- such as during the National Multicultural Conference and Summit in 1999 (Sue, et. al, 1999). Many of the divisions and associations within APA were founded specifically to incorporate a more diverse perspective into the field of psychology, including Division 45: the Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity, and Race (see here). One participant from the APA also mentioned there had also been previous calls from within for APA to issue an apology for its role in contributing to racism that were originally unsuccessful.

The historical accountability process launched in 2020 was in part inspired by a task force report calling for truth and reconciliation. The 2020 report, Protecting and Defending our People: Nakni tushka anowa (The Warrior's Path) Final Report, documented the ways that BIPOC people have been harmed through the field of psychology and utilized an indigenous perspective to come together and identify actions they could take “as psychological warriors in defense of our people inside and outside of psychology” (Aiello et al., 2020, p.13). One prominent theme identified in the report included, “Visions for Truth and Reconciliation,” which called for healing and decolonizing the field (Aiello et al., 2020, p.24). A critical part of this was a call for “acknowledgment and recognition from APA regarding the harm done to BIPOC students, practitioners, and communities through the endemic perpetuation of colonial practices
throughout the history of psychology, up to and including present APA systems and policies” (Aiello et al., 2020, p.28).

In 2020, APA commissioned the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology (CCHP) to conduct a historical review around harms to people of color from 1850. In May 2021, CCHP created a working group of seven scholars to review the ways in which the field of psychology has historically harmed people of color, and six weeks later, it submitted the first draft of their review. The historical chronology can be found here.

Additionally, in July 2021, Jernigan & Associates (J&A) were hired by the APA to “provide a forum to better understand the harms caused by psychology’s historical contributions that have perpetuated systemic inequities for communities of color” (APA website, 2022). J&A conducted a series of listening sessions with 119 psychologists who identify as people of color and who work with communities of color. Findings from these listening sessions were coded and analyzed to offer themes around the ways participants perceived APA and the field of psychology to have harmed communities of color.

In October 2021, APA issued an apology which received widespread media attention for its “role in promoting, perpetuation, and failing to challenge racism, racial discrimination, and human hierarchy in U.S.” The apology acknowledges multiple ways it has “contributed to the dispossession, displacement, and exploitation of communities of color,” including promoting eugenics, creating ideas of human hierarchy, creating and promoting psychological tests used to disadvantage communities of color, minimizing and marginalizing psychologists of color, and the significant barriers in entry to the field of psychology for students of color (APA, 2022).

In November 2021, the Association of Black Psychologists rejected the APA apology. In an official statement, they wrote “This apology is at best patronizing and at worst, an intentional
act of obfuscation designed to mask the truth” (Association of Black Psychologists, Inc., 2021). For some of the participants I interviewed from APA, this rejection was seen as a substantial challenge for those involved in the historical accountability process.

In February of 2022 an audit of all equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives across the association was conducted and released. Next steps outlined by APA included engaging members and soliciting input, which included a Racial Equity Summit scheduled for Summer 2022. In August 2022, APA publicized an action plan aimed at racial equity which aims to operationalize the commitments made in its apology. The action plan includes five key domains for actions: knowledge production, health, APA/Workforce, the training of psychologists, and education (Akbar et al., 2022). This historical accountability process is still very much in the process of unfolding, and the impact it has in both transforming the institution and the field have yet to be seen.

4.2 Georgetown University

Georgetown University (GU) is a private Jesuit institution that identifies itself as a “leading research university with a heart” (Georgetown University, n.d.). Their webpage announces that, “Today, we’re a forward-looking, diverse community devoted to social justice, restless inquiry and respect for each person’s individual needs and talents” (Georgetown University, n.d.). In the Fall of 2021, Georgetown enrolled 7,598 undergraduates, and 14,332 graduate and professional students across its schools (Office of the University Registrar, 2021). In 2021, it employed 5,010 full-time staff, and 1,542 part-time staff in Fall 2021 (Office of Assessment and Decision Support, 2021).

The University has recently been criticized for the ways that “poor treatment of Black faculty, staff, and students blight efforts toward a racially diverse and inclusive academic and
social environment” (The Editorial Board, 2021b). There have been several instances of racism from professors on campus (The Editorial Board, 2021b), Black undergraduate students are more likely than other students to feel they are not part of a community within Georgetown, and to have experienced prejudice or discrimination on campus (Office of Assessment and Decision Support, 2021). Black students also remain under-represented: in the 2019-2020 school year, 6.3% of students identified as Black, while 13.4% of Americans and 46% of the population of Washington, D.C. identify as Black (The Editorial Board, 2021b).

GU was established in 1789 and is the oldest Catholic and Jesuit university in the United States, and has deep historical ties to slavery. Jesuits engaged in chattel slavery, they owned and operated plantations in Maryland, where they enslaved and abused people, and forced attendance to Catholic mass in hopes of their salvation (Swarms, 2016). The sale of these enslaved people and profits from these plantations were an important source of funding for GU.

As abolitionism increased in the North, and more slave rebellions occurred across the country, the Jesuits thought they might lose the enslaved people they owned. Fearing they would not be compensated, and eager to make a profit, in 1838, they sold 314 people into the Deep South where there was little likelihood for abolition at the time. Many of those sold were children. One baby sold was only 2 months old (Swarms, 2015), while the oldest person sold was 80 (Quallen, 2015). Families were pulled apart. Today, the sale would translate to around 3.3 million USD (Swarms, R.L). The bulk of the down payment from this sale was used to solve a serious debt problem of GU (Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation, 2016), and in a New York Times article on the sale, Adam Rothman, a historian at GU, noted that “The university itself owes its existence to this history” (Swarms, 2016).
Although most attention from the media, outside sources, and the university itself, has been focused on the sale of 1838, GU’s entwinement with slavery is not limited to this sale and those enslaved people. Estimates suggest that in the early 19th century, around 10% of the people on Georgetown’s campus were enslaved and working on campus, some brought by students (Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation, 2016). Students at the time overwhelmingly supported the Confederates, and at one time, Georgetown was known as the “alma mater of the Confederacy” (Quallen, 2015b). Additionally, enslaved people were rented by the University from businesses in Georgetown, and many students came from slave-holding families (Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation, 2016).

Insight into this history was brought to light in 2004, when Patricia Bayonne-Johnson, a descendant of one of the people sold by the Jesuits in the 1838 sale, found evidence of this history while researching her family tree (Descendants Truth & Reconciliation Foundation, 2022). In 2015, further information about this sale and the ways that GU is connected with slavery was uncovered by the Georgetown Memory Project, an independent non-profit started by historian Richard Cellini. The non-profit continues to this day and is self-funded (The Georgetown Memory Project, n.d.; Charles Warren Center, n.d.).

Also in 2015, a group of students began campaigning for GU to reckon with its history of racism. They held a sit-in and rally at GU President John DeGiogia’s office, and demanded creating a fund for more Black faculty to be hired, plaques to identify the unmarked graves of enslaved people on campus, including the history of contributions of Black people in GU tours, and renaming McSherry Hall and Mulledy Hall, named for the people who helped orchestrate the sale of 1838 (PEN America, n.d.; Caterucci, C., 2015).
In September of 2015, the University created the Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation, a group consisting of 16 students, faculty, staff, and alumni (Georgetown University, n.d.b). The group was tasked with examining GU’s history of slavery, and offering recommendations to the University on how best to “acknowledge and recognize Georgetown’s historical relationship with the institution of slavery (DeGioia, J.J., 2015).”

Some students who led the student protests were also included in the working group, and were impatient with the slow bureaucratic nature of the working group. They demanded that immediate changes be made, such as the renaming of the buildings named for those whoorchestrated the sale. After considerable pressure, they were successful, and in November 2015, the University announced that Mulledy and McSherry Hall would be re-named Freedom Hall and Remembrance Hall (Svrluga, 2021). Later, in 2017, at a Liturgy of Remembrance and Hope, two additional buildings would be named in remembrance of the enslaved people sold, Isaac Hawkins Hall and Anne Marie Bancroft Hall (Georgetown University, n.d.b).

In 2016, nine months after the Working Group had been formed, the Working Group issued a report with recommendations (Georgetown University, n.d.b). The main recommendations were 1) to engage the descendant community, which to date had not been meaningfully included in the historical accountability project; 2) to offer reparations in the form of a meaningful financial commitment from the University; 3) to devote “significant funding, attention, and resources... to assessing and improving the racial climate on campus,” 4) to institutionalize and hire someone tasked with reconciliation; 5) to use Georgetown’s existing research centers to explore and devise policies to address the legacies of slavery; 6) to address worker justice issues; and 7) to dialogue around “moral imagination” and examine current unjust
or environmentally damaging business practices (Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation, 2016).

On the recommendation from the working group, the University began to engage in outreach to the descendant community. President DiGioa met with Patricia Bayonne-Johnson, the descendant who first brought attention to the sale, and he traveled to Maringouin, Louisiana where 90% of residents can trace their ancestry to people sold in the 1838 sale. In September, at the request of descendants, President DiGioa and the Jesuit Maryland Provincial agreed to begin a series of meetings to define their way to establish the GU272 Foundation, a foundation for descendants (Cecero et al., 2019).

Additionally, in 2016 the University “launched a related set of efforts to strengthen the University’s commitment to racial justice” which included establishing a Department of African American Studies, and a faculty group was charged with creating an Institute for the Study of Racial Justice (Georgetown University, n.d.b). It was also decided that descendants of the enslaved people sold for the University would receive preferential admissions consideration (this is around the equivalent of the ways that people whose parents attended Georgetown receive preferential legacy admission). Importantly, students admitted through this program would not receive any sort of preferential financial aid, and would still be responsible for paying for tuition.

Later, in 2019, descendant leaders requested a dialogue process (Georgetown University, n.d.b), and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation was asked to come in as a neutral convener to support GU, the Society of Jesus, and Descendants in a series of dialogues for a Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation process (Georgetown University, n.d.b; Cecero et al., 2019).

Despite the Working Group’s recommendation to pay reparations, the University had still not paid reparations directly to descendants by 2019. There has been widespread media coverage
around Georgetown potentially paying reparations, and much commentary on the ways that GU profited from slavery and the sale of 1838. Currently, in Maringouin, Louisiana, where 90% of the population can trace ancestry to people enslaved and sold for GU, the average per capita income for the town is $10,817, with 31.5% of the population living below the poverty line (Town of Maringouin, n.d.).

In the Spring of 2019, students imposed a referendum where two-thirds of the student body voted to add a $27.20 semester fee to tuition bills in order to allocate money towards reparations for descendants (Hardy, 2021). Despite this vote, the University declared this was a non-binding decision, and decided to instead contribute $400,000 a year towards “a reconciliation fund to support work to benefit the Descendant community” (Georgetown University, 2021). This $400,000 would be mostly raised through fundraising and paid to the Descendants Truth & Reconciliation Foundation.

The Descendants Truth & Reconciliation Foundation was established after a group of descendants, Jesuits, and the University came together. On September 20, 2019, a joint memorandum of understanding was signed by the GU272 Descendants Association, the President of the Jesuits Conference in the United States, and the U.S. Provincials signed to establish a $1 billion irrevocable trust tasked with working “to address and heal the wounds of that betrayal of human dignity and the millions of others like it that have occurred in America before and since” (Descendants Truth & Reconciliation Foundation, 2022).

In 2020, GU helped support the planning and technical work for this Foundation, and contributed $1 million in funding (Georgetown University, 2021). In comparison, in the 2021 fiscal year, GU had $279.9 million in research and development expenditures, (Georgetown University, n.d.d), and according to an article published on its financial situation, Georgetown
had “$3.5 billion in assets and $1.8 billion in liabilities, leaving $1.7 billion in net assets” (Cuccia, 2021; Georgetown University, n.d.d). The Jesuits Conference of priests has pledged to fundraise $100 million for this trust, significantly less than the $1 billion called for, and have contributed $15 million to start (Swarns, 2021). As one descendant noted, “[T]hey are going to fundraise a lot of this money, which means they’re not actually paying out of their own pocket […] so it serves as an opportunity for institutions that are mostly led by white people to contribute to this fund, which means it’s a tax deduction” (Merelli, 2021). Additionally, since most of this money will be fundraised, it is not a direct transfer of wealth from institutions that profited from slavery to descendants who were deeply harmed by slavery- rather they are acting as intermediaries for others to pay through donations. As of August 2022, only about $180,000 had been raised in small donations, far short of what was anticipated (Swarns, 2022).

In March 2021, the Foundation was officially created. While the plan for these funds has not yet been cemented, “Roughly half of the foundation’s annual budget will be distributed as grants to organizations engaging in racial reconciliation projects…About a quarter of the budget will support educational opportunities for descendants in the form of scholarships and grants. A smaller portion will address the emergency needs of descendants who are old or infirm” (Swarns, 2021).

This new Foundation has so far received a mixed reception. In April of 2021, more than 100 descendants and students protested aspects of the Foundation. Many expressed disappointment that JP Morgan Chase advises the fund and serves as a co-trustee, since JP Morgan itself is a for-profit institution with a history entwined with slavery and institutional racism (Hoyas Advocating for Slavery Accountability, 2022). Additionally, there have been complaints that few descendants have been included in the Foundation (Merelli, 2021), and there
has been heavy criticism that the Foundation’s goal of investing in “racial healing” centers whiteness rather than centering repair. In an op-ed in the Georgetown student newspaper, the student group Hoyas Advocating for Slavery Accountability (2022) wrote, “Reparation funds should not go towards helping white people unlearn prejudice.” This student group in 2022 organized a school supply drive for students in Maringouin, and have been protesting the Foundation and campaigning for direct reparations for descendants.

18 years after Descendant Patricia Bayonne-Johnson uncovered that her ancestors had been sold for Georgetown University, the historical accountability process has led to several changes. Georgetown has formally acknowledged its history of slavery, and has pledged to work towards reconciliation. Descendants have been included in a series of dialogues with the University and with the Jesuits, and many have gained insight into the lives of their ancestors. While projects affiliated with GU have helped bring these histories to light, many descendants and students have led the charge in doing this research and contacting other descendants. GU has made public The Georgetown Slavery Archive, which offers access to documents relating to GU’s history of slavery. Additionally, courses such as Black Georgetown Rediscovered and a course on Georgetown’s history of slavery have highlighted the history and contributions of Black Americans to the university and the area (Georgetown University, n.d.c). Additionally, GU has helped support the founding of the Descendants Truth & Reconciliation Foundation, and pledged to send $400,000 a year to this group.

People within Georgetown have campaigned for more to be done in its historical accountability efforts. In a series of op-eds in its newspaper The Georgetown Voice, the Editorial Board (2021b) lamented the ways, “Georgetown is complicit in the lack of resources available to critically engage with its racist history and surviving racist policies.” While Georgetown did
remove the names of slaveholders from some buildings, and the University helped to restore Holy Rood cemetery which includes some marked and unmarked graves of enslaved people, to this day, several buildings, monuments, and statues continue to bear the names of slaveholders on campus (The Editorial Board, 2021a; Georgetown University, 2021).

While there has been some progress on the recommendations from the 2016 Working Group’s report, many have also yet to be fully achieved. There are continued calls for Georgetown to make a meaningful financial commitment towards direct reparations to descendants. While Georgetown certainly did start to engage in dialogues with the descendant community, there have also been calls to more actively engage more of the descendant community. Additionally, while Georgetown has offices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion tasked with making Georgetown inclusive to all students, I have not found any evidence of a meaningful commitment towards addressing worker injustices. Additionally, I am unable to evaluate the extent to which GU has been able to dialogue around “moral imagination” and examine current unjust or environmentally damaging business practices.

4.3 Yale Union/ Native Arts and Culture Foundation

Yale Union (YU) was a contemporary art center located in Portland, Oregon, on the traditional lands of the Multnomah, Chinook, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla, and other Indigenous peoples (Yale Union, n.d.a). The organization was “led by a desire to support artists, propose new modes of production, and stimulate the ongoing public discourse around art (Yale Union, n.d.a).

In 2021, YU dissolved and transferred ownership of their building to the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation, an act widely seen as an act of land rematriation. In contrast to repatriation, which can be understood as the transfer of lands or assets, rematriation is a term first brought to
popularity through the ReMatriate Collective (see rematriate.com) and has varying definitions, but is generally used to signify more than just the material transfers of land and assets, suggesting material transfers also needs to involve a change in epistemologies and relationships, i.e. to also refer to an “Indigenous feminist paradigm, an embodied praxis of recovery and return, and a sociopolitical mode of resurgence and refusal” (Gray, 2022). NACF President/CEO Lulani Arquette said of the transfer, “We are deeply grateful for this transformative opportunity afforded NACF by YU board and staff, and stand united with all to reclaim Native truth, engage anti-racism, and address important issues we face today” (Yale Union, 2022).

YU was located in the Yale Union Laundry Building, described by a de-identified (C) research participant from YU as “a $5 million urban property that is about 40,000 square feet in the industrial section of Southeast Portland.”

The building itself had a long history entwined with social justice, and was significant in both the labor strike movement and the women’s movement. According to de-identified research participant C and Flint of YU, in 2008, a donor bought the building and donated it to YU in 2013 under a legal covenant which stipulated it must always be used for arts and culture. News articles suggest the donor was Laurel Walsh, ex-wife of co-founder and previous YU Executive Director Curtis Knapp, and granddaughter of Kenneth Monfort, heir to a meatpacking fortune acquired through conAgra foods (Row, 2011; Gragg, 2010; The New York Times, 1987).

The building was entwined with the organizational identity of YU, with the “About” page on the YU website noting “our building, a handsome brick block, isn’t as much an albatross as it is an instrument” (Yale Union, n.d.b). Flint Jamison, a co-founder of the organization, explained in an interview how the building was used as a major revenue source for YU throughout its tenure, and was rented out for various purposes such as weddings and photo shoots in order to
support YU’s operations as an art center. In this way, the building was critical to YU’s operations, with Flint Jamison noting, “even though we were a non-profit, we kind of operated on this earned income model more than most non-profits.”

After YU started its arts programming in the building, Flint described how the organization began to grapple with the ways the neighborhood was rapidly gentrifying: “Shortly after we started programming, we noticed some new coffee shops starting to pop up in the neighborhood, and then after that a couple of hipster boutiques opened, and then shortly after that we noticed some cranes that started building mixed use retail skyris… and yeah, we started to obviously encounter our own culpability or complicity in the phenomenon of gentrification, and as we started to understand that as a version of, you know, contemporary colonization.”

Later, YU experienced several destabilizing events including, according to interviewees, several law suits, a sexual harassment, a financial crisis, and internal conflict. As Jenny Martin noted, the organization never expanded beyond a “shoestring budget” and “while the programming was, you know, pretty high grade and excellent, it kind of became clear that serious things needed to be changed in order to continue as an organization, especially within that building, so there started to be a lot of conversations within staff and the board about, you know, what to do.” According to Jenny, in the wake of these events, discussions began around the potential of closing YU, and staff began to search for potential organizations that might be able to take over the space.

Due to the covenant from the donor who originally bought the building for YU, the organization that would take over the building would need to be connected with art, and would need to be able to handle the considerable expenses associated with maintaining and managing
the space, especially since the building was in need of seismic retrofit in case of an earthquake. As Jenny framed it, “We're giving something really beautiful, but we're also giving them kind of a challenge here as well, so we needed somebody that could handle that.”

In mid-2018, Yoko and Flint began thinking through the possibility of rematriating the building to indigenous stewardship. YU staff were excited about the prospect. De-identified research participant C said: “When Yoko talked about this idea of giving the building away to an indigenous led organization, it was very exciting, for me, I had never heard of anything like this… I remember when she came into my office and told me that this was her idea for how to close YU, I like stood up from my desk and I was like,’ Oh my God, this is incredible, like, giving it back. This is incredible, what an amazing way to go.’”

Yoko was raised in Hawaii and was familiar with indigenous struggles for land rights. She had a vision of transferring the building to an Indigenous organization as a radical act of land rematriation. According to interviews, at this stage, there was still hope that YU may continue in another form without the building. In 2018, Yoko had a conversation with Lulani Arquette, the head of the NACF and a Native Hawaiian. The two had an existing relationship, and were connected through their ties to Hawaii.

On October 19, 2018 Yoko Ott died by suicide. All those I spoke to from YU described a deep period of mourning and shock following her death. A de-identified research participant (C) who was a staff member at YU described how “it just devastated all of us on the staff and board and in the wake of her suicide it just kind of became paramount to dispatch of YU. It was cursed. We had crisis fatigue and so in that climate, the board decided to go ahead with Yoko's idea, even though it would be without her you know, but just the sort of the best way to kind of end YU.”
Others also described how her death further motivated all to carry out her wish of seeing the building rematriated to an indigenous organization. As Reuben from NACF described the situation, “a big part of the transfer was in honor of their Executive Director who passed.”

Around the same time, Flint started speaking with the NACF Board of Directors about the potential of rematriating the building. According to Jenny, it was particularly synchronous because NACF had recently voted to expand their mission from a foundation to include programming art and community events. In the beginning of 2019, Flint and a YU curator came to the NACF board with a formal proposal to rematriate the land. Reuben, who works with NACF was at this meeting. He describes how, “When they put the proposition on the table, now I got goosebumps. I had never heard of such a thing, and there were some of us that just- we started to cry. Yeah, it was very, very powerful.”

For him, the historical significance was obvious. He said:

“That notion that somebody, some entity, some people, personally had really taken enough time to think about how they could address historical inequity, what it meant for them, and what assets did they have to really contribute to an effort that may make sense all around, what actions can they can take… Immediately we picked up on the historical significance of this going back in time to all of the land grabs, and all of the forest removals, and all of just the death and destruction and plundering. To push back on that in an urban setting was really interesting. One arts organization to another was interesting.”

After this meeting, YU and NACF entered into a non-binding agreement, the YU board voted to rematriate YU, and because of the significant expenses involved in owning the building, NACF decided to first undergo a feasibility study. According to research participants, following this meeting, the YU donor agreed to fund YU until the feasibility study and transfer were complete. In December 2019, the NACF board voted to accept the YU building, and brought in consultants to take on a feasibility study which lasted 18 months.
Before finalizing their acceptance, according to Reuben, NACF had some internal back and forth around whether or not to accept given the expenses associated with the building. Reuben noted how the board was:

“indeed honored to be offered the property, but some of them are like what are we getting ourselves into here? It was a big step for us. We had always been a small organization, relatively speaking, just a few staff. And so, this would be the biggest undertaking that we have ever, you know that we've ever taken, set our minds to. Even in the end, after this extensive report was presented to the board, some were like, well why don't we just take the amount of money that we would have to raise and build something brand new? … But for us that were for taking the building it was much more than the cost of the building or whether to have a brand new one… it was really more about the symbolic gesture, and now we wanted to step up to honor that gesture. The narrative inside of that, the story inside of that, was much more important than anything else.”

YU staff was officially told of plans of not only land rematriation, but also that the organization would be dissolved. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic drastically shifted operations forcing everyone into lockdown, described by Jenny as a disappointment for YU staff who had planned for “a bang all epic finish.” On July 16, 2020 the land transfer was announced publicly (official statement).

In February of 2021, YU rematriated its land and handed over the keys to NACF. In 2021, YU officially closed.

When NACF received the building, according to research participants Reuben and Jenny, they took on a large fundraising campaign to raise between 10-20 million in capital for building and seismic retrofitting. They also began to engage local native communities. Reuben explained the importance of this, “the local community will be the first folks to enter the door, whether that be as an audience member or as a participant in some kind of activity or whatever the case may be. So we're really engaging them right now to try to see what they're into.” In 2022, NACF
began to activate the building, and they have plans to hold a river ceremony for a creek that runs underneath the building in September 2022.

The land transfer was hailed by many as a groundbreaking act of land rematriation, and received publicity in different news outlets. According to Reuben, “the result of that is that we've received more inquiries, and more requests to collaborate, more requests from native artists- can we work with or how can we help you, from philanthropy and other donors and that kind of thing. There's just a lot more interest in our work, because of that one symbolic movement.” Flint also noticed increased interest in their work, noting, “NACF has had like a really amazing year, and not just because of the transfer of this building, but because of kind of like a momentum you know that it instilled… it's been bananas, and that's been amazing just to witness.”
Chapter 5: Results

After reading through interview transcripts several times, I identified several codes that referred to processes within historical accountability processes and the ways they were perceived. I then grouped these codes into overarching themes. These themes fit within the theoretical framing of the Constructive Multicultural Organizational Development (CMOD) Model (Coleman et al., 2017) which uses insights from complexity science to illustrate how organizational cultures related to diversity and discrimination can be viewed as attractors, or “entrenched, dynamic, and multiply determined patterns in systems that resist change” (pp. 3-4). This approach highlights how a myriad of factors interact to create stable patterns related to exclusion and inequity, making them difficult to tackle and disrupt. It also suggests organizations have latent positive attractors, or potential constructive states an organization could shift to, that would also be stable and difficult to disrupt. The model offers insight into how an organization might shift from a more destructive to a more constructive attractor through destabilizing systems, deconstructing destructive dynamics, and reconstructing constructive dynamics. While the CMOD model is intended to be used to understand organizational reform, the ideas included in the model work well to describe the organizational processes these case study organizations undertook, even if they are not explicitly aimed at reform. The themes I identified through my data analysis process when I was still using a mainly inductive approach closely matched these ideas within the CMOD model, so I ultimately decided to organize my codes according to themes using the CMOD ideas of replicating patterns, deconstructing destructive patterns, and reconstructing constructive patterns. Additionally, several codes seemed to relate to the importance of articulating patterns by connecting the past, present, and the future, which is not mentioned explicitly in the CMOD model, but seemed important in interviews, so I decided to
make this its own theme. Topics and ideas mentioned by participants that did not address my research question were not included in codes and themes. Codes and themes can be viewed in Table 3.

While there was variation in how different interviewees perceived events and their significance, these differences were more along individual lines and there were not necessarily clear differences between representatives of harmed parties and members of organizations. In fact, members of organizations involved in historical accountability processes were sometimes also members of harmed parties, pointing to the ways interviewees may hold multiple overlapping identities.

**Table 3: Themes and Codes**

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<th>Research Question</th>
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<td>What are facilitating factors for these historical accountability processes?</td>
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<td>What are challenges to these historical accountability processes?</td>
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What did participants identify as critical elements of a historical accountability process?

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<th>Acknowledgement</th>
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<td>Ongoing Dynamics</td>
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<td>Deconstructing Patterns</td>
<td>Taking down myths</td>
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<td>Giving something up</td>
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<td>The experience of loss</td>
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<td>Reconstructing Patterns</td>
<td>Re-membering</td>
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<td>Relationship</td>
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<td>A model for others</td>
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5.1 Levers of Change

In interviews with participants, several facilitating factors were described including 1) shocks to the system, 2) leadership that is committed and aware, 3) the ways that these actions can be seen as connected to the organizational mission, and 4) organizational activists pushing for these historical accountability processes.

*Shocks*
The CMOD model describes the importance of destabilizing existing systems in order to create an environment that is ripe for change (Coleman, et al, 2017). In the three case studies examined here, it can be observed how both internal and external shocks were facilitating factors which created pressure to create change and energy for action. In both the Georgetown case and the APA case, the Black Lives Matter movement helped spur momentum and created a context where people began to demand more attention be paid to racial justice. In 2015, following the murder of Michael Brown and ensuing Black Lives Matter protests at universities across the country, students at Georgetown decided to initiate protests. These protests added significant pressure to the University to take action towards historical accountability. The APA historical accountability process also gained significant momentum following the widespread 2020 Black Lives Matter protests. The timelines of events help show the ways that significant political events led to a context where APA and Georgetown experienced significant pressure to act.

The case of Yale Union also highlights how internal shocks created a context ripe for major organizational change. Yale Union was rocked by several significant and rattling events. A de-identified research participant staff member described how there was “a sexual harassment scandal, a financial crisis, and several law suits,” as well as conflict around what should be done with the building, and according to them, “we were pretty screwed organizationally in a lot of ways, there was a lot of trouble.” According to Jenny Martin, in the wake of these events, there was some preliminary conversation around the potential of closing YU, and staff began to search for potential organizations that might be able to take over the space.

As Jenny put it, this instability was critical to making the land transfer occur: “I don't think we would have had thought about it, if we weren't having this broader conversation about what is our future going to look like. I don't think we would have just like come up one day, we
should just give it back, you know, like our brains weren’t quite, you know, that charitable. But when you start to have these conversations within your own organization about how you're going to continue or how you're going to end, I think it was really important to look at what could we do.” The experience of Yale Union shows the ways that significant internal instability also contributed to a context that made the organization open to make significant changes.

Leadership

Participants also highlighted the importance of leadership in all these processes, both noting the ways that committed and aware leaders could facilitate historical accountability projects, and how unaware leaders could make these processes more challenging. As Elsa Stamatopoulou noted, “enlightened leadership is a facilitating factor,” and as Laura Hill, who serves as co-chairperson of Coming to the Table's National Reparations Working Group, similarly said, “You know, some organizations, you know it really depends on the leadership.” Dr. Marcia Chatelain of Georgetown explained how leadership can serve to protect these projects, and generate interest: “I think the number one thing is that if it comes from the top and as a presidential mandate, you get more people interested in the work…You kind of have that level of protection.” In the Yale Union case, many pointed to how the land transfer occurred at least in part because of the vision of Executive Director Yoko Ott. Flint said, “Her vision paved the way for this conversation. She was raised in Hawaii, and really saw what gentrification of that land looked like after growing up there.” He also described the ways that his own shifting perspective helped motivate the work after her death, saying “I had been reading a lot of non-metaphorical decolonization theory…a lot of that had gotten into my thinking.” Leadership that deeply believed in and were committed to these projects was thus seen by some as critical to the process.
**Aligned with mission**

Some interviewees in the APA case and the Yale Union case described the ways that these historical accountability processes were perceived to be aligned with the organizational missions, and the ways that this also served as a facilitating factor in these processes. As Flint put it, “There's something about this being something that is happening in the arts, because there is a risk being taken. Obviously, we're beholden to capital in all of its violence, but at the same time, through all of that internal drama, but also through the mission of the organization itself to kind of take risks, we were able to do it.”

**Organizational Activists**

Many participants also pointed to the importance of organizational activists, or internal stakeholders who were committed to advocating for these processes. As Georgetown’s Working Group lead David Collins noted, “The issue of racial justice is not something that came out of nowhere for Georgetown.” He described how there have long been many people calling for racial justice from inside the University, including both staff and students. In the case of Georgetown, many interviewees highlighted how students in particular were key organizational activists pushing for historical accountability. As descendant Melisande put it, “It wasn't about anybody outside of Georgetown bringing this and pushing this… It was students.” Students led protests, contacted the media, and consistently have applied pressure on the University to take further action. They are not the only internal people who have been pushing for change, however, there were certainly staff members who had been pushing for racial justice in different ways internally before the student protests. In the APA case, many interviewees also highlighted the ways that there have been staff committed to racial justice who have long been working from within the institution to create change.
5.2 Maintaining Patterns

While the institutions covered in these case studies are certainly trailblazers in initiating conversations of organizational historical accountability, their projects are not without challenges. The main critiques and challenges that surfaced from interviews I collected, across cases, were the ways these projects 1) replicated harms by excluding those most affected, 2) encountered resistance to change, and 3) can be seen as performative acts allowing institutions to avoid substantive changes and in some cases even allow harms to continue. While these historical accountability projects have allowed institutions to grapple with complicity in racism in new ways, they have also (likely unintentionally) in some aspects reproduced the systems they are seeking to repair. In specific processes, there were ways that these historical accountability processes served to maintain destructive patterns, or replicate and reinforce what they are intending to dismantle and address. As Sarah Ahmed described this phenomenon, “Solutions to problems are the problems given new forms” (Ahmed, p. 143). The ways these institutions sometimes replicated these patterns, points to the challenge of how sticky certain ways of being are; even as these organizations strived to repair past harms, a variety of factors served to pull organizations towards processes that continued to elevate the needs of the organization over the needs and desires of harmed parties.

Replicating Exclusion

The most often discussed manifestation of the ways historical accountability projects can replicate destructive patterns, centered around the ways that representatives of those most harmed by historical wrongs were often excluded from historical accountability projects. Most interviewees highlighted how imperative it is to have members of harmed parties involved in all
historical accountability processes. As Elsa Stamtopoulou put it, “Of course, the aggrieved people have to be really fully there, with meaningful participation.”

Often, rather than including those most directly harmed by these historical incidents, organizations would include in their processes what I call bridging communities, or people who were harmed by the historical incidents being addressed who also belong in some way to the community of organizational members. Yale Union, for example, engaged with another arts organization, the Native Arts and Culture Center. NACF is an arts organization centered around Native communities, and in this way, many of the people who are a part of NACF have certainly been affected by the historical harms of colonization that Yale Union was attempting to redress, but they are not necessarily members of communities directly affected by the theft of land in Portland that the Yale Union building rests on. Members of local communities who were the original stewards of the land were not consulted. As Reuben of NACF observed, “The one thing that I saw missing I guess was that the local community had not been engaged…We [NACF] are the ones that then began to engage the local native community… I think that for a local community they would, you know, consider the use of that land, maybe in a different way that would have more meaning for them in terms of their traditions…I’ll just say that their approach to it might look a little bit different.” Importantly, there was a covenant placed on the building which legally restricted Yale Union to transferring the building to an entity that is engaged in the arts. The case of Yale Union provides an example of the ways there can be formal processes and even legal structures that make it difficult to veer from established patterns of engagement.

Figuring out exactly whom to include can be particularly challenging for organizations who are apologizing to large swaths of people. In the case of APA, for example, which is undergoing a historical accountability process to apologize for harms towards people of color, it
is difficult to pinpoint who specifically should be included. Interviewees pointed to the ways that APA strived to ensure that staff of color were leading or heavily involved in the internal process. One de-identified APA staff member described her experience, “I will say that doing the work as a woman of color has its challenges…To be creating an apology to our own communities, I think it was important that we got it right.” In addition to this pressure, she also described how it was difficult to hear from other staff criticisms of the work and the need for such a process, which she described as “really challenging on a personal level.” Within APA’s process to date, psychologists of color and psychologists who work with communities of color were included in listening sessions. Again, these constituents can be seen as a bridging community as they are members who are affected by the historical harms of perpetuating racism that APA is addressing, and they also belong to the community of psychologists APA is a part of.

People who have been perhaps most directly harmed by racism through the APA were not included, however. As Evan, a member of the Association of Black Psychologists and who published a critique of the APA apology, described, “When they do these listening sessions there's still not a large representation of… people who've been impacted by psychiatric institutions that are accredited by the APA.” He went on to describe the ways people in hospitals, jails, and other institutions who arguably have been the most dramatically affected by racism built into APA frameworks and measures are largely absent from discussions on repair. These perspectives were not only left out of listening sessions, they were also not necessarily included in the written history of harms that APA commissioned. Cathy Faye, who led the efforts to research the historical impact of racism within the APA, was also open to highlighting the ways that the historical narrative maintained a Eurocentric perspective, excluding some other perspectives which might have perhaps enriched the narrative: “I started to realize how much I
was just re-inventing this cycle of silence…The best we did was sort of acknowledge that in the introduction to the history, so you know, ‘We did it again, we gave white people all the voice, we rewrote the same sort of Eurocentric history that's been written since the 1920s.’” Because the history commissioned by the APA was a scholarly endeavor, the history included scholarly sources, rather than perspectives of people who have been disenfranchised through APA’s frameworks such as those in psychiatric institutions. In this way, it can be observed that APA’s baked in norms around both who to engage in conversations, and what sources are considered valuable, can make the longstanding pattern of exclusion a pattern that is particularly resistant to change.

In the Georgetown case, descendants of those enslaved were also not originally included in the historical accountability process. As David Collins, who led the University’s Working Group, noted, “it was not evident to me that descendants would play a significant role… the importance of that emerged slowly.” Eventually, he and others in the Working Group advocated outreach to descendants, and he said in our interview that, “Everything is considered secondary to the development of the relationship with the descendants.” Efforts to outreach descendants were a key part of the Working Groups recommendations; President DiGioa traveled to Maringouin, Louisiana to meet with descendants; and several dialogues with descendant leaders were held at the request of descendants. Despite this, many interviewees I spoke with criticized the University for not making substantial efforts to outreach all descendants. Instead descendants had to reach out to the University and identify themselves. As Rochell noted, “Nobody reached out to me, I reached out to people… I made it my business to go home or research more, and … in February 2017 I actually sponsored on my own dime a gathering to tell them [other descendants] the facts about it. You know all the handouts, and everything, so I did that. And
then I continue to reach out to people.” Melisande, a descendant and a founding Council Member of the GU272 Descendants, said, “Georgetown never looked for descendants. They never did. There was never a program.”

Additionally, throughout the process, descendants banded together continually demanding to be included in GU and Jesuit proceedings. Melisande said, “Descendants coming to Georgetown to meet for the first time as a collective group- that happened because descendants got pushy about it and said, you can't do any of this without us, which is what all institutions have done in the past. They’ve made decisions for and about people without including those people in the decision-making processes.” Several descendants, alumni, and people involved in Georgetown’s accountability process I interviewed pointed to the ways that it was imperative for descendants to be fully included in the process, and also pointed to the ways Georgetown has fallen short of this goal.

While the vast majority of interviewees described how vital it is to include harmed parties in historical accountability processes, many also described how this can be challenging as there is often great diversity among harmed parties, and different people often want different things. As scholar Sharon Stein noted, “One of the things that I noticed is that people are not prepared to actually sit with the depth and complexity of the problem, including the fact that different communities and even different constituencies within a community have different ideas about what they actually want from this process of reckoning.” Similarly, Elsa Stamatopoulou described how “Aggrieved communities can be divided for various reasons because, some might see economic interests, others not. So that is a real challenge, because if the organization seeking historical accountability wants to do a good thing, and we assume they want to do a good thing, how do they deal with that?”
Kirt von Daacke, who runs the University of Virginia’s President’s Commission on Slavery, also said, “In this work, as soon as you expand to all those different constituencies, you end up with a series of groups that have very different desires and outcomes, and their desires and outcomes for your work change over time…It's going to be incomplete, it's going to be imperfect, and it will be judged differently 10 years from now than it might be at the moment you're doing it. That's okay. Doesn't mean it's not worth it.” This is in fact something that Georgetown encountered. Several interviewees familiar with the Georgetown case described how it could be difficult deciding on what to do because descendants are such a diverse group, and there is not necessarily an agreed upon course of action from descendants. A wide variety of descendants, however, have not been fully included in the process. As descendant and alum Elizabeth pointed out, “The fact that they're only choosing to legitimately speak to and engage in negotiations with one group, it's disheartening right, because, like I said, there's no one solution or one group that has all the ideas. And if everyone deserves a seat at the table and, of course, you can’t have like 2000, 3000 people on these calls, right, but there's several organizations that make up more diverse accurate voices of what descendants want. So I definitely think Georgetown could do a better job of including more voices at the table as they continue to move forward with negotiations about what will impact thousands of people.”

Fully engaging those most harmed by these historical incidents is difficult for organizations; these communities are often outside the social circles of those within the organizations, and organizations often prefer (to start) by engaging people who hold dual identities of those harmed. It can also be difficult to identify exactly who harmed parties are, especially when these harms occurred in the distant past. Additionally, members of harmed parties are often diverse groups with different perspectives and desires, making addressing this
heterogeneity complicated for organizations. Despite these challenges, without exception, interview participants pointed to the ways that those most directly affected by these historical harms should be included in historical accountability processes.

Resistance

One challenge several participants spoke to was internal resistance to these organizations’ historical accountability projects. Participants described how both institutional structures and some organizational members’ skepticism or outright disapproval of these processes could serve to slow these processes, or make them resistant to tangible change. Scholar and activist David Ragland said, “I think, as we're talking about these processes in the United States…there's white backlash and I think we have to consider that as part of our processes.” Georgetown’s Working Group leader David Collins also described how, “You have to be prepared for enormous amounts of mistrust on all sides.”

This mistrust from organizational members can manifest in challenges to the processes, and often these challenges are indirect. For example, in the Georgetown case, Professor Marcia Chatelain described how, “People were saying things like, you know, ‘they should submit to DNA tests,’ and ‘how do we prove that someone really is a descendant,’ and all this kind of weird stuff.” In the APA case, similarly a de-identified staff member (B) spoke to the ways that challenges and resistance to the historical accountability project were often indirect: “Nobody wants to be the one to talk bad about it. And so, a common refrain was, ‘Well…we've got problems with the process.’ And it was so obvious that that's not what they had [a problem with]... nobody's gonna say anything overt, right, they're uncomfortable.”

In both the APA case and the Georgetown case, participants also spoke to the ways that the institutional structures also sometimes acted as barriers to more rapid change. Ayodele
Aruleba, a student activist at Georgetown who also was asked to join the Working Group, described the university’s preferred Working Group process as “slow” and “theoretical.” He also described how student protests and direct action were more effective at getting tangible results than relying entirely on bureaucratic institutional processes. Similarly, the institutional structures within APA were also viewed as a challenge. APA’s culture was described as “bureaucratic,” with work often being done by many associations within the organization, and with committees, reviews, and reports playing a large part in processes across the organization. A de-identified APA staff member (B) noted that “the structure itself can be really challenging” since there were many different working groups simultaneously working towards the overarching goals of the project, often with great overlap, but with limited communication. This was considered by a de-identified APA staff member (A) as “difficult in terms of coordination and organization,” and helps illustrate the ways that organizational structures can contribute to inertia and make substantial shifts more difficult.

Participants also spoke to significant institutional resistance to the idea of loss, be it material loss or reputational loss. Kirt von Daacke, for example, noted how institutions are “always scared about economic reparations right, and I think this is frankly because the lawyers get in the room, and they go, you're going to get sued.” Many institutions seem very aware of risk that might come along with historical accountability processes. For example, seventeen organizations I reached out to refused to participate, my requests to conduct research on potential case study organizations were often sent to legal teams, and a potential interviewee refused to participate because they had signed a non-disclosure agreement, pointing to the ways that many organizations see historical accountability projects as potentially risky. Additionally, several potential participants outreach refused to participate, and some who did participate chose to be
de-identified, pointing to the ways that awareness of this risk can lead to a lack of transparency and contribute to a cycle of silence. As Sarah Federman, who has does extensive research on organizations undertaking historical accountability processes, said on the HBR Ideacast podcast, “I know that companies are very careful about apologies because if they say, ‘I’m sorry,’ in English that can mean, ‘We accept legal liability,’ so they’re very careful.” (Nickisch, C. et al., 2022).

Performativity

Many interview participants also criticized historical accountability projects for being performative, more for good optics, than about substantive change. With Georgetown, for example, descendant and alumni Elizabeth commented, “They could have been a leader in this and they chose instead to be very timid and mislead the public with the actions that they did do versus the referendum that was passed on campus” referring to the referendum passed by students where students committed to increasing their tuition in order to pay direct reparations to descendants, which received widespread national publicity, despite not being enacted by Georgetown. Descendant and founding Council Member of the GU272 Descendants Association Melisande Short-Colomb, commented, “They do the minimum, and then everybody thinks it's magically great.” For Georgetown, despite early concerns by some in the administration that it might open Georgetown to liability threats, the historical accountability process has on the whole been admired, receiving significant media attention, and inspiring other universities to follow suit. As Gregory Stahl, Director of Development for Georgetown College, noted, “It turns out that three years on, after the whole thing sort of broke, people are admiring Georgetown for coming face to face with its history.”
With the Yale Union case, some interviewees drew attention to the fact that Yale Union was already in the process of dissolving, and suggested the idea to transfer land and assets to a Native group was ultimately a performative act. In an interview, a de-identified research participant and staff member said, “I believe that it was calculated as a way to kind of terminate our organization in a way that had really good optics.” They called the land transfer an act of “performative reconciliation” to “absolve white settler guilt.” They further suggested, “If the intention was to actually like give land back, then connections would have had to have been made between Yale Union and The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Native American reservation closest to Portland.” Importantly, however, it would have been legally challenging to give the building to a local community reservation since there is a covenant on the building stipulating that it must be used for arts and culture. According to a research participant, this covenant is signed by Laurel Walsh, who originally donated the building to YU, and continues to give her control over the uses of the building.

With regards to the APA apology, notable critics include the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsy) which criticized the act as performative. ABPsy issued a statement which reads:

“We also know that ‘the white man will try to satisfy us with symbolic victories rather than economic equity and real justice,’ [referencing the concept of Sankofa] underscoring that while the apology and resolutions may appear genuine, it is far too late for it to mean anything to Black America and sorely lacks several opportunities for real and meaningful apology and atonement, which are inextricably linked to restitution and restoration….To even begin to make good on its promises, the APA must empower the survivors of its ongoing terrorism. They may accomplish this by abdicating their unjustifiable claim to be the arbiter of universal human functioning and by granting full authority to the Association of Black Psychologists, the Hispanic Psychological Association, the Society of Indian Psychologists, the Association of Asian American Psychologists, and other Ethnic centered Associations to establish their own independent and separate codes of ethics, licensing, certification and education and training.” (Association of Black Psychologists, 2021)
Evan Auguste of the Association of Black Psychologists also called the move “an incomplete apology meant to make psychologists feel good.”

While interviewees familiar with the YU/NACF case seemed to agree that the historical accountability process did lead to significant changes, and interviewees familiar with the APA case often felt that it was too early to tell if the process was leading to a significant shift in organizational patterns or not, many people I interviewed pointed to the ways that Georgetown’s historical accountability process has not yet led to substantive change for descendants, naming this as a key issue. For example, Candace, a Georgetown alum who helped lead the original student movement, noted how Georgetown “hasn't done the things they said they would do from those working groups.”

Descendants in particular observed how the changes Georgetown has made benefit GU, rather than those harmed by the University. Melisande said, “Five years later, the benefit still remains to the institution.” Elizabeth, an alum and descendant, agreed, saying, “My mom was the first President of the Descendants Association, so I know from her first-hand account how difficult it was to get anything from Georgetown, let alone, even just an acknowledgement that this was wrong. There's a lot of misinformation that is out there about what Georgetown has actually done. And of course it's to their benefit.” As an example, she explained how even though GU advertises preferential admission for descendants, this is not necessarily the case in practice: “There's not even a spot when you fill out your application to mark that you're a descendant… there's so many other descendants out there who maybe want to go to the institution, or want at least a shot at going, and you know they're saying they're doing these preferential admits, well, how can you do that if you don't even know who the descendants are?”
These insights help show the ways that what has not (yet) been done reveal as much about the process as what has been done. She was particularly disappointed by Georgetown, because she felt GU has missed an opportunity for meaningful repair: “There's so many things they could have done. They could have given money to Maringouin. They could have put more money into education- there's no high school in Maringouin. There's no hospital in Maringouin. There's no wi-fi in Maringouin, right? There's so many steps or things they [Georgetown] could have done, including but outside of the education aspect. Just missed opportunities.” Georgetown Professor Marcia Chatelain also observed an unwillingness on the part of GU to make changes: “I think sometimes in these processes there's a desire for the University to say, ‘Okay, we addressed it. Everyone shut up,’ instead of saying we are addressing this by being open to some substantive changes that need to happen as a result.”

In particular, both interviewees and opinion articles in the media have pointed to the ways Georgetown has sidestepped paying direct reparations to Descendants as a marker of the ways Georgetown is unwilling to make substantive changes, even after two thirds of the student community voted to support a tuition increase to pay direct reparations. While descendants have mixed opinions about whether or not direct reparations should be paid by the university, many interviewees connected to the GU case emphasized the importance of an economic dimension to repair work relating to slavery. Candace, for example, said, “I think, for me, what is like needed to go a step further, is that economic piece, because at the end of the day, that is the hardest piece to commit to and that's the piece that you know got us into this predicament, that is, the piece that was fueling slavery in the first place…I think that there needs to be a clear form of reparations to the descendants of the folks that were sold.” Elizabeth noted, “I definitely think the economic aspect of it is extremely important, I mean at the end of the day, this was about the
sale of bodies for money.” Melisande similarly said, “It was always about money. Owning and selling people was about money. So if it was about money then, why it can’t be about money now?”

Georgetown has contributed one million dollars to the Descendants Truth and Reconciliation Foundation, but many have criticized the process since the Foundation will fundraise the money it eventually pays out, rather than the money coming directly from Georgetown or the Jesuits. Rochell was involved in the process and originally also shared concerns that the money would be fundraised rather than come directly from the Jesuits or Georgetown. “For me, it feels like we’re begging, and we shouldn’t have to beg. I read like everyone else that they’re (the Jesuits) are worth 4 billion dollars. Just give us our billion. It’s sitting there.” She says these concerns were eventually put to rest for her, however, when the Jesuit leaders shared “fundraising is what they do.” For others, however, this remains problematic. As Melisande put it, using charitable contributions amounts to making it so when it comes to Georgetown’s “financial responsibility- somebody else has to pay for that.”

Yale Union, APA, and Georgetown, have all had challenges when it comes to deeply held patterns of exclusion, and have been criticized for prioritizing their own institution over those most directly historically harmed. These criticisms can be seen as counterpoints to participants’ views of aspects of these processes where organizations gave something meaningful up (see section on Deconstructing). Even as these processes were striving for repair, they at times were pulled into norms and structures which advantage the institution over those most harmed. As shown above, some participants suggested these processes may (at least in part) be intended to benefit perpetrating institutions rather than benefit harmed parties. In some ways, the values and the norms which help keep these structures in place become more visible in the
organizations which are actively trying to engage in redress and repair. Many organizations in the United States have been steeped in these same histories of racism and oppression, and yet few call attention to this, never mind attempt a historical accountability process. These case study organizations expose structures and norms that are allowed to remain invisible by organizations that choose not to take on this work. As Sarah Ahmed writes, “diversity workers acquire a critical orientation to institutions in the process of coming up against them. They become conscious of ‘the brick wall’ as that which keeps its place even when an official commitment to diversity is given. Only the practical labor of ‘coming up against’ the institution allows this wall to become apparent. To those who did not come up against it, the wall does not appear- the institution is lived and experienced as being open, committed, and diverse” (p.174).

In grappling publicly with historical harms, these organizations expose their own brick walls, often unintentionally replicating aspects of the systems they are apologizing for. Criticisms that arose from interviewees about these processes mostly centered around this dissonance.

5.3 Connecting Past, Present, and Future

While the idea of connecting the past, present, and future is not mentioned explicitly in the CMOD model, I found participants regularly spoke to the importance of articulating long-held attractor patterns. They described the ways that the past is intimately connected with the present, and the future, and again and again, highlighted the necessity of acknowledging historical harms and linking these harms both with present day dynamics, and using this acknowledgement as a springboard for future change.

Acknowledgment

Academics and advocates of historical accountability processes interviewed all pointed to the importance of acknowledging harms. Laura Hill, who leads Coming to the Table- Virginia’s
Historic Triangle, said, “I think the biggest factor in structural change is first and foremost, acknowledging the truth. That is a hurdle for some organizations, you know, because what it means is that they are changing a narrative.” Scholar and reparations advocate David Ragland further spoke to how important it is that “truth-telling” be an aspect of this process, highlighting how truth-telling can involve community dialogues as well as a research component.

In all three case studies, participants also recognized that foundational to these projects was the way these organizations acknowledged the ways they enacted historical harms. For Yale Union, this included recognizing that their building was on land originally stolen from indigenous groups. As Flint, a co-founder of Yale Union put it, “We started to obviously encounter our own culpability or complicity in the phenomenon of gentrification, and we started to understand that as a version of, you know, contemporary colonization.” For Georgetown, this included recognizing the ways the institution participated and financially benefited from slavery. For APA, this included recognizing the ways the organization had contributed scientific theories, validity, and methods of measurement to enforce racial hierarchies.

As Cathy Faye, who worked with APA, framed it, the acknowledgement that “We helped create this world” was crucial. She saw this as “a huge step for the organization to understand and to recognize that there is this full history that we need to contend with.” While acknowledging the perpetration of or complicity in historical harms may seem like an obvious step, it is critical to remember that these case studies are of organizational trailblazers within the United States. They were among the first organizations to publicly reckon with harmful pasts, while many organizations with similar histories have not engaged in any sort of acknowledgement or accountability process.

*Ongoing Dynamics*
Interviewees also emphasized how it was critical to connect these historical harms to present day dynamics. David Ragland explained, “The reason why historical harms require accountability is because they lead into the future, they bleed into the present.” Interviewees from all three institutions also highlighted the ways that patterns from the past continue today. For example, in the Georgetown case, many of the people I interviewed emphasized not just the history itself, but the legacy of this history. As Professor Marcia Chatelain explained, “The study of slavery isn't just about the 19th century and before, but it's also about actively engaging the afterlives of slavery.” Past student activist Candace noted, “I think it was important for us to connect what happened at that time to how Georgetown has been able to continue to harm Black communities in DC and on campus.” And Elizabeth, both a descendant of enslaved people sold for the university, and a graduate of Georgetown, highlighted how the historical harms from slavery and the 1838 sale can be seen today, rippling across generations, asking attention to be drawn to “the poverty that's in Maringouin and that community where the enslaved people were sold to, versus the wealth of Georgetown. I think that's just like an important distinction or parallel to show people- that wow, this institution sold these humans and made billions, the people that were sold are living well below the poverty level and educational level and everything is kind of crappy down there.”

Some interviewees highlighted how not understanding the ways that the past connects to the present posed a problem: one de-identified participant from the APA said she thinks that, “decoupling historical harms and current forms is harmful” and Cathy Faye of the Cummings Institute who worked with APA said “I do still think there's this tendency to think that this was a few bad apples, and a few bad events that happened in the past and we're all good now, which I don't think is true…We need to continue to deal with this because it's not a thing of the past, it is
a thing that our future is built on.” Marcia Chatelain, a Georgetown Professor, also noted the
danger of locating harm only in the past: “Bad acts in the past shape the ways that institutions
use and wield their power, even if those acts are no longer tolerated. So slavery doesn't exist
anymore, and universities are still engaged in really nefarious things around the globe, and so
like, how do we understand that slavery might not be the aberration, it might be the standard.”

Building in an acknowledgement that these historical harms continue to have
ramifications today, implies that organizational historical accountability projects address not
only past harms, but the present as well. As put by Candace, who had been a GU student
activist, “You've made this commitment to thinking about the history of slavery- what are you
doing about the present conditions of workers? Of people in the DC Community? What are you
doing to ensure that your focus on the past isn't just about the past but it's about how these things
endure to the present?”

For Georgetown, where the original impetus was to reckon with a specific history, this
understanding that history is not just contained to the past led to a larger scope of the project than
was originally anticipated: Working Group member and Professor Marcia Chatelain said,
“Sometimes they think they want a history project, and they're actually getting a racial justice
demand…The origins of these calls might be one central place, but kind of what happens once
they're animated can be radically different.” She further explained how, “I think that they
[Georgetown] had a very narrow and limited view of what reconciliation and repair would look
like, and I think the descendants challenged that. I think it was frustrating and it was hard for
them to accept, and I also think that the University just was not prepared for the kind of
complexity that this type of engagement would require both legally, and ethically in terms of
relationships to The Catholic Church and the Jesuits. Like, I think that they just really
underestimated, like, everything that this process would require of them.” As one past Georgetown student activist and member of the Working Group, Ayodele Aruleba, noted, “It's not something that's just like a little initiative where you pop in and it's done. It's never going to be done.”

Scholars and activists familiar with historical accountability projects also highlighted that this sort of work often has a tendency to grow and continue. Elsa Stamatopoulou, the former Chief of the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, noted how in this work, “You must always go towards more justice requests, because if you stop and you say you are great, now I'm going to rest on my laurels, they push you back …in other words, it's a long and constant process, justice is.”

While an expanding scope of a project can sometimes be a challenge, Kirt von Daacke, who leads University of Virginia’s President’s Commission on Slavery, asserted, “We have to understand it's not a pitfall that all these projects, no matter how much good work they do, are necessarily going to be incomplete and imperfect. That doesn't mean they're not incredibly valuable. And so I think the way to think about it is 1) they're going to take a lot longer than any university or the people leading the project think they're going to take.” Despite the challenging scope of this work, historical accountability was seen by many of the experts I interviewed as imperative for moving forward, for organizational survival, and for a more tenable future. As David Ragland put it, “Without historical accountability, there's no integrity or trust for any of these systems or institutions.”

5.4 Deconstructing

In the CMOD model, deconstructing negative dynamics is a key step towards helping an organizational system reach a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just space. In this process,
the objective is “simply to make destructive multicultural attractors weaker and less attractive” (Coleman et al., 2017). The CMOD model specifies several specific ways to deconstruct these negative patterns such as decoupling feedback loops, introducing interventions which help break negative cycles, and intervening with small changes to distant elements that influence the system as a whole from afar. In many ways, using a historical accountability process to help stop and prevent current issues fits soundly into this third strategy for deconstructing negative patterns; examining a historical harm is a way of examining and tackling a distant element which has contributed to these negative patterns, making it perhaps less risky than tackling a more immediate issue, but still allowing for conversations and interventions around current negative dynamics and can offer a path towards stopping these patterns. Interviews with participants focused on 1) taking apart convenient and affirming myths, 2) taking concrete actions to stop current destructive patterns, and actively giving something up.

Interviewees highlighted the need to deconstruct myths about organizations. For example, Kirt von Daacke, who runs the University of Virginia’s President’s Commission on Slavery, observed how for universities who are seeking to confront a legacy of slavery, “I think the very first step is institutions ending the kind of mythmaking and storytelling they do about the universities that are deeply incomplete, that have a tendency to privilege often only the White male founders and leaders and don't represent in any way the full history of the university in all of its complexity.” He went on to say how ending these organizational “myths” about an institution’s history can then change stakeholders perspective of current dynamics: “[They] come back to you and go, ‘Oh my gosh, I look at everything everywhere I go differently now… I’ve now noticed that all the low-wage staff serving me food and cleaning things seemingly are
African-American at this university,’ right. That's in part a legacy of the story, this really complicated tapestry of stories that we are starting to unpack.”

Cathy Faye of APA also described how admitting wrongdoing and apologizing can serve as a launching point to take on the work of initiating concrete actions to mitigate harm to the extent possible, “I really believe that apologies are good things, and I do think, you know, if you even think about it from a personal point of view, it's really hard to make change or move on until you admit that you are wrong in the first place.” All case studies explored here put effort into changing the ways their history was viewed. All have made public statements that address the ways their institutions perpetrated, allowed, or benefited from historical harms. These organizations admitted wrong-doing and apologized.

Apologizing, however, was cited by interviewees as a necessary but insufficient step within a historical accountability process. As Elsa Stamatopoulou put it, “Apologies are never enough, as we know...yes, that's great, but then there has to be another level of engagement, which will have some material ramifications, seeking positive changes on the ground…I think apologies are just the beginning of reconciliation processes.” David Collins, who led the Georgetown Working Group, explained the ways that re-examining history can highlight current injustices and hopefully motivate action, “This is not an opportunity for us to pat ourselves on the back. Rather, it’s about drawing insights from history and applying them to our contemporary situation. Our approach cannot assume that we are less blind or less unjust than our predecessors; instead we hope that by understanding their blindness and injustices better, we can understand, and hopefully correct, our own blindness and injustices more critically.”

*Giving something up*
Critical to historical accountability processes is also reflecting on ongoing harms, and stopping these harms from continuing. Some framed this process of deconstruction as a way for the organization to engage in reform, adapt, and continue to survive. In my interview with a participant from the APA who chose to be de-identified (A), we discussed how in many ways a historical accountability process can be necessary for organizational survival by helping an organization take concrete action towards current destructive dynamics. She said, “I also think that we have an ongoing conversation around our process about on-going harms, and how important not contributing to ongoing harms is to survival, and that being a really important part of the repair and reconciliation process. So for me the words, the language, is just the first necessary first step, but the ongoing harms and sort of pulling back, and then also the recommendation piece, I would say, for me, would be most important to survival.”

Participants seemed to suggest that historical accountability processes seemed more meaningful and authentic if these organizations actively gave up something in the process. Scholar Sharon Stein, for example, described how it is important for powerful groups to understand, “In order for things to change, you're going to have to give things up, which is not just your resources and your power, but also your sense of superiority.”

Yale Union perhaps engaged in the most in depth process of deconstruction, completely closing their operations. Flint observed, “organizationally we dissolved…we weren't receiving rent checks, we had no operation budgets, it's like okay cool, we're done. So that is one real outcome.” In this process, they also gave up their main asset, the building. Reuben of NACF pointed to the power of Yale Union giving something up, saying, “I've been told that a gift means more if it hurts a little bit… I think that that was in part, what that was for them [Yale Union], it took a big step. They went all the way, you know, they're like we're all the way in.”
This “big step” also made a big impact: Reuben described the NACF meeting where Flint had come to propose giving them the building, saying

“I got goosebumps. I had never heard of such a thing. There were some of us that just, we started to cry, and yeah it was very, very powerful. That notion that somebody, some entity, some people personally, had really taken enough time to think about how they could, how they could address historical inequity. What it meant for them, and what that asset did, they had to really contribute to an effort that, you know, made sense around what actions they can take, and so that asset that they had, it was the thing that had most value for them, but I think it was much more than that, ultimately, in their gifting.”

Here, Reuben describes how both the asset itself, and the effort and thought that went into the gifting, helped make the action meaningful and significant. He also was clear that, “We don't expect everything to be handed over, you know that's not that's not the goal, that's unrealistic.”

However, the fact that Yale Union committed to contributing something which required a degree of sacrifice was an important part of making the action meaningful.

On the other hand, in the Georgetown case, many people interviewed were upset that Georgetown has not put an end to certain practices or given up something significant. Georgetown has arguably taken more actions towards constructing new systems to address historical harms, than it has actions aimed towards deconstructing current harms. It has taken down some building names associated with the sale of people, and has made some efforts to make its teaching staff and student body more diverse, though it has also been criticized for not including more actions surrounding low-wage workers for the school. Recently, it has particularly received criticism for not giving up more financial resources in the form of reparations. In one news article about Georgetown contributing to the Descendants Truth and Reconciliation Foundation which would fundraise money for repair work rather than Georgetown or the Jesuits directly paying reparations, one descendant Negest Rucker was quoted
(Merellli, 2021) as saying, “They’re not actually sacrificing anything. So I don’t see that as repair."

The experience of loss

This act of giving something up is often difficult for organizations, and the people who are a part of them. There is a strong bias that in order to improve something, additions must be made rather than subtractions (Adams et al., 2021; Klotz, 2021). Taking something away in order to make an improvement is often anathema. Often bubbling under the surface of conversations around historical accountability processes is the idea that members of powerful groups (e.g. White people), will lose something in the process. Lynda Davis of Coming to the Table, who is White, said of historical accountability processes, and in particular reparations, “We will all gain from doing this and not lose, because I think people are still in that zero sum game mentality that this initiative, these initiatives are going to make us lose things, when really it will make all of us gain and we will all be liberated, because I don't feel liberated when someone else is not.”

Scholar Sharon Stein, also spoke to the idea of loss in this work, saying, “There are those people who say, ‘Equity is not about taking away your privileges, but rather expanding them [to other people]’ and I don't think it's possible. There are only so many positions in institutions, there's only so much money.” She is suggesting that equity will necessarily require that historically privileged groups give up certain privileges. She further went on to describe how important this process can be for members of privileged groups, “If you open up yourself to other ways of knowing, and being, and relating, and dis-invest from the ones you're invested in, which is a lifelong process that's never done, it's virtually impossible, but still, then you are losing things, yes, but you're also opening up all these other possibilities that you couldn't even imagine…But you don't get those for free. Actually, it does require giving something up.”
Sharon Stein is currently located in Canada, where conversations about historical accountability for colonization have been more common place for a longer time than in the United States, and she noted that there are a range of thoughts on the degree to which organizations need to give something up in decolonization processes, with some people even calling for the dissolution of institutions.

This is what actually occurred with Yale Union, which ended up completely dissolving. The loss of the institution was difficult for many to process. One de-identified staff member of YU described the process, “It sort of, like, looks amazing from the outside, but, oops we all lost our jobs and then had to figure out what to do about that. I understand that, like, structural change definitely comes with some different kinds of personal loss and like I'm totally on board with that.” They further described:

“It has felt like a huge personal loss… I probably got you know 90% of my social interaction just through my work at Yale Union…I identified very closely with the place, with the organization, with being part of it-- So definitely kind of like in the spiritual sense, sort of like loss of identity, because for [x] years I was an integral part of Yale Union and now I'm not and I'm like, ‘What am I?’ So the identity piece is kind of a big one, because now that I'm not working at Yale Union, I'm technically not a [job position removed to de-identify participant] anymore, and that's how I identified for the last [x] years, so it's confusing… I realize all sorts of implications of possession that this says, but it's not mine anymore. And that's what feels sad to me, and I realized, you know, like objectively it never was mine. It was a building built on stolen land that like I never had ownership of, but, yeah so there's definitely a conflict with that, and so personally right now I definitely kind of feel it as more of a loss, but I think it is definitely a gain for the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation obviously, and it's definitely a gain for Portland's urban Native American community.”

While it was a difficult experience for this de-identified research participant, for Jenny Martin, who was the Yale Union Director of Operations, this experience of closing, ending, losing assets, etc., was a positive development. She observed, “Most nonprofits are built nowadays where they're basically forever, but that's not necessarily always a great thing…One
really important thing for people to stop thinking, is that when a nonprofit ends after a short period, it's failed…You have to stop thinking, ‘This is forever,’ you have to start saying, ‘what's best now.’”

Scholar Sharon Stein similarly spoke to institutional endings and loss, saying, “The system we have built, it's not only built on racial colonial violence, it's also built on a totally unsustainable ecological model that may kill us all…We don't know if our institutions are going to last…So I think, rather than focus in on, ‘here's what you are specifically going to lose,’ it may be more like this big picture thing of ‘look at these ridiculous structures that we created.’”

Interview participants also highlighted how applying a historical lens to equity work can be helpful in re-framing what can be seen as a loss for powerful groups. Lotte Lieb Dula of Reparations4Slavery, who is White, described how members of powerful groups often see engaging in repair as a form of “charity,” or “noblesse oblige,” or “a way of signaling virtue while also maintaining their sense of superiority and power over those with structural disadvantages.” She described how utilizing a historical lens has the potential to shift this framing, particularly for those whose families perpetuated or benefited from the institution of slavery, saying:

“If you learn the truth of your family’s involvement with slavery, for instance, and gain an understanding of the cause of the racial wealth gap, through studying your family’s accumulation of wealth over generations – if you study the many ways that Black economic progress has been blocked, that feeling of noblesse oblige melts away. It’s replaced with a sense of accountability, and a moral imperative to atone for the harms our families have perpetrated over centuries. Engaging in reparations is no longer seen as an act of charity; it is seen as repayment of a debt that is past due. And that's a very different spiritual place to be coming from in this work. But you can't displace that feeling of noblesse oblige if you haven't looked at the history. And, if you don’t know the history, you can’t honestly engage in repair.”
Similarly, Sharon Stein spoke to this concept of moving from a charity mindset to a debt mindset, saying: “We need to think about it in the frame of debt, … Then you see affirmative action is not about charity, it's about somehow making a tiny dent in this colonial debt and basically, it's never going to be enough.”

For many of the participants interviewed, deconstructing problematic remnants of history is an important part of a historical accountability process. Taking apart damaging systems is the core of decolonization work, and several interviewees highlighted how critical it is to stop committing continued harms, and to unravel harms embedded within organizations. Many pointed out how perpetrating institutions must give up something in order to deconstruct negative patterns; Yale Union went as far as re-matriating their land, releasing its most valuable asset. This process can be difficult, especially for members of perpetrating institutions. Giving something up, and ending things, can often be accompanied with a deep sense of loss. Participants discussed how a historical lens can help reframe the process of deconstruction from giving something up as an act of charity to an act of repaying a debt, and from ending as a failure, to an inevitable process that can make room for different possibilities.

5.5 Reconstructing

Just as deconstructing negative patterns is an essential process towards organizational change for justice, so too is reconstructing positive patterns. As Coleman et al. (2017) write, “In order for any social system to undergo a qualitative change in cultural dynamics, it must have a feasible and coherent alternative attractor to transition to” (p. 22). In interviews, participants highlighted the value of reconstructing desirable states, particularly the importance of 1) reconstructing a new historical narrative through re-membering what has been severed, 2) reconstructing relationships between groups who have perpetrated and survived historical harms,
3) creating new organizational structures, both within the perpetrating organization and in organizations led by people of color, 4) contributing to a realignment in a way of being. Many of the academics and activists I interviewed discussed how repair work is multi-dimensional, speaking to different ways it can be intellectual, material, political, and spiritual. David Ragland, for example, spoke to the goals of historical accountability processes saying, “I think part of it is to get the truth out, to get acknowledgement for the harm, to heal from the harm, and under the Western regime of you know, money as one of the highest values and goods, to get compensation…And I think at the core of that is a demand for the respect of human dignity.”

Professor Joyce Hope Scott said:

“It's not going to be possible to give somebody a check for what happened. What happened is so much more profound than a check can ever hope to repair. So yes, there are many things that have to be done. Yes, there has to be a question of land restoration...People were trafficked away from their homes, they were separated from their origins. The very spiritual epicenter of their being was transgressed, torn apart, violated by what happened to them. That has to be addressed. You know, there's suffering, there's trauma, you know, there's pain and suffering that continues. There's separation that needs to be repaired.

Because there are so many dimensions that are touched by a historical accountability process, reconstructing is not limited to a single process, such as rebuilding a new narrative.

Reconstructing touches on multiple aspects simultaneously.

Re-membering

Inherent in many historical accountability processes in a new rendering of history. This re-telling can allow for a “re-membering” of histories that had been severed. In the cases examined here, before the processes were started, the accepted history of the organizations tended to center achievements and positive organizational milestones. Harms were likely not referenced, and certainly not highlighted as central to the understanding of the institution.

Members of harmed parties were often simply not a part of the narrative of the organization. The
historical accountability processes in these cases all worked to change this by building new histories highlighting these harms and their impacts. APA, for example, hired the Cummings Institute to do research on the ways it had historically perpetuated and contributed to racism and then made this narrative publicly available. Georgetown commissioned its Working Group to explore its ties to slavery, and also made their report publicly available. Yale Union included a history of the ways the building was built on stolen land on their website. This retelling of history helps acknowledge and connect the impact these historical harms have had on both the institutions and the harmed parties.

For those from harmed groups, it can be particularly critical to center these histories. In the Georgetown case, for example, Elizabeth explained why it was so important for her to attend GU as a descendant, “If we just went away in the shadows and we didn't show our presence at this school and on this campus, we would be forgotten about and shoved back under the rug as they tried to do for decades and decades…We wanted to make our imprint physical, to be actually on the campus that our ancestors’ lives were sold to sustain.” She further described how she wanted to, “keep the pressure up and stay in their faces” as a way to ensure the university would remember them.

The University itself also took steps to ensure that the history of slavery is part of the history told of the university by renaming building which had been named for those who orchestrated the sale of 1838. David Collins, who led the Working Group saw this as an important step: “gestures are important. And the naming of the building suddenly tells the history of the early 19th century. First of all, it tells that history like it had not been told before.” For him, these gestures matter because “Maybe those little symbols will mean something to the
students who learn the story now every year as they're introduced to, you know, the historical core of the campus of Georgetown University.”

Along with renaming the building, the University also publicly released records that had previously been private. Airing this history had a big impact on many descendants. Rochell noted how, “As an African American in America, it has been awesome. I found relatives in Maryland… We’ve connected.” This was powerful for her, because, as she put it, “I value things that money can’t buy.”

Relationship

Many of the academics and activists I interviewed highlighted the importance of reconstructing relationships between groups who have perpetrated and groups who have survived historical harms. Briayna Cuffie of Reparations4Slavery, who is an advocate for reparations for slavery, spoke to the ways that the transfer of wealth is not enough when it comes to reparations, saying:

“You can give all the money you want, but if you don't understand why you're giving it, how long you need to give it for, how you got it in the first place, then it's kind of hollow. I mean, and I know there's some people where they're like ‘I just want my money, I don't really care about who gives it to me, or how it gets to me, I just want it,’ whereas I am like, No. I still need to know that humanity is becoming a little less trash, and I need to know that by talking to you regularly, by seeing you face to face…There's a relationship piece, there's a trust piece that's got to be there. Some people want it to be like a strictly business kind of thing, but there's gotta be some sort of personal relation, I think, with the work. There's got to be some semblance of camaraderie…For me at least, this work isn't transactional, it's transformative.”

David Ragland similarly pointed to the importance of relationship saying, “I think, it is also a negotiation, it involves negotiation between people impacted, in between oppressors with the people who are impacted by that oppression, so I think there's a spirit of restitution that has to be about humility by those who have benefited from theft and continue to benefit by no merit but
inheritance and social constructs of white supremacy.” Evan described his hope for these processes to allow for different ways of being in relationship, “What I hope is, I guess that this kind of unlocks the type of wisdom, the ways of knowing, the ways of caring for one another… I'm hoping the ways we understand how to, you know, be family with one another, the ways that we understand to integrate community, to start leveraging those.”

While many interviewees spoke to the importance of being in a more right relationship, some highlighted how forgiveness is not the aim of this relationship. David Ragland, for example, said “We don't have a right to forgive on behalf of our people.” Rather interviewees seemed to describe the need for a reconstruction of relationships between groups based on a more honest understanding of current legacies of these harmful histories. As Rochell told me, “the legacy of my Ancestors' legal enslavement has resulted in an unwarranted pain and suffering. For that I (or my future generations) deserve a meaningful resolve.” As Melisande put it, “In their process of Truth and Reconciliation, some things may not be reconciled. Some things just have to stand in the truth of what they are.”

**Organizational Structures**

These historical accountability processes also led these organizations to create new organizational structures. GU initiated some changes such as opening an Institute for the Study of Slavery and its Legacy. APA is in the process of initiating several recommendations geared towards the future. As Cathy put it, “I think it was really important that they had the two resolutions, side by side. One that kind of acknowledges the past, and one that moves forward, and that there are action items in that second resolution to make a different kind of future… to change the future is the number one most important thing in this project, and I think that that's happening… I mean everything happens more slowly than you want it to, but I think it's
happening.” To her, this movement towards building an alternative and better system within the organization is thus seen as the “number one most important thing in this project.” Reconstruction is seen as absolutely critical.

While some of this reconstruction happens within the organization itself, others pointed out how reforming organizations that have perpetrated harm is not the only way to reconstruct more constructive patterns. Several interviewees highlighted how constructive systems already exist outside these organizations, and how it can be more effective to transfer resources and support to alternative systems that, importantly, are led by people of color. As an advocate for Indigenous rights, de-identified research participant D, said, a clear goal of historical accountability processes is about “just giving us our power back.”

Some of the organizations examined here have initiated this sort of reconstruction process. Georgetown, for example, has contributed support to help found a new organization, The Descendants Truth and Reconciliation Foundation, which is run and led by descendants. The clearest example of this, however, is the case of Yale Union where resources were transferred to NACF. Reuben described the importance of NACF being a native-led arts organization, “What I’ve seen in our work is how critical it is to have this place that is native-led … it’s native focused, native-centered, and all of the services are for natives… It might not always fit for every native person, but they know that it's there... When it comes from our own communities, from our own knowledge bases, that’s how much more valuable that is than… You know, than MOMA saying, ‘Oh, we're going to have some native artists over here and sit alongside.’ That's great, I'd love that, but we don't need that, we would rather just have our own thing.” He was clear in noting the ways that existing solutions already exist: “What we have, you know solutions that we can offer, they're better than what they got a lot of times.” This act of land re-matriation
had a big impact on NACF, leading to more publicity for NACF, more requests to collaborate, and more interest from donors, ultimately allowing NACF to scale up its work.

Evan of the Association of Black Psychologists echoed this sentiment, sharing how there have always been alternatives to White dominant institutions, and historical accountability processes can play a role in transferring acknowledgement and resources towards these already existing systems, “We have African centered people practicing wellness the same way they've known for millennia, you know, so there all these paradigms of all these ways of knowing, these ways that people practice community healing…they don't get the financial support or are broadly taught, and so reform, I guess is still kind of circumscribed in my way of understanding… For me, it is less about reform, it’s more like, let's expand the genre of work, let’s fund this, let's talk about that.” APA has not (yet) contributed resources or support towards structures outside its organization, however.

A model for others

Interviewees also described the ways these historical accountability processes were also creating models for others. Each of these organizations is on the leading edge of organizational historical accountability work, and people involved were very aware that others would be looking to their processes. Jenny of Yale Union, for example, described how, “it was really important to just see it [the land transfer] happen. You know, it's one of the first times it has happened to just recognize that white people stole this land from Native Americans and maybe some of it should be returned.” Similarly, Reuben spoke of the significance of this project beyond Yale Union and NACF, saying, “We knew that it would stand as not just a representation of bringing to bear all of the historical trauma that we've experienced through all of the land
transfers, that this would stand as a beacon for other organizations to consider their participation and systemic inequities.”

Professor Marcia Chatelain also described how Georgetown would serve as model of other organizations, “It wasn't until 2015 that Georgetown was engaged in this process that I think other universities started to follow suit in earnest … [Georgetown] really showed that these conversations were inevitable… I think elite schools tend to dominate and determine what other schools do, and so I think elite schools that were able to do this process and not completely like, you know, have to close the doors and didn't lose, you know, didn't have a huge backlash from donors, I think signal that other elite institutions can get engaged in this work.” Indeed, since Georgetown has undertaken this process, many universities across the country have started to examine their own legacies of slavery. Rochell sees the Georgetown process as modeling a process that may have impact beyond the field, calling it “the model for healing the nation.”

A realignment

Ultimately, many participants spoke to how historical accountability processes seek to fundamentally shift ways of being. Laura Hill, who leads Coming to the Table- Virginia’s Historic Triangle, described how she was motivated to take on historical accountability work, saying, “I think about what my descendants are going to be doing in 2121 and 2122. You know, 100 years from now, what are my descendants going to be doing? ... [The] focus is on helping America have a better future and working to make our communities, our individual communities, and our country, a better place for future generations.”

Participants spoke to the ways these processes seek to bring light to past harms, to work towards repair, and many also really see these processes as ecological, and ultimately, about reconstructing not only human relationships, and organizational relationships, but our
relationship with the Earth itself. David Ragland, for example, described how these processes help contribute to “a realignment” that “honors sacred medicines, and honors the land, not as something that people can own. How do you own land? How do you own what is alive? … A realignment is looking at the world the way the world actually lives and breathes as opposed to like the way white supremacy has moved us.” Evan expressed a similar idea saying, “This could really be a point where we could advance all those different knowledges, in all those ways of well-being in a way that benefits the community, and not talking just about psychology. Like we can cultivate wellness as it pertains to climate, as it pertains to our relationship with nature, as it pertains to our relationship with justice.”

An advocate for Indigenous rights, de-identified research participant D, also suggested that these processes can influence “the way that we are in relationship, not just with each other, but also with the land.” And Reuben similarly described how historical accountability processes “try to, you know, make amends in some way. First, yes to us as people, as communities, as nations, but really to the Earth, and ultimately that's what it has to be about.”
Chapter 6: Discussion

At the outset of this process, I set out to investigate the ways that organizations who have committed historical harms undertake historical accountability projects for racial justice. Interview participant and scholar Sharon Stein asked, “How do you address the unpayable? That is, to me, perhaps the most interesting question.” This question also interested me, and I strived to identify how organizations sought to address the unpayable, examining three historical accountability processes and the ways that participants perceived these processes. I asked, what did these organizations do in their processes? What were some of the facilitating factors and challenges they encountered? What elements of their projects did participants see as particularly essential?

Through interviews and reviews of publicly available resources, I used an exploratory case study approach to examine three historical accountability processes: APA’s public apology and action plan to address its history of perpetuating racism, Georgetown University grappling with its history of slavery, and the land transfer from Yale Union and the Native Arts and Culture Foundation in the name of land re-matriation. I also interviewed several scholars and activists specializing in historical accountability, truth-telling, institutional repair, and reparations. Using a thematic analysis approach, I sorted this data into codes and themes.

I identified several themes that closely overlap with the Constructive Multicultural Organizational Development model, and used this framework to organize my findings. I found that across cases, several interviewees highlighted key levers of change that helped spark and facilitate these historical accountability processes including both external and internal shocks to the system, enlightened and committed leadership, aligning the historical accountability process with the organizational mission, and the work of organizational activists. The idea of shocks to
the system connects with the idea of destabilization highlighted in the CMOD model (Coleman et al., 2017), suggesting that it can be necessary to have some sort of motivating force to spark organizational change. The other levers of change (i.e. enlightened leadership, mission alignment, and organizational activists) also connect to the idea of bolstering latent positive attractors (Coleman et al, 2017), or a pattern to shift into once the system is sufficiently destabilized. In particular, organizational activists can be understood as bolstering latent positive attractors. Research on attractor dynamics suggests that as the dynamics of negative attractors strengthen, so too does the likelihood of a latent positive potential (Vallacher et al., 2013), in part because suppressed elements within a system can self-organize to promote positive dynamics (Coleman et al., 2017). Organizational activism is a clear example of this: as they perceive inequity, bias, discrimination, and harm within the system, they organize and work to create more equity, inclusion, and justice, strengthening latent positive attractors that the system then has the potential to shift into if and when certain conditions are met.

Participants also spoke to the ways the main challenges identified in these historical accountability processes centered around the ways these initiatives could serve to maintain and uphold existing troubled dynamics through replicating exclusion, resistance to change, and performativity. Finally, participants identified several critical elements of historical accountability processes. These included articulating patterns through connecting the past, present, and future, i.e. acknowledging historical harms and the ways these contributed to ongoing and continuing dynamics; deconstructing destructive patterns through taking down myths, giving something up, and experiencing loss; and reconstructing constructive patterns through re-membering ignored or forgotten histories, developing relationships between perpetrating institutions and harmed parties, bolstering alternative organizational structures both
internally and externally, creating models of historical accountability, and ultimately contributing to a realignment in ways of being.

Through these findings, I believe there are different aims and mental models, implicit and explicit, people and organizations may use to drive, support, and understand institutional historical accountability processes. Based on my findings, I started to notice ways historical accountability processes often (sometimes simultaneously) serve to maintain current patterns, deconstruct harmful patterns, and reconstruct constructive patterns.

Below I suggest five frames or orientations that may undergird institutional historical accountability processes: Perform, Reform, Repair, Dismantle, and Realign (see Table 4 for summary). I want to highlight these are not mutually exclusive orientations. Institutions working towards historical accountability may be (and in fact are likely) involved in processes which include aspects of several frames simultaneously. Different perceivers often perceive the same institution in different ways, and different aspects of a single case may fall within different orientations.
### Table 4. Organizational Orientations for Historical Accountability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community-focused</td>
<td>Involves broad participation from citizens and other stakeholders in the decision-making process, aiming to achieve a consensus on policies and actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center-focused</td>
<td>Centered on the historical accountability of government institutions, emphasizing the need for transparency and accountability in governance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center-focused</td>
<td>Centered on historical accountability of government institutions, promoting the concept of a &quot;people's center&quot; and the role of citizens in shaping policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inertia-focused</td>
<td>Focused on the persistence of historical accountability practices in the face of resistance, highlighting the importance of overcomes and perseverance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process-focused</td>
<td>Concentrated on the procedural aspects of historical accountability, ensuring that processes are transparent, consistent, and effective.</td>
</tr>
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**Note:** The orientations listed above are illustrative and not exhaustive. The table provides a brief overview of the different approaches to historical accountability, each with its own strengths and challenges.
Some organizations use historical accountability processes as a way to maintain the status quo and allow the institution to continue on its current path without significant changes. Historical accountability processes become a way to wipe away any smears or threats to image, and a form of impression management. Organizations can take on a variety of strategies to engage in forgetting work (see Coraiola & Derry, 2020 and Mena et al., 2016 for examples). Mena et al. (2016) show how engaging in organizational forgetting can be beneficial to the organization, allowing it to preserve its legitimacy and pave the way for organizational survival. While generally organizations may distort or hide harmful incidents in order to aid in a forgetting process, even public apologies and acknowledgment of past harms can serve as strategic shows of remorse which can paradoxically lead to the forgetting of harmful incidents. Mena et al., for example, draw a parallel to “greenwashing,” where firms repeatedly communicate about the environment and their commitment to sustainability, even when this commitment does not exist (p. 730). Similarly, organizations may emphasize their acknowledgment to past harms, and pay lip service to racial justice without taking further actions.

Similarly, Sara Ahmed (2012) has written about “performance culture” where discussion about diversity replaces the work of actual transformation. She describes an example where a race policy document she wrote received an award for being the best document submitted, showing how “a document that documents inequality becomes usable as a measure of good performance” (2012, p. 84). She asserts that “while doing the document is doing something, it is also a way of not doing something: you do the document rather than ‘doing the doing,’ where this other sense of doing would require doing something more than the document” (p. 86). In a similar way, apologies for harms, and processes and people committed to analyzing these past
harms can become a measure of good performance, and replace the work of actually trying to repair past harms, dismantling the structures that maintain the legacies of these harms, and preventing these harms from happening again.

In this frame of performing, historical accountability projects may include public apologies, written statements, webpages, and marketing, but are not accompanied by shifts in power hierarchies or structures, or meaningful interaction with harmed parties, and harmed parties are not satisfied with results. While there may be processes or people assigned to enact historical accountability, there are no (or minimal) tangible changes, attempts at repair, or transfer of resources or power made by the organization, and ongoing harms continue.

Historical accountability processes as a way to perform racial justice can lead organizations to maintain patterns of harm, rather than disrupt and change dynamics that have privileged certain groups at the expense of others. This frame can be seen in some of the challenges highlighted by participants in the case studies explored here in the ways that interviewees described processes as performative and institutions as invested in theoretical work rather than actual changes (Coraiola & Derry, 2020).

Reform

Some institutions use historical accountability processes to reform the organizations. This may occur when institutions decide their current modus operandi is no longer desirable, and/or believe that adapting and fundamentally changing the institution would make the organization better equipped to survive in the future. The aim of this orientation is often to prevent future serious mistakes so these organizations can survive and help an expanded group of people thrive. Historical accountability processes become the basis for internal discussion around past and ongoing harms, and lead to institutional change processes. This process may include apologies, a
thorough accounting of past wrongs, and concrete action plans implemented to change structures within organizations. Often people in bridging communities may be promoted or valued internally, and also expected to do much of the labor of transforming the institution. This process may be sparked by external political shocks, or accusations towards the organization, accompanied by committed leadership and/or many internal organizational activists. Using historical accountability for reform results in an internal shift in power, resources, and/or structures, and often highlights ideas of inclusion and belonging. This approach centers institutions, bridging communities, and those who are currently excluded in the institutional world, but would like to be included. Historical accountability becomes about offering a counter-narrative of the organization’s history, and using this understanding to reform the institution and shift power dynamics internally.

This frame connects to a “history-as-power” view of organizational change (Suddaby et al., 2016). This perspective is taken from Marx’s view of power and holds assumptions that organizations are shaped by history into social structures that define social position and the division of labor, that history solidifies differences in power within an organization, and that change occurs dialectically, where organizations go through large periods of stasis, and then encounter an oppositional force which unbalances this stasis, allowing change to occur (Suddaby et al., 2016). In this view, change occurs through organizational praxis, where an organization engages in reflection about the ways that history shaped the current power arrangements of the institution, and gains insight that these structures can be changed. Organizations thus change in a process of punctuated equilibrium, where the organizations experience long periods of stability, and then short periods of revolutionary change (Suddaby et al., 2016; Gersick, 1988). From this lens, historical accountability can be understood as a period of praxis, where a contradictory lens
of history is surfaced challenging the status quo and paving the way for a period of rapid evolutionary change.

This frame also connects to Edgar Schein’s thoughts on organizational change based in Kurt Lewin’s change theory, where organizations go through three stages of a change process: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing (Schein, 1993). In this model, survival anxiety, or the anxiety that without change it will not be possible to continue, needs to be created and amplified. When this survival anxiety exceeds learning anxiety, or the anxiety that attempts at learning or changing will result in a loss of a sense of identity or competence, organizations, conditions thus become ripe for unfreezing. This also connects to the CMOD model, where in order for organizations to become more diverse, equitable, and inclusive, it can be useful to destabilize the system (Coleman et al., 2017). Historical accountability from this frame can thus be understood as an act of destabilization or amplifying survival anxiety, providing the motivation necessary for an organization to unfreeze and become open to reform and change.

In the cases highlighted here, this frame can be observed in the ways some interviewees pointed to their historical accountability processes as critical for organizational survival, a way to avoid future mistakes that parallel the past, and motivation for action to transform the institution. It particularly connects to the underlying aims of APA, where a revised and public understanding of the organization’s history has been used to provide support for an action plan aimed at racial equity mainly within the institution, as evidenced by a key priority in their action plan being “Efforts that promote an equitable, diverse, and inclusive work environment within APA staff, the association at-large, and the broader psychology workforce” (Akbar et al., 2022).
**Repair**

When organizations undertake historical accountability processes to engage in repair, they aim to acknowledge past wrongs, satisfy the desires of harmed parties, make amends, and prevent repetition of harms in future. Organizations might do this through truth-telling or dialogue sessions directly with harmed parties, they may focus on acknowledgement of pain caused to harmed parties, and seek to meet the needs and desires of harmed parties. This approach often involves some form of compensation. This process may perhaps be driven in part by outside legal or government pressures. Repair centers those who have historically been harmed by the institution.

This often parallels truth and reconciliation processes, and as such may include elements of reparations, which according to the United Nations includes *restitution* (i.e. restoring victims to the situation before violations), *compensation* for economic damage, *rehabilitation* (e.g., medical and psychological care), *satisfaction* (e.g. cessation of all harms, public apology, sanctions towards perpetrators, commemoration for victims), and *guarantees of non-repetition* (OHDCR, 2005).

This frame is exemplified by what descendants and organizational activists have pressured Georgetown to move towards, and has in some ways initiated (i.e., through the Carnegie dialogues). Other examples include aspects of the historical accountability process of French National Railways (SNCF) which transported people to concentration camps during the Holocaust and the multimillion settlement the country of France (not SNCF) paid to some survivors, their spouses, and children in response (see Federman, 2017; 2018; 2021a; 2021b).

**Dismantle**

For some institutions, historical accountability may be about dismantling harmful structures. Here, the aim is to deconstruct institutional systems of white supremacy and
oppression, and historical accountability processes can be a way of highlighting the ways the institution is inherently a colonial structure. In this orientation, institutions are recognized as inherently a structure of white supremacy, and parts or all of the institution are actively deconstructed. This approach is often seeking to prevent future harms and centers future communities.

Some have asked, “Is it possible to decolonize institutions of colonial power (such as the academy, government, etc.), but, further, is it possible to decolonize through them?” (Sium, Desai, and Ritskes (2012, p. iv). The dismantle frame connects with logics which suggest these perpetrating institutions are incapable of being the solution, or that “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” (Lorde, 2003). In this way, this frame also connects with the idea of path dependence, where the current and future possibilities of an organization are constrained by the initial conditions and historical path of an organization (i.e., its historical harms), leading to a kind of “lock-in” where significantly veering too far from the original trajectory is no longer possible (see Arthur, 1989; Gersick, 1991; Booth, 2003; Teece et al., 1997). In this view, an institution may be observed to be “beyond repair,” and as such, it is viewed as imperative to move “beyond reform,” i.e., where decolonization can be interpreted to mean the “dismantling of modernity’s systematic violences (capitalism, colonialism, racism, heteropatriarchy, nation-state formation)” (Andreotti et al., 2015, p. 31).

The dismantle framing thus centers on ending and taking apart. While this process could be an active process of deconstruction or abolishing, it can also involve attending to an institution that is declining. Scholars investigating decolonization within a higher education context have called attention to a process called “hospicing” which entails “sitting with a system in decline, learning from its history, offering palliative care, seeing oneself in that which is
dying, attending to the integrity of the process, dealing with tantrums, incontinence, anger and hopelessness, cleaning up, and clearing the space for something new” (Andreotti et al., 2015, p. 28). An insight in hospicing is the idea that “we need to be properly taught by the system’s successes and failures by facing its death and attending to its affliction rather than turning our back or attempting to murder it before it is ready to go” (Andreotti et al., 2015, p. 15).

Through this process of dismantling, privileged groups may experience loss of power and resources. The labor of transformation (in this case dissolution/deconstruction) often involves changes on the part of perpetrating institutions and privileged groups (e.g., stepping down from positions of power, giving up resources). This could result from a variety of situations ranging from external shocks and outside pressures, to leadership that feels ethically aligned with processes of decolonization.

This frame is exemplified in the framing the leaders of Yale Union used to describe their process of closing the institution and transferring the building, and the accompanying sense of loss on the part of some Yale Union employees. This framing can also be seen in a variety of settings such as in calls to abolish ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement), to defund the police, and in prison abolitionism. This framing is often coupled with realigning (see below), as calls to deconstruct structures and systems are often paired with calls to replace them with alternatives.

Realign
For organizations that are using a realigning frame, the aim of a historical accountability process is to redirect attention, resources, power, and respect to institutions and structures outside historically harmful institutions. Historical accountability processes in this orientation can offer framing for why alternative institutions may be better equipped for resources and power. This
approach no longer centers perpetrating institutions. Instead, it centers alternatives external to the perpetrating institution, and other ways of being which may be new or perhaps that have existed for a long time, perhaps communities that have been historically harmed but are thriving, participants of alternative systems, and/or future communities. In this way, it can be likened to framings of decolonization as a “restoration of cultural practices, thinking, beliefs and values” (Monchalin, 2016, p.293 citing Michael Yellow Bird) or indigenization (McNamara & Naepi, 2018). In this orientation, alternative systems and institutions gain resources, power, acknowledgement, and respect, and the labor of transformation is done by alternative institutions. It can often be coupled with dismantling, with the resources and power transferring to these alternative systems.

This frame connects with those who reject the notion that challenging oppression and systemic change can be accomplished through the institutions which have been instrumental in perpetuating oppression, instead highlighting the need to center and promote change through alternative structures. It maps onto what has been described as “system walkout” where “alternative communities and epistemologies are developed or reclaimed” (Andreotti et al., 2015, p. 27). For example, scholar Glen Crouthard rejects the notion of attaining increased recognition from the settler state and society as a path towards decolonization, and instead advocates for orienting more towards “critically revaluing, reconstructing and redeploying culture and tradition in ways that seek to prefigure, alongside those with similar ethical commitments, a radical alternative to the structural and psycho-affective facets of colonial domination” (Coulthard, 2007, p. 456). In a similar vein, scholar Audre Lorde (2003) advocates for operating outside dominant and oppressive structures, writing, “It is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside
the structures, in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish. It is learning how to make our differences and make them strengths. For the master’s tools can never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us to temporarily beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change” (p. 26).

Similarly to the Dismantle framing, Realigning also connects to the idea of path dependency, suggesting that perpetrating organizations are limited by their history to truly transform, making it necessary to accomplish real change through structures which have consistently been shown to be diverse, equitable, and inclusive. From a dynamical systems perspective, realigning can thus be understood as shifting the system into a positive attractor pattern. From this lens, these alternative structures and organizations can be viewed as either latent positive attractors (which perhaps did not originally exist, but always had the potential to become manifest stable states), or as positive attractors which were already manifest but perhaps viewed as separate systems (e.g. equitable and inclusive organizations outside the existing organization), which can be strengthened by an influx of resources, attention, and respect. Promoting these positive attractors is thus seen as a way of shifting the system into a more constructive stable state.

This framing also ties into a promotive perspective (see Molden et al., 2008 for an overview of differences between motivations for promotion and prevention), i.e. imagining healthier futures, rather than the emphasis being on preventing future harms. As such, this orientation often includes an ecological framing, suggesting that transferring power to these alternative systems is a way of caring for the planet, and critical to thriving in the future.
In the case studies highlighted here, this framing can most clearly be observed in the ways NACF received land, increased funding, and attention, and ultimately was able to expand its impact through the historical accountability process it participated in with Yale Union.

6.2 Reflections

I want to highlight this research occurred during a larger context where issues of race and racism are at the forefront of national conversations, where racial justice is both openly discussed and championed, and at the same time, disparaged and dismissed. I began this project in 2021, shortly after the advent of COVID, shortly after Black Lives Matter protests erupted across the country, and in the midst of what has been called a racial reckoning. Throughout the course of this research, I noticed more and more institutions reckoning with historical harms, and widespread calls to decolonize a variety of institutions. As calls for racial justice were amplified, so too have calls to silence conversation around race, racism, and decolonization, as exemplified by restricting and banning the teaching of critical race theory in several states.

As I did this research, the organizations highlighted in these cases also evolved and changed. Their processes are still unfolding and for some of them, what is captured here may still just be the initial stages of longer and more involved processes. Given this, it is important to note that this dissertation captures the perspectives of participants (and myself) at a moment in time. As these organizational processes continue to develop and as the larger context continues to shift, perceptions of these processes will likely change as well.

When I began this research project, I saw historical accountability processes as transformative justice work. And I still do. But I see the picture as much more complex than I did at the outset. I sought out organizations that I perceived to be leading examples of organizations doing this work. While I still see these organizations as leading examples, I now also see ways
these projects include aspects which serve to maintain patterns of inequity and exclusion, even as they work to change this. I also see the ways that these historical accountability processes are pieces of larger organizational patterns, how many of these organizations have long had people both within and outside calling for anti-oppression. Additionally, I have been struck by how the people within these organizations are often simultaneously critical of these historical accountability processes, hopeful for more change, and deeply proud of what has been accomplished.

In the process of this research, I also encountered the ways that my own project mirrors the processes of these organizations, and also replicates these patterns, often failing to include the people most affected by these historical harms. I was unable to find people from local indigenous groups in the Portland area willing to participate in this project and offer perspectives from the people whose traditional lands the Yale Union building sits on, though I did outreach multiple local tribal leaders and artists. I did not include the people likely most affected by APA’s harms such as incarcerated people, and people with mental disabilities. As someone who is part of institutions which mirror the institutions which have enacted historical harms in these case studies (i.e., as someone employed in higher education, and recently, by a Jesuit school; and as someone who is in the field of psychology and is familiar with APA practices), I, like these institutions, found it challenging to identify and include some of the people most directly impacted. I encountered structural challenges to including certain groups- for example, I would have needed to change and obtain a special IRB to include what they call “vulnerable populations” such as people who are incarcerated and have mental disabilities, highlighting the ways the structures and processes I participate in also can serve to uphold these patterns even as they strive to “protect” (Teachers College Institutional Review Board). Through this work, I also
personally learned so much, and have thought much more deeply about my own roles in historical patterns of harm and oppression.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

In exploring the historical accountability efforts undertaken by APA, Georgetown, and Yale Union/NACF, I found that each institution had different histories, varying aims for their accountability processes, and took up the work of historical accountability in different ways. These organizations were pushed (and continue to be pulled) towards this work for a variety of reasons, ranging from calls to action from harmed parties, students, organizational activists and leaders, to internal shocks to the system such as financial crises, to an external environment which challenges institutions to look at their own complicity in systemic racism. These historical accountability projects often had a way of expanding beyond what these organizations originally envisioned, and for most of these organizations, they are not finished. These processes are still evolving and taking new turns today.

Processes were varied and included research projects aimed at uncovering and publicizing problematic histories, dialogues with harmed parties, creating action plans for institutional reform, the closure of an institution, the creation of a new institution, and the transfer of land. These processes involved elements which served to connect the past with the present and the future, deconstruct destructive dynamics, reconstruct constructive dynamics, and to also maintain existing patterns and serve the perpetrating institutions. Participants interviewed critiqued and problematized these processes and also praised these processes as transformational and offering important insights for other institutions that may be interested in this work.

While some of these historical accountability processes resulted in changes to the perpetrating institutions, the processes and impact sometimes went beyond these institutions, affecting members of harmed parties, alternative structures and organizations, and the broader fields these organizations are situated within. Historical accountability projects can be about
shaping an organizational narrative, an impetus for reform, a process of repair, or a justification to transfer resources, attention, and power. Given these differences, I propose five frames or orientations for the ways historical accountability projects tackle racial injustices: perform, reform, repair, dismantle, and realign. These orientations are not mutually exclusive, but may help distinguish different aims, logics, theories of change, and elements that undergird different historical accountability projects aimed at racial justice. These orientations also serve to connect existing theories on both the role of history in shaping organizational trajectories and processes of institutional decolonization.

For leaders and organizational members interested in taking on a historical accountability project, some practical implications include:

- **Embrace destabilization.** While both internal shocks (such as conflict, crises, and disgrace) and external shocks in the larger culture can be uncomfortable and even frightening, they are also an opportunity to challenge the status quo and make meaningful change.

- **Consider facilitating factors.** Aligning a historical accountability process with the organizational mission, having leadership who is committed to historical accountability, and utilizing the power of organizational activists can help bring this work forward.

- **Listen and take direction from harmed parties.** It is critical to listen to and involve organizational activists, those critical of the institution, alternative institutions, and especially those who have been most harmed by the organization’s history. These key constituents can help shed insight on processes and next steps.

- **Consider the ways history connects to the present and the future.** Histories of harm often have enduring legacies, and it is critical to understand and acknowledge the ways in
which these harms have continuing impact today and into the future. This process may reveal how patterns of racial injustice are maintained through multiple dynamics from the structural to the psychological, making them difficult to address. This makes mission creep likely - the scope and aims of a historical accountability process are likely to evolve and expand as the process unfolds.

- **Consider whom the work is for and why historical accountability is important.** Is the aim to protect the organization? To reform the organization? Is the aim to work towards repair? Is the aim to dismantle harmful structures? To support institutions that can make meaningful change? Perhaps multiple of these? Recognize that there are a variety of kinds of historical accountability projects, and consider your aims.

- **Be prepared to divest.** Historical accountability often means shedding parts of an organizational identity and organizational narrative, changing existing structures, and can also involve an organization and those within an organization relinquishing power and resources. This process can be painful and involve loss, particularly for groups historically privileged by these organizations. Plan for backlash and resistance.

- **Look to engage, support, and perhaps build alternative structures and institutions.** Creating a new narrative which acknowledges harms, and building new internal structures can help reconstruct more constructive institutional patterns. Sometimes the most effective ways of moving forward may be outside the organization, and involve supporting and/or transferring resources, power, and attention.

  Historical accountability processes do not serve a single purpose, they can be used in the pursuit of various aims and objectives. They can be about addressing the past, but they can also be about restructuring the present, and paving the way for a more just future. As many interview
participants described, these processes can ultimately work to shift the status quo, moving organizations from historically ingrained patterns of extraction, harm, and inclusion, through processes of repair, and ultimately towards a structural, material, psychological, and even a spiritual shift for a more sustainable and reciprocal future.
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Appendix A: Interview Questions

**Interview Questions for Organizational Members**
Can you describe the historical accountability process your organization undertook?
Why did your organization take this on?
What steps did your organization take in this process?
What was your role in this process?
How does your own identity influence the role you had in this process?
What challenges did the organization face? Did you face?
What were the impacts/ actions at the organizational level (e.g policy changes, hiring changes, board changes)? For you personally?
What impacts are you looking to measure down the road?
Do you think this brought about anything unique?
What do you hope to see down the road?
What would you do differently?

**Interview Questions for Representatives of Affected Communities**
Can you describe the historical accountability process the organization undertook?
How do you feel about this process?
What was your role in this process?
How does your own identity influence the role you had in this process?
What challenges did you face? Did your community face?
What were the impacts/ actions at the community level? For you personally?
How do you think the organization was impacted?
Do you think this brought about anything unique?
What do you hope to see down the road?
What would you do differently?

**Interview Questions for Academics and Activists**
What do you see as the goal of historical accountability processes?
What kinds of organizations do you think should undertake these processes?
What elements should an organizational historical accountability process include?
Who should be involved in a historical accountability process?
What might be ideal outcomes of a historical accountability process?
What might be potential pitfalls of a historical accountability process?