

[THEME MUSIC]

"Sustainability Unwrapped"-- a conversational podcast about responsibility, ethics, inequalities, climate change, and other challenges of our times, where science meets practise to think about our world and how to make our society more sustainable, one podcast at a time. So welcome to this episode of the "Sustainability Unwrapped" podcast, brought to you by Hanken School of Economics in Finland. My name is Eva Nilsson, and I'm a PhD student, passionate about political economy, businesses, and politics in Africa. And today we are here to discuss a very timely topic, the Black Lives Matter movement and how slavery and colonialism still matters for Western businesses.

The Black Lives Matter movement has brought the legacy of slavery and colonialism to the Western consciousness in a way perhaps not witnessed since the end of formal colonialism in most African countries in the 1960s. It has reminded Western publics that colonialism lives on today in the forms of economic and knowledge-based dominance as a power structure that reproduces inequality and racism. The corporate sector has not gone unnoticed by the movement.

On one hand, activists, at least in the UK, France, and the US, have demanded businesses that can be traced back to slavery for reparations and formal apologies. In the UK, the insurance company Lloyd's of London; the banks HSBC, Barclays, and Royal Bank of Scotland; in the US, the banks JP Morgan, Bank of America, and the clothing retailer Brooks Brothers; and in France, AXA Insurance company, Banque de France, and the maker of Hennessy Cognac have been pointed fingers at. On the other hand, many large multinationals such as Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Coca-Cola have endorsed the Black Lives Matter movement and marketed their diversity strategies in order to profile themselves as responsible corporations.

In light of these recent developments, we are here today to discuss how and why slavery and colonialism still reflect on Western corporations, and what steps should be taken towards decolonization. And I'm very happy to have three distinguished academics with me today. They all have researched colonialism and its different expressions in today's world.

First, we have Stella Nkomo, who currently holds the position of Strategic Professor in the Department of Human Resource Management at the University of Pretoria, and is the president of the Africa Academy of Management. Professor Nkomo is a noted scholar in the areas of leadership and change, diversified work forces, and women and leadership, and the author of several books and articles. She

has also been awarded for her lifetime achievements in Africa's most influential women in business and government awards.

Then we have Professor Bobby Banerjee joining us from Cass Business School in London, where he is professor of management. Professor Banerjee's primary research interests are in the areas of sustainability, climate change, and corporate social responsibility, combined with Indigenous, post-colonial, and cultural studies, and the study of globalisation. He has published extensively in leading academic [AUDIO OUT] books.

And finally, we have Holger Weiss, who is currently serving as professor in general history at Abo Akademi University in Finland. His research focuses on global and Atlantic history, with a special focus on Nordic colonial aspirations in Africa and the Caribbean. He has also researched international labour movements, West African environmental history, and the history of Islam in Ghana. And to start this discussion, we will have a brief dive into history and ask Professor Weiss if he could tell us how and maybe also which corporations were involved in slave trade and colonialism. Please, the floor is yours, Professor Weiss.

Thank you. This is, of course, tackling a topic that stretches over 500 years in a few words is almost impossible. But let's see.

Let's kind of-- the basic line is that maybe look at the global history of slavery. It opens up the doors to racism, segregation, and discrimination. That's kind of the great general outline. And that kind of forms-- still affects us today. That would be kind of the really short outline.

When you think of corporations engaged in slave trade, and then, of course, not only we have to think of the transatlantic slave trade, we must also think of the slave trade concerning the Indian Ocean world, the slave trade going to North Africa and the Islamic world and so on. It's a very complex matter. And generally, when we speak about slave trade during the pre-colonial period, you usually-- we rather would focus on small enterprises, the really kind of-- it was a short phase when you had chartered companies that were engaged with this trade. In general, when you move into the 18th century, and then when you speak about the so-called hidden Atlantic, the illegal slave trade, which was when we speak about Brazil not even illegal, then you would find also smaller corporations being engaged.

But usually, the kind of long-term effects would be then slave traders investing their money somewhere else. You would find big slave plantation owners who would invest their fortunes they would have made out of these plantations back home in Britain or other areas. And that would then

be the link but that you could follow up.

But then kind of there's a breaking point in a sense when you start to focus on the colonial period, where you kind of really-- what you see is the effects of colonialism in a sense that, in particular when we focus on Africa, is that apart from South Africa, during the colonial period, there was very little investment in Africa colonies in comparison with investments in Russia, in North America, even South America, Australia from Europe. There was very little investment, financial investment, in terms of generating a kind of modern industrial sector, for example, or a modern transport sector. Rather, you would speak about during the colonial period, the establishment of enclave economies, which mainly would focus on either the mining sector or then plantation sector of producing raw materials like palm oil, ground nut oil, rubber, cotton, coffee, cocoa, and so on.

And then, of course, there are some well-known companies that are still existing today and that kind of have sometimes a dubious history, especially when we speak about their engagement in this enclave sector, in the plantation sector, for example, or in the mining sector, like Firestone in Liberia, when we speak on the rubber plantations, which really hit the headlines during the 1920s and 1930s for the use of forced labour. Earlier on, we have the well-known example of the Congo Free State and the use of forced labour. And about up to 10 million people died out of the so-called rubber boom at the turn of the 19th-20th century.

Then we could list on and go on the link with Unilever today and its background, Lever brothers, but also the soap industry, but also then the margarine industry in Europe. Really kind of when you go now to the grocery and buy [INAUDIBLE] margarine, that kind of would link you very closely back to raw material produced in Africa, which for a very long time during the colonial period was linked to the use of forced labour. So you could raise-- I mean, Nestle would be a case. [? Carbody ?] would be a case.

So that kind of would be the short introduction. And where we really kind of could open up kind of the long-term history of very few investments being done during the colonial period, the establishment of an [? eclectic ?] [? enclave ?] economy, with mainly focusing on mining or then plantations. But otherwise, we could really also make the case of that all of these raw materials have been produced, were processed outside Africa. So they were processed in Europe. So kind of the big-- the [INAUDIBLE] made out of these raw materials were never kind of reinvested back in Africa but then were invested in Europe in whatever kind of [INAUDIBLE].

How would you explain that Nestle, for example, that you raised as a case? How exactly then-- what

was Nestle's forum during colonialism? How can it be linked to colonialism?

Well, it's always, we have to go back with-- because these are now big multinational companies. And it is the kind of-- when they merged during the 1910s, 1920s, 1930s with previous companies that had been engaged in cocoa plantation or coffee plantations and so on, which would then be the link. And this is kind of-- it's, to my understanding, a very complex issue, because you really had to go back with mergers of these kind of now big companies, which are the kind of companies that were originally independent companies. But what's their engagement at let's say the end of the 19th century or the first 20 or 30 years during the 20th century.

All right. And since you have also researched Nordic colonial aspirations, I'm wondering if you have examples of Nordic companies or entrepreneurialists who have been active during colonialism.

Well, the Danish cases [? they ?] [? most ?] [? were not, ?] because Denmark had a trade possessions in West Africa. And they even tried to establish a plantation sector in-- on the Gold Coast, in today's Ghana, which failed, mainly due to environmental and political reasons. But there was a kind of aspiration to do so.

In the West Indies, Danish West Indies, which was sold to the USA in 1917, you had a plantation sector especially on St. Croix, with about 300 mainly sugar plantations. And, of course, the still-existing Danish sugar company [? Danisco, ?] which owns also the Finnish sugar company [INAUDIBLE], has its kind of background to that sector. So, yes, you can open up these kind of links, too.

But if you have in mind, let's say, Swedish engagements, there was for a brief period a Swedish West India company, which was established in 1786 and existed until 1805, which had the permission to engage in transatlantic slave trade but never did so. Realised that it didn't have the capacity to do so. But you had private enterprises and merchants on Saint Barthélemy, which was the Swedish colony in the West Indies, which engaged in the slave trade. So it wasn't the company itself, but it was private, mainly one-person enterprises, which do not exist anymore and kind of are very difficult to do research now because they haven't left any archive.

All right, thank you. I think these Nordic possessions often go under the radar because we're, of course, focused more on the big colonial powers like France and the UK, for example, and then might forget that also Nordics were involved and can be traced back to this time. So for all our Finnish and Nordic listeners, I think it might be interesting to hear that also these historical traces exist.

I mean, you do have-- but then we move into the late colonial period. And let's say after the Second

World War, you have Nordic companies, for example Swedish mining companies, being engaged in Liberia, for example, the [INAUDIBLE], for example.

Right.

So that kind of-- but has to do also with the [INAUDIBLE] to Nordic countries, which why you wouldn't find direct involvement during the 19th century.

But thank you. Let's move on to discuss also the forums in which colonialism still then lives on today, after all those years from the times of slavery and the actual historical face of colonialism. Let me ask first Professor Banerjee, you have written extensively about multinational companies in light of neocolonialism and imperialism. And you have even used the term corporate colonialism when describing how corporations can disrupt state rule with the threat of violence. Could you talk us through an example of a situation where a Western corporation can be considered a colonial actor today?

I thin you can drop the professor. Bobby's just fine.

OK, thanks.

Just, yeah, I guess a caveat before I start is I belong to a school formerly known as Cass Business School. The reason I say formerly is in July we found out during the height of the Black Lives Matter movement that our school Cass was named after Sir John Cass, who was a very active participant and senior executive in the slave trade. He was an executive director of the Royal African Company, which was the biggest slaving company in the world, responsible for shipping more African slaves to the Americas than any other institution.

So obviously, this has produced shock waves across. And we have quickly dropped the name. And we are now looking to find a new name and also rebranding.

So before I get into, I guess, the continuation of colonialism-- and also, it's important to realise I live in a city, London, which was the capital of the slave trade. The wealth of this country was made by slaves. So a lot of institutions are very nervous because they're now looking at their sources of funding. And almost everybody has some connection, especially in the city of London. So there's a lot of soul-searching going on, which is good, 200 years too late, but better late than never.

So I think if we talk about what kind of colonialism exists today in terms of corporate sector, we should probably go back to some history. Let's not forget that the world's first multinational

corporation was in 1602, which was the Dutch East India Company. They were the world's most multinational. And they were doing things back in the 17th century which a lot of companies are doing today, what we teach in the strategy textbooks-- exploring markets, competition, making deals with governments, organising communities. So it's not really different in terms of the strategies.

And if you fast forward a couple of hundred years from that, there is the infamous case of the United Fruit Company in South America and links with the CIA, and the so-called Banana Wars, where there was state capture in Honduras, and Guatemala, and attempts in Cuba and Colombia. So the links between foreign power intelligence agencies, big corporates, and then the links with local government has a long and very troubled history. So coming back to the modern era, where do I see the traces?

I study violent mining conflicts across the world. And there-- it's about 4,000 or 5,000 ongoing conflicts. It is no coincidence that all these conflicts are occurring in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Indigenous communities in North America and Australia. These are the former colonies.

It is also no coincidence that the companies who are involved in these conflicts are headquartered in New York, Berlin, Paris, Montreal, London. So these are the metropolitan centres. So the only difference is the white man has gone.

So the colonialism now is carried out by native elites like myself, I guess, who are now carrying on the same modes of colonial extraction, using the same discourses, and ironically, in India at least and in many parts of South America, ironically using colonial-era laws to imprison people who are opposing the mines. So the same laws that the British used to imprison people like Gandhi in India, the same laws are now used to imprison environmental activists, who are tribal people trying to protest mining. So that's the [? purpose ?] irony, I guess.

So to look at specific companies, it's not very difficult to point fingers at, obviously, the oil and gas industry. I think one thing we need to figure out in terms of how the power exists is sheer economic power. So if you look at the Fortune Global 500, the top 500 companies, their total revenue is \$31 trillion.

So these 500 companies there are essentially having revenues more than the top 100 countries. So the 26th-largest country in the world today is Walmart in terms of GDP economies. The 27th-largest economy is ExxonMobil-- sorry, is Royal Dutch Shell.

The 30th-largest economy is ExxonMobil. So these are-- so more than 50 economies of 100 are

corporations. So there is a [? strain ?] of economic power in terms of just money and wealth, which obviously buys a lot of influence, for instance.

So if you look at, for example, the mining industry in some of the remote areas in Latin America, I spent a lot of time in Australia. If you go to northern-- to the northern parts of the country, you have Rio Tinto, right? This is a mining town.

Now, this is a private corporation. They've built the roads. They've built the airport. They've built the railway station.

They've built the power plant. They've built the water supply. They've built the medical centre. They've built the hospital. They've built the schools.

This is a private corporation. So who does all these things? It's the government. And all this was done without any government subsidies. The government just gave them the land for free and no taxes.

So what on earth is a oil company or a mining company building roads and schools and hospitals, right? So you can see the dependency that sets up, right? So they are not the town. They are the town. They are the government.

And for local Aboriginal communities who don't have jobs in the mines, for them, they are the first [INAUDIBLE]. So if an Aboriginal child is sick, the mother does not go to the government. There is no government. The mother will go to Rio Tinto manager and say, please give me some money.

And in most cases, the manager will give them the money. But this woman, or her husband, or her family has no connection with the mine. They're not working there. They just happen to live there. Yes, the lands have gone.

So that relationship which you normally have is set up. And it's, of course, that then that dependency continues, right? So you are essentially playing the role of government as well.

Shell in Nigeria is another example. During the height of the troubles, I mean, at that one point of time, oil was about 30% to 40% of Nigeria's GDP. It's now come down to 10%. So this was in the '80s, when Shell got into trouble.

And there was a classic case, where a Shell manager was kidnapped by the local community because of the environmental problems. He was finally released. But then he was interviewed. And he said, things are back to front in Nigeria.

The government is in the oil business. And we are a local government. Again, in that particular area, the hospitals, the schools, the roads were all built by Shell.

But there's a catch to that. So they said, this is great [INAUDIBLE]. They built a hospital.

But there's no doctors. There's no patients. Why? Because Shell says it's the government's responsibility.

They built a school. There are no teachers, right? They've built a connection to the water, which Shell has, but there's no water because there's no water pipe coming in there. So these are essentially, as I said, supposedly government activities. And this continues.

And the last point I want to make is the privatisation of islands. So post the second invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, after the US troops, the second-largest soldiers in there were private corporations. The entire peacekeeping force, so-called peacekeeping anyways, are now run by private corporations who have no accountability.

So if a US soldier-- and this has actually happened in Iran-- he went crazy, and he shot about 17 women and children. He was tried, convicted, and sentenced. Somebody from the private military contractor, which was at that point of time called Blackwater, did the same thing. And he was just thrown out of there. Nobody knows where he is.

So the accountability of the private soldiers, mercenaries, are not to any government, right? Worse comes to worst, it's for shareholders. So there is a privatisation of violence.

Violence is a legitimate act of the state. Only the government can carry on violence, not private actors. But we're seeing more and more in the Middle East in many other peacekeeping forces is private corporations, who are now being-- kind of violence has been outsourced to them.

Thank you, Bobby. You are painting a quite grim picture, which is true in many ways. My own research is also on an oil and gas investment in Tanzania in Eastern Africa. And it is very-- these kind of colonial encounters are very prevalent in that case, too.

Let's move on now to Professor Nkomo. May I call you Stella also?

Of course, yes, Eva.

So, Stella, you have written extensively on diversity within organisations, and about white privilege, and on the link between colonialism and racialization in organisations in today's US. Can you talk

about how you see that white privilege is present within Western businesses and what kind of structural racism it entails?

Thank you, Eva, and great to be with Holger and Bobby. Yes, and I need to-- I also need to go back a little bit, because I think it's very important for people to understand that structural racism started taking place just-- and was implicated and very important to colonisation and slavery. So these racialization processes gave birth to the idea of white supremacy.

So what holds up structural racism is the belief in white supremacy. And white supremacy put out this idea that unequal development of human societies could be explained by hierarchical biological differences that placed the so-called white race above the yellow and Black races. And so feeding into the rationale for colonialism, it was positioned as a civilising mission by a superior white race. And this was something that the white race could do to civilise other parts of the world.

So this idea of white supremacy, the superiority of white people compared to inferior races, Black and brown people, spread across the globe. And you talked about the Nordic countries. So even though the Nordic countries may not have been involved directly with slavery, that idea of white supremacy spread across the globe. So even though they were not right in it, whiteness is sort of like an enveloping concept.

The second thing I want to make, and it was mentioned about the Dutch East India Company, that the structural racism could even be seen early, even in how they managed their businesses, how they handled the slave trade, and also in the industrialization area-- era. If we go back to scientific management, and we look at the management practises that were developing in the early 20th century, the work of Frederick Taylor, there was already racism and the idea of white supremacy built into those practises. So one thing I find very annoying, frankly, is that companies today with the Black Lives Matter, they seem to be discovering that, wow, we have structural racism. So that's kind of ironic because I need to say to them, it's always been there.

We don't have time, but I would refer readers to the work of Bill Cook, who has done a lot of work showing the connection of management techniques to techniques used to manage slaves on US plantations, a wonderful book by Roediger and Esch, *The Production of Difference*, where they talk about race management, how racial knowledge informed management practises. So my point there is that structural racism has been around for centuries. But the interest today is in how does it manifest now.

So even though companies seem to not be aware of it, it is there. So I would point to three very

observable manifestations. And I'll talk about the hidden ones.

The first three I would point to, which Bobby already alluded to, Western domination of the world's top corporations. And when you look at that, the top 10 countries with the most global 500 companies are in Europe and North America. Of course, we begin to see that China, South Korea, and Japan are also featuring on that list.

But if you look at those companies, they mirror the racial hierarchy in terms of dominance. And the fact that those corporations are predominantly controlled by white male executives and boards, and deeper than that, the zone of power of those corporations and the predominantly white men who lead them extends beyond even their corporate boundaries. It goes into the norms and structures of international markets as well as controlling capital markets, your IMF, your World Development Bank.

For example, South Africa is at the mercy of the rating agencies. So even though, for example, the US has huge debt, their ratings do not get lowered. So that's a puzzle to us in South Africa. And then I think the connection to the G7. The G7 forum also is a racial hierarchy.

The second manifestation is the white domination of business ownership. So ownership is in the hands of predominantly people designated as white. And the third one, which Bobby and Holger both talked about, if you-- the large majority of exploited and oppressed workers are precisely those members of races and ethnicities into which formerly colonised populations were categorised. And this continues to influence contemporary racial inequalities in the workplace.

So the appropriation of labour from so-called Third World populations allows global companies to profit. And then internally, you look at the racial hierarchy in any large multinational, any company in the US or North America, Black and brown employees are always at the bottom of the hierarchy. They dominate in menial, precarious jobs and organisations, jobs with low flexibility, low pay, and benefits. So people of colour-- I'm using that term, it's not the best term-- remain super-glued to the corporate floor.

Think about it. In a recent study, found that if you look at the major indices in the UK, the US, and Canada, only 5% of the CEOs are from ethnic minority backgrounds. None of the countries have any women CEOs from an ethnic and racial minority background.

If you go to the US, in 2020-- this is recent statistics-- there are only 5 African or Black CEOs and 10 Asian CEOs heading Fortune 500 companies. So those are observable. They're known. Although corporates don't seem-- they seem to be shocked by it. It took the coronavirus for them to realise

systemic racism.

I guess we should be happy or optimistic that now we hear people saying systemic racism might exist in corporate America or in the UK companies. But I think the deeper imbeddedness of whiteness is what we should also talk about. So structural racism today is a little bit more nuanced.

So the ascendancy of white employees to top positions and better paying jobs is seen as a natural outcome of individual effort and merit and not due to the ascendancy coming at the expense of holding down or subordinating Black and brown people. So these racialized hierarchies that began in the colonial and slavery area become taken for granted, aspects of corporations. They are enforced by the dominant group's power position.

So any threat to changing the racial composition of organisations of that hierarchy are met with resistance. So for example, affirmative action, equality legislation, and even diversity programmes are resisted. They are seen as illegitimate intrusions into normal meritorious processes and practises. The definition of the ideal worker, how we populate job descriptions and associated competencies, are deeply entwined with the ideology of white supremacy, because those designated as white are assumed to possess the right stuff and the right fit. So it's kind of this interesting correlation between the characteristics of a successful Western corporation and those traits ascribed to the white race-- strength, aggressiveness, decisiveness, competitiveness, all assumed superior traits.

And the last point I'll make is the point I started with. The most insidious aspect of structural racism today is its denial. So organisations are positioned as raceless spaces. So white domination has become normalised. It's neutral and normal.

And the extent that Black people, brown people continue to be at the bottom of organisations or in the essential jobs, that idea gets deeply embedded in the psyche of people. It gets defended. And this is why even so-called diversity initiatives don't change the representation of Black people in significant ways.

So I'll stop there. So my point is racial hierarchies and racist management practises were created and imposed initially during colonialism and slavery. But they've become further embedded in this post-colonial era.

And I'll just say something about South Africa. South Africa is a predominantly Black nation that became a new democracy in 1994. But as I sit here today, the corporate profile still reflects a racial [AUDIO OUT]. And the country struggles with that, and the progress is extremely slow. So, Eva, I'll stop

there, and we can talk more about this if there's time.

Thank you very much, Stella. I would like to use the rest of the time to discuss about hope and future after this, yeah, quite grim picture that we are facing today. So I want to ask all of you, how do you think the Western corporate sector could de-colonise?

Who wants to go first? It's not a very simple question. But I think it's important to talk about hope and a better world.

If you want to talk about hope, you should ask somebody else, not me.

[CHUCKLES]

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

I'll be happy to start. I think that I do take some hope, because I do think even if they don't fully understand the magnitude of the problem and how much they will change, just the fact that the words systemic racism are being discussed in corporate settings, I think that's a good start. I do think that there would be the need-- and some of them are doing that.

I mean, one thing-- I know what they shouldn't do. Like you have-- what is it?-- the Quaker Oats Companies, the big companies where they're changing their branding. That is all very superficial.

So one of the things that they must do, I think, is to stop diversity programmes. I think diversity programmes, they should take that out of their idea of that. And they need to dismantle and start a new type of intervention. So this is where I agree with the Black Lives Matter. They need to stop diversity programmes, because they're asking people to join existing structures which will not get them to where they need to go.

And they do need to change the representation and remove these artificial barriers to bringing in more people of colour. So those would be starts. But until we can-- Eva, I think the challenge in the world is until we can dismantle, disrupt, get rid of the idea of racists, and a racial hierarchy, and re-humanise the world, to humanise Black people-- and this is what the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag is about, the fact that Black people are not considered to be humans. So if corporations can begin to have those deep levels of understanding, and until they get to that point, I think they'll just be doing superficial and cosmetic kinds of interventions.

And the last thing I do think, I do think they have to invest. They have to pay reparations. Black-

owned-- Black ownership of businesses has to be funded if we're going to change the profile of organisations. But in the end, and I think this is where Bobby and I would agree, and I'll stop here, is that until you dismantle capitalism, it's going to be very hard to make significant change.

I think one of the important points that the Black Lives Matter movement has raised, at least for me as a white person, is that white people need to deconstruct their white privilege. So it's not about victimise or helping the victims and supporting the victims of today, the victims of racism. But it's about dismantling privilege, so really turning an eye on the white people instead of turning an eye more on people of colour.

What about Bobby and Holger? Do you have thoughts on de-colonisation?

Yeah, yeah. Holger, you go first, yeah.

Maybe not de-colonisation. I would more kind of take up the word of Stella, with the focus on capitalism and the question of a structural or enabling a structural change, which I see to be really the most important point here, because-- and that's the most difficult one, because when I go back and I kind of analyse and highlight the question of, at the moment when the abolition of slavery and emancipation of slaves started, they would kind of see a root kind of structure that it was not the slaves that were compensated. It was the owners that were compensated.

Mm-hmm.

There was never a land reform, which meant that the former slaves had only the wage labour to-- as an asset. So-- and you could never negotiate the wage. That was negotiated by the employer.

And we are still there. There is no land reform. It's only focused on wage labour. But the wage is negotiated by the owners, meaning the employers.

And if this is not going to change, then the rest is quite-- then you do some cosmetic changes here and there. But you keep up the same kind of structures. It's not very hopeful.

[CHUCKLES]

Yeah, I guess I have a more cynical, perhaps realistic take on this. De-colonisation of the UK has become an ice cream flavour. Everybody wants to de-colonise. So after this whole Black Lives Matter and the Cass name story broke, the dean of my business school asked me to chair a task force on de-colonising the curriculum.

And I replied to him saying, I'm happy to do this. But if you read the literature, de-colonising, especially coming from Latin America, means dismantling capitalism. I said, if that's your mandate to me, then you're going to have a very interesting but very rapidly extinct business school. And I haven't heard from him after that.

But this is the problem. It has become an ice cream flavour. No one knows what it means. So that's one part.

The second part-- and I agree with Stella. I think we need to go away, get away from diversity programmes. Diversity is the difference that does not make any difference. That's what-- to quote Angela Davis.

For me, the more-- the nefarious part, the more, I guess, insidious part is how people of colour and Black people are interpolated into the discourse. For just having a black face-- and this is what Cornel West called Black faces in high places, that's not enough. You need to have the correct politics.

So let's not forget, Black Lives Matter started under a Black president. It was under Obama that Black Lives Matter started, because of the shootings of the Black people. It did not happen under a white president, right?

Secondly, in the UK-- and I don't expect you to know the politics here-- we have people of colour and Black people in the cabinet. This is the most diverse cabinet in the history of the UK. It is a right-wing Tory cabinet, the most diverse ever.

But the people in the cabinet-- as I said, they might be Black faces in high places. We have a commissioner for the Race and Ethnicities Disparities. He's a Black person who believe there is no structural racism in the UK. [INAUDIBLE]. This is a Black guy who's heading the race commission, right?

We have a minister, one minister, a woman, and hardcore right-wing racist person. She herself has been subject to racism, being of an Asian origin. But that does not make her less racist when it comes to other things, right? So those are things we've got to be careful about.

In terms of hope, yes, certainly what Black Lives Matter has done, it has brought this uncomfortable conversation. And there are some very economic issues, things like I think you mentioned in your note. Are those realistic in terms of reparations? Sure, they are.

I mean, if you look at the history of World War II and Ford Motor Company, they paid reparations to-- they were directly implicated in Holocaust. So Auschwitz was not run by the Nazis. Auschwitz was run by a German chemical company, a multinational chemical company, which still exists today, by the way.

So these corporations were sued. And then they settled out of court. And they put up a fund. Same thing with the big banks, Lloyd's and Barclays.

So, yes, it is possible. But I think it-- those are first steps. It's an acknowledgment of an ongoing condition.

And the ongoing stuff is the important part. How is this being continually reproduced in the so-called diverse companies? That, for me, is the challenge.

And can I just, Bobby, pick up on something you said? I agree with you, because that's what I try to explain to people, that this idea of racial hierarchy and the ranking of the races has permeated the psyche of Black and brown people themselves.

Yes.

Frantz Fanon wrote very eloquently about that. And we don't look at that, because I do think he captured that. And so part of this, I think that part of me says, one of the things we must do is start-- we're continuing to educate managers. So one of the things we should do, Eva, I think, is change the curriculum.

And I think that I've been struggling with this because I'm in South Africa. It's the same thing as you said, Bobby. We're putting-- we're parachuting in Black people.

You just have a black face. They also benefit from mimicking the whiteness to hold onto their individual position. I mean, Malcolm X spoke about that very eloquently in his analogy between house slaves and field slaves. So this is a part of this whole thing.

But I do think the burden upon us, who [AUDIO OUT] colonisation, is what is the alternative? And so if we could begin to have conversations, Eva, of imagining-- imagining what if organisations from the outset had been developed and structured not for a dominant group, domination by white people or whiteness, what would that organisational entity look like, you see?

And I think that is what's very difficult, because that is what South Africa thought it was going to try to

do in 1994 when Mandela said, we want to build a non-racial and non-sexist nation. But I think the problem is that we haven't known a world without racisms, you see? So it's hard then to say, what would this thing look like if we, from the beginning-- I think the Latin American scholars used a term. Unfortunately, it sounds too much like diversity to me. They talk about [AUDIO OUT].

But that's the task for us. But I do think we should at least, at a minimum, start with educating current and future managers. You see President Trump-- I hate to bring up his name-- has outlawed the teaching of whiteness to diversity programmes of federal employees.

So I would hope the private corporate sector will not do that, because most of our students are not aware of the histories that the three-- the four of us are discussing. Even my students in South Africa were not really aware of this history. So I'll stop there.

Thank you very much, Stella, Bobby, and Holger. I think it's good to stop here and, like Stella said, start imagining a better future. So perhaps we are currently in the face of history of kind of fracture of bringing these issues to the fore, these issues that are not very pleasant for many people to face, especially white people. And hopefully, one day we can have another discussion about how we start imagining a different future.

But thank you very much. And hope you stay safe and healthy all over South Africa, and the UK, and Holger and myself, others here in Finland. Have a good day, everyone.

[THEME MUSIC]