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What is the Best Leadership Style to Confront Anti-Black Racism and Advance Racial Equity in Transit Organizations?

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What is the Best Leadership Style to Confront Anti-Black Racism and Advance Racial Equity in Transit Organizations?

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Abstract

The author conducts the research question explaining their curiosity on which leadership style is the most appropriate to tackle anti-Black racism and advance racial equity. The preliminary investigation will utilize existing research, including Gooden's (2014) theory of nervousness within public administrators and organizations, combined with transformational and adaptive leadership styles. Looking at the organizational structure and challenges of operating a large organization like the Toronto Transit Commission is the example used for this research. The research will show that using an adaptive leadership style is the most effective in eradicating Anti-Black racism and advancing racial equity in transit organizations. The research design used will be qualitative using content analysis from predominantly American research. Definitions of race and different forms of racism will allow the reader to understand the implications these constructs play in organizations. The analysis will show that transit leaders must adopt a new leadership style to advance racial equity while providing a succession plan for new leaders to advance this work. Furthermore, advancing racial equity and adaptive leadership into various Master of Public Administration (MPA) courses and within academia are critical moving forward.

Keywords: Anti-Black Racism, adaptive leadership, organizational leadership, racial equity

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

There is much influx on confronting Anti-Black racism in the larger context of racial equity within organizations. Within this discussion is the underlying policy debates affecting the field of public administration. It aspires to promulgate into the lexicon of ethics, guiding values and criteria. At the time of this paper, there are ongoing and fluid discussions on racial equity in the public sector regarding the detrimental effects of institutional and structural racism on individuals and, on a larger scale, organizations.

The sentiment surrounding transit organizations has recently been that they "are still managing and operating systems that have racism embedded in them. They have inherited past decisions, entrenched systems and ways of thinking" (Spieler, 2020). The need to advance racial equity in transit, let alone public sector organizations, is gaining traction. In 2020, the Toronto Transit Commission (hereafter, TTC) began introducing an Anti-Racist Strategy to address systemic racism within its organization and its practices – a first within Canada. This strategy is consistent with the City of Toronto's greater efforts of confronting Anti-Black racism, begun in 2017 with the introduction of the Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism. The Anti-Racism strategy recommended by the City's Ombudsman responded to existing fare inspection policies (TTC, 2020, 3). As well, findings from an internal investigation of an incident on February 18, 2018, where 3 White transit fare inspectors forcibly detained a young Black male on the streetcar platform at St. Clair Avenue West and Bathurst Street (Ombudsman Toronto,2019, 1; City TV, 2018). In any event, despite the action, the decision-making from past and current TTC's organizational leadership comes into question.

Executive leaders of public sector organizations lead organizational change and adapt to change due to technological, social, political and economic factors. Typically, new or existing leaders focus on a transformational leadership style that requires a culture change and people change that reflects the leader's personality. In addition, leaders usually fit within the existing institution to meet the political needs of the Mayors and City or Regional Councils that also reflect the will of the people. From there, executive leaders traditionally have developed a top-down hierarchical structure.

With this recurring theme, executive leaders tend not to reflect their employees' organizational diversity nor reflect the diversity of the populations they serve, which reflects on the organization's institutions and structures. Instead, their visions are driven through the implemented policies and programs. Leaders of public sector organizations have typically been White, have maintained the status quo for decades and withhold power and influence within their institutions. With the current racial reckoning that is occurring, maintaining the status quo is unacceptable.

The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Regis Korchinski-Paquet have been part of a failed regime that perpetuated Anti-Black racism through to the leadership that continues to exist today. Exacerbated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a window of opportunity for organizational change to occur. The racial makeup of leaders must be reflective of their organizations. Therefore, an existing or incoming public sector executive leadership change would require a new leadership style that adapts to social change.

Given these conditions, the central research question is which leadership style would be the most effective to confront Anti-Black Racism and advance racial equity within public sector organizations? Subsequent questions can arise from this such as, can White leaders adopt this leadership style or, through new leadership or succession planning, is a Black or racialized person best suited to lead large public sector organizations to incorporate an adaptive leadership style because of their lived experiences? The Toronto Transit Commission will be used in this paper as a singular case study for a transit agency.

The paper's structure will begin with providing a context and background of the situation at hand. A description of how Anti-Black racism has been perpetuated through organizations and systems and into policy implementation. The reader must understand how we arrived at the racial reckoning that is before us. From there, I describe the research design I intend to use and the rationale behind using the case study of transit. I will then proceed with a literature review demonstrating the differences between transformational leadership and adaptive leadership styles.

1.1 ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER

This paper will provide the reader with some relevant and critical definitions so that they understand race and elements of racism in an organizational context. Next, a literature review will consist of relevant material on nervousness in the public sector, organizational leadership and racial equity and leadership styles that are relevant in this context. I will then set the tone by developing the qualitative research methodology. I will then analyze the current and fluid situation with the Toronto Transit Commission and their development of an

Anti-Racism Strategy to address Anti-Black Racism with content respective of the organization's leaders. Finally, I will conclude with an assessment of what type of leadership skills an existing or new transit executive leader should possess to confront Anti-black racism and advance racial equity.

A shortcoming of the research is that since this is a new topic, the readings emphasize identifying problems and a 'how to' on initiating racial equity programs or departments and less on providing solutions. Future research will outline best practices from various municipalities that implement racial equity programs.

1.2 CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

I would have to claim a personal bias based on my own lived and professional experiences in the Greater Toronto Area and Edmonton based on observations of policy, operations, leadership style, and the predominant Whiteness perpetuated within the leadership followers. Therefore, the topic of advancing racial equity in organizational change within transit begins with my childhood memories and how they shaped my experiences.

I am of mixed-race heritage born in North York, Ontario to an Afro-Caribbean Trinidadian mother and a White Maltese father. For the first 20 years of my life, I lived in social housing, Ontario Housing as it was called, in a community called Lawrence Heights, colloquially known as "The Jungle." Growing up on Leila Lane in one of three low-rise apartment complexes, I would have memories of block parties during Caribana, playing baseball by the hill, playing tennis at one of two local courts, and plenty of police cruisers traversing the neighbourhood. These memories of formative years growing up in this neighbourhood while taking transit

shaped my lived experiences. I was a very observant passenger, whether taking the Ranee 109 or Lawrence 52 or getting on the subway, especially in the sweltering heat. I watched the construction workers and labourers go northwards to the suburbs. In contrast, those "in suits" who went southward to the Financial District and points Downtown.

Working in both the public and private sectors, I rarely would report to anyone of a racialized background. I was constantly being told about keeping my head down and doing the work. Not rocking the boat. Otherwise, it would jeopardize my career aspirations. Code-switching just to appease the White people and make them feel comfortable. A lack of career advancement, not accepting the status quo and wanting to see organizational change was top of mind for me. Programs, policies, and procedures were favouring those with privilege. Transit safety was a priority for transit agencies to protect the interests of the comfortable choice riders. Equality was the mantra, but not equity. Working on such issues related to racial equity, such as disaggregating passenger data based on destination and race to provide a better profile of the transit rider, was necessary. However, hearing that 'it was not something we do here' was a common phrase of leaders being comfortable and unwilling to do the work.

Furthermore, sensationalized media focused on Black people portrayed as an individual problem. At the same time, Black people and other racialized communities struggle to get ahead. These lived experiences that no White, wealthy, or even middle-class privileged person could relate to. This paper is about the struggle of fighting Anti-Black racism, getting ahead through times of racism in our organizations, and what must be done to level the playing field so that my brothers and sisters could succeed in years to come.

A window of opportunity presents itself from a 'perfect storm' to address Anti-Black racism in our public sector institutions.   The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the impacts on health, affordable housing, and income. It crosses class, gender, economics and most importantly, race. The pandemic highlighted the systemic and institutional injustices that racialized communities, including Black people, have faced for decades. For example, the over-policing of our Black communities, which includes racial profiling, has resulted in higher incarceration rates, assaults, and deaths of Black bodies at the hands of police. George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and Regis Korchinski-Paquet are names that are not to be forgotten. Street-level bureaucrats, executive leaders, and politicians have not accounted for addressing Anti-Black racism, with transit being an example.

THE POLITICS OF TRANSIT IN TORONTO

Transit in Toronto is highly political. Decisions have influenced the way policy is designed and implemented and where infrastructure is built. Transit is a visible public good where infrastructure and services are delivered to serve the people residing, employed, studying and visiting the various Canadian municipalities. The Toronto Transit Commission, as a point of reference, is the largest transit agency in Canada and the third largest transit system in North America. It has 15,000 employees. Its service area spans the City of Toronto and parts of Markham, Vaughan and Mississauga. The City of Toronto, with a population of nearly 3 million people, with 9% Black population (City of Toronto, 2019, 13).

While our organizational leaders have addressed the need for diversity over the last two decades, organizational leadership has been lacking. As a result, Anti-Black Racism has shaped

transit in Toronto, and is riddled with inequities. An example is the inferior amount of bus service delivered by the TTC to passengers residing in the inner suburbs of Toronto such as Scarborough and Toronto. More importantly, there are three examples of recent political decisions, although partially made by those at the Provincial level that have significantly impacted Toronto residents.

The first such example was the Scarborough transit debate that began in 2016. A long-standing debate had occurred on delivering better transit options to residents of Scarborough, an inner suburb of Toronto. The debate was between transit modes of a subway extension to Scarborough Town Centre or a Light Rail Transit extension to Malvern. The initial plans were to deliver light rail transit to Malvern. However, several Toronto councillors decided for political reasons to revert to building a one-stop subway extension. This debate carried over from the Provincial election of 2014. Mitzie Hunter, a Black Ontario Liberal MPP was voted in as the self-proclaimed "subway champion" (Edmiston, 2015), but it was later revealed by a Toronto Star investigation (Pagliaro, 2018) that it was a play by the Provincial Party just to win seats in Scarborough.

Another story related to the Scarborough transit debate lingered. A memo released from Mayor John Tory's office indicated that racism was at play. On June 27, 2016, the Mayor wrote a Toronto Star op-ed indicating support for the Scarborough Subway. A quote from the Mayor seemed to strike a chord with many:

> *(M)any of the subway's loudest critics do not live or work in Scarborough, where more than half the population is born outside of Canada. When they say this is too much to spend on a subway, the inference seems to be that it's too much to spend on this part of the city.* (Toronto Star, 2016).

Quite possibly, there was some malintent from the Mayor and his handlers in releasing this op-ed. Still, it was unnecessary to raise an immigrant stance. As someone who staunchly defends diversity, a loose term these days, leaving this statement hanging allowed to turn the transit debate into an ugly matter of race and identity (Syed, 2016).

A third example has been the ongoing construction of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT project scheduled to be completed by 2023. The Eglinton Crosstown LRT stretches from Scarborough to Mount Dennis with a planned extension to the Toronto Airport. One particular section of the line traverses underground through Little Jamaica, a hub for Black business and culture in Toronto.

The socioeconomic impacts of the construction of the Crosstown LRT, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, have had drastic effects on small businesses. The community has been faced with business displacement and rapid gentrification. With the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail construction, scheduled to open in 2022, and political inaction by way of a lack of government support, many small businesses along the corridor were forced to shut down (BUTO, 15). This displacement has been caused by lax city planning policies that "cater to the interests and tastes that align with a larger neo-liberal plan…that has been a culmination of a deliberate set of actions and inactions" (BUTO, 27).

> *The sidewalk closures, traffic delays, and decreased parking caused by LRT construction have severely hampered business, with some businesses estimating loses of up to 50%. Horace Rose, owner of RAP's Authentic Jamaican Foods, which has served the community for 35 years, notes "when working folks have one or two days off, they can't spend it waiting in traffic. They have to do all of the things that parents do on their day off. So, they say 'let's go to Eglinton', then it's 'man, I'm going to be stuck in traffic for four or five hours,' so [shopping here] gets pushed back, and it gets pushed back. It's been hard, it's been really hard."* (Morgan, 2017)

In addition, The City of Toronto released Eglinton Connects (2014). This urban planning study featured elements comprised of urban design, active transportation, public space regeneration, heritage, and culture. This comprehensive study failed to mention historical spaces such as Little Jamaica and its relevance to the Eglinton West Corridor.   The total erasure of Little Jamaica from the report by consultants and city staff was an indication that the Black community was not part of the larger-scale transportation integration.

In 2019, the Toronto Ombudsman issued a report highlighting an incident from 2018 that involved three transit inspectors and a Black passenger (City of Toronto, 2019, 3). TTC enforcement officers have disproportionately stopped more Black and Indigenous riders between 2008 and 2018. For example, 6963 per 100,000 Black riders or nearly 7% of riders were stopped by transit enforcement officers, whereas 3578 White people, or 3.6%, were stopped. While Black residents make up 9% of Toronto's population, they were involved in 19% of all enforcement incidents over that period. From a TTC report on April 14, 2021, the researchers concluded with the following:

> *It is clear that the size of the observed racial disparities are, at a minimum, consistent with allegations of racial bias. All else being equal, if people from all racial backgrounds are treated equally, we would not expect to uncover racial disparities as large as those documented in the tables and charts presented in this section. However, other possible explanations exist. To begin with, some might argue that Census benchmarking – including Census estimates of the commuting population -- do not accurately capture the racial characteristics of TTC riders. Is it possible that the true population of TTC users is more diverse – i.e., more Black and more Indigenous – than the population estimates used in this study? If this is the case, the enforcement rates for Black and Indigenous Torontonians may be somewhat inflated.* (City of Toronto, 2021)

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a strong link between high infection rates and low income. These precarious workers were predominantly from racialized communities. There was even a stronger association between neighbourhoods with an increased number of COVID cases and those with a high population of Black people. TTC service levels were cut considerably (Spurr, 2020), and those who are dependent on transit were met with overcrowded buses. One example was the Jane 35 route which traverses many of those hard-hit working-class neighbourhoods of Toronto – Jane & Finch, Woolner, Trethewey (Huynh, 2020).
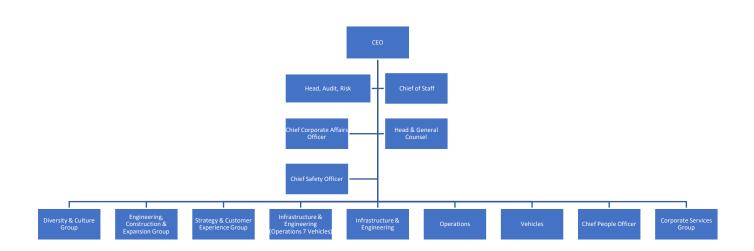
Transit agency leaders have a propensity to be more considerate about their impacts on racialized communities than any other government agency. Transit planning explicitly considers the implications on those racialized communities even as service changes occur. Transit agencies, TTC included, are full of people who want to contribute to provide a solution. Yet, at the same time, there is colourblindness embedded in their decision-making process. To assume that race-neutral policies are meant to be a good thing is wrongheaded. In fact, ignoring race in making policy or planning decisions will bring about justice or achieve morality is just a fantasy (Culp, Jr, 2004, 162-3). Colourblindness ultimately argues in favour of a racialized status quo that leaves Black people and other racialized communities oppressed and therefore in inequitable positions (ibid, 167).

Transit agencies have traditionally made attempts to attract and design "choice riders" as a matter of "White comfort" (Speieler, 2020). Some of these choice riders show up to Board meetings or are vocal to their politicians, just out of safety and comfort. The reality is that

transit agencies are still managing and operating system that have racism embedded in them. When 9 out of 10 board TTC members are White, and no members of TTC's senior executive team that are Black, there is a disconnect with their institutional leadership, which perpetuates institutional racism. Further to this, looking across the board at the all Canadian transit agencies, many of the chief executive officers are white males, apart from a handful who are women.

BACKGROUND OF THE TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

The TTC is the largest transit operator in Canada where 525,470,000 passengers ride the system (TTC, 2020). The TTC is governed by a 10-member board consisting of City Councillors and members of the public. In February 2021, Fenton Jagdeo became the 3rd Black person to be named as a TTC board member in its history, and only 1 of 2 racialized persons on the Board.

In Figure 1.1 is an unofficial organization chart for the TTC based on their organization listed on their website (Toronto Transit Commission, 2021). The organization is structured in top-down hierarchical fashion, with close advisers reporting to the CEO and operational and tactical staff formed in a flat structure. Rick Leary is the Chief Executive Officer for the organization. In 2021, the organization hired Keisha Campbell as their Chief Diversity Officer (Toronto Transit Commission, 2021) as part of their newly formed Diversity & Culture Group.

Figure 1.1 - Unofficial TTC Organization Chart Source: https://www.ttc.ca/Coupler/Short_Turns/TTC_Org_Chart/index.jsp

2.0 DEFINITIONS

There must be a foundation laid where some important definitions are required. Understanding racism is the most critical part of this work, especially in understanding which leadership style best suits advancing racial equity and, more so, in confronting Anti-Black racism.

2.1 Racism

Racism is thought of as an individual act of bias. Race has impacts on economics and politics. While discrimination is very much thought of as a reality, focusing on individual acts of racism can obscure the realities that create and maintain racial inequity more broadly (City of Seattle, 2012). Racism comes in several forms: structural, institutional, and individual or interpersonal which will be explained further.

Structural racism "is the interplay of policies, practices, and programs of differing institutions, leading to adverse outcomes and conditions for racialized communities compared to white communities that occur within the context of racialized historical and cultural conditions" (ibid). This form of racism refers to broader political and social disadvantages within society, such as higher incidences of poverty for Black people or higher rates of mortality from COVID for racialized groups. It "normalizes historical, cultural, and institutional practices that benefit White people and disadvantages *racialized*[1] people. It also stealthily replicates the racial hierarchy established more than 400 years ago through slavery and colonialism, placing White people at the top and Black people at the bottom"(Lander, 2021).

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[1] People of colour, used by the author, is replaced and italicized by me.

Institutional racism is defined as the policies, practices, and procedures that work to benefit White people and to the detriment of racialized people, usually unintentionally or inadvertently. They are primarily invisible processes that can be compared to a glass ceiling. It can be prescribed by formal rules that depend on the organizational cultures that tolerate such behaviours. In fact, the "racist institutional decisions neither require nor preclude the participation of racist individuals" (as cited in Gooden, 12). Institutional racism encompasses the often covert barriers and selection/promotion barriers that disadvantage members of racialized communities (Ward, 2016, 1). Covert racism is defined as contemporary expressions of dislike, a semblance of hatred and discrimination towards racialized people that are subtle and often unnoticed by conventional measures (as cited in Nkrumah, 2021). Canada's racism has been categorized as covert, which has usually been done by propagating Anti-Black discourses that enable Anti-Black policies that dehumanize Black people.

The definition of individual or interpersonal racism in its context is a pre-judgement of bias, stereotypes or generalizations about an individual or group based on race (City of Seattle, ibid). The impacts on racism on individuals – white people and racialized people-are internalized privilege and oppression. Individual racism can then result in discrimination. Interpersonal racism is considered more overt through racial slurs, Blackface, or believing Whites have superiority over other groups.

2.2 Anti-Black Racism

Anti-Black racism is "policies and practices embedded in Canadian institutions that reflect and reinforce beliefs, attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping and/or discrimination that is

directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of

enslavement and colonization here in Canada" (City of Toronto, 2017, 1). One example of Anti-

Black racism that has been experienced in the public sector is career progression to leadership

positions. Some disheartening statistics prove the uphill battle experienced by Black graduates

entering the workforce and those wishing to climb the corporate ladder regardless of sector:

- 53% of Black employees are forced to "code switch" or switching among dialects or styles in order to "fit in" and integrate.
- Black employees reported 4 times more microaggressions than Whites.
- Promotional processes are laden with hidden biases that harm Black employees. 50% of Black workers report discrimination in promotional opportunities.
- White professionals do not acknowledge the obstacles Black employees face. 16% of White workers say it is harder for Black workers to advance as opposed to 65% of Black professionals (Boston Consulting Group and Civic Action, 2021, 6).

Anti-Black racism in professional environments is insidious and are costly for

workplaces. Driving Black employees out of their organizations because of the pervasive

institutional and structural biases impact their businesses. The average cost of replacing an

employee is 33% of their annual salary (ibid, 7). The organizational structures in place require a

wake-up call where racial equity must include race-conscious action to close the gaps.

2.3 Racial Equity

Racial equity, which operates in the greater context of social equity (Gooden, p.16), is

about closing the gap so that race does not determine a person's likelihood or success. Racial

equity is about the elimination of the policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that

reinforce the differential outcomes by race or found to eliminate them. Racial equity according

to Gooden is grounded in the extension of organizational justice (p.17).   Understanding how

organizations effectively or ineffectively operate requires an examination of the external environment, senior public administrators, public servants and the organizational values. The external environment consists of political, moral, legal and economic triggers and operate as the catalyst for the examination of racial equity (p.19). They can be in the form of laws, cost-benefit analyses, and public engagement. Concerning senior public administrators, which is the focus of this paper, this is about the communication methods they use and the determination of resource allocation, which influence the overall value of racial equity. Public administrators or street-level bureaucrats apply those policies and procedures that senior leaders expect of them. Racial equity work occurs through multiple strategies, which then are administered through organizational values. Organizational values are comprised of a hierarchy of values of efficiency, effectiveness, public participation and innovation (p. 21). When these values are communicated, directly or indirectly within the agency, organizational tolerance is defined by the need for racial-equity analysis and its boundaries (ibid).

Using a racial equity lens is an ongoing process and practice of increasing capacity to see, understand and relate to other racial and cultural realities, worldviews, values and norms that are different from one's own and to be willing to work to create equity and justice (Hill and Curry-Stevens, 2017, 26). The City of Toronto goes deeper in using an Anti-Black Racism lens, which is centred on "Black Torontonians as an equity-seeking community, while accounting for additional experiences of marginalization when their racial identity intersects with their identities as members of other equity-seeking communities, including women, youth, newcomers, queer and transgendered people, Francophones, and people living with HIV/AIDS" (Attachment B: Anti-Black Racism Lens, 2017).

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section will outline the research design and methodology for the paper. The justification for using the TTC is that it is the largest transit operator in Canada with the largest population in the country. In selecting the proposed Anti-Racism strategy as a precedent, it is indicative of the challenges faced by a large municipal agency that is going through an organizational culture change to address institutional and structural Anti-Black racism that stems from past leadership decisions.

This exploratory study applies a research methodology that is characterized as inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analyzing the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This research design uses the inductive framework in investigating the nervousness and leadership styles to advance racial equity in organizational leadership. Qualitative researchers typically work inductively, building patterns, categories and themes from the bottom up by organizing the data into more abstract information units. Qualitative research is interpretive research. Inquirers identify reflexively their biases, values and personal backgrounds, such as gender, history, culture and socioeconomic status. My personal introduction is proof of this. Because of the nature of an evolving methodological design, inquirers would define a few terms at the beginning, although they may advance tentative definitions (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018, 99).

The research strategy used is comproised of desk research. The existing data sources for this research comes in the form of academic research, policy documents, council reports and articles obtained via the internet. The research will comprise several disciplines: public

administration, organizational behaviour management, urban planning, and human resources.

For example, the interviews conducted in Larson's paper are a testament to the experiences of

transit agency officials who express their opinions and experiences working with existing

policies and reporting mechanisms. Another important characteristic of using existing research

is that is geared towards studying what the best leadership style is to address Anti-Black racism

and advance racial equity.

Secondary research which will comprise of earlier studies which could be applied to this

paper.   For example, some of the conclusions from Larson's study would serve as input for

further research and for new research questions, that will be proposed (van Thiel, 2017, 105).

Larson's study on how transit practitioners would navigate nervousness (2020) uses Gooden's

work as the basis for her study. I am filtering some of the results of Larson's study, which uses

interviews from transit leaders in Denver, Minneapolis, Birmingham and Orlando from an

operational basis. Part of Larson's research focuses on organizational implications, which is of

great interest for the purpose of this study (van Thiel, 106). Furthermore, given that this study

is inductive in nature, I have familiarized myself with the subject matter. While it was not clear

the direction I was going, I would let the research direct me to the conclusions I am interested

in (ibid).

There are some limitations and drawbacks to this research. Firstly, while operating

transit is universal, the research for the purpose of this study will be American in nature.

Secondly, there are generalizations, assumptions, and personal biases about the atypical transit

leader. The assumption is that transit leaders in Canada are white male, with a handful of

female leaders, who are also white. Their professional backgrounds are predominantly in engineering profession or with military experience. Another drawback with this research, to what Van Thiel points out is operationalization (ibid). Operationalization results in the identification of the variables that would be included in this study. But the data sources that will be used will not match the research question. To resolve this problem, there must be creativity to find reasonable enough information to answer the research question and use existing information in that its contents will concur with the research subject (Van Thiel, 106). In this case, it is the determination of which leadership style would most effectively advance racial equity.

This report will be the first of its kind in Ontario, let alone Canada, and deemed a best practice for municipal agencies alike. The intent is to report an instrumental case study. Thus, the focus was to emphasize the complex downstream effects of how structural, institutional, and systemic Anti-Black racism which have failed Black operating and implementing policies and procedures of the organization. Because of the recency of the study, this would be a starting point for future research.

4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of the literature review stems from what inevitable affects leaders in making

organizational change towards combatting anti-Black racism and advancing racial equity. In this

section, I will review the literature in defining nervousness that affects public administrators

and in turn, organizations. This will include subcomponents of race talk at work and

organizational culture, leadership, and change. A review of the two leadership styles -

transformational and adaptive will be done with their benefits and drawbacks and relate to

racial equity and organizational change.

　　Much of the literature was written during a time where new public administration

principles were prevalent. These principles are focused on the use of market models and

values are the best way to understand the role and operations of government and to ensure

efficiency. Transit operations and the development of service standards have been a prime

example of this. When it comes to creating racial equity as part of institutional and

organizational leadership, there is a need to emphasize the importance of New Public Service

(NPS) plays now. NPS "argues that the explicit consideration of democratic values and

citizenship by public administrators will have benefits in terms of building communities,

engaging citizens, and making government work more effectively. Therefore, the effectiveness

of transit as an institution is just as, if not, more important. Understanding these, it is

important to develop and understanding of the relevance that race, and racial equity have on

organizational leadership and change. It must begin with first understanding what the

literature discusses on nervousness and how it shows up in individuals and public sector organizations.

4.1 Defining nervousness and how it shows up in individuals and in public sector organizations

Susan T. Gooden labeled nervousness to express administrators disposition towards the examination of racial disparities within a government agency (2014, 17). There are two types of nervousness that exist in order to confront anti-Black racism towards advancing racial equity. First, there is the nervousness that exist within public administrators at all levels. The second type of nervousness exists within organizations, to which leaders are a part of. In this section, I will discuss the nervousness within public administrators. Before this, there needs to be a clear definition of what nervousness entails.

Nervousness can operate as "lived experience as it affects and is affected by interpersonal relations and social action" (as cited in Gooden, 46). At the individual level, racial equity, "a nervous area of government" shares certain attributes with emotional labour. Emotions are a central part of the brain, which is usually attributed to joy, happiness, love, fear and anger. Nervousness is commonly associated with fear and anxiety and is shaped by interpersonal relationships and environmental context. Within the workplace comes emotional labour.

Emotional labour is defined by Guy, Newman and Mastracci (as cited in Gooden, 46) as the component of the dynamic relationship between workers and citizens or worker to worker. "The labour employed by street level bureaucrats at the conjunction of public service delivery and consumption is often emotional in nature and this can be the difference between the

uniform application of rules and regulations and the discretion required to ensure equity in public service provision (Dudau and Brunetto, 2020)". Emotional work is on a continuum with a range of feelings occurring from amicability to suppression of emotions. There are costs to this such as burnout, fatigue, and emotional exhaustion. Synonymous to this is racial trauma.

We are becoming aware of the mental health impacts of structural and institutional racism in the workplace. This is where the discussion of racial trauma becomes present. Racial trauma is described as "the emotional impact that racism has on individuals and in turn how this affects the person's physical and psychological well being" (Kandola, 2021). Racial events can be either covert or overt, which can lead to distress, anxiety, and post-stress disorder. While much of the research on this exists in the private sector, there is little to no discussion about the impacts of racial trauma in public sector settings.

Race can be distinct at both the individual and organizational levels. Emotional labour and racial trauma are specific to the individual, with the former more occupation specific. With the nervous area of government, public administrators engage race at work more directly with organizational leadership and culture and to external events that force it onto the agenda, such as what is evident now with reports of constant attacks on Black and Indigenous peoples. The common link is the individual's fear of saying the wrong thing and/or racial insensitivities showing up at work. This could show up as the fear of being called a racist or even the fear of being isolated at work.

There is an individual baseline of nervousness at work brought on by street level bureaucrats' level of comfort or apprehension in wanting to discuss race at work. Being

apprehensive affects skills attainment and performance. But rather than talking race at work, individuals develop multiple ways to strategically avoid discussing race and into a more comfortable discussion out of fear. If race is not discussed at work individual street level bureaucrats, the work towards racial equity becomes a moot point.

Conversations among individuals are connectors whether among their fellow employees or the public they serve. Engaging in discussions about race at work can be uncomfortable, but they are necessary and a core challenge for street level bureaucrats for a nervous area of government. Avoidance, color-blindness, and assimilation are strategies applied the dominant culture and are problematic (Gooden, 55). "They allow individuals to avoid discussion of the inequitable distribution of power and privilege that undergirds the administration and distribution of public services" (Gooden, ibid). In other words, it makes the conversation comfortable.

Having conversations at work about race, racism/Anti-Black racism, and providing public services provide individuals an opportunity about the role social identity and group membership play. Having diverse conversations in group settings allows for a better understanding and an appreciation for the different historical and social circumstances of racialized groups. Ultimately the goal is to improve the knowledge of the role race plays in the administration of public services. This will then lead to specific organizational actions that will lead to the elimination of racial inequities in public services.

Organizational cultures can be accepted by all members, regardless of attitudes, where behaviours are concealed, questions provoke reactions toward defensiveness and hostility, and

there are consequences for those who go against an organization's culture. Downs (1967) conceptualizes four major biases affecting public administrators. First, they are subject to distorting information that is passed upwards to superiors. Second, they exhibit biased attitudes towards policies and actions towards policies and alternative actions. Third, there is compliance on directives, especially ones that they favour. Finally, varying willingness to seek out additional responsibilities and assume any risk within their position of influence as a street-level bureaucrat or senior level administrator.

The nervous area of government rests on organizational justice that involves some person or group benefiting or harmed in a manner that is deemed unfair (Gooden, 18). The nervous area of government involves and approach to organizational justice that is deemed systemic. The dominant concern is that how an organization provides public justice rather than solely internal, employee justice (ibid, 18). Public justice is more than just the provision of services. It is more value-oriented.

Gooden mentions four areas of nervousness when racial equity is focused. The first is the external environment. This area entails the legal, moral, economic and political areas. Examples are the platforms of elected officials, court decisions, improved organizational efficiency and larger societal shifts that wield organizational pressure (ibid, 19-20). The second is senior public administrators, which is the main focus of this paper. This group has tangible power with an organization to exercise power by way of decision-making and personnel and budget controls. Furthermore, they provide leadership within the organization. Therefore, it entails four critical important tasks of defining the institutional mission and role, the

institutional purpose, a defensiveness of the organizational integrity, and maintaining order to internal conflict (ibid, 20). Specific to racial equity, "senior public administrators communicate important messages to allocate resources that influence the overall values of public justice and administration of social equity. They operate as important translators of the external racial-equity triggers. Their actions influence nervousness intensity and largely determine the acceptable "racial analysis" boundaries within the agency" (ibid, 20). Third public servants, including managers and supervisors, are those street level bureaucrats that implement decisions and mediate the relationships between citizens and the agency. Racial equity analysis is an important dimension in the nervous area of government where it is largely affected by socialization processes regarding acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. From there, it provides fuel for organizational values. Finally, organizational values are the most single important factor in understanding nervousness in organizations. Organizations have cultures that embody and maintain a hierarchy of values such as efficiency and effectiveness which are directly communicated within the organization. Culture is defined as "the accumulated shared learning of a group as it solves problems of external adaptation and internal integration; which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, feel, behave in relations to those problems (Schein & Schein, 2016, 6). They define organizational tolerance for racial equity analysis and its acceptable boundaries and also affect the overall nervousness intensity within the organization (ibid, 21). Communicating the need to have racial equity work is a clear value for organizations overall, including race talk at work.

While race talk at work is crucial to addressing racial inequities in the service provided, nervousness must be addressed as well. Within organizational culture, nervousness exists through five key areas according to Gooden: organizational socialization, organizational leadership and change, organizational discourse and organizational learning and performance. While all feed into each other, for the purpose of this paper, I will be focusing on the organization leadership and change portion.

Organizational leadership is a process of influencing others by virtue of their position, formal authority, perceived and real power, and influence. Leaders determine convey what is or isn't important and what is indifferent to them. Actions such as a leader's commitment to organizational justice are displayed by leadership action and behaviour.

The influence of a leader on its employees, and their perception, is the key to an organization's culture and the value of organizational justice and racial equity as a whole (Gooden, 71). Agency leaders personify the organization and their motives. Leaders can affect individual behaviour in three ways: by affecting expectations, setting organizational goals, and how they clarify those goals (ibid, 71).

Organizational goals have a purpose of benefiting their citizens. Their purpose is that they have three primary functions: they guide the activity by determining tasks that need to be performed, provide a standard in organizational performance, and legitimize the function of the agency. It is about connecting the public sector organizations as a larger part of the society in which they operate (ibid).

Leaders overcoming nervousness is significant by way of promoting racial equity. This will involve some form of culture change that aligns with the future of the organization. This future must be clear, compelling and adaptable so that it would allow the organization to learn and adjust along the way. Yet, with any organizational change will come resistance.

Leaders will deal with resistance to change to overcome nervousness by their employees. Even themselves as senior leaders, especially in transit agencies, are nervous especially in that promoting racial equity to confront Anti-Black racism will involve a cultural shift. This would entail demonstrating that an overall strategy aligned with the future direction the organization must go in. Leaders must have a compelling vision, but they also must believe in that vision themselves.

Racial inequity in public sector organizations is often viewed as a symptom but not as a problem. Redefining racial inequity is an important first step and it is moved from a status quo problem to situation that is solvable (Gooden, 78). Transit policies and the organizations they are part of, are steeped in systemic and institutional racism with evidence of inequities and colour blindness.

There must be the belief by leaders that promoting racial equity is not insurmountable. Leaders are comfortable and can focus on minimizing defensiveness among themselves and the street level bureaucrats by addressing those structural and institutional inequities. Furthermore, leaders must them embody a leadership style that is right to embrace a change in organizational culture to confront Anti-Black racism and get to racial equity. It is the racial

equity commitment that confirms clear standards and expectations of performance and accountability.

4.2 Public Sector Organizations and Racial Equity

Inequities exist with the organizational structure of transit agencies where decision-making power lies and how agency resources are distributed. There is an overwhelming proportion of executive and board leadership comprised of White men who make up the everyday policy, planning and budgetary decisions about transit operations. In fact, those who are most affected by these decisions have no part in making them, including those from racialized communities and the front-line workers such as the bus operators and other customer service staff. While many transit agencies, have diversified their workforces, many of them are not in top decision-making positions. The emphasis on representation and diversity alone shows tokenism and colourblindness, not equity (Buchanan & Rivera, 2020).

Public agencies are racialized organizations and because racism is deeply institutionalized ideology in society, organizational inner workings contain racialized meanings (Solis, 2020). Racial equity change has a longer lasting institutional and systemic effects. Organizations are perceived as race-neutral bureaucratic structures as they perpetuate racial inequities in several ways. First, organizations enhance or diminish a racial groups' agency (Solis, p 299). While the intention is there to diversify the workforce, and understanding that diversity is profitable for organizations, "the selective incorporation of people of colour can be organizationally useful (Ray, 2019, p. 45). Examples of these are the heavy concentration of racialized bus operators, as well as examples where organizations spend more time serving

White people and the hands of serving Black and other racialized people (Solis, p. 298; Spieler, 2020). Organizational change moves into formal organizations in an attempt to institutionalize movement ideals and therefore with concrete notions of racial inferiority (Ray, ibid, as citied in Solis, ibid) Secondly, while fairness is deemed as the mantra, the application process ascribe to the idea that Whiteness is a credential. The question of criminality is meant to deter some from applying and are put under scrutiny, and sometimes are not hired based on race (as cited in Solis). Furthermore, organizations "decouple formal rules from organizational practice" (Solis, ibid). Equity is generally viewed as some discernable change around issues of disparity and discrimination (Hill & Curry-Stevens, 26). But the effectiveness of racial equity training has been proven to unlikely to produce positive effects without broader accountability mechanisms and organizational leadership. These points symbolize how organizations have passively approached racial equity by allowing racial hierarchies and inequitable distribution of resources.

Supporting organizational change requires a public commitment of leadership to an equity vision and stated goals at the operational and government levels (Hill & Curry-Stevens, p. 27). Organizational leadership is a critical factor when engaging the nervous area of government.Larger values of agency are largely affirmed by the leader's behaviour. It is this behaviour that must be shown through the leader's commitment to organizational justice. This commitment is accomplished through the role leaders display in overcoming the nervous area by promoting change. This is done through a strategy aligned with the desired future that includes targets, monitoring, resources, and policy reforms to advance solutions (p 27). Several organizations have completed this such as Seattle's Racial and Social Justice Initiative,

Portland's Racial Equity Strategy Guide and the City of Toronto's Action Plan to Confront Anti-

Black Racism. Such change though will sometimes be met with resistance (Gooden, p.71; Peng,

Li, Wang, Lin, 2020), especially when there is a fear of loss – status, benefits, relationships- is

involved. Resistance can then be insurmountable if psychological safety is not granted which

then can create an environment where there is even more resistance to change (King Sr., 20).

Several initiatives are required for organizational change to occur in order to address

the need for racial equity. First, embedding racial equity solutions in the overall fabric of the

organization instead of assigning a special project. For example, linking racial equity analysis to

performance evaluations, incentive systems and other reinforcement mechanisms can motivate

and influence behaviour that can be aligned with organizational justice (Gooden, p. 72). The

ongoing TTC Anti-Racism Strategy is an example of this.   Secondly, establishing accountability

structures within the organization and throughout departments. Racial equity must operate in

the context of accountability by directly linking performance with the vision, mission and

strategic goals of the organization (Gooden, p. 200). The failure to define structures of

accountability before they are needed will undermine any progress towards cultivating and

equitable and inclusive workplace environment (Anderson, 2021). Third, ensuring there is a

cultural shift from colourblindness of not acknowledging race differences exist and moving

towards effective race equity strategies. Racial and ethnic differences must be comprehended

within a broader institutional, structural and societal context. Finally, leaders must ensure that

policies are initiated with an attention to creating and advocating for policies that are more

relevant.

Using a racial equity lens for organizational change definitely has success. Understanding the importance of clarifying that an equity lens is an evolving process to examine the ways the race and ethnicity affect an organization's functions from policymaking, to budget development, to program changes. This includes establishing and operating out of a systematically based framework. Using an adaptive leadership approach from an organizational perspective would include engagement of a combination of staff, participant/client and community leadership.

4.3 Leadership

There is a distinction between managers and leadership. John Kotter from the Harvard Business School differentiates between the two by arguing that "managers promote stability while leaders press for change and only organizations that embrace both sides of the contradiction can survive in turbulent times" (as cited in Langton et al, 2014, 266). Managers are the mediators between executive leaders and the teams they hold responsibility over. Managerial roles include the engagement of day-to-day activities, exhibits supervisory behaviour, administration of subsystems within organizations, maintains the culture, uses transactional influence which including overseeing employee performance, acts within an established organizational culture. In other words, managing takes place on three planes, with information, through people and direct action (Mintzberg, 2014, 49). Leaders, on the other hand, set the direction for the future of the organization by aligning people and communicating their vision by inspiring them to overcome any hurdles through followership. Leaders are

innovative, asks appropriate questions to determine if and why to change standard practices,

uses a transformational influence and challenges the status quo (as cited in Langton et al, 266).

Leadership research spans over several decades and throughout various professions

such as public administration, organizational behaviour, social work and many others.

Leadership has been studied using qualitative and quantitative methods from small groups to

large organizations. Leadership is complex and sophisticated rather than simplistic and many

management authors such as Mintzberg (2014) like to convey.

Rost (1991, as cited in Northouse, 2016) found there were 200 definitions of leadership.

Many leadership theories were developed before 1980 and focused on their supervisory

nature, meaning how they managed day-to-day activities and functions of employees. They

ranged from control and centralization of power (as cited in Northouse, 2), to trait, behavioral,

situational, and contingency theories of leadership. Charismatic and transformational

leadership follow within the early traits of leadership approaches. Using the transformational

leadership approach seems to be the standard for much of the public administration research.

Emerging research has emphasized the "process of leadership whereby an individual

influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal, rather than developing ways of

defining leadership" (as cited in Northouse, 4). Examples of these emerging approaches include

authentic leadership, servant leadership and adaptive leadership. For the purpose of the paper,

I will be analyzing the material between transformational and adaptive leadership and how

they can relate to advancing racial equity.

4.3.1 Transformational Leadership

Research on organizational change in the public sector has leaned towards a transformational leadership style (Paarlberg and Lavigna, 2010; Wright and Moynihan, 2012; Ward, 2017). Transformational leadership emphasizes on interpersonal interaction in group settings for the purpose of achieving higher levels of trust, thereby enhancing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for all involved (Ward, 2). Transformational leadership corresponds with innovation wherein leaders take it upon themselves the responsibility to ensure that their innovative ideas succeed, whether those ideas are broader reforms or represent a narrower approach to change. Transformational leaders are charismatic and flexible with rules and norms. This process fosters a sense of belonging as the organization's followers easily identify with the leader and their purpose. Transformational leaders develop skills through cultivation and practice and not through traits. Bass (1985) argued that transformational leadership "motivates followers to do more than expected by (a) raising followers' levels of consciousness about the importance and value of specified and idealized goals, (b) getting followers to transcend their own-self-interest for the sake of the team or organization, and (c) moving followers to address higher level needs" (p 20).

Transformational Leadership Characteristics
Idealized influence: Provides vision and sense of mission, instills pride, gains respect and trust.   *Inspirational motivation*: Communicates high expectations, uses symbols to focus efforts, expresses important purposes in simple ways.   *Intellectual stimulation*: Promotes intelligence, rationality, and careful problem solving.   *Individualized consideration*: Gives personal attention, treats each employee individually, coaches, advises.   Source: As cited in Langton et al (p. 279).

Idealized influence is the emotional component of leadership where is describes characteristics of leaders. They act as a strong role model for followers and very much want to emulate them. They provide a vision and a sense of mission. They have a high moral and ethic conduct and can be trusted to do the right thing. Northouse (2016) mentions that he idealized influence factor is measured on two components. First, an attributional component which refers to the attributions of leaders made by the followers based on their perceptions of their leaders. The second is the behavioural component that refers to the followers' observations of leader behaviour (p. 167). The second characteristics is inspirational motivation which describes leaders who are highly motivational and are committed to sharing the vision of the organization. Leaders utilize symbols and emotive appeals to focus on group members' efforts to achieve more than their own self-interests (ibid, p. 169). Team spirit is enhanced which then drives higher levels of organizational performance. The third characteristic is intellectual stimulation. Transformation leaders are characterized as those who stimulate followers by becoming innovative and creative as well as changing their own beliefs and values, especially when dealing with organizational issues. It encourages followers to think things out on their own and engage in careful problem solving (ibid). The final characteristic is individualized consideration. Leaders support a climate in which they carefully listen to the needs of the followers. Leaders act as coaches and advisers while trying to assist followers in becoming actualized (ibid). These leaders may delegate to assist followers to grow through personal challenges.

A transformational leader is able to assist employees in helping employees with self -

esteem and self actualization. Leaders quickly adapt to change in internal and external

environments. As a result, they can function well in the increasingly complex, unpredictable,

and dynamic environments. This was supported by Bass (as cited by Briggs, 2008) in that he

proposed superior leadership performance occurs when "leaders broaden and elevate the

interest of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purpose and

the mission of the group, and when they steer their employees to look beyond their own-self

interest for the good of the group" (p 50). In addition, transformational leaders have significant

organizational performance.

Moynihan, Pandey and Wright (2011) proposed that transformational leaders "set the

table" for performance innovation for reform implementation suggesting there is a positive but

indirect effect on two mediating factors- goal clarity and organizational culture (158).   The

results from Moynihan et al's study suggest there is some relevance to public sector leadership

reform efforts. Their findings correlate transformational efforts to administrative reform of our

time, which would definitely align with NPM reforms that have existed over the last 30 years.

In a distinction between managing and leading, management leads to technical processes and

systems where leadership is about strategy and inspiration. Consistent with the literature,

"transformational leaders exert influence through performance systems, while also creating a

culture that enables those processes to succeed. Transformational leadership recognizes that

leaders are not technicians – they should inspire, stimulate, and act as role models" (p.159).

Transformational leaders then set the table for success way of fostering performance

outcomes. Leaders who want to effectuate organizational change would not only support

direct involvement and credible commitment, but also set the conditions necessary for the reforms to succeed.

Wright and Pandey state there are several challenges of transformational leadership in a public sector context. "If flexibility and discretion are necessary for transformational leadership, then it is not surprising that so many scholars suggest that the elaborate control systems associated with mechanistic or bureaucratic organizations should hinder both its emergence and effectiveness" (2009, 78). Because public sector leaders tend to be inflexible and are averse to change, "the desire for stability, predictability and equity within bureaucratic organizations results in the reliance on structural mechanisms to limit individual discretion and promote uniformity in how employees interpret and respond to work situations" (ibid). Second, transformational leadership is that it "does not address how leaders facilitate cooperation within the group, gain trust of followers, or build collective identity. Influence is unidirectional, flowing from the leader to follower (Ensari and Riggio, 2021, 28.). Furthermore, transformational leadership is treats people as a trait rather than a a behaviour people can learn. (as cited in Northouse, 178). The word *transformational* creates an image of one person being the most active in the group. Having the responsibility of an individual to create a vision and have a followership accentuates a trait characterization of transformational leadership. Third, there is evidence that transformational leadership that while it is associated with positive outcomes such as organizational effectiveness, researchers have not been able to establish a causal link between transformational leaders and changes in followers and organizations (Northouse, 179). A final drawback of transformational leadership is that it is deemed elitist and undemocratic. Leaders play a direct role in leading changes and a vision which gives the

impression that they act independently of followers putting themselves above the needs of the followers' needs (Northouse, 179).

4.3.2 *Adaptive Leadership*

Operationalizing organizational change and development as well as race are necessary components of the work towards racial equity. It is important to consider that these efforts must take into account the adaptive leadership style. Hill and Curry-Stevens (2017) assert that to address organizational change with a racial equity lens, leaders must have an adaptive leadership style. Adaptive leadership is a "commitment to ensuring all team members are treated equitably, feel a sense of belonging, and have the resources and support they need to achieve their full potential" (Center for Creative Leadership, 2020). Ronald Heifetz describes adaptive leadership as an activity, not a set of personality characteristics. The core activity for leadership is mobilizing groups and individuals to address adaptive challenges and helping create conditions that make adaptive work possible (Ferdman, 2021, 4).

Adaptive challenges are in sharp contrast to what Heifetz refers to as technical challenges. Technical challenges are those problems in the workplace or within the community that are clearly defined with known solutions that can be implemented through existing organizational challenges and are solved by subject matter experts and usually those in siloed environments, such as engineering and planning (Northouse, p. 261). People then look to the leader for a solution and accept the leader's authority to resolve the problem (Valeres & Clemency Cordes, 2020, p. 495). Adaptive challenges are problems that are not clear cut and easy to identify because they are possibly entrenched in our systems and structures, our beliefs

and how they may push up against the status quo (Valeres & Clemency Cordes, ibid). They will

eventually point to leader behaviours that play a pivotal role in adaptive leadership. The model

of adaptive leadership is outlined in Figure 2.1. Adaptive leadership considers how change

happens at each level of analysis – individual, interpersonal, group, organizational, and societal

– and the influence processes, competencies, and interventions that foster more inclusion, both

within and across levels (Ferdman, 10).

Figure 4.1 Model of Adaptive Leadership. Image from Northouse p 261
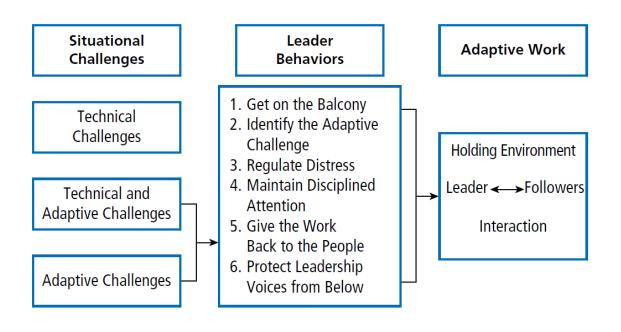
First behaviour is labelled as getting on the balcony. This relates to letter seeing the big

picture and momentarily stepping away from the chaos which will allow him or her to get a

clearer view of the landscape. This allows them to identify the value and power conflicts

among people, ways they maybe avoiding their work, and roadblocks towards change (as cited

in Northouse, 263). An example would where a leader steps away from table for a moment to separate the emotion and intensity from the situation and reflect on their goals and purpose. It is better for them to observe but also to stay engaged as a participant with the challenges they are confronting.

The second behaviour is identifying adaptive challenges. As mentioned earlier, those challenges are not exactly clear cut. They are usually value laden and can stir up emotions, such as those experiencing racial trauma through their lived experiences. Then front line workers and street-level bureaucrats would require the psychological safety necessary (Valeres & Cordes, p. 496). At the end, it will require leaders to find new ways to cope and become adaptive. Northouse (as cited) identify 4 archetypes to consider when distinguishing adaptive challenges from technical ones: identifying the gap between espoused values and behaviour; competing commitments that conflict from each other; allowing radical ideas or unspoken truths to enter the conversation; and, where people avoid addressing difficult issues so to stay within their comfort zone (p. 265). These are some of the common challenges that adaptive leaders face.

The third behaviour relates to regulating distress. While is comfortable to stay in our zones when things are predictable, maintaining the status quo becomes problematic. Adaptive challenges create the need for change and that process for change becomes uncomfortable for them – common trait when race at work is discussed, for example. The adaptive leader must monitor the levels of stress by creating a holding environment; provide direction, protection and orientation; and regulate that personal distress from those situations (Northouse, p. 266).

The fourth adaptive leadership behaviour is that a leader must maintain disciplined attention by focusing on the tough work that is required. Getting to racial equity within an organization is tough and is a long and arduous process. It will natural to avoid the need for change. Therefore, help focus on the issue by providing support in getting tough topics on the agenda for discussion. If there are deep divisions, there must be a vessel of safety where competing sides have an opportunity to address hot and sensitive topics without any repercussions (Northouse, p. 270).

The fifth behaviour is allowing for people to have the autonomy and space to work. Providing the opportunity for employees to be empowered by pursuing causes that are of interest to them that further the mission of the organization (Reeves, Shanahan, Torres, & Chua, 2011) will allow them to think for themselves and have the belief to solves their own problems.

The final behaviour is protecting the leadership voices from below. This means that adaptive listen to the marginalized voices within and outside the organization. This becomes a challenge because when a leader provides the opportunity for a out-group voice a platform, they may upset the social equilibrium of the group. Leaders should resist being in the comfort zone and listen to these voices by relinquishing a sense of control and giving those members the floor, which becomes a challenging process altogether (Northouse, p. 272).

An essential construct for adaptive leadership is equity. Adaptive leadership involves noting, calling out and addressing inequities. Furthermore, it means challenging organizations, societies to foster more equitable processes, systems, and outcomes (Ferdman, 13). As

mentioned, adaptive leaders must challenge the status quo – the systems and institutions that led to the racial and ethnic disparities in the first place. Adaptive leadership involves seeing and disrupting patterns of equality and inequity by challenging organizations to work through tensions and dilemmas involved to address, mitigate, and ideally eliminate these inequities. Adaptive leaders should foster more sustainability for organizations and the communities around them.

There are several strengths to adopting an adaptive leadership style. Using an adaptive leadership is a complex interactional process that underscores that leadership is not a trait or characteristic, but rather it occurs between leaders and followers in different situations (Northouse, 275). It is an interactive process that comprises of multiple dimensions and activities. Another strength is that orchestrating this conflict cannot occur with the holding environment. Horizontal relationships of trust are one key component of the holding environment. Vertical bonds of trust with authority maybe another where formal authority is involved (King, Sr., 2018, p. 23). Seeking out challenges where people can learn, improvise and create that holding environment (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009, p. 346). The third strength is that it directs attention to the tough questions and brings conflict to the surface (as cited in King, Sr, ibid; Northouse, ibid). As a result, the adaptive leadership style is unique in helping followers confront their personal values for change and adaptation to occur. Fourth, the leader behaviours outlined mobilize followers to do the work and suggests that followers learn to adapt and change while setting up the environment where it is most likely to happen. It is a prescriptive approach to facilitate adaptive change. Finally, adaptive leaders focus on diversity, which leaders them to be more adaptable (Valeras & Cordes, p. 496). Adaptive leaders prefer to

hear many voices from different backgrounds, cultures, and lived experiences. More ideas equate to better results in the long term.

There are minimal disadvantages to adopting an adaptive leadership style. There are several examples of leaders utilizing an adaptive style in health and education sectors, it has never been utilized in public sector organizations. Since many public sector organizational leaders are used to using a transformational leadership style, work in siloed environments respective of their professions, and, as much as they embrace policy innovation, they are still risk averse. Leaders still will cling to the status quo without doing the work. So there is little to no evidence that adaptive leadership style can be successful. Another disadvantage, conceptualizing requires further refinement. "Adaptive leadership was designed intentionally as a practical approach to leadership and is composed of a series of prescriptions about what leaders should do to help people engage in adaptive work" (Northouse, p. 276). Because it is normative, much more needs to be done in order to clarify the relationships and the process to which these factors lead to adaptive change in organizations. This leads to the third disadvantage in that the style is criticized to be too abstract. For example, leadership behaviours like "protect the leadership from below", "mobilize the system" and "give work back to the people" often lack clarity (Northouse, p. 277). In addition, some employees require structure and may cause them to not embrace the creative process.

5.0 CASE STUDY

In 2019, two Toronto Star articles were published highlighted concerns about the TTC

Transit Enforcement's practice of collecting and documenting race-based data which followed

by-law infractions where Black and racialized passengers were being disproportionately

targeted. The TTC board directed staff to report back on the Unit's policies and practices,

training and access to information as part of the Fare Inspection program. The Board also

requested an Equity Impact Evaluation of the demographic information of individuals with

whom their information was collected in the previous two years.

In February 2020, TTC developed a report that provided a status update on their Anti-

Racism Strategy and Ombudsman Recommendations. TTC was "committed to implementing a

system-wide Anti-Racism Strategy to remove barriers to equity and to make its workplaces and

transit services more inclusive and reflective of Toronto's increasingly diverse population"

(Toronto Transit Commission, 2020, p. 1). The TTC partnered with the Confronting Anti-Black

Racism Unit to learn and listen about the lived experiences of Black and other racialized groups

when taking transit and address and prevent racism on and within the TTC. Some of the issues

include experiences of racial profiling and Anti-Black Racism by fare inspectors. The

collaborative work included learning about the policies and practices of the Special Constable

and Revenue Protections services division using an Anti-Black racism analysis tool.

An example of how the anti-Black racism tool was administered for a COVID-19

response (City of Toronto Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, 2020). In the guiding document,

operational principles used to create a COVID-19 response were intrinsic, extrinsic,

collaborative, accountable, accessible, autonomous, transparent, creative & open, responsive,

and sustainable. From there operational questions ensued based on those principles that raised such issues as surveillance of Black people that affect their mental health, listening to Black communities and organizations in their response to COVID-19, and collection of disaggregated race-based data in order to adjust services to reflect a post-pandemic recovery.

The TTC recognized that systemic changes were necessary which also required external stakeholder consultations from anti-racism leaders, educators, and community groups and organizations. The framework for this strategy had four components. First, was customer and employee engagement and consultation. Looking from within is the first step to addressing where problems of anti-Black racism and racism as a whole lie. The model included an anti-Racism Task Force and development of strategy for continuous engagement. The strategy included public and employee consultations as well as the workforce demographic data.   The second was an Anti-Racism Policy Development and Review. A policy consultant was hired in 2021 for the development of an anti-racism policy as well as and anti-racism tool for the review and development of future policies. The third part of the framework entailed diversity, outreach and advancement. The TTC reviewed professional networking and development and anti-Black awareness events. Finally, there was anti-Black racism training in 2019 which was provided to executive leaders, fare inspector and new recruit classes, trainers, internal investigators and their Diversity and Human Rights Department. In 2020, this was to be rolled out to middle management and employees.

The TTC provided an Interim Report on the Anti-Racism Strategy Review (2020) since the Spring of that year, which was conducted by an external consultant, Arleen Huggins, a lawyer

from Koskie Minsky LLP.   The mandate of the review included the several elements. The first

was to provide advice on matters related to diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism. Second, was

to advise on a strategy and implementation plan for the Anti-Racism Strategy. Third, a review

of TTC's employment policies and practices to identify barriers for Black and racialized people

during recruitment. Fourth, was to consult on the development of broad anti-racism and

unconscious bias training. Fifth, was to liaise with academics in undertaking public consultation

sessions. Sixth, was to develop and implement a new public complaints process to address its

deficiencies. Finally, a review the Annual Report on Diversity and Inclusion as well as the Unit

itself. I will highlight some of the key findings from Ms. Huggins' report on the status of the

Anti Racism Strategy Review.

The first recommendation was to dismantle Diversity from Human Rights and form its

own Diversity and Culture Group within a new Diversity and Racial Equity Department (p. 8).

The role chief executive of the department, which Keisha Campbell was hired for, was to

"enrich diversity, equity and throughout the organization on a systemic level by promoting,

developing and co-ordinating the diversity and anti-racism initiatives at the TTC" (ibid). She will

lead, review and implement policies and programs with respect to anti-Black racism, diversity

and inclusion throughout the organization. Also, within the purview of the department was to

be a Manager and racial equity consultants working closely with the Confronting Anti-Black

Racism Unit while developing policies with an anti-Black racism lens and toolkit. Within the

recommendation for this section, there was a requirement to prioritize a strategy for Anti-Black

Racism and anti-racism policies (p. 10). Furthermore, a diversity and inclusion lens toolkit was

launched in 2016 to which over 1000 staff members from all levels were trained with the

exception of those in senior and executive management, which was supposed to occur, at the

time of this paper in 2021. The report also highlighted details of anti-Black and anti-racism

training which was set to be done by December 2022. Ms. Huggins highlighted the work of the

Diversity and Human Rights Steering Committee and internal consultation groups. This

committee, developed in 2018, was responsible for "overseeing the strategic direction,

development and implementation of TTC's diversity including human rights plans, programs

and initiatives, including the finalization and implementation of the TTC's 5 year Diversity and

Human Rights Strategic Plan and 10 point Action Plan. The Action Plan and the Strategic Plan

were completed in 2020.

Another one of the aspects of this report highlighted the need to restructure and

reorient the revenue protection and special constables unit. The purpose of the reorganization

was to "enhance the focus on each departments key priorities" (p. 15) with the goals of

maximizing revenue, delivering safety and security for customers and employees, and

improving the passenger experience by introducing "transparency, public confidence, and trust

and accountability into the Transit Unit's dealings with the public" (p. 15).

One of the more important areas is talent management, especially when it pertains to

leadership potential within an organization. 2 of the 10 points within the action plan highlight

accountabilities with respect to recruitment, outreach and compensation. But while there are

several other initiatives in progress some were completed. Initiatives that specifically targeted

women included the ongoing efforts of the Women and Diversity Committee and recruitment

of transit operators. These also included diverse hiring panels are being utilized for executive

positions, stakeholder engagement to be expanded to community groups and those from priorities neighbourhoods.

Finally, race-based disaggregated data collection should not be used against Black and racialized communities for the purpose of enforcement activities. In 2019, TTC had an increase of complaints raising allegations of systemic discrimination and differential treatment in the delivery of services based on race, which was highlighted in Spieler (2020). There is a definite need to address Anti-Black racism and systemic racism within the Strategy.

Also highlighted within the Report was TTC Workforce Demographics for 2019. The TTC collects demographic data annually for four employment equity designated groups – people who identify as racialized, Indigenous, women, and/or having a disability (p.19). For example, those TTC staff who identify as racialized has only increased by 0.2% from 2018 to 2019 from 40.6% to 40.8%. It is 8% lower than the Toronto and Ontario benchmarks, but significantly higher than the Federally regulated Transportation Sector benchmark. Table 2 highlights those employees that are racialized and categorized by occupation groups.   Important to highlight is the decrease in racialized senior managers and the year-over-year minimal increase or decrease of middle-managers and supervisors. One assumption in the decline of those employees at the senior manager level could be departures to other organizations or retirements. The dotted line signifies the Census 2016 benchmark, which in this case, the TTC falls short in all categories, except for one.
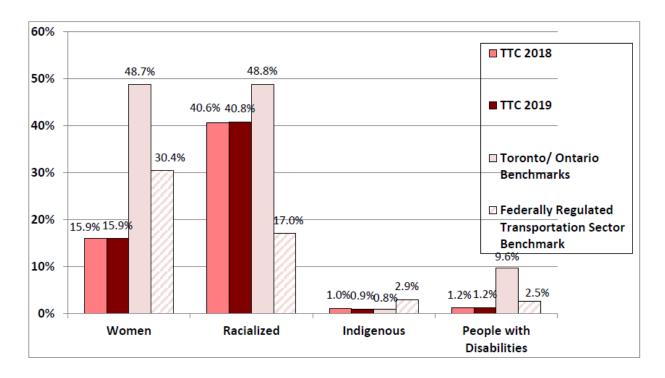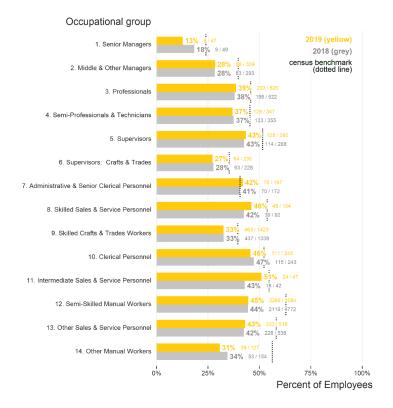
Table 1 TTC Workforce Demographic Data

	Women	Racialized	Indigenous	People with Disabilities
TTC 2018	15.9%	40.6%	1.0%	1.2%
TTC 2019	15.9%	40.8%	0.9%	1.2%
Toronto/ Ontario Benchmarks	48.7%	48.8%	0.8%	9.6%
Federally Regulated Transportation Sector Benchmark	30.4%	17.0%	2.9%	2.5%

Table 2 Employment Equity Occupational Group - Racialized

Occupational group	2019 (yellow)	2018 (grey)
1. Senior Managers	13% 6 / 47	18% 9 / 49
2. Middle & Other Managers	28% 88 / 309	28% 83 / 293
3. Professionals	39% 203 / 526	38% 198 / 522
4. Semi-Professionals & Technicians	37% 128 / 347	37% 133 / 355
5. Supervisors	43% 128 / 295	43% 114 / 268
6. Supervisors: Crafts & Trades	27% 64 / 235	28% 63 / 228
7. Administrative & Senior Clerical Personnel	42% 70 / 167	41% 70 / 172
8. Skilled Sales & Service Personnel	46% 48 / 104	42% 39 / 92
9. Skilled Crafts & Trades Workers	33% 463 / 1423	33% 437 / 1338
10. Clerical Personnel	46% 111 / 243	47% 115 / 243
11. Intermediate Sales & Service Personnel	51% 24 / 47	43% 18 / 42
12. Semi-Skilled Manual Workers	45% 2266 / 5084	44% 2119 / 4772
13. Other Sales & Service Personnel	43% 223 / 518	42% 228 / 538
14. Other Manual Workers	31% 39 / 127	34% 53 / 154

census benchmark (dotted line)

Communications and procurement highlight the remainder of the report. The goal of the

communication plan that was developed by the Corporate Communications department was to

allow the CEO to be put into a positive light, especially pertaining to diversity, equity and

inclusion in the transportation industry and the broader public sector (p. 23). The key strategic

areas include external communications to include public consultations with Black and other

racialized groups to best inform the Anti-Racism Strategy; internal communications through

internal channels such as MY TTC as diversity initiatives roll out as well as utilizing the expertise

of Keisha Campbell to which a plan would be specified for her area; and, employee

communications to highlight specific cultural events such as Emancipation Month, creating

awareness regarding the contribution of people of African descent to the City of Toronto (p.

26). Furthermore, the 10-point Action Plan highlighted the revision of procurement policies

which included training on procurement policies to ensure there was an emphasis on equity

and diversity criteria among its supply chain. No training plans were developed at the time of

the report.

While moving towards the development of an Anti-Racism Strategy, it is best for the TTC

to review best practices from not only the transit industry, but as well as other public sector

organizations and non-profit groups so that they can be applied. The report suggested to look

internally for best practices within the transit profession but made it a point to establish a

connection with the Black North Initiative, a non-profit group that is specific to bringing equity

to organizations.

This existing data is used to tailor and target recruitment initiatives with executives and

department heads and involves engaging community organizations for career fairs targeting

diverse applicants (p. 22).

6.0 ANALYSIS

Organizational structures and systems are coming to a reckoning due to the need to address anti-Black racism. There is clear evidence that adaptive leadership requires a multi-level approach. Advancing racial equity in an organization requires an upheaval of culture that requires accountability and a different approach. There is an urgency for addressing Anti-Black racism at the systemic and institutional levels. This is highlighted by the need to address Anti-Black racism by way of profiling aggregation of data and enforcement, more would be needed at the organizational level to ensure effectiveness.

Changing times and the changing needs of a changing workforce call for massive changes in entire systems. They call for new social norms to be promoted and for proactive disruption of the status quo. Transit leaders thus have a potentially powerful role to play. As having the power as individuals in specific roles to shape the collective and the organizations is where structure meets agency (Shyamsunder, 2021, 240). The traditional transit organization has been top-down with direction coming from politicians and the Board through to executive leadership. When new leaders have arrived at an organization, they tend to use a transformational leadership style. This style is individualistic in nature and is top-down in its approach. The traditional transformational leadership style would typically resemble reinventing the wheel. There are still forms of normalcy and interest convergence within the transit institution. Different face, same colour, same culture. While both transformational leadership and adaptive leadership are follower centred, the evidence indicates that the latter approach is focused on organization wide because, as evidence with the ongoing TTC Anti-

Racism strategy, there is input from staff as well as from the community. Adaptive leaders get on the balcony to have a bird's eye view of the organization. The role of the CEO is to have a balanced focus where the must focus on the macro, top-down changes, as well as the short-term, micro-level changes, to which both transformational and adaptive leadership styles are slightly similar. Where the leadership styles differ is that they need to get out of the fray and trust the other organizational members in helping with advancing racial equity.   In addition to the CEO getting on the balcony, it is important for the CEO of the TTC to differentiate between the technical challenges and the adaptive ones. Executive leadership past and present have been primarily focused on the technical challenges of 'customer' retention, fleet management, and procurement, for example, but ignoring the adaptive challenges that include institutional and structural racism. The adaptive organizational challenges that are required are the "changing individuals actions, biases, and choices to the collective by focusing on behavioural or relational interventions for employees and decision-makers, and also working to make structural and systemic changes at the macro organizational level and even societal levels (ibid, 240).

While transformation is about change, leaders at transit agencies are still "nervous" as Larson pointed out in her article (2020). Larson's findings from the four transit agencies in Denver, Minneapolis, Birmingham, and Orlando would be comparable to the operations of Canadian transit agencies. Larson indicated that each of the agencies supported many of the guiding principles outlined in Gooden (2014). The most highly adopted principles offer insight into the activities, practices and behaviours that maybe be initially adopted to achieve more

equitable transit across racialized communities and lower-income neighbourhoods (Larson, 47).

Achieving greater accountability is of the utmost importance towards advancing racial equity.

The motivation to begin navigation of nervousness typically include some combination

of political, moral, legal, and/or economic triggers. Much of the work towards an Anti-Racism

strategy for the TTC involves preventing racial bias, racial profiling and anti-Black racism while

building trust with Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities (TTC, 8). The strategy is

aimed at driving organization wide changes to systemic policies and procedures across the TTC

to remove the barriers to equal opportunity and achieve equity for all groups who experience

racism or marginalization. The long-term impacts of the Action Plan for Confronting Anti-Black

Racism at the city-wide level, one of the driving forces for the Anti-Racism strategy, has direct

implications to address past discriminatory practices by the transit enforcement officers and

fare inspectors.

To overcome nervousness, sometimes there is "awkward tension because white

leadership and administration are serving people they do not understand or are not connected

to" (Larson, 48). These White leaders will revert to equality standards based on human rights

legislation because they have to and they are comfortable in doing so. Transit leaders must

then have the responsibility to operate in the nervous area of government. There is an ethical

responsibility to address racial equity concerns given their high-profile roles. Regarding race,

ethnicity, income and language barriers, Larson claimed that leaders generally understand how

systemic discrimination affects the generationally disadvantaged (p. 51).   At the organizational

level, transit agencies like the TTC should evaluate their socialization boundaries and extend

them to accommodate a wider range of equity work. One respondent mentioned that it is uncomfortable to talk about race at work and realize that people must talk through racism issues (Larson, 51). In using adaptive leadership, a holding environment for this to occur must be adopted. Senior leadership is a critically important factor in realizing sustained progress. Organizational leaders need to regulate distress by creating a holding environment for those within and outside the organization to express their concerns, especially when it comes to oppression and Anti-Black racism. The Anti-Racism Strategy sets out a mechanism that will allow for this to happen through committee work, as outlined in Huggins' report. There must not be any repercussions for those who speak about their lived experiences Once the strategy adopted, the long road towards advancing racial equity begins.

Transit leaders within their organizations were critical in creating a culture in which racial equity is important (Larson, 52). More should be done to develop leaders who take on a more engaged position to champion for better access to enhance opportunities. While there are no perfect solutions, there must be solutions that embody a race-conscious approach most directly facilitate structural equity solutions. Some transit agency leaders in the US have taken a conscious approach to addressing the persistence of inequities through examining structural and systemic barriers to opportunity based on race, income, ethnicity, etc. Institutional racism is prevalent in transit agencies. The TTC has begun to do the work with the Anti-Racism Strategy. Institutional racism is the large part of the conversation and that racial inequity is a systemic problem and racial trauma has affected racialized communities for decades. Canadian transit leadership is notorious for being predominantly male and white. Policies are written and approved by leaders who have never had the lived experiences.

This proves that barriers have emerged when specific voices, up until now in TTC's case, are not represented at the top levels, which place a level of burden on transit users as a whole. This becomes a clear criticism of the principles that stem from new public management. Greater emphasis must be placed on leaders to understand the structural barriers inherent in unjust systems that continue to burden women, low-income and racialized communities when compared to those who are white and privileged. An adaptive leadership style should address these issues.

Transformational leadership does have its place when there needs to be change from a new incoming leader. One convincing characteristic of not using transformational leadership in public sector organizations in the current climate of advancing racial equity is that leaders in such structures restrict the ability for them to be creative or provide a compelling case to reinterpret organizational objectives that would be congruent with employee values. Therefore, it is evident that an alternative leadership model should be introduced.

In circumstances that must address the social upheaval, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, leadership must incorporate an adaptive leadership style as it is the most appropriate in adopting the more subtle and complex activities. For instance, race-conscious solutions most directly facilitate structural progress (Larson, 55). A consciousness about equity is required for change.   Virtually all organizational changes involve a leader who can listen yet instill those changes and into the behaviours of organizational members, particularly ones who are not from racialized communities. Adaptive leaders, like transformational leaders, must institutionalize them over the long haul so that new patterns must displace the old ones.

Putting adaptive leadership principles in place, a common theme throughout the paper involves

a bottom-up approach in creating a personal connection between the leader and a diverse set

of stakeholders. Making and implementing decisions would become much easier.

In the end, transit's executive leaders can put these insights into work in two ways. First

is by developing a personal advisory board that is comprised of those who have regular contact

with the executive leader and whom the leader trust to talk straight with. Recommendations

from the Interim Report on TTC's Anti-Racism Strategy included the development of an Anti-

Racism Leadership Working Group. The group would include members closely related to

diversity issues at the TTC. They would be responsible for:

- Discussing and coordinating priorities and timelines in respect of the TTC Anti-Racism agenda, including initiatives to respond to the City of Toronto's Ombudsman report from July 2019;
- Implementation of initiatives on both strategic and operational levels;
- Implementing anti-racism initiatives on a TTC wide corporate level;
- Establishing accountability for all initiatives;
- Maintain cohesion and avoiding overlap;
- Maintain clear communications from the highest level down to staff as to a TTC diversity commitment;
- Ensure regular reporting to the CEO. (Huggins, 28).

Within this framework, these trusted advisers can provide the transit leader with

detailed feedback on everyday interpersonal behaviours that support or inhibit inclusion

(Bourke and Titus, 2020). Examples of questions could include: Does the leader always refer to

the dominant gender when giving examples? Does the leader use a broad spectrum of imagery

when addressing a diverse audience or imagery that represents only one group of people. A

second tactic for adaptive leaders is to share their learning journey about recognizing and

addressing biases. In addition, adaptive leaders must consider factors beyond the narrow ones, of individual actions, individual biases and individual choices (Shyamsunder, 2020, 237).

The focus has always been on the individual, which once again stems from the new public management principles, and not on the collective. Systemic failures have become at the more macro levels, such as organizational-level processes and operations and societal-level norms, which then get explained as an individual responsibility or problem. Organizational change at the TTC will need to be done using an adaptive leadership style.

7.0 Conclusion

The research question asked which leadership style was the most effective in addressing anti-Black racism and advance racial equity. Adaptive leadership is situational and contextual in nature. The evidence is conclusive that executive leaders at the TTC should use an adaptive leadership style to confront Anti-Black racism and to advance racial equity within the organization. While adaptive leadership styles have been predominantly applied in the fields of social work, health care and education, many of the principles aee still applicable. With the window of opportunity presented before the CEO and executive leaders at the TTC, given the perfect storm of a racial reckoning along with the COVID-19 pandemic, using an adaptive leadership style is suitable for the current scenario. Transit leaders should break the nervousness and adapt to a new leadership style in reforming their organizations, which should serve as a lesson learned for transit and other public service agencies. The default has always been leaders who execute a transformational leadership style to bring about organizational change. Transformational leaders hold charismatic traits and has a followership throughout the process of change. Yet in these important times for change, and while transformational change is inevitable in this case, it only serves the existing leader. The evidence shows a new type of leadership style is required. A transformational leader is right for the here and now. An adaptive leader is the right type of leader for the future.

A subsequent research question was asked in terms of the best type of leader to adopt this type of change. The characteristic of transit organizations have been hierarchical with the leadership profile which comprises of highly technical backgrounds such as engineering or the

military. These leaders have also been predominantly White and male. While executive

leaders must be strategic, more sympathetic while promoting psychological safety, the

evidence has shown that diversity programs to develop that awareness of anti-Black racism that

has perpetuated organizations will still exist. A new type of leader must preferably be from

outside the ranks of transit and from racialized communities in order to confront Anti-Black

racism. For the time being, existing transit leaders must be ready to adopt the need for change

from the bottom-up. They must be amenable to coach, mentor and promote Black people to

leadership positions who already possess the lived experiences that White executives never

had. Currently, "the TTC has, at the highest level, being the CEO, illustrated the will to

transform itself into a modern, progressive, and diverse organization which has restructured

itself to service the increasingly diverse communities which it serves (Huggins, 2020, 27). This is

a good start for Canadian transit organizations to follow and mimic for other racialized groups.

While this paper has proven that an adaptive leadership style should be adopted, this

research will only scratch the surface. Future research will be needed in order to see what

effects and outcomes of an adaptive leadership style have in reshaping transit organizations

and how leaders are making bold decisions to eradicate Anti-Black racism from within and the

outside. This can be applied for other public sector agencies looking to advance racial equity by

adopting this style of leadership.

Implications for Academia

As I completed the MPA program at Western, I went through two phases. I was afforded the

opportunity to learn and write about transformational leadership in Organizational Behaviour

class. During this second phase of the program, I entered the program with a newfound vigour and impetus to raise awareness into the program that did not have a single racialized person teaching. After reading Gooden's (2014) insight on overcoming racial nervousness in MPA programs, the hope is that Western becomes a leader in incorporating components of social and racial equity within the program. As public administration practitioners, the expectation is to uphold the ethics, standards, missions, and visions of our organizations, the ethical standards when we practice within our communities and within our professions.

Although this study was of a single organization, a one-time study at a point in time, which is still ongoing, and although the findings may not be applied to all public sector organizations and academia, the findings would have some practicality. Hiring diversity or equity officers within the organization are a step in the right direction. They would be well served to evaluate their organizational practices and adopt an adaptive leadership style to ensure racial equity is applied throughout the program. A cultural audit and a racial equity committee would benefit from listening to its students, alumni and professors who have lived experiences operating in environments that were not conducive to listening to their needs.   It is paramount that racial equity is taught within the program either through an individual course as well as being embedded in such courses as policy, organizational behaviour, management, economics, and strategic planning. Another suggestion would be to actively recruit professors from racialized communities, not as a performative measure, but as a long-lasting impact for incoming students. It is also important to recognize the contributions Western alumni from Black and other racialized communities have to the school itself.

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