

Roundtable on Values and Justice

Examining racial disparities in the criminal legal system and reimagining justice in Oklahoma

Co-hosted by The Education and Employment Ministry, Oklahomans for Criminal Justice Reform, Langston University, the Greenwood Cultural Center, and the Justice Lab at Columbia University

Roundtable Readings

Day One: Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Greenwood Cultural Center, 322 North Greenwood Avenue, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74120

Discussion 1. THE RACIAL HISTORY OF OKLAHOMA'S CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

Facilitated by Tiffany Crutcher and Kym Cravatt

Historic and current policies and practices have led to incarceration on an unprecedented scale in Oklahoma. What is the relationship between our racialized history and our current policies? How can examining our history help us achieve justice in the present? How can we use history to shape current justice system practice, and reform efforts in the state?

- [Our Generational Vision for Liberation and Justice](#) by The Terence Crutcher Foundation
- [Criminal Justice in Indian Country: A Theoretical and Empirical Agenda](#) by Jeffrey T. Ulmer and Mindy S. Bradley
- [The Foundational Lawlessness of the Law Itself: Racial Criminalization and the Punitive Roots of Punishment in America](#) by Khalil Gibran Muhammad

Discussion 2. THE UNITED STATES' VIOLENT EXCEPTIONALISM AND PUNITIVE EXCESS

Facilitated by George Young and Francie Ekwerekwu

U.S. history is characterized by exceptional levels of violence: it was founded by colonial occupation and the genocide of first peoples, and sustained by an economy of enslaved people. Collective violence continued against African Americans following Reconstruction, and, in the late 20th century, high levels of lethal violence emerged in U.S. cities. What explains U.S. violent exceptionalism? How has structural violence become ingrained in U.S. culture and society? How has it been codified by law, or supported politically? In what ways does Oklahoma suffer from the violence that is unique to the U.S.? Can we rectify and heal from our violent past as a country? As a state?

- [Due Process and the Theater of Racial Degradation: The Evolving Notion of Pretrial Punishment in the Criminal Courts](#) by Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve

- [The Historical Reckoning that Revokes an Irreducible Minimum of the Youth Justice System in Ending Incarceration of Indigenous/Chicanx/Latinx/Afro-Latinx Two-spirit Youth](#) by Marcia Rincon-Gallardo

Day Two: Thursday, February 2, 2023

Greenwood Cultural Center, 322 North Greenwood Avenue, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74120

Discussion 3. CREATING SAFETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION, AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Facilitated by Tina Brown and Vered Harris

Communities thrive when their residents feel safe, secure, and socially integrated. Such flourishing depends on systems that provide basic welfare such as food and housing, access to public education and healthcare, and the freedom to work and associate with others. However, all too often, the punitive force of the criminal legal system impacts these sectors' ability to meet such social needs. How have these sectors addressed the effects of—and separated themselves from—the criminal justice system? Do sectors outside the traditional justice system have promising practices and solutions that ensure safety, harm reduction, and healthy communities? What are their successes and their challenges? How can we learn from and amplify their work? Where can sectors build stronger, more inclusive, and more intersectional collaborations to create community safety, resiliency, and thriving?

- [What Makes a City Safe: Viable Community Safety Strategies that Do Not Rely on Police or Prisons](#) by Amanda Alexander and Danielle Sered
- [Turning the Page: Oklahoma's Criminal Justice Reform Story](#) by Felicity Rose, jasmine Sankofa, and Alison Silveira
- [Restorative Justice in Native American Communities](#) by Jon'a F. Meyer

Discussion 4. THE OKLAHOMA STANDARD AND THE VALUES OF THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

Facilitated by Ayana Lawson and Adam Luck

In the wake of the Oklahoma City Bombing, Oklahomans demonstrated their deep care for one another and modeled generosity towards strangers in the face of a collective crisis. This harrowing moment gave rise to the Oklahoma Standard: the three values of acts of service, kindness, and honor. These values can guide decision making for both institutions and individuals—about what policies should be set, which practices are acceptable, what budgets should look like, and more. How are these values reflected in the day-to-day work of achieving safety and justice? Can they answer the call to address Oklahoma's history of racism, and its impact on the current legal system? Are there additional values

that we might consider to reduce, repair, or remove the conflicts and shortcomings—both societal and interpersonal—that lead to state violence?

- [The Values of Justice](#) by Keith Wattley
- [Knowing What We Want: A Decent Society, a Civilized System of Justice and a Condition of Dignity](#) by Jonathan Simon

Discussion 5. ASPIRATIONS FOR MOVEMENT BUILDING AND NARRATIVE CHANGE

Facilitated by Cece Jones-Davis and Reggie Hines

Over the past several months, Oklahomans participating in the Square One Project have been reflecting on how to change the narrative around harm and punishment. They have considered how to reimagine justice in the state. This final session is an opportunity to take stock of contributors' hard work and the themes that arose from their discussions. What is the power of truth telling about difficult topics, including the racial disparities in the justice system? How can sector-specific ways to address harms support coalition-building that strengthen efforts to reimagine justice? How do we build that coalition for change? Who needs to be included in this process and what does it take to include these voices? How do we go past tinkering around the edges and achieve real change? What is holding us back as we aspire to reimagine justice?

- [Beyond the Easiest Cases](#) by Matt Desmond and Greisa Martinez Rosas
- [Critical Connections: Trust Building as a Prerequisite to Systems Change](#) by Susan Glisson