STRUCTURAL LANGUAGE FRAMEWORK FOR FBA JUSTICE

A Framework for Accuracy and Integrity in Research, Policy, and Public Discourse

INTRODUCTION

Public language shapes public understanding. The words institutions use to classify people determine how data is collected, how disparities are interpreted, and whether harm is correctly diagnosed. When language is imprecise, policy becomes misaligned, resources drift, and repair remains impossible.

For Foundational Black Americans, centuries of state produced harm have shaped our lives through enslavement, exclusion, displacement, discriminatory housing and labor policy, and generational deprivation. These realities have been buried inside broad racial categories such as Black, African American, minority, and POC. These labels collapse distinct populations into a single group and erase the lineage-based harms produced by federal, state, and local governments.

The structural language framework restores precision. It names the lineage harmed, defines the mechanisms that produced the harm, and creates the clarity required for targeted intervention and enforceable repair. Without accurate language, justice cannot be measured or delivered.

RACE-BASED TERMINOLOGY

Race-based categories were created for administrative convenience, not historical accuracy. Terms like "Black" or "African American" group FBAs together with diverse Black immigrant populations whose histories, exposures, and structural outcomes differ dramatically.

Race-based terminology fails because it:

- masks lineage-specific disparities

- obscures the harms uniquely targeting FBAs

- redistributes resources away from the intended population

- produces misleading SSDH data

- encourages institutions to appear compliant while avoiding the core harm

- prevents eligibility criteria from matching the population injured

Race-based language is not a neutral descriptor; it is a structural barrier to repair.

MISCLASSIFICATION AS STRUCTURAL HARM

Misclassification is a form of structural harm. When lineage is replaced with broad racial categories, it distorts how harm is understood and how repair is designed.

This damage occurs in three primary ways:

- **Identity Harm**
  Lineage is collapsed into generalized racial belonging, weakening cultural continuity, political coherence, and the ability to name a distinct national experience.

- **Structural Harm**
  When FBAs are measured within broad racial groups, SSDH indicators—such as life expectancy, maternal mortality, environmental exposure, chronic disease, and wealth deprivation—are distorted, masking patterns of lineage-specific harm.

- **Resource Harm**
  Funds intended to repair the descendants of U.S. chattel slavery are redirected to non-FBA populations, including groups not subjected to the policies those resources were designed to address.

Misclassification is not an administrative error. It is a mechanism through which structural harm is reproduced.

WHY THE STRUCTURAL LANGUAGE FRAMEWORK

Accurate repair requires accurate identification, which means naming the lineage directly, protecting it from category drift, and ensuring no other group is substituted in its place.

This helps to:

- define the population harmed (FBAs)

- distinguish lineage from race, ethnicity, and nationality

- clarify eligibility for lineage-based policy

- correct distorted SSDH data

- prevent category collapse

- establish jurisdictional accountability

- support the legal foundation for reparations

- align institutions around shared definitions

Identity clarity is the foundation of lineage-based policy. Without it, the boundaries of harm and repair dissolve.

FRAMEWORK COMPONENTS

Instead of attributing every conflict or disparity to "racism," the framework distinguishes between bias, structural design, institutional behavior, and narrative distortion.

The goal is not to minimize historical racism, but to replace vague language with diagnostic clarity that supports understanding, accountability, and repair.

This shift makes room for dialogue and precision by naming the true sources of harm.

Examples:

- **Implicit Bias**
  Unconscious associations that shape interactions

- **Prejudice**
  Beliefs rooted in stereotypes or limited exposure

- **Structural Distortion**
  Policies reproducing harm regardless of intent

- **False Equivalencies**
  Treating unlike groups as interchangeable

- **Narrative Fallacies**
  Stories or assumptions that distort lineage history

- **Whataboutism**
  Shifting focus through irrelevant comparisons

This clarity reduces unnecessary conflict, strengthens accountability, and opens the door to productive discussion rather than accusation.

JURISDICTIONAL CLARITY AND NATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

FBA lineage-based claims are grounded in jurisdiction, not ideology. The harms addressed by this framework were produced through U.S. law, policy, and institutional design. As a result, repair must be anchored within the same national systems.

Jurisdictional clarity:

- affirms FBAs as a people formed inside the United States

- establishes federal responsibility for historical and ongoing harm

- protects lineage-based remedies from dilution or substitution

- shifts discourse from moral debate to legal and policy accountability

This framework asserts national responsibility, not loyalty or nationalism, grounding enforceable repair in documented records, citizenship, and jurisdictional clarity.

PATTERNS OF MISREPRESENTATION AND RESISTANCE

Misclassification does not persist solely through error or misunderstanding. It is often maintained through recurring patterns of resistance that prevent lineage clarity from taking hold.

These patterns include:

- **Category Expansion**
  Broadening eligibility to avoid naming a specific harmed population, resulting in resource dilution and misaligned policy outcomes.

- **False Equivalence**
  Treating distinct groups as interchangeable despite differing histories, exposures, and jurisdictional relationships.

- **Delegitimation**
  Reframing lineage-based identification as extremist or exclusionary in order to undermine its credibility and discourage institutional adoption.

- **Derailment**
  Shifting focus from policy and data to interpersonal accusations or identity debates that stall structural correction.

Recognizing these patterns allows institutions to distinguish between good-faith confusion and systemic resistance. Accurate repair requires confronting both.

NARRATIVE DISCIPLINE AS STRUCTURAL PROTECTION

Language discipline is not about controlling speech. It is about protecting accuracy. When lineage-based frameworks are discussed without precision, narratives drift, conflict escalates, and repair becomes impossible to administer.

Institutions and advocates must avoid debates that collapse into identity validation or moral accusation.

Narrative discipline requires:

- centering jurisdiction, data, and policy outcomes

- refusing false equivalencies

- redirecting discussion to documented harm and eligibility clarity

- disengaging from debates that obscure the population harmed

Discipline preserves the framework and prevents misrepresentation from becoming institutional practice.

STRUCTURAL LANGUAGE AS GOVERNANCE

Structural language determines how systems function.

It governs:

- access to recognition and resources

- eligibility for policy and repair

- accountability across institutions

When language is imprecise:

- populations are misidentified

- eligibility criteria weaken

- responsibility becomes diffuse

When language is disciplined:

- harmed populations are clearly defined

- remedies align with need

- outcomes can be measured and enforced

Lineage clarity is a governance requirement that moves institutions from symbolic equity to enforceable justice.

FRAMEWORK DEFINITIONS

With the mechanisms clarified, the framework introduces a vocabulary that institutions can use to classify populations accurately, measure harm, and design lineage-based solutions.

FBA Lineage

Definition: Direct descent from chattel slavery in the U.S. prior to 1865.

Example: "SSDH indicators must be reported separately for FBA lineage populations."

FBA Jurisdiction

Definition: Born in the U.S. and subjected to lineage-based harm through its laws and institutions.

Example: "Redlining produced jurisdiction-specific disparities concentrated in FBA neighborhoods."

Structural Suppression

Definition: Policies that restrict opportunity, wealth, health, or safety for FBAs.

Example: School closures in Black neighborhoods represent structural suppression.

Systemic Deprivation

Definition: The multigenerational denial of resources and opportunity.

Example: Housing discrimination created systemic deprivation that persists today.

Social Misclassification

Definition: Incorrectly categorizing FBAs inside racial aggregates.

Example: Reporting "Black unemployment" hides FBA-specific disparities.

Category Collapse

Definition: Merging distinct groups into a single category that erases lineage differences.

Example: "African American" often includes immigrants, causing category collapse.

Misclassification Harm

Definition: Resource loss caused by inaccurate population grouping.

Example: Millions in FBA-targeted resources are lost through misclassification harm.

Structural Distortion

Definition: Policies that reproduce inequity regardless of stated intention.

Example: Algorithms prioritizing non-FBA patients reflect structural distortion.

False Equivalencies

Definition: Treating unrelated groups as though they share the same history or outcomes.

Example: Comparing FBA outcomes to recent African immigrants is a false equivalency.

Narrative Fallacies

Definition: Stories, claims, or assumptions that distort lineage truth.

Example: "All Black groups struggle the same way" is a narrative fallacy.

Jurisdictional Outcomes

Definition: Disparities produced by federal policies such as housing, education, and policing.

Example: Life expectancy gaps across Chicago reflect jurisdictional outcomes.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Institutions must align their practices with identity clarity.

Responsibilities include:

- lineage-disaggregated data collection
- updated reporting systems
- lineage-based eligibility standards
- staff training on FBA identity and history
- removal of pan-ethnic assumptions
- evaluation frameworks distinguishing FBA and immigrant outcomes
- lineage-protected program design

- establishment of FBA-led advisory structures

Institutions cannot claim equity while relying on language that obscures the population harmed.

MUTUAL BENEFIT AND IMPACT

Using a structural language framework produces measurable benefits by replacing confusion with clarity and ensuring systems respond to the right population.

For FBA Communities:

- accurate diagnosis of SSDH disparities
- targeted lineage-based interventions
- protection against resource dilution
- stronger legal claims for reparations

For Institutions:

- higher-quality research
- improved program outcomes
- clearer accountability
- credibility with FBA communities
- competitive advantage as lineage-based policy becomes a national standard

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For Society:

- more efficient use of public funds
- clearer public understanding
- stronger, healthier communities
- reduced conflict and miscommunication

Precision benefits everyone.

CONCLUSION

When discussing identity clarity, language is structural. It shapes who is seen, who is counted, and who receives repair. A structural language framework brings clarity where race-based terminology created confusion. It provides the precision needed to identify lineage-based harm and establishes the foundation for the policies that follow.

Clear language reveals truth and makes repair possible.

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