## DA

### A. Link

#### [Link] They say in CX that they only focus on intentions, and don’t consider their policy’s consequences

### B. Impacts

#### 1. [Utt] Their focus on intentions reifies privilege and oppression.

**Utt:** Utt, Jamie [Writer and Diversity Consulant] “Intent vs Impact: Why Your Intentions Don’t Really Matter”. July 2013. RP

Imagine for a moment that you’re standing with your friends in a park, enjoying a nice summer day.You don’t know me, but I walk right up to you holding a Frisbee. I wind up – and throw the disc *right into your face.* Understandably, you are indignant. Through a bloody nose, you use a few choice words to ask me what the hell I thought I was doing. And my response?*“Oh, I didn’t mean to hit you! That was never my intent! I was simply trying to throw the Frisbee to my friend over there!”* Visibly upset, you demand an apology. But I refuse. Or worse, I offer an apology that sounds like *“I’m sorry your face got in the way of my Frisbee! I never intended to hit you.”* Sound absurd? Sound infuriating enough to give me a well-deserved Frisbee upside the head? Yeah. So why is this same thing happening *all* of the time when it comes to the intersection of our identities and oppressions or privileges? Intent v. Impact From [Paula Deen](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-207_162-57591063/paula-deen-on-today-im-not-a-racist/) to Alec Baldwin to your annoying, bigoted uncle or friend, we hear it over and over again: *“I never meant any harm…” “It was never my intent…” “I am not a racist…” “I am not a homophobe…” “I’m not a sexist…”* I cannot tell you how often I’ve seen **people attempt to deflect criticism about their oppressive language or actions by making** the conversation **about their intent.** At what point does the *“intent”* conversation stop mattering so that we can step back and look at impact? After all, in the end, **what does the intent of our action really matter if our actions have the** impactof furthering the marginalization or oppression of those around us? In some ways, this is a simple lesson of relationships. If I say something that hurts my partner, it doesn’t much matter whether I intended the statement to mean something else – *because my partner is hurting.* I need to listen to how my language hurt my partner. I need to apologize. And then I need to reflect and empathize to the best of my ability so I don’t do it again. But when we’re dealing with the ways in which our identities intersect with those around us – *and, in turn, the ways our privileges and our experiences of marginalization and oppression intersect* – this lesson becomes something much larger and more profound. **This becomes a lesson of justice**. What we need to realize is that when it comes to people’s lives and identities, **the impact of our actions can be profound and wide-reaching**. And that’s far more important than the question of our intent. We need to ask ourselves what might be or might have been the impact of our actions or words. And we need to step back and listen when we are being told that the impact of our actions is out of step with our intents or our perceptions of self. Identity Privilege and Intent For people of [identity privilege](http://everydayfeminism.com/2012/12/how-to-talk-to-someone-about-privilege/), this is where [listening becomes vitally important](http://everydayfeminism.com/2013/04/the-importance-of-listening-as-a-privileged-person-fighting-for-justice/), for **our privilege can often shield us from understanding the impact of our actions.** After all, as a person of privilege, I can never fullyunderstand the ways in which oppressive acts or language impact those around me.What I surely *can* do is listen with every intent to understand, and I can work to change my behavior. Because what we need to understand is that **making the conversation about intent is inherently a privileged action.** *The reason?* It ensures that you and your identity (and intent) stay at the center of any conversation and action while the impact of your action or words on those around you is marginalized. So if someone ever tells you to *“check your privilege,”* what they may very well mean is: *“Stop centering your experience and identity in the conversation by making this about the intent of your actions instead of their impact.”* That is: Not everything is about you. “What They Did” vs. “What They Are” The incredible Ill Doctrine puts it well when he explains the difference between the *“What They Did”* conversation and the *“What They Are”* conversation, which you can watch [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0Ti-gkJiXc). In essence, the *“intent”* conversation is one about *“what they are*.” Because if someone *intended* their action to be hurtful and racist/sexist/transphobic/pickyourpoison, then they must inherently *be*racist/sexist/transphobic/pickyourpoison. On the other hand, the *“impact”* conversation is one about *“what they did.”* For you, it takes the person who said or did the hurtful thing out of the center and places the person who was hurt in the center. It ensures that the conversation is about how *“what they did”* hurts other people and further marginalizes or oppresses people. And it’s important for people to understand the difference. Just because you *did* something sexist doesn’t mean that *you* are sexist. Just because you *said* something racist doesn’t mean that *you* are racist. When your actions are called into question, it’s important to recognize that that’s *all* that is being called into question – your actions, not your overall character. Listen. Reflect. Apologize. Do Better. It doesn’t matter whether we, deep down, believe ourselves to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-ist or whether we intended our actions to be hurtful or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-ist. *It.Doesn’t.Matter.* If the impact of our actions is the furthering of oppression, then that’s all that matters. So we need to listen, reflect, apologize, and work to do better in the future. What does that look like? Well, to start, we can *actually* apologize. I don’t know about you, but I am sick of hearing the “*“I am sorry your face got in the way of my Frisbee! I never intended to hit you”* apologies. Whether it’s Paula Deen weeping on TV or Alec Baldwin asking us to simply trust that he’s not a “homophobe,”those are not apologies. That’s why I was incredibly inspired and relieved to see a major organization do it well when [Kickstarter apologized and took full responsibility](http://www.kickstarter.com/blog/we-were-wrong) for their role in funding a creepy, rapey seduction guide. They apologized earnestly and accepted the role they played in something really terrible. hey pledged to never allow projects like this one to be funded in the future. And then they donated $25,000 to RAINN. At the interpersonal level, we can take a cue from Kickstarter. When we are told that the impact of our action, inaction, or words is hurtful and furthers oppression, we can start by apologizing *without* *any* caveats. From there, we can spend the time to reflect in hopes of gaining at least some understanding *(however marginal)* of the harmful impact. And we can do our best to move forward by acting more accountably.

#### 2. [Guess] Drawing dichotomies between racist “consequences” and racist “intentions” takes a “view from nowhere” that contributes to Black oppression.

**Guess writes:** Guess, Teresa J. [Department of Sociology, University of Missouri-St. Louis] “The Social Construction of Whiteness.” *Critical Sociology,* Volume 32. Issue 4. 2006. RP

**Sedimentary traces of socially constructed knowledge about “race” and whitenesshave been documented in America’s history of slavery, Jim Crow, segregation, and discriminatio**n based on the ascription of some meas- ure of social de-valuation imposed on non-white peoples and normatively defined as racial characteristics. Under these conditions, one could argue that **many Americans have been negatively affected by ‘racism by intent.’ Racism by intent operates at the level of the individual and is manifested as racial prejudice[.]** and discrimination toward non-white individu- als. **This argument, however, looks at the consequences of ‘racism by intent**.’ Here, I examine the extent to which racism by intent produces structural consequences in the social milieu. Such a focus reveals that the idea and conception of whiteness derives from the dynamics of racism by intent, a type of racism that is founded upon custom and tradition, but shatters against social scientific principles. **Racism by consequence,** operates at the macro level of society, and represents an historical evolution. It **constitutes a gradual shift away from a conscious, almost personalized conviction of the inferiority of an “othered” “race**.” Such conviction expresses itself in attitudes of prejudice and is acted out in discriminatory behavior. In its place follows social practices that are essentially depersonalized through institutionalization. As a result, racial [P]rejudices may decline overtime, yet more subtle patterns of discrimination persist[.], supported by the inertia of custom, bureaucratic procedure, impersonal routine, and even law. The result of racism by intent has overtime informed institutional cultures and practices that rest on assumptions of white superiority over non-white ethnic groups. At the institution**al level, [R]acism by consequence tends typically** not to be recognized **by ‘white’** Americans, and may not necessarily be triggered by intent. **Racism by consequence then is reflected in differential educational opportunities, [and] economic differentials between whites and non-whites, residential segregation, health care access, and death rate differentials between whites and non-whites.**

#### 3. [Curry] Their intent-based focus prevents a focus on real-life, material concerns.

Curry shows: Curry, Tommy J. [Ph.D., Associate Professor of Philosophy, Texas A & M University] “The Cost of a Thing: A Kingian Reformulation of a Living Wage Argument in the 21st Century.” Victory Briefs, 2014. CH

Despite the pronouncement of debate as an activity and intellectual exercise pointing to the real world consequences of dialogue, thinking, and (personal) politics [W]hen addressing issues of racism, sexism, economic disparity, global conflicts, and death, many of the discussions concerning these ongoing challenges to humanity are fixed to a paradigm which se[e] the adjudication of material disparities and sociological realities as the conquest of one ideal theory over the other. In “Ideal Theory as Ideology,” Charles Mills outlines the problem contemporary theoretical-performance styles in policy debate and value-weighing in Lincoln-Douglas are confronted with in their attempts to get at the concrete problems in our societies. At the outset, Mills concedes that “ideal theory applies to moral theory as a whole (at least to normative ethics as against metaethics); [s]ince ethics deals by definition with normative/prescriptive/evaluative issues, [it is set] against factual/descriptive issues.” 4 At the most general level, [T]he conceptual chasm between what emerges as actual problems in the world (e.g.: racism, sexism, poverty, disease, etc.) and how we frame such problems theoretically—the assumptions and shared ideologies we depend upon for our problems to be heard and accepted as a worthy “problem” by an audience—is the most obvious call for an anti-ethical paradigm, since such a paradigm [that] insists on the actual as the basis of what can be considered normatively. Mills, however, describes this chasm as a problem of an ideal-as-descriptive model which argues that for any actual-empirical-observable social phenomenon (P), an ideal of (P) is necessarily a representation of that phenomenon. In the idealization[,] of a social phenomenon (P), one ‘necessarily has to abstract away from certain features’[.] of (P) that is observed before abstraction occurs.5