

# EBONY N. BRIDWELL-MITCHELL, PH.D.



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## BIOGRAPHY

Ebony N. Bridwell-Mitchell the Herbert A. Simon Professor of Education, Management and Organizational Behavior at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. She studies how institutional conditions enable and inhibit the implementation of U.S. K-12 education reform policies. Her research, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, such as social network analysis, has been published in high-impact peer-reviewed journals across fields, translated for practice-oriented outlets, supported by funders, such as the National Science Foundation, and awarded by professional associations. Ultimately, Dr. Bridwell-Mitchell's research program aims to provide researchers, policymakers, and practitioners with theoretically grounded and empirically rigorous conceptual frameworks, analytical tools, and research evidence needed to improve schools and extend educational opportunities, especially for underserved students. The values driving her work were instilled by parents with long careers in education and human services and a family with rural roots prizing integrity, hard work, and fair play. Dr. Bridwell-Mitchell's early experiences in Montessori education taught her to value self-directed, interdisciplinary learning, and problem solving as much for the sake of personal fulfillment as individual attainment. She brings these values not only to her work as a researcher and teacher in academia but also when partnering with leading-edge education organizations to support organizational development, institutional change, and school reform across the country.

A video-introduction to Dr. Bridwell-Mitchell's research program can be viewed [here](#).

## EDUCATION

New York University Leonard M. Stern School of Business Doctor of Philosophy – Management and Organization Theory	New York, NY May 2008
Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government Master of Public Policy – Human Resources, Labor, and Education	Cambridge, MA June 1999
Cornell University College of Arts and Sciences Bachelor of Arts – American Policy Studies, <i>Summa cum Laude</i> Concentration – Education Policy	Ithaca, NY May 1996

## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Harvard University Graduate School of Education	Cambridge, MA
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Full Professor of Education	2022-Present
Associate Professor of Education	2016-2022
Assistant Professor of Education	2012-2016
Brown University	Providence, RI
Assistant Professor of Sociology	2008-2012
Commerce, Organizations, and Entrepreneurship Faculty	

## PUBLICATIONS

### Peer Reviewed Journals

Bridwell-Mitchell, E. N., Jack, J., & Childs, J. (2023). The social structure of school resource disparities: How social capital and interorganizational relationships matter for educational equity. *Sociology of Education*, Online First. Retrieval from <https://doi.org/10.1177/003804072311765>.

Bridwell-Mitchell, E.N. & M. Yurkofsky (2023). “Defying logic? Exploring the multiple network pathways for principals’ institutional logics”. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 59(2), 306–338. Retrieval from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X231156874>

Bridwell-Mitchell, E.N. (2020). “Between what is and what is possible: Theorizing the role of institutional interstitiality in state-led school turnaround”. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 95(4), 423-438. Retrieval from <https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2020.1800177>.

Bridwell-Mitchell, E.N., & Fried, S. A. (2018). “Learning one’s place: Status perceptions and social capital in teacher communities”. *Educational Policy* 34(7), 955-991. Retrieval from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904818802117>.

Bridwell-Mitchell, E. N. (2017). “Them that's got: How tie formation in partnership networks gives high schools differential access to social capital”. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(6), 1221 – 1255. Retrieval from <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831217717815>.

Bridwell-Mitchell, E., & Sherer, D. G. (2017). “Institutional complexity and policy implementation: How underlying logics drive teacher interpretations of reform”. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 39(2), 223-247. Retrieval from <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373716677567>

Bridwell-Mitchell, E. N. and Cooc, N. (2016) “The ties that bind: How social capital is forged and forfeited in teacher communities”. *Educational Researcher*, 45(1), 7-17. Retrieval from <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X16632191>.

Bridwell-Mitchell, E. N. (2016) “How peer learning in communities of practice enables and inhibits micro-institutional change”. *Organization Studies*, 37(2), 161-192. Retrieval from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840615593589>.

Bridwell-Mitchell, E. N. (2015). “Theorizing teacher agency and reform: How institutionalized instructional practices change and persist”. *Sociology of Education*, 88(2), 140-159. Retrieval from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040715575559>.

Bridwell-Mitchell, E.N. & Lant, T.K. (2014). Be careful what you wish for: The effects of issue

interpretation on social choices in professional networks. *Organization Science*, 25(2), 401-419. Retrieval from <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2013.0840>.

Bridwell-Mitchell, E.N. (2013). "The rationalizing logics of public school reform: How cultural institutions matter for classroom instruction". *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 7(2), 173-196. Retrieval from <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689812468792>.

Bridwell-Mitchell, E.N. & Mezas S.J. (2012). "The quest for cognitive legitimacy: Organizational identity crafting and internal stakeholder support". *Journal of Change Management*, 12(2), 189-207. Retrieval from <https://doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2011.645053>.

### Book Chapters, Reviews, and Rejoinders

Bridwell-Mitchell, E.N., Daly, K. Frank, J. Spillane, P. Bjorklund, A. Caduff, and E. F. Martinez Orbegozo. (Forthcoming). Chapter 32: "Social network analysis: How relationships and the methods for studying them matter for education policy". In L. Cohen-Vogel, J. Scott, and P. Youngs (Eds), *AERA Handbook of Education Policy Research. Second Edition*.

Chapter 7: "Inside the place of policy implementation: Understanding and overcoming institutional inertia in school organizations". (Forthcoming) in Meredith I. Honig & Lydia R. Rainey (Eds), *Predictable Patterns of Policy Implementation*. New York: Routledge Press.

Bridwell-Mitchell, E.N. (2020). Rejoinder: "More than a metaphor: What we miss in the charge to "Change the Grammar of Schooling". *American Journal of Education Forum*. November 2, 2020. Retrieval from <https://www.ajeforum.com/more-than-metaphor-what-we-miss-in-the-charge-to-change-the-grammar-of-schooling-by-dr-ebony-n-bridwell-mitchell>

Bridwell-Mitchell, E. N. (2019). Book Review: "Lesson plans: The institutional demands of becoming a teacher" by J.G. Everitt. *Contemporary Sociology*, 48(3), 301–303. Retrieval from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0094306119842138n>

Bridwell-Mitchell, E. N. (2018). Chapter 9: "Too legit to quit: Institutional perspectives on the study of school organizations". In M. Connolly, D. E. Spicer, C. James, & S. D. Kruse (Eds.), *Sage International Handbook on School Organization*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. Retrieval from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526465542.n9>

Bridwell-Mitchell, E. N. (2018). Book Review: "Corporate elites and the reform of public education" by H. Gunter, D. Hall, & M.W. Apple (Eds.). *Teachers College Record*. March 15, 2018. Retrieval from <https://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=22306>

Bridwell-Mitchell, E.N. (2018). "System self-regulation and static equilibria: How socio-cognitive control processes regulate school responses to external reform", In H. Shaked, C. Schechter & A. Daly (Eds.), *Leading Holistically: How Schools, Districts, and States Improve Systemically*. New York: Routledge Press. Retrieval from <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203712184>.

Milliken, F.J., Lant, T.K. and E.N. Bridwell-Mitchell (2005). "Barriers to the interpretation and diffusion of information about potential problems in organizations: Lessons from the space shuttle Columbia disaster" p. 246-266 in W. Starbuck and M. Farjoun (Eds.) *Organization at the limit: NASA and the Columbia disaster*. New York: Blackwell. Retrieval from <https://www.wiley.com/en-us/Organization+at+the+Limit%3A+Lessons+from+the+Columbia+Disaster-p-9781405131087>

### Work Under Review or In Progress

“What can institutional analysis tell us about school improvement and reform?” with S. Lee (2023).

“Turning things around? The work of state-provided technical assistance in changing school institutions” with K. Larned. (2022).

“Beyond fidelity of implementation: How professional collaboration enables and inhibits instructional innovation” with E. F. Martinez Orbegoza and E. Kaufman (2022).

### Cases, Trade Publications, and Popular Press

Ayer, David (2021, February) A talk with Dr. Ebony Bridwell-Mitchell. *Montessori Public*. 5(2). Retrieval from <https://www.montessoripublic.org/2021/02/a-talk-with-dr-ebony-bridwell-mitchell/>

Bridwell-Mitchell, E.N. and S. Lallinger (2020). Access, autonomy and accountability: School governance dilemmas in post-Katrina New Orleans. [Public Education Leadership Project \(PELP\) Case Series](#) PEL-092; PEL-093

Bridwell-Mitchell, E.N. (2020, October). “Governing schools in the wake of upheaval: Lasting lessons from Katrina”. *School Administrator*. Retrieval from <http://my.aasa.org/AASA/Resources/SAMag/2020/Oct20/Bridwell-Mitchell.aspx>

Bridwell-Mitchell, E. N. (2019). Them that’s got: How school partnerships can perpetuate inequalities. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100(8), 32-36. Retrieval from <https://kappanonline.org/them-thats-got-how-school-partnerships-perpetuate-inequalities-bridwell-maxwell/>

Quinn, R. (2019, May). [Ebony N. Bridwell-Mitchell on...] How school partnerships can perpetuate inequalities. *CPRE Knowledge Hub Research Minutes*. Retrieval from <https://cprehub.org/research-minutes/how-school-partnerships-can-perpetuate-inequalities>.

Shafer, L. (2018, July 29). [Ebony N. Bridwell-Mitchell on...] What makes a good school culture? *KQED/NPR News Mind/Shift*. Retrieval from <https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/51746/what-makes-a-good-school-culture>.

Bridwell-Mitchell, E. N. (2015). Getting your ducks in a row: The principle of alignment and what it means for school leadership. *Principal Leadership Magazine*, 16(3), 53-55. Retrieval from <https://www.nassp.org/publication/principal-leadership/volume-16-2015-2016/principal-leadership-november-2015/november-2015-viewpoint/>

Alleyne, S. (2012, August). [Ebony N. Bridwell-Mitchell on...] Bridging the gap. *Black Enterprise Magazine*, pp.34-35 Retrieval from <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/12/08/bridging-gap>

### **AWARDS AND GRANTS**

Scholars of Color Mid-Career Contribution Award Nominee. *American Educational Research Association* 2022

Harvard Graduate School of Education Dean's Venture Fund (\$55,275). "The Relational Infrastructure of Instructional Reforms: Designing Teachers' Collegial Work to Foster Institutional Change". *Harvard Graduate School of Education*. 2017-2020

Lyle Spencer Research Awards - Finalist. (\$872,204). "The Relational Infrastructure of Successfully Implemented School Reform: A Proposed Study of Intentionally Designed Teacher Communities and Institutional Change". *Spencer Foundation*. 2016.

Radcliffe Institute Exploratory Seminar Award (\$21,450) "Implications, Interventions and Impact: Putting Organizational Research to Work in Real World School Contexts". *Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study*. 2015

Best Paper Award- "Institutional Complexity and the Embedded Logics of Public School Reform". *American Educational Research Association Organization Theory SIG*. 2014

Brown University Richard B. Salomon Faculty Research Award (\$15,000). 2012-Terminated

Brown University Commerce, Organizations, and Entrepreneurship Program Faculty Research Award (\$10,000). 2009-2010; 2010-2012

Brown University Office of the Vice President of Research Departmental Small Grant Funds Award (\$2,000). 2008; 2009; 2010

Award Recipient (\$460,190) and Co-principal Investigator with Stephen J. Mezas – *National Science Foundation* Human and Social Dynamics Competition [SES-0433280]. 2004-2009

## **SELECTED PRESENTATIONS**

### Invited Lectures and Symposium

"Leveraging Organizational Theory to Make Educational Systems More Effective and Racially Equitable". Session Chair – Organization Theory Special Interest Group Paper Session at *American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting*. Chicago, IL. April 2023

"Braver, Brighter, Bolder: School Renewal for a Brand-New World". Keynote address at  
- *Washington Educational Research Association* Annual Meeting. Tacoma, WA. March 2023  
- *New England Association of Schools and College* Annual Meeting. Boston, MA. December 2022.

"Overcoming the Institutional Status Quo? The role of meso-level practice change". Paper presented at *Indiana University Department of Sociology*. Bloomington, IN. November 2022.

"Partnering for improvement? How school-partner network characteristics matter for student outcomes" Paper presented at *University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education Visiting Scholar Program*. Philadelphia, PA. December 2019

"So high we can't get over it? Overcoming inherent obstacles to radical change in longstanding institutions". Keynote Address – By All Means Convening. *Harvard University Education Redesign Lab*. Cambridge, MA. May 2019.

"Busting out of the iron cage: Network mobilization and professional prescriptions" Paper presented at

- *Michigan State University Education Policy Innovation Collaborative*. Lansing, MI. April 2019
- *Vanderbilt University Peabody College of Education Leadership, Policy and Organizations Colloquium Series*. Nashville, TN. October 2018

“Them that’s got: How tie formation in partnership networks gives high schools differential access to social capital”. Paper presented at

- *University of Connecticut*. Storrs, CT. April 2017
- *University of Southern California*. Los Angeles, CA. November 2016
- *University of Texas Austin*. Austin, TX. October 2016

“Agents of change? The institutional mechanics of public school reform.” Paper presented at *the University of Arizona Department of Sociology*. Tucson, AZ. March 2012

“Network enactment: How managerial interpretations affect advice network formation.” Paper presented at *University of Wisconsin School of Business, Department of Management and Human Resources*. Madison, WI. May 2011

"Entrepreneurship in highly institutionalized contexts: How public schools form organizational alliances." Paper presented at *Brown International Advanced Research Institutes, Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management Institute*. Providence, RI. June 2010

“Human capital innovations: Opportunities and challenges.” Discussant for Project on Private Initiatives in Public Education Conference at *Stanford University Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society*. Palo Alto, CA. May 2009

#### Refereed Lectures and Symposia

“Institutions, Innovation, and Impact: Dynamics of Exclusion and Organizational Responses.” Symposium Organizer for the *Annual Meeting of the European Group for Organization Studies*. Subtheme 12: Institutions, Innovation, Impact. Vienna, Austria. July 2022

“Beyond Fidelity of Implementation: How Professional Collaboration Enables and Inhibits Institutionally Divergent Instructional Innovation” Paper presented at *The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. Organization Theory Special Interest Group. San Diego, CA. April 2022

“Pandemics and Organizational Dynamics in Schools”. Paper Discussant at *The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. Division A-Administration, Organization, and Leadership. San Diego, CA. April 2022

“Turning Things Around? The Work of State-Provided Technical Assistance in Changing School Institutions” Paper presented at *The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. Division L – Educational Policy and Politics. San Diego, CA. April 2022

“The strength of the relational state: How institutional change is enacted in U.S. public schools”. Paper presented at *The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association – Organization Theory Special Interest Group*. Toronto, CA. April 2019

“Place, positionality, and performativity: Understanding and overcoming the barriers to better research practice partnerships”. Paper presented at *The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association* – Organization Theory Special Interest Group. New York, NY. April 2018

“Three takes on fragmentation and social capital”. Paper Discussant at *The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. Division A-Administration, Organization, and Leadership. San Antonio, TX. April 2017

“Thinking beyond the institutional status quo: The effects of managerial advice networks on isomorphic issue response”. Paper presented at *The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. Division A-Administration, Organization, and Leadership. Washington, DC. April 2016.

“The ties that bind: How social capital is forged and forfeited in teacher communities”. Paper presented at *The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. Division A-Administration, Organization, and Leadership. Chicago, IL. April 2015.

“Learning one’s place: How status matters for social capital in teacher communities” Paper presented at *The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. Organization Theory Special Interest Group. Chicago, IL. April 2015.

“The embedded logics of public school reform”. Paper presented at:

- *The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. Organization Theory, Special Interest Group. Philadelphia, PA. April 2014
- *The Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management*, Organization and Management Theory Division. Philadelphia, PA. August 2014

“Them that’s got shall have: School social capital and access to partner resources.” Paper presented at:

- *Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management*, Public and Non-Profit Division. Philadelphia, PA. August 2014
- *Annual Meeting of American Sociological Association*. Sociology of Education Section. Philadelphia, PA. August 2014

“When reform just won’t make sense: How cognitive routines and social structure affect teachers’ collective sensemaking”. Paper presented at *The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. Division A-Administration, Organization, and Leadership. San Francisco, CA. April 2013.

## **UNIVERSITY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

Academy of Management Organization and Management Theory division doctoral student consortium. Faculty Mentor at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management. August 2022

Board Member, Spencer Foundation Teacher Turnover Project Advisory Board – University of Texas at Austin. Since 2022

Editorial Board Member, Sociology of Education. Since 2022

Co-Chair, Education Leadership, Organizations, and Entrepreneurship Program – Harvard University Graduate School of Education. Since 2020

Board Member, Shared Systems Research Advisory Board – Partnership for the Future of Learning. 2019-2022

Member, Harvard University PK-12 Task Force. 2019-2020

Associate Editor, American Educational Research Journal. 2019-2020

Editorial Board Member, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis. Since 2019

Editorial Advisory Board Member, Journal of Education Policy. Since 2018

Program Chair, American Educational Research Association, Division A- Section 2: School and Organization Effects. 2016-2017

Chair, American Educational Research Association, Organization Theory Special Interest Group. 2015-2018

Editorial Board Member, Sociology of Education. 2015-2017

Secretary/Treasurer, American Educational Research Association, Organization Theory Special Interest Group. 2012-2014

Member and Reviewer, American Educational Research Association – Division A- Administration, Organization, & Leadership; Organization Theory Special Interest Group. Since 2004

Member and Reviewer, American Sociological Association – Organizations, Occupations, and Work Division; Sociology of Education Division. Since 2003

Member and Reviewer, Academy of Management – Organization and Management Theory Division; Public and Non-Profit Sector Division; Organization Development and Change Division. Since 2003

## **TEACHING**

### Harvard University Graduate School of Education

ELOE 101Y: Education Leadership, Organizations, and Entrepreneurship Program Core Experience  
Expanding Impact in Education

A-504: The Organization Science of School Improvement

S-428: Institutional Change Research Practicum: Understanding the Work of State-Supported School  
Turnaround and Institutional Change

S-417: Networked for Change: The Impact of Social Relationships in School Organizations

A-607: Organizational Leadership and Management in K-12 Schools and Systems

A-362: Institutional Change in School Organizations, Systems, and Sectors



Brown University

Soc 1030: Organizational Theories of Public and Private Sectors

Soc 187L: Advanced Seminar in Economic Sociology

Soc 1090: Theories of Organizational Dynamics and Decision Making

Soc 1020: Methods of Social Research

Soc 1050: Methods of Research in Organizations

New York University Leonard M. Stern School of Business

C50.0001.06: Management and Organizational Analysis

**SELECTED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE – TRAINING, CONSULTING AND BOARD SERVICE**

National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector Board Member	West Hartford, CT 2020-Present
College Visions Board Member	Providence, RI 2020-Present
Council of Chief State School Officers Speaker, Annual Meeting – Teaching, Leading and Learning Collaborative	Washington, DC 2018
KIPP, Knowledge is Power Program Trainer, Summer Leadership Institute	New York, NY 2008-2019
Microsoft Corporation Speaker, Microsoft Corporation Procurement Summit	Redmond, WA 2017
Leadership for Educational Achievement Foundation, Inc. Trainer, Superintendent’s Summer Institute; Cabinet Leadership Summit	Albany, NY 2016; 2017
Alief Independent School District Trainer, Summer Leadership Institute	Houston, TX 2016
Harvard University Graduate School of Education Instructor, Programs in Professional Education	Cambridge, MA 2013-Present
Leading Educators Trainer, Summer Intensive Leadership Program	New Orleans, LA 2008; 2009
John Peter Sinnott Magnet School for Health and Health Careers Instructor; Instructional Lead Teacher	Brooklyn, NY 1999-2002