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Introduction

The Race in America: Restructuring Inequality conference was a unique experience for all of us. Our goal was to have a race conference hosted by social workers yet not be a social work conference. We wanted to bring together not only social work experts but also scholars and leaders from other disciplines—health, criminal justice, economics, and more. Working hand in hand with dedicated sponsors, presenters, and attendees, we hosted one of the largest race conferences ever held in America.

The University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work created the Center on Race and Social Problems to confront what W.E.B. Du Bois, in his 1903 book The Souls of Black Folk, described as “the problem of the twentieth century … the color line.”

This conference was first and foremost a manifestation of the mission of the Center on Race and Social Problems. Above all else, we wanted it to be useful. We wanted not just to discuss racial problems but to sincerely try to find solutions to them. Each of our conference presenters is an expert in his or her field. All were asked not simply to come and present their latest research findings but instead to provide the conference attendees with suggestions, based on their life’s work, as to what should now be done with regard to a specific racial problem.

One of the center’s goals has been to make race no longer a taboo topic in America. We want to lessen the anxiety and discomfort often associated with conversations about race and to make it a topic around which people can come together and discuss in a civil and respectful way. We want to promote a more enlightened and informed America and show how existing racial differences and disparities affect our country, our society, and each of us as individuals.

We believe that a more learned people will serve to ameliorate both structural and personal acts of racism, prejudice, and discrimination, as these serve to undermine the principles of fairness, equality, and social justice that guide our country. One of the ways in which the center has attempted to support this goal is to regularly bring together diverse groups of multiracial scholars, students, community leaders, interested citizens, industry leaders, public officials, heads of foundations, and policymakers to participate in racial dialogues.

We found that this format of bringing folks together has been well received and highly successful in both our regular monthly lectures as well as in our summer institutes. Therefore, for this conference on race, we essentially employed the methods that we had learned from our prior racial discussion groups. The conference had seven topic areas: economics, education, health, mental health, criminal justice, families (youth, children, and the elderly), and intergroup relations. Each topic area had two speakers who spoke back to back for 45 minutes each. These two presentations were then followed by a brief break and a question-and-answer session. To capture what had taken place at the conference over the three days, it was necessary to watch the entire 60 recorded hours of the conference and then to summarize each presentation. It truly was a herculean job, but for the center’s associate director, Ralph Bangs, and me, it was a labor of love. Still, it was a tedious task that required a great deal of our time. But the presenters found our work sufficiently representative of their talks, and you can now find each presentation included here as a report.

A conference of this size is never the work of one or two people but that of dozens. To that end, the center wishes to thank Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg; Pitt Distinguished Service Professor of Physics and Provost Emeritus James V. Maher; the conference planning committee; the staff and faculty of the School of Social Work and the center; and, of course, our sponsors, listed on pages 148 and 149, who so generously supported this conference.

The Race in America conference was very successful. It was attended by more than 1,200 people who learned about the most up-to-date thinking and work on given racial topics. They also experienced a few days of dialogue on race with concerned others, and, to the best of our knowledge, all of these interactions were civil and without insult. We also believe that useful knowledge was not only shared but created. This book is intended to be a historical record of the conference as it happened. We hope this knowledge will be used even by those who were unable to attend the conference.

Still, we recognize that much work remains to be done. Various forms of racism, unfortunately, remain part of everyday life in America. Therefore, with respect to fighting racial bias, prejudice, and discrimination, we will continue to support needed research, mentor and promote interested scholars, and disseminate useful race-related knowledge and information. So, with that as our backdrop, let us begin.

Larry E. Davis
Dean and Donald M. Henderson Professor,
University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work
Director, Center on Race and Social Problems
As chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, I am pleased to welcome you to Race in America: Restructuring Inequality, a conference sponsored by our School of Social Work and our Center on Race and Social Problems.

We at the University of Pittsburgh take great pride in our commitment to equality of opportunity; human dignity; and racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. We also take pride in the work of our Center on Race and Social Problems—the first race research center to be housed in a school of social work. This conference will build on the already strong scholarly work being done both by the center and our School of Social Work, including the 2004 conference Fifty Years After Brown: New Solutions for Segregation and Academic Underachievement, which marked the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark decision in Brown v. Board of Education.

In 2008, then Senator Barack Obama said, “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

On behalf of the University of Pittsburgh, I welcome you to this conference and invite you to contribute to effecting positive change for all of us.

Sincerely yours,

Mark A. Nordenberg
Chancellor and Distinguished Service Professor of Law, University of Pittsburgh
I believe you would agree with me that despite significant progress in America’s stride toward racial equality, there remains much to be done. Racial disparities across a number of areas are blatant—education, employment, community violence, incarceration rates, and health and mental health outcomes.

As part of an attempt to address these and other race-related problems, the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work and Center on Race and Social Problems have constructed a conference national in scope: Race in America: Restructuring Inequality.

This conference has as its goal bringing about greater racial equality for all Americans. We have brought together a group of multiracial scholars, researchers, students, leaders of industry, public officials, community leaders, and interested citizenry to create a solution-focused dialogue to work on ways to promote a more racially equitable society.

As the entire country struggles to recover from a major economic crisis, we believe it is an ideal time to restructure many of our existing systems rather than merely rebuilding them as they once were. Indeed, our present crisis affords us the opportunity to begin anew to create change that promotes greater racial equality.

In the effort to accomplish this goal, we have assembled many of the best thinkers and leaders in the area of race in America.

Welcome to what promises to be an important and historic event.

Sincerely yours,

Larry E. Davis
Dean and Donald M. Henderson Professor
University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work
Director, Center on Race and Social Problems
Keynote Address, June 3, 2010

The Road to Freedom: From Alabama to Obama

Julian Bond, Chairman Emeritus, NAACP; Social Activist; Leader in the American Civil Rights Movement; Politician; Professor; and Writer

Horace Julian Bond was born in Nashville, Tenn., in January 1940. His father, Horace Mann Bond, was the first president of Fort Valley State College, and in 1945 became the first Black president of the country’s oldest Black private higher education institution, Pennsylvania’s Lincoln University. The Bond family lived at Lincoln until 1957, when Julian’s father became dean of the School of Education at Atlanta University. His mother, Julia Washington Bond, retired in her 90s after working for decades as a librarian.

Julian Bond graduated from the George School, a coeducational Quaker school in Bucks County, Pa., in 1957, and entered Morehouse College in Atlanta, Ga., that same year.

While still a student, Bond was a founder of the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights (COAHR), a student civil rights organization that helped to win integration of Atlanta’s movie theaters, lunch counters, and parks.

Bond also was one of several hundred students from across the South who helped to form the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). He later became SNCC’s communications director, responsible for its printing and publicity departments and for editing the SNCC newsletter, The Student Voice. Bond also worked in voter registration drives in the rural South.
Bond left Morehouse one semester short of graduation in 1961 to join the staff of a new protest newspaper, The Atlanta Inquirer. He later became the paper’s managing editor. Bond returned to Morehouse in 1971 and graduated with a BA in English.

Turning his attentions to the political sphere, Bond first was elected in 1965 to a one-year term in the Georgia House of Representatives. Members of the house voted not to seat him because of his outspoken opposition to the war in Vietnam. Bond was elected two more times before the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the Georgia House had violated Bond’s rights in refusing him his seat.

During his service in the Georgia General Assembly, Bond sponsored or cosponsored more than 60 bills that became law, and he organized the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus, then the largest such group in the nation. He was elected to the Georgia Senate in 1974. When he left the senate in January 1987, Bond had been elected to public office more times than any other Black Georgian, living or dead, ending his tenure only when an unsuccessful congressional race in 1986 prevented him from seeking re-election to the senate.

In 1968, Bond was cochair of the Georgia Loyal National Delegation to the Democratic National Convention. The Loyalists, an insurgent group, were successful in unseating the handpicked regulars. Bond was nominated for vice president of the United States, the first Black person to be so nominated by a major political party, though he withdrew his name because he was too young to serve.

Bond holds numerous honorary degrees and has served on the boards of many organizations working for social change. He is currently a Distinguished Scholar in Residence at American University in Washington, D.C., and a professor in the history department at the University of Virginia.

In 1995, Bond was elected to his fourth term on the national board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the nation’s oldest and largest civil rights organization. Bond chaired the NAACP from 1998 to 2010.

A collection of Bond’s essays has been published under the title A Time To Speak, A Time To Act. His poems and articles have appeared in The New York Times, American Negro Poetry, the Los Angeles Times, and several other national publications.

Bond has been a commentator on America’s Black Forum, the oldest Black-owned show in television syndication. He has narrated numerous documentaries, including the Academy Award-winning A Time for Justice, the critically acclaimed series Eyes on the Prize, and K. Leroy Irving: The Lion of Pennsylvania, produced by the University of Pittsburgh Office of Public Affairs. In March 2003, Bond delivered the inaugural lecture for Pitt’s Center on Race and Social Problems.

Keynote Address, June 3, 2010

Thank you a great deal for that kind introduction. Thank you, ladies and gentleman, for your warm welcome. It’s a great, great pleasure to be at the University of Pittsburgh once again, a great pleasure to be in Dean Davis’ company.

I was thinking as I heard his remarks earlier this evening about a familiar occurrence with speakers, people who speak publicly, and that is our ability to borrow from others, and I thought, the time is gonna come when I’m gonna say, “As Dean Larry Davis said”; and then some time will pass and I’ll say, “As someone said”; and then more time will pass and I’ll say, “As I always say there are more Black men in the big house than in Morehouse and more in the state penn than in Penn State.” And you heard me say it.

And I’m particularly pleased that the introduction you’ve heard mentioned, that among other things I’ve done, and I’ve done many, many things, you know, I was a host of Saturday Night Live. See, you did not know that and you may not know that it used to be a comedy show, but I was a host of Saturday Night Live and I’ve done other things, and the introduction was kind enough to mention that I was a poet, and most people don’t know that either, and I’ve had poems published and would like to recite one now.

This was written when I was in college, and it came about, as many poems do, because of a real experience in my life. I went to Morehouse College in Atlanta, [Ga.,] an all-Black school for men at a time when all of the colleges in Atlanta, were segregated by race, not just segregated by gender as Morehouse was, and is, but segregated by race. But every now and then, we’d visit these White schools, Georgia Tech and Agnes Scott and Emory University, and have tea and cookies with White students, and always, these were always pleasant occasions. And as we parted, they would generally say, “This has been great. If only they were all like you.” And I wrote this poem:

Look at that girl
Shake that thing
We can’t all be
Martin Luther King

One other thing: A few months ago, I was lucky enough to attend in Raleigh, N.C., at the campus of Shaw University the 50th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Raleigh on Easter weekend 1960. The organization doesn’t exist anymore, but the surviving members decided that since 50 years had passed since we were founded, we’d have a reunion. And we sent out invitations. We expected there to be 300 people there. A thousand came, and I have to tell you it was one of the most wonderful experiences of my life. It was like a high school reunion where you liked everybody and were happy to see everybody, and you knew that some of these people
you would never see again in life and some of them you knew you hadn’t seen for 50, 45 years, and just a great, great occasion. And I’m telling you all this because I’m a frustrated singer—I’m not not gonna sing, but we had a song. I’m gonna recite it to you:

The time was 1960, the place the USA
February 1 became a history-making day
From Greensboro across the land, this spread far and wide
As quietly and bravely youth took a giant stride
Heed the call Americans all, side by equal side
Sisters sit in dignity, brothers sit in pride

Just a great occasion, and I’m happy you allowed me to do that, but now let me get to why I’m here. Now, for almost all of my adult life, I’ve been engaged in what you might call race work, fighting to make justice and fairness a reality for everyone. One of those to whom I’ve looked for guidance is Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, one of the founders of the NAACP.

In 1905, he proposed we must complain, yes, plain blunt complain, ceaseless agitation, unfailing of exposure of dishonesty and wrong. This is the ancient, unerring way to liberty and we must follow it.

Next, he said, we propose to work. These are the things that Black people must try to do: We must press the matter of stopping the curtailment of our political rights. We must urge Negroes to vote honestly and effectively. We must push the matter of civil rights. We must organize business cooperation. We must build schoolhouses and increase the interest in education. We must bring Negroes and labor unions into mutual understanding. We must study Negro history, and we must attack crime among us. To do all in our power by word and by deed, to increase the efficiency of our race, the enjoyment of our manhood rights, and the performance of our just duties.

Du Bois’ injunction neatly encompasses the tactics and the strategies adopted and employed by generations from his time until ours. That these have proven successful is more than evident.

We live in a very different and much better country than Du Bois did a century ago. The racial picture in America has improved remarkably in my lifetime so much that a Black man has been elected president of the United States, a development thought unthinkable only a few years ago. But, paradoxically, Barack Obama’s victory in 2008 has convinced many that all racial barriers and restrictions have been vanquished and we have entered a racial nirvana across the land. I’m here to dispel that notion and in the process discuss the challenges that we face in the area of civil rights.

Those who say that race is history, have it exactly backward. History is race. The word America scrambled, after all, spells “I am race.” And America is race: from its symbolism to its substance, from its founding by slaveholders to its rending by the Civil War, from Johnny Reb to Jim Crow, and from the Ku Klux Klan to [Hurricanes] Katrina and Gina.

It was 42 years ago this year that Martin Luther King was gunned down in Memphis. He’s now been dead longer than he lived. This year marks the 55th anniversary of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the event that introduced King to the world. He was then 26 years old. At that early age, at the early stage of the boycott, King understood how significant it would be. Four days after Rosa Parks stood up for justice by sitting down, the boycott began. That evening, at the first mass meeting, King declared, “When the history books are written in the future, somebody will have to say, there lived a race of people, of Black people, who had the moral courage to stand up for their rights, and thereby they injected a new meaning into the veins of history and civilization.” King did not exaggerate. Montgomery was the beginning of a mass movement that destroyed segregation and permanently changed our world.

Thus it is no coincidence that this year we also celebrate the 45th anniversary of the passage of the Voting Rights Act. And this year marks the 50th anniversary of the sit-ins in Greensboro, N.C., in 1960 that began a mobilization of Black high school and college students, a mobilization that has not been duplicated since. It is almost 50 years to the date that I was arrested at the segregated cafeteria at Atlanta City Hall. In less than a few days after my arrest, the newly nominated Republican Senate candidate from Kentucky said the law, which ever since has protected me and others like me from being arrested again, was wrongly decided. The more things change, the more they remain the same.

In 1963 alone, the year that King, fresh from the battlefields of Birmingham, told the nation about his dream at the March on Washington, there were more than 10,000 antiracist demonstrations. The result was the enactment of the 1964 civil rights act, the most sweeping Civil Rights Law before or since and our democracy’s finest hour. The spirit of the civil rights movement imbues any election giving the lasting importance of the voting rights act of 1965. But this spirit was especially evident in the momentous election of 2008. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 made discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity, or religion illegal. Another act soon followed making discrimination based on age illegal. The major candidates in both sides’ primaries included a Black man, a woman, a Hispanic, a Mormon, and a man who became his party’s nominee who would have been the oldest person elected to the presidency and did a first for his party—he chose a woman for his running mate. All of these candidates and the nation owe a debt to what the author Taylor Branch has called the “modern founders of democracy”—those who

“Those who say that race is history, have it exactly backward. History is race.”
labored, many unknown and unheralded, in the vineyard of civil rights. That is one reason we look back on the years between Montgomery in 1955 and the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 with some pride. Those were the days when politicians from both parties supported the struggle for civil rights. Now they struggle to be civil. Those were the days when banks loaned money to people and not like these days, when the people loan money to banks. Those were the days when we were powered by our values and not valued for our power. Those were the days when good music was popular and popular music was good. Those were the days when some people gambled with their own money in Las Vegas; today, some people gamble with our money on Wall Street. Those were the days when we had a war on poverty and not a war on the poor. Those were the days when the news media really were fair and balanced and not just mouthpieces for the misinformed.

But these were not the good old days. In those days, the law, the courts, the schools, every institution favored Whites. This was White supremacy. Dr. King described those days in 1962; he said then, “When you’ve seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at will; when you’ve seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, and even kill your Black brothers and sisters; when you’ve seen the vast majority of your 20 million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your 6-year-old daughter why she can’t go to the public amusement park that [has] just been advertised on television; when you see tears welling up in her eyes when she’s told ‘Fun Town is closed to colored children’ and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward White people; when you have to concoct an answer for a 5-year-old son who’s asking, ‘Daddy, why do White people treat colored people so mean?’; when you’re harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro; when you’re living constantly on tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next; when you’re plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of nobodiness,” then, King said, “then you would understand.”

And you would understand that most southern Blacks then could not vote. Most attended inadequate segregated schools, if they went at all, many only for a few months each year. Most could not hope to gain an education beyond high school. Most worked as farmers or as semiskilled laborers; few owned the land they farmed or the homes in which they lived.

When the Supreme Court announced in May of 1955 in the second of the two Brown decisions that the White South could make haste slowly in dismantling segregated schools, I was one year older than Emmett Till. His death three months after the second Brown decision was more meaningful to me than the Court’s pronouncements had been. We were nearly the same age when he was murdered in Money, Miss., for whistling at a White woman. Emmett Till’s death terrified me, but in the fall of 1957, a group of Black teenagers encouraged me to put that fear aside. These young people, the nine young women and men who integrated Little Rock Central High School, set a high standard of grace and courage under fire as they dared the mobs who surrounded their school. Here, I thought, this is what I can be if ever the chance comes my way.

The chance to test and prove myself did come my way in 1960 as it came to thousands of other Black high school and college students across the South, first through the sit-ins, then in the Freedom Rides, then in voter registration and political organizing drives in the rural South. We joined an old movement against White supremacy that had deep, strong roots.
King was the most famous, the best known of all the modern movements’ personalities, but we should remember, this was a peoples’ movement. It produced leaders of its own. It relied not on the noted but on the nameless, not on the famous but on the faceless. It didn’t wait for commands from afar to get a campaign against injustice; it saw wrong and acted against it; it saw evil and it brought it down.

Many stand now in reflection of that earlier movement’s successes, including the election of Barack Obama, confused about what the next steps ought to be. The task ahead is enormous, equal to if not greater than the task already done. Let me talk about how we came to this moment, about changes over time, about now and then, about what was, about what may be, about where we are and where we ought to be going.

Today, we are four decades past the second Reconstruction, the modern movement for civil rights that eliminated segregation in the United States. We are 14 decades past the first Reconstruction, the single period in American history in which the national government used its might to enforce the civil rights of Black Americans.

One hundred and fifteen years ago, Black Americans faced prospects eerily similar to those we face today. Then it was 30 years after the Civil War and the first Reconstruction; the 19th century was winding down. White America was growing weary of worrying about the welfare of the newly freed slaves, tired of fighting to secure their right to vote, tired of fighting for their right to attend a public school. Then, as now, a race-weary nation decided these problems could best be solved if left to the individual states. Then, as now, racist demagogues walked the land. Then, as now, minorities and immigrants became scapegoats for real and imagined economic distress; then a reign of state-sanctioned and private terror, including ritual human sacrifice, swept across the South to reinforce White supremacy. That’s when the heavy-handed racial segregation descended across the South, a cotton curtain that separated Blacks from education, from opportunity, but not from hope.

As we recall the struggles of the recent past, many of us are confused about what the movement’s aims and goals were, what it accomplished, where it failed, and what our responsibilities are to complete its unfinished business today. Looking back at that movement from today, we now see a very different view of the events and personalities of the period. Instead of the towering figures of Kings and Kennedys standing alone, we now see an army of anonymous women and men; instead of famous orations made to multitudes, we now also see the planning and the work that preceded the triumphant speech. Instead of a series of well-publicized marches and protests, we now also see long organizing campaigns and brave and lonely soldiers often working in near solitude. Instead of prayerful petitions for the government’s deliverance, we now see aggressive demands and the ethic of reliance and self-help.

We now realize our view of the movement’s goals were narrower, too. Seeking more than removal of racial segregation, that movement did not want to be integrated into a burning house; rather, it wanted to build a better house for everyone. It marched on Washington for freedom and jobs, not for abstract freedom alone. And instead of a sudden and unanticipated upsurge of Black activism in Montgomery in 1955, we now see a long and unceasing history of aggressive challenges to White supremacy that began as long ago as slavery time. And instead of a movement that ended in 1968 with the death of Martin Luther King, we now see continued movement stretching from the ancient past until this moment, with different forms and personalities, in many places and locales, with differing methods and techniques whose central goal has always been the elimination of strictures based on race. We now see a movement that has long followed the plan I referenced earlier, articulated by Dr. Du Bois when the 20th century was brand new. The Du Bois plan, written for the all-Black Niagara movement, was incorporated into the new interracial NAACP, born in 1909. Black Americans have generally followed this prescription for action, pursuing civil rights, economic justice, and entrance into the mainstream of American life.

The NAACP’s founding in 1909 gave the movement an organized base. It soon developed an aggressive strategy of litigation aimed at striking down racial restrictions
enshrined in law, triumphing in 1954 with Brown vs. Board of Education, ending legal segregation in public schools. That decision effectively ended segregation’s legality; it also gave a nonviolent army the license to challenge segregation’s morality as well. From Brown in 1954 forward, the movement expanded its targets, tactics, and techniques. Organizations and leadership expanded as well.

After Dr. King came on the scene as the leader of the 1955–56 Montgomery Bus Boycott, he articulated a new method, nonviolent resistance, of fighting segregation. The new movement required direct action through mass participation; reliance on slower appeals to the courts began to subside. In this period, gains were wanted at lunch counters and movie theaters, bus stations and polling places, and the fabric of legal segregation came undone.

That movement then was a reconstruction, a reconstruction whose ripples were felt far beyond the southern states and whose victories benefited far more than Blacks. Like the first Reconstruction, it saw gains for Blacks extended to greater protections for others. Like the first Reconstruction, it gave new life to other movements of disadvantaged Americans. And like the first Reconstruction, the second one ended when the national purpose wavered and reactions swept the land. But before it slowed, it changed our country forever. A voteless people voted with their bodies and their feet and paved the way for other social protests. The antiwar movement of the 1960s drew its earlier soldiers from the Southern Freedom Army; the reborn movement for women’s rights took many of its cues and much of its momentum from the southern movement for civil rights. The movement’s origins were in a bitter struggle for elemental civil rights, but it largely became in the postsegregation era a movement for political and economic power, and today Black women and men hold office and wield power in numbers we only dreamed of before.

But despite impressive increases in the number of Black people holding public office, despite our ability to sit, eat, ride, vote, go to school in places and live in places, including the White House, that used to bar Black faces in some real ways, important ways, non-White Americans face problems more difficult to attack now than in all the years that went before. Much of the origins of today’s distresses are found in the recent past and came to climax in the 1980s and the 1990s. In 1968, the Kerner Commission, appointed by President Lyndon Johnson to investigate the causes and prescribe the cures of 1967’s riots, concluded that White racism was the single most important cause of continued racial inequality in income, housing, employment, education, and life chances between Blacks and Whites.

Within a few short years, the growing number of Blacks and other minorities and women pushing for entry into and power in the academy, the media, business, government, and other traditionally White male institutions created a backlash in the discourse over race. The previously privileged majority exploded in angry resentment at having to share space with the formerly excluded. The historic pattern of Black advance and White insistence on retreat continued on. Opinioned leaders began to reformulate and redefine the terms of the discussion. No longer was the Kerner Commission’s description of the problem acceptable. Any indictment of White America could be abandoned, and a Susan Smith defense was adopted: Black people did it—did it to the country, did it to themselves. Black behavior, not White racism, became the reason why Blacks and Whites lived in separate worlds. Racism retreated and pathology advanced. The burden of racial problem solving shifted from racism’s creators to its victims. The failure of the “lesser breeds” to enjoy society’s fruits became their fault alone. And a kind of nonsensical tautology we heard again and again—these people are poor because they are pathological; they are pathological because they are poor. Thus pressure for additional civil rights laws suddenly became a special pleading. America’s most privileged population, White men, suddenly became a victim class. Aggressive Blacks and pushy women became responsible for America’s demise.

This perversion of reality occurred as a result of an organized campaign, which continues on until today. It is led by a curious mix of Whites and a few Blacks—academics, journalists, and policymakers. Its aim is the demobilization of effective insurgent politics, the depoliticizing of discussions of our grossly inequitable distribution of income, and the adoption of reactionary and punitive social policy.

Over time, opposition to government, especially Washington government, succeeded opposition to communism as a secular religion. The United Nations, Washington bureaucrats, gays and lesbians, supporters of minority and women’s rights, replaced the Soviet Union as the evil empire. And together, these became the energies driving the callous coalition that captured Congress in 1994 and to a large extent are the energies driving the tea baggers today. As long ago as 1964, Republicans had begun to remake their party as the White people’s party and they found a winning formula at the intersection of race and opposition to activist government.

“That movement then was a reconstruction, a reconstruction whose ripples were felt far beyond the southern states and whose victories benefited far more than blacks.”
For much of the 1980s, America was presided over by an amiable ideologue whose sole intent was removing government from every aspect of our lives. He brought to power a band to financial and ideological profiteers who descended on the nation’s capital like a crazed swarm of right-wing locusts bent on destroying the rules and the laws that protect our people from poison air and water and from greed, but nowhere was their assault on the rule of law so great as in their attempt to subvert, ignore, defy, and destroy the laws that require an America that is bias free.

One of these [Ronald] Reagan acolytes was named John Roberts. The memos he wrote while working in the Reagan White House contain racist and sexist jokes, but his approach to the law was no joke. He marshaled a crusader’s zeal in his efforts to roll back the civil rights gains of the ‘60s and the ‘70s—everything from voting rights to women’s rights. Today of course, he is the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, where he continues his crusade against what he has called the sordid business, this divvying us up by race.

The Roberts Court, in a cruel irony, observed the 50th anniversary of the Little Rock school crisis by gutting Brown v. Board. This stark case, which gave birth to Little Rock, was supposed to end school segregation. Until about 25 years ago, remarkable progress toward that goal was made under Brown. From 1954 to 1982, Supreme Court justices of all persuasions, from Lewis Powell to William Rehnquist, agreed that race conscious integration policies stand in harmony, not in tension, with Brown. Indeed, for most of us, the notion that race could not be considered in remediying racial discrimination is ludicrous, but now the ludicrous has become the law.

The Bush Court, on the same day the bald eagle was removed from the endangered species list, removed Black children from the law’s protection. In two cases from Louisville and Seattle, the court held by a five to four vote that these school systems could not voluntarily use race in assigning students to schools. The court ruled that conscious racial integration is the moral equivalent of conscious racial segregation. This is the most radical in the line of courts beginning in the 1980s that question race-conscious policies. Only Justice [Anthony] Kennedy stood between this ruling and total disaster. The four other conservative members of the court, including the chief justice, would have prohibited any use of race in remediying school segregation.

The truth is, there are no nonracial remedies for racial discrimination. In order to get beyond race, you have to go to race. To suggest racial neutrality as a remedy for racial discrimination is sophistry of the highest order. A plurality of the court would condemn minority students to secondary status even before they’ve started secondary school and at a time when school segregation is increasing.

Black and Hispanic children today are more separate from White children than when Martin Luther King was killed—the result of a systemic neglect of civil rights policy for decades, including fair housing laws. School resegregation also means the average Black and Latino student is now in a school where 60 percent of his or her classmates are poor.

I believe in an integrated America—integrated jobs, integrated homes, and integrated schools. I believe in it enough to have spent most of my life in its elusive pursuit. I think it a legal, moral, and political imperative for America. It is a matter of elemental justice, simple right, waged against historic wrong.

It’s foolhardy to argue under the guise of race neutrality or color blindness that we can now dismantle the protections in organizations that made civil rights gains and the election of Barack Obama possible. No one would have made the same argument after World War II that because the United States won the war, we can now dismantle the Army, the Navy, and the Marines.

We are such a young nation so recently removed from slavery that only my father’s generation stands between Julian Bond and human bondage. Like others, including some in this room, I am the grandson of a slave. My grandfather, James Bond, was born in 1863 in Kentucky. Slavery didn’t end for him until the 13th amendment was ratified in 1865. He and his mother were property, like a horse or a chair. As a young girl, she’d been given away as a wedding present to a new bride, and when that bride became pregnant, her husband—that’s my great-grandmother’s owner and master—exercised his right to take his wife’s slave as his mistress. That union produced two children, one of them my grandfather. At age 15, barely able to read or write, he hitched his tuition—a steer—to a rope and walked 100 miles across Kentucky to Berea College, and the college took him in. He belonged to a transcendent generation of Black Americans, a generation born in slavery, freed by the Civil War, determined to make their way as free women and men. Martin Luther King belonged to another transcendent
generation of Black Americans, a generation born in segregation, freed from racism’s constraints by their own efforts, determined to make their way as free women and men.

When my grandfather graduated from Berea in 1892, the college asked him to deliver the commencement address. He said then, “The pessimist from his corner looks out on the world of wickedness and sin, and blinded by all that is good and hopeful and the condition of the progress of the human race, bewails the present state of affairs and predicts woeful things for the future. In every cloud he beholds the destructive storm; in every flash of lightning, an omen of evil; and in every shadow that falls across his path, a lurking foe. He forgets that the clouds also bring life and hope, that the lightning purifies the atmosphere, that shadow and darkness prepare for sunshine and growth, and that hardships and adversity prepares the race and the individual for greater efforts and grander victories.”

While we’re now poised for greater efforts and grander victories, we’re still being tested by hardships and adversities. We’ve now been rocked by an Enron economy, where one of the decade than they had earned at the beginning downward mobility never stands apart from economic realities. He understood then what we must understand now: Race class 40 years ago have descended into poverty or near poverty as adults, compared with only 16 percent of Whites. White unemployment is high enough at 9.5 percent but Black unemployment is even higher at 15.7 percent.

Home ownership rates for Blacks, already low, have been sinking under the weight of the subprime mortgage, which stands likely to be the largest loss of African American wealth that we have ever seen, wiping out a generation of home wealth building. This has not happened by accident; there’s evidence that minority neighborhoods were actually targeted, that lenders have gone after people who they think are less sophisticated home borrowers. That’s why the NAACP has filed two lawsuits alleging that lenders, including the nation’s largest, have engaged in systematic discrimination against minorities.

Just as President Obama’s victory did not herald a post-civil rights America or mean that race had been vanquished, it could not and did not end structural inequality or racist attitudes. Indeed, there’s evidence that it fomented them. Obama is to the Tea Party as the moon is to werewolves. The Southern Poverty Law Center says the rise of the number of hate groups in the United States since his election is unprecedented. We saw hate on display last summer in town halls and Tea Parties across the country, subsidized by corporations and their well-funded fear machine. That continued into the spring as health care reform was debated and eventually passed. Tea baggers spit on Black Congressman Emanuel Cleaver; called Representative Barney Frank a faggot, and hurled the N-word at civil rights legend John Lewis, now a congressman from Georgia.

Our politics have been poisoned by armed and paranoid self-described patriots drawn from the Taliban wing of American politics, truly a “fright wing.” We used to call them “birchers”; now we know them as “birthers,” still spreading lies and spreading myths. The real issue for many opponents today is that we now have a president who they believe is guilty of governing while Black. The tea baggers are 99 percent White, and 52 percent of them (twice as much as the rest of the population) believe too much attention has been paid to Black people. They see the nation’s demographics turning them into a minority and they don’t like it. Having demanded citizenship papers from the president, it is not surprising that freedom lovers would demand papers from anyone in America who doesn’t look like them. They say they want their country back, and we ask, “What was that country like?” In their country, I couldn’t eat at a lunch counter. When my grandfather graduated from Berea in 1892, the college asked him to deliver the commencement address.

When my grandfather graduated from Berea in 1892, the college asked him to deliver the commencement address. He said then, “The pessimist from his corner looks out on the world of wickedness and sin, and blinded by all that is good and hopeful and the condition of the progress of the human race, bewails the present state of affairs and predicts woeful things for the future. In every cloud he beholds the destructive storm; in every flash of lightning, an omen of evil; and in every shadow that falls across his path, a lurking foe. He forgets that the clouds also bring life and hope, that the lightning purifies the atmosphere, that shadow and darkness prepare for sunshine and growth, and that hardships and adversity prepares the race and the individual for greater efforts and grander victories.”

While we’re now poised for greater efforts and grander victories, we’re still being tested by hardships and adversities. We’ve now been rocked by an Enron economy, where one writer said, “Middle-class taxpayers cover billionaires’ bets.”

“We used to call them “birchers”; now we know them as “birthers,” still spreading lies and spreading myths. The real issue for many opponents today is that we now have a president who they believe is guilty of governing while Black. The tea baggers are 99 percent White, and 52 percent of them (twice as much as the rest of the population) believe too much attention has been paid to Black people. They see the nation’s demographics turning them into a minority and they don’t like it. Having demanded citizenship papers from the president, it is not surprising that freedom lovers would demand papers from anyone in America who doesn’t look like them. They say they want their country back, and we ask, “What was that country like?” In their country, I couldn’t eat at a lunch counter. I couldn’t attend the University of Virginia, let alone teach there. If Obama represents the end of America they knew, I say, “Good for him.”

American slavery was a human horror of staggering dimensions; a true crime against humanity.”
This former community organizer ran the most organized campaign in history. It led to a victory that was not only broad but deep, particularly with regard to 18- and 29-year-olds. He carried every age group except those over 65. He won a higher percentage of White men than any president since Jimmy Carter. He won among women by 56 to 43 percent. He won among 96 percent of Blacks, 67 percent of Hispanics, 62 percent of Asians. He carried eight of the 10 largest states and nine states that voted for [George W.] Bush in 2004. Three former Confederate states rejoined the Union and our country rejoined the world community. Before 2008, we were a pariah state among nations, and in the aftermath, we have begun to reclaim some of the esteem in which America once was held.

But in the national orgy of self-congratulation that followed Obama’s victory, some forgot there was a darker subtext. The electorate that made Obama president had the lowest percentage of White voters ever, and he had the lowest approval rating among Whites at the end of his first year of any president in the 30 years of such polling. So if you tell me that the tea bag party or the [Sarah] Palin party has nothing to do with race, I’ll tell you that you’ve been drinking something and it isn’t tea.

The Civil War that freed my grandfather was fought over whether Blacks and Whites shared a common humanity. Less than 10 years after it ended, the nation chose sides with the losers and agreed to continue Black oppression for almost 100 years. American slavery was a human horror of staggering dimensions, a true crime against humanity. The profits that were produced endowed great fortunes and enriched generations and its dreadful legacy embraces us all today. As the historian John Hope Franklin taught us, “All Whites benefited from American slavery; all Blacks had no rights they could call their own; all Whites, including the vast majority who owned no slaves, were not only encouraged but authorized to exercise dominion over all slaves, thereby adding to the system of control.”

Even poor Whites benefited from the legal advantage they enjoyed over all Blacks as well as from the psychological advantage of having a group beneath them. Most living Americans, Dr. Franklin said, do have a connection with slavery; they have inherited the preferential advantage if they are White and the loathsome disadvantage if they are Black, and these positions are virtually as alive today as they were in the 19th century.

Two hundred forty-six years of slavery were followed by 100 years of state-sanctioned discrimination, reinforced by public and private terror, ending only after a protracted struggle in 1965—four years after Barack Obama was born. If you are 45 years old or older, it is only in your lifetime that racial equality before the law became a reality, not before. For only 45 years have all Black Americans been granted the full rights of citizens, only 45 years since legal segregation was ended nationwide, only 45 years since the right to register and vote was universally guaranteed, only 45 years since the protections of the law and Constitution were officially extended to everyone. We’re now asked to believe that 200 years of being someone else’s property, followed by 100 years of discrimination in the South and oppression in the North, can be wiped away by four and a half decades of half-hearted remediation and one presidential election. We’re now asked to believe that no permanent damage was done to the oppressors or the oppressed. We’re asked to believe that we Americans are a healed and whole people.

The truth is that Jim Crow may be dead, but racism is alive and well. That is the central fact of life for every non-White American, including the president of the United States, eclipsing income, position, education—race trumps them all. We may have elected Barack Hussein Obama president of the United States, but Barry Jabbar Sykes cannot get a job, even though he has a degree from Morehouse College. He now continues his job search as Barry J. Sykes and hopes that hiding his race will open a space in the job market. The unemployment rate for Black male college graduates 25 and older in 2009 was nearly twice that of White male college graduates. [For] Black women with college degrees, the unemployment rate was 7 percent versus a 4 percent rate for comparable White women.

If you’re Black in America, you can play by the rules and still not win the game. If you don’t play by the rules and run afoul of the criminal justice system, you’ll be left out of the game entirely, as Larry Davis said. Nationally, one out of three Black men between 20 and 29 is under some form of criminal justice supervision on any single day—if not in prison or jail, then on probation or parole. A Black man born in 1991 has a 29 percent chance of going to jail sometime in his life. For his White counterpart, the chance is 4 percent.

One result is that almost a million and a half Black men could not vote in our last election. That is 13 percent of all Black men in the country. It is estimated that one in three members of the next generation of Black men will be disenfranchised at some point in his lifetime. No other democratic nation in the world denies as many citizens this most basic right because of felony convictions. Again, this did not happen by accident. In our oxymoronic criminal justice system, race, more than any other factor, determines who’s arrested, who’s tried for what crime, who gets what punishment and who receives what
length of sentence, and who receives the ultimate punishment. In the years following the Civil War, felon disenfranchisement laws targeted newly freed slaves with many requiring the loss of voting rights only for offenses thought to be disproportionately committed by Blacks. In Mississippi, for example, you could be disenfranchised if you stole a chicken but not if you killed the chicken’s owner. Today, it is the disproportionate and discriminatory enforcement of the war on drugs that has weakened the voting power of the Black community. Voting barriers like Black codes, literacy tests, and poll taxes may no longer exist, but other impediments have taken their place.

So we have work to do, none of it easy, but we’ve never wished our way to freedom. Instead, we’ve always worked our way. Today, we have much more to work with, and we take heart that so much has changed in America. A Black man is running the country; a Black woman is running Xerox; and a Black man is the mayor of Philadelphia, Miss., where three civil rights workers were murdered and buried in a dam in 1964. The changes that have come have everything to do with the work of the modern movement of civil rights and with the work the NAACP has waged for 100 years.

It was fitting that Obama gave his acceptance speech as his party’s nominee exactly 45 years to the day after Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream speech” at the March on Washington. For his inauguration, he rote to Washington on a private railroad car built in the 1930s when being a Pullman porter was the best job a Black man could hope to have and the worst job on the train. He was sworn in front of the National Mall, which had been the site of a slave market. He took the oath standing on the steps of the Capitol, built by slaves. He then moved into the White House, also built by slaves. And it was fitting [that] he was sworn in almost exactly 100 years after the founding of the NAACP. Just as he launched his candidacy for [the] presidency in the shadow of Abraham Lincoln, on the steps of the Illinois state capitol, so the NAACP issued a call to the nation on the 100th anniversary of Lincoln’s birth in 1909. That call asked then, as we do now, for all believers in democracy to join in the renewal of the struggle for civil and political rights. If we don’t, the “tea baggers” will win.

There needs to be a constantly growing and always reviving movement across America if we’re going to maintain and expand victories such as reforming health care. We must not forget that Martin Luther King stood before and with thousands of people, those who made the mighty movement what it was. From Jamestown slave pens to Montgomery’s boycotted buses, these ordinary women and men labored in obscurity, and from Montgomery forward, they provided the foot soldiers of the freedom army. They shared with King an abiding faith in America. They walked in dignity rather than riding in shame. They faced bombs in Birmingham and mobs in Mississippi. They sat down at lunch counters so others could stand up. They marched and they organized. King didn’t march from Selma to Montgomery by himself.

He didn’t speak to an empty field on the march on Washington. There were thousands marching with him and before him and thousands more who did the dirty work that preceded the triumphant speech.

The successful strategies of the modern movement for civil rights were litigation, organization, mobilization, and coalition, all aimed at creating a national constituency for civil rights. Sometimes it is the simplest of deeds—sitting at a lunch counter, going to a new school, applying for a marriage license, casting a vote. These can challenge the way we think and act. We have a long and honorable tradition of social justice in this country. It still sends forth the message that when we act together, we can overcome.

A progressive agenda for this new century must include continuing to litigate, to organize, to mobilize; forming coalitions of the caring and concerned; joining ranks against the comfortable, the callous, and the smug; fighting discrimination wherever it raises its ugly head; in the halls of government, in corporate suites, or in the streets; ensuring our children in inner-city or suburban and rural schools receive the best education, an education that prepares them for success; enforcing fair housing and lending laws; strengthening health care and social security; [and] passing immigration reform that restores respect for the individual and for the rule of law. Illegal immigration skews the labor market. Workers living in the shadows depresses wages for workers in the sunlight. They cannot organize unions for their own protection, and callous employers know it. In the year 2050, Blacks and Hispanics will be 40 percent of the nation’s population.

The growth of immigration and the emergence of new and vibrant populations of people of color holds great promise and great peril. The promise is that the coalition for justice has grown larger and stronger as new allies join the fight. The peril comes from real fears that our common foes will find ways to separate and divide us. It doesn’t make sense for Blacks and Latinos to argue over which has the least amount of power. Together, we can constitute a mighty force for right. Racial justice, economic equality, world peace—these are the things that occupied Dr. King’s life; they ought to occupy ours today.

When I started working four and a half decades ago, there were five workers paying into the national system for every retiree. I can’t possibly know who my five were, but there’s a good chance their names were Carl, Bob, Ralph, Steve, and Bill. When I retire, there’s going to be three workers paying into the retirement system. There’s a good chance their names will be Tameka, Maria, and Jose and I’m here to tell you that you better make sure that Tameka, Maria, and Jose have the best schools, the best health care, the best jobs, and the strongest protections against discrimination they possibly can. Thank you. Thank you.
RAC E in AMERICA

Keynote Address, June 4, 2010

What Is Economic Justice and How Do We Attain It?

Julianne Malveaux, President, Bennett College for Women; Economist; Author; and Commentator

Introduction of Provost James V. Maher by Julianne Malveaux by

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Julianne Malveaux is the 15th president of Bennett College for women. She is an economist, author, and commentator recognized for her progressive and insightful observations, and she has been described by Cornel West as “the most iconoclastic public intellectual in the country.” Malveaux’s contributions to the public dialogue on issues such as race, culture, gender, and their economic impacts are shaping public opinion in 21st-century America.

Malveaux’s popular writing has appeared in USA TODAY, Black Issues in Higher Education, Ms. magazine, ESSENCE magazine, and The Progressive. Indeed, Malveaux was ESSENCE magazine’s first college editor, having been selected in 1970 by Marcia Ann Gillespie for her winning essay, “Black Love Is a Bitter/Sweetness.” Her weekly columns appeared from 1990 to 2003 in newspapers across the country, including the Los Angeles Times, Charlotte Observer, New Orleans Tribune, Detroit Free Press, and San Francisco Examiner.

Well known for her appearances on national network programs, Malveaux has hosted television and radio programs and appeared widely as a commentator on networks including CNN, BET, PBS, NBC, ABC, Fox News, MSNBC, CNBC, C-SPAN, and others.

Malveaux is an accomplished author and editor. Her academic work is included in numerous anthologies and journals. She is the editor of Voices of Vision: African American Women on the Issues (1996)
Malveaux has contributed to academic life since receiving her PhD in economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1980. She has served on the faculty or visiting faculty of the New School for Social Research; San Francisco State University; the University of California, Berkeley; the College of Notre Dame (San Mateo, Calif.); Michigan State University; and Howard University. She also has lectured at more than 500 colleges and universities. Malveaux holds honorary degrees from Sojourner Douglas College (Baltimore, Md.), Marygrove College (Detroit, Mich.), the University of the District of Columbia, and Benedict College (Columbia, S.C.). She received her undergraduate education, as well as a master’s degree, in economics from Boston College.

A committed activist and civic leader, Malveaux has held positions in women’s, civil rights, and policy organizations. She was president of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women’s Clubs from 1995 to 1999 and currently is honorary cochair of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. She also serves on the boards of the Economic Policy Institute; the Recreation Wish List Committee of Washington, D.C.; and the Liberian Education Trust.

A native of San Francisco, Calif., Malveaux is the founder and thought leader of Last Word Productions, Inc., a multimedia production company headquartered in Washington, D.C.

Keynote Address, June 4, 2010

Thank you so much. Thank you all so very much for that very, very warm welcome. I first bring you greetings, of course, from Bennett College for women. We are an oasis where we educate and celebrate women and develop them into 21st-century leaders and global thinkers. Secondly, and if there’s Bennett in the house—if there’s any of my alums in the house—if you put your hand in the air, I’d be grateful. We do have Bennett in the house in some way: One of your alums from the University of Pittsburgh, Mr. Luddy Hayden Jr. has been a visiting faculty member with us at Bennett College, and we have been so grateful for what he’s sown into our global studies program, and I want to thank him. Luddy, can you stand up so people can see you? And thank you.

I want to thank Dr. Larry Davis not only for my invitation to participate in this event but also for his conception of such an important conversation at such a time as this. People have “race fatigue” these days. They don’t want to talk about it, and here you have at Pitt three full days of conversation, three phenomenal days of conversation. Larry, I think the only challenge I may have is [that] you’ve given me the impossible task of following Julian Bond. But, in any case, I’m grateful for the thinking and for the many colleagues I’ve worked years ago with. Pedro Noguera—you couldn’t have picked a better person to talk about urban education. He’s just done such phenomenal work, and your list of presenters and others just reads like the people that have been doing the pivotal work in this area, so thank you for continuing the conversation. I do hope that you’ll be able to take some of your proceedings and turn them into a published volume. I do think there have to be different ways for us to talk about race without hollering, without Tea Party signs, without any number of other things.

Now, Larry, I also have to thank you because you forced me to do some different kind of thinking. I had a topic [but] he didn’t like my topic. He called me up and said, “Change your topic.” I’m like, “Huh?” But you know, trying to be cooperative, I did, and the title that we came up with is “What Is Economic Justice and How Do We Attain It?” And as I prepared for this evening, I recalled that everybody doesn’t think about economic justice. That’s not a term that’s commonly used. Social justice is something that we do talk about, but [we talk about] economic justice more rarely. So I want to take a few minutes just at the outset to talk about what I’m talkin’ ’bout, Willis.

Economics is a study of who gets what, when, where, and why. It’s a study of distribution. Economics 101, if you remember that, says that the distribution of factors determines who gets paid what. So the factors of production are land, labor, capital, and entrepreneurial ability. Those with these resources are paid rent, wages, interest, and profit. What does any of that have to do with justice? Justice simply raises the question: Is it right? Is it fair? Or, more plainly, does the economy treat people fairly?

Now, the term economic justice has been used off and on throughout history but got the most media attention in 1986,
when the Catholic bishops issued a massive document—and I would encourage all of you, if you’re interested in this, to read the document. It was about a 75-page document that went through just about everything, and some of the things that they said in the document were just fascinating. “Economic life raises important social and moral questions for each of us and for society as a whole. Like family life, economic life is one of the chief areas where we live out our faith, love our neighbor, confront temptation, fulfill God’s creative design, and achieve holiness. Our economic activity and factory, field, office, or shop feed our family or feed our anxiety, exercise our talents or waste them, raise our hopes or crush them. This activity also brings us into cooperation with others or sets us at odds.” These are the Catholic bishops [speaking], and again I would encourage you to read the tone they set. They actually acknowledge capitalism as a working system, but they say that even under the rubric of capitalism, there has to be something called fairness.

Why was this document issued in 1986? Well, if you recall, there was a Reagan recession. We were dealing with double-digit unemployment. We had a shifting job structure. We had development issues. The general agreement on tariffs and trade was being argued, and the question was going to be whether or not we were exploiting developing nations. There were debt issues, especially on the African continent. Sound familiar? This was 1986, and this document was issued in 1986 as a result of challenges that people felt were being ignored by our federal government. In 1986, the Congressional Black Caucus was still issuing something they called the alternative budget, in which they literally looked at the existing budget and talked about what budget might be more fair. It’s been a long time since those Catholic bishops issued that statement. It’s not only a walk down memory lane for some of us; it reminds us what economic activism might look like. Economic activism is something we don’t do anymore, and so the question becomes: How can we do economic activism? We don’t hear words like hunger and homelessness routinely, although hunger and homelessness have risen in our nation. But we don’t hear the words anymore. Since 1986, we had a progressive president advocate for what I call “welfare reform”—for welfare reform that dehumanized women and raised questions about work ethics. And so some people might look at the content of the Catholic bishops’ statement and say, “Well, that was 1986; they were bleeding hearts.” Some might even call them—and we’ve heard this word a lot lately—socialists. Now, what I want to do, then, is lay out four ways to look at economic justice from a contemporary perspective. One—and only an economist would ask this question—do similarly situated people get similar economic outcomes? You know we’re always controlling for the situation. One time when I was in graduate school, I read a paper called “Social Security in a One-consumer World.” That lets you know how wacky economists are. So you’ve got one person on social security in a one-consumer world. But the question really is, do similarly situated people get similar economic outcomes? Secondly, how does last year’s action or one 50 years ago or 100 years ago affect current outcomes? Third question: Has sufficient work been done to ameliorate disparate outcomes? And then, finally, has assessment been done to measure efficiency?

Yeah, we ought to make sure that the economy is generating fair results, and if it isn’t, we want to figure out why. Did it have something to do with something we did in the past? If it has something to do with something we did in the past, did we try to fix it? And then did we measure whether or not it got fixed?

And someone might say, “What does race have to do with it?” Well, the most consistent and persistent fact in American economic history is racial inequality in economic life. That is the most consistent and persistent fact that confronts us no matter what era of U.S. history we look at. So that’s the thing that I want us to just think about: the consistent racial inequality in U.S. economic life. What do we talk about in terms of economic life? We talk about participation. Well, of course, we all participate in the economy in some way. Some participated historically as workers; some participated as property. So if we look at factors of production, people who look like me were other people’s property. So we were not being paid; other people were collecting our factor payments. I don’t want to belabor the point, but it’s an important point to make when we begin to look at issues of wealth. In other words, “Why didn’t you save?” you often hear people ask. What was I to save? Race affected access to both public and private goods and services—capital and all of those things. There was wage appropriation that was a function of race. Not only from sharecropping, from slavery to sharecropping, to today’s incarceration that has spawned a prison industrial complex that has inmates being paid $12 an hour while the companies—forgive me, 12 cents an hour—while the companies who sell their wares are being traded publicly on Wall Street.

There has never been economic justice if you use my four questions for African American people. Oh, there’s been a nod to difference; there have been laws, minority business
development laws and other laws, that have paid attention to race. There’s even been a diversity movement, but diversity is not economic justice. We support the diversity movement, of course, but what’s the justice in a movement that in some corporations focuses solely on women? Their diversity is women, not everyone. So it’s very interesting when we look at these movements to look at who benefits, but who is a rubric for the benefit? Yeah, there’s an unlevel playing field, it’s unlevel, but the lovely thing about African American people is [that] despite the unlevelness of the playing field, we play anyway. We continue to play no matter what. And Black economic history speaks to the ironies of African American participation and to the brilliance and tenacity of our patriotism.

Let me tell you the story of a man called Free Frank—Free Frank McWorter. Free Frank McWorter was a slave. He was a slave in West Virginia, and he was also a craftsman—he was a blacksmith, which meant that he was able to buy his own time and do what he wanted to on Sundays. Well, he cut a deal with his master. Now y’all are supposed to look at me crazy—how do you cut a deal with your master? That’s like people saying Sally Hemings was in love with Thomas Jefferson. I mean, how do you fall in love with massa? “Oh no, massa, I don’t love you. I don’t think I can see you Thursday night.” That couldn’t go over too well. But, in any case, Free Frank cuts a deal with massa. He’s going to buy himself back. He’s going to lease himself out every Sunday; he’s going to pay massa a sum, 600 bucks; and then he’s going to be free. As you might guess, massa changed the terms and conditions whenever he felt like it, but Free Frank wanted to be free, and so he continued to participate in this Faustian bargain, and eventually it did turn out right.

However, there were a couple of bumps in the road. Free Frank, being a relatively young man, walking to the place where he hired out his time, ran into a relatively young woman who was extraordinarily attractive. So the next thing you know, they were jumping the broom. So now what did Free Frank have to do? He had to buy his wife. And again, I said they were relatively young, so y’all know the next part of the story. They had children. So he had to buy his children. Before it was over with, Free Frank bought 13 of his relatives: his wife, his children, cousins. Thirteen relatives left West Virginia [and] started one of the first free Black towns in Illinois in the 1840s.

That is a story of believing in a system that is clearly stacked against you but understanding that tenacity still can pay [off], because that’s my area of expertise. I say that not to minimize any other exploitation but to focus on what our nation has done to a race of people that they now persistently vilify. The way that this economic injustice primarily manifests itself, and it’s probably one of the most important things to focus on, is the wealth gap. The wealth gap—the wealth is really, in the words of Lauryn Hill, the erudite Lauryn Hill, “It’s not what you cop, it’s what you keep.” People spend a lot of time looking at income, but the issue is not always income, it’s also wealth. So we’ve been able with wealth to look at that which is intergenerational, not just that which is paid at a point in time. It’s a measure of generations; it’s a measure of status. Wealth also, in so many ways, both determines and is determined by income, household, education, debt, and access. Any number of things is affected by wealth, and wealth affects any number of those things.

The data, the stories of Black economic history, suggest that there are lots of winners like that. At the same time, the data suggest that we have a long way to go before we close racial economic gaps. The Catholic bishops’ letter doesn’t focus on race, but it focuses on issues of exploitation, and capitalism is, by nature, an exploitative system.

So it’s important at this point before I go on to note that others have been exploited by our economic system and have not gotten economic justice. Some of the same things that have happened to African American people happened to other people of color. Native Americans also had the appropriation of their land and labor—in fact, the original appropriation, if you will, the original sin of America simply taking all of the native peoples’ land and then putting them on reservations and then starving them and doing any other number of other things—we won’t go there. Mexican Americans experienced appropriation of land and labor and nativity. Matter of fact, Arizona used to be Mexico, and people in Arizona might want to remember that. Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans as well suffered exploitative expropriation of labor and land. But what we have to say about all of that is that I’m focusing on African Americans this evening.

“Yeah, there’s an unlevel playing field, it’s unlevel, but the lovely thing about African American people is [that] despite the unlevelness of the playing field, we play anyway.”
There’s a new Brandeis [University] study. They looked at one generation, a same set of families, from 1984 to 2007 and found that the wealth gap more than quadrupled over that time period—going from a gap of roughly $20,000 to a gap of roughly $100,000. And it was a sample, a pretty large sample, of 16,000, if I’m not mistaken, people. However, for whatever reason, and we’ll get into the reasons, it quadrupled.

A much more alarming story is a story of women of color. White women, single White women, have [median] wealth of $41,000; single Latino women, $120; single Black women, $100. This is wealth. This is what they’re worth on any given day of the week. A portion of these women were single mothers.

Again, what am I saying? Wealth is access. Think about what wealth means. A good friend was telling us, Miss Linda Boyd, about somebody who needed to get out of jail. Well, wealth meant that he didn’t spend the night. They might have kept him from 2 a.m. until 6 p.m., but he didn’t spend the night in jail. Well, almost, but that’s another story. There are any number of things that come up that your wealth allows you to have access to. And yet, a single Black woman has a 100 dollars’ worth of wealth.

One of the reasons that we see the wealth gap, if we look at the 1984–2007 data, is that financial deregulation, which primarily occurred during that time period, did not basically promote economic justice. Indeed, financial deregulation raised the amount of debt that both African Americans and poor people carried. Financial deregulation made it possible for people to create these instruments, these derivatives, that were based on subprime mortgages, which meant they weren’t worth anything. Okay, so that’s what financial deregulation did. It was done as part of a free economy that moves freely, that’s more competitive, [and] provides better results.

Well, someone ought to ask Larry Summers, advisor to the president, who pushed [for] the elimination of the Glass-Steagal [Act], whether he’s satisfied with the results that he generated, that HE generated. And then someone might ask President [Barack] Obama, with all due respect, why the dude who messed it up is going to clean it up. Like, why is the fox watching the chicken house? It’s just a little interesting. I come not to criticize President Obama; he gets enough of that from the Tea Party people. But, from time to time, there are questions that must be raised.

In the latest Survey of Consumer Finances, 28 percent of African American people compared to just 8 percent of whites had no assets at all. In the words of Ntozake Shange, “We ain’t got no stuff.” How do you not have stuff—I mean, no stuff? No bank account, no automobile, no tangible assets. How does this kind of thing happen? And how did these folks then live in America? Again, when we look at this wealth data, we’re looking at this data because we’re looking at the best report card we have of economic status and of actual status. We’re looking at mobility and we’re looking at access. How often do you say, “Well, I’ll just get it out of, you know, I hate to go into my savings, but … ?” The African American woman with $100 of wealth doesn’t have any savings to go into.

Have you heard of “recession chic?” If you follow some of the newspapers, you get these articles by a young woman out of New York, I think her last name is Von Tobel, who wrote about how she managed to go all day, a whole day, without spending any money. She went all day long, a whole day, 24 hours, without spending any money, and she wrote this article that [The] Huffington Post actually printed. She takes two paragraphs to talk about how traumatic it is not to have her Starbucks. And so she had to go into her own kitchen—now this is a grown woman, in Manhattan, who had to go into her cupboard and make her own coffee. Oh my God! And then she suffered the indignity of having to use a Ziploc bag to put in a few slices of meat on a piece of bread. Obviously, she was anorexic; she just had one piece of bread. She didn’t say a “sammich.” And then, oh poor thing, she had to forgo the $10 cab ride and walk to work. After she walked all the way to work and didn’t get to go out with her friends for yet another cup of coffee, one of her friends reminded her that they were going out to dinner that day. She says, “Oh no, we’ll have to have a potluck at my house.” So she went home and found that she had been to Trader Joe’s a few days before and had some penne pasta and tomato sauce and even some frozen peas to hook this up. And so they managed to have a dinner,
but she cooked it herself. And then, at the end of the day, she wrote about how proud of herself she was. This was some major accomplishment.

You have another one, and I don’t mean to pick on these Manhattanites, another one who cut out blow-dried hairstyles and a few other things for a year, so she saved $1,000 a month, so she went to Aspen, Colo., to reward herself for that saving. And then there’s a former editor of House & Garden magazine; some of you have read it. She wrote Slow Love: How I Lost My Job, Put on My Pajamas, and Found Happiness. She got a pink slip, poor baby. Last month, 250,000 Americans experienced mass layoffs, but she got a pink slip. So she got a book contract and she wrote a book about how she sold one house and bought another one, embarked upon an ill-advised affair with a ne’er-do-well, and wrote about it. TMI. This was featured in The New York Times Magazine, which does not publish things for free, so while freelancers all over the country are struggling (there are a number of people who are freelance writers who talk about losing kill fees), this woman who probably killed a few kill fees herself is complaining about how difficult it is to get a pink slip from your six-figure income, with your Rolodex of 30 years that will get you into just about everywhere. See, the flip side of this story is while Miss Von Tobel didn’t spend any money all day long, there are some people who don’t have any money to spend on any day.

The Brandeis study talks about these African American women and the wealth that they have. One woman who has a job [and] works actually talked about the number of days that she walked to work and the number of times that she had to choose between feeding her children or paying their bus pass to school. That’s poverty, not this “recession chic.” So when I talk about economic justice, I talk about economic justice both from a perspective of looking at where we are but also looking at the bifurcation in our society and the folks who don’t get it.

One group that doesn’t get it is the media. The New York Times did a piece last October about the former executives who were reduced to working “survival” jobs. Now these survival jobs included jobs at basically service places. They were being paid a paltry $12 an hour. Well, while I think that $12 an hour is a significant comedown from a six-figure salary, there are people who would salivate at a $12-an-hour job when the minimum wage is just $7.35. And so, instead of writing a story about how this poor person who has accumulated all this stuff and now has to work at this $12-an-hour job is making it, why not write about the minimum wage worker and how they’re making it? We haven’t seen very many of those stories. The Huffington Post has not gone out of its way to find a minimum wage worker to write about or her children.

And so we have both economic injustice and insensitivity to it because the media look at each other’s navels, because you basically have Caucasian, upper-middle-class, Ivy League-educated folk talking to each other. You know, the stories about the women who are in such angst because they don’t know whether they’re going to quit their job or not because they have a baby at home are a slap in the face to the women who juggle many, many child care possibilities and don’t have the luxury of saying, “Can I quit my job?” because public assistance, thanks to Bill Clinton, is limited now to five years and we don’t publicly support child care.

So let me go back to this wealth story and talk about why you end up with White women at $41,000, Black women at $100, [and] Latino women at $120 and why you end up with Whites with median household wealth of $170,000 and African Americans with median wealth of $17,000. Wealth is an accumulation, and we have public policy that has consistently failed to allow African Americans to accumulate [and,] indeed, in some cases, [has] been hostile to accumulation. Postslavery, African Americans often could not own the tools of their trade, so Free Frank couldn’t find a job in Reconstruction because you could not have blacksmiths in some southern places where White unionists did not want competition. Jim Crow laws, in some southern states, limited the amount of money that African Americans could accumulate. You could not have more than a certain amount of money in the bank. And so, what some resourceful people did was [that they] found good White people, and I mean no irony there, and asked them to hold their money. Now this is just like cutting a deal with massa; someone is only going to hold your money if they have a whole lot of money of their own. So if indeed they come under economic hard times and they’re just holding your money, with a nonlegally binding agreement—they’re just your friend—you’re actually out of luck.

This is how the Emergency Land Fund documented the loss of 6 million acres of African American land from 1890 to 1950. Fences just moved; people just took, but they don’t save. Fences just moved. People just decided that [that] piece of land over there looks too good for that Black man to have, so he’s not going to have it.

"In Mississippi in 1947, there were 3,239 Gl [loans] granted. Two were granted to African Americans."
The Tulsa, Okla., riots were not anything more than pure economic envy. There was a thriving Black community—thrusting. John Hope Franklin wrote eloquently about his father, who had been a physician in that area; about how the Whites, before they burned that area down, came through and looted Black peoples’ houses, took the finery, and revealed in the fact that they took it—simple economic envy. What the law did not say in Tulsa, people enforced. You can have but so much. And so when we look at the wealth gap and those median wealth numbers, we’re looking at a history of people saying, “You can have but so much.”

Probably the most pernicious area in quasi-modern times would be the 1930s and 1940s, when the New Deal was a raw deal for people of color. Ira Katznelson has written eloquently [in] When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-century America. He writes about how the GI Bill in particular enabled groups of working-class Whites to get a foothold into the middle class. They were able to get loans for housing, free schooling, loans for businesses, and many other things. But in Mississippi in 1947, there were 3,239 GI [loans] granted. Two were granted to African Americans. You have to know that there were more than two African American veterans out of Mississippi who approached those GI boards for loans. So let’s just talk about accumulation from 1947—so for those who would say when you talk about economic justice in the context of slavery, you’re talking about the past, 1947 is not exactly the distant past. We’re still talking about a period that we know about.

Not only that, the Federal Housing Administration failed to provide the same kind of loans for African Americans as for White veterans but, more importantly, as a matter of public policy, wrote that integrated neighborhoods were unstable neighborhoods. Therefore, what you saw in terms of housing patterns was that, usually, as African Americans encroached on a neighborhood, the predominant ethnic group would leave and then more African Americans would come, but the area would be integrated for a while. Integrated neighborhoods are unstable neighborhoods, so Blacks could not get loans to move into the neighborhood that their communities were moving into. And so you basically saw then something called contract lending, in which groups of majority people and banks bought the contracts on the homes [and] rented the homes to African Americans at prices that were very inflated—again a source of wealth seepage.

Katznelson’s book is one of these powerful books; if you didn’t know it, you’d sit there and say it couldn’t be true, but it was. He uses the analogy of a foreign aid plan, but he says the foreign aid plan was given to the wealthy people and excluded the poorest people. We don’t know that it was given to the wealthiest people because we know that many working-class Whites were veterans, but we do know that African Americans were systematically excluded. The reason this happened, of course, was that southern senators did not want African Americans to get but so much. And so the GI Bill benefits were locally administered, and so in order to get these benefits, you had to go to a local GI board.

Katznelson writes movingly about the paucity of African Americans who were able to get [a] college education. One man who went to apply for a college education was sent to a six-week vocational school. On the other hand, if we talk to our fathers and grandfathers, or look at the records of Harvard [University], Yale [University], and MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], we see the folks who went to get their PhDs and their MBAs when they came back from serving our country. African Americans were not allowed to do that.

Social security was another opportunity where African Americans, because of occupational distribution, were systematically excluded. What am I talking about? Social security excluded farmers and domestic workers. When [the Social Security Act] was passed in 1935, 80 percent of African American women worked as domestics, so African American women then had no opportunity to accumulate for retirement, and African American people, through public policy, were not provided with the tools that Whites were provided with to ensure old age, to get good jobs, to secure economic security, to build assets, and to gain middle-class status. No wonder that by 1960, 57 percent—only 57 percent—of the African American community was poor. That number certainly is lower now—it’s 24.5 percent—but it’s much higher than the national average of 13.2 percent.

Civil rights laws are good law, laws that we appreciate, but it has very few economic justice factors. It does not provide for general economic access. It simply provides [for] the elimination of certain racist laws that were allowed to stay on our books for a very long time. After a generation, then, the beneficiaries of the New Deal “no fair deal laws” are the very ones who say to the beneficiaries of civil rights laws, “Oh, you need to pull yourself up by your bootstraps.” Their bootstraps were the GI Bill. “You need to stop all this
dependency.” “There’s a culture of poverty.” What about a culture of oppression?

Now, I don’t want to dwell too heavily on history—I think I kind of made my point—but I do want us to be clear that the period right before and after World War II, that awful time period, was responsible for many of the gaps that we see now.

But we’re in this “postracial” era now. That was meant with all due sarcasm. Y’all must not watch Tavis Smiley. I said I never wanted to hear those words again. But, in any case, in this so-called era, many people believed that when they voted for Barack Obama, they wouldn’t have to talk about race anymore. In some cases, that’s why they voted for Barack Obama. And since then, they’ve been resisting him. So he inherited a climate of racial economic injustice; he inherited a climate of indifference there, too, and some of this inheritance that he has also explains his reluctance to speak about the economic status of African American people at this point in time. It’s something, frankly, that he can’t do, nor do I think he necessarily should. But I do think that he should be aware of it, and I think he is.

Today, data were released that said [that] 431,000 jobs were created, up from 200,000 last month. Good news, right? Four hundred eleven thousand of those jobs are temporary jobs, according to the Economic Policy Institute, so before you start celebrating, understand that those jobs are getting ready to go away. The unemployment rate is 9.7 percent. For African Americans, that unemployment rate is 15.5 percent; for Black men, 17.1 percent.

There’s this number U6 in the economic situation report. U6 is the unemployed, the discouraged workers, and people who are working part time but want full-time jobs. That number for everybody is 16.6 percent. They don’t report that number for African Americans, so every time they put the press release out, I go figure it out. Nobody else does. I never hear anyone say what the numbers are, and I send it to people and say, “Please say this.” But it’s 26.5 percent; one in four African Americans doesn’t have a job.

What is economic justice, and how do we attain it? How do we live with it? What if White America experienced an unemployment rate of 26.5 percent? What do you think would happen? Just think about it; I’m not going to speculate. I’ve not spent 24 hours White in my life, so I don’t know what White folks would do. But just think about the indignity. The last time we saw numbers like this in our nation, what did we have? We had a depression, and we had a massive public policy plan to fix it. Just like we had a massive public policy New Deal, we had a massive public policy plan, but there has never been a massive public policy plan to deal with [the] economic status of African American people. Instead, a social program here, a social program there, and if you go back to my initial four questions, no assessment of whether those programs worked. And so people will tell you, “Oh we have this program and we have that program.” The big question is, was it an effective program?

The other couple of numbers you need to know about the employment situation, the White House says it’ll be 2015 before the unemployment rate drops below 7 percent. That was posted on whitehouse.gov just a month ago; now they may have revised it based on the so-called recovery they got for those extra jobs today, but that would probably not be the best thing to do. So the question then is, where is economic justice in contemporary social policy? We had a $700 billion bailout for banks who would then not lend. They were given the money to lend, and the purpose of lending was to stimulate the economy; that’s what they were supposed to do. But they kept the money. Where’s the economic justice there?

Now, President Obama has agreed with the House of Representatives that there should be an $18 billion bill. OK, a $700 billion stimulus but just $18 billion, y’all do the math, to do some job creation and to extend unemployment benefits. But the Senate refused to extend unemployment benefits; they refused to act on this action before they went on Memorial Day break, [and] they’re not coming back until Monday. OK. That means hundreds of thousands of people will not get their benefits this month. But they have this new policy, they say, called PAYGO. You have to pay as you go, so anytime a senator or a House member proposes legislation, they have to say where the money is going to come from. This seems economically prudent—so prudent that it must be a new rule because nobody thought of that when they gave the $700 billion to the bankers. Now, you know, the most interesting thing about the banker bailout is that Henry Paulson, who was then secretary of the treasury, did a whole lot of preparation to get that money. He approached the Congress with three pieces of paper. If a student asked me for $100 for a student activity with three pieces of paper, they wouldn’t get it. But $700 billion based on three pieces of paper, no footnotes, no proof, just, “I need $700 billion,” — but then he went to Harvard. I’m not mad at Harvard; I went to MIT, the little school down the river. But I think you learn temerity at Harvard. If you don’t learn anything else, you learn that whenever you get into a tight spot, you just say, “I went to Harvard.” And so he got the $700 billion.

But, in any case, I want us to look at this policy through the lens of economic justice. We just passed financial services reform; it was a great moment for President Obama. He said it was something he was going to do, and he did. As with any piece of legislation, that reform was what? It was a compromise so everybody didn’t get everything they wanted. Guess who didn’t get much at all? The poorest people in America.
The one thing that could have been done to protect poor people would have been to regulate payday lending. North Carolina Senator Kay Hagan proposed a very modest, modest provision that people would be restricted to six payday loans a month. That’s modest, six? I mean, how many paychecks do you get a month? Do you know anybody who gets six paychecks a month? And so Senator Hagan was trying to be the moderate compromiser that she is, and that was her proposal. The folks who do payday lending went overtime with lobbyists, and it was turned down. So we’re celebrating financial services reform, and again there are some good provisions, but the poorest people in America and the inner-city poor who are the special victims of payday lenders are the ones who basically suffer from such lending.

The BP spill, just for a minute, somebody called it President Obama’s [Hurricane] Katrina. See, these folks will blame anything on him. If there’s an eclipse, it would be President Obama’s eclipse. Anything can be blamed on this president. We know that BP says they’re going to pay the people who are affected, but the least protected are going to be the most hurt. The small fishing communities in Louisiana and Mississippi where people make $300 or $400 a week, sometimes cash, during the fishing season, they won’t be making the money now. And guess what BP says? “We’ll pay you what you show on your tax return.” They apparently never heard of an underground economy, although they’ve been operating one for some time (or at least an underwater economy). But we need to pay attention to these people who are raising questions about who is hit just as they raised the same questions around Katrina. And again, you had small communities of people, cash economies or, in the African American community, people who got maw-maw’s house but not the deed. Well, if you got the house but not the deed, you did not get compensated. “Well,” they would say, “you know it’s my house; I’ve been in here for 40 years. And if it’s not mine, whose is it?” But FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] said, “If you can’t prove it, you can’t have it.” And so the reliance on tax returns, the ignoring of underground economies, is yet another way to deny economic justice.

I won’t spend very much time talking about education policy because you had the best here in Pedro Noguera. What I will say, however, is that the long-term implications of the way we finance education speak not only to economic injustice but to the very erosion of the competitiveness of this nation. As long as we fund schools through the property tax, we are asserting inequality. We are saying that inequality is OK with us. And as long as we fund schools through the property tax, we are going to end up with a situation where poorly prepared inner-city students are going to have a harder time competing against well-prepared suburban students. There is implicit racism, frankly, in the reliance on SAT scores exclusively and these formulas that the University of Michigan and others come up with that include things like International Baccalaureate as points for admission when all schools do not have International Baccalaureate. So you’re coming in two points less because your school did not offer this. And then let’s just flip it down to the college level, where when poorly prepared students come to us, we prepare them. Historically, Black colleges do more with less. And yet we find if our accreditors say to us [that] if they don’t have this and they don’t have that, there’s a question mark, or, more importantly, they want to measure us with graduation rates that are equal to that of other schools. If they graduate, we’re in a victory. If it takes them a minute more, that’s OK. The minute more for all they lost, let’s give credit where credit is due.

But let’s also say what’s going to happen if we don’t try to educate every American—not every Black American [or] every Latino, every American. We are in a fight for our competitive lives, and we’re losing. We are losing. We spent all this money in 1959; people of a certain age will remember National Defense Student Loans. Remember Russia beat us to the Moon? And so then we put billions of dollars into higher education. OK, China has beaten us, India has beaten us, Eastern Europe has even beaten us in the number of engineers they produce, and yet we’re not spending those dollars that way.

Watch this; this is one of my favorite statistics: If you look at people 55–64, the United States leads in production of people with AA or BA degrees who are 55–64, but those of us who are 55–64 know that golfers call this time of our life, “the back end.” In other words, “back nine,” that’s what it is. See, I don’t golf, but I like that terminology. This is limited productivity that you’re going to get from somebody who’s 55–64. Oh, they’ll be as productive as long as they can be. You know we have our dear Dr. Dorothy Hayden, who just left us at 98 and went to work every day, every single day, until she was hospitalized. So we know that folks who are advanced age can be productive, but we know that there is going to be a limit to that productivity.

So 40 percent of all Americans 55–64 have AA or BA degrees—that makes us first. What percentage of 25–34-year-olds have AA or BA degrees? The same 40 percent; that makes us 10th. What it also suggests is that we have not been able to improve our delivery of educational services in a 30-year period. We have not been able to educate more people in a 30-year period. What does that mean? As the demographic changed, we stopped caring. And so we began to withdraw. What is economic justice and how do we attain it? And so this failure to provide economic justice has long-term international consequences for the United States. It suggests that we are so busy hating on people that we’re prepared to cut off our noses to spite our faces. We collectively will become a developing nation because we fail to invest in the
education of those who don’t look like the majority but who are soon to be the majority. The numbers continue.

And so the question then becomes, what do we do about this? How do we attain economic justice? One of the things that I would say is important is that investment in education is the most important thing that we can do. Invest in education; every child should have a quality education. Oh, Arne Duncan’s Race to the Top is interesting. That’s going to be for those schools that apply; most of the schools that need the money don’t even have the means to apply. It’s just like the recovery dollars and those cities and others who don’t have the means to apply. The grant writers I sat with in Greensboro said, “Should we hire a lobbyist?” Well, if you’re asking if you should hire a lobbyist, you’re already a little bit behind [in] the game, because somebody has a lobbyist. So, in any case, the first thing we can do to talk about racial economic justice is to ensure that we invest in education.

But that does not deal with this issue of the wealth gap. The issue of the wealth gap can only be dealt with when we start targeting advantages in the same way that we targeted disadvantages. In the same way that people were excluded from the GI Bill, they now need to be included [in] some other kind of bill that might look like a GI Bill. Ira Katznelson talks about those who were excluded getting tax credit or other funds to be included—that inner-city folk be given subsidized mortgages so they can become homeowners. We have a gap, a 25–30 percent gap, between the number of Whites and the number of African Americans who own their homes. And home ownership is the bridge to middle-class status in the United States. And so why not do that? The argument about targeting advantages is not an argument about reparations, although I have no problem with reparations; I will argue that today. The argument about targeting advantages is not about dealing with race but [with] specific injustice. The New Deal was [an] injustice. It’s an injustice that still can be fixed if we’re committed to closing the racial economic gap. Others have come up with creative ideas around asset-building policies—ways that people can basically accumulate wealth and build assets. I think those policies are very important also.

But the bottom line is [that] we have to raise the question that the young lady asked me in our little press meeting before I came in: “What should young people do?” One of the main things is to tell this story. Do not allow people to talk about a people who don’t save, as people who are inferior. We are a people who saved, and our savings were taken. We are a people who have been deliberately tarred and feathered with negative stereotypes that affect [our] contemporary ability to earn money and to participate still in the economy. Is there economic justice? No, there is not. But the possibility is there if it’s something we prioritize.

Unfortunately in the “postracial era,” you have these people, very interesting people, who would like not to move forward to postracialism but backward to the “good old days” of the 1950s; that’s really where they want to be. And you hear them talk about family values. Well, if you have family values, why would you take a 7-year-old child’s mother and deport her? What kind of family value is that? So we have to be very careful and mindful of this group of people who will take us back.

What was 1950 like? Well, I wasn’t there. But you know, women did not work and hardly even talked. Roughly 60 percent then of African American women were still private household workers. Gay and lesbian people had to stay in the closet. In some cases, in some states, it was still a crime to be gay or lesbian. We can go down the list and talk about what 1950 was like. Who wants to go back to Ozzie and Harriet? Only Ozzie and Harriet were comfortable back in those days. Will we get economic justice? If we don’t get economic justice, what we will get is residency in a country that will fall behind not only China, India, and Eastern Europe; we [will] fall behind Spain in education. We’re ranked 19th in the number of high school graduates in our country.

If we choose to ignore this issue, we choose really to ignore our own prosperity. “To be a poor man is hard,” said W.E.B. Du Bois, “but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardship.” There are those who experience the very bottom of hardship in an era of “recession chic.” If we are to talk about race, we must talk about economics; it must be central to our conversation. We can’t simply talk about affirmative action or even progressive diversity. We have to talk about wealth gaps, closing those gaps, and providing access for millions of Americans who have heretofore not had it.

Thank you very much.

“We have a gap, a 25–30 percent gap, between the number of Whites and the number of African Americans who own their homes. And home ownership is the bridge to middle-class status in the United States.”
June 5, 2010

Postracial America: A Panel Discussion

Panel Moderator
Alex Castellanos, political commentator and media consultant

Panel Presenters
Benjamin Todd Jealous, president and chief executive officer, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
Tony Norman, columnist, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, professor of sociology, Duke University
Abigail Thernstrom, vice chair, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

Pictured seated (left to right): Tony Norman and Abigail Thernstrom
Standing (left to right): Benjamin Jealous, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Alex Castellanos, and Dean Larry Davis
Overview
This dynamic panel presentation and discussion was introduced by University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work Dean Larry Davis as the culminating event for the Race in America conference. Moderated by Alex Castellanos, the distinguished panel took on some of the broader issues related to whether we now have, or even should strive toward, a postracial America. What changed with the election of Barack Obama, and what changes are anticipated?

The panelists agreed that America cannot be seen as postracial when one considers the range of ongoing race-related social, economic, and educational problems it faces. While Obama’s election brought pride and hope to many, it is unrealistic to expect that his election alone could erase attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that have become such an integral part of our culture.

Looking toward the future, both panelists and audience members strongly agreed that racism is a structural problem in the United States that can be addressed only through broad, comprehensive, and directed policy reforms. We had success in coming together to elect a Black president, and now we must remain committed to the goal of a multiracial, inclusive democracy for America. We must continue the dialogue and continue to bring these issues to the forefront of that dialogue. Participatory educational and political activity is necessary to achieve equality.

The following are summaries of the panelists’ brief remarks.

Panel Presentation Summaries

Benjamin Todd Jealous, president and chief executive officer, NAACP

The aspirations of Black children across America rose on the day Barack Obama was elected president of the United States. At the same time, many of these children were attending schools that were an embarrassment to everything America stands for. Many had mothers working two jobs in order to maintain the family, and many had seen a disproportionate number of their community members sent off to prison. The distance between a family’s situation and the aspirations of its children is an exact measure of the frustration of Black parents.

These parents are keenly aware that racism still exists under an Obama presidency. They know that it is still harder for a Black man with no criminal record to get a job than it is for a White man with a record. They know that Black people who go to the hospital with the same symptoms as Whites are less likely to receive pain pills. They know that life is harder for Blacks and also can be literally more painful.

In today’s America, Black and Latino children can be grossly mistreated at school. A 12-year-old Latina in a New York City school, for example, was booked and taken downtown because she scribbled on a desk with an erasable marker. In a Georgia county that contains 3 percent of the country’s Black population but 30 percent of the country’s death row exonerations, one school—proud of its “no tolerance” policy for weapons at school—gave a two-day suspension to a White Boy Scout who had a hatchet in his car trunk. A month later, the same school issued a two-week suspension to a Black student-athlete star for having tableware—a fork, knife, and spoon—in his car. His two-week suspension required him to repeat the entire school year.

The good news is that we have more people in this country than ever who are truly committed to a multiracial, inclusive democracy. We also have a smaller than ever number of hard-core bigots and a large number of people in the middle who could go either way. Right now, the far right wing, as represented by the Tea Party, has dug in, made its positions very clear, and works steadily to draw in more people. We who believe in inclusive democracy have to be just as clear about the future we want to see. We’ve been working a long time to get to this place—the NAACP for 100 years and human rights movements for even longer. We have to be clear that the only direction this country can be allowed to move in is forward. Our kids literally cannot afford to go backward.

Tony Norman, columnist, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The Institute on Assets and Social Policy at Brandeis University recently published results of a study on the wealth gap between Black and White Americans. The study should be subtitled, “Please, no more nonsense about a postracial society, OK?” Data show that the typical White family is now five times richer than its African American counterpart. Assets, excluding home equity, averaged $100,000 for White families and just $5,000 for Blacks, and about half of America’s Black families have no assets at all because their debt exceeds their assets. Since the mid-1980s, the average assets of White families grew from $20,000 to $100,000, while those of Black families grew from $2,000 to $5,000. If property equity is included in this comparison, the numbers diverge even more dramatically. Middle-class Blacks still fail to achieve or even to approach asset equality with their White counterparts, even when they start with equal salaries.

Many things contribute to these inequities, including institutional racism; redlining and its modern equivalents; tax policies that disproportionately favor wealthy and White Americans; practices that steer Blacks toward “bottom-feeding” institutions, such as payday loan centers; and risky, subprime mortgage lending.

But the biggest culprit is class. When he was killed, Martin Luther King Jr. was steering the country toward an equality more profound than that of race. He was looking at the big
ideas. Today’s conversations too often revert to issues of racial insult, police brutality, or where Blacks “fit.” Black chat rooms discuss interracial marriage or how many Blacks are cast in a popular new television series. Rarely do we have sustained discussions on the serious issues, such as the drug war, Afghanistan, Black education, or their impact on every area of Black life. We don’t talk about structural equality because we’re afraid we’ll sound like Marxists. The only way we can talk about a postracial America is apart from any serious discussion of economics and class.

When Obama gave his first State of the Union address, MSNBC’s Chris Matthews said that for an hour, he forgot that Obama was Black. Barack Obama is biracial by birth. His White mother was frequently absent, and his Kenyan father was mostly out of the picture entirely. Obama had high aspirations. Just transcending race was insufficient; he wanted to vault up the social ladder. So, he went to an Ivy League school, Columbia [University], and then on to Harvard Law [School], where he learned to negotiate the corridors of power like a born insider. He is president today because he learned to be all things to all people. His nonthreatening demeanor, intelligence, and ability to refrain from shouting when he is angry contribute to his charisma. If Barack Obama wasn’t part of our national politics, we wouldn’t even hear the term “postracial.” It is meaningless without him; the term grew popular when Obama won the Nobel Peace Prize for not being George W. Bush. Obama is a talented politician, but he is scrupulous about not addressing the common causes of so much of our misery. Think about this: Who would be more likely to appoint a Thurgood Marshall to the [U.S.] Supreme Court, Barack Obama or Lyndon Johnson?

Postracial as an idea certainly lost in Arizona, where the debate about immigration was the repudiation of all things postracial. What we see is that it is easy to believe in a postracial America only if you never believed that things were racial in the first place.

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, professor of sociology, Duke University

Are we postracial? Should we strive to be so? Eduardo Bonilla-Silva answered “no” to both questions and illustrated his response with a recent experience of racial discrimination in a well-known men’s store. But racial inequity and its analysis are complex.

Racism and racist behaviors are not just the result of prejudices held by individuals; rather, they are structural by-products of a system that has been based on the existence of a dominant race. Systematic racism has evolved into a complex set of practices and effects. The idea of “postracial” suggests that we simply can ignore ingrained racist policies and practices as if they no longer exist.

Covert racist behavior has now replaced much of the overt racism of the past. A new paradigm of “color blindness” has been promoted that often supports racist practices. For example, the argument that affirmative action is undesirable because it leads to reverse discrimination is based on a lack of understanding of the pervasive and ingrained nature of racist practices. Color blindness supports the view that the election of Obama proves that the country has moved beyond race and that anyone can succeed if he or she works hard enough. If Blacks are behind, then there must be something wrong with their culture, their family life, or their work ethic. They should stop “playing the race card.”

In terms of what Obama’s election means for Blacks in America, he cannot be disconnected from the postracial politics he advocated both during and since the campaign. His election was not really a break from the philosophy of color blindness but rather a continuation—and perhaps even an intensification—of it.

Should we strive to become postracial? No, because if race matters, then we must work to remove all discriminatory practices and behaviors, both overt and covert. If we, like Martin Luther King Jr., wish to live in a color-blind society, then we must deal seriously with race and race-based problems and follow through with race-based policies.

Abigail Thernstrom, vice chair, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

The day Barack Obama was elected president made America proud, no matter what your politics. It did not proclaim that we are a postracial society, but it did say that we are a good people, willing to cast ballots for a Black man, and that notion was previously inconceivable. As graduate students, we couldn’t go south in the summer because of the demonstrations. Many of today’s students cannot understand how far we have come in the last half century. Nonetheless, we must strive for greater equality, both racially and ethnically, in the United States. And we are not alone: The Turks in Germany and the North African Arabs in France, for example, can attest to the notion that the United States compares remarkably well in some respects.

America’s need for a reduction in disparities is obvious in its schools. There is no compelling reason that our urban Black and Hispanic students should graduate from high school with the equivalent of a junior high school education. This is a needless disparity. We need to teach whoever shows up in the classroom that the problem is not the kids—it’s what we offer the kids. As a member of the Massachusetts State Board
of [Elementary and Secondary] Education, I can say that our urban schools could have been so much better. We have made progress, but the disparities still exist and must be addressed. A student cannot compete in further education or employment if he or she begins with these disparities.

Panel Discussion

Q: What did Blacks expect from the election of Barack Obama, and are they getting it?

Jealous: Some hoped that a Black man would be nominated to the Supreme Court and still hope for a Black woman. We expect support for unions in the South and more jobs for Blacks across the country.

Bonilla-Silva: We expected him to talk about race, and we need to push him to do so. We wanted him to attend the UN conference on race [United Nations World Conference Against Racism] in Geneva,[ Switzerland].

Norman: We wanted more forcefulness in addressing our issues and dealing with Republican intransigence—more “righteous indignation.” We hope to see more in his second term.

Ternstrom: I disagree in part. Obama pushed through the health care bill. He is dealing with a center-right country.

Bonilla-Silva: We, too, must act. We can’t vote and go home but rather must combine social movement with political movement.

Q: Are our schools de facto segregated, and what can be done about it?

Jealous: Yes, this is a reality, even in this city. After Brown [v. Board of Education] and Rodriguez [Rodriguez et al v. San Antonio Independent School District et al and San Antonio Independent School District et al v. Rodriguez et al], we must continue to demand the right to a good education in which no child is deprived.

Ternstrom: What politics enable us to deliver a quality education? It is almost politically impossible.

Q: Should everyone be able to choose the best school for their kids?

Jealous: Vouchers are inadequate. A voucher for $6,000 or $8,000 won’t enable a child to attend a school costing $17,000.

Ternstrom: But $6,000–8,000 would offer some good school options.

Bonilla-Silva: Research shows that, on the whole, charters do slightly less well than publics. We don’t need more schools; we need good schools.

Q: What, for you, is the biggest economic issue for Blacks in this country?

Norman: Economic opportunity and social justice are but two sides of the same coin. All of these issues are important. Education is essential. We must have a major investment in education. Obama cannot take our support for granted. He must think about these as he develops economic policy.

Ternstrom: We cannot achieve economic equality until we close the achievement gap in our schools. Undereducated individuals will not be prepared to fill jobs that lead to equity.

Norman: Parents must instill hope in their children [and] must love them enough to reverse the creeping nihilistic attitude.

Ternstrom: Schools don’t give that message of hope, nor are they teaching many of the fundamental skills needed for getting ahead, including social skills such as how to meet a person, look the person in the eye, shake hands, speak clearly, and so on.

Audience Participation

Issues and ideas identified through audience comments and questions included the following:

- Race is a social, not a biological, construct, but it is perceived to be real
- Social stratification as a component of a capitalist society
- Incentives to attract and retain the best teachers to needy schools rather than to only the best schools
- Teaching as a professional job in an environment of 300-page contracts
- Feasibility and desirability of a nationalized education system
- The value and use of exit exams in schools

Closing

Panelists were asked, in closing, to identify one thing they would do or change immediately if they could. Their answers are as follows:

Jealous: Institute compulsory two-year national service.

Bonilla-Silva: Remove the blindfolds from White people so that they could see these racial issues and remove inequalities.

Norman: Make education an “orgasmic experience.”

Ternstrom: Continue dialogue with all these voices to achieve equality.
This report summarizes information provided by those speakers who focused on race and education in their presentations as well as responses to audience questions and comments. The value of this report is that it provides access to the extensive and detailed information disseminated at the conference. This information will be particularly helpful to community and policy leaders interested in gaining a better understanding of racial disparities in education and finding effective strategies for improving these conditions.
Children of color have disproportionately higher rates of school suspension and expulsion compared to White children. School suspension disproportionality between Black and White students has remained constant or increased for more than 30 years. Many children who are suspended are repeat offenders. In addition, the use of suspension has a high correlation with poor performance on standardized testing, dropping out of school, and juvenile delinquency.

The causes of disproportionate suspension may stem from the large achievement gap between Black and White students (achievement and behavior tend to be correlated) and the lack of culturally competent teachers and administrators. It is believed that most schools are ill-equipped to deal with issues like poverty, discrimination, and negative peer culture, which may extrinsically have a negative effect on children’s behavior.

It is proposed that by increasing school accountability for discipline and offering alternative methods of dealing with poor behavior, such as positive behavioral supports, we can decrease school reliance on suspension and expulsion as a primary source of punishment. The importance of teachers being culturally responsive toward the differing needs of Russell Skiba

Russell Skiba is a professor of counseling and educational psychology at Indiana University. He has worked with schools across the country in the areas of disproportionality, school discipline, and school violence and has published extensively in the areas of school violence, zero tolerance, and equity in education.

Skiba currently is director of the Equity Project, a consortium of research projects offering evidence-based information to educators and policymakers on equity in special education and school discipline. That project just received a major grant to develop a statewide network of culturally responsive positive behavior supports. He was a member and the lead author of the American Psychological Association’s Task Force on Zero Tolerance and was awarded the Push for Excellence Award by the Rainbow Coalition/Operation PUSH for his work on African American disproportionality in school suspension. Skiba has testified before the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and spoken before both houses of the U.S. Congress on issues of school discipline and school violence.

Esther L. Bush

As president and CEO of the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, Esther L. Bush has established herself as a voice of reason, a coalition builder, and a force for positive change in the greater Pittsburgh community and throughout the United States. Bush began her career as a high school teacher and worked as a college administrator and corporate consultant. She has moved progressively up the ladder of the Urban League movement, starting in 1980 with the position of assistant director of the Labor Education Advancement Program for the National Urban League in New York, N.Y. From there, she served first as director of the New York Urban League Staten Island office, then as director of its Manhattan office. Before returning to her hometown of Pittsburgh, Bush was president and CEO of the Urban League of Greater Hartford (Conn.). She is the first female to serve in each of her last four positions with the Urban League.

Bush holds a BS degree in education from Morgan State University and an MA in guidance and counseling from Johns Hopkins University. She has received several honorary doctorates, is an adjunct faculty member in the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, and is a member of several advisory committees at Pitt and Carnegie Mellon University.
diverse student bodies should be recognized. Accordingly, implementing a culturally sensitive intervention is an important step toward reforming school discipline.

The Problem

Black students are disproportionately disciplined in the United States. Black students are six times more likely to be suspended at the elementary school level. Black males are 16 times more likely to be suspended than White females. The relative Black-to-White suspension ratio has been increasing over the years. For example:

- In 1972, the relative Black-to-White suspension ratio was 1.94.
- In 2000, the relative Black-to-White suspension ratio was 2.59.
- In 2003, the relative Black-to-White suspension ratio was 2.84.

In addition to having higher school suspension rates, Black students are usually treated more severely than White students for similar offenses. Further, Black students receive more school referrals for reasons that are subjective and judgmental. School suspension persists despite evidence of its being largely ineffective and having negative outcomes, such as the following:

- Thirty to 50 percent of children who are suspended are repeat offenders—suspension seems to function more as a reinforcer than as a punisher.
- Children suspended in sixth grade are six to eight times more likely to have school referrals in the eighth grade.
- States with a high rate of school suspensions tend to have higher rates of juvenile incarceration.
- The use of suspension has a high correlation with dropping out of school.
- The use of suspension is associated with poor school achievement (schools with lower rates of suspension perform better on statewide tests).
- School alienation resulting from suspension increases the risk of delinquency.

Causes

There is no evidence to suggest that Black students behave more poorly than their White counterparts. Rather, disproportionality in suspensions and expulsions occurs along racial lines for some of the following reasons:

- A significant achievement gap exists between White children and children of color—achievement and behavior tend to be correlated.
- There is a lack of culturally competent teachers and school administrators (50 percent of students are minorities, while more than 95 percent of teachers are White).
- Classroom management issues: A majority of school disciplinary referrals are for day-to-day threats to the teacher’s authority rather than serious disruptive or safety threat issues.
- Poor school climate
- Negative effects of poverty
- Negative community influences on children
- Negative peer culture
- Aftereffects of historical discrimination

Solutions

1. Ensure that groups interpreting data on school discipline disparities are diverse and representative of the population in order to consider all hypotheses.
2. Increase available alternatives to suspension and expulsion.
3. Increase available access to more effective practices for classroom management, discipline, and school climate, such as:
   - Positive Behavioral Supports
   - Character education
   - Second Step (social and emotional learning that teaches kids how to deal with their emotions and interactions)
   - Bullying prevention
   - Conflict resolution
4. Make schools accountable for discipline and behavior in addition to achievement on statewide tests.
5. Incorporate measures of safety and climate as part of the school’s annual report card.
6. Set criteria and preventive interventions for persistently unsafe schools.
7. Set criteria and provide technical assistance for states that have schools with disproportionate numbers of minority students in special education classes.
8. Improve effective means of discipline and conflict management available to teachers and administrators.
9. Increase coordination and collaborations with other child service agencies.
10. Implement culturally responsive Personal Behavioral Supports (see page 31).
11. Recognize the socioeconomic, religious, ethnic, and racial backgrounds of individual teachers as a part of cultural competency training; effective teacher training must be culturally self-reflective.
12. Represent fully all cultures in textbooks to avoid minimizing the lives of the children in the classroom.

**Alternatives to Disciplinary Removal**

More than 10,000 schools currently are using Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS). This three-tiered model of school violence prevention consists of the following:

**Tier 1:** Create a climate where children can learn to get along with each other.

- Bullying prevention
- Conflict resolution
- Improved conflict management

**Tier 2:** Identify children with difficulties and intervene early (using schoolwide screening approaches to assess which children should move on to this level).

- Check and connect—At-risk children with a certain number of referrals will check in with the guidance counselor or school principal to establish goals for the day. Goals are evaluated at the end of the day.
- Mentoring and anger management—At-risk students are paired with school mentors and take time out for an activity throughout the school week.

**Tier 3:** Preplan responses to negative behavior.

- Functional assessment—This is a tool that helps in identifying targets for intervention and hypothesizing causal connections. At its most basic level, it gets to the question of why a child is behaving in a certain way so that steps may be taken to change the behavior. Its focus is not on punishing “misbehavior” but on changing the environment to promote appropriate behavior.
- Restorative justice—This is an approach to justice that encourages offenders to take responsibility for their actions by apologizing and often making restitution to the victim. The focus of this approach is reconciliation instead of punishment and healing instead of retribution.
- In-school alternatives, such as in-school suspension
- Parent suspension: Parents are placed in the school to monitor the children’s behavior for a three-to-four-day period.
- Probationary expulsion—Children are left in school after expulsion for a probationary period that has been approved by the board of education.

**References**


Race, Equity, and School Discipline: How to Create Safe and Orderly Schools

**Presenter:** Pedro Noguera, Peter L. Agnew Professor of Education; Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development; New York University

**Moderator:** Esther Bush, President and CEO, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh

Staff and faculty in urban schools often lack the cultural competency necessary to effectively manage school behavior without relying on extreme methods such as humiliation, suspension, and expulsion on a regular basis. The newest and most inexperienced teachers tend to be placed with the students who have the most behavioral problems and the most needs. Students in larger schools have less opportunity to create relationships with school faculty and staff. This lack of relationship diminishes the opportunity for cultural competency between teachers and students to occur naturally.

Pedro Noguera

Pedro Noguera is the Peter L. Agnew Professor of Education in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development at New York University. He also serves as director of the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education and codirector of the Institute for the Study of Globalization and Education in Metropolitan Settings.

Noguera is an urban sociologist, and his scholarship and research focus on the ways in which schools are influenced by social and economic conditions. He has published more than 150 research articles, monographs, and research reports on such topics as urban school reform, conditions that promote student achievement, youth violence, the potential impact of school choice and vouchers on urban public schools, and race and ethnic relations in American society.

He is the author of several groundbreaking books, including The Imperatives of Power: Political Change and the Social Basis of Regime Support in Grenada; City Schools and the American Dream; Beyond Resistance; Unfinished Business: Closing the Achievement Gap in Our Nation’s Schools; and, most recently, The Trouble with Black Boys and Other Reflections on Race, Equity and the Future of Public Education, which won the American Educational Studies Association Critics Choice Award. Noguera also received the Schott Foundation Race and Gender Equity Award.

The framing of school problems around the achievement gap forces educators to view problems through a deficit lens. It is more appropriate to view school problems through a developmental lens that focuses on the needs of students rather than their insufficiencies.

It is recommended that schools establish connections with community and social service providers, local police departments, nonprofit agencies, and neighboring churches to create innovative ways to resolve disparities in education from a holistic approach. There is a need for more interaction among teachers with regard to training and dealing with discipline issues with students. The most effective teacher development will take place in the classroom and through teacher modeling. Schools have to move away from discipline that relies heavily on ostracism and exclusion toward creating safe environments for students to learn and institutions where character development is central to the school’s mission.

**The Problem**

Violent communities create environments that breed violence in schools.

We disproportionately punish the neediest children:

- Racial minorities
- Special education students
- Homeless children
- Children in foster care

Schools tend to punish the same children repeatedly through:

- Humiliation
- Exclusion

Schools are failing to reach the needs of children; we punish them because of our inability to meet their needs.

Large numbers of children do not come to school because their safety is not ensured.

Children in suburban schools tend to feel safer than kids in inner-city schools.

**Causes**

- A lack of cultural competency on the part of school faculty and staff
- Students who no longer have an interest in learning and are the hardest to discipline
• Students who internalize negative aspects of the culture of their communities (e.g., students’ associating themselves with the gang culture that takes place outside school)
• Fewer opportunities for children in larger schools to create personal relationships with faculty and staff
• The best and brightest kids are being taught by the best teachers and children with the most learning and behavioral problems are being taught by the most inexperienced teachers
• An absence of adults with moral authority in the most dangerous schools
• The criminalization of misconduct by minority children in the school system
• The framing of school problems around the achievement gap, which forces educators to view problems through a deficit lens as opposed to a developmental lens that would focus on meeting the needs of students

Solutions

1. Create ways to increase opportunities for children to establish relationships with faculty and staff.
2. Broaden the notion of who is at risk to learn ways to create safe schools.
3. Increase the capacity of schools to deal with safety, educational, and health issues that may hinder learning.
4. Establish partnerships with community service providers to effectively change disparities in education.
5. Evaluate and improve upon the rules and procedures schools have for maintaining school discipline.
6. Promote interaction and training between teachers who are most able to maintain classroom discipline and those who have deficiency in that area.
7. Involve students in the process of constructing school rules.
8. Move away from reactive approaches to school discipline that rely heavily on ostracism and exclusion toward preventive approaches that focus on clearly articulated and actively enforced values and norms.
9. Move to approaches of discipline that engage parents before there is trouble.
10. Ensure that a clear focus on character development is central to the school’s mission.
12. Move away from ignoring serious indicators of problems toward responding quickly and early to minor offenses.
13. Help students to make concrete plans for the future.
14. Institute the most effective teacher development strategies, including placing teaching coaches inside the classroom and teacher modeling. Training that is disconnected from what is taking place in the classroom does not work.
15. Formulate specific strategies in the schools to counteract negative stereotypes before the students begin to internalize them.
16. Create more school safety net programs that link nonprofit agencies, employment, health and social services, and community organizations to the schools (e.g., the Harlem Children’s Zone and Homewood Children’s Village).
17. Align academic plans with safety net programs.
18. Ensure that cultural competency in the school’s curriculum is relevant to the communities in which students live.

References


Presenter: Ronald Ferguson, Senior Lecturer in Education and Public Policy, Graduate School of Education and John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Moderator: Mark Roosevelt, Outgoing Superintendent, Pittsburgh Public Schools

In America, Black and Latino children trail White and Asian American students in academic achievement, although it must be noted that White and Asian American students rank only 14th in academic achievement internationally. Concentrated poverty is a major barrier to closing the achievement gap.

There has been no improvement in high school dropout rates in 50 years, with the exclusion of general equivalency diplomas (GEDs). Students who obtain GEDs typically have about the same test scores as students who get high school degrees; however, they often lack the soft skills needed to be successful in the labor force (e.g., ability to lead a team). Parenting practices during early adolescence, such as allowing time for independent play and increasing the amount of leisure reading, correlate strongly with higher scores on standardized tests.

Ronald Ferguson

Ronald Ferguson is a Massachusetts Institute of Technology-trained economist and since 1983 has taught at Harvard University, where he is a senior lecturer in education and public policy with a joint appointment between the Graduate School of Education and the John F. Kennedy School of Government. He also is a senior research associate at the Kennedy School’s Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy.

His teaching and publications cover a variety of issues in education and economic development. In addition to teaching and writing, Ferguson consults actively with schools and governmental agencies on efforts to raise achievement levels and close achievement gaps. He is the creator and research director of the Tripod Project for School Improvement, the faculty cochair and director of the Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard, and a faculty cochair of the Pathways to Prosperity Initiative. His most recent book is Toward Excellence with Equity: An Emerging Vision for Closing the Achievement Gap, published by Harvard Education Press. Ferguson earned an undergraduate degree at Cornell University and a PhD at MIT.

Mark Roosevelt

Mark Roosevelt was appointed superintendent of the Pittsburgh Public Schools in August 2005. Since that time he has pursued an aggressive academic reform agenda called Excellence for All, which includes a new more rigorous curriculum; a nationally recognized program to recruit, train, support, and compensate principals as instructional leaders; and eight new Accelerated Learning Academies for many of Pittsburgh’s most underserved students. He also is the founder of the Pittsburgh Promise, a remarkable initiative that guarantees as much as $10,000 per year in college scholarship dollars for all graduates who meet certain academic standards.

Before arriving in Pittsburgh, Roosevelt had established himself as a public-sector change agent with a proven track record in educational reform. As chair of the Massachusetts state legislature’s Education Committee, Roosevelt coauthored and steered to passage the Education Reform Act of 1993, landmark legislation providing the equitable resources and accountability measures necessary for school improvement. In 1994, Roosevelt was the Democratic nominee for governor of Massachusetts. Roosevelt holds a Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School and a Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University. He is a graduate of the Broad Urban Superintendents Academy, an intensive executive management program designed to prepare educators and professionals from other fields to lead large city school systems.
There is a need for more and better training to equip teachers with the know-how and resources to more effectively teach students from diverse backgrounds. However, teachers may be apprehensive about new training efforts because they are afraid of losing autonomy in their role, being asked to do too much work, or being asked to do something unfamiliar.

Academic achievement goals should be raised for children from all backgrounds, with a special focus on those groups that are farthest behind. All races should be equally represented in academic achievement, and achievement must be enhanced for all so that American students can continue to compete internationally in this expanding global economy. Teacher training is essential to closing the achievement gap. Further, at the school district level, progress and goals concerning academic achievement gaps should be clear, and progress should be measured against state-level benchmarks.

The Problem

- There is a persistent educational achievement gap between Whites and Blacks in the United States.
- Further, there have been stagnant achievement levels for all older adolescents since the 1990s.
- There has been no improvement in high school dropout rates in 50 years.
- The test scores for students with GEDs are about the same as those for students who possess a high school diploma. However, students with GEDs rate lower than high school graduates in noncognitive “soft skills” necessary to perform well in the job market. Some examples of soft skills are deferred gratification, forms of etiquette, team participation, and team leadership.

Causes

Concentrated poverty is a huge barrier to closing the achievement gap.

While some parenting practices can hinder a child’s ability to perform well academically, others can bolster it. For example, when children are allowed to roam more freely around the house at age 2, it helps to predict visual motor integration by age 4 and math skills by age 8. Also, if children are exposed to conversations during bedtime reading that mix hard and easy questions, it predicts cognitive skills growth over the next year. The amount of cognitive skills growth is independent of the starting point.

First graders of all races typically engage in leisure reading at about the same rates. However, by fifth grade, 60–70 percent of Whites and Asians— and only 30–40 percent of Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans—say that they engage in leisure reading.

There is evidence suggesting that Blacks and Hispanics who get the highest grades suffer a popularity penalty.

This may have more to do with personality style than with other students’ resentment of their high achievement.

Teachers may resist efforts to initiate training. There are six reasons why teachers fear or are apprehensive about new training efforts:

1. Belief that their time is being wasted with repetitive ideas with no real buy-in from administrators
2. Fear of losing autonomy or of being asked to do something they do not want to do
3. Fear of feeling incompetent if asked to do something they do not know how to do
4. Fear that their colleagues might not buy in and they will become socially isolated
5. Fear of unpleasant surprises that may occur in the duration of the training
6. Fear of being asked to do too much work

Solutions

1. Effectively implement teams of teachers with leaders who understand the principles of good instruction and good practices to attain major improvements in the achievement gap.
2. Create ways to make the interactions children have with parents, peers, and teachers as positive and developmentally oriented as possible.
3. Excellence with equity—Raise academic achievement among all students, with a special focus on those students who are farthest behind.
4. Group proportional equality—Equally represent all races in academic achievements and failures; race and ethnicity should not predict an individual’s academic achievement.
5. Judge schools on how much students learn rather than solely on how much students know. When schools are assessed in this way, many of the poor inner-city schools show significant levels of growth during a particular interval of time.
6. Increase aptitude in academically struggling schools in English language arts by having all teachers (including sports coaches) focus on teaching reading. Teachers should receive professional development training to accomplish this during monthly faculty meetings.
7. Stop focusing on the achievement gap in the school district alone and instead focus on the gap between each group in the district and the statewide average for White students. If students already are excelling beyond the statewide average for Whites, then another, higher measure should be considered as a benchmark for achievement. This strategy could be effective in getting White parents to become invested in the push for creating equity in academic achievement.
8. Have books at home in order to strengthen the home intellectual climate.
9. Find ways to increase the implementation at the classroom level of five principles (the Five Cs) that encompass what high teacher quality entails. The Five Cs are:
   • Care: in ways that build committed relationships with students
   • Control: any tendencies toward out-of-order or off-task student behavior
   • Clarify: key concepts and ideas that might confuse students
   • Challenge: students to persist and think rigorously
   • Captivate: students to hold their attention and stimulate interest
10. Establish regional teacher training centers where school leaders and district personnel are required by policy to be engaged, and where teachers are taught best-practice teaching methods.
11. Change the style of research on schools to focus on effective practices rather than just general headings and principles.

Some Reasons to Be Hopeful about Closing the Achievement Gap

The IQ gap between Blacks and Whites shrank by 25 percent between 1972 and 2002. Sixty-three percent of the Black/White reading score gap for 17-year-olds that existed in 1971, which some people believed to be genetic, was gone before 1988.

Reference

The Bankruptcy of Achievement Gap Policy and What to Do About It

Gary Orfield
Gary Orfield is a professor of education, law, political science, and urban planning at the University of California, Los Angeles. Orfield is interested in the study of civil rights, education policy, urban policy, and minority opportunity. He was cofounder and director of the Harvard Civil Rights Project and now is codirector of the UCLA Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles.

Orfield’s central interest has been the development and implementation of social policy, with a central focus on the impact of policy on equal opportunity for success in American society. Recent books include Twenty-first Century Color Lines: Multiracial Change in Contemporary America, Lessons in Integration: Realizing the Promise of Racial Diversity in America’s Public Schools, Dropouts in America: Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis, School Resegregation: Must the South Turn Back?, and Higher Education and the Color Line.

In addition to his scholarly work, Orfield has been involved in the development of governmental policy and has served as an expert witness in several dozen court cases related to his research. He was awarded the American Political Science Association’s Charles Merriam Award and the 2007 American Educational Research Association’s Social Justice in Education Award.

Presenter: Gary Orfield, Professor of Education, Law, Political Science, and Urban Planning, University of California, Los Angeles
Moderator: Mark Roosevelt, Outgoing Superintendent, Pittsburgh Public Schools

Schools alone do not possess the transformative power to solve the achievement gap on their own. The achievement gap closed substantially when school reforms were accompanied by the War on Poverty and desegregation strategies to create access to better schools, teachers, and peer groups for Black and Latino students. Because reforms have been limited to within-school pressure on tests and standards, there has been no significant progress. There needs to be a major improvement in U.S. education policy and an increase in school safety net programs (such as the approach in the Harlem Children’s Zone) for schools to take positive steps toward education equity. A large part of the disparity in education among Black and Latino students is the result of extrinsic circumstances, such as concentrated poverty, racial separation, and housing issues.

The United States has been operating on outdated policies regarding education that have not produced improvement in graduation rates in almost 30 years. Poor academic achievement of Black and Latino students cannot be blamed solely on teachers and schools, because schools cannot effectively resolve the numerous issues that children living in poverty may present, including health concerns and excessive mobility related to housing problems.
Academic achievement cannot be assessed exclusively on test scores. Achievement measured only on test scores fosters a learning environment in which subjects who are not tested often are ignored and the curriculum is radically limited in impoverished schools. There should be an increased focus on graduation rates as opposed to test scores. Students earning the credential of a high school diploma and beyond are a more important measure of academic achievement than just standardized test scores. There should be a richer understanding of the social and political climates that create these gaps in achievement as well as the policies that promote personal and human development in students at all levels. In order for school achievement to improve, there needs to be a greater focus on creating mentoring programs and positive social networking programs for students in communities that lack connections to social capital. We need to disregard the false pretense that schools completely on their own have the power to create great change in poor academic achievement. This belief tends to produce counterproductive pressures on teachers in the most troubled communities and drives them to leave these schools even more rapidly.

The Problem

The United States is on the wrong path when it comes to educational equity. It is hard to run a multiracial country that has the most unequal distribution of income of any advanced country. The United States is the only advanced country in the world that has not made improvements to high school graduation rates since the 1970s. Poor and disadvantaged children usually attend schools with high concentrations of poverty, racial separation, and immigrant and non-English-speaking populations.

The achievement gap exists not only between Blacks and Whites; the Latino-White gap and the gap between Asians and everyone else are tremendous. A vast difference in college completion exists between Whites and Latinos as well as between Asians and everyone else. We are approaching the multiracial setting where Whites and Asians will be the dominant population in terms of educational achievement, despite being racial minorities. The United States made progress in increasing graduation rates for 75 years until the 1970s, but currently we are making no improvements in educational achievement at the secondary school level.

We also are not developing a teaching force that reflects the changing population of our schools. White teachers systematically leave disadvantaged and impoverished schools. Existing policies provide big incentives for teachers and administrators to leave the schools where they are needed most, because we systematically sanction schools, mark them as failures, “charterize” them, and threaten to dissolve them under the Race to the Top initiatives.

Causes

- Segregation in schools
  - Races have become increasingly isolated in schools across the country. Intensely segregated minority schools, where no more than 10 percent of the school population is White, are composed of 41 percent Black and 38 percent Latino students.
  - The average Black student attends schools that are 29 percent White.
  - The average Latino student attends schools that are 27 percent White.
  - The average California Latino student was in a school that was 54 percent White in 1970. Currently, Latino students attend schools that are 85 percent non-White.
  - A typical Latino student attends schools where 59 percent of the students live in poverty. One of the biggest programs eliminated from President Ronald Reagan’s first budget in the 1980s was the Desegregation Assistance Centers Program, which provided assistance to help schools desegregate. Ninety-six percent of teachers feel that a program like this would be a good idea.
  - The year with the lowest level of the achievement gap, 1988, also was the year of highest integration. Segregation has gotten worse each year since then. We have lost all the progress made in school desegregation since 1967.

- Currently, 72 percent of Black and 53 percent of Latino children are being born into single-parent households.

- Subjects who are not tested are simply ignored, because schools are being evaluated solely on test scores. Education has been reduced to kids learning only what is necessary to pass statewide tests.

- The United States has gone through seven or eight presidential terms with an education policy that has failed to close the achievement gap, particularly at secondary school levels.

- Implementing school reform initiatives without addressing the issue of poverty and race in schools will not be effective in closing the achievement gap. The roots of the problem with the achievement gap are the enormous amounts of concentrated inequality and segregation in American society and the false pretense that schools alone have the transformative power to create great change.

- Nothing in the Reagan administration’s A Nation at Risk report focused on improving graduation rates. This report continues to be the model for school improvement in the United States, which is one of the reasons there has been no progress in high school graduation rates in almost 30 years.
• The easiest way for schools to improve their test scores is to get rid of students with low average test scores. Dropout accountability was written into No Child Left Behind, but it was “interpreted away” by the George W. Bush administration by not being enforced.

• Families, communities, and peer groups are more important than schools when it comes to the achievement gap.

• The weakest teacher training is in schools that are the most disadvantaged.

• There is systematic inequality in the advanced courses offered between schools of different races that relates to student readiness for these courses, availability of faculty, and scheduling (e.g., lack of Advanced Placement courses available to schools in poor communities).

• Housing issues
  - Poor children in rental housing move frequently, sometimes several times within the school year.
  - We are spending four times as much money to subsidize homeowners through the tax system as we do for housing poor people.
  - We have the least amount of adequate housing for poor people in comparison with any other advanced country, a main cause for so much instability in student enrollment at the schools with the poorest populations.
  - Many families in the poorest communities are paying more than half of their income for truly inadequate housing.
  - There are high schools in Los Angeles, Calif., where the absolute majority of the students are in foster care.
  - Billions of dollars are being spent to build housing in areas where the schools are failing miserably. No civil right policies are being implemented to use that money in places where the schools are actually viable.
  - Black and Latino middle-class families that move into the suburbs find themselves on the path to resegregation, because there is virtually no effort to initiate policies on housing integration in these areas. During the second Bush administration, less than 20 cases a year were filed on housing segregation in the entire country, despite an estimated 4 million violations.

• Schools with high populations of poor children typically have only one social worker per 1,000 students.

• There is virtually no evidence that charter, private, or smaller schools are more effective at closing the achievement gap.

Solutions

1. Base the achievement gap on graduation rates as well as test scores and other indicators. Focus on the progress students achieve.

2. Recognize that the student’s education has to go beyond the math and reading test.

3. Develop a richer understanding of the social and political climates that create these gaps in achievement.

4. Recognize that in countries that outperform us in reading and math, teachers usually have unions and tenure.

5. Establish labor policies that produce less inequality.

6. Establish higher standards for teacher training institutions (e.g., teachers need to be trained through teachers’ colleges, not through alternative teaching methods).

7. Reduce subsidies for the affluent and increase subsidies for the disadvantaged and working class.

8. Create housing subsidies that do not concentrate children in communities with poorly performing schools.

9. Create ways to increase parent education.

10. Create policies that implement personal and human development.

11. Create regional magnet schools in our metropolitan areas.

12. Find ways to create mentoring and positive social network programs for students in communities that may lack connections to social capital.

References


REFOCUS AND REFORM:
Changing Direction in Urban Schools
From Harlem to Homewood: Rebuilding the Village to Raise Our Children

Presenter: John M. Wallace Jr., Philip Hallen Professor of Community Health and Social Justice, School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh

Moderator: Alex Johnson, President, Community College of Allegheny County

This session focused on the major steps being taken to improve education in Homewood, one of Pittsburgh’s most distressed neighborhoods. The central strategy is to adapt the renowned school safety net program, the Harlem Children’s Zone, to Homewood.

Homewood currently fits the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s criteria for a “distressed neighborhood.” Its poverty rate exceeds 27 percent, more than 33 percent of the male population is unemployed, and the dropout rate of those aged 16–19 exceeds 23 percent. Multiple quality gaps in regard to teachers and school facilities are some of the causes for Homewood’s disparity in education.

To solve this problem in Homewood and communities like it, there needs to be a significant investment in getting those children to—and through—college by initiating programs that increase social support for children; increase interaction between schools and the community; and build a community among residents, institutions, and stakeholders.

John M. Wallace Jr.
John M. Wallace Jr. is the Philip Hallen Professor of Community Health and Social Justice at the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work. He earned his PhD and master’s degree in sociology at the University of Michigan and his BA in sociology at the University of Chicago.

Wallace is the principal investigator of the University of Pittsburgh Center on Race and Social Problems’ Comm-Univer-City of Pittsburgh project, an integrated program of research, teaching, and service designed to investigate and ameliorate social problems that disproportionately impact economically disadvantaged children, families, and communities. He also is a coinvestigator on Monitoring the Future, the National Institute on Drug Abuse’s ongoing national study of drug use among American young people.

His recent research examines comprehensive community revitalization initiatives; racial and ethnic disparities in social and economic well-being; the impact of crime on clergy and congregations; and adolescent problem behaviors, including violence and substance abuse. His work has appeared in numerous professional journals, books, and monographs. Wallace also pastors a church in Pittsburgh’s Homewood-Brushton neighborhood.

Alex Johnson
Alex Johnson, president of the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC), previously served as chancellor of Delgado Community College in New Orleans, La. He also was president of the metropolitan campus of Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland, Ohio.

At CCAC, Johnson is concentrating on seven key initiatives, including emphasizing the importance of the college’s 10 campuses and centers as part of a one-college whole, focusing on a learning-centered environment, and leading the effort to address the region’s workforce and economic development needs. He also is continuing to strengthen CCAC’s commitment to diversity, expanding recognition of the college’s regional impact and rank as a college of first choice, and focusing on building and updating facilities needed for innovative learning. Finally, Johnson is working to ensure that effective and efficient budget management processes are in place while expanding existing revenue streams and pursuing new ones.

Johnson holds a doctorate from Pennsylvania State University, a master’s degree from Lehman College, and a bachelor’s degree from Winston-Salem State University. He has honorary degrees from the Community College of Philadelphia and Our Lady of Holy Cross College. He completed the Executive Leadership Institute of the League for Innovation in the Community College and the Management Development Program at Harvard University.
The Problem
Homewood currently meets the qualifications of a distressed neighborhood.

- Poverty exceeds 27 percent.
- Female-headed households exceed 73 percent.
- High dropout rates exist among those between the ages of 16 and 19 (exceeding 23 percent).
- More than one-third of the male population is unemployed.
- Of the 3,300 children who live in Homewood, more than 1,200 receive some type of social services.
- Seventy-two percent of the children living in Homewood and 95 percent of children attending public schools in Homewood are in single-parent households.
- More than 88 percent of the children are on free or reduced lunches.

The school situation in Homewood is troubling.

- Less than 60 percent of students at Westinghouse High School graduate in a four-year period.
- Only one-quarter of the students at Westinghouse are proficient in reading.
- Only 13 percent of the students at Westinghouse are numerate.
- Only 25 percent of the students at Westinghouse are Pittsburgh Promise ready. The Pittsburgh Promise is a college scholarship for graduates of Pittsburgh Public Schools who have lived in the city of Pittsburgh, have at least a 2.5 GPA, and have demonstrated 90 percent attendance in high school.

Out of 4,364 taxable properties in Homewood, there are:

- 2,200 vacant buildings
- 2,492 tax-delinquent buildings
- More than 8 million square feet of property
- More than $5 million in delinquent taxes

The More You Learn, The More You Earn
Education increases earnings over a lifetime. The average lifetime earnings of a White male who drops out of school is only $627,000, which is about the same as a Black male who graduates from high school. Hourly wages increase more quickly for African American males with more education than they do for White males. More than 70 percent of African American students entering college are female.

The total public health cost of an African American male who drops out of school is $82,000 and for an African American female is $107,000. The total lifetime public savings in getting an African American male through high school is $269,000.

Causes
- Nationally, urban education is becoming increasingly diverse:
  - Sixteen percent of the youth population in schools is African American.
  - Twenty-two percent of the youth population in schools is Latino.
  - Fifty-five percent of the youth population in schools is White.
- There are multiple achievement gaps in:
  - Test scores
  - Graduation rates
  - School discipline
  - Dropout rates
  - College attendance
- There are quality gaps for schools in poorer communities in:
  - Teacher quality
  - School facility quality
  - Quality and safety of the environment surrounding the schools
- Only 5 percent of White students are in schools where 70–100 percent of the students are on free or reduced-price lunches (which is used as a measure of poverty). That number of White students decreases to 1 percent at the secondary school level. More than 50 percent of Black and Latino children are in schools where 70–100 percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunches.

Solutions
1. Invest in getting African American males to—and through—college.
2. Raise expectations for students who may be struggling.
3. Increase social supports for students.
4. Improve teacher quality and preparation to work in poor urban schools.
5. Extend the school day and school year to increase the amount of learning time that students receive.
6. Increase interaction between schools and the community.
7. Build ways to connect schools with community and social services.
8. Work to change the negative perception of Homewood and neighborhoods like it.
9. Build a community among residents, institutions, and stakeholders.
10. Rigorously and regularly evaluate teachers and students.
11. Create a culture of success and education excellence within the community.
12. Hold adults accountable for outcomes.

Reference
High School Quality and Race Differences in Postsecondary Achievement

**Presenter:** Marta Tienda, Maurice P. During Professor in Demographic Studies, Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs, Princeton University

**Moderator:** Alex Johnson, President, Community College of Allegheny County

Although it is a well-established fact that school integration is beneficial to students of all backgrounds, America has struggled to find efficient ways of creating racial equality in regard to admission criteria for postsecondary education since public school desegregation was instituted with the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision in 1954. Affirmative action legislation has been a common tool used to quell some of the racial disparity in admissions at colleges and universities. However, opponents of affirmative action argue that those policies allow students of color the opportunity to attend more selective universities even though they may be less qualified than their White counterparts.

Cases like *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* and *Hopwood v. Texas Law School* are examples of the backlash that has taken place against affirmative action in regard to school admissions since its establishment. Due to increasing animosity toward affirmative action, many states have attempted to create alternative “race-neutral” legislation to create equity in educational institutions. One example of this is the Texas Top 10 Percent Law (Texas House Bill 588), which guarantees that students in the top 10 percent of every high school across the state have the opportunity to be admitted to the Texas state college or university of their choosing, regardless of admission criteria and SAT scores. In the years following the introduction of Texas House Bill 588, the number of college-eligible minority students increased more than 60 percent. However, state schools like the University of Texas at Austin were unable to accommodate the increasing number of new students due to inadequate investment. This initiative was seen by many as a veiled attempt at affirmative action to curtail the effect of the *Hopwood v. Texas* decision, which prohibits the use of race or ethnicity as admission criteria in any educational institution.

In 2009, Texas established Senate Bill 175, which allows the University of Texas at Austin to limit the number of incoming students to 75 percent of the 10 percent from across the state who are guaranteed admission.

One solution for creating racial equality in educational institutions is to fuel more debate around the need for class and race-based preferences concurrently in college admissions. Preference based on these two approaches is critical because preference based solely on race could possibly be met with resistance by critics of affirmative action. In addition, class preferences alone in school admissions would broaden educational opportunities for Whites more than minorities because Blacks and Latinos typically are poorer than Whites on any given economic measure.

Another solution would be to eliminate the use of standardized test scores as part of college admissions. Because minorities typically score lower than Whites, these scores can be seen as an exclusionary tactic aimed at keeping more minorities out of selective institutions. Standardized test scores tend to predict only a student’s first-year grades and nothing more. Selective universities continue to rely heavily on standardized test scores.

**The Problem**

- A lack of diversity in colleges and universities across America
- A minority college paradox: rising levels and growing gaps
  - Completion disparities are widening, especially for Hispanics.
  - Poor youth are less likely to enroll in and complete college.
  - The mismatch hypothesis is unfounded—minorities actually are more likely to graduate from selective than nonselective institutions (Bowen and Bok, 1998; Kane, 1998; Alon and Tienda, 2005).

**Marta Tienda**

Marta Tienda is Maurice P. During Professor in Demographic Studies and professor of sociology and public affairs at Princeton University, where she directed the Office of Population Research. She has held appointments at the University of Chicago and the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

She is a past president of the Population Association of America and is a board member of TIAA-CREF, the Sloan Foundation, the Jacobs Foundation of Switzerland, and the Corporation of Brown University. Previously, she served on the boards of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Russell Sage Foundation, and Kaiser Family Foundation. She has published widely about social and economic inequality, including several books about the U.S. Hispanic population.
• The extent of the lack of diversity and the significance of having integrated schools has been evident by the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and others that followed. In the *Brown v. Board* decision, the racial segregation of schools was declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. The legislation that has occurred since then has shown that it has been a constant struggle to find acceptable methods to integrate schools.

**Causes**

- The lack of diversity in colleges and universities across America is in part driven by the overwhelming focus on standardized test scores for admissions.
  - Selective colleges and universities rely heavily on standardized test scores as part of their admission criteria.
  - Standardized test scores tend to predict only student grades at the freshman level. Accordingly, they are not good indicators of college completion.
  - High school grades are a better predictor of college admission, grades, and graduation as well as of the work one does after college, yet their importance among admissions criteria is minimized.
  - The increasing importance placed on these scores has been fueled by college and university rankings, such as the *U.S. News & World Report* annual ranking of top schools. Schools receive their ranking based on the test scores of the students they admit.
  - The result of the strong emphasis on test scores is that minorities are disproportionately excluded from colleges and universities, given that Black and Latino students in particular traditionally score lower than Whites on standardized tests.

- The lack of diversity in colleges and universities has not effectively been addressed by alternatives to admissions practices that take race into account, such as the following:
  - Ignore race and class—Grades and test scores are class-neutral measures of merit. Grades can be considered a class-neutral measure of merit because even the worst schools have students who perform at the head of their class. However, the top performers at the worst schools may not test well on standardized tests compared to students at better schools.
  - Class preferences of any race—This broadens educational opportunity, but more so for Whites than minorities. Because minorities are poorer than Whites on any given stratum, a class-based method of measuring merit would still benefit Whites at each socioeconomic level.
  - Percent plans—By establishing a measure of merit and applying it uniformly across all schools, this method would recognize merit in all schools, regardless of whether the school performs poorly or above average. This method is supposedly race neutral; however, it assumes that the social distribution of schools is race neutral.

- Selective colleges and universities have neglected to increase their capacities despite a growing number of students who want to attend these educational institutions.

- In the case of Texas, the lack of diversity persists as efforts aimed at broadening college access by economic class, geography, and ethno-racial group have come under attack.
  - The State of Texas had implemented the Texas Top 10 Percent Law, which guaranteed admission to students in the top 10 percent of each high school, based on criteria set by the administration of the individual schools, into any public school in the state of Texas. Support for this measure is waning due to its being classified as a veiled attempt at affirmative action.
  - Colleges in Texas, including its two flagship institutions, the University of Texas at Austin and Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University (Texas A&M), lack the capacity to accommodate the increasing number of new students due to a lack of investment in higher education by the state.

- Researchers have questioned the role of high school quality in explaining the low achievement of minority students within selective schools (e.g., Vars and Bowen, 1998). The Texas Higher Education Opportunity Project sought to broaden our understanding of this issue by exploring the questions “Does high school quality explain racial and ethnic disparities in college achievement?” and “Do performance disparities in high school quality depend on institutional selectivity?” Results from the study suggest the following:
  - Class stratification within the secondary school system reproduces academic disparities in college. High school affluence does not insulate minority students from underachievement. Furthermore, association between high school quality and college achievement depends on selectivity of institution attended.
  - High school influences on achievement carry through to the college career. There is an erosion of first-semester minority performance advantage, mainly because Whites improve more than minorities. Averages rise for all. There are no graduation disparities among poor school students (lower levels with less dispersion).
Solutions

1. The ongoing debate about class- versus race-based preferences suggests the need for both approaches, because minorities at any school might be less advantaged.

2. School effects need further specification:
   - “Average” schools’ evaluation tends to be very heterogeneous
   - In-depth evaluation of within-strata school characteristics
   - Examination of school size, teacher traits, etc.

References


This report summarizes information provided by those speakers who focused on race and economics in their presentations as well as responses to audience questions and comments. The value of this report is that it provides access to the extensive and detailed information disseminated at the conference. This information will be particularly helpful to community and policy leaders interested in gaining a better understanding of racial disparities in economics and finding effective strategies for improving these conditions.

Disclaimer:
This postconference Race in America report includes detailed summaries of the presentations and subsequent discussions that took place. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work or Center on Race and Social Problems.
Family wealth, including home equity, explains many of the disparities along racial lines that exist in the United States today. Currently, Whites have $10 for every $1 Blacks have in net worth. It also is more difficult for Blacks to amass family wealth and/or acquire additional income.

Slavery has been a major contributor to the current state of family wealth disparity in the United States. In addition, throughout much of the past three centuries of U.S. history, there have been practices and policies at state and federal levels that have caused and perpetuated intergenerational economic inequality between Blacks and Whites. Actions such as the failed promise of “40 acres and a mule” and the Black Codes and Jim Crow laws are key contributors to the current state of economic inequality. More recent actions that have contributed to wealth disparities are the redlining of neighborhoods by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation and the racially restrictive housing covenants that kept certain neighborhoods all White.

In terms of solutions, there should be an increase in federal initiatives to help eliminate some of the wealth disparity for...
generations to come. Asset-building initiatives could include the American Savings for Personal Investment, Retirement, and Education (ASPIRE) Act, individual development accounts, and covenant savings plans. These initiatives would begin to close the wealth gap between Whites and Blacks and establish a pathway for intergenerational wealth among all races in the United States.

The Problem

Even in this post-civil rights era, inequality between Blacks and Whites persists:

- Fourteen percent of Blacks have a bachelor’s degree, compared to 28 percent of Whites.
- The Black-White unemployment ratio is 2:1. This is even greater if you look at youths.
- Sixteen percent of Blacks are in professional/managerial occupations compared to 31 percent of Whites.
- The Black-White net worth ratio is 1:10.

While pundits on the left and right have offered many explanations for disparities by race, most of these arguments have left out an important factor: family wealth. Family wealth is a measure of class, and when wealth is not taken into account, the results are:

- Blacks are much more likely than Whites to finish high school.
- Blacks are more likely than Whites to complete a bachelor’s degree.
- Blacks are less likely than Whites to use welfare.

In addition, Black wealth mobility and stability are precarious. In terms of intergenerational wealth mobility:

- 43 percent of Blacks and only 35 percent of Whites who grew up in families in the bottom quarter for wealth remained stuck at the bottom as adults.
- 68 percent of Black adults and only 44 percent of White adults in the bottom quarter for wealth stayed there for 20 years.

In terms of the stability of wealth:

- Only 25 percent of Black adults and 60 percent of White adults in the top quartile for wealth were able to maintain this position for 20 years.

“It’s not that race doesn’t matter. … It’s just that race works through family wealth levels, creating an intergenerational cycle of inequality,” according to Dr. Conley.

Causes

The past three centuries have witnessed many of the actions and conditions that created the large disparities in family wealth that exist today between Blacks and Whites. The following occurred during the 19th century:

- Slavery: Slavery was a form of forced labor of Blacks that took place in America from 1619 until it was abolished in 1865 by the 13th Amendment. During that time, more than 600,000 slaves were shipped to North America; the slave population in the United States had grown to 4 million, according to the 1860 U.S. Census. For centuries, these individuals were unable to own property or acquire wealth.
- Failed Promise of “40 Acres and a Mule”: President Andrew Johnson revoked Special Field Order No. 15 given by General William Tecumseh Sherman that declared newly freed Blacks be given 40 acres and a mule. Four hundred thousand acres in Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida were to be divided among freemen and families.
- Lynching: Lynching was a form of extrajudicial punishment—derived from the name Charles Lynch (1736–96), a justice of the peace in Bedford County, Va.—in which a mob executes an alleged offender without trial, often after inflicting torture and physical injury.
- Black Codes and Jim Crow Laws: Laws enacted in former Confederate states after the American Civil War were designed to replace the social controls of slavery removed by the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. The purpose of the Black Codes was to restrict the labor, movements, and activities of newly freed slaves.
- Homestead Act of 1862: The Homestead Act of 1862 was not enforceable for Blacks. It had promised Blacks freehold title to 160–640 acres of undeveloped land outside the original 13 colonies. Southern White farmers feared that the act would pose a serious threat to plantation slavery.
- Southern Homestead Act of 1866: Some 47 million acres of land were opened in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi to homesteading by Blacks and by Whites who did not take up arms against the United States during the Civil War. Johnson pardoned many former Confederates in 1865 and gave much of the land distributed by the Southern Homestead Act and Sherman’s Special Order No. 15 back to its original owners. Most of the remaining land available for homesteading was of poor quality. Former slaves usually lacked the resources or funds to purchase items needed for farming. The Southern Homestead Act eventually was repealed in 1876 because it was said to be unnecessary due the Homestead Act of 1862.
In addition, the following actions in the 20th century contributed to wealth disparities:

- Redlining by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC): Redlining was a policy that used racial criteria to determine lending and insurance risk in cities across the nation. HOLC created color-coded maps of cities, which established four categories of neighborhood quality to identify risk. The lowest category of neighborhood quality was reserved for African American neighborhoods and was color-coded red. Banks and insurance agencies soon accepted these maps and used them to direct their lending and underwriting determinations. The Fair Housing Act of 1968, Home Mortgage Disclosure Act of 1975, and Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 all were laws created to curtail the detrimental effects of redlining.

- Racially Restrictive Covenants: Covenants were used to protect property values and provide neighborhood stability. Racially exclusive covenants promised that only members of a certain race would occupy a property. In the case of Shelley v. Kraemer (1948), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racially restrictive covenants are unconstitutional.

- Social Security exclusion of agricultural and domestic workers

- Federal Housing Administration loans disproportionately allocated to Whites

Finally, the following 21st-century conditions contributed to wealth disparities:

- Lower wages for Black workers

- Higher mortgage interest rates for Black homeowners

- Steering and other discrimination against buyers in housing

- Credit discrimination (see The Color of Credit: Mortgage Discrimination, Research Methodology, and Fair-lending Enforcement by Stephen L. Ross and John Yinger)

- Whites acquiring 50 percent of their wealth from inheritance

- Residential segregation and its effect on housing values

- Gentrification, which can transfer wealth from Blacks to Whites

### Solutions

Moving toward a true ownership society would help to narrow the economic gap between Blacks and Whites. This is based on the notion that any policy that targets asset poverty will inevitably be one that aids the cause of racial equality—even if it is officially color-blind. In light of this, the following wealth-building policies were proposed:

1. Institute the America Saving for Personal Investment, Retirement, and Education (ASPIRE) Act, which would set up a Lifetime Savings Account (LSA) with a onetime, $500 contribution at birth for every child in America. The LSA later can be used to pursue postsecondary education, buy a first home, or build up a nest egg for retirement.

2. Expand individual development accounts (IDAs), which can become the new affirmative action in the wake of challenges to race-conscious policies. IDAs are special savings accounts designed to assist low-income people on their path toward asset ownership through matched savings and financial education.

3. Change the credit risk formula to favor minorities.

4. Underwrite mortgages, for example, through the Self-Help program in North Carolina, funded by the Ford Foundation. The Self-Help initiative is a secondary market program that creates and protects ownership and economic opportunity for low-wealth families and communities by providing lenders with liquidity to lend to low- and moderate-income borrowers.

5. Give residents of public housing an equity stake (e.g., sell public housing units for $1 to residents as in the United Kingdom).

6. Use a sovereign wealth fund, a collection of money derived from a country’s reserves that can be invested to benefit the country’s economy and citizens.

7. Offer integration insurance to White homeowners to prevent White flight and safeguard them from losing home equity in the event that minorities move into their neighborhoods.

8. Encourage covenant savings plans (e.g., premium bonds in South Africa and the United Kingdom and the credit union lottery in Detroit, Mich.) that put money into savings.

9. Provide payday loans at low rates; for example, a Chicago credit union offered payday loans at low rates and is driving private lenders out of business (www.northside-communityfcu.org/other_loan_products_servic.html).
The Great Recession: Wealth Loss, Communities of Color, and a Widening Wealth Gap

Presenter: Thomas Shapiro, Pokross Professor of Law and Social Policy, Brandeis University

Moderator: James C. Roddey, Principal, McCrory & McDowell LLC

In the last 25 years, the wealth gap (not counting home equity) between Blacks and Whites has increased at an astounding rate. Wealth has actually decreased among the highest-earning Blacks, and more than a quarter of the Black population has absolutely no assets whatsoever. In addition, $948 billion (59 percent) of the $1.6 trillion in wealth loss for low- and middle-income individuals during the Great Recession was lost by African Americans.

Some reasons for the increase in the wealth gap between Blacks and Whites were public investment in wealth building by way of tax codes, tax write-offs on mortgages, and the nontaxability of money allocated for pensions.

Changes that can be made to close the widening economic gap between Blacks and Whites include encouraging banks to meet the credit needs of the people in the communities they serve and encouraging the establishment of programs that lead to self-sufficiency through human capital development and increased employment opportunities.

The Problem

The Black-White racial wealth gap in the United States went from $20,000 in 1984 to $95,000 in 2007—a four-fold increase. This gap persists even when income is controlled:

- Among high-earning Whites, wealth holdings went from $68,000 in 1984 to $238,000 in 2007.
- Among high-earning Blacks, the holdings went from $25,000 to $18,000.
- The data do not provide an explanation for the drop in Black wealth.
- Among the poorest 10 percent of the population, no changes in wealth holdings occurred for Whites. However, Blacks’ misery intensified. Their wealth decreased from minus $2,000 to minus $3,600. In fact, 25 percent of Blacks had no assets at all.

Wealth holdings are impacted during economically depressed times. For example, aggregate wealth loss for low- and middle-income individuals was $1.6 trillion during the Great Recession. African Americans lost $948 billion of that sum. This includes loss of property and equity.

Causes

Public investment in wealth building is an important contributor to the wealth gap in the United States.

- Public investment in the form of tax codes creates incentives for individuals and families to grow their wealth.
- The investment budget of the government is $369 billion in tax codes.
- The largest-ticket item in this is the tax write-off for home mortgages. The second-largest item is the nontaxability of money that is set aside for pensions. The third largest is the exclusion of capital gains. Collectively, these policies can be called public investment in individual wealth building.
The racial distribution of this public investment, however, is uneven. Blacks get 3.5 percent, which mostly goes to the highest-earning Blacks. Redistribution could provide some $34 billion more for Blacks.

Solutions

Strategies that could be undertaken to close the Black-White wealth gap are the following:

1. Strengthen community strategies: The purpose of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) is to encourage banks and savings institutions to help meet the credit needs of borrowers in the communities in which they operate (particularly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods). CRA is a progressive tool because it allows communities to have a voice. However, it needs to be brought into the 21st century in a way that captures all types of institutions, including mortgage brokers.

2. Expand baby bonds: Baby bonds are issued in an amount less than $1,000. In Great Britain, as a way to encourage saving, the government now provides parents with a voucher or bond to use in starting a savings account for each new baby.

3. Use stimulus spending as affirmative action, such as by promoting minority business participation in procurement contracts.

4. Create a portfolio shift in public investment: Specifically, there needs to be a massive public investment that targets people who have not been reached previously. For example, allow renters to write off portions of their rent. This is not an outlandish move but one that will allow individuals to build wealth.

5. Expand individual development accounts (IDAs): IDAs are savings accounts that are matched by private funds and the public sector. Use is limited to such things as buying a home, starting a business, getting an education, and training for a job.

6. Implement Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS): FSS is a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development program that encourages communities to develop local strategies to help voucher families obtain employment that will lead to financial self-sufficiency. FSS is for families in public housing or Section 8. Any extra earnings do not lessen the government subsidy but instead go into an account that the individual can access upon completion of the program.

7. Reengineer Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac: There is a need to reengineer these two bodies. They serve an important purpose, especially as their mission includes residential integration.

8. Tighten fair lending laws and enforce fair housing laws.

9. Reestablish usury laws to protect individuals from extreme interest rates charged by unscrupulous lenders, such as those for payday loans.
HELP WANTED: Creating Equal Opportunities for Minorities
Recent Employment Trends among African American Men and Their Policy Implications

Presenter: Harry J. Holzer, Professor of Public Policy, Georgetown University
Moderator: Aradhna Dhanda, President and CEO, Leadership Pittsburgh Inc.

African American males have one of the lowest rates of postsecondary educational attainment and the highest rate of incarceration of any group in the United States. This reality translates into Black males’ having the lowest labor force participation in the nation. While Black and Hispanic women have joined the labor market in increased numbers since the 1990s, Black males continue to have a 25–30 percent gap in labor market participation compared to White men.

White male youths are more than two times as likely as Black male youths to have a bachelor’s degree, and Black male youths are twice as likely as White male youths to have ever been incarcerated. These astonishing problems among Black males are caused by a number of factors. One factor may be discrimination against Black males in the labor market. Another cause may be the decrease in available employment for low-skilled individuals that dates back to the 1970s. Black

Harry Holzer

Harry Holzer joined the Georgetown University Public Policy Institute as a professor of public policy in fall 2000. He served as associate dean from 2004 to 2006 and was acting dean in fall 2006. He currently is an institute fellow at the Urban Institute, a senior affiliate of the National Poverty Center at the University of Michigan, a national fellow of the Program on Inequality and Social Policy at Harvard University, a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, and a research affiliate of the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin—Madison.

Prior to coming to Georgetown, Holzer served as chief economist for the U.S. Department of Labor and professor of economics at Michigan State University. He also has been a visiting scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation and a faculty research fellow of the National Bureau of Economic Research.

For most of his career, Holzer’s research has focused primarily on the low-wage labor market and particularly on the problems of minority workers in urban areas. In recent years, he has worked on the quality of jobs and workers in the labor market and how job quality affects the employment prospects of the disadvantaged as well as worker inequality and insecurity more broadly.

Aradhna Dhanda

Aradhna Dhanda is the president and CEO of Leadership Pittsburgh Inc. (LPI), a premier resource for leadership development in Southwestern Pennsylvania. LPI seeks to strengthen regional leadership by connecting current and emerging leaders with the people and issues shaping our community’s future. During its 25-year history, LPI has produced more than 1,500 informed and engaged leaders and linked them with opportunities to help serve the region.

Prior to joining LPI in December 2004, Dhanda served as the program officer of the Forbes Funds, a supporting organization of the Pittsburgh Foundation. There, she led the grant-making and sector leadership activities of the funds with a focus on enhancing the management capacity of human service and community development organizations. Dhanda was the executive director of the Children’s Festival Chorus (CFC) of Pittsburgh from 2000 to 2003. Known as the children’s chorus of choice for Pittsburgh Opera and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, CFC draws the best choral talent from more than 80 area schools and maintains its own concert schedule.

Before moving to Pittsburgh in 1999, Dhanda led an arts organization in Princeton, N.J., and taught as an adjunct professor of management and psychology at both Rider University and the College of New Jersey.
men may further marginalize themselves from mainstream values and institutions, such as schooling and marriage, by engagement in criminal activity and decreased employment.

One way to create a positive change in labor market participation among Black males is to increase programs that establish linkages between high school-aged youth and postsecondary education. Examples of these are Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), a college readiness program, and the Federal TRIO Programs, which help low-income students move from middle school up the ranks through college. In addition, there should be an increase in assistance for ex-offenders and noncustodial parents, including developing transitional jobs, providing better reentry and fatherhood programs, and managing child support arrears more effectively.

### The Problem

Employment and labor force participation among less-educated Black men—those in the bottom half of education levels with no postsecondary education—is worsening steadily. This is the case in both absolute and relative numbers. Black men are falling behind other demographic groups in academic achievement and marriage rates and are exceeding all others in rates of incarceration.

The story is different for less-educated Black and Hispanic women ages 16–24, who experienced a 10–15 percent increase in labor market participation in the 1990s. This could be attributed to a strong economy, welfare reform, increased child care, and expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). EITC is a refundable tax credit for low-income workers and families to reduce the burden of payroll taxes and supplement the wages of low-income workers, particularly those with children. EITC gives a 40 percent wage subsidy to workers with two or more children.

For Black men, there was a downward trend in labor market participation, with the trend line always below that of other groups. Further, there is a 25–30 percent gap in participation rate between Black men and White men. These figures would be even more daunting if the incarcerated population were taken into account.

Data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth provide information on some factors that impact labor market outcomes. The youths were ages 12–16 in the initial survey in 1997 and were in their early 20s at the time of the follow-up survey. The following data show that Black male youths, relative to others, are more at risk for having poor outcomes in the labor market.

### Causes

One major economic reason for the poor labor market outcomes of young Black men has to do with labor demand shifts and labor supply responses. Individuals with lower educational levels, many of whom are Black men, see less demand in the market for their labor. As the demand for their labor shifts downward, many underprepared workers (labor supply) withdraw from the market.

Among the demand-side factors are the following:

- Employment skills demand: Employers are looking for higher-level skills.
- Discrimination: Several audit studies have shown that Black men receive fewer offers in the labor market.
- Urban segregation or spatial mismatch: Larger numbers of Black males may live in one place, such as the inner city, while available jobs are elsewhere, often in the suburbs. Such a reality limits the jobs available to individuals who may not own or have access to a reliable form of transportation.

Labor supply responses that help to explain the Black man’s plight include the following:

- Lower labor force participation in response to deteriorating options for success
- Declining attachment to mainstream institutions and behaviors: schooling, legal activity, marriage
- Increasing criminal activity as the legal labor market deteriorates

There were other causes for the underperformance of Black men, particularly in the 1990s. Despite the booming economy that appeared to benefit women, Black men were left behind. Two explanations were offered:

- Ex-offender status: One-third of Black men had spent some time being incarcerated. For those without

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<th>White Male Youths</th>
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a high school education, the rate was roughly 65 percent. Employers either were not allowed to hire ex-offenders by law (in certain fields) or just did not want to employ them.

- Child support arrears drove low wage earners out of the job market. (If one is in arrears, up to 50 percent of his earnings can go to the state to pay for family welfare costs—money that does not go to the family.)

Solutions

Policy solutions to improve the employment outcomes of young Black men might include the following:

1. Improve education and early links to the labor market, thereby avoiding disconnection. This could be accomplished through:
   - Youth development programs for adolescents, e.g., Big Brothers Big Sisters
   - Multiple pathways in high school to higher education and/or the labor market
   - High-quality career and technical education through career academies, technical preparation, and apprenticeships
   - Better preparation for postsecondary education through:
     - Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), a college readiness system designed to increase enrollment in four-year colleges in the United States, and
     - Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO), eight federal outreach and student services programs that help low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities progress from middle school through postsecondary and postbaccalaureate education

2. Improve incentives for individuals to take available jobs:
   - Extend EITC, which worked for Black females, to childless adults and/or noncustodial fathers

3. Incarcerate fewer young men and address the barriers and disincentives for ex-offenders and noncustodial fathers through:
   - Transitional jobs and other reentry services (an MDRC evaluation showed paid work and skill building for nine months reduced recidivism)
   - Fatherhood programs
   - Arrears management and forgiveness
   - Pass-through of child support payments to families

During this economic downturn, it is a good idea for young Black men to stay in school. Most of all, it is important to recognize that skills matter enormously for labor market success in the United States.
Housing and Opportunity in the Wake of the Subprime Lending Crisis

**Presenter:** John A. Powell, Professor and Executive Director, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, The Ohio State University

**Moderator:** Aradhna Dhanda, President and CEO, Leadership Pittsburgh Inc.

The decreased number of Black males in the labor market is due to a lack of demand for them, rather than just a lack of skills and ability on their part. The lack of desire for Black males in the labor force is something that often reflects subconscious racism.

One of the reasons for economic disparity among Blacks and Whites is the ineffectiveness of major systems such as health care. When universal health care was implemented in Massachusetts in 2006, demand increased but the law provided no increase in the supply of physicians. This caused doctors to move from marginalized areas and left the poor without health care despite having health coverage.

Rather than universal programs and policies, the United States needs directed programs that address universal goals but have targeted strategies for those most in need. Also, a broader economic recovery program that tracks civil rights compliance and connects marginalized workers to growing sectors of the economy (such as green-collar jobs) would be helpful in increasing the demand for workers from those communities that disproportionately deal with issues of unemployment.

**The Problem**

The unemployment rate among young Black men is not simply a failure of young men to look for work. Many institutions do not want them. The main problem is the lack of demand for Black workers. As Ira Young pointed out, Black men are no longer exploited (“needed but despised”); they are now marginalized (“despised and not needed”).

**Causes**

- Implicit racial bias: Central to the institutional neglect of Black males is the existence of implicit, often subconscious, racial bias in our daily lives.
- The Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 greatly weakened the power of workers: The Taft-Hartley Act (61 Stat. 136), also known as the Labor Management Relations Act of 1947, was created to amend the National Labor Relations Act (formally the Wagner Act) to make labor union practices, such as wildcat strikes and secondary boycotts, illegal.

**Solutions**

The cities of Baltimore, Md., and Portland, Ore., have developed projects that give inner-city poor the chance to move to suburban areas with high levels of opportunity (jobs, schools, transportation, housing, etc.) and low crime. In Baltimore, Whites in wealthier suburbs accepted Blacks moving into their neighborhoods, thanks in part to the project. Blacks who moved left the inner city primarily to escape crime, but they ended up liking the diversity of suburban living.

In Portland, White environmentalists were not understanding of Black demands to reduce disparities, such as in home ownership. Because of the project, both parties adopted the goal of moving everyone to within 5 percent of national home ownership rates.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) is an economic stimulus package enacted by the U.S. Congress in February 2009 with the intent of creating jobs and encouraging investment and consumer spending during the recession. As a solution:

- The stimulus package has not always helped the communities in greatest need. Further, data challenges exist, which make a thorough equity assessment of the stimulus difficult.
• The share of stimulus contracting dollars that went to businesses was 3 percent for Blacks, 4.1 percent for Latinos, 2.9 percent for Asians, and 9.3 percent for women.
• The stimulus reduced state budget deficits somewhat; however, large deficits still remain.

Universal programs do not solve racial gaps. For example, universal health care in Massachusetts increased demand for doctors but did not increase the supply, causing doctors to leave marginal areas. The poor still do not have doctors and clinics even though health insurance is provided. Instead, the following is recommended:

1. Adopt a targeted universal approach to address problems faced by racial minorities.
• Universal solutions do not work because people start at different places.
• We have universal goals but should have targeted strategies to eliminate racial disparities.
• The current administration has taken a “race-light” approach to public investment.

• Examples of targeted investment, like the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), represent a relatively small portion of an otherwise universal package. NSP was established for the purpose of stabilizing communities that have suffered from foreclosures and abandonment.
• Budget stabilization funds keep communities of color afloat, but they do not recover or develop.
• In summary, “Rising tides don’t lift all boats” equally.

2. Implement a broader equity recovery platform. Such an approach will entail:
• Greater civil rights compliance
• More targeted investment (geography, race, areas of need)
• More investment in broader community infrastructure, not just roads
• Connecting marginalized workers to the growth sectors in the “new” economy (e.g., linking green economy initiatives to worker training)

In conclusion:
• Changes in systems, structures, and institutions are needed to promote racial equality in housing and opportunity.
• America emphasizes individual action much more than collective action.
• We need people who can discuss race.

References
Presenters: Mark Rank, Herbert S. Hadley Professor of Social Welfare, Washington University in St. Louis

Moderators: M. Gayle Moss, President, NAACP Pittsburgh Chapter

Despite being one of the richest nations, America still has one of the highest poverty rates of any of the world’s developed countries. Almost 60 percent of all Americans and 90 percent of African Americans ages 20–75 will experience at least one year of poverty in their lifetimes. In addition, two-thirds of Americans ages 20–65 will rely on a social safety net program, such as food stamps, at some point in their lives.

Many Americans believe the false notion that most people experience poverty because of individual flaws, such as lack of work ethic, poor relationship choices, or lack of desire to develop the necessary human capital to be successful in the labor market. More often, it is a failure of the political and economic structures within our society that causes high rates of poverty rather than individual character flaws. The United States has failed to enact policies that curtail the downward spiral in income that many low- and middle-income families face. In the past 30 years, there has been an increase in jobs that pay low wages (less than $11 per hour). In addition, there are approximately 2.4 million jobs available in the labor market, but more than 15 million Americans are unemployed.

In order to fix the problem of high poverty in the United States, poverty has to be seen as something that negatively impacts all Americans.

(Continued on page 56)
affects all Americans. Also, we must evaluate the factors that cause poverty and educate people about those causes. Poverty often is the result of poor social policy rather than individual failings. The best way to solve the issue of poverty is for the United States to increase job opportunities for all and create a collective desire to eliminate poverty for society as a whole.

The moral ground from which this country views poverty should be one of injustice and the need for social change. Continuing the viewpoint that poverty is the result of individual failing will lead to further inactions and continued acceptance of high levels of poverty.

The Problem

America has one of the highest rates of poverty among developed nations, despite being the richest country in the world. It requires a lot more money to build prisons than it does to alleviate poverty and other problems that cause crime in the first place.

Although those on welfare often are vilified for using the service, the reality is that most Americans will encounter the need to use the welfare system at some point in their lives:

- Nearly 60 percent of all Americans ages 20 to 75 will experience at least one year of poverty or near poverty in their lifetime.
- Two-thirds of Americans between the ages of 20 and 65 will use a social safety net program at some point in their lives; 40 percent of those will use that program for an aggregate of five years over the span of their lives.
- Half of all American children between the ages of 1 and 20 will live in a household that has used food stamps for some period of time.
- Forty percent of White children will experience at least one year of food stamp use in America, compared to 90 percent of Black children.
- Fifty percent of all Americans and 90 percent of African Americans will experience at least one year of poverty between the ages of 20 and 75.

All American citizens pay a steep price for such high rates of poverty, including increased health, family, and social problems. The cost of childhood poverty in the United States is around $500 billion a year (nearly 4 percent of the nation’s gross domestic product). This estimate includes such measures as potential future productivity and health care, unemployment, and crime costs.

Causes

Poverty in America is caused by political and economic structures within our society and is not primarily the result of individual flaws. Some Americans experience periods of poverty due to unexpected issues that arise over the course of a lifetime, such as divorce, job loss, and the death of a family member.

More and more families, including middle-class families, are experiencing downward spirals in their income due to instability in the labor market and a lack of benefits like health and unemployment insurance. The safety net for many of these Americans in the recent past has been to accumulate debt on credit cards or tap into home equity in order to sustain their living standards.

Particular individual shortcomings, such as a lack of education or skills, help to explain who is likely to be left out in the competition to locate and secure good opportunities. However, it cannot explain why there is a shortage of such opportunity in the first place. In order to answer that question, we have to turn to the inability of the economic and political structures to provide the supports and the opportunities necessary to lift all Americans out of poverty.

The fundamental problem lies in the fact that there are simply not enough opportunities in America.

- Over the past 30 years, the U.S. economy has been producing more and more low-wage jobs, part-time jobs, and jobs that lack benefits.
- One-third of all U.S. jobs are considered to be low paying (less than $11 an hour).
- In April 2010, the U.S. unemployment rate stood at 9.9 percent (more than 15 million Americans). This number only includes unemployed individuals who are actively seeking employment.
- Forty-six percent of all unemployed individuals have been seeking employment for more than six months. This is the highest percentage in 60 years.
- There are only 2.4 million job vacancies in the United States, but more than 15 million people are unemployed.

The commonly held view of poverty is a fundamental cause of the problem, and this view should change from one of individual blame to one of injustice:

- The life expectancy in Harlem (N.Y.) is less than it is in Bangladesh.
- The wealth gap between Blacks and Whites has steadily increased.
- In 1940, the average CEO made 40 times more than the average wage earner. Today, it is well over 400 times more.
• The top 1 percent of the U.S. population currently owns more than 42 percent of the entire financial wealth in the United States, while the bottom 60 percent owns only 1 percent.

• One percent of White children live in counties that can be counted as “high poverty” compared to 39 percent of Hispanics and 64 percent of Blacks.

• Those exposed to a high level of poverty are much more likely to encounter a variety of environmental and social hazards, which include the following:
  - Exposure to toxic pollutants
  - Greater risk of being victims of crime
  - Increased probability of dropping out of high school
  - Higher arrest rates
  - Increased risk of substance abuse

Solutions

1. Shift the common perception of poverty from something that happens to others to an understanding that poverty is something that affects us all.

2. Recognize that major causes of poverty are weaknesses at political and economic levels rather than individual failings.

3. Shift the moral ground from which this country views poverty to one of injustice and the need for social change rather than that it is a result of individual failing, which leads to inaction and continued acceptance of high levels of poverty.

4. Convince Americans that it is in their interest to take steps to eliminate poverty in this country.

5. Increase job opportunities and social supports to American households.
From the War on Poverty to the Great Recession: Antipoverty Policies and the Future of Poverty

Presenter: Sheldon Danziger, Henry J. Meyer Distinguished University Professor of Public Policy, University of Michigan

Moderator: M. Gayle Moss, President, NAACP Pittsburgh Chapter

Blacks continue to experience poorer economic outcomes than Whites due to issues like higher rates of incarceration, lower rates of educational attainment, declining employment and wage rates (for less-educated workers of all races and ethnic groups), and changes in Black family structure. Blacks have a poverty rate that is three times that of Whites. Also, the median income of Black households is about 60 percent of that of non-Hispanic White households. Since the early 1970s, the United States has not aggressively pursued expanded antipoverty policies because many politicians and the public believe that government programs themselves are responsible for persistent poverty.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) is an excellent example of the kinds of antipoverty policies that are needed in today’s economy. The act increased food stamp benefit levels, expanded the Earned Income Tax Credit and per-child credit for families with low incomes, modernized and extended unemployment insurance benefits, and encouraged states to use emergency Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to subsidize employment of disadvantaged workers. Although many ARRA provisions have already expired, they demonstrate the kinds of policies that can effectively reduce poverty.

The Problem

Americans enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world, but for one-fifth of U.S. citizens, economic hardships are much greater than they are in other developed countries. Blacks continue to experience much poorer economic outcomes than their White counterparts. For example:

- Black poverty rates have declined over the last 60 years, but in 2009, the Black poverty rate was substantially higher than that of non-Hispanic Whites—25.8 percent and 9.4 percent, respectively.
- In 2009, the median family income for Black households was $38,409, about 57 percent of that of non-Hispanic White households ($67,341).

The Great Recession, which officially began in December 2007 and ended in June 2009, wiped out a substantial amount of many families’ housing and stock market wealth and left a legacy of economic hardship. Over the next couple of years:

- Unemployment rates are projected to remain high, staying above 6 percent through 2016.
- Real wage growth for less-educated workers is unlikely, as high school graduates today earn less in inflation-adjusted dollars than similar workers did in the early 1970s.
- States are cutting social welfare spending, such as child care and other programs that help make work pay.

The following long-term trends are likely to continue:

- High school graduates will have much lower employment rates and earnings than college graduates.
- Men will have lower educational levels than women.
- Black women will continue to work more than Black men.

Sheldon Danziger

Sheldon Danziger is the Henry J. Meyer Distinguished University Professor of Public Policy, director of the National Poverty Center, and director of the Ford Foundation Program on Poverty and Public Policy in the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan.

He is an elected fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a member of the MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood, a 2008 John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellow, and a 2010 Gollbrither Fellow of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences. He has been a visiting scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation and at the Rockefeller Foundation’s Bellagio Center. He received his bachelor’s degree from Columbia University and his PhD in economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Danziger is a coauthor of America Unequal and Detroit Divided and coeditor of numerous journal articles and edited volumes, including “Understanding Poverty”; “Working and Poor: How Economic and Public Policy Changes Are Affecting Low-wage Workers”; “The Price of Independence: The Economics of Early Adulthood”; and “Changing Poverty, Changing Policies.”
Causes

The social significance of race along with social and demographic changes in the United States have disproportionately impacted Blacks:

- Although a decline in racial discrimination has helped to reduce poverty, large disparities still remain.
- “Race-neutral” changes, such as declines in wages for less-educated workers, have had differential effects because a greater percentage of Blacks have not graduated from high school or college.
- Race-related factors also contribute to differential outcomes, e.g., mass incarceration, housing discrimination, and spatial mismatch.
- Changes in family structure have led to somewhat higher poverty rates. These changes include a decline in marriages and growth in the number of nonmarital births and parents earning low wages. However, more mothers are completing their schooling, working more hours, and having fewer children, all of which have reduced poverty. Even in light of these social changes, poverty rates remain higher than they were in the early 1970s.

Conventional wisdom related to the causes of poverty and, consequently, policy responses have changed over the past half century:

- In the decade following President Lyndon B. Johnson’s 1964 declaration of the War on Poverty, the poor were seen as victims of their circumstances who did not have equal opportunities to advance. Because lack of income was seen as the primary cause of poverty, an effective antipoverty policy was to provide income. Accordingly, there was an increase in social spending as new programs were introduced and benefit levels were increased in existing programs.
- Between the end of World War II and the early 1970s, the economy grew rapidly, “a rising tide lifted all boats,” and poverty declined rapidly.
- After the early 1970s, economic growth slowed and income inequality increased. As a result, the poverty rate did not decline. Instead of blaming the changing economy for the failure of poverty to decline, however, a new conventional wisdom took hold during the Ronald Reagan administration. It claimed that government programs themselves were responsible for persistent poverty because they discouraged work and encouraged family breakup. Accordingly, the goal of antipoverty policies shifted from providing resources to the poor to raise their incomes to demanding increased work and personal responsibility.

Solutions

The economic and policy history of the last half-century demonstrates that the gradual growth of the economy on its own will not significantly reduce the high poverty rate in the United States. Expanded antipoverty policies are needed to supplement the poverty-reducing effect of economic growth. Many components of the 2009 American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (stimulus) could effectively reduce poverty if they were made permanent. These include:

- Higher food stamp benefit levels
- Subsidized public and private jobs funded by TANF emergency funds
- Expanded unemployment insurance payments
- Subsidized Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) health insurance payments for the unemployed
- Increased funding for Early Head Start and Head Start
- Increased availability of Pell Grants

These provisions have helped to offset the negative effects of the recent recession on the poor and unemployed. If Congress were to extend them, they could continue to reduce poverty and economic hardships. However, it is likely that many of these provisions will expire by the end of 2011.

In summary, government antipoverty policies can effectively prevent and/or resolve social problems. But we as a nation continue to resist paying higher taxes to invest in poor children and raise the incomes of their families.
INTERGROUP RACE RELATIONS REPORT

This report provides access to the extensive and detailed information disseminated during the intergroup race relations sessions at the conference. This information will be particularly helpful to community and policy leaders interested in gaining a better understanding of race relations and finding effective strategies for improving these conditions.

Disclaimer:
This postconference Race in America report includes detailed summaries of the presentations and subsequent discussions that took place. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work or Center on Race and Social Problems.
IN THE MIX: Multiracial Demographics and Social Definitions of Race

Race: Changing Composition, Changing Definition

Presenter: Howard Hogan, Associate Director for Demographic Programs, U.S. Census Bureau

Moderator: Pat Chew, Professor of Law, University of Pittsburgh

America’s categorization of race is more of a definition of how America chooses to see individuals and less the result of how people categorize themselves. Our concept of race in the United States has evolved over the country’s history. In America’s first census in 1790, the country viewed itself racially as comprising only three groups: Whites, slaves, and others. American Indians were not identified as a distinct group for this census. As immigration increased, our racial composition changed rapidly, and it was for this reason that, in 1850 and 1860, the United States felt that it was necessary to gather information on the birthplaces of individuals. The term “Black” was first used as a census race category in the census of 1850, and the term “Negro” did not appear as a census race category until 1930.

Most of our current racial categories stem from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). During the 1970s, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights felt that it was necessary to develop more precise definitions of race and a policy for...

Howard Hogan

He received his BA from Pomona College in economics and mathematics. He has a master’s degree in public affairs and a master’s degree in economics from Princeton University. He completed his PhD at Princeton’s Office of Population Research.

He worked for two years as a demographer in Tanzania and joined the U.S. Census Bureau in 1979 as a demographer working on census coverage measurement. He led the research to develop improved undercount measurement methods for the 1990 Census. In 1993, he began working as a mathematical statistician in the Economic Directorate. In 1998, he became chief of the Decennial Statistical Studies Division. He moved to the Economic Statistical Methods and Programming Division in 2002, leading both the software development and the statistical methodology for the Economics Directorate.

Hogan has taught as an adjunct professor in statistics at George Washington University and also has taught demography and data analysis.

Pat Chew

Pat Chew is a professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and a Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award recipient. In addition to Pitt, she has taught at the University of Texas; University of Augsburg, Germany; and University of California Hastings. She received a JD from the University of Texas and undergraduate degrees in psychology and communications from Stanford University.

Her numerous presentations, both in the United States and abroad, have focused most recently on judicial decision making in racial harassment cases, subtly sexist language in the legal profession and law schools, the role of culture and race in legal disputes, empirical research in civil rights laws, and key employment laws for multinational corporate managers. Her most recent seminars have been on subtle sexism and subtle racism in the workplace.

Chew was named one of the first Law School Distinguished Faculty Scholars. Her research is diverse, both in subject area and methodology. Her books include International Conflict Resolution: Consensual ADR Processes, The Conflict and Culture Reader, Directors’ and Officers’ Liability, Corporations and Other Business Organizations, and Directory of Asian American Law School Faculty and Professionals. She has written dozens of articles in both general interest and specialized law journals.

(Continued on page 62)
the collection of racial and ethnic data. The racial and ethnic categories developed by OMB in 1977 were American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black, White, and Hispanic/Latino. OMB revised and further defined these categories in 1997.

In the 2000 census, the United States saw a huge increase in its minority population. As these minority groups continue to grow in size and as individuals continue to reject the group affiliations assigned to them by the census and OMB, the United States will have to devise innovative ways of creating racial categories that individuals are more willing to accept.

The Past

- **1790 Census**: America thought of itself racially as three groups: Whites, slaves, and others.
- **1850 Census**: This census included separate questionnaires for free persons and slaves. Free individuals were asked to identify as “B” for Black, “M” for Mulatto, or nothing for White. Also, America’s first mass immigration was at its peak from 1840 to 1850, when large numbers of Irish, Germans, British, and French immigrated to the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau began gathering information on the birthplaces of individuals.
- **1860 Census**: The concept of race changed to reflect the influx of immigrants coming into the country. Attempts were made to identify American Indians, and Chinese as a category appeared only for residents of California.
- **1870 Census**: Japanese and Chinese (beyond California) made their first appearances as census race categories. By this time, respondents included children of the 1840s and 1850s immigration, and America began to tailor census questions that would gather information on the birthplaces of parents of second-generation immigrants.
- **1890 Census**: Individuals were instructed to select among the following under the category of “Race or Color.” This was the first attempt to collect census data about American Indians.
  1. White
  2. Black
  3. Mulatto
  4. Quadroon
  5. Octoroon
  6. Chinese
  7. Japanese
  8. Indian

Many census respondents did not understand the distinction between race categories, such as the distinction between “Mulatto,” “Quadroon,” and “Octoroon.” However, Mulatto, Quadroon, and Octoroon were not eliminated as categories until after the 1920 census.

- **1930 Census**: The term “Negro” made its first appearance as a race category in the census. Mexican and Hindu also made their first appearance. “Mexican” as a selection for race appeared only in this census and was eliminated after protests from the Mexican embassy that Mexicans are White and not a separate racial category.
- **1960 Census**: First-time appearance of:
  1. Hawaiian
  2. Part-Hawaiian
  3. Eskimo or Aleut

The Present

In 1997, OMB issued revised categories for data on race and ethnicity. It included five categories related to race and one (Hispanic or Latino) related to ethnicity that were defined as follows:

1. **American Indian or Alaska Native**: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment. This is the only category that has a legal definition, and tribal affiliation or community attachment is required.
2. **Asian**: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
3. **Black or African American**: A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
4. **Hispanic or Latino**: A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. Data on Hispanic ethnicity was first collected in the 1970 U.S. Census.
5. **Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander**: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, and Samoa or other Pacific islands.
6. **White**: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

- **1990 Census**: First appearance of “Indian (Amer.),” This was an attempt to clarify that this category was intended for those who identified as American Indian. The word “American” next to race choices confused many. For example, there were many people from the southern part of the United States who chose “South American” in the Hispanic origin question on previous censuses. To avoid this confusion, “American” was placed in parentheses next to race choices.
- **2000 Census**: The interracial population increased to 2.9 percent in the country by 1990, and the multiracial movement intensified. In response, people were able to choose more than one race on census forms. The census questionnaire also included the option of “Some Other Race.”

- **2010 Census**: Detailed group examples were reintroduced for Hispanic, Asian, and Pacific Islander response categories (e.g., Hispanic: Colombian, Dominican, etc.). The census is still struggling to find ways to properly identify and categorize race in a way that people understand and fully accept. Children who are identified as multiracial may define themselves as only one race as they reach adulthood.

### The Future of Race and Ethnicity Categories in America

Over the next 20 years, the population of the elderly will increase, and in 2026, the first baby boomers will turn 80 years of age. In the future, the Hispanic population will continue to grow, but it will still look very similar to the current Hispanic population. More and more children will be born to parents of different races and ethnicities as we continue to have a mobile, more integrated population. These are just a few of the many social changes that will affect the U.S. population. As a result, categories for race and ethnicity will continue to be problematic as groups outgrow and reject the classifications given to them by the U.S. Census Bureau and OMB. One example of this are members of the Afro-Caribbean population, many of whom do not identify themselves as African American.

The concept of race and identification of racial origin continue to serve a role in the United States with regard to monitoring and enforcing civil rights legislation for employment, educational opportunities, and housing. It was for this reason that the U.S. Supreme Court, in the 1980s, declared Judaism to be a race for purposes of antidiscrimination. Data on race also are used to study changes in the social, economic, and demographic characteristics and changes in our population. But there is no reason to assume that it will get easier for OMB and the U.S. Census Bureau to make the kind of distinctions they need to be able to collect this information.

To address this problem, the U.S. Census Bureau is conducting experiments with alternative questions to assess how the format of a question affects the ways individuals respond to it. In-depth interviews and focus groups are now being conducted with different racial and ethnic groups to formulate more effective ways of categorizing race. The trend is toward assessing how individuals perceive themselves with regard to race and ethnicity and how they believe they are perceived by those around them.

### Reference

Leveraging America’s Increasing Diversity

Presenter: Patricia Gurin, Nancy Cantor Distinguished University Professor Emerita of Psychology and Women’s Studies, University of Michigan

Moderator: Pat Chew, Professor of Law, University of Pittsburgh

The coexistence of people from different backgrounds, races, and ethnicities alone is not enough to increase positive interactions among them. Because of the difficulty in getting people to talk about race, programs that facilitate candid discussions about diversity issues could be useful in increasing opportunities for positive interaction among different racial and ethnic groups.

Diversity in any characteristic of space, institution, or organization should be mediated in order for society to receive the most benefit. Inequality and disparity have increased along racial lines in recent years in spite of the tremendous growth of racial and ethnic diversity in America. As diversity in the United States continues to grow, more social mechanisms will need to be in place at all levels to properly deal with problems of discrimination and inequity.

Research shows the value in creating more opportunities for positive intergroup relations in society. College-level courses in intergroup dialogue are one way to create opportunities for promoting effective interactions between students of different backgrounds. Students who experience positive interactions in intergroup relations during college harbor less prejudice (conscious and unconscious), have a more positive demeanor toward diversity, and exemplify greater openness to multiple perspectives in their adult lives.

The Problem

People from different backgrounds, races, and ethnicities who coexist do not necessarily increase the probability of actual positive interactions among them. It takes more than being in the same space to make diversity beneficial. Forms and institutions of inequality are interconnected, and you have to address the interconnections of inequality in order to create major change. Talking about race across races is incredibly difficult.

Causes

Diversity in any kind of characteristic of a space, institution, or organization somehow needs to be mediated in order for it to have any meaning. Among the challenges America faces are the following:

The Demographic Challenge
America is becoming a more diverse place, and social mechanisms need to be in place to deal with it properly.

The Democracy Challenge
There is an enormous problem with inequality and disparity—across racial and ethnic lines—that continually has gotten worse during the past 10–20 years.

The “Rise of the Rest”
It is more important than ever for students to learn how to have dialogue with people from other backgrounds, because they will be graduating into a world where the United States is not the only economic leader.

Solutions

Universities can help to improve race relations. First, simply having racial and ethnic diversity on college campuses is associated with:

- Reduced prejudice (both unconscious and conscious)
- Cognitive development on various measures
- More positive attitudes toward diversity
- Greater adherence to democratic values
- Stronger electoral behavior
• Leadership skills
• Openness to multiple perspectives
• More integrated lifestyles as adults

Structural diversity (the racial and ethnic composition of a space) on college campuses can primarily increase the probability of interaction across differences. However, these interactions often result in negative reactions, such as:

For Whites
• Concerns about being prejudiced (also, concerns about being viewed as being prejudiced)
• Anxiety
• Depleted executive (frontal lobe) functioning
• Increased cardiovascular reactivity
• Nervous behaviors

For Racial and Ethnic Minorities
• Concerns about being the target of prejudice
• Compensatory strategies
• Negative emotions
• Feeling inauthentic in interactions with those outside of their race or ethnicity

The Program on Intergroup Relations

Intergroup Dialogue is a program at the University of Michigan and other universities. This program brings together students on a voluntary basis (students apply to be part of the program) and asks them to dialogue on diversity topics, deal with the contentious issues that may arise as a result of that dialogue, and over time begin to understand each other and form coalitions with one another. The educational goals of Intergroup Dialogue are to increase intergroup understanding, establish positive intergroup relations through empathy and motivation to bridge differences, and create intergroup action and collaboration. The program consists of credit-bearing courses in intergroup dialogue.

A study across nine colleges and universities is being conducted to discover the program’s effects on intergroup relations among students. The research has found that these are the conditions under which intergroup dialogue is effective:

• Two groups of students, with equal numbers in each group
• Sustained personal contact
• An official class that provides legitimation of authorities
• A common goal: to capitalize on differences while at the same time recognizing similarities to get to some kind of action

The program also has identified two types of processes in intergroup dialogue:

• Dialogic (about relationships characterized by dialogue)
  - Active listening
  - Asking questions, follow-up, and inquiry
  - Sharing of perspectives
• Critical
  - Identifying one’s assumptions
  - Critical analysis of inequalities
  - Individual and collective reflection on the activity that has taken place and what was learned

The instructional methods of the program are:

• Content—reading, assignments, papers
• Structured interaction—equal numbers/statuses and active learning exercises to illustrate concepts
• Facilitative guidance

The program promotes effective interaction through:

• Guided and sustained facilitation that lasts for an entire semester
• Helping students to deal with anxiety and concerns about prejudice and to view the interaction in “promotive rather than preventative” ways, i.e., opportunities for learning rather than avoiding appearing prejudiced
• Teaching listening exercises to students
• Addressing the different needs of advantaged and disadvantaged group members—for personalized relationships based on commonalities versus explorations of power and privilege and how to effect social change

Finally, members of high-powered and more advantaged groups come into Intergroup Dialogue wanting to find commonalities. Members of low-powered groups come into Intergroup Dialogue wanting to discuss inequalities and effect social change. The program balances desires for personal connection with the importance of understanding groups, cultures, and inequalities.

References


COMING TOGETHER:
Promoting Harmony among Racial Groups
Obama and the Durable Racialization of American Politics

Presenter: Lawrence D. Bobo, W.E.B. Du Bois Professor of the Social Sciences, Harvard University

Moderator: Lu-in Wang, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor of Law, School of Law, University of Pittsburgh

There are some in American society who are unable to assess issues of racial discord because they accept the concept that the United States has become a postracial nation. There are others who consider postracialism to be a politically neutralizing falsehood that veils how the racial divide is constructed and maintained in American society. The prevalence of racial dissonance has waned over time in comparison to the racial conflicts America faced in the past. However, in order for this recuperation to continue, American society has to be forthright about current race relations conditions and open to developing new ways to improve relations in the future.

The United States has adopted a new contemporary form of racism, because the blatant Jim Crow discrimination of years past is not as socially acceptable. The characteristics of this contemporary form, called laissez-faire racism, are the widespread and consequential harboring of negative stereotypes and the collective racial resentment of African Americans. Laissez-faire racism is very prevalent in today’s society despite the belief by many that the United States has transitioned into postracialism, spearheaded by Barack Obama’s presidential election. However, the majority of

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Lu-in Wang

Lu-in Wang is associate dean for academic affairs and professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. Her legal scholarship examines ordinary and extraordinary forms of discrimination and the connections between them. Her current project focuses on the relationship between social and economic stereotypes, how the law adopts or contributes to those stereotypes and hence reinforces their connection, and how the law might disrupt that connection to more effectively identify and redress discrimination. Her 2006 book, *Discrimination by Default: How Racism Becomes Routine* (New York University Press), draws on social psychology to detail three commonplace but generally unrecognized ways in which unconscious assumptions lead to discrimination in a wide range of everyday settings as well as how these dynamics interact to produce an invisible, self-fulfilling, and self-perpetuating prophecy of racial disparity. Her earlier work examined more extreme forms of discrimination. In addition to being the author of *Hate Crimes Law* (Clark Boardman Callaghan, 1994, updated annually through 2000), the first legal treatise on that subject, Wang has written several major articles that take an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the social processes underlying the legal issues related to bias-related violence, applying historical, sociological, and social psychological literature.
White voters chose not to vote for Barack Obama for president. An overwhelming majority of minority voters chose to vote for him.

There are several reasons why America has not reached the point where the color line between Blacks and Whites has become blurred beyond recognition. First, only 14.6 percent of U.S. marriages in 2008 were between spouses of a different race or ethnicity, and only 11 percent of these mixed marriages were White-Black. Second, only 7 million (2 percent) of the U.S. population in 2000 marked more than one race on the census, One-quarter of these were Black. Third, Black-White wealth gaps have grown, even among educated Blacks.

In order to relieve some of the racial discord in society, progressive dialogue on the current realities of race relations in the United States is needed as well as structural and cultural change.

The Problem

Many Americans believe, partly as a result of Obama’s election, that America is postracial, “Blackness” is being “erased,” and America is a happy tale of assimilation. Reality is just the opposite.

Causes

The success of Barack Obama’s presidential campaign is one that reflects the durable racialization of American politics. Obama’s election should not be seen as the milestone that ended racism in American society even though his political success is regarded as the one major event that fuels the postracial narrative in American society. Although Obama’s election is a great achievement, it is an accomplishment as confined and constrained by race as it is an accomplishment that transcends race. Obama’s political success hinges on his continued deft management of the racial divide in the United States. This racial divide includes the following:

- Gallup polls reveal that 30 percent of Whites believe that they are more intelligent than Blacks, and 50 percent believe that they are more working hard.
- Eighty percent of Whites believe that Blacks should overcome prejudice without special favors from the government.
- The national presidential election exit poll results show that Obama received:
  - 43 percent of the White vote
  - 95 percent of the Black vote
  - 67 percent of the Latino and Asian vote
- Despite the belief that Obama’s election pushed America into a postracial society, Obama received the most death threats ever of any president-elect, and racist political cartoons appeared in several major newspapers and publications across the country.

The new configuration of racial attitudes by Whites in America is one that accepts a laissez-faire approach to racism and steadily repudiates Jim Crow racial ideology. In laissez-faire racism, negative stereotypes about African Americans remain widespread and consequential.

Collective Racial Resentment

In laissez-faire racism, there also is collective racial resentment. This relates to a core narrative about the nature of Black-White inequality in which the individual choices and cultural shortcomings of Blacks are the primary sources for any disadvantages facing the Black community. This belief frowns upon any political initiative to undo systematic racial inequality or improve the social circumstances of African Americans. The belief in collective racial resentment is that Blacks should overcome prejudice without any special favors and without any commitment by the rest of society or government to undo inequality.

Although many Blacks concur with the sentiments of collective racial resentment, a majority still believes that discrimination exists on many levels. There also is an emotional tonality among Whites in relation to collective racial resentment. This is not represented in Blacks who may harbor the same beliefs.

Collective racial resentment is highly correlated with which political party people associate with. This association has grown stronger in recent years, and it correlates with how people actually vote.

The anti-Black cultural project of “erasing Blackness” has not destabilized the core racial binary. Although many believe that miscegenation — the mixing of races through marriage, cohabitation, sexual relations, and procreation — is common an overwhelming majority of Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians still marry within their racial group.

Miscegenation

Many Americans buy into the notion that miscegenation is causing the end of the Black and White races and that eventually the color line between Whites and Blacks will become blurred beyond recognition. The data show:

- African Americans are the least likely of all races to marry Whites.
- Although the pace of interracial marriage increased more rapidly in the 1990s than it did in other periods, the social boundaries between Blacks and Whites remained highly rigid and resistant to change.
• Although interracial marriages have increased greatly in recent years, they still only account for 15 percent of marriages in the United States.
• Only 7 million Americans (2 percent) identified more than one race when given the option to do so on the 2000 Census. Of those 7 million, one-quarter identified having any mixture with African Americans.
• Biracial African American-White individuals have historically identified themselves as Black and typically married other African Americans.

Ethnic Heterogeneity

The number of foreign-born in the United States who are classified as Black has increased to nearly 3 million, circa 2005. Despite this huge change, more than 89 percent of Blacks are classified as regular, non-Hispanic, American-born Blacks.

The configuration of the racial separation in the United States may be moving away from one that is Black-White and into a division that is more Black-non-Black.

Race and Class

Race and class interact, as opposed to a situation in which class operates as the fundamental basis of racial division. The growth of a Black middle class does not mean or foreordain an end to racism. In terms of data:

• The median wealth gap between Whites and Blacks has increased from $20,000 to $95,000 since 1984.
• Without extraordinary effort through reparations, there is no way that the White-Black economic gap will ever close.

The fundamental purpose of the one-drop rule, which was part of Virginia’s Racial Integrity Act of 1924, was to ensure that Black children had no claim on the wealth of Whites. The act tried to protect the integrity of the White race by criminalizing miscegenation between Whites and non-Whites.

Take America Back versus Inertia of Diversity

Census trends show that by 2050, Whites will be less than 50 percent of the population. If current trends persist, today’s multiracial hierarchy could be replaced by a dual or bimodal one consisting of non-Black and Black population categories, with a third residual category for the groups that do not, or do not yet, fit into the basic dualism (Gans, 1999).

The notion of the United States as a happy tale of assimilation among immigrants remains misleading at best:

• Asian Americans are perpetually seen as foreign regardless of how many generations of their families have been in the United States. The rate of intermarriage is increasingly panethnic, as opposed to intermarriage between Whites and Asians.
• The Latino community, particularly those of Mexican American descent, is now in the midst of deep racialization.
  - Economic fortunes are at or below those of African Americans.
  - African Americans are advantaged compared to undocumented Latinos because they have the benefit of American citizenship.
  - In income ratios since the 1970s, Latino men and women have been steadily losing ground.

Solutions

1. Honest and progressive discourse: Only on the basis of truth can there be true reconciliation in race relations.
2. Policy priorities: Wealth accumulation strategies are needed for minority populations. These strategies should atone for excluding Blacks and Latinos from the Social Security Act, initial Aid to Families with Dependent Children and unemployment coverage, and the G.I. Bill and home mortgage opportunities.
3. There must be continuity in the enforcement of antidiscrimination laws, particularly in housing, to undo racial residential segregation.
4. There needs to be an end to the war on drugs and a dismantling of racialized mass incarceration.
5. Meaningful strategies to help close the achievement gap have to be implemented.
6. We need positive cultural and structural change rather than just structural change. Structural change alone will not be enough to change the hearts and minds of American society.

References


Somewhere Over the Rainbow?: Postracial and Panracial Politics in the Age of Obama

**Taeku Lee**

Taeku Lee is a professor of political science and law at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of Mobilizing Public Opinion (University of Chicago Press, 2002), which received the J. David Greenstone and the V.O. Key book awards; coauthor of Race, Immigration, and (Non)Partisanship in America (Princeton University Press, forthcoming); and coauthor of Asian American Political Participation (Russell Sage Foundation Press, under review). He also coedited Transforming Politics, Transforming America (University of Virginia Press, 2006) and currently is coediting Accountability through Public Opinion (World Bank Press, under contract) and the Oxford Handbook of Racial and Ethnic Politics in the United States (Oxford University Press, under contract).

Lee has served in administrative and leadership positions at UC Berkeley and in advisory and consultative capacities for numerous academic presses and journals, nongovernmental organizations, think tanks, and private corporations. Prior to coming to Berkeley, he was an assistant professor at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government. Lee is a proud graduate of K–12 public schools, the University of Michigan (AB), Harvard University (MPP), and the University of Chicago (PhD).

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**Moderator:** Lu-in Wang, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor of Law, School of Law, University of Pittsburgh

Postracism has several forms in society, and each of these forms is a failed attempt at creating an empirical reality that colorblindness exists. Even though Barack Obama’s presidential election convinced many that America is now a postracial society, recent political commentary and movements have been increasingly “racialized.” The Tea Party movement demonstrates how political movements in U.S. society have become increasingly racial. A majority of supporters of the Tea Party movement are White, and a majority of Tea Party supporters harbor negative sentiments toward Blacks, immigrant populations, and gay/lesbian rights.

Disparities in incarceration rates are high and have increased in recent years. Latinos are three times as likely and Blacks are five times as likely as Whites to face prison incarceration in the United States. In addition, Blacks and Latinos are more than four times more likely to be imprisoned at some point in their lives compared to Whites. A cultural switch to a panracial categorization of race is a crucial step toward creating a society that is inclusive of all races and nationalities. Collective action is necessary to move society to develop a panracial view. For collective action to work, individuals must choose to act as part of a group and must choose which group best represents their interests.


The Problem

Many Americans live under the false notion that the country has become a postracial society. The concept of postracial often means different things for different people, and many use the term without offering a definition. It need not include the elimination of race but might simply be a desire to transcend the point of race’s having any significance for the greater good. In effect, postracialism can be an ideological commitment to colorblindness without the empirical reality. Some attempts at postracialism take the form of the following:

- Coda: The belief in the end of the importance of race in society
- Trans: Reaching beyond, to the exceptional
- Abnegation: Renouncement or rejection of race in society
- Invisibility: Pretending race no longer exists. One example of this is the failed California Proposition 54: Racial Privacy Initiative, Section 32(a), which stated: “The state shall not classify any individual by race, ethnicity, color, or national origin in the operation of public education, public contracting, or public employment.”

The focus of this presentation is to explore the concept of a panracial, rather than a postracial or biracial, structure; to consider the relationship between research and practice; and to question who would be included in an inclusive group and what standards would be used for inclusion. These issues have implications for the potential of individuals to develop into a political coalition and to take collective action.

Causes

Obama’s presidential win in 2008 convinced many that America is now a postracial society. However, there is much evidence that this is not true.

Voting Changes

In the 2008 election, voting increased by 14 percent among Asians, 27 percent among Latinos, and 15 percent among Blacks while increasing only 2 percent for Whites. This represented a primary change in voting patterns in terms of race.

Subsequent Political Activity

U.S. racism has been described as having moved from Jim Crow to laissez-faire. There is evidence to suggest that both types of racism continue to exist across the country. Some of the public statements and images about President Obama, for example, went far beyond laissez-faire. Sample findings from a noted survey about whether or not there is a racial basis behind the Tea Party movement in the United States are illustrative of current attitudes:

- Approximately 45 percent of Whites either strongly or somewhat approve of the movement. Of those, only 35 percent believe Blacks to be hardworking, only 45 percent believe that Blacks are intelligent, and only 41 percent think that Blacks are trustworthy.
- Seventy-two percent of strong Tea Party movement supporters disagree that there is an historical basis for the challenges that Blacks face in the United States.
- Eighty-three percent of strong Tea Party supporters disagree that Blacks have gotten less than they deserve over the past few years.

There is a sharp demarcation in racial attitudes between Tea Party supporters and nonsupporters. One of the most striking findings from this national survey is that so many respondents were willing to express support for negative stereotypes of African Americans in a time period that so many others are calling postracial.

Incarceration Rate Disparities

The incarceration rates for Blacks and Latinos continue to increase at a far greater pace than the rate for Whites. Based on current trends, about one in three Blacks will be incarcerated at some point in their lives, up from one in six in 2001. Not only are the disparities in actual rates of imprisonment compelling and demanding of attention, but so is the comparative number of young men in prison versus those in college. Furthermore, research by a Princeton University professor found that Whites with curricula vitae (CVs) that included a felony conviction were more likely to be called for a second interview than Blacks with the identical CV except with no felony conviction.

Immigration

Immigration has increased greatly since the enactment of the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965, which abolished the national origins quota system that had structured American immigration policy since the 1920s. In 1991, the immigrant population in the United States reached more than 1.8 million, its highest point in the country’s history. Over the next few decades, the proportion of Whites in the United States is expected to decline to a minority as the proportion of Asians and Latinos increase and the proportion of African Americans remains fairly constant.

Miscegenation

The racial and ethnic categories of the U.S. Census Bureau continue to change as the population becomes more multicultural and more people take on a multiracial identity. For example:

- One in 15 marriages was interracial in 2000, a 65 percent increase from 1990.
• Nearly three out of 10 marriages involving an Asian or Latino is a mixed-race marriage.
• Nearly one in two interracial marriages in the United States involves a Latino/a.

Solutions

Research and Practice in Areas of Race

• Research on initiatives that are directly aimed at trying to improve social conditions
• Research that directs practice, such as driving the work of electoral campaigns, government agencies, and community-based organizations
• Avoiding research regardless of practice: Having the ability to refrain from engaging in research that has no connection to its intended audience
• Research directed by practice: Practice that is deemed important through a network of community friends and colleagues
• Mutually constitutive and communicative spheres of action

America Should Strive to Become a Panracial Society

Panracial is a racial categorization that is inclusive of all races and nationalities and could become the new goal for racial integration in the United States. Both historically and currently, discussions and analyses of race in America focus on a Black/White paradigm, and all races in the United States are categorized by this paradigm. The recent census used terms like Black and non-Black. However:

• The United States has seen a greater influx of immigrants in recent years than it has in any other time in its history.
• U.S. immigrants in recent years have primarily been from Latin American and Asian countries.
• Americans commonly do not affiliate themselves with U.S. Census Bureau categories.

For these reasons, a panracial conception of U.S. society might be more relevant and might facilitate collective action to achieve equality.

What, however, will be the standard or benchmark goal? The traditional standard has been Anglo conformity. Could African Americans be a benchmark? In the case of stereotypes of Asian Americans as hardworking, ambitious, valuing education, and so on, these qualities seem to be held up specifically to show African Americans as a negative benchmark. But, when we look at how African Americans come together at times for political action, such as during the civil rights movement, for the 2008 presidential election, and to offer support for Democrats, they can be seen as a positive benchmark for political coalition.

Coalition Politics

Group solidarity is needed for political strength and collective action. There are four identifiable factors in the link between identity and politics:

• Classification: How are people classified by others, such as the U.S. Census Bureau? Their sense of identity is influenced by the category names assigned to them and by the changes in these labels over time.
• Category Identification: Do people actually identify with the categories given?
• Consciousness: Do members of the group share a group consciousness with others similarly identified? This group identity—view of linked destiny—is stronger among African Americans than among Asian Americans.
• Collective Action: Do members of the group believe that political coalition and political behavior is a way to mobilize and conduct collective action? Do individuals choose to act in pursuit of group-based interests?

A final question is, which group do individuals choose to work with for their group-based interests and ambitions? These groups could be based on ethnicity, political party, religion, ideology, gender, or sexual orientation.

References


THE WHITE WAY?: Discussing Racial Privilege and White Advantage
Where and Why Whites Still Do Blatant Racism: White Racist Actions and Framing in the Backstage and Frontstage

Presenter: Joe Feagin, Ella C. McFadden Professor in Sociology, Texas A&M University
Moderator: Kathleen Blee, Distinguished Professor of Sociology, Psychology, and History and Chair of the Department of Sociology, University of Pittsburgh

The systemic racism that was created by Whites in the beginning of U.S. society still is prevalent today in major contemporary forms. A central part of systemic racism is the White racial frame. This set of racial stereotypes, prejudices, emotions, narratives, images, and ideologies was created by Whites to maintain the continuity of White power and privilege in the United States. This set of pro-White, anti-Black, and anti-other concepts and perspectives dates back to the 1600s and can clearly be seen in the famous book our first intellectual, Thomas Jefferson, called Notes on the State of Virginia. Over the years, Whites have added to this blatant racism some more subtle forms of racism, and both can be found in diverse public, frontstage settings and in all-White backstage (more private) settings and situations.

People of color encounter a significant number of subtle or blatant racist events on an annual basis. The present-day framing of Whites’ racial thinking and action often takes

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place in a joking format so Whites can more easily deflect accountability and ownership of this racist framing to others if necessary. Probably billions of racist commentaries and performances by Whites take place annually across the United States.

Most Americans, especially Whites, need to learn much more about our history of systemic racism and White privilege in the United States. Americans of all backgrounds, especially Whites, need to learn how to respond when they face racist commentaries, racist discussions, and other racist events. In addition, in the backstage all-White settings, Whites should call out everyday racism aggressively and, in countering racist events, guide the perpetrators toward a more positive liberty and justice framing.

The Problem

Foundational and systemic racism created by Whites early in U.S. history has persisted to the current time. This racism has involved 246 years of slavery and 90 years of Jim Crow, which is about 85 percent of modern North American history.

White racial framing is the set of racial stereotypes, prejudices, emotions, narratives, images, and ideologies developed to rationalize and explain institutionalized oppression targeting people of color over the centuries. It rationalizes the racial hierarchy and extensive White power and privilege that structures of oppression have created. The White racial frame was first fully developed by Whites in the 1600s and was well established by Jefferson in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Today, most Whites still adhere to many of the racist concepts accent by Jefferson, including negative views of Blacks and other people of color, as well as pro-White superiority perspectives.

Today, Whites still buy into and perpetuate blatant racism in many aspects of everyday life. Much present-day racism is presented in a joking format. Racist comments and interactive commentaries often are played out in a backstage setting where only Whites are present. Young Whites, in backstage and frontstage settings, often maintain and exhibit much of the blatant racism adhered to by their parents and grandparents. For example, since the 1600s, the Black criminology stereotype has often been at the heart of anti-Black sentiment among Whites. This negative view has been essential to the dramatic expansion by White elites of the U.S. prison system, which now imprisons far more Blacks for doing things (like using illegal drugs) that Whites engage in with far fewer instances of incarceration. The White racial frame often is viscerally held, for it is tied to White emotions and ideals and to the personal identity of Whites.

In a field study by Joe Feagin and his colleague, Leslie H. Picca, about 626 White college students at 28 colleges and universities across the country reported in diaries that they saw or experienced more than 9,000 accounts of racial events over a brief (about 8–12 weeks) period. The events reported reflected blatant racism of the sort that Jefferson espoused and documented in the early 1780s. Racist jokes and stereotypes were common themes. Only about 1 percent of the young educated Whites actually reported in their diaries any Whites protesting racist commentaries and actions by Whites. There is frequently an aggressive pro-White arrogance in Whites’ expression of the anti-Black sentiments so central to the dominant White racial framing. White roles in racist commentaries and racist performances often take these forms:

- White protagonist: Person who leads off with racist comments and actions (common)
- White cheerleader: Person who laughs and eggs on White racist comments and actions by protagonists (very common)
- White passive bystander: A person who does nothing to counter White racist comments and actions (very common)
- White dissenter: A person who protests other Whites’ racist comments and actions (rare)

Another study involving interviews about racial attitudes of White professionals, including executives, lawyers, and doctors, yielded similar results, as did a study of local community and business leaders. Racist attitudes among these groups have far-reaching implications for Black employment opportunities. In another inquiry, detailed questioning of educated White students revealed far less acceptance of racial intermarriage than those students reported initially on a more superficial survey. Yet another Internet survey investigated perceptions of White men about Black women. Of the 160 respondents, 80 percent reported negative, stereotypically racist views. The narratives about Black women and men that so many Whites have learned and adopted continue to perpetuate Whites’ negative views of Blacks. We definitely do not live in a postracial America.

Basic lessons:

1. Postracialism does not exist in U.S. society; Whites invented the “lie” and terminology of postracialism.
2. U.S. racism is deep, foundational, systemic, and everywhere today, as it has been for centuries.
3. Contemporary racism involves the old racial hierarchy: Whites at the top with power and privilege and most others below and positioned by Whites on the hierarchy.
4. Many billions of racist commentaries and performances, routine actions in frontstage and backstage, occur in the United States annually.
5. Racism is legitimized and reproduced by a very old, extensive, and constant White racial framing, one that views White Americans as mostly superior and deservedly privileged and Americans of color as mostly inferior and racially “othered.” This reality has existed since the 1600s.

**Solutions**

**Areas of personal action.** Whites and others should study and know their racial history. They should be able to teach themselves and others how to respond to racist events taking place around them.

**Call out racist acts aggressively.** Possible strategies include using of pointed humor, showing puzzlement to racist jokes and comments, and calling out the racist protagonist subtly or bluntly.

**Reframe the racist content of commentaries to accent positive liberty and justice framing.** Where people have conflicting frames in mind (e.g., justice/fairness frame versus the old White racist frame), try to counter the racist action by activating the justice/fairness frame. Counter-framing is required for change. We must regularly call out racist performances in the backstage and frontstage. We must teach and encourage more (especially White) people to see and understand everyday racism and how to dissent in all social settings in the backstage and frontstage.

**Collective action.** We need to create more national and multiracial organizations that call out individual/systemic racism and teach people how to challenge and eradicate everyday racism. We need to create stereotyping 101 and racism 101 courses in schools from kindergarten to graduate school. We need to create well-organized movements to aggressively pressure our major socialization organizations (e.g., the mainstream media) to honestly assess society’s racial oppression and to press for major structural change. Only large-scale societal movements can bring major changes to this deep and foundational racism. Eternal organization is, indeed, the price of real liberty and justice. This will be an uphill struggle. But systemic racism is human-made and, thus, can be unmade—but only with large-scale collective efforts.

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The Future of White Privilege in a Postrace, Post-civil Rights, Color-blind America

Presenter: Charles Gallagher, Professor and Chair, Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Criminal Justice, La Salle University

Moderator: Kathleen Blee, Distinguished Professor of Sociology, Psychology, and History and Chair of the Department of Sociology, University of Pittsburgh

Whites maintain the myth that America is a color-blind society in order to continue to reap the benefits of White privilege. White privilege consists of systemic social, cultural, and economic advantages that Whites (consciously or unconsciously) enjoy and assume are available to people of all backgrounds. Those who deny the existence of White privilege believe that inequality, prejudice, and discrimination have little or nothing to do with the current disparities that exist between the races; rather, the lower social and economic status of races outside the dominant group primarily is due to individual failings and character flaws that make them incapable of achieving success in society. Whites allow themselves to think society is color-blind and that race no longer has any bearing on the success of individuals. Whites subscribe to the notion of color blindness to alleviate themselves of any responsibility for the current state of inequality and disparity among the races in America and to maintain the power that comes along with White privilege.

Barack Obama’s presidential election often is referred to as the event that proves America is a color-blind nation. However, since Obama has taken office, the negative racial commentary and images that have followed prove not only that postracialism does not exist but that racism is more prevalent in politics and in the media than ever before. In order to advance the discussion about the true social reality in American society, Whites have to be open to discuss the nature and depth of racial inequality and the myth that we are a color-blind nation.

The Problem

Much of White America now believes that the United States is, by and large, a color-blind society and that the shift to a color-blind perspective has been achieved by the eradication of White privilege. The election of a Black president led to bold headlines touting the end of racism in America. Many Whites do not see race as an obstacle to upward mobility and equal treatment, nor do they see it as a barrier to achievement. The primary danger of this view is the belief that the goals of the civil rights movement have been achieved, that there is no longer such a thing as race-based privilege, and that we no longer have a need to address issues of race in the United States. It promotes the belief that race is a benign cultural marker, more like ethnicity. A rich body of research firmly establishes the falsity of this color-blind perspective, yet it persists throughout White America. The fact that we are hampered by our inability to talk candidly about race continues to be a factor in the racial stratification of our society. We must honestly confront the myth of the color-blind narrative in order to expose it.

Causes

White Americans try to convince themselves that racism is not, and presumably has not been for some time, an obstacle to upward mobility, unequal treatment, or a barrier to achievement. Further, the media, regarding the election of President Barack Obama, have opposed the idea that racism continues to infect our country. The media in America continue to paint the picture that racism is a false collective belief that is not grounded in fact.
Color Blindness

Color blindness is the new racial narrative of Whites:

• Color blindness means that color no longer plays a role in shaping an individual or a group’s life chances.
• Within the framework of color-blind race relations, the act of pointing out racist actions is a form of racism in itself, because in the false reality of color-blind society, institutional racism no longer exists.
• Adherents of color blindness readily admit there are individual manifestations of racism, but these singular acts of hate are carried out by fringe elements of the population and are individual outliers that are not representative of America’s new consensus on race.
• Whites believe that the color-blind racial frame has crystallized into a truism, a common-sense understanding of how a significant part of the population understands society.
• Subscription to a color-blind worldview allows people to believe that there is no such thing as White privilege. If they believe society is color-blind, they cannot simultaneously believe that being White affords people any social and/or economic privileges.

Many scholars argue that the reason Whites deny the existence of institutional racism is because of the tangible benefits of buying into a color-blind belief system. One dominant line of thinking among researchers is that Whites fully understand that the system is rigged in their favor yet choose to do nothing about it because the status quo serves their interests. Recent trends in racial attitudes suggest that most Whites have arrived at an attitudinal tipping point where false perceptions of equality have pushed aside structural explanations of racial disparities between groups.

Belief in a nondiscriminatory, merit-based system that is accessible to all promotes the notion that success, like failure, is a choice that can be made by each individual. Even some well-placed Black leaders in America today espouse this view of unfettered individual accountability.

Ignorance of Evidence about Racial Disparities

Many Whites are ignorant of the documented reality of socioeconomic disparity among different groups in our society. For example:

• The wealth gap between Blacks and Whites has grown over the last two decades. Evidence shows that the typical White family is five times richer than its average African American counterpart.

• Schools are more segregated now than they have been since the Brown v. Board of Education decision. Research shows that, 55 years after this landmark decision, Blacks and Latinos are more segregated than they had been the previous four decades.
• Blacks and Hispanics continue to face discrimination in the housing and rental markets. Too many neighborhoods remain segregated, and “geographic steering” keeps Blacks and Latinos living in selected communities.
• In 2000, almost half of all African American men who lacked both a high school degree and a job were incarcerated.
• In 2009 in New York City, Blacks and Latinos were nine times as likely as Whites to be stopped by the police although they were no more likely to be arrested.
• The jobless rate for Blacks is 16.5 percent, almost twice the rate for Whites.

Access to health care, college graduation rates, infant mortality rates, and rates of long-term unemployment are additional examples of racial disparity.

“Racial redistricting” is taking place where the boundaries of “Whiteness” are expanding to include groups who, until quite recently, would have been on the margins of “Whiteness.” Within the context of contemporary race relations, those groups who do not conform to cultural and physical expectations of White middle-class norms will be stigmatized and cut off from the resources Whites have been able to monopolize for decades.

Messages from the Media

Watching television depictions of well-off, successful Black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans has the effect of convincing White Americans that racial minorities share their socioeconomic opportunities. Although stereotypes remain in the media, we now typically see images of a carefully manufactured racial utopia where people of different races interact comfortably in common spaces. Race is meaningless in these race-neutral environments, and camaraderie crosses all color lines. Well-off, successful, light-skinned Asians and Blacks are positioned in jobs and housing specifically designed to communicate equal social and economic opportunity.
Blurring of the Concepts of Race and Ethnicity

A common belief among White Americans is that if White ethnic groups could overcome the obstacles they faced when they immigrated and could climb the social ladder in America, why can’t non-Whites, especially Blacks, do the same? A recent survey showed that 70 percent of Whites agreed with the following statement: “Irish, Italian, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudices and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without special favors.” In the same survey, 58 percent disagreed that “Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class.” Even with recognition of the very real discriminations and hardships to which White ethnic groups were subject upon immigrating, it is inconceivable that these could become indistinguishable from three centuries of slavery, Jim Crow, legal segregation, and state-sanctioned benign neglect.

Demographic changes in the United States are altering our definitions of racial categories. In 1990, there were 22 million Latinos in the United States. By 2010, there were 47 million, making this the largest minority group in the country at 15 percent. Many of these individuals described themselves as “White only” in the latest U.S. census, and we now have the emerging racial categories of “Black” and “non-Black.” Research shows that our lightest-skinned immigrants earned an average of 8–15 percent more than immigrants with darker skin. In fact, one skin shade lighter has the same effect on income as one additional year of education.

Solutions

Society needs to move to the next level of discourse, where the social definition of reality for many Whites is one where we have meaningful discussions about the nature and depth of racial inequality and the myth that we are a color-blind nation. We need to address color blindness as a form of ideology that maintains White privilege. We also need to recalibrate the baseline from which we study attitudes about race. Our traditional methodologies fail to tap the deeper attitudinal complexities of a color-blind worldview, and our traditional theories oversimplify how race and racism are understood.
This report summarizes information provided by the race and criminal justice speakers. The value of this report is that it provides access to the extensive and detailed information disseminated at the conference. This information will be particularly helpful to community and policy leaders interested in gaining a better understanding of racial disparities in criminal justice and finding effective strategies for improving these conditions.

Disclaimer:
This postconference Race in America report includes detailed summaries of the presentations and subsequent discussions that took place. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work or Center on Race and Social Problems.
Incarceration has been a major growth industry in the United States over the past 40 years, and the United States is now the world’s leader in incarceration. African Americans have been most affected and are greatly overrepresented in jails and prisons. A major contributor to the growth in imprisonment has been changes in drug policies and drug laws, such as mandatory sentences for drug offenses. These laws had little effect on drug abuse or crime, but they did fill prison cells. Because of the detrimental effects that high incarceration rates have on a community and on tight state budgets, it is important that the political and criminal justice systems find innovative ways to reduce prison rates and do so without increasing crime.

(Continued on page 80)
The Problem

While the U.S. incarceration rate was impressively flat for the 50 years from 1925 to 1975, the rate has been increasing by 6–8 percent per year since the mid-1970s. Now 750 Americans per 100,000 (1 percent) are incarcerated in prison or jail, making us the world’s leader in incarceration.

African Americans have been seriously affected by the growth in incarceration. At the present time, 3.2 percent of all U.S. Black males are in prison, which is 6.5 times the White rate. In addition, 29 percent of Black males can expect to be in prison at some point in their lives.

Young Black males are even more affected:

- 7.5 percent of Black males age 25–39 are in prison
- 32 percent of Black males in their 20s are under control of the criminal justice system, which includes federal prison and county jail, parole, and probation

Drug crimes represent the single largest crime type in prison, constituting more than 20 percent of state prisoners and more than 50 percent of federal prisoners. Drug crimes are the ones where the representation of African Americans in prison is most disproportionate compared to their representation at arrest. And incarceration for drug selling is not a very rational strategy if the intention is to use incarceration to control crime, largely because sellers sent to prison are usually replaced by others in the marketplace as long as a supply of sellers is available.

The ratio of Black to White incarceration rates, surprisingly, is highest in the northern rather than the southern states. We can speculate that that disparity occurs because Blacks in the South have been there longer and so are more socialized to local mores, understand the rules in their communities, and live more in rural areas with less contact with law enforcement. The ratios are higher in the North because Blacks live more in urban areas where crime is highest, are more mobile and less connected to social controls, tend to have peer groups who are associated with prison, and live in areas with greater socioeconomic differences.

High incarceration rates are a problem not just for the people incarcerated. They also are a problem because:

- Communities and families are disrupted as people move in and out of prison.
- Prison mores and culture are brought into communities through community-prison networks.
- People with a criminal record, and especially ex-prisoners, find it difficult to reenter the labor force and community.
- The community-level social stigma of having been to prison is reduced as more young people are incarcerated, and this reduces the effect of incarceration as a crime deterrent.

- The large racial disproportionality in prison raises concern in the Black community that the differences are all attributable to discrimination, thereby diminishing the credibility of the criminal justice system.

Causes

Incarceration rates began to increase rapidly four decades ago as control over prison populations shifted from the officials in the criminal justice system to political officials, especially legislators, in response to public demands to “do something” about the crime problem. Since those in the political system are constrained by time (terms in office) and a limited repertoire of possible responses, the easy solution was to pass laws to increase prison terms for criminal offenses. Unfortunately, the increased sentences were of diminishing effectiveness at reducing crime.

Trends in the prison population also reflect actions by prosecutors, judges, and parole boards. They must be responsive to changes in legislation, and those who run for office—most prosecutors and many judges—are motivated by the same political influences that affect legislators. Their actions include deciding what offense to charge (most crimes with a mandatory minimum have a nonmandatory variant), the length of a sentence imposed, when to permit parole release, and on what basis to return a parole violator to prison. Corrections officers’ unions also can become politically active and can pressure legislatures to enact laws that increase incarceration in order to secure the jobs and increase the wages for their members.

In 1998, 70 percent of the Black-White differences in incarceration rates were due to corresponding differences in arrest rates for the crimes that are likely to lead to prison. Thus, the Black to White ratio at arrest is very close to that in prison, perhaps even an underrepresentation to that in prison. Blacks are slightly overrepresented in prison for robbery, greatly overrepresented for drug offenses, and underrepresented for murder. The other 30 percent can be accounted for by differences in socioeconomic situations and prior arrest records as well as possible discrimination by prosecutors, judges, or parole authorities.

The notorious 100:1 crack to powder cocaine disparity is one reason for the overrepresentation of Blacks in prison on drug charges. In the early 1980s, crack was an important technological innovation that made the pleasures of cocaine available to poor people at a low price, and the newly established crack markets used violence as an important means of competition. In an attempt to suppress the violence, Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, which imposed a mandatory minimum sentence of five years for possessing five or more grams of crack cocaine and the same sentence for 500 or more
grams of powder cocaine. This resulted in many street-level crack dealers being sent to federal prisons for extended terms, and many states followed suit.

The crack-powder disparity also contributed to great racial disparities in prison, as 85 percent of the people convicted for crack cocaine are Black, whereas only 30 percent of those convicted for powder cocaine offenses are Black. People convicted of crack offenses serve about 50 percent more time than those convicted of powder cocaine offenses. Since 1986, the crack markets largely stabilized and the violence diminished, and so the disparity looked more and more like racial discrimination. However, it took Congress 25 years to reduce the disparity, and then only to a crack to powder ratio of 18:1.

Black underrepresentation in prison for murder is probably a consequence of what has come to be known as “victim discounting,” or punishing more severely for offenses against Whites than against Blacks. Most murders are intraracial, and so Blacks convicted of murder could benefit from this form of racial discrimination. This issue was raised in the McCleskey v. Kemp case as a “disproportionate impact,” but the U.S. Supreme Court refused to act on it.

Solutions

Although it is hard to attribute the 6:1 disproportionate representation of Blacks in prison as attributable entirely to racism in the presence of their differential involvement in the crimes that lead to prison, it is hard to argue that racial discrimination plays no role. There are many opportunities for discrimination to appear, and it is important to root out discrimination wherever it exists.

Part of the solution will be to view the drug epidemic in America as a public health problem rather than a crime problem and deal with that through the public health system accordingly. In addition, policymakers need to recognize the futility of averting drug transactions through deterrence or incapacitation when replacements for drug sellers are available. Incarcerating a rapist removes his rapes from the community, but incarcerating a drug dealer opens the door for a replacement to serve the demand for drugs. Also, it is possible that the replacements represent a greater threat to public safety than the people they replaced; in the crack experience, the replacements were younger and less restrained in using the guns they had to carry to protect themselves from street robbers, and so there was a major rise in homicide with guns by young people as a result. Locking up the dealer does not solve the issue of drug use in society and could well make matters worse.

In addition, we need to facilitate redemption by informing employers that the risk of a new crime drops below that of the general population when the former offender has stayed clean for a reasonable amount of time. Employers who follow such a policy could be protected against due diligence liability by statute. State criminal record repositories can choose not to disseminate such stale criminal record information.

There also is the need to reduce incarceration by dramatically shortening the long sentences and increasing certainty of punishment and celerity or immediacy of response. The HOPE program in Hawaii is a good model. HOPE tests drug-using probationers weekly on a randomly chosen day. Those who fail the test are subject to immediate incarceration for several days. The certainty of the response and its immediacy has been shown to be an effective means of reducing the probationers’ drug abuse and thereby avoids the much greater cost of sending them back to regular incarceration as probation violators.

Part of the solution also involves reducing crime by reducing disadvantage, such as facilitating employment opportunities through education, job skills, and reentry services. This also warrants a focus on the next generation. For example, home visitation by nurses has been shown to be effective in giving young mothers the knowledge and support for raising their children.

The primary challenge involves a willingness to pursue rational and evidence-based policies and to avoid the ideological and discriminatory policies that have driven too many of our actions regarding crime over the past 40 years. The pressure on state government budgets created by the Great Recession represents an important opportunity for convergence in an otherwise highly polarized political environment.

References


Minorities continue to be imprisoned at higher rates than Whites. Disparities along racial lines in arrest and incarceration rates across the country demonstrate how race continues to play a major role in criminal justice decisions. Criminal justice policies tend to be race neutral when taken at face value. However, crime legislation in practice tends to have severe racial consequences that have been the cause of much of the disproportionality in criminal convictions in the United States.

In particular, race continues to be a major factor influencing drug policy. Sentencing tends to be more severe for the use or distribution of drugs that are considered to be used primarily by minorities than drugs considered to be used by Whites. The penalty for the possession or use of crack cocaine, which is largely thought of as a Black drug, is much more punitive than sentencing for the possession of cocaine in its powder form, which is considered to be the drug of choice for Whites and people of higher socioeconomic status.

Marc Mauer
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Mauer frequently lectures before a broad range of national and international audiences, appears regularly on television and radio networks, and is an adjunct faculty member at George Washington University. Mauer is the recipient of the Donald Cressey Award for contributions to criminal justice research, the Alfred Lindesmith Award for drug policy scholarship, and the Maud Booth Award for correctional services.

The Problem

Today, there are more than 900,000 African Americans behind bars. The crime problem in the United States has been defined as an African American problem. It is this belief that has spearheaded most of the legislation around present-day criminal justice and drug policy.

What makes a safe neighborhood and good community?

The factors that make up a good neighborhood have little or nothing to do with the criminal justice system. They may include:

- Good schools
- Opportunities for employment and recreation for children and teens during the summer
- Families with resources to devote to their children
- Neighborhood cohesion

The History of Drug Use

Marijuana: During the 1930s, marijuana was considered to be a drug used by Mexican Americans and the underbelly of society in the racy parts of town. Societal attitudes about marijuana began to shift in the 1960s as Whites began using the drug in large quantities. As the perception of marijuana users began to include Whites and as marijuana became part of popular culture, public outcry for decriminalization of the drug began.

Crack Cocaine: This has been identified as an African American drug and an African American problem. Solutions for dealing with the crack cocaine issue were primarily handled within the criminal justice system. Penalties surrounding the use or distribution of crack cocaine tend to be harsh and extremely punitive.

It would be advantageous to change decisions about which groups go to prison. For those who commit marginal crimes, social services can be offered as an alternative to jail time, given the stigma that is associated with having a criminal record. In addition, it would be helpful to evaluate criminal policy surrounding drug crimes. Because drug use is mainly a public health issue, it should not be expected that the criminal justice system would be effective in solving the nation’s problem with drugs. Increased funds should be allocated for preventative measures that make becoming involved with drugs less attractive to individuals.
Society's Approach to Drug Use

America has a two-tiered approach to problems of drug use, based on socioeconomic status. First, middle-class and upper-middle-class families with access to greater resources do not typically rely on the criminal justice system to deal with issues of drug use by their children. They deal with it as a public health problem and find a program that is suited to help them. If one program is unsuccessful, they have the resources available to seek out other programs. Second, criminal justice resources are used for those believed to have less access to family and community resources.

The Role of Race in the Criminal Justice System

Penalties for crimes dealing with drug use, possession, and distribution are often at the discretion of legislators and law enforcement agencies in a particular area, which can make race a major factor. In addition, race often is used as a qualifier in determinations regarding probation and parole. Race disparities continue to exist in who qualifies for early release from prison.

Further, law enforcement workers may unintentionally make decisions based on racial bias. An example of this occurred in the Washington state juvenile justice system. When practitioners added descriptive information suggesting whether or not a child should be prosecuted for a crime, a majority of their presentence statements for White children suggested that their issues stemmed from environmental factors, such as problems with family and peer groups. For Black children, a majority of the presentence statements suggested that Black children have trouble because of antisocial issues. Environmental problems can be handled with the proper resources’ being made available to the individual and their family, while antisocial personalities cannot be changed simply by providing family resources. Statements such as these can be highly influential in determining whether a child is prosecuted for a crime and his or her length of stay.

Sentencing Policy

Criminal justice policies have a tendency to be very race neutral on the surface, but in practice, they tend to have significant racial effects that could have been predicted at the time they were enacted:

- There are major differences in how crack is penalized as opposed to powder cocaine, and crack is considered to be an African American drug.
- School zone laws that increase the penalty for drug crimes committed around schools inadvertently affect more African Americans because they tend to live in more densely populated areas that contain more schools than those that would be found in suburban or rural areas. New Jersey recently rescinded its school zone law because 97 percent of the people affected were Black or Latino.
- The race of the perpetrator remains a key factor in how death penalty cases are decided.

Further, half of the states have “three strikes” laws that state that after a third felony charge, an offender will receive a minimum sentence of 25 years to life in prison. California has the most stringent of the “three strikes” laws. If your first two felony charges are serious in nature and you receive another felony charge, then you will face a minimum of 25 years to life regardless of the severity of the crime. In California, 29 percent of the prison population is African American and 45 percent of the African Americans in prison are currently serving sentences under the “three strikes” law.

Consequences of Mass Incarceration

The effect of mass incarceration on crime is more modest than policymakers believe. This is particularly so with drug offenses. Research suggests that because of tougher jail sentences, violent crime has seen a reduction of 10–25 percent. If these numbers are true, then three-fourths of crimes have nothing to do with increased incarceration.

However, the effects on individuals, families, and communities are immense. For example, if you have a felony drug conviction, you can be barred for life from applying for:

- Cash assistance
- Food stamps/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Housing assistance/living in public housing
- Federal financial aid/Pell Grants

In addition, some employment opportunities become unavailable for ex-convicts despite their crimes having no particular relationship to the job. It is understandable why you may not want a pedophile working in a day care center. However, it is harder to comprehend why someone with a drug felony cannot be a barber or remove asbestos.

Another large consequence is the disenfranchisement of felons. More than 5 million ex-convicts were unable to vote in the Barack Obama/John McCain presidential election. Of that 5 million, 40 percent (2 million) were African American.

Further, in 48, states you cannot vote if you are incarcerated. Of those 48 states, 35 forbid you to vote if you are on probation or parole. Eleven states do not allow you to vote even after your sentence is complete. In Virginia and Kentucky, if you have a felony conviction, you lose your right to vote for life, despite the severity of the offense. The only way to receive the right to vote again is through a pardon from the governor.
Some of the other consequences of mass incarceration include:

- People with limited education and skills reentering society after stints in prison
- Separation of individuals from their families and communities for several years at a time

**Reasons for Decreasing Crime Rates since the Late 1990s**

The decrease in crime since the late 1990s could be attributed to the healthy economy from 1995 to 2000, the waning of the crack epidemic of the late 1980s and early 1990s, and changing behavior by both law enforcement and families.

**Solutions**

To improve public safety, we need to start with investments in preschool programs and in initiatives that increase high school graduation. In terms of criminal justice solutions, we need to:

- Increase the availability of indigent defense so that low-income defendants can see a public defender before a trial
- Offer social services to those who commit marginal crimes rather than requiring jail time
- Renounce the “war on drugs” by recognizing that the drug problem is a public health issue and not a criminal justice issue
- Allocate more funds on the front end to prevent individuals from becoming involved with drugs in the first place
- Reduce jail sentences by 10 percent and redirect money to the communities with the most people incarcerated to establish neighborhood initiatives to increase public safety
- Invest more in reentry programs for ex-offenders

**Reference**

COMMUNITY RELATIONS:
How Police Interact with Minorities
Police and Minority Communities: A Reconciliation

Presenter: David M. Kennedy, Director of the Center for Crime Prevention and Control and Professor of Anthropology, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York

Moderator: Nathan Harper, Chief of Police, City of Pittsburgh

Gang and drug violence across the nation’s urban centers has increased greatly in recent decades. In many poor and urban communities throughout the United States, the aura of mistrust that exists between community residents and law enforcement continues to be a barrier to eliminating crime and overt drug activity. The relationship between local police and community residents in many neighborhoods has deteriorated to the point that it is almost impossible for the two sides to create solutions without facilitation from outside parties.

It should be a fundamental right for all people to feel secure in the communities in which they live. In order for deeper work around health care, education, economic development, and family support to be effective, neighborhoods have to become safer. Law enforcement has to work harder to change the perception that they are perpetuating the drug problem for their own gain. Community residents need to feel as if

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the police are there to protect and serve their neighborhoods. In addition, there needs to be an increase in social services and employment opportunities to those in need. Preventative measures like workforce development, job readiness, and programs that facilitate youths’ excelling in education are vital to neighborhoods where crime and drug activity are rampant.

Operation Ceasefire (Boston, Mass.)

Around 1995, at the height of the crack epidemic in Boston, there was on average one child a week who was the victim of homicide and at least six people wounded by gunfire. By the time Operation Ceasefire was initiated, the problem of homicides in Boston had been ongoing for at least six years. Boston’s drug and homicide problem was a microcosm of the problem that had been going on in urban neighborhoods across the entire country. The homicide problem was almost exclusively among young Black men.

There was an increase in violence due to the presence of informal neighborhood drug gangs, although few of the killings were drug related. Most of the killings were due to minor disagreements and not based on disputes about drugs or drug turf.

There were approximately 60 drug crews and 1,300–1,500 individuals who belonged to these crews. Out of more than 150 homicides that were researched, 60–70 percent were connected with the drug crews. Those who committed homicide in these cases and the victims of homicide averaged more than 12 prior arrests. One-quarter of those who committed homicide were on probation or parole.

Some of the violence in Boston was due to the culture of violence perpetuated by the media, urban music, and video games. Welfare reform and firearm availability also contributed.

In response to the homicides, Operation Ceasefire was established by the Boston Police Department’s Youth Violence Task Force (Gang Task Force). The operation included the Department of Juvenile Corrections, the Department of Probation and Parole, and several African American community activists and spiritual leaders. Partnerships were created with for-profit businesses in Boston to provide summer jobs to urban youths.

How Did Operation Ceasefire Work?

Prominent members from each gang were placed in a room for a presentation by police, social service providers, and people who represented the community. In the police presentation, the Gang Task Force stated that they would heavily prosecute every member of the gang associated with the next murder in the city. In the social services presentation, agencies offered alternatives to engaging in criminal activity and provided linkages to resources and employment. In the community leaders’ presentations, they spoke about the harm caused when friends and loved ones are murdered or incarcerated for committing murder.

Was Operation Ceasefire Successful?

In the months following the establishment of Operation Ceasefire, homicide was reduced by 65–70 percent. As gang violence in the communities began to wane, street gang workers noted that in order to keep homicides out of the streets, there needed to be more opportunities for employment for gang-affiliated young men. The U.S. Department of Labor provided a large grant to create employment slated for those who were gang affiliated. One of the major factors in the program’s success was that it offered an alternative to jail time for marginal offenders and an opportunity to access resources, like employment and life skills, that may keep individuals from engaging in crime in the future.

Race and Crime

There is a belief that overt drug activity in communities cannot be eradicated because there is a breach in trust between police departments and those living in the neighborhoods they serve. Communities and police cannot work together because each side feels the other is innately corrupt.

Community Perspectives

People in crime-ridden communities have a deep belief that the police will do nothing to increase safety. A majority of those in the hardest hit communities believe that it is a deliberate conspiracy by law enforcement to use the law to do them damage. The suspicion is that government is bringing drugs into their neighborhoods or that the government could stop it if they chose to do so. They believe that the drug epidemic is perpetuated by law enforcement so that they can keep their jobs and that crack was created by the government and purposely unleashed into their communities. They believe that their children are being exploited by law enforcement to fill jails and boost the economic standing of those who work in the prison system. They believe that the police constantly harass residents without just cause.

Poor treatment by law enforcement makes the community silent and uncooperative. If you are a young Black male living in New York City, you have a 90 percent chance of being stopped and frisked by the police.
The Black community has a long history of being exploited and victimized by the government and law enforcement, including:

- Slave capturing
- Slavery enforcement
- Establishment of the Black Codes to take away the gains of the Civil War
- Enforcement of Jim Crow Laws
- Police brutality during the civil rights movement

However, contrary to what community residents may accept as true, there have been many community efforts to stop violence that have been initiated by the police. In many cities, law enforcement has sought the help of community leaders, churches, and social service agencies to create programs that would be effective in reducing violent crime and making neighborhoods safer.

**Police Perspectives**

Law enforcement in areas with high rates of crime tends to believe that many of the people who live in these communities benefit financially from crime and drug trade. They feel that community residents too often turn a blind eye to criminal offenses and drug activity in their neighborhoods and that residents are too unlikely to assist them in enforcing laws and identifying crime. In addition, police believe that individuals who engage in crimes like drug dealing and homicide are sociopaths who care little about the lives of the people they endanger, the community, or even their family and loved ones.

**Solutions**

There needs to be an increase in social services and employment opportunities for those in need. In order for deeper community work to occur around health care, education, economic development, and family support, neighborhoods have to be safer places to live. Overt drug markets need to be eliminated. Law enforcement has to actively change the perception that it is perpetuating the drug problem for its own gains. Communities need to know that the police care.

The following examples describe situations in which police and community members cooperated to reduce crime.

**Drug Market Intervention with Informal Social Control (High Point, N.C.)**

In High Point, N.C., law enforcement engages in video surveillance of low-level drug deals. The mothers of the people involved in the taped drug sale are contacted and warned that their children will be placed in jail if their involvement in crime continues. The mothers agree to work with police and social services to keep their children out of trouble. The individuals involved in the drug sale are told that despite having the evidence to convict them with a felony, the police will drop the charges if they agree to change their ways. If the person caught becomes a repeat offender, the original warrant will be signed and the person will be prosecuted. As a result of the Drug Market Intervention, there was a 40 percent reduction in homicide and violent crime.

**Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV in Cincinnati, Ohio)**

In 2007, homicide numbers in Cincinnati, Ohio, reached an all-time high. The specific groups of people and/or gang members that were associated with the most homicides were identified. In addition, rivalries and ill will between specific gangs also were recognized. It was discovered that less than 3/10 of 1 percent of the city’s population was responsible for 75 percent of the killings that were occurring in Cincinnati. The Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) targeted the most active crime offenders within these gang populations because homicide tended to be carried out by those with longer and more serious criminal histories. The police, community activists, social service agencies, and potential employers presented these individuals with the most criminal offenses with the opportunity to reform by taking advantage of the resources that agencies would provide to boost them to self-sufficiency. Conversely, if there was a murder of an individual that happened to be a rival member of the gang that they were affiliated with, the police would prosecute them and all other known members of their gang for all their crimes to the fullest extent of the law, no questions asked. After CIRV was initiated, Cincinnati experienced a reduction in homicide.
Racial profiling is a tool that is used in all segments of law enforcement, from small local police departments to large federal agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The use of racial profiling does not always derive from overt racism on the part of police departments. For the most part, law enforcement agencies rely on racial profiling because they assume that it can help them weed out criminals more effectively. Many in law enforcement subscribe to the notion that race and ethnicity can be reliable indicators of criminal and noncriminal behavior. Although the focus of racial profiling has shifted with the occurrence of different events in America’s history, the underlying belief that race plays a role in why some individuals engage in illegal behavior has been unrelenting.

Over the past few decades, racial profiling has manifested itself in law enforcement in three distinct waves:

• The “war on drugs” during the 1970s and the 1980s
• Targeting people of Middle Eastern descent after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001
• Targeting Latinos in recent anti-immigration campaigns

The problem with racial profiling is that it is a highly inefficient method of conducting police work. The ratio...
of uncovering criminal behavior is relatively low when race is used to determinate stops and searches. It would be more effective if law enforcement agencies placed more resources in learning the actual behavior of criminals rather than falsely assuming someone is a criminal based on his or her race.

It also is often the case that members of a particular race or ethnicity may be the best people to inform law enforcement of the nuances of criminal behavior in their communities. If law enforcement preempts the opportunity for exchange of information with a particular community by assuming that each one of its members is possibly guilty based on his or her race or ethnicity, it eliminates the chance to gain valuable information about and observe behavior of real criminals.

The Problem

Race and ethnicity often are used as predictors of criminal activity by many law enforcement agencies. Racial profiling is defined as the use of racial or ethnic appearance as one factor, among others, to decide which persons should be stopped, questioned, and/or searched.

Racial profiling is based on false hypotheses:

- Using race or ethnicity to decide who to stop, question, search, etc., will help police find more bad guys per stop because it “ups the odds” by focusing police on the group that presents the danger.
- It is a good tool for fighting crime.

There have been three waves of racial profiling. First, in the 1980s and 1990s, law enforcement used profiles that included race and ethnic appearance to find drug couriers on highways and roads. African Americans and Latinos were targeted, and for them it was a universal experience to be stopped for trivial offenses and asked for consent to search. Police denied that racial profiling existed and assumed it was just criminals playing the “race card.” As data emerged that racial profiling was “real, not imagined” (N.J. A.G. Interim Report, 1999), police changed the argument and said that racial profiling is “about effective crime fighting” and is the most effective way to fight crime.

The second wave was using profiling after September 11, 2001, to fight terrorism. Profiling was used to stop, question, and search Muslims and people of Middle Eastern descent at airports and national borders in an effort to find potential terrorist attackers. There was strong public support for this, even among African Americans and Latinos. Before the 9/11 attacks, 80 percent of Americans understood what profiling was about and agreed that it was wrong and should be stopped. After the attacks, more than 60 percent of Americans felt racial profiling was acceptable as long as it was around airports and targeted Arabs.

The assumptions behind the profiling were that:

- The threat comes from Muslim men in the Middle East.
- We know who the enemy is.
- It’s a matter of probabilities.
- Therefore, it just makes obvious common sense to use a profile focusing on men from the Middle East and Muslim countries.

The third wave, using profiling in immigration, started around 2004 and included rebranding immigration measures as national security issues. The two main policies adopted were:

- Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which authorized the federal government to enter into agreements with state and local law enforcement agencies and to designate officers to carry out immigration law enforcement functions.
- Arizona’s S.B. 1070 law, which allows the state police to perform checks on a person if they have “reasonable suspicion” that they may be an illegal immigrant. Police also are allowed to arrest individuals for not carrying ID papers.

It is possible to test the hypothesis underlying racial profiling, which is that using race/ethnicity to decide when to act will help police to catch more “bad guys” per stop. Using data from law enforcement highway stops, it is possible to determine the “hit rates” along racial lines of finding those engaging in criminal activity. The steps involved in testing the hypothesis are:

Step 1: Does police department X stop/search by race or ethnicity?

Step 2: If so, at what rate do officers find evidence of criminal activity when they stop/search each racial/ethnic group?

Step 3: Do results support the profiling hypothesis?

In an effort to test the racial profiling hypothesis, the New York State Attorney General ordered a study of all stops and frisks registered by the New York City Police Department after the police murder of an unarmed man, Amadou Diallo. Using data from the first quarter of 1998 through the first quarter of 1999 (n=175k), the study found city police were engaged in racial profiling:

- Latinos were 22–23 percent of the population and 33–34 percent of the people getting stopped and frisked.
- Blacks were 25 percent of the population and 53 percent of those people who were stopped and frisked.
- Whites were 43 percent of the population and 12 percent of the people who were stopped and frisked.
The New York City Police Department suggested a number of alternative explanations for these disparities in an attempt to justify racial profiling:

- These disparities are the result of crime reports, and Blacks and Latinos are simply reported as offenders more often. (Actually, the majority of the stops and frisks were police initiated and not as the result of the report of a particular offender of a certain race.)
- Higher-crime neighborhoods, where more minorities live, have more police present; therefore, those citizens are more likely to be stopped and frisked. (Actually, the data showed that most of the stops and frisks of Blacks and Latinos took place in low-crime, predominantly White areas instead of high-crime minority areas.)

The study also found that racial profiling is inefficient in that police focused their stops and frisks on Blacks and Latinos even though stopping and frisking Whites produced higher hit rates (rates of police discovering criminal activity during a stop and frisk):

- Whites: 12.6 percent
- Latinos: 11.6 percent (The difference between Latino and White “hit rates” is 10 percent.)
- Blacks: 10.6 percent (The difference between Black and White “hit rates” is 20 percent.)

Solutions

- Intelligence collection, analysis, and use: In order to understand the behavior of criminals and terrorists, we need to foster relationships with the communities (such as Muslim communities) in which they may thrive and not the race of people.
- Incorporate multilayered systems in law enforcement to recognize inconsistencies with stops and actual hit rates.
- Don’t waste resources by engaging in police tactics that do little or nothing to uncover criminal activity.
- Don’t just grab for the conventional wisdom. Be hesitant to buy into ideas just because they are assumed to work. Many in law enforcement engage in profiling because they assume that Blacks and Latinos are the targets because they engage in criminal activity more often.
- Question the assumptions.

References


Racial Profiling: Empirical Research and Policy Implications

Presenter: Steven Rafael, Professor in the Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley

Moderator: Sala Udin, President and CEO, Coro Center for Civic Leadership in Pittsburgh

Racial profiling continues to be used in assessing whether or not police should stop and frisk individuals, despite its inefficiency. This use of race in the decision to make a stop may or may not be fueled by racial prejudice. Blacks and Latinos frequently experience higher rates of traffic stops than Whites, even when they have a much lower percentage of residents in a particular area than Whites.

Law enforcement agencies often explain racial profiling as the result of higher rates of criminal activity in neighborhoods where more ethnic and racial minorities reside. To dispute police department claims that racial profiling is just part of the job and to create more effective arguments against racial profiling at all levels, there needs to be more statistical research into how profiling plays out within smaller segments of society. One method of research that may be beneficial is to disaggregate racial profiling statistics within cities. By doing this, we can discover if there are differences in rates with regard to being stopped in parts of town that are majority White in comparison to being stopped in parts that are majority Black. Information on the stops and arrests of single officers in cities or neighborhoods can be researched to uncover disproportionalities at an individual level. In addition, it would be useful to study the correlates of unsuccessful searches by individual police officers. This type of research may uncover how productive the stops and frisks of police officers are and whether people are being arrested for frivolous reasons that could have been avoided.

The Problem

Racial profiling occurs when race exerts an independent impact on the likelihood that an officer stops a motorist or pedestrian. These stops:

- May be driven by racial prejudice
- May be the product of statistical discrimination, which is when an individual takes the average characteristic of a group and assigns it to an individual when making a choice.

There is usually a lot of disproportionality along racial lines in regard to the number of people stopped by the police:

- In research data from Maryland (circa 1990s) of drivers along the Interstate 95 corridor, 63 percent of the people stopped were Black and 29 percent were White.
- In Missouri in 2001, Blacks and Latinos accounted for 75 percent of all people stopped.
- In St. Paul, Minn., 27 percent of all traffic stops were of Black drivers.
- In Oakland, Calif., 48 percent of all traffic stops were of Black drivers.

Cause: A Police Officer’s Racial Profiling Equation

It is useful to think of a police officer’s decision about racial profiling as an equation:

- The officer sets a threshold of factors that determine whether he chooses to stop and frisk an individual.
- A predetermined numeric threshold of police interaction with Whites is used as the benchmark in this equation. If the crime index is at or below that predetermined numeric threshold set for Whites, the officer may choose not to stop an individual. If the crime index surpasses the numeric threshold for Whites, then an officer may choose to stop and frisk that person.
- If the officer perceives that there is a relationship with criminality that is independent of everything else, then he will hold the Black citizen to a lower threshold.
- If the officer is able to accurately estimate the relationship between race and crime, he will stop African Americans more frequently due to statistical

Steven Raphael

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Raphael’s research focuses on the economics of poverty, immigration, crime, and racial inequality. He has conducted extensive research on American corrections systems, racial labor market disparities, and economic competition between the foreign born and native born in the United States and other national settings. Raphael also is the editor in chief of the academic journal Industrial Relations.
discrimination. He also will be stopping more innocent African Americans at higher rates. This reaction may not be due to prejudice or erroneous beliefs about Blacks. If the officer is actually prejudiced, then the number of stops he has that were based on his perceived relationship between race and criminality will be in excess of the actual relationship between race and criminality. Both prejudiced and nonprejudiced officers can engage in racial profiling.

**Strategies to Fight Racial Profiling and Statistical Discrimination in Court**

If you were trying to win a court case against racial profiling that was not overtly racist in nature (statistical discrimination), then you would have to use statistical arguments. You would need to show that the probability of being stopped for Blacks is higher than the probability of being stopped for Whites:

- If the ratio is equal to or less than one, then there is no racial profiling toward Blacks.
- If the ratio is greater than one, racial profiling exists.

The problem that many researchers face with this argument is that this scenario is not generally observed. If you divide the probability of being Black and stopped by the police by the probability of being Black in a population and then divide the probability of being White and stopped by the probability of being White in a population, then you can properly use the White probability of being stopped as the benchmark for proving that Blacks are racially profiled.

**Examples of Using Data to Create Benchmarks for Racial Profiling**

First, census data can provide a benchmark. For example, Blacks might be 12 percent of the population surrounding a highway but 26 percent of traffic stops. This argument could be rejected, because the resident population is not necessarily the same as the population of drivers on the interstate.

Second, the race of licensed drivers could be the benchmark. For example, traffic stops of African Americans were greater than the proportion of licensed drivers in North Carolina.

Third, the location of traffic accidents can be used in relation to the race of the drivers involved in accidents but not at fault to estimate the population at risk of Blacks’ being racially profiled. This has been found to show disproportionality in the stops of African Americans.

Fourth, it is important to observe the race of people stopped and reported by the police for running red lights. Camera footage has provided evidence of racial disproportionality in the traffic stops of Blacks and Latinos.

Fifth, disproportionality of traffic stops should increase during daylight hours, when the race of drivers is actually visible, as opposed to nighttime hours, when drivers are less visible. Use of this method in Oakland, Calif., found that African Americans constituted 55 percent of total traffic stops, 45 percent of daytime traffic stops, and 65 percent of nighttime traffic stops.

If there is no disproportionality once you properly benchmark crime, then police are not engaging in racial profiling by stopping and arresting more Blacks. If there is disproportionality in stops and arrest, racial profiling exists. There tends to be more disproportionality in searches after a person is stopped. One percent of those stopped are actually searched. Blacks are six to seven times more likely to be searched when stopped than Whites.

**Problem with Omitted Variables**

Are there other legitimate factors that correlate with race but do not represent an explicit decision by police to disproportionately stop Blacks at higher rates? One such factor is that people may be subject to warrantless search because they are on probation or parole. Second, police services may be unequally allocated to neighborhoods. If services are allocated in proportion to the distribution of emergency calls, some police departments argue that they are just stopping people in relation to where they are deployed. If this argument is true, than one question that can be raised to challenge its legitimacy is whether there is overpolicing in minority areas.

**Solutions/Areas for Future Research**

There needs to be more research into whether or not people respond to differential policing by offending less. If “driving while Black” is true and Blacks change their driving behavior due to racial profiling, in what other ways does racial profiling change the behavior of Blacks and Latinos?

There need to be more efforts to disaggregate racial profiling statistics within cities. Are there differences in being stopped in White parts of town in comparison to Black parts of town?

Further, information on stops and arrests can be researched by individual officers in cities or neighborhoods. Are there officers who are prone to more frivolous stops than others?

In addition, studying the correlates of unsuccessful searches can be beneficial in managing police resources and rooting out racial profiling. Addressing the following types of car searches by police that are most often unproductive (i.e., yield no illegal items) could reduce racial profiling:

- Stops for mechanical problems that are unsuccessful in finding criminal activity
• Searches related to reports of resisting arrest (arresting people just because the officer thought they were being difficult)
• Searches related to reports of interfering with the duty of the police officer

There also needs to be research on how racially charged abuses and time on the force correlates.

References


MENTAL HEALTH REPORT

This report summarizes information provided by those speakers who focused on race and mental health. The value of this report is that it provides access to the extensive and detailed information disseminated at the conference. This information will be particularly helpful to community and policy leaders interested in gaining a better understanding of racial disparities in mental health conditions and finding effective strategies for improving these conditions.

RACE in AMERICA
Restructuring Inequality

MENTAL HEALTH

The Fifth of Seven Reports on the Race in America Conference
June 3–6, 2010

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
CENTER ON RACE AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

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Disclaimer:
This postconference Race in America report includes detailed summaries of the presentations and subsequent discussions that took place. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work or Center on Race and Social Problems.
MENTAL HEALTH: Finding Solutions to the Problems Minorities Face

Improving the Mental Health of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders

**Presenter:** D.J. Ida, Executive Director, National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association

**Moderator:** Christopher T. Moore, Producer and Host, WQED Multimedia Pittsburgh

Communities of color bear a disproportionately high burden of disability from behavioral health disorders. The burden cannot be attributable only to greater frequency or increased severity in these populations. Rather, it is a lack of care, and in many instances, people of color are the recipients of poor-quality care. Even when communities of color receive mental health services, they are usually of substandard quality and not equal to those of the White population. Failure to provide quality health care has far-reaching psychological and economic side effects. The U.S. health care system continually fails to provide mental health care that is culturally competent to communities of color. Also, the system doesn’t recognize the correlation between health and mental health, and the two issues tend to be serviced separately.

(Continued on page 96)
The Problem

Minority Youth and Mental Health Care

One in five Latino girls has attempted suicide. Black and Latino youth are referred for help with mental health issues at the same rate as the general population. However, they are less likely to receive mental health care due to the lack of quality care that is available to them in their schools and community. Also, African American and Latino children have a higher number of unmet needs when it comes to receiving proper medications.

Cost of Mental Health Disorders

Mental health disorders are the leading cause of disability in the United States based on the “burden of disease,” which is the impact of a health problem in terms of financial cost, mortality, morbidity, or other indicators. Severe mental illness costs the United States $192 billion in lost wages. This exceeds the gross revenue of 499 of the Fortune 500 companies. People with serious mental health issues die 25 years earlier than the general population. This is due primarily to health conditions that have a mental health component for which the individual did not receive proper medical care.

Causes

Barriers to Quality Health Care

• Poor Communication and Lack of Access: Language barriers exist in many ethnic and immigrant communities. In addition, medical professionals often use medical terminology and jargon that are perplexing to patients. The inability of those needing care to speak the language and the failure of the medical system to provide proper accommodations to those who don’t speak English perpetuate the lack of access to health care that many in these communities face.

• Economics: The Mental Health Parity Act, which mandated that financial or treatment limits for mental health services can be no more restrictive than financial or treatment limits for medical or surgical benefits offered in the same plan, was passed in October of 2008. This law neglected to guarantee the quality of services. Parity in relation to the poor health care that communities of color receive is of little or no benefit.

• Lack of Identification or Acknowledgment of Mental Health Issues: People in communities of color are much less likely than others to seek help for mental health issues out of feelings of shame or fear of being stigmatized.

• Fear of Deportation: Illegal immigrants may not seek health care because they fear that health care workers will alert authorities about their unlawful residence in the United States.

• Lack of Effective Providers: There are not enough people of color or culturally competent individuals working within the health care system

• Lack of Quality Evidence-based Research: People of color often receive poorer health care because there is a lack of research showing how mental health issues affect their communities specifically. A majority of mental health research is conducted focusing primarily on Whites, and all other minorities are typically grouped together as non-Whites.

• A Fragmented Health Care Delivery System: Mental and physical health often are treated as separate issues within the health care system. Many people suffering from physical health issues have undiagnosed mental health issues they may be contributing to their condition or vice versa.

The Need to Improve Workforce Diversity

Poor communication and lack of access are due in part to lack of diversity in the mental health workforce. While ethnic minorities constitute 30 percent of the population, they make up 7 percent of psychologists, 8 percent of social workers, 5 percent of psychiatric nurses, 17.4 percent of counselors, 4.5 percent of family and marriage counselors, and 5 percent of school psychologists. It is not known what percentage of the minorities in these professions has bilingual capabilities.

Asian Americans and Mental Health Issues

Asian Americans often experience a lack of help and resources in dealing with mental health issues because there is a deficiency of data to prove that there are problems in their communities. Asian American and Pacific Islander females, have the highest suicide rate of any ethnic group ages 15–24 as well as over the age of 65. Native Hawaiian youth have significantly higher rates of suicide. Seventeen percent of Asian American boys ages 5–12 suffer physical abuse compared to 8 percent of White boys. Thirty percent of Asian American girls ages 5–12 report depressive symptoms. Additionally, more than 40 percent of Vietnamese and Cambodian women experience domestic violence.

Evidence-based Practice

Evidence-based research has become one of the critical factors in determining which programs receive funding. Unfortunately, research on the negative effects and determinants of mental health issues in communities of color is extremely lacking. Data affect resources, but it takes resources to get the data. Many communities of color lack the resources to do rigorous data collection and research.
Of the 7,670 individuals included in clinical trials for major depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia, only 1 percent of the participants was identified as non-White. For example, of the 1,675 children included in the studies on attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children, only 1 percent was identified as Black, Latino, or Asian American. Less than half of the 378 National Institute of Mental Health-funded clinical trials from 1995 to 2004 provided any information on specific ethnic composition.

**Solutions**

- Remove the five-year ban to receive benefits for immigrants who are in the United States legally.
- Pass the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, which provides provisional permanent residency to undocumented students of good moral character who graduate from U.S. schools.
- Recruit and retain people of color as health care professionals.
- Require cultural competency training as part of the licensing and recertification process for health care professionals.
- Mandate mental health and cultural competency training for teachers.
- Develop certification and reimbursement rates for mental health interpreters.
- Improve data collection when researching mental health issues.
- Improve housing, education, employment, public safety, and access to quality health care in communities of color.

**How to Create a Culturally Competent Workforce**

Cultural competency is a key component to improving the quality of health and mental health care for racial and ethnic minorities. A culturally competent workforce requires training and ongoing support. It encompasses more than just speaking the language of the group of people that you are serving.

There are five categories of cultural competency:

- The ability to self-assess: learning to take account of the beliefs and biases we may have toward the groups with whom we work
- The ability to effectively connect with others: gaining the ability to listen, understand, and respect your patients; taking the time to learn and understand the body language and nuances of someone else’s culture
- The ability to perform a culturally appropriate and sensitive diagnosis
- The ability to develop a culturally responsive intervention
- The ability to understand systems

**References**


Current Race-related Mental Health Problems and Their Solutions

Presenter: King Davis, Robert Lee Sutherland Endowed Chair in Mental Health and Social Policy, University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work

Moderator: Ralph Bangs, Associate Director, Center on Race and Social Problems, University of Pittsburgh

There is a central policy dilemma in mental health that is based on long-term differences in access to and use of services by race, ethnicity, language, class, religion, gender, insured status, region, and diagnosis. The scientific cause of mental illness continues to be elusive for all groups and has remained so from the year 1760 to the present. In addition, the current trend in dealing with many of those who suffer from mental illness has been to deinstitutionalize them from asylums and mental hospitals and transinstitutionalize them into the criminal justice system. In addition, many people suffering from mental health conditions die several decades before those without a mental health problem because they have underlying physical health conditions that never receive care. Numerous poor communities and communities of color face so many intense social problems, ranging from housing issues to discrimination, that dealing with matters of mental health often becomes an impertinent issue that receives little to no attention. When the people of these communities make the decision to seek care, they often lack access to medical attention or are forced to deal with substandard care with a poorly trained workforce and poorly equipped facilities. In order for mental health conditions within communities of color to change, new mental health facilities need to be built, linkages between independently operated facilities need to be made with general hospitals to monitor both physical and mental health, and a policy that provides federal insurance support to the mentally ill should be enacted.

The Problem

In 1955, there were 600,000 people in mental institutions around the United States. At that time, there were 559,000 beds in mental hospitals to accommodate the mentally ill. Since then, the number of available beds to accommodate the mentally ill in hospitals across the nation has decreased by 500,000. There are currently only 22 beds per 100,000 people available to service the mentally ill. Sixteen percent of the prison population in the United States, or 310,000 people, have been diagnosed as having a mental illness.

In 1955, there were practically no homeless people with a diagnosis of mental illness in the United States. Today, it is estimated that more than 200,000 homeless individuals are suffering from mental illness or severe mental illness.

In 2004, there were 1.4 million people admitted to psychiatric hospitals in the United States with mental illness as the primary diagnosis, and 7.1 million were admitted with mental health issues as a secondary diagnosis. Of those primary diagnoses, 730,000 were for depression, 300,000 for schizophrenia, 131,000 for cognitive disorder, 76,000 for anxiety, and 4,000 for issues with personality.

Mortality and Mental Illness

People with diagnosed mental health issues tend to die 25–32 years sooner than those without mental health issues. Thirty to 40 percent of excess or premature deaths from those suffering from mental illness come from suicide. There also is increased morbidity and mortality from metabolic disorders, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, hypertension, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), obesity, infectious diseases, psychiatric medications, low mental health literacy, diagnostic errors, and the absence of primary care. Adults receiving treatment in behavioral health care settings tend to have major health issues, and these problems are rarely diagnosed.
The Null Hypothesis (Deinstitutionalization)

1968–present:

The Economic Burden of Mental Illness

The direct cost of mental illness in 2002 was $317 billion in direct and indirect costs. This figure does not include the additional costs of incarceration, homelessness, morbidity, and early mortality.

Causes

The United States has had three prevailing hypotheses regarding mental health.

1760–1860: The Immunity Hypothesis (no services for people of color): In the 1700s, persons who suffered from mental illness often were described as violent individuals or criminals. They often were homeless and, subsequently, very costly to the local parishes. Because local citizens were growing more angry with and wary of the mentally ill, the decision was made to establish institutions for those with any kind of mental disorder. They also decided to create a policy to segregate the mentally ill by diagnosis and race. This policy was based on the notion that Blacks, other groups of color, women, and poor Whites were immune to mental illness because it was thought to derive from the stress of owning and operating property. The implications of this hypothesis were that these groups of people were not in need of any services. This immunity hypothesis was the school of thought from 1760 to 1860. In 1840, if you were a freed Black person who developed a mental illness, you could be admitted to the first institution for the mentally ill in the New World as long as it did not displace a White person. The first asylums for the mentally ill were basically established for wealthy White men. Their goal was to remove them from their stressful environments and provide treatment so they could recover.

1860–1968: Segregated Services by Race: One of the prevailing hypotheses was that Blacks were considered to be at extreme risk of developing mental illness because of freedom. It was assumed that their inability to deal with freedom, living in Northern states, and concentration in urban locales would cause African Americans to have extraordinarily high rates of mental illness. Between 1860 and 1968, the proportion of persons in the African American community diagnosed with severe mental illness was significantly greater than any other population in the United States. In the 1860s, it was believed that the numbers of mentally ill would skyrocket after emancipation. In 1868, the Central Lunatic Asylum for the Colored Insane in Virginia was created so that Blacks could be treated separately from Whites. It was the first institution created specifically for Blacks in the world. Native Americans also were allowed to be treated at this facility.

1968–present: The Null Hypothesis (Deinstitutionalization): One of the current hypotheses about mental health is that no significant difference by race exists in either the risk or the frequency of most mental illnesses. More and more asylums have been closed across the nation, and the movement to integrate the mentally ill back into society was initiated. One outcome has been a transinstitutionalization of those with mental health issues into the criminal justice system. Many of the people occupying prisons in the United States are people who are diagnosed with mental illness or severe mental illness.

The problem of mental illness often is viewed as miniscule in terms of the other kinds of issues and social problems that occur in poor communities. Many low-income communities and communities of color face issues involving asset accumulation, housing/homelessness, voting patterns, jail and prison reentry, being uninsured, literacy, HIV/AIDS, and domestic violence. Problems with mental health issues often are so invisible or secondary within the community that the community delays seeking help. This is probably due to low levels of mental health literacy or mental health issues not being the most prevailing issues in their lives. In the African American community, there can be a delay of up to 30 years after the onset of symptoms before seeking services. During these 30 years, churches and ministers tend to be the primary source of care for mental health issues.

Solutions

All state mental health hospitals, particularly those built prior to 1995, need to be closed. Only the more recent hospitals should be allowed to operate. Also, there needs to be a linkage created between these facilities and general hospitals.

Freestanding psychiatric hospitals and institutions for mental disease (IMDs) are excluded from reimbursement for psychiatric care. This exclusion should be eliminated with the condition that IMDs create linkages to general hospitals.

All general hospitals in a community, or some consortium of those, should be required to provide inpatient mental health care. Psychiatric care cannot be reimbursed by Medicaid in state hospitals, but it can be reimbursed if the person was in psychiatric treatment in a general hospital.

All community mental health centers should be eliminated. The centers should be merged with federally qualified health centers.

There should be federal insurance support for anyone with a diagnosis of schizophrenia. Furthermore, there needs to be a national long-term care policy for the mentally ill.

Integrated care should be provided through strategies such as colocation, collaborative care, or enhanced training for people in primary care. Medical care should be provided to all people with mental illness. Integrated care should include health, mental health, and social problem issues. Mental health professionals should work with clergy to encourage referrals to mental health professionals.
FROM THE START: Identifying Disparities in Children’s and Adults’ Mental Health

The White House or the Jail House: The Mental Health Trajectories of African American Boys

Presenter: Oscar A. Barbarin III, L. Richardson and Emily Preyer Bicentennial Distinguished Professor for Strengthening Families, School of Social Work, and Senior Investigator, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Moderator: Marcia Sturdivant, Deputy Director, Allegheny County Department of Human Services, and Administrator, Office of Children, Youth and Families

African American boys tend to have a cross-section of the kinds of dilemmas, strains, and vulnerabilities that result from race and gender. By the time African American boys reach adolescence, they are disproportionately represented among children in special education, particularly in classrooms of behaviorally and emotionally disturbed children. The rate of suicide among African American males is increasing rapidly. There is a disproportionately high rate of incarceration for African American males beginning at age 14. Many African American men are marred by the social consequences of incarceration. In addition, African American men with mental health issues often are funneled through prisons. There continues to be a close link between the African American males who are associated with the criminal justice system and mental health issues, learning disabilities, and limited

Oscar A. Barbarin III

Oscar A. Barbarin III joined the University of Michigan faculty in 1979 and was named professor emeritus in 2001. Currently, he is the L. Richardson and Emily Preyer Bicentennial Distinguished Professor for Strengthening Families in the School of Social Work and senior investigator at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

A productive researcher and scholar, Barbarin collaborated on several books, including *Childhood Cancer and the Family: Meeting the Challenge of Stress and Social Support; Children with Cancer: School Experiences and Views of Parents, Educators, Adolescents, and Physicians;* and *Institutional Racism and Community Competence.* He also has published numerous articles in leading professional journals.

He currently is involved in a longitudinal study of the effects of family life and publicly sponsored pre-K programs on early socioemotional and academic development. He also is interested in the effects of early childhood intervention and the etiology of achievement and underachievement in ethnic minority children.

Marcia M. Sturdivant

Marcia M. Sturdivant is deputy director of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services and administrator of the nationally recognized Office of Children, Youth and Families, the second-largest child welfare agency in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Sturdivant received her doctorate in educational and developmental psychology from the University of Pittsburgh, where she is an adjunct faculty member in the School of Social Work, and she holds a master’s degree in criminology and correctional science from the University of Detroit. Sturdivant also is an assistant professor in the Department of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences at Point Park University, where she received her undergraduate education.

President of the Pittsburgh affiliate of the National Black Child Development Institute, Sturdivant is a renowned consultant and popular workshop presenter. An expert in program administration, policy development, program evaluation, and cultural competency, she lectures extensively on both the local and national level on child maltreatment, racism and its effect on child development, family group decision making, spirituality, and culturally based intervention strategies. A recognized leader in the field of child welfare, education, and developmental psychology, she was an invited participant and research panelist at the Oxford University Educational Roundtable in Oxford, England.
education. There currently are more than 800,000 Black males between the ages of 20 and 50 in the prison system. African American youth between the ages of 14 and 18 make up more than 60 percent of the population of incarcerated youth, despite being only 10 percent of the nation’s population. The incarceration rate for Black males is 48.3 per 1,000, compared to only 8.5 per 1,000 for White males.

African American males also tend to have higher rates of morbidity, mortality, and premature death; greater rates of unemployment; and higher proportions of marginalization from society. Some measures that can be taken to ensure brighter futures for African American boys and students from all other backgrounds would be to promote the health and well-being of the parents who raise them; encourage mental health through academic and social competence; and incorporate more African American males as teachers in schools, especially at the early childhood level.

The Problem

Conduct Issues in African American Men

A majority of the mental health issues that African American males are diagnosed with are associated with conduct. Although there are many mental health disorders that are biological, genetic, or neurological in nature, conduct disorders largely are socially determined. Conduct issues are less likely to be caused by underlying neurological issues and more likely to be caused by a combination of experience and social issues. Mental health diagnosis for conduct issues usually derives from a social construct that defines people as problematic once they fall out of line with some social norm.

Causes

Vulnerability of Boys Entering School

Young boys are more vulnerable in some areas of development than girls. Boys under the age of 6 tend to have delayed language abilities, are more socially immature, have more difficulty with self-regulation, and have a lower propensity for action than girls. With a lower level of vocabulary, boys often come to school less ready to read than girls.

Boys on average have fewer fine motor skills than girls under the age of 6. In addition, boys under the age of 6 have more difficulty regulating their attention and behavior.

Responses by Educators to Boy Behavior

The above issues tend to be magnified in the eyes of educators in reference to African American boys, making them subject to punishment, negative labeling as poorly adjusted, special education placement, and grade retention more frequently and routinely. The social processes carried out by educators that punish boys for these vulnerabilities diminish the excitement that young boys have for school and also can be the cause for low-grade depression in boys because of the amount of failure that they experience.

White boys are typically characterized as being high-strung in school. African American boys are usually thought to be less able to concentrate and more disobedient. Although most boys come into schools with the same vulnerabilities, it is often misconstrued that Black boys are less well behaved and less apt to learn than White boys.

African American boys often are viewed as men rather than children in school. The loud active play that most boys exhibit is misconstrued as aggression. Their assertive responses get miscommunicated as challenges to authority, and their fear-induced posturing often is misinterpreted as being menacing or dangerous. Educators consequently tend to lower academic expectations and have more harsh and punitive responses to African American boys.

Disadvantaged Schools

The schools that poor and ethnic minority children attend tend to be disadvantaged in the following ways, which contribute to behavior, education, and mental health problems:

- High concentrations of ethnic minority poor children
- Peers who have below-average skills
- Teachers who are less experienced
- Teachers who have low performance expectations
- More danger
- Poorer facilities, including fewer books and science labs
- Fewer music, art, and drama rooms

Often, there also is a gap between the skills boys require and the ability of their learning institution to accommodate their needs.

Social Development of Incarcerated Adolescents

Most incarcerated adolescents had a typical early development, but at some point they may have experienced some type of trauma in early childhood (e.g., disruption in family
life). They also often have unremediated learning difficulties. A majority of incarcerated adolescents grew up in poorer communities that were in transition, especially with an influx of poorer people with fewer resources. These boys also tended to have families that were unable to transmit a legacy of spirituality, and these boys often became disconnected from extended families.

_Psychological Stressors_  

**Depression in the Home**  

More than 40 percent of African American mothers suffer from depression. More than 70 percent of African American children are being raised in single-parent, female-headed households. On average, African American children have little contact with men in their daily life.

**Solutions**  

The mental health of African American boys can be promoted through academic and social development. This requires:

- Warm, demanding parenting
- Nurturing school environments
- Safe, health-promoting communities
- Character/moral/spiritual development

We should begin by doing things to promote the health and well-being of parents. It is imperative to focus on or develop goals for parents that will help them to be nurturing. The goals can include health goals and career goals.

Parents should promote the development of language and higher-order thinking skills for young children. This should include:

- Talking, reading to, and having fun with the child
- Using thoughtful rather than reactive discipline
- Addressing problems directly but in affirming ways
- Raising the child to take pride in family and ethnic identity and cultural heritage
- Guiding the child to be caring and responsible  

Parents also should be teachers to their children by:

- Giving children ways of interpreting things that occur in their lives
- Answering their questions

- Expanding the knowledge that they already have  
  (in early childhood education, this technique is called scaffolding)
- Supporting
- Directing
- Minimizing criticism while providing explicit direction

Schools can promote the development of African American boys by:

- Employing more African American males as teachers in schools, especially at the early childhood level
- Acknowledging the challenge and promise of African American boys
- Because a large percentage of the teaching force is White women, developing innovative methods of training them how to teach and raise Black boys
- Supporting positive development
- Developing a strong connection to each child’s family
- Affirming boys’ identities as young men of African descent by selecting literature that displays positive images of Black men and having Black men mentor Black boys in the schools
- Changing schools and classrooms to create a better fit for boys’ abilities, needs, and interests
- Improving instructional quality for all students
- Using instructional approaches that motivate and engage Black boys
- Teaching boys to be caring, responsible, and ethical

**Reference**  

Race, Place, and Depression

**Presenter:** David T. Takeuchi, Professor in the School of Social Work and Department of Sociology, University of Washington

**Moderator:** Marcia Sturdivant, Deputy Director, Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Administrator, Office of Children, Youth and Families

Notions about correlations between race and mental health issues have been constantly evolving since the birth of the United States as a nation. America currently has the highest rates of depression of any country in the world. Whereas it was once believed that Blacks and immigrants to this country could not have issues with mental health, it is now assumed that Blacks and immigrants are some of the most susceptible due to the conditions under which they tend to live. In addition, it is now believed that an individual’s environment can have tremendous social, psychological, and physical effects on his or her health. At this time, research on mental health as it specifically relates to immigrants and people of color is extremely lacking. Greater effort by groups like the National Institute of Mental Health to expand its interest regarding the social determinants of mental health issues for people of color would be very beneficial to establishing services that are geared specifically toward them.

**The Problem**

There continues to be a strong biological and genetic component to looking at issues of race, especially around issues of health and mental health. In addition, the cultural aptitude of racial and ethnic minorities to assimilate into society continues to be questioned. Additionally, the United States has a higher rate of people suffering from depression than any other country: 16.9–21 percent of the American population experiences an episode of major depression in their lifetime.

**Causes**

**Varying Perspectives about How Race and Ethnicity Correlate with Mental Health and the Ability to Assimilate into American Society**

**1900s (Biological/Genetic Perspective)**

In the early part of the 20th century, most immigrants in mental facilities were placed there because they exhibited innate character flaws that led Whites to believe that they were too inept to adjust to American society. During this same period, it was believed that African Americans were genetically and biologically unable to become depressed because they were stereotypically defined as happy with their social circumstances.

**1920s (Cultural Perspective)**

American society began to move away from notions of biology explaining the social circumstances of groups of people. At this point, social situations were viewed to be the result of culture. The cultural perspective was a reaction to the biological and genetic argument regarding mental health and race. Proponents of the cultural perspective questioned whether or not racial and ethnic minorities were too different culturally to actually assimilate into American society. It was thought at the time that racial and ethnic minorities did not have the cultural capacity to successfully integrate into American society.

**1950s–1960s (Institutional Racism Perspective)**

During this time period, the social and structural components that led to different inequities in society were examined. The federal government was a key catalyst in investigating these components. The National Institute of Mental Health was
established during this time. The government also sponsored several centers focused on institutional racism. During this time, research was conducted on poverty as one of the factors for the social standing of Blacks in American society and why there were different outcomes at the end of mental health programs for people along racial lines.

**1970s–Present (Social Class Perspective)**

Social class was believed to be a major factor causing differences or disparities among racial groups. The debate continues today on whether social class explains all of the variance in racial effects. The question continues to be whether race still matters when you control for social class.

**1980s–1990s (Perspective of Race as Just a Social Construct)**

In this period, many people believed that race is a series of fluid categories with meaning that changes over time rather than precise classifications that are fixed and unchangeable.

**Present Day (Super Diversity)**

The current dominant view is that:

- Disparity exists along racial lines due to intersections between race and one or more of the other perspectives above.
- The notion of Super Diversity is more appropriate to reflect the complexity of the current time, i.e., simple notions of race may not help to understand the causes and effects that are most concerning.

Today, there also are two prevailing hypotheses about race, ethnicity, and depression:

- Blacks should have higher rates of depression due to the social circumstances in which they live.
- Immigrants should have higher rates of depression than American Whites due to the social stressors they encounter during their adjustment to American culture.

In addition, research on place now focuses on the social and psychological effects it has on individuals rather than just on the effects of the built environment. Someone’s place is defined by a geographical location that includes a nexus where social life is initiated and engaged. It is a place where social activity occurs. Also, someone’s place is a holder of different symbols, values, and traditions. Someone’s place has a sense of meaning, identity, and belonging. A person’s place or environment can have negative effects on health and mental health because there may be fewer resources, fewer employment opportunities, less social control, weaker social support, fewer educational opportunities, greater contact with air pollutants and industrial contaminants, less access to healthy food, less access to quality health care, and a greater concentration of various social problems and stressors.

**Geographic Segregation (Ethnic Density)**

When you have a concentration of a racial group in an area, there can be detrimental health and mental health effects because of the conditions of the environment. There also are some positive effects of ethnic density. It can be associated with reducing exposure to discrimination and providing added protection from discriminatory practices. Additionally, there can be a concentration of economic capital that can be used among the group (especially if they are denied access to more mainstream means of resources). Geographic segregation can be a facilitator of ethnic identity, which can have a positive influence on reducing the effects of discrimination. There is greater access to resources that are specifically tailored to that particular group and greater opportunity to build positive social networks.

Mood disorder and depression decreases in Asian and Latino immigrants as ethnic density increases. For Latinos, there tends to be less drug and alcohol abuse where ethnic density is more prevalent. However, anxiety disorder increases in both Latinos and Asians as ethnic density increases.

**Treatment Effects**

People who develop a mental illness often lose their place in society. When they seek treatment, the treatment actually creates a greater distance for the individual’s place in society. Whites are more likely to receive adequate treatment for depression than people of color. More than 50 percent of Whites receive adequate treatment for depression and other mental health issues, while an overwhelming number of people of color receive inadequate treatment or no treatment at all.
Solutions

The National Institute of Mental Health should expand its interest regarding the social determinants of mental health issues. In recent years, it has become less focused on the social determinants of mental health and more focused on the individual, clinical, biological, and genetic aspects of mental health.

There also need to be programs that take preventive measures for immigrants before social conditions adversely cause mental health issues. This includes:

- Developing community partnerships that focus on preventing mental health problems and promoting health in general
- Conducting research on health and mental health in a more holistic fashion and focusing on the role race plays

A three-pronged strategy to combat institutional factors causing mental health problems should be adopted:

- Community groups can change the structure of their programs to make them more compatible with their clients (especially racial and ethnic minority groups).
- Culturally tailored programs can be developed to meet the specific needs of each racial and ethnic group.
- Better individual therapist results should be encouraged when working with people from varying backgrounds.
This report summarizes information by the race and health speakers. The value of this report is that it provides access to the extensive and detailed information disseminated at the conference. This information will be particularly helpful to community and policy leaders interested in gaining a better understanding of health disparities and finding effective strategies for improving these conditions.
Racial and ethnic minorities, compared to Whites, have shorter life spans and higher rates of HIV/AIDS, asthma, obesity, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and infant mortality. Reasons for these disparities include lower socioeconomic status, living in poor social and environmental conditions, lack of health insurance, less access to proper health care, and more sporadic forms of care at the nation’s lowest-performing hospitals and medical facilities. Other factors include genetics and health risk behaviors. Diseases and their causes often are co-occurring, and efforts are needed to simultaneously and comprehensively address both. Although Blacks are disproportionately at or near the top of all health and health care disparities, there has been little research focused on how the issues Blacks face with obesity and asthma can be resolved. The latter is similarly true for Latino subpopulations such as Puerto Ricans, who have higher rates of asthma than Mexican Americans.

Research that investigates disease (cause, course, and consequences) as well as solutions is needed to understand within- and between-group health disparities and how...
issues related to health care access affect the well-being of underserved populations. In addition, disparities in men’s health are largely underinvestigated. Resolving health disparities will require improved cultural proficiency among health care professionals, interdisciplinary collaboration between clinicians and scientists and between researchers and advocacy groups, improved access to insurance and supports such as transportation, and a patient-centered team approach to health care services such as is emphasized in the medical home model. In the future, health care practice and policy changes that improve the capacity of health professionals to serve diverse patients, reduce the complex array of social inequities, and emphasize health protection may help to lower health care costs, improve health status, and reduce the divide between the health of racial and ethnic minorities and Whites.

The Problem

There are a variety of health disparities in the United States that have existed for decades across racial and ethnic lines. They occur across the life span of an individual, from childhood through adulthood, and they encompass physical and behavioral health as well as health care services. Health disparities are causally related to interactions among social (educational, economic) and environmental, cultural, behavioral, and genetic and biological mechanisms associated with certain diseases. In addition, health disparities involve a variety of clinical and scientific disciplines (medicine, sociology, genetics, etc.) and demand cultural proficiency to manage. Social determinants of health disparities are critical problems. Research shows that patients receive differential treatment by race, ethnicity, and gender in diagnosis, treatment, and prescription of secondary prevention measures. In order to make changes in health disparities in the United States, there need to be focused efforts by a diverse and well-trained workforce.

Infant Mortality Rate

In 1995, the infant mortality rate for African Americans was twice the national average (14.2 vs. 7.2 per 1,000, respectively) and more than twice that of Whites (six per 1,000). Ethnic minority women often do not receive prenatal care as early as White women, which exacerbates disparities. The rate of infant mortality does not improve for African American mothers with higher levels of education as it does for White mothers as they obtain higher education. Presently, African American women with college degrees have a higher rate of infant mortality than White women who drop out of high school.

Asthma Morbidity/Mortality

Environmental risks are major contributors to asthma, a respiratory condition marked by spasms in the lungs, causing difficulty in breathing. Being a minority in America is a stronger predictor of living near commercial hazardous waste than income level, house value, and number of waste sites. Minority communities can be identified on a map by locating neighborhoods that are nearest to garbage incinerators and toxic waste dumps.

There are almost 4,000 asthma-related deaths per year in the United States. A highly disproportionate number of those deaths occur in the African American community. African Americans are generally undertreated, have more obesity, and have lower birth weight compared to Caucasians. This is in part because African Americans generally have less access to “standard” health care, use emergency or “urgent care” more often, and have a tendency to use more Medicaid or subsidized medical care than Whites.

There has been an increase in genetic population studies of Caucasian and Asian asthma patients in the past 10 years. Conversely, there have been very few studies of African American patients despite the high number of asthma-related deaths in the Black community. Disparities in asthma prevalence, severity, quality of care, and outcomes are widely documented across diverse communities. These communities include people with either public or private insurance as well as varying socioeconomic statuses and other patient factors. In order to effectively manage asthma, patients must have affordable access to a full range of services and receive coordinated, quality health care. Thus there is a tremendous need to improve the capacity of safety net providers to meet the needs of people who are uninsured and those who are underinsured.

Burden of Pain

Racial and ethnic disparities exist in perceptions, assessment, and treatment of pain. Similarly, racial and ethnic differences related to pain and pain management have been found regardless of the setting (e.g., postoperative, emergency department). These differences relate to a complex interplay of patient expression of pain and belief in the need for pain medication, clinician bias in the recognition and perception of pain severity in diverse patients, and health care system factors such as access to medications.

Black and Hispanic patients with extremity fractures are less likely to be given analgesics in the emergency room than White patients with similar injuries. Studies have found that

- 57 percent of Black patients as opposed to 74 percent of White patients with similar injuries received pain medications and
- White patients with broken bones are 64 percent more likely than Hispanic patients with similar fractures to receive pain medications in the emergency room.
Causes

Socioeconomic Disparities and Health

Those with the lowest income and the least education are the least healthy because they lack the resources that are most important for them to do well in society. In addition, racial and ethnic groups that live in homogenous, socially isolated communities typically experience worse health than those in more racially and economically diverse neighborhoods.

Environmental Factors Influencing Health

In minority communities, there is greater exposure to toxic waste, violence, and disease:

- 17 percent of American children (ages 6 months–5 years) suffer from lead toxicity levels greater than 15 ug/dl. Of these 3–4 million children, 46 percent are African American.
- 15 percent of Mexican American children and 20 percent of Puerto Rican children have lead levels greater than 15 ug/dl.

Uninsured Children and Poor Quality of Care

Families of uninsured children face nonfinancial access barriers to care, such as lack of continuity with a primary care provider and inadequate visit time. These issues are compounded when the family has a child with special needs. Also, 70 percent of children who remain uninsured are actually eligible for Medicaid or government-subsidized health care for children (State Children’s Health Insurance Program, or S-CHIP). The lack of coverage inhibits people from seeking appropriate care, diminishes health care provider availability, and compromises care content. Additionally, minorities are more likely to receive care in lower-performing hospitals where all patients tend to receive worse health care despite racial background.

Interactions among Sources of Disparities in Health Care

Patient Level

- Patient preferences or refusal of treatment
- Care-seeking behaviors and attitudes
- Differences in clinical presentation of symptoms
- Perceptions that erode patients’ trust
  - Lack of time and attention given by health care professionals
  - Perceived lack of concern and empathy
  - Perceptions that the provider’s desire for profit drives medical decision making
  - Perceptions that managed care plans are not designed to protect patient interests
  - Perceptions that many health care providers hold negative stereotypes of minority patients

Health Care Systems Level

- Lack of interpreter and translation services
- Time pressures on physicians
- Availability and mix of health care providers
- Fragmentation in systems of financing and delivery of care

Provider Level

- Bias toward or against certain racial and ethnic groups
- Clinical uncertainty
- Beliefs/stereotypes about behavior or health of patients

Solutions

Changes in Health Care Policy

- Develop policies that improve overall care in facilities that serve a large percentage of minority patients
- Develop policies that effectively address the underlying reasons for health disparities (e.g., improve education, employment, and socioeconomic status)
- Develop strategies that strengthen primary care capacity and emphasize health protection to improve health status, reduce inequities, and lower costs
- Establish patient-centered medical homes and incentivize interdisciplinary team approaches to care
- Establish initiatives that improve cross-cultural communication between primary care doctors and patients and provide patients with access to a diverse group of doctors to advance adherence, satisfaction, and health outcomes

Culturally Competent Health Care Systems

- Increase culturally and linguistically appropriate services (e.g., interpreters, bilingual providers, health education materials)
- Recruit and retain medical professionals and staff who reflect community diversity
- Provide high-quality cultural competence training (including recognition of historical factors, language literacy, and socioeconomic status) to develop culturally proficient clinicians
- Establish culturally specific health care settings
- Improve access to insurance, transportation, and geographic locations of health facilities
- Change the narrative professionals use when caring for patients from deficits to assets

Reference

Health Disparities Solutions

Presenter: Thomas A. LaVeist, William C. and Nancy F. Richardson Professor in Health Policy and Director of the Hopkins Center for Health Disparities Solutions, Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health

Moderator: Brian Schreiber, President and CEO, Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh

Health disparities often are considered to be the result of race and socioeconomic status rather than an issue of racism and how it impacts the lives of individuals. Racial and ethnic minorities have the highest prevalence of most illnesses and mortality rates. However, the correlation between race and health disparity is greatly diminished when diverse groups with a similar educational background and income level are compared. There are racial/ethnic disparities at all levels of socioeconomic status.

As a result of racism and discrimination, racial and ethnic minorities often find themselves living in neighborhoods that are not conducive to good health and wellness. In disadvantaged, racially homogeneous neighborhoods, people are exposed to stressors and have inadequate access to health-supporting resources, such as adequate housing, quality medical care, and fresh food. Moreover, they often are exposed to health risks such as environmental pollutants. Add to these conditions the stress of dealing with racism and discrimination and the adverse effects on health and health disparities are compounded. Despite these well-documented facts, many still believe that race disparities in health are the result of genetics/biology or socioeconomic status. In sum, health disparities represent disparate experiences of American life. They result from gaps among diverse groups in four interrelated areas: health, wealth, educational attainment, and criminal justice. The solution to health disparities, therefore, will rely on interventions that collectively address each of these areas. Continuing to pursue medical care as the sole source of solutions to disparities misses the mark and decreases the likelihood of solving this vexing problem.

The Problem

The United States has higher health care costs but fewer optimal health outcomes compared to all other industrialized countries. To compound this issue, there are well-documented inequalities in access to health care and the quality of care available to racial and ethnic minorities. The issue of disparities in health care quality is much more than just an access issue. In its seminal report, the Institute of Medicine compiled the results of a large body of research documenting suboptimal care among minorities who had private health insurance. There has been a steady disparity in mortality rates by gender, race, and ethnicity for as long as data have been collected on this topic (which goes back to the beginning of the 20th century).

The Economic Burden of Health Disparities

Racial/ethnic disparities affect more than just the minorities who suffer from suboptimal care. Disparities cause substantial costs to society, affecting all Americans. A 2008 report commissioned by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies estimated that about 30 percent or $229 billion of the direct medical cost to the U.S. economy were “excess costs” attributable to minorities in poor health. The report estimated further that $1.24 trillion was lost to the economy from 2003 to 2006 when taking into account premature deaths, absenteeism, and lost productivity at work due to poor health among minorities. This $1.24 trillion is more than India’s economy, the 11th largest economy in the world.
Experiences racism actually assesses how an individual, group, or community because race is a social construct, the measurement of race of mechanisms:

• **Creating differential opportunity structures:** Opportunities, even within one community, often fall along racial lines, exposing some groups to increased health risks while at the same time protecting other groups. For example, being forced (by not having access to quality education and economic advancement) to live in disadvantaged neighborhoods exposes minorities to more crime, fewer resources, more fast food restaurants, more liquor stores, less access to fresh produce, and fewer places for recreational activities. However, opportunities to choose homes and schools in more affluent areas within a community, by virtue of better educational and economic resources, reduces these health risks.

• **Impacting individuals through stress processes:** Stress affects health through a variety of health processes. Dealing with racism and discrimination is an additional stressor with significant potential risks to health because of psychological and behavioral coping strategies that, while helping to reduce stress, may increase other conditions. One example of a behavioral coping strategy many use to deal with stress is overeating. This coping strategy can have detrimental effects on one’s health, especially if individuals are living in a community that provides little opportunity to acquire fresh and healthy food. Further, overeating with little opportunity to compensate with exercise or outdoor activities exacerbates health risks such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension and has been shown to contribute to a seven-year shorter life span.

**Racism**

Because race is a social construct, the measurement of race actually assesses how an individual, group, or community experiences racism. Racism impacts health through a variety of mechanisms:

• **Creating differential opportunity structures:** Opportunities, even within one community, often fall along racial lines, exposing some groups to increased health risks while at the same time protecting other groups. For example, a Black college-educated woman has a higher infant mortality rate than a White woman who has dropped out of high school. Race and socioeconomic status are not synonymous, however. There are disparities that are associated with race and those associated with socioeconomic status. Race-based disparities do not exist merely because of socioeconomic status. Racism and the institutions and policies that support racism create different life experiences and, thus, different outcomes for diverse groups despite similar social standing.

**Socioeconomic Status**

While socioeconomic status is not the sole reason for race disparities, it is a contributing factor. Race and socioeconomic status are intertwined, and ethnic minorities are more likely to be at the bottom of the economic strata than Whites. However, Blacks with higher educational attainment still suffer from illnesses like diabetes and hypertension at disproportionate rates compared to Whites. For example, a Black college-educated woman has a higher infant mortality rate than a White woman who has dropped out of high school. Race and socioeconomic status are not synonymous, however. There are disparities that are associated with race and those associated with socioeconomic status. Race-based disparities do not exist merely because of socioeconomic status. Racism and the institutions and policies that support racism create different life experiences and, thus, different outcomes for diverse groups despite similar social standing.

**Causes**

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• **Internalized racism:** American culture has a strong orientation toward individualism and places great value on the idea that American is a meritocracy. The culture suggests that educational attainment and economic self-sufficiency are achievable with hard work, perseverance, and morality. Because racial and ethnic minorities experience lower socioeconomic status than Whites, some individuals internalize the negative images and stereotypes that often are associated with low socioeconomic status. In addition, some racial/ethnic groups internalize portrayals of themselves as lazy, worthless, criminals, etc., and believe that these false images truly represent their character and that of others like them. Thus, for some, these images become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Others may become highly stressed by trying to overcompensate to disprove the stereotypes.

• **Segregation:** The United States is highly segregated. Racial and ethnic groups experience the country in very different ways from Whites. Risk and protective factors, the type and impact of stressors, and availability of and access to health care and other resources differ according to neighborhood and have a powerful influence on health and health disparities. Low-income populations live in mostly segregated neighborhoods with many risk-inducing environmental factors, such as liquor stores, and few, if any, grocery stores, fresh food markets, or banking institutions. Where an individual lives is highly correlated with his or her racial/ethnic background.

**Solutions**

A growing body of research is shifting the paradigm to growing recognition that racial disparities may be the results of place disparities. For example, researchers at the Hopkins Center for Health Disparities Solutions at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health have conducted a novel study that compared Black and White Americans living under similar social and economic conditions and receiving health care in the same health care marketplace. They found that the race disparity we normally see in national samples was attenuated or completely erased when White and Black Americans live under similar conditions. So, when social factors and medical care are equalized, race disparities are minimized.

However, the challenge in developing policies that focus on place is that race also determines place. That is to say, members of racial minorities have fewer options in the housing market. A racially segmented housing market affects health through several routes: limited appreciation in home values
leading to attenuated wealth creation, increased exposure to health risks, decreased availability of resources necessary to live a healthy lifestyle, less access to quality health care, and limited access to social capital such as friendship networks.

The impact on health disparities may be greatest if policymakers address the systemic structures that produce inequities in opportunity. Solutions for the health outcomes often have emphasized personal choice. It is certainly true that individuals have the responsibility and agency to maximize their health outcomes. However, a large body of research has documented that each of the leading causes of death in the United States is complex and multifaceted, influenced by myriad factors interacting at the individual, family, community, and societal level. Strategies to eliminate health disparities require solutions that address multiple levels, not just individual responsibility.

Even if we assume that the eradication of racial segregation is beyond the reach of policy prescriptions, we can pursue strategies that lessen the impact of place in producing race disparities. This can be done through the adoption of policies that redress the inequitable distribution of power and resources across communities. Adopting a strategy of “health in all policies” is one such approach. It recognizes that health is affected by policies that are not explicitly targeted to health, such as policies related to housing, agriculture, and the environment. Thus, to improve population health, the policies of sectors other than health must be considered.

Reference

MINORITY HEALTH: The Social Factors That Determine Health Disparities

Breast Cancer and Social Interactions: Identifying Multiple Environments That Regulate Gene Expression

Presenter: Sarah Gehlert, E. Desmond Lee Professor of Racial and Ethnic Diversity, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University in St. Louis

Moderator: Candi Castleberry-Singleton, Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center

Racial and ethnic disparities in the United States operate across a number of diseases and conditions. Mechanisms for these inequalities are found in rates of screening, treatment, and mortality associated with illnesses like HIV/AIDS and certain cancers. Currently, health disparities in the United States have reached a level that is unconscionable. In regard to breast cancer, ethnic minorities have more aggressive tumors and higher mortality rates than White women, despite the disease’s being more prevalent in White women. Nationally, Black women have a 37 percent higher chance of dying from breast cancer than women from any other racial or ethnic group. In addition, Black women have an increased chance of having forms of malignant breast tumors that are resistant to most of the known treatments and medications for breast...

(Continued on page 114)
cancer. These and other health disparities are determined by the interaction among behavioral patterns, genetics, social circumstances, and shortfalls in the medical system. The social environment that Black women and other minorities tend to live in carries risks that can have adverse effects on health and the severity of breast cancer. Stressors such as increased exposure to crime, toxins, and other adversities compound breast cancer in many ethnic and racial minorities. Community-based participatory research is proposed as a solution to decreasing the negative effects of breast cancer on women in minority communities. Community-based participatory research includes focus groups with the target population and development of community advisory boards and task forces to discuss ongoing concerns related to breast cancer and to develop solutions.

The Problem

There is a link between the social environment and biological and clinical outcomes that fuels racial and ethnic disparities in breast cancer. Over the last 30 years, there has been a growing disparity in breast cancer mortality between African American and Caucasian women. Despite the fact that breast cancer is more prevalent in Caucasian women, their mortality rates have been improving faster than those of Black women since the 1980s. In addition, groups like Hispanics/Latinas, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders all have lower rates of breast cancer mortality than African American women. Nationally, Black women have a 37 percent higher death rate from breast cancer than White women. However, this gap is higher in certain geographical areas. In Chicago, Ill., for instance, Black women have a 68 percent higher chance of dying from breast cancer than White women. In Missouri, where breast cancer mortality has been on a steady decline among White women, there has been virtually no change in Black women since the 1980s.

Causes

Although not much is known about the determinants of health disparities, many agree with the five-point framework established by McGinnis et al. (2002), which states that they may be the result of:

- Behavioral patterns (40 percent causation) (smoking, diet, adherence)
- Social circumstances (15 percent causation) (discrimination, availability of services)
- Shortfall in medical care (10 percent causation) (physician bias, access to health care)
- Genetic predisposition (30 percent causation) (heritability and genetic propensity)
- Environmental exposures (5 percent causation) (toxins, pollution, secondhand smoke)

Genetic Predisposition

Only a small proportion of breast cancers (5–10 percent) are due to genes or genetic predisposition. Cancers that occur due to genetics typically cluster within families. A much larger percentage (70–80 percent) of breast cancers are due to sporadic gene mutation that occurs over the course of a woman’s life.

Environmental Exposures

In the past, environmental factors were thought to include only chemical exposures, altered diets, toxins, or things that come from outside the body. Currently, the interpretation of what makes up environment has been broadened to include social exposures.

Social Circumstances

Negative social experiences, like facing discrimination, exposure to violence, and lack of availability of resources, may modify a person’s epigenome, or how a gene is marked and programmed. Social factors may contribute to the disproportionate mortality rate between African American and Caucasian women. Race is not considered biology. However, race in America, to a certain extent, determines exposure to particular social circumstances. Experiencing certain negative social circumstances, as explained below, may cause psychological responses to those social conditions that may result in changes in neuroendocrine and gene expression or the survival of malignant cancer cells (tumor growth).

- **Social isolation and stress:** Stress hormone receptors inhibit the death of malignant cells in breast tissue. Everyone experiences cell mutations that, in a healthy body, are repaired right away. It is hypothesized that when someone experiences a negative social environment, epigenetic changes that occur as a result do not allow the body to repair mutating cells as it should.

- **Effects of negative social exposure (social isolation) on breast malignancy in lab rats:** Rats are a good model for human disease because they share the rearing of the young, are very social, and have a slight propensity toward breast cancer even without external intervention. In an experiment performed on rats and transgenic mice, it was proposed that increased social isolation and stress would result in larger malignant tumors. This study examined social stressors and breast cancer risk in groups of genetically related (i.e., sibling) rats in which scientists isolated some rats by placing them in separate cages on individual tables and left the others in a group. As expected, while the rats that remained in a group had stress levels that rose and fell normally, the levels of stress hormone in the socially isolated rats rose higher and took much longer to return to normal. Not only did the experiment result in an
altered stress response in the socially isolated rats, but some of those with the heightened stress response also spontaneously developed malignant tumors at a rate that was 84 times higher than the rats that were not placed in social isolation.

Triple-negative breast cancer tumors, which are particularly aggressive and resistant to standard treatments, are much more likely to be found in African American women than in women from other groups. In the social isolation experiment, scientists found that as triple-negative tumors became more invasive (malignant) in the rats, the cells reacted as if they were mounting a stress response. When this occurred, there was an increase in stress hormone receptors and a simultaneous decrease in estrogen and progesterone receptors. This made the breast cancers even more aggressive and harder to treat with existing chemotherapies, which may have contributed to lower five-year survival rates.

Solutions

Community-based research to develop solutions was conducted with African American women in Chicago. Focus groups (n=49) were held with 503 residents in 15 Chicago neighborhoods with high concentrations of African American women of diverse socioeconomic statuses. Research staff with similar backgrounds assessed participants’ attitudes, beliefs, and concerns about breast cancer and its treatment.

A community advisory board was formed and then focus group participants were brought together for a breast cancer summit at which results of the focus groups were presented. Participants were asked to formulate action steps to address concerns raised about breast cancer. The number one action step identified was to increase the availability of educational materials on wellness for African American youths ages 12–16. A DVD series on wellness was developed and is now a part of the health curriculum in all Chicago public schools.

Also developed was a Chicago breast cancer task force and partnerships with six community-based organizations. The summit also led to a research study with women who had recently been diagnosed with breast cancer. These participants allowed researchers to be present during tumor removal and to take samples of the malignant tissue. Investigators also conducted in-home follow-up interviews after surgery and assessed psychosocial functioning, social networks, health behaviors, perceived discrimination, and daily salivary cortisol to monitor stress. In addition, they mapped and coded crime rates, housing, and pollution within a four-block radius of each participant.

Through this research, it was discovered that 32 percent of the women undergoing cancer treatment were clinically depressed, several had trouble securing stable housing for themselves and their children, most reported a high level of loneliness, and 31 percent reported being sexually assaulted during childhood or adolescence.

In general, solutions should include the following:

- Community-based participatory research consisting of focus groups, advisory boards, and task forces composed of members of the targeted groups for the purpose of discussing and addressing concerns related to breast cancer and breast cancer treatment
- Partnerships with community-based organizations to expedite wellness initiatives within the public, including summer apprenticeships to involve youths in educational workshops and innovative programming focused on wellness
- Psychosocial interventions for underserved women with breast cancer, such as:
  - The Sisters Network
  - African American Breast Cancer Alliance
  - Supportive-Expressive Group Therapy for women with endocrine receptive breast cancers
  - Resource/system navigator programs for patients
- Multilevel interventions that focus on the intrinsic and extrinsic levels
  - Interventions that focus on individual behavior change may not deal with issues of race and ethnicity.
  - Develop neighborhood- and community-level interventions that achieve policy change.
- Interventions that offer social support and build social networks (e.g., block clubs)
- Extensive case management for breast cancer patients by neighborhood support coordinators to help women navigate different systems and act as a liaison

References


Racism Matters: Its Deadly Effects on Health

**Presenter:** David R. Williams, Florence and Laura Norman Professor of Public Health, Harvard University School of Public Health

**Moderator:** Candi Castleberry-Singleton, Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center

African Americans have higher death rates than Whites for 12 of the 15 leading causes of death in the United States. Thus, there is a need to address the systemic factors that underlie such a diverse array of negative health outcomes. African Americans and American Indians have higher death rates than Whites across the life course, from birth through the retirement years. While official health statistics are fairly accurate for Whites and African Americans, it is important to keep in mind that officially reported data are not as precise for other racial/ethnic groups, including American Indians, Asians, and Latinos, because much of the data is based on observations of physical characteristics.

In addition to the significant disparities that exist between minorities and Whites in terms of illness and death rates, minorities tend to become sicker from illnesses earlier in life. These illnesses also tend to be more severe in minorities even when the illness is more prevalent in Whites. Within certain disease groups, there is variation in prevalence. For instance, among women under 40 years of age, African American women have a higher incidence of breast cancer than White women, illustrating the fact that Black women are more likely than White women to get breast cancer when young.

Much of the health disparity in the United States is driven by segregation. Segregated neighborhoods often lack resources and decent health care facilities. They often have higher rates of crime and airborne pollutants and less opportunity to obtain a quality education and to improve socioeconomic status, a major driver of health disparities. Living in a segregated neighborhood makes it extremely difficult to live a healthy lifestyle, due in part to restricted access to healthy food choices and opportunities for exercise. In order to reduce health disparities, policies and interventions are needed that ameliorate the negative effects of racism and dismantle the structures of racism. Additionally, a greater investment is needed to consciously address deeply embedded cultural stereotypes, build infrastructure, and create opportunities in disadvantaged neighborhoods that address gaps in socioeconomic status, which in turn will improve health.

**The Problem**

**Persistence of Disparities over Time**

Although life expectancy has increased for both Blacks and Whites over the past 50 years, on average, Whites still live five years longer than Blacks. In 1950, the life expectancy of Whites was 69.1 years. Not until the 1990s did Blacks reach an average life expectancy of 69 years. Thus, a 40-year gap exists between the health of Whites and the health of African Americans.

Also persistent is the significant difference in mortality rates from diabetes between Whites and American Indians. For Whites, the death rate from diabetes has remained fairly stable since the 1950s. However, for American Indians, diabetes-related deaths have increased significantly, widening the disparity.

**Excess Deaths**

The term “excess deaths” describes how many people die in a year who would not have died if health disparities did not exist. In 1998, the most recent year for data on excess deaths, 96,800 African Americans died who would not have died if there were no racial disparities in health. This amounts to 265 premature deaths per day among African Americans.

These disparities are indicative of a failure in the United States to address the health care needs of its overall population as well as subgroups within the United States. While constituting less than 6 percent of the world’s population, the United States accounts for 50 percent of the world’s medical resources. Despite this fact, Americans have the worst health of any industrialized nation.
Causes

Socioeconomic Status

In every country in the world, one of the strongest predictors of variations in health is socioeconomic status. In the United States, socioeconomic status is a stronger predictor of health than genetics, cigarette smoking, or exposure to carcinogens. Socioeconomic status tends to be patterned by race and ethnicity. Because minorities have markedly lower educational attainment than Whites, they also tend to have lower socioeconomic statuses. Historically, minorities have experienced elevated levels of poverty in comparison to Whites, although nationally there are more poor Whites than there are poor minorities. Thus, the issue of socioeconomic status affects all populations. As income level increases, the chance of death before the age of 60 declines. Low-income Americans are three times more likely to die before the age of 60 than those with high income.

Race in American Society

Despite its powerful and apparent implications, socioeconomic status does not fully explain racial and ethnic disparities in health. Race, while a complex factor, also is an important driver of health disparities. Although, on average, Whites live five years longer than Blacks, Whites with a college degree live 6.4 years longer than Whites who do not finish high school. Within the African American population, there also is a socioeconomic difference whereby, on average, African Americans with a college degree live 5.3 years longer than African Americans with less than a high school education. However, at every level of education, Whites live longer than African Americans. Whites who drop out of high school live three years longer than African Americans who drop out of high school. This gap widens as education increases such that among college graduates, Whites live 4.2 years longer than African Americans. Similarly, for all mothers, as their education increases, the rate of infant mortality declines. However, disparities exist such that African American mothers with a college degree have higher infant mortality rates than White women and women of all other racial/ethnic groups who drop out of high school (with the exception of American Indian women).

In addition, all of the indicators of socioeconomic status are unequal across race. For example, compared to Whites, Blacks receive less income with the same levels of education; the differences in pay are particularly great for men compared to women. Further, Blacks have less wealth at equivalent levels of income than Whites (differences in economic resources). Finally, Blacks have less purchasing power in part because the cost of goods and services in more disadvantaged neighborhoods is higher than in more affluent neighborhoods.

Segregation

Residential segregation is a fundamental cause and driver of health disparities in the United States. Segregation is basic to understanding inequality in America. It is the linchpin of U.S. race relations and the source of inequality and the gap in socioeconomic status among the races. It is argued that residential segregation is one of the most successful domestic policies of the 20th century in the United States because, once implemented, it has pervasive effects. Yet it is rarely identified as intentional, as a mechanism of racism, or as a target for change.

Segregation has a significant effect on health because where a person lives determines where he or she attends school, his or her preparation for college, and his or her foundation for socioeconomic success. Segregation also affects the quality of neighborhoods. Neighborhoods can either promote health or promote disease. It is more challenging to live a healthy lifestyle in a low-resource, highly restricted community. People get less exercise in neighborhoods where there are high levels of violence and eat fewer healthy foods in neighborhoods where there are no supermarkets that sell fresh fruits and vegetables. There also is less access to medical care in segregated communities.

There is not one city in America where Whites live under similar residential conditions to Blacks. The worst urban contexts in which Whites live is considerably better than the average context of Black communities. Even the wealthiest of Blacks are more segregated than the poorest Latinos and Asians despite Blacks’ preference to live in less-segregated areas.

Factors That Make Segregated, Disadvantaged Neighborhoods Unhealthy

Segregated neighborhoods are more likely to be unsafe because they usually have higher levels of concentrated poverty, crime, and blight. Segregated neighborhoods also tend to have higher levels of exposure to toxins and pollutants. They are less likely to have parks and areas that facilitate physical activity. The quality of housing in segregated neighborhoods has a tendency to be substandard or of poor quality. Streets and sidewalks often are in a state of disrepair in poorer segregated areas. In addition, segregated neighborhoods tend to lack culturally sensitive resources, health resources, access to medical care, and public transportation.

Blacks are more likely than Whites to reside in areas with lower-quality medical care. Hospitals are more likely to close in disadvantaged, segregated neighborhoods. Also, it is more likely that pharmacies in poorer neighborhoods have inadequate supplies and inventory, and physicians are less likely to participate in Medicaid in racially segregated areas. African Americans also are more likely to receive medical care in poorer-quality medical facilities where there are fewer board-certified physicians.

Factors That Foster Segregation

Wealth Distribution

Significant racial/ethnic disparities exist in wealth (i.e., net worth), which is defined as how much is left after all debts
and assets have been accounted for. For every dollar of wealth the average White person has overall, the average Black person has 9 cents and the average Latino has 12 cents. Among the poorest populations, for every dollar of wealth poor Whites have ($24,000 on average), poor Blacks have 1 cent and poor Latinos have 2 cents. When there is a shortfall in income, there is no economic reserve. There is no racial difference in savings behavior at similar levels of income in the United States. Therefore, the racial differences in wealth reflect disparities in the intergenerational transfer of wealth through inheritances when relatives die or through home equity over time due to historical policies and practices that promoted suburban development for Whites and restricted homeownership for Blacks. Thus, determining eligibility for social services by income dramatically understates the economic conditions minorities face. Economic hardship persistently differs for Blacks and Whites, even after adjusting for broad-range sociodemographic and socioeconomic factors.

An analysis of the economic downturn of the early 1990s revealed that African Americans were the only ones with a net loss of jobs. This reflected normal corporate downsizing and restructuring in the United States in that employers moved jobs from areas where African Americans lived. As an example, whereas 16 percent of Sears’ workforce was African American, African Americans made up 54 percent of workers who lost jobs. At Coca-Cola, where 18 percent of its workforce was African American, African Americans accounted for 42 percent of workers who lost jobs. It also has been documented that domestic and foreign automakers take into account the percentage of African Americans who live in the market area and strategically locate or move plants away from areas with a high concentration of African Americans.

Negative Stereotypes

It is the persistence of negative stereotypes that drives racism and segregation in this country. Audit studies bear evidence of racism, most recently showing that a White man reporting a criminal record is more likely to receive a job interview and job offer than a Black or Latino man with an identical résumé and no criminal record. As further evidence of the persistence of negative racial stereotypes, a study showed that

- 44 percent of Whites believe Blacks are lazy;
- 56 percent of Whites assume Blacks prefer to live off welfare and only 4 percent of Whites believe White people prefer to live off welfare;
- 51 percent of Whites believe Blacks are prone to violence;
- 29 percent of Whites believe Blacks are unintelligent; and
- one in five Whites, or fewer, is willing to say that Blacks are hardworking, self-supporting, not prone to violence, and intelligent.

In addition, many Blacks also embrace or internalize these negative stereotypes. Research shows that Blacks who endorse negative stereotypes of their own racial group have higher levels of substance abuse and mental health issues. Stereotypes also drive unconscious/unthinking discrimination in health care, further contributing to disparities in health and health care. More than 200 studies, many conducted in large, nationally renowned medical centers, reveal that across virtually every medical procedure, minorities receive poorer quality of care and less intensive care.

Perceived Discrimination

Perceived discrimination is an additional source of stress that has negative consequences on health. For instance, a recent study showed that for Arab American women only, six months after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center, there was an increase in low birth weight and rate of preterm labor. This suggests that hostility directed at any particular group impacts its health and well-being. People who perceive that they are victims of discrimination are less likely to adhere to medical visits or prescribed medication regimens.

Solutions

- Increase investment in building infrastructures and creating opportunities in disadvantaged neighborhoods to improve the quality of health.
- Consciously address deeply embedded cultural stereotypes.
- Redefine health policy rather than focusing solely on targeted health programs. Health policies should be diversified across all sectors of society that have health consequences. Some examples of policy directions to improve health are the following:
  - Housing policy
  - Unemployment policy
  - Community development policy
  - Income support
- Increase political will and commitment to implement strategies that improve living and working conditions.
- Acknowledge the existence of racism and its consequences on health in America. Increase efforts to ameliorate the negative effects of racism, dismantle the structures of racism, and establish countervailing influences to the pervasive processes of racism.

References


Rates of obesity have greatly increased over the last 20 years among all racial groups. The number of obese and extremely obese women has doubled since 1980. However, the increase in obesity has been particularly high in African American and Hispanic communities. Hispanic boys have higher rates of obesity than any other ethnic subgroup in the nation. Medical costs associated with overweight and obesity are estimated at more than $90 billion annually. In addition, the medical burden of obesity could be as high as $147 billion per year. Obesity is related to a number of life-altering illnesses in children and adults, including cardiovascular disease, pulmonary complications, problems with the endocrine system, orthopaedic and gastrointestinal complications, and mental health and social/interpersonal problems. The causes of much of the obesity among minorities, particularly African Americans, are lower consumption of fruits and vegetables.
greater satisfaction with and acceptance of larger body types, lower levels of physical activity, greater consumption of sugar and artificially sweetened beverages, more total fat consumption, greater preference for sweets, and food insecurity. Unhealthy eating patterns in families also tend to be passed from generation to generation. In addition, racial and ethnic minorities often live in communities with little access to healthy foods and where there is limited access to outlets for physical activity. Some of the ways to combat obesity are to develop, implement, and evaluate community education resources and programs developed in partnership with diverse communities and community groups. In addition, it is vital to work with local government officials to improve recreational options in the community.

The Problem

Short-term Health Consequences

Among adults, obesity is described as a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher, and extreme obesity is a BMI of 40 or higher. For children and adolescents, weight status is classified to take into account normal differences in body fat between boys and girls at various ages. As such, obesity for youth is defined as at or above the 95th percentile for children of the same age and sex. The problem of obesity is growing in the United States, affecting a greater number of children as well as adults. There are a number of consequences to being overweight or obese. Some of the short-term effects of obesity are cardiovascular health risks (e.g., high cholesterol, high blood pressure, lipid disorders); pulmonary complications (e.g., asthma, sleep apnea); problems with the endocrine system (e.g., type 2 diabetes, menstrual irregularities); orthopaedic complications (e.g., bowed legs, hip disorders); gastrointestinal complications such as liver disease; mental health conditions (e.g., depression, low self-esteem); and social/interpersonal problems such as teasing, bullying, and discrimination. Some of these short-term problems become longer-term diseases and disorders, including diabetes, heart disease, osteoarthritis, stroke, gall bladder disease, numerous cancers, high blood pressure, and depression.

Economic Consequences of Obesity

There is a clear relationship between the rise in obesity and the rise in medical spending in the United States. Medical costs associated with overweight and obesity are estimated at more than $90 billion annually. About 50 percent of these medical expenditures are paid by Medicare and Medicaid. Consequently, each tax payer contributes about $180 per year toward obesity-related medical costs for public-sector health plans. Across all payers, per capita medical spending for the obese is $1,429 higher per year (42 percent) than for a normal weight person. Additionally, the annual medical burden of obesity could be as high as $147 billion per year.

Rising Rates of Obesity by Race/Ethnicity

Rates of obesity have increased steadily over the last 20 years. About one-third of the U.S. population is considered obese, and more women than men are obese and extremely obese. Since 1980, obesity has doubled in women. In particular, non-Hispanic Black women have seen the greatest increase in obesity and extreme obesity—more than any other racial or ethnic group in the United States. While rates of obesity are similar between racially/ethnically diverse men, non-Hispanic Black men have much higher rates of extreme obesity than men of any other racial or ethnic group. Additionally, African Americans and Mexican Americans have a higher prevalence of overweight, obese, and extremely obese young girls ages 6–11 and adolescent girls ages 12–19. Among boys, Hispanic boys ages 6–19, particularly Mexican Americans, have higher rates of overweight, obesity, and extreme obesity than boys from any other racial or ethnic group.
**Obesity by Geographic Location: Place Matters**

It has become increasingly clear that living conditions have a strong bearing on adult obesity. Maps depicting rates of obesity from 1990 through 2008 show a higher concentration of obesity in the states of the deep South, where there is a higher percentage of minorities, specifically African Americans and Hispanics. The same is true for children. In southern states where obesity is highest among adults, obesity also is high among children. In addition to state rates of obesity, maps of obesity across U.S. cities show that communities with higher concentrations of minorities also have higher rates of childhood obesity.

**Causes**

Obesity may be a normal response to an abnormal environment—a function of the interactions among family, community, workplace, culture, economics, physical environment, and social relationships that do not adequately support health and wellness.

**Individual Factors**

Among minorities, particularly African Americans, there are lower consumptions of fruits and vegetables, greater satisfaction and acceptance of larger body types (excluding those body types that may be considered obese), lower levels of physical activity, greater consumption of sugar and artificially sweetened beverages, more total fat consumption, greater preference for sweets, and food insecurity. Food insecurity describes a condition among individuals who are concerned about food availability and access to basic needs. They may have a tendency to overconsume food when it is available because there is uncertainty (i.e., insecurity) about where their next meal will come from. Relatively unaddressed is the relationship between obesity and African American women’s need to protect their hairstyles from sweat and water. Seeking to maintain a hairstyle that may be costly and time consuming to achieve, they may be less likely to engage in vigorous physical activity.

**Family Factors**

Children learn eating habits and preferences within the context of their families. This includes norms about meal size and frequency of eating. Overweight children are more likely to have at least one overweight parent, which may relate to biology and genetics or learned behavior/patterns of eating within the family. Additionally, meals are increasingly likely to come from fast food restaurants or be prepackaged in stores, resulting in a higher intake of fats, sugars, and extra calories. Food traditions also are meaningful to families, and unhealthy ingredients or methods of food preparation may be intergenerational. Also, many parents assume children will “grow out” of their early overweight condition. However, an overweight child or adolescent has a 75 percent chance of being obese as an adult.

**Cultural Factors**

In addition to cultural factors such as acceptance of a larger body type, many cultures consider the preparation and sharing of large portions of food a symbol of affection. Thus, it is often customary to finish one’s food entirely and eat as many helpings as possible as a sign of gratitude and respect for the person who prepared the meal. For some groups, physical activity may be seen as “work” and thus competing with the need or desire for rest and relaxation. In groups or populations that hold multiple jobs, people may choose not to engage in physical activity when off from work. Different populations also prefer different sorts of activities. For instance, African Americans are more likely to play basketball or jump rope while Whites are more likely to hike or ice skate.

**Institutional Factors**

There are a number of institutional disparities influencing the types of food available to minorities. More minority children attend public schools where meals contain less nutritional value. Also, school beverage/food contracts and fundraising goods (e.g., cookies, candy bars) often are high in fats, sugars, and calories, yet many public schools rely on these fundraisers to support programs and extracurricular activities. Additionally, the reduction in opportunities for physical activity in schools and the increase in sedentary adult work have been associated with increased risk of obesity.

**Community Factors**

Predominantly Black neighborhoods have 2.5 fast food restaurants per square mile compared to 1.5 fast food restaurants in predominantly White neighborhoods. Black communities also are less likely to have as many “sit-down” restaurants where it might be easier to find fresh fruit and vegetables. Supermarkets are far less prevalent in low-income and predominantly Black communities, further reducing access to healthy foods. There also is less access to parks and recreational facilities that are safe and well kept in predominantly African American neighborhoods.

**Organizational/Policy Factors**

Exposure to unhealthy foods and beverages also is prevalent among minority youths and families via advertisements for desserts, soda, candy, and fast food during television programs with large African American audiences. This is problematic given that minority youths are more likely to...
engage in television viewing and playing video games, which are sedentary activities. There also are fewer African American families with adequate health insurance and access to health care facilities in their communities.

**Solutions**

**Individual and Intrapersonal Strategies**

- Offer culturally appropriate literature on prevention and weight control.
  - There are efforts by the National Institutes of Health to target programming to African American women to address some of the unique elements and needs of this group.
- Review benefits of healthy eating and regular physical activity to show the benefits of acquiring a healthy lifestyle.
- Refer to community education resources.
  - There often are resources available in the community, such as weight management programs or workout facilities, of which residents are not aware.
- Help to organize exercise and cooking classes in community settings (e.g., civic clubs, neighborhood association meetings).
  - Show people healthier ways to prepare their favorite meals, or convene community potluck dinners with a healthy focus.
- Work with local vendors to arrange for donations of food/activity products and/or discounts.
- Organize focus groups of community members to identify other strategies to foster healthy communities at a local level rather than just focusing on making changes at a policy level.

**Institutional Strategies**

- Organize coalitions to develop strategic plans for promoting healthy eating and physical activity.
  - Enlist members from recreation departments, school nurses, school administrators, owners of exercise facilities, grocers, local government, and faith-based leaders.
- Provide literature to local groups (e.g., faith-based organizations, civic clubs, neighborhood associations) to help them form walking clubs and cooking classes.
- Increase local media attention (e.g., newspaper articles, interviews on local TV/radio stations).
- Work with local schools to develop programs for youths (e.g., walk to school days).
- Work with local businesses to display health education materials/brochures in their establishments.
- Work with local health clinics to distribute information about community programs.

**Community and Public Policy Strategies**

- Work with local government officials to improve recreational options in the community.
- Educate community leaders about the lack of access to healthy food options in the community.
- Lobby for more physical education and health education in local schools.
- Develop community gardening programs.
  - Very effective at aligning older generations with younger ones
  - Initiatives like urban farming can rejuvenate dilapidated or blighted spaces.
  - Economic boost by profiting from sales of produce
- Participate in school wellness teams designed to monitor school nutrition programs.
- Send press releases to local media and health departments on research related to health benefits of exercise, healthy eating, and weight management.

**Recent Policy-level Changes with a Positive Effect on Obesity**

- **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (2010)**
  - All restaurants with more than 20 locations are required to display calories on menus and have additional nutrition information available: calories from fat, total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates, sugars, dietary fiber, and protein. This includes vending machines.
  - Insurance companies will now be required to provide coverage for preventive health services. This includes obesity screening—a doctor’s physical exam combined with a measurement of body mass index (BMI)—and nutritional counseling.
- **The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded $372 million in stimulus money to 44 urban and rural communities to fight obesity by increasing the availability of nutritious foods and providing safe places for exercise and play.**
Obesity-related Health Promotion in Minority Communities

- Include community members as partners in developing, implementing, and evaluating programs and policies.
  - Community-based participatory research is a good way to identify the community’s perspective of the most important issues related to obesity prior to program development, as there may be culturally driven concerns such as body image, perceived need for weight control, or parenting styles.
- Build on existing traditions with respect to food, music, and types of activities rather than “force-fitting” participants into a preconceived model.
- Embed programs within an existing minority community institution or organization (e.g., church, social/civic group).
- Include program content (e.g., terminology, language, symbolism, role models, choice of incentives) that respects and matches the target population.
- Select recruitment strategies and venues for programs appropriate for the minority population targeted (e.g., use community members to recruit participants and choose locations where the target groups are most likely to be).
- Include some form of evaluation to gauge the program’s successes and shortcomings and use this information for ongoing improvement.
- Engage policymakers in program development and/or share success stories.
  - Data showing the effectiveness of an initiative justify the importance and need for continued support.

References


Obesity is a universal phenomenon with a significant impact on cardiovascular disease, one that affects populations worldwide except in sub-Saharan Africa (with the exception of South Africa). In the United States, however, African Americans and Latinos experience disproportionately high rates of obesity and its consequences. Further, the number of obese children in America is increasing at a rapid rate, for some populations more than others. Currently, obese adolescent boys ages 13–18 are twice as likely to die from cardiovascular disease in adulthood, and adolescent obesity is now a better predictor of cardiovascular disease mortality than adult obesity.

The built environment, which refers to man-made infrastructure, is a major contributor to this health disparity. America’s urban centers are often rampant with pollutants and are not configured in a way that facilitates physical activity. In U.S. suburbs, resources often are spread out, making it necessary to drive rather than walk to most destinations. One proposed solution to improving health disparities is to begin to incorporate mixed land use into ongoing community and neighborhood development projects so that they are more conducive to physical activity. It also would be beneficial for research and medical communities to have open dialogue with local neighborhoods to discover new and innovative ways they could adapt healthy habits into the neighborhood residents’ lifestyles.

The Problem

Childhood Obesity

Children who are obese are twice as likely to develop high blood pressure and three times as likely to develop diabetes. From 1982 to 1992, the number of children diagnosed with type 2 diabetes increased tenfold, and currently about half of all new cases of childhood diabetes are type 2. Childhood diabetes contributes to a number of poor health conditions, including dyslipidemia, sleep-related breathing problems, Blount’s disease, and gallstones.

Psychosocial Impact: Childhood Bullying and Adult Discrimination

Obese children and children who appear overweight but who may not be obese may experience bullying at school, camp, and other settings. As obese children become adults, employment discrimination may affect their earning potential. Discrimination also may affect their medical care. A survey of family practitioners conducted in the early 1980s revealed that family physicians perceived patients with obesity, alcoholism, drug addiction, and mental illness as less desirable. In addition, 24 percent of nurses found caring for obese patients to be repulsive and 12 percent preferred not to touch obese patients. Seventeen percent of physicians reported being reluctant to perform pelvic examinations on obese women.

Economic Impact of Obesity

In the United States, $93 billion is spent on health care for obesity-related conditions each year. Individuals spend an additional $33 billion a year on weight loss products and services for children and adults. While surgery is appropriate for some patients, it would cost $50 trillion if every obese American had bariatric surgery.
Causes

The Built Environment

The built environment refers to the man-made structure of communities and neighborhoods, including schools, workplaces, community-based practices, restaurants, and grocery stores. Much of the built environment in urban neighborhoods is not conducive to health and wellness because neighborhoods are structured in ways that make healthy eating and physical activity significantly challenging. The most disadvantaged neighborhoods lack grocery stores and places to buy fresh fruits and vegetables (“food deserts”). Also, as many Americans move away from their city’s urban center into the suburbs, the distance between their homes and their schools and grocery stores makes driving a necessity. Thus, the built environment across U.S. cities makes it increasingly difficult to incorporate physical activity into everyday life.

Race and Obesity

On average, communities with large African American and Latino populations have less access to recreational facilities that promote physical activity than other communities. As a result, Whites tend to be more physically active than Blacks and Latinos. Despite popular belief, African Americans and Latinos tend to be more concerned with the effects of obesity than Whites due to the prevalence of illnesses like diabetes and hypertension in these communities. Whites are generally more concerned with the social aspects of obesity, mainly discrimination and physical appearance. Blacks and Latinos, on average, have unhealthier food purchasing habits than Whites. However, Latinos and Asians tend to eat home-cooked meals more often than other groups. Also, African American and Latino children are more susceptible to unhealthy food and beverage advertising on television than Whites. African Americans and Latinos tend to eat home than Whites and African Americans. African Americans have different food purchasing and dining habits than Whites. African Americans and Whites differ in their taste preferences (African American children are more likely than White children to favor sweet foods). African American and Latino children are less physically active than their White counterparts. Latinos and Asians spend more time preparing food at home than Whites and African Americans. African American children are more susceptible to food and beverage advertising on television than White children. (Fast food and foods high in fat and sugar are targeted toward African Americans.) African Americans spend more time purchasing food than Asians or Latinos. (African Americans spend three times as much time shopping because they buy more diverse foods and also spend more time reading labels and comparing prices, whereas the diets of Asians and Latinos center on the foods of their cultures, which often are given their own section in stores.)

Solutions

- Be culturally sensitive when approaching communities about health and wellness. Also be mindful of differences in children by age and gender.
- Be direct when approaching the subject of obesity and be open about the health risks.
- Gather information on how individuals eat and live. Factors like fast food consumption, beverage consumption, frequency of eating, hours of television watched per day, and computer time are good indicators of habits people have that may be a benefit or detriment to their health and wellness.
- Help families to set individualized goals that focus on changing or eliminating one particular behavior at a time.
- Advocate for changing the built environment within disadvantaged communities to reinforce healthy living.

Ten Key Statements Related to Health, Wellness, and Obesity

1. It costs less to have a healthy diet than an unhealthy diet.
2. Minority families (African Americans and Latinos) have less access to recreational facilities that promote physical activity than other families.
3. African Americans and Latinos are more concerned about childhood obesity and its consequences than others.
4. African Americans and Whites differ in their concerns related to obesity. African Americans are more concerned about obesity-related diabetes because of its impact on their communities, while White Americans are more concerned with social aspects of obesity (e.g., appearance, employment discrimination).
5. Latinos and African Americans have different food purchasing and dining habits than Whites.
6. African Americans and Whites differ in their taste preferences (African American children are more likely than White children to favor sweet foods).
7. African American and Latino children are less physically active than their White counterparts.
8. Latinos and Asians spend more time preparing food at home than Whites and African Americans.
9. African American children are more susceptible to food and beverage advertising on television than White children. (Fast food and foods high in fat and sugar are targeted toward African Americans.)
10. African Americans spend more time purchasing food than Asians or Latinos. (African Americans spend three times as much time shopping because they buy more diverse foods and also spend more time reading labels and comparing prices, whereas the diets of Asians and Latinos center on the foods of their cultures, which often are given their own section in stores.)

Reference

FAMILIES, YOUTH, AND THE ELDERLY REPORT

This report summarizes information provided by those speakers who focused on race and families, youth, and the elderly. The value of this report is that it provides access to the extensive and detailed information disseminated at the conference. This information will be particularly helpful to community and policy leaders interested in gaining a better understanding of racial disparities in family, youth, and elderly conditions and finding effective strategies for improving these conditions.
Families in communities of color frequently face several barriers to stability. A person’s family life is a great predictor of the achievements or shortcomings that an individual may face as he or she transitions from childhood to adulthood. A quality family structure is made up of several elements, which include love, sufficient income, a job, education, safe environments, parenting skills, a good neighborhood, physical and mental health, and nutritious food. Racial and ethnic minorities often face multiple detrimental factors that threaten stability in their lives and within their families. Some of these factors are lower rates of marriage, higher rates of unemployment, and higher rates of incarceration than Whites. Because of this, people of color—and particularly African Americans—tend to experience higher rates of children born out of wedlock and children entering the foster care system. In order to strengthen families of racial and ethnic minorities, we need to find ways to address poverty, inadequate housing, and parental substance abuse. Also, there need to be more innovative educational programs, like the Knowledge Is Power Program and Urban Prep Academies.

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The Problem

Low Marriage Rates
There are many issues that disproportionately affect families of color in the United States. One of these issues is the difficulty people of color have in finding a suitable mate. There are only 70 single Black men for every 100 single Black women. Only 45 percent of African American families include married couples, compared to 80 percent for Whites, 82 percent for Asians, and 65 percent for Latinos.

Single-parent Households
As a result of the low marriage rates, African American children are more likely than other children to live in single-parent households. For example, 35 percent of Black children ages 0–2 years live in single-parent households compared to 6 percent of White children and 1 percent of Asian children in that same age group. In addition, almost half—42 percent—of all African American teenage children live in single-parent households compared to only 17 percent of White and 9 percent of Asian teens. As these data suggest, the likelihood of living in a single-parent home increases as Black children get older.

Working Parents with Children
In past generations, when a family had children under the age of 18, the mother usually took care of the home while the father worked to earn wages. In 2007, there were 83 million family groups in the United States; 73 percent were couples and 44 percent had children under the age of 18. Of the families that had children under age 18, 66 percent had both spouses in the workforce.

Causes
The factors impacting African American families historically have been:

- slavery,
- northern migration (loss of communal institutions),
- welfare policies,
- declining job opportunities for Black males,
- isolation in neighborhoods, and
- concentrated poverty.

Living in areas of concentrated poverty has many negative effects for Black families. These families lack safety and have poor physical and mental health, a sense of hopelessness, low education, and diminished life opportunities.

Increase in Children Born Out of Wedlock
In the 1950s, only one in 20 children was born to an unwed mother. Today, the number of children born out of wedlock has increased to one in three. Having a child out of wedlock is three times as common for the poor than for the affluent. Half of the women who give birth out of wedlock have no high school diploma, and nearly a third have not worked in the last year.

Divorce
One of the reasons for the high number of single-parent households is divorce. Thirty percent of children born to married couples will see their parents divorce before they reach age 18.

African American divorce rates are higher than that of Whites and Hispanics.

Incarceration
In 2007, 1.7 million minor children had a parent in prison. Imprisoned parents are mostly fathers. Lack of parent-child contact during incarceration jeopardizes the chances of family reunification.

Dropping Out of High School
In 2007, 21 percent of Blacks, 27 percent of Latinos, and 12 percent of Whites dropped out of school. Youths who drop out of school often find it harder to get good jobs as adults and, as a result, face greater difficulty taking care of themselves or a family.

Unemployment
The overall unemployment rate in the United States is 9.75 percent. However, once the number of unemployed is disaggregated by race, there is disproportionality along racial lines:

- 8.8 percent of Whites
- 16.5 percent of African Americans (19 percent of males; 12.4 percent of females)
- 12.6 percent of Latinos
- 8.2 percent of African Americans with college degrees
- 4.5 percent of Whites with college degrees

Joblessness is another way to look at unemployment. In 2004, 72 percent of Black high school dropouts in their 20s were jobless compared to 34 percent of Whites and 19 percent of Hispanics.

Digital Divide
There also is a great digital divide growing among low-income families of color. Poorer parents often lack the ability to communicate with educators using methods of current technology, like e-mail, which is becoming a common tool in most schools.
**Children in Foster Care**

There were 463,000 kids in foster care in 2008 and 123,000 children awaiting adoption. The average length of time that children remain in foster care is 27.2 months. Also, the average age of a child in foster care is 9.7 years. Of the total number of children in foster care, 60 percent are racial and ethnic minorities. African American children are particularly overrepresented in foster care. While they are 15 percent of the U.S. child population, they constitute 31 percent of those in foster care and 25 percent of the children awaiting adoption.

Although the number of children in foster care has decreased in recent years, the number of children who have aged out of the system without finding a permanent home has increased. In the 10 years from 1999 through 2008, 230,000 teens aged out of foster care. The number aging out each year increased from 19,000 in 1999 to almost 30,000 in 2008. These children are less likely to have a high school diploma and more likely to experience economic hardship. They also are likely to have had a child out of wedlock, more likely not to earn a living wage, more likely to become homeless, and more likely to become part of the criminal justice system.

**Solutions**

We need to ask ourselves the following:

- What can be done?
- What can schools do?
- What can churches do?
- What can agencies do?
- What can we be doing?
- How can we promote happy families that yield happy, permanent homes for children?

For children in foster care, we need to find ways to address poverty, inadequate housing, and parental substance abuse. These are the things that lead to child neglect, family disruptions, and kids’ being removed from birth families. We need to find permanence for children in foster care through a biological connection with extended family, if necessary, or through adoption. We need to create new ways to alert people within the community about children in foster care who need permanent homes. This communication can include outreach to churches, community groups, or any place where large numbers of people gather. It also can include ad campaigns like AdoptUSKids, whose mission is to raise public awareness about the need for foster and adoptive families for children and to assist U.S. states, territories and tribes to recruit and retain foster and adoptive families and connect them with children.

We also need to work on preventing abuse and neglect and on family reunification. We need to find alternative responses to child removal, including early intervention and support programs for parents and kids.

We need to establish innovative educational programs, like the following:

- **The Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP):** A national network of free, open-enrollment college preparatory public schools with a track record of preparing students in underserved communities for success in college and in life.
- **Urban Prep Academies:** A network of free public, comprehensive, high-quality college preparatory education programs open to young men that result in graduates succeeding in college.

Further, we need to teach about relationships and parenting in schools.

To increase employment and reduce poverty, we need to:

- establish economic policies that create jobs that support families,
- increase social interventions that teach vital skills related to employment in the community and through community-based programs serving families, and
- create self-help efforts that inspire those who have made it out of impoverished communities to give back.
Domestic Violence and African Americans: Exploring the Intersections of Race and Social Context

Presenter: Oliver J. Williams, Executive Director, Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community, and Professor, University of Minnesota School of Social Work

Moderator: Barbara S. Burstin, Holocaust and Jewish Studies Scholar, Department of History, University of Pittsburgh

African Americans and American Indians have the highest levels of domestic violence in the United States. When the social context of abuse is taken into account, domestic violence is higher among African Americans who are in high-stress, low-income environments than among those in middle- and upper-class households. African American rates of domestic violence within middle- and upper-class households are still higher when compared to other races at the same income levels.

A majority of intimate partner violence in the United States is abuse by men against women. It tends to have a high correlation with factors such as unemployment/underemployment, lack of social support, substance abuse, and child abuse or neglect. There are usually multiple social problems facing families that have issues of domestic violence. In order to decrease the prevalence of intimate partner violence in people of color, there need to be holistic and culturally competent interventions that identify and promote the true desired outcomes of the individuals and the communities they serve.

The Problem

There are several challenges associated with violence in some homes and communities:

- How can we effectively address issues that encourage healing on the part of those who have been victims of domestic violence?
- How do we end up encouraging transformation for those men who can change?
- How can we have conversations about things in authentic ways that really connect with the experience and realities of families?
- How can we prepare children to deal with conflict without it resulting in violence?
- How do you find ways to deal with issues of violence within communities and families?
- How can we find ways to holistically address the multiple issues facing families that experience intimate partner violence?

Causes

Risk Factors for Domestic Violence

Socioeconomic Status: Intimate partner violence tends to be related to lower socioeconomic status. This violence occurs more frequently among couples in low-income households and when the male partner is unemployed, not seeking work, or underemployed. Although it is true that lower socioeconomic status does not cause domestic violence, it does exacerbate the problem. In addition, domestic violence occurs at higher rates when couples live in poorer neighborhoods, even if both parties are working. African Americans are poor at disproportionately high rates compared to Whites. Even when income and environments are held constant, racial differences in domestic violence still exist.

Lack of Resources/Social Support: Seventy to 80 percent of abused Black women have left or attempted to leave these relationships. Half of domestic violence homicides were cases where women were killed in the process of leaving the relationship. Many women who leave abusive relationships return to them due to an inability to support themselves or to
find stable housing. They also may return out of concern for their children and how leaving or the lack of resources that may be associated with leaving could affect them. Among African American women who killed their partners, 80 percent experienced domestic violence.

Women do better when they have support systems and family support. In many cases, the abuser tries to keep the victim away from those who may offer support.

Problems with Substance Abuse: Alcohol problems are more frequently related to intimate partner violence for African Americans than for Whites and Hispanics. In many cases, people who engage in domestic violence while intoxicated continue to abuse their mate even during periods of sobriety or treatment for substance abuse.

Jealousy: African American men, like other men who batter, demonstrate higher rates of jealousy than men who do not batter.

Child Abuse/Neglect: There is a high rate of domestic violence and co-occurrence with other issues, particularly child abuse and neglect. In households where intimate partner violence occurs, children are nine times more likely to come to the attention of child welfare workers.

Reasons that have been identified to explain the prevalence of domestic violence in Black communities include:

- realization of the barriers to being able to achieve manhood in different ways,
- displaced anger,
- poor definitions of respect,
- issues of fatherhood and/or mentoring, and
- poor problem-solving skills.

Solutions

We need to understand the multiple issues that affect families that experience domestic violence. Domestic violence programs that are ineffective tend to have a one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to working with victims and families. Initiatives and interventions have to adjust to the unique social context of domestic violence within the communities they serve.

Real conversation within African American communities needs to be conducted to discern the challenges that batterers and their victims face and the true desired outcomes that people want from domestic violence programs and interventions. In some instances, the violence that may be associated with gang life may be seen as normal behavior to those associated with that culture. Also, a victim of domestic violence may view the act of jealousy on the part of her mate as an outward showing of affection. Effective measures to eradicate domestic violence cannot happen until interventions begin to address issues in relation to the social context of the environments they are serving. In addition, we need:

- more assessment points around challenges that people are facing in communities on a day-to-day basis,
- coordinated community responses in which different community partners come together to give attention to issues of domestic violence, and
- more assistance provided to African American community leaders and providers to help them understand and address the multiple issues fragile families and communities face.

There also are themes to consider as we address domestic violence:

- African American women who stay in abusive relationships
- African American fathering after violence
- Coparenting after violence
- Prison reentry and domestic violence
- Manhood and mentoring young African American men
- Intersection of substance abuse and domestic violence
- Sexism

References


Discrimination, such as biases, prejudice, and stereotyping, create much of the disparity in health and health care that exists throughout the life course for people of color today. Power, social participation, social environment, behavior, and early life all have significant influence and effect on social inequalities and health throughout the life course of racial and ethnic minorities in the United States. Currently, an eight-year gap exists in life expectancy at birth between Whites and Blacks. It would take an estimated 60 years at the current rates for Blacks to achieve equality with Whites in life expectancy. In addition, the United States is becoming more unequal in the distribution of economic resources, more racially and ethnically diverse, more materially disadvantaged, and more geographically segregated. There are those who would like to associate the health disparities that African Americans face with genetics. However, there is little to no evidence that can link the genes that account for skin tone and other physical characteristics that we use to define race with any of the complex assortments of genes that are associated with...
illnesses such as diabetes or hypertension. The determinants of poor health have more to do with behaviors in which people engage, the environments in which people live, and the social stressors that people encounter in their daily lives. These factors often are much more problematic in the lives of racial and ethnic minorities, thereby making them more susceptible to illness. Social and political changes are needed if we are to adopt effective strategies for improving health and health care for this and the next generation of racial and ethnic minorities. This will benefit not only African Americans but also the growing ethnic and racial populations in this country and, in fact, our society as a whole.

The Problem

The aging society is driven by a drop in fertility and by people living longer. In the near future, there will be more people over 60 than there are under the age of 15. In years to come, younger generations will become much more racially heterogeneous than older generations due to higher fertility and increased immigration of racial and ethnic groups.

Life Expectancy and Race

There are large differences in life expectancy at birth between Whites and Blacks. The life expectancy for Whites in the year 2000 was 77.4 years, compared to 71.7 for Blacks. At the current rates, parity of life expectancy between Whites and Blacks will not be reached until the year 2071. Also, pregnancy mortality rates for Black women worsen as their levels of educational attainment increase. In addition, the probability of survival from age 15 to 65 years is almost 10 percent higher for poor Whites than it is for nonpoor Blacks.

Genetically Defined Groups

Attempts to order human variability into discrete genetically defined groups racializes health disparities and reifies human group differences. It encourages uncritical acceptance of some disparities and pathologizes certain groups. It also distracts attention from exploring how social life is expressed biologically. Ultimately, any effort to categorize human variability in this fashion will inhibit the ability to act on political, economic, and social factors that are known to produce poor health.

Causes

The life course is very important in terms of understanding human development. It is a major factor in how we understand race in the United States. Race influences the experiences of individuals throughout the duration of their lives. Social, economic, and political context; history; life course; and their intersections are clearly at the epicenter of understanding human development. These factors may be even more important in understanding the developmental trajectories of discriminated-against ethnic and racial groups over the life course.

Four Eras of Racial Subjugation in the United States

Slavery: During this period, total control over people from Africa was exercised by private industry and abetted by the government for the purposes of economic growth and development of the country. During this period, theories of racial classification were developed to justify and rationalize the subjugation of an entire class of people in a general worldwide trend of enlightenment and democratic ideals.

De Jure Segregation: During this period after slavery, Blacks continued to be discriminated against based upon a set of legal tenets and national and state laws that were developed to maintain the relative social and economic position between Blacks and all other peoples in the immigrant United States. This is the beginning of the “at least you are not Black” era.

De Facto Segregation: This was a major period of continued maintenance of relative differences between Blacks and others enforced by social convention and, when necessary, vigilantism and violence, especially in the South. It also was maintained in the North through a series of often unwritten but powerful beliefs and behaviors, including geographical redlining, mortgage preferences, housing codicils, social and economic segregation, and others.

Status Quo Subjugation: This is the period we are in today—a period in which many can point to the legislation of the late 1960s as markers of Black emancipation and as a signal that equality exists among the “races.” In this period, many people are concerned about the ways in which the government oppresses Blacks by forcing them to wear the label of Black and the need to free people to be whatever they want to be. This is a period of “don’t know, don’t tell.” The Civil Rights Act does guarantee citizenship for African Americans, but they do nothing in the way of guaranteeing economic justice. As a result, this legislation has created the “disappointed generation” among African Americans who saw very few of the expectations for a better life come to fruition.

Why Life Course Disparities Persist in Today’s Society

- Reductionist thinking—cognitive distortion that fails to recognize the interconnectedness of factors or causes
- Disparities provide an effective rationale for continued subjugation
- Powerful and parsimonious explanation for why my group is good and your group is bad
- Disparities contribute to continued rationale for “racial” segregation, especially restrictions on group intermarriage
Markers of Race

- Race may offer some basis for genetic groupings, but it is hardly definitive for observed health differences.
- Race as merely a social construction is probably too simplistic.
- Race is most likely a social construction based upon genetically caused phenotypical differences—observable traits or characteristics.
  - We categorize people based on genetic markers such as skin color. These categorizations are unimportant with regard to how Americans understand race.
- The genes responsible for observable racial markers are the most unstable and under the most selective pressures.
  - These genes are the most unstable and the least important with regard to what is known about the human genome.
  - There is no evidence that links the genes that create skin color or other visible racial characteristics to the complex genes that are related to health issues like diabetes and obesity.
- In parsing out causal factors, environmental and gene/environmental interactions are probably most important in any health and disease risk assessment.

Alternative Theories about the Major Marker of Race

Skin tone is the most often used marker of a person’s race. However, skin tone is most likely related to selection pressures (vitamin D and reproduction) and is thus unstable. Dark skin evolved to protect against breakdown in folate, a nutrient essential for fertility and for fetal development. Skin that is too dark blocks sunlight needed for vitamin D production, which is critical in maternal and fetal bones. Thus, humans have evolved to be light enough to make sufficient vitamin D yet dark enough to protect stores of folate. However, when we construe race (ethnicity, etc.), there are two operative processes in group categorization:

- Biological—phenotypical differences
- Social—self and other meanings

It is far-fetched to think that biological process alone could account for observed group differences in health in the United States. Social processes must play a major role.

Historically, African Americans and Caucasians are the only racial groups that do not dispute their racial characterization of being labeled as Blacks or Whites, respectively. Other groups, such as Afro-Caribbeans, tend to dispute being labeled solely as Black.

Race and Chronic Stress

The chronic stress process is one possible pathway for physical and mental health disparities among racial and ethnic minorities. Three of the major culprits for producing stressful effects are the following:

- Discrimination and perceived racism—a class of stressors that have been shown to have health and mental health effects among racial and ethnic minorities
- Discrimination operating in the context of social, political, economic, and cultural influences over the individual and group life course
- Discrimination and perceived racism as well as other nonrace-related stressors tied to poor structural life conditions, which probably play a role in health and mental health processes, but the role is complex.

The “law of small effects” in race-related outcomes states that there is no one single factor that produces observed physical health disparities among racial/ethnic groups in America. Instead, it is a group of small differences, which may accumulate over the life course to produce observed differences in adulthood and older ages among different race/ethnic groups. Those factors may include:

- gene/gene and gene/environment interactions,
- discrimination and perceived racism (stress process),
- cultural factors,
- behavioral differences,
- socioeconomic status and institutional arrangement, and
- social and psychological factors.

Disparities in Demographic, Economic, and Social Resources: Structural Inequalities

The United States is becoming more unequal in the distribution of economic resources and more racially and ethnically diverse. Blacks remain materially disadvantaged and geographically segregated.

There also are large disparities, such as neighborhood segregation and differentially stressful communities, that exist in living arrangements favoring non-Hispanic Whites. These neighborhoods afford differential opportunities like access to food, services, and jobs and differential coping resources, such as fast food outlets, liquor stores, and illegal drug distributors.
Disparities in Health Status, Health Services, and Mental Health: Physical and Psychological Inequalities

Large disparities in rates for all causes of death exist among ethnic and racial groups, and these differences are not due in any simple way to socioeconomic status. Infant mortality rates have declined, but large differences exist between African Americans and Whites. There also are large disparities in health care use between African Americans and Whites.

Health Disparities by Age, Aging, and the Life Course

Disparities in health tend to increase as people of color get older. There are links from childhood (infancy, neonatal care, pregnancy, etc.) social conditions to racial/ethnic disparities in adulthood and older age. Over the life course, Blacks more than any other group live the fewest years, and a high proportion of these years are lived in poor health. Health, race, ethnicity, and mobility are linked in complex ways across childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age. As people of color increase in age, they are more susceptible to endocrine, nutritional, and metabolic diseases because the stressors they endure over their life course begin to have a greater impact.

Health Behaviors Parallel Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Poor health behaviors, such as smoking, heavy alcohol use, drug use, and obesity, increase in African American males and females as they get older. Also, vigorous physical activity sharply decreases in Blacks as they grow older.

Mental Health Disparities

In comparison to health statuses, mortality, and poor health behaviors, prevalence rates for major psychiatric disorders reveal few, if any, Black/White disparities favoring Whites.

Solutions

We need to focus more on the heterogeneity produced by race, ethnicity, class, gender, immigration, and other conditioners of life, including the life course. Explicit or implicit assumptions of homogeneity in research on and policy formulation regarding ethnic and racial populations are no longer tenable.

We must develop effective strategies for this society to make social and political changes for this, and the next, generation of Black Americans who, after all, constitute one of our oldest groups of American citizens. This strategy will benefit not only Black Americans but also the growing ethnic and racial populations in this country and, in fact, our society as a whole.

We also need to encourage the development of relevant ongoing demographic, economic, social, and policy studies, like the National Survey of American Life1, that address the nature of the African American population in this more ethnically and racially diversified nation of the 21st century.

The specific policy implications are as follows:

- Create a sustained, broad-based focus by government and private organizations on providing a wide range of social and economic opportunities.
- Develop policies to improve family support systems, finance education reform, and provide opportunities for intergenerational wealth accumulation.
- Find common objectives among racial and ethnic minority groups as a basis for building effective coalitions within and across age cohorts.
- Eliminate ongoing racial and ethnic discrimination through more vigorous monitoring and enforcement of antidiscrimination laws (already on the books) in housing, politics, employment, education and schooling, and the criminal justice system.
- Develop a comprehensive, sustainable government and private sector plan that addresses the long history of unequal racial treatment.

References


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1 The National Survey of American Life (NSAL) is a study designed to explore racial and ethnic differences in mental disorders, psychological distress, and informal and formal service use from within the context of a variety of presumed risk and protective factors in the African American and Afro-Caribbean populations of the United States as compared with White respondents living in the same communities. NSAL is part of the Collaborative Psychiatric Epidemiology Surveys (CPES) data collection (see ICPSR20240). Data and documentation for NSAL can be accessed through the CPES Web site.
Aging and Health among Hispanics/Latinos in the United States

**Presenter:** Kyriakos “Kokos” S. Markides, Annie and John Gnitizinger Distinguished Professor of Aging and Director of the Division of Sociomedical Sciences, Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health, University of Texas Medical Branch

**Moderator:** Richard Schulz, Professor of Psychiatry; Director, University Center for Social and Urban Research; and Director of Gerontology and Associate Director, Institute on Aging, University of Pittsburgh

The U.S. Census Bureau recently reported that the Hispanic population in this country grew by 43 percent over the past decade and now exceeds 50 million, or one in six members of the total population. This number is projected to double by 2050. Clearly the health characteristics of this group will have a major impact on the well-being of families, youth, and the elderly in the United States.

The Hispanic population, especially the Mexican American population, which constitutes more than 65 percent of U.S. Hispanics, has experienced an increase in life expectancy in recent years that is larger than the general population, despite being an underprivileged group. Although the life expectancy of Hispanics is increasing, they tend to have more health disparities. While disparities are decreasing for other groups of color, they are on the rise for Latinos. A large percentage of older Hispanics have health insurance. However, they are still a population in which serious illness and disability are widespread. Many younger Hispanics lack health insurance or Medicaid, despite being among the poorest people in the country. There are various theories as to why Hispanics, particularly Mexican Americans, have the greatest increase in life expectancy but still suffer disproportionately from mental and physical illness. It is believed that the cultural aspects of the racially homogenous neighborhoods in which most Hispanics find themselves may have some health benefit to them. To decrease the prevalence of health issues in Mexican Americans and other Hispanics, we need to find ways to make these racially homogenous neighborhoods safer, more economically viable, and better situated to facilitate physical fitness.

The Problem

**The Hispanic (Epidemiological) Paradox**

The Hispanic paradox, also referred to as the epidemiological paradox, refers to the situation in recent years in which Hispanics in the United States, especially Mexican Americans, have had a larger increase in life expectancy than that of the general population but at the same time are a very underprivileged group with increasing physical and mental health problems. Some of the health disparities in the Hispanic population include the following:

- High rates of diabetes
- High rates of obesity
- Similar rates of hypertension and high cholesterol
- High smoking rates among men; women smoke fewer cigarettes than men
- Cuban American males smoke the most
- High alcohol (binge) drinking rates among men, low among women
- Alcohol consumption in women increases with acculturation
- Low rates of physical activity

Other characteristics of Hispanics that affect health in a more positive way are culturally strong family structures and the fact that, as immigrants, they have successfully passed selection criteria for entering the country.
Projected Rates of Disability for Hispanics and Others

- Older Hispanics as a group will have greater disability rates than older non-Hispanic Whites—rates that are only slightly lower than those for African Americans.
- Older Asians and Pacific Islanders will have disability rates that are somewhat lower than those of older non-Hispanic Whites.
- Older Native Americans (American Indians and Alaska natives) will have high disability rates—possibly higher than any other population.
- Among the Hispanic populations, older Puerto Ricans will have the highest disability rates, with older Cubans having the lowest and Mexican Americans having intermediate rates.
- Among older persons of Mexican origin, the foreign born, especially men, will have lower disability rates than the native born.

It is not clear what rates for older Central Americans and older South Americans would be like, given the absence of guidance from existing literature. We might hypothesize that because these groups are overwhelmingly immigrants, their rates might be somewhat lower than rates for Mexican Americans if indeed they are selected through migration. Given that men are more likely to be selected than women, men will have lower disability rates.

It also is not clear what the rates for other Hispanics might be like. Other Hispanics are a heterogeneous mix of Spaniards, Dominicans, and perhaps some Filipinos as well as more than a few Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and persons of mixed ancestry who fail to identify with a specific Hispanic origin in their responses to the U.S. Census. Given this mix, we might expect them to exhibit average disability rates, perhaps similar to those for Mexican Americans.

Causes

It is theorized that the epidemiological paradox exists because of the large number of Hispanics who are immigrants. Immigrant populations across the world tend to be healthier people. They are physically and emotionally apt to overcome the barriers that may exist to moving to another country. They are usually motivated to make profound changes for themselves or their families in their new countries. Immigrants who do not face barriers of a selection process when migrating to another country are not as physically and mentally fit as those who face obstacles of a selection process when entering a new country. Those who enter the United States illegally and populations who migrate here freely, like Puerto Ricans, who are citizens of a U.S. commonwealth, are not as healthy as those immigrants who face a selection process to gain entrance into the United States. Also, the health of immigrants tends to worsen the longer they stay in the United States.

The Salmon Bias Hypothesis

There has been evidence that some immigrants prefer to go back to their native countries when it is time to die. Because this is like a salmon going to its place of birth to die, it is called the salmon bias hypothesis. There is some truth to this hypothesis: Foreign-born social security beneficiaries living abroad had higher mortality rates than foreign-born beneficiaries living in the United States. However, the number of people who do migrate back to their native countries is relatively small. This small number would not account for the difference in mortality that exists between Hispanics and the general population. The salmon bias hypothesis also is offset by the number of children who move from their countries of birth back to the United States to be near any family members who may be there. While there is considerable return migration back to Mexico, data from the Mexican Health and Aging Study show that the vast majority of return migrants are younger. Very few older people return to Mexico because their children live in the United States.

Infant Mortality

Hummer and colleagues examined infant mortality rates among Hispanics and compared those rates to others. Their results showed that first-hour, first-day, and first-week mortality rates of infants born in the United States to Mexican immigrant women are about 10 percent lower than those among infants of non-Hispanic, White U.S.-born women. Furthermore, infants born to U.S.-born Mexican American women exhibited rates of mortality equal to those of non-Hispanic White women during the first weeks of life. In both cases, these infants fared better than those born to non-Hispanic Black women, with whom they share similar socioeconomic profiles. These fairly consistent patterns support the idea of an epidemiological paradox.

Health Characteristics of Mexican American Households

The study by Hummer et al also showed patterns of decreased health status over time for Mexican Americans and suggested a strong emphasis on education and continued monitoring. Trends suggest that prevalence of hypertension, diabetes, cognitive impairment, and the percent reporting disability in daily living activities will increase over time in Mexican Americans age 75 and older.

On a positive note, 92 percent of older Mexican Americans living in the Southwest have medical insurance through Medicare, making them one of the most insured older populations in the United States. However, younger Mexican Americans are one of the most uninsured groups. This accentuates the importance of working now to help future generations of Mexican Americans, as well as other at-risk populations, to attain and maintain positive health outcomes.
Neighborhood Composition and Health among Hispanics

Hispanics benefit from the cultural aspects of living in racially homogenous neighborhoods, like being among people who speak the same language, eat the same foods, and practice the same religions. Living in a majority Hispanic neighborhood possibly could have some positive health effects. Mexican Americans who live in homogenous neighborhoods often experience lower prevalence of stroke, cancer, hip fracture, and mortality. The incidence of breast, colorectal, and lung cancer among Hispanics increased as the percentage of Hispanics in the census tract decreased. The lower cancer rates among Hispanics relative to non-Hispanic Whites may dissipate as Hispanics become more assimilated into the mainstream society.

There are drawbacks to these more homogenous Hispanic communities as well. For example, they often lack sidewalks, recreational facilities, and a safe environment.

Solutions

We need to create better communities for Hispanics that promote health and physical activity. This includes safe neighborhoods that accommodate and facilitate healthy living. We also need continued monitoring and research in order to develop effective educational programs and other interventions.

Reference

IN THE SYSTEM: The Disproportionality of Race in Child Welfare

Keeping America’s Promise to All of Our Children

Presenter: William C. Bell, President and Chief Executive Officer, Casey Family Programs

Moderator: Marc Cherna, Director, Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Disparate treatment exists for children of color within the child welfare system. Permanent and stable families have positive and long-lasting effects on the lives of children. Conversely, the lack of a stable home can be detrimental to the lives of children and affect them in a negative way in adulthood. America always has had some response to issues of child welfare in society. In the country’s infancy, many of the strategies for dealing with issues of child welfare may have exacerbated the problem or were intentionally noninclusive of all races. Child welfare policies and practices have continually evolved to adapt to the ever-changing landscape of American society. While children have become a federally protected group in the United States, much disproportionality in the children who enter the child welfare system still exists today.

The Problem

African American children make up 14 percent of the U.S. child population but 33 percent of the population of the children in foster care. White children make up 56 percent of the children in foster care in America but only 40 percent of the children in foster care. Black children stay in foster care for longer periods of time, experience more moves from foster home to foster home, receive less developmental and support services while in foster care, are less likely to be reunited with their families, and are more likely to age out of foster care without finding a permanent home than children of any other race. Each year, more than 700,000 children spend at least one day in foster care.

In 2008:

• eight out of every 1,000 African American children entered foster care,
• four out of every 1,000 Hispanic children entered foster care, and

(Continued on page 140)
• three out of every 1,000 White children entered foster care.

If we do nothing, by 2020:
• 5.5 million more children will be in foster care,
• 1.8 million of these children will be African American, and
• 115,000 more children will age out of foster care at age 18.

Causes
Distinct periods in history have had different responses to child welfare and specifically to children of color within the child welfare system.

Colonial Period
• No children of color were in the child welfare system. Any social response to the needs of African American children during this time was not considered because they were slaves. Poverty was considered a main factor for children in need of care by the child welfare system in place, which primarily involved moving poor children into families with land where they could be of service.
• White children were seen as the deserving poor, though their parents were undeserving.
• Children were removed from undeserving parents.
• African American children were property.

Poorhouse Reform Era (1850–80)
• African American children still were not considered in the response system in child welfare.
• People started to believe that poorhouses were not places where children belonged.
• Children were removed from their families in the poorhouse and placed into indentured servitude.
• Children’s aid societies were established. In 1853, philanthropist Charles Loring Brace founded the Children’s Aid Society (then called “the Society”) as an organization that found families for orphans and homeless youths among the pioneer families that were then just settling into the American West. Brace felt that living among these families would be a better alternative than living on the streets or in jails, almshouses, or orphanages.
• There was an increase in the number of orphanages.
• Family-based services were established.
• “Family breakup” was a child welfare response that resulted in the removal of children ages 2–16 from their homes to be placed in some sort of indentured servitude.

This era represented a time when Black children were disenfranchised. In addition, states began to enact their own policies regarding Black children in the child welfare system. For example, Alabama law allowed parents to be deemed unsuitable by the state. Their children then could be removed from the home and indentured back to former slave owners.

The Progressive Era (1880–1930)
• Concern for child abuse/cruelty to White children began to rise.
• People began to see that removing children from homes due to poverty could be problematic.
• The 1909 inaugural White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children, held by President Theodore Roosevelt, commenced. This group opposed the institutionalization of dependent and neglected children and determined that poverty alone should not be grounds for removing children from families.
• In 1912, the Children’s Bureau was formed to investigate and report matters affecting the welfare and lives of children.
• In 1913, President Woodrow Wilson enacted an executive order that resegregated all federal offices. Before this, federal offices had been integrated for almost 50 years. This move by Wilson effectively negated the possible positive effects of the Children’s Bureau for Black Children because Blacks were forbidden to work in the same space with Whites on issues that affected their community.
• From 1916 into the 1940s, the “Great Migration” of 1.5 million African Americans from the rural South to the urban North took place.
• White children were protected.
• Black children were separate but somewhat equal.

• The focus on helping and protecting children greatly increased.
• The federal government took a more involved role in the child welfare system with the Social Security Act of 1935 (Title IV-B and Aid to Families with Dependent Children enacted). Title IV-B appropriated federal block grants to state public welfare agencies for the purpose of establishing, extending, and strengthening child welfare services. The language of IV-B was about delinquency and focused on protecting society from problems that came from the failure of parents. Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) was a federal assistance program that provided financial assistance to children whose mothers lacked the support of a breadwinner, no matter how they had gotten to that position. People believed it was better
to provide aid to struggling mothers so that children could have the opportunity to be raised within their own families.

- Some states removed kids from ADC because of their parents’ behavior (e.g., parents had additional kids out of wedlock).
- In 1962, ADC changed to Aid to Families with Dependent Children, which was a federal assistance program that provided financial assistance to children whose families had low or no income. “Families” was added because it was believed that the original legislation discouraged marriage.
- Children were removed from unsuitable parents. Children of color were removed more frequently than children of other races.
- In 1962, the term “battered child syndrome” was defined as a disease in which children are victims of any of the various forms of child abuse or neglect.
- In 1967, Congress amended the Social Security Act to make it mandatory for states to have a foster care system and allow nonprofits to serve kids.
- Child welfare came from a punitive perspective, not from a nurturing perspective.


- Increased legislation was used during this time to address child welfare problems.
- Major federal policies were implemented.
- In 1976, 100,000 children were in out-of-home care. By 1980, that number had increased to 302,000 children.
- The draconian 1986 drug laws about possession and use of crack impacted the African American family. Lengthy incarcerations rose rapidly, which increased out-of-home placement for African American children. By the year 2000, the number of children in out-of-home care had increased to 547,000, and 41 percent of those were African American.

Solutions

Culturally competent programs need to be implemented in communities in which the greatest number of youths enter the child welfare system. These programs need to value children in the context of the specific social problems that those families and communities face. In addition, case workers need to have manageable caseloads so that they are able to make caring and informed decisions about the placement of children within troubled families. Family group or team decision-making models should be used. We need to have a greater reliance on kinship foster care. This would provide fewer moves and stronger bonds.

We need to have greater investment in frontline staff and supervision as well as cap the number of cases that each caseworker can carry, because more manageable caseloads are necessary for them to be able to make better decisions regarding the placement of children. Twenty-five percent of kids entering foster care leave within the first three months, so the question has to be, did they really need to be in out-of-home care?

In addition, we should:

- Fully implement the Family Support Model from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program. Family support services are community-based preventive activities designed to promote parental skills and behaviors that will increase the ability of families to successfully nurture their children, use resources and opportunities available in the community, establish supportive networks to improve the child-rearing abilities of parents, help to compensate for the increased social isolation and vulnerability of families, strengthen parental relationships, and promote healthy marriages.
- Empower communities with data.
- Urge communities to take communal ownership of the responsibility of giving vulnerable children and families proper care.
- Value children in the context of families, value families in the context of communities, and value everyone else’s participation in the context of a community support network that is helping communities to care for their own.
- Facilitate and support families making decisions regarding their future in the child welfare system.
- Increase the involvement of fathers in the lives of children.
Disparities, Decision Paths, and Disproportionate Placement of Native American Children

Presenter: Terry L. Cross, Developer and Founder, National Indian Child Welfare Association

Moderator: Marc Cherna, Director, Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Historically, the federal child welfare policy for Native American children was to systematically remove children to destroy the culture. Placement into the child welfare system often has been used as a strategy to assimilate American Indians into American society and eliminate their way of life. Native Americans lead in a majority of all child well-being disparities. They also are among the poorest children in the country, with more than 35 percent of them living in poverty. Native American families in the child welfare system receive very few poverty reduction services, housing-related services, mental health services, or substance abuse treatment services. In order to change the prevalence of Native Americans in the child welfare system, there has to be an increase in research to better understand the problems and the dynamics that cause them. In addition, measures need to be taken to reduce poverty in Native American communities and increase community-based services that are child centered and family driven.

The Problem

Child Well-being Disparities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KID COUNT DATA</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Asian and Pacific Islander</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>Latino</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–14)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of teen deaths by accident, homicides, and suicides (deaths per 100,000 children ages 15–19)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of teens who are high school dropouts (ages 16–19)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of children in poverty</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

American Indian children lead in almost every category of well-being disparity. Native American children currently rank second in U.S. child death rates, with 29 deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–14. Also, Native American children rank first in rates of teen death, with 92 per 100,000; percentage of teens who are high school dropouts (17 percent); and percentage of children living in poverty (35 percent). Although Native American children have a higher rate of poverty than children of any other group, Native American families account for only 1.3 percent of the families that receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families.

Disparities vs. Disproportionailities

“Disparities” refers to the variation in rates at which persons of different groups experience social conditions. An example of disparity is that Native Americans experience higher rates of health problems, such as diabetes and obesity, than other racial and ethnic groups in the United States.

“Disproportionality” refers to the overrepresentation of specific groups within a system, such as the overrepresentation of Native American children in child welfare, particularly placement. Native Americans also are underrepresented in the preventive and restorative services.

Behavioral Health in American Indians/Alaska Natives

- The rate of alcohol-related deaths among Native Americans ages 15–24 is 17 times the national average.
- The suicide rate for Native American youths is three times the national average (10 times the national

Terry L. Cross

Terry L. Cross is an enrolled member of the Seneca Nation. He is the developer and founder of the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA). Cross’ highest honor was to be initiated into the Kenai Chieftain Society by the Blood Tribe of Canada.

He is the author of the Heritage and Helping and Positive Indian Parenting curricula as well as the Cross-cultural Skills in Indian Child Welfare training program. He coauthored Toward a Culturally Competent System of Care, published by the Georgetown University Child Development Center, and has contributed numerous articles, chapters, and reports to Indian social work literature. He has 37 years of experience in child welfare, including 10 years working directly with children and families. Additionally, he served on the faculty of the Portland State University School of Social Work for 15 years.

Cross has directed NICWA since its founding in 1983 and has traveled to make presentations internationally in relation to child welfare work. He is experienced in evaluation design and policy-related research, nonprofit management, fundraising, community and organizational development, and governmental affairs and advocacy. He has organized culturally specific technical assistance programs for more than 15 years and has developed culturally based models for social services, research, and organizational development.
average for children placed transracially in the child welfare system).

- There is only one trained mental health provider for every 17,000 American Indian children.

**Juvenile Justice in American Indians/Alaska Natives**

American Indian youth are represented at 2.4 times the rate of Whites in state and federal juvenile justice systems and in secure confinement. Also, incarcerated American Indian youths are much more likely to be subjected to the harshest treatment in the most restrictive environments. Pepper spray use, restraint, isolation, and death while in confinement appear to be grossly and disproportionately applied to or occurring among Indian youths. In the state of Montana, Native Americans make up 7 percent of the population. However, 70 percent of the girls in secure confinement are Native American. Almost none of the Native American girls in secure confinement has committed a crime in society. They came into the system as truants and status offenders and were subject to harsher punitive measures due to acting out after entering the system.

**Child Welfare Services for American Indians/Alaska Natives**

Indian families receive very few poverty reduction, housing-related, mental health, and substance abuse treatment services.

**Causes**

For more than 100 years, the “outing” systems of the 1850s and boarding schools from the 1870s to the 1970s were used to remove Native American children from their families and destroy their way of life. There also was a systematic removal of tribal authority over children during the 1950s. This was the era of transracial adoption, in which children were removed from Native American families without due process and placed in non-Native American homes across the East for the purpose of “saving” and “civilizing” the Indian. In addition, sterilization of Indian women occurred until the 1970s.

**Decision Path to Disparity**

For every 100 White children reported to child welfare in the United States, 25 cases are substantiated and eight are actually placed in the system. For every 100 American Indian children reported, 50 cases are substantiated and 25 are placed. Once placed, American Indians are twice as likely to enter the juvenile justice system.

**Potential Factors for the Overrepresentation of American Indians and Alaska Natives**

Overrepresentation of American Indian and Alaska Native children in care is related to poverty, poor housing, untreated mental health issues, and caregiver substance misuse. In Nova Scotia, Canada, 95 percent of children removed were from families with total incomes below $25,000.

**Solutions**

- Research to better understand the problems and the dynamics that cause them
- Reduction of poverty
- Community-based services that are child centered and family driven
- Cultural competence among professionals, organizations, and systems and within community work and treatment

Organizational cultural competence is a set of congruent practice skills, attitudes, policies, and structures that come together in a system, in an agency, or among professionals and enable that system, that agency, or those professionals to work effectively in the context of cultural differences. The elements of cultural competence are:

- awareness and acceptance of difference,
- awareness of one’s own cultural values,
- understanding the dynamics of difference,
- development of cultural knowledge, and
- ability to adapt practice to fit the cultural context of the family.

**Policy and Practice Recommendations for Responding to Structural Risk Factors**

There need to be strategies for responding to structural risk factors. Also, these strategies need to differentiate between maltreatment and social disadvantage. Services need to be better aligned with structural risk factors and the culture of children and families.

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978 shows that these problems cannot be legislated away. Not all children are covered by ICWA.

**Approaches to Reduce Disproportionalities**

- Training for mandatory reporting
- Differential response/diversion programs
- Greater use of tribal services
- Tribal capacity building for safety assessment and in-home services
- Parental involvement—navigators, volunteers
- Systems of Care Model (North Dakota Sacred Child)—culture and language
- Holistic approach
- Structural interventions
- Nondiscrimination
Conference attendees enjoyed lively discussion between presentations as well as eclectic entertainment.
“The changes that have come have everything to do with the work of the modern movement of civil rights and with the work the NAACP has waged for 100 years.”

— Julian Bond
“Our goal was not entertainment. Our goal was to give information to people. Now it’s their turn to go out and use it.”
— Larry E. Davis
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