



Research Report

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The Kerner Commission Report Plus
Four Decades: What Has Changed?
What Has Not?

Report 08-656
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**The Kerner Commission Report Plus Four Decades:
What Has Changed? What Has Not?**

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1. The Summers of the 1960s

Wednesday evening August 11, 1965 in south central Los Angeles. A highway patrolman stopped a young black man for speeding. As the officer carried out the arrest, a crowd of blacks gathered; a woman spit at a police officer who then apparently shoved her, while another officer accidentally struck a bystander with his club. The police departed with the arrestee but the following evening, blacks began pelting police officers and burning and looting stores. The National Guard was summoned to Los Angeles and after 36 hours the rioting was over. Thirty four Angelinos were dead and \$35 million in property was destroyed.

Tuesday July 12, 1966 was a very hot day in Chicago. Black youngsters opened a fire plug and played in the spouting water. Police officers arrived, closed the hydrant, but before they left, other black youngsters reopened the plug. They were arrested and taken away. Rumors spread in the black community that the youths were beaten by police. The next night rock throwing, looting and the fire bombing of buildings started in Chicago. 4,200 National Guardsmen were mustered and sent to Chicago's black neighborhoods. After three days, rioting was over with the death of three blacks killed by stray bullets. The next week, four nights of rioting on Cleveland's east side necessitated the dispatching of the National Guard, rioting that left four dead.

The 1967 riot season began with conflicts in Nashville, Jackson, Mississippi and Houston. A more substantial racial riot broke out in Tampa on Sunday, June 11, 1967. The next day, racial violence occurred in Cincinnati. On Saturday, June 17, 1967, rioting started in Atlanta's black community. Each of those riots Tampa, Cincinnati and Atlanta led to hundreds of arrests and scores of injuries, but only three people were killed.

On Sunday evening July 8, 1967, Newark police arrested a black taxi driver for a moving violation. Their station was just opposite a high rise public housing project. As the police took the driver into the station for booking, residents of the housing project thought that he was shoved and abused. Crowds of blacks gathered and the next evening, the looting and burning of stores started. The National Guard arrived in Newark. By the time they were withdrawn on Monday, July 17; 2 whites and 21 blacks were dead.

On Saturday evening, July 22, 1967; Detroit police raided several blind pigs in black neighborhoods. Shortly after 3 AM on Sunday, July 23, they entered one on 12th street expecting to arrest just a handful of customers. Instead, they found a large group of patrons celebrating the return of several soldiers from the Nam. The police held the arrestees on Twelfth as they slowly took them to the station house where they were booked and released. Crowds gathered and began throwing stones at the police even though it was early on a Sunday morning. By 8:30 AM, the burning of stores started. Later that day, Governor Romney called in the National Guard and the next evening President Johnson sent federal troops to the streets of Detroit. By Wednesday, July 26, Detroit was calm, but 9 whites and 43 blacks were dead. Substantial areas of the city looked as if they had been attacked by the Luftwaffe.

During the first nine months of 1967, 164 documented racial disorders occurred in 128 cities. There were 76 deaths and 1,900 injuries.

2. The Appointment of the Kerner Commission and Its Mission

Urban racial violence flared in the summers of 1965, 1966 and 1967. Indeed, it appeared to increase in frequency and intensity from one year to the next. When faced with a crisis that cannot be solved readily, presidents often appoint commissions whose timid reports are soon forgotten. President Johnson selected Governor Otto Kerner of Illinois to chair a National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders with New York's glamorous mayor, John Lindsay as Vice-Chair. The commission, of course, included a diversity of members: Edward Brooke the only black then serving in the Senate, Herbert Jenkins, the police chief in Atlanta and Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP.

On July 28, 1967 while fires were still smoldering in Detroit. President Johnson directed the commission to answer three questions:

- A. What happened?
- B. Why did it happen?
- C. What can be done to prevent it from happening again?

3. Kerner Commission Findings and Recommendations

A. WHAT HAPPENED?

The Kerner Commission itemized in explicit detail what happened during the summer of 1967. In many cities, blacks had longstanding grievances about the quality of city services in their neighborhoods, about the appropriation of black neighborhoods for urban renewal and development, about overcrowding in their segregated public schools, about the dearth of blacks appointed to good governmental jobs and about persistent abuse from law enforcers. Every day the police arrested blacks for common offenses in dozens of cities but in a few circumstances, rumors spread about excessive police violence. Higher ranking police and city officials tried to calm the black community, but they were typically white and had little credibility among young and militant blacks. Soon enough, young blacks began throwing stones at the police and fire trucks, and then started looting or burning stores. At this point, in many cities, a massive display of police manpower controlled the violence. But in the cities where extensive riots occurred, the police were overwhelmed or performed poorly and so the burning and looting spread over substantial section of the black community. When the National Guard was called, they were often ineffective since they feared for their own lives and typically shot at many blacks thereby contributing to the death toll. After 24 to 60 hours, local police, the state police and the National Guard established peace, although federal paratroopers were needed in Detroit.

The modal participant, the Kerner Commission concluded, was a black man between ages 17 and 24. Rioters primarily looted and burned business in or near black ghettos. The Commission reported no evidence that blacks were attacking whites or whites attacking blacks, although in Detroit, whites were quite involved in the looting. In no riot did blacks go into largely white neighborhoods or suburbs to loot. In many of the riots, black shopkeepers and

property owners tried to protect their own investments, fought rioters and defended firefighters but, generally, without success.

B. WHY DID IT HAPPEN?

Prior to the Kerner Commission's March 1, 1968 report, two explanations for the riots were popular among whites and frequently cited in the media. First, was the widespread belief that many young black men were prone to criminal activities and disinclined to work diligently. If the police were sufficiently stern it was assumed this criminal element would be held in check. The riots resulted, in this view, from police tolerating some illegal activities in the early stages of riots, activities that quickly escalated into arson, looting and violent deaths. The solution was the deployment of police units that would not hesitate to use force. In the 1960s, we had a debate about whether the police should shoot to kill, even when the rioters were youth stealing clothing, food or a television set from neighborhood stores. Some cities, including Detroit, established special units of militant police officers dedicated to keeping blacks under control.

Second was the widespread belief held by many whites, including civic officials and police officers, that young black militants, including H. Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael, were touring the country encouraging black men to arm themselves and be prepared to violently attack the symbols of white oppression. In Detroit, Newark and other cities with major riots, there were numerous reports of black snipers on the roofs of buildings shooting at the symbols of white oppression: the police and National Guard.

The Kerner Commission was unambiguous about what caused the riots. They wrote at length about how the police handled blacks in riot cities. While higher ranking police officials realized racial conflict and tried to establish good contacts with the black community and create programs for black youth, they were quite unsuccessful. But many rank and file police officers endorsed racial stereotypes and tended to treat blacks with little respect. At this time, urban police forces were overwhelmingly white.

Chapter 3 of the Kerner Commission report is dramatic. It is no longer than Lincoln's second inaugural. In just two pages, the Kerner Commission reported that they investigated the hypothesis that domestic or foreign agitators played a role in fomenting the 164 riots they studied. They found no evidence whatsoever to support the idea that black militants were responsible for the riots.

The most dramatic argument of the Kerner Report is that whites and white racism were responsible for the creating ghettos whose problems generated the riots. As the report stated (National Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968:203)

“ . . . certain fundamental matters are clear. . . . the most fundamental is the racial attitude and behavior of white Americans toward black Americans. Race prejudice has shaped our history decisively in the past; it now threatens to do so again. White racism is essentially responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II.

. . . “*What white Americans have never fully understood but what the Negro can never forget is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.*” (National Commission on Civil Disorders: 1968:2)

The Kerner Commission went on to describe:

- 1) Pervasive racial discrimination and segregation in the nation’s cities
- 2) The emergence of black ghettos and the exodus of whites from cities
- 3) The frustrated hopes of urban blacks and their feelings of powerlessness when confronting an unsympathetic and largely white power structure.
- 4) The legitimating and tolerance of violence in black communities
- 5) The generally inappropriate response by white police to the needs of the black community.

C. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT RIOTING FROM HAPPENING AGAIN?

In just twelve pages, the Kerner Commission laid out what could be done with regard to urban racial violence. First, they identified the **Present Policies Choice** meaning that little new would be done to address the crucial issues. They did not predict an increase in urban violence. Indeed, they saw a growth of the black middle class as a favorable trend but they believed that the most risky policy for the nation was to continue with policies that, they believed, fostered the bloody rioting.

Second, the Kerner Commission described an **Enrichment Choice** that came to be known as “gilding the ghetto.” This called for the federal government to develop Model Cities programs, new manpower training programs for black men and an expanded War on Poverty including dramatically improving ghetto schools along with the fostering of black self-development programs what became the black capitalism policy in the Nixon Administration.

Finally, the Kerner Commission laid out the **Integration Choice**. They argued that residential segregation mitigated the quality of public school education for blacks and limited employment opportunities since job growth was in the suburban ring while blacks were in the central cities. The Commission clearly favored the integration option, but recognized that it was more practical to call for programs that would simultaneously improve conditions in the ghetto and promote racial integration.

4. How Has the Status of Blacks Changed in the Decades since Kerner?

The 513 pages of the Kerner Report, focus the reader’s attention on racially isolated ghettos where housing was dense and dilapidated, where the public schools were overcrowded and ineffective, where black men were either unemployed or underemployed and where the

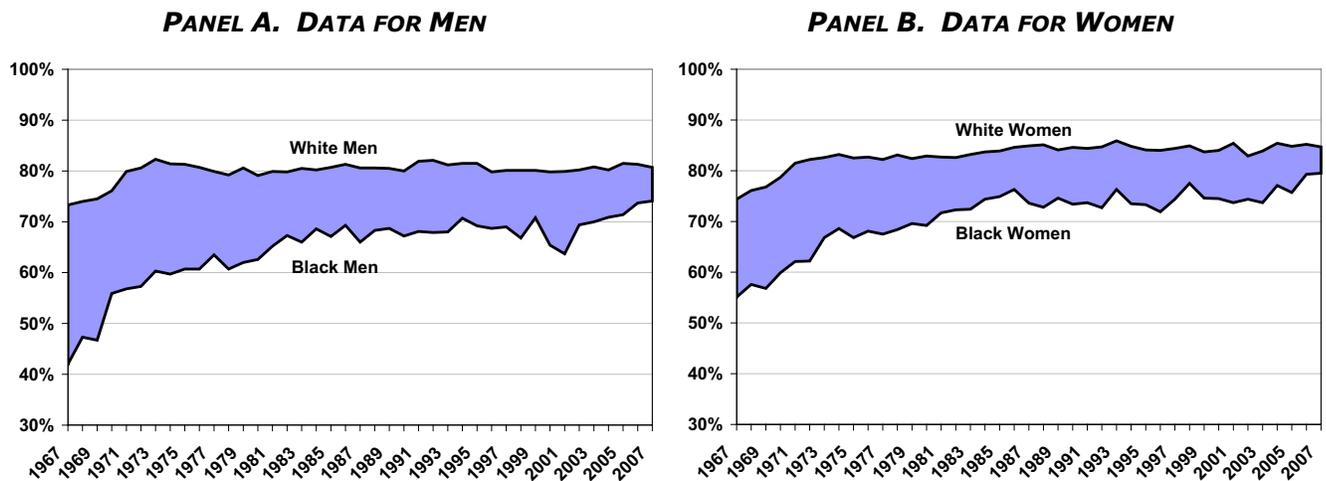
police frequently treated blacks with hostility and disrespect. They stressed that institutionalized practices caused and exacerbated these problems.

I will focus upon several key indicators of the changing status of blacks. The federal statistical system provides immense detail about what happened and, to some degree, why. Data from decennial censuses, the annual *American Community Survey* and the annual *March Current Population Survey* are examined. The Kerner Commission focused exclusively upon the grievance of blacks that fostered the racial violence of the 1960s. They did not foresee how immigration would change this country. Thus, the data in this presentation focus specifically upon native-born non-Hispanic whites and native-born non-Hispanic blacks. The terms whites and blacks in this report refer to native-born non-Hispanics

A. TRENDS IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The Kerner Commission described racial segregation in schools, racial gaps in high school completion and severe overcrowding in urban black schools. Have black-white gaps in educational attainment closed in the last 40 years?

FIGURE 1. Percent of Native-Born Non-Hispanics, Ages 18-24, Reporting a High School Education



The most frequently used index of trends in secondary school attainment is the percent of persons age 18 to 24 with a high school diploma or General Education Degree (GED). Figure 1 refers to young adults and shows the percent who reported a high school education in the Census Bureau’s March surveys each year from 1968 through 2007.

First, you observe an upward trend in high school completion. In 1968, 73 percent of young adults held high school diplomas; by 2007, it was 82 percent. Then you observe a substantial diminution of the racial gap. In 1968, 75 percent of young whites had completed high school and 53 percent of blacks – a gap of 22 percentage points. Today that racial gap is only 6 percentage points: 83 percent of young whites and 77 percent of African Americans report a complete high school education. Over this period, spending for education increased substantially

and the result appears to be that roughly similar percents of young native born whites and blacks graduate from secondary school.

There is, however, considerable debate about the accuracy of the Census Bureau measures of high school attainment. If you calculate the ratio of high school diplomas granted to the population attaining age 18 each year, you find much more modest educational progress. James Heckman and Paul LaFontaine (2007) adjusted for the GED degrees and several problems that afflict Census Bureau estimates of high school completion, including proxy reporting, the inclusion of GED and other diploma-like certificates and the omission of the institutional population from the Current Population Survey. They conclude that the percent of late-teens earning a regular high school diploma declined moderately between the early 1970s and 2002 when the *No Child Left Behind Program* became effective. Their analysis reports that the racial gap among men did not close between the early 1970s and the present decade. If the analysis is restricted to those who earned a regular high school diploma by the late teens, then there has been, at best, only modest progress in narrowing the black-white gap.

FIGURE 2. Percent of Native-Born Non-Hispanics, Ages 25-34, Reporting a Four-Year College Education

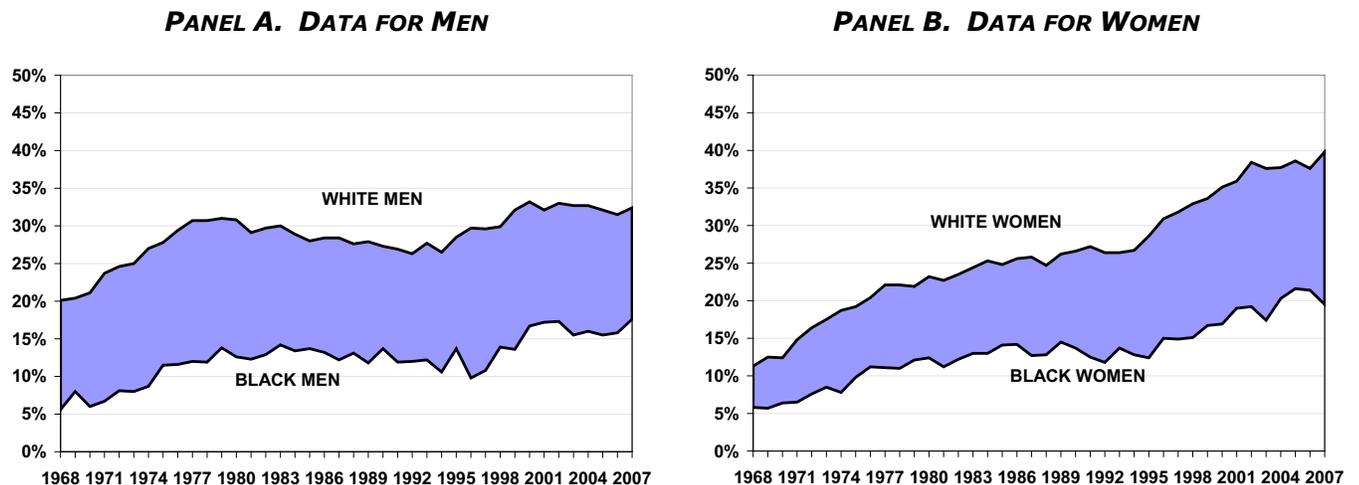


Figure 2 presents information about the college attainment of young adults ages 25 to 34. It shows the percent of whites and blacks who reported a four-year college education. There is little evidence of a racial convergence. To be sure, increasing proportions of young blacks earn college diplomas. The percent with such degrees rose from 6 to 18 percent among black men in the years following the Kerner Report. But there was a similarly impressive rise in the college attainment of white men and thus the gap in college attainment persists.

When I began my teaching career in Durham, North Carolina 44 years ago, most of the highly rewarded professions—medicine, the law, veterinary science, engineering and economics—were numerically dominated by men. Indeed, women were very rare in those jobs. We have seen a feminization of higher education followed by huge gender shifts in the incumbents of many occupations, thanks, in part, to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. College enrollment rates of women have soared, especially for white and Asian women.

As Figure 2B illustrates, the college attainment of black women has gone up. At present about one black woman in five reports a four-year college degree. White women have much more dramatically shifted their college enrollment and attainment upward and, at present, 40 percent of young white women report a four-year college education. The black-white gap in college attainment has grown much larger in this span as illustrated in this figure. Black women, whose attainment rate continues to rise, have college completion rates about equal to those of white women in the early 1970s. Young black men now have college completion rates about equal to those of young white men in 1960.

White women are quite different from men and from blacks in terms of their pursuit of college degrees. In 2006, the percent of native born non-Hispanic persons age 20 to 24 with either a college degree or enrolled in college was as follows:

Native-born Non-Hispanic white women	60%
Native-born Non-Hispanic white men	50
Native-born Non-Hispanic black women	45
Native-born Non-Hispanic black men	34

There is a trend toward greater educational attainment, but since the Kerner Report, college enrollment and completion has increased considerably more among whites than among blacks, and more so among women than men. There is no unambiguous evidence of any trend toward a black-white convergence in education attainment in the last four decades.

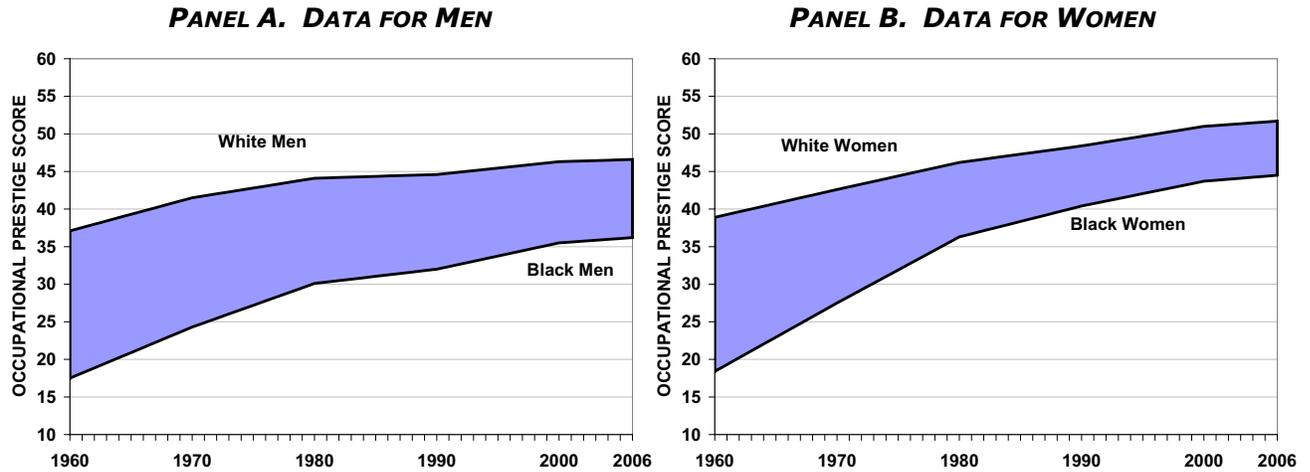
B. TRENDS IN THE OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF WHITES AND BLACKS

The Kerner Commission described the underemployment of black men at length. Some firms refused to hire any black men; others hired them but kept them in menial jobs. Thus, black men who invested in education faced great challenges finding work commensurate with their qualifications. When the Kerner Report was drafted, customs and norms generally reserved the best jobs for white men. Few very few women or blacks worked at the most rewarding professions or held executive positions in industry. That has changed and African Americans are represented in almost all occupations.

We can readily summarize trends over time using indexes of occupational status. In the late 1950s, Otis Dudley Duncan developed a popular prestige scores that assigned a numerical value to every job linked to how the job was ranked, the educational attainment of the incumbents and their earnings. Toward the top, physicians and surgeons were assigned a score of 92 points; toward the bottom, sawyers and farm laborers were assigned a score of only 6 points. The average occupational prestige of a group is a rough measure of their occupational achievement.

Figure 3 uses information about the occupations of employed whites and blacks aged 25 to 59 in censuses from 1960 to 2000 and in the 2006 *American Community Survey*. It shows trends over time in the average Duncan occupational prestige score for each group.

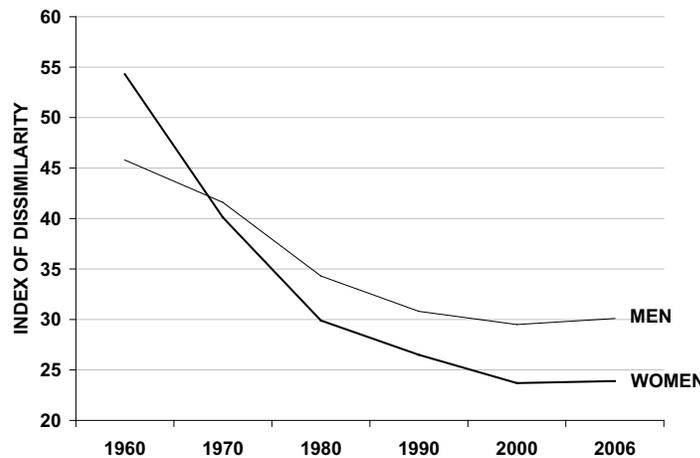
FIGURE 3. Average Duncan Occupational Prestige Scale for Employed Native-Born Non-Hispanics, Ages 25-59: 1960 to 2006



As shown, average occupational prestige rose considerably faster for black men than for white men—a gain of about 26 points for black men compared to 13 points for white men. The shift toward a racial convergence was even greater among women. The white-black gap in occupational prestige was 21 points among women in 1970, only 7 points in 2006.

Another way to examine these trends is to consider how similarly blacks and whites are distributed across detailed occupations. There are challenges in comparing occupational distributions over time since some occupations disappear, new jobs emerge and occupational titles persist but the actual tasks change. Professor Steven Ruggles and his collaborators at the Minnesota Population Center produced a roughly comparable array of 388 occupations for 1960 to the present. Figure 4 is based upon data for employed native born non-Hispanic whites and blacks and shows the index of dissimilarity comparing the occupational distributions of whites and blacks. Were there a system of complete occupational apartheid such that the workers in every occupation were either exclusively white or exclusively black, the index would take on its maximum value of 100. Were blacks and whites similarly distributed across occupations, the index would equal zero.

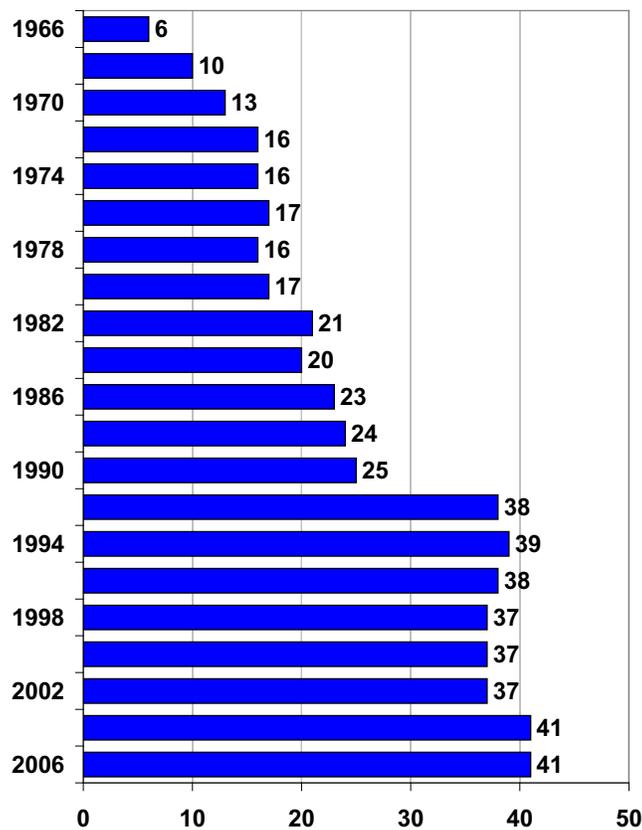
FIGURE 4. Index of Dissimilarity Comparing the Distributions of Native Born Non-Hispanic Whites and Blacks, Ages 25-59, across Detailed Occupations: 1960 to 2006



Over time, white and black workers have become more similar with regard to the occupations they hold. In 1960, the index for men was 46, meaning that either 46 percent of white men or 46 percent of black men would have had to change jobs to eliminate racial differences in occupations. That index declined to 34 in 1980 and to 31 in 1990, but has not fallen much since then. In 1960, the racial gap in occupations was greater among women than among men reflecting, in part, the concentration of black women in domestic service. That has changed. The index for women dropped from 54 in 1960 to 30 in 1980 and has continued to decline modestly since then.

One of the most obvious and consequential changes is evident on Capitol Hill. Serving in Congress is one of the nation’s most prestigious jobs. At the time of the Kerner Commission, only six of the 435 members were African Americans. Figure 5 illustrates the racial trend in Congress. The size of Congress has been constant at 535. As the figure show, on March 1, 1968 when the Kerner Commissioners reported to President Johnson only 6 blacks served in Congress; now there are 41 black solons.

FIGURE 5. Number of Blacks Elected to Serve in Congress: 1966 to 2006



A variety of factors — changes in norms about who could do what work, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the enforcement actions of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and encompassing federal court rulings — broadened occupational choices for minorities. Despite the gains of blacks, African-Americans lag far behind whites in occupational prestige. Black men today work at jobs that have the occupational prestige similar to those white

men held in 1960 while the occupational attainment of white women lags about one-quarter century behind that of white women. To a considerable degree, blacks are still concentrated in the least remunerative jobs while whites numerically dominate the top jobs.

In 2006, blacks made up 18 percent of the employed adult labor force in metropolitan Detroit. If you consider the detailed occupations with the lowest pay, you find that blacks made up the following percentages:

- 55 percent of Nursing Aides, Orderlies and Attendants
- 51 percent of Housekeepers, Maids and Butlers
- 51 percent of Guards, Watchmen and Doorkeepers
- 43 percent of Licensed Practical Nurses
- 40 percent of Janitors

At the other extreme, if you consider the highest paid jobs in metropolitan Detroit, blacks filled the following percentages:

- 2 percent of Physicians
- 3 percent of Tool and Die Makers
- 4 percent of Chief Executive Officers
- 4 percent of Computer Software Developers
- 6 percent of Mechanical Engineers
- 6 percent of Heavy Equipment Operators

C. TRENDS IN EMPLOYMENT OF WHITES AND BLACKS

In their discussions of ghettos, the Kerner Commissioners stressed the severe employment problems of black men. They noted that the typical riot participant was a young black man lacking a good job and lacking prospects for getting one. They quoted officials in Atlanta and Newark who observed that there were many unfilled good jobs in their cities, but that few black men were qualified to fill them.

Young whites and blacks report in the Current Population Survey graduating from high school at about similar rates. And the prestige of jobs held by blacks has risen somewhat more rapidly than that of jobs held by whites. When it comes to the employment of men, however, there is no evidence of improvement. Indeed, adult black men have fallen further and further behind similar white men in terms of being employed.

I considered several summary indicators, including the per capita hours of employment in a year, the employment-to-population ratio and the unemployment rate. They all reveal similar trends over time. There is a small but persistent trend toward less employment and fewer hours of work on the part of men but black men are withdrawing from the labor force more rapidly than white men.

FIGURE 6. Per Capita Hours of Employment in Year for Native-Born Non-Hispanics Ages 25-59: 1968 to 2007

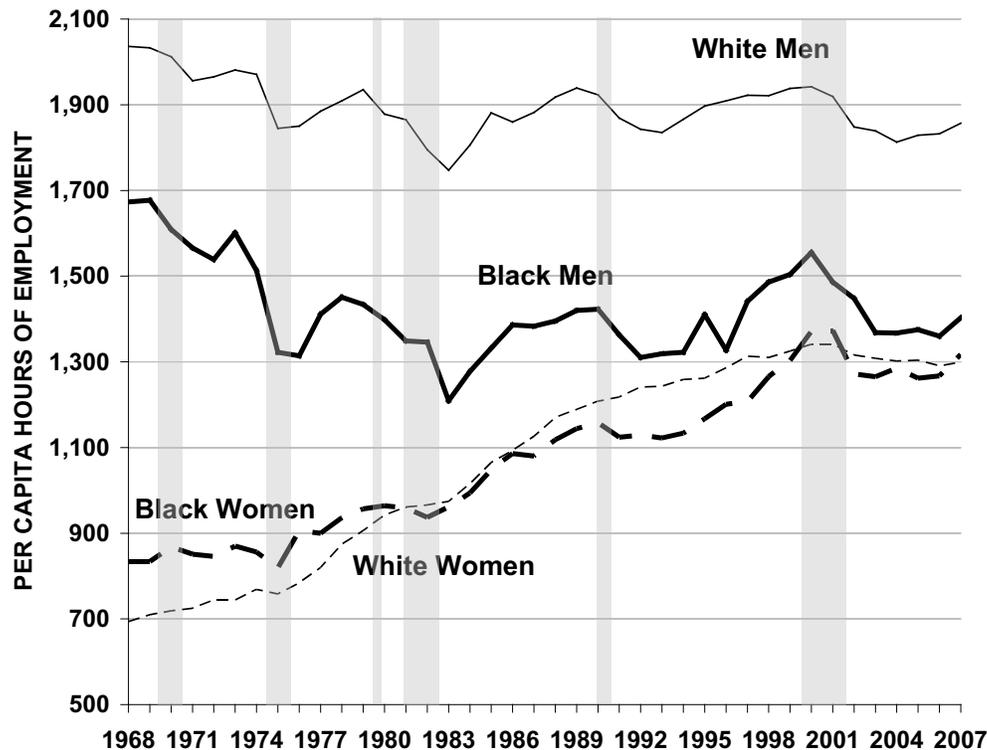


Figure 6 presents information about the annual hours of employment of whites and blacks aged 25 to 59. At the time of the Kerner Commission, black men averaged 360 fewer hours of work per year than did white men. That is a racial difference of seven hours per week. For both races, average annual hours of employment declined for men, but the drop was sharper for black men. By 2007, black men averaged 450 fewer hours of work each week than white men. White men now spend an average of 9 hours more of employment each week than black men, on average. On this important measure, black men have fallen further behind white men.

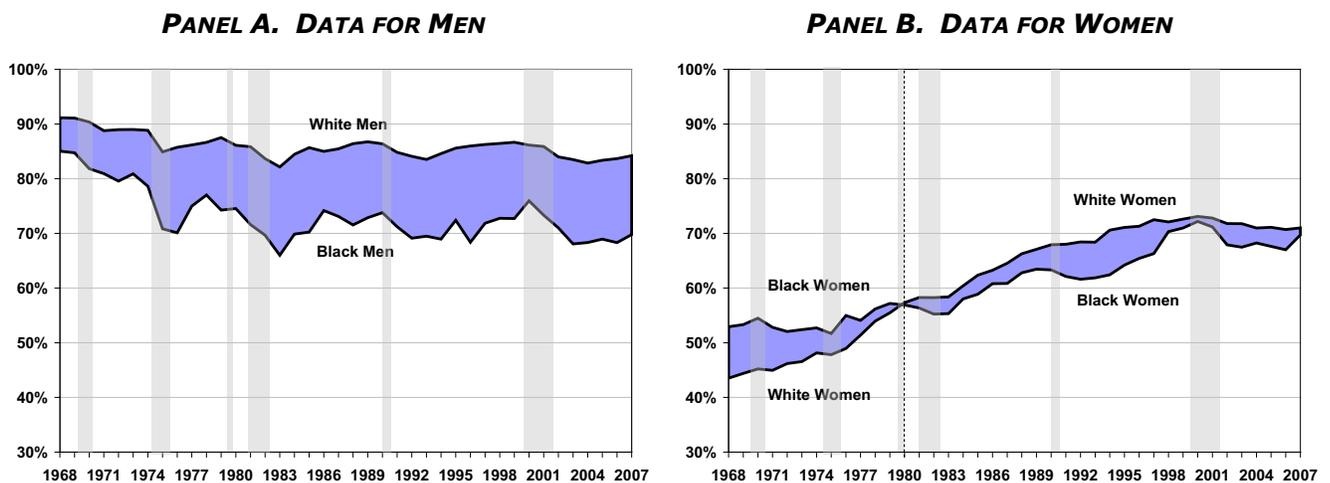
President Johnson appointed only one woman to the Kerner Commission: Katherine Peden, Kentucky's Commissioner of Commerce. While employment issues are a central theme in the Kerner Report, little was written about the employment of women. The Kerner Commissioners never foresaw that the increased employment of women would substantially increase household income and reduce poverty.

In the past, black women were more likely to work than white, both because they were more likely to live on farms and because of their husbands' limited incomes. They typically worked as low-wage jobs. As recently as 1970, 22 percent of employed black women were housekeepers or charwomen, primarily working in the houses of white families. Employment increased rapidly and steadily among women of both races, but slightly faster among white women. When the Kerner Commissioners drafted their report, black women averaged 150 more hours of work per year than white women. The recession at the end of President Carter's term prompted many women to enter the labor market and, at that time, white women reached parity

with black women in terms of hours of employment. Since then, racial differences in the employment of women have been small. When the most recent survey was conducted, black women worked an average of 18 more hours per year than white.

Another approach to understanding racial issues in the labor market is to focus upon the percent of adults at work when the March surveys were fielded. This is the employment to population ratio and varies, of course, with the economic cycle. Figure 7 shows the percent of adults employed at each date. The pale gray shaded vertical lines indicate intervals of recession.

FIGURE 7. Percent Employed in Year for Native-Born Non-Hispanics, Ages 25-59: 1968 to 2007



In 1968, the percent of adult white men employed 91% was 6 percentage points greater than among black men. This racial gap increased, especially during the economic recession that followed the first oil price crisis and then again during the recession that accompanied the Carter to Reagan transition. Since the early 1980s, the racial gap in employment among men has neither grown larger nor smaller. The gap widened at times of recession and then narrowed in periods of prosperity, but in 2007, it was more than twice as large as in 1968. A lack of employment is, arguable, much more of a problem for black men now than it was when the Kerner Report appeared.

Panel B of Figure 7 shows employment trends for women. At the start of the span we consider, black women were considerably more likely to be employed than white women. By 1980 (indicated by the vertical dashed line), white women, for the first time, had higher employment rates than black women. Racial differences in the employment of women have been small since then. Women's employment is less sensitive to the economic cycle than men's, but as the figure shows, racial gaps among women narrowed in eras of economic growth and widened in periods of recession.

D. TRENDS IN THE INCOMES OF WHITES AND BLACKS

Blacks and whites have increased their educational attainment but there is no racial convergence in college attainment. Gaps in occupational prestige are narrowing but black men typically work at much less prestigious and lower-paying jobs than white men. Among men, blacks have fallen further and further behind whites in employment itself but for the last three decades, black and white women have been equally likely to be employed. What are the implications of these trends for income?

FIGURE 8. Per Capita Income of Native Born Non-Hispanics, Ages 25-59 (Constant 2007 dollars)

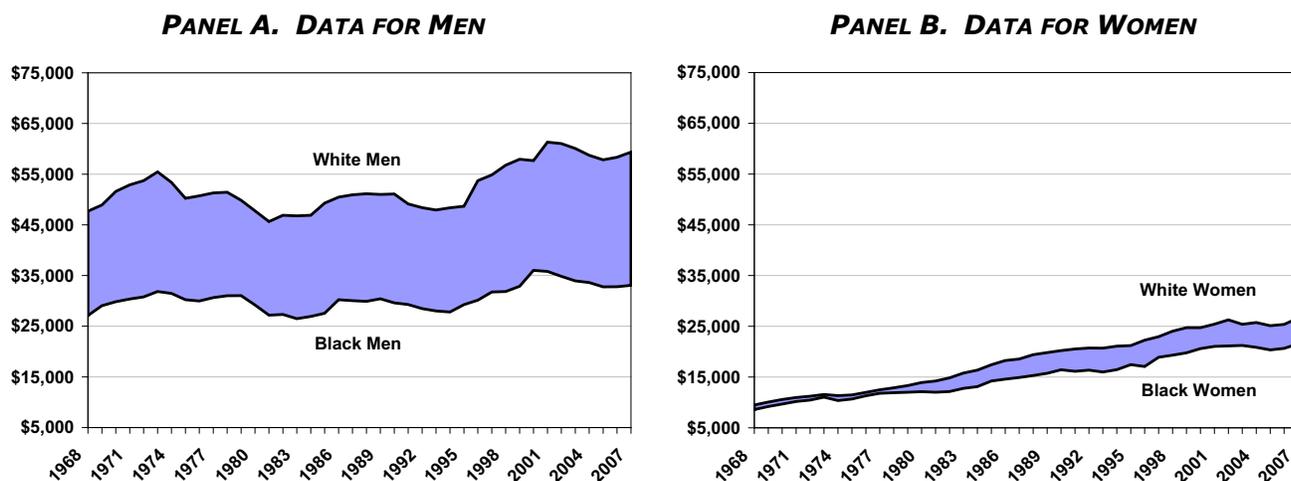


Figure 8 shows the per capita income of men and women aged 25 to 59 in constant dollars from 1968 to 2007. These data report pre-tax cash income as measured in the Census Bureau's *Current Population Survey*. These are per capita data and so they are influenced by the trend toward fewer men but more women working. In 2006, wage and salary earnings made up 87 percent of the total cash income of men 25 to 59 and 85 percent for women,

Turning to the upper panel for men, the average income of white men rose from \$48,000 in 1968 to a peak of \$61,000 in 2001, and then declined by 3 percent. White men, in 2007, had about 24 percent more purchasing power than they did 40 years earlier. Among black men, average incomes rose from \$27,000 in 1968 to a peak of \$36,000 in 2000, but then fell 9 percent in this decade. The basic finding is a very slow growth of income for adult men—about one-half of one percent each year on average—and no racial convergence at all. The incomes of white and black men have been increasing at basically similar rates, meaning there has been no racial convergence. The racial gap remains large: in constant dollars, black men now have lower average incomes than white men did during the Eisenhower years.

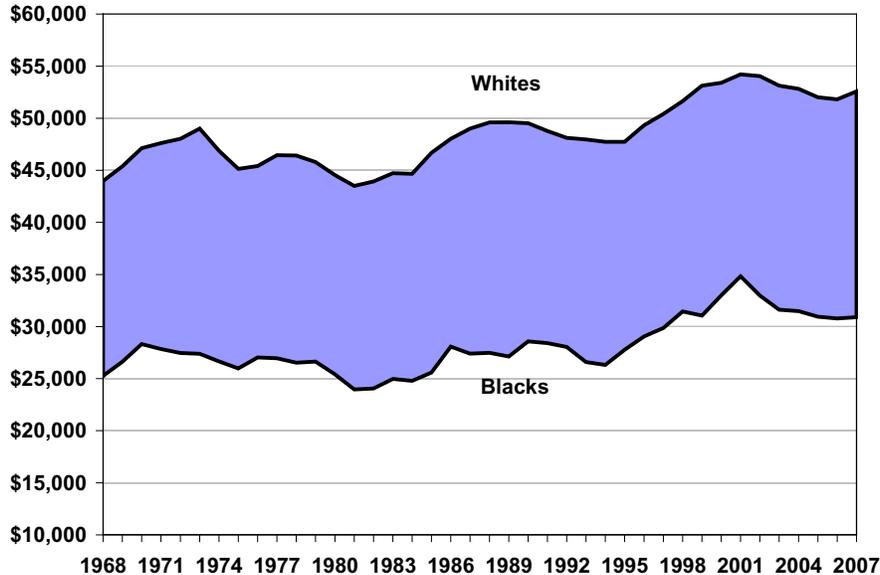
The most far-reaching and momentous social and economic development in the United States in the last half century is the changing status of women: the increasing educational attainment, the occupational achievement and the much higher earnings of women. Incomes of adult men have grown slowly for four decades, but those of women have grown rapidly as

illustrated in the lower panel of Figure 8. The real income of native born non-Hispanic white women has been increasing by 2.6 percent annually since the Kerner Report was published; for black women it was a growth of 2.4 percent annually. In terms of purchasing power, the typical white women has about three times as much now as in 1968; for black women, it is now about 2.5 times as much as forty years ago. Figure 8 points out that the white-black gap in the average incomes of women has grown larger. This is explained, in large part by the exceptionally great investments that white women are making in college attainment. While the college enrollment rates of young black women are rising, they are doing so modestly *vis-à-vis* those of young white women.

Back in 1970, white women comprised 4 percent of young (age 25 to 39) architects, 4 percent of dentists, 7 percent of veterinarians, 8 percent of physicians and 15 percent of pharmacists. In 2006, white women comprised 25 percent of young architects, 24 percent of dentists, 69 percent of veterinarians, 26 percent of physicians and 44 percent of pharmacists. White women, in substantial numbers are entering the most financially rewarding occupations, black women are also doing this but more slowly.

Figure 8 also reveals that during this present decade of slow economic expansion, the incomes of men have declined while those of women slowly increased.

FIGURE 9. Median Income of Households Headed by Native Born Non-Hispanic Whites and Blacks (Constant 2007 dollars)



Next, I consider the income of black and white households; that is, households headed by a native-born, non-Hispanic white or black. Figure 9 displays the median income of households in constant 2007 dollars. A variety of demographic trends contribute to changes over time in the income of households. The percent of households with a married couple declined from 71 percent at the time of the Kerner Report to 51 percent at present. Thanks to both delayed marriage and increased longevity, the percent of households consisting of just one person rose

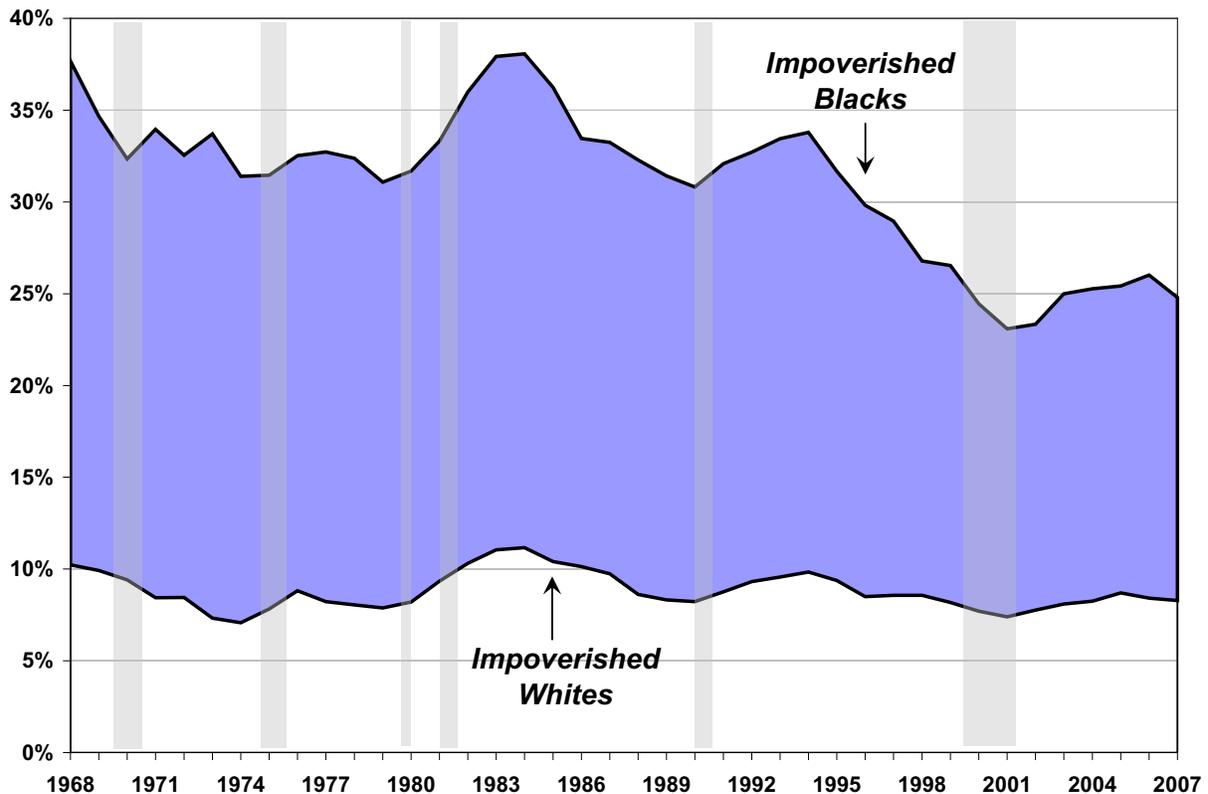
from 17 to 27 percent. Cohabitation was not measured in the 1960s, but in 2007, 5 percent of the nation’s households included a household head with an unmarried partner. While these contribute to changes in household income, trends in income and earnings are most important.

Figure 9 reveals a slow but consistent rise in median income of about one-half a percent per year for the last forty years. Income has risen at about the same rate for both races. This has the consequence of slowly increasing the dollar gap. In 1968, black households at the median had about \$19,000 less purchasing power than white households. Four decades later, that racial gap grew to \$21,000. The median household income of blacks in 2007 \$31,000 was equal to the median household income of whites in 1960.

D. TRENDS IN POVERTY AND THE EMERGENCE OF A BLACK ECONOMIC MIDDLE CLASS

The poverty rate now rivals the unemployment rate as a key economic indicator. There is favorable news regarding poverty. Poverty rates have fallen slowly and the black-white gap in poverty is much smaller now than when the Kerner commissioners described the problems of urban black neighborhoods.

FIGURE 10. Percent of Native Born Non-Hispanics Below the Poverty Line

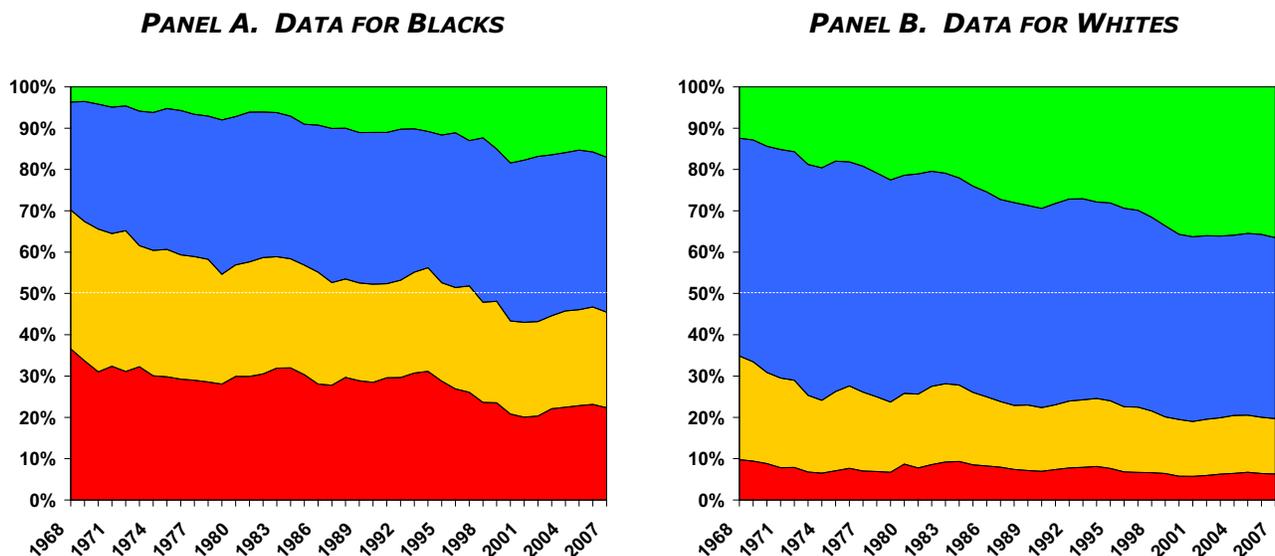


In 2007, the poverty threshold for a two-parent family with two children was a pre-tax cash income of \$21,400. Figure 10 shows the percent of total native born non-Hispanic whites and blacks in households with incomes below the poverty line. The lightly shaded gray vertical bars identify economic recessions.

Among blacks, the poverty rate fell from 38 percent in the final year of President Johnson’s term to a low of 23 percent in 2001. It has risen about 2 percentage points since then. Among native-born non-Hispanic whites, the percent of impoverished fluctuated in a narrow range hovering around 10 percent. The lowest poverty recorded for whites was 7 percent in 2001.

Figure 10 shows a favorable trend toward a considerably smaller racial gap in poverty. I presented information showing that the white-black gap in personal income is not closing, nor is the white-black gap in household income getting any smaller. How can it be that the racial gap in poverty is steadily getting smaller? The answer is that incomes are rising very slowly for men, but rapidly for women. The poverty line is a fixed number adjusted only for inflation, so modest increases in real income over a long span will eventually lift many households above the poverty threshold. It is important to emphasize the minority poverty remains a substantial national problem. One African-American in four lived in poverty last year, and among black children under age 18, one in three was impoverished. These are roughly the poverty levels that characterized whites in the early to mid-1950s.

FIGURE 11. Economic Status of Native Born Non-Hispanic Whites and Blacks: 1968 to 2007



The slowly rising incomes of black men and the more rapidly rising incomes of black women produced an important economic change for African Americans. In 1996, for the first time, the majority of blacks were in the economic middle class or above, if that means living in a household with an income at least twice the poverty line.

The bright primary colors of Figure 11 illustrate changes in economic standing. At the bottom of each panel, the red area indicates the percent impoverished. As you can see, there is a secular trend toward less poverty but, at all dates, the percent impoverished has been two and one-half times as great among blacks as among whites.

The orange area of Figure 11 reports the percent who were near poor; that is, living in households with pre-tax cash income of one to two times the poverty line. For a household of four in 2007, this was an income between \$21,000 and \$43,000. When the Kerner commissioners wrote, 70 percent of blacks lived in impoverished or near poor households. Rising income, transfer programs including the Earned Income Tax Credit and much greater earnings for black women changed that, and by 1996, for the first time, less than one-half of blacks were poor or near poor. Among whites, the majority moved above poverty and near poverty during the second Eisenhower administration.

The blue section of these charts shows the percent in the economic middle class; that is, in households with income two to five times the poverty line or, for a household of four, an income between \$43,000 and \$107,000 in 2007. In that year, three-eighths of blacks and 45 percent of whites were in the economic middle class. Middle-class blacks increasingly resemble middle class whites with regard to social and economic indicators. The median income for middle-class black households was \$51,600 compared to a higher \$ 52,800 for middle-class whites, and both black and white middle-class households reported per capita incomes of \$27,000. Twenty five percent of middle class black household heads completed at least four years of college, while among whites, it was 29 percent. But there is a substantial racial difference in the wealth holdings. Among middle-class white households, 79 percent owned or were buying their residence, but for blacks, it was 63 percent. And 73 percent of white middle-class households reported income from interest, dividends or rents in 2007 compared to 57 percent of blacks documenting the huge racial difference in capital assets.

The percent of blacks in the middle class has hardly changed since 1980, and among whites, the percent in the middle class declined. This is not because of an increase in poverty or near poverty. Rather, the percent of people who are economically comfortable grew rapidly. The bold green area at the top of each chart shows the percent of people in households that reported incomes at least five times the poverty line; that is, incomes of greater than \$105,000 for a household of four in 2007. Only three percent of African Americans could be described as economically comfortable in 1968. That has increased to 17 percent at present. This is an unambiguous sign of racial progress: one black household in six could be labeled financially comfortable. Among whites, favorable economic trends including the higher earnings of women resulted in 36 percent in households with incomes at least five times the poverty line.

5. Trend Toward Greater Social Integration of Whites and Blacks

A. DECLINING RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION

Economic indicators are extremely important but the Kerner Commission also emphasized the geographic isolation of blacks in the nation's metropolises. They blamed residential segregation for white-black discrepancies in the quality of schooling and linked it to job opportunities since they saw employment increasing rapidly in the suburbs, but not inner

cities. Reports analyzing data from Census 2000 by John Iceland, John Logan, myself and others agreed that white-black residential segregation was declining (Lewis Mumford Center, 2002; Logan, Stults and Farley, 2002; Iceland *et al.* 2004). In the most rapidly growing metropolises of the South and West, including Orlando, Dallas, Phoenix, Las Vegas and San Bernardino; the segregation of whites from blacks was no more than moderate at the last census date. In the older metropolises of the Rust Belt and northeast, changes in segregation were small but, nevertheless, they were consistently in the direction of more residential integration.

Since 2005, the Census Bureau’s *American Community Survey* provides annual information about the racial composition of Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). These are larger in population size than the census tracts or block groups ordinarily used in analyzing segregation. Nevertheless, examining these data for this decade reveals a continued shift toward whites and blacks increasingly sharing neighborhoods.

FIGURE 12. Residential Segregation of Native-Born Non-Hispanic Whites from Blacks 15 Largest Metropolises: 2000 and 2006

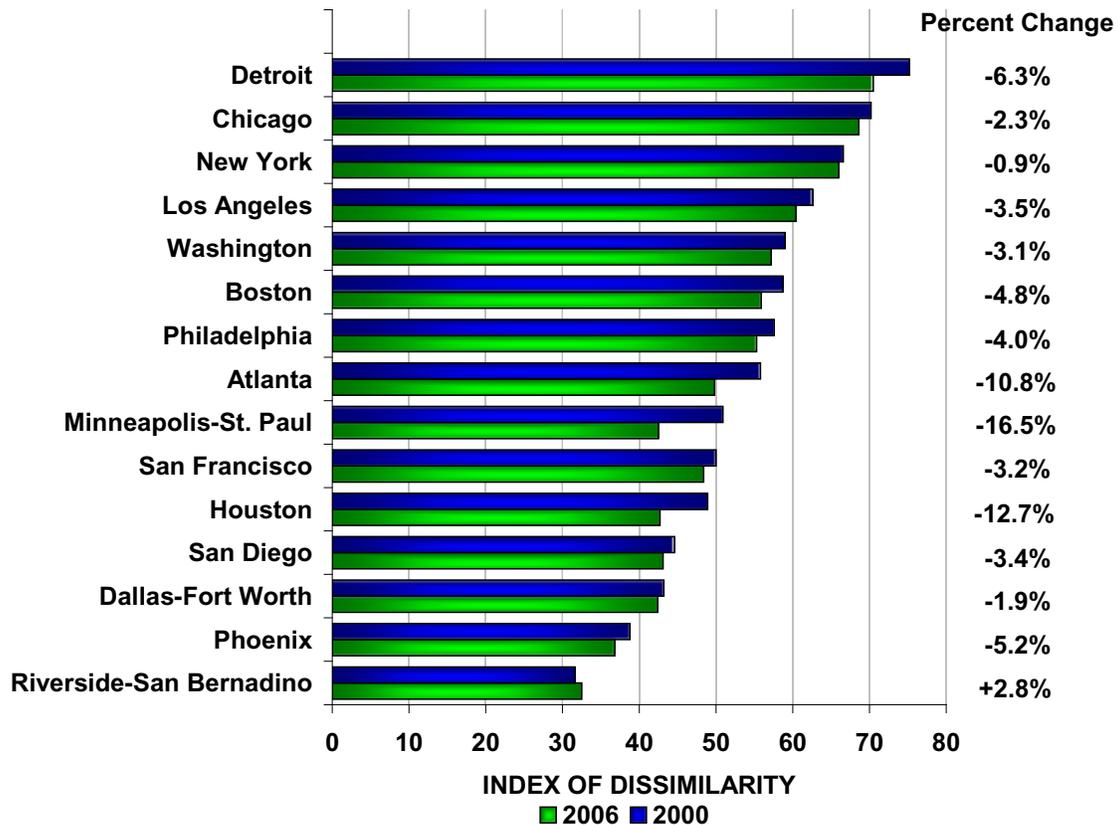


Figure 12 with its blue and green horizontal bars illustrates changes in the residential segregation of native-born non-Hispanic whites from blacks using consistent geographic areas. The metropolises are listed in order of their segregation levels in 2000, so it is not surprising that Detroit and Chicago are at the top.

In 14 of the 15 metropolises, residential segregation declined. These numbers exclude Hispanics and the rapidly growing foreign-born black population, so they refer to residents who were here at the time of the Kerner Report and their offspring. You see a decline of 17 percent in white-black segregation in Minneapolis-St. Paul; 13 percent in Houston, 11 percent in Atlanta and 6 percent in Detroit. The trend toward less residential segregation that emerged in the 1980s and accelerated in the 1990s continues in this century.

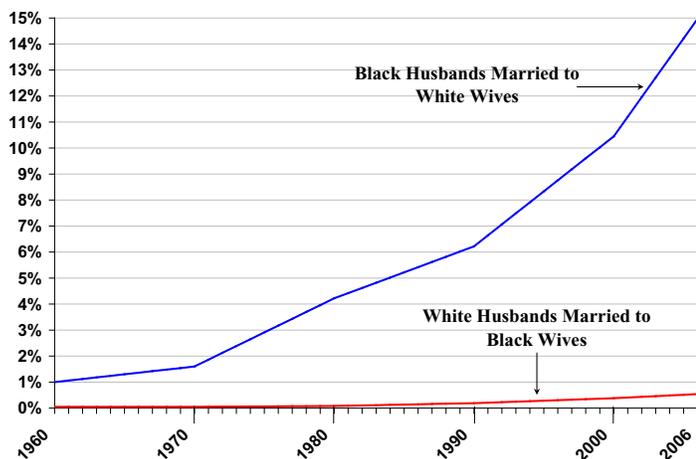
By no means has racial residential segregation been eliminated. Blacks are more segregated from whites than Hispanics or Asians. Here in metropolitan Detroit, the white-black segregation index in 2006 based on PUMAs was 70. The segregation score comparing Hispanics to non-Hispanic whites was 44; for Asians it was 34. And to illustrate that black-white residential segregation here in Detroit is much greater than segregation by economic class, we find that the segregation score comparing poor whites to comfortable whites at the PUMA level in 2006 was only 31.

B. INCREASING INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MIXED RACE POPULATION

Interracial marriage was exceedingly rare in the United States in the 1960s. It was not considered by the Kerner Commissioners This is the second measure of social integration I consider. Indeed, until 1967 states could prohibit whites from marrying blacks. Marriage patterns, however, have changed greatly in the last four decades and it is now common for whites and blacks to marry.

FIGURE 13. Interracial Marriage among Native Born Non-Hispanics, Ages 25-34: 1960 to 2006

PANEL A. Percent of Married Spouse Present, Native-Born, Non-Hispanic White Men, Ages 25-34, Married to Black Women, and Percent of Similar Black Men Married to White Women



PANEL B. Percent of Married Spouse Present, Native-Born, Non-Hispanic White Women, Ages 25-34, Married to Black Men, and Percent of Similar Black Women Married to White Men

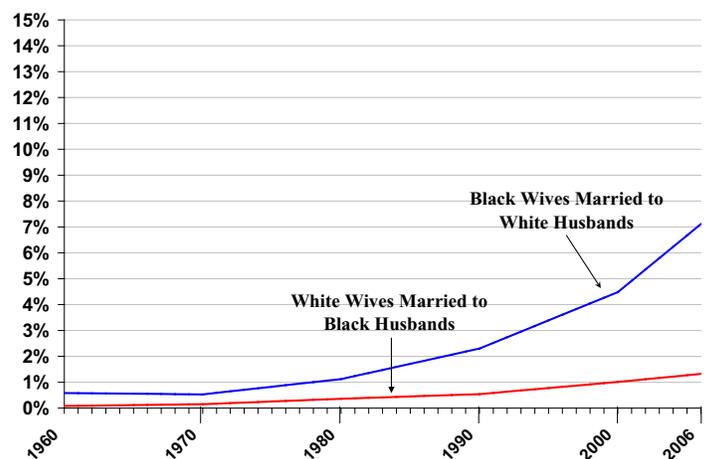


Figure 13 shows the percent of young ages 25 to 34 whites and blacks who married across the racial line for years between 1960 and 2006. The left-hand panel reports the percent of recently married young black wives married to white husbands and the percent of white wives married to black husbands. Less than one-half of one percent of black wives were married to white husbands at the start of the civil rights decade. In 2006, about one young black wife in 14 was married to a white husband.

There has been a sharp increase in the percent of young black husbands who marry white women. At the time of the Kerner Report, about one black husband in 100 was enumerated with a white spouse. By 2006, about 14 percent of young black husbands were married to white women. One-in-seven black men marrying at present, weds a white woman.

Interracial marriage is quickly producing a racially mixed population. Since 2000, the federal statistical system allows each of us to identify simultaneously with up to five major races on governmental forms. In 2006, 10 percent of native-born non-Hispanic children under 6 whose parents identified them as black went on to also identify these children as white. In 2000, it was 8 percent. Among children under age 6 whose parents identified them as white by race, 3 percent were also identified as black. This is up from 2 percent in 2000.

6. Conclusion: What Has Changed and What Has Not?

The Kerner Commissioners commented about the rapid growth of a black middle class, but stressed racial inequalities in education, in employment and in receiving fair treatment from the police and municipal governments. Indicators of many of the key issues are reviewed in this draft. Several present unambiguous evidence that the status of blacks has improved and the gap separating native-born non-Hispanic blacks from whites has narrowed. These include:

- the occupational prestige of employed workers
- the representation of blacks in elected and appointed offices
- poverty rates; that is, poverty has declined more rapidly among blacks than whites
- racial residential segregation: blacks and whites are increasingly living in the same neighborhoods
- blacks and whites are increasingly marrying each other, suggesting a declining social distance between the races and leading to a substantial multiple race population

On other indicators, the status of blacks has improved, but the status of whites has also improved, so that racial gap is at least as large now as it was 1968. These indicators include:

- high school completion
- the average incomes of men
- the median incomes of households
- the employment rates of women
- the home ownership rate of householders (trend shown in appendix)

Finally, there are indicators revealing that blacks have fallen further behind whites in the last forty years. The proportion employed among adult men has declined for both races, but the drop has been considerably greater for African American men. More commonly for the indicators in this group, the status of blacks improved, but the status of whites improved even more, leading to a wider racial gap. Such indicators include:

- college enrollment and completion
- the earnings of women

7. Why Has Racial Change Occurred As It Has in the Last 40 Years?

The most effective way to explain both the racial achievements described in this draft and persisting or growing differences is to focus upon five trends.

FIRST, THE CHANGING RACIAL ATTITUDES OF WHITES

The single most important reason for change in the status of blacks is whites' increasing endorsement of equal racial opportunities and their eventual condemnation of the blatant discrimination that was once common. In the 1960s, a majority or substantial minority of whites believed that whites had a right to racial purity in their neighborhoods, that blacks should not push where they were not welcome, that laws could prevent interracial marriage and that whites could and should be given preference in employment.

FIGURE 14. Racial Attitudes of National Samples of Whites: General Social Survey: 1972 to 2004

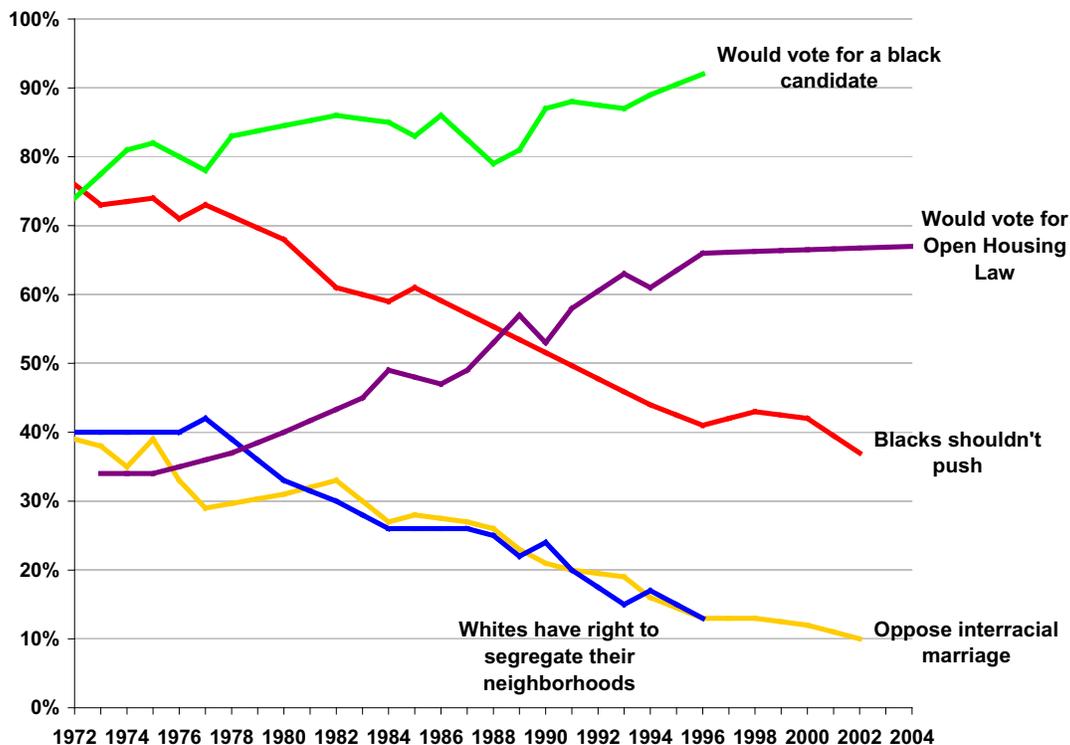


Figure 14 reports trends in attitudes of national samples of whites as measured by the University of Chicago's General Social Survey. In 1972, 39 percent of whites approved of laws banning interracial marriage. Thirty years later, that declined to 13 percent. In 1972, 76 percent of whites agreed that blacks should not push themselves where they were not wanted. In 2002, that was down to 37 percent. In 1973, only 34 percent of whites said they would vote for a law prohibiting racial discrimination in the sale of homes. In 2002, 67 said they would cast a vote for such legislation. And the last time the question was asked 1996 92 percent of whites said they would vote for a black presidential candidate if their party nominated a qualified one. (Schuman *et al.*, 1997)

These pervasive changes in the racial attitudes and beliefs of whites mean that there is no longer support for the idea that whites should have opportunities denied to blacks. The question of implementing rights is a different one, and there is strong white opposition to affirmative action, but in the last four decades, the political system, the courts and the values of Americans shifted to endorse the employment, housing and political opportunities that the Kerner Commission believed were systematically denied to blacks.

Why did whites change their attitudes? After World War II, national leaders became aware of the fundamental abrogation of the rights of blacks throughout the South. Gunnar Myrdal's (1944) *American Dilemma* hastened this awareness. Black voters became increasingly influential in those cities of the North whose residents sustained the power of the Democratic Party. President Truman ordered the racial integration of the military, called for the extension of the Fair Employment Practices to peacetime and appointed the commission that produced the influential volume: *To Fulfill These Rights* (President's Committee on Civil Rights, 1947), a report that emphasized that governments at all levels, the military, private employers and real estate brokers consistently and thoroughly discriminated against blacks. And not inconsequentially Harry Truman owed his victory in the 1948 election to votes cast by blacks in Ohio and Illinois.

On Monday May 5, 1954 the Supreme Court struck down state-imposed racial discrimination in public schools and then gradually moved on to overturn those Jim Crow ordinances that mandated black-white segregation in public transit and in municipal facilities. That legal change was necessary, but not sufficient to alter the nation's Jim Crow system. To accomplish change, national attention had to be focused upon civil rights grievance of blacks. The killing of Emmett Till in Money, Mississippi in August, 1955 brought the national press to that state. By 1956, the Montgomery bus boycott and the emergence of Dr. Martin Luther King established the foundation for the modern and effective civil rights movement. For the first time, racial issues in the South were extensively covered in the nation's media. Northerners began to realize that blacks could not ride in the front of a bus in the South, could not use city parks, could not eat in most restaurants or spend a night in the motels and hotels whites used on their trips to Florida. Substantial numbers of young blacks and whites protested racial discrimination. Southern police officers, the Ku Klux Klan and other militant white groups used extreme violence against civil rights activists, including the murders of about two dozen. The press finally investigated an issue they had long overlooked the denial of civil rights to blacks and the violence blacks faced when they sought the rights that whites in the North took for granted: voting rights, employment rights, the ability to matriculate in college, fairness in the court room

and freedom from capricious police brutality. The success of the civil rights movement depended, in part, upon getting the nation to understand that the violence of southern whites contradicted the nation's laws and norms (Roberts and Klibanoff, 2006). This was accomplished by front page and television coverage of such events as:

- The Freedom Riders who sought to travel through Alabama and Mississippi on interstate buses but were beaten and arrested.
- The extremely bloody violence in Oxford that left two dead in September, 1962 when the Fifth Circuit court ordered James Meredith admitted to Ole Miss.
- The abuse that Birmingham Police Chief Connor directed toward peaceful marchers in his city in spring 1963.
- The bombing of Sixteenth Street Baptist in that city in September, 1963 that killed three black children.
- The murders of civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner in Philadelphia, Mississippi in June, 1964,
- The violence at the Selma voting rights marches in March 1965 that resulted in the deaths of Jimmie Lee Jackson, Viola Liuzzo and James Reeb.

Finally moved to action, Congress enacted the encompassing Civil Rights Act of 1964 that sought to end racial discrimination in the labor market and in public accommodations and to promote the racial integration of schools. The next year, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act that made the 1870 Fifteenth Amendment effective. These laws may have helped shift white attitudes toward support for equality of opportunity for blacks.

Not only have the racial attitudes of whites changed, but a norm of racial and gender diversity has developed. Into the 1960s, almost all high-level political appointments were held by white men, all of the leading universities were headed by white men, all of the top-ranking positions in professional sports were held by white men. Except for the black press, advertisements showed white customers exclusively. Now we have a norm of racial and gender diversity. The boards of major corporations are expected to include women and minorities, all presidents since Lyndon Johnson have appointed diverse arrays of men and women to high level positions and professional sports have minorities in administration jobs. It is now common almost mandatory for slates of candidates for good jobs to include more than just white men. Perhaps no one illustrated this norm of diversity more lucidly than did President George W. Bush with his original cabinet appointments in 2001: three women, two blacks, two Asians, one Hispanic and one Arab.

SECOND, INDUSTRIAL RESTRUCTURING

The mechanization of agriculture in the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s led to massive unemployment. Fortunately, many of the men could find industrial jobs, and thus there was a tremendous migration from the South to northern cities, first to take jobs in the munitions factories of Akron, Chicago and Detroit during World War II, and then to produce the consumer

durables that were popular in the two prosperous decades following World War II. William Julius Wilson documented the far-reaching consequences of industrial restructuring for the employment of blue-collar workers in Chicago and the Rust Belt. It is not so much that industries have disappeared. They have not. But they employ a fraction of the blue-collar workers they once did. The steel industry is thriving in this country now and turns out as much tonnage as in the 1960s, but with about one-fifth as many workers. Railroads are moving more tonnage now than in the World War II years, but with about one-seventh of their former employment. Many men displaced from agricultural jobs found remunerative jobs in manufacturing. It is now much more challenging for men displaced from good blue collar jobs to find similarly rewarding jobs in the medical sector or financial services.

William Julius Wilson did not describe and the Kerner Commission did not foresee the huge changes in employment that continue to reshape the economic landscape. Jobs are not disappearing in the United States; they continue to increase, albeit slowly at present. But the industrial sectors that are now growing most rapidly are those where women either have always been well represented, or are increasingly represented. Industrial restructuring, in important ways, has disadvantaged men and favored women.

This process continues. Manufacturing employment has declined steadily at 2 percent each year this decade. Employment in transportation and utilities has grown slowly. But in the industrial sectors where women are numerous, the growth of jobs has been much more rapid a 4 percent annual increase in social services employment, 3 percent in the medical sector and financial services and about 2 percent each year in education. The nation continues to devote larger shares of the Gross National Product to health and education, a trend that increases employment opportunities and wages for women. Reducing the persistently large economic gaps that separate blacks from whites will require sharp increases in the college attainment and employment of African American men.

THIRD, IMMIGRATION

The Kerner Commission issued their report just four months before the Celler-Hart Reform Immigration Law fundamentally changed who and how many move to this country. No member of that Commission foresaw that, by 2002, Hispanics would be more numerous than blacks, or that the Asian and Hispanic populations would grow at much higher rates than the African-American. The annual growth rates for the first seven years of this new millennium are:

Hispanics	+ 4.3% per year
Non-Hispanic Asians	+3.9%
Non-Hispanic Blacks	+1.3%
Non-Hispanic Whites	+0.3%

The consequences of immigration for black-white gaps are not clear. Immigration leads to population growth and such growth in a developed nation should stimulate economic growth, leading to more jobs and higher incomes. There is evidence from studies of residential patterns

that the presence of many Hispanics or Asians in a metropolis lowers the segregation of blacks from whites. Immigrants tend to be at the upper or lower end of the educational attainment distribution. The presence of many immigrants in some metropolises, presumably, lowers the wages and employment of native-born workers who might compete for unskilled or semi-skilled jobs.

President Truman's report (President's Committee on Civil Rights, 1947), *To Secure these Rights*, and the Kerner Commission (National Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968) focused upon the denial of the rights of blacks. Through the 1960s, civil rights legislation and legal decisions focused primarily upon the denial of opportunities to blacks. With the arrival of immigrants, the population has changed, and at present, 14 percent of the nation's residents were born outside this nation and another 11 percent are second-generation immigrants. It is more challenging to view rights issues and discrimination in terms of only blacks and whites. Much more so than in the 1960s, a diverse variety of racial and ethnic groups as well as the handicapped and sexual orientation groups can advocate for programs to insure equal opportunities.

Immigration, I speculate, encourages Americans to rethink the assumption that ability, competence and morality can be judged by skin color or phenotype. Immigrants from throughout the world are filling important and highly visible jobs in our society: Asians in science and medicine, Dominicans and Venezuelans in baseball, Slavs and Nordics in hockey, and talented athletes from all parts of the world in professional basketball. More than a few first- and second-generation immigrants have been elected governors or to Congress. And, although they are less visible, we know that several million immigrants from Mexico and all parts of Asia are filling those important but lowly-paid jobs in agriculture and the service industries that young native-born people are reluctant to take. The skin colors and physiologic characteristics of immigrants are extremely diverse as are their accents. The success of such different types of immigrants in so many fields may, over the generations, erase the assumptions that bolstered the Jim Crow society the Kerner Commissioners portrayed.

FOURTH, A DIFFERENT CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The modern civil rights movement of the 1960s was responsible for passage of the three most consequential racial laws since Reconstruction: the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Open Housing Law of 1968. No individual was more important than Martin Luther King in eloquently pointing out the discordance between American ideals and the actual subordination of blacks in daily life. The combinative components of the modern civil rights movement were briefly unified on August 28, 1963 when Dr. King spoke at the Lincoln Memorial, but then they splintered. After the 1968 killing of Dr. King, no one emerged as a civil rights leader who could speak to the nation. The rise of black militancy—the Black Panthers, Bobby Seale, Stokely Carmichael, the Republic of New Africa and more than a dozen individuals and organizations that advocated the use of violence to overturn white power and forcefully replace it with black power scared middle-class blacks and whites who feared that the vibrant civil rights movement might transform in a movement for racial violence.

To be sure, the issues the civil rights movement faces now are extremely different from those of the early 1960s. It was easier to get the federal courts to order registrars in Mississippi and Alabama to list blacks on their voting rolls than it is to elevate the college enrollment rates of blacks to those of whites or to ensure that blacks have wealth holdings similar to whites. The civil rights movement peaked before the Kerner Commission issued their report.

FIFTH, POLITICAL AND POLICY INDECISION

Every federal administration since 1968 has wrestled, to some degree, with the predictions of the Kerner Commission and their policy options. No president more cogently restated the essence of the Kerner Report than incumbent George W. Bush when, speaking from Jackson Square in front of St. Louis Cathedral after Katerina devastated New Orleans, he said.

As all of us saw on television, there's also some deep, persistent poverty in this region, as well. That poverty has roots in a history of racial discrimination, which cut off generations from the opportunity of America. We have a duty to confront this poverty with bold action.

Early in the Nixon Administration, there appeared to be support for the integration option recommended by the Kerner Commissioners. The Justice and Labor Departments developed a Philadelphia Plan that got black men into the construction crafts unions in the Northeast for the first time. President Nixon's Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, George Romney, devoted great energy to breaking down the barriers that kept blacks out of suburbs. But those efforts quickly ended. Nixon's advisors realized they had an opportunity to develop a strong Republican Party throughout the South by capitalizing upon the desires of white voters. This was a successful strategy, but one that effectively pushed civil rights issues to a low priority.

President Carter may have recognized the problems described in the Kerner Report, but was a deficit hawk so he did not initiate new programs to gild the ghetto or to strongly promote integration. In addition, he faced economic chaos with high inflation, high interest rates and the second oil price crisis. Those problems precluded his addressing racial or urban issues.

Ronald Reagan was the most recent president who, arguably, gave the lowest priority to civil rights issues. Perhaps nothing more clearly indicates this than the location he selected to begin his 1980 campaign: Philadelphia, Mississippi. The informative diaries of President Reagan have been published and clearly reveal his priorities. There is almost no mention of racial issues or blacks, with the exception of a few positive comments about his appointment of Clarence Pendleton to head the Civil Rights Commission and Clarence Thomas to lead the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission.

The first president Bush appointed Jack Kemp to head the Department of Housing and Urban Affairs. In that role, Kemp emphasized the continuing problems of Rust Belt and Northeast cities and developed a comprehensive policy for gilding the ghetto: Empowerment Zones. The financial constraints imposed on government spending for the Gulf War prevented the first Bush administration from creating Empowerment Zones, but they were created in the Clinton Administration.

If you examine the income and employment trend lines in these figures shown in this report, you see that the one period since 1968 when most indicators moved toward a racial convergence was during the economic expansion that lasted from mid-1993 until the first quarter of 2001. As Sheldon Danziger observed, this expansion was a rising tide that lifted all boats. Not surprisingly, the Clinton Administration took credit for those favorable developments. In addition, several modest programs to promote integration were initiated: the Move-to-Opportunity experiment and the Hope VI housing program with its greatly expanded use of housing vouchers. President Clinton called for a national discussion of racial issues. Presumably, he was seeking to develop a consensus about what should be done to reduce racial segregation and disparities in educational attainment, occupational achievement and income. Many of us who participated in that discussion were hopeful at the start. A fair assessment, however, would conclude that the few publications from that endeavor have had little consequence and were soon forgotten.

One of the most ambitious programs to minimize racial disparities was the No Child Left Behind Act proposed by the current president and enacted by Congress in 2001. It was specifically designed to provide increased federal support for programs to improve the academic achievement of the disadvantaged, and was followed by very large increases in federal spending for primary and secondary schools. Narrowing gaps on tests of intellectual achievement will, presumably, eventually narrow the black-white gap in college enrollment. While this law has been controversial, results from the National Assessment of Education Progress show a modest trend toward a black-white convergence in test scores of at the elementary school ages and there is some evidence that the gap in high school completion may now be contracting. As indicated, President W. Bush brought the nation's attention to the lingering consequences of past racial discrimination in one of his most eloquent speeches. However, few, if any, policies or programs have been developed to address the problems he described.

8. Summary

What is the status of race relations forty years after Kerner? Most importantly, personal values, the nation's norms and our laws abjure blatant racial discrimination. Occupations that were once closed to blacks are quite well integrated. Blacks vote everywhere, and as this year's election demonstrates, contend for political office at all levels. The majority of blacks are in the economic middle class or above. Indeed, there is a substantial black economic upper class. A norm of racial and gender diversity influences appointments to the most important jobs. The residential segregation of whites from blacks is declining, and black-white interracial marriage is now common. The Kerner Commission argued that a continuation of the policies of their era would lead to the permanent establishment of two societies: one predominantly white and in the suburbs, and one largely Negro in cities. Unlike 1968, current trends point toward more integration. And, for a variety of reasons, we have not seen and will not see the racial polarization described by Kerner Commissioners.

Nevertheless, the significance of race has not been eliminated. Gaps in educational attainment, income and wealth holding are persistent and substantial. Many of them are attributable, in part, to Jim Crow practices in the past and the lingering effects of racial

stereotypes. The educational attainment of children is closely linked to the education of parents. Today's young blacks come from homes where parents complete fewer years of schooling and earn less than the parent's of today's young whites. Among native-born non-Hispanic blacks age 13 to 17 in 2007, 14 percent lived in households headed by a college graduate. For white teenagers, it was a much higher 32 percent. Twenty percent of those young blacks were in households with gross incomes of \$75,000 or more, but for similar young whites, it was 50 percent. Economic gaps in the past and at present and the once pervasive pattern of racial residential segregation help to account for current racial differences in educational attainment, income and wealth holdings.

Has racial discrimination been eliminated? Perhaps not, but it may now occur in a subtle manner, not recognized by the perpetrator or victim. Many whites once held prejudicial views of blacks, seeing them as less intelligent than whites, prone to criminal activity, preferring to live off welfare rather than work, as speaking English poorly and doing a poor job of raising their children. While fewer and fewer whites endorse such stereotypes, they still influence the judgments of whites in ways that make it difficult for African Americans to get some jobs or enter some neighborhoods.

To audit the hiring practices of 350 employers, Devah Pager (2003) sent matched pairs of black and white applicants to seek entry-level jobs advertised in Sunday Milwaukee newspapers. Black and white applicants were matched with regard to demographic and labor market characteristics, so they only differed in skin color. In one-half of the audits, the tester reported that he had a criminal record for drugs, while in the other half of the audit there was no mention of a conviction. Even though black and white testers were matched with regard to characteristics, only 10 percent of black, but 26 percent of white, applicants were called back for a second interview. White applicants who reported a conviction were significantly more likely to be called back than black applications with no mention of a criminal record. The employers' decisions were based on skin color.

Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan (2004) took a different approach. They selected 1,300 advertisements for white-collar occupations in Boston and Chicago newspapers and sent employers 5,000 fictitious applications that did not mention race. They determined which applications led to a call for a job interview. The credentials of applicants were matched with one important exception: the applicant's first name. Using information from birth records, the experimenters gave some applicants common black first names such as Jamal and Latisha and gave others matched applicants typically white first names such as Allison and Greg. Applicants with "white" first names had to send out, on average, 10 resumes to get a call for an interview; applicants with "black" first names, 15 résumés to get an interview. Employers' decisions were influenced by the racial connotation of first names.

Maria Krysan, Mick Couper and I (forthcoming, 2008) carried out an experiment in Chicago and Detroit with random samples of 609 white respondents. They viewed video clips of five neighborhoods ranging from one showing modest starter homes to one showing spacious upper middle class homes. After viewing the clip, whites were asked to estimate the cost of the housing, how well the homes were maintained, the safety of the neighborhood, whether the homes were likely to appreciate in value and the quality of schools in that neighborhood.

A random selection of white respondents saw clips with white residents going about such activities as raking leaves, picking up mail and chatting with neighbors. A different random selection of whites saw the identical neighborhoods, but with similarly dressed black respondents doing exactly the same activities. The ratings white gave to the neighborhoods depended strongly upon the quality of the housing they saw. But whites' evaluations were also significantly influenced by the skin color of residents. In the absence of other information, whites assumed that neighborhoods with black residents had significantly less expensive housing, were less safe, were less likely to appreciate and had lower quality schools than did the identical neighborhood with white residents. In a subtle fashion, traditional racial stereotypes may continue to influence who get what opportunities.

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NOTE ABOUT DATA SOURCES:

Social, demographic and economic indicators for the native-born non-Hispanic white and black populations were obtained from the Public Use Microdata Samples issued by the Census Bureau from the following censuses and surveys:

- Decennial censuses from 1960 to 2000
- March Current Population Survey from 1968 through 2007
- American Community Survey from 2001 through 2006



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