

# Beyond civil rights

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What's a Self-Respecting "Black" Intellectual  
To Do in the Face of Persistent  
Racial Inequality in the United States?

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Brown University and CASBS-Stanford University  
January 26, 2016



BROWN

## Outline of this presentation

- Tribute to My (“White”) Mentor – Thomas C. Schelling
- Motivation: What’s Next for the ‘American Dilemma?’
- Basic Facts About Persistent Racial Inequality in US
- The Incarceration Explosion: A Case in Point
- Social Capital + Racial Segregation=Racial Inequality
- Some Political Considerations:
  - A Tempting But False Analogy: Obama Was No King
  - What, now, are a “black” intellectual’s responsibilities?

# What Is Meant by “Schelling-esque”

- Broad interests; playful mind; mastery of strategic analysis; elegant writing; imaginatively linking theory with policy.
- Taught “Public Policy in Divided Societies” with Tom in 1980s. Encountered writers like: Amartya Sen; Albert Hirschman; Erving Goffman; Leo Strauss; Kenneth Arrow; Robert Merton (Sr.); Howard Raiffa; Mancur Olson; Michael Spence; Harold Isaacs; Jon Elster; Thomas Pettigrew; Michael Walzer; Gunnar Myrdal; Thomas Kuhn ... (I got an education!)
- Our students investigated such topics as: the Roma in Europe; the indigenous in Central America; untouchability in India; slave maroon communities in the Caribbean; skin color caste in cities of New Orleans and Charleston; sign language vs. lip-reading among the deaf; name and accent changes to disguise ethnic/regional origins; collective punishment, pride, shame and reputation; racial profiling; stigma; sexual divisions of labor at home and in the workplace; endogamy and assortative mating ...

- We explored conceptual puzzles in lectures from that course about the workings of: rumors; seduction; riots; “passing for white”; anonymity; plausible deniability; signaling; strategic imprecision; group think; code words and dog-whistle politics; discursive taboos and naked emperors; knowledge of another’s state of knowledge; behavior in public; difference between promises, threats and bluffs.
- In short, I incurred an enormous intellectual debt to Tom in those years, one which I shall never be able adequately to discharge ... He forever altered my way of thinking about the intersection between economic theory, social policy and race – in the United States and throughout the world

# Race: America's Seemingly Permanent Dilemma

- This year we will mark sixty-second anniversary of U.S. Supreme Court's fabled *Brown* decision. It's ancient history...
- Reckoning with what Myrdal called the "American Dilemma" of race was the country's biggest domestic challenge post-WWII.
- The large scale of non-European immigration since 1964 has transformed social/political landscape on racial inequality issues.
- So, concerning blacks, how are we doing? Problem solved?
- Not hardly! While "enormous progress has been made," we have NOT solved this problem, are now in danger of losing our way.
- While still relevant, conventional notions of "racial bias" inherited from mid-20<sup>th</sup> century US are inadequate to the current problem.
- A focus on the remediation of the developmental disparities that are inhibiting blacks' full participation in 21<sup>st</sup> century American society is now crucial.

Discussing “race” in the US has global significance. It’s important to get it right. (Proposed a framework in Anatomy of Racial Ineq. 2002)

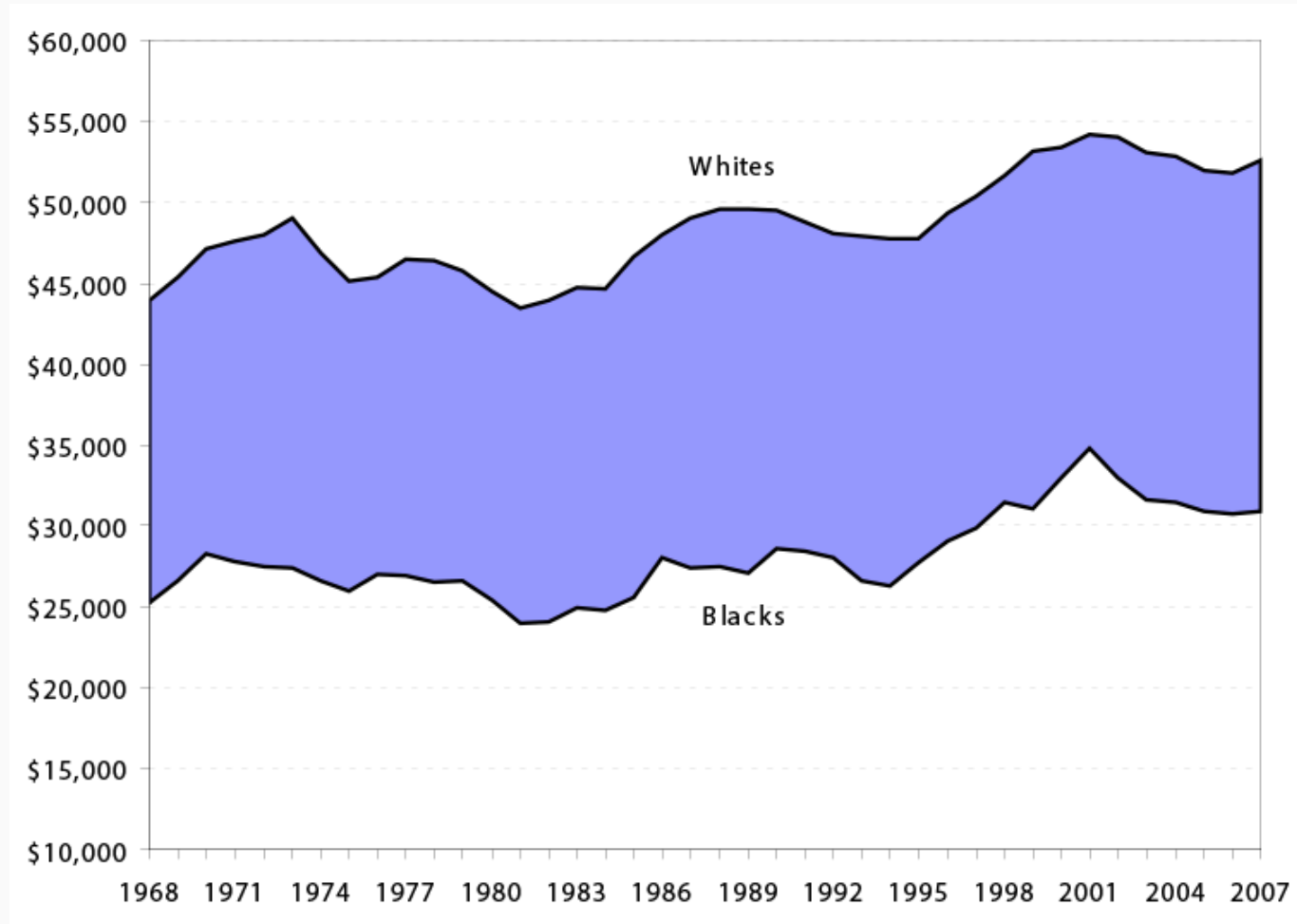
- Concern not parochial: “Inextricable web of mutuality”
  - Consider Gandhi, King, Mandela: many mutual influences
  - Anti-Colonialism and Anti-racism struggles intertwine
  - Common to these struggles: the violent domination of non-white bodies
- Common themes of “recognition,” “redistribution” and “reparation” arise in many national contexts
- “Historical transition” and “intergenerational justice” problems also present in many contexts. Will focus here on this set of issues for the US.

# Case in Point: Failed Transition to Racial Equality in the US:

October 2015 Brown University

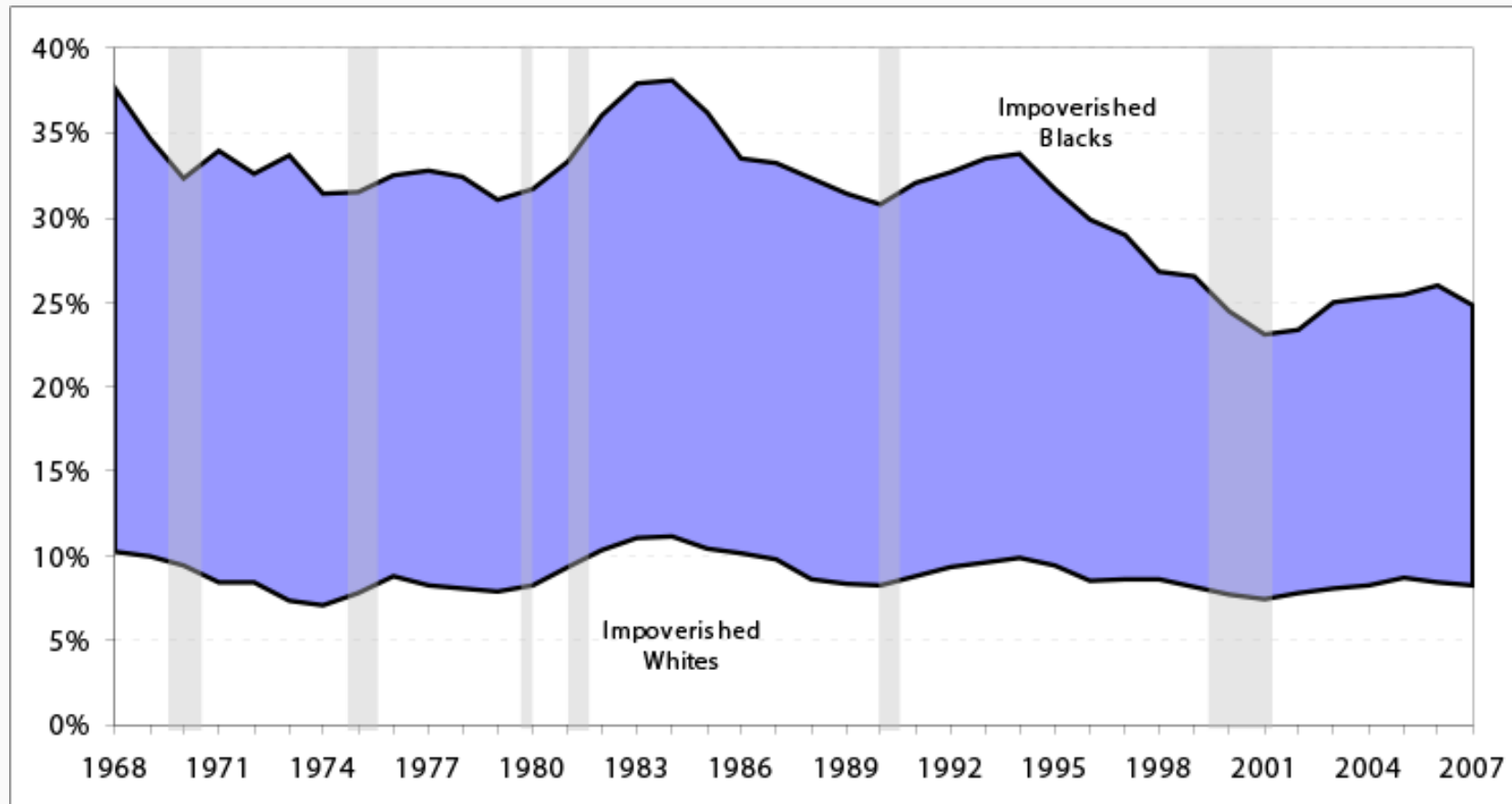
- 1) African American Disadvantage Persists in 21st Century
- 2) Convergence to Parity Nowhere in Sight (the transition problem...)
- 3) Dr. King's 'Dream' of Equality Has Yet To Be Realized
- 4) "But That's OK Because We Got Us a Black President"?
- 5) What Is to Be Done?? (An Unhelpful "Race vs Class" Debate)

# Median Income of Households Headed by Native-Born Non-Hispanics (shown in constant 2007 Dollars)

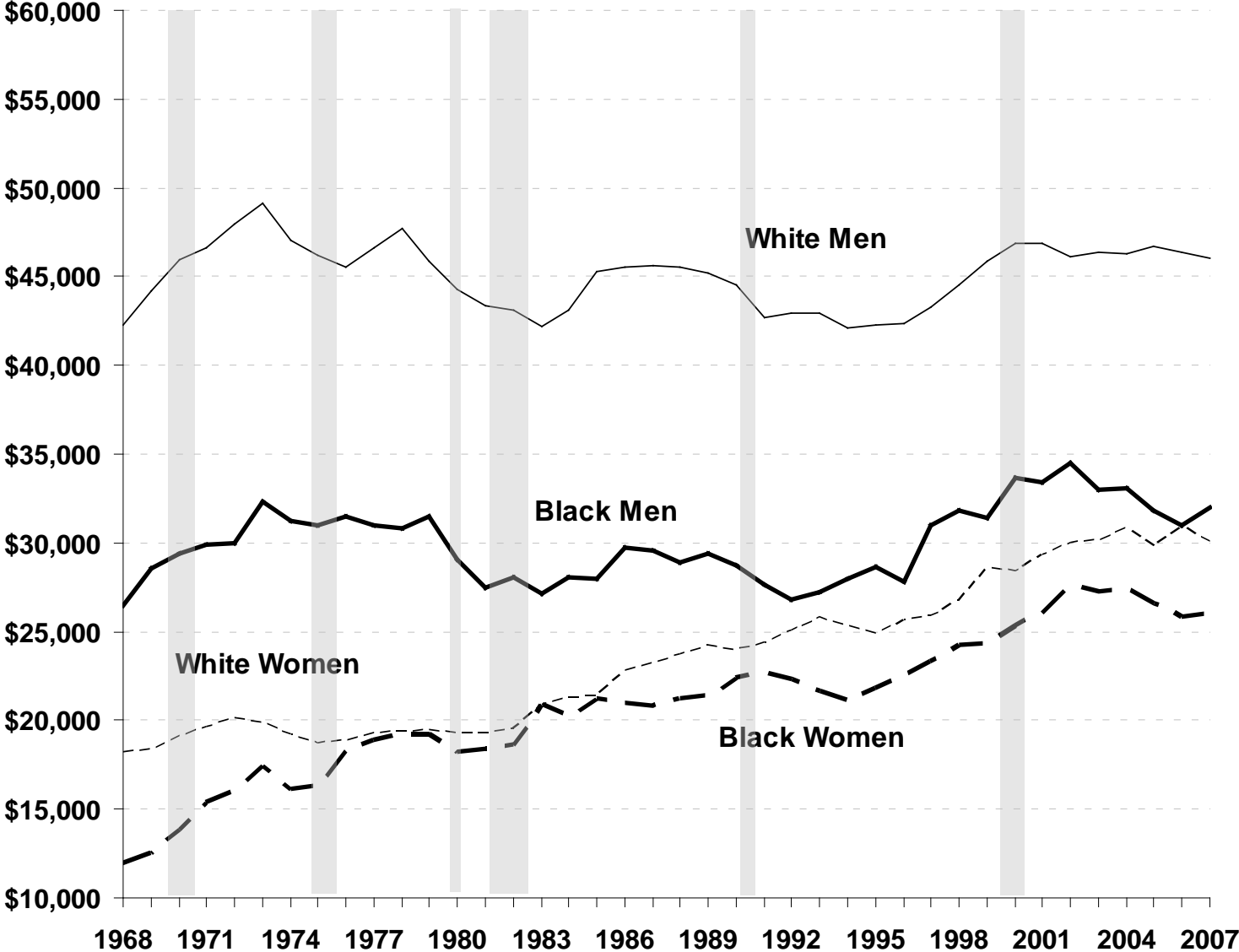




# Percent of Native-Born Non-Hispanics Below the Poverty Line 1968 to 2007

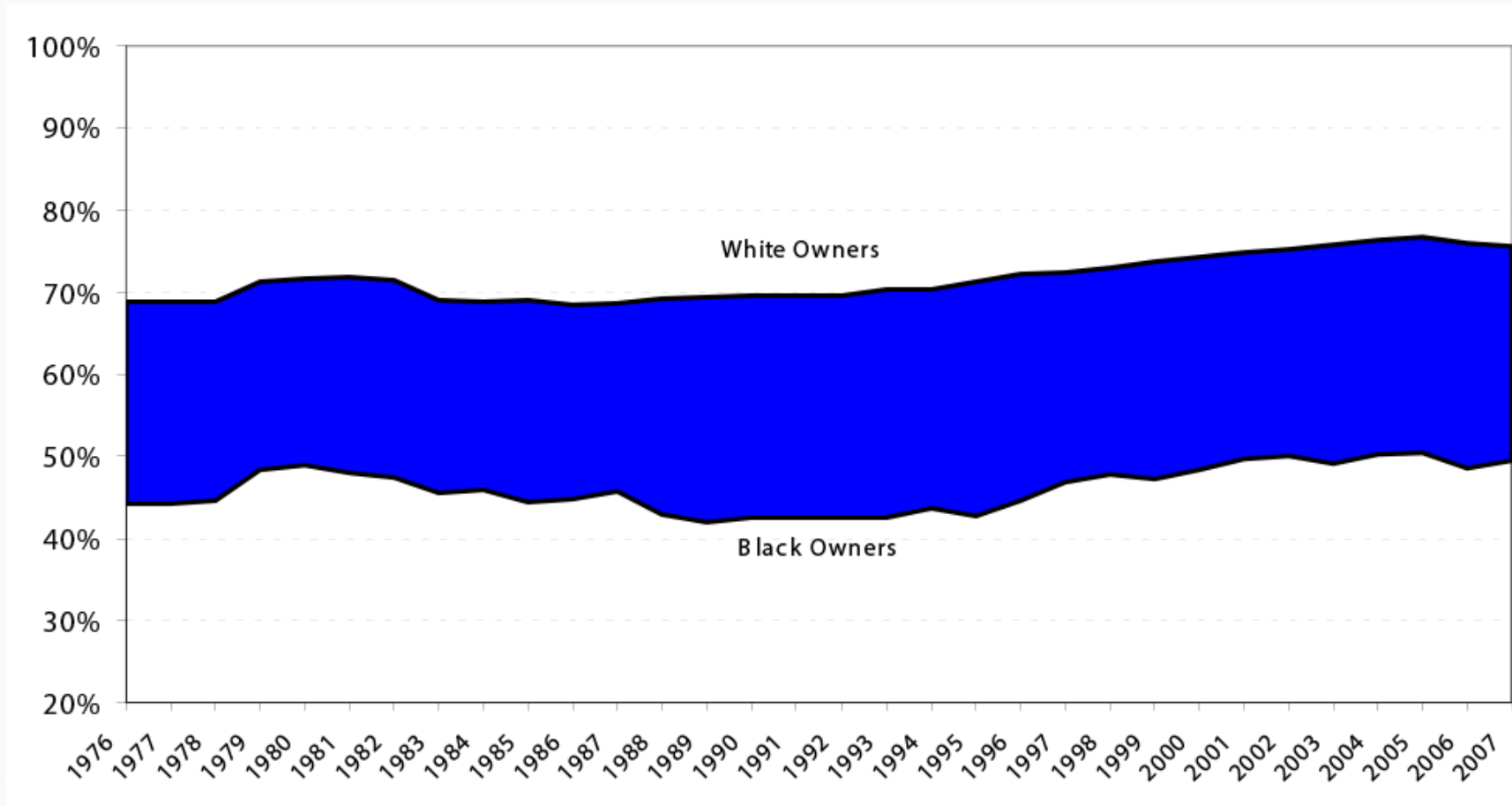


Median Wage and Salary Earnings for Native-Born Non-Hispanics Reporting Earnings

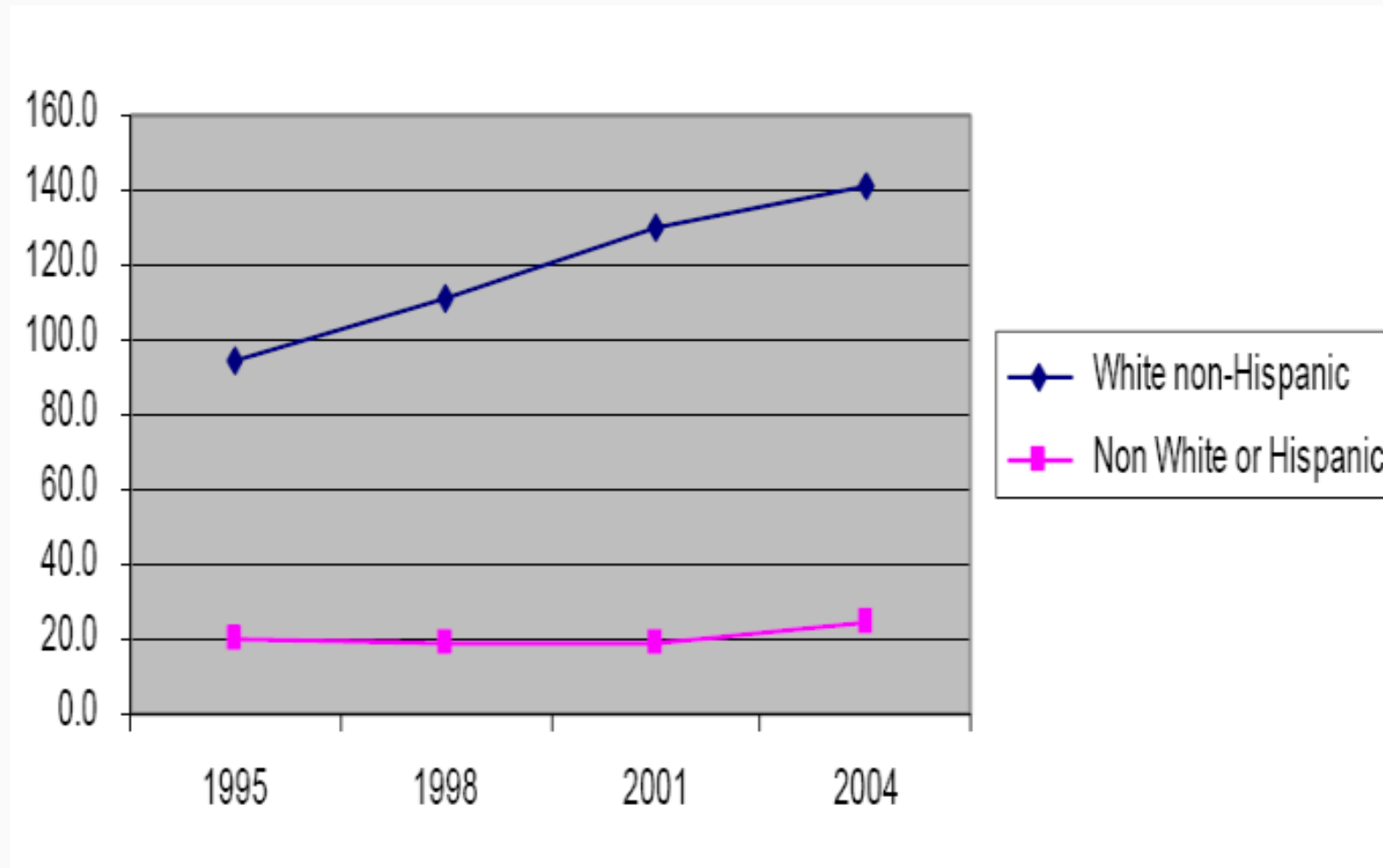


# HOME OWNERSHIP

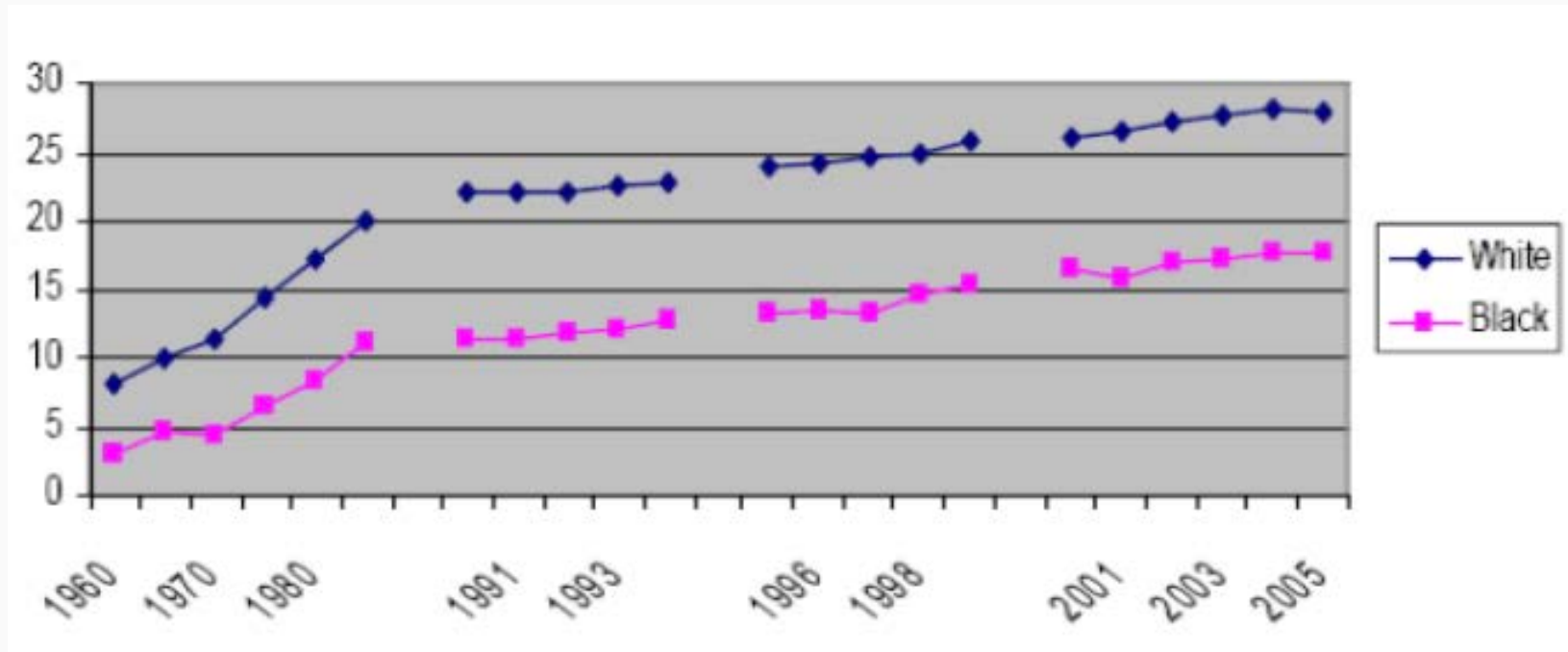
Percent of Native-Born Non-Hispanic Households Owning their Residence

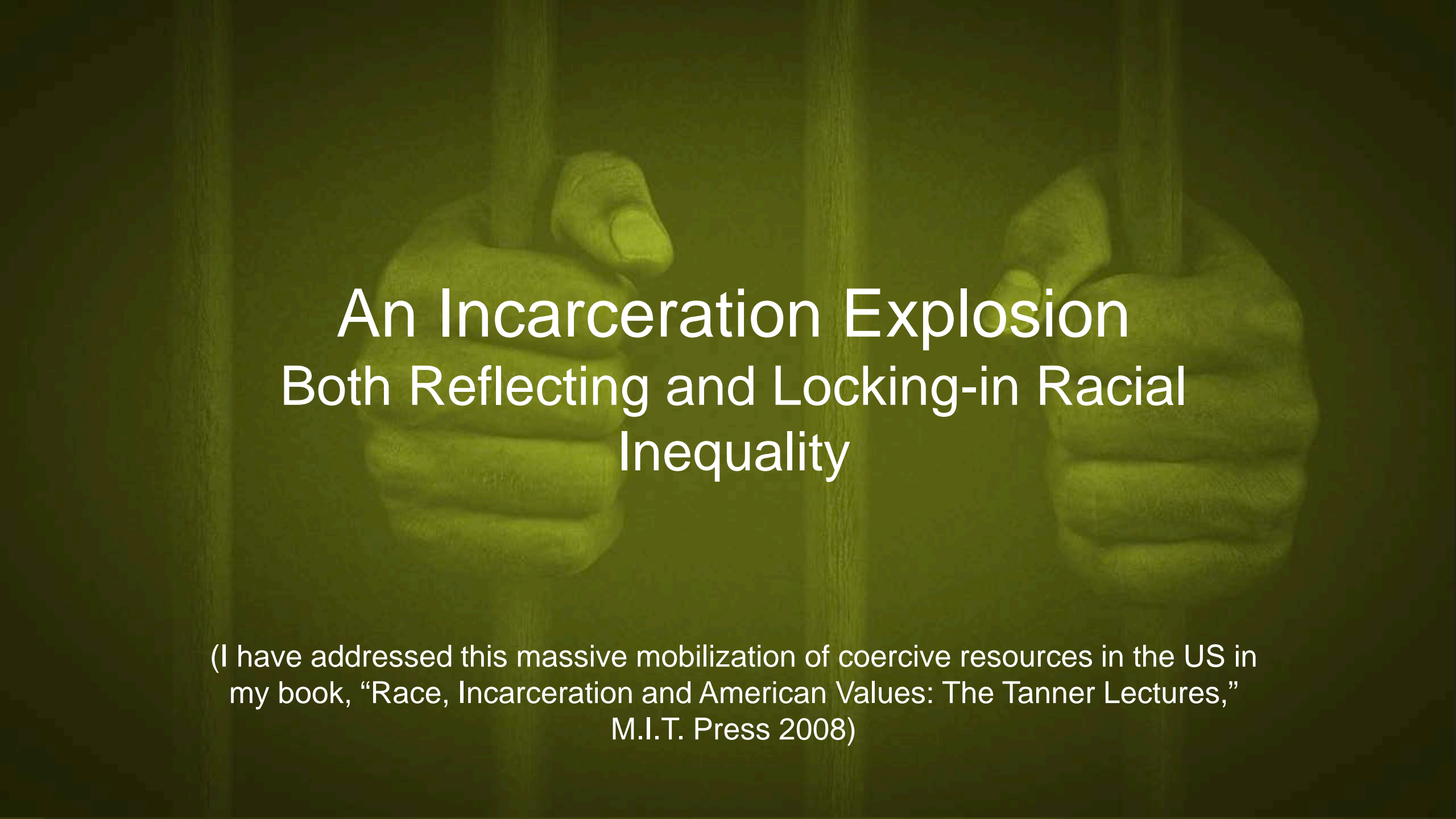


## Median net worth by race



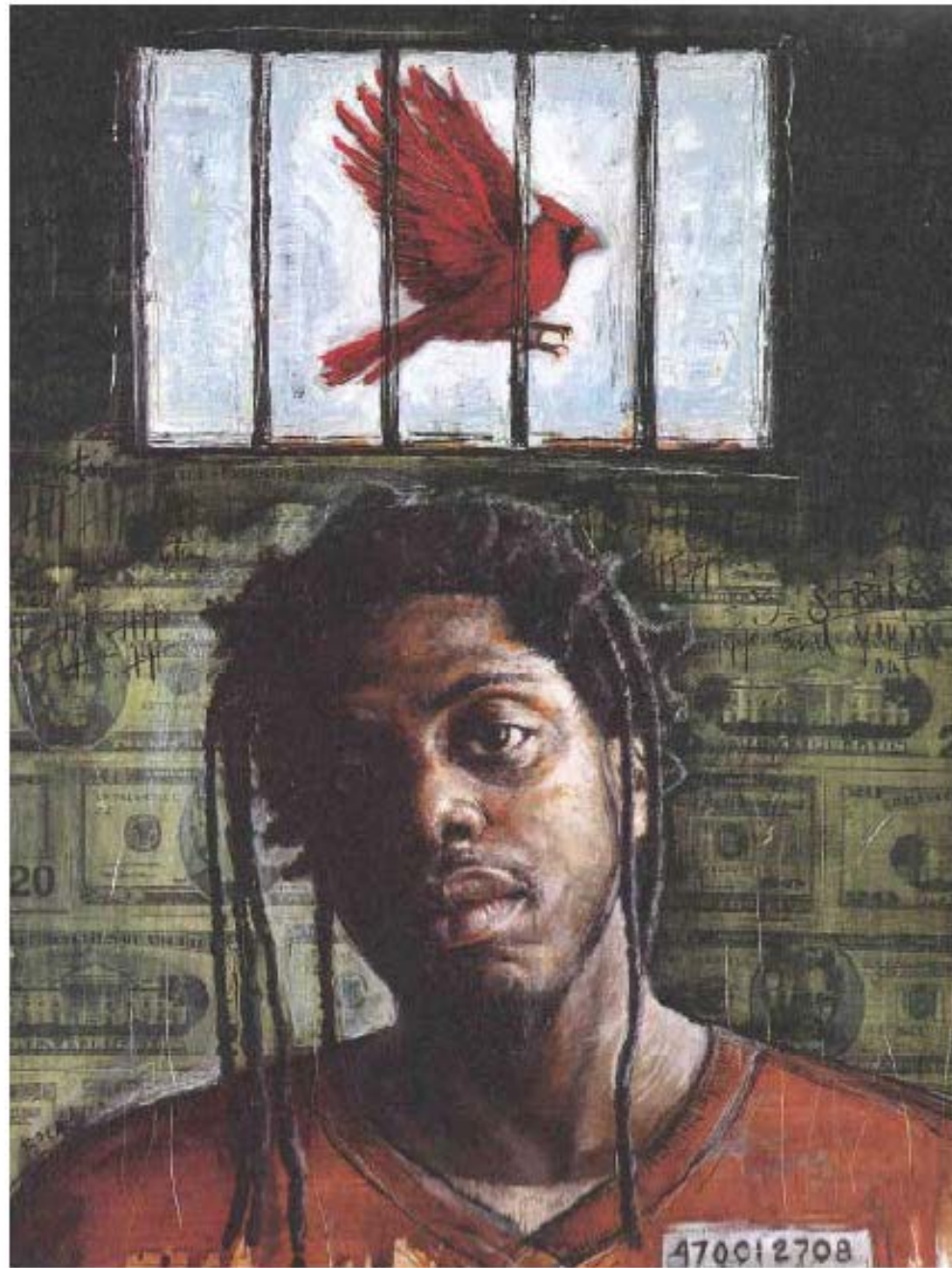
# Percent college graduate by race



The background of the slide features a pair of clenched fists, one on the left and one on the right, holding a scale of justice. The entire image is tinted with a dark green color. The scale's beam is horizontal, and the two pans are suspended from it. The fists are positioned as if they are firmly gripping the vertical supports of the scale.

# An Incarceration Explosion Both Reflecting and Locking-in Racial Inequality

(I have addressed this massive mobilization of coercive resources in the US in my book, “Race, Incarceration and American Values: The Tanner Lectures,” M.I.T. Press 2008)





There are five key points to note about Imprisonment Trends in the United States 1970-2010:

- 1) US Imprisonment Dwarfs that in other Countries
- 2) Current High Rates Unprecedented in US History
- 3) Incidence Wildly Disparate by Race and Class
- 4) Rise Since 1980 Due Largely to Anti-Drugs “War”
- 5) Imprisonment Now Key Feature of US Social Policy



## What can a self-respecting black intellectual do?

In last five years I have promoted two scholarly investigations of the causes and consequences of such high rates of incarceration in the US:

- 1) Study group at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences  
Daedalus (2010)
- 2) Expert panel reporting under auspices of the National Academy of Sciences (2014)

# Daedalus 2010

Daedalus



# Daedalus

Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences  
Summer 2010

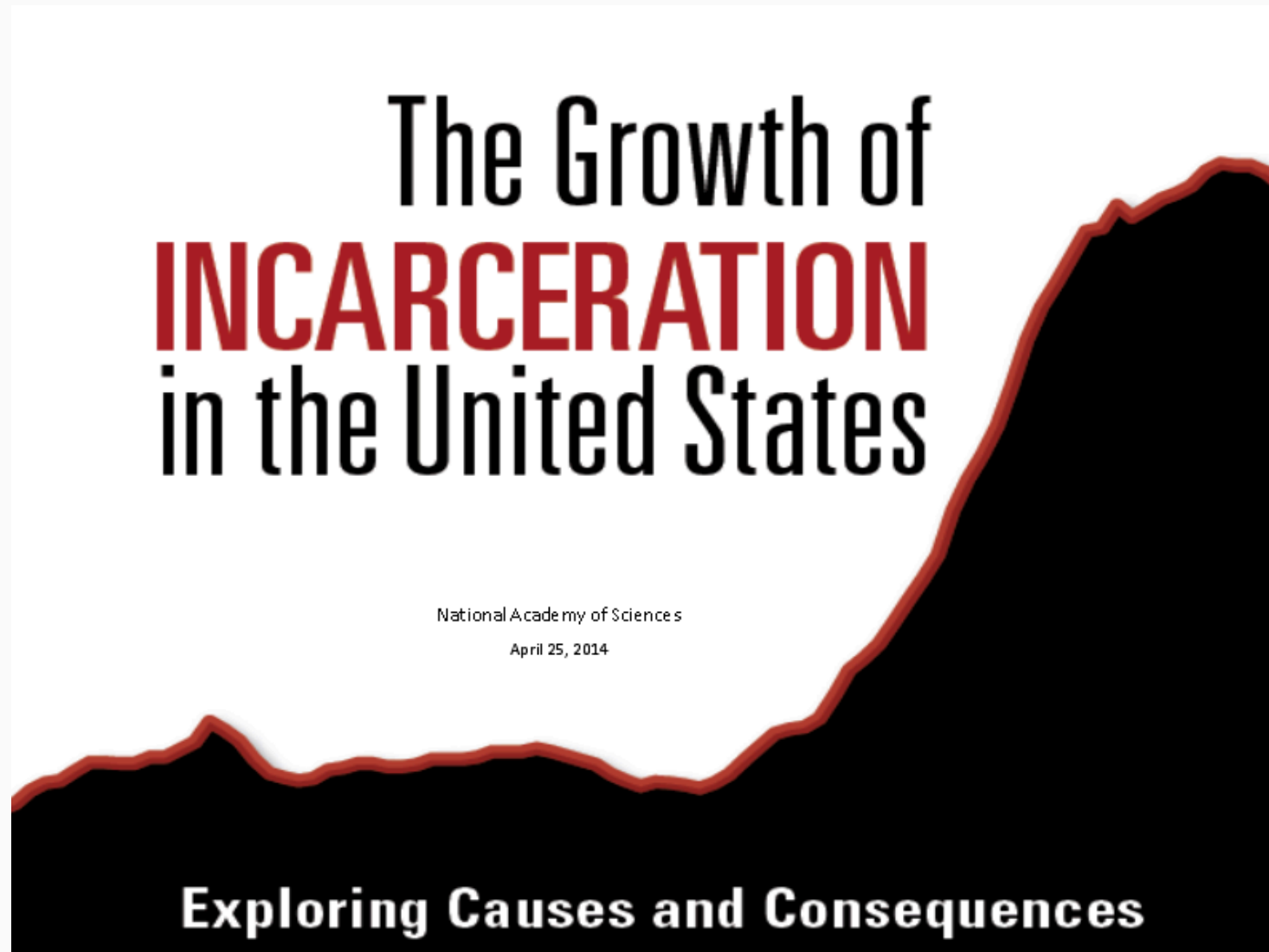
on mass incarceration

Summer 2010 : on mass incarceration

Glenn C. Loury & Bruce Western	Introduction 5
Bruce Western & Becky Pettit	Incarceration & social inequality 8
Robert J. Sampson & Charles Loeffler	Punishment's place: the local concentration of mass incarceration 20
Candace Kruttschnitt	The paradox of women's imprisonment 32
Jeffrey Fagan	The contradictions of juvenile crime & punishment 43
Marie Gottschalk	Cell blocks & red ink: mass incarceration, the great recession & penal reform 62
Loïc Wacquant	Class, race & hyperincarceration in

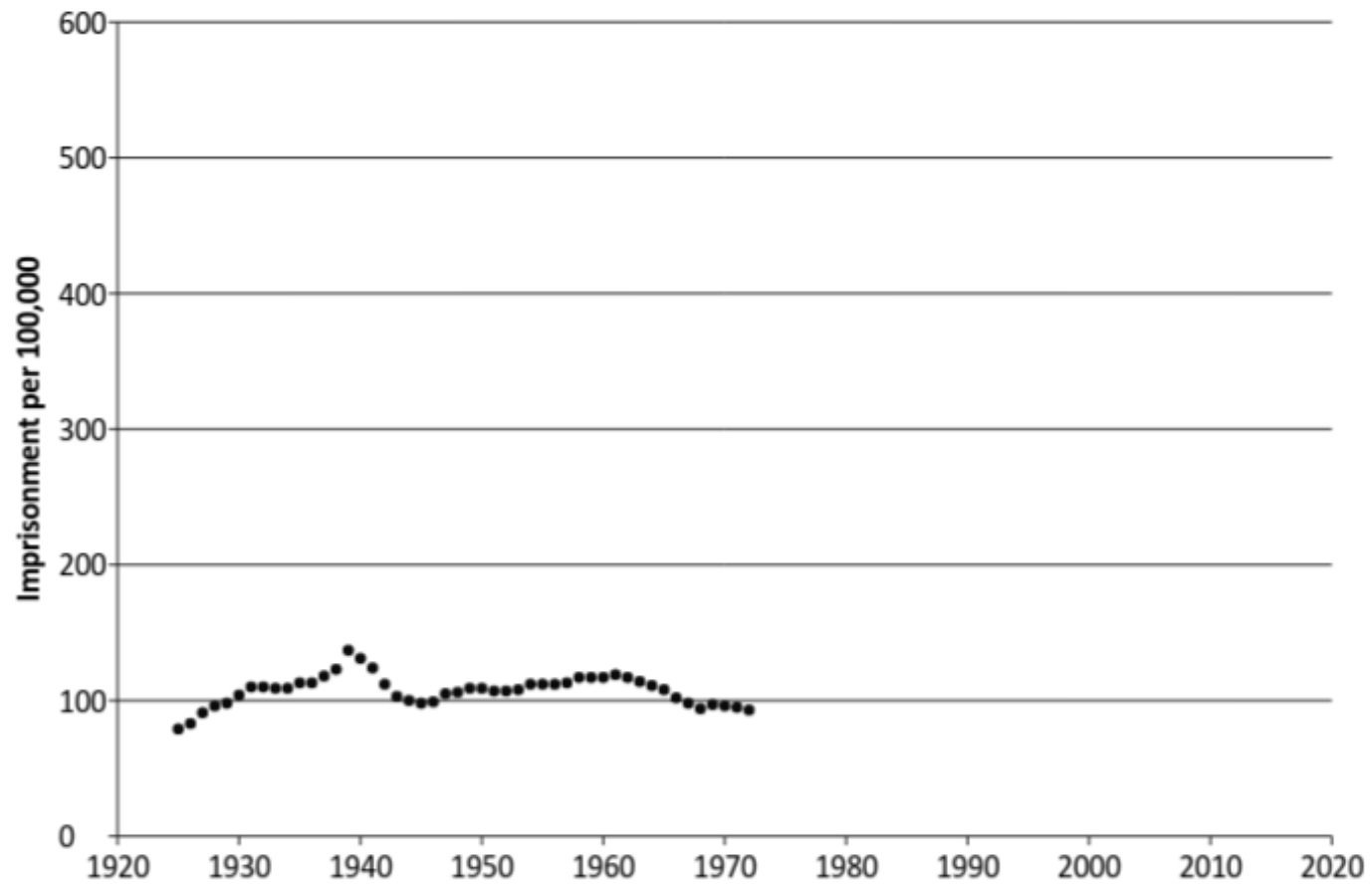
# The growth of incarceration in the united states

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# U.s. Incarceration rate 1925 - 1972

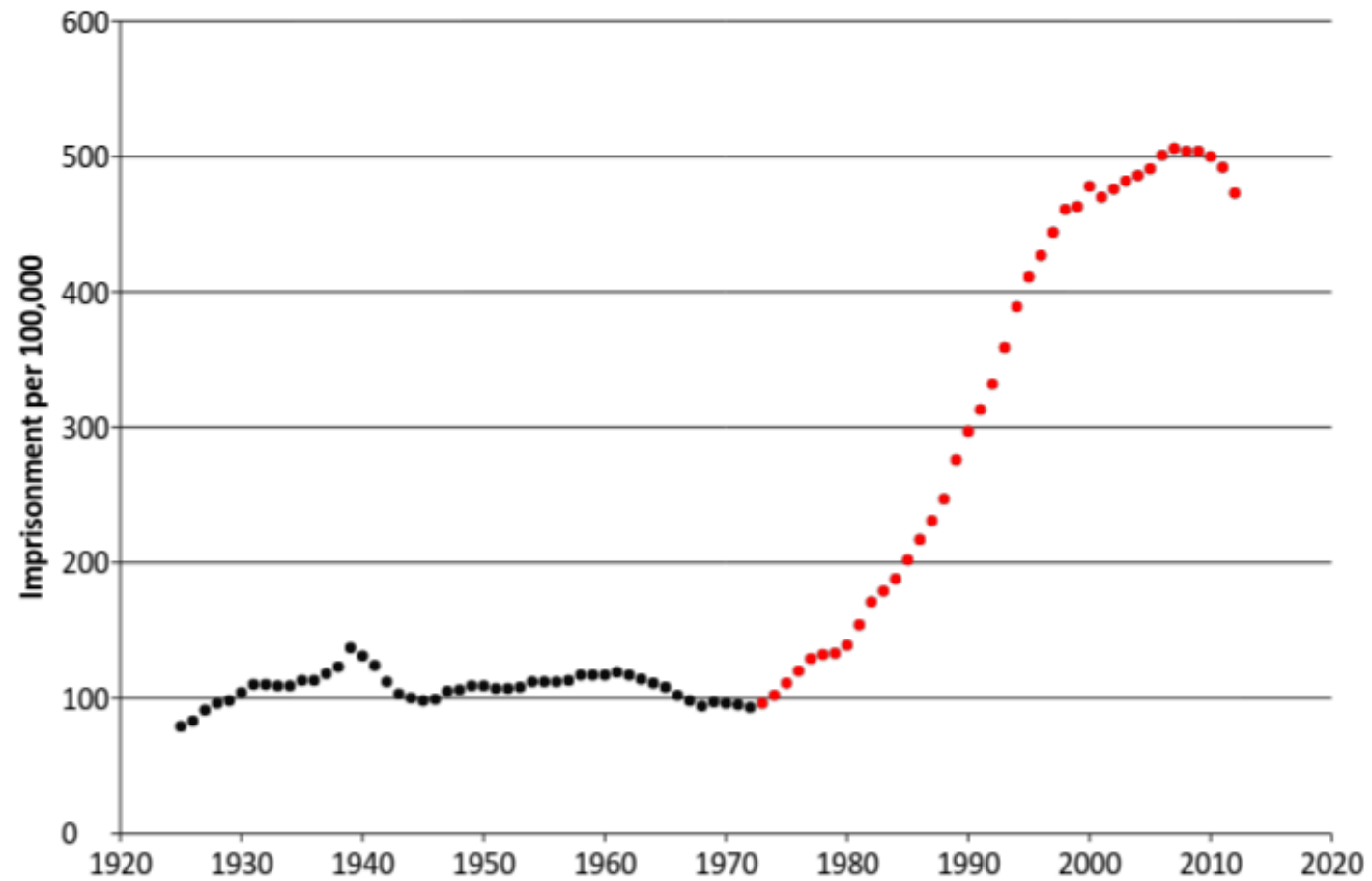
October 2015 Brown University



Note: Incarceration rate is state and federal prison population per 100,000

# U.s. Incarceration rate 1925 - 2012

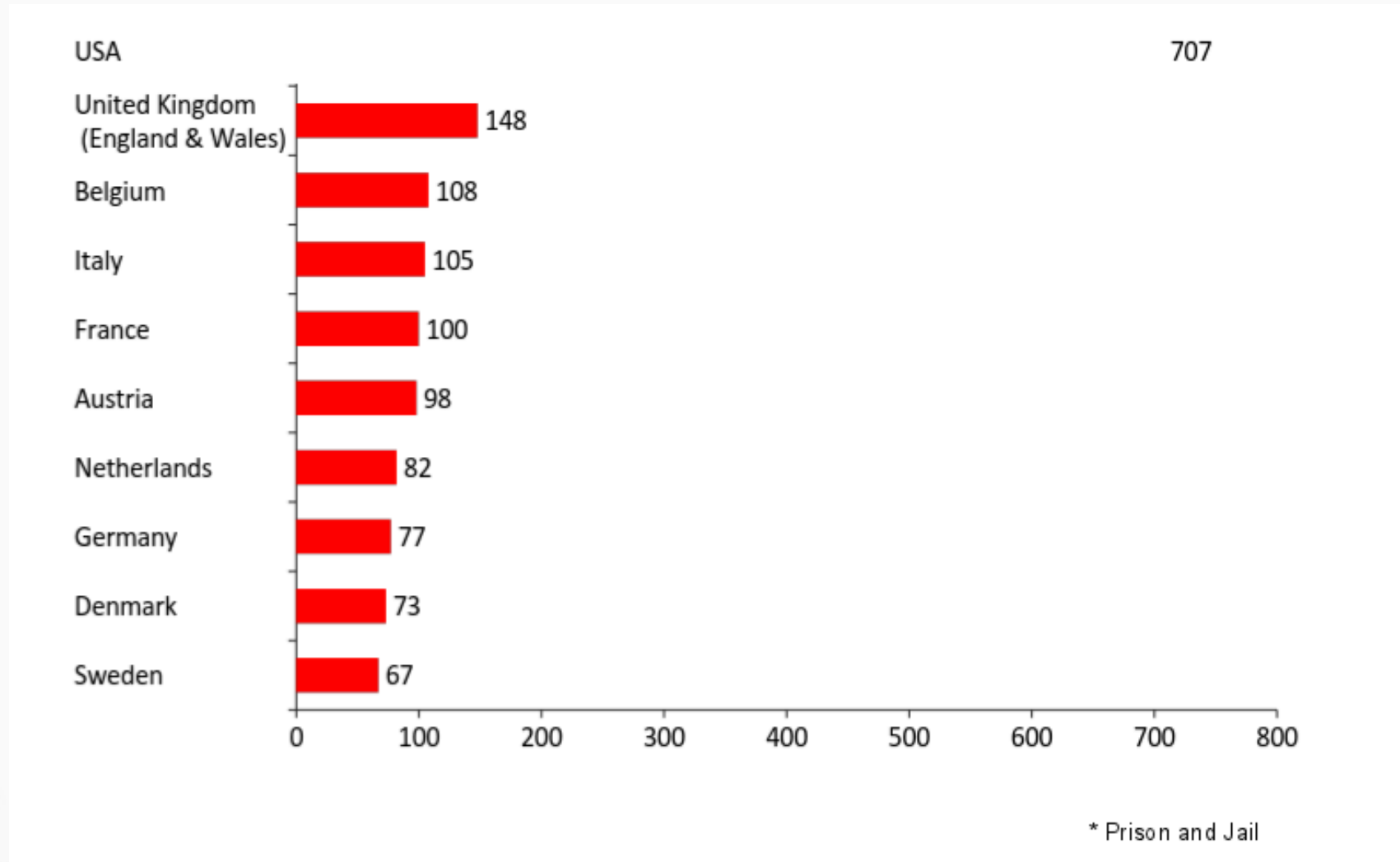
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Note: Incarceration rate is state and federal prison population per 100,000

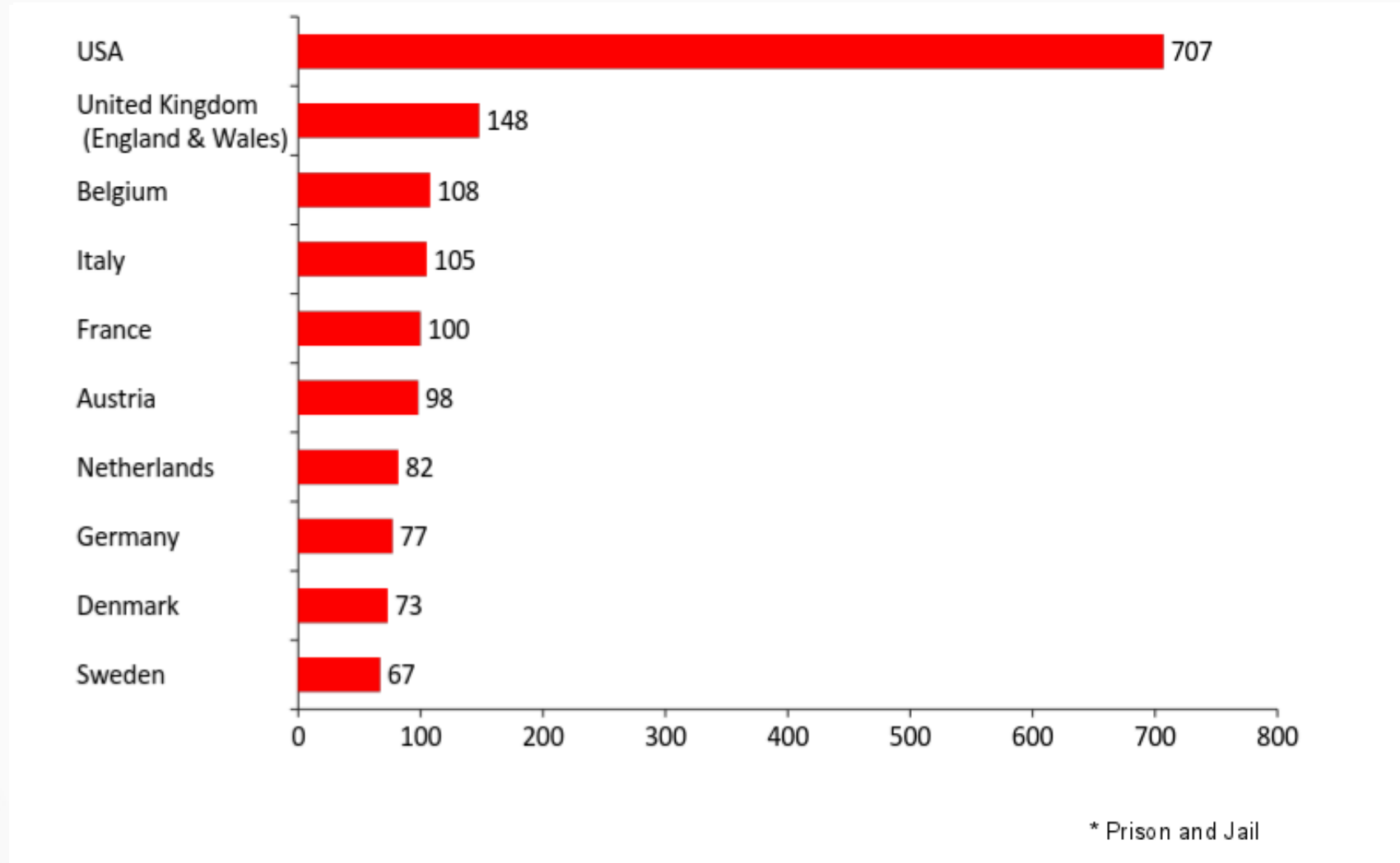
# Incarceration in the u.s. and europe 2012 – 2013

## Per 100.000 population

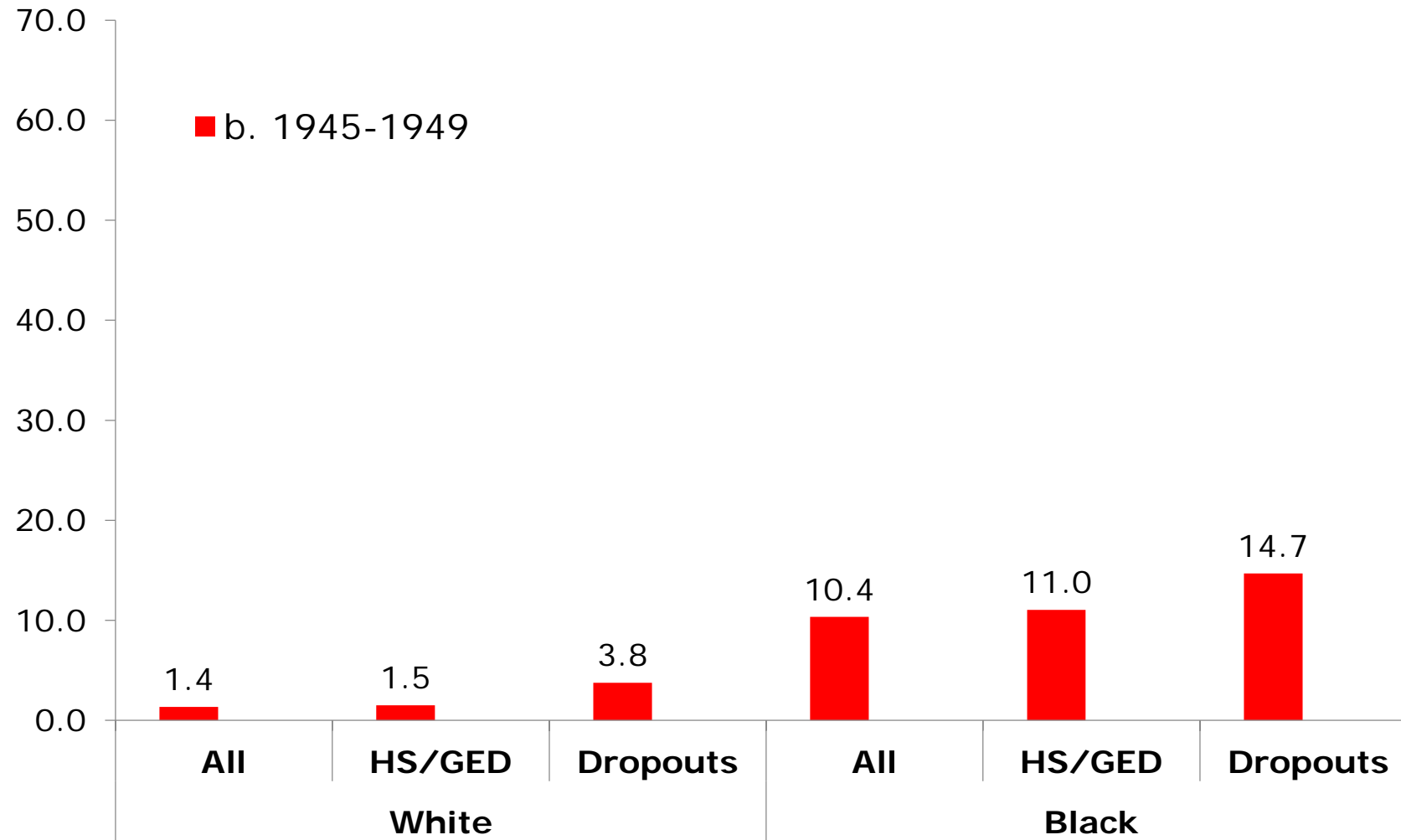


# Incarceration in the u.s. and europe 2012 – 2013

## Per 100.000 population

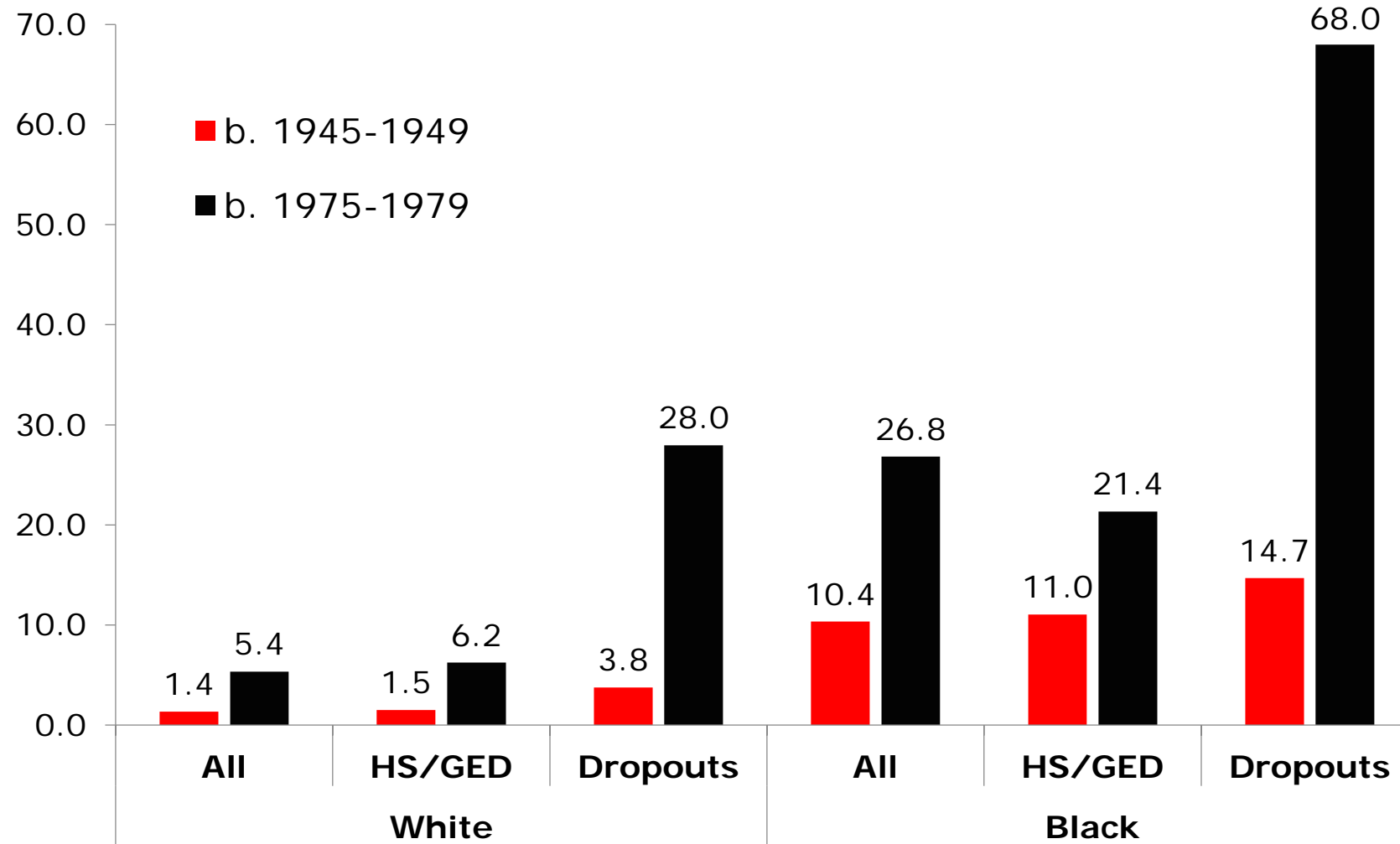


# Men's Risk of Imprisonment by Age 30-34

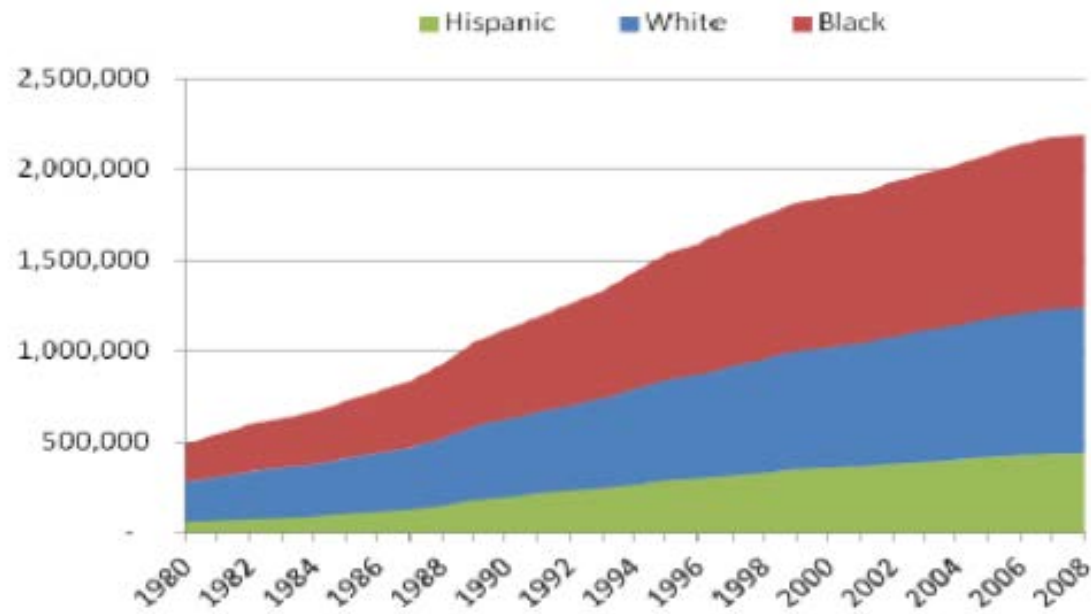




# Men's Risk of Imprisonment by Age 30-34

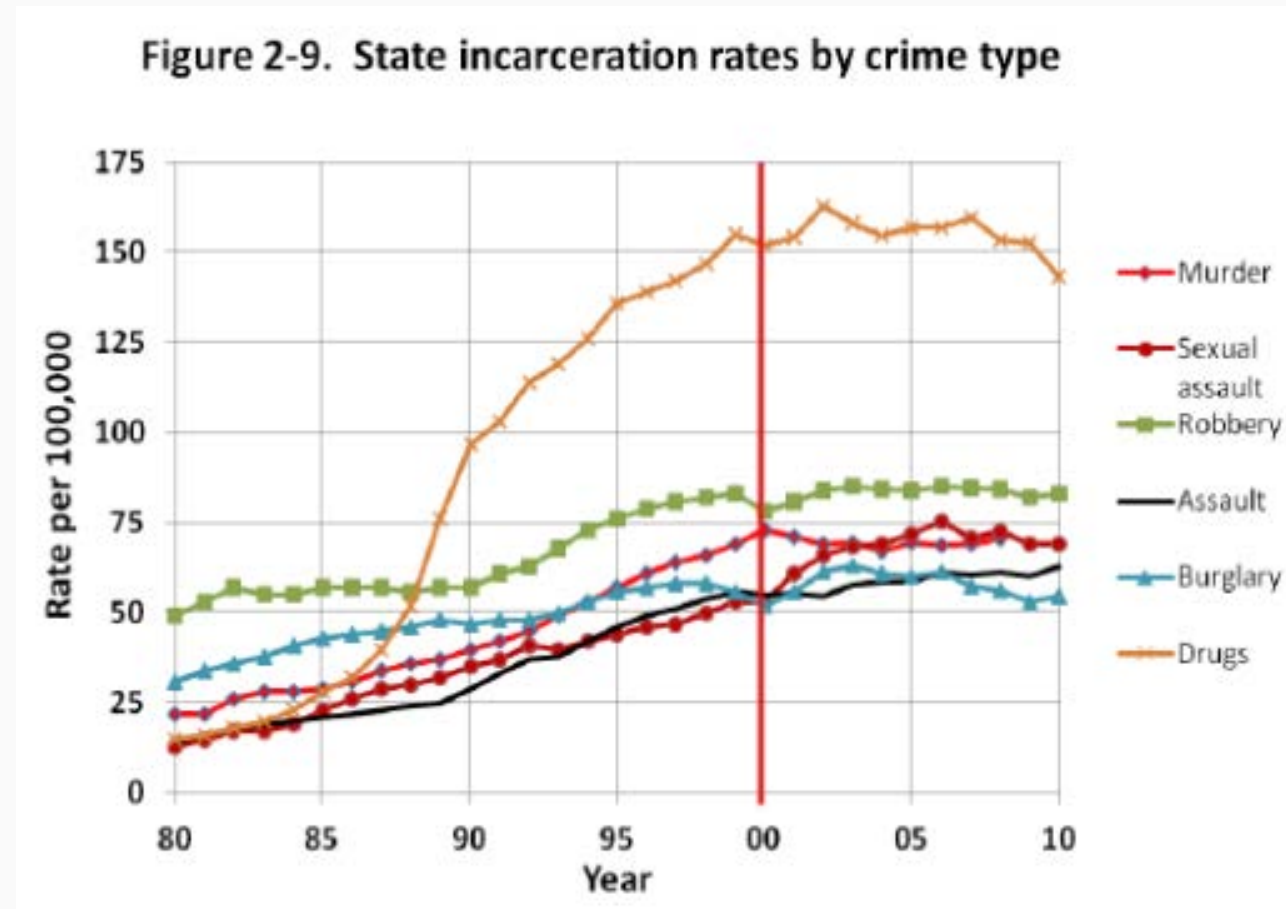


# Numbers Incarcerated in US by Race: 1980-2008



SOURCE: Western and Pettit (2009).

# Increased Imprisonment for Drug Offenses Leading Factor in the Growth of US Incarceration since 1980

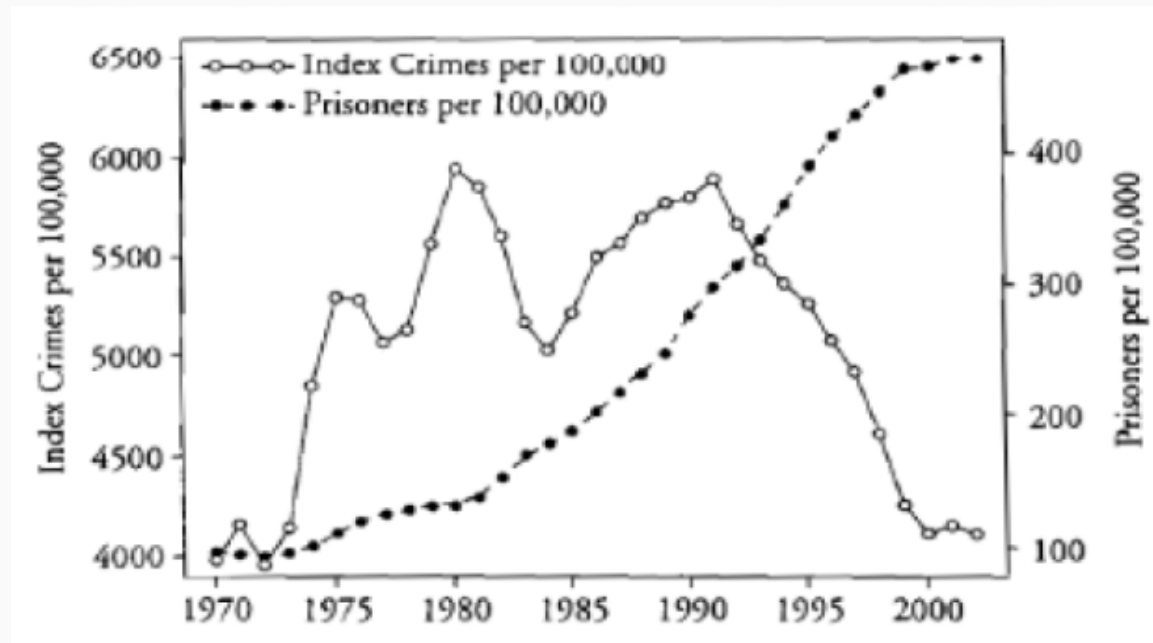


**Question:** “But wasn’t rise in (black) punishment  
a reasonable response to increases in (black) crime?”

**answer:** “No , not really..!”

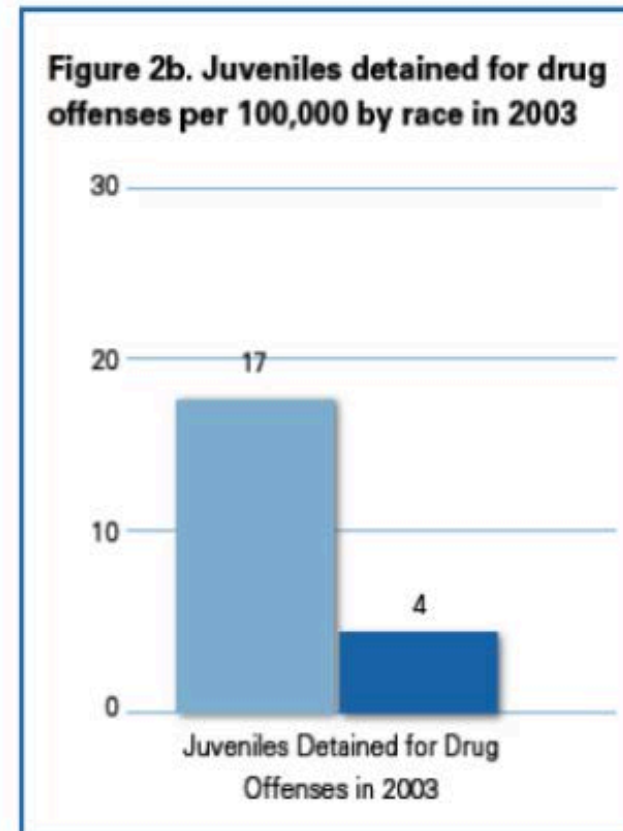
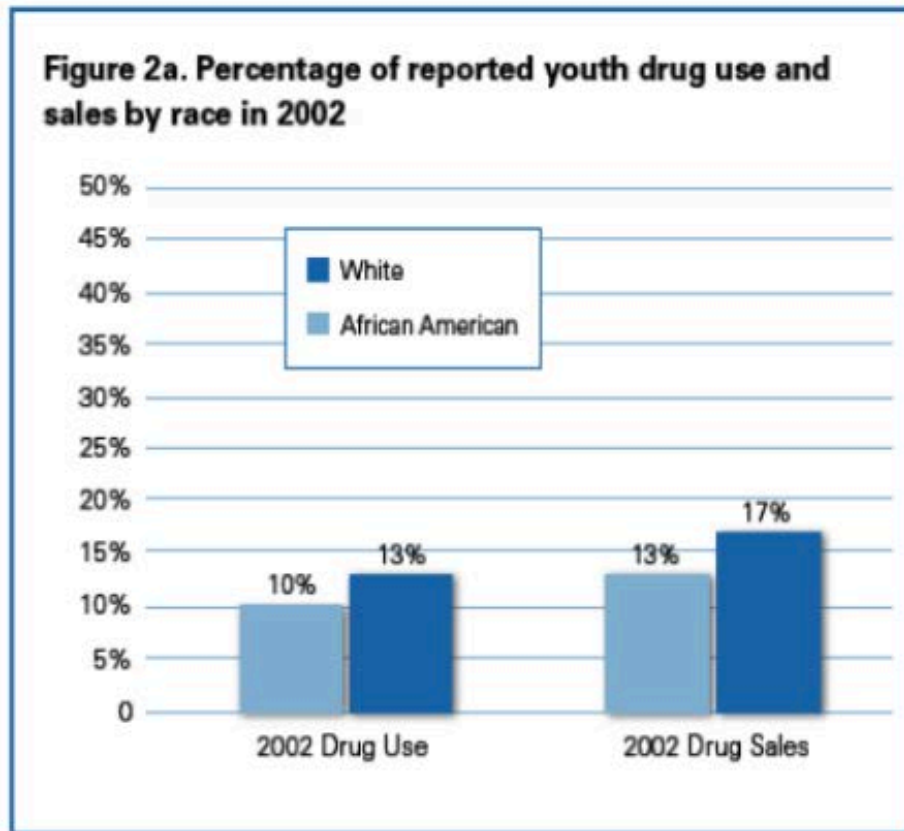
# Crime vs Incarceration in the United States

## From 1970 onward



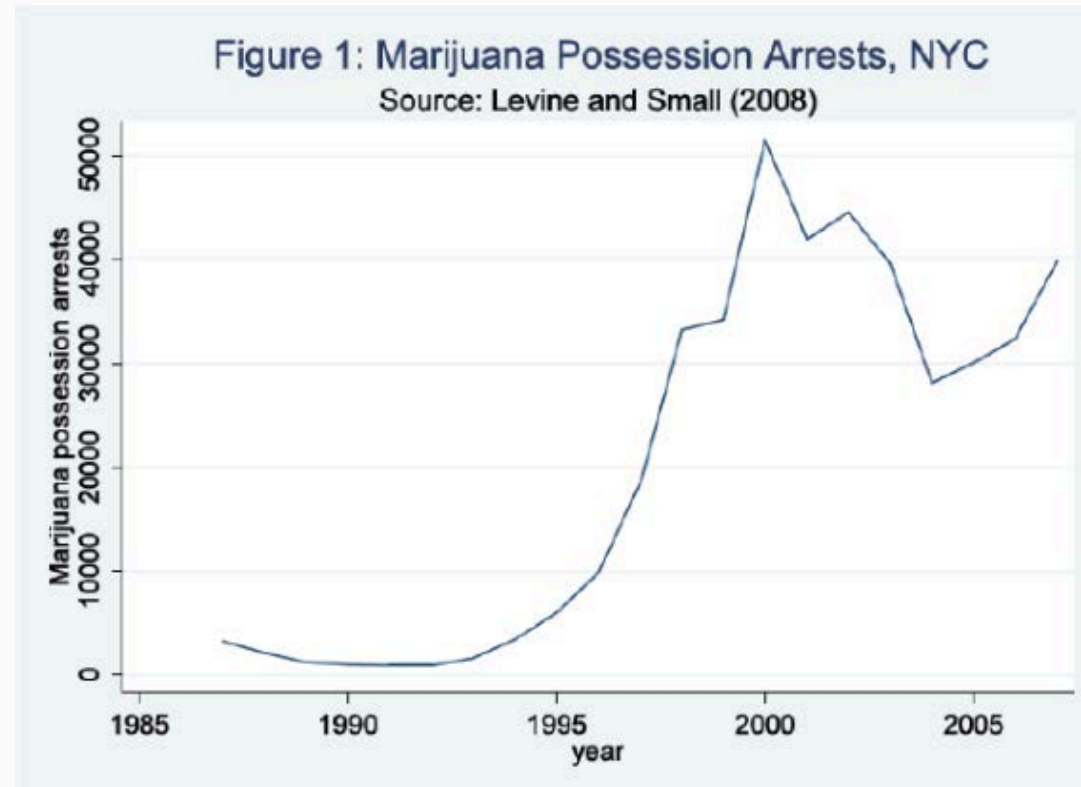
But, incarceration rose steadily from 1970 onward, while crime rates went up and down. Moreover, crime has been falling steadily for twenty years

# There Has Been a Massive Racial Disparity in the Incidence of Anti-Drugs Law Enforcement (relative to usage rates)



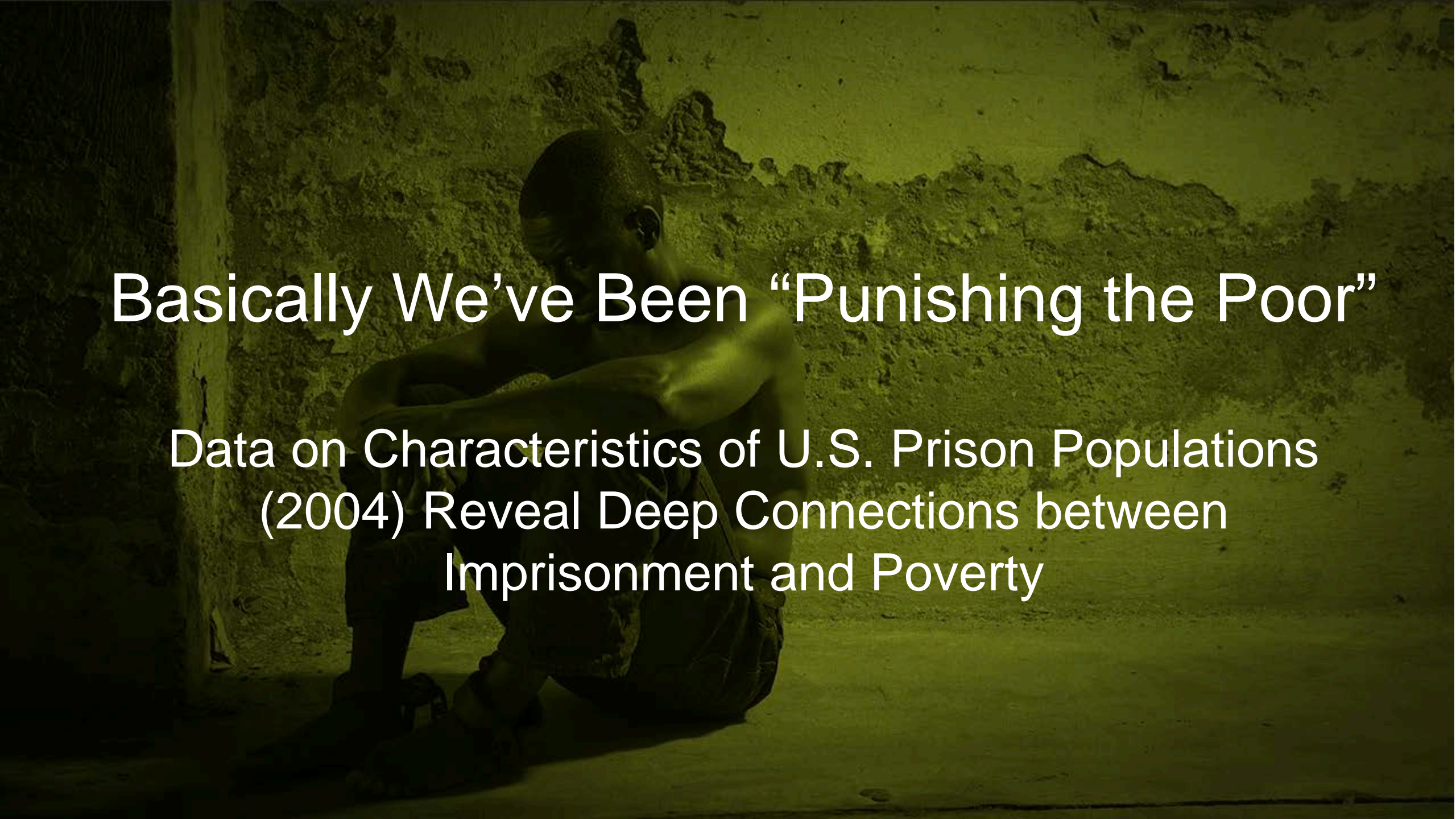
Sources: SAHMSA, 2005 Note: This is data for 12- to 17-year olds; Sickmund, Melissa, Stadky, T. I. and Kang Wei. (2005), "Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement Databook."

# Marijuana possession arrests 1985 - 2008



Yet, Marijuana has been the target of much anti-drug policing. Why?





# Basically We've Been "Punishing the Poor"

Data on Characteristics of U.S. Prison Populations  
(2004) Reveal Deep Connections between  
Imprisonment and Poverty



## Characteristics of State and Federal Prisoners in 2004

	State Prisoners	Federal Prisoners
Proportion of prison population	0.904	0.096
Proportion Male	0.932	0.929
Education attainment prior to admissions		
Elementary school	0.029	0.040
Middle school	0.165	0.143
Some high school, no degree	0.472	0.374
High school graduate	0.195	0.214
More than high school	0.139	0.227
Proportion Hispanic	0.182	0.251
Race		
White	0.487	0.433
Black	0.430	0.460
Other	0.083	0.107

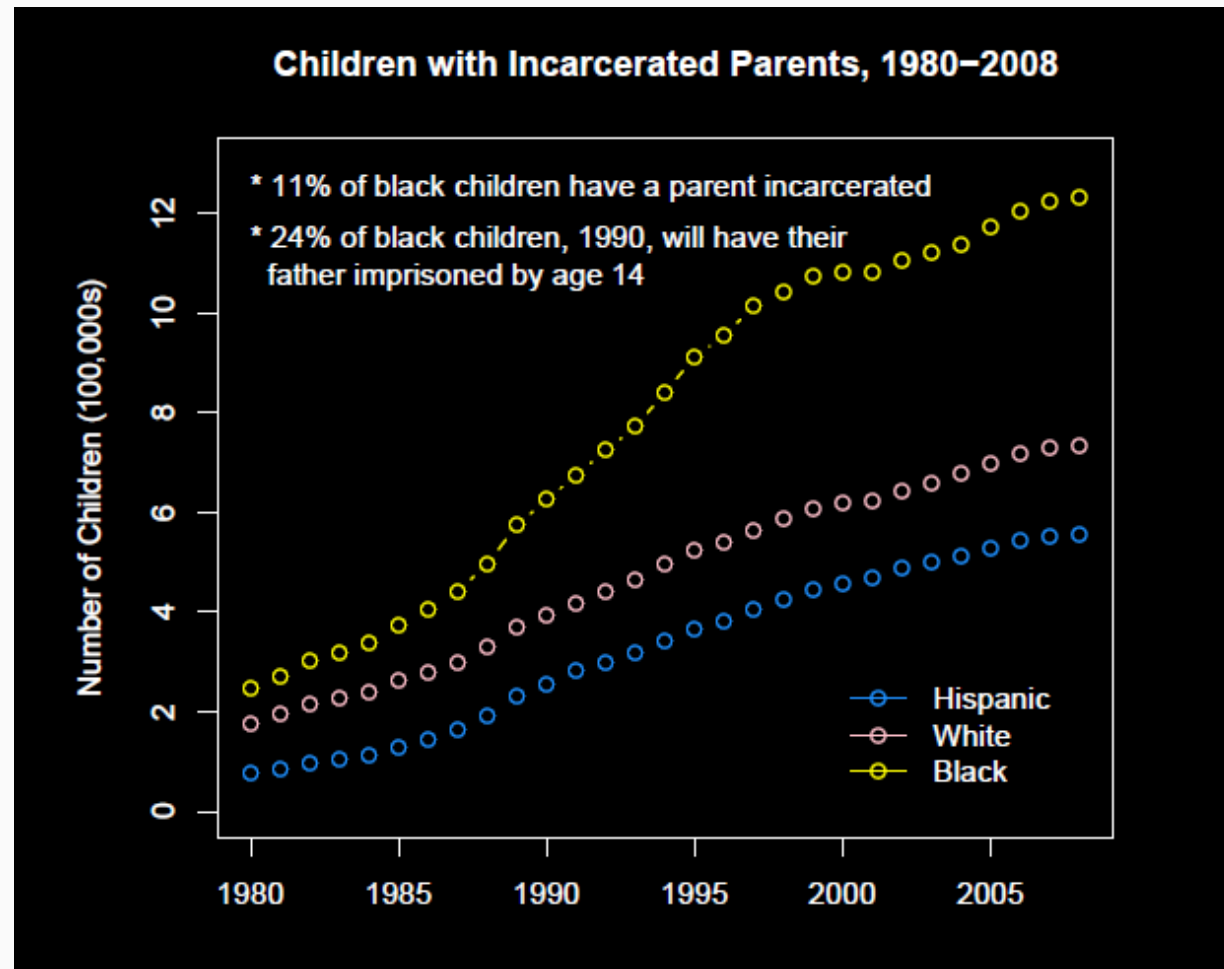
# Characteristics of State and Federal Prisoners in 2004

Age Distribution		
25 <sup>th</sup> percentile	27	29
50 <sup>th</sup> percentile	34	35
75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	42	44
Age at first arrest		
25 <sup>th</sup> percentile	15	16
50 <sup>th</sup> percentile	17	18
75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	21	23
Age first engaged in criminal activity		
25 <sup>th</sup> percentile	12	12
50 <sup>th</sup> percentile	14	14
75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	16	16
Health Conditions		
Diabetes	0.047	0.061
Heart problems	0.093	0.086
Kidney problems	0.061	0.057
Asthma	0.144	0.115
Hepatitis	0.095	0.076

## Characteristics of State and Federal Prisoners in 2004

	State Prisoners	Federal Prisoners
Indicators of mental health/substance abuse		
Participated in alcohol/drug treatment program	0.605	0.649
Manic depression, bipolar	0.097	0.041
Schizophrenia	0.046	0.019
Post-traumatic-stress	0.057	0.031
Anxiety disorder	0.071	0.046
Personality disorder	0.059	0.032
Other mental health problem	0.019	0.008
Any diagnosed mental health problem	0.248	0.144
Ever attempted suicide	0.129	0.059
Program participation while incarcerated		
Vocational education/ job Training	0.273	0.314
Education program	0.312	0.454
Religious studies	0.302	0.312

The prison intersects with families and communities. (Note incarceration's huge impact of black children. Source: Pettit and Western)



## Imprisonment and life course (Source: Pettit and Western)

White and black men, born 1975–1979 experiencing a life event by 2009 (percent).

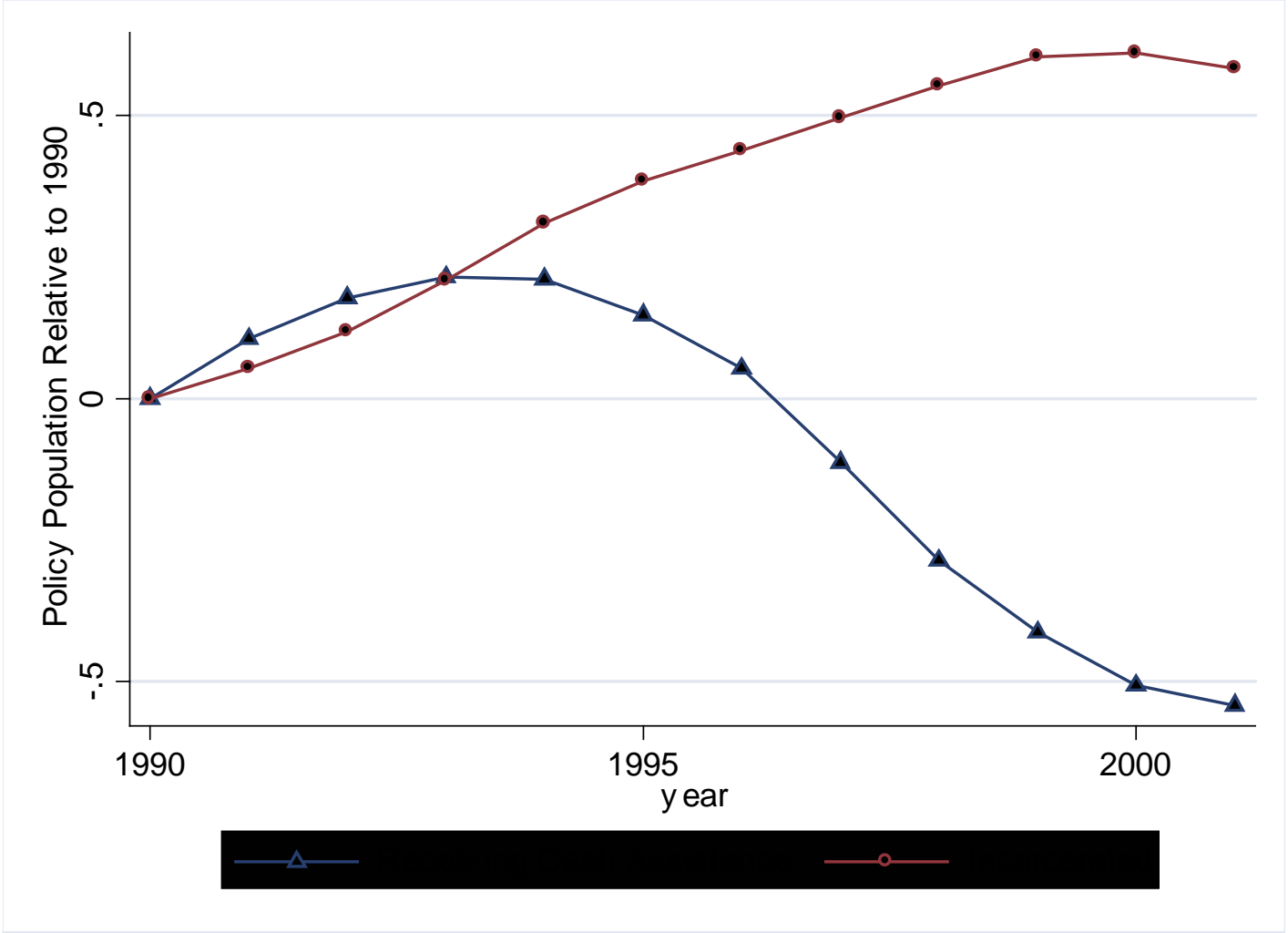
	Whites	Blacks
Marriage	68%	47%
Bachelor's Degree	34	17
Military Service	10	9
<b>Imprisonment</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>27</b>

What does this say about the quality of American Democracy?

- Prison/Jail Primary Venue for Government Engagement with African American Men. More important than schools, unions, military, or social service agencies.
- There are six times as many whites as blacks in the US, but there are twice as many black as white children with an incarcerated parent.



# The American Path Chosen: Change in Numbers Incarcerated and Receiving Cash Aid:1990-2000





## Direct Causes: Changes in Sentencing and Law Enforcement

- In the 1980s states and the federal government adopted mandatory guidelines and expanded mandatory prison sentences
- Drug arrest rates increased significantly and drug crimes were sentenced more harshly
- In the 1990s longer sentences were set particularly for violent crimes and repeat offenders (e.g., three-strikes, truth-in- sentencing)





## Tough Sentencing Increased Incarceration and Contributed to Racial Disparity

- Growth of state prison populations, 1980 – 2010, is explained in roughly equal proportion by (a) the increased rate of incarceration given an arrest and (b) longer sentences
- Although incarceration rates increased across the population, racial disparities yielded high rates among Hispanics and extremely high rates among blacks



## Underlying Causes: Crime, Politics, and Social Change

- Crime rates increased significantly from the early 1960s to the early 1980s (e.g., murder rate doubled from 1960 to 1980)
- Decline in urban manufacturing, problems of drugs and violence concentrated in poor and racially segregated inner city neighborhoods
- Rising crime combined with civil rights activism, urban disorder, heightened public concern and tough-on-crime rhetoric from political leaders

# Frontlash: Race and the Development of Punitive Crime Policy

**Vesla M. Weaver**, *University of Virginia*

*... fear in turn seeks repressiveness as a source of safety.* [1970]

—Ramsey Clark, former Attorney General (1967–1969)

*I sense there is a tendency to make crime in the streets synonymous with racial threats or the need to control the urban Negro problem.* [1968]

—Dr. Kenneth B. Clark, sociologist whose doll studies were instrumental in showing that separate was not equal in *Brown v. Board of Education*

Civil rights cemented its place on the national agenda with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, fair housing legislation, federal enforcement of school integration, and the outlawing of discriminatory voting mechanisms in the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Less recognized but no less important, the Second Reconstruction also witnessed one of the most punitive interventions in United States history. The death penalty was reinstated, felon disenfranchisement statutes from the First Reconstruction were revived, and the chain gang returned. State and federal governments revised their criminal codes, effectively abolishing parole, imposing mandatory minimum sentences, and allowing juveniles to be incarcerated in adult prisons. Meanwhile, the Law Enforcement Assistance Act of 1965 gave the federal government an altogether new role in crime control; several subsequent policies, beginning with the Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 and culminating with the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, 'war on drugs,' and extension of capital crimes, significantly altered the approach. These and other developments had an exceptional and long-lasting effect, with imprisonment increasing six-fold between 1973 and the turn of the century.<sup>1</sup>

Changed  
Norms

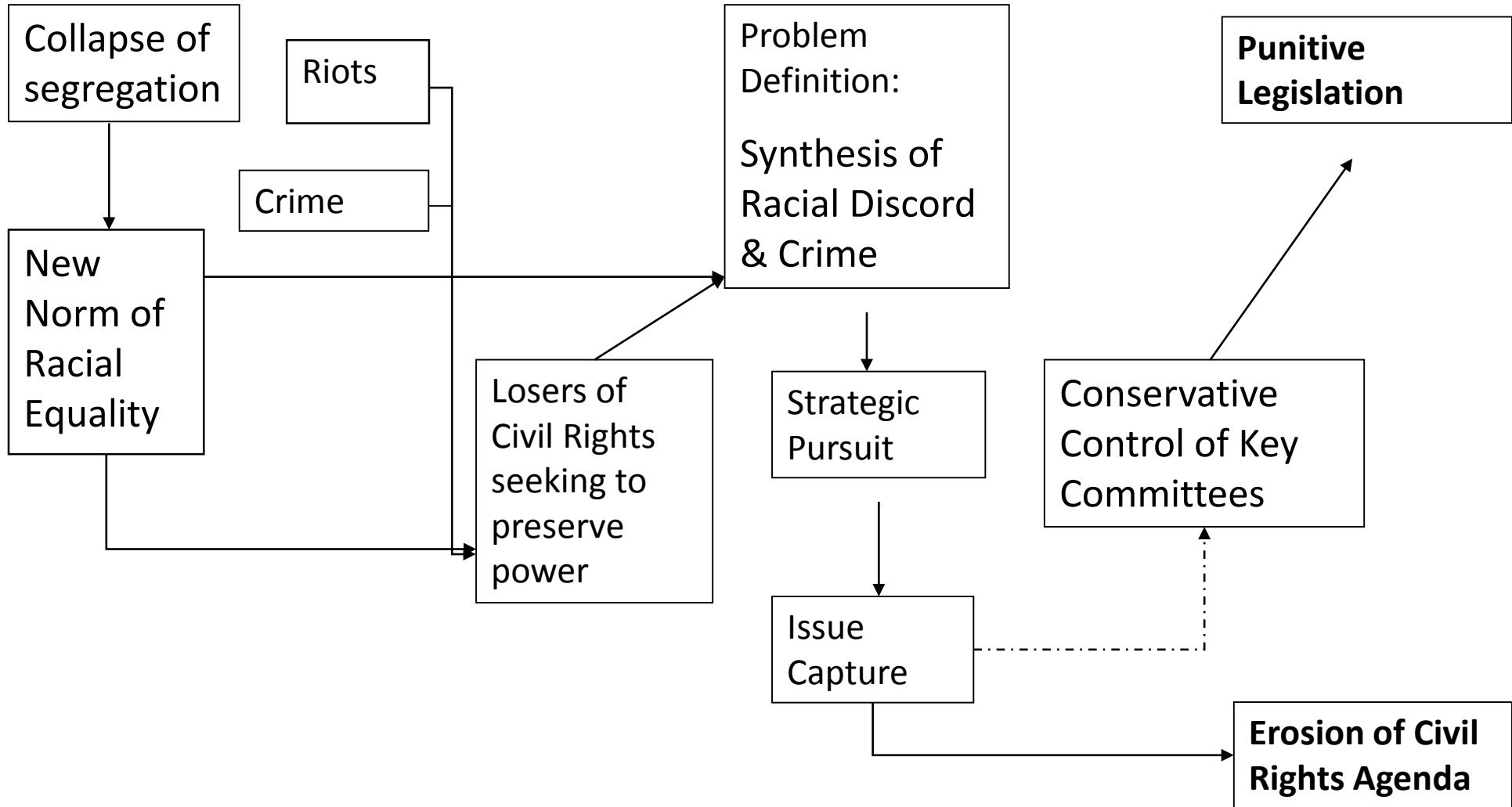
Focusing  
Events

Elite  
Goals

Issue  
Formation

Institutions

Policy  
Outcomes



## NAS/NRC Committee's findings on impact of incarceration on crime

- Increased incarceration may have reduced crime but most studies indicate a small effect.
- Either through incapacitation or deterrence, the incremental effect of increasing lengthy sentences is modest at best.

## NAS/NRC Committee's findings on Social and economic effects

- Prisons became more overcrowded and offered fewer programs, but lethal violence in prison declined.
- Men and women released from prison experience low wages and high unemployment
- Incarceration is associated with the instability of families and adverse developmental outcomes for the children involved
- Incarceration is concentrated in poor, high-crime neighborhoods

## NAS/NRC Committee's Main conclusion

“The U.S. has gone past the point where the numbers of people in prison can be justified by any potential benefits.”

According to the best available evidence:

- The social and human consequences may have been far-reaching
- The crime reduction effect is highly uncertain



## Policy recommendation of NRC Committee

“The United States should take steps to reduce incarceration rates”

This requires:

- Sentencing Policy: Reexamining policies for mandatory sentences, long sentences
- Prison Policy: Improving the conditions of incarceration, reducing the harm to the families and communities
- Social Policy: Assessing community needs for housing, treatment, and employment that may increase with declining incarceration

But what about this counter-argument?

- 1) “Racial differences in punishment are not really ‘inequality’ since people can always choose not to “do the crime,” in which case they needn’t “do the time.”
- 2) Besides, huge differences by race in rates of criminal offending reflect aspects of “black culture” – like unwed motherhood, paternal abandonment and a proclivity to violence. Such cultural deficiencies are a problem over which public policies can exert little beneficial effect...

## Answering the counter-argument (1)

But “culture” among poor is not a fixed thing independent of social structure and policies.

The question is, are we observing “endemic” or “systemic” effects here?  
Poverty and social exclusion exert powerful effects on “choices”  
(criminal and other) of the poor.

“Biased Social Cognition” (Loury 2002) is the tendency to attribute what are *systemic* racial inequalities to racially *endemic* causes.

## Answering the counter-argument (2)

In my own work over four decades I have developed an alternative social-scientific framework for understanding the transition problem in the U.S. (See posted interview)

Persistent Racial Inequality Stems not from “Black Culture” but rather from Combined Effects of Racial Stigma and of Social and Geographic Segregation by Race and Class?

# Social capital: its origins and Applications in Modern society

*Alejandro Portes*

Department of Sociology, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey 08540

KEY WORDS: social control, family support, networks, sociability

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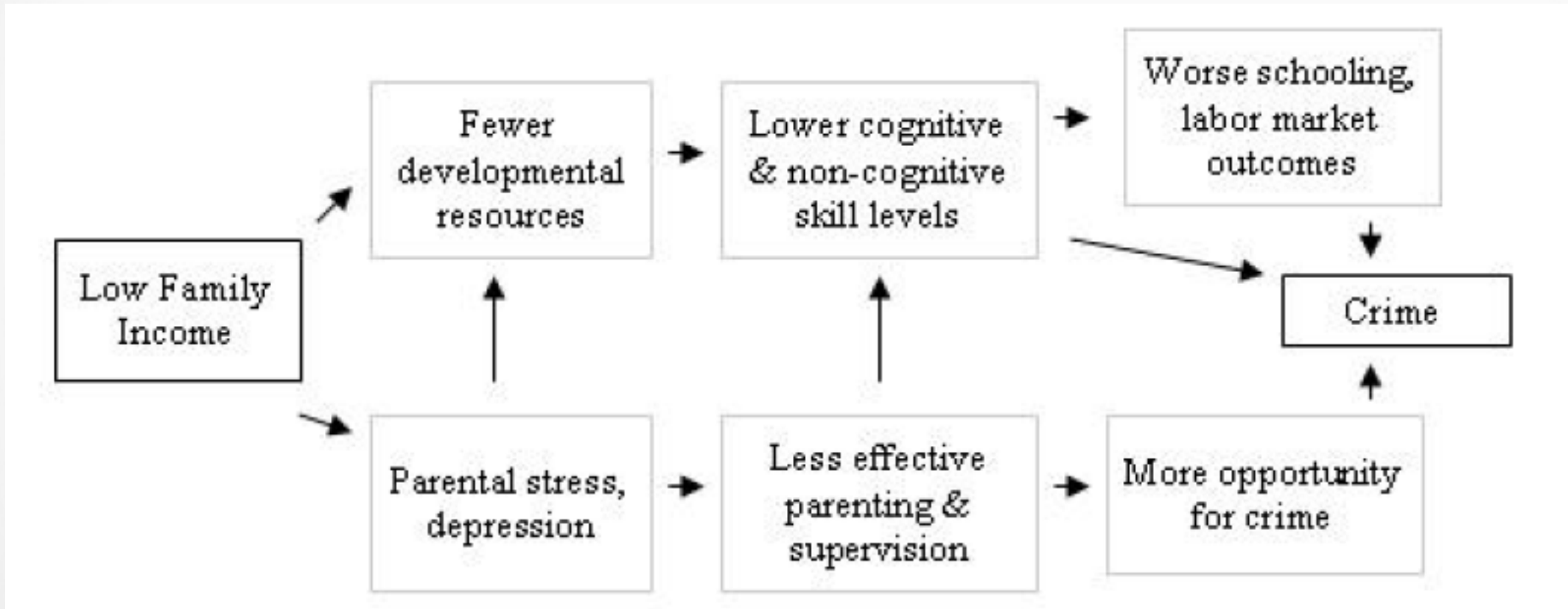
## ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the origins and definitions of social capital in the writings of Bourdieu, Loury, and Coleman, among other authors. It distinguishes four sources of social capital and examines their dynamics. Applications of the concept in the sociological literature emphasize its role in social control, in family support, and in benefits mediated by extrafamilial networks. I provide examples of each of these positive functions. Negative consequences of the same processes also deserve attention for a balanced picture of the forces at play. I review four such consequences and illustrate them with relevant examples. Recent writings on social capital have extended the concept from an individual asset to a feature of communities and even nations. The final sections describe this conceptual stretch and examine its limitations. I argue that, as shorthand for the positive consequences of sociability, social capital has a definite place in sociological theory. However, excessive extensions of the concept may jeopardize its heuristic value.

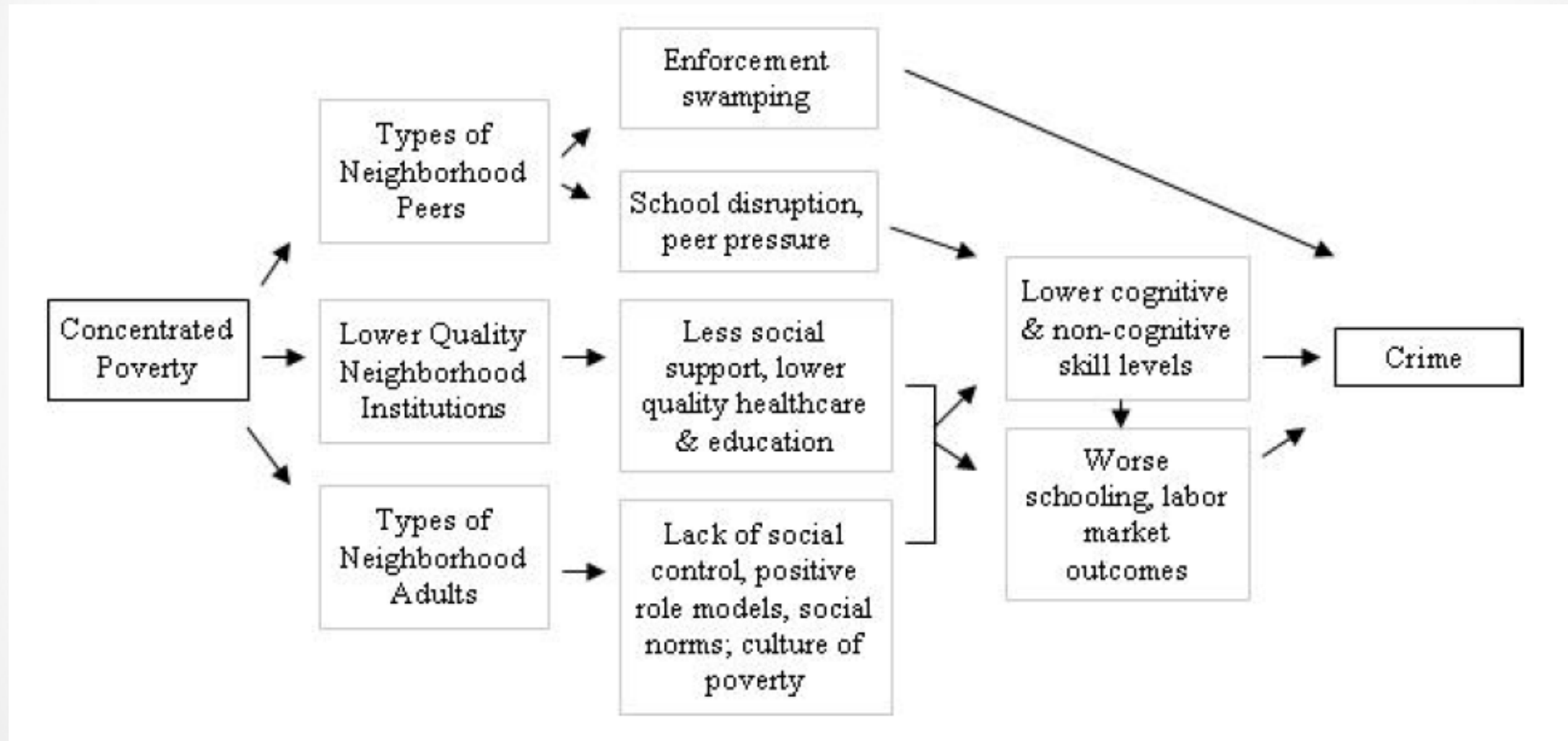
Race and class-based spatial segregation is a persistent feature of the structure of American cities.

This fact has significant consequences for social outcomes affecting the members of different racial groups.

# Poverty's potential effect on crime through developmental pathway



# Concentrated Poverty's potential effect on crime



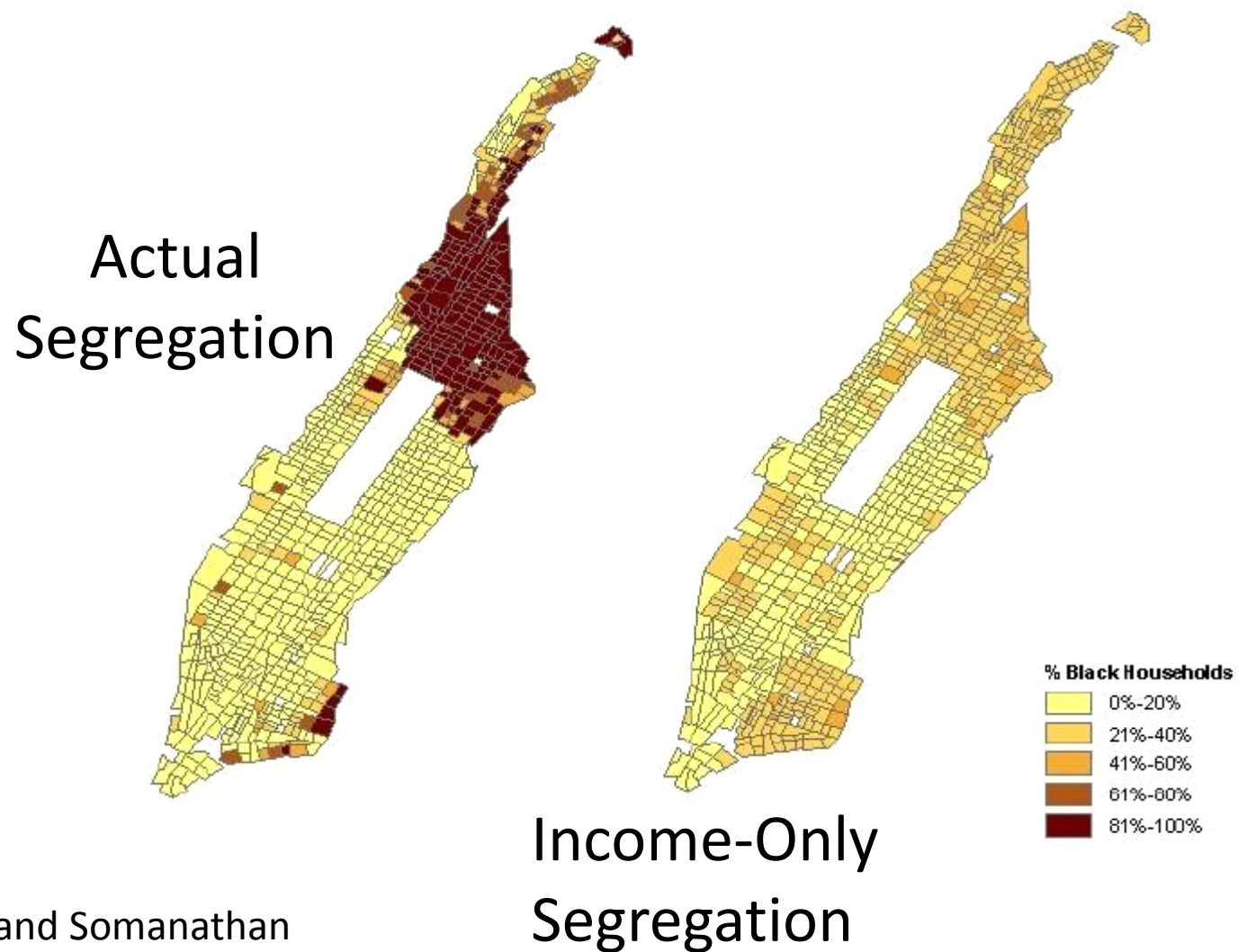


Persistent Racial Inequality in US  
Due to Social and Geographic  
Segregation by Race?

Consider Some Evidence

# Manhattan: Actual and Hypothetical (2000)

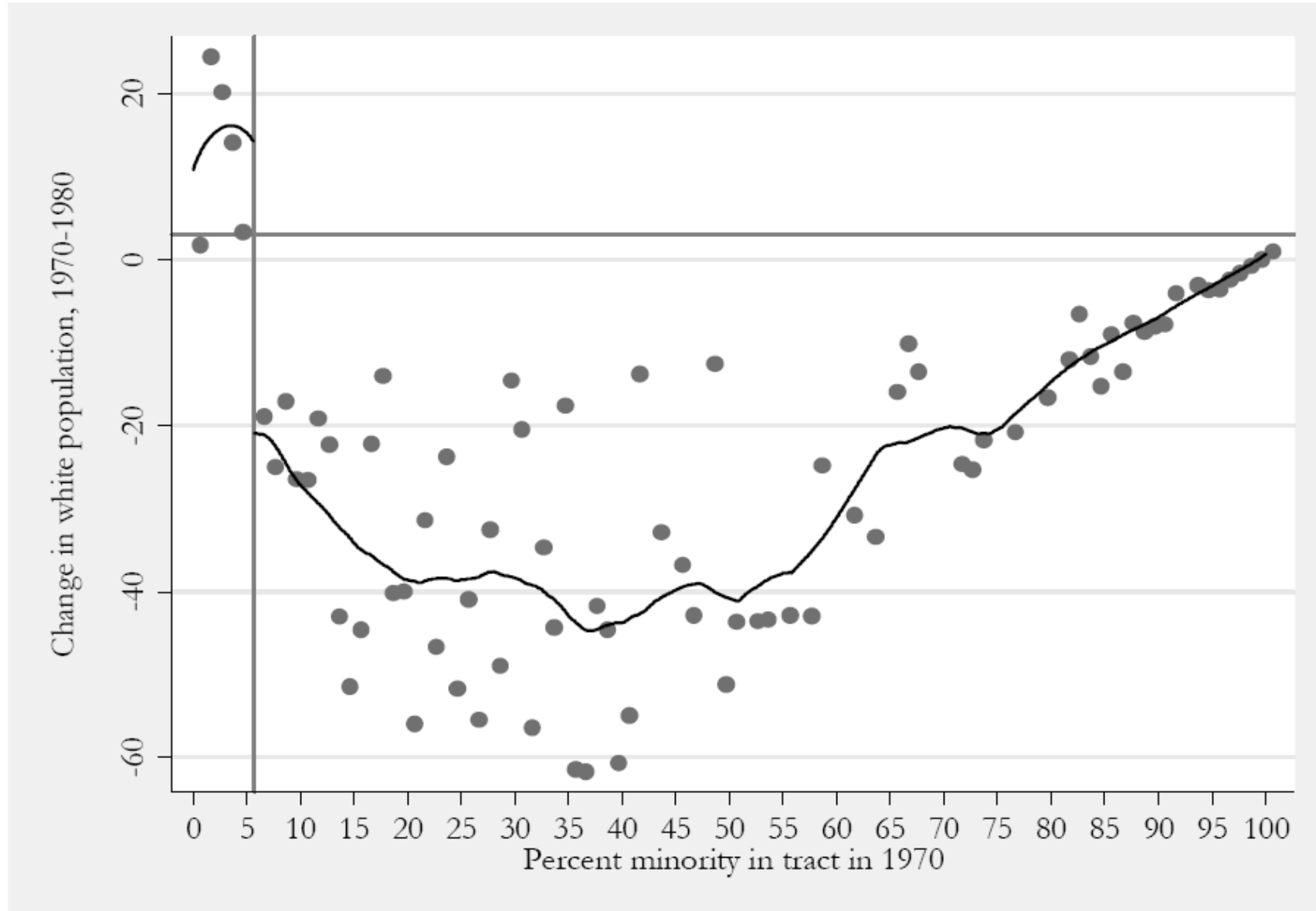
Residential Segregation in Manhattan: Income vs. Race



Source: Sethi and Somanathan  
JPE, 2004 (working paper version)

“Neighborhood Racial Tipping” in Chicago (from Card, Mas and Rothstein, QJE, 2008)  
(Whites flee neighborhoods where blacks more than 10% of population)

**Figure 1. Neighborhood change in Chicago, 1970-1980**



(First and Second-Generation Non-Whites Avoid Living Near Blacks)

**Neighborhood Racial-Composition  
Preferences: Evidence from a  
Multiethnic Metropolis** (Los Angeles in the 1990s)

**CAMILLE ZUBRINSKY CHARLES,** *University of Pennsylvania*

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# Neighborhood Racial Composition Preferences

386 CHARLES

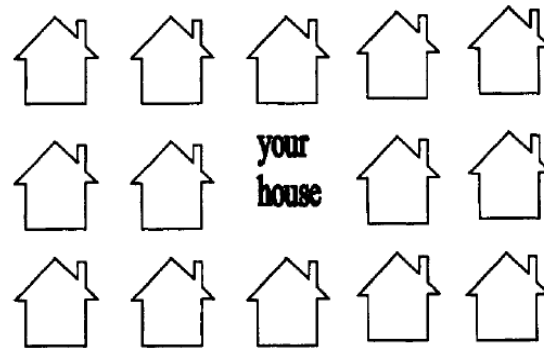


Figure 1 • *Multi-Ethnic Neighborhood Experiment Showcard*. Source: 1993–94 *Los Angeles Survey of Urban Inequality*.

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Now I'd like you to imagine an ideal neighborhood that had the ethnic and racial mix you, personally, would feel most comfortable in. Here is a blank neighborhood card like those we have been using. Using the letters A for Asian, B for Black, H for Hispanic, and W for White, please put a letter in each of these houses to represent your ideal neighborhood, where you would most like to live. Please be sure to fill in all of the houses.

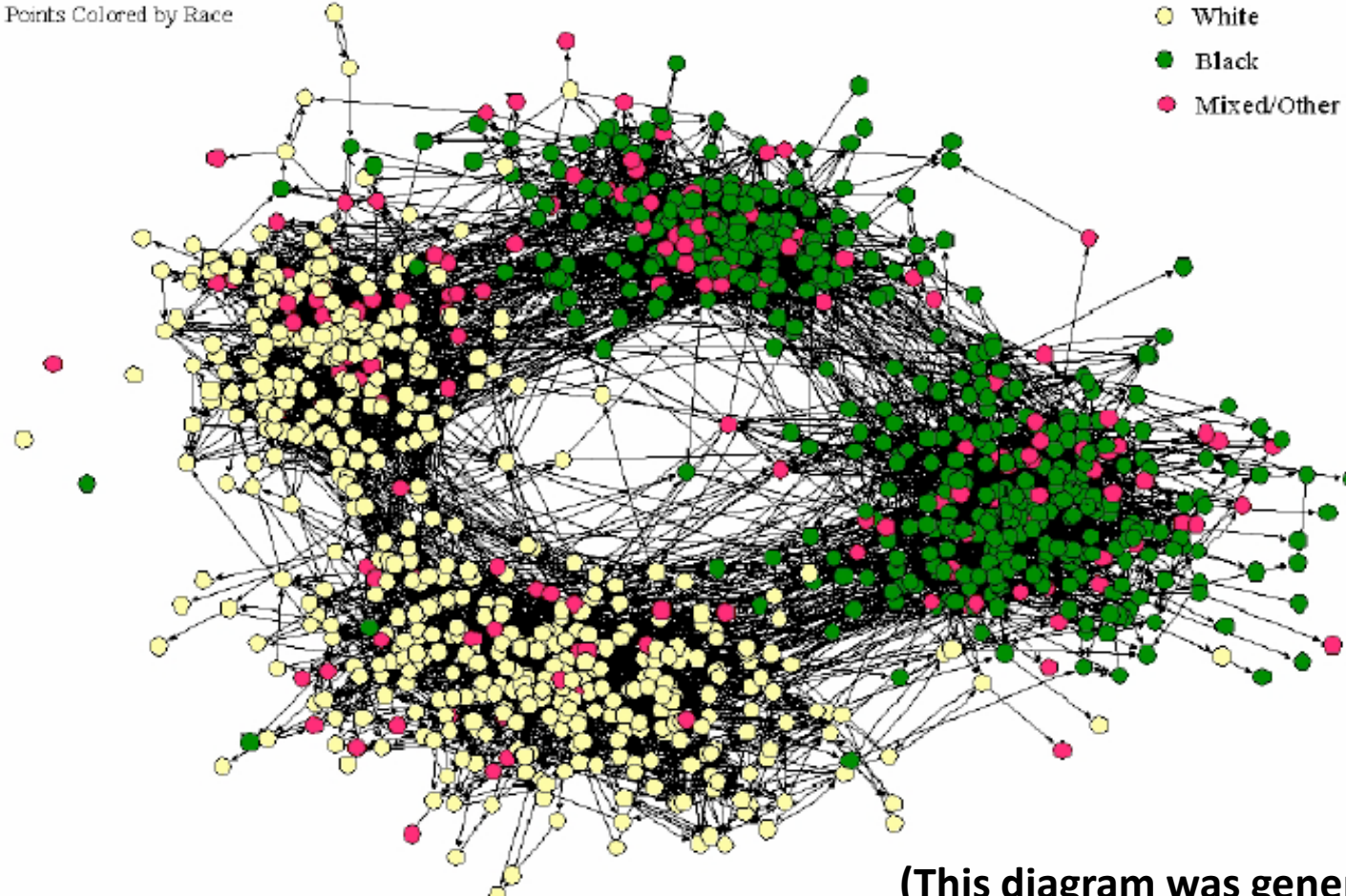
The variables—percent White, percent Black, percent Latino, and percent Asian—used in the

<i>Target Group</i>	<i>Respondent Race</i>				<i>f/χ<sup>2</sup></i>
	<i>Whites</i>	<i>Blacks</i>	<i>Latinos</i>	<i>Asians</i>	
<b>Whites</b>					
Mean %	49.21%	23.67%	28.42%	32.98%	87.82***
No Whites	0.24%	10.10%	12.39%	7.24%	208.20***
All Whites	11.16	0	1.44	.52	192.03***
<b>Blacks</b>					
Mean %	16.15%	37.41%	13.76%	11.05%	182.83***
No Blacks	18.91%	0.72%	31.66%	39.94%	258.33***
All Blacks	0	2.76	0	0	93.36***
<b>Latinos</b>					
Mean %	17.07%	21.32%	41.23%	15.57%	146.63***
No Latinos	17.05%	8.55%	2.76%	26.42%	220.52***
All Latinos	0	0	6.60	0	166.20***
<b>Asians</b>					
Mean %	18.04%	17.77%	17.06%	40.98%	86.00***
No Asians	15.88%	15.57%	22.43%	0.54%	78.09***
All Asians	0	0	0.10	7.06	233.32***
<b>All Out Groups</b>					
Mean %	51.26%	62.72%	59.22%	59.60%	18.35***
No Out-Group	11.16%	2.76%	6.60%	7.06%	45.12***
All Out-Group	0.24	.72	2.76	.54	43.51***
N	818	1,082	982	1,027	

# Friendship Segregation (Moody, 2001)

## The Social Structure of “Countryside” School District

Points Colored by Race



**(Note the extent of racial in-group “bias” in patterns of social affiliations for this district!)**

**(This diagram was generated via the so-called “Spring Algorithm”)**

Source: “Race, School Integration, and **Friendship Segregation** in America.” *American Journal of Sociology* 107(3) 679:716; **Moody**, James.

(Evidence that neighborhoods where blacks live are perceived to be more disorderly than is warranted by objective characteristics.)

*Social Psychology Quarterly*  
2004, Vol. 67, No. 4, 319–342

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## **Seeing Disorder: Neighborhood Stigma and the Social Construction of “Broken Windows”\***

ROBERT J. SAMPSON  
*Harvard University*

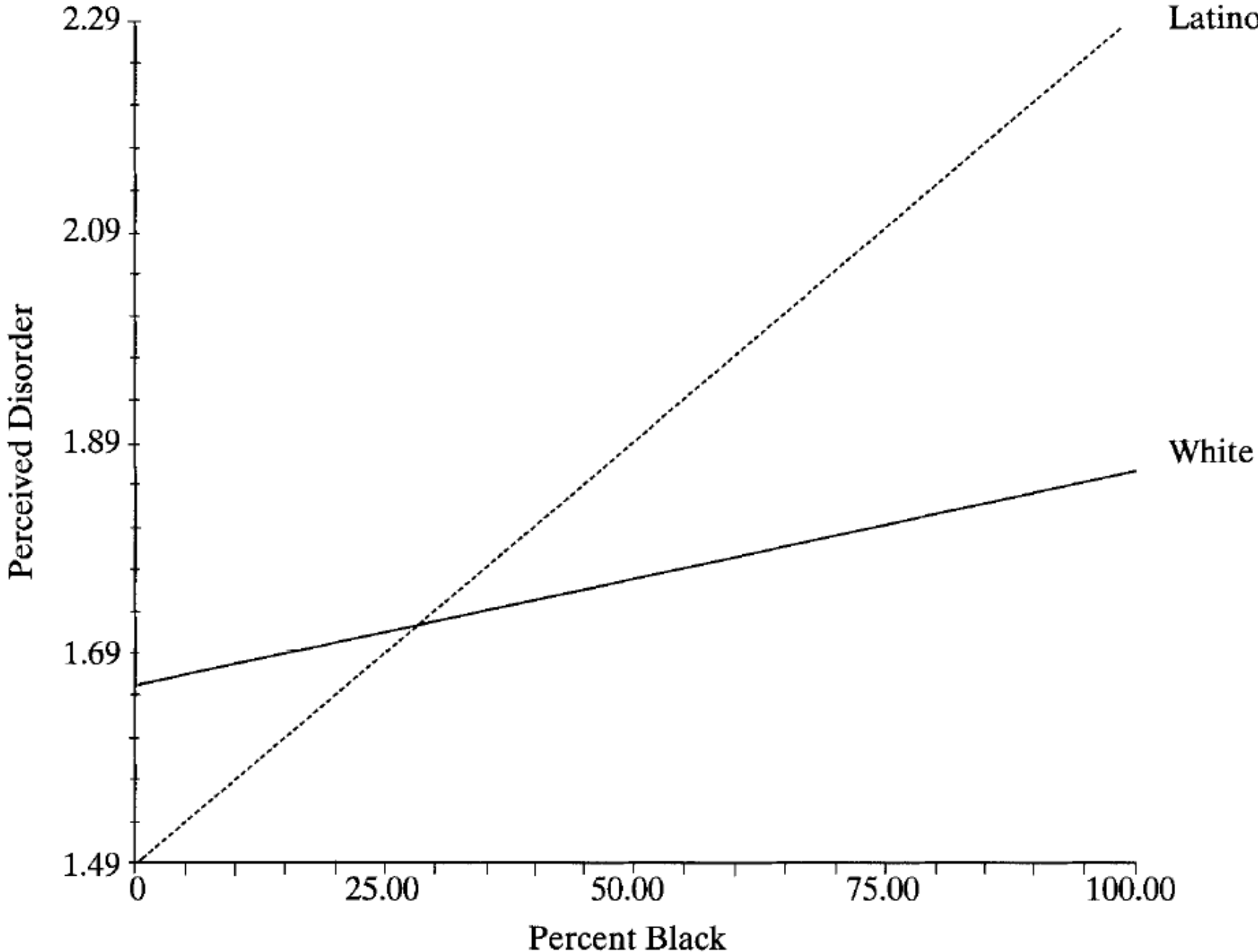
STEPHEN W. RAUDENBUSH  
*University of Michigan*

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*This article reveals the grounds on which individuals form perceptions of disorder. Integrating ideas about implicit bias and statistical discrimination with a theoretical framework on neighborhood racial stigma, our empirical test brings together personal interviews, census data, police records, and systematic social observations situated within some 500 block groups in Chicago. Observed disorder predicts perceived disorder, but racial and economic context matter more. As the concentration of minority groups and poverty increases, residents of all races perceive heightened disorder even after we account for an extensive array of personal characteristics and independently observed neighborhood conditions. Seeing disorder appears to be imbued with social meanings that go well beyond what essentialist theories imply, generating self-reinforcing processes that may help account for the perpetuation of urban racial inequality.*



NEIGHBORHOOD STIGMA



# Economic Theories of Persistent Racial Inequality

## Three Conceptual Models That May Help To Explain Persistent Racial Inequality

(Examples motivated by Yale sociologist Elijah Anderson's ethnographic study of Philadelphia, as reported in his 1999 book, *Code of the Streets*)

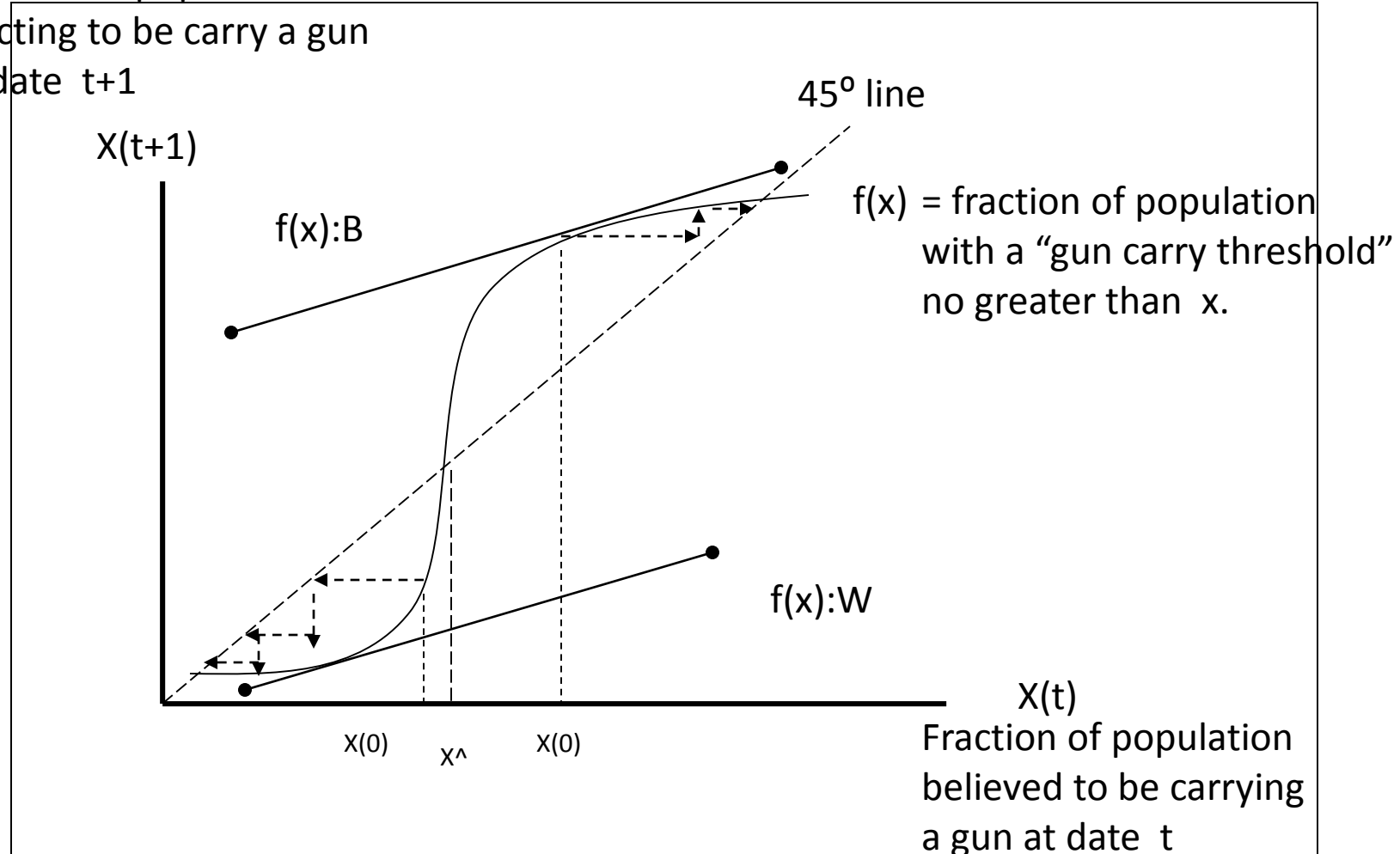
# Three Conceptual Models

- 1) “Tipping” and Multiple Equilibrium
- 2) A Reputation Game and “Rational Aggression”
- 3) Segregation, Behavioral Spillovers and Persistent Social Inequality

# 1) Schelling's "Tipping" Phenomenon

Multiple Equilibria: One Reason Why It Is Difficult to Distinguish "Culture" from "Structure" When There Is Significant Social Segregation by Race

Fraction of population  
electing to be carry a gun  
at date t+1



Multiple Equilibrium, "Tipping" Effects and Dynamic Social  
Decisions within Some Community about Weapons Possession

## (2) “Campaigning for Respect”

A Little Bit of Game Theory to Help Explain Why  
It May Be Rational to Acquire a Reputation for  
Violence

The Reputation Game models an ethically significant the interaction between Bob and John. (See diagram below.) In this dynamic game of incomplete information, John can be either of two types – soft or tough (one thinks of Elijah Anderson’s “decent” vs. “street” distinction.) Bob chooses whether to Attack or Not; John responds, choosing whether or not to Fight. (The game is ‘ethically significant’ because it shows that the link between character and behavior depends on the social context.) The payoffs (specified in parentheses in the diagram) are such that both the soft and the tough versions of John would much prefer not to be attacked, though if attacked a soft John would want not to fight and a tough John would want to fight. (This is reflected in the fact that both soft and tough versions of John receive payoff = +1 from not fighting, while fighting gives soft John a payoff = -1 but tough John’s payoff from fighting =+2.) Also, the payoffs indicate that Bob wants not to attack if will be fought (payoff = -1 versus 0), and wants to attack if he will not be fought (payoff = +1 versus 0).

## THE REPUTATION GAME



Payoffs =(Bob, John)



If this interaction between Bob and John were to occur only once, then rational agents would play as follows: if attacked, a tough John fights and a soft John does not. So, Bob computes the average of his payoffs over the outcomes that could obtain, and attacks only if he thinks the probability that John is tough is less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ . The soft and tough types of John react naturally. The game is trivial.

But, should these players interact twice in succession, the outcome of the game is more interesting. Now, John's action at the first stage can serve as a signal to Bob about his type, thereby affecting how the second stage is played. John knows this. Bob knows that John knows, John knows that Bob knows that he knows..., etc.

Given this structure, we make the following two claims:

**Claim 1:** In the twice-played game it is inconsistent with rationality for the soft John never to fight when first attacked.

**Proof:** If soft John were never to fight when first attacked, then because tough John always fights, John's first stage action would be a perfect signal of his type: "fight at the first stage" would mean he's tough, "not fight" would mean he's soft. But then,

Bob's rational response to this situation is to attack at the second stage only if he is fought at the first stage. Yet, this response on Bob's part means that soft John could avoid being attacked at the second stage by fighting at the first stage which, if he is rational, he would want to do since  $(-1+4)$ —his payoff from fighting and thereby avoiding subsequent attack, exceeds  $(1+1)$ —his payoff from not fighting at either stage. This contradicts the supposition that he never fights when first attacked.

**Claim 2:** In the twice-played game it is inconsistent with rationality for Bob to always attack at the second stage after being fought at the first stage.

**Proof:** If Bob always attacks after being fought, soft John can gain nothing by fighting at the first stage and so, being rational, soft John would never fight when first attacked. But, Claim 1 asserts that this can't occur when the players are rational.

Taken together, Claims 1 and 2 imply that the only outcome of the twice-played game consistent with player rationality has soft John mixing his behavior at the first stage between fighting and not fighting, while Bob mixes at the second stage between attacking and not, given that he has been initially fought. (If Bob is not fought at the first stage then he knows John is soft and so definitely attacks at the second stage.) Indeed, if  $P < 1/2$  is Bob's assessment of likelihood that John is tough, then the unique equilibrium of the twice-played game entails soft John fighting when first attacked with probability  $P/(1-P)$ , and Bob attacking at the second stage if fought at the first with probability  $1/3$ . John's personal "values" may reflect a disdain for fighting (soft John), and yet his rational adaptation to his circumstances lead him to behave in a way that is inconsistent with those "values."

### (3) How Segregation Can Cause Racial Inequality to Persist

A Simple Model with Social Interactions and Behavioral Spillovers to Illustrate How Segregation Can Lead to Persistent Racial Inequality When There Are No Real Differences of “Culture”

(based on Bowles, Loury, Sethi, JEEA, 2013)

# A Dynamic Model of Persistent Group Inequality

- Society extends over an indefinite number of periods, consisting of people belonging to social groups A or B. Think of B's as being disadvantaged. People live for two periods; generations overlap.
- Young people adopt either “decent” or “street” orientations. The orientation adopted depends on the earnings of the old people by whom a young person is socially influenced (perhaps because old people earn higher wages if they had been “decent” when young.)
- Each young person has ties to a large number of older people, and the fraction of “out-group” ties depends on degree of segregation.
- A demographic parameter  $\beta \in (0,1)$  denotes the relative number of group B agents in each generation. (So if  $\beta < 1/2$  then disadvantaged are a minority of the overall population, etc.)

- A segregation parameter  $\eta \in (0,1)$  denotes the probability that a young person's social tie is to some old person drawn at random from within his same social group. And  $1 - \eta$  is the chance a tie is drawn at random from overall old population. ( $\eta=1$  implies total segregation.)
- The quality of a young person's social influences is represented by the symbol  $\sigma \in (0,1)$ , which denotes the share of “decent” older people among a young person's social influences.
- **Key Behavioral Assumption:** There exist a quality threshold  $\sigma^* \in (0,1)$  such that a young person adopts the “decent” orientation if and only if the quality of his social influences,  $\sigma$ , exceeds this threshold.
- How does the “decent vs. street” conflict evolve over time in this model, given demographic/segregation parameters  $\sigma$  and  $\eta$ ? Note that “everybody decent” and “everybody street” are both stable behavioral configurations in this society. More interesting is that “all A's decent, all B's street” is also stable behavioral configuration if  $\eta$  is big enough!

## SOCIAL STRUCTURE

\* We assume that the quality of an agent's social network depends on group identity and generation of birth.

\* Specifically, an agent born at date  $t + 1$  has a large number of social ties to generation  $t$  agents.

\* Each of these ties is, with probability  $\eta \in [0, 1]$ , drawn at random from the agent's social group (A or B).

\* With probability  $1 - \eta$  the associate is drawn at random from among the general population of agents without regard to group identity.

\* Let  $x_i^t$  be the fraction of generation  $t$  agents in group  $i$  who become high skilled, and let  $\sigma_i^{t+1}$  denote the quality of the social network of a generation  $t + 1$  agent in group  $i$ . Then:

$$\sigma_i^{t+1} = \eta x_i^t + (1 - \eta)[(1 - \beta)x_a^t + \beta x_b^t]$$

\* So, the probability that an <sup>old</sup> associate of a <sup>young</sup> group A agent belongs to group A equals

$$\eta + (1 - \eta)(1 - \beta) \equiv \alpha_1$$

\* While, the probability that an <sup>old</sup> associate of a <sup>young</sup> group B agent belongs to group A equals

$$(1 - \eta)(1 - \beta) \equiv \alpha_0$$

Thus, once adopted, a behavioral configuration in this society where all A's adopt a "decent" orientation and all B's adopt a "street" orientation would tend to persist across the generations whenever  $\alpha_1 > \sigma^* > \alpha_0$



**Theorem 1:** There exists a minimal degree of in-group bias in associational behavior,  $\underline{\eta}(\beta, \sigma^*)$ , such that whenever  $\eta > \underline{\eta}(\beta, \sigma^*)$  ("social segregation") then the initial condition of group inequality  $(x_a^0, x_b^0) = (1, 0)$  is a stable steady state equilibrium. Moreover,

$$\underline{\eta}(\beta, \sigma^*) \equiv \text{Max}\left\{1 - \frac{\sigma^*}{1 - \beta}; 1 - \frac{1 - \sigma^*}{\beta}\right\}$$

Furthermore, when  $\eta < \underline{\eta}(\beta, \sigma^*)$  ("social integration") then the system converges, from the initial state  $(x_a^0, x_b^0) = (1, 0)$ , in one period to a steady state with group equality. This steady state is "skill-enhancing" (relative to the initial condition) when the disadvantaged group is not too big ( $\beta < 1 - \sigma^*$ ) and it is "skill-reducing" when  $\beta > 1 - \sigma^*$ .

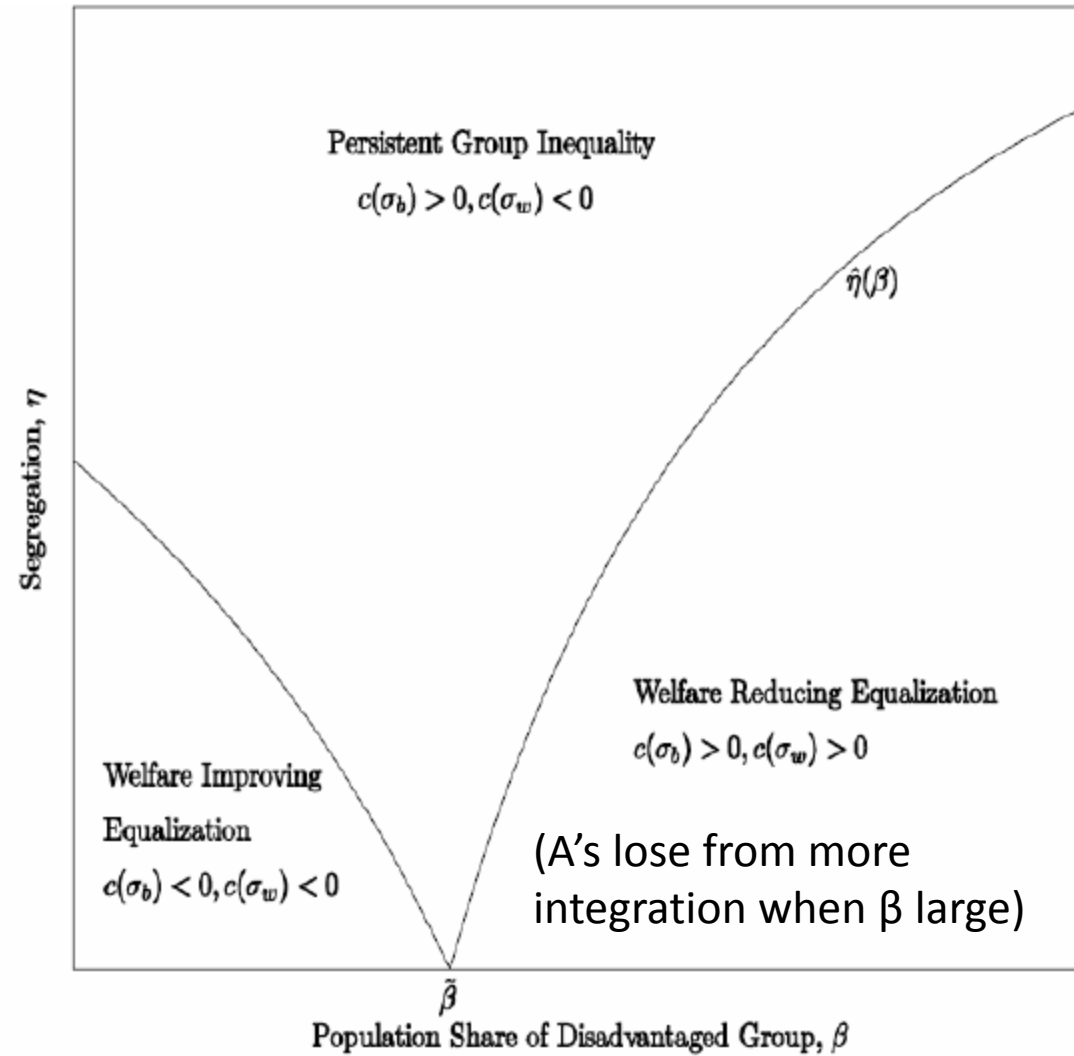


Figure 2. Effects of segregation and population shares on persistent inequality

# Conclusions from B-L-S Model of Social Interactions:

This conceptual exercise suggests that:

- Group inequality can **persist** with no fundamental group differences
- Group inequality can **emerge** from initially group egalitarian structures
- Attempts at equalization may be **futile** or **invert** existing hierarchy
- Group incentives may be **aligned** rather than **opposed**
- The size of the elite matters

SOME POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

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ON THE LIMITS OF ETHNIC POLITICS

## What Has Rise of Obama To Do with Problem?

My radical answer: *Next to Nothing (not his fault)*

- 1) Our first black President dared not speak directly and forcefully of racial inequality and racial subordination.
- 2) He (rightly) feared losing legitimacy in the eyes of the voting majority were he to do so. (racial stigma)
- 3) Ironically, he appealed openly for Hispanic or gay votes, but could not (need not) be seen to be trying to help blacks, as such.
- 4) Ironically, blacks' interests may have gotten less explicit political attention under Obama than they would under a prospective President Hilary Clinton

## What Has Rise of Obama To Do with Problem?

My radical answer: *Next to Nothing (not his fault)*

- 5) But, I wish to argue that the current situation is actually much worse than that!
- 6) It is not only that black officials atop the US government are unable/unwilling to address the leadership challenges posed by persistent African-American subordination in the society.
- 7) What is worse is that the ascendancy of blacks to such high office has fostered a false narrative of racial equality undercutting possibilities for change.
- 8) (More Radically) Their rise also threatens to neutralize a ***prophetic social critique*** of US politics and policy – both domestic and foreign -- that is naturally rooted in the heroic legacy of the black freedom struggle!

# One Man's Conclusion

October 2015 Brown University

A Self-Respecting Black Intellectual (ME?) Oughtn't to Allow That To Happen!

But That Is Easier Said Than Done!

Consider, e.g., the Politically Naïve Analogies Being Drawn between Barack Obama and Martin Luther King, Jr.

A Simplistic and False Narrative Has Emerged  
Equating the Political Programs of These Men





# 'Brother' Jesse Jackson – Weeping with Joy on Inauguration Day, 2009

October 2015 Brown University



Living the dream, 2009



# President Barack Obama: Fulfilling the dream

October 2015 Brown University



# A fist pump across the generations!

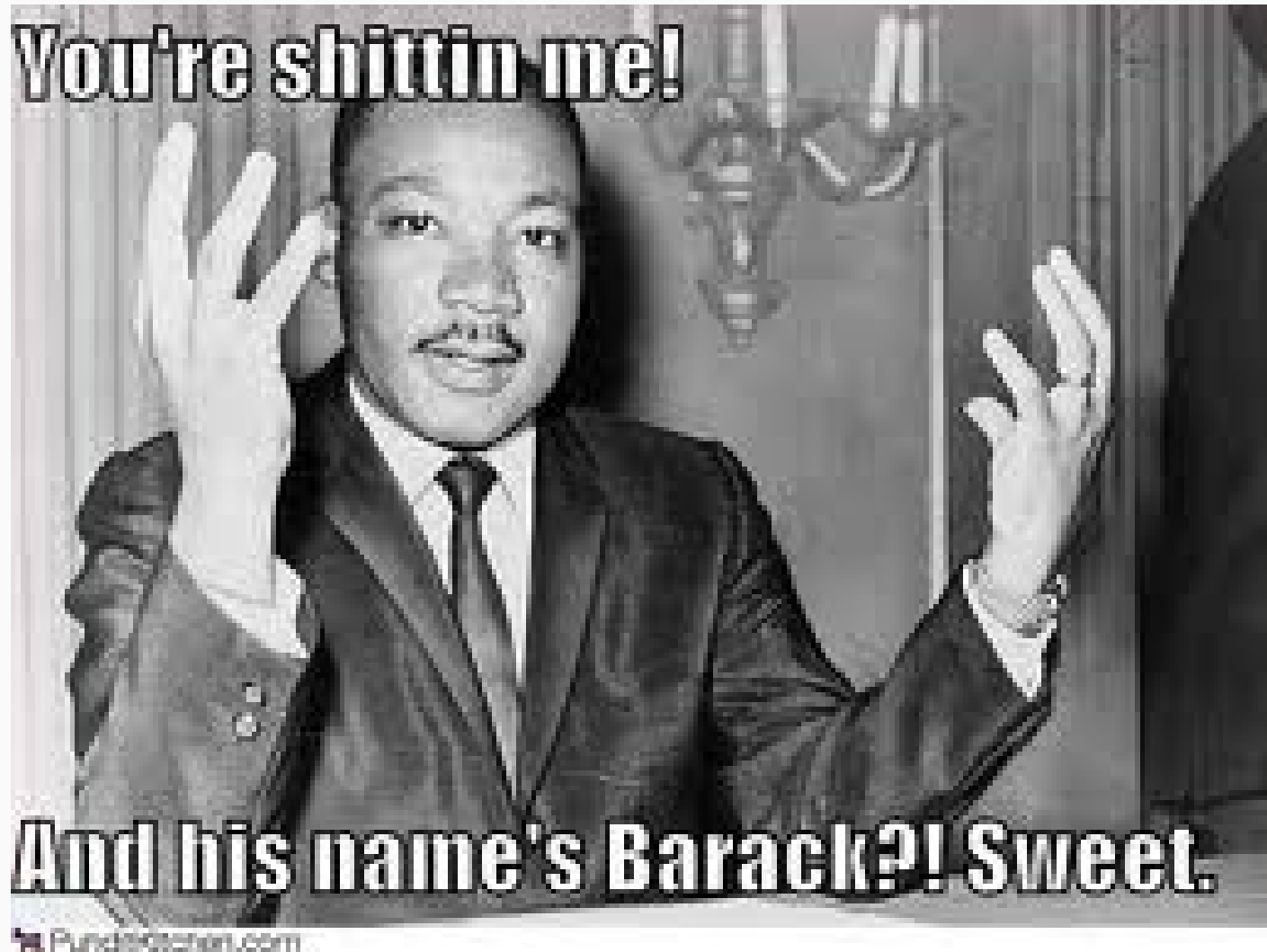
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Note: The 'fist bump' is a popular greeting among young African-Americans

And, my personal favorite

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# 'brother' cornel west – scolding, circa 2011

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There has always been a push-back against the 'dream' analogy.