



HARVARD Kennedy School
JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

HARVARD JOURNAL
of **AFRICAN AMERICAN**
PUBLIC POLICY

FEATURES

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Zenobia C. Joseph

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Reviewed by Fatima Abdrabboh

COMMENTARIES

The Future of Fatherhood and Families in African American Communities
Robert Michael Franklin

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Editor's Note

Every now and then, there comes a time in history when a generation is granted the opportunity to dramatically change the way the world operates. From the days of the Revolutionary War when young men left their families to fight alongside their fathers for the freedom of America, to the historic Civil Rights Movement where college students balanced their academic studies with sit-ins, protests, and peaceful marches, young people have stood up in massive numbers to fight for change. Today, we have thousands of troops of young people that fight for the protection of our country and for the freedom of others, securing the legacy of a generation and the safety of the United States of America.

Most recently, a generation that had been widely ignored in the political world swept the nation and, surprisingly, the world, carving out a place in history that is uniquely theirs. Few could have predicted that the efforts of young people and their technologies, which had previously been alien and unfamiliar to the political sphere, would have a dramatic impact on the 2008 U.S. presidential election. Their commitment to their candidates and political parties served as an inspiration to the world, awakening a spirit of political awareness, social activism, and public service.

The economic struggles that have historically been reserved for one segment of the population and largely ignored by traditional media outlets are now the struggles of our friends, family members, and neighbors. The parks we used to play in as children are dilapidated. The homes we grew up in have been foreclosed, and the communities deserted. The water we drink and the air we breathe are increasingly polluted by the cars we drive and the activities we undertake. Our realities have changed dramatically, and many people may never be able to go back to the lives they used to lead.

The election of the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama, has been the result of a tireless struggle to change not only the way America is seen by the global community, but also the way America sees itself. The excitement that was present in Grant Park in Chicago on the night of 4 November 2008 has transformed into a passion for progress and restoration. In this time of dire need, policy makers across party lines are more committed than ever to improving the lives of the American people. Policy makers have before them the challenge of improving our school and healthcare systems, increasing accessibility to higher education, stimulating the economy, and reversing environmental degradation, to name a few.

Surprisingly, the bleak picture that has been painted over the past year is somehow illuminated by the glimmering hope that our nation's new leader, President Barack Obama, will be able to unite those at the forefront of the decision-making process and create policies that will restore this nation. The *Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy* is pleased to present the

Summer 2009 edition, which aims to address the issues that decision makers must consider in moving forward. Issues such as cancer policy disparities, the restoration of environmental justice, and the importance of family as an institution are relevant not only to the African American community in which these features are framed, but also to the broader global community as we seek to promote progressive public policies and political accountability.

I am thankful to the authors of and contributors to our 15th edition of the Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy. Their theoretical, honest, and often personal perspectives have touched on a number of topics that are increasingly relevant to the African American community. The proposals they have introduced are insightful, well-informed, and ever important as policy makers join forces to create policies that make life easier for all Americans, particularly those in communities much like the ones addressed in our publication. I am also extremely grateful to the efforts of my coeditor, Desmond Serrette, the 2008–2009 editorial board, our advisors, board of directors, copy editors, and publisher, Jen Swartout. Without their hard work and dedication, this publication would not have been at all possible.

On behalf of the Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy, I encourage all people to take advantage of this unique opportunity to “bend the arc of history” and remain vocal, informed, and passionate about changing and improving this world.

We only have one.

Respectfully yours,

Shayla Elise Ball

Editor

“I-35 Divide” Conundrum: Can a True Community-University Partnership Grant Austin’s Gifted/Talented K–12 African American Males Access to College?

by Zenobia C. Joseph

ABSTRACT

Socratic questioning shaped my scholarship through a basic fundamental question, “Why are so few African Americans in the Austin Independent School District (AISD) Gifted/Talented Program?” Larry Cuban’s “School Reform in Austin, Texas 1954-2008” report lays the groundwork for this article’s critique of the community-university partnership between AISD and the University of Texas at Austin. Though the Cuban report does a good job of illustrating Derrick Bell’s interest-convergence theory as related to superintendency and communal race relations, it falls short of specifying hegemonic systemic forces impacting advanced learning opportunities for children of color—exacerbated by social promotion in the wake of school reform. Thus, this article reflects upon my corpus of field notes and scholarly work since 2001 in AISD as a teacher, Gifted/Talented consultant, and critical race theorist with emphasis on Gloria Ladson-Billings’s Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. I also highlight policy implications that impact African American males as a result of process-product research in the context of Instructional Theory. Most importantly, my scholarship aims to imbue integrity into race discourse in the hopes of moving leaders beyond ideological proclivity. Anything short of such courage will—as I reflect on Ida B. Wells—result in a modern-day lynching of African American males. The findings imply a need for AISD and the University of Texas at Austin to form a “true community-university partnership” to prepare K-12 African American males for college.

Zenobia C. Joseph attends the University of Texas at Austin full time as a Ph.D. student in Cultural Studies in Education and serves as the Gifted/Talented African-American Outreach Consultant for the Austin Independent School District (AISD). In 2005, she received the accolade of Teacher of the Year at Norman Elementary (AISD). She also taught fourth grade under leadership of four principals in five years at two low socioeconomic east Austin schools prior to establishing A+ WRITERS Consulting, LLC, which focuses on P-16 Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and standardized Language Arts test preparation. Per testimony before the Texas Senate Committee on Education, Ms. Joseph advocated for underrepresented student needs during the 80th Legislature (May 2007) and 80th Session Interim (Summer 2008). Through course work in legislative issues in higher education, she is currently focused on policy issues impacting equity and access to college.

INTRODUCTION

“There is a crisis in America’s schools,” stated former Lambuth University President Fred Zuker in *Ebony’s* “Young, Gifted and Black” article (Robinson-English 2006). Zuker did the unthinkable when he awarded a \$60,000 four-year scholarship to Michael Alexander (a nine-year-old African American third grader at Levi Public Elementary School in Memphis) based on the child’s exceptional reading and oratory skills. Zuker said, “It is the first such scholarship in the history of the university” (Robinson-English 2006). I have no doubt that Alexander is going to college, and I believe Zuker’s generosity impacted Alexander’s classmates, too. Unfortunately, many African American males may never get an opportunity even remotely similar to Alexander’s. Through a “self-conscious critique that moved beyond the dogma of traditional doctrinal assumptions” (Giroux 1983), I testified before the Texas Senate Committee on Education (2007) and recommended incentivizing gifted African American males through a trust fund or 529 tax-advantaged savings plan to counter the education crisis.

During the Select Committee on Public School Accountability September 2008 Hearing, Texas Commissioner of Education Robert Scott stated that the Austin Independent School District (AISD) put \$1 million dollars into its failing schools, but “a sense of urgency is what you need to see” (Texas Select Committee on Public School Accountability 2008b). In an article on tutoring incentives (Heinauer 2008), AISD’s Superintendent Pat Forgione noted that “less than 2 percent” of at-risk students use the \$1,334 per pupil tutoring allocation. Hence it may benefit AISD to follow Zuker’s lead—invest in a scholar, not brick and mortar—to get a return on investment! My scholarship focuses on hegemony in the context of social promotion and community-university relations through a historical ideological lens, in other words, a “focus on theory and practice as imperative to the political struggles against exploitation and domination” (Darder, Baltodano, and Torres 2008).

INSTRUCTIONAL THEORY FRAMEWORK

In “Fighting for our Lives: Preparing Teachers to Teach African American Students,” Gloria Ladson-Billings (2000) notes the work of Lee Shulman (1987): “I would argue that the educational literature is silent on the issue of teaching African American students because much of the educational research has relied on generic models of pedagogy.” In peeling back the layers of superficial discourse and “PC [political correctness] chitchat” as Class of 1943 Professor at Princeton University Cornel West often says, Ladson-Billings speaks to the concept of hidden curriculum:

Autobiography, restructured field experiences, situated pedagogies, and examining the classrooms of experts all provide glimpses of possibility for facilitating the pedagogy of teachers who teach African American students. However, each has the potential to fail to confront the major stumbling block in preparing teachers for success with African American students: racism. (Ladson-Billings 2000)

“Using field notes, research journaling, and student memoirs through a theoretical backdrop” (Berry 2005), I frame my critical race theory scholarship in the context of autoethnography in which the “researcher is a member of the group in question” (Wikipedia n.d.). I contend my Alternative Teacher Certification Program, albeit at a historically Black university, coupled with subsequent professional development, reflected “blind activism” as noted by Paulo Freire (Darder, Baltodano, and Torres 2008).

Guided by an uninformed quest “to fight against the spirit of the times rather than join it (Buck-Morss 1977)” (Giroux 1983), I muddled through the madness of mendacity to discover teaching as an art. Sitting through countless training sessions, I looked for “a golden nugget,” like a speck of paint on a palette, and later added it to my canvas of high expectations, social justice advocacy, and home visits to finish compositions. Eventually, my culturally relevant pedagogical painting mirrored Ladson-Billings’s theory in *The Dreamkeepers* (1994). Yet, in five years of teaching African American and Hispanic students, even as an AISD elementary Teacher of the Year (2005), I had no theoretical reference (e.g., training or language) to overtly frame my praxis.

Darder, Baltodano, and Torres refer to Freire’s argument as such:

A dialectical view of knowledge supports the notion that theory and practice are inextricably linked to our understanding of the world and the actions we take in our lives . . . true praxis is impossible in the undialectical vacuum driven by a separation of the individual from the object of their study. (Darder, Baltodano, and Torres 2008, 13)

My passion in abstraction of theory comes from an innate desire to prepare students for life. Anecdotally, I recall sitting next to the principal from Mabel B. Wesley Elementary (a predominantly African American Title I school) in Houston as she received a Texas Alliance of Black School Educators’ exemplary performance award in my second or third year of teaching. As a self-starter, I visited the Wesley school during spring break as noted per written testimony to the Select Committee on Public School Accountability on 23 June 2008 (Texas Select Committee on Public School Accountability 2008a). I drove from Austin to Houston to get a first-hand view of successful classroom ecology:

The classroom ecology program examines the reflexive influences of teacher and student actions, frequently illuminated by aspects of thought. Different patterns of interaction may subsequently be related to changes in students’ capacities. (Shulman 1986, 8)

On the morning of my visit, I sat in the office hearing sounds of what appeared to be a pep rally. “What’s that?” I asked a woman. “Oh! That’s our first graders saying their multiplication facts.” Afterward, I spent the day observing a fourth-grade teacher. Much like an interpretive researcher, I studied “a concrete particular [class] in detail, aiming to develop as full a model as possible of the situation and the contexts in which it [was] nested” (Shulman 1986). Time on task proved crucial during choral reading. The teacher said, “Get ready”—while waiting for students to place an index finger on the beginning word—followed by the cue, “Begin.” I equated

this simple methodology to a sports analogy of runners lining up on a track for a race. As a discipline strategy the teacher simply repeated “get ready” rather than calling out the names of students who were “off task.” However, my broad sweeping inference reflects a flaw of classroom ecology:

A major problem is the tendency toward ambivalence with respect to generalization from case to case from a particular case to the world at large. Although Gertz speaks wisely of generalizing within rather than across cases in ethnographies, too frequently we find educational researchers making sweeping general statements based on woefully limited data. (Shulman 1986, 21)

Though I reveled in the discovery of a more efficient choral reading strategy, I remained cognizant of a *60 Minutes* special that critiqued the validity of this school’s standardized test scores. According to the Texas Education Agency 2003-04 Wesley School Report Card, 91 percent of African Americans and 94 percent of Hispanics met the standard for all Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests (reading, mathematics, writing, and science) in 2003. Comparatively, 83 percent of African Americans and 94 percent of Hispanics met the standard for all tests in 2004. Cuban (2008) also notes “clever tactics” by Houston secondary schools as a result of test pressures. My mission to discover effective strategies made the trip worthwhile. But in the core of my soul, my first-year principal’s voice echoed, “Kids don’t care what you know, unless they know that you care.” Her wisdom, unlike teacher training, changed the trajectory of my pedagogy. Thus, I tend to agree with Shulman as he compares classroom ecology to process-product theory:

While process-product researchers view classrooms as reducible to discrete events and behaviors which can be noted, counted, and aggregated for purposes of generalization across settings and individuals, interpretive scholars view classrooms as socially and culturally organized environments. Individual participants in those environments contribute to the organization and to the definition of meanings. They are actively engaged in “making sense” in the setting, taking both senses of that phrase. They both discern the meanings intended by other actors and they engage in the continuing invention and reformulation of new meanings. (Shulman 1986, 20)

A criticism of interpretive research is “the tendency to ignore the substance of classroom life, the specific curriculum content and subject matter being studied. One can read the meticulous detail of many classroom ethnographies and never discover the simple facts, concepts or principles, skills or understandings, being taught” (Shulman 1986). Teaching equates to a delicate dance—a balance between caring, process-product specificity, and willingness to invoke Socratic questioning. Perhaps the most crucial factor remains an “ethic of care” (Noddings 2005). I contend caring can’t be taught and defer to West who says, “You can’t lead the people, if you don’t love the people. You can’t save the people, if you don’t serve the people” (West 2006).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

“The historic serves as a guide to understanding the present” (Bell 2004). As Johnston High School, a chronically low-performing school, closed in August 2008, AISD’s Superintendent Pat Forgione admitted Blacks’ distrust of the district stems back to desegregation in the 1970s. An *Austin Chronicle* article discussed the situation:

There’s a mantra often heard within Austin ISD circles: “Johnston won’t become another Anderson.” Founded in 1938, for decades the original L.C. Anderson High School on Thompson Street in East Austin was the only city high school open to black students. In 1971, it was closed in the course of desegregation. It was not the closure but how it was done that left scars. “Not just the building got closed, but the neighborhood got dissolved,” said Pat Forgione. “I can tell you, the black community has never forgiven the district for that.” (Whittaker 2008)

In September 2008, Forgione and Cuban shared findings from Cuban’s report at the University of Texas at Austin. I preface Cuban’s remarks by acknowledging the blessing I received through my experience teaching three- to five-years-olds to read at the Reverend Sterling Lands’s school in 2007. I left wishing every teacher could see high expectations in action. Cuban’s critical race discourse follows:

Consider those crises that blindsided both the Board of Trustees and Superintendent. Such events sucked up enormous time and energy from Forgione and his aides as they set aside other priorities to work on the emergency. Between late 2000 and early 2002, for example, much time was spent in responding to the Reverend Sterling Lands, [Black] minister of the Greater Calvary Baptist Church and fiery head of the Eastside Social Action Coalition’s 20 demands for better schools for Austin’s minority children.

In an October 2000 letter to Board President Kathy Rider, Lands said that 46 years after *Brown v. Board of Education* “our schools are still separate and unequal.” Pointing to minority students’ lower achievement, more dropouts, higher numbers in special education than white students, Lands wrote:

Unless you believe that children of color are inferior in their ability to learn, you must conclude with us that we have an emergency of horrible magnitude and immediate and deliberate action is required to reverse the trend. The 600-member Eastside Social Action Coalition (ESAC) had originally formed in protest to police brutality in 1998. In the Spring of 2000, Forgione’s firing of the black principal of LBJ high school in what Lands called “a very cavalier and inhumane way”—the principal was escorted off campus by security officials at the end of the school day—triggered protests. The issue leading to the principal’s removal was the unrelenting tense relations between the magnet program (“Science Academy”) staff and the principal. The firing brought

out 500 ESAC parents, students, and activists to a Board of Trustees meeting to protest the principal's removal. The Board backed the Superintendent. (Cuban 2008, 16)

DATA AND ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The Advanced Placement (see Figure 4) and Gifted/Talented (see Figure 10) rates for African American students in comparison to their White counterparts inform this discourse in accord with AISD's Strategic Plan 2005-2010, Annual Balanced Scorecard (2006).

Performance Indicator 5: Participation rates in Advanced Placement/International courses for all students and each student group.

How Indicator Progress is Assessed: Increase in percentage of students participating in AP/IB courses.

Indicator Assessment of Progress: Between 2004 and 2005, with the exception of students identifies as Limited English Proficient, AP/IB participation rates increased for all students groups. However, AISD will continue efforts to reduce disparities among student groups.

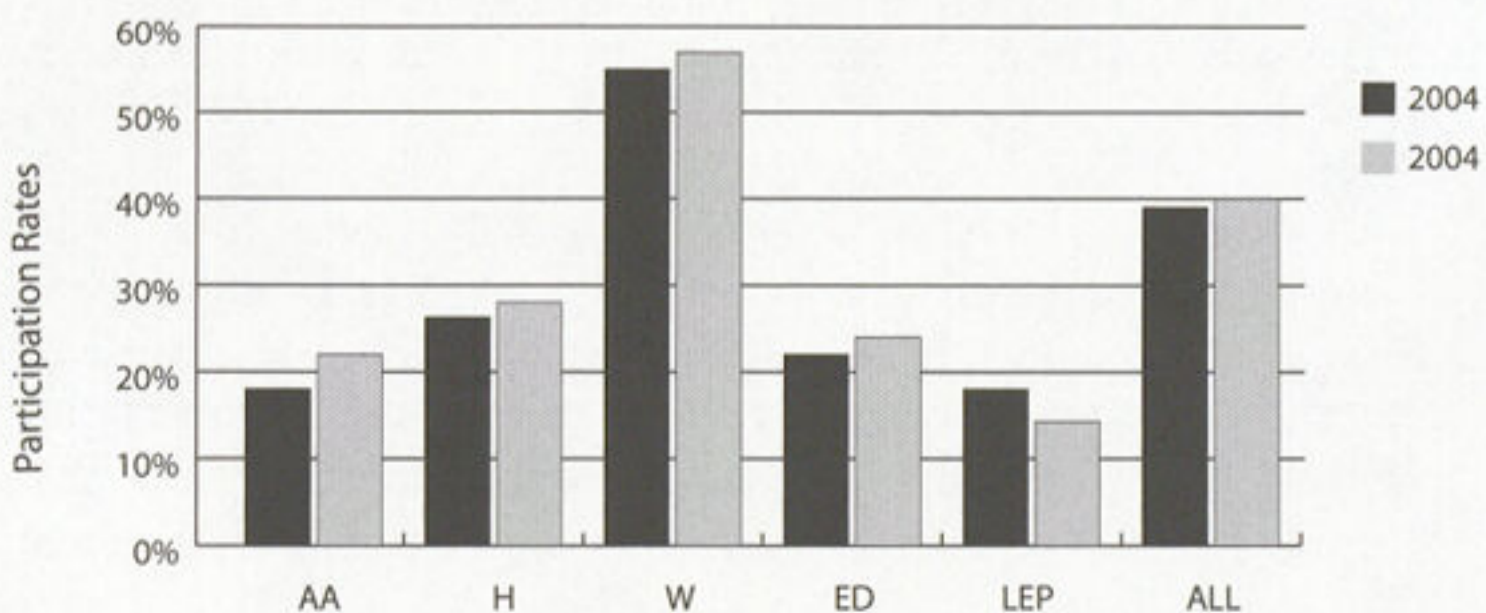
Data (Baseline 2004):

Student Groups (See Figure 4)	Participating in AP/IB Courses		Change 04-05
	2004	2005	
African American	17.9%	23.9%	+6.0
Hispanic	27.6%	28.3%	+0.7
White	54.9%	55.7%	+0.8
Economically Disadvantaged	21.7%	23.7%	+2.0
Limited English Proficiency	17.5%	13.6%	-3.9
Special Education	3.7%	4.9%	+1.2
All Students	38.8%	40.1%	+1.3

Data Source: AISD, Results Monitoring Reports

Notes: The Advanced Placement (AP) program allows students to take courses to receive college credit. The International Baccalaureate (IB) program offers an internationally recognized curriculum widely recognized by universities, and currently is offered at only one high school (Anderson). The data presented are aggregates of both programs.

Figure 4. Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate Participation Rates



Additional Performance Indicator E: Participation rates in the Gifted and Talented Program for all students and each student group.

How Indicator Progress is Assessed: Increase in percentage of students participating in Gifted and Talented Program.

Indicator Assessment of Progress: Between 2004 and 2005, overall, relatively little change occurred in GT Program participation rates. AISD will continue efforts to increase GT Program participation rates and reduce disparities between student groups.

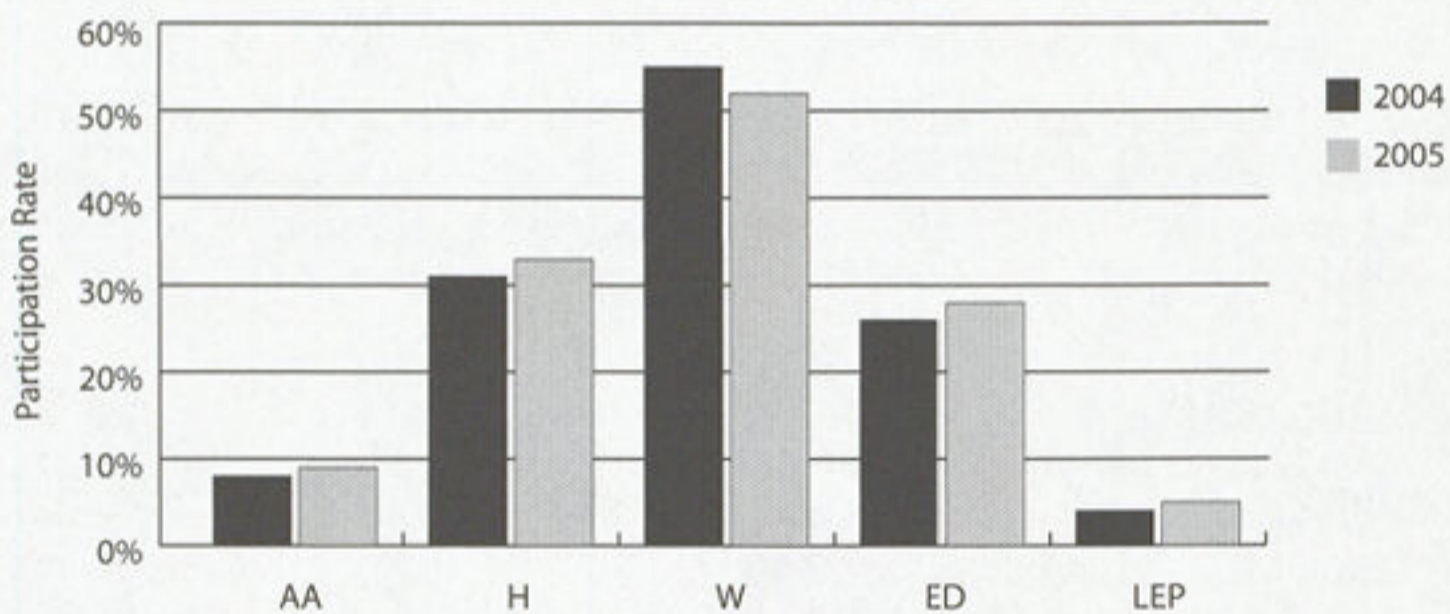
Data (Baseline 2004):

Student Groups (See Figure 10)	Participating in GT Program		Change 04-05
	2004	2005	
African American	7.9%	8.1%	+0.2
Hispanic	31.0%	33.2%	+2.1
White	55.8%	53.2%	-2.6
Economically Disadvantaged	26.1%	28.3%	+2.2
Limited English Proficiency	3.0%	2.9%	-0.1
All Students	6.9%	6.7%	-0.2

Data Source: For 2004, Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS); for 2005, AISD estimated data submitted to Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS)

Notes: Participation rates for students groups are percentages within the Gifted and Talented (GT) Program.

Figure 10. Gifted and Talented Program Participation Rates



GIFTED/TALENTED DISPARITIES

From a policy perspective, I remain keenly aware that the absence of Gifted/Talented (GT) programmatic incentives and monies compared to “sanctions” and school ratings linked to TAKS may adversely contribute to the GT gap.

As of the date this article was written, the Texas legislature was meant to convene in January 2009, and it is foreseeable that deficit-thinking discourse may prevail. Brownsville Independent School District Superintendent Hector Gonzalez spoke to this point during the 80th Session Interim in 2008: “Correlation with all of the subgroups . . . what gets monitored is what gets done and what gets monitored is what the state demands of us” (Texas Select Committee on Public School Accountability 2008b). I agree with Gonzalez and contend if policy makers amended the “Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students” (Texas Education Agency 2000) requiring GT identification of subgroups to determine accountability ratings, more emphasis would be placed on high expectations for all students.

In the context of microethnography, the Cuban report reflects, in part, “the process of data collection, content analysis, and comparative analysis of everyday situations for the purpose of formulating insights” (Stokrocki 1997). My critique provides an autoethnographic perspective using field notes and personal communication as noted per Appendix. Despite countless task forces and recommendations by experts, staggering statistics (as seen in Figures 4 and 10) lead one to wonder, as West often says, whether an “a priori approach to the negro” prevails or whether “the remedy for blacks, appropriately viewed as a ‘good deal’ by policy-making whites, . . . provides benefits for blacks that are more symbolic than substantive” (Bell 2004).

With Bell’s interest-convergence theory in mind, whereby deal-making racial subtleties equate to *Silent Covenants* (2004), I imbue “an emancipatory pedagogy, rooted in the praxis of reflection, dialogue, and action [that] can be enacted wherever subordinate populations struggle to affirm, challenge, resist, and transform the dehumanizing conditions of their existence” (Darder, Baltodano, and Torres 2008). According to Henry Giroux, critical theory “simultaneously calls for the necessity of ongoing critique, one in which the claims of any theory must be confronted with the distinction between the world it examines and portrays, and the world as it actually exists” (Giroux 1983).

TWO-TIERED SYSTEM

Ladson-Billings notes the concept of a two-tiered system in *The Dreamkeepers*, which reflects AISD’s high school redesign:

Throughout the district, they offer exemplary programs in mathematics, science, technology and so on. Unfortunately, these magnet schools sometimes operate under a two-tiered system, virtually resegregating students within the so-called desegregated schools. Thus, the white students who come to the schools benefit from the special program while the African American students remain in the low level classes. (Ladson-Billings 1994, 6)

On 25 October 2007, the *Austin American-Statesman* reported on AISD's high school redesign efforts funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Heinauer 2007). Now the Liberal Arts and Science Academy (LASA) and LBJ High School are separate schools under the same roof, they are on different floors, and each has its own principal and staff. The split reflects an evolution in Austin's magnet programs. Focus shifted from integration to keeping middle- and upper-class students in public schools. Though magnets were created in 1985 to bring more diversity to predominantly minority East Austin high schools, integration remains questionable. One might ask whether diversity merely serves as a bureaucratic construct for being well-adjusted (West 2006).

"Critical pedagogy is fundamentally committed to the development and enactment of a culture of schooling that supports the empowerment of culturally marginalized and economically disenfranchised students. By doing so, this pedagogical perspective seeks to help transform those classroom structures and practices that perpetuate undemocratic life" (Darder, Baltodano, and Torres 2008). During LBJ's redesign, less than sixty of the nearly 850 students attending LASA were Black in a White majority setting. Downstairs, nearly 1,000 Black and Brown students attended LBJ. According to LBJ's Principal Patrick Patterson, parents raised concerns about inequities as well, asking, "Why are all the minority students on the first floor and the White students on the second floor?" Another comment, "They think we don't know, but it's sugarcoated segregation," was made by an LBJ African American male junior during my 22 September 2007 workshop at the African American Men and Boys Conference. To provide a sense of agency for this student and others, I sent an e-mail message to the high school redesign project director on 8 October 2007:

Subject: FW: AA Conference Feedback, Student Entrepreneur-AAAB-SE [Austin Area Alliance of Black School Educators] Fundraiser Idea, & Poems! Follow-up Questions:

Following my work with seven (7) African-American males, in part, from LBJ High School during the September 22, 2007 Men and Boys Conference, I wondered: Is there a way for students to give feedback (suggestions) to you regarding their views about LBJ or other schools involved with high school redesign? If so, what is the process? Notably, the young men I worked with expressed their views artistically and most creatively as indicated per e-mail below.

Despite ideal rhetoric, the project director ignored the fundamental need of marginalized students to have a voice while maintaining the status quo per his e-mail reply to author on 10 October 2007. The end result is that I received no reply to my specific inquiry; however, the project director forwarded an unrelated scholarship link via e-mail reply to me on 10 October 2007:

Subject: NUL-NGFV Scholarships, "Hi Ms. Zenobia: This correspondence came and because it targets your population of interest, thought I'd share. Hope you're having a good day!"

In this way, the director sidestepped the issue, reflecting the systemic impact of the dogma of hegemony, which is described below:

Hegemony refers to the moral and intellectual leadership of a dominant class over a subordinate class achieved not through coercion (i.e., threat of imprisonment or torture) or the willful construction of rules and regulations (as in a dictatorship or fascist regime), but rather through the general winning of consent of the subordinate class to the authority of the dominant class. The dominant class need not impose force for the manufacture of hegemony since the subordinate class actively subscribes to many of the values and objectives of the dominant class without being aware of the source of those values or the interests which inform them. Hegemony is not a process of active domination as much as an active structuring of the culture and experiences of the subordinate class by the dominant class. (McLaren 2003)

According to the *Austin American-Statesman* 25 October 2007 article, “About \$2 million more than last year’s combined budget—about \$8.3 million—will be spent at both schools this year. Much of the money will be used for a program at LBJ that combines small learning communities and one-on-one contact with students to improve attendance and academic performance. The split was a condition of the program” (Heinauer 2007).

While it proves necessary to consider two-tiered secondary implications, one must also remain cognizant of elementary tracking. I am reminded of an AISD gifted African American male who decided against applying to either middle school magnet program. Like Alexander, he was an orator who memorized and recited excerpts from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech—in less than one week. In fifth grade, he often returned to my classroom for “shut-down” (discipline) during which time he wrote the winning poem for the school’s poetry contest. Through writing he revealed having a pact with his boys, “When one falls, we all fall,” and said he was tired of being the only smart boy. To rekindle his love of learning in my culturally responsive classroom, I integrated Constructivist Learning Theory, which “refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves—each learner individually (and socially) constructs meaning—as he or she learns” (Hein 1991). Building on my young scholar’s prior knowledge, I provided space for him to utilize his language arts and leadership skills as rooted in John Dewey’s belief in “the notion that education must engage with and enlarge experience; that thinking and reflection are central to the act of teaching; and that students must freely interact with their environments in the practice of constructing knowledge” (Darder, Baltodano, and Torres 2008).

“I-35 DIVIDE”

If AISD wants to level the playing field, it could invoke an “ethic of care” (Noddings 2005) into its policy and practice, yielding an invaluable return on investment. To do so requires integrity and an admission that current policy and practice prove ineffective for African American males as reflected by their overrepresentation in AISD’s Special Education and Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs and underrepresentation in the GT program (Austin Independent School District and City of Austin 2006). “Suffice it to say here that the resolution requires critical thinking and dialogue directed to mutual understanding of both expressed and inferred needs” (Noddings 2005).

A “true community-university partnership” may benefit the community and university as Gregory Vincent, vice president, Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE) and professor in the College of Education’s Department of Educational Administration at the University of Texas at Austin, notes in a *Washington Times* diversity article on 3 October 2005. As the article notes, “Among Mr. Vincent’s first priorities is breaking down real and perceived barriers that discourage minority teenagers from applying. He wants school officials to visit predominantly Black and Hispanic high schools more often, and to build relationships with middle schools that feed into them” (Flagship 2005). Vincent is quoted in the article as noting that, “there are some communities in Texas where UT [University of Texas] is not seen as a completely open door” (Flagship 2005). However noble these sentiments, my unique position as an “insider” sheds light on this notion of a true community-university partnership that occurs oft at the expense of “East” Austin students. Theoretically, I preface my narrative in the context of demystification by Linda McNeil:

Even within an increasingly complex and international body of scholarship, however, there are serious gaps. One of these is the absence of critical scholarship that carries theory into, or builds theory from, what goes on inside schools. And even more glaringly and ironically absent, given the role of critical scholarship in raising issues of power and power inequities, is the lack of up-close studies of systems of schooling. (Darder, Baltodano, and Torres 2008, 387)

“The Neighborhood Longhorns Program (NLP), established in 1991, is an educational incentive program operated in partnership with AISD in 28 Title I elementary and middle schools” (University of Texas at Austin n.d.). On its face, NLP serves an invaluable collaborative purpose. Over two years, I experienced the program’s requisite for “good behavior” for tutorial participation and absence of African American college students. The unintentional consequence of “good behavior” criteria excluded many African American boys from tutoring while the absence of African American UT-Austin students, subliminally, sent a message that Blacks don’t go to UT; others do! A similar unintended consequence exists in selection of students for the ChemBridge science dual credit DDCE program with requisite recommendations by pre-advanced placement teachers.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

As previously noted by Figure 4, the Advanced Placement (AP) program reflects about 24 percent participation by African Americans compared to nearly 56 percent participation by White students. Moreover, less than 10 percent of African Americans compared to more than 50 percent of White students participate in AISD's GT program per Figure 10. AISD's 2006 Annual Strategic Plan Balanced Scorecard excludes the total number of participants. However, it proves unlikely that many African Americans take pre-AP courses, as noted by the 16 October 2003 AISD news release that reported the receipt of a U.S. Department of Education Advanced Placement Initiative Grant totaling \$267,153. AISD said it would use the grant to fund Project SOS (Supporting Optimal Scholarship), intended to increase minority enrollment and success on pre-advanced placement and advanced placement secondary exams (Austin Independent School District 2003). Per the Interlocal Agreement noted in the 12 January 2004 AISD Board Meeting, approximately \$161,881 went to UT's Ray Marshall Center (RMC) for the Study of Human Resources to conduct an impact evaluation, leaving less than half the grant monies for program implementation: Project SOS began its operation in the spring 2004 semester and continued offering services through 2005-06 school year (Austin Independent School District 2004).

The reality of Project SOS may lead to ChemBridge's unintended exclusionary practices and cause one to consider hegemonic system notions rooted deep within Austin's past:

While residence of blacks had been widely scattered all across the city in 1880, by 1930 they were heavily concentrated on the east side of town, a process encouraged by the 1928 city plan, which recommended that East Austin be designated a "Negro district." Municipal services like schools, sewers, and parks were made available to blacks in East Austin only. (Findit Texas n.d.; Cuban 2008, 19)

"Neither the *Brown* decision nor our efforts to give it meaning had any relevance to the plight of those whom we had not forgotten, but had no real idea how to help" (Bell 2004). In the context of advanced academic college opportunities that exclude some K-12 African Americans, albeit unintentionally, I contend critical discourse must unmask the true nature of such hypocrisy. As a response to Texas House Bill 400 (passed in 2001, which requires certain school districts to develop partnerships with nearby colleges and universities for the purposes of increasing the number of graduating seniors who enroll in higher education), ChemBridge was launched in the fall of 2003 to offer college preparatory experiences to high schools that are underrepresented in postsecondary institutions. ChemBridge is a DDCE, Web-based, dual-credit course that allows underrepresented high school students to earn six hours of college chemistry credit upon satisfactory completion of the course, while concurrently earning two semesters of high school credit for an advanced science class that serves as an Advanced Measure under the Texas Education Agency Distinguished Achievement Program. An excerpt of the student profile criteria per ChemBridge's Web site (ChemBridge n.d.) follows:

- A strong foundation of coursework: concurrent enrollment in Algebra II (Pre-Calculus preferred), completion of Pre-AP Chemistry or a course of a similar level with a grade of A or B, and a written recommendation from the Pre-AP teachers.
- A strong background in science vocabulary and reading.
- A willingness to spend time on coursework outside of class.
- An ability to work independently.

“True community-university partnerships can help match the available institutional resources of the university with the interests of the community to produce work in the public interest that has direct relevance to the broader community,” notes Vincent in the *Southern University Law Review* (2003). But can a project that excludes an unspecified number of Blacks be truly relevant?

INTEREST-CONVERGENCE THEORY

May I tear down the walls of demarcation that perpetuate the “I-35 Divide”? Though I agree with Larry Cuban’s “School Reform in Austin, Texas 1954-2008” report, it falls short of noting disparities in AISD’s GT program impacting specific subgroups. Cuban contends:

[Superintendent] Forgione . . . achieved much while tiptoeing smartly through the maze of contradictory goals the Board of Trustees . . . prize: Seeking excellence in academic achievement for each and every student by setting standards that all must reach regardless of neighborhood and equity in opportunities. . . . The Board [also] support[s] district-wide racial and ethnic diversity even though residentially segregated neighborhoods produce racially and ethnically isolated Eastside and Westside schools. (Cuban 2008)

I contend diversity requires integrity, moral conviction, and willpower to honor said policies.

“The policies are designed to make the system care” noted Texas Commissioner of Education Robert Scott during the 80th Session Interim, but the crux of any system’s success lies in the hands of its leaders (Texas Select Committee on Public School Accountability 2008b). Rather than produce milestones to show a good faith effort to eliminate the Black-White achievement gap by 2010 per Strategy 1.7 of its Strategic Plan (2005-2010), AISD changed verbiage to meet “all” student needs—in lieu of a focus on African Americans—when its annual scorecard came up for review in 2007. “In 2005, the Board of Trustees approved its five-year Strategic Plan. The Board pledged that AISD will be a ‘world class school district by 2010’ with students achieving at higher levels in all subjects and ‘achievement gaps . . . eliminated.’ One goal specifically called for ensuring that the ‘district meet the needs of all student groups’ with priority given to ‘African American adolescents’” (Cuban 2008). The level of wordsmithing leads one to wonder whether AISD ever intends to equalize the “I-35 Divide.”

SOCIAL PROMOTION

Bell's interest-convergence theory reveals what lies beneath the surface: "The blatant involuntary sacrifice of black rights to further white interests, so obvious in early American history, remains viable and, while somewhat more subtle in its contemporary forms, is as potentially damaging as it ever was to black rights and the interests of all but wealthy whites" (2004). AISD's racial inequities prove undeniable, but the Cuban report "failed to develop a critical discourse that challenges the hegemony of dominant ideologies" (Giroux 1989) per ambiguous reference to "those students." Cuban contends, "Raising test scores for particular groups of students with 'unspectacular' test history . . . is nearly impossible" (2008). This gap notion calls for critical analysis of Texas policy juxtaposed with social promotion in lieu of adherence to the Student Success Initiative, which, in accord with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, requires passage of TAKS in Grades 3, 5, and 8 for promotion.

As a result of an unspecified newspaper article, Chair Florence Shapiro (Texas Senate Committee on Education) argued that "we have this disproportionate number of African American students and minorities who are put in special needs classes." Shapiro contended:

We just wait and wait and wait for someone to make a change and we have no accountability. . . . I'm as frustrated as I've ever been about a situation and about an agency [Texas Education Agency]. We don't know what's happening to these kids. It's like they've just gone into a black hole and we're not doing very much to find out what's happening. . . . We know the problem. We know there's disproportionate numbers of African-American students. . . . They comprise 24 percent of the kids that we don't know where they are; they've just disappeared and they represent 14 percent of the population. How can we be missing 24 percent when they represent 14 percent? . . . I think the issue with special needs is what finally brought it to my attention because Special Education students make up 12 percent of the student population but nearly 15 percent of the dropout population. . . . We have become—in my opinion—a system that's become the laughing stock. We are not doing what the public expects us to do. . . . We can't even account for where these youngsters are. (Texas Senate Committee on Education 2008b)

Shapiro developed "a critical discourse that challenges the hegemony of dominant ideologies" (Giroux 1989). Yet, the problematic nature of race and dropouts yields a dichotomy when one considers Shapiro's discourse juxtaposed with Texas's alleged success per the 19 September 2008 Accountability Hearing: "I think the frustration that we have, at least I do, is the fact that we see that these students are not prepared but the override that takes place—the exception has swallowed the rule and I think we need to address that" (Texas Select Committee on Public School Accountability 2008b). Using the National Assessment of Educational Progress data to frame his *positivistic* remarks, attorney Sandy Kress surmised, perhaps exclusive

of special education dropouts and social promotion, “Mostly at elementary . . . I think if you look at where we are today compared to 1992 . . . I think it’s a part of the Civil Rights story—and a lot of it came from you, Shapiro.” Larry Kellner (CEO of Continental Airlines) argued, “As I understand it today, about half the kids that don’t pass the TAKS test get moved ahead anyway.”

“More than half, I would say 75 percent,” Shapiro replied. Kellner clarified, “I just want to be clear on the Student Success Initiative; I think it’s been a failure. Any time you have a standard that’s being overridden more than half the time, the standard’s wrong.” Paradoxically, Kress staunchly viewed the Texas accountability system positively and disfavored getting rid of the Student Success Initiative despite its glaring flaws:

In Texas and in all other states, that’s why we have these remediation rates at 50 percent in the community colleges. There’s something, and they called it social promotion—now maybe that’s not right—maybe that’s a false accusation, but the accusation was that a substantial number of students were passed on from grade to grade by these local decisions for better or worse, whatever is motivating them, and that you would have students who would be accumulating a deficit. Once they get into the fourth grade, the fifth grade and the sixth grade, they’d be a year behind, then they’d be two years behind and then they’d be three years behind. And I’ve seen major research that says that’s a bigger contributor than relevance to dropout rates—when you’re three years behind or more. . . . Hard to be interested in the class when you can’t understand what’s going on and you can’t do the work. (Texas Select Committee on Public School Accountability. 2008b)

Still, process-product research dominates the delivery of instruction in Texas despite Cochairman Rob Eissler’s acknowledgement during the 80th Session Interim that TAKS is not really helping with college and career readiness. Reality leads one to consider two poignant questions raised by Shulman (1986): “What accounts for the vigor of process-product research? Why have its central constructs—teacher effectiveness, direct instruction, active teaching, time-on-task—been so readily accepted and applied by practitioners and policymakers?”

In the context of providing advanced academic opportunities for African American males, the future looks bleak. No policy discourse focused on incentivizing gifted education during the 80th Session Interim. Though Shapiro noted, “We’re looking for new and innovative ideas,” deficit-thinking prevailed. Senator Royce West raised concerns to U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings in February 2008 and later to Commissioner Scott in October 2008 about the education crisis while Senator Leticia Van de Putte stated dismay in June about alternative education programs. I preface the 80th Session Interim Special Education Hearing (Texas Select Committee on Public School Accountability 2008a) excerpt with this notion of integrity:

Freire adamantly stressed that tolerance is neither about playing the game, nor a civilized gesture of hypocrisy, nor a coexistence with the

unbearable. Instead, the critical expression of tolerance is founded on the basic human principles of respect, discipline, dignity, and ethical responsibility.” (Darder 2003)

Yet, discourse revealed an unnerving level of hypocritical hegemony and complacency espoused by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). A special education label oft overrides advanced academics and postsecondary readiness per Senator Van de Putte’s questioning of Kathy Clayton, director, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Coordination, TEA, about disproportionality [of African American students per Shapiro’s earlier discourse] in correlation to jail for eight- and nine-year-olds in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs) and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs (JJAEPs):

I know that you’re using the Fort Worth [data]. . . . My concern is that one of the studies says that with our Special Education students, a lot of them have behavioral components that act out and up to two to three times the representation of a normal campus is the representation at our DAEPs and Juvenile Alternatives, which has me greatly concerned. In our original concept for the District Alternative Education Program, it is for breaking the rules of conduct and/or serious persistent misbehavior, or students coming out, transitioning back from either TYC [Texas Youth Commission] or their juvenile detention and the JJAEPs. And it greatly alarms me that the data—at least what we have from Region XI and I don’t know where other state data is—is that two to three times more students classified as Special Education are sent to these place settings, which are totally inappropriate and do not have any Special Education services for [them]. So if you know about the problem, how have we not been able to uncover that?

Is this just a reflection of what we have in our criminal justice system? [It does raise concerns within the context of disproportionate representation that we have (TEA)].

While we’re talking about transition of students [who] are Special Ed to be successful post-graduation, what I worry about is . . . they don’t even get there because they’ve been put in alternative settings. . . . We need to do a better job because the eight- and nine-year-olds that are sent to the DDAEP are sent . . . and from what the data tells us, most of the time [they] are Special Education students to begin with and it’s almost like in our prisons. Our number one mental health provider is our community jails and I hate to see this happen in our education system already. . . . I worry that child[ren] eight or nine [who are] really Special Ed students [are] already being tracked into more criminal justice place settings rather than getting services they need to be successful students. (Texas Senate Committee on Education. 2008a)

SUMMARY

Representative Elijah Cummings's discourse on the economic downturn seems fitting for the education crisis: "I think we have to face up to it. This Congress has to face up to it, and we have to face the problems that we're dealing with, and they are urgent" (Joint Economic Committee 2008). However, education discourse must move beyond rhetoric to concerted action. Cuban noted 500 citizens spoke urgently to AISD's Board of Trustees through the Eastside Social Action Coalition. Silence ensued and numbed their souls with stories left untold. "We are reminded of the real difficulties that arise when members of dominant and subaltern [subordinate] groups confront one another. Speaking back may have contradictory results. Reality is complex and contradictory, as are the politics coming out of it" (Apple and Buras 2005). Bell (2004) poignantly coined these incidents as "silent covenants"—agreements to accept the somberness of one's fate in a school system plagued by hegemonic hypocrisy despite Emancipation Proclamation and *Brown v. Board of Education* litigation. In the 14 November 2007 *Austin American-Statesman* article on AISD's GT diversity efforts, I noted that TAKS often overrides gifted education focus (Hill 2007). This fact remains unchanged to date.

In December 2008, I observed five writing classes at an AISD Academically Unacceptable middle school, noting a sole African American male out of nineteen students in a pre-AP class. He worked independently while his peers, African American males, in the general track slumped in their seats and talked back to the permanent substitute (who had no teaching experience); one stood on his desk seat in the middle of six-weeks testing. Rather than sit in a complicitous manner, I informed an AISD trustee and wondered, "How likely is it that these young men will gain access to K-12 college opportunities across the I-35 Divide?" Cuban (2008) contends, "Board members and top AISD staff implicitly accept that chronically low performing high schools are, basically, test-taking factories." I might add low-performing elementary and middle schools, too.

The greater travesty remains that "less than 2 percent" of at-risk students noted by Forgione utilize Title I monies for tutoring (Heinauer 2008). Why is that? Does hegemony preclude parents from gaining access to tutorial information? Cuban (2008) favorably notes Forgione's retirement in 2009, "AISD Board of Trustees and Superintendent have accomplished a great deal. Their drive and commitment have provided direction for district administrators, principals, and, most important, teachers. Both qualities of leadership have profited most but not all students." I agree with Cuban, not all students—African American males, especially—benefit from AISD's K-12 schooling. Since "all" subgroups fail to profit, does one consider this legacy a true success? Yet, I remain hopeful through Senator Royce West's tenacious spirit. He consistently urges Texas policy makers to move beyond rhetoric to confront the education crisis:

The problem is . . . over the past ten years, we've been playing definitional games with dropouts . . . we don't know from one time period to the next . . . what the definition is and now the definition looks like its about to change again. . . . I'm more concerned with what we've done

Madam Chair . . . in terms of the legislation that we passed last session and where we are now. We sit up and say we have 82 percent completion rate; when you break it down, all of the workshops and everything I've been to over the course of this interim still says we have a crisis on our hands with African-Americans and Hispanics . . . we've talked about this problem over and over again and the question is what [are we] doing about it even though we may have 82 percent completed. Demographics are changing and we're not doing anything of any substance. . . . I haven't seen anything with any substance across the country that we're doing in order to ameliorate that problem so I'd like to hear, what's going on in Texas? (Texas Senate Committee on Education. 2008c)

Integrity and caring prove paramount. "We, as conscious caring souls, must do more" (Williams 2008). My scholarship illustrated K-12 African American males' unequal advanced academic access across the "I-35 Divide" within the context of hegemony in AISD, the University of Texas at Austin (DDCE's noted programs), and the Texas legislature. The findings imply a need to establish a "true community-university partnership" to prepare K-12 African American males for college. "These are students' lives . . . they're not numbers; they're not percentages and this is the future of Texas. . . . It's time we stop playing these games!" (Texas Senate Committee on Education 2008b)

APPENDIX: COMPREHENSIVE AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC TIMELINE

- **2002.** The Cultural Connections to Teaching and Learning Task Force recommended a research-based methodology for African American students and other students of color. The Austin Independent School District's (AISD) 28 October 2008 Regular Meeting Agenda reflects Gloria Ladson-Billings' visit:

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, a presentation by Professor Gloria Ladson-Billings.

Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and author of *The Dreamkeepers* and her latest book *Crossing Over to Canaan: The Journey of New Teachers in Diverse Classrooms*, as a member of the team of nationally recognized experts assisting Dr. Pedro Reyes and Dr. Juanita Garcia with the charge of the Cultural Connections to Teaching and Learning Task Force, addressed the board while in Austin working with Dr. Reyes and Dr. Garcia. Dr. Ladson-Billings addressed the three things needed for student achievement: learning, environment, and relationships. When asked what the three things are for a school board to consider, Dr. Ladson-Billings responded: the need for every school to analyze patterns, set priorities, and develop leadership.

Board discussion with Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings included the following: cultural competence; participation of every student in cocurricular (extracurricular) activities; challenges with state-mandated tests; conceptual

learning; social networks; professional development; career plans; content knowledge for teachers; and job description differentiation for new teachers. (Cultural Connections to Teaching and Learning Task Force 2003)

- **25 February 2003.** Pat Forgione's "Testimony on Urban Education in Texas to the House Public Education Committee" makes reference to "a recent publication of Austin ISD entitled 'Success for Our Students.' It will give you a more detailed picture of my district and our recent successes and significant challenges ahead of AISD" (Forgione 2003).
- **22 April 2004.** Forgione's Memorandum to Members, Board of Trustees, refers to the "Success for Our Students" publication, but the online link is no longer active. "Success for Our Students, published in February 2003, describes the district's commitment to students, particularly in regard to academic achievement, preparation for college, and career, learning environment, and community support. The report also addresses budgetary, legislative, and other challenges facing the district (Forgione 2004, 17).
- **27 October 2004.** Scholarship: Per principal's guidance, I forwarded my research paper entitled, "'Clad-Iron' Fence: Leaving Black Boys and Girls Behind!," via e-mail to Arthur Granada, AISD's director of Advanced Academic Services. My scholarship states, in part, "The positive aspect of AISD's Interlocal Agreement with UT [University of Texas], and its 2003 Cultural Task Force reflects AISD's openness to take steps to right its wrong of leaving Black children behind." Specific reference to AISD's Interlocal Agreement with the University of Texas at Austin and the "Success for Our Students" brochure follow:

"Per Board of Trustees, Board Agenda for January 12, 2004, Regular Meeting (Revised January 9, 2004), SUBJECT: Interlocal Agreement with The University of Texas (UT) at Austin for Advanced Placement Initiative Grant Impact Evaluation. . . . Dr. Granada stated in part: 'Economically disadvantaged students have been underrepresented in the Advanced Placement program for many years in AISD as well as across the state.'"
- "The AISD Cultural Connections to Teaching Task Force June 2003 also discussed Black students' advanced academic instruction deficits. The task force addressed in part the need to create G/T [gifted/talented] elementary full-time teacher positions, and project-based learning incentives to promote minority students' giftedness." (Cultural Connections to Teaching and Learning Task Force 2003)
- **On or about 2005-2006.** Bret Cormier (African-American researcher/doctoral student) identified best practices in the district as applied, in part, to African American students. When I inquired of Mr. Cormier about the Cultural Connections to Teaching and Learning Task Force, he stated that initiative differed from his. End result: NOKOA (Black newspaper) dated 13 July 2006 indicated Mr. Cormier's findings as, "This is a project I hope will promote some possible solutions."

- **August 2005.** AISD's Strategic Plan 2005-2010, Executive Summary, stated elimination of the achievement gap between all groups by 2010. "By 2010, all AISD students will be achieving at higher levels in all subject areas, and achievement gaps between student groups will be eliminated" (Austin Independent School District 2005a, 1).
- **14 October 2005.** Proposed action at the 14 October 2005 meeting of the AISD/City of Austin Joint Subcommittees, Task Forces on Education and the Quality of Life in Austin for African American Students, and the Quality of Life in Austin for Hispanic Students. Motion language specifying enhancement of African Americans' and Hispanics' educational attainment by 2015 counters the Strategic Plan's Executive Summary verbiage, which states elimination of the achievement gap by 2010 (Austin Independent School District 2005b, 1). Motion:

That the AISD/City of Austin Joint Subcommittees establish two parallel task forces to review how AISD and the City of Austin are addressing the challenges in public education and in the community facing many African American and Hispanic children;

That the task forces identify current AISD and City of Austin initiatives approaches and best practices in order to support successful and effective strategies and interventions to enhance the educational attainment for African American and Hispanic students by 2015.

- **8 November 2005.** Per e-mail to Janice Guerrero, executive director for AISD's Planning and Community Relations, I inquired about achievement gap milestones:

"Subject: Strategic Plan Milestones Inquiry

"1. Preface: As a proactive teacher . . . I reviewed the Austin Independent School District Strategic Plan 2005-2010 but found no specific milestones (timeline) or programs geared towards minority teacher recruitment. . . . Mr. Ashton Cumberbatch (Police Dispatcher [Attorney]) recommended I speak with you regarding my milestones inquiry. In short, I am scheduled to meet with Dr. Granada (director, Advanced Academic Services) today (November 8, 2005) regarding in part a proposed communication solution to bridge the "I-35 educational divide" — a means to engage East and West Austin schools. Hence I seek your expertise and ask that you lend insight into questions stated below.

"2. Questions:

"a. Do you have a tentative list of dates (milestones) and specific programs geared towards minority teacher recruitment?

b. What specific measures does the district have in place to 'achieve greater diversity [in its] recruitment and retention efforts'?

c. How does AISD plan to eliminate ‘achievement gaps between student groups . . . especially between African American adolescents and other students?

“3. Summation: In short, what specific issues will AISD review during its strategic plan annual review regarding the aforementioned issues?” (Z.C. Joseph, personal communication, 8 November 2005)

- **8 November 2005.** E-mail reply from Guerrero, “Dear Ms. Joseph, Thank you for your interest in the strategic plan’s annual review process. I am very happy to discuss your questions and any other related matters in a telephone conversation or personal meeting at your convenience.” (Z.C. Joseph, personal communication, 8 November 2005)

End result: On or about the afternoon of 8 November 2005, I conversed with Guerrero and Joey Crumley (strategic plan contact) via telephone conference, which led to a human resources referral whereby I acquired a Recruiting and Staffing Action Plan for Teachers/Other Professionals 2005-2006 per my inquiry regarding Goal 4, teacher recruitment and retention. However, I received no gap elimination milestones. Subsequently, I stated the need for milestones via NAACP and African American Resource Advisory Commission meetings. The commission referred me to legislators.

- **17 November 2005.** Working together to close the achievement gap: Prepared remarks for U.S. Secretary Margaret Spellings at the 33rd Annual Conference of the National Alliance of Black School Educators in Detroit, Michigan. Spellings said, “Education can—and will—break the cycle of poverty. It’s the key to making sure that every single child has the chance to realize the American dream. That’s why four years ago we made an unprecedented commitment to close the achievement gap by 2014” (Spellings 2005).
- **2007-2008.** In 2007, AISD’s home page reflected the Advanced Academic Services Pilot African-American Outreach Initiative. As the consultant leading this effort, I conducted presentations in the community aimed at increasing K-12 African Americans in the district’s GT Program. Verbiage from the Web page titled, AISD’s African-American Outreach, stated, “Empower yourself to put an African-American child on the pathway to college. Come to one of AISD’s Gifted and Talented Presentations, starting October 30th” (Austin Independent School District 2007).
- **March 2007.** Per Superintendent’s Task Force on Strategic Plan Review, Proposed Strategic Plan Revisions, 1 March 2007. [Input Suspense: 16 March 2007], the proposal struck Strategy 1.7 language that specified meeting the needs of African-American students (Z.C. Joseph, personal communication, 8 March 2007).

Priority 1 (Education—Student Achievement)

Deleted Strategy: 1.7. Ensure that the academic and personal needs of African American adolescents and other students of high risk are effectively addressed.

Replacement Strategy: 1.7. Ensure appropriate assessment of students requiring special education services and provide for greater inclusion of special education students in general education classes that are prepared to meet their needs.

Added indicators:

—Special education participation rate for all students and by each student group

—District self-contained/least restrictive environment ratio compared to state and 125% ratios

- **9 March 2007.** Following citizen's communication at the AISD School Board Meeting, Richard Smith, host of the Wakeup Call Show KAZI 88.7 FM, invited me to discuss strategic plan concerns on the air regarding AISD's intent to eliminate Strategy 1.7 as stated above. Note of thanks sent via e-mail following show appearance (Z.C. Joseph, personal communication, 9 March 2007).
- **23 March 2007.** In an e-mail to a concerned citizen, I provided an update of efforts to maintain language of Strategy 1.7, AISD's Strategic Plan 2005-2010 per paragraph 2a.

Legislative process: On or about March 9, 2007, I noted Dr. Guerrero and Joey Crumley's names as contacts for the Quality of Life for African-Americans update report provided during the AISD/City of Austin meeting. They are also contacts for AISD's Strategic Plan input. After providing Strategic Plan input via flyer (previous e-mail) to them, I submitted my "GAP" comments via legislative channels to Congressman Doggett (Austin office faxed input to D.C.) and Representative Dawnna Dukes' office in person. I included e-mails dated on or about November/December 2005, in part, to Dr. Guerrero and Mr. Crumley when I asked the "GAP" elimination by 2010 question to no avail, along with minority teacher recruitment/retention via telephone conference with Dr. Guerrero and Mr. Crumley in December 2005 (Z.C. Joseph, personal communication, 23 March 2007).

- **3 July 2007.** Per e-mail to Amy Averett (Tri-Chair), I inquired about milestones.

"Subject: AISD Strategic Plan Follow-up

"1. AISD Strategic Plan Follow-up Inquiry:

"May I request you provide me an update on changes and/or updates made to AISD's Strategic Plan (2005-2010) as we discussed, in part, with Tri-Chairs this Spring 2007? Is there a link to changes via AISD's Web site? If so, please provide or let me know of a way citizens can remain abreast of milestones or district plans to eliminate the achievement gap between African-American students and their counterparts by 2010" (Z.C. Joseph, personal communication, 3 July 2007). End result: No reply.

- **17 August 2007.** Excerpt from e-mail to Texas Representative Dawnna Dukes follows:

“1. Preface: I appreciate your request for re-election campaign support and recognize your past advertisement(s) with Congressman Lloyd Doggett in Austin Black Newspapers (*NOKOA* and *The Villager*). However, I still await your response to my education question from on or about March 14, 2007. Please reply and bring this issue to closure!

“2. Follow-up: On or about March 14, 2007 I stopped by your office and submitted a local and federal education inquiry in writing to your [education] staffer regarding:

a. Local. Austin Independent School District (AISD) Strategic Plan (2005-2010), Proposed Changes and Impact on Blacks. Issue: I still want to know, how can I (as a citizen) request AISD put its strategic plan milestones online to show transparently how the district plans to eliminate the achievement gap between Blacks and other students by 2010 per verbiage in Strategic Plan (2005-2010), Executive Summary. . . . Notably, I requested in March 2007 and follow-up now to ask that you ask this question on my behalf.” End result: Representative Dukes’ staffer forwarded official reply from AISD, Strategy 1 language changed to “all” students (Z.C. Joseph, personal communication, 17 August 2007).

- **23 September 2007.** Per Granada’s e-mail, I use the term “gifted” to mean African American males or students currently identified as “GT” in accord with AISD’s criteria.

“Subject: Re: AA Conference Feedback, Student Entrepreneur-AAABSE [Austin Area Alliance of Black School Educators] Fundraiser Idea, & Poems!”

Reply: “While indeed the young men you referred to demonstrated a varied degree of talents, using the term ‘gifted’ can broaden the context of the term beyond the definition our GT program serves. Please be sure that you are using the term only as it applies to our program, and in other contexts, use a different terminology—high potential, budding talent, strength-based, high aptitude, or other descriptor that is suitable to the context” (Z.C. Joseph, personal communication, 23 September 2007).

- **24 October 2007.** Excerpt from e-mail to Kevin Foster (assistant professor, director for the Institute for Community, University & School Partnerships at the University of Texas at Austin).

“Subject: Thanks! Re: AISD G/T African-American Data Request... Do you have current data on the number of African-Americans in AISD and in AISD’s Gifted/Talented Program? If so, please forward.” Reply: “I don’t, sorry.” (Z.C. Joseph, personal communication, 24 October 2007)

- **15 November 2007.** E-mail message excerpt to author from Richard Olenchak, Ph.D., P.C., professor, psychologist, and codirector Urban Talent Research Institute, University of Houston.

“Subject: Austin newspaper article

“To Whom It May Concern:

“Our group, the Urban Talent Research Institute, has engaged in a number of studies about such variables as personality development, presence of multiple exceptionalities, ethnic and racial diversity, and gender, among others, with respect to giftedness and talent development. We are the **ONLY** research center in the world that is focused **EXPLICITLY** on talent development of students from urban environments, and we are fairly well seasoned not only at researching this population but also at developing programs that remove the camouflage hiding their talents and then nurture their often overlooked abilities.

“If we can somehow be of assistance to you as you design opportunities for students of color from Austin ISD to be included in gifted and talent development education, we would be interested in at least discussing possibilities with you.”

E-mail reply from author, 17 November 2007:

“Subject: Thanks/Strategic Input Request! Austin newspaper article (1) Gratitude: Thanks for your thorough comments... (4) Input Request: If Urban Talent Research Institute has innovative ways to get “buy-in” from this target audience (e.g. African-American parents, volunteers, and non-profits working with African-American students), please feel free to share!”

Message sent “cc” to Arthur Granada, director, Advanced Academic Services (AISD).

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A Community-Driven and Evidence-Based Approach to Health Policy Development: Reducing Cancer Disparities in Arkansas

by Charlotte Lewellen-Williams, Glen Mays, Paul Greene, and Ronda Henry-Tillman

ABSTRACT

This article describes how minority and underserved communities can contribute to policies for reducing cancer disparities. The Arkansas Cancer Community Network developed a model for engaging communities with decision makers in cancer policy development because Arkansas has significant cancer disparities based on race and ethnicity. A descriptive review of cancer legislation, a qualitative analysis with legislators, and an examination of policy theory formulate the model. The Cancer Policy Development model emerged as a prototype adapted from theory and customized to connect communities and policy makers in the policy process. The model shows promise in successfully integrating policy, research translation, and community engagement.

Charlotte Lewellen-Williams, Dr.P.H., M.P.H., is Assistant Professor and Director of the Center on Community Philanthropy at the Clinton School of Public Service. The center is dedicated to expanding the knowledge, tools, and practice of community-spawned and community-driven philanthropy. Lewellen-Williams joined the Clinton School from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) where she served as the director of policy research and faculty training. She completed her doctorate in public health leadership from the UAMS College of Public Health. Her research experience includes strategies to expand community engagement and civic involvement in public policy development and conducting needs assessments at the population level. She also has substantive experience in applied health policy analysis developed while serving as the lead policy analyst for the National Cancer Institute-funded Arkansas Community Network initiative. A business administration graduate from Howard University in Washington, D.C., Lewellen-Williams earned her master's degree in public health from the UAMS College of Public Health. In her academic research experience, she has extensively studied and published papers on the mentoring of minority faculty and professionals in medical centers. She is a board member of the Arkansas Cancer Coalition and a volunteer with the Arkansas Legislative Black Caucus.

Glen P. Mays, Ph.D., M.P.H., has an extensive research portfolio focusing on strategies for organizing and financing public health and preventive services, health insurance, and medical care services for underserved populations. He serves as

principal investigator on a series of CDC- and RWJF-funded studies examining how public health services are organized, financed, and delivered across local communities and what factors influence the availability and quality of these services. He also serves as co-PI of the AHRQ-funded Arkansas Consortium for Health Services Research, where he oversees investigations into the factors affecting access to care using large administrative databases from Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurers. His work in cancer research currently involves the study of state and local policies to reduce cancer disparities as part of the National Cancer Institute-funded Arkansas Cancer Community Networks (AR-CCN) initiative, led by Dr. Ronda Henry-Tillman, MD (PI). Mays serves as coinvestigator and director of the health policy component of this initiative. Dr. Mays' work in health insurance has included economic evaluations of state strategies to expand health insurance coverage as well as studies to identify the causes and consequences of change in private health insurance designs. Mays recently served on the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine committee for studying the use of performance measures and incentives to improve health care quality. He has published more than fifty journal articles, books, and chapters on issues involving public health systems, health insurance, and safety-net health care programs. He received Ph.D. and M.P.H. degrees in health policy and administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in health economics at Harvard Medical School. He currently serves as Professor and Chair of the Department of Health Policy and Management at the UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health.

Paul Greene, Ph.D., is a clinical health psychologist with twelve years of experience on NIH- and CDC-funded clinical trials and community demonstration projects addressing behavioral risk factors associated with cancer incidence and mortality. He is coinvestigator on the National Cancer Institute-funded Arkansas Cancer Community Networks (AR-CCN) grant. He oversees the core research project and development of all community-based research as Director of Research Development for the AR-CCN grant.

Ronda Henry-Tillman, M.D., F.A.C.S., is a Professor in the Department of Surgery, with an appointment and tenure in the Division of Breast Surgical Oncology. Her clinical expertise spans the arena of breast cancer, colorectal cancer, and surgical endoscopy. She is the Director of the Women's Oncology Clinic. She has more than seven years of experience in Cancer Control where she serves as Director at the Arkansas Cancer Research Center. Her major focus in cancer research includes clinical, translational, behavioral, and health policy and has brought these components together to develop interventions and strategies targeting early detection, treatment, and cancer health disparities. Dr. Henry-Tillman has several leadership roles serving as the Associate Director for the Breast Oncology Surgical Training Fellowship, Principal Investigator for the NCI Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities Community Network Program, Senior Principal Investigator on several pilot grants from the NCI, and Vice President for the Faculty Diversity and Community Outreach Committee.

Cancer health disparities continue to plague minority and underserved communities despite scientific advances in cancer care (American Cancer Society 2004). At the root of this problem are two persistent factors. First, evidence-based interventions for cancer prevention and treatment are not reaching the communities that need them most. This issue is often referred to as the “critical disconnect” between cancer research and cancer care delivery (President’s Cancer Panel 2001). The science of cancer research has advanced with improvements in survival and quality of life through improved screening tests and sophisticated treatment regimens tailored to specific types of cancer. The challenge is how to ensure that those with the greatest need benefit from these advancements. Second, these communities are often not engaged directly in efforts to elucidate barriers and identify solutions that will improve access to evidence-based cancer care. Public health professionals persist in exploring new approaches to address this problem. Health fairs, public screening activities, and church-sponsored outreach programs have collectively contributed to the landscape of multiple approaches aimed at reducing cancer health disparities. Despite the momentum and determination of these approaches, death rates from breast cancer, prostate cancer, and colorectal cancer are still on the rise among minority groups, which are the populations that these interventions have been targeting (American Cancer Society 2004).

BACKGROUND: POLICY AS AN INTERVENTION

Policy is an intervention tool used to impact population health. There is growing recognition of the potential role of public policy strategies as vehicles for reducing cancer risks and improving access to beneficial cancer prevention and treatment services. These strategies often utilize policy instruments such as taxation and regulation to facilitate cancer policy development (Gostin 2001). Policy instruments are vehicles that provide a structured pathway for the successful adoption of key political issues (Gostin 2001). Examples of policy regulation instruments used to impact lung cancer include smoking restrictions and the emergence of smoking bans in areas such as the workplace (Radecki and Brunton 1994; Olive and Ballard 1996). Insurance mandates that require health insurers to cover specified cancer screening and treatment services are another form of policy regulation instrument (Rathore et al. 2000; Bellows et al. 2006).

While policy instruments have been historically used to facilitate cancer policy development, it is important to note that public policies do not always reflect the current evidence base regarding effective cancer prevention and treatment strategies such as those outlined by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. The reason for this is that policy decisions are shaped by a variety of forces, most notably the competing interests of health care providers, payers, and consumer advocates (Schauffler 2000). The priorities of these interest groups are not always based on the scientific evidence. Additionally, public policies do not always reflect the needs and values of greatest concern to the populations who are the intended beneficiaries, resulting in policies that produce unresponsive and ineffective outcomes (Schauffler 2000).

An example of this would be mandated benefit policies that require coverage for certain types of cancer screenings but that do not address that portion of the population without health insurance coverage (Mays and Norton 2000).

There may be multiple reasons why people don't have access to or utilize scientific advancements in cancer care. These reasons may be unknown or unobserved by policy makers and are sometimes unstudied by researchers. This increases the need for community involvement to identify the barriers to make sure that policies reflect the real needs of the community. Promoting evidence-based and community-driven policy development for cancer prevention and control requires a better understanding of the processes that determine whether and how cancer-related public policies reach the legislative agenda.

To shed light on these important issues, this article describes cancer-related policy making in one state that bears a disproportionate burden of cancer mortality and morbidity, particularly among its minority and underserved residents. The objectives of this article are twofold: (1) to identify key processes that have influenced the adoption of state policies addressing cancer in Arkansas over the past two decades; and (2) to propose a new framework for cancer policy development designed to promote the use of evidence-based strategies for cancer prevention and control and engage communities more directly in the policy design process. Special emphasis is given to raising the voice of the minority community in policy development given its increased risk of death from all types of cancers. To inform the development of this framework, we analyze state-level legislative policies considered and adopted in Arkansas during the 1987-2005 period. Findings from this analysis highlight the influence of perceived cancer burden, interest group politics, and key policy entrepreneurs in shaping legislative agenda setting. However, the analysis also suggests that a more staged approach to policy development can facilitate the adoption of evidence-based strategies in cancer prevention and control, even in complex policy environments that are heavily influenced by perceived problems, political dynamics, and multiple policy options. These findings suggest alternatives for promoting the adoption and diffusion of evidence-based cancer policies in state legislative policy environments.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Arkansas is a useful setting in which to study cancer-related policy development at the state level because of the high burden of illness from cancer and the large and persistent disparities in minority populations in cancer prevention, treatment, and outcomes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that 15,200 new cancer cases and 6,140 cancer deaths would occur in Arkansas during the year of 2006 (CDC and NCI 2005). In Arkansas, the average annual cancer incidence rate is reported to be 526 per 100,000 individuals (CDC and NCI 2005). The average annual cancer mortality rate per 100,000 people in Arkansas is 220, compared to 206 nationally (CDC and NCI 2005). Among the fifty states including Washington, D.C., these figures rank Arkansas as the 12th highest in overall cancer mortality rates (CDC and NCI 2005).

Arkansas also has significant disparities based on race and ethnicity (see Table 1). Table 1 gives a breakdown of the disparities in cancer rate for regions by race. The Delta region comprises those counties that border the Mississippi River and have the highest concentration of African Americans (45 percent), along with the highest cancer deaths per 100,000 in the state at 262 deaths per 100,000. Compare this to the Northwest region, which has the highest population of White Arkansans (93 percent) and the lowest cancer death rate per 100,000 at 198 per 100,000. In fact, the Northwest region, with nineteen counties composed primarily of Whites, maintains the lowest mortality rate from cancer than any other region in the state; the Delta region comprises only seven counties and has the highest mortality rate of any other region in the state. This data on cancer disparities in Arkansas provides a basis to begin considering new policy interventions to address the problem.

Table 1. Cancer Disparities in Arkansas

Region	Counties	Population	Ethnicity			Incidence 100,000	Mortality 100,000
			White	African American	Hispanic		
Southeast	14	288,355	56%	43%	3%	379.7	218.6
Central	7	736,823	77%	20%	3%	398.9	202.9
Northwest	19	886,508	93%	2%	9%	350.2	197.8
Southwest	17	333,121	75%	23%	4%	349.7	220.1
Northeast	18	534,347	86%	13%	2%	403.3	223.0
*Pulaski Co. Little Rock	1	336,463	63%	34%	3%	426.5	199.5
**Delta	7	192,722	54%	45%	25%	373.6	261.7

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau 2005, and Arkansas Department of Health 2004 incidence and mortality statistics.
 Age adjusted rates per 100,000 population.
 *Little Rock is the state capitol and the largest city in Pulaski County.
 **The Delta is made up of seven Arkansas counties that border the Mississippi River.

POLICY THEORY

Policy interventions are products of the political process and governmental deliberations that are shaped by many different factors and sources of influence (Gostin 2001). Established theoretical and conceptual models of the policy process provide insight into conditions and processes likely to influence cancer policy making. Leading theory on policy agenda setting and policy development were reviewed for this study. This review was done for two reasons; first, to identify key factors likely to influence cancer-related policy and second, to identify opportunities for using evidence and community-driven priorities to influence cancer-related policy. Two prominent theories emerged that contain elements conducive for adaptation at a community-engagement level.

John Kingdon's multiple streams theory highlights the establishment of the policy agenda and the identification of viable alternatives (Kingdon 1997; Sabatier 2007). Kingdon's theory supports the concept that processes and participants impact

policy agenda setting (Kingdon 1997). The media, the public, Congress, interest groups, and bureaucrats are examples cited by Kingdon as participants in policy agenda setting (Kingdon 1997). The processes described in the multiple streams theory include three streams that “flow” through the political system. The problem stream is the first process, which could include a crisis such as a public health epidemic or a set of indicators like morbidity rates. In regard to the problem stream, Kingdon explains that there must be an identifiable problem before a resolution can be recommended (Kingdon 1997). The second process is the policy stream, which is a steady accumulation of ideas or knowledge about a particular policy issue (Sabatier 2007). Ultimately, solutions to a problem develop from either accumulated knowledge or from a new idea. For example, new research on barriers to colorectal cancer screening may lead to new ideas that improve colorectal cancer screening rates. Lastly, the political stream is made up of elements such as elections, the national mood, and public opinion. The multiple streams theory suggests that each stream can serve as a restriction on policy making by promoting or preventing issues from arriving at the policy agenda where they would traditionally be considered. However the convergence of the three streams is described as the “window of opportunity,” and it is here that policy agenda setting can occur (Kingdon 1997; Sabatier 2007).

To complement the multiple streams theory, the Beaufort Longest Stages Model was analyzed. This model offers a way of thinking about public policy both in concept and in operation. It provides a framework for contemplating important “downstream” policy processes like estimation of alternatives, policy selection, implementation, and evaluation. The Beaufort Longest Stages Model framework emphasizes the interactive nature and interdependence of stages in the policy-making process (Longest 2003). A unique phenomenon depicted in the Longest model is the impact of the preferences of the individuals, organizations, and interests groups affected by the policies along with the ethical, social, and economic inputs on the policy-making process (Longest 2003). This characteristic of the Longest model supports our premise that participation from minority and underserved populations can impact cancer policy development. The primary limitation of the Longest model is that while it may be effective among experienced politicians and skilled political insiders, it is not practical for use at the grassroots level as it does not emphasize a role in which community voices can actively participate. Adapting this model and modifying it for this purpose is a key activity of this research.

The multiple streams theory is important because it tells how an issue actually arrives on the policy agenda and, accordingly, provides insight into how cancer issues can arrive on the political agenda. However, simply being placed on the agenda is not enough. There remains a need to employ the Longest framework, which describes downstream events that impact successful policy selection and passage.

To investigate these concepts, we conducted a retrospective analysis of policy making in Arkansas and developed a proposed model to facilitate the use of evidence and community participation in cancer policy development. Ultimately, this study proposes a model that takes components from the multiple streams theory and the Beaufort Longest Stages Model framework and combines them into a model that

supports a community-driven, evidenced-based approach to health policy development for cancer prevention and control.

METHODS

The research design consists of three primary components: (1) a retrospective, descriptive review of cancer-related legislation passed in Arkansas compared to that of other states; (2) a qualitative analysis of the policy-making process utilizing semi-structured interviews with lead authors of cancer legislation; and (3) development of a new model designed to facilitate the use of evidence and community participation in cancer policy. The retrospective legislative review provided insight about historical patterns of policy making in Arkansas. The objective in conducting the retrospective review was to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the cancer policy-making process in the state. Twenty-two cancer policies were targeted and included in our legislative review. The time frame of 1987-2005 was chosen because 1987 was the oldest recorded legislative record year in the Arkansas State Legislative Database where we abstracted the records; 2005 was the current year of the study.

Legislation in the database that contained key words such as “cancer” or “cancer disparities” was retrieved. These records were analyzed to determine the focus or intent of the original bill and to assess population groups targeted by the legislation. The goal was to highlight policies that specifically addressed some area of cancer health disparities research, prevention, and control. Twenty-two policies were selected for our inventory (see Table 2).

Table 2. Condensed Historical Record of Legislative Activity Health Disparities in Arkansas, 1987-2005

Date	Description of Act
1987	ACT 925: Appropriates fund for construction of the Arkansas Cancer Research Center
1989	ACT 435: Reestablishes statewide cancer registry
1989	ACT 292: Requires specified insurers to offer coverage for mammogram screening
1991	ACT 515: Requires that funds collected from state income tax check-off go for cancer research and treatment facilities; in effect until 1993
1993	ACT 34: Requires that funds collected from state income tax check-off go for cancer research and treatment facilities; in effect until 1995
1995	ACT 508: Amends Arkansas code to comply with federal mammography quality standards
1995	ACT 1231: Prohibits specified individual and group insurers from limiting or excluding coverage for any drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use in the treatment of cancer
1997	ACT 434: Establishes a Breast Cancer Research Program to support research into the cause, cure, treatment, earlier detection, and prevention of breast cancer; establishes a Breast Cancer Control Advisory Board; establishes in the state department of health the Breast Cancer Control Program, part of the national breast and cervical cancer program ACT 483: Appropriates funds for the Breast Cancer Control Program for the Arkansas Department of Health
1997	ACT 828: Appropriates funds for the Breast Cancer Research Program for the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
1999	ACT 397: Enacts the Prostate Cancer Act of 1999; establishes the Oversight Committee on Prostate Cancer
2000	Initiated Act I: Creates the Prevention and Cessation Program Account within the Tobacco Settlement Program Fund; requires the state department of health to develop and administer the Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program; authorizes the department to award grants and allocate money to implement the program
2001	ACT 1698: Amends provisions of the law that distributes additional tax monies from an increased excise tax on cigarettes; requires that all remaining moneys collected from the additional tax to be distributed to the Breast Cancer Research Fund to be used exclusively for the Breast Cancer Research Program and Breast Cancer Control Program
2001	ACT 256: Appropriates funds for upgrading the cancer treatment equipment at the Claude Parrish Radiation Therapy Institute
2003	ACT 1571: An act to require the Minority Health Commission, the Arkansas Department of Health, and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences to study disparities in health and health care among minority and majority populations in Arkansas
2003	ACT 38: Increases the tax on cigarettes from 34 to 59 cents and on other tobacco products from 25 to 32 percent of the manufacturer's selling price
2003	ACT 865: Amends previous law to also direct that the Arkansas Minority Health Commission provide education and awareness programs, support research and screening programs, and distribute information on the prevention, treatment, and detection of prostate and testicular cancer in the state
2003	ACT 179: Amends previous law to require insurers that provide coverage for mastectomies conform with the requirements of the federal Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998
2005	ACT 1414: Creates the Cervical Cancer Task Force; requires the task force to make recommendations to the Breast Cancer Control Advisory Board; further requires the task force to develop standards and policy recommendations
2005	ACT 2236: Establishes the Colorectal Cancer Act of 2005; creates the Colorectal Cancer Control and Research Program ACT 1859: Provides an appropriation from the general improvement fund to the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences cancer control department colorectal cancer screening program
2005	ACT 2059: Appropriates funds for the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences stereo tactic breast biopsy program

In addition, we searched the National Cancer Institute's State Cancer Legislative Database, which contains legislative records for all fifty states. This national search was done to compare Arkansas' legislative record on cancer control with that of other states during the same period. We narrowed the set of policies studied by selecting legislation that either emphasized primary and secondary cancer prevention or policies that focused on cancer disparities. Twenty-two policies in our inventory were reviewed in three major domains: reach and scope, evidence-based, and policy instrument type.

The reach-and-scope domain compared Arkansas cancer policy with that of other states to determine whether other states practiced policy intervention in areas where Arkansas did not. This analysis was used to identify potential gaps in Arkansas cancer disparity policy. The evidence-based assessment used criteria from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force guidelines and recommendations regarding cancer. Lastly, the policy inventory was studied to determine the degree to which different types of policy instruments were used in policy development, including taxation and regulatory authority. This distinction between policy instruments is important because it provides insight into what kinds of instruments are needed to improve the cancer disparity-related legislative process in Arkansas.

To supplement the review of Arkansas cancer-related legislation, qualitative descriptive data was analyzed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with lead legislative sponsors of three key pieces of cancer policy that was proposed, adopted, and enacted between the years of 1987-2005. The three legislators were chosen based on their role as lead author of the legislation, their knowledge and involvement in the policy process surrounding the legislation, and their level of accessibility for this study.

Questions for the interviews were intended to reveal evidence of the Beaufort Longest Stages Model framework and the Kingdon multiple streams theory as a means to further guide development of our model. Responses from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed for specific themes on factors that facilitate or inhibit policy adoption. Results from the interviews are grouped below with direct quotations to provide context.

RESULTS

Cancer Policy Development in Arkansas

Analysis of the Laws, Policy Reach and Scope

In terms of reach and scope, the overall finding is that Arkansas has enacted cancer policy in a variety of different areas. In some areas, Arkansas was an early adopter of cancer legislation while in other areas Arkansas cancer policy was considered comparable in reach and scope to that of other states. Results show that Arkansas was an early adopter of colorectal cancer policy. With the enactment of Act 2236, the Colorectal Cancer Act of 2005, Arkansas became one of the first of sixteen states to have legislation targeting screening, treatment, and research for colorectal cancer. Regarding breast cancer coverage by private health insurers, Arkansas is considered

comparable to most states in this policy area. Arkansas is one of only twenty-one states that requires insurers to provide coverage for inpatient care such as a mastectomy (National Cancer Institute 2006). Arkansas is one of thirty-six states that requires insurers to provide coverage for post-mastectomy services such as reconstructive surgery. Arkansas, Michigan, and Mississippi are the only states that currently require that insurers offer, not provide, coverage for mammography (National Cancer Institute 2006).

Evidenced-Based Policy

One key finding in this portion of the analysis is that only two cancer policies met the evidence-based criteria. This is due largely in part because of their wording regarding screening and early detection that was based on the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force guidelines. Act 434, the Breast Cancer Act of 1997, and Act 2236, the Colorectal Cancer Act of 2005, both incorporated language specific to the national guidelines. However, these are not the only evidenced-based cancer screenings. Cervical cancer is also a disease with well-documented, evidenced-based screening guidelines, yet analysis of the inventory found that Arkansas did not have policy targeting screening and early detection for this cancer. This finding has noteworthy application for African American women who suffer higher incidence of negative outcomes from cervical cancer primarily due to late-stage diagnosis and treatment (American Cancer Society 2004).

In the absence of consensus or evidence on appropriate prostate cancer screening, Arkansas has refrained from mandating coverage for prostate cancer screening, yet it has not been as proactive with evaluation policy as other states. Arkansas trails behind states like New Jersey and Washington that have passed legislation designed to evaluate cancer-control strategies including emerging evidence on prostate cancer and creating a plan to reduce health disparities regarding prostate cancer (National Cancer Institute 2005). This finding is particularly relevant given the high incidence of prostate cancer among African American men and their need to begin screening earlier for this disease (American Cancer Society 2004).

Policy Instruments

The findings surrounding policy instruments suggest that Arkansas has had a balanced approach to using policy instruments. A full array of policy instruments were recorded in the policy inventory. Prominent policy instruments included program funding, taxation, and regulatory authority. One example of program funding was Initiated Act I, which directed funds from the Arkansas tobacco settlement to establish numerous tobacco-cessation programs including the building of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Public Health. Taxation was utilized with Act 1698, which mandated distribution of the tobacco tax to enhance funding for the breast cancer research program at the department of health. Regulatory instruments encompass insurance mandate laws such as Act 1231, which required insurance coverage for drugs recognized for cancer treatment.

Qualitative Results

Two major themes emerged during the interviews: evidence and community participation. The qualitative interviews allowed us to see examples from the past where use of evidence was a significant factor in helping legislation pass successfully. The policy makers interviewed had an appreciation for how evidence is important in the policy-making process. An example of this is seen in the following statement of one legislator interviewed:

“We need to stop spending money in the wrong direction. . . . Minority life expectancies were much shorter than majority, and there was no data in the state that could explain why the disparity exists.”

The first finding from the qualitative data is that using evidence strategically in the policy arena can be important in getting cancer policy passed. For example, in the breast and cervical cancer debates, the lead author of one piece of legislation said it was critical to use the data to get her policy passed, and bringing in the evidence was a key part of the process. She said: “Minority women were dying 33 percent above the national average from breast cancer. . . . People who are not working or on Medicare or work only thirty hours a week and don’t qualify for Medicaid and whose employers don’t provide insurance were not getting screened.”

The lead author of the colorectal cancer legislation confirmed that getting the evidence into the dialogue along with other political considerations was vital to reaching consensus around this policy.

“I needed medical and political conversations to happen at the same time.”

Community Participation Need

The second finding from the qualitative data is that community participation could facilitate policy adoption. Minority and underserved populations can participate in the policy arena and be supportive in finding positive alternatives to reducing cancer health disparities. Examples of this can be found in the breast and cervical cancer debates. The lead author of this study commented that she needed people at the grassroots level to help her with their legislators. She also discussed that the idea for the breast and cervical cancer legislation emerged from what she found out from her personal experience and from working with minority women in her church and neighborhood as well as with other breast cancer survivors.

Examples of the need for community participation to help facilitate success during the colorectal cancer policy decision-making process are seen in comments from one lead legislative sponsor who said:

“If people have not been touched by colorectal cancer then they might not vote for it. . . . I needed someone from the community as well as a public entity to be involved in how we would structure an approach to colorectal cancer for the state.”

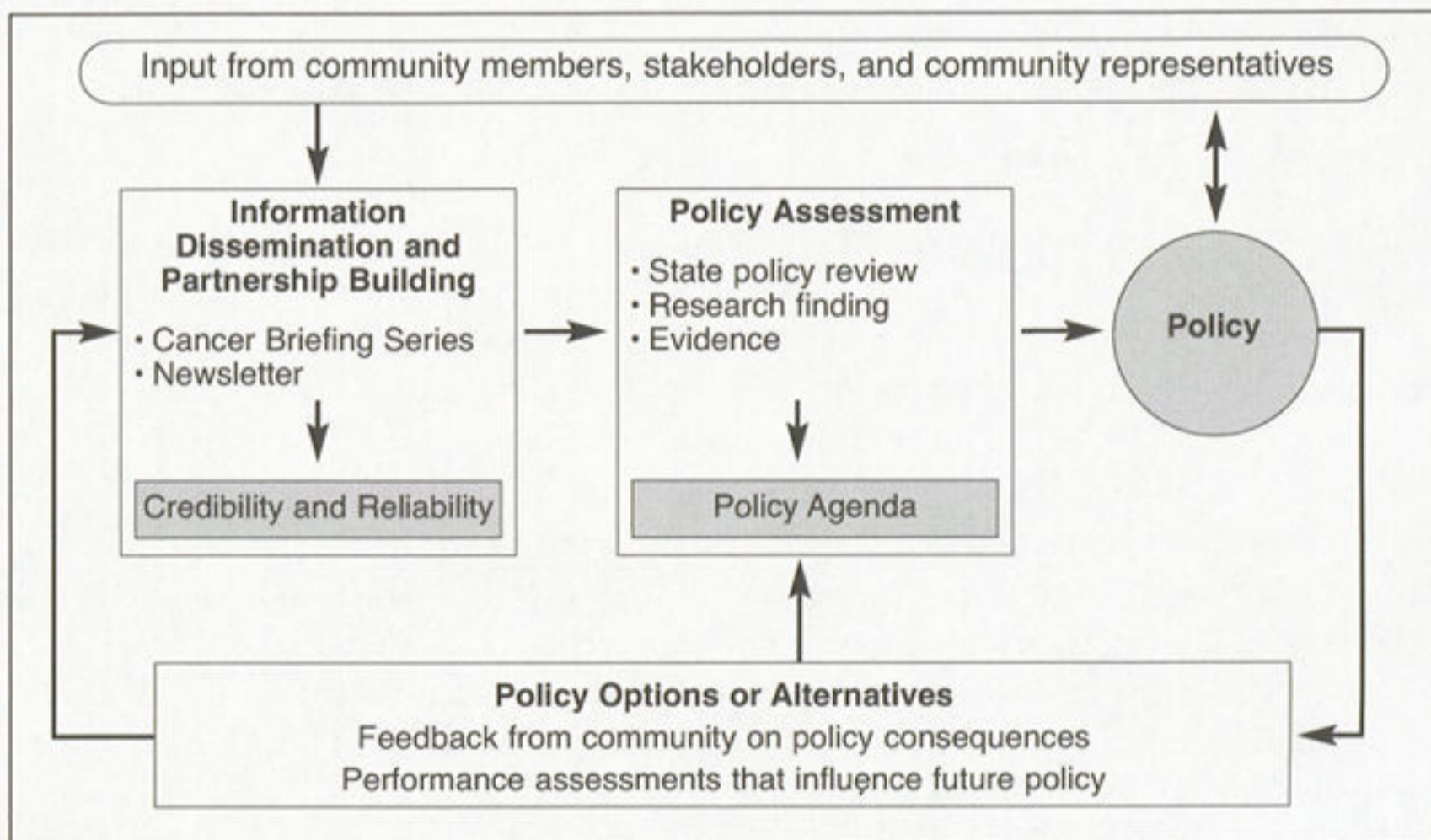
Overall, findings from the qualitative data helped support the premise that public policy often does not reflect the current base of evidence regarding effective cancer prevention and treatment strategies and that community participation is necessary and beneficial to successful policy adoption. The model proposed will address both issues.

Improving the Process: A Proposed Model for Cancer Policy Development

Arkansas' historical approach to cancer policy development has yielded few evidence-based cancer policies, which suggests the need for a process that will improve the translation of research findings into policy-related suggestions for legislators. In addition, communities of color have not been given a sufficient voice in the policy development process. To address these issues, we studied leading policy theory and merged findings from our retrospective inventory review and qualitative formative research to develop a model for community-driven cancer policy development.

The model proposed in this study is the Cancer Policy Development (CPD) model (see Figure 1). This model is adapted from the Beaufort Longest Stages Model for public policy development. The model has three stages: information dissemination and partnership building, policy assessment, and policy options or alternatives. The model promotes a framework for cancer disparity policy development that incorporates research findings from community-based participatory involvement grounded in evidence-based knowledge and recognizes the importance of the individual experiences of high-risk groups for cancer such as African Americans.

Figure 1. Cancer Policy Development model



The goal of the CPD model is to establish a framework for cancer policy development that promotes policies that use evidence-based prevention and treatment strategies while also engaging communities more directly in the policy development process (Lewellen-Williams 2004). For example, during the first stage, activity is designed to bring minorities, community advocates, researchers, and professionals in the health care industry together with legislators in an organized, structured forum to discuss policy strategies for reducing the cancer burden. This first stage is

responsive to findings from the qualitative research where interviewees express the importance of community-level influence as a necessary part of their policy strategy. One activity in Stage 1 is the Arkansas legislative cancer briefing series. The series is designed to educate the target audience on the depth of Arkansas' cancer disparities problem; identify the policy questions and understand the information needs of policy makers; engage the voices and experience of cancer victims, particularly minorities that have been disproportionately affected by cancer; and translate research findings into policy-relevant implications. The series stimulates dialogue between legislators, community advocates, and researchers to explore ways to use public policy to find solutions. The briefing series' primary audience is elected officials, including members of the Arkansas House of Representatives and Senate. Other stakeholders, who play key roles in the current administration such as the governor's health policy advisor and the health policy representative from the Arkansas Division of Health, were also targeted to ensure involvement from all sources. Partnership building involved connecting with partners for participation in the Arkansas cancer legislature briefing series from several organizations with a track record for influencing the policy process such as: Arkansas Prostate Cancer Foundation, Arkansas Cancer Coalition, Arkansas Medical Dental Pharmaceutical Association, Arkansas Cancer Research Center, Arkansas Division of Health, and American Cancer Society.

The Arkansas cancer legislative briefing series involves the partners listed above as well as state and local elected officials in a meeting twice a year for information sharing regarding cancer prevention and control. The meeting format allows for presentation of district- and county-specific cancer disparities data in accessible language that goes beyond generalities to policy implications. Disseminating information by county and district during these briefings enables policy makers to identify the burden of cancer in their locales and see how cancer interventions impact their districts. Using evidence-based information that directly affects and is associated with their voting constituency makes the series valuable and interesting to policy makers. These meetings also give the cancer prevention and control research community an opportunity to build a reputation as an objective, reliable data resource for public health information, specifically on cancer disparities, among legislators and other policy actors. Data shared twice a year during this series includes but is not limited to: data on cancer mortality and morbidity rates (such as changes, fluctuations, improvements by county/district), data on access to and rates of cancer screening by county/district, and updates on cancer prevention and control interventions by county/district. Attendees receive direct feedback regarding up-to-date interventions, community-based participatory research plans, and pilot study projects.

At each briefing at least one cancer survivor or community advocate gives personal testimony of the effectiveness of cancer control interventions in their community and/or shares personal experiences of cancer's impact on their life. Often these messages reflect stories of social or racial inequities faced while trying to understand, access, or utilize cancer care. This approach is uniquely different and valuable to policy makers because it illuminates the role that race, education, and social status still play in the delivery of vital services involving cancer prevention

and control. It also raises the value of the community-based participatory approach because it provides a human element to evidence-based data by individualizing the impact of current or proposed cancer policies.

Stage 1 activity also includes the development and distribution of short, frequent publications that target high-priority or single-issue topics related to cancer or cancer disparities. This activity is based on a study that found the responsiveness of policy makers was enhanced by brief, frequent, targeted information (Soriano and Baugh 2002). The study determined that because of busy schedules and limited time allocation, most policy makers appreciated receiving information in a concise, direct manner (Soriano and Baugh 2002). Based on those findings, one-page data bulletins or issue briefs are published addressing specific cancer-related items and describing the policy issues related to these topics so legislators can quickly identify problems and their policy implications.

Stage 2 policy assessment continues the synthesis, framing, and analysis of community voice and evidenced-based information disseminated to policy makers in Stage 1 and broadens the scope to include policy assessment of current state cancer legislation. Stage 2 was developed to answer findings from the retrospective descriptive assessment of past and present Arkansas cancer policies. The goal of the assessment is to evaluate the effectiveness of a policy in meeting its original goals and determine positive outcomes or unintended consequences of legislation on specific population groups. Assessing policy impact is particularly relevant in a state like Arkansas where term limits restrict the number of years a policy maker can serve in the state legislature. This results in a consistent turnover of new legislators coming into the policy-making process at different intervals over time. Educating these legislators on what policies are working and what policies are not and informing them of potential "gaps" in the law where opportunities for cancer policy intervention exist is one important objective of Stage 2. Additionally, Stage 2 policy assessment facilitates collaboration and partnerships aligned across communities, researchers, and health professionals that is vital to support evidenced-based policy outcomes.

Stage 2 policy assessment of the CPD model utilizes the RE-AIM evaluation structure as a roadmap to review current Arkansas cancer policy to determine: implementation or enforcement; reach of policies; intent of statewide adoption and/or diffusion; intended effect; maintenance or sustainability; and implications of socioeconomic impact within minority populations across the state (Glasgow et al. 1999). Stage 2 of the model helps to identify areas needing more policy research and locate "gray areas" that are unknown or unstudied, in which sufficient information is not available to make policy recommendations. This facilitates development of a future research cancer policy agenda. Activity in Stage 2 also involves tracking other state policies to assess how they have dealt with issues of cancer disparities.

In response to findings regarding use of evidence, the model contains a final stage described as Stage 3, policy options or alternatives. Stage 3 builds on Stages 1 and 2 by allowing issues studied during those stages to be revisited or modified. This stage is crucial to the policy process because cancer disparities' policy formulated today or currently in place is subject to becoming inadequate because of biological, cultural, demographic, ethical, legal, social, or technological changes

(Soriano and Baugh 2002). An example of this would be continuously changing policy recommendations regarding use of the cervical cancer vaccine. Recommendations to amend policy also result from new priorities or needs perceived by individuals or interest groups (Soriano and Baugh 2002).

During Stage 3, community advocates, researchers, and health professionals collaborate to lay out information for policy makers so they can make informed decisions about the advantages or disadvantages of options they face. Feedback from key stakeholders in targeted communities that experience consequences of policies is also gathered and shared with policy makers in a concise, credible, and reliable manner. The purpose here is not to advocate policies or make policy recommendations but instead offer policy options or alternatives based on sound assessment and documented information. Recognizing that policy makers have advocates, the objective in Stage 3 is to provide them with experts to help them sift through information and assist them in framing the issues and ultimately present a policy alternative to eliminating a problem.

CONCLUSION

Policy intervention is one approach to help lessen the suffering and dying from cancer through laws designed to improve access to up-to-date cancer prevention and control strategies for the public. The need for policy intervention is often greatest among minority and underserved populations that continue to bear a disproportionate burden from this disease. This study documents one state's progression of cancer policy development by analyzing aspects of the legislative process retrospectively, aligning it with theory and contextualizing it with qualitative data from key policy makers of that period. Based on these three components a model was developed to facilitate community participation in evidenced-based policy making. The Cancer Policy Development model is new and largely untested but is grounded in theory and past experience with the Arkansas policy process. This model takes policy theory and applies it to relevant cancer policy, which has not been done before. Through continued collaborations and further development of the model, new policy going forward will benefit from the lessons learned and strategies formulated from using this model approach to public health policy development.

The main limitation of the model is that it has not been tested yet. Recognizing that the model is just in the process of being implemented, an evaluation plan is in place to see how well the model works at promoting evidenced-based, community-driven cancer policy decision making and to determine the degree to which groups at high risk for cancer, such as African Americans, gain a greater voice in the policy process. The evaluation framework tracks process-level measures such as demands for evidence from policy makers as well and community-driven policy activity at the state and local level. The evaluation continues to track the adoption of new cancer policy in Arkansas and other processes that flow out of the model.

Several gains are expected to result from the impact of this model. First, stronger policy attention should be directed toward cancer prevention and control. Second, more evidence-based cancer policy should be adopted in Arkansas reflecting the most up-to-date science and translation of research findings. Third, more health

policy should be enacted that is responsive to the needs of communities of color and the unique barriers they face regarding accessing cancer prevention and treatment interventions.

Factors that affect policy adoption should have wide application in other state contexts. The magnitude of cancer-related issues may differ among states, such as which populations or ethnic groups are affected or which types of cancers are most critical. However, issues regarding community participation and use of evidence should be the same across states. Therefore, if successful, the model should be generalizable to other states and able to transfer to other public health areas beyond cancer.

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Effective Policies for Promoting Early Behavioral Development

by Valerie Rawlston Wilson and Renee R. Hanson

ABSTRACT

Before a child enters kindergarten he or she is expected to have a combination of intellectual skills, motivational qualities, and social-emotional skills. Yet, most public policy recommendations for improving student outcomes have focused largely on academic progress, with less attention given to behavior or social and emotional development. This article examines some of the cultural, economic, and social factors that contribute to student misbehaviors (or the perception thereof), particularly among African American children, and proposes specific public policies that could more productively improve both behavioral and academic outcomes.

Before a child enters kindergarten he or she is expected to have a combination of intellectual skills, motivational qualities, and social-emotional skills. According to a National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) study, teachers rate these behavioral qualities as more important to school success than being able to read (Boyd et al. 2005). In fact, school readiness encompasses all developmental domains (social, emotional, physical, and cognitive) and is cultivated when all children have access to quality early care and learning experiences in classrooms with warm teachers and an engaging learning environment. When it comes to social-emotional skills for children, the development of secure attachments between children and caregivers/teachers is important because better social and emotional development not only benefits young children but can also provide long-term positive social, emotional, and academic success that can carry these children through their adult lives. However, in recent years, appropriate behavioral development has become a growing problem in some kindergarten classrooms.

Research has shown an increase in aggressive behaviors among American kindergarteners. These aggressive behaviors include talking back to teachers, profanity, and kicking and hitting adults. According to the NIEER, "Teachers state

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that about 20 percent of children entering kindergarten do not possess the necessary social and emotional skills for school readiness, and for low-income families, about 30 percent of children may lack the necessary skills” (Boyd et al. 2005). These problems are not only occurring with low-income schools but in middle-income schools as well. As reported in Time magazine, a 2003 report by the Partnership for Children, a child-advocacy group in Texas, showed that 93 percent of kindergarteners surveyed at 39 schools (child care centers and elementary schools) had emotional and behavioral problems (Wallis 2003). The group also found that half of the day care centers had experienced incidents of rage and anger. Research seems to suggest that there has been an increase in suspensions and expulsions among pre-K and kindergarten children across U.S. schools. As the most severe action a school can exercise against a student, expulsion may be defined as the complete removal of educational services without the benefit of alternative services (special education programs or alternative schools). Researchers have found that the problem of expulsion is not only a factor in kindergarten through 12th grades but has become a larger problem in prekindergarten as well (Gilliam 2005).

According to a 2005 national study, “Prekindergarteners Left Behind: Expulsion Rates in State Prekindergarten Systems” by Dr. Walter Gilliam of the Yale University Child Study Center, prekindergarten expulsion rates have surpassed those of K-12. The study sample involved 3,898 prekindergarten classrooms representing all of the nation’s fifty-two state-funded prekindergarten systems operating across forty states. The results show that, nationally, 6.67 preschoolers were expelled per 1,000 enrolled. Gilliam finds that “Although this rate for state-subsidized prekindergarten is lower than what has been previously reported for child care programs, the prekindergarten expulsion rate is 3.2 times the rate for K-12 students” (2005). Another alarming trend shows that expulsion rates are higher among older preschoolers, African Americans, and boys; boys were more than four times as likely to be expelled than girls.

Startling results such as these lead to questions not only about student behavioral problems that lead to higher rates of expulsion, but also about how family characteristics, school administration, the classroom environment, and teacher characteristics impact these rates. Child psychologists and behavioral specialists have often noted that a number of social trends are factors in this growing problem. For example, with low-income parents working longer hours, children are spending longer hours in day care and as a result often lack much needed quality time with their parents. Increased academic pressures faced in kindergarten resulting from the No Child Left Behind Act have also become a major concern among educators. According to the Time article, most kindergartens are so inundated by yearly tests that some classrooms have eliminated recess or limited recess to only 15 minutes a day (Wallis, 2003).

In an article, C. Cybele Raver (2002) examines how academic readiness may overshadow the importance of children’s social and emotional development. Children’s emotional stability is especially important because evidence shows that emotionally well-adjusted children have greater chances of early school success and that children experiencing serious emotional problems face the risk of having difficulty in school.

Most public policy recommendations for improving student outcomes have focused largely on academic progress, with less attention given to behavior or social and emotional development. While the foremost objective of education is learning, the previously reviewed literature on this topic reveals that the process can be easily interrupted when a child exhibits problem behaviors that interfere with the learning process. In this article we examine patterns in the evaluation of student behavior both for the classroom as a whole as well as for individual students using data from the “Early Childhood Longitudinal Study: Kindergarten Class of 1998–99 (ECLS–K)” (Rock and Pollack 2002). Through this analysis we seek to address the following questions:

1. Why are so many young students lacking the appropriate social-emotional development necessary for school readiness?
2. To what extent does race affect a teacher’s perception of student behavior?
3. Is there a way school administrators and teachers can better assist these young students before behavior problems further interfere with their social-emotional growth?

By addressing these issues we seek to identify some of the factors that contribute to student misbehaviors (or the perception thereof) as well as specific public policies that could more productively affect these outcomes both directly and indirectly. In the next section, we present the results of our data analysis and conclude with policy recommendations in the final section of the article.

DATA ANALYSIS

The ECLS–K is a nationally representative survey of children, teachers, and parents that focuses on children’s early school experiences beginning with kindergarten through fifth grade. From this data, we have drawn a sample of 5,945 kindergarten students from public schools across the United States. As a proxy for social-emotional development, we use student behavior measured both in terms of the teacher’s evaluation of overall classroom behavior and the teacher’s evaluation of individual student behavior.

In the first measure, teacher’s evaluation of overall classroom behavior, teachers were asked to rate the behavior of the children in their classes using responses that ranged from “group misbehaves very frequently” to “group behaves exceptionally well.” Cultural competency and sensitivity have long been issues related to teachers’ perceptions and expectations of their students, particularly in inner-city classrooms where the majority of students are African American or from low-income backgrounds. In these environments it becomes particularly important that teachers recognize that children from at-risk groups (e.g., low-income or single-parent homes) may be struggling with myriad emotional and behavioral problems that can make teaching difficult and that the teacher’s response to such problems can affect students positively or negatively.

Figures 1 through 5 provide a comparison of teachers’ evaluations of classroom behavior based upon the racial composition of the class and the race of the teacher.

In general, most teachers in the sample report that their students “misbehave occasionally.” However, another pattern that emerges is that classes with a majority of Black students (51 percent or more) are more commonly labeled as misbehaving compared to classes in which the majority of students are not Black. Also, White teachers are more likely to report frequent misbehavior of majority Black classes than Black, Hispanic, or Asian teachers.

Teachers also rated the social and emotional development of individual students using a social rating scale (SRS). The items were rated on a scale of one (never) to four (very often), indicating how often a child demonstrates certain behaviors or social skills. For the purpose of our analysis, we focus on the two indicators at opposite ends of the spectrum: approaches to learning and externalizing problem behavior. A description of the items included in each scale is listed below:

- **Approaches to learning** measures behaviors that affect the ease with which children can benefit from the learning environment. It includes six items that rate the child’s attentiveness, task persistence, eagerness to learn, learning independence, flexibility, and organization.
- **Externalizing problem behavior** includes acting out behaviors. Five items on this scale rate the frequency with which a child argues, fights, gets angry, acts impulsively, and disturbs ongoing activities.

These two scales were chosen as the focus of this analysis because of the inverse relationship between acting-out behaviors and a child’s ability to benefit from the learning environment. Psychologists have discovered that children who act in anti-social ways are less likely to be accepted by classmates and teachers (Kupersmidt and Coie 1990; Shores and Wehby 1999). They may also participate less frequently in classroom activities and perform more poorly in school than their more emotionally positive, pro-social counterparts, even after one controls for the effects of children’s preexisting cognitive skills and family backgrounds (Ladd et al. 1999). David H. Arnold et al. (1999) and S.P. Hinshaw (1992) also argue that children’s early academic skills and emotional adjustment may be bidirectionally related, meaning that young children who struggle with early reading and learning may grow increasingly frustrated and more disruptive.

Using regression analysis, we examined how individual student traits, family background, teacher characteristics, and classroom characteristics affect student behaviors as evaluated by the teacher SRS. The individual student traits used in the analysis are race and gender of the student, whether he or she has been diagnosed with a disability (learning, activity, mobility, speech, hearing, or vision), and the type of preschool environment the child was in prior to starting kindergarten (parental care, relative care, nonrelative care, Head Start, or other type of center-based care). Family background includes the family structure (one parent, two parent, or other), number of siblings, and socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status is measured using five quintile indicators (quintile one being the lowest and five being the highest) that were derived from parents’ education, income, and occupational prestige score. Teacher characteristics include the race and gender of the teacher, teacher’s years of experience teaching kindergarten and/or preschool, edu-

cational attainment, and certification in either elementary or early childhood education. Classroom characteristics include whether it is an all-day kindergarten program, the percentage of Black students and Hispanic students in the class, and the class size.

The average SRS scores by race of the child indicate that African American and Hispanic kindergarteners score lower than their White and Asian counterparts on the "approaches to learning" scale and score higher on the "externalizing problem behavior" scale (see Table 1). Tables 2 and 3 present full regression estimates for the approaches to learning and externalizing problem behavior scales, respectively. Across all racial groups, males score worse than their female counterparts on both scales. This result is consistent with much of the literature on student achievement and behavior outcomes.

Other factors that had consistent results across both scales are the effect of students diagnosed with a disability and the effect of socioeconomic status. As can be expected, students with a disability (learning, activity, mobility, speech, hearing, or vision) score lower on the approaches to learning scale and higher on the externalizing problem behavior scale than students not diagnosed with some type of disability. This result stresses not only the importance of early and accurate diagnosis of disabilities, but also the importance of pairing the diagnosis with appropriate treatment or special instruction.

Higher socioeconomic status is associated with better performance on both scales. This result is also consistent with what has been found in the literature and implies that improving student outcomes is a matter of not only addressing the needs of the individual student, but the needs of the family as well.

In terms of the approaches to learning scale, attending Head Start prior to entering kindergarten and having a teacher with a higher-level degree are found to have statistically significant effects on a student's score, although not necessarily in the direction one would expect. For example, compared to students who were cared for by a parent, students who attended Head Start score lower. This relationship is particularly significant among White students and could actually be the result of differences in socioeconomic status between working-class White families who send their children to Head Start and those who care for them at home. Also, teachers with a master's degree or a professional or doctorate degree rate students lower than teachers with an associate's or bachelor's degree. One possible explanation for this may be that teachers with higher-level degrees tend to have higher expectations of their students.

In our analysis of the externalizing problem behavior scale, we found that children in all-day kindergarten programs as well as those with more siblings are less likely to exhibit problem behavior in the classroom. This suggests that those who spend more time with other children are more likely to develop better social skills. On the other hand, students who attended Head Start or some other type of center-based care before entering kindergarten scored higher (worse) on the externalizing problem behavior scale than their counterparts who were cared for by a parent. Again, students in these preschool programs are more likely to have working parents, who probably have less time to spend with their children. As a result, the child's response may be to act out in an attempt to gain more attention.

The teacher's race relative to the race of the student was also found to have significant effects in terms of the evaluation of problem behavior, especially when it comes to African American children. For example, compared to White teachers, African American teachers rate African American children lower on the externalizing problem behavior scale while Asian teachers rate African American children higher. This further stresses the importance of cultural sensitivity between teachers and students.

Finally, teachers with more years of experience tend to rate students lower (better) on the externalizing problem behavior scale than their less experienced counterparts. This result could be interpreted in two ways. First, it could be the case that experience translates into better understanding of how to identify, prevent, or address behavioral issues before they become a major problem. Second, it could be the case that more experienced teachers are selected into classrooms with more well-behaved students.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Following from the results of our analysis, we propose four broad-based policy recommendations for addressing the behavioral as well as the academic aspects of student learning outcomes. These recommendations are also consistent with those proposed in two National Urban League publications: "Opportunity Compact" (2007a) and "Recommendations for Reauthorizing No Child Left Behind" (2007b).

1. Enact a federal teacher and principal supply policy to identify and support highly qualified and effective teachers and leaders for all students.

Our regression analysis shows that teachers with more years of experience are less likely to identify children as exhibiting problem behavior that interferes with the learning environment. However, schools serving students with the most challenging needs are most likely to have the least qualified and least effective teachers. As noted in the National Urban League's "State of Black America 2007," high-poverty schools have three times as many uncertified or out-of-field teachers as low-poverty schools (2007c). Higher pay and incentives such as home-buying programs or tax credits should be provided to attract effective school leaders and teachers to serve in high-need schools.

Our results also reveal that boys are more likely than girls to exhibit problem behavior in the classroom. Therefore, special attention should be paid to recruiting African American males into teaching and educational leadership positions through scholarships, loan forgiveness, fellowships, and other incentives. In the sample used for this analysis, there was only one Black male kindergarten teacher out of 110 total male teachers.

2. Provide mandatory, high-quality, early childhood education for all children.

Early learning programs that possess high-quality curriculums improve children's self-esteem, motivation, and social behavior. Two programs in particular that demonstrated these qualities and success are the Chicago Child-Parent Center (CPC) Program, 1967-present, and the Abecedarian Project, 1972-1985. The programs provided both short- and long-term effects of high-quality, preschool education for young children from poor families. The CPCs stress attention to health and nutritional services along with the provision of family-support services to economically disadvantaged children from preschool to early elementary school. As a result, CPC children have demonstrated better social adjustment, less frequent grade retention, and lower rates of crime as adolescents.

The Abecedarian Project, designed to examine the benefits of full-day educational child care for low-income African American children from birth to age five, has also demonstrated similar results for participating cohorts. The project stressed language development coupled with social, emotional, cognitive, and physical areas of development. Program participants have had higher cognitive test scores from the toddler years through age twenty-one, higher scores on achievement tests in mathematics and reading during their elementary and secondary school years, higher rates of high school graduation and college attendance, and lower levels of grade retention and placement in special education classes.

3. Enact more family-friendly policies that benefit the child by improving the stability of parents.

Socioeconomic status has been found to be a significant determinant both in terms of student academic achievement and student behavior. As the primary teachers and influencers on their children's lives, stable parents help to shape more socially and emotionally stable children. Therefore, policies aimed at providing better wages, quality, affordable child care, and paid leave time for working parents would help to eliminate the need for multiple jobs or extra long work hours, allowing parents more of the much needed quality time with their children. Additionally, policies that encourage rather than penalize the acquisition of additional training or education for parents would open doors for those seeking to climb the economic ladder.

4. Incorporate cultural sensitivity training into the college curriculum or certification prerequisites for all teachers.

Based upon both the classroom and individual student behavior analyses presented in this article, African American children are less likely to be labeled as "problem students" by African American teachers and more likely to receive these negative labels from White and Asian teachers. Although, the underlying influences for these evaluations can not be identified in our analysis, the results tend to suggest that perhaps teachers who are more sensitive to or familiar with a student's background are less likely to label (or mislabel) them prematurely. Providing all teachers with a

better frame of reference for student behaviors would go a long way toward avoiding the transmission of negative signals between teachers and students, thus improving the overall learning environment.

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Figure 1

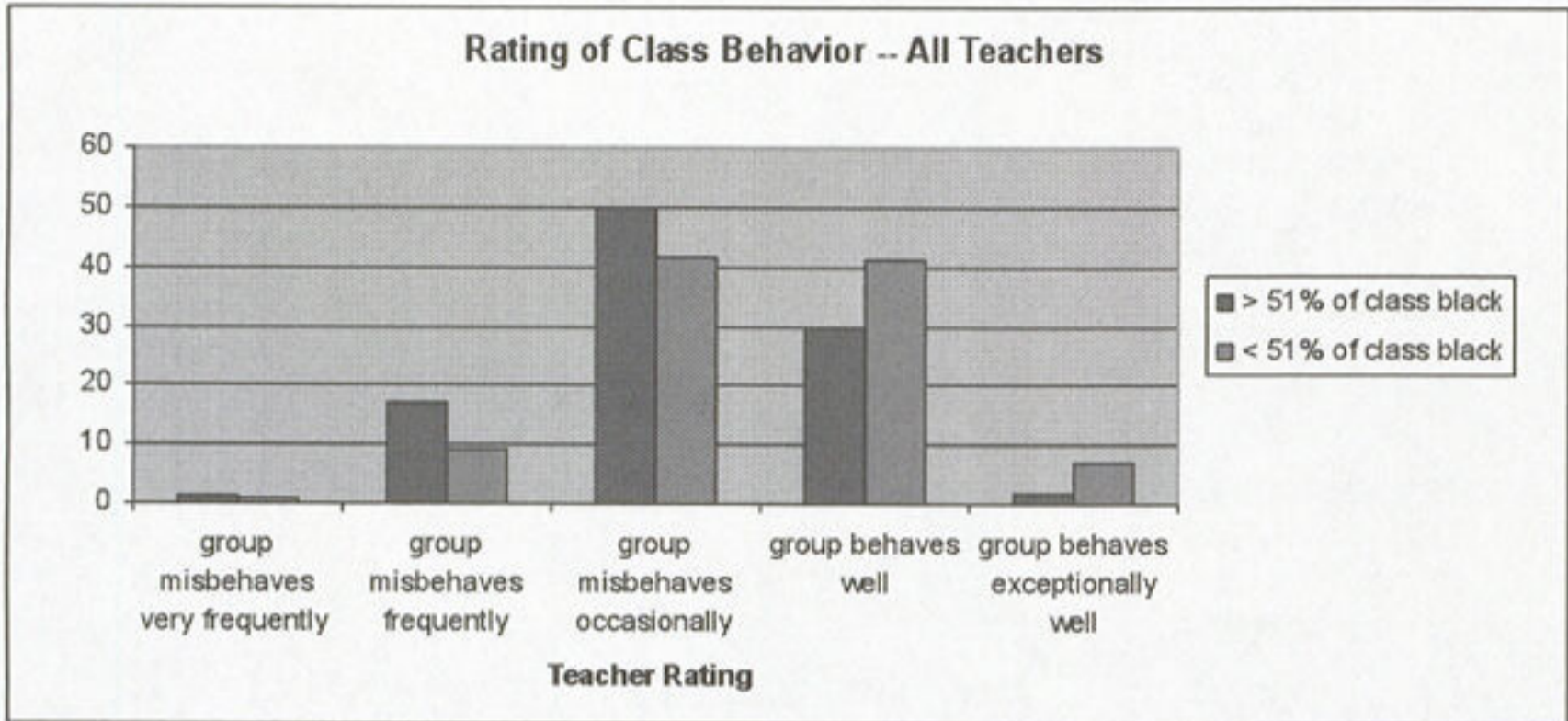


Figure 2

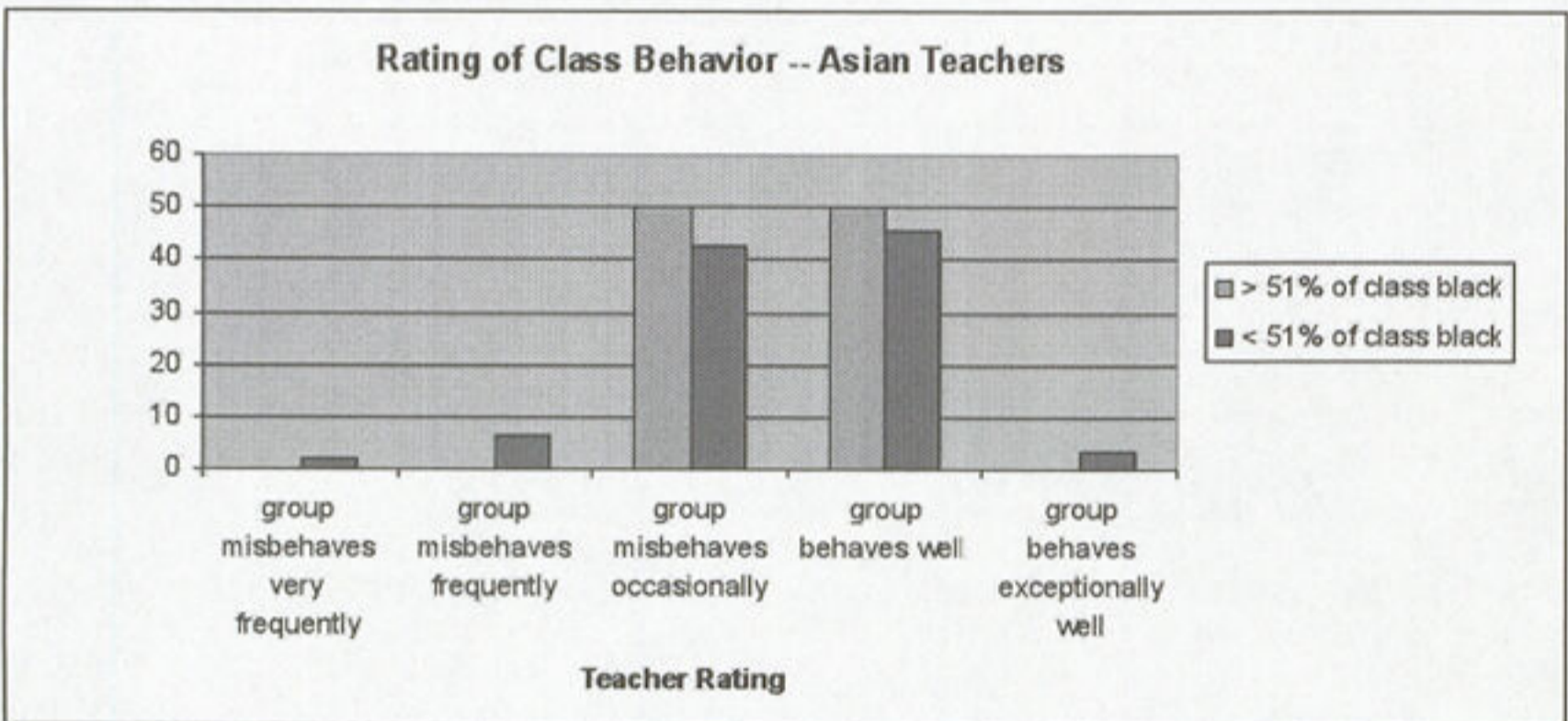


Figure 3

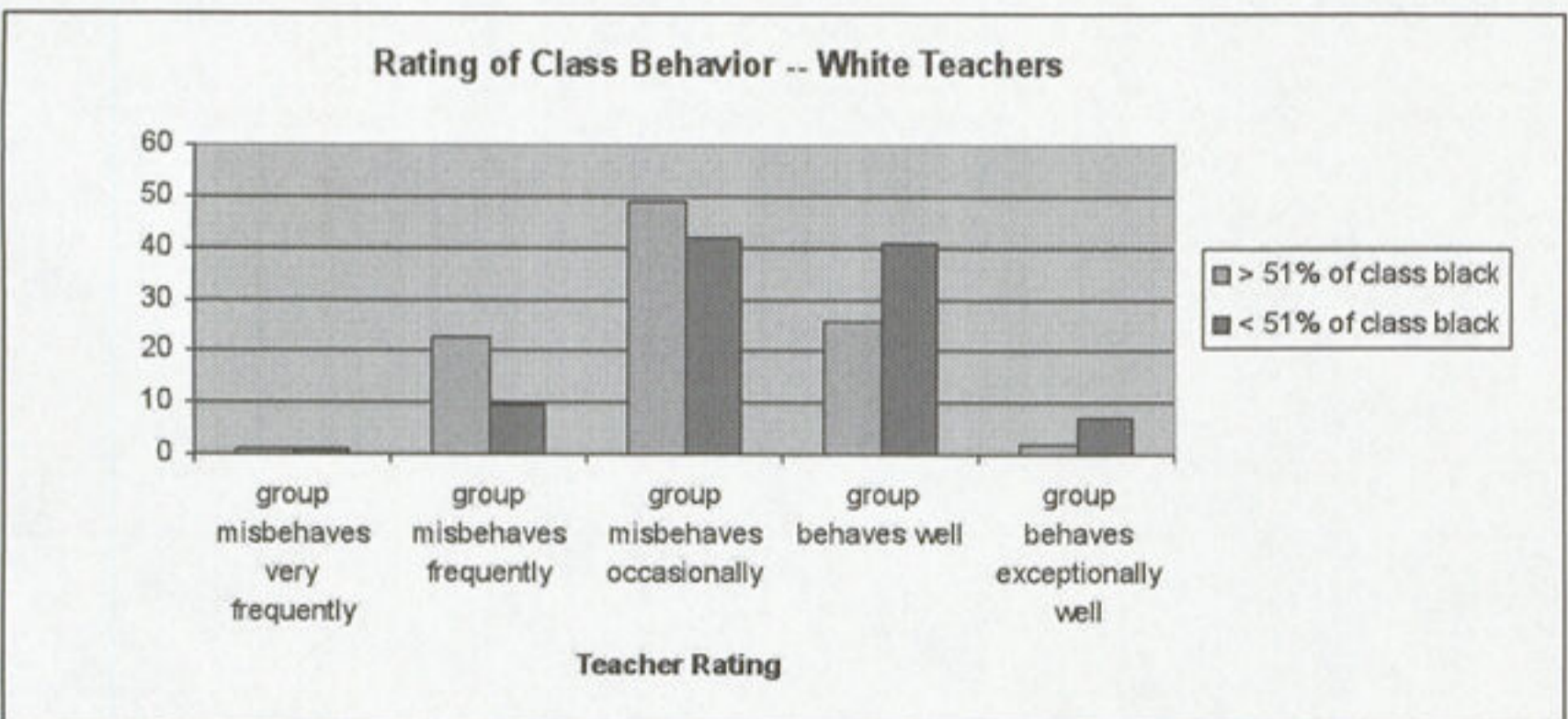


Figure 4

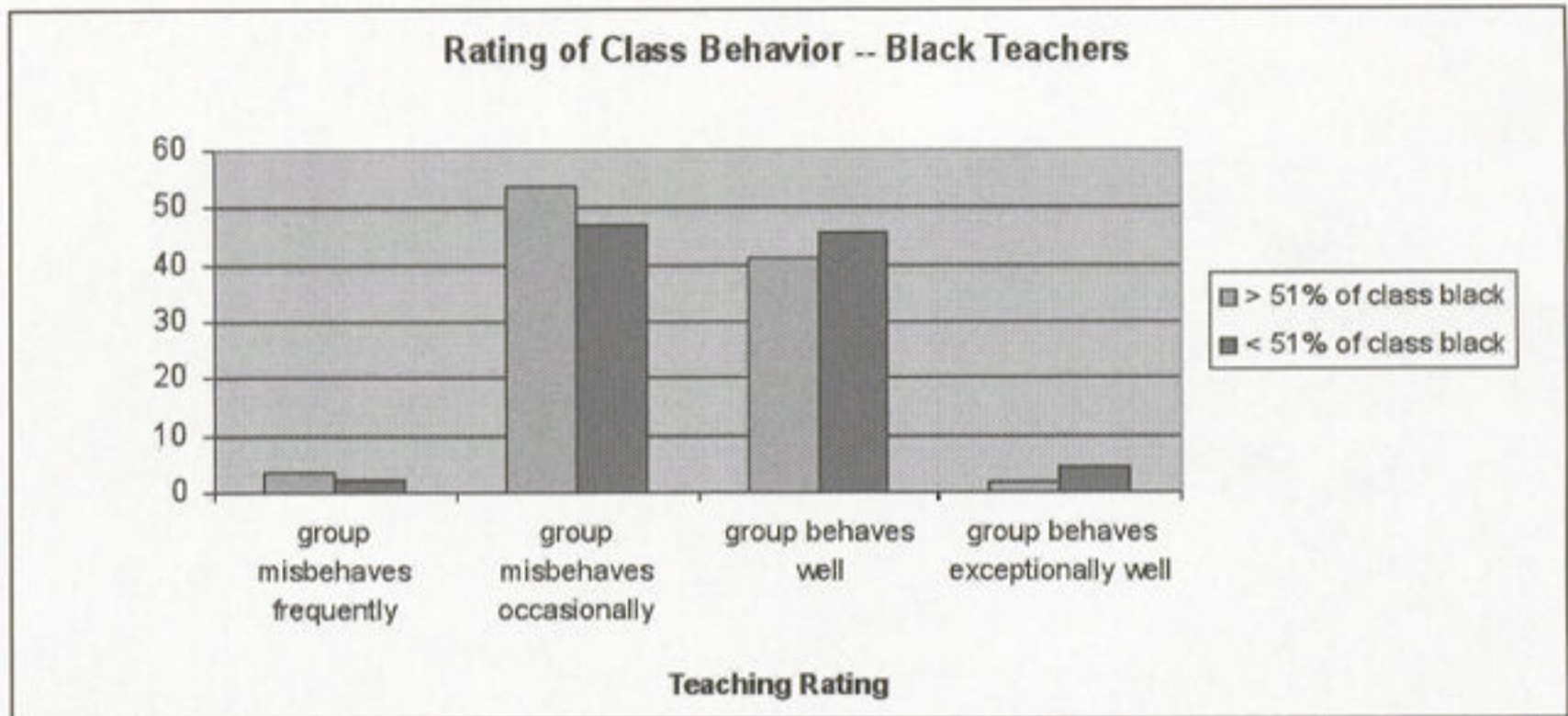


Figure 5

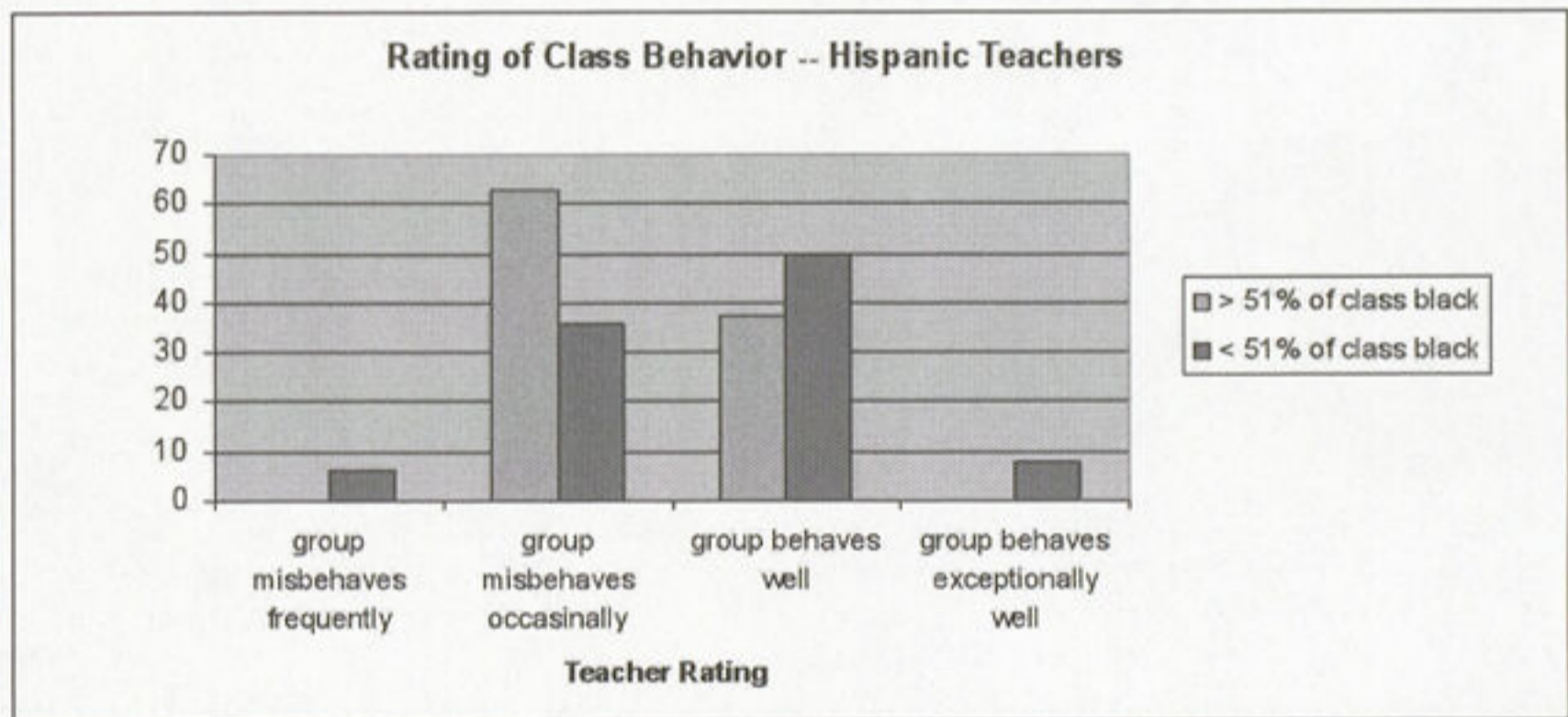


Table 1. Average Social Rating Scale Scores by Race of Child

Race of Child	Approaches to Learning Scale	Externalizing Problem Behavior Scale
White	3.103	1.561
Black	2.925	1.743
Hispanic	2.952	1.544
Asian	3.216	1.415

Table 2. Approaches to Learning

	<u>All</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>Asian</u>
Black Child	-0.133 (0.037)**				
Hispanic Child	-0.108 (0.029)**				
Asian Child	0.107 (0.034)**				
Male Child	-0.276 (0.016)**	-0.214 (0.058)**	-0.282 (0.020)**	-0.285 (0.040)**	-0.189 (0.063)**
Child Has Disability	-0.185 (0.023)**	-0.266 (0.086)**	-0.192 (0.027)**	-0.076 (0.066)	-0.116 (0.128)
All Day Kindergarten - Fall	0.016 (0.017)	0.044 (0.075)	0.015 (0.021)	-0.004 (0.043)	0.063 (0.067)
First-Time Kindergartener	0.014 (0.044)	-0.118 (0.143)	0.045 (0.054)	-0.173 (0.106)	0.218 (0.211)
One Parent Family	-0.070 (0.051)	-0.162 (0.115)	0.034 (0.068)	-0.242 (0.115)*	0.358 (0.443)
Other Type of Family	-0.168 (0.075)*	-0.126 (0.141)	-0.162 (0.109)	-0.305 (0.186)	-0.110 (0.440)
Number of Siblings	0.027 (0.015)	-0.018 (0.056)	0.060 (0.023)**	-0.015 (0.037)	0.071 (0.047)
Number is Siblings (squared)	-0.005 (0.003)	0.000 (0.010)	-0.012 (0.005)*	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.008 (0.006)
Second Quintile	0.115 (0.029)**	0.165 (0.086)	0.155 (0.042)**	0.071 (0.054)	0.149 (0.111)
Third Quintile	0.175 (0.029)**	0.334 (0.092)**	0.231 (0.042)**	0.045 (0.062)	0.167 (0.115)
Fourth Quintile	0.250 (0.030)**	0.197 (0.093)*	0.334 (0.042)**	0.176 (0.068)*	0.144 (0.110)
Fifth Quintile (lowest)	0.317 (0.032)**	0.360 (0.122)**	0.373 (0.043)**	0.181 (0.090)*	0.440 (0.111)**
Relative Care	-0.037 (0.029)	-0.030 (0.101)	0.003 (0.037)	-0.086 (0.062)	-0.105 (0.098)
Non-relative Care	-0.007 (0.030)	0.058 (0.165)	-0.022 (0.035)	-0.012 (0.084)	-0.107 (0.163)
Head Start	-0.129 (0.032)**	-0.157 (0.092)	-0.151 (0.048)**	-0.089 (0.062)	0.012 (0.111)
Center-based Care	-0.022 (0.022)	0.065 (0.087)	-0.041 (0.027)	0.017 (0.054)	0.013 (0.085)
Black Teacher	0.030 (0.037)	0.098 (0.077)	-0.049 (0.059)	-0.025 (0.082)	0.081 (0.104)
Hispanic Teacher	0.047 (0.043)	-0.242 (0.229)	0.067 (0.090)	0.027 (0.055)	0.136 (0.187)
Asian Teacher	-0.029 (0.038)	-0.076 (0.093)	0.013 (0.061)	0.075 (0.084)	-0.068 (0.101)
Male Teacher	-0.055 (0.062)	0.358 (0.315)	-0.032 (0.085)	-0.084 (0.114)	-0.657 (0.209)**
Teacher's Years of Experience/10	0.004 (0.011)	0.006 (0.040)	-0.002 (0.013)	0.003 (0.028)	0.037 (0.042)
Teacher Completed at Least 1 Yr Beyond Bachelor's Degree	-0.011 (0.022)	-0.080 (0.080)	0.021 (0.026)	-0.092 (0.058)	0.060 (0.095)
Teacher Completed Master's Degree	-0.048 (0.022)*	-0.163 (0.075)*	-0.027 (0.027)	-0.009 (0.058)	-0.112 (0.093)
Teacher Completed Professional/Doctorate Degree	-0.118 (0.036)**	0.051 (0.137)	-0.137 (0.044)**	-0.053 (0.091)	-0.193 (0.146)
Certified in Elementary Education	0.034 (0.025)	0.080 (0.071)	0.059 (0.031)	-0.139 (0.063)*	-0.001 (0.113)
Certified in Early Childhood Education	0.013 (0.017)	0.057 (0.065)	0.011 (0.020)	0.020 (0.042)	-0.044 (0.067)
Percent Black Students in Class	0.000 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	0.003 (0.002)
Percent Hispanic Students in Class	0.000 (0.000)	0.004 (0.002)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.000 (0.002)
Class Size	0.002 (0.002)	0.005 (0.007)	0.003 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.005)	-0.000 (0.007)
Constant	2.991	2.733	2.849	3.423	2.791

Table 3. Externalizing Problem Behaviors

	<u>All</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>Asian</u>
Black Child	0.185 (0.034)**				
Hispanic Child	0.008 (0.027)				
Asian Child	-0.116 (0.032)**				
Male Child	0.237 (0.015)**	0.208 (0.059)**	0.238 (0.019)**	0.267 (0.035)**	0.171 (0.051)**
Child Has Disability	0.097 (0.022)**	0.171 (0.087)*	0.089 (0.025)**	0.077 (0.057)	0.025 (0.103)
All Day Kindergarten - Fall	-0.097 (0.016)**	-0.253 (0.076)**	-0.087 (0.020)**	-0.101 (0.038)**	-0.060 (0.054)
First-Time Kindergartener	-0.024 (0.041)	0.029 (0.144)	-0.015 (0.051)	-0.040 (0.092)	-0.092 (0.170)
One Parent Family	0.058 (0.047)	-0.123 (0.116)	0.124 (0.064)	0.022 (0.100)	-0.340 (0.358)
Other Type of Family	0.132 (0.070)	0.123 (0.143)	0.121 (0.103)	0.141 (0.163)	0.162 (0.355)
Number of Siblings	-0.068 (0.014)**	0.025 (0.057)	-0.112 (0.022)**	-0.051 (0.032)	-0.041 (0.038)
Number is Siblings (squared)	0.006 (0.002)**	-0.011 (0.010)	0.016 (0.005)**	0.007 (0.005)	0.003 (0.004)
Second Quintile	-0.021 (0.027)	-0.037 (0.087)	-0.070 (0.040)	-0.010 (0.047)	-0.020 (0.089)
Third Quintile	-0.033 (0.027)	-0.244 (0.093)**	-0.087 (0.039)*	0.097 (0.054)	0.039 (0.093)
Fourth Quintile	-0.084 (0.028)**	-0.127 (0.095)	-0.156 (0.040)**	-0.023 (0.059)	0.117 (0.089)
Fifth Quintile (lowest)	-0.129 (0.029)**	-0.213 (0.124)	-0.178 (0.041)**	-0.119 (0.078)	-0.042 (0.090)
Relative Care	-0.018 (0.027)	-0.045 (0.102)	-0.037 (0.035)	0.054 (0.054)	-0.112 (0.079)
Non-relative Care	0.064 (0.028)*	-0.049 (0.167)	0.081 (0.033)*	0.082 (0.073)	-0.035 (0.131)
Head Start	0.145 (0.030)**	0.196 (0.093)*	0.176 (0.045)**	0.117 (0.054)*	0.005 (0.090)
Center-based Care	0.127 (0.021)**	0.222 (0.088)*	0.134 (0.025)**	0.133 (0.047)**	-0.076 (0.069)
Black Teacher	-0.066 (0.034)	-0.180 (0.078)*	-0.023 (0.056)	-0.046 (0.071)	0.006 (0.084)
Hispanic Teacher	-0.035 (0.040)	-0.052 (0.232)	-0.125 (0.086)	0.007 (0.048)	0.029 (0.150)
Asian Teacher	0.025 (0.035)	0.205 (0.094)*	-0.005 (0.058)	-0.032 (0.074)	-0.040 (0.082)
Male Teacher	-0.006 (0.058)	-0.320 (0.318)	-0.010 (0.081)	0.029 (0.099)	0.119 (0.169)
Teacher's Years of Experience/10	-0.028 (0.010)**	-0.007 (0.040)	-0.022 (0.012)	-0.047 (0.024)	-0.043 (0.034)
Teacher Completed at Least 1 Yr Beyond Bachelor's Degree	0.027 (0.021)	0.109 (0.081)	0.010 (0.025)	0.095 (0.050)	-0.030 (0.077)
Teacher Completed Master's Degree	-0.009 (0.021)	0.121 (0.076)	-0.036 (0.025)	0.030 (0.051)	0.045 (0.075)
Teacher Completed Professional/Doctorate Degree	0.032 (0.034)	-0.071 (0.139)	0.032 (0.041)	0.078 (0.079)	0.081 (0.118)
Certified in Elementary Education	0.051 (0.023)*	0.055 (0.072)	0.030 (0.029)	0.124 (0.055)*	0.104 (0.091)
Certified in Early Childhood Education	0.010 (0.016)	0.024 (0.066)	-0.008 (0.019)	0.049 (0.037)	0.038 (0.054)
Percent Black Students in Class	-0.001 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.002)
Percent Hispanic Students in Class	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.002 (0.002)	0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.002)
Class Size	-0.000 (0.002)	-0.005 (0.008)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.004 (0.004)	0.001 (0.006)
Constant	1.539 (0.067)**	1.774 (0.253)**	1.648 (0.085)**	1.321 (0.151)**	1.473 (0.256)**
Observations	5945	533	3974	1036	402
R-squared	0.09	0.13	0.08	0.12	0.09
Standard errors in parentheses					
* significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%					

The Cradle to Prison Pipeline: America's New Apartheid

by Marian Wright Edelman

Incarceration is becoming the new American apartheid, and poor children of color are the fodder. It is time to sound a loud alarm about this threat to American unity and community, act to stop the growing criminalization of children at younger and younger ages, and tackle the unjust treatment of minority youths and adults in the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems with urgency and persistence. The failure to act now will reverse the hard-earned racial and social progress for which Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and so many others sacrificed and died. We must call for investment in all children from birth through their successful transition to adulthood, remembering abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass's observation that "it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

So many poor babies in rich America enter the world with multiple strikes against them, being born without prenatal care, at low birthweight, and to a teenaged, impoverished, and poorly educated single mother and absent father. At crucial points in a child's development after birth until adulthood more risks pile on, making a successful transition to productive adulthood significantly less likely and making involvement in the criminal justice system significantly more likely. Black children are more than three times as likely as White children to be poor and are four times as likely to live in extreme poverty. A poor Black boy born in 2001 has a one-in-three chance of going to prison in his lifetime and is almost six times as likely as a White boy in similar circumstances to be incarcerated for a drug offense.

The past continues to strangle the present and the future. Children with an incarcerated parent are more likely to become incarcerated. Black children are nearly nine times and Latino children are three times as likely as White children to have an incarcerated parent. Blacks constitute one-third and Latinos one-fifth of the prisoners in America, and one in three Black men, twenty to twenty-nine years old, is under correctional supervision or control. Of the 2.3 million people in jail or prison, 64 percent are minority; of the 4.2 million persons on probation, 45 percent are minority; of the 800,000 individuals on parole, 59 percent are minority. Inequitable drug-sentencing policies including mandatory minimums have greatly escalated the incarceration rate of minority adults and youths.

Marian Wright Edelman, whose new book is The Sea Is So Wide and My Boat Is So Small: Charting a Course for the Next Generation, is president of the Children's Defense Fund.

For more information about the Children's Defense Fund, go to <http://www.childrensdefense.org>.

Child poverty and neglect, racial disparities in systems that serve children, and the pipeline to prison are not acts of God. They are a result of America's immoral political and economic choices that can and must be changed with strong political, corporate, and community leadership.

No single sector or group can solve these child- and nation-threatening crises alone, but, together, we all can. Leaders must call us to the table and use their bully pulpits to replace our current paradigm of punishment as a first resort with a paradigm of prevention and early intervention. That will save lives, save families, save taxpayer money, and save our nation's aspiration to be a fair society. Physical and mental health care and quality education cost far less than prisons.

If called to account today, America would not pass the test of the prophets, the gospels, and all the great faiths. Christians who profess to believe that God entered human history as a poor vulnerable baby and that each man, woman, and child is created in God's own image need to act on that faith. The Jewish Midrash says God agreed to give the people of Israel the Torah only after they offered their children as guarantors, deeming neither their prophets nor elders sufficient. It is time to heed the prophets' call for justice for the orphans and the weak. America's Declaration of Independence says, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights." After more than two centuries, it is time to make those truths evident in the lives of poor children of color and to close our intolerable national hypocrisy gap. The world is waiting for America to show whether democratic capitalism is an oxymoron or whether it can work. Our national creed demands it. All great faiths demand it. Common sense and self-interest require it. And our moral redemption and credibility in the world we seek to lead in compel it.

Ending child poverty is not only an urgent moral necessity, it is economically beneficial. Robert M. Solow, MIT Nobel Prize Laureate in Economics, wrote in the foreword to *Wasting America's Future* that "ending child poverty is, at the very least, highly affordable" and would be a boost to the economy. Healthy Social Security and Medicare systems for our increasing elderly population need as many productive workers as possible to support them. We can ill afford to let millions of our children grow up poor, unhealthy, uneducated, and as dependent rather than productive citizens.

What then can leaders do to help build the spiritual and political will needed to help our nation pass the test of the God of history and better prepare for America's future? What steps can you take to heed Dr. King's warning not to let our wealth become our destruction but instead our salvation by helping the poor Lazaruses languishing at our closed gates? How can our nation use its blessings to bless all the children entrusted to our care and rekindle America's dimming dream?

As U.S. President Barack Obama and the U.S. Congress contemplate ways to stimulate our economy, let them begin by investing in a healthy, fair, head, and safe start for every American child and in measures to ensure a child's successful transition to college and productive adulthood.

The State of Race Relations in the United States and the Effects on Environmental Justice: A Conversation with Julian Agyeman

Interviewed by Alice Abrokwa and Kai Carter

Born and educated in the United Kingdom, Julian Agyeman is currently professor and chair of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning at Tufts University. He is the cofounder and former chair of the United Kingdom–based Black Environment Network and is the cofounder and coeditor of Local Environment: The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability. His research focuses on the relationship between humans and their environment and the role of social movements, institutions, and policy in establishing relevant equity and justice.

HJAAP

Our first question concerns your perspective on race relations in the United States from an environmental framework, as compared with your work in either Great Britain or the Soviet Union or other countries. The United States has a unique way of talking about race. How does that change the strategy of the environmental justice initiative or movement, as compared to how you frame it abroad?

AGYEMAN

The U.S. has a particular way of talking about and dealing with race—at least different, certainly, to my experience in the U.K. I've tried to think about why the U.S. has a different way of looking at race and how that affects environmental justice. I think the one thing I'd have to say is that we have environmental injustices in Britain. They are not as racially polarized because, basically, British society isn't quite as racially polarized as the U.S.

Interviewers: Alice Abrokwa and Kai Carter of the Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy interviewed Julian Agyeman on 11 December 2008.

Alice Abrokwa is a native of Auburn, Alabama, and is jointly pursuing a master in public policy and law degree from the John F. Kennedy School of Government and Harvard Law School. Kai Carter is also a master in public policy candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. She is a graduate of Brown University and previously worked at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

As an example, research about ten years ago found that, like in the U.S., the most polluting facilities were closest to the lowest-income communities. And this was pretty statistically significant across Britain. But it was socioeconomically linked because we don't have zoning in Britain. We don't have racialized zoning. Well, we don't have zoning, full stop. So, you don't tend to get dense populations—or as dense populations or ghettos—of one particular racial group.

Whereas in the U.S., there is much more active segregation in certain cities, where certain groups of people are kept in certain places. But it doesn't happen so much in Britain, certainly not legally. Illegally, I know that realtors do show people from different social groups to different places. And there have been cases in Britain where Asian families or African-Caribbean families have not gotten into the neighborhood they wanted to because realtors have been actively trying to maintain the Whiteness or otherwise of those neighborhoods.

So, there is much more polarization in the U.S. And certainly, the work I'm doing in Canada on environmental justice is more like the U.K., in the sense that there isn't the racialized zoning. There is more of a spirit and an official policy of multiculturalism in Canada. But, the positive side to the U.S. is that you have this fabulous civil rights movement; really, the culmination is [U.S. President] Barack Obama today.

The environmental justice movement [in the United States] has managed to align its frame of outrage with that of civil rights. And I always think of civil rights as almost like being a renewable energy supply: you plug your plug into the socket, and you've got a live issue. The environmental justice movement really, I think, capitalized on that. Only in the U.S. could a civil rights movement [happen], as such, because of those conditions that I've just described: real racialized segregation through planning, through public policy making, through realty active decisions, etc.

HJAAP

Do you think now, given the election of Obama, that people might be receptive to understanding what environmental racism is? Or, is this a time where we should just sort of say, "Let's focus on the solutions"?

AGYEMAN

This is a really interesting point, and this is actually where my research is. We're at a really interesting point in racial history in the U.S. Barack Obama, [Massachusetts Governor] Deval Patrick, [Founding President of Green For All] Van Jones, and [Newark, N.J., Mayor] Cory Booker—this is the new black leadership. These are people who don't mention racism and civil rights in the first sentence, unlike—say—Al Sharpton and the Reverend Jesse Jackson. We've handed the baton to a new leadership, not just in politics, but in environmental justice. So, my good friend Robert Bullard, [environmental justice advocate], is part of the old leadership who expressed righteous indignation and started tub-thumping straightaway. Now, that was appropriate in the early days in environmental justice campaigning.

But, the new wave is Van Jones, and it's Majora Carter, [environmental justice advocate]. This new wave stands on the shoulders of the fighters, the civil rights people. But it acknowledges that times have changed and that you're not going to get anywhere just screaming and shouting about racism. Because that's—in a sense—reactive. What Van Jones and Majora Carter are, what Barack Obama is, what Deval Patrick and Cory Booker are, they are proactive. They talk about opportunity rather than problems.

We had Van Jones here [at Tufts on] April 22, 2008, and he stood there, and he said, "You know, we got it all wrong. We used to go into communities and say, 'Hey, brother and sister, join my struggle.' Who wants to join a struggle? No, I've got enough struggles of my own. Why do I want to join a struggle? We need to talk about opportunity, floating of our boats, and pathways out of poverty." That's the brilliance of the green collar jobs idea. This is the new environmental justice.

Now, it's not to say that environmental racism doesn't exist. But, we were beating on the same old drum for a long time. This is where my research comes in. I'm interested in how we reframe these old arguments about environmental justice.

Here's what I do, it's called "justice sustainability." The bigger agenda now is sustainability, sustainable development. We've got to be part of that agenda. And I'm going to be radical here: we need to drop the phrase "environmental justice." We need to talk about justice sustainability and justice sustainable communities. The words "environmental justice" have carried us a long way, but they are now tainted by activism and advocacy. Policy makers and planners may have sympathy with the concept of environmental justice, but how do they get it into the political system when it's seen as an advocacy agenda?

The big agenda is the sustainable community. What is a sustainable community? Obama asks this. Obama has this in all his Web sites, talking about building and developing sustainable behaviors. So, let's infuse that agenda with a reframed notion of "environmental justice." And it's what I call "justice sustainability." How can we have a better quality of life—now and into the future—in the most just and equitable manner, while living within the limits of ecosystems? That's my definition of sustainability. But, it's a definition of a just sustainability.

I get so tired and angry when I just hear people talking about environmental sustainability. That's not what it's about. We could, in theory, have an environmentally sustainable community that could be very unjust socially. To me, social justice and environmental protection are prerequisites for a truly sustainable community.

There are organizations that I've been mapping with some of my students that are really trying to get this agenda of social justice and environmental sustainability. These organizations I call "just sustainable organizations." One very good example is Urban Ecology in Oakland, California. On its Web site it says, "We have not traveled the path of normal environmental organizations, to protect watersheds, air, and public open space. Nor have we had a traditional kind of social justice agenda or affordable housing."

It says, rather, “We have infused these two agendas into what we call the agenda of healthy human habitats.” That’s just sustainability. You know, as a researcher, when you find something like that, that is just real evidence for me that organizations are really trying to embrace what I call the just sustainability paradigm. It’s not easy; there are tradeoffs. But, I think it’s surely worth working for because this has got to be the way of the future.

The environmental justice movement got itself into a little bit of a corner. I think we need to be part of and work within a bigger movement for sustainability. This is not to negate what is going on in local communities with struggles for cleaner air, clean watersheds, cleaner play areas, better bus services—all the traditional environmental focuses. That’s not to negate this. This is absolutely the lifeblood of democracy: people protesting, people getting better deals in their communities. And it’s healthy; it’s good. All I’m saying is that, in terms of a policy agenda, I don’t think it’s going anywhere.

At the policy level we need to reframe it into the language that the policy makers can deal with. And the language, at the moment, is sustainability.

HJAAP

Having just celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 2008, how might environmental justice or just sustainability be reframed in terms of people’s right to a healthy environment?

AGYEMAN

There’s a lot of talk about adding environmental rights to human rights. I’m not sure where that is at the moment. Again, it’s not a particular expertise of mine, but I understand that there have been attempts almost to enshrine environmental rights within the wider issues of human rights.

If you go to, say, Nigeria and the Ogoni people in the Niger Delta who are really being dealt a very unfair hand, the oil is in their area, and they get all of the dis-benefits, oil spill pollution, but none of the [economic] benefits. They set up an organization, the Ogoni Environmental and Human Rights Organization, and link the environment to human rights. Here in the U.S., it’s always been much more about civil rights. And I’ve never fully understood why or if that will change.

It strikes me—and it struck several people before at World Watch Institute—that, if you strengthen human rights, you’re going to strengthen the environmental rights of people in disciplinaries of the world. The premise of our book, *Just Sustainabilities* [with Robert Bullard and Bob Evans], is that wherever environmental degradation and desolation is happening, it’s always linked to issues of social justice and human rights.

But again, I think that the opportunity that lies ahead of us is really if we can seriously start linking environmental rights, substantive rights, to a certain clean environment, to a helpful environment, to community well-being; if we can link

these to some sort of human rights, then I think we're going to be moving in a very productive direction.

This will require a strengthened United Nations, not a weakened United Nations. President Obama has talked about his support for the United Nations, and maybe even a strengthened United Nations. But, who knows? I mean, this may be part of this new agenda.

HJAAP

In thinking about Obama's agenda, it seems like many people are putting a lot of hope in Obama. And he has a large agenda before him. Obviously, his number one priority is dealing with the economy and the Iraq war. Do you think that these "just sustainability" issues are even going to get on his radar? How much do you expect for him to actually attack within this first term?

AGYEMAN

Well, he's talked about a Green New Deal. He's talked about the green economy and green car—that's precisely just sustainability. That's what Van Jones has been talking about. In December, Governor Patrick announced a green jobs bill—it's called a "Pathways out of Poverty" program—for Massachusetts, especially aimed at low-income and gateway cities. This is going to offer several grants. I think the fund is for about a million dollars, so it's not a lot. It's more of a demonstration volume. But, I suspect there'll be more when Obama comes in. This is for communities to bid for money, to create green jobs—especially low-income communities—for social justice and environmental protection. That's just sustainability. I mean, people don't need to talk the language, "just sustainability," to be real.

And Obama is going to come in with massive infrastructure spending. This is good long-term investment. That investment will benefit low-income neighborhoods, I would think, more than it would benefit middle-income neighborhoods or upper-income neighborhoods.

So, while I don't expect Obama—although I would love him to—to talk about just sustainability, [if he did] my life would be complete. But, if he talks about green collar jobs in the brilliant way that Van Jones has phrased it, then that's good. We could have a new industrial revolution. It's not jobs or the environment, like the media would have us believe, it's jobs through the environment.

We're entering a new paradigm here. [Obama] may not call this paradigm the "just sustainability" paradigm, but that's precisely what it is. So, to lift our boats, to start getting people back to work in a post-fossil fuel scenario, we're going to have to be using, as one person has said, sustainable development means—using our own limited mental resources, not our limited natural resources. That's precisely what we're going to be doing. We're going to get smart about job creation and creating jobs—weatherizing houses, installing solar arrays—doing things which both lower our

carbon footprint and create meaningful, worthwhile, benefit-giving jobs. That's just sustainability.

HJAAP

Do you think we would be able to get the sort of buy-in that seems likely now, if the economy were not in the state that it is? It has been convenient for Obama to say, "We need a transition in the way that we find jobs for people."

AGYEMAN

That's an interesting question. I mean, [White House Chief of Staff] Rahm Emanuel said, "Never allow a crisis to go to waste." And we've got a crisis now. In a crisis, you can do some serious things. In some ways I hate this, but the crisis is good if we use it to our best advantage. My worry, as an environmental educator, is that people just want to get back to normal.

Well, I don't want to get back to normal. I want to get back to, or get to, a new way of prosperity. We can have a new prosperity, but it's got to be a smart prosperity—a green prosperity. We can make money, but I think we need to incentivize clean production. We need to incentivize lowering our carbon footprint. We need to incentivize weatherization of homes. We can do this with smart policy and planning. But in the past, especially in this country more than any other country in the world, we've had a reliance on a huge energy consumption. Huge amounts of energy have been consumed.

Van Jones's new book, *The Green Collar Economy*, has just become a *New York Times* best-seller. He's the first African American to have got a green book on the *New York Times* best-selling list. Things are changing. And, we need to think about the new paradigm and what this new paradigm offers. It can offer us a huge amount if we take it.

But here in the U.S., it's going to be deep cultural change. This is not just about education; this is a culture shift. Ultimately, this is about redefining the American dream. If you think about it, the American dream, in its earliest day, was a dream that was shared by very few people, a low level of the population. It was a dream that happened when resource levels were much higher than they are now, and our level of technology to exploit those resources was much lower. We could have a material dream.

But now, the obverse is true in every case: the high population, low resources, and technology that can vacuum the planet. The American dream, the material dream, is dead. It cannot continue. You know the ecological footprints theory? If every person on this planet lived like we do, we'd need five or six planets. So, we need to have a culture shift to a more dematerialized dream, a more qualitative dream. We can have better quality of life, but we can't all have a better standard of living.

HJAAP

I think that point is interesting, in particular for African American culture, because our culture is moving toward materialism. Younger generations look up to people who are buying five, six, seven cars, who are buying the big homes.

AGYEMAN

This is a really interesting point. Twenty years ago when we set up the Environment Network, I remember someone said, “My people,” meaning African Americans, “need to consume for another 100 years. When we’ve consumed as much as you, perhaps then we’ll think about sustainability. But don’t tell us to stop consuming now. My people have a consumption thirst.” And I can see that. This is a nuance that we have to think about in terms of sustainable communities. The message is sustainability, but there is not one message. It’s almost offensive to say, “You need to cut down.” There are some people I see who sleep under bridges. They can’t cut down. They need to ramp it up.

The point I think we need to realize is that in that transition toward a more sustainable society, we’re going to have to allow some people in some countries to ramp up that consumption. But we are going to have to ramp it down rapidly. That’s the challenge. Several people are talking about that now, that we wealthy countries are going to have to fund the sustainability transition. People will say, “Oh, you don’t know. This is just—.” But, the alternative to this is really dire. I think it’s around the corner, but it’s not far around the corner. And we’ve got very little time to turn this around.

There is now a discourse for well-being and happiness. We’re beginning to realize that well-being and feeling good and happy is as important as not smoking and as maintaining a healthy diet and not drinking too much. When you look at how the World Health Organization defines health, it talks about the mental, physical, and social well-being of a human—not merely the absence of infirmity or disease. But, what did our health services take that to mean? The absence of infirmity or disease. We’ve forgotten the whole well-being part.

So these are all things that I’m talking about that we can start looking at as ways of enriching our lives, because there’s such a hole at the moment. We’re replacing non-material needs in love, family, and community with material goods. And it’s just not cutting it with most people.

I think the point that we need to get back to is back to connection. We’re already disconnected from the seasons. When I was a kid in Britain, strawberries were Wimbledon. It was summer, we got strawberries. Now you can get strawberries all year-round. So, we disconnect from the seasons. We disconnect from each other, from our neighbors, from our families. That’s a dangerous thing.

So, again, this is all a very roundabout way of saying we can have much richer lives. But we need to redefine success so that it’s about nonmaterial wealth rather than material wealth. That’s a heavy sell. And that’s the rest of my life’s work. But, this

is what we've got to do. The new dream has got to be a dematerialized or nonmaterial dream. And it's well worth doing it.

We're obsessed with efficiency. I want to see people obsessed with sufficiency. Efficiency says, "Oh, that car does 1,000 miles on one gallon of gas." Sufficiency says, "Do I need that car?" That's what I want the question to be, "Do I need that car?" To me, efficiency without sufficiency is a hollow deal.

We would have a very different America and a very different world, I think. So, there's a dream.

HJAAP

A greener dream.

AGYEMAN

A greener dream, absolutely.

Good Is Not Enough: And Other Unwritten Rules for Minority Professionals

(Portfolio, Penguin Publishing, 2008)

by Keith R. Wyche

Reviewed by Fatina Abdrabboh

In describing the key to success in the corporate world, Kenneth Chenault, a renowned economist and CEO of American Express, suggested success in business derives from understanding the following maxim: “its not the strongest, most intelligent who survive, but those most adaptive to change.” In *Good Is Not Enough*, successful businessman Keith Wyche offers the “young minority professional” the tools to become more adaptive in a manner that ensures corporate success. As the president of U.S. operations at Pitney Bowes, Wyche is well-positioned to offer insight into corporate success. In *Good Is Not Enough*, Wyche uses his dynamic command of language and his knack for identifying solutions to problems to cinematically zoom the reader in and out of the lives of many minority professionals he helped to nurture and mentor during his career. These stories, which represent the essential grist of this book, offer the reader extremely valuable insights into many of the nuances of corporate America that one could rarely glean without having experienced them. Wyche’s biggest triumph in the book, however, occurs as a result of the many informative stories he describes of his own experiences staring fear, racism, and other vices in the face as he steadily climbed up the corporate ladder to take the helm of a *Fortune* 500 company.

In a world where less than 3 percent of executive positions in *Fortune* 500 companies are held by minorities, Wyche suggests that “selling out” or hiding one’s “blackness” is “no guarantee for acceptance” or success in the corporate world.

Fatina Abdrabboh is a graduate of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She made headlines with the New York Times publication of her op-ed entitled, “Veiled Praise,” in which she discussed cultural alienation and acceptance in the United States.

Keith R. Wyche is an author, thought leader, career coach, and corporate executive. He is among the highest-ranking African American executives in the United States. He is a board member of both the National Black MBA Association and the Executive Leadership Council and has more than 25 years of experience in corporate America with some of the country’s top companies and organizations. In 2008 he became one of the first inductees into the Martin Luther King Jr. International Board of Renaissance Leaders, established by Morehouse College of Atlanta, Georgia. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Mr. Wyche has always envisioned himself as a savvy business leader with an entrepreneurial spirit, characteristics that have carried him through various executive leadership roles and remain with him in this current position as president of U.S. operations at Pitney Bowes.

Despite considerable progress in trying to address this disparity in recent years, “black representation at the top of corporate America still falls woefully short” (10). In order to succeed in the business world, the author argues, African Americans and other minorities “know they cannot afford to operate at the C level” (135). Instead they must “know [their] firm,” learn the “importance of becoming a team player,” and understand that, for the minority professional, there “are no second chances.” Unlike other professionals who Wyche argues are evaluated differently than the minority, the minority professional must “maintain good composure” and ensure that integrity is “upheld at all times” in order to remain a “HiPo (high-potential) [rather than] a PoPo (passed over and pissed off) player” (52) in the company.

Given the importance social interaction and networking plays in “climbing the corporate ladder,” Wyche exhaustively describes numerous social situations that could potentially be “career killers you must avoid.” Thus, “out-of-office decorum must also be properly managed” to maintain upward movement in a company and to ensure success is not whittled away by alcohol-induced “reckless behavior” in a social setting.

Perhaps more disturbing than the poor representation of minorities in the corporate world today is the dismal reality that “black women constitute a mere 1.1 percent of corporate officers and top earners” (10). Wyche’s book is essentially a handbook brimming with valuable secrets for corporate success. However, he readily acknowledges that utilization of his wisdom may yield the reader individual success but not “significance.” The author remains confident that the individual reader can extract lessons from the book that can ensure his or her individual success, however, it is only when the individual minority professional “gives back” to his or her community that the individual moves “beyond success to significance.” Thus, according to Wyche, the minority professional today has a noble responsibility: to “leverage your success for the good of others” (207). Any failure to do so would, in the estimation of the author, guarantee the continuation of the abysmal situation facing minority professionals today in the corporate world.

The Future of Fatherhood and Families in African American Communities

by Robert Michael Franklin

ABSTRACT

My purpose is twofold: to provide an overview of the state of the conversation regarding father absence in African American communities and to offer recommendations for implementing that conversation in local communities. The statistics on father absence are so troubling that they beg for contextualization, interpretation, and action. In order to move beyond analysis and interpretation to improving the quality of life for children and families, I believe that this topic must become an urgent priority for the Black community's most important and influential institutions and leaders, especially our congregations and community-based organizations.

THE UNANSWERED CALL

In the fall of 1998, a historic conference, sponsored by the Morehouse Research Institute at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, almost succeeded in placing the issue of father absence on the national agenda. Morehouse is the only all-male, historically Black college in the United States, and it happens to be the alma mater of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This bastion of African American male achievement was the perfect venue for a conference designed to examine issues pertaining to the future of marriage and parenthood in Black communities. In contrast to other conferences on the topic, whose proceedings slumber between the covers of academic journals, the conference organizers, Obie Clayton (from Morehouse), Ronald Mincy (of the Ford Foundation, now Columbia University), and David Blankenhorn (of the Institute for American Values), decided to produce a thirty-page, user-friendly report directed at a broad audience: "Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America" (Clayton et al. 1999). Three things made this conference and the resulting report both promising and remarkable. First was the comprehensive way in

Dr. Robert Michael Franklin is the tenth president of Morehouse College. Previously, Franklin served as a Presidential Distinguished Professor of Social Ethics at Emory University, president of the Interdenominational Theological Center, and a program officer in Human Rights and Social Justice at the Ford Foundation. He is the author of Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities; Another Day's Journey: Black Churches Confronting the American Crisis; and Liberating Visions: Human Fulfillment and Social Justice in African American Thought.

which they defined the issues. The proceedings were informed by a variety of disciplines and brought together historical, global, and grassroots perspectives. Second was the diversity of their fifty signatories, including an impressive variety of academic disciplines, sectors, institutions, political persuasions, and ethnic-racial identities. And third was the audacity of their proposed ten-year strategic agenda in advocating specific policy ideas, expenditures, and collaborative public and private action aimed at reversing father absence.

“Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America” issues a “call to action” to fathers, churches, civil rights organizations, and the public sector to prioritize this issue for the next ten years. The wide-angled analysis of the section “Why Fathers Matter” identifies various economic, cultural, and policy challenges to fatherhood and marriage, and it wisely places the American family crisis within the context of global trends. The report finds that by fault of strident individualism and a weakened sense of obligation to the family, “fathers the world over, rich and poor alike, are increasingly disengaging from their children and from the mothers of their children” (Clayton et al. 1999, 9). The section “Spiritual Dimensions of Father Absence in Black America,” invokes African notions of the sacredness of being a father (creator) and remembers the history of Black religion’s success in empowering Blacks to overcome oppression. The report concludes with ten recommendations for collaborative and self-empowering activity designed to reverse this crisis.

By way of providing a sense of the tone of the report and beginning to frame the state of the conversation, I include several brief passages here:

“We gathered together because of our shared concern about the national trend of father absence that is affecting nearly all races and ethnic groups in the United States, and because of our particular concern about father absence in the African American community” (Clayton et al. 1999, 4).

“We gathered together because we believe that among the most urgent problems facing the African American community, and the entire nation, is the reality that 70 percent of African American children are born to unmarried mothers, and that at least 80 percent of all African American children can now expect to spend at least a significant part of their childhood years living apart from their fathers” (Clayton et al. 1999, 4).

“Although we differ on the relative weight to be given to economic, cultural, and private and public policy factors in shaping the lives of African American fathers, we agree that each of these factors is at work, and that comprehensive strategies are needed to confront the crisis of father absence in the African American community” (Clayton et al. 1999, 5).

Then, closer to the point of my concern about religious intervention on this issue, signatories affirmed that:

“We gathered knowing in our hearts that the estrangement of fathers from their children is wrong, that children need both their fathers and their mothers, and that neither the African American community, nor the nation as a whole, can truly prosper unless and until we reverse the alarming trend of father absence” (Clayton et al. 1999, 4).

“We agree that there are profound spiritual dimensions to this crisis, and that in order to make the way for nurturing relationships between fathers and their children, much healing must be done between fathers and mothers, men and women” (Clayton et al. 1999, 5).

This focus upon estrangement as a moral wrong and the need for healing may contribute to the kind of case that needs to be made to church leaders to embrace this issue as a priority.

Before addressing these issues, I would like to make an observation that relates to my central claim. I have noticed that during the post-civil rights movement period, a span of approximately thirty-five years, the African American leadership elite has focused on a wide variety of challenges related to racial group advancement through opening opportunities and dismantling the remnants of institutional racism in the public and private sectors. Ironically, however, they have not managed to sustain a highly visible and energetic focus upon issues pertaining to Black relational behavior particularly related to topics of sexual behavior, heterosexual marriage, parenting, various family forms, and same-gender relationships. While African American and other scholars from across the racial-ethnic spectrum have churned out a small mountain of disturbing and provocative reports on the consequences of falling Black heterosexual marriage rates, skyrocketing out-of-wedlock birth rates, and epidemic proportions of sexually transmitted disease in urban Black communities, few major African American public intellectuals, clergy, civil rights leaders, elected officials, entrepreneurs, sports heroes or heroines, or other professionals have made this a cause celebre. This invites a difficult question, assuming that they have not done so, why haven't African American communities had a vigorous internal conversation about the future of marriage and family? In an interview with the author on 13 March 2003, Columbia University economist and coauthor of the report Ron Mincy put it this way, “While President Bush is conducting a public conversation about marriage and fatherhood, the African American community hasn't yet had the necessary private conversation about these issues that would facilitate a productive joining of the larger conversation.”

WHY WE CANNOT SPEAK

During the past several years, I have been engaged in a series of interviews, conversations, and focus groups with college students and seminarians, officials from the nation's leading civil rights organizations, scholars, policy experts, conservative and liberal think-tank advocates, Muslim and Christian clergy, fatherhood advocates, journalists, government leaders, executives in philanthropy, and grassroots community leaders, as well as people who reside outside the United States for comparative perspective. In these discussions and investigations, I have listened to a

host of compelling explanations for why the kind of conversation to which I refer has not occurred. Consider the most oft-cited reasons:

- Racism is still a reality. Leaders must be careful not to dilute the impact of their work by addressing too many issues. Some leaders are called to focus on fighting structural inequities and discrimination, and they happily leave the private realm of family matters to people with appropriate expertise. There has to be a division of leadership labor in public and private matters. We have chosen to work in the public square.
- The obstacles that stand in the way of promoting marriage and nuclear families are too overwhelming. Leaders like successes. This set of issues promises few, if any, of them. Since we cannot reverse the travails of history, let us settle on being realistic about what we can effectively accomplish in one lifetime.
- Vulnerable minorities must take care not to have private conversations in ways that might lend assistance to their political opponents. Talking about this issue amounts to airing dirty laundry. Even presumably well-intentioned allies who do not understand African American cultural dynamics, such as Daniel Moynihan in his report forty years ago¹, may inadvertently do harm by focusing the public gaze upon the deficits of Black families at the expense of a complete lack of attention on the assets and strengths of African American families and communities.
- The issues are complex, and solutions are dependent upon individual choices that, generally, should be respected. There is no law requiring people to marry and little social pressure to conform to traditional expectations. The culture of individualism makes it almost impossible to persuade people to behave better if they do not want to do so. Individual will trumps good programs and rhetoric every time. So why work against the grain of the culture?
- No one is perfect. We admit that we may not be fit for this task. Some of us have experienced moral failures. We know divorce, out-of-wedlock birth, pain, and moral ambiguity firsthand. Who are we to lecture people about *their* personal and private lives? Only God can judge.

Although these rationales were offered, no one I spoke with suggested that the conversation should not occur. Some did express skepticism, especially regarding the starting of such a conversation and how productive it could ever be. A few noted the model of the annual "State of the Black Union" panel discussions convened by popular African American radio personality and author Tavis Smiley. When such conversations occur and are broadcast by C-SPAN or other mass communication outlets, they do, in fact, generate some ongoing discussion about salient issues and arguments raised during the panel discussions. Nevertheless, two important virtues are missing from most national meetings: first is the freedom to be honest and second is safety from censoring or stigmatizing (if not physically brutalizing) influences in the community. These concerns raise important questions for my proposal later in this article regarding the role that congregations and community-based organizations should take in sponsoring this conversation throughout the African

American community. Let us now consider four factors that have discouraged men from becoming husbands and fathers: (1) slavery, (2) economic changes, (3) cultural change, and (4) public policy.

LIVING WITH AMERICA'S ORIGINAL SIN

In a powerful essay on the contemporary debate about family issues and urban poverty, Brown University professor Glenn Loury observes that conservatives now dominate the discussion. He writes:

With great fanfare, conservatives now declare the historic battle against racial caste to have been won. They go on to say that, but for the behavioral dysfunction of the Black poor, and the misguided demands for affirmative action from a race-obsessed Black middle-class, our "problem of the color line" could be put behind us. Abigail and Stephen Themstrom with their (new) book, *America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible* offer a prime example of this mode of assessment. This line of argument should not be permitted to shape our national understanding of these matters. (Loury n.d., 15)

His observation reminds me of the costly fact that almost none of the best-known African American public intellectuals have stepped up to challenge or, at least, balance that perspective on the subject of Black family structure and dynamics. Although his own political loyalties have often been questioned, Loury himself represents an exception to this pattern of silence.

In contrast to most liberal African American leaders who dismiss and discredit nearly all conservative analysis and opinion, Loury acknowledges that there may be a "grain of truth in the conservatives' insistence that cultural differences lie at the root of racial inequality in America." Just when one thinks Loury is about to take too large a conciliatory step toward this "unfriendly" camp, he pulls off the gloves and continues:

The deeper truth is that for some three centuries now, the communal experience of the slaves and their descendants has been shaped by political, social and economic institutions that, by any measure, must be seen as oppressive. When we look at "underclass culture" in the American cities of today we are seeing a product of that oppressive history. It is *morally obtuse and scientifically naïve* to say, in the face of the despair, violence, and self-destructive folly of these people, that 'if they would get their acts together, like the poor Asian immigrants, then we would not have such a horrific problem in our cities.' We should not ignore the behavioral problems of the underclass, but we should discuss and react to them as if we were talking about our own children, neighbors, and friends. This is an American tragedy. (Loury n.d., 15)

Contemporary discussions about race relations generally, and Black family issues in particular, are frustrating and predictable. When the subject of slavery and its impact emerges, one is likely to encounter either a considerable ignorance of America's

past, a lack of intellectual honesty about its consequences, or a contraction of the empathy necessary to work for change. We must reckon with slavery, America's original sin, not simply to understand its possible lingering impact on Black family structure but in order to continually discern what justice requires of a great nation that became great at the expense of an incalculable exploitation of humanity. It is useful to summarize the debate on the lingering effects of slavery on Black family structure. When sociologist E. Franklin Frazier argued that slavery was responsible for the troubles and instability of Black families, many other social scientists embraced his perspective. Indeed, Moynihan's infamous report that trumpeted the pathology of Black families was essentially following Frazier's lead. As a White policy maker and academic, Moynihan was an easier target than his African American mentor; however, more recent research has challenged Frazier's perspective. Relying on census data, historians have shown that the two-parent, nuclear family was the predominant family form in the late 19th and early 20th centuries for Blacks as well as Whites. Herbert Gutman found that 70 to 90 percent of Black households were "male-present" and that a majority of them in the counties he examined were nuclear families (Wilson 1987, 64) (Gutman 1977). African American family scholars such as Andrew Billingsley have tried to replace the usual focus upon deficits with one on the assets and strengths that have been developed and retained, such as the extended family, fictive kin, and the veneration of grandmothers (Billingsley 1994).

Again, the picture is complex. In a powerful study of African American gender relations, titled *Rituals of Blood: Consequences of Slavery in Two American Centuries* (Patterson, 1999), Harvard sociologist Orlando Patterson acknowledges that we must not overemphasize slavery as an explanation. However, he also contends that intellectual honesty and rigor require us to understand slavery's most important features. Patterson states:

After two hundred fifty years of forced adaptation to the extreme environment of slavery, African-American men and women developed a distinctive set of reproductive strategies in their struggle to survive. Tragically, the strategies that were most efficient for survival under the extreme environment of slavery were often the least adaptive to survival in a free, competitive social order (Patterson 1999, 41).

Patterson notes that the most devastating impact of the "centuries-long holocaust of slavery" was the "ethnocidal assault on gender roles, especially those of father and husband, leaving deep scars in the relations between African-American men and women" (Patterson 1999, 25). He then traces the manner in which male slaves found it rational and expedient to have as many children as possible in order to "leave progeny who might survive to adulthood." Male slaves experienced the separation of two important processes that have been almost universally observed together in parenting, which is calculating the number of children one could support financially, on the one hand, and then carefully proceeding to limit one's family size accordingly, on the other. During slavery, Black men were prevented from exercising moral agency to participate in this parenting process, and after slavery they were not encouraged or rewarded for doing so.

Patterson presents a chilling analysis of how newly freed young Black men and women began to have large numbers of children, which suited them perfectly, but sentenced them to long-term dependence upon the Southern sharecropping economy and “farm tenancy rather than farm ownership” (Patterson 1999, 48). He declares that “Afro Americans and American society at large (like Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Latin societies) are *still living with the devastating consequences* of this male attitude toward reproduction” (Patterson 1999, 43). Together with the phenomenon of very early marriages among African Americans as compared with others and extremely high fertility rates, he notes that “this pattern was a recipe for chronic and persistent poverty” (Patterson 1999, 47). Whether Patterson’s interpretation is firmly supported by the data may be a matter of perspective and presupposition. Nonetheless, he has highlighted factors from our history and slavery that have not been adequately theorized and examined.

INTO THE JAWS OF MODERNITY

In his best-selling book, *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How it Changed America*, Nicholas Lemann observes that between 1910 and 1970, six and a half million Black Americans moved from the South to the North; five million of them moved after 1940, during the time of the mechanization of cotton farming.

The Black migration was one of the largest and most rapid mass internal movements of people in history—perhaps the greatest not caused by the immediate threat of execution or starvation. In sheer numbers it outranks the migration of any other ethnic group—Italians or Irish or Jews or Poles—to this country (Lemann 1991, 4).

Growing up in a working-class household in Chicago in the 1950s, I used to enjoy listening to the migration stories of my parents and extended family. Most of the adults whom I knew and loved were born in rural Mississippi, where they struggled to thrive amidst the economic challenges of the sharecropping system and the social boundaries of Jim Crow. On occasion, relatives moved to Detroit or Chicago in search of better job opportunities or in desperate efforts to escape the terror of local White citizens who meant to do them harm. Most folks traveled by train or bus, but I can recall a couple of cousins and neighbors who claimed to have been smuggled out by cover of darkness in the trunks of automobiles driven by well-dressed and respected Black pastors, a latter-day version of the underground railroad rarely heard about.

My parents heard the stories of those Northern relatives who were living well thanks to the abundant work opportunities in the heavy industries of the North. My extended family (grandmother and eight young adult offspring) moved to Chicago’s South Side *en masse*, and all of my aunts and uncles soon were gainfully employed. They all became members of the Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ, the congregation where membership was shared with Sister Mamie Till and her family. Emmett Till, her son and soon-to-be man-child martyr, was several years older than me. My father worked his way up the ladder to management at the Campbell Soup

Company's West Side plant. All of the adults worked, and they all married. All had children, but not quite as many as their own parents, who had relied upon child farm labor to make ends meet. Already they were learning an important adaptive lesson: large families were no longer an economic necessity; indeed, they could prove to be a liability. There were other painful lessons. My family often whispered about how a neighbor or relative had been laid off, started drinking, and stopped coming home to his wife. During the 1950s, we learned a new word: *divorce*. We had no way of anticipating what the 1960s and its many revolutions would bring.

William Julius Wilson reminds us that the earliest detailed national census information on family structure is available from the 1940 census:

In 1940, female-headed families were more prevalent among Blacks than among Whites, and among urbanites than among rural residents for both groups. Yet, even in urban areas, 72 percent of Black families with children under eighteen were male headed. Moreover, irrespective of race and residence, most women heading families were widows. (Wilson 1987, 65)

Although African Americans embraced marriage once they were free to do so, especially between the 1890s and the 1940s, something began to change after the 1950s. African American women began to marry later than their White counterparts resulting in a "post-sixties reversal in which the proportion of single African American women significantly exceeded that of single Euro American women" (Wilson 1987, 56). Underscoring the impact of macroeconomic changes on Black families that had survived slavery and sharecropping only to arrive in Northern ghettos, Wilson insists that we recall that between 1947 and 1972 the central cities of the thirty-three most populous metropolitan areas lost 880,000 manufacturing jobs, while manufacturing employment in their suburbs grew by 2.5 million. The same cities lost 867,000 jobs in retail and wholesale trade at the same time that their suburbs gained millions of such positions. Wilson argues persuasively that we cannot ignore the impact of joblessness and economy on the desire of women and men to pursue marriage.

In brief, three frequently cited explanations have been offered by various scholars. First, the "male marriage pool" thesis, developed by Wilson, suggests that Black marriage rates deteriorated in the 1970s because of declining job prospects. Second, "the female independence thesis argues that the improved economic situation of women since the 1950s has made all women more independent of men. Women delay marriage in order to pursue their careers or because they do not feel as pressured to secure a marriage early, and when they do get married they are less reluctant to walk away from unhappy circumstances" (Wilson 1987, 63). And third, the "school enrollment" explanation maintains that "increased school enrollment accounts for the delay in marriage. Young Black people are pursuing their education instead of going directly into the workforce and getting married, as they might have done during earlier periods when there were fewer educational opportunities" (Wilson 1987, 63). I can think of innumerable Black women who recall with some frustration the dual messages from their mothers: stay in school, get as much education as you can, and then earn as much as you can without depending on a man,

on the one hand; on the other hand, hurry and marry a good man and provide me with grandchildren before your biological time clock runs out. Similarly, cultural change has been recognized as a factor that may discourage men from becoming responsible husbands and fathers.

CULTURAL CHANGE

The third significant factor affecting the environment for Black marriage and parenting is the changing nature of social, cultural, and moral codes. During and immediately after the slave period, the Black community did not stigmatize female-headed households. Who knew why such a woman was now alone? Mincy notes:

At certain times in the painful history of race relations in this country, desertion and victimization were as likely causes of single motherhood as moral failure. In any individual case, who could know? Who would ask? In response, the Black community developed a tradition of embracing all of its children, even the fair-skinned ones. Under these circumstances, stigmatizing unwed births was impossible (Mincy and Pouncy 2001, 22).

As quoted in Wilson's book, the famed sociologist Kenneth Clark notes how this change of moral code correlated with class identity:

In the ghetto, the meaning of the illegitimate child is not ultimate disgrace. There is not the demand for abortion or for surrender of the child that one finds in more privileged communities. In the middle class, the disgrace of illegitimacy is tied to personal and family aspirations. In lower-class families, on the other hand, the girl loses only some of her already limited options by having an illegitimate child: she is not going to make a "better marriage" or improve her economic and social status either way. On the contrary, a child is a symbol of the fact that she is a woman, and she may gain from having something of her own. (Wilson 1987, 73)

This practice is complex and merits more attention than we can provide here. However, we should note that the ethic of toleration and acceptance of single parenthood, which was developed by the larger Black community, has always lived in tension with the more traditional family agenda of the Black church.

PUBLIC POLICY

In addition to the economic changes and cultural change, public policy has also been an important factor in discouraging men from becoming husbands and fathers. Here, I will be exceedingly brief in noting that the Black family has been acted upon with varying effects by a long history of law and public policy. Blacks have had to endure the indignity of a social system that did not permit legal marriages and contract-making among enslaved people. Moreover, Blacks were not recognized before the law as citizens until passage of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the

Constitution in 1865 and 1868. Later, the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, or *welfare*, was implemented in ways that penalized women for allowing a man to be present in the household. Law and policy have been enemies of the Black family for a long time. Perhaps they can now lend their authority and resources to strengthening fragile families.

WHO HELPS TROUBLED FAMILIES?

To this point, we have reviewed various dimensions of the father-absence challenge. We noted that the legacy of slavery cannot be ignored in this discussion as it established social conditions under which Blacks developed adaptive reproductive strategies to preserve the group. Unfortunately, those same strategies quickly became maladaptive in a relatively free society with increasing economic and educational opportunities. We have followed the line of argument elaborated by Orlando Patterson to appreciate the divergent socioeconomic trajectories of Black women and men since the latter half of the 20th century. We have also reviewed the impact of economic dislocation, cultural change, and public policy on Black families. I cited the challenges surrounding the case for marriage in a milieu in which women benefit less than men, and both men and women under use the institution. It is patently unfair that Black children are deprived of their fathers because of the choices and behavior of adult men and women, hence my call for congregations and community-based organizations to take seriously the cultural work of creating "generative adults."² Let us return to the unanswered call of the Morehouse conference on father absence.

I began by observing that well-known African American public intellectuals, civil rights leaders, and media personalities have done little to jump-start the internal conversation that African Americans should be having about marriage, family, and the African American future. These are individuals who enjoy frequent and free access to mass media and who can communicate with millions of people through their comments, speeches, and publications. I believe that, despite their reluctance to initiate the conversation, they will have a crucial role to play in the success of the eventual dialogue. Nonetheless, I nominate African American congregations and community-based organizations as the natural coordinators and catalysts for an ongoing conversation about the future of Black marriages, families, and children's well-being. There may be well over 60,000 Black churches and mosques in the United States. They possess a variety of assets necessary to sponsor a series of conversations. These include meeting spaces, talented leaders, armies of potential volunteers, track records of service and effectiveness, community credibility and trust, financial assets, and the moral authority to instruct, admonish, and empathically guide people in regard to that which is right and wrong, good and bad, blameworthy and praiseworthy. In an interview with the author on 13 March 2003, Mincy contends: "I don't believe the marriage and fatherhood agenda will go very far without a religious foundation. The Black community expects that moralizing will have religious roots. But the failure of the Black church to get out front and speak up hampers the efforts of other professionals who wish to help Black kids."

How would such a conversation begin? Congregations and community-based organizations need user-friendly materials to inform their perspectives on the complex issues of marriage and family formation in contemporary society. The village dialogue will cover material that is emotionally charged, intellectually demanding, and theologically complex. This work will demand study and the discipline of listening carefully. Community dialogue sponsors will need these materials in order to focus the dialogue and ensure that it is properly informed. For example, the "Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America" report and additional resources on various topics, including religious and moral dimensions of sexuality, marriage, parenting, and childhood, could be prove useful.

In addition, community sponsors should consider employing a collaborative leadership model approach, which would pool resources among stakeholders and encourage active participation in the decision-making process. Churches, mosques, and the local chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) could cosponsor these important conversations. Religious congregations should regard this process as a special opportunity for healing the entire community, and they should do everything possible to *practice an ethic of hospitality, patience, and reconciliation*. They must restrain themselves from reimposing traditional stigmas or moral judgments on those who have experienced moral failure, unfortunate economic downturns beyond their control, and bad personal decisions. A great deal of healing could come from church leaders and members courageously admitting their own shortcomings and failures in this arena of life. This challenge is tricky because much of the pain that affects individuals and families in our communities is the fault of, for want of a better phrase, bad religion. Churches, and to a lesser extent, mosques and other houses of worship have practiced exploitation of women, homophobia, narrow-mindedness regarding the variety of family forms, and an embrace of Puritan cultural values.

Furthermore, I recommend that discussion, preparation, and planning start now so as to be ready for a series of conversations that might begin as soon as is feasible, perhaps during Black History Month. Some churches could use the season of Lent as a symbolically appropriate time to hold the conversation over several weeks. What is important is that community partners organize and contextualize the conversations to reflect their unique histories and circumstances.

I believe that there are sufficient resources within and outside the African American community to reverse the current trend of declining marriage, rising divorce, and out-of-wedlock births. All of the beautiful and innocent Black children out there—our future brain trust—deserve such a national campaign on their behalf.

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¹ "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," otherwise known as the Moynihan report, was written in 1965. In this report, Moynihan argued that the rise in single-mother families was not due to a lack of jobs but rather to a destructive vein in ghetto culture that could be traced back to slavery and Jim Crow discrimination.

² Generative adults are people who are willing to remain in marriages, even if they are not ecstatically happy, in order to offer certain goods to their children and community. Generative adults need not be martyrs or live in misery, but they should be urged to consider the consequences of their actions and decisions upon the next generation.

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Conference**

www.hks.harvard.edu/bpc

**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Leadership 500
Summit**

www.naacp.org/events/leadership

National Urban League Legislative Policy Conference

www.nul.org/legislativepolicyconference.html

National Urban League's The State of Black America Annual Report

www.nul.org/thestateofblackamerica.html

Southern Conference on African American Studies, Inc.

www.scaasi.org

**Kellogg School of Management Annual Black Management Association
Conference**

www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/bmaconference

National Black MBA Association Annual Conference

www.nbmbaa.org

Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Conference

www.alc2008.org

National African American Student Leadership Conference

www.naaslc.org

The Urban Institute

www.urban.org/race/index.cfm

The Root

<http://theroot.com>

The W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research

<http://dubois.fas.harvard.edu/research-projects>

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