

Political, Cultural and Civic Life

Dawson, Michael C. 1994. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African American Politics*, Princeton University Press.

The central question in Dawson's research was whether race or class is more important in shaping African American politics. By explaining the importance of race and class in shaping political behavior, Dawson addresses why African Americans have remained politically homogeneous while economically polarized, and the extent to which greater political diversity is probable in the future. *Behind the Mule* examines the tension between racial interests and class interests as factors in shaping African American politics. Dawson argues that the tension arises from the historical legacy of the formation of African American racial identity, which was shaped by racial and economic oppression; therefore, African American political behavior is different than that of white citizens, for it has been shaped by a unique set of historical forces. "It is this legacy of a social identity in which racial and economic oppression have been intertwined for generations that has been the critical component in understanding not only the cultural basis of African American politics but also the material roots of black politics."

Dawson questions whether the racial identity becomes less relevant as some African Americans develop a stronger class identity. To answer these pointed questions, Dawson develops a framework for analyzing African Americans' racial group interests. The framework helps in predicting which African American social identities are politically salient, as well as the conditions under which African American political diversity is likely to increase. By testing the framework Dawson puts forth a better understanding of the circumstances under which race or class, or their interaction, becomes the dominant influence in shaping African American political behavior and public opinion.

Kelley, Robin. 1997. *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional!: Fighting the Cultural Wars in Urban America*, Beacon Press.

Robin Kelley wrote *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional* in defense of black people's humanity and condemnation of scholars and policymakers for their inability to see complexity in the black community. Kelley critiques critics, such as Charles Murray, Dinesh D'Souza, Daniel Patrick Moynihan and William Julius Wilson; he also attempts to give voice to those urban populations currently under siege.

Kelley explores the ongoing battle over representation of the black urban condition and illuminates cultural and ideological warfare that continues to wage over black people and "social problems" of the inner city. The "cultural wars," as Kelley calls them, help to explain why many people believe that racism is defunct and constraints to black progress have been removed, even though the conditions for the urban black working class continue to deteriorate. Kelley presents compelling critiques of how various scholars, activists, policymakers and displaced urban working people have tried to make sense of the urban crisis, solutions they have proposed, strategies they have adopted, and potentially transformative social movements.

Yo' Mama's Disfunktional! is premised on the idea that culture and questions of identity have been at the heart of intense battles facing African Americans at the end of the century. For instance, depending on who's doing the analysis, the "ghetto" can be viewed as America's Achilles' heel, the repository of bad values and economic failure, or the source of a vibrant culture of resistance. Because these cultural and ideological constructions of ghetto life shape public policy, scholarship, and social movements, it is important to be cognizant of the role identity plays in the key political and economic struggles of our time.

Putnam, Robert D. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital" in *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 6, No. 1 (January).

Putnam points to a long history of empirical evidence that highlights the importance of civic engagement and social connectedness in producing positive community outcomes such as improved schools, economic development, sustainable social institutions, lower crime, and more effective government. As Putnam suggests, diverse researchers have come to a common framework for understanding public life, which rests on the concept of *social capital* – "features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit." Putnam research is based

on the premise that social connections and civic engagement influence public life in contemporary America.

Putnam begins by addressing the areas in which social capital has eroded in American life, including a consistent decline in political and governmental engagement; a decline in organized religion and churchgoing; a withdrawal from community participation in public meetings and affairs; falling union membership; an erosion of social trust; and drastic drops in parent-teacher associations, fraternal and civic organizations. Through empirical evidence we see that although more Americans are in social circumstances that foster associational involvement (higher education, middle age, etc.) membership in organizations remains stagnant or declining. Putnam posits that the erosion of social connectedness and civic engagement in America over the past two or three decades can be attributed to four primary explanations: first, the movement of women into the labor force which has decreased their participation in civic organizations and altered their role in family life. Second, the increased mobility of families and individuals has decreased their ability to establish roots in a community. Third, demographic trends and the transformation of family structure. Finally, the advancement in technology which has altered forms of entertainment and created distance among community residents. Unfortunately however, Putnam does not propose suggestions for reversing adverse trends in social connectedness but rather, advocates for more empirical research. Putnam's works on social capital are widely cited in community building literature because of the apparent significance of civil society to American democracy.

Stack, Carol. 1974. *All Our Kin*, Basic Books.

More than twenty years ago, Stack received the approval of several black families in a Midwestern city to study their family life first hand. Based on this research, Stack refutes many of the stereotypes popularized by certain scholars of "the culture of poverty" and "the black family." She draws attention to how strategies and networks of self-reliance are the basis for daily survival for black urban communities in the United States. Additionally, Stack argues that unlike the mainstream white free-market values of individualism, competitiveness, and materialism, the value system that undergirds the survival networks of poor and working class black urban communities is based on what she calls the "ethic of cooperation." Stack observes that black families "share with one another because of the urgency of their needs. Alliances between individuals are created around the clock as kin and friends exchange and give and obligate one another. Through these survival strategies black urban communities develop bonds of trust, friendship and solidarity.

For Further Reading :

Coleman, James S. 1988. "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital, " *American Journal of Sociology*, supplement.

De Tocqueville, Alexis. 1969. *Democracy in America*, trans. George Lawrence, Anchor Books.

Haymes, Stephen Nathan. 1995. *Race, Culture and the City: A Pedagogy for Black Urban Struggle*, State University of New York Press.

Putnam, Robert D. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton University Press.

Social Policy

Katz, Michael B. 1989. *The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare*, New York: Pantheon Books.

Katz, an urban historian, shows how American preoccupation with productivity, cost, and eligibility have shaped and confined ideas about poor people by channeling discourse about need, entitlement and justice within narrow limits bounded by the market. Although poverty is essentially about inequitable distribution of resources, mainstream poverty discourse, both liberal and conservative, largely remains silent about essential issues of politics, power, and equality. Katz suggests that descriptions of the demography, behavior, or beliefs of the poor cannot explain patterned inequalities evident in every era of American history. These persistent patterns result from styles of dominance, how power is exercised, and the politics of distribution, which can only be understood through a critical political economic analysis. In *The Undeserving Poor*, Katz presents a critical historiography of the ideas and assumptions that have shaped public policy, from the sixties' War on Poverty to the war on welfare. By defining and critiquing important concepts, such as the "culture of poverty" and the "underclass," as well as the scholars, journalists and policy makers using such verbiage, Katz hopes that poverty discourse moves away from a language about family, race and culture toward a much needed discourse on inequality, power and exploitation.

Moynihan, Daniel Patrick. 1965. *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. [The Moynihan Report] Washington, DC: Office of Policy Planning and Research, US Department of Labor

While Daniel Patrick Moynihan occupied the Assistant Secretary of Labor position under President Lyndon B. Johnson, in 1965, he wrote a report on the condition of the Negro family, which became known as The Moynihan Report. This controversial Report marked a change in the government's thinking on the civil rights movement. Moreover, the Report facilitated a shift from focusing on the legal discrepancies, which perpetuate racial inequality, to emphasizing living conditions, specifically of the black family. This Report was intended to address the inherent inequality embedded in the American system, which was actually getting worse based on income, standard of living, and education indices, and thus, could not be eradicated with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 alone.

The central thesis of the Report is that the change in the black family structure, characterized by the absence of a strong male figure, single female headed households and the loss of family stability, engendered urban ghetto decay. While a small black middle-class has managed to save itself, the fabric of conventional social relationships has disintegrated for vast numbers of unskilled, poorly educated urbanites. Moreover, post-war data suggested that the trends would continue and perpetuate the cycle of poverty and disadvantage, barring federal action. The nation was faced with a new set of problems that required new direct action geared toward the establishment of a stable Negro family structure.

The Moynihan Report represented the "liberal" perspective on urban poverty sponsored by the federal government, however, it received relentless criticism for bastardizing the black family and legitimating a "culture of poverty" thesis through descriptive statistics on unemployment, welfare dependency, single parent households, etc. which negated larger structural issues.

Piven, Frances Fox and Richard A. Cloward. 1971 (reprinted 1993). *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare*, Vintage Books.

Rather than analyzing America's welfare system, Piven and Cloward explain how "relief-giving" as an institution in the United States has been used to regulate the political and economic behavior of the poor. The authors suggest that relief giving is manipulated (expanded and contracted) based on larger political and economic agendas. Piven and Cloward argue that "expansive relief policies are designed to mute civil disorder, and restrictive ones to reinforce work norms. In other words, relief policies... depend on the problems of regulation in the larger society with which government must contend." Interestingly, the authors point out that barring pension and unemployment insurance, most social welfare activity has not greatly aided the poor because the poor have little political power to demand more appropriate programs. Relief systems that perform the two main functions, maintaining civil order and enforcing work, are deemed successful.

Piven and Cloward argue that much more should be understood about relief giving within the context of a market economy. The relief-giving institution does more than reinforce work norms. It goes far toward defining and enforcing the terms on which different classes of people are made to do different kinds of work; relief arrangements in other words, have a great deal to do with maintaining social and economic inequalities. The indignities and cruelties of the dole are no deterrent to indolence among the rich; but for the poor person, the specter of ending up on welfare or in the poorhouse makes any job at any wage a preferable alternative. And so the issue is not the relative merit of work itself; but rather how some people are made to do the harshest work for the least reward.

Wilson, William Julius. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy*, University of Chicago Press.

The Truly Disadvantaged grew out of the controversy over Wilson's previous book the *Declining Significance of Race*. It challenges liberal orthodoxy in analyzing inner city problems; discusses in candid terms the social pathologies of the inner city; establishes a case for moving beyond race specific policies to ameliorate inner city social conditions to policies that address the broader problems of societal organization; and advances a social democratic public policy agenda designed to improve the life chances of truly disadvantaged groups such as the ghetto underclass by emphasizing programs to which the more advantaged groups of all races can positively relate.

More specifically, Wilson articulates numerous fallacies in neo-conservative analysis, showing, for example, that there is no consistent evidence that welfare programs are a disincentive for work. Wilson argues that persistent urban poverty stems from the structural transformation of the inner city economy. By this, Wilson is referring to the decline in manufacturing, the suburbanization of employment, the rise of the low-wage service sector, and the decline in living wage opportunities, thus we see high rates of joblessness among minorities. This in turn, has contributed to a shrinking pool of "marriageable" men, as Wilson calls it. Because there are fewer men able to support a family, marriage becomes an less desirable option for many poor women, hence, we have a rise in unwed childbearing and female headed households. Wilson states that "past" discrimination has increased the spatial concentration of this phenomenon. Additionally, Wilson outlines the effects of social isolation – the out-migration from the ghetto of middle class blacks, who once served as "role models" and "social buffers"-- and the concentration of underemployed, desperate, single parent families in under serviced ghetto neighborhoods.

By interweaving voices of inner city men and women in Chicago, with quantitative survey data, Wilson dismantles the conservative argument that the people of the ghetto lack drive and aspiration. He demonstrates that their desire and quest for success and a stable life are comparable to those of society at large, but they develop within a context of constraints and opportunity drastically different from those in middle class society. The major critiques of *The Truly Disadvantaged* is economic determinism, avoidance of "contemporary" issues of racial discrimination, and blaming the black middle class for blacks trapped in the inner city.

For Further Reading:

Bane, Mary Jo and David Ellwood. 1994. *Welfare Realities: From Rhetoric to Reform*, Harvard University Press.

Clark, Kenneth B. 1965. *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power*, Harper and Row.

Freeman, Richard B. 1999. *The New Inequality: Creating Solutions for Poor America*, Beacon Press.

Neighborhood Conditions, Housing and Education

Abramsky, Sasha. 1999. "When They Get Out: How Prisons, Established to Fight Crime, Produce Crime" *The Atlantic Monthly* (June).

Abramsky presents a journalistic perspective on the prison industrial complex and the effect of maximum security prisons on the life of inmates and the communities they reenter. The author discusses how people imprisoned for nonviolent crimes often become homicidal when released on parole. Abramsky points to academic research which suggests that physical and psychological torment results from sensory deprivation and social isolation of inmates in solitary confinement over extended periods of time. This isolation can cause human beings to regress until they are only capable of acting on instinct, like violent animals, with no ability to plan beyond the moment. Abramsky also presents startling statistics about the large numbers of people that will be released from prison over the next few decades. However, it is not clear that these communities will be able to reabsorb large numbers of ex-convicts, who will inevitably have difficulty obtaining work and participating in civic life. Many of these communities are already devastated by high rates of unemployment and urban blight. Abramsky asks the question, what will happen to these communities when large numbers of uneducated, unemployed and angry ex-convicts flood the streets?

Anderson, Elijah. 1992. *Streetwise: Race, Class and Change in an Urban Community*, University of Chicago Press.

Using informal interviews and ethnographic observation, Anderson describes and analyzes the nature of street life and public culture among diverse groups of urban residents. Anderson's fieldwork is conducted in two communities: one black and low income-to-very poor, the other racially mixed but becoming increasingly middle-to-upper income and white. His analyses convey his understanding of the way social relations are shaped by societal changes. Anderson documents how gentrification of inner city neighborhoods as newcomers, often white and of a professional status, begin to alter the negative perceptions of neighborhoods. As newcomers enter, property values rise, and areas on the verge of becoming slums slowly turn around and are redefined as quaint, historic and desirable. Concurrently, increasing property values push poorer residents, many of whom are black renters, into adjacent ghetto areas.

Anderson documents how interpersonal trust and moral cohesion once prevailed in these ghetto areas was undermined by unemployment, crime, drug use, and antisocial behavior, creating an atmosphere of distrust, alienation and social disorganization. As the social life of the ghetto deteriorates, those living in middle-class areas nearby, newcomers, and old-timers feel the impact. Some residents stay in the community, others flee. The diverse group of residents that remain share a concern about public safety. Collectively, they struggle to fight crime and preserve the neighborhood's character by forming town watches and shoring up local municipal codes that attempt to discourage "undesirables" and encourage those of their liking. Anderson tells a story of residents black and white, male and female, young and old that have become suspicious of unfamiliar black males, and wonder if they will be safe in their neighborhood's streets. Anderson argues that "one gains street wisdom through a long sometime arduous process that begins with a certain 'uptightness' about the urban environment, with decisions based on stereotypes and simple rules of public etiquette. Given time and experience, the nervousness and fear give way to a recognition that street life involves situations that require selective and individualized responses – applying broad stereotypes simply will not do."

DuBois, W.E.B. 1899 (originally printed). *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*, University of Pennsylvania Press.

DuBois' *The Philadelphia Negro* is a seminal work in the field of race relations. It was one of the first pieces of social science research to combine urban ethnography, social history, and descriptive statistics. While the book is considered a classic in urban sociology, the issues – problems of black integration into American society – and DuBois' thinking are strikingly contemporary.

The purpose of the research, at least for DuBois, was to educate those in power about the race problem and the conditions of black people, and thus help to improve conditions. DuBois believed that the

Negroes' problems were not rooted in their heredity but rather their environment and the social conditions that confronted them, such as the legacy of slavery, race prejudice, and competition with white immigrants. Blacks were routinely excluded from labor opportunities, even exploitative opportunities, which could be used as a means to develop a work ethic while supporting families and community. At the same time, blacks were expected to advance and participate in the American system like immigrant groups – Jews, Italians, Irish, etc. – that were more highly regarded and that received benevolent treatment from upper class whites. *The Philadelphia Negro* says a great deal about the insight of the author but it also speaks to the pervasiveness of racial inequality in America.

Jargowsky, Paul A. 1997. *Poverty and Place: Ghettos, Barrios, and the American City*, Russell Sage Foundation.

Poverty and Place provides a theoretically and methodologically comprehensive analysis of changes in neighborhood poverty nationwide. Through extensive field research Jargowsky conceptualized high-poverty neighborhoods – where poverty rates are at least 40 percent -- as areas of racial and ethnic identification. Thus, Jargowsky uses the terms ghetto, barrio and slum to describes black, Latino, and white high-poverty neighborhoods, respectively. This important distinction is made to express the cultural experiences of each group, as well as the growth in the concentration of poverty in each neighborhood.

This important book critically examines predominant literatures about neighborhood poverty, including structural analyses, economic and racial segregation, cultural explanations for neighborhood poverty, as well as the incessant debate about “place verse people” strategies. Jargowsky highlights the controversy in many of the hypotheses and empirical conclusions concerning the growth of high poverty areas, and suggests that metropolitanism become central to policy prescriptions, because existing strategies for alleviating neighborhood poverty fail to construct models in which high-poverty areas are connected to their metropolitan areas. Moreover, Jargowsky states that “neighborhood poverty can not be ‘solved’ with programs in ghettos and barrios alone. The data show that these communities have not become self-sustaining enclaves, with a “culture of poverty” and a disconnected underclass. Therefore, policies should be developed to address broad changes in the metropolitan economy, which Jargowsky suggests will in turn help neighborhood poverty.

Jencks, Christopher and Paul E. Peterson (editors). 1991. *The Urban Underclass*, The Brookings Institute.

Jencks and Peterson present an often-cited collection of essays that debunk commonly held propositions about the urban underclass. Some of these are that the United States is witnessing a significant growth in the percentage of the population that is persistently poor; that increasing numbers of teenage girls are bearing children; and that welfare roles primarily consist of black and brown women. Additionally, at the time this book was written, it was widely believed that crime among the underclass was on the rise, young people were dropping out of school in record numbers, and a higher percentage of this population was withdrawing from the labor force. The poor are also seemed to be increasingly isolated in ghettos at the cores of our metropolitan areas.

These essays try to separate the truth about poverty, social dislocation and changes in the American family from the myths that have become part of contemporary folklore. The authors demonstrate that the main issue is not so much a growth in the size of the underclass as the persistence of poverty decades after the country thought it had addressed the problem. Moreover, the collection of essays point out that the paradox of poverty in a wealthy nation will continue until society makes greater efforts to provide all citizens with improved educational and economic opportunities as well as adequate income maintenance in times of need.

Kotlowitz, Alex. 1991. *There are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America*, Anchor Books.

Using his training in ethnographic journalism, Kotlowitz shares the story of two brothers, Lafayette 12, and Pharoah 9, growing up in the Henry Honer Homes in Chicago during the late 1980's. As he depicts the interesting and complicated interactions and maneuvers of these young black boys, we see how poverty traps many inner-city kids, and forces them to grow up quickly. As we follow the daily interactions of the

boys with their family and friends, as well as the numerous institutions (schools, social services, juvenile justice) which mediate their lives, we are sensitized to the constraints poor families face as they try to escape the dehumanizing aspects of daily life. At times the story becomes somewhat frustrating as the boys' mother and other family members make seemingly irrational choices. More often, however, we empathize with the survival strategies that are employed at the individual and community levels, which help families cope with the oppressive conditions in the public housing projects.

Kozol, Jonathan. 1991. *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*, Crown Publishers.

Kozol takes us into schools across the country, describing what is happening to many of our children from poor families in the inner cities and the less affluent suburbs. By bringing the children, and subsequently, the inequities of the educational system into vivid life, Kozol forces us to confront the important fact that children, "defenseless emblems of hope and promise," are suffering. Kozol documents schools in East St. Louis, New York, San Antonio, Chicago, Washington, DC, and Camden, NJ that are literally falling apart. Kozol highlights the travesty and hypocrisy of a situation in which public educational institutions in some places actually starve young bodies and minds. Because of the way public schools are funded in this country, the rich get a richer quality of education while the children of the poor get less education, opportunity, hope or concern.

Massey, Douglas S. and Denton, Nancy A. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*, Harvard University Press.

In the enduring national debate on the causes of persistent urban poverty four explanations tend to unfold. First, cultural explanations, or the "culture of poverty," which adopts the myth of Horatio Alger, suggests that people are poor because they have a defective culture and therefore, have a poor work ethic. The culture of poverty thesis, is often criticized for blaming victims for their impoverished state and focusing too intensely on individual agency and too little on socioeconomic constraints. Second, the institutional racism explanation posits urban poverty as an outcome of deeply embedded racist practices in American institutions, particularly schools and the labor market, which keep the urban poor dependent. Third, structural economic shifts in the inner city, which include the decline in manufacturing jobs, the suburbanization of employment, and the rise of service sector low wage jobs, all contribute to explaining persistent urban poverty. Finally, America's welfare policy has been identified as a major culprit for insistent urban poverty. Welfare policy has been blamed for altering the incentives governing the behavior of poor men and women, devaluing the "Protestant work ethic" by lowering the attractiveness of menial labor, altering the traditional family structure, increasing the benefits of unwed childbearing, and thus, increasing the rates of urban poverty.

Massey and Denton suggest that these theoretical explanations of urban poverty neglect the impact that segregation has had on impoverished communities. Massey and Denton's fundamental argument is that "racial segregation -- and its institutional form, the black ghetto -- are the key structural factors responsible for the perpetuation of black poverty in the United States." Therefore, the purpose of *American Apartheid* it to redirect the focus of public debate back to issues of race and racial segregation as fundamental determinants of the status of black Americans and the urban underclass.

Furthermore, Massey and Denton argue that racial discrimination is rampant in many of the institutions that are crucial to black progress, such as the labor market and the educational system. They argue however, that without a clear understanding of the significance of residential segregation even this view of black subjugation would be incomplete. Residential segregation enables other forms of racial oppression. It is the institutional apparatus that supports other racially discriminatory processes and binds them together into a coherent and uniquely effective system of racial subordination. As Massey and Denton clearly state, "until the black ghetto is dismantled as a basic institution of American urban life, progress ameliorating racial inequality in other areas will be slow, fitful, and incomplete." Massey and Denton argue for both race-conscious policies and class-specific policies to concurrently attack the institutions of segregation and improve the economic status of minorities.

Sugrue, Thomas J. 1996. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, Princeton University Press.

Sugrue documents the transformation of Detroit from a “magnet of opportunity to a reservation for the poor.” And he suggests that the economic and social decline of Detroit is a symbol of the American urban crisis. Sugrue asks why Detroit and other industrial cities have become the sites of persistent racialized poverty. As an historian, Sugrue does not offer solutions to the urban crisis but rather, suggests that the current fixation on the work habits, family structure, and attitudes of the poor is largely beside the point. The sources of urban poverty are to be found in economic structures and decisions – particularly over plant location, deindustrialization, and automation – and historical and persistent discrimination in housing and employment, which jointly generated or reproduced black poverty (Arnesen, 1998*). Sugrue examines Detroit in the quarter-century after World War II and points out that the origins of the urban crisis were much earlier than articulated by most social scientists. Therefore, the roots of the problem are far more entrenched and perhaps more intractable than often suggested. As Sugrue states “there is no simple explanation for the inequality and marginality that beset the urban poor. It is only through the complex and interwoven histories of race, residence, and work in the postwar era that the state of today’s cities and their impoverished residents can be fully understood and confronted” (p. 5).

Sugrue challenges the conventional wisdom that urban decline is the product of the social programs and racial fissures of the 1960s. His analysis of Detroit primarily builds on economic and spatial structural explanations of urban inequality. By weaving together the history of workplaces, unions, civil rights groups, political organizations, and real estate agencies, Sugrue finds the roots of today’s urban poverty in a hidden history of racial violence, discrimination, and deindustrialization that reshaped the American urban landscape after World War II.

* Eric Arnesen. 1998. (book review) “History First: Putting Urban Poverty in Perspective” in *Labor History*, Vol. 39, No. 1.

For Further Reading:

Galster, George. 1991. “Housing Discrimination and Urban Poverty of African Americans,” *Journal of Housing Research*, 2:87-122.

Employment and Labor Market Opportunities

Holzer, Harry J. 1999. *What Employers Want: Job Prospects for Less Educated Workers*, Russell Sage Foundation.

Holzer looks at the demand side of urban labor markets and asks: to what extent are less educated workers disadvantaged by limited skills, geographic distance from employment opportunities, and by race or gender discrimination? Using the Multi City Study of Urban Inequality, Holzer focuses on over 3,000 employers, in four major metropolitan areas: Atlanta, Boston, Detroit and Los Angeles, sharing information on who gets hired and why.

Kirschenman, Joleen and Kathryn M. Neckerman. 1991. "We'd Love to Hire Them But..." the Meaning of Race for Employers," in Jencks and Peterson (editors), *The Urban Underclass*, The Brookings Institute.

This paper explores the meaning of race and ethnicity to employers, the ways race and ethnicity signal characteristics of behavior to employers, and the conditions under which race matters most. Kirschenman and Neckerman interviewed Chicago area businesses to show that employers generalized about inner city blacks. Black inner city residents were typically viewed as unstable, uncooperative, dishonest and uneducated, therefore, less likely to be hired. Black job seekers, unlike their white counterparts, were forced to demonstrate to employers that they were not like "others" from the inner city by adopting middle class styles of dress and speech, or perhaps lying about their address. Kirschenman and Neckerman's research suggests that race is an important variable in hiring decisions. More importantly, race becomes significant as it triggers employers perceptions about class and inner city residents.

Shulman, Steven. 1991. "Why is the Black Unemployment Rate Always Twice as High as the White Unemployment Rate?" in Cornwall and Wunnava eds. *New Approaches to Economic and Social Analyses of Discrimination*, Praeger.

Shulman discusses the contradictory racial trends in labor-market outcomes by pointing to the stubborn failure of the black unemployment rate to show tendencies to converge with the white unemployment rate. Given the changes in the law and popular racial attitudes over the past quarter-century, one would expect racial inequality in the labor market to have steadily fallen. While he recognizes the substantial gains blacks have made in narrowing the wage gap with whites by fighting prejudice and discrimination, obtaining skills and education, and relocating for opportunities when necessary, Shulman pointedly reminds us that the black unemployment rate has consistently remained about twice that of whites since the 1950s. Shulman suggests that the unemployment rate differential cannot be fully explained by supply-side variables, or those characteristics that blacks and whites bring to the labor market. Therefore, the unemployment differential is a demand-side phenomenon, or a by-product of rational business decision making. Employers use discriminatory practices when fluctuating levels of employment in response to changes in the cost of production. Because of this Shulman argues that discrimination is endogenous to the normal economic process of modern capitalism.

Shulman, a strong critic of corporate capitalism, posits that discrimination is capable of adapting to changes in its political and economic environment as long as there are incentives for it to be practiced. Incentives exist for both white workers and employers, the former in terms of job security and the latter in terms of the maximization of control and the minimization of costs. This perspective about discrimination would suggest that there is no necessary or economic reason for it to decline over time. Mainstream economists that view discrimination as an irrational business decision fail to consider the social cohesion created by racial identification among white workers and between white workers and employers. Shulman argues that "capitalism responds to discrimination in the same flexible, rational and adaptive manner that it responds to all else in its environment. It uses discrimination like any other resource. It incorporates it, transforms it, and ultimately reproduces it."

Waldinger, Roger. 1996. *Still the Promised City? African-Americans and New Immigrants in Postindustrial New York*, Harvard University Press.

In *Still the Promised City?* Waldinger addresses questions of why African-Americans have fared so poorly in securing unskilled jobs in the postwar era and why new immigrants have seemingly done so well. Waldinger looks toward increases in immigration for an explanation as to why blacks have failed to advance into high growth industries and occupations, such as the garment and hotel industries, and more importantly, in lucrative areas such as construction and entrepreneurship. Additionally, Waldinger explores municipal jobs and finds that, in general, blacks are overrepresented in the public sector, although fairly rigid segmentation exists throughout government occupations. For example, while native minorities (blacks) have been quite successful at securing social service jobs, they are disproportionately underrepresented in professional service jobs (e.g. accountancy, engineering) and uniformed services (e.g. police and fire departments).

According to Waldinger, the two most popular explanations for the conditions of blacks in New York and other major cities are the deindustrialization and globalization. The first claims that the decline in manufacturing has closed job opportunities for blacks that were available for earlier immigrants who lacked skills and education. The second emphasizes the movement of manufacturing jobs offshore to areas with lower labor costs. Using the labor market history of Jews, Italians, West Indians, Dominicans, Chinese and African Americans, Waldinger shows that these explanations do not fit the facts. Instead, he points out that a previously overlooked factor, population change, and the rapid exodus of white New Yorkers, created vacancies for minority workers up and down the job ladder. Ethnic succession generated openings both in declining industries, where the outward seepage of whites outpaces the rate of job erosion, and in growth industries, where whites poured out of bottom-level positions even as demand for low-level workers increased. However, this employment queuing process yielded few opportunities for blacks, who saw their share of many low-skilled jobs steadily decline. Instead, advantages went to the immigrants, who remembered conditions in societies they left, maintained a low reservation wage, and thus, exploited their opportunities by expanding their economic base. In contrast, African-Americans, who came to the city a generation ago, have job aspirations similar to those of whites. But they have been unable to establish job niches, except for the public sector in highly competitive occupations, or occupations in which there are civil service requirements. While, educated blacks have been able to secure middle class positions, their networks no longer provide connections to lower-level jobs.

Wilson, William Julius. 1996. *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Wilson explores the loss of blue-collar jobs in inner city communities and the effects of “suburbanization” of employment, which disproportionately exclude the black urban poor who remain isolated in neighborhoods of concentrated unemployment. Wilson describes the lack of locally available training and education, and the dissolution of government and private support of local organizations that once supplied job information and employment opportunities. Interestingly, Wilson examines the attitudes of employers toward inner city residents and the resulting effects on hiring policies.

Wilson interweaves the voices of many of the inner city men and women he interviewed during the years of his research. By humanizing the experience of poverty and unemployment Wilson is able to dismantle conservative arguments that the people of the inner city lack drive and aspiration. He demonstrates that, on the contrary, their desires and quests for success and a stable life are comparable to those of society at large, but the on-going constraints they face are drastically different from those experienced in middle-class society. Finally, Wilson outlines a series of universal policy programs, which can benefit both the urban poor and the middle class, such as transportation alternatives to get people to jobs located in the suburbs; jobs and job training for high school graduates and a call for new educational programs and employment policies.

For Further Reading:

Freeman, Richard R. and Harry J. Holzer, eds. 1986. *The Black Youth Employment Crisis*, University of Chicago Press.

Ihlanfeldt, Keith R. 1999. "Are Poor People Really Excluded for Jobs Located in their Own Neighborhoods? Comments on Reingold and Some Additional Evidence from the Multi City Study of Urban Inequality," *Economic Development Quarterly* (November).

Kain, John F. 1992. "The Spatial Mismatch Hypothesis: Three Decades Later," *Housing Policy Debate* 3(2) 371-469.

Meiklejohn, Susan Turner. 1999. "Has Discrimination Disappeared? A Response to William Julius Wilson," *Economic Development Quarterly* (November).

Reingold, David A. 1999. "Inner City Firms and the Employment Problem of the Urban Poor: Are Poor People Really Excluded From Jobs Located in their Neighborhoods? *Economic Development Quarterly* (November).

Economic Development and Urban Revitalization

Galster, George C. 1992. "A Cumulative Causation Model of the Underclass: Implications for Urban Economic Development Policy" in Galster and Hill, eds. *The Metropolis in Black and White*, Rutgers University Press.

Galster updates Gunnar Myrdal's theory of cumulative causation by creating a model for understanding the contemporary black underclass phenomenon. "The model describes the mutually reinforcing interrelationships between the conditions of the underclass people, the place in which they live, and their labor market opportunities." Galster suggests that inner city blacks are often mired by a vicious circle that progressively worsens their plight. Therefore, no single cause to the plight of blacks can be identified but rather, a web of mutually reinforcing connections in which elements serve as both cause and effect. Effective policy solutions need to be equally robust to reverse the downward spiral. A cumulative causation model allows researchers to evaluate various policy approaches directed at the underclass, by dissecting the array of elements that fall under the general rubrics of people, place and labor markets including: skills, education, attitudes, physical isolation, housing, discrimination, segmented labor market opportunities, etc.. Galster's conclusion is that limited piecemeal approaches to inner city problems are bound to fail. However, in the past "Americans have been unable to mobilize the political will to try little more than fragmentary efforts. Their (predictable) failure has, ironically, engendered a widespread, if fallacious, sentiment that the problem is insoluble." By using cumulative causal models to better understand how various facets of the lives of poor people interact and effect other elements, researchers can make more informed and useful policy recommendations.

Porter, Michael. 1995. "The Competitive Advantage of the Inner City" *Harvard Business Review*

In "The Competitive Advantages of the Inner City" Porter addresses the need to revitalize America's inner cities through what he calls "radically different approaches," which include private, for-profit initiatives and investment based on economic self-interest and competitive advantage. Porter argues that this strategy requires that the private sector take a leading role in urban revitalization, replacing the popular approach of expanding social programs and hoping that economic development will follow. Porter believes that inner cities are potentially viable and even attractive locations because of the inner city's strategic location or proximity to central business districts; local market demand which has been poorly-served, especially in retail, financial services, and personal services; ability to integrate with regional clusters; and an available pool of labor. Porter suggests that the major disadvantages of an inner city location including high land and building costs, dilapidated or failing infrastructure, employee and management skills, security, access to debt and equity capital, and "anti-business" attitudes among workers and community residents, should be candidly addressed, and they can be overcome.

Porter argues that firms should exploit the competitive advantages of inner city locations with a coherent economic strategy that emphasizes clustering companies – having companies in the same industry, or linked together through customers or suppliers, locate near each other. Clustering of firms will push all competing firms to improve products and process, thus benefit consumers. The presence of the cluster "contributes to the formation of new suppliers, the growth of companies in related fields, the formation of specialized training programs, and the emergence of technological centers of excellence... Clusters also provide newcomers with access to expertise, connections and infrastructures...." Porter's urban revitalization hypothesis suggests that realizing inner city advantages requires the commitment and involvement of business, government and the nonprofit sector. First, the private sector should take a leading role in expanding business activity in the inner city; build relationships with existing inner city businesses; redirect corporate philanthropy away from social services to market based efforts; and entice equity capital investments. On the other hand, Porter views the government's new role in urban revitalization as one of supporting the private sector by directing resources to areas of greatest economic need and reducing the costs and regulations inflicted on businesses. Finally, Porter argues that community based organizations should capitalize on their strengths and play only a tangential role in economic development. They should focus on housing, changing attitudes of community residents, work readiness preparation, creating job referral systems and facilitating environmental cleanup of commercial property.

Harrison, Bennett and Amy Glasmeier. 1997. "Why Businesses Alone Won't Redevelop the Inner City: A Response to Porter's Competitive Advantage of the Inner City" *Economic Development Quarterly*.

Harrison and Glasmeier state that community development activists recognize that some of the poorest neighborhoods in the largest cities are among the best situated in terms of access to the regions of which they are a part. Scholars and activists often remark on the paradox of high inner-city poverty rates coexisting with substantial aggregate purchasing power. Porter contends that inner city businesses should exploit their potential linkages to other firms located outside their immediate neighborhoods by becoming suppliers or joint venturers. Additionally, training programs should be organized around the region's most promising clusters. These concepts – linkages, sectors, and industrial or service complexes – actually have a long history in the field of development planning, antedating Porter's writing. His incorporation of these elements is valuable; however, his inclination to dismiss the positive contributions of local governments and community based organizations is not. In Porter's blanket condemnation, he often misses the supportive role of the public and quasi-public sector in brokering, financing, and otherwise facilitating the cluster development and networking that he professes to admire.

For Further Reading:

Boston, Thomas D. and Catherine L. Ross eds. 1997. *The Inner City: Urban Poverty and Economic Development in the Next Century*, Transaction Publishers.

Keating, Dennis, Norman Krumholz and Philip Star. editors. 1996. *Revitalizing Urban Neighborhoods*, University Press of Kansas.

Squires, Gregory D. editor. 1989. *Unequal Partnerships*, Rutgers University Press.

Broad Analytical Perspectives

Bell, Derrick. 1992. *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*, Basic Books

Modern discrimination is, moreover, not practiced indiscriminately. Whites, ready and willing to applaud, even idolize black athletes and entertainers, refuse to hire, or balk at working with, blacks. Whites who number individual blacks among their closest friends approve, or do not oppose, practices that bar selling or renting homes or apartments in their neighborhoods to blacks they don't know. Employers, not wanting 'too many of them,' are willing to hire one or two black people, but will reject those who apply later. Most hotels and restaurants who offer black patrons courteous – even deferential – treatment, uniformly reject black job applicants, except perhaps for the most menial jobs. When did you last see a black waiter in a really good restaurant?

Derrick Bell, an eminent legal scholar and civil rights activist, suggests that the American system is wrought with racial "schizophrenia." Therefore, no African American – regardless of professional status or income – is insulated from capricious acts of racial discrimination. Moreover, part of the danger with the current system is the absence of visible signs of "Jim Crow" discrimination. This is not to suggest that Jim Crow racism was tolerable, but rather, that the subtle and surreptitious aspects of discrimination create an atmosphere of racial neutrality and encourage whites, and some blacks, to believe that racism is a thing of the past. As Bell states "racism is an integral, permanent, and indestructible component of this society." Using a series of allegorical stories and fictional characters, Bell draws on legal precedents and historical experience to shed light on some of the most perplexing issues of our day. Some of the major themes in the book include civil rights law, affirmative action, employment discrimination, housing discrimination, and more. Although Bell uses a combination of imagination and real experience, the book sends a sobering racially deterministic message that racism is so integral to American life that no matter what blacks do to better their lot, they are doomed to fail as long as the majority of whites do not see that their own well being is threatened by the inferior status of blacks. Bell calls on blacks to realize this mirthless truth and let go of their "we shall overcome" mentality. Only then will black, and supportive whites, be in an intellectual, emotional and physical position to strategize.

Bobo, Lawrence, James R. Kluegel, and Ryan A. Smith. 1997. "Laissez-Faire Racism: The Crystalization of a Kinder, Gentler, Antiblack Ideology, in Tuch and Martin eds. *Racial Attitudes in the 1990s: Continuity and Change*, Praeger.

We argue that in post-World War II US society, the racial attitudes of white Americans involve a shift from Jim Crow racism to laissez-faire racism. As part of this change, we witnessed the virtual disappearance of overt bigotry, of demands for strict segregation, of advocacy of government-mandated discrimination, and of adherence to the belief of full-blown Jim Crow racism, however, has not resulted in its opposite: a thoroughly antiracist popular ideology based on an embracing and democratic vision of the common humanity, worth, dignity, and place in the polity for blacks alongside whites. Instead, the institutionalized racial inequalities created by the long era of slavery followed by Jim Crow racism are now popularly accepted and condoned under a modern free market or laissez-faire racist ideology.

Bobo, Kluegel and Smith make a useful distinction between historic racism, which they call Jim Crow racism, and contemporary racism or laissez-faire racism. They argue that Jim Crow racism was replaced by laissez-faire racism as a result of structural shifts in the economy and polity. First, technological advancement and global competition led to a decline in the demand for black agricultural. Second, the hard-fought struggle of the civil rights movement helped to eradicate historic racist ideology as the movement defeated the power of elite planters in the South, who were the chief beneficiaries of Jim Crow Ideology and practices and primary actors in the establishment of Jim Crow social arrangements.

The authors argue that Jim Crow racist ideology reflected the economic, political and cultural climate of a historical epoch, as laissez-faire racism reflects the current social order. Laissez-faire racism has evolved and crystallized as federal and state policy advocates race neutrality and antidiscrimination; African Americans are geographically concentrated in urban areas although occupy heterogeneous occupations; and most white Americans interpret black inequality using volitional and cultural explanations as opposed to inherent or biological explanations. Under this new regime called laissez-faire racism, Bobo, Kluegel and Smith argue that blacks are stereotyped and blamed for their disadvantaged status. Moreover, we are currently witnessing large numbers of white Americans who have become comfortable with as much racial inequality and segregation as the polity and free market economy can produce.

Burman, Stephen. 1995. *The Black Progress Question: Explaining the African American Predicament*, Sage Publication Series on Race and Ethnic Relations, Volume 9.

African Americans have enriched the history of America in many ways, however, their overriding experience in American is one of exploitation and discrimination. Burman poses an important question. How long will the black experience in American continue to be characterized by suffering and discrimination, above and beyond that experienced by other Americans? Burman's answers are somewhat pessimistic because the prospects for the resolution of the African American predicament are not necessarily good. Burman demonstrates that there are no simple answers. The answers depend on the rate of progress blacks realize in terms of being fully incorporated into American society. However, the meaning of progress is highly contested and dependent on the intellectual framework within which it is employed.

Burman explores the range of possibilities generated through various traditions of thought – liberal, neoconservative, Marxist, black nationalist, -- that have attempted to explain and resolve the African American predicament. In Burman's synopsis the liberal tradition defines progress as the integration of blacks into the existing structure of society. Liberals do not advocate for changing social structures because they assume there are no structural obstacles to racial integration. The problem is perceived to lie in prejudicial attitudes of whites. Liberals believe prejudice would be attenuated through exposure and education in the American creed and ideals. The neoconservative response, however, suggests that African American behaviors beget inequality over time. Neoconservatives contend that if structural barriers are eliminated and blacks fail to achieve equality over time it can only be explained in terms of inadequacies in their attitudes and culture. This perspective absolves whites of guilt for perpetuating black poverty and it provides a basis for opposing equalizing measures such as affirmative action and income redistribution. A Marxist analysis, on the other hand, suggests that progress for blacks can only come with the overthrow of capitalism; for capitalism, not racism, is understood to be the cause of the oppression. In contrast, a black nationalist perspective stresses the role of white racism in maintaining racial inequality, rather than class exploitation.

Burman states that no one approach captures more than a partial perspective on the African American predicament. The on-going debate around the question of black progress is "best seen as an exploration of the meanings that can be associated with the concept and not as an attempt to reduce it to one universally accepted set of attributes because its intellectual provenance will not lend itself to such uniformity." As Burman rightly states, the problem with a one sided approach is it gives rise to a form of theoretical closure such that the conceptual frameworks of each perspective are used to predetermine the outcome, and empirical evidence is relegated to a supporting role designed to demonstrate movement toward the preordained solution. One sided approaches fail to address the depth and complexity of the African American predicament because their wider agendas prevent them from facing the fact that there is no clear solution.

Danzinger, Sheldon H., Gary D. Sandefur, and Daniel H. Weinberg (editors). 1994. *Confronting Poverty: Prescriptions for Change*, Russell Sage Foundation.

While popular sentiment suggests America lost the War against Poverty, contributors to this volume point out that poverty is a complex problem which persists because the economy and society have changed in ways that were not evident when the War was waged. These changes have generated more poverty at the same time that the public resolve to fight poverty has waned. The themes collected in this volume seek to establish a new conventional wisdom with regard to poverty and antipoverty policy. The contributors reviewed the research of three decades to establish what is known and unknown about the causes of poverty and to formulate an antipoverty agenda for the coming years.

The authors document trends in poverty and income inequality, review government programs and policies, and analyze public attitudes concerning these policies. Additionally, they discuss the persistence and intergenerational transmission of poverty, the extent of welfare dependence, and the emergence of what is now being categorized as the urban underclass. Using past policies, both successes and failures, the authors offer prescriptions for reform in employment and training, education, child and health care, immigration, and urban policy. The proposals put forth are meant to help resolve the American paradox of "Poverty amidst plenty."

Hacker, Andrew. 1992. *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile and Unequal*, Macmillan Publishing.

Hacker addresses why race remains America's deepest and most enduring division. Despite efforts to increase interracial understanding and expand opportunities, black and white Americans still lead separate lives, continuously marked by tension and hostility. Hacker explains why racial disparities persist. He clarifies the meaning of racism and conflicting theories of superiority and equality. Hacker uses statistical data to paint a stark picture of racial inequality, which is most apparent in income and employment, family life, education, politics and crime. Hacker addresses head-on some of the startling facts that so many choose to ignore; he shows how race influences the attitudes and behavior of all Americans.

Finally, Hacker explains why so much behavior regarding race remains so obdurate and ingrained. Not the least of its conclusions is that racial tensions serve too many important purposes to be easily ameliorated, let alone eliminated or replaced. *Two Nations* does not end on an optimistic note, nor does it offer prescriptive policy proposals for reducing discrimination and ending prejudice. The aim of *Two Nations* is to show why inequities persist.

Marable, Manning. 1995. *Beyond Black & White*, Verso.

Marable argues that an "analysis of black political and civil society, its leadership and competing ideologies, is linked to the development of a broader understanding of what the future of American democracy may be." Therefore, as race, a social construction, is being redefined within America, its reformulation has profound consequences for all "sectors and classes." Blacks and other minority groups need to develop a progressive paradigm that challenges the rhetoric of the far right and expands the boundaries of democracy. The black struggle for social change must move beyond previous strategies, which have not produced desired outcomes. For instance, the "symbolic representation model" characterized by the civil-rights movement and traditional middle-class organizations like the NAACP and the Urban League gained sought after political representation but broke down during the 1980's as black elected officials implemented policies and programs that adversely affected black working class communities. Additionally, the resurgence of black nationalism and black conservatism during the 1990's, which advocates the building of black institutions, racial separatism, group solidarity and a rejection of coalition politics, has been largely ineffective. Marable suggests that the inability of the black movement to develop new theories and models of political intervention during the years of conservative domination has meant that the spectrum of social forces left of center has fallen into disarray. "White liberals, labor, feminists, and others have not produced a coherent statement to halt the movement to the right because in the end that alternative must be articulated by the most oppressed sectors of our society for it to have a fundamental impact upon the social order.

Marable's collection of essays in *Beyond Black and White* dissects the politics of race and class in the United States during the 1990's. Marable addresses topics including: the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill controversy; the factors behind the rise and fall of Jessie Jackson's Rainbow Coalition; Benjamin Chavis and the conflicts with the NAACP; the national debate over affirmative action; and current debates between black liberals and "Afrocentrists."

Myrdal, Gunnar. 1944. *An American Dilemma: the Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, volume I & II, Harper & Brothers Publishers

This landmark work is an early attempt to understand the position of black people in America by uncovering the contradictions in American society. The *American Dilemma* refers to the moral contradictions of society torn between allegiance to its highest ideals and the awareness of the on-going reality of racial discrimination. This seminal work addresses, in voluminous detail, the inherent discrepancy between the American creed of respect and dignity of all persons, equality, and the inalienable rights of freedom, justice, and fair opportunity and the pervasive violations of the dignity of blacks and of their rights to freedom, justice and fair opportunity. One of the main criticisms of this often cited work is its liberal tradition which emphasizes racial inequality as a function of prejudice attitudes. Therefore, ending inequality is merely changing attitudes. Myrdal neglects to look at structural components of racism.

Oliver, Melvin L. and Thomas M. Shapiro. 1995. *Black Wealth / White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality*, Routledge.

Oliver and Shapiro develop a perspective on racial inequality based on the analysis of wealth as opposed to the more common indicator of inequality, income. Oliver and Shapiro suggest that income is a disposable asset that accumulates over a relatively short period of time, whereas wealth is a special form of money used to create opportunities, secure desired stature and standard of living, or pass class along to one's children. Wealth signifies the command over financial resources accumulated and inherited by families over generations. Therefore, their perspective explores how wealth is created, expanded and preserved. The authors posit that examining the differentials in black and white wealth holdings uncovers qualitatively different patterns of inequality, which are otherwise concealed by analyses of income, occupational attainment, or education.

By constructing a "sociology of wealth and racial inequality," Oliver and Shapiro are able to properly situate the social context in which wealth generation occurs. Three key concepts form the sociologically grounded approach to understanding racial differentials in wealth accumulation. First, the "racialization of the state," which refers to how, historically, state policy has impaired the ability of many black Americans to accumulate wealth. The state has erected and perpetuated major barriers to black economic self-sufficiency from the pre-bellum period to the twentieth century. Second, the "economic detour," which addresses restrictions upon black American participation entrepreneurial endeavors. And third, "the sedimentation of racial inequality," which are the ways in which the cumulative effects of the past have cemented blacks to the bottom of the economic hierarchy. Oliver and Shapiro's analysis and differentiation between wealth and income have played a significant role in pushing forward research on racial stratification and inequality.

Pincus, Fred L. 1996. "Discrimination Comes in Many Forms: Individual, Institutional and Structural" *The American Behavioral Scientist* (Nov/Dec)

Pincus defines and analyzes three different levels of discrimination: individual, institutional and structural. He suggests that making a distinction among them is important because each type of discrimination is associated with a different level of harm. For instance, individual discrimination refers to the behaviors individuals from one race/ethnic/gender group impose on individuals from other race/ethnic/gender groups. In contrast, institutional discrimination refers to the policies of the dominant group which are intended to have a harmful effect on minority groups. With institutional discrimination, the discriminatory behavior is embedded in important social institutions. Therefore, Jim Crow segregation was a form of institutional discrimination, whereas the landlord that refuses to rent an apartment to blacks is a form of individual discrimination. Finally, "structural discrimination refers to the policies of dominant race/ethnic/gender institutions and the behavior of the individuals who implement these policies and control these institutions, which are race/ethnic/gender neutral in intent but which have a differential and harmful effect on minority race/ethnic/gender groups."

Shulman, Steven. 1990. "The Causes of Black Poverty: Evidence and Interpretation." *Journal of Economic Issues*, December, Vol. XXIV, No. 4.

In the face of legal, social, and educational progress over the past quarter century, why haven't we seen a convergence in the economic position of blacks relative to whites? Shulman argues that conventional methods and theories of black poverty utilize causal models that overemphasize individual variables, such as female headed households/family structure, human capital and welfare dependency, while negating the importance of the interaction among these determinants. Shulman's empirical research suggests that black families are more than twice as likely to be poor than white families, controlling for family structure, labor market participation and welfare dependency. Although education is found to be a significant determinant of economic position, Shulman does not use empirical evidence to merely present another human capital argument for persistent black poverty. Instead, Shulman uses the empirical data to posit a strong theoretical argument for employment discrimination and structural racism. Shulman argues that looking at black poverty through "demand-side" or "supply-side" factors is too simplistic because of the inherent interaction among these determinants. "Education is not merely a characteristic that workers bring with them to the labor market, but is itself a function of the opportunities (or lack thereof) the labor market offers." Among employed blacks and whites with similar characteristics,

their income discrepancy may be quite small, however, the (in)ability of blacks to get the same jobs as whites is the significant factor.

The popular perception is that black poverty is explained as a “choice” by black people to drop out of the labor force, form female-headed families, collect welfare, or acquire inferior education or skills. Shulman argues that race is a resource (or liability) because it provides access to a segregated network of information, trust, and privilege. Therefore, it is an integral part of market mechanisms insofar as it influences the allocation of jobs.

Steinberg, Stephen. 1995. *Turning back: The Liberal Retreat from Racial Justice in American Thought and Social Policy*, Beacon Press.

John Rex. 1997. (book review) *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, January, Vol. 20.

Steinberg's central thesis is that America needs to overcome historically based structured inequality between people regarded as blacks, and the whites who rule them. However, both liberal and conservative orthodoxy have failed, over fifty years, to address the problem of racism and thus, failed to champion civil rights, affirmative action and other policies designed to advance the cause of racial justice. Steinberg begins with a critique of Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*, which he suggests avoided the issues of institutionalized inequality. Myrdal was not alone in this glaring omission, however, Steinberg points out other writers of the liberal establishment, such as Daniel Patrick Moynihan, William Julius Wilson and Cornel West, either failed to poignantly articulate the problem, suggest viable solutions, or both.

Steinberg provides a deeply sensitive reading of the crucial literature. What he was looking for, and failed to uncover in the most popular social science texts, was a scholarly discussion of American race relations, in a way that presents a serious understanding of the issues, as well as political action. Steinberg critiques Myrdal's *American Dilemma* for misrepresenting the nature of America's problem, which Steinberg identifies as political, although Myrdal presents a deep moral quandary, in which white Americans have been unable to live up to a shared "American Creed." Steinberg accuses Myrdal of playing a historically significant role in the delegitimization of racism by compiling all of the substantive racial arsenic and sugar coating it, to make it more amenable to Myrdal's patrons – the Carnegie Corporation, the academic establishment and the mass public.

West, Cornel. 1993. *Race Matters*, Beacon Press.

Cornel West, the scholar, theologian and activist, is one of the most recognized public intellectuals because his message that social liberation is accessible to academics and lay people. In *Race Matters*, West asks for a renewed engagement on the question of race and presents a bracing call to action to establish a new framework from which to discuss the issue. West believes race represents a dire paradox for the nation: either America recognizes the common humanity of all its citizens, acknowledges its spiritual impoverishment, and overturns a political environment dominated by image rather than substance, or it risks unmaking the democratic order.

The American crisis, West contends, evolves in large measure for the market-driven American way of life. The emphasis on individualism, materialism, and competition renders traditional black communal life ineffective and leads to the denigration of black people. This crisis, West explains, creates both a social political crisis in the black community and a deep existential crisis that affects society at large. As West poignantly articulates, more than one hundred years after the abolition of slavery, and decades after the major battles of the civil rights movement, race still matters.