

TRENDS IN THE STRATIFICATION OF THE
BLACK COMMUNITY

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BLACK COMMUNITY

By

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There are differing views in the literature about the evolution of the black community in the United States. This paper seeks to assess current trends on the basis of census data and focuses on four major areas. The first section deals with the progress of different sectors of the black community. Complete families and those in the North and West have closed the income gap more than broken families and those in the South. The next chapter treats two of the major components of income disparities: differences in years of schooling and differences in job distribution. Both educational and occupational attainment only explain about a third of the difference in income among black and white men while they explain almost all the difference among black and white women. The unexplained difference among black men appears to be due to discrimination. However, current evidence points to substantial improvements in the position of educated black men and younger black workers. The third section is concerned with the relationship between economic and social phenomena in light of Frazier's theory. There appears to be substantial convergence in marital stability, fertility patterns, educational

patterns, etc. across class lines. The greatest differences in behavior between the races are found in the lower class. The discrepancies are largely due to differential access to the economic rewards of the society. The last section treats a neglected portion of the black community - black women. Black female headed families have actually lost ground in comparison with their white counterparts. On the opposite extreme are black college educated women who are the only sector of the black community which actually earns more than its white counterpart. Finally, the prospects for the future are discussed in respect to the growing schism in the black community between the skilled and unskilled and the possible implications on race relations in America.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Enormous amounts of literature, both popular and scholarly have appeared in recent years trying to assess the condition of the black community. Much of this volume of literature has been emotional in content. However, not only the popular, but also the professional literature abounds in widely divergent conclusions about the fate of black men and women in America.

The following quotations are more or less representative of these views:

...in terms of employment and income and occupational status it is quite possible the Negro community is moving in two directions or rather that two Negro communities are moving in opposite ones. Obviously such a development would be concealed - cancelled out - in aggregate statistics that list all "nonwhites" together.

Daniel P. Moynihan, 1967¹

It is a stark reality that the black communities are becoming more and more economically depressed.

Stokely Carmichael and
Charles V. Hamilton, 1967²

Negro incomes are growing as fast as white, but while Negroes are increasingly well-off absolutely, the gap remains nearly constant in relative terms.

Edward C. Banfield, 1970³

¹Daniel P. Moynihan, "Employment, Income and the Ordeal of the Negro Family", in Talcott Parsons, ed., The Negro American, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967).

²Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America, (New York: Random House, 1968).

³Edward C. Banfield, The Unheavenly City, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970).

(It is) startling...that there has been very little change in the ratio of nonwhite family income to white family income over the last decade and a half.

Rashi Fein, 1967⁴

Although the occupational status for nonwhites relative to whites has improved for the country as a whole, in most states the nonwhite male now has about the same occupational distribution relative to the whites that he had in 1940 and 1950.

Herman Miller, 1966⁵

A remarkable development has taken place in America over the last dozen years: for the first time in the history of the republic, truly large and growing numbers of American blacks have been moving into the middle class.

Ben Wattenberg and
Richard Scammon, 1973⁶

There can be little doubt that the question of black - white relations is one of the most crucial domestic issues facing Americans today. The increasingly militant mood of the Negro community since World War II has given Negro employment and the general condition of the Negro community an added sense of urgency. The achievement of civil rights will mean very little if the Negro is unable to secure the material means and stability to translate these rights into concrete reality. In light of the civil rights revolution and the ferment in black America which has taken place during the last decade and a half, it seems particularly relevant to assess the condition of the Negro community at this point in time. It is undeniable that the Negro's employment opportunities and

⁴Rashi Fein, "An Economic and Social Profile of the American Negro", in Talcott Parsons, ed., The Negro American, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967).

⁵Herman P. Miller, Rich Man, Poor Man, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1964).

⁶Ben Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon, "Black Progress and Liberal Rhetoric", in Commentary, (April, 1973).

conditions have important implications for the efficient use of human resources as well as for political, social and economic stability.

In order accurately to perceive the black problem we must understand not only the economic disparities which exist between black and white Americans, but also how they are connected to social phenomena. Since so many things about men's and women's lives, both black and white, are related to the family's position in the economic-opportunity structure,⁷ the second chapter will focus on the general economic condition of the black community.

Gunnar Myrdal wrote in the author's preface to An American Dilemma that "things look different depending upon where you stand."⁸ The profile of the American Negro is a constantly changing one. What one observes depends on what one looks at, on the period that one examines, and on the comparisons one makes. Without comparisons the significance of such a study is greatly limited. The frame of reference I shall employ will, therefore, be a comparison between the Negro and other Americans. Comparisons are given increased dimension when the data examined represents the positions of the two groups over time. For if we are to comprehend anything about the world of the American Negro, we need to know not only where he is, but also how he got there and how rapidly conditions have been

⁷ So many references could be cited to support this assertion it would be impossible to list them all. I shall only offer a few that are particularly concerned with race and class. On poverty: Daniel P. Moynihan, "Employment, Income, and the Ordeal of the Negro Family". On marital stability: R.J. Udry, "Marital Instability by Race, Sex, Education, and Occupation using 1960 Census Data", Amer. Jour. Sociology. 72(September 1966):203-210; William J. Goode. "Family Disorganization" in Robert Merton, ed., Contemporary Social Problems; On Fertility: John Scanlon, The Black Family in Modern Society, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1971).

⁸ Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma, (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1944), p. XVIII.

changing as well as what has been happening to his relative position.⁹

In assessing the economic condition of the Negro, I shall also attempt to reconcile the widely divergent conclusions about the condition within the black community. Various economists and sociologists, as has been previously noted, have suggested conflicting evidence.

In comparing the American Negro to other groups it is not implied that all groups should be expected to follow the same path. Each group - racial, ethnic, religious - in American life has its unique characteristics and is the product of its unique experiences. The Negro brings with him different traditions, strengths and handicaps than other groups. Nevertheless, the disparity between black and white Americans is an indication of the effects of present and past differences in opportunity.

Chapter III will treat two of the major components of the income disparities: differences in years of schooling and differences in job distribution. Unemployment rates will also be discussed in this section.

Chapter IV will be concerned with the relationship between economic and social phenomena as, for example, family structure. The most salient conclusion of Frazier's classic, The Negro Family in the United States, according to Glazer, is that "with further economic progress the weaknesses of the Negro family would be overcome."¹⁰ For Frazier there was an inextricable link between economic resources and black family structure. In other words, Frazier believed that as the educational and

⁹The frame of reference is basically that adopted by Rashi Fein, "An Economic and Social Profile of the American Negro" in The American Negro.

¹⁰Nathan Glazer, "Foreword", The Negro Family in the United States by E. Franklin Frazier, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. ix.

economic position of blacks improved, their conformity to dominant family patterns would increase. The major objective of this chapter, then, will be to examine this premise and some of its corollaries.

Perhaps a note of caution should be inserted here. Certain white intellectuals and black militants, mainly on ideological grounds, denigrate the validity of the dominant family form as a goal for blacks in general. In response to this criticism Glazer cites an interesting incident. During a conference on the Negro family held at the University of California in 1964, a leading social analyst and critic pointed out that most of the speakers took it for granted that the model they should attempt to set for all Negro families was the middle class family. He himself questioned the worthwhileness of this goal. A woman in the audience responded that it was up to Negroes to decide whether the goal was worthwhile or not. "Just give us the tickets; we'll decide where to get off."¹¹ Although I, too, have reservations about certain aspects of the white middle class family, it will be beyond the scope of this paper to question the fundamental soundness of this institution. On the basis of census data, it is evident that the majority of American blacks are "choosing" the dominant family form. Rainwater claims that even "lower-class Negroes know what the normal American family is supposed to be like, and they consider a stable family-oriented way of life superior to the conjugal and familial situations in which they often find themselves."¹²

¹¹ Ibid., pps. xiv-xv.

¹² Lee Rainwater, "Crucible of Identity: The Negro Lower-Class Family" in Talcott Parsons, ed. The Negro American, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 170. See also Elliot Liebow, Tally's Corner, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967); David A. Schulz, Coming Up Black, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969); and Joyce Ladner, Tomorrow's Tomorrow, (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1971).

The emphasis of the fifth chapter will be on black women. This is an area that has been almost totally neglected in the sociological literature. Gerda Lerner in her recent documentary history Black Women in White America argues that "black women have been doubly victimized by scholarly neglect and racist assumptions... There have been few biographies of black women of the past, fewer monographs and no scholarly interpretive works."¹³ This section will seek to fill a small part of this gap in our knowledge.

Both from an economic and social point of view the role of the black women is particularly salient. She appears to hold one of the most important keys in determining the black family's economic fate. (The black female-headed household is proportionately more often in poverty than any other single group - black male-headed household, white female-headed household, white male-headed household. On the other extreme, young husband-wife families outside the South, where both the husband and wife work, earn incomes that are higher than their white counterparts - 104 percent of white. The primary explanation for this appears to be that young Negro wives in families with a head under 35, earned approximately 30 percent more than their white counterparts).¹⁴

Sources and Limitations of Data

This paper will draw primarily on data collected by the United States Bureau of the Census in the Current Population Report series and the decennial census. The Current Population Survey tabulations are

¹³Gerda Lerner, ed. Black Women in White America, (New York: Random House, 1972), p. vii-viii.

¹⁴Current Population Reports. Series P-23, No. 42. The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States, 1971, Table 21 and 23.

presently based on a stratified sample of about 50,000 households. The CPS contains the most complete figures currently available. However, some qualifications regarding these data are still necessary. Herman Miller shows that there are considerable variations in the Census and the CPS received for identical persons in each survey. Nonetheless, these variations tended to cancel each other out, leaving the overall distributions unchanged. No significant differences in the medians, the distribution by income levels or the proportion of income recipients were observed.¹⁵

Other qualifications regarding the comparability of the white and nonwhite¹⁶ samples are also important. First, there is the problem of underreporting. Whites have more of a principal kind of income that is underreported - self employment income. On the other hand, some hold that nonwhite income is underreported because more nonwhites, especially men, are missed by census interviewers.¹⁷ There is also the problem of price differences in and out of the ghetto. These appear to favor whites,

¹⁵Herman P. Miller, Rich Man, Poor Man, Table A-3, pps. 232-233.

¹⁶In Census usage, the term "nonwhite" describes persons of all races other than white. "White" and "nonwhite" are the two main categories into which the population is divided in most ongoing, statistical series collected by the federal government. Only in the decennial census is the nonwhite group broken down into subgroups. In this paper the term "Black" or "Negro" will be used only when relevant data are available exclusively for Negroes. The term "nonwhite" or "Negro and other races" will be used whenever data for blacks alone are not available over the period of time shown. Generally, statistics for the national population of Negro and other races reflect the condition of the black population, since about 90 percent of the population of Negro and other races is black.

¹⁷See for example Daniel P. Moynihan, "Employment, Income and the Ordeal of the Negro Family", p. 150 and Maurice R. Daive, Negroes in American Society, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1949), p. 405.

but there are no reliable estimates of the magnitudes of these differences.¹⁸ According to Wohlsetter and Coleman "On the whole, a rough evaluation suggests that the data understate the current nonwhite relative disadvantage and also appear to understate the relative improvements over time."¹⁹

Measurement of the rate of Negro progress is also complicated by the recency of their migration. Hauser has noted that:

Although the Negro has lived in this nation for some three centuries by 1910, he had scarcely began to enter the main stream of American life. Almost nine-tenths of all American Negroes were in the South, where they were living largely in isolation from white society as a segregated, subcultural group steeped in poverty, largely illiterate, and denied participation in the political process. Moreover, about three-fourths of them resided on farms or in places having fewer than 2,500 inhabitants, where even remote contact with white America was limited. In a fundamental sense, then, it may be said that the Negro really did not enter white American society until World War I. Although Negro female household workers did have contact with whites in a restricted manner, the Negro, at present, is in many respects a more recent arrival to the main stream of American life than our most recent mass immigrant white European groups.²⁰

The limitations of the census categories which recognize only whites and nonwhites obscure the genuine differences in occupation and income and the different categories of whites (ethnic groups) made comparisons invidious. Unfortunately, more refined data are difficult to come

¹⁸Albert Wohlsetter and Sinclair Coleman, "Race Differences in Income" in Anthony H. Pascal, ed., Racial Discrimination in Economic Life, (Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath & Co., 1972), p. 8.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Philip M. Hauser, "Demographic Factors in the Integration of the Negro," in Talcott Parsons, ed., The Negro American, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 86. (emphasis mine). In 1970, there was still a high percentage of Negroes born in the South - about 45 percent of blacks residing in the West and 34 percent of those living in the North.

by. Despite these limitations, the findings of this study are, nevertheless, indicative of the major trends evolving in the black community, and how they compare with the total white community in the United States.

CHAPTER II

PROGRESS OR REGRESS IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY...AND FOR WHOM?

More than "one hundred years of delay have passed since President Lincoln freed the slaves, yet their heirs, their grandsons are not fully free. They are not yet freed from the bonds of injustice. They are not freed from social and economic oppression."¹

"You do not take a person who for years has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and say, 'you are free to compete with all the others,' and still justly believe that you have been completely fair. Thus it is not enough to open the gates of opportunity. All our citizens must have the ability to walk through these gates. This is the next and more profound stage of the battle for civil rights."²

Lyndon B. Johnson

How much progress in this new aspect of civil rights has been achieved? To what extent has the black American been able to compete with the other Americans? Has the progress been even within the black community? These are some of the questions which I shall attempt to answer in this chapter.

Income is one of the best measures of economic status. It is also probably one of the most revealing indicators of the disparity between white and black America. A broad range of social, political, and economic

¹Lyndon B. Johnson, speech delivered June 12, 1963 - on the eve of the admission of two Negro youths to the University of Alabama; quoted in Herman P. Miller, Rich Man, Poor Man, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1964), p. 84.

²Lyndon B. Johnson, speech delivered on June 4, 1965 to the graduating class of Howard University; quoted in Lee Rainwater and William Yancey, The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy, (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1967), p. 126.

problems is reflected in income disparities. In looking at current differences in income between blacks and whites, we shall first turn to median income.

The Black - White Income Gap

Table 2-1 shows a comparison of the median incomes of white and nonwhite families from 1950 to 1971. Since the middle of the 1960's, rather substantial gains have been registered in narrowing this gap. In 1971 the ratio of Negro to white family income was 60 percent, an obvious increase over the 1964 ratio of 54 percent. No significant narrowing of the income gap between families of Negro and other races and white families occurred during the 13 year period preceeding 1964. In 1961 through 1963, the ratio was about the same as it was in 1950 through 1951. Many authors have stressed the ratio of black to white family income as an absolute indicator of trend. However, as we have previously noted, this ratio is a highly fluctuating figure.

One encouraging prospect is the faster rate of increase of black family incomes. Over the past 23 years, the median incomes of families of Negro and other races have increased proportionately more than those of whites. Table 2-2 illustrates this point. The median income of Negro and other races has increased 132 percent as compared with 87 percent for white families. With the rising median incomes for Negro and other races, there has been a significant shift in the income distribution as exhibited by the reduction in the proportion of families of Negro and other races with incomes under \$3,000. In 1970, about twenty percent of the families were in the under \$3,000 class, compared to fifty-four percent in 1947.

Table 2-1

Median Income of Families: 1950 to 1971
(In current dollars)

Year	Race of head			Ratio: Negro and other races to white	Ratio: Negro to white
	Negro and other races	Negro	White		
1950.....	\$1,869	(NA)	\$3,445	0.54	(NA)
1951.....	2,032	(NA)	3,859	0.53	(NA)
1952.....	2,338	(NA)	4,114	0.57	(NA)
1953.....	2,461	(NA)	4,392	0.56	(NA)
1954.....	2,410	(NA)	4,339	0.56	(NA)
1955.....	2,549	(NA)	4,605	0.55	(NA)
1956.....	2,628	(NA)	4,993	0.53	(NA)
1957.....	2,764	(NA)	5,166	0.54	(NA)
1958.....	2,711	(NA)	5,300	0.51	(NA)
1959.....	3,161	\$3,047	5,893	0.54	0.52
1960.....	3,233	(NA)	5,835	0.55	(NA)
1961.....	3,191	(NA)	5,981	0.53	(NA)
1962.....	3,330	(NA)	6,237	0.53	(NA)
1963.....	3,465	(NA)	6,548	0.53	(NA)
1964.....	3,839	3,724	6,858	0.56	0.54
1965.....	3,994	3,886	7,251	0.55	0.54
1966.....	4,674	4,507	7,792	0.60	0.58
1967.....	5,094	4,875	8,234	0.62	0.59
1968.....	5,590	5,360	8,937	0.63	0.60
1969.....	6,191	5,999	9,794	0.63	0.61
1970.....	6,516	6,279	10,236	0.64	0.61
1971.....	6,714	6,440	10,672	0.63	0.60

NA Not available. The ratio of Negro to white median family income just became available in 1964.

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 46, 1972, Table 7, p. 17.

Table 2-2

Distribution of Families by Income in 1947, 1960, and 1970
(Adjusted for price changes, in 1970 dollars)

Income	Negro and other races			White		
	1947	1960	1970	1947	1960	1970
No. of families..thous.	3,117	4,333	5,413	34,120	41,123	46,535
Percent	100	100	100	100	100	100
Under \$3,000	54	36	20	20	13	8
\$3,000 to \$4,999	25	22	17	24	13	10
\$5,000 to \$6,999	11	16	16	24	17	11
\$7,000 to \$9,999	7	15	18	18	26	20
\$10,000 to \$14,999		8	17		21	28
\$15,000 and over	4	3	11	15	10	24
Median income	\$2,807	\$4,236	\$6,516	\$5,478	\$7,664	\$10,236
Net change, 1947-70						
Amount	(x)	(x)	\$3,709	(x)	(x)	\$4,758
Percent	(x)	(x)	132.1	(x)	(x)	86.9

x Not applicable.

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 42, 1971, Table 17.

In spite of the faster rate of income growth, poverty is still a day to day reality for many black families; it is three times more prevalent among Negroes than whites. There were 7.4 million blacks below the poverty or low-income level in 1971, comprising about 32 percent of the black population in the country.³ In 1959, however, the proportion who were below the low income level was much higher, 55 percent. Poverty is by far less prevalent among the white population. From 1959 to 1971, the proportion of whites below the low-income level declined from 18 percent to 10 percent. Although Negroes made up about 11 percent of all persons in 1971, they comprised approximately three tenths of all people below the low-income level.

A common impression is that most poverty among black families exists in metropolitan areas where about three fourths of all Negro families currently live. However, this is not true. Only about half of the low-income families lived there. In 1969, five out of every ten Negro families in the nonmetropolitan areas in the South were in the low-income group, compared with two out of ten in the central cities of the North and West. Poverty is also more severe for blacks in nonmetropolitan areas. In 1969 the average number of persons per low income (below the poverty line) black family was 5.0 for nonmetropolitan areas and 4.6 for metropolitan areas. Per capita income data permit us to observe a relationship between

³It is, of course, virtually impossible to define precisely the boundaries of poverty and it is almost as difficult to obtain general agreement on any definition used. For the purpose of this brief analysis, we shall use the definition accorded by the United States Bureau of the Census. The low-income threshold for a non-farm family of four was \$4,137 in 1971, \$3,968 in 1970, and \$2,973 in 1959. These are obviously arbitrary cut-off figures but they do provide a yardstick for measuring the incidence of poverty among different groups in the population.

the incomes of low income Negroes living in various areas by roughly reducing the effect of differences in average family size for these groups. Again we see in 1969 that income in nonmetropolitan areas per family member was the lowest: \$458 outside metropolitan area, \$533 outside central cities in metropolitan areas, and \$552 inside central cities.⁴

Regional Differences in Income

How much of the progress that we have just documented can be accounted for by the major migration of Negroes? Certainly one would expect a change in view of the major relocation of the black population in the last 30 years. In 1940, about three-fourths (77 percent) of all Negroes lived in the South and were largely engaged in agriculture. By 1950, the proportion residing in the South had dropped to two-thirds. Today only slightly more than half (53 percent) of the black population lives in the South. Blacks are now more concentrated in urban areas than ever before. By 1970, about three-fourths of the black population lived in metropolitan areas and about three-fifths in central cities.⁵

The income position of Negroes relative to whites is most favorable in the North and West. Table 2-3 shows a comparison of the median income of Negro males by states for 1949, 1959 and 1969. The figures are restricted to states with 100,000 or more Negroes in 1960. In all northern states examined, the median income of Negro men was 70 percent or more of the white average in 1969. The situation for blacks was best in such states

⁴BLS Report No. 394, Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 38, 1970, Table 31, p. 40.

⁵Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 42, 1971, The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States, p. 1.

Table 2-3

Regional Differences in the Incomes of White and Negro Males
in 1949, 1959 and 1969

(For states with 100,000 or more Blacks in 1959)

State	1949			1959			1969		
	White	Negro		White	Negro		White	Negro*	
<u>United States</u>	\$2,582	\$1,356	53%	\$4,337	\$2,254	52%	\$6,765	\$3,937	58%
<u>Northeast</u>									
Massachusetts	2,630	1,944	74	4,452	3,069	69	7,086	5,007	71
Connecticut	2,809	2,023	72	5,033	3,545	70	8,081	5,749	71
New York	2,929	2,097	72	4,812	3,372	70	7,516	5,534	74
New Jersey	3,033	1,977	65	5,172	3,375	65	8,061	5,626	70
Pennsylvania	2,638	2,073	79	4,369	3,246	74	6,831	5,180	76
<u>North Central</u>									
Ohio	2,852	2,146	75	4,903	3,492	71	7,591	5,703	75
Indiana	2,696	2,211	82	4,483	3,520	79	7,146	5,582	78
Illinois	3,030	2,260	75	5,056	3,651	72	7,843	5,971	76
Michigan	3,039	2,659	87	4,983	3,768	76	8,011	6,500	81
Missouri	2,224	1,611	72	3,863	2,616	68	6,155	4,335	70
<u>West</u>									
California	2,966	2,121	72	5,109	3,553	70	7,473	5,454	73
<u>South</u>									
Maryland	2,782	1,601	58	4,880	2,769	57	7,866	4,945	63
D. of Columbia	3,242	2,182	67	4,694	3,376	72	7,259	5,598	77
Virginia	2,255	1,220	54	3,758	1,907	51	6,340	3,638	57
N. Carolina	1,872	1,002	54	3,040	1,318	43	5,297	2,978	56
S. Carolina	2,043	801	39	3,224	1,140	35	5,626	3,014	54
Georgia	1,870	919	49	3,420	1,510	44	6,005	3,118	52
Florida	2,239	1,185	53	3,769	2,080	55	5,880	3,450	59
Kentucky	1,701	1,197	70	2,938	1,787	61	5,076	3,361	66
Tennessee	1,685	1,141	68	2,939	1,637	56	5,184	3,184	61
Alabama	1,809	957	53	3,409	1,446	42	5,690	2,801	49
Mississippi	1,462	605	41	2,796	904	32	5,061	2,039	40
Arkansas	1,423	759	53	2,553	990	39	4,511	2,206	49
Louisiana	2,228	997	45	4,001	1,609	40	6,330	2,875	45
Oklahoma	2,041	992	49	3,489	1,704	49	5,400	2,986	55
Texas	2,272	1,202	53	3,756	1,916	51	6,034	3,618	60

Source: U.S. Census of Population: 1970 General Social and Economic Characteristics for respective states; 1960, Detailed Characteristics, Table 133; 1950, Vol. II, Table 87.

*Information of individual states is for Negro and other races and therefore not strictly comparable with previous years. Statistics for Negroes only are not currently available.

as Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Indiana where unionized heavy industries are located.

Negroes have a substantially lower ratio of income in the South than in the North. In the District of Columbia, the average for Negroes was 77 percent of the white average, higher than many northern states, reflecting the influence of the federal government. As Miller has noted, it also reflects the fact that many of the higher paid employees, who are primarily white, live in the suburban areas outside the District of Columbia.⁶ The income ratio is also higher in the Southern border states of Maryland, Oklahoma, and Kentucky. These were the only states in the South except for Tennessee in which the median income of Negro men reached 60 percent of the white male average.

In spite of the lower ratio of Negro to white income in the South than in the North and West, the ratio in the South has increased substantially faster than in the North and West. In fact a joint report of the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed that "since 1965, the only gains in closing the gap between Negro and white family incomes have been in the South."⁷

The widening gap reported by Miller between 1949 and 1959 has moderated its trend.⁸ Nevertheless, it is discouraging to note that with the exception of the South, only three northern states (New Jersey, New York and Illinois) and California have exceeded their post-World War II ratio.

⁶Herman Miller, Rich Man, Poor Man, p. 86.

⁷BLS Report No. 394, Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 38, 1970, No. 394, p. 27.

⁸Herman Miller, Rich Man, Poor Man, p. 88.

This analysis leads us to conclude with Ginzberg and Hiestand that "internal migration probably accounted for much more of his (the Negroes') total gains than a move towards equality within particular regions".⁹

Age, Race, Sex Differential in Income Distribution

There is inequality of income distribution associated with almost every social, economic and demographic characteristic of the population. Table 2-4 reports the median income in 1970 of income recipients according to age, race and sex. There is a very definite age pattern to the income

Table 2-4
Median Income in 1970 of Persons by Age, Race, and Sex

Age	Male			Female		
	White	Negro	Ratio	White	Negro	Ratio
Total	\$7,011	\$4,157	59%	\$2,266	\$2,063	91%
14 to 19 yrs.	710	518	73	465	464	100
20 to 24 yrs.	4,148	3,302	80	2,598	2,359	91
25 to 34 yrs.	8,558	5,572	65	3,158	3,438	108
35 to 44 yrs.	9,147	6,094	61	3,474	3,335	96
45 to 54 yrs.	9,512	5,835	61	3,921	2,411	61
55 to 64 yrs.	7,993	4,360	54	3,210	1,514	47
65 and over	3,218	1,895	59	1,576	1,181	75

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 80, 1971, Table 45.

⁹Eli Ginzberg and Dale L. Hiestand, "Employment Patterns of Negro Men and Women," in The American Negro Reference Book, ed. John P. Davis, Prentice Hall, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966), p. 234.

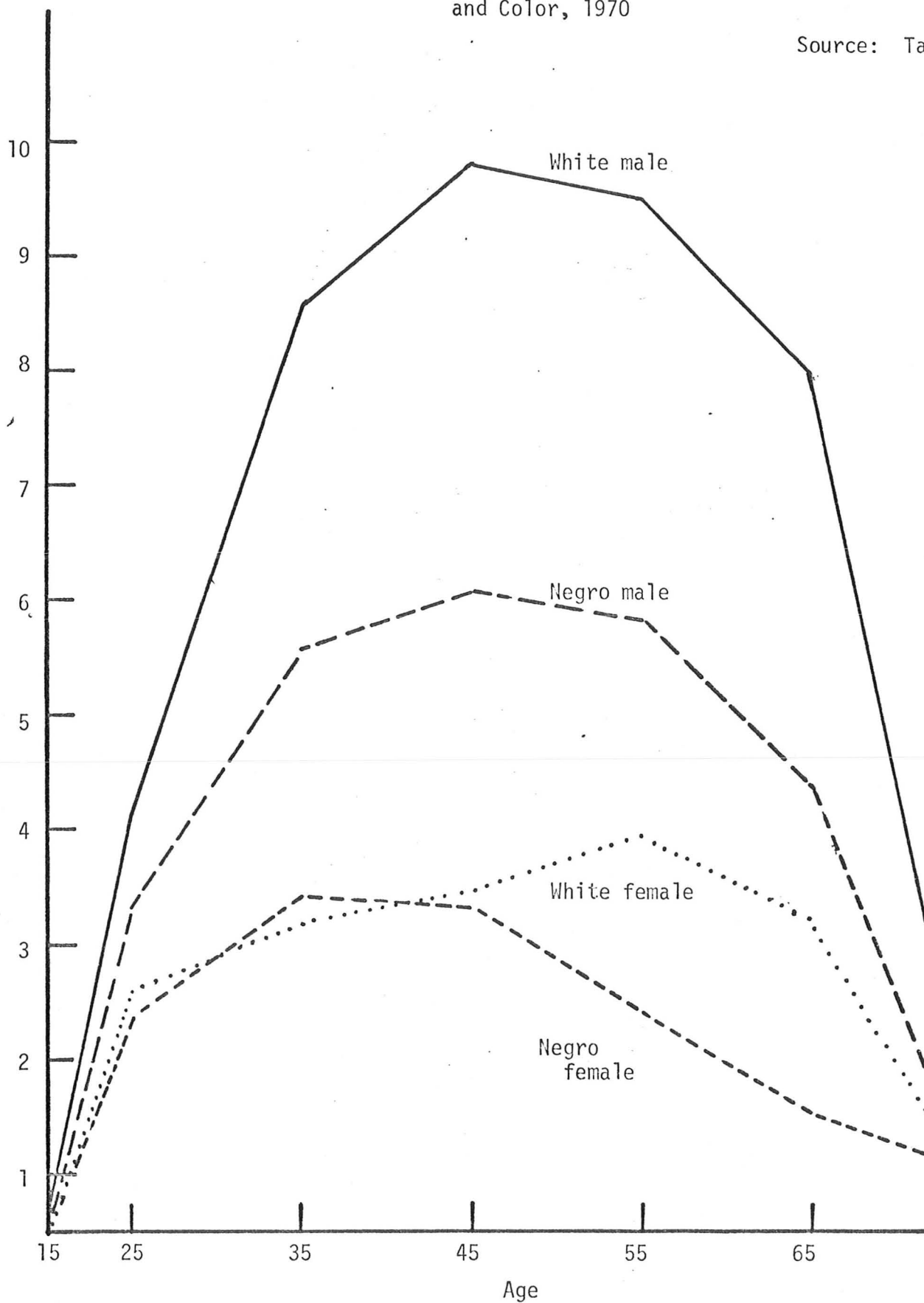
distribution (see Figure 2-1). It is similar in shape as a whole for males and females, for black and white workers. However, it differs considerably in detail, particularly between white and black males. In this pattern the income is very modest (however, also most equal) during the early years of participation in the labor force, rises steadily and reaches a peak at about 35 to 44 years of age, after which it declines. The income of black male workers drops more rapidly than that of their white counterparts after the age of 55. This is probably because black men are disproportionately employed in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs which often require great physical exertion. As these men pass their physical prime, they may be shifted to jobs that pay lower wages.

An encouraging trend is the higher ratio of black to white median income among the younger age groups of black men and women. This trend is particularly pronounced among black women. (Table 2-4 includes all workers, both full and part time. We shall examine the differing rate of labor participation of black women later in this chapter.) The black female is, with the exception of the age group 55 to 64 years, closer in median income to her white counterpart than the black male is to his white counterpart along the entire age distribution. The black woman is also more equal in earnings to her male counterpart. There is considerably less disparity (primarily because the black male earns much less than the white male) in income among black men and women than among white men and women. The income of black women averaged about 70 percent of that of black men, while that of white women was only about 59 percent of that of white men, among year-round, full-time workers. The implications of these statistics are

Figure 2-1

Median Income Received by Individuals at Each Age Group, by Sex
and Color, 1970

Source: Table 2-4



reflected in the sex role patterns of the black family. According to Murray, "The economic necessity for the Negro woman to earn a living to help support her family - if indeed she is not the sole support - has fostered her independence and equalitarian position..."¹⁰ In the next section we shall examine the important role the black women plays in contributing to the economic well-being of the family.

Family Income

Statistics for income of individuals can understate the economic status of a population. A large proportion of the very lowest small incomes received by individuals are the incomes of wives, children or elderly persons working only part-time or intermittently to supplement the family income, the major share of which is contributed by a principal earner. Table 2-5 shows the prevalence of multiple earners and the importance they have had on the income level of the family. Fifty-three percent of white families and fifty-seven percent of Negro families had two or more earners in 1969. However, the second earner, usually the wife, contributed significantly more in black families than in white families. A second earner increased the income of the white family by an average of nearly 30 percent and the black family by an average of slightly over 75 percent. In other words, a comparison of incomes of Negro and white multiple earner families reveals that the average Negro family needs an additional earner in order to earn substantially more than half of the income of the comparable white family. For those families with just one earner, the median income

¹⁰Pauli Murray, "Jim Crow and Jane Crow," in Gerda Lerner, ed. Black Women in White America, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), p. 594.

of Negro families was only about half that of white families (the high incidence of Negro female headed families where the black women is the only earner is probably significant in reducing the median family income; we shall turn our attention to this subject in a later chapter). Thus it seems evident that a black family has a slim chance of attaining a middle class plane of living if the black husband is the only breadwinner.

Table 2-5

Influence of Number of Earners on Family Income: 1969

Number of earners	% distribution		Median Income		Negro median income as a percent of white
	White	Negro	White	Negro	
All families	100	100	\$9,794	\$5,999	61
No earner	8	11	3,183	2,162	68
One earner	38	32	8,450	4,416	52
Two earners	39	42	10,885	7,782	71
Three earners	10	10	13,978	9,027	65
Four earners or more	4	5	16,243	11,259	69

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 38, BLS Report No. 394, Table 23.

Income varies sharply among black and white families not only according to age and region, as we have previously noted, but also according to the type of family. Table 2-6 examines the ratio of black to white income as related to age of head, region, and type of family. It is noteworthy that in 1970, the relative disparity in incomes between

Table 2-6

Median Income of All and Husband-Wife Negro Families as a Percent
of White, by Age of Head and Region: 1959 and 1970

Age of Head	United States		North and West		South	
	1959	1970	1959	1970	1959	1970
ALL FAMILIES						
Total	51	61	71	74	46	57
Under 35 years	54	65	68	70	50	62
35 to 44 years	54	64	69	74	45	56
45 to 54 years	49	59	68	74	44	50
55 to 64 years	49	60	74	74	47	62
65 years and over	52	62	75	76	58	64
HUSBAND-WIFE FAMILIES						
Total	57	73	76	88	50	66
Under 35 years	62	82	78	96	55	74
35 to 44 years	60	76	74	83	50	71
45 to 54 years	55	69	70	80	48	60
55 to 64 years	51	65	75	82	49	65
65 years and over	57	66	82	78	63	66

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 42, 1971, Table 20.

black and white families was smaller for husband-wife families than for other types of family (most of which were headed by a woman). This pattern was most strongly realized by husband-wife families in the North and West, where the ratio of Negro to white families was about 88 percent in 1970. The most significant gains in achieving income parity with whites were among young husband-wife families in the North and West whose heads were under 35. In these young families the ratio of black to white median income was approximately 96 percent in 1970, a substantial increase over the 78 percent in 1959. This is a significant development that deserves closer attention.

We must first note in order not to be accused of "selective statistic hopping"¹¹ that these young families in the North and West, whose incomes were about equal to those of whites comprised a relatively small proportion, only approximately 6 percent of the 4.9 million black families in the country in 1971. Table 2-7 focuses on these young husband-wife families whose heads are under 35. This table reveals that a very important part of the explanation of the narrowing gap between black and white families is the working wife. The income parity observed for young black and white families in the North and West holds true only for the families in which both the husband and wife worked. For these families, the ratio of black to white income was about 104 percent; the comparable figure was 85 percent in 1959. In contrast, no gains were made in closing the income gap by

¹¹See Ben Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon, "Black Progress and Liberal Rhetoric" in Commentary, April 1973 and reply to their article by John Morsell, "Black Progress or Illiberal Rhetoric?" Crisis, June-July 1973.

Table 2-7

Median Income and Distribution of Husband-Wife Families with Head under
35 Years, by Work Experience of Husband and Wife: 1959 and 1970

(in current dollars)

Work Experience of Husband and Wife	United States	North and West	South	United States	North and West	South
Negro, total ¹	\$3,534	\$4,594	\$2,735	\$8,032	\$9,560	\$6,788
Only husband worked	3,025	4,080	2,311	5,965	7,104	5,196
Husband and wife worked	3,845	5,320	3,060	9,267	11,045	7,464
White, total	5,658	5,897	4,987	9,796	10,002	9,229
Only husband worked	5,233	5,467	4,436	9,065	9,373	8,210
Husband and wife worked	6,013	6,246	5,420	10,396	10,578	9,948
Negro, as Percent of White Total ¹	62	78	55	82	96	74
Only husband worked	58	75	52	66	76	63
Husband and wife worked	64	85	68	89	104	75
Percent Distribution						
Negro, total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Only husband worked	43	45	41	31	35	25
Husband and wife worked	50	48	52	68	65	77
Other combinations	7	7	7	2	2	2
White, total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Only husband worked	56	57	55	43	44	40
Husband and wife worked	40	40	41	56	54	59
Other combinations	4	3	4	2	2	2

¹Includes other combinations not shown separately

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 46, 1971, Tables 21 and 22

young black families in which only the husband worked in the North and West. In both 1970 and 1959, these families were making only about three-fourths as much money as comparable white families in the North and West.

If we concentrate our attention on the working wife, it becomes apparent that both in 1970 and 1959, Negro wives were more likely than white wives to have worked. In the North and West, the number of young families in which both the husband and wife worked has increased about 95 percent since 1959. By 1970, about 63 percent of young black wives in this area contributed to the family income by working, as contrasted to 54 percent for the young white wives. Not only do black wives work more, but they also are more apt to work year round. Of those working, approximately 52 percent of the Negro wives worked all year compared to only 36 percent of the white wives.

As we have previously seen, the working black wife is largely responsible for the remarkable gains among the small sector of the black population that has reached parity with their white counterparts. She earned 30 percent more than her white counterpart - \$3,900 as compared to \$3,010 in 1970. However, it is important to note that in those same families the husbands were also making progress. They earned 76 percent of comparable white husbands in 1959 and 90 percent of comparable white husbands in 1970. Here we notice a strange development emerging. In black husband-wife families where both partners worked the median income of the husband was 90 percent of white husbands whereas in black husband-wife families where only the husband worked the comparable figure is only 76 percent.

We might speculate that the black husbands whose wives also worked were better educated and more highly motivated than those husbands whose wives did not work. Unfortunately statistics are not available to locate the reasons for this apparent discrepancy.

Measures of Overlap of Income Distributions

We have previously focused on the gap between the black and white populations. This concept implies that there is a substantial difference between the two populations. However, as we have previously indicated medians' or other specific points in the distribution of the white and Negro population fluctuate considerably and obscure the fact that the distributions of the two populations overlap substantially. Ginzberg and Hiestand have developed a statistical measure to summarize the degree of overlap or integration.¹² This statistic is particularly helpful in examining the trend toward more or less integration or equality in income.

An index of Income Integration of white and Negro (I_{wn}) measures the sum of the commonalities expressed in terms of percents shared between whites and Negroes for each income class interval. I_{wn} can be derived by summing for each income class interval the lower percent for either white or Negro:

$$I_{wn} = \sum P_{i_w}, P_{i_w} < P_{i_n}; \sum P_{i_n} < P_{i_w}$$

In 1971, for example, 2.9 percent of Negro families had incomes under \$1,000 compared with 1.3 percent of white families. The overlap

¹²Eli Ginzberg and Dale L. Hiestand, Mobility in the Negro Community, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Clearinghouse Publication No. 11, June 1968.

value common to both groups at this observation point is 1.3 percent. Repeating this procedure for all income class intervals and summing the overlap values results in an Index of Income Integration between white and Negro families (I_{wn}) of .72, with 1.00 representing perfect accordance between the two frequency distributions (see Table 2-8 and Figure 2-2).

We can conclude from Figure 2-2 that the black population is comparatively worse off at the upper portion of the income distribution. This is particularly evident in the income groups between \$12,000 and \$25,000. Wohlsetter and Coleman using data running from 1947 through 1968 have come to a similar conclusion. According to them "nonwhite family and personal incomes are much inferior to white incomes along the entire distribution of each. It is not simply a matter of the middle of the distribution. Still less is the trouble confined to the low ends. The differences are pervasive and they are displayed most sharply in the existence of upper limits that tend to bound nonwhite personal income."¹³

The ratio of median family income to Negro and other races to that of white families and the Index of Integration are presented for the years 1947 through 1971 in Table 2-9 and Figure 2-3. The Index of Integration ranges from .62 in 1947 to .74 in 1971. Both the ratio of black to white family median income and the Index of Integration show that substantial progress was made during the latter part of the 1960's. Apparently the "war on poverty" programs and a tight labor market had begun by 1966

¹³Albert Wohlsetter and Sinclair Coleman, "Racial Differences in Income," Anthony Pascal, ed., in Racial Discrimination in Economic Life, (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath & Co.), 1972, p. 66.

Table 2-8

Measure of Overlap

Percent Distribution, and Indexes of Integration and
Differentiation of White Families and Negro Families
by Total Money: 1971

Income	Percent Distribution		Components of Index of...	
	White	Negro	Integration	Differentiation
Total	100	100	71.7	28.4
Under \$1,000	1.3	2.9	1.3	+ 1.6
\$1,000 to \$1,499	0.8	2.5	0.8	+ 1.7
\$1,500 to \$1,999	1.3	4.2	1.3	+ 2.9
\$2,000 to \$2,499	1.7	5.5	1.7	+ 3.8
\$2,500 to \$2,999	1.8	5.2	1.8	+ 3.4
\$3,000 to \$3,499	2.2	4.8	2.2	+ 2.6
\$3,500 to \$3,999	2.1	4.1	2.1	+ 2.0
\$4,000 to \$4,999	5.0	9.4	5.0	+ 4.4
\$5,000 to \$5,999	5.4	8.3	5.4	+ 2.9
\$6,000 to \$6,999	5.4	7.1	5.4	+ 1.7
\$7,000 to \$7,999	6.1	7.4	6.1	+ 1.3
\$8,000 to \$8,999	6.0	6.1	6.0	- 0.1
\$9,000 to \$9,999	6.5	4.8	4.8	- 1.7
\$10,000 to \$11,999	13.0	8.8	8.8	- 4.2
\$12,000 to \$14,999	15.0	8.4	8.4	- 6.6
\$15,000 to \$24,999	20.6	9.5	9.5	-11.1
\$25,000 to \$49,999	5.1	1.0	1.0	- 4.1
\$50,000 and over	0.7	0.1	0.1	- 0.6

Source: Current Population Reports, P-60, No. 85, 1972, Table 16.

Figure 2-2
Percent Distribution of Negro Families and
White Families: 1971

Source: Table 2-8

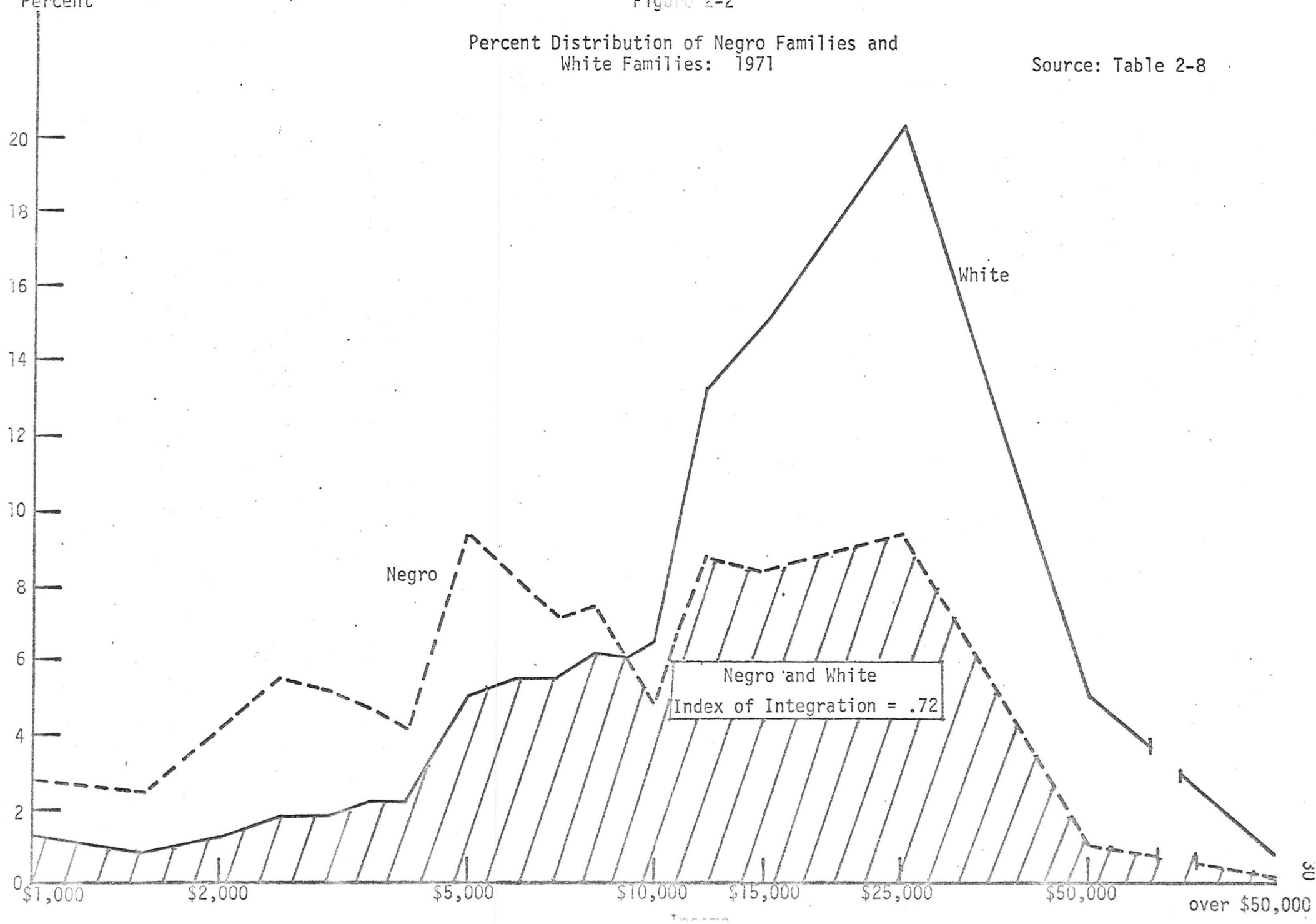


Table 2-9

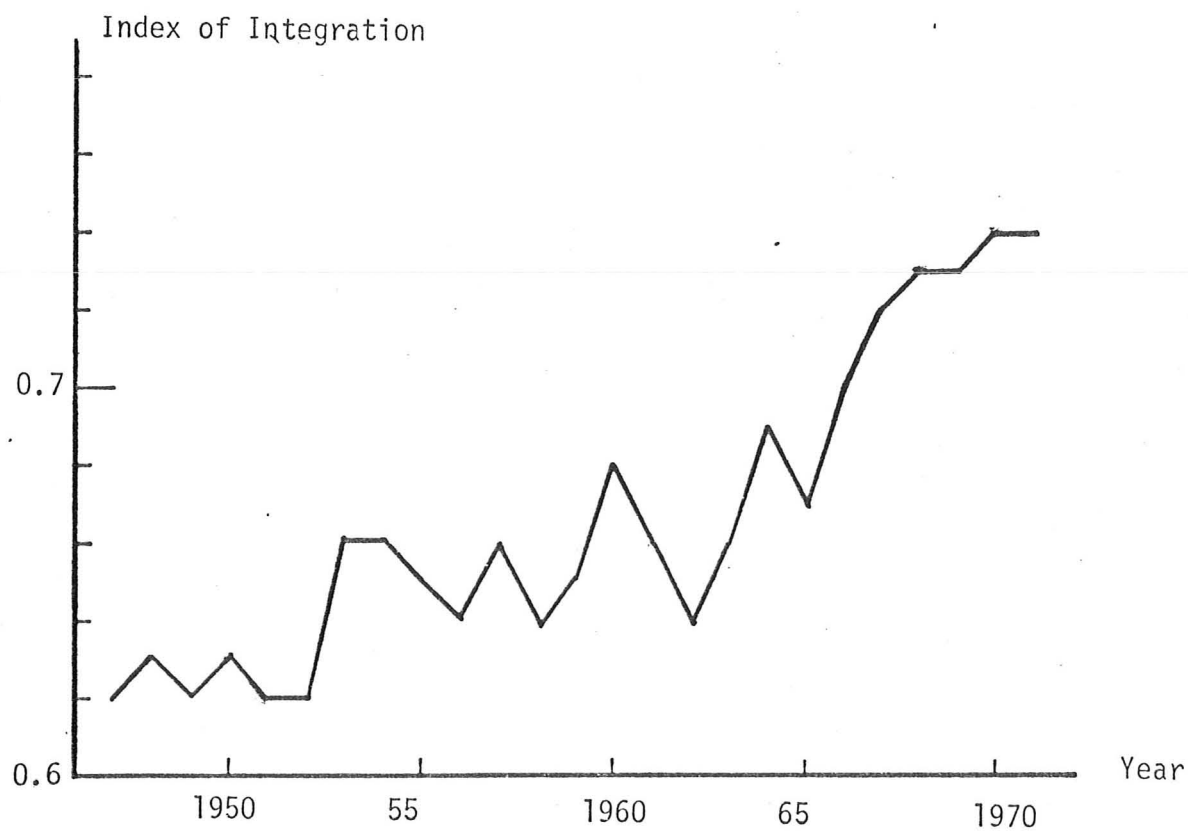
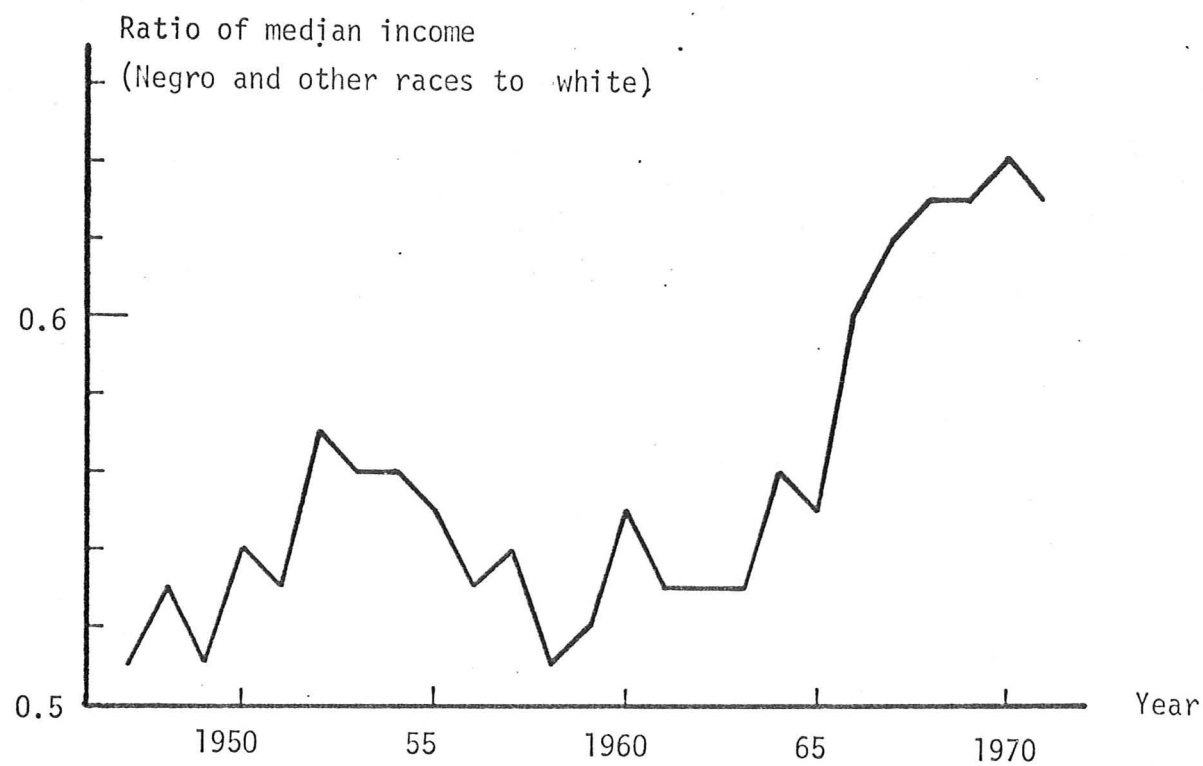
Selected Summary Measures of White Families and Families of Negro and
Other Races: 1947 to 1971

Year	Median Income			Index of Integration	Gini Index of Concentration	
	White	Negro and other races	Ratio of Negro and other races to white	Ratio	White	Negro and other races
1971	\$10,672	\$6,714	.63	.74	(NA)	(NA)
1970	10,236	6,516	.64	.74	(NA)	(NA)
1969	9,794	6,190	.63	.73	(NA)	(NA)
1968	8,937	5,590	.63	.73	.336	.390
1967	8,274	5,141	.62	.72	.347	.403
1966	7,792	4,674	.60	.70	.343	.385
1965	7,251	3,994	.55	.67	.347	.388
1964	6,858	3,839	.56	.69	.347	.400
1963	6,548	3,465	.53	.66	.348	.404
1962	6,237	3,330	.53	.64	.352	.399
1961	5,981	3,191	.53	.66	.366	.419
1960	5,835	3,233	.55	.68	.357	.412
1959	5,643	2,917	.52	.65	.348	.413
1958	5,300	2,711	.51	.64	.342	.413
1957	5,166	2,764	.54	.66	.341	.400
1956	4,993	2,628	.53	.64	.347	.395
1955	4,605	2,549	.55	.65	.355	.388
1954	4,339	2,410	.56	.66	.360	.404
1953	4,392	2,461	.56	.66	.350	.393
1952	4,114	2,338	.57	.62	.359	.368
1951	3,859	2,032	.53	.62	.351	.402
1950	3,445	1,869	.54	.63	.370	.402
1949	3,232	1,650	.51	.62	.365	.414
1948	3,310	1,768	.53	.63	.358	.402
1947	3,157	1,614	.51	.62	.366	.406

(NA) Not available

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Measures of Overlap of Income Distributions of White and Negro Families, 1970, Table B, p. 3 and Current Population Reports, Series P-60, Nos. 75, 80, 85.

Figure 2-3



Source: Table 2-9.

to ameliorate the disparity between black and white families and reverse the early 1960 trend which recorded a widening differential in income distribution. Progress in the Nixon years of 1969, 1970, and 1971 has been considerably less dramatic than in the Kennedy-Johnson years. Statistics for the early 1970's are still sketchy, however, they appear to point to a general slowdown or perhaps even a slight decrease. For example, although the ratio of Negro to white family income did not differ significantly between 1970 and 1971 for the entire United States, it dropped from 74 percent to 69 percent for the North and West. During this same time period the South remained essentially constant at 57 percent in 1970 and 56 percent in 1971.

Trends Within the Black Community

The distribution of income within the black community has consistently been slightly more unequal than white family income. The basis for this conclusion can readily be seen in Table 2-10 and Figure 2-4. Table 2-10 shows the percentage distribution of families and aggregate money income by color, in 1947 and 1970. One can observe that in both the white and nonwhite communities, the middle income groups made slight gains in their share of total income at the expense of the highest fifth and top 5 percent of the income spectrum. There were also very small gains registered in the relative share of the lowest fifth

of both populations.¹⁴

Figure 2-4 provides a visual perspective of income distribution among white and nonwhite families in 1970. It also provides a graphic picture (known as the Lorenz Curve) of the distribution of total money income among the white and nonwhite families in 1970. These are the same figures shown in Columns (4) and (8) of Table 2-10.

This curve is a useful tool with which to examine the extent of income equality within any specified group. For instance, if incomes were equally distributed, the Lorenz Curve would be the diagonal line rising from the lower left of the chart. It would mean that 20 percent of the families received 20 percent of the income; 60 percent of the families received 60 percent of the income, etc. Consequently, the deviation of the actual pattern of income distribution from this diagonal line is a measure of the degree of income inequality within a particular community. The degree of inequality can be calculated by taking the ratio of the area between the

¹⁴For a recent analysis of Census data covering the period 1958-1970 see Peter Henle, "Exploring the Distribution of Earned Income," Monthly Labor Review, December 1972. Henle concludes that personal incomes have shown a slight but persistent trend toward inequality. In contrast changes in family incomes during the period 1958-70 are relatively slight, but they point unmistakably toward greater equality. According to Henle "The major difference in trend between the traditional family income distribution and the distribution of earnings of wages and salaries can largely be accounted for by two factors: (1) Changes have taken place in the distribution of nonearned income, in particular, the increasing flow of government transfer payments, including social security and welfare assistance, has supported the income of many families with little or no earnings; and (2) There has been an increasing proportion of families with two earners or more. During the 1958-70 period, the proportion of wives in the labor force rose from 31 to 41 percent. Similarly, a higher proportion of teenagers have been working, mostly at part-time jobs. The result is that the proportion of families with more than one earner rose from 46 to 54 percent during the 1960's, and those with three earners or more from 11 to 15 percent. Thus, there are many more families in 1970 than in 1950 whose members considered individually would be placed in the lower earnings group but when considered together as a unit the family falls into the middle or higher income groups." (p. 22).

Table 2-10

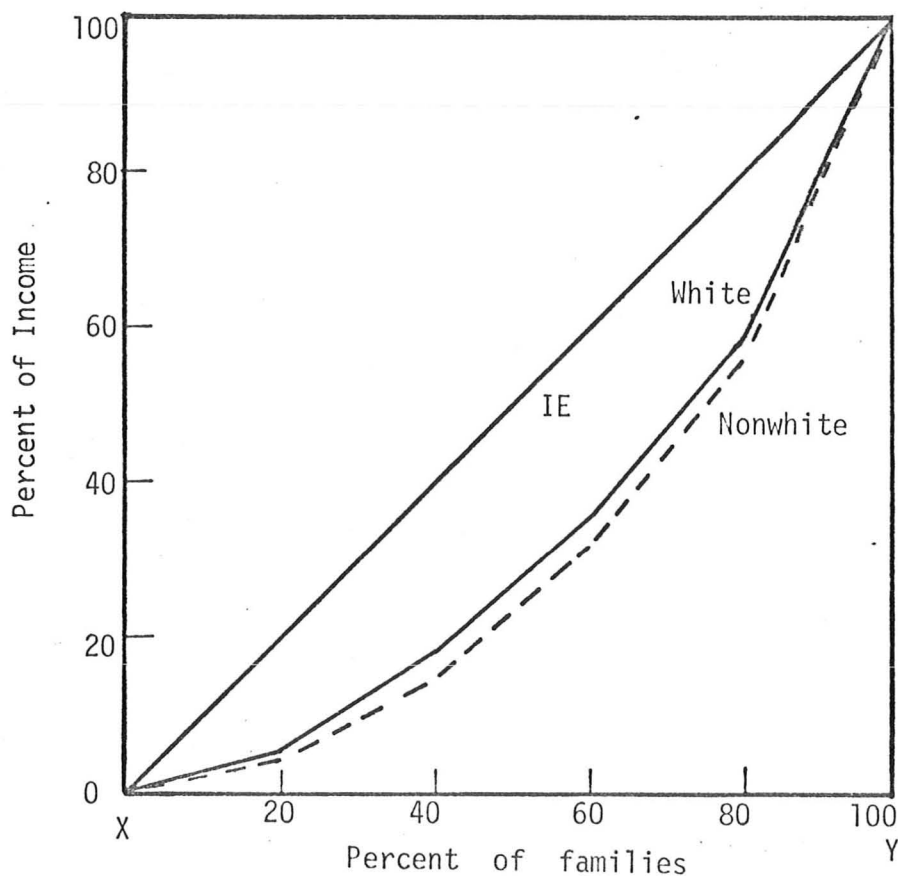
Percentage Distribution of Families and Aggregate Money Income,
by Color, 1947 and 1970

Distribution of families	White				Negro and other races			
	1947		1970		1947		1970	
	Share (1)	Cumula- tive (2)	Share (3)	Cumula- tive (4)	Share (5)	Cumula- tive (6)	Share (7)	Cumula- tive (8)
Lowest Fifth	5.4	5.4	5.8	5.8	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.5
Second Fifth	12.1	17.5	12.3	18.1	10.3	14.6	10.4	14.9
Middle Fifth	16.9	34.4	17.4	35.5	16.0	30.6	16.5	31.4
Fourth Fifth	22.7	57.1	23.4	58.9	23.7	54.3	24.5	55.9
Highest Fifth	42.8	99.9	41.1	100.0	45.7	100.0	44.0	99.9
Top 5 percent	17.7	-	14.2	-	17.1	-	15.4	-

Source: Current Population Reports. Series P-60, No. 85, 1971, Table 14, p. 38.

White and Nonwhite, 1970

Figure 2-4



diagonal lines and the actual Lorenz Curve (Marked by IE in the chart to the area of the triangle X,Y,Z). This ratio is known as the "Gini Index" of income concentration.¹⁵ As income inequality increases, the IE area is enlarged, and the Gini Index rises. The Index varies between 0 and 1.00, indicating respectively, complete equality and complete inequality of income distribution.

In Table 2-9, the Gini Index is shown for white and nonwhite families in the United States for the period 1947 through 1968. It is noteworthy that in every year income was distributed considerably more unequally among nonwhite than among white families.

Socioeconomic Status of the Black and White Population

Under slavery the caste principle dictated that a classless Negro community should prevail wherein all Negroes in all respects - educationally, occupationally and economically - were to be placed under the lowest class of whites.¹⁶ This absolutistic principle, however, was never fully realized. Even in slave society there came to be a social stratification within the slave community, as house servants and skilled mechanics acquired a level of living and culture and enjoyed a social prestige different from that of the field slaves. The early emergence of a class of free Negroes also strengthened this trend of stratifying the black population in America.¹⁷

¹⁵The technique of computing the Index is explained in Herman Miller's Trend in the Income of Families and Persons in the United States: 1947 to 1960, United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963) p. 26.

¹⁶Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma, (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1944), p. 689.

¹⁷E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Family in the United States, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), pps. 22-23, 143.

After Emancipation this development continued despite Jim Crow legislation and measures to keep the Negroes disfranchised and deprived of civil rights. Social segregation which was and continues to be a last attempt in enforcing the caste principle, afforded protection for a growing number of black professionals and businessmen. According to Myrdal "Negroes had to be ministered to, their educational institutions had to be manned, their corpses had to be washed and buried, and as white people did not wish to take on these tasks and as Negroes gradually found out their own needs and chances, a Negro middle and upper class developed to perform these functions, and thus drew its vitality from the very fact of American caste."¹⁸

Robert Park was among the first to call attention to the changing nature of Negro - white relations. He pointed out that "originally race relations in the South could be rather accurately represented by a horizontal line, with all the white folk above, and all the Negro folk below... With the development of industrial and professional classes within the Negro race, the distinction between the races tends to assume the form of a vertical line... The situation was this

All white
All colored

It is now	White	Colored
	Professional occupation	Professional Occupation
	Business occupation	Business occupation
	Labor	Labor

¹⁸Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma, p. 690.

The result is to develop in every occupational class professional and industrial bi-racial organizations... The races no longer look up and down, they look across.¹⁹ Park was primarily concerned with status rather than income. He believed that there would be an incipience of parallel differentiation within the two groups.

Myrdal attempted to portray the caste-class system of the early 1940's. Unlike Warner's diagram which implied that the Negro group got proportionately smaller as one went up the social status scale, Myrdal suggested that the Negro middle and upper class actually were more than proportionately smaller than their lower class.

Du Bois brings this out clearly.

It goes without saying that while Negroes are thus manifestly of low average culture, in no place nor at any time do they form a homogeneous group. Even in the country districts of the lower South, Allison Davis likens the group to a steeple with wide base tapering to a high pinnacle. This means that while the poor, ignorant, sick and anti-social form a vast foundation, that upward from that base stretch classes whose highest members, although few in number, reach above the average not only of the Negroes but of the whites, and may justly be compared to the better-class white culture. The class of the whites, on the other hand, resembles a tower bulging near the center with the lowest class small in number as compared with the middle and lower middle classes; and the highest classes far more numerous in proportion than those among blacks.²⁰

Myrdal diagramed the class-caste situation in two: one, in terms of absolute numbers after the manner of the ordinary population pyramid (as in DuBois' description); two in terms of percentage at each social level²¹ (see Figure 2-5).

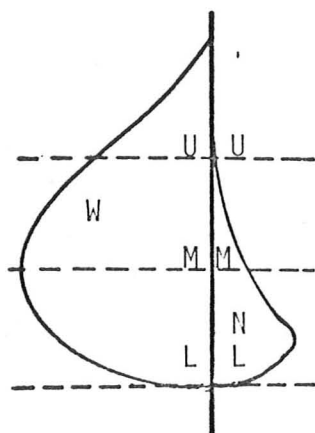
¹⁹Robert Park, "The Basis of Race Prejudices" in Race and Culture, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1950), p. 243.

²⁰W.E.B. DuBois, Dusk of Dawn, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940), p. 183.

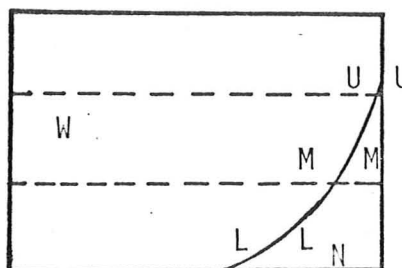
²¹Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma, p. 692.

Figure 2-5

Absolute Number of
Whites and Negroes
at each Level of
Social Status



Percentage of Whites and Negroes
at each Level of Social Status



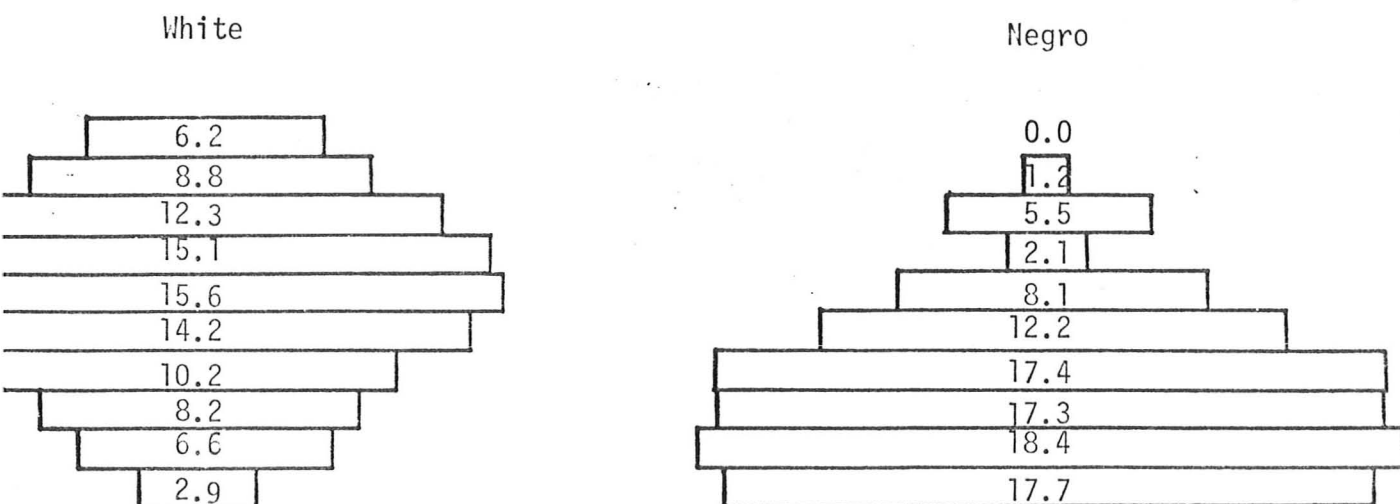
Legend: W-White. N-Negro. U-Upper Class. M-Middle Class. L-Lower Class

How can we characterize the black as compared with the white class structure today? Is the black middle class increasing as some observers have indicated? Figure 2-6 shows the actual percentage of population at each class interval for 1960. The scores which are shown here represent a combination of the scores which an individual was assigned by virtue of the occupation in which the chief income recipient in the family is engaged, that person's educational attainment, and the current income of the family. A score ranging from 0 to 99 was assigned to each of the categories; a simple average of the three scores was then computed. The scores for the three items were developed by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the 1960 Census data.²²

²²See U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Methodology and Scores of Socio-economic Status," Working Paper No. 15, Washington D.C., 1963.

Figure 2-6 shows that in 1960 the black class structure resembles a pyramid as opposed to the white class structure which approximates a diamond. From this diagram we can see that there is a large cleavage between the black and white stratification structures. In effect, the overwhelming majority of whites, both in the working class and the middle and upper classes benefit economically and socially from the existence of a "lower caste" within their midst. Despite this, we must not lose sight of the fact that the stratification structure of the whole society as well as the position of the minorities within it is subject to change. Although census data is not yet available for 1970, there is an indication that the Negro middle and working classes have expanded considerably. If occupation is used as a criterion for determining membership and those in professional and technical, clerical, sales, and skilled occupations are included approximately 36 percent of all Negro workers belong to the middle class. White workers in the above-mentioned categories represent 64 percent of all whites in the labor force. In 1960 the respective figures were 21 percent for Negroes and 60 percent for whites (see Table 3-6).

Figure 2-6
Socioeconomic Status
1960



Summary

As we conclude the discussion of the general economic condition two points need special emphasis. First, though there have clearly been sizeable absolute and relative improvements, these can hardly be the basis for sound optimism. Only 6 percent of black families - those narrowly defined as husband-wife units headed by someone under 35 and living in the North and West - have incomes roughly equal to white families of the same statistical profile. Although black family income in relation to white family income has improved since the end of World War II, nationally the ratio has dropped slightly since 1970. The most recent statistics (1972) show that black families earn approximately \$6,900, about 59 percent of what white families earn. Approximately one-third of all blacks are currently classified as poor as compared with less than 10 percent of whites. Second, given the present large disparities, convergence will require a drastic improvement in occupational distribution, income within occupations and educational attainment. (We shall turn our attention to these components of income disparity in the next chapter).

Finally, our examination of the class structure undeniably leads us to conclude with Lipset that "despite the considerable progress of certain segments of the black community, whites are enormously advantaged by the presence of a racial minority which handles a disproportionate share of the less rewarded jobs and status positions."²³

²³Seymour Lipset, "Social Mobility and Equal Opportunity," The Public Interest, No. 29, (Fall 1972), p. 98.

CHAPTER III

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF INCOME DISPARITY: EDUCATION AND OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

The means of education, though not so free and open to us as white persons, are nevertheless at our command to such an extent as to make education possible; and these thank God, are increasing. Let us educate our children, even though it should subject to a coarser and scantier diet, and disrobe us of our few fine garments. "For the want of knowledge we are killed all the day." Get wisdom - get understanding, is a peculiarly valuable exhortation to us, and the compliance with it is our only hope in this land. - It is idle, a hollow mockery, for us to pray to God to break the oppressor's power, while we neglect the means of knowledge which will give us the ability to break this power. - God will help us when we help ourselves.

Frederick Douglas, 1848¹

The difference in educational attainment accounts for much, but not all, of the difference in occupational structure found between the two races. Occupation is, in turn, a very important variable in determining income. This chapter will examine recent trends in educational attainment and occupational distribution, focusing on the contribution of these two variables to the "income gap". While the quality of education will not be considered here, it should be kept in mind that the education received by Negroes in segregated schools has been, in general, inferior in quality to that received by whites. Comparisons in this chapter will be made in

¹Frederick Douglas, "What are the Colored People Doing for Themselves," in Howard Brotz, ed., Negro Social and Political Thought, (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 208.

terms of years of school completed, although these "years" are not necessarily equivalent units.

Educational Attainment

The difference between nonwhite or Negro and white median years of schooling for those 25 years and older has been decreasing in recent years but it is still sizable. Table 3-1 shows that in 1972 the median was 12.3 years for white and 10.3 years for Negro men. For 25 to 29 year olds, the gap at the median appears by 1972 to have almost vanished. A great breakthrough in the area of education has taken place among younger blacks. In 1940, the young black was typically an elementary school graduate. Not until 1960 did the young Negro American typically reach even the level of high school drop-out, and not until 1970 did he typically become a high school graduate.

Dramatic gains were also registered in black college attendance. The number of black men 25 years and over with four or more years of college increased from 162,000 in 1967 to 271,000 in 1968, an increase of about 34 percent in one year. The corresponding increase in the number of white men with four or more years of college was only 2 percent. Even more astonishing is the fact that black college enrollment increased 85 percent between 1964 and 1968.² The gains of these young men, 35 and under, are particularly dramatic in the North and West, (see Table 3-2) where those

²Albert Wohlsetter and Sinclair Coleman, "Race Differences in Income", in Racial Discrimination in Economic Life, ed. Anthony H. Pascal, (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1972), p. 59.

Table 3-1

Median Years of School Completed by Persons 25 Years Old
and Over, and 25 to 29 Years Old, by Color and Sex,
1940 to 1972

25 Years and Over	Male		Female	
	White	Nonwhite	White	Nonwhite
April 1940	8.7	5.4	8.8	6.1
April 1950	9.3	6.4	10.0	7.2
March 1960	10.7	7.7	11.2	8.6
March 1966	12.0	8.8	12.1	9.6
March 1970	12.2	9.6	12.2	10.2
March 1972	12.3	10.3	12.3	10.6
25 to 29 Years				
April 1940	10.5	6.5	10.9	7.5
April 1950	12.4	8.4	12.2	8.9
March 1959	12.5	10.9	12.4	11.0
March 1966	12.6	12.1	12.5	11.9
March 1972	12.8	12.4	12.6	12.4

Source: Statistical Abstract of the U.S.A., Current Population Reports Series P-60.

Table 3-2

Median Earnings in 1969 and Educational Attainment of Persons 25 to 34 Years Old, who Worked Year Round in 1969, by Sex and Region: 1970

Area and education	Male			Female		
	Negro	White	Ratio: Negro to white	Negro	White	Ratio: Negro to white
UNITED STATES						
Total.....	\$6,346	\$8,839	0.72	\$4,403	\$5,175	0.85
Elementary: 8 years or less...	4,743	6,618	0.72	2,935	3,980	0.74
High school: 1 to 3 years.....	5,749	7,910	0.73	3,671	4,282	0.86
4 years.....	6,789	8,613	0.79	4,592	5,037	0.91
College: 1 to 3 years.....	7,699	9,190	0.84	5,544	5,724	0.97
4 years.....	8,715	11,212	0.78	6,971	7,206	0.97
5 years or more...	9,955	11,808	0.84	7,957	8,128	0.98
NORTH AND WEST						
Total.....	\$7,478	9,127	0.82	5,156	5,400	0.95
Elementary: 8 years or less...	6,314	7,278	0.87	4,021	4,185	0.96
High school: 1 to 3 years.....	6,737	8,319	0.81	4,328	4,467	0.97
4 years.....	7,650	8,838	0.87	5,219	5,187	1.01
College: 1 to 3 years.....	8,233	9,383	0.88	5,952	5,895	1.01
4 years.....	9,747	11,394	0.86	8,068	7,501	1.08
5 years or more...	11,099	11,927	0.93	8,459	8,258	1.02
SOUTH						
Total.....	\$5,226	8,090	0.65	3,657	4,749	0.77
Elementary: 8 years or less...	4,220	5,782	0.73	2,330	3,745	0.62
High school: 1 to 3 years.....	4,872	6,928	0.70	3,064	4,071	0.75
4 years.....	5,783	7,987	0.72	3,866	4,736	0.82
College: 1 to 3 years.....	6,525	8,669	0.75	4,645	5,370	0.86
4 years.....	7,372	10,738	0.69	6,394	6,660	0.96
5 years or more...	8,784	11,439	0.77	7,522	7,563	0.99

Note: Data are for persons in experienced civilian labor force who worked 50 to 52 weeks in 1969 and had earnings.

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 46, 1972, p. 25.

black men with five years of college or more who worked year round earned 93 percent of their white counterparts.

In spite of these tremendous gains in college attendance a much smaller proportion of blacks than whites received additional schooling after highschool. The higher black drop-out rate occurs at all levels of schooling. (See Table 3-3).

Table 3-3

Years of School Completed by Persons 25 Years Old and Over
by Color and Sex: 1970

	Male		Female	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
No school years completed	1.4	3.9	1.4	2.7
Elementary: 1 to 4 years	3.5	13.8	2.7	9.3
5 and 6 years	5.3	12.3	4.8	11.1
7 years	4.4	6.9	3.9	7.2
8 years	13.3	10.2	12.8	10.8
High School: 1 to 3 years	18.2	22.9	19.4	26.4
4 years	28.5	20.0	35.5	22.2
College: 1 to 3 years	11.1	6.0	11.1	5.8
4 years	7.2	2.2	5.7	2.9
5 years or more	7.2	2.0	2.8	1.7

Source: U.S. Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics: 1970 Summary, Table 88.

Marginal Returns to Schooling for Blacks

Every study of the relationship between earnings and education shows that the more highly educated the man, the greater his earnings. Absolute dollar income also increases for blacks with additional years of schooling. However, the amount is far less than for whites. Table 3-4 shows what a difference color makes! Black men earn considerably less at

every educational level. (Educational trends of women will be examined in the last chapter.) In an encouraging development, the data suggests that the disturbing trend noted by many sociologists and economists whereby better educated blacks were worse off economically relative to comparable whites than blacks with less education is slowly changing.³ During the 1960's, better educated blacks improved their market position. It is still true, however, that black male college graduates over 25 earn less than white high school graduates of the same age. The earnings of black men relative to those of whites are highest and have increased most rapidly since 1959 for those in the 13 to 15 years of schooling group, and for those with less than 8 years of schooling. During the 1960's the "earnings from education" gap began to narrow, particularly among young college educated men. This is a welcome, if not sufficient change, from the fifties at which time the earnings of black men relative to those of whites declined as the educational levels increased.

Clearly, education is not enough to close the "income gap" between white and black males. Wohlsetter and Coleman found in 1968 that even if black educational levels were adjusted so that they paralleled white levels the adjustment would only improve the white to nonwhite income ratio at the median by 13.5 percent or roughly one third of the disparity in income. The ratios are still substantially below 100 percent.⁴

³See Herman P. Miller, Rich Man, Poor Man, (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell Company, 1964), p. 155. Miller noted that in 1959, the average nonwhite with four years of college could expect to earn less over a lifetime than the white who did not go beyond the eighth grade. See also Giora Hanoch, "An Economic Analysis of Earnings and Schooling". The Journal of Human Resources 2, No. 3 (1967).

⁴Albert Wohlsetter and Sinclair Coleman, "Race Difference in Income", p. 58.

Table 3-4

Median Earnings in 1959 and 1969 by Educational Attainment of
Males 25-54 Years Old by Race

	1969		Ratio: Negro to White	1959		Ratio: Negro to White
	White	Negro		White	Negro	
Total	8,795	5,222	.59	6,637	3,570	.54
Elementary, total	6,311	4,152	.66	5,223	2,990	.57
Less than 8 years	5,509	3,922	.71	4,557	2,797	.61
8 years	7,018	4,472	.64	5,745	3,705	.64
High school, total	8,529	5,826	.68	6,712	4,227	.63
1 to 3 years	7,812	5,327	.68	6,464	4,106	.64
4 years	8,829	6,192	.70	6,906	4,490	.65
College, total	11,023	7,956	.72	8,627	5,243	.61
1 to 3 years	9,831	7,427	.76	7,796	5,000	.64
4 years or more	12,354	8,669	.70	9,632	5,654	.59

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 37, 1971, Table 12.

Hope for the Future?

Nevertheless, the gains made by the college educated black are particularly encouraging. In 1963 Glazer and Moynihan wrote:

The facts still show that Negroes at the same levels of education as whites, do not get as good jobs, as high incomes. These are still the crude, brute facts of discrimination. And yet the same facts can be responded to in different ways. The Japanese in California before the war found it impossible to get good jobs outside the Japanese community; Jews until the Second World War took it for granted that they would find few jobs in engineering or with large corporations. But at the same time, Japanese attended college in phenomenal numbers; they became the best educated racial group in California. Jews did the same. This meant frustration for Japanese and Jews who could not find jobs for which they had trained and were qualified...But this overtraining also meant that when the barriers came down these groups were ready and waiting. For the Negro today this is not true.⁵

This situation changed radically during the latter half of the 1960's and this trend appears to be continuing into the 1970's. For the first

⁵Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot, (The M.I.T. Press and Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1963), p. 43.

time in the history of the American Negro large numbers of black youths are pursuing higher education. Not only this, but young black men are also beginning to reap the financial benefits of higher education.

The Occupational Structure of the Negro Labor Force

The Negro labor force is concentrated in the semiskilled, unskilled, and service occupations. This is true for both men and women. As Table 3-5 indicates, over 50 percent of both Negro men and women are in these occupations. Among Negro men, one in four is an operative, and one in seven a craftsman or foreman, laborer, or service worker.

Negro women are even more strongly concentrated in a few lower level jobs than are Negro men. Over one fourth of all employed Negro women, or 750,000, were employed as service workers in 1970. In contrast to men, however, a substantially larger proportion of Negro women are in more desirable jobs such as teaching, nursing, and clerical work.

Occupational Trends

There is a tendency for occupational trends to shift relatively slowly. This reflects the fact that the technological and economic factors in the several sectors of the economy, the geographical distribution of various population groups, and the education, political and social factors that affect access to various occupations, are all likely to move at comparatively slow rates.

The continuing shift of the Negro population from the Southern farm to the Southern city and to urban centers in the North and West as well as the continuing improvement within each region, has profoundly altered their overall occupational distribution.

As Table 3-6 shows, in 1910 half of the Negro labor force was in farming as compared to only 28 percent of the white labor force.

Table 3-5

Major Occupation of Employed Persons by Race and Sex: 1970

United States Number	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total employed, 14 years old and over	43 501 103	25 470 679	4 091 390	3 328 956
Professional, technical and kindred workers.....	6 198 711	3 907 473	213 998	343 778
Managers and administrators, except farm.....	4 971 695	958 348	111 883	44 578
Sales workers.....	3 171 063	1 909 208	75 611	72 932
Clerical and kindred workers.....	3 116 427	8 863 413	293 472	613 464
Craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers	8 879 325	446 174	540 484	42 758
Operatives, except transport.....	5 339 442	3 193 771	701 763	471 157
Transport equipment operatives.....	2 264 441	109 046	360 533	11 938
Laborers, except farm.....	2 345 373	220 450	556 814	44 689
Farmers and farm managers.....	1 243 494	58 621	29 667	2 218
Farm laborers and farm foremen.....	637 748	108 932	126 220	27 775
Service workers, except private household.....	3 008 142	3 612 472	563 613	749 881
Private household workers.....	22 248	533 246	16 121	508 729
Occupation not reported.....	2 302 994	1 549 525	501 211	395 059
Percent Distribution				
Total employed, 14 years old and over	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Professional, technical and kindred workers.....	14.2	15.3	5.2	10.3
Managers and administrators, except farm.....	11.4	3.8	2.7	1.3
Sales workers.....	7.3	7.5	1.8	2.2
Clerical and kindred workers.....	7.2	34.8	7.2	18.4
Craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers	20.4	1.8	13.2	1.3
Operatives, except transport.....	12.3	12.5	17.2	14.2
Transport equipment operatives.....	5.2	0.4	8.8	0.4
Laborers, except farm.....	5.4	0.9	13.6	1.3
Farmers and farm managers	2.9	0.2	0.7	0.1
Farm laborers and farm foremen.....	1.5	0.4	3.1	0.8
Service workers, except private household.....	6.9	14.2	13.8	22.5
Private household workers.....	0.1	2.1	0.4	15.3
Occupation not reported	5.3	6.1	12.3	11.9

Source: U.S. Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Summary 1970, Table 81.

This discrepancy no longer exists, for in 1970 only 4.0 percent of the white labor force and 3.9 percent of the Negro labor force were in farming. As the white labor force transferred out of farming, it became increasingly concentrated in the white collar sector. The proportion of the white labor force in manual and service work has remained comparatively stable since 1910 at approximately 50 percent. In contrast, as the Negro labor force shifted out of farming it went until 1940 almost wholly into manual and service work. Since 1940, the shift has been almost equally divided between white collar and manual and service occupations.

White collar work was not an important field for Negro employment for many decades, but particularly within the last 10 years this has changed. Only 3 percent of Negro workers were engaged in white collar occupations in 1910, 6 percent in 1940, and 28 percent in 1970. Table 3-7 shows employment by major occupation in 1970 and the net change from 1960 to 1970. The highest gains in this period were registered in clerical, professional, and technical occupations.

Each decade has been more or less unique in terms of the opportunities it has opened up for blacks. According to Hiestand, between 1910 and 1920, Negroes found substantial opportunities in unskilled labor but also made a sizable breakthrough into semi-skilled work. The 1920's were noted chiefly for substantial withdrawals from Southern agriculture to service work, but also saw a significant expansion into semiskilled employment. The depression of the 1930's hit Negroes severely as job opportunities declined even in such traditional fields as service and unskilled labor. As a result not only did total Negro employment decline

Table 3-6

Percentage Distribution of White and Negro Labor Force, by Occupational Field, 1910-1970

	1910		1920		1930		1940		1950		1960		1970	
	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro
All sectors	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0 ^a	100.0 ^a	100.0 ^a	100.0 ^a	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Nonfarm, total	72.0	49.9	76.0	53.4	80.6	63.9	82.3	66.6	81.6	79.5	92.7	88.7	96.0	96.1
White collar sector, total.....	23.8	3.0	27.8	3.6	33.0	4.6	35.7	6.0	39.9	10.2	46.5	15.4	50.8	27.9
Professional and technical workers...	4.8	1.4	5.3	1.5	6.5	2.1	8.0	2.7	8.6	3.4	12.2	4.7	14.8	9.1
Proprietors, managers and officials.....	7.4	.8	7.4	.8	8.3	1.0	9.0	1.3	9.8	2.0	11.5	2.3	11.4	3.5
Clerical and sales workers.....	11.6	.8	15.1	1.3	18.2	1.5	18.7	2.0	21.5	4.8	22.8	8.4	24.7	15.3
Manual and service sector.....	48.2	46.6	48.2	49.8	47.6	59.3	46.6	60.6	47.7	69.3	46.2	73.3	45.2	68.2
Skilled workers and foremen.....	13.0	2.5	14.5	3.0	14.2	3.2	12.2	3.0	14.4	5.5	13.8	5.7	13.5	8.2
Semiskilled workers and operatives.....	16.1	5.4	16.8	7.3	17.2	9.4	19.0	10.3	20.3	18.3	17.8	20.7	17.0	23.7
Laborers.....	14.3	17.4	13.4	20.8	11.7	21.6	6.1	14.3	5.0	15.7	4.4	14.1	4.1	10.3
Service workers.....	4.8	21.3	3.5	18.7	4.5	25.1	9.3	33.0	8.0	29.8	10.2	32.8	10.7	26.0
Farm, total	28.0	50.4	24.1	46.6	19.4	36.1	16.7	32.8	11.1	19.0	7.3	11.3	4.0	3.9

^aSum of items does not equal 100.0 because of those for whom no occupation was reported.

Source: Dale L. Hiestand, Economic Growth and Employment Opportunities for Minorities, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 43.

For 1970: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 46, 1972, Table 37

Table 3-7

Employment by Occupation, 1970, and Net Change, 1960 to 1970

(Numbers in thousands. Annual averages)

Occupation	1970 employment		Change, 1960 to 1970			
	Negro and other races	White	Number		Percent	
			Negro and other races	White	Negro and other races	White
Total	8,445	70,182	1,518	11,332	22	19
Professional and technical	766	10,374	435	3,236	131	45
Managers, officials, and proprietors	298	7,991	120	1,102	67	16
Clerical	1,113	12,601	610	3,342	121	36
Sales	179	4,675	78	552	77	13
Craftsmen and foremen	691	9,467	276	1,328	67	16
Operatives	2,004	11,904	590	1,368	42	13
Service workers, except private household	5,547	6,608	333	1,772	27	37
Private householdworkers	653	906	-329	- 85	-34	-9
Nonfarm laborers	866	2,859	- 85	257	-9	10
Farmers and farm workers	328	2,797	-513	-1,538	-61	-35

Source: Current Population Reports, BLS Report No. 394, Series P-23, No. 38, 1970, p. 59

between 1930 and 1940, but the total number of Negroes in the labor force also declined. During the 1940's their major improvements occurred at the operative level. The 1940's also marked the beginning of significant employment at the clerical and skilled level. The 1950's saw continued improvement at the semiskilled and higher levels, particularly at the clerical level.⁶ The 1960's were significant in opening more opportunities in the white collar sector, particularly at the professional and clerical levels. The increased importance of white collar jobs among the black population is a recent development, however. Over the long run, the major transformation for Negroes has been the shift from farm to manual and service work.

Within the Negro labor force men have traditionally been in farm employment more than women. (See Table 3-8) In 1910 over 55 percent of the men but only 40 percent of the women were in farm work. By 1970 these proportions had dropped to 4 percent for black men and 1 percent for black women. The reduction of Negro men in farming between 1910 and 1940 was matched by an increase in the proportion in the manual and service sector. Since 1940 the transfer out of farming has been divided. Approximately two thirds went into manual and service work and one third to the white collar sector. Among Negro women, as among Negro men, nearly all the decline in the proportion in farming between 1910 and 1940 was matched by an increase in the proportion in manual and service occupations. However, after 1940, the proportion of Negro women in the manual and service sector declined. The continued reduction in farming since 1940

⁶Eli Ginzberg and Dale L. Hiestand, "Employment Patterns of Negro Men and Women," in The American Negro Reference Book, ed. John P. Davis, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 221.

Table 3-8

Percentage Distribution of Negro Labor Force in Occupational Fields, by Sex, 1910-1970

	1910		1920		1930		1940		1950		1960		1970	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
All sectors	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0 ^a	100.0 ^a	100.0 ^a	100.0 ^a	100.0	100.0	100.0 ^a	100.0 ^a
Nonfarm, total	44.4	59.7	50.9	58.9	59.3	73.1	58.2	83.0	74.5	89.0	85.3	98.3	96.2	99.1
White collar sector, total	3.2	2.6	3.6	3.7	4.4	5.0	5.7	6.6	8.8	12.8	13.7	18.0	16.9	32.2
Professional and technical workers	1.1	1.8	1.2	2.3	1.5	3.3	1.8	4.3	2.2	5.6	4.0	5.8	5.2	10.3
Proprietors, managers, and officials	1.1	0.4	1.0	0.5	1.2	0.6	1.6	0.7	2.3	1.4	2.7	1.8	2.7	1.3
Clerical and sales workers	1.0	0.4	1.4	0.9	1.7	1.1	2.3	1.6	4.3	5.8	7.0	10.4	9.0	20.6
Manual and service sector	41.2	57.1	47.3	55.2	54.9	68.1	52.5	76.4	65.7	76.2	71.6	75.8	66.0	55.0
Skilled workers and foremen	3.6	0.1	4.4	0.1	4.8	0.1	4.4	0.2	8.1	0.6	9.1	0.7	13.2	1.3
Semiskilled workers and operatives	4.7	6.8	6.7	8.6	9.0	10.1	12.2	6.5	20.1	14.8	24.4	15.1	26.0	14.1
Laborers	25.9	1.0	29.5	2.6	31.7	1.7	21.1	0.9	23.1	1.5	23.3	0.3	13.6	1.3
Service workers	7.0	49.2	6.7	43.9	9.4	56.2	14.8	68.8	14.4	59.3	14.8	59.7	14.2	37.8
Farm, total	55.6	40.3	49.1	41.1	40.7	26.9	41.3	16.1	24.1	9.3	14.7	6.2	3.8	.9

*Sum of items does not equal 100.0 because of those for whom no occupation was reported.

Source: Dale L. Hiestand, Economic Growth and Employment Opportunities for Minorities, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 44.

For 1970: U.S. Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Summary, Table 81.

has been completely accounted for by the increase in the proportion of Negro women in white collar jobs. It is noteworthy that there were proportionately almost twice as many black women as black men in white collar jobs in 1970, 32 percent and 17 percent respectively.

Occupation and Income

Although Negroes have improved their occupational position since 1910 in the American economy, this improvement has only partially been matched by income. Table 3-9 emphasizes that Negroes tend to be concentrated in the lower paying positions within each occupational group. In almost every field Negroes earn less than whites. This was particularly true among men in the older age bracket. Negro women earned more than white women in clerical, sales and transport operative work and almost as much in professional, managerial, operative, labor, service and household jobs. Among men this occurred only in the small occupational category of bus drivers. It appears that white men earn more simply because they are white, regardless of the job. This trend is less prevalent among black men 25 to 34 years old which hopefully indicates a reduction of discrimination among younger workers. Also it is without doubt that these younger black workers are better qualified educationally than the generations that came before them.

There has been a considerable reduction in occupational dissimilarity in the last two decades and a shift of nonwhites to higher-paying occupations. Table 3-10 shows an index of relative occupational position devised by Hiestand, which takes into consideration the respective distribution of whites and Negroes at various occupational levels, but does not reflect

Table 3-9

Occupation by Median Earnings in 1969 of Black Men Who Worked Year Round in 1969, by Age: 1970

Occupation	Number of year-round workers (thousands)		Median earnings in 1969		Ratio: Median earnings black to white	
	25 to 34 years	35 to 54 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 54 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 54 years
Total.....	681	1,200	\$6,403	\$6,403	0.72	0.66
Professional, technical and kindred workers.....	53	67	8,606	9,720	0.81	0.72
Engineers.....	4	5	11,350	12,048	0.92	0.82
Physicians, dentists and related practitioners.....	1	4	11,044	20,323	0.85	0.82
Teachers, except college and university.....	8	9	7,838	8,943	0.90	0.79
Engineering and science technicians	6	6	8,253	9,320	0.92	0.87
Managers and administrators, except farm.....	23	45	8,095	8,733	0.79	0.67
Sales workers.....	16	20	7,002	7,038	0.74	0.63
Clerical and kindred workers.....	66	98	6,830	7,593	0.83	0.85
Craftsmen and kindred workers.....	114	207	6,578	6,929	0.75	0.73
Construction.....	26	55	5,824	6,173	0.65	0.65
Carpenters.....	5	13	5,235	5,599	0.63	0.65
Mechanics and repairmen, except auto.....	15	25	6,812	7,313	0.80	0.83
Automobile.....	14	26	6,210	6,353	0.79	0.77
Metal.....	11	18	7,253	7,831	0.77	0.78
Printing.....	4	4	7,089	7,856	0.79	0.80
Operatives, except transport.....	154	232	6,332	6,481	0.80	0.79

.....

Occupation	Number of year- round workers (thousands)		Median earnings in 1969		Ratio: Median earn- ings black to white	
	25 to 34 years	35 to 54 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 54 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 54 years
Transport equipment operatives.....	76	142	6,086	6,142	0.75	0.72
Bus drivers.....	7	9	8,271	8,107	1.00	0.99
Taxicab drivers and chauffeurs...	4	11	5,832	5,830	0.93	0.90
Truck drivers.....	34	72	5,779	5,958	0.71	0.69
Laborers, except farm.....	82	169	5,307	5,511	0.76	0.76
Farmers and farm managers.....	2	9	2,061	2,237	0.35	0.38
Farm laborers and farm foremen.....	13	28	2,689	2,526	0.58	0.56
Service workers, except private household.....	79	179	5,700	5,513	0.73	0.72
Protective workers.....	14	20	8,218	8,207	0.93	0.88
Policemen and detectives.....	8	8	8,631	9,374	0.96	0.94
Private household workers.....	1	4	3,403	3,101	0.68	0.68

Note: Data are for persons in experienced civilian labor force who worked in 1969 and had earnings.

Source: Current Population Reports, P-23, No. 46, 1972, p. 52.

Table 3-9 (cont'd)

Occupation by Median Earnings in 1969 of Black Women Who Worked Year Round in 1969, by Age: 1970

Occupation	Number of year-round workers (thousands)		Median earnings in 1969		Ratio: Median earnings black to white	
	25 to 34 years	35 to 54 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 54 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 54 years
Total.....	401	758	\$4,403	\$3,901	0.85	0.79
Professional, technical, and kindred workers.....	50	76	6,619	6,907	0.93	0.95
Registered nurses, dietitians and therapists.....	12	21	6,469	6,263	0.94	0.93
Health technologists & technicians	4	4	5,824	5,984	0.89	0.96
Teachers, except college and universities.....	14	22	6,576	7,379	0.94	0.97
Managers and administrators, except farm.....	6	16	6,534	5,990	1.03	0.96
Sales workers.....	10	17	3,935	3,814	1.00	1.01
Clerical and kindred workers.....	114	124	5,350	5,588	1.00	1.05
Secretaries.....	19	14	5,695	5,904	1.01	1.02
Stenographers.....	1	1	6,265	6,221	1.10	1.03
Typist.....	14	11	5,290	5,638	1.05	1.08
Craftsmen and kindred workers.....	8	14	4,594	4,782	0.85	0.88
Operatives except transport.....	81	131	4,081	4,049	0.92	0.89
Assemblers.....	10	11	4,606	4,704	0.95	0.93
Dressmakers and seamstresses, except factory.....	1	2	3,662	4,069	1.15	1.06
Transport equipment operatives.....	1	3	4,502	4,360	0.88	0.88
Laborers except farm.....	5	11	3,926	3,935	0.90	0.93
Farmers and farm managers.....	(Z)	1	2,117	3,011	(Z)	1.01
Farm laborers and farm foremen.....	1	3	2,347	2,033	0.83	0.72

.....

Occupation	Number of year-round workers (thousands)		Median earnings in 1969		Ratio: Median earnings black to white	
	25 to 34 years	35 to 54 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 54 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 54 years
Service workers except private household.....	94	225	3,647	3,599	0.96	0.99
Cleaning service workers.....	17	62	2,644	3,053	0.90	0.94
Food service workers.....	21	57	3,033	3,157	0.98	0.99
Health service workers.....	37	64	4,213	4,352	1.01	1.05
Personal service workers.....	7	21	3,856	3,722	0.87	0.93
Private household workers.....	32	136	1,795	1,772	0.97	0.97

Note: Data are for persons in experienced civilian labor force who worked in 1969 and had earnings.

Z Less than 500.

Source: Current Population Reports, P-23, No. 46, 1972, p. 53.

changes in earnings in these fields. The index reflects the shift in the distribution noted in Tables 3-6 and 3-8.⁷ Although this index has not yet been calculated for 1970, there is little doubt that the position of Negro men relative to whites has continued to improve. It also seems likely that the occupational position of Negro women relative to white women has again improved significantly in the last decade. As a result, a smaller gap between the races now prevails among women than among men.

Table 3-10

Index of Occupational Position of Negroes Relative to Whites,
by Sex, 1910-1960

	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960
Occupational Position of Negroes relative to whites:						
Male	78.0	78.1	78.2	77.5	81.4	82.1
Female	78.0	71.3	74.8	76.8	81.6	84.3
Occupational Position of Females relative to male						
White	101.4	110.0	105.6	102.6	98.9	93.6
Negro	101.5	99.9	101.0	101.7	99.3	96.1

Other indications of the reduction in occupational dissimilarity in the last two decades have also been reported. For example, the improvement by 1967 was larger than had been anticipated in the National Planning Association projection made early in the 1960's for 1972.⁸ Hodge noted

⁷Dale L. Hiestand, Economic Growth and Employment Opportunities for Minorities, (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1964), p. 53.

⁸Albert Wohlsetter and Sinclair Coleman, "Race Differences in Income," p. 48.

in 1969 that Negroes have made substantial progress in a relatively short period toward better representation in some of the major higher status, better paid occupational fields.⁹ Nonetheless, in 1972 Negroes were still greatly underrepresented in high-paying occupations. (See Table 3-11)

Again, as for the case of education we find that changing the occupational distribution of Negro men to that of white men is not enough. To estimate the effect of the different occupational distributions (using the ten main Census categories) on the overall earning differences, Wohlsetter and Coleman made white and nonwhite occupational distributions operationally equal, but assigned non-white men the same earnings within each category as they now receive. (Of course, as we have already seen the "within-occupation" differences for the ten major occupations reflect large contrasts in jobs within each category. For example among "professional, technical, and kindred workers" physicians and surgeons as well as teachers are included and Negroes are much scarcer among the former that pays almost twice as much at the average than among the latter group.) The result of this adjustment is an increase in the nonwhite to white earnings ratio of about 12 percentage points at the median, from 60 percent to 72 percent in 1967.¹⁰ Therefore, it is evident that at this point in time upgrading the Negro labor force would help to decrease the "income gap" but it would definitely not erase inequality of income between the two races.

Performing the same kind of adjustment for women that has already been described in the case for men, yields an interesting but not totally

⁹Claire C. Hodge, "The Negro Job Situation: Has it Improved", Monthly Labor Review, (January 1969), p. 28.

¹⁰Albert Wohlsetter and Sinclair Coleman, "Race Differences in Income", pp. 49-50.

Table 3-11

Occupation of the Employed Population: 1972

(Numbers in thousands. Annual averages)

Occupation	Total	Negro and other races	White	Percent Negro and other races of total
Total employed.....	81,702	8,628	73,074	10.6
White-collar workers.....	39,092	2,575	36,517	6.6
Professional and technical.....	11,459	821	10,638	7.2
Engineers.....	1,102	38	1,063	3.4
Health workers.....	1,888	151	1,737	8.0
Teachers, except college.....	2,841	260	2,580	9.2
Other professional and technical.....	5,629	371	5,258	6.6
Managers and administrators, except farm..	8,032	320	7,711	4.0
Salaried workers.....	6,308	228	6,079	3.6
Self-employed.....	1,724	92	1,633	5.3
Sales workers.....	5,354	193	5,161	3.6
Retail trade.....	3,107	145	2,963	4.7
Other industries.....	2,247	48	2,198	2.1
Clerical workers.....	14,247	1,240	13,007	8.7
Stenographers, typists and secretaries..	4,095	288	3,807	7.0
Other clerical workers.....	10,152	953	9,200	9.4
Blue-collar workers.....	28,576	3,440	25,136	12.0
Craftsmen and kindred workers.....	10,810	749	10,061	6.9
Carpenters.....	1,045	62	984	5.9
Construction craftsmen, except carpenters.....	2,248	201	2,047	8.9
Mechanics and repairmen.....	2,768	180	2,588	6.5
Metal craftsmen.....	1,095	64	1,030	5.8
Foremen, not elsewhere classified.....	1,413	85	1,328	6.0
All other craftsmen.....	2,241	158	2,084	7.1
Operatives, except transport.....	10,340	1,366	8,974	13.2
Transport equipment operatives.....	3,209	475	2,734	14.8
Drivers and deliverymen.....	2,751	382	2,368	13.9
All other.....	458	92	366	20.1
Nonfarm laborers.....	4,217	850	3,367	20.2
Construction.....	876	195	682	22.3
Manufacturing.....	1,008	219	789	21.7
Other industries.....	2,333	437	1,896	18.7

.....

Occupation	Total	Negro and other races	White	Percent Negro and other races of total
Service workers.....	10,966	2,350	8,616	21.4
Private household.....	1,437	584	853	40.7
Service workers, except private household.....	9,529	1,766	7,763	18.5
Cleaning service workers.....	2,074	622	1,452	30.1
Food service workers.....	3,263	453	2,810	13.9
Health service workers.....	1,506	370	1,135	24.6
Personal service workers.....	1,542	202	1,340	13.1
Protective service workers.....	1,144	119	1,025	10.4
Farm workers.....	3,069	263	2,806	8.6
Farmers and farm managers.....	1,688	55	1,634	3.3
Farm laborers and foremen.....	1,381	208	1,172	15.1

Source: Current Population Report, Series P-23, No. 46, 1972, p. 51.

unexpected result. (We have already seen that the black woman earns as much or almost as much as her white counterparts in most occupational categories.) With the occupational adjustment, the ratio of nonwhite to white median earnings for females improves from about 69 percent to about 99 percent.¹¹ Differences in the distribution among major occupations, then account for nearly all of the disparities for women. We shall examine the implications of this finding more thoroughly in Chapter V.

Unemployment and Labor Force Participation Rates

Another aspect of the lower income position of blacks is that they are employed to a lesser extent than whites. In recent years, unemployment rates for Negroes have tended to remain approximately twice as high as for whites. (See Table 3-12) Higher unemployment rates among blacks is in part a reflection of the fact that they tend to be concentrated in the low paying, low skilled jobs in which higher unemployment rates prevail. This is not the only factor, for, as Table 3-13 shows, Negro men tend to suffer higher unemployment rates than whites at every occupational level.

The previous data on unemployment refers to data collected at a particular point in time. Not only are blacks more likely to be unemployed, they are also more likely than white workers to be out of work for a long time. For example in 1970, 1.3 percent of the "Negro and other races"

¹¹Ibid., p. 52

Table 3-12

Unemployment Rates: 1949 to 1972

(Annual averages)

Year	Negro and other races	White	Ratio: Negro and other races to white
1949	8.9	5.6	1.6
1950	9.0	4.9	1.8
1951	5.3	3.1	1.7
1952	5.4	2.8	1.9
1953	4.5	2.7	1.7
1954	9.9	5.0	2.0
1955	8.7	3.9	2.2
1956	8.3	3.6	2.3
1957	7.9	3.8	2.1
1958	12.6	6.1	2.1
1959	10.7	4.8	2.2
1960	10.2	4.9	2.1
1961	12.4	6.0	2.1
1962	10.9	4.9	2.2
1963	10.8	5.0	2.2
1964	9.6	4.6	2.1
1965	8.1	4.1	2.0
1966	7.3	3.3	2.2
1967	7.4	3.4	2.2
1968	6.7	3.2	2.1
1969	6.5	3.2	2.0
1970	8.2	4.5	1.8
1971	9.9	5.4	1.8
1972	10.0	5.0	2.0

Source: Current Population Reports, P-23, No. 38, 1970, Table 36 and No. 46, 1972, Table 26.

Table 3-13

Unemployment Rates of Civilian Labor Force, by Occupation: 1970

(Annual averages)

Occupation	Male		Female		Ratio: Male Negro and other races to white
	Negro and other races	White	Negro and other races	White	
Total, civilian labor force	7.3	4.0	9.3	5.4	1.8
Experienced labor force.....	6.6	3.6	7.7	4.6	1.8
Professional and technical..	2.0	1.8	2.2	2.3	1.1
Managers, officials, and proprietors.....	2.0	1.2	1.2	2.1	1.7
Clerical.....	5.2	3.2	8.1	3.9	1.6
Sales.....	4.0	2.7	13.3	4.9	1.5
Craftsmen and foremen.....	5.2	3.7	2.5	4.1	1.4
Operatives.....	7.5	5.7	11.6	9.1	1.3
Nonfarm laborers.....	10.5	9.1	11.6	11.8	1.2
Private household workers...	(B)	1.3	5.4	3.5	(B)
Other service workers.....	6.8	4.7	8.1	5.1	1.4
Farm workers.....	4.5	2.1	11.0	2.8	2.1

B Base too small to be shown separately

Source: Current Population Reports, BLS Report No. 394, Series P-23, No. 38, 1970, p. 62

labor force, but only 0.7 percent of the white labor force were unemployed for 15 weeks or more. Nonwhites comprised 19 percent of the long-term unemployed in 1970.¹²

The unemployment statistics alone do not provide an adequate picture of the extent of joblessness among Negroes. The labor force is comprised of those who are employed as well as the unemployed who are looking for work. However, there is also a third group who are neither employed nor looking for work. They are not counted in the labor force. Although some men and women do not look for work as a matter of choice, generally this is not the case for the Negro. Usually they do not look for work because they know or at least believe that no job opportunities are open to them. Such persons are clearly unemployed but they are not counted in the unemployment statistics. Table 3-14 suggests that an increasing number of blacks are not counted.

Several interesting points arise when comparing labor force participation rates of black and white men and women. In the first place it is apparent that white men and black women have higher participation rates than their counterparts. For males the trend has been downward among both whites and nonwhites, but the decline has been considerably steeper among the Negroes. Older men of both races have left the labor force to about the same extent, primarily because of mandatory retirement rules and the spread of pension plans. It is among the younger men that the differences in opportunity have had the most pronounced effect. Negro teenagers were once more likely than white teenagers to be in the labor force, but now they

¹²Current Population Reports, BLS Report No. 394, Series P-23, No. 38, Special Studies, "The Social and Economic Status of Negroes in the United States", 1970, p. 56.

Table 3-14

Percent in the Labor Force, by Age Group, Sex and
Color: 1950, 1960, 1969

Age in Years	Male					
	White			Nonwhite		
	1950	1960	1969	1950	1960	1969
16 years and over	86.4	83.4	80.2	85.9	83.0	76.9
16-17 years	50.5	46.0	48.8	57.4	45.6	37.7
18-19 years	75.6	69.0	66.3	78.2	71.2	63.2
20-24 years	87.5	87.8	82.6	91.4	90.4	84.4
25-34 years	96.4	97.7	97.0	92.6	96.2	94.4
35-44 years	97.7	97.9	97.4	96.2	95.5	92.7
45-54 years	95.9	96.1	95.1	95.1	92.3	89.5
55-64 years	87.3	87.2	83.9	81.9	82.5	77.9
65 and over	45.8	33.3	27.3	45.5	31.2	26.1
	Females					
	1950	1960	1969	1950	1960	1969
16 years and over	32.6	36.5	41.8	46.9	48.2	49.8
16-17 years	30.1	30.0	35.2	30.2	22.1	24.4
18-19 years	52.6	51.9	54.6	40.6	44.3	45.4
20-24 years	45.9	45.7	56.4	46.9	48.8	58.6
25-34 years	32.1	34.1	41.7	51.6	49.7	57.8
35-44 years	37.2	41.5	48.6	55.7	59.8	59.5
45-54 years	36.3	48.6	53.0	54.3	60.5	60.8
55-64 years	26.0	36.2	42.6	40.9	47.3	47.5
65 and over	9.2	10.6	9.7	16.5	12.8	11.9

Source: Manpower Report of the President: 1970, p. 219

are less likely. The tendency toward a higher proportion of white teenagers to be in the labor force has occurred despite the fact that more of them attend school. Furthermore, the fact that there has been a tendency for relatively fewer young Negroes to be in the labor force at the same time that their unemployment rates have increased substantially faster than whites (see Table 3-15) suggests that many are not in the labor force because there is no work for them. Thus, it seems clear that young Negroes have suffered an increasing burden of hidden unemployment during the past decade.¹³

The proportion of Negro women who work has always tended to be higher than that of white women, not only because of the impoverished condition of the race, but also because they have often had better opportunities for steady employment as domestics than their husbands had as laborers.¹⁴ However, labor force participation by white females from 1950 to 1970 has increased much more rapidly than for black females; the rate for Negro women as a whole did not rise substantially during this period. Among teenagers, relatively more white girls and fewer Negro girls have entered the labor force than in the past. This discrepancy, as is the case for Negro boys, cannot be explained in terms of increased school attendance since a higher proportion of white female teenagers attend high school

¹³The problem of black teenage unemployment is a grave one, with no immediate solution in sight. Time reported in its November 6, 1972 issue that even if the United States could reach 4 percent unemployment (the working definition of practical "full employment") by 1973 the "unemployment rate of 4 percent to 4 1/2 percent would be comprised of very different rates for particular groups in the labor force - a low of 2 percent for married males, the traditional breadwinners, but a socially disastrous 29 percent for black teenagers." (emph. mine) p. 57.

¹⁴Arthur M. Ross, "The Negro in the American Economy," in Employment, Race and Poverty, eds. Arthur M. Ross and Herbert Hill, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967), p. 23.

Table 3-15

Unemployment Rates by Sex and Age: 1960, 1967, and 1970 to 1972

(Annual averages)

Subject	1960	1967	1970	1971	1972
NEGRO AND OTHER RACES					
Total.....	10.2	7.4	8.2	9.9	10.0
Teenagers.....	24.4	26.3	29.1	31.7	33.5
Adult women.....	8.3	7.1	6.9	8.7	8.8
Adult men.....	9.6	4.3	5.6	7.2	6.8
WHITE					
Total.....	4.9	3.4	4.5	5.4	5.0
Teenagers.....	13.4	11.0	13.5	15.1	14.2
Adult women.....	4.6	3.8	4.4	5.3	4.9
Adult men.....	4.2	2.1	3.2	4.0	3.6
RATIO: NEGRO AND OTHER RACES TO WHITE					
Total.....	2.1	2.2	1.8	1.8	2.0
Teenagers.....	1.8	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.4
Adult women.....	1.8	1.9	1.6	1.6	1.8
Adult men.....	2.3	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.9

Source: Current Population Reports, BLS Report, No. 46, 1970,
p. 39.

and college.

Among women over 20, Negroes have higher participation rates in every age group. Unlike white women, there is no tendency for black women in the childbearing age, from 20 to 35, to retreat from the labor force. This situation can probably be explained by several factors; the higher incidence of poverty in the Negro community, the economic weakness of many Negro males, the large proportion of fatherless families, and a greater acceptance within the black community of working wives.

Summary

Blacks have made significant advances in school attendance and occupational upgrading within the last decade. However, the proportion of Negroes completing all levels of schooling is still below that of whites. Also blacks continue to be overrepresented in low-status and low-paying jobs. Probably the simplest and most obvious reason for the inferior economic and occupational position of Negroes is discrimination. We have seen that even if educational and occupational levels of Negro men approximated those of whites significant differences in income between the two races would still exist. There are grounds for optimism, if only guarded optimism. Younger Negro men are closer in income to comparable groups of white men in most occupations than were older black generations. Black women earn as much as their white counterparts in many occupations. In fact, when the occupational distribution of the two races is statistically equalized, the income gap between black and white women all but disappears.

The pace of improvement in employment is, of course, governed by the rate at which the Nation's economy and the demand for workers grows. For Negroes a continuing strong demand for workers is particularly critical. As Hiestand has documented, it is often in the rapidly growing occupations that Negroes can gain real ground. In growing occupations, or in occupations with high turnover, hiring needs are greater and upgrading is more prevalent.¹⁵ It is also important that the black worker continue to advance even more rapidly in education and training if he is to make up for past handicaps. Young blacks have shown exceptional motivation in this aspect of work. About one-half million, or 18 percent of all blacks 18 to 24 years old were enrolled in college in 1972.¹⁶ Nevertheless, one of the most critical issues concerning black employment remains unsolved. Accelerated movement into better jobs depends on improving the opportunities for the younger workers, yet today over one third of all black teenagers in the labor force are unemployed.

¹⁵Dale L. Hiestand, Economic Growth and Employment Opportunities for Minorities, pp. 110-111.

¹⁶Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 46, "The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States," 1972, p. 3.

CHAPTER IV

EXPLORING FRAZIER'S THEORY

As racial barriers break down, the Negro middle class will become assimilated with the salaried workers in the community. Consequently, they will cease to think of themselves as a privileged and "wealthy" upper Negro class and will regard themselves as other intellectual workers. Their standards of consumption and the character of their family life will reflect these changes in status and outlook on life.¹

E. Franklin Frazier

For Frazier there was an inextricable link between economic resources and social phenomena. He believed that as the educational and economic position of blacks improved and paralleled that of the white majority there would also be a shift in Negro values toward increased conformity to dominant family patterns. For example, he said that, "It appears that, as the Negro worker becomes an industrial worker, he assumes a new authority in family relations... his ideals and patterns of family life approximate those of the great body of industrial workers."² The major objective of this chapter, then, will be to examine this premise and some of its corollaries.

Thus far we have been primarily concerned with what Banfield

¹E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Family in the United States, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966 edition - original in 1939), p. 333.

²Ibid. p. 355.

calls the "Census Negro".³ We have seen that the Census Negro is distinctly inferior to the white majority in earning power, educational attainment, and ability to obtain and maintain jobs. However, these disadvantages cannot all be attributed to race. Banfield argues "there is no a priori reason to assume that the causes operating in the evolution of a problem over time must be identical with those operating to perpetuate that problem at any given time."⁴ (The Negro population is still heavily concentrated at the lower end of the socioeconomic scale and therefore plagued by distinct disadvantages.) Banfield uses the term "Statistical Negro" to denote the Negro when all non-racial factors have been controlled for.⁵ A second concern of this chapter will be to assess the continuing causes of the Negro problem that have little or nothing to do with race.

Census data imposes many limitations. It is hardly possible and beyond the scope of this paper to control for all non-racial factors. Census material ignores many factors which might influence comparisons between blacks and whites. For instance, place of birth or place educated is rarely considered. (We would assume that both blacks and whites have a relative disadvantage by being educated in the South; however, a disproportionate percentage of blacks in comparison with whites were educated there.) Also census categories make it difficult to arrive at any consistent criteria for class. Therefore, depending upon the social characteristic, i.e. fertility, family structure, etc. examined, education, occupation or income will be used as the indicator for class. Despite

³Edward C. Banfield, The Unheavenly City, (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1968), p. 70.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

these limitations, the findings of this chapter are, nevertheless, indicative of how the Statistical Negro compares with his white counterpart.

Marital Instability

Marital instability is a much more common phenomenon among Negroes than among whites. For example, in 1970 28.3 percent of Negro families as compared to 9.4 of white families were headed by females (see Table 5-1). Table 4-1 shows that although black men were more likely to have disrupted marriages than whites at all income levels, men, regardless of race, with higher income levels were more likely than men with lower incomes to have a wife living with them in 1969. Among those who had incomes of \$10,000 or more, the proportion who were married with spouse present was 83 percent for blacks and 92 percent for whites. By contrast, for men who had incomes below \$3,000, about 49 percent of the blacks and 56 percent of the whites were in a comparable marital status category.

There is also an obvious inverse relationship between disruption rate and educational status for both races. However, Table 4-2 reveals that for the black men with disrupted marriages, those who were not high school graduates were more likely to be separated than divorced. For the men with one year of college or more, the proportion separated and divorced were about the same. Udry, using unpublished 1960 Census data employing finer educational categories than Table 4-2, notes that "being separated is still a characteristic reported primarily by the uneducated and the nonwhite."⁶

⁶J. Richard Udry, "Marital Instability by Race, Sex, Education, and Occupation Using 1960 Census Data," American Journal of Sociology, 72 (September 1966), pp. 203-209.

Table 4-1

Income in 1969 of Males 25 to 54 Years Old, by Marital Status
(Persons as of following year)

Subject	Total ¹ (thous sands)	Single	Percent of total				
			Married, spouse present		Separated	Widowed	Divorced
			Total	Married once			
NEGRO							
Total, 25 to 54 years old	3,112	13	70	58	7	2	4
Under \$3,000	622	25	49	40	11	4	6
\$3,000 to \$4,999	687	14	67	57	8	2	4
\$5,000 to \$6,999	739	11	74	63	7	2	4
\$7,000 to \$9,999	749	8	79	66	5	1	4
\$10,000 and over	314	6	83	68	4	1	4
\$10,000 to \$14,999	259	6	83	68	4	1	4
\$15,000 or more	55	6	83	66	3	1	4
WHITE							
Total, 25 to 54 years old	30,323	9	84	74	1	1	3
Under \$3,000	2,202	28	56	47	3	2	8
\$3,000 to \$4,999	2,526	17	72	61	2	1	5
\$5,000 to \$6,999	4,607	11	81	70	2	1	4
\$7,000 to \$9,999	8,969	7	87	76	1	1	3
\$10,000 and over	12,020	4	92	82	1	1	2
\$10,000 to \$14,999	7,912	5	91	81	1	1	1
\$15,000 or more	4,108	3	93	83	1	1	2

¹Based on persons reporting income. Includes "married, spouse absent," not shown separately.

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 46, 1971, p. 72.

Table 4-2

Years of School Completed by Males 25 to 54 Years Old, by Marital Status: 1970

Subject	Total ¹ (thou- sands)	Single	Married spouse, present			
			Total	Married once	Separated	Divorced
NEGRO						
Total, 25 to 54 years old	3,276	15	67	56	7	5
Not high school graduate	2,029	15	66	54	8	4
High school graduate	1,247	14	70	60	6	5
College, 1 year or more	413	15	71	60	5	5
College, 4 years or more	170	15	73	64	4	4
WHITE						
Total, 25 to 54 years old	30,845	9	83	73	1	3
Not high school graduate	10,950	10	82	69	2	4
High school graduate	19,895	9	84	75	1	3
College, 1 year or more	9,428	11	83	76	1	3
College, 4 years or more	5,457	12	84	78	1	2

Note: High school graduates are those persons who had completed 4 years of high school or some college.

¹Includes married spouse absent (exc. separated) and widowed, not shown separately

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 46, 1971, p. 71.

There is still some question as to whether marital instability rates among blacks and whites at the same status level are coming closer together. Goode claims that "Negro and white rates of divorce are converging... As a higher proportion of Negroes acquire middle-class patterns, it seems likely that they will resort to the courts more, but their rates will be about the same as those of whites."⁷ Udry, on the other hand, maintains that while the relationship between status and marital disruption is inverse for both whites and nonwhites, the greater instability of nonwhite marriages cannot be attributed solely to the general low educational and occupational status of this group.⁸ Frazier's contention appears, then, to be correct only in part. Greater economic resources on the part of black families have resulted in increased adherence to the dominant family pattern. However, other variables than education, income or occupation also appear to play a role. Perhaps the "caste" position of Negroes has a relation to marital instability. Or perhaps a socio-historical explanation, tracing the Negro family pattern to roots in the slavery system and the transition from rural to urban poverty can help explain the differences in marital stability.

A third possibility which pertains particularly to the middle-class Negro can be termed "relative deprivation". Turner remarks that "pride and self-respect rather than economic opportunity constitute the problem of today's middle-class Negroes..."⁹ Billingsley, also referring

⁷William J. Goode, "Family Disorganization" in Robert K. Merton and Robert A. Nisbet, Contemporary Social Problems, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966 edition), p. 514.

⁸J. Richard Udry, "Marital Instability by Race, Sex, Education, and Occupation Using 1960 Census Data", pp. 208-209.

⁹Ralph H. Turner, "Book Review," American Journal of Sociology, 74 (September 1968), pp. 198-199.

to middle-class black families asserts that, "money has not given them the sense of mastery over the conditions of their life that is available to white families of similar economic status."¹⁰ As we have seen in Chapter III, blacks at the same occupational level as whites earn considerably less. In addition at the same social level, blacks receive less status, respect and prestige. Deprived of dollars, as well as prestige and respect accorded their white counterparts, feelings of solidarity and cohesion are almost inevitably less. These factors no doubt contribute to higher dissolution rates among blacks.

Percentage of Own Children Living with Both Parents

The percentage of own married children under 18 living with both parents is directly related to family income (see Table 4-3). Here again we see that there is an inverse relationship between family income and percentage of own children living with both parents. At family income levels of \$7,000 and above, the differences between the proportion of Negro and white children living with both parents are smaller than at the lower income levels. This result is not entirely unexpected, considering the fact that families with only one earner are likely to earn considerably less, and the relationship we have previously noted between male income and marital stability.

¹⁰ Andrew Billingsley, Black Families in White America, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall), 1968, p. 170.

Table 4-3

All Own Children and Percent of Own Children Living with Both
Parents, by Family Income: 1969

Family income	Negro		White	
	All children (thousands)	Percent living with both parents	All children (thousands)	Percent living with both parents
Under \$3,000	1,626	24	2,663	44
\$3,000 to \$4,999	1,933	49	4,205	70
\$5,000 to \$6,999	1,797	71	6,442	86
\$7,000 to \$9,999	1,786	87	13,795	95
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1,291	91	18,598	97
\$15,000 and over	513	89	12,540	97

Note: Unmarried children under 18 years old living in families

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 38, BLS Report, 394, 1970, p. 111

Fertility

The fertility rates for all races have declined sharply since 1961. Nevertheless, Table 4-4 shows that the fertility rate for the Census Negro continues to surpass that for whites. In 1968 (the latest year for which data are available) the rate for Negro women was equivalent to the white rate 10 years earlier. However, when we compare the Statistical Negro with her white counterpart we find a different trend emerging. The fertility level of black women 35 to 44 years old surpasses that of white women at all educational levels through high school. Hill and Jaffe suggest much of this difference in fertility among the less educated can be accounted for if one controls for Southern rural background.¹¹ Table 4-4 appears to confirm this prediction. Almost all Negroes of rural farm and nonfarm background live in the South, where the difference between black and white fertility is greatest. Black women with college training, on the other hand, had a lower fertility rate than white women in the same educational group (see Table 4-5). Black women who had completed 4 years or more of college had 1.9 children per woman as opposed to 2.3 children per white woman in the same educational group.

An analysis of illegitimate births shows that blacks have illegitimacy rates several times higher than whites. For example, in 1968 the number of illegitimate births per 1,000 unmarried women 15 to 44 years old (illegitimacy rate) was 86.6 for Negro women and 13.2 for white women.¹²

¹¹ Adelaide C. Hill and Frederick S. Jaffe, "Negro Fertility and Family Size Preferences", in Talcott Parsons and Kenneth B. Clark, eds., The Negro American, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 208.

¹² Vital and Health Statistics, Series 21, No. 19.

Table 4-4

Fertility rates: 1955 to 1968

(Live births per 1,000 women age 15 to 44)

Year	Negro and other races	White
1955	155	114
1956	161	116
1957	163	118
1958	161	115
1959	162	115
1960	154	113
1961	154	112
1962 ¹	149	108
1963 ¹	145	104
1964	142	100
1965	134	91
1966	126	86
1967	120	83
1968	115	82

Note: Births 1955-59 adjusted for under-registration of births.

¹Excludes data for New Jersey.

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 38, BLS Report, 394, 1970, p. 113.

Table 4-5

Number of Children Ever Born, Per Woman 35 to 44 Years
Old, by Selected Characteristics: 1970

Subject	Negro	White
All women	3.5	2.9
Women ever married	3.8	3.0
Type of residence:		
Urbanized area	3.2	2.7
Other urban	3.8	2.9
Rural nonfarm	4.7	3.1
Rural farm	5.4	3.5
Years of school completed:		
Elementary: Less than 8 years	4.1	3.4
8 years	4.0	3.2
High school: 1 to 3 years	3.8	3.1
4 years	3.0	2.8
College: 1 to 3 years	2.7	2.8
4 years or more	1.9	2.3

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, NO. 46,
1972, p. 74.

Moynihan, in particular, has cited similar statistics to point to the pathology of the Negro family.¹³ Yet he and others have failed to realize that the continuing high illegitimacy rate is largely due to the Negro's disproportionately low socioeconomic status (illegitimacy also appears to be more common in the white lower class). Probably even more important in explaining the high illegitimacy rate is the different value content which exists among lower-income blacks. According to Ladner:

There are no "illegitimate" children in the low-income Black community as such because there is an inherent value that children cannot be "illegally" born. There are, however, "unauthorized" births because these children are not born within the limitations and sociolegal context defined by legislators and other people in the majority group who create and assign labels to the minority group... It is unfortunate that social scientists always use the term "illegitimate" to refer to Black children born out of wedlock. Illegitimacy is a stigmatizing label that acts to degrade the mother and the child, but no such degradation as is common in the white middle class can be found to exist with low-income Blacks.¹⁴

The birth of a child appears to be an accepted mark of adulthood for lower-income black adolescents. Rainwater writes that "It would seem that for girls pregnancy is the real measure of maturity, the dividing line between adolescence and womanhood".¹⁵

¹³Daniel P. Moynihan, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action", Office of Policy Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor, March 1965, p. 8. Also reprinted in Lee Rainwater and William L. Yancey, The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy, (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1967).

¹⁴Joyce Ladner, Tomorrow's Tomorrow, (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1971), pp. 217-218.

¹⁵Lee Rainwater, "Crucible of Identity: The Negro Lower-class Family," in Talcott Parsons, ed., The Negro American, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 187.

Education

We have seen in Chapter III that the nonwhite population is much more poorly educated than the white population. Yet we do not know how much of this difference can be attributed to socioeconomic factors such as family income. Table 4-6 shows the percentage of youth 18 and 19 years old enrolled in school according to selected social and economic characteristics of the home in 1960. (The years 18 and 19 were taken because they are critical in measuring drop-out from high school and entrance into college.) From this table Bogue concludes that "when the amount of education of parents is controlled, the nonwhite population appears to be encouraging its youth to complete school even more than the white population. These statistics indicate that after allowance is made for the lower educational status of Negro parents, and the fact that many Negro homes are broken homes where the child must go to work, Negro parents are trying harder than white parents to get their children to stay in school and succeeding better."¹⁶ This is not a recent trend. Education has historically occupied a special place in the Negro community. Drake and Cayton have noted that a peculiarity of the Negro social status scale in America is that a heavier weighting is given to education than occupation.¹⁷ With a very narrow occupational spread, education has traditionally been an important measure of the man (or woman). Data from 1971 indicates that this trend is continuing, and quite possibly even more pronounced than in 1960. Among white family members enrolled in college in 1971, 57 percent grew up in families in which the head had not completed

¹⁶Donald J. Bogue, Principles of Demography, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1969), p. 202.

¹⁷St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, Black Metropolis, (New York: Harper & Row, 1945), p. 515.

Table 4-6

Percent of Youth 18 and 19 Years of Age Enrolled in School by Characteristics
of the Home and Color: 1960

Characteristics of the home	Total		Nonwhite	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total persons 18 or 19 years old.....	46.6	37.7	40.1	36.5
EDUCATION OF PARENTS				
Total living with both parents.....	50.9	43.2	46.5	45.8
Father less than 8 years				
Mother less than 8 years.....	34.4	35.1	39.8	42.2
Mother 8 years or more.....	42.9	37.7	46.8	45.2
Father 8 to 11 years				
Mother less than 8 years.....	40.2	35.1	46.8	48.0
Mother 8 to 11 years.....	45.9	45.8	60.6	49.7
Mother 12 years or some college.....	56.6	45.8	60.6	49.7
Father 12 years				
Mother less than 12 years.....	55.1	39.7	56.3	49.5
Mother 12 years.....	63.7	50.6	63.8	52.5
Mother some college.....	74.1	65.9	-	-
Father some college				
Mother less than college.....	70.7	59.8	67.0	57.1
Mother some college.....	81.8	76.8	83.1	79.7
EDUCATION AND INCOME OF PARENTS				
Parent's Education:.....	49.5	42.0	44.6	43.1
Less than 8 years school				
Income under \$3,000.....	36.5	39.9	41.2	43.5
Income \$3,000 to \$4,999.....	37.3	37.4	43.0	40.5
Income \$5,000 to \$6,999.....	39.1	35.8	38.9	38.4
Income \$7,000 and over.....	36.9	28.3	41.1	32.4
8 to 11 years of school				
Income under \$3,000.....	44.1	41.9	47.5	44.0
Income \$5,000 to \$6,999.....	49.1	40.4	45.6	44.1
Income \$7,000 or more.....	46.5	34.4	44.9	42.8
12 years or more				
Income under \$3,000.....	61.8	55.7	60.1	51.1
Income \$5,000 to \$6,999.....	63.5	54.2	57.1	54.1
Income \$7,000 or more.....	67.7	54.4	65.5	56.7

....

Characteristics of the home	Total		Nonwhite	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUP OF FATHER.....	51.9	43.7	47.4	46.4
Professional: technical, or kindred workers..	74.5	63.6	69.1	68.1
Farmers and farm managers.....	42.4	47.5	46.2	53.0
Managers, officials and proprietors.....	67.4	56.3	66.5	59.9
Clerical and kindred workers.....	58.4	44.2	50.9	57.7
Sales workers.....	65.3	51.8	66.6	-
Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers.....	50.7	39.6	51.2	47.3
Operatives and kindred workers.....	44.9	36.9	47.0	44.0
Services workers.....	49.2	38.3	49.5	45.0
Farm laborers or foremen.....	34.4	37.7	37.0	43.9
Laborers etc. farm and mine.....	39.7	37.8	43.2	43.1

Source: U.S. Census of Population: 1960 School Reports, School Enrollment, Tables 4, 5, and 6.

any years of college, including 20 percent who were in families in which the head had not completed high school. Among Negro family members enrolled in college, the corresponding proportions were 78 percent and 56 percent, respectively.¹⁸

Not only does the Negro family try harder to send its children to school, it also does it in a more equalitarian fashion. Table 4-7 illustrates this point. The percentage of Negro youths 18 to 24 years old attending college is roughly equal to the distribution of family income, in fact proportionately more students are recruited from the lower income brackets. Among white students, the opposite phenomenon occurs - 41 percent of the students were from families with incomes of \$15,000 and over although this group only accounted for 26 percent of the families.

It is interesting to note that the black population is also more equalitarian in other aspects of education. For instance in 1971, 6.5 percent of all black males and 6.2 percent of all black females 25 to 34 years old had completed four years of college as opposed to 21.1 percent for white males and 13.4 percent for white females. This phenomenon still exists among younger college students, 18 to 24 years old. In 1971, 20 percent of black males and 17 percent of black females were enrolled in college as compared with 34 percent of white males and 21 percent of white females.¹⁹ Black females had an enrollment which was almost as high as that of their white counterparts. Epstein concludes that black families, like many white immigrant families in the past, could not afford sex discrimination

¹⁸Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 35, 1972, Characteristics of American Youth, Table 15.

¹⁹Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 42, The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States, 1971, p. 84.

Table 4-7

Family Members 18 to 24 Years Old by Enrollment and Family Income, 1971

	Negro		White	
	Percent of Families	Percent College Enroll.	Percent of Families	Percent College Enroll.
Under \$3,000	19	12	7	2
\$3,000 to \$9,999	51	60	39	27
\$10,000 and over	30	27	54	71
\$10,000 to \$14,999	18	16	28	31
\$15,000 and over	12	11	26	41

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 46, 1971, p. 86 and Current Population Reports, Series P-60, 1971, No. 85, p. 31

of any family member who showed promise.²⁰ As one black dentist commented: "Girls or boys - whoever had the brains to get education was the one pushed to do it and encouraged."²¹

Education and Relative Occupational Disadvantage

One important reason that blacks fare more poorly than whites at the same educational level is that Negroes generally secure less desirable employment. Table 4-8 shows that among college graduates, 20 percent of the nonwhites were skilled, semiskilled, service or unskilled workers, compared to 9 percent of the whites. Twenty-four percent of the whites, but only 8 percent of the blacks were managers, officials and proprietors. Although a slightly higher proportion of nonwhites were in professional and technical occupations, they were concentrated in the lower paying occupations of teaching and the clergy. Among high school graduates, nearly 40 percent of the whites were in white collar jobs, compared to only 21 percent of the nonwhites. The discrepancy remains even among those who complete only grade school. Nonwhite men were far more likely to become service or unskilled workers, while the whites had far greater proportions concentrated among craftsmen, foremen and managers.

Duncan and Blau reported this same phenomenon in their investigation of American mobility patterns:

²⁰Cynthia Epstein, "Positive Effect of the Multiple Negative: Explaining the Success of Black Professional Women", American Journal of Sociology, 78 (January 1973) p. 922.

²¹Ibid.

Table 4-8

Occupational Distribution of White and Nonwhite College, High School and Elementary School Graduates,^a by Sex, 1960

Years of School Completed	Male		Female	
	Nonwhite	White	Nonwhite	White
College - 4 years				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Professional and technical	47.4	42.5	73.6	68.9
Mgrs., officials, and props., exc. farm	7.9	24.4	1.7	4.5
Clerical	12.7	6.7	11.2	16.1
Sales	3.6	12.5	0.9	2.9
Craftsmen and foremen	5.2	5.5	0.2	0.5
Operatives	5.1	1.7	2.1	0.8
Service workers	6.7	1.0	4.9	1.9
Laborers, exc. farm and mine	2.7	0.4	0.1	0.0
Farmers	0.9	1.8	0.0	0.3
Farm laborers and foremen	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1
Occupation not reported	7.3	3.2	5.1	3.8
High School - 4 years				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Professional and technical	3.2	7.1	5.8	7.5
Mgrs., officials and props., exc. farm	3.8	15.1	1.7	5.3
Clerical	11.6	9.8	19.7	47.9
Sales	2.5	8.8	3.0	9.9
Craftsmen and foremen	14.1	24.8	1.1	1.3
Operatives	23.9	16.8	16.0	10.8
Service workers	15.7	4.7	42.7	11.5
Laborers, exc. farm and mine	12.1	3.0	0.8	0.3
Farmers	1.7	5.2	0.2	0.4
Farm laborers and foremen	1.4	0.7	0.7	0.7
Occupation not reported	9.8	4.0	8.1	4.4
Elementary - 8 years				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Professional and technical	0.9	1.4	0.8	1.8
Mgrs., officials, and props., exc. farm	2.2	7.9	1.1	3.7
Clerical	3.1	4.3	1.7	12.5
Sales	1.0	4.0	1.5	10.0
Craftsmen and foremen	12.7	26.2	0.6	2.0
Operatives	27.6	25.8	15.8	31.6
Service workers	16.1	6.6	65.6	28.6
Laborers exc. farm and mine	20.5	7.3	0.9	0.8
Farmers	3.2	10.5	0.6	1.1
Farm laborers and foremen	3.7	2.0	2.4	1.7
Occupation not reported	9.0	3.8	8.9	6.2

^aEmployed persons aged 25 years or more.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1960, Educational Attainment, Table 8.

The same investment of time and resources in education does not yield Negroes as much return in their careers as it does whites. Negroes, as an underprivileged group, must make greater sacrifices, which may well be a major reason why Negroes often exhibit little motivation to continue in school and advance their education...²²

Among women there was less job discrepancy with equivalent educational levels than among men. There was little difference between occupational distributions of white and nonwhite college graduates. Among high school graduates, white women tended to become clerical workers, while Negro women tended to enter service jobs. Among those who finished only elementary school, nearly two-thirds of the Negro women but only a little more than one-fourth of the white women entered service occupations.

Education is clearly not the same guarantee of occupation, status and income for blacks that it is for whites. At every educational level, black males are far behind whites in occupational attainment. In spite of "relative success" in school, black males still experience considerable discrimination in obtaining and holding a job and being advanced, particularly in respect to higher status positions.

Employment, Unemployment, Income and Labor Force Participation Rates

As we have previously seen in Chapter III, black men earn less at almost all levels of employment regardless of their job. Black women fare considerably better in comparison to their white counterparts. The disparity between black and white is also manifested in unemployment rates - blacks have considerably higher unemployment rates (see Table 3-13)

²²Peter M. Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan, The American Occupational Structure, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1967), pp. 405-406.

even in the better paid and higher status jobs.

Negroes are more likely than whites to be divorced, widowed or separated. This is associated with higher labor force participation rates in general among Negro than white women, but lower labor force participation rates in general among Negro men than white men. Differences in marital status do not, however, account for all the differences in labor force participation rates. In all three types of marital status, single, married, spouse present and other marital status, i.e. divorced or separated, etc., Negro men are consistently less likely than white men in the same age range to be in the labor force. The same observation holds true when comparing Negro and white women who were single, divorced, widowed or separated. The exception is women with spouse present, among whom Negroes are more likely than whites to work.

Scanzoni suggests that wife employment has to a certain extent become established or normal within black subsociety.²³ Because it is accepted, employment of wives does not have the same kinds of either positive or negative consequences that it does among whites where traditionally it has been far less the norm. The greater acceptance of working wives in the black subsociety can partially be explained in economic terms. Nationally in 1971 in complete families where only the husband worked the black to white family income ratio was only 68 percent as opposed to 80 percent when both husband and wife worked. The realm of female employment represents perhaps the one area where white and black family patterns are converging.

²³ John S. Scanzoni, The Black Family in Modern Society, (Boston: Allyn and Beacon, 1971), pp. 228-229.

Ethnicity, Race, and Class

Gordon has formulated the term "ethclass" in order to apprehend certain differences between groups at the same social-class level who are in many other ways similar. The term refers to the subsociety created by the intersection of ethnic group and class. He specifies that the ethclass is a subsociety, that is, a "...functioning unity which has an integrated impact on the participating individual".²⁴ Thus, he cites such examples of ethclasses as upper-middle-class white Protestant or lower-middle-class Irish or upper-lower-class Negro. In these ethclasses people tend to concentrate their primary social relationships. As Gordon expresses it, with a person of the same social class but of a different ethnic group "one shares behavioral similarities but not a sense of peoplehood."²⁵ With those of the same ethnic group but of different social class, one shares the sense of peoplehood but not behavioral similarities.

Throughout this chapter, we have documented basic similarities between black and white patterns at the same class level, but have also noted several dissimilarities as well. The greatest differences in behavior between the races appear to be found in the lower classes. Much discussion, for example, revolves around the great instability of the lower-class Negro family. From our investigation it appears that the divergences in the behavior patterns of lower-class Negroes and whites are largely the result of discrimination.

²⁴Milton M. Gordon, Assimilation in American Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 51.

²⁵Ibid., p. 53.

Yet it would be a mistake to cite discrimination as the sole root of the Negro problem. Edwards has observed that "significant advancement in the status of the Negro comes at a time when economic conditions are quite different from those faced by immigrant groups. The great influx of immigrants came at a time when there was a market for agricultural labor and unskilled work and mobility through these avenues was still possible."²⁶ The black man today must compete for work in an urban market which requires a higher level of skills and education than was the case a half century ago. The Negro immigrant has not had the good fortune of arriving with these skills. Insofar as there is a schism in the black community, it is largely between the skilled and unskilled.

Another factor which has probably been severely underestimated in explaining the divergence between black and white family patterns is the structural composition of the black and white middle classes. Among whites, there has been a relatively large, stable middle class to exert influence on a relatively smaller upwardly mobile contingent just entering that class; among Negroes this has not been true. Blau noted this difference when examining class-color differences and exposure to child-rearing literature.

The constitution of the Negro middle class differs sharply from that of the white middle class, and therein may lie the explanation, at least to some degree, of the differences in the extent to which their members expose themselves to child-rearing literature... Owing to their insignificant number, the stationary members of the middle class are not in a position to exert any appreciable effect on the behavior of the upwardly mobile members of their class.²⁷

²⁶G. Franklin Edwards, "Community and Class Realities: The Ordeal of Change", in Talcott Parsons, ed., The Negro American, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 282.

²⁷Zena Smith Blau, "Exposure to Child-rearing Experts: A Structural Interpretation of Class-Color Differences," American Journal of Sociology, 69 (May 1964), pp. 605-607.

However, the proportionately smaller size of the Negro middle class is not the only factor that has impeded upward mobility. Brotz has noted that, "Because of legal segregation, the idea of a voluntary Negro community as a need and, hence, a legitimate concern of American Negroes disappeared from respectable discussion. So long as Negro life was forced by compulsory, externally imposed segregation, every movement toward the formation of a self-respecting voluntary community that would be the social matrix of the Negro's own impulses toward self-improvement was throttled."²⁸ Unlike other ethnic groups, the black middle class had neither the size nor the solidarity to organize a massive self-help effort. Happily, this situation is changing - largely spurred by "black consciousness" and "black nationalism".

Summary

Chapter IV has examined Frazier's theory linking economic and social phenomena. It states that as the educational and economic position of blacks improves there will be a corresponding movement toward dominant family patterns. We have seen that there is, indeed, substantial convergence in marital stability, fertility patterns, educational patterns, etc. The greatest differences in behavior between the races are found in the lower class. Where there is divergence, it appears to be the result of non-racial factors. That there are certain "black family patterns" which differ somewhat from "white family patterns" may reflect in part differential access to the economic rewards of the society or in other words economic discrimination.

²⁸Howard Brotz, The Black Jews of Harlem, (New York: Schocken Books, 1970 edition), p. 116.

Structural changes in American society have also worked against the Negro. As the most recent unskilled immigrant to reach the city (along with the Puerto Rican and Mexican-American) he faces a market that no longer requires a large pool of unskilled labor.

CHAPTER V

THE BLACK WOMAN: AFFECTS OF THE DOUBLE NEGATIVE

In a peculiar way, the problem of the Negro in America is the problem of the Negro men more than the Negro women. It was the women who could get whatever work was available even in the worst times. It was the man who was seen as a threat and subject to physical violence. It was the women who came in touch with the white world, and for whom favors, if any were forthcoming, were more common. Perhaps it was easier for whites to be gracious to the women, who because they were women, could be seen as accepting subordination with more grace and with less resentment and sullenness. Already a member of one underprivileged group (that of women), membership in another (that of Negro) did not perhaps weigh so heavily upon her, or so it might appear to the white world.

Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan¹

Black women are most typically pictured at the bottom of the occupational pyramid. They earn less than white women who, in turn make less than men, white or black.² While a very substantial occupational dissimilarity appears to be bad in itself, the mere fact of dissimilarity does not appear to explain why nonwhites have lower incomes than whites. Nonwhites may be scarce in "white occupations" because they are excluded. Whites may be scarce in "nonwhite occupations" because they regard them as nonwhite and inferior. A nonwhite in the jobs accessible to him has

¹Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot, (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press and M.I.T. Press., 1963), p. 38.

²Median earnings of full-time, year-round workers were reported as follows in 1971: Negro women - \$5,092; white women - \$5,767; Negro men - \$6,771; white men - \$9,902.

to compete with an extra supply of nonwhites who are capable of working in "white occupations" but are excluded from them. A white, on the other hand, would experience a parallel extra competition from members of his own race whose prejudices limit their choice, and would benefit by freedom from the competition of the excluded nonwhites.³

In order to separate the effects of broadly different occupational distributions from the effects of different earnings within major occupational groups, Wohlsetter and Coleman calculated a new nonwhite earnings distribution for black women. They standardized the distribution for nonwhite women among the ten major Census occupational categories so that the proportion of nonwhites in each occupational class was the same as that of whites, but retained the same earnings within each category as they presently received. In other words, they made white and nonwhite distributions operationally equal. The result of this adjustment increased the ratio of nonwhite to white median earnings from about 69 percent to about 99 percent in 1967.⁴ Differences in the distribution by race among major occupations, then, account for nearly all the disparities between the incomes of white and black women. Wohlsetter and Coleman also performed an adjustment analogous to that used for major occupations in order to estimate the effects of differences in nonwhite and white years of schooling completed on the relative income standing of nonwhite females. Again, they found that this adjustment improved the median income ratios substantially, from 78 percent to 93 percent.⁵ Therefore, for both

³Albert Wohlsetter and Sinclair Coleman, "Race Differences in Income", ed., Anthony H. Pascal, Racial Discrimination in Economic Life, (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, D.C. Heath and Co., 1972), p. 47.

⁴Ibid, p. 52

⁵Ibid. p. 60

occupational differences and years of schooling, nearly all of the income disparity is accounted for in the case of women. If black women are not discriminated against in the future, their earnings should parallel the earnings of white women as they obtain more education and get better jobs. This is in marked contrast to the case for men. We have previously seen in Chapter III that each factor accounts for roughly only a third of the income disparity for nonwhite men.

It would appear that Glazer's and Moynihan's contention is statistically true. The problem of the Negro in America in terms of financial disparity and economic discrimination is, indeed, the problem of Negro men more than that of the Negro women. Other authors have also emphasized this point. For example, Bernard in her book Marriage and Family Among Negroes entitles one of her headings "The Unnatural Superiority of Negro women."

Not only formal education but also contacts with the white world have been more available to Negro women than to Negro men. Negro men have been more feared, sexually and occupationally, than Negro women. In fact, Negro women have often been loved - not only as sex partners but also as nurses or "mammies". As a result, Negro women have been less isolated from the white world; ... More doors - back doors to be sure, but doors - have opened for them. ... Even in their contact with social-work agencies and the world of bureaucracy, they have known their way around. ... As a result, Negro women tend, in general, to fall into a higher class (as measured by education, acculturation, income and familiarity with the amenities of the white world) than Negro men.⁶

⁶Jessie Bernard, Marriage and Family Among Negroes, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 69

Two interpretations have been put forth to explain the substantially greater equality between black and white women, than between black and white men. Epstein suggests, on the basis of a study of black professional women, that multiple negative effects (such as being a woman and black) can add up to a positive one.⁷ It appears from the data presented in this paper and the Wohlsetter and Coleman study that this hypothesis is not limited exclusively to professionals but applies to all black women. An alternative explanation offered by Palmore and Whittington maintains that sex differentials can be explained by the general principle that there is greater equality among the inferior category which, in this case, is represented by women. They believe that this principle holds true because the inferior category has a constricted range and variation, and thus less room for as much discrepancy.⁸ Be it as it may, it should be remembered that women - both black and white - remain in a subordinate earning position to white men, like black men, being paid less for equivalent work.

Mother-centered Families

Female heads of families have received a considerable amount of publicity in the last decade. This is primarily a result of the government's increased attention which has been directed toward poverty and its characteristics. Moynihan has noted that, "In gross terms, the number of blacks

⁷Cynthia Epstein, "Positive Effects of the Multiple Negative: Explaining the Success of Black Professional Women," American Journal of Sociology, 78 (January 1973), pp. 912-935.

⁸Erdman Palmore and Frank J. Whittington, "Differential Trends Toward Equality Between Whites and Nonwhites", Social Forces, 49 (September 1970), p. 113.

below the poverty line declined 49.4 percent between 1959 and 1968 for families with male heads; but it increased 23.6 percent for those with female heads."⁹ There are many more female-headed families in the black community. In March 1973, out of 5,265,000 Negro families, 34.6 percent were headed by females. White women were heading 9.6 percent of their families (see Table 5-1).

The image of the Negro women most often invoked by sociologists is that of a "matriarch". Noble asserts that "the preoccupation with the dominant role of Negro women is largely due to mounting concern over widespread social pathology among Negroes; this stems from psychological interpretations of ill effects on children, especially males, of mother-centered homes."¹⁰ The ill effects of female-headed families have been well documented by Moynihan, Sheppard and Striner and others.¹¹ It is certainly true that a large number of Negro women are the mainstays of their families, a less than ideal situation. However, it appears that this is primarily related to the socio-economic situation which denies

⁹Daniel P. Moynihan, "The Schism in Black America", The Public Interest, No. 29 (Fall 1972), p. 9.

¹⁰Jeanne L. Noble, "The American Negro Women", in John P. Davis, ed., The American Negro Reference Book, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 538.

¹¹Daniel P. Moynihan, "Employment, Income and the Ordeal of the Negro Family", Talcott Parsons and Kenneth Clark, eds., The Negro American, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

Daniel P. Moynihan, The Negro Family: The Case for National Action, by the Office of Policy Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965).

Harold Sheppard and Herbert Stiner, Employment and the Social Status of American Negroes, (Kalamazoo, Mich.: The W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 1966).

Negro males adequate opportunity to earn a living. In 1964, a team of researchers in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that since 1951 "the percentage of nonwhite women separated from their husbands has a significant correlation of +0.68 with the unemployment rate for the preceeding year."¹²

Among other causes cited is the "Slave Survival" theory, which maintains that the matriarchal role of the Negro woman can be traced from slavery. Some researchers seriously question this theory and believe it is greatly oversimplified. One thoughtful view has been expressed by Herzog and Lewis:

One clue lies in the comparison between very low income Negroes and whites with regard to the elements of family structure usually assumed to be the Negro's heritage from slavery. There are marked similarities between these two groups, and the whites did not get their characteristics from slavery. Leaning too much on the slavery crutch prevents us from moving more quickly toward sounder understanding and practice. Perhaps the most clearly cultural element in this connection is the belief of many that after one hundred years the heritage of slavery wields more influence than such intervening variables as urbanization and continuing social and economic deprivation.¹³

The most recent statistics appear to support Herzog's and Lewis' interpretation. In 1971, the highest proportion of female-headed families for any group of new immigrants to the city, is not that of blacks, but of Puerto Ricans (33.9 percent of their families were headed by women as opposed to 30.6 percent for blacks).¹⁴

¹²Dorothy K. Newman and Morton S. Raff in a memorandum dated October 21, 1964, p. 1 quoted in Jessie Bernard, Marriage and Family Among Negroes, p. 21.

¹³Elizabeth Herzog and Hylan Lewis, "Priorities in Research Perspectives on the Unmarried Mother," Eastern Regional Conference Child Welfare League of America, New York, April, 1961 quoted in Jeanne L. Noble, "The American Negro Women", p. 539.

¹⁴Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 224, 1971, Table 3.

Table 5-1

Percent Distribution of Families by Type: 1950,1955,1960,1965,1968
and 1970 to 1973

Year	Total all families (thousands)	Percent of all families			
		Total	Husband- wife	Other male head	Female head ¹
NEGRO AND OTHER RACES					
1950.....	3,214	100.0	77.7	4.7	17.7
1955.....	3,764	100.0	75.3	4.0	20.7
1960.....	4,234	100.0	73.6	4.0	22.4
1965.....	4,752	100.0	73.1	3.2	23.7
1968.....	5,020	100.0	69.1	4.5	26.4
1970.....	5,215	100.0	69.7	3.5	26.8
1971.....	5,413	100.0	67.4	3.7	28.9
1972.....	5,655	100.0	65.7	4.2	30.1
1973.....	5,896	100.0	63.2	4.0	32.8
NEGRO					
1968.....	4,589	100.0	67.9	4.3	27.7
1970.....	4,774	100.0	68.1	3.7	28.3
1971.....	4,928	100.0	65.6	3.8	30.6
1972.....	5,157	100.0	63.8	4.4	31.8
1973.....	5,265	100.0	61.4	4.0	34.6
WHITE					
1950.....	35,979	100.0	88.0	3.5	8.5
1955.....	38,170	100.0	87.9	3.0	9.0
1960.....	40,828	100.0	88.7	2.6	8.7
1965.....	43,081	100.0	88.6	2.4	9.0
1968.....	44,814	100.0	88.9	2.2	8.9
1970.....	46,022	100.0	88.7	2.3	9.1
1971.....	46,535	100.0	88.3	2.3	9.4
1972.....	47,641	100.0	88.2	2.3	9.4
1973.....	48,477	100.0	87.8	2.5	9.6

A family consists of two or more persons living together and related by blood, marriage, or adoption.

¹Female heads of families include widowed and single women, women whose husbands are in the Armed Service or otherwise away from home involuntarily, as well as those separated from their husbands through divorce or marital discord.

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 46, 1972, Table 52, p. 68

Another factor thought to contribute to the increasing number of female-headed families among blacks is urbanization. Frazier was among the first sociologists to describe the plight of urbanization on the rural Negro. In 1939 he wrote:

The impact of hundreds of thousands of rural southern Negroes upon northern metropolitan communities presents a bewildering spectacle. Striking contrasts among these newcomers to modern civilization seem to baffle any attempt to discover order and direction in their mode of life.

In many cases, of course, the dissolution of the simple family organization has begun before the family reaches the northern city. But, if these families have managed to preserve their integrity until they reach the northern city, poverty, ignorance, and color force them to seek homes in deteriorated slum areas from which practically all institutionalized life has disappeared. Hence, at the same time these simple rural families are losing their internal cohesion, they are being freed from the controlling force of public opinion and communal institutions. Family desertion among Negroes in cities appears, then, to be one of the inevitable consequences of the impact of urban life on the simple family organization and folk culture, which the Negro has evolved in the rural South.¹⁵

The influence of urbanization alone is not an adequate explanation, however. Bernard has noted that the most rapid rate of urbanization does not always coincide with the increase in female-headed families.¹⁶ Although the peak of rural-urban migration is passed, the number of female-headed families continues to increase (see Table 5-1). It appears that the disrupting effect of urban migration takes longer than the immediate urbanized generation to reveal itself.

¹⁵E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Family in the United States, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 231, 255.

¹⁶Jessie Bernard, Marriage and Family Among Negroes, p. 20. She notes that the increase in the proportion of Negroes who were urban between 1900 and 1910 was 20.3 percent; between 1910 and 1920 24.5 percent; between 1920 and 1930, 28.5 percent; between 1930 and 1940, 11.2 percent; between 1940 and 1950, 28.4 percent; between 1950 and 1960, 17.3 percent.

The College Educated Black Woman: Trend Setter

The college educated black woman has been almost completely neglected as a topic for investigation. Most studies that compare black and white women use as their framework the "lag" or "deviant" model.¹⁷ Either of these two frameworks tends to obscure the fact that there is a small segment of the population that earns more and is in many ways more "modern" than her white counterpart.

There are proportionately fewer college educated black than white women, the percentage of college educated women is twice as big for white as for black females (11.4 percent of the black female population, 25 years old and over has 1 or more years of college, as compared to 20.3 percent for white females).¹⁸ Nevertheless, the earning potential of well-educated black females is actually higher than that of her white counterpart. For example, in 1969, the median income for females with one to three years of college education was \$3,427 for white women and \$4,247 for black women (see Table 5-2). Part, but by no means all of this gap was due to the fact that there are more full time workers among the black college educated population.¹⁹ The higher earnings of black over white college educated females probably reflects greater consistency in career efforts. According to a special study of graduates of predominantly

¹⁷The "lag" framework tends to emphasize how far black women are behind their white counterparts in such areas as income and occupational distribution, whereas the "deviant" framework focuses on the female-headed family and such aspects as illegitimacy.

¹⁸Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 243, 1972, table 3, p. 34.

¹⁹Median earnings of full-time, year-round workers in 1967 were \$6,209 for black women professionals and \$5,910 for white women professionals, Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 27, 1969, p. 49

Table 5-2

Median Income of Women 25 Years Old and Over, by Educational Attainment: 1969

Years of school completed	Women 25 years and over, 1970 (thousands)		Median income, 1969 (dollars)	
	Negro	White	Negro	White
Total, 25 years and over	4,397	33,402	\$2,078	\$2,513
Elementary: Less than 8 years...	1,261	4,028	1,195	1,303
8 years.....	496	4,447	1,320	1,688
High school: 1 to 3 years.....	1,075	5,562	2,268	2,355
4 years.....	1,054	12,673	3,257	3,234
College: 1 to 3 years.....	285	3,395	4,247	3,427
4 years or more.....	226	3,296	6,747	5,707

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 38, BLS Report No. 394, 1970, Table 102, p. 125.

Negro colleges, Negro women have a stronger career orientation than white college women. When compared with other college women who graduated in 1964, Negro women were more than twice as likely (40 percent) as southern white women (19 percent) and all other women (14 percent) to say that they realistically expected to combine marriage, child-rearing, and gainful employment.²⁰

While the white female may move "in and out" of the labor force in order to fulfill family roles, the black female is probably less prone to do this. By staying with a job over a longer uninterrupted time span the black college educated woman is likely to reap greater job advancement and salary. No longitudinal studies are available to test this hypothesis; however, recent labor force participation rates collected by educational attainment and color appear to support this conclusion. In March 1972, 66 percent of nonwhite and 52 percent of white women, 25 to 54 years old, with one to three years of college were participants in the labor force. For women with 4 years or more of college the corresponding rates for nonwhite and white women were 82 percent and 62 percent, respectively.²¹

Although Negro women and white college women showed a remarkable similarity between the general fields of academic preparation chosen, Negro women were somewhat more likely than white women to have majored in fields where the correlation between occupations and college major is strongest, as shown in the 1964 training study mentioned above. Thus 64 percent of women students at predominantly Negro colleges majored in

²⁰ Joseph H. Fichter, Graduates of Predominantly Negro Colleges - Class of 1964. Public Health Services, No. 1571, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 81.

²¹ Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 46, "The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States," 1972, table 33, p. 45.

elementary or secondary education or other educational fields, as compared with 53 percent of southern white women and 50 percent of all other women. Moreover, Negro women were twice as likely as other college students to major in business fields - 4 and 2 percent, respectively. On the other hand, only 6 percent of Negro women majored in the humanities, where the weakest correlation had been reported, as compared with 20 percent and 19 percent, respectively, of southern white and all other women.²² Of the black women college graduates studied by Noble, 90 percent said that preparing for a vocation was the most important reason for going to college.²³ These findings support the proposition that black college women are more "modern" in their outlook than their white counterparts. They have more realistic job aspirations, and are also more likely to pursue a career. (As a result, nonwhite women in the professions are better educated on the average than their white counterparts, 16.0 and 15.3 years of schooling, respectively, in 1972).²⁴ On the other hand, we should not overlook the possibility that for Negro females employment is more necessary. Because black men are discriminated against economically, employment of wives may be necessary to increase the family income to a level more comparable to that of white families.

Black women with college training had a lower fertility rate than white women in the same educational group. For example in 1970, black

²² Joseph H. Fichter, Graduates of Predominantly Negro Colleges - Class of 1964, p. 85.

²³ Jeanne L. Noble, The Negro Women's College Education, (New York: Stratford, 1956), p. 46.

²⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, Manpower Report to the President, 1973, table B-12, p. 181.

women who had completed 4 years of college or more had 1.9 children per women, as compared to 2.3 for white women (see Table 4-5). This is not a recent trend. In 1937 Frazier studied 114 black faculty members at Howard University and found that although they had come from families averaging 5.1 children they had only an average of 0.8 children per family.²⁵ Another study of black college educated women in 1956 revealed that 41 percent of the women were childless.²⁶

According to Scanzoni:

Blacks may be more "modern" and equalitarian in their conception of the female role than are whites. If this is indeed so, it might help to account for the lower fertility rates of educated black females versus white females. On the one hand, there are the compensations provided by a relative sense of participation in the opportunity structure. On the other side, educated black women, because they probably define the female role in less traditional terms than whites, may seek far fewer compensations through traditional means (i.e. motherhood), and instead seek for more "modern-type" compensations such as those found in employment.²⁷

It seems probable that black women view careers differently than white women. While white women often see their work as supplemental to their husbands', black married women tend to view their work less as a "hanger-on" activity. One interviewer has noted that she gets the feeling that the quality of black professional women's lives is determined more by their own endeavor and is less a response to their husband's occupational situation than that of comparably situated white women.²⁸ Greater

²⁵E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Family in the United States, p. 330.

²⁶Jeanne L. Noble, The Negro Women's College Education, pp. 39-42.

²⁷John H. Scanzoni, The Black Family in Modern Society, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1971), p. 252.

²⁸Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, "Positive Effects of the Multiple Negative: Explaining the Success of Black Professional Women," p. 925.

self-confidence is no doubt an important ingredient in guiding college educated women toward more independent careers. Fichter found that college educated black women have more confidence in their abilities than a comparable group of white women graduates. When asked if they thought they had personalities suitable to a career as business executives, 79 percent of the black women but only 49 percent of the white women interviewed said they did.²⁹

Historical circumstances and a heritage of slavery have no doubt had an important impact on the socialization of black females. According to one black scholar "Black women in this society are the only ethnic or racial group which has had the opportunity to be women. By this I simply mean that much of the current focus on being liberated from the constraints and protectiveness of the society which is proposed by Women's Liberation groups has never applied to Black women, and in that sense, we have always been 'free' and able to develop as individuals even under the most harsh circumstances."³⁰ This tradition of individuality coupled with the greater necessity and normative acceptance of working women provide clues as to why married black college educated women are more "modern" than their white sisters. Perhaps too, because she is unique in the professional world and has already been able to overcome formidable barriers, her self confidence is reinforced which in turn probably motivates her to pursue a more serious career.

²⁹ Joseph H. Fichter, Graduates of Predominantly Negro Colleges - Class of 1964, pp. 92-93.

³⁰ Joyce Ladner, Tomorrow's Tomorrow, New York: Doubleday, 1971, p. 280.

The Black Woman -

Key Element in the Economic Fate of the Black Family

The black woman appears to hold one of the most important keys in determining the black family's economic fate. The black female-headed household is proportionately more often in poverty than any other type of family. Families with a female head earned only 61 percent of their white counterparts in 1968; the lowest ratio of any family type (see Table 5-3). This is probably, at least in part, due to the low earning power of many black men. In cases of separation or divorce, black men simply do not have the monetary resources to pay their women.

Complete black families with a male head and the wife not in the paid labor force make less than two-thirds of their white counterparts. It is only when the wife works that this ratio is significantly improved. Black families with a wife in the labor force earn almost three-fourths of their white counterparts; a significant increase over black families with only one earner. At the highest earning extreme are young (head under 35) husband-wife families outside the South, where both husband and wife work. These couples earn incomes that are higher than their white counterparts - 104 percent of whites. As we have previously seen, the primary explanation for this appears to be that young Negro wives earned approximately 30 percent more than their white counterparts.

In many ways the legacy of the black family is tied closely to the black woman. She has had a larger share of the black family's burdens and joys since slavery.

Table 5-3

Median Annual Money Income and First and Fourth Quintile of Annual Money Income for Families, by Type of Family, and for Male and Female Unrelated Individuals, by Race of Head of Family, 1968

Family type or unrelated individual	White			Negro			Median, ratio Negro/white
	First quintile	Median income	Fourth quintile	First quintile	Median income	Fourth quintile	
Families with male head:							
All families with male head	\$5,444	\$ 9,297	\$14,331	\$3,510	\$6,611	\$10,928	.71
Families with male head, wife present:							
Wife in paid labor force	7,222	10,967	16,220	4,568	8,029	12,168	.73
Wife not in paid labor force	4,698	8,393	13,278	2,834	5,355	8,859	.64
Families with female head	2,316	5,160	9,000	1,687	3,140	5,620	.61
Unrelated individuals:							
Male	1,599	4,411	8,596	1,243	3,020	6,116	.68
Female	1,120	2,353	5,339	702	1,479	3,380	.63

Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 66. "Income in 1968 of families and Persons in the United States", pp. 30-32.

Summary

We have seen that if educational and occupational levels of black women approximated those of white women almost all the "income gap" between the two races would be erased. This finding differs significantly from the case for Negro men. Despite equalization of educational and occupational levels with white males, black men would still experience large differences in income. If black women are not discriminated against in the future their earnings should parallel the earnings of white women as they obtain more education and get better jobs. Perhaps because they are women and are viewed as less threatening than black males, jobs have been more available to black women in accordance with their education and qualifications. Historically black women have also had more access to white society than black men and have had more opportunities to learn the "ropes" of the white world.

It appears that the increasing number of female headed families among Negroes is related to the socio-economic situation which denies Negro males an adequate opportunity to earn a living rather than historical roots.³¹ This situation is no doubt also related to structural changes in modern America. Fewer unskilled laborers are required so increasingly blacks are unemployed - a condition closely related with marriage break-up.

³¹ Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., Theodore Hershberg, and John Modell have presented evidence that indicates that the household structure in both 1850 and 1880 in Philadelphia was similar among Irish, German and Black families. This leads the authors to conclude that the female-headed family appeared not as a legacy of slavery, but as a necessary adaptation to the destructive conditions of urban life. (Family Structure and Ethnicity: An Historical and Comparative Analysis of the Black Family paper presented at the American Sociological Association Meetings, New York, 1973).

Perhaps the most interesting findings of this chapter concern the black college educated woman. Because of the emphasis on lower class female-headed households this sector of the black community has been almost totally neglected as a focus of study. Black college educated women earn more, are more career oriented, and have higher labor participation rates than their white counterparts.

The black woman appears to hold one of the most important keys in determining the black family's fate. When she is required to head a family chances are great that her family is in poverty. On the other hand, in complete families where both partners work, black family income comes closes to approximating white family income.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

The first lesson of modern sociology is that the individual cannot understand his own experience or gauge his own fate without locating himself within the trends of his epoch and the life chances of all the individuals of his social layer.¹

C. Wright Mills

It is difficult to summarize what has emerged from the critical review of stratification trends of the black community in the United States during the past two decades. Different sectors of the black community have been and are moving at different rates in closing the gap between themselves and their white counterparts; indeed, for a minority the gap is widening rather than closing.

First let us present a macro picture and review the most general trends. Blacks have moved during the past half century from agriculture, the major declining industry to which they were overwhelmingly attached to jobs in the expanding industrial sector. They have relocated in large numbers from the South, where their opportunities were more constricted, to the North and West, where they had broader opportunities. As a result of this migration and wages which were higher in the North and West they have succeeded in reducing the income gap. We have seen in Chapter II

¹C. Wright Mills, White Collar, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. xx.

that internal migration has accounted for a substantial part of the gains registered by the black community, probably more of the total gains than a move towards equality within particular regions.

Various sectors of the black community have made somewhat uneven progress toward equality with their white counterparts. Complete families and those in the North and West have closed the income gap more than broken families and those in the South. Black women are substantially closer to their white sisters in income, educational attainment, and occupational position than black men are to their white counterparts. In fact, black female college graduates currently earn more than their white counterparts. A noticeable improvement in the position of younger black male workers has been witnessed in the late 1960's. Evidence is also building of substantial improvements in the position of educated black men, who have long suffered the greatest relative disadvantage economically.

Despite substantial progress in educational attainment and occupational upgrading, the Negro was so far behind at the start of this century that he still remains far behind. Both overt and covert forms of discrimination have no doubt had a sizable effect, on educational, employment and income patterns. It is difficult to disentangle the role of any individual factor. Lack of opportunities have discouraged favorable work attitudes, while poor work attitudes help to provide a rationalization or justification for discrimination. Previously the unclear value of additional education, particularly for black men, has reduced motivation to stay in school. Recently the educational gap has almost vanished among young blacks 25 years and under. Nevertheless, Duncan calculated that

"Even if Negroes in their teens were to begin immediately to match the educational attainment of white children, with the equalization persisting indefinitely we shall have to wait fifty years for the last of the cohorts manifesting race differentials to reach retirement age."² The relative lack of education helps to explain the lower occupational levels of Negro men. However, as we have seen from the Wohlsetter and Coleman study, both educational and occupational attainment only explain about a third of the difference in income among black and white men (while they explain almost all of the difference among black and white women).

Although most blacks have improved their socioeconomic position relative to whites, a minority have fallen behind. Significant among this group are female-headed families, which increasingly find themselves in poverty. Poor black families break under the responsibility imposed by a large number of children. A fundamental cause of this breakup appears to be the low income and high unemployment of Negro males as well as high geographical mobility and other as yet unascertained reasons. In many broken families youngsters may not receive the emotional and economic support necessary for the development of work attitudes and skills essential for upgrading future generations of black youths.

Prospects for the Future

What are the prospects for the Negro in America, particularly the lower-class Negro?

As has been stressed in this study, the interpretation of the

²Otis Dudley Duncan, "Population Trends, Mobility and Social Change," quoted in C. Franklin Edwards, "Community and Class Realities: The Ordeal of Change" in Talcott Parson, ed., The Negro American, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 298.

"black problem" as one which is intrinsically unique and fundamentally different from the predicament of all previously lower-income minorities has subsequently led some social observers to view the problem of the lower income Negro as essentially a problem of racial discrimination.³

This interpretation clouds the similarities between the black man in America and other ethnic minorities. Handlin says concerning Negroes and Puerto Ricans, that "the experience of the past offers a solid basis for the belief that the newest immigrants to a great metropolis will play as useful a role as any of their predecessors; they themselves need only show the will and energy and their neighbors the tolerance to make it possible".⁴

This socio-historical perspective does not deny that Negroes bring with them different traditions, strengths and historical experiences than other groups. No doubt, some of the previous immigrants such as the Jews and Japanese, have had long traditions of education, occupational achievement and family solidarity to support upward mobility, while others

³The Report of the National Advisory Commission has subscribed to this approach stating: "Racial discrimination is undoubtedly the second major reason why the Negro has been unable to escape from poverty. The structure of discrimination has persistently renewed his opportunities and restricted his prospects. Well before the high tide of immigration from overseas, Negroes were already relegated to the poorly paid, low status occupationEuropean immigrants, too, suffered from discrimination, but never was it so pervasive as the prejudice against color in America which has formed a ban to advancement, unlike any other." Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), pp. 278-79.

⁴Oscar Handlin, The Newcomers, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 39.

such as Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican-Americans may lack some of these cultural reinforcements. Nevertheless, in many ways the Negro is like his forerunners from other ethnic minorities, migrating from agricultural to industrial poverty.

Tocqueville, writing about the slums of the large American cities, with their population of both freed Negroes and European immigrants, had this to say:

There is a crowd of Europeans driven by misfortune or misbehavior to the shores of the New World; such men carry our worst voices to the United States without any of those interests which might counteract their influence. Living in the land without being citizens, they are ready to profit from all the passions that agitate it; thus quite recently there have been serious riots in Philadelphia and New York. Such disorders are unknown in the rest of the country, which does not get excited because the populations of the towns do not at present exercise any authority or influence over the country people.⁵

The Irish, Italian, Poles and Jews all constituted for some greater or lesser period of time an ethnic proletariat at the base of a society in which they had little status or voice. Yet everyone in its turn moved into the economic and political mainstream. Each of the minority groups utilized three main modes of movement from the lower classes to the middle class society - illegal but politically protected enterprise, political office and patronage, and labor.⁶ To these three we append also a fourth as the most obvious basis of ascent into the middle class, namely education and the acquisition of skills.

Organized crime syndicates have long had links with political

⁵Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, trans. by George Lawrence, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1969 edition), p. 278.

⁶See also James O'Kane, "Ethnic Mobility and the Lower-Income Negro: A Socio-Historical Perspective", Social Problems 16 (Winter 1969), pp. 302-311.

machines. According to O'Kane it would be fruitless and unrealistic to speak of the ethnic and political movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries without realizing the close connection between these movements and the "shady" and illicit organizations of that era.⁷ Bell also links organized illegality, politics and mobility during the fifties.

There is little question that men of Italian origin appeared in most of the leading roles in the high drama of gambling and mobs, just as twenty years ago the children of East European Jews were the most prominent figure in organized crime, and before that individuals of Irish descent were similarly prominent... It is clear that in the major urban centers there was a distinct ethnic sequence in the modes of obtaining illicit wealth... and that (it) provided considerable leverage for the growth of political influence as well... As in earlier American eras, organized illegality became a stepladder of social ascent.⁸

Although the vast majority of each ethnic group worked their way out of the lower classes concurrent successes in ethnic crime and politics supplied the finances and the political acumen necessary for the mobility of the entire group. Ethnic consciousness and ethnic solidarity were thus strengthened. Once large parts of the entire group moved into the middle class, it no longer had to depend on the functional relationship between crime and politics. This, of course, does not mean that the Negro should pursue crime and politics as routes of upward mobility. Nevertheless, blacks like many lower class ethnic minorities that have gone before them are pursuing these paths.

Politics has recently played an important part. Political successes in Gary, Indiana, Los Angeles, California, Detroit, Michigan and Atlanta, Georgia underscore the fact that the traditional path of

⁷ Ibid., p. 306

⁸ Daniel Bell, The End of Ideology, (New York: The Free Press, 1960), pp. 146-147.

ethnic politics is being utilized. Increasingly among both black militants and moderates there is a growing awareness that the key to success lies not in violence and disorder but rather in political power. It is significant that such militant organizations as the Black Panthers have recently stressed self-help measures and political participation within the system.

Although blacks hold relatively few positions of political power in comparison to their numbers,⁹ there is another dimension of Black Power that perhaps wields more strength. Blake notes that:

The political emphasis of Black Power renews the hope for reform of values as well as behavior. As such, it strikes more deeply at the basis of the problems separating blacks and whites. Black Power advocates also add a strong community orientation to black nationalism. They have not sought to build a unified mass movement around the country, but rather to develop programs and policies relating to the particular needs, conditions, and expressed desires of specific communities.¹⁰

Black Power and black consciousness should be considered as necessary intermediary means to the political effectiveness of the Negro population. Many urban centers either are or soon will be predominantly black. These areas should supply the population base for more black political victories. The Negro is presently actualizing what other minorities have historically accomplished.

The third and most problematic route to upward mobility is labor. The economic expansion of the nineteenth century provided the most obvious channel of upward mobility for the recent immigrants. It

⁹See Hanes Walton, Jr., Black Politics: A Theoretical and Structural Analysis, (Philadelphia: J.P. Lippencott, 1972).

¹⁰J. Herman Blake, "Black Nationalism", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 382 (March 1969) p. 23.

required an abundant supply of cheap and unskilled labor. Although the new immigrants were forced through societal exclusion to work at the most menial and underpaid jobs, the plenitude of unskilled labor enabled the newcomers to place themselves on the lowest rung of the social ladder, no matter how unequally. It also provided a ray of hope if not for the immigrant, at least for his children. Therefore, stable unskilled labor became the basic requirement for mobility, along with ethnic politics and crime.

The Negro, unlike other ethnic minorities that have gone before him, faces the relative disappearance of unskilled occupations. Increasingly the lower income Negro is marginal to the economic structure. In 1966, the U.S. Labor department conducted special surveys of "sub-employment" in selected non-white urban areas for ten major ghetto areas. The average rate of "sub-employment " was 34 percent. According to the Manpower Report of the President for 1967, "one out of every three slum residents who was already a worker, or should and could become one with suitable help was either jobless or not earning enough for living above the poverty level".¹¹ Economic and technological development since World War II have eliminated many of the unskilled and semiskilled jobs that Negroes might have utilized as leverage for subsequent mobility. Without these jobs it is increasingly difficult to climb the class ladder.

The fourth route to upward mobility which is currently being utilized by blacks and which gives rise to optimism for the future is education. For the first time in the history of the Negro population large

¹¹ Sub-employment includes unemployed, part-time workers seeking full-time work, marginal earners, and those either not defined in the labor force or missed in the regular survey. Quoted by John A. Morsell, "Black Progress or Illiberal Rhetoric?" in Crisis (June-July 1973), p. 201.

numbers of black youths are completing high school and attending university. Although attendance and completion rates for blacks are still lower than for the total population, they have exceeded the rates for those of Puerto Rican and Mexican-American origin.¹² Since job requirements are rising in the labor force as a whole, the education of young blacks must continue to rise at a faster than average rate if they are to catch up with their white counterparts. Increasingly education has come to determine what one can accomplish in the job market. The results of educational upgrading in current generations will only manifest itself in the future.

The prospects for the Negro in America are therefore mixed. The middle and working class black has more possibilities open to him than ever before. The members of this sector of the black community have increasingly participated in the economic and social prosperity of contemporary America. The lower income black, on the other hand, has been victimized not only by his color but also by his lower class position. In this respect he remains similar to the Puerto Rican and Mexican American, all of whom are over-represented in the lower class and find mobility difficult.

Brimmer has also observed this trend in a speech entitled "The Economic Progress of Negroes in the United States: The Deepening Schism" delivered at Tuskegee Institute in 1970:

¹²See Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 238, 1972 "Selected Characteristics of Persons and Families of Mexican, Puerto Rican and other Spanish Origin," Table 4 and Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 46, 1972, "The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States", Table 50.

The deepening schism can be traced in a number of 'ways', including the substantial rise in the proportion of Negroes employed in professional and technical jobs - while the proportion in low skilled occupations also edges upward; in the sizable decline in the unemployment while the share of Negroes among the long-term unemployed rises; in the persistence of inequality in income distribution within the black community while a trend toward greater equality is evident among white families; above all in the dramatic deterioration in the position of Negro families headed by females.¹³

It may be surmised that those blacks who are unable to obtain a foothold on the class ladder are increasingly comprising a lumpen-proletariat. They have been so suppressed and demoralized that they often either have dropped out of the labor force altogether or cling only marginally to unskilled employment.¹⁴ A concomitant of such conditions is marital instability and a rise in the percentage of female headed families. Will this become a permanent situation? It appears that the relative disappearance of unskilled jobs might perpetuate a Negro lower class. Upward mobility via unskilled labor is no longer possible. Yet black nationalism and special forms of education in the ghetto might provide another alternative channel of upward mobility. Its success will only be seen in the future.

As the destinies of different classes of Negroes become more diverse, it is unrealistic to make predictions for the black population as

¹³Andrew Brimmer, "Economic Progress of Negroes in the United States: The Deepening Schism", p. 15.

¹⁴It is interesting to note that the typical rioter was better educated, better informed, and geographically more stable than the non-rioter of the same neighborhood. Evidently the non-rioter was so demoralized that even calls to revolution and retaliation were thought to be meaningless. The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), pp. 128-135.

a whole. It does not appear as yet that the expansion of the black middle class which is taking place, is going hand in hand with a diminution of the black lower class. Perhaps the ratio of middle to lower class is what is decisive for blacks as for any ethnic group. By this is meant no more than whether the middle class or lower class is the predominant group.¹⁵ It is suggested that until the middle class ceases to be a minority of the total Negro population the process of social mobility going on in black America will continue to appear as no more than an augmentation of the schism in black America.

The problem of the Negro lower class remains. There are no easy panaceas, conclusions or predictions. It is to be hoped that a new attack on education in the ghetto will fill a void which a simple policy of desegregation will not solve. The Negro deserves preferential treatment in education because his needs are great, but to receive it calls for recognition of his special situation. Encouragingly, both recognition and action have increasingly come from within the black community. Ultimately, though, the welfare of the Negro depends upon the health of the whole economy and its capacity to produce and distribute goods according to an acceptable pattern. Yet this is presently but a remote hope.

The future of the black community is uncertain. However, one conclusion remains clear. Handlin writes that:

Whatever may happen in the most distant future, Negroes will not merge into the rest of the population in the next few decades. Those who desire to eliminate every difference so that all Americans will more nearly resemble each other, those who imagine that there is a main stream into which every

¹⁵There appears to be a critical level after which acculturation proceeds more rapidly. See for instance Zena Smith Blau, "Exposure to Child-rearing Experts: A Structural Interpretation of Class-Color Differences," American Journal of Sociology, 69 (May 1964), pp. 605-607.

element in the society will be swept, are deceived about the character of the country in which they live. As long as memories, experiences, and interests make the Negroes a group, they will find it advantageous to organize and act as such. And the society will better be able to accommodate them as equals on those terms than it could under the pretense that integration could wipe out the past.¹⁶

¹⁶Oscar Handlin, "The Goals of Integration", eds. Talcott Parsons and Kenneth B. Clark, The Negro American, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 675.

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