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Discrepancies in Race, Occupational Prestige Score, Socioeconomic Index, Income/Wealth, and Social Class Between Blacks and Whites

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Discrepancies in Race, Occupational Prestige Score, Socioeconomic Index,

Income/Wealth, and Social Class Between Blacks and Whites

by

Queensley Udofia

M.S., Arizona State University, 1988

B.Ed., Arizona State University, 1984

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy Administration

Walden University

July 2023

Abstract

An argument that has gained prominence recently is that race is/will no longer be a significant factor in explaining any Black - White gaps. The argument is that in the post-Civil Rights era, the implementation of affirmative action and antidiscrimination policies at local, state, and federal levels has closed, if not almost erased, the gaps between Blacks and Whites. Research, however, has disputed the claims of proponents of color-blindness that issues of race are on the decline and will no longer be a factor in explaining racial inequalities between Blacks and Whites. This study used General Social Survey 2021 data to examine discrepancies in race, occupation, socioeconomic index, income/wealth, and social class between Blacks and Whites using multiple regression. The principal finding suggests that the inequalities between Blacks and Whites are not narrowing in 21st-century America. Furthermore, this study suggests that there are still significant differences in class identification between Blacks and Whites, and that factors such as wealth, occupation, income, education, and class origin play a role in determining class identification. Because there is overwhelming support for closing the gap between the wealthy and poor in the country, it is proposed that poor communities have equal access to the same curriculum, resources, and trained, experienced, and caring teachers/staff as wealthy White communities starting with prekindergarten. With the implementation of the best curriculum, a uniform standard for all schools, the same quality and skill programs for minorities as for Whites, and the removal of racialized barriers to education, Black–White inequalities/gaps may begin to close.

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Dedication

To the Glory of GOD, The Father; GOD, The Son, JESUS CHRIST; GOD, The
HOLY SPIRIT; and the Beautiful Memory of our Beloved Son, Brother, and Uncle,
Ekom-Abasi Uko Benjamin Udofia.

Acknowledgments

As I march towards the completion of my PhD program, I give all the glory to God, The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit, who has turned the dream of 33 years ago into a reality. My sincere thanks go to the late Professor Philip Stiles of blessed memory, Department Chair and Professor of Agribusiness at Arizona State University, who, towards the completion of my Master of Science degree in Agribusiness, said he had nominated me for a PhD program in the School of Public Policy and Public Administration. At the time, I had three young children 5 years and under. As a result, I could not pursue the dream. Dr. Stiles would be most happy to finally see the dream he birthed in me become a reality.

My deep appreciation goes also to my dissertation committee chair, Ross C. Alexander, PhD, and committee member, Mark A Stallo, PhD. I thank you both for your support, patience, great suggestions, constructive insights, and guidance. I would not have done it without you. Thanks for your willingness to work with me.

My thanks also go to my dearly beloved late father, Elder Etim Akpan Uko, the man with so many hats—educator; philanthropist; Church caretaker and benefactor; adoptive/foster father to so many; the best tenor I know; politician, when necessary; humorist; and the most intelligent and stylish person I know, a lover of life, and a patient soul.

My late mother, Madam (Lady) Afiong Etim Akpan Uko (nee Ekpo), left us with a legacy of hard work that none of us can match. I know she is always looking down from Heaven and shouting Hallelujah to our risen and glorified Savior each time I reach

another milestone. Graduation will be bittersweet because of her absence. Ma, the values you and Papa inculcated in me have not been wasted, and have brought me this far, and will take me to the end. Thank you.

How can I even begin to acknowledge Engineer Ukoekong-Abasi Benjamin Udofia, my beloved, quiet, dutiful, praying, go getter husband, who with his ministerial and engineering mind, has been my go-to person by day and by night. I thank him for giving me the liberty to be me, picking my brains with hard questions so I can see things from different perspectives, and just giving me all the time and support I need to pursue this program successfully to the end.

Much appreciation also goes to our three awesome and wonderful children, Aniebiet-Abasi, Udeme-Obong, and Ekom-Abasi. They never stopped asking when I was going back to school to fulfill my dreams of many years ago. They have supported and encouraged me in so many ways that it would constitute a full chapter if I were to put it all on paper. I am very appreciative to God and proud of them as I watch them pursue their own dreams and build their families.

I love my children to the moon and back, but there's a new brood arising called grandchildren. I feel so blessed and fulfilled for Kaleb Midoho-Abasi, Josiah James Edikan-Abasi, Kyla Uyai-Abasi, and Micah Ukeme-Abasi. Guys, you, your parents, and future siblings are the reason Grandma sprints out of bed every morning to face the challenges of this PhD program and other tasks. I know you will have quite a story to tell your siblings and cousins as they come along in the future.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

During the era of slavery, African Americans were prohibited from any kind of ownership, including ownership of themselves. After the end of slavery, Jim Crow laws and other racial systems and guidelines made it virtually impossible for Blacks to succeed in business. It also hindered them from creating wealth and overcoming the redlining policies meant to prevent them from obtaining loans from private banks at same interest rate as Whites. They could not live in neighborhoods with appreciating property values like their White counterparts (Fasching-Varner et al., 2015; Hanselman & Fiel, 2017; Ho-Hing, 2019; Iceland, 2019; Kelley & Evans, 2015; Levin, 2018; Martin & Varner, 2017; Nwafor &; Roth, 2016). These hindrances were less conspicuous as they were subtly incorporated into discriminative strategies that were designed to dominate, oppress, and hinder Blacks at all levels, preventing them from experiencing any equal rights. This also resulted in Blacks with comparable college education as Whites experiencing unequal wealth distribution (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Emmons & Ricketts, 2017; Meschede et al, 2017; Roth, 2016). This was not and has not been a matter of Blacks not taking personal responsibility for life outcomes or being unproductive or lazy, according to Sowell (2016), but an implementation of systematic, obstructive strategies designed to frustrate, hinder, and block any socioeconomic gains and aspirations by Blacks (Thomas et al, 2020). These glaring racial inequalities between Blacks and Whites with respect to poverty and affluence were still rampant between 1959 and 2015 (Bonilla-Silva, 2015, 2017; Doane, 2017; Phelan & Link, 2015; Seamster & Ray, 2018; Traub et al, 2017;

Williams, 2019). These racialized structures guaranteed White advantage, dominance, empowerment, and well-being while promoting perpetual Black disadvantage in every socioeconomic measure (Assari, 2018; Assari & Lankarani, 2018; Jackson, 2020; Meschede et al., 2017; Ray, 2019; Sibley & Osborne, 2016; Taylor & Meschede, 2018; Traub et al., 2017). These practices are incompatible with the norms of a country that prides itself as the land of the free and home of the brave (Matias et al, 2017; Spitzer & Land, 2020) and tries wielding worldwide dominance as human rights benefactor.

Another group of researchers (e.g., Hout, 2008) has interpreted data from Blacks and Whites on occupational prestige score, socioeconomic index, income/wealth, and social class from the General Social Survey (GSS) 2021 using multiple and logistic regression. Such researchers have concluded that the effect of race on prestige score, socioeconomic index, income/wealth, and social class indicate that gaps between Blacks and Whites have been declining and that race is no longer a good predictor of class identification, disparities, or gaps. This camp consists of the *post racialists*, who seek to minimize the effect of, and discussion of, race in any post-World War II discourse as insignificant and inconsequential (Schraub, 2017). Supporters of this viewpoint wish that race would be treated like sex or eye color in a colorblind society with little or no racial conflict (Schraub, 2017). Most of all, advocates and supporters of a post-racial color-blind America hold White advantage and White supremacy and are of a privileged class. Neither they nor their ancestors have experienced the inhumane, deplorable, shameful, punishing, appalling, and horrendous actions and/or effects of racism (Bradley, 2019; Jorpey, 2019; Lockhart, 2018; Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019). The purpose of

the current research was to address all these flaws of prior research by Hout and others, using GSS 2021 data to identify and include all key independent, dependent, categorical, and continuous variables. The purpose of this research was to also provide a current review of empirical research literature in an effort to document if there is a difference in race, occupational prestige score, education, academic achievement, socioeconomic status, income/wealth, and social class between Blacks and Whites.

Background

An increasing number of post-racial writers do not want race to be significant or deserving of the attention given it. This movement aims to silence, marginalize, distort, exploit, dehumanize, villainize, besmirch, disparage, destabilize, and sow propaganda in public discourse. It works to repeal gains in civil and human rights and covertly promotes the Whiteness/White supremacy agenda. It also seeks to maintain everyday structural inequalities known in various forms and contexts as color-blindness, multiculturalism, post-racial ideology, and neoliberalist ideology (Anderson, 2017; Da Costa, 2016; Yogeeswaran et al, 2017). This post-racial ideology/politics ignores and heavily discounts present-day realities. These realities include, but are not limited to, the history of discrimination, injustice, marginalization, stigmatization, inhumane treatment and dehumanization of Blacks, race consciousness, and oppression. This philosophy has strongly resonated with the elite Whites' superclass/supremacy, and this dominance is maintained with respect to social class, socioeconomics, education, wealth, access to capital and resources, privileges, and status (Bonilla-Silver, 2017, 2018; Burke, 2017; Da Costa, 2016; Doane, 2017). Color-blind doctrine is rooted in personal responsibility,

merit, individual performance, and hard work. It completely overlooks and justifies

systemic racism and discrimination in employment, promotions, housing, wealth

creation, social status, neighborhood revitalization, school resources/funding, and all

aspects and phases of the American dream. The problem with post racialists' assertions is

that if society is race neutral as they suggest, how else can the disproportionate number of

Blacks in prison, the disproportionate financial and social ruins to Black communities,

the voting restrictions in mostly Black communities, racial profiling by police, and the

unjustifiable killings of Blacks by police be explained?

What happens to the colorblind doctrine when inner-city schools lack basic

resources or graduates of Black colleges cannot get employment in the field of their

training and must settle for anything just to survive? Color-blind strategy seeks to

undermine current daily effects of structural and systemic racism and acknowledges

racism as a thing of the past. It asserts that race is no longer a factor or at best a declining

factor. It posits that race will no longer have any sociological impact on Black Americans

and therefore cannot incorporate into its ideology the ongoing systematic racist practices

in society (Da Costa, 2016). This strategy enables cutbacks on protections against

ingrained racial injustices and discrimination against Blacks while creating more

opportunities for Whites (Berrey, 2015Bonilla-Silva, 2017, 2018; Edelman, 2016; Petts,

2020; Wetts & Willer, 2018). Colorblind doctrine has also been extended into the

academic system with the promotion of diversity and individual choice over race in hopes

that schools and businesses can operate without policy intervention so Blacks can be

constrained in their choice of schools (Berrey, 2015 Burke, 2017; Fiel, 2015; Kelley &

Evans, 2015; Lewis & Cantor, 2016; Peguero & Jiang, 2016). In entertainment-industry entities such as the National Football League (NFL), the predominantly White owners have used the colorblind argument to perpetuate racist and noncommittal ideologies to please the majority White fan base (Brown, 2018; McGannon & Butryn, 2020; Montez de Oca, 2021), although most of the players are Blacks. Since the election of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States, a growing number of proponents of a colorblind society have maintained that racism against Blacks in America is no more a major/significant problem (Alexander, 2018; Kelly, 2020; Kolber, 2017; Lundberg, 2020). These proponents like to reference, out of context, Barack Obama's speech of 2004, where he stated that there is not a Black America, White America, Asian America, or Hispanic America, but the United States of America. The euphoria this statement gave to supporters of equal rights for every American was short lived as American society continues to be marred by openly intensified racial issues, including the birther slander that questioned the legitimacy of Obama's U.S. citizenship and his Affordable Care Act (Hero & Levy, 2016).

Many authors of income and economic analysis have made little or no reference to issues of race even though income and wealth inequalities have been documented to be a function of race (Hero & Levy, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2016). Gilens and Page's (2014) much-publicized article on American politics intentionally eliminated race or ethnicity in alignment with color-blindness and White advantage tenets and strategies (Bernstein, 2018; Brown, 2018; Koechlin, 2019; Monk, 2018). Analyzing U.S. Census data from 1980–2010, Hero and Levy (2016) found that racial inequalities had risen, with

race being a significant factor, contrary to the colorblind theory that race will become less salient. This is at variance with the constitutional protection given to race in the public and private sectors. My research provided a current review of any inequalities or lack thereof and answers the question of whether there is racial inequality in occupational prestige score, education, academic achievement gap, socioeconomic status, income/wealth, and social class between Blacks and Whites.

Problem Statement

The benchmark for inequality and incongruity between Blacks and Whites in the United States has centered on issues such as socioeconomic differences, wealth/wages, income, education, occupation, and social class/status. The inequality in almost every facet of life between African Americans and Whites in the United States has resulted in numerous research into the cause, if any, and remediation, mitigation, and institution of policies at both state and federal government levels (Assari, 2018a; Beshliam, 2019; Brown, 2018; Burke, 2017; Douglas et al., 2017; Emmons & Ricketts, 2017; Herring & Henderson, 2016; Lang & Spitzer, 2020; Maroto, 2016; Thomas et al., 2020). One key barometer is wealth accumulation (Addo et al., 2016; Hanks et al., 2018; Hoover et al., 2018; Kelley & Evans, 2015; Thomas et al., 2020). Racial and ethnic disparities, imbalances, inequalities, and gaps in wealth have been extensively documented (DelRio & Alonso-Villar, 2015; Herring & Henderson, 2016; Jorpey, 2019; Maroto, 2016). From all sources of wealth, including family, friends, large giftings, and foundations, Blacks have 12% less wealth than Whites (Thomas, et al., 2020).

One body of research that has gained prominence recently is used to support the contention that race is/will no longer be a significant factor in explaining any Black–White gaps. The argument is that in the post-Civil Rights era, the implementation of affirmative action and anti-discrimination policies at local, state, and federal levels have closed, if not almost erased, the gaps between Blacks and Whites. Proponents of this view theorize that Blacks complaining of race discrimination in the 21st century are lazy complainers looking for entitlements who are devoid of work ethics and cannot and will not produce as Whites do. They also argue that Blacks are irresponsible and need to take responsibility for their actions, fate, and shortcomings because their state in life has nothing to do with race or skin color (Gilens & Page, 2014; Hout, 2008; Sowell, 2016). Sowell (2016) posited that America is now a post-World War II society with racial issues in the past and that Black Americans should stop playing the race card. The increasing prevalence of this view could have enormous policy ramifications at the local, state, and federal levels for all private and public entities.

Other research has disputed the claims of proponents of color-blindness that issues of race are on the decline and will no longer be a factor in explaining racial inequalities between Blacks and Whites. Their research has documented the cumulative and accretion effects of discrimination (Emmons & Ricketts, 2017; Tatjana et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2020; Traub, et at., 2017; Wilson, 2018; Wolla & Sullivan, 2017). The United States has a long heritage of being beset by problems of racial inequality with conspicuous and clandestine forms of structural practices to bolster and entrench White

advantage, dominance, and superiority (Berrey, 2015; Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Edelman, 2016; Hanks et al., 2018; Lowe & Wallace, 2017).

Purpose of the Study

This was a quantitative study using GSS 2021 data to address shortcomings of prior research by Hout (2008) and others that posited that the effect of race is declining and soon will no longer be salient in issues of Black and White inequality. In this dissertation, I provide a current review of empirical research literature and seek to answer the question of whether there is a difference in race, occupational prestige score, education, academic achievement, socioeconomic status, income/wealth, and social class between Blacks and Whites. In addition, I showed whether any racial gaps are declining, as those who argue for the declining significance of race and the post-racial argument contend (Alexander, 2018; Emmons & Ricketts, 2017; Hartmann, et al., 2017; Hoover, et al., 2018; Jones, et al., 2016; Kolber, 2017; Lang & Spitzer, 2020; Lundberg, 2020; Powers, et al., 2016; Thomas et al., 2020;), or whether they are increasing or staying the same or flat, using multiple and logistic regression with the most current data from GSS 2021. This study extends the body of knowledge on the differences or lack thereof between Blacks and Whites in 21st-century America in terms of the socioeconomic index, status, and class. Should the analysis show any racial gaps between Whites and Blacks, I will provide and articulate guidelines for public policy and thought leaders for ameliorating any damaging effects of racism, resulting in the America everyone deserves. Unlike prior research, if there was a spouse, the highest education in the family was used, and the income was combined, not averaged, to be fair to the stay-at-home spouse

concept. It evaluated whether gaps between Black and White are expanding, contracting, or staying the same over the life course, with values statistically significant at $p < .05$. This study closely mirrored society as much as possible in their lived experiences. I will provide guidelines for dismantling the roadblocks from early childhood education, so that members of all minority groups acquire the skills, resources, and tools necessary to participate in the free-market economy and compete unhindered equally in the 21st century and beyond.

To compare my research with Hout (2008) and others' analysis stating that race is no longer salient to occupational prestige score, socioeconomic index, income/wealth, and social class for Blacks and Whites, the dependent variable was respondents' class identification (upper class, middle class, working class, or lower class). The independent variables were racial identity, education, family income, family wealth, employment status (self-employed, regular employment), and occupation. Education was a categorical variable for the selected educational level. Occupation and degrees obtained were further subdivided into categories reflective of society.

If data were collected in the GSS 2021 survey, I measured Black–White earnings disparity as an additional dependent variable and occupational race segregation as the corresponding independent variable.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1: What are the odds of self-identified Whites and Blacks identifying as middle class or upper class after controlling for class position and class origin?

H01: Self-identified Blacks and Whites do not have significantly different probability of identifying as middle class or upper class when class positions and class origins are controlled.

Ha1: Self-identified Blacks and Whites have significantly different probability of identifying as middle class or upper class when class positions and class origins are controlled.

RQ2: Does an individual's wealth, occupation, income, and education affect class identification?

H02: An individual's wealth, occupation, income, and education do not have significant effects on class identification.

Ha2: An individual's wealth, occupation, income, and education have significant effects on class identification.

RQ3: Is there an effect of class origin on class identification:

H03: Respondents' class origin does not affect their class identification.

Ha3: Respondents' class origin significantly affects their class identification.

RQ4: Is there a declining effect of race?

H04: There is a declining effect of race.

H0 4: There is no declining effect of race.

RQ5: Are the inequalities between Blacks and Whites narrowing?

H05: Inequalities between Blacks and Whites are narrowing.

Ha5: Inequalities between Blacks and Whites are not narrowing.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

The theoretical framework was critical race theory, which provides immense and invaluable information on the beginnings, operations, and ramifications of systematized racism in United State. It traces its original work to Du Bois (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011; Du Bois, 2012) who in his critical race theory articulated that whiteness is like an asset with accruing advantages integrated into the society and legitimized by legal and structural underpinnings, the U.S. Constitution, and ideologies put in place by Whites to guarantee, maintain, and sustain racial dominance and supremacy (Bonilla-Silva 2001, 2015; Cose, 1993; Du Bois, 1905; Embrick & Moore, 2020; Jones et al., 2015; Lowe &; Traub, et al., 2017; Wallace, 2017). Central to this theory is White privilege in social, cultural, economic, and political life, which is considered as a natural entitlement. White privilege is a covert, systematic racial inequality operating below the conscious level (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Lowe & Wallace, 2017). It disguises itself in strategies such as colorblind racism. It is ubiquitously interwoven into everyday norms and taken for granted (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Embrick & Moore, 2020; Hanks, et al., 2018; Lang & Spitzer, 2020; Lowe & Wallace, 2017). These racial structures or White advantage systems are evident in education, employment, housing, family wealth and income, the labor market, and the criminal justice system (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Lowe & Wallace, 2017; Moore-Berg & Karpinski, 2019; Wetts & Willer, 2018; Wilson, 2018).

Nature of the Study

There is a trending body of research promoting the narrative that the effects of race on prestige score, socioeconomic index, income/wealth, and social class between

Blacks and Whites have been declining and that race is no longer a good predictor of Blacks' and Whites' class identification, disparities, or gaps. The post r*acialists* seek to reduce the effect of the discussion of race in any post-World War II discourse as insignificant and inconsequential (Hout, 2008; Schraub, 2017). Some authors of income and economic analysis have made little or no reference to issues of race even though income and wealth inequalities have been documented to be a function of race (Pew Research Center, 2016). Gilens and Page's (2014) much publicized article on American politics intentionally eliminated and avoided race or ethnicity in alignment with color-blindness and White advantage tenets and strategies (Hero & Levy, 2016).

This study joins the rigorous quantitative research that has characterized the critical race theory of Black and White inequality to guide my comprehensive evaluation and exhaustive analysis of trends or lack thereof in earnings, socioeconomic index, education, housing, employment, status, and class using the most current available GSS data. Should the analysis show any racial gaps between Blacks and Whites, I will provide and articulate guidelines to public policy and thought leaders for amelioration.

Class as specified by the survey participants will be used for the dependent variable. The independent variables will be racial identity, education, family income, family wealth, employment status (self-employed, regular employment), and occupation. Education will be a categorical variable for the selected educational levels. Occupation and degree will be further subdivided into categories reflective of society. Given that data were collected in the GSS 2021 survey, I will measure the Black–White wage/earnings

disparities as additional dependent variables and occupational race segregation as the corresponding independent variables.

Definitions

Racism: Refers to the subtle, deceitful, dishonest, cruel, callous, morally wrong, appalling, horrific, and horrible instrument of repression, suppression, and exploitation. It is a violation of basic human rights. Often, the beneficiaries from economic, social, and political domination, accumulated structural advantage, and power do not acknowledge its harmful effects because it is woven into the structure and framework of everyday life and race-neutral policies (Bradley, 2019; Merolla & Jackson, 2019).

Colorblind: Colorblind racism is a systemic and institutionalized tool that provides Whites the strategic argument to justify White supremacy and the cumulative benefits while denying and minimizing the presence of racism, racial prejudice, and any form of discrimination (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Brown, 2018; Burke, 2017; Doane, 2017; Hartmann, et al., 2017; Mueller, 2017). It operates covertly in a subtle and less obvious manner, denying the importance of race and racial inequality, while promoting, defending, and upholding White supremacy and social injustice tenets (Perez, 2017). Colorblind racism has shifted from overt to more covert ways in every facet of society to suppress minority rights and protect White supremacy and benefits (al-Gharbi, 2019; Anderson, 2015; Anderson 2017; Burke, 2017; Fiel, 2015; Forman & Lewis, 2015; Mueller, 2017; Traub, et al., 2017; Wesley & Peterson, 2017; Wetts & Willer, 2018;).

Gaptors: Individuals or entities committed by their actions to help narrow the socioeconomic gaps between rich and poor Americans.

Gaptee: Those helped by gaptors to narrow their socioeconomic gaps.

Assumptions

The primary assumption of this research was that the 2021 GSS data were very representative of the country and demographics being analyzed. I assumed that the sample size would be representative of the population in evaluating Black and White inequality, trends, or lack thereof in earnings, socioeconomic index, education, housing, employment, status, and class using the most current data available. This was necessary to determine if there is a racial gap or race is no longer a significant factor in post-World War II America in understanding issues and gaps (if any) in earnings, socioeconomic index, education, housing, employment, status, and class.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the research study entailed the Blacks and Whites who participated in the 2021 GSS. These data were chosen because the post-World War II (colorblind) advocates posit that race is no longer significant in any Black and White issues while another group of researchers maintain that race and racial discrimination permeate every facet of socioeconomics, occupations, employment, class, and status, with an increasingly widening gap. My focus was an objective, quantitative evaluation of both claims to determine the current position.

The 2021 GSS data has information on other ethnic/racial groups. However, information on other ethnic or minority groups was not applicable to the data being analyzed.

Limitations

One limitation of the research study was the potential that the research design and methodology were not encompassing enough to capture all the issues on both sides of the discussion. Another limitation of the study was that I might have to collapse the four class categories into lower or working class and middle or upper class, as previous researchers had (e.g., Hout, 2008; Speer, 2016). Researcher bias was another bias because as an African American woman, I have lived many experiences of racial inequality, discrimination, and police racial profiling, as well as the unjustified and brutal murder of a family member. As a researcher committed to accurate and rigorous analysis, I bracketed this out so as not to skew the analysis and result (Bradley, 2019; Card & Giuliano, 2016).

Significance

In this study, I sought to provide a current understanding, review, and in-depth analysis of differences or lack thereof in race, occupational prestige score, education, academic achievement gap, socioeconomic status, income/wealth, and social class between Blacks and Whites in 21st-century America. One group of researchers postulates that racial gaps are declining according to the declining significance of race in the post-racial argument (Hout, 2008; Thomas et al., 2020). Another group of researchers postulates that there is still an ever-increasing racial gap with respect to occupational prestige score, education, academic achievement gap, socioeconomic status, income/wealth, and social class between Blacks and Whites (Blaisdell, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020; Chengedt et al., 2019; Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 2019; Jorpey, 2019;

Lockhart, 2018; Lowe & Wallace, 2017; Park et al., 2019; Speer, 2016; Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019).

      In this study, I present an accurate, in-depth, and current assessment of racial issues in Black and White occupational prestige scores, education, academic achievement, socioeconomic status, income/wealth, and social class; identify underlying problems; and recommend resolutions for well-meaning advocates, policymakers, and thought leaders. This study adds to the existing body of knowledge, promoting substantive, quantifiable, and verifiable social change that will translate into desirable outcomes in communities and the country. I do not seek to specify an end date to racial gaps but to provide a template or roadmap for closing the racial gaps and making real changes in education.

      Through this research study, I hope to determine whether the implementation of the best curriculum, a uniform standard for all schools, the same quality and skill programs for minorities as for Whites, removal of social differential, racialized barriers, and structures to education will start closing the gap in education. The quality of education is largely responsible for the widening gap in test scores (Becares & Priest, 2015; Davis, 2016; Fiel, 2015; Glock & Klapproth, 2017; Lang & Spitzer, 2020; Little, 2017; Mangino, 2019; Merolla, 2018; Merolla & Jackson, 2019; Morris, 2017; Potter et al., 2016; Quinn, 2015). Creating programs that help minority students have the required skill sets through additional tutoring, coaching, and mentoring before going into colleges, universities, trades, and technical colleges will help prepare students for achievements, skill sets, and success (Beattie, 2017; Clauset et al., 2015; Gollner et al., 2018; Valentino,

2018; Wolla & Sullivan, 2017). Partnering with CEOs of major corporations to prepare 2- to 3-minute "stay in school and strive to be the best" infomercials to be played in schools would be an avenue that can be utilized to improve students' skill sets and education. Popular celebrities would be recruited to promote this new system to counteract the detractors who do not want minority children to succeed by spinning this as Big Brother taking over "our" school system (Berends, 2015; Headworth & Freese, 2015; Pinheiro et al., 2017). Students would be tracked through university graduate and postgraduate programs into employment to measure whether racial gaps are closing with respect to occupational prestige score, education, academic achievement gap, employment, socioeconomic status, income/wealth, and social class between Blacks and Whites (Blake, 2018; Downer et al., 2016; Hanselman & Fiel, 2017; Kozlowski, 2015; Mangino, 2019; Morgan et al., 2016; Palardy et al., 2015; Potter & Morris, 2017; Shores et al., 2020). The result of this study will support the elimination of discipline gaps, teacher bias, and school policies that exist between Blacks and Whites. Black students are 3 times more likely to be suspended from school than White students for the same infractions (Balfanz et al., 2015; Barrett et al, 2017; Losen et al., 2015; Okonofua et al., 2016; Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015).

The fact is that 64% of Americans favor closing the achievement gap between the wealthy and poor, but only 36% favor closing the Black–White achievement gap (Archer, 2020; Derenoncourt & Montialoux, 2021; Fiel, 2015; Kuhn et al., 2020; LaMont, 2019; Rowe, 2021; Zietlow, 2020). This partially explains why there has been little progress to narrow the targeted Black–White education gap. Wealth, socioeconomic status, and class

identification have been shown to directly correlate with race and ethnicity. This

sentiment has national support from politicians, policymakers, and community

leaders/representatives. Targeted universalism, as a method of closing the racial-wealth

gap, was proposed by John A. Powell of The Haas Institute in 2012 and has been written

about yearly since then through 2021 yet remains a nice but unimplemented policy

suggestion for social change (Hanks et al., 2018). The goal is for every student to have

equal access to the same curriculum, resources, and trained and experienced

teachers/staff as wealthy communities and is not immediate student integration (Bell,

2019; Thompson & McDonald, 2016; Wolla & Sullivan, 2017). Action is needed now if

this issue is to go beyond academic essay and policy discussion to implementation with

quantifiable and verifiable results. I propose that my social change be applied to all poor

and underperforming schools starting with pre-K. This will drastically improve the

probability of being adopted nationwide with significant results towards closing the

achievement gap for the poor, including minorities, using the metaphor that "a rising tide

lifts all boats" (Wilson, 2018). The 2012 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll indicated 97%

support for improving urban schools, but only 62% of respondents were willing to accept

a tax increase in support of the proposal. It is better to make incremental progress now

than wait for drawn-out debates in the hands of those who do not like race to be brought

into the discussion. Implementing my plan as laid out in my published article will

increase the high-skill pool to a point where much of the critical high-talent pool is not

imported from overseas. This will benefit national and homeland security, high

technology companies, and the socioeconomic health of the country. This will be in line

with the country's support for class-based economic policies that will unite rather than divide the races.

Summary

The post-World War II (colorblind) theorists advocate that race is no longer significant in any Black and White issues while opponents maintain that race and racial discrimination permeate every facet of the socioeconomics, occupations, employment, class, and status, with an increasingly widening gap. The purpose of this study was to present an accurate, in-depth, and current assessment of racial issues in Black and White occupational prestige scores, education, academic achievement, socioeconomic status, income/wealth, and social class. I also sought to identify underlying problems and recommend resolutions for well-meaning advocates, policymakers, and thought leaders. I seek to add to the existing body of knowledge, promoting substantive, quantifiable, and verifiable social change that will translate into the desirable outcomes within the communities and the country at large. In this chapter, I used a quantitative statistical in-depth analysis and evaluation of both claims to determine the current position. I used critical race theory to give more clarity to the origin and issues of racial inequalities between Blacks and Whites in the United States. In addition, I reviewed current literature, which will be documented in detail in Chapter 2. The information provided supports the significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The theory of a post-World War II colorblind society is a tenet, teaching, creed, and dogma whose proponents find other covert ways to practice racial inequality by denying the importance of race as a factor in the ever-widening gap of inequality between Blacks and Whites (Bonilla-Silva, 2017, 2018; Doane, 2017). It still operates with the same end goal of white dominance, white privilege, Black marginalization, social injustice, and systematic oppression. This is even evident in the legal and judicial systems that unfairly and disproportionately target people of color, and in policies at all levels of public and private sectors that are systematically against equality for Blacks (Arnett, 2021; Bell, 2019; Brown, 2018; Iceland, 2019; Jorpey, 2019; Tyner, 2020). Blacks are still crying to be recognized and accepted as being as fully human as Whites. They lament the questioning of their Blackness and are subjected to endless violence and police brutality with guns and police dogs. Blacks face structural and systemic racism, exploitation, oppression, and discrimination. They are oftentimes segregated into extremely poor neighborhoods and forced to live in White-owned very high rent, high-rise ghettos in deplorable apartments that the owners refuse to maintain (Assari, 2018a; Grell-Brisk, 2021). Government- and state-approved programs and policies support the under resourcing of schools and community health programs, voting discrimination and suppression, employment discrimination, and unjustified mass incarceration (Grell-Brisk, 2021; Jackson, 2020; Lockhart, 2018; Mears et al, 2016; Schneider, 2022; Spitzer & Land, 2020; Taylor, 2016). More and more Whites are embracing and accepting the

colorblind doctrine, tenets, and teaching that race can be ignored in everyday life

(Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Mueller, 2017). Central in the colorblind doctrine is that it is in

place for the protection of White power and privilege (Wetts & Willer, 2018). By not

seeing, minimizing, or eliminating any discourse on race, proponents of colorblindness

distort issues on racial dynamics and inequalities. These inequalities are still manifested

in lived factual structural experiences. As a result, Blacks continue to lag behind in access

to health care and mental health treatments. Schools in Black neighborhoods are poor and

under resourced. This leads to poor educational achievements, which in turn hamper the

ability of Blacks to compete for high-paying and lucrative jobs. Color-blind theory has

also been documented in housing discrimination and the criminal justice system (Bonilla-

Silva, 2015; Davis, 2019; Geary, 2018; Gonzalez, 2017; Johnson, 2019; Murphey, 2018;

Slack et al, 2020; Williams, 2019). Color-blind doctrine indicates that racial inequalities

happened only in the pre-World War II era. It further posits that any more protections

against racial injustices and discrimination are unnecessary and could adversely affect

Whites, White privilege, and White advantage (al-Gharbi, 2019; Berrey, 2015; Bonilla-

Silva, 2017; Edelman, 2016; Forman & Lewis, 2015). Additionally, it posits that the

United States is a post-racial economy, and that the market dynamics can/will correct

racial issues and imbalances. Color-blind racism affects all forms of operations, and is

most injurious, damaging, and dangerous in that its strategy is undetected as it is woven

into the fabric and facets of everyday life despite all the antiracism legislation (Lowe &

Wallace, 2017). One way in which this is evident is in the Black and White income,

earnings, and wealth inequality gap. My research employed rigorous quantitative

methods to evaluate any effect of race or lack thereof, using among the most current

research data available. The income gap closed a little bit for 20 years after World War II

but is currently wider than it was in 1960 (Bell, 2019; Emmons & Ricketts, 2017; Golan

& Sanders, 2019; Wilson, 2018). Wealth inequality is one of the most important

hindrances to closing the economic gap in America (Hanks, et al., 2018; Lang & Spitzer,

2020; Perez, 2017; Traub, et al., 2017; Wolla & Sullivan, 2017). With all the structural

and systemic discriminatory practices in favor of White advantage and White privilege at

every level of society, 40% of Blacks do not believe the United States will ever attain

racial equality (Pew Research Center, 2016).

Literature Search Strategy

This literature review started with searching scholarly literature databases at

Walden University such as EBSCO, Academic Search Complete/Premier, Educational

Resource Information Center (ERIC), ProQuest Central, SAGE Premier, CINAHL,

Thoreau, PsychINFO, Soc INDEX, Political Science Complete, Science Direct, Business

Source, Public Policy and Administration, Google Scholar, and Annual Reviews. For

current, thorough, and comprehensive research on this topic, I went beyond the scholarly

articles to include governmental and nongovernmental publications. Most of the articles

that I selected for my literature review were peer reviewed due to the high scholarly

standard and rigor these articles are subjected to before publications. I reviewed over 150

articles related to this research topic.

Theoretical Foundation

The United States is a nation plagued by racial inequality. Critical race theory gives an in-depth understanding of the beginning, operations, structural support, and underpinnings of racial inequality, social injustice, criminal justice inequality, White advantage, and color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Cohen, 2013; Du Bois, 2012). Racism permeates and is entangled in all facets of life, programs, policies, education, housing segregation, occupational segregation, the criminal justice system, and employment, which disadvantages Blacks (Lowe & Wallace, 2017). Racial inequality is felt in income gaps between Blacks and Whites. White advantage or "whiteness" is a color-blind ideology, with cumulative invisible assets woven overtly and covertly into every fabric of society (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). This structural ideology and underpinnings provide Whites with unparalleled resources, privilege, power, economic opportunity, income, and wealth creation (Lowe & Wallace, 2017). Whites are overwhelmingly those in power in most institutions in the United States, and a large majority of them are aggressively involved in overt and covert policies, agendas, and propaganda to systematically reduce and deny Blacks' rights in every facet of society (Anderson, 2015). Any form of black joy or achievements is looked down upon with disgust by white advantage (Blaisdell, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020; Dumas, 2016; Dumas & Ross, 2016; Matias, 2016).

Critical race theory employs several avenues to illustrate how racism is entrenched and woven into every fabric of society and institutions such as culture, education, socioeconomics, class, wealth, occupations, and the justice system (Delgado &

Stefancic, 2017; Dumas, 2016). White advantage and superiority lead to White rage at anything ceremonious about Blacks. They are also seen in the disdain of Black joy, unnecessary monitoring, and excessive punishments of Blacks (Annamma, 2017; Blaisdell, 2020; Love, 2019; Richards, 2017; Yancy, 2017), as well as in unnecessary policing and profiling of Blacks (Embrick, 2015). This disdain of Blacks can be seen in incidents of Blacks being assaulted/attacked just for getting together for a picnic (Levin, 2018), waiting in the restaurant for an appointment (Miller, 2018), or just napping in the university student recreation area (Wootson, 2019). This disdain and anti-Blackness are also seen in the amount of unjustified violence and insults toward Black teachers and administrators (Blaisdell, 2020; Brown, 2018; Dumas & Ross, 2016; Kohli, 2018; Sung & Allen-Handy, 2019).

The second theoretical framework for this study was Bonilla-Silva's (2001) conception of racialized social systems. These social systems are "communities or societies in which economic, political, social, and ideological levels are partially structured by placement of actors in racial categories or races" (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). The placement is inherently ranked, ordered, or stratified to grant and vouchsafe advantage and privileges for White Americans and disadvantage for Blacks and people of color. Bonilla-Silva posited that even when specific dynamics and racial manifestations change as time progresses, the ranking and vesting of racial groups remain unchanged (Merolla & Jackson, 2019). This may manifest in prejudice, discrimination, educational inequality, wealth inequality, achievement gaps, and color-blind policies that disadvantage minorities (Lukacho, Hatzenbuehler, & Keys, 2014; Merolla & Jackson, 2019). Seamster

and Ray (2018) posit that the racialized social system in America is the primary cause of racial inequality in educational outcomes. Whites on average have unfettered access to all kinds of resources, thus the persistence of White advantage and dominance in all facets of society (Merolla & Jackson, 2019). Bonilla-Silva (2015) conceptualized color-blind racism as a scheme, arrangement, or system to link individual racial perspective to a comprehensive and far-reaching systemic racial structure. Historically, racial oppression has been entrenched in all facets of U.S. life—socioeconomics, politics, family, education, housing, and the labor market (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011). The governing racial ideology is color-blind racism, advocating free choice, minimizing the impact and existence of racism, and thus aiding the perpetuation, preservation, and continuity of White supremacy (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Color-blind doctrine does not acknowledge racial discrimination or take any actions to curb racism or work towards racial equality (Garibay et al., 2020).

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts.

Brief History of Wealth Inequality Between Black and White Americans

Since 1619, when the first slaves arrived in Jamestown, Virginia, and through the centuries, government policies have prevented wealth building by Blacks while strengthening, supporting, and encouraging Whites. Blacks were chattel properties, and not humans with rights as citizens. The Constitution gave property rights and protection to slave owners. Blacks did not even own their own bodies. They were exploited, dehumanized, raped, and plundered by force/violence, even after the Emancipation Proclamation (Nierenberg, 2020; Jefferson-Jones, 2021; Lawrence, 2020; Warren, 2020;

Harrell, 2020; Wilson, 2018; Henricks, 2018; Hunt II, 2020; Reece, 2020; Zietlow, 2020;

Logan, 2019; Ogungbure, 2019).

Beginning with the New Deal through World War II, the federal government

created programs and policies that created wealth through education, home ownership,

Social Security, a minimum wage, and collective bargaining programs that were race

neutral, but the legislation purposely did not include workers on farms, where most

Blacks were employed. Blacks could not have retirement, unemployment, disability,

death of breadwinner, or any other benefits that were available to Whites. Again, Blacks

were discriminated against, denied their rights, and shut out of any of the programs that

created the White middle class. In 1938, Congress enacted the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The act covered minimum wage and working conditions, but the Southern Democrats in

Congress would only give their support if the existing racial hierarchy called Jim Crow

was preserved (Derenoncourt & Montialoux, 2021; Eargle, 2016; Martinez-Matsuda,

2019; Rauchway, 2019; Thelen, 2019).

From the inception of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) program for

low-cost government backed financing to increase home ownership and build wealth,

Blacks were denied loans under the premise that lending to Blacks is too risky. They

were also forced to buy homes with declining values on contracts that ultimately led to

foreclosures. Whites were given these loans to buy homes in the suburbs and move away

from Black people in urban areas. This was the beginning of racial segregation, urban

blight, and poverty. Whites moved to the suburbs, where homes appreciated in value,

thereby creating wealth, while Blacks resided in the segregated urban blight

neighborhoods with declining property value and no home equity. This led to many foreclosures (Archer, 2020; Graff, 2019; Hanley, 2019). In the first 30 years of the FHA loan program, only 2% of the loans were awarded to Blacks. FHA developed a rating system where communities with most Black Americans or Black-leaning communities were rated as risky for government loan investment; thus, the term "redlining" was coined because it caused Blacks to be denied loans (Archer, 2020; Martin & Varner, 2017; McCardle, 2017). FHA was responsible for this discriminatory policy against Blacks, and its discriminating system was adopted by other financial institutions (Gordon & Bruch, 2020; Killewald & Bryan, 2020). Blacks were shut out from decades of wealth-creating opportunities.

In 1944, the GI Bill was the largest national program targeted by the government to help veterans, but Congress left the implementation and oversight to the local governments. Once again, Black veterans were denied benefits such as home and business loans, job training, tuition, and college admissions to White-only colleges and universities (Harris, 2021; McCardle, 2017). There were 3,229 GI Bills given to guarantee loans for homes and businesses in Mississippi in 1947, but only two were given to Black veterans. This program resulted in an unparalleled abundance of money and resources for education, job training, good employment, business ownerships, access to financial capital, and resources for veterans. The free flow of these funds established Whites in suburbs that created wealth for them. This led to a generation that built the American White middle class while Blacks were left out and denied participation due to discrimination and racism just for being Black (Koechlin, 2019).

From 1935 through 1965, these enormous government programs with accompanying massive financial transfers were instrumental in creating the White middle class, but the government racial and discriminatory policies and structures disadvantaged Blacks. This was White affirmative action, and the Black affirmative action of today pales in significance to what Whites received for decades (Hanks et al., 2018). These programs gave Whites the greatest advantage in all the socioeconomic indices. With Blacks left out of decades and centuries of wealth building, the racial wealth, income, and socioeconomic gap between Blacks and Whites kept widening. Blacks had extraordinarily little access to home ownership and were forced by Whites via threat of bodily harm and extreme violence into segregated and concentrated, very high-rent, high-rise apartments owned by Whites. This gave birth to ghettos with massive policing, police brutality, White supremacy, and domination, in order to contain and control Blacks within these segregated communities in major cities of America (Martin & Varner, 2017). Black bodies were criminalized, stereotyped, and dehumanized so Whites could torture, plunder all Blacks, and rape Black women without impunity, guilt, or remorse.

Currently, these government-sanctioned discriminatory, punishing, and damaging practices are no longer legal, but the systemic structures that created White advantage and racial inequality, the wealth gap, marginalization, and massive and unjust imprisonment of Blacks continue in race-neutral or color-blind practices and policies through White advantage with the same racist results (Hanks et al., 2018; Koechlin, 2019). From 1980 through 2015, the wealth of White families increased by 84%, and that of Blacks increased by only 28% (Hanks et al., 2018).

Race, Wealth, and Class in the 21st Century

Quantitative research over the last 65 years documents that class identities of

African Americans are a function of lived experiences of systemic, intentional, racial

inequality and discrimination (Jackson, 2020; Pew Research Center, 2016; Speer, 2016).

Studies have refuted Hout's (2008) claims that race may no longer be a factor in class

identification using GSS 2006 data and previous studies on class position and class

identification (Speer, 2016). First, upon careful analysis and evaluation of Hout's

scholarly work using the GSS 2006 survey, race was not directly analyzed; rather, it was

coded as "other" and "Black." Thus, Hout's result on the effect of race was not accurate.

Second, the question of wealth was directly excluded. Speer (2016) found that even

college-educated Blacks had only 23% of the net worth of Whites and only 0.8% of the

financial assets. This confirms the wealth inequality between Blacks and Whites. Third,

other than that of Speer, no research has statistically evaluated the joint impact of racial

identification and class origin to predict class identity. Based on the identified

weaknesses above, Hout (2008) results are less likely to be generalized due to incomplete

design that generated erroneous results.

Iceland (2019) examined poverty and affluence using data from the U.S. Census

and the American Community Survey over the period covering 1959–2015. He found

considerable racial prejudice, inequity, imbalance, and disproportion in all socioeconomic

categories such as racial discrimination, inequality in earnings, wealth, affluence, and

poverty. No narrowing of the gaps has been supported or documented in other research

(Eargle, 2016; Derenoncourt & Montialoux, 2021; Gordon & Bruch, 2020; Graff, 2019;

Iceland, 2019; Killewald & Bryan, 2020; Kim et al., 2017; Martinez-Matsuda, 2019;

Rauchway, 2019; Thelen, 2019). The *Saint Louis University Law Journal* (Pantin, 2018)

found that in 2011, on average, a typical black family's median earning was about 70

cents for every dollar for a White family (Arnett, 2021; Jorpey, 2019; Kuhfield et al.,

2018; Meschede et al., 2017; Slack, et al., 2020; Tyner, 2020; Wagner, 2017). In 2013,

the average White family's wealth was more than $500,000 higher than the average

Black family's wealth of $95,000 (Aliprantis & Carroll. 2019; Pantin, 2018; Thomas et

al., 2020; Yang, et. al., 2020).

During the color-blind post-racial era, the racial gap reached an all-time high in

2016. On the average, White households had seven times the wealth of Black households,

which was over $700,000 higher than Blacks (Bell, 2019; Iceland, 2019; Kuhn, et al.,

2020; Pantin, 2018; Taylor and Meschede, 2018; William, 2019). Economists have

calculated that it will take the Black American household 228 years to accumulate the

amount of wealth the average White American has at present (Graff, 2019; Harris, 2021;

Killewald & Bryan, 2018; Tyner, 2020). On the average hourly wage, Whites earn 30

percent more than blacks for comparable work (Golan & Sanders, 2019). In 2016, 12% of

the Black working group made up 26% of the working class and only three percent of

chief executives. On the other hand, 45% of the white working population made up 85%

of the chief executives (Golan & Sanders, 2019). Historians have shown that this

generational wealth accumulation and transfer can be traced back to the U.S. government

exclusionary and discriminatory Social Security Act and legislations that denied coverage

to Blacks of any work benefits such as retirement, disability, or death (Hanley, 2019;

Iceland, 2019; Yang et al., 2020). Following the National Labor Relations Act of 1935,

Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938 but the powerful Southern

Democrats in Congress supported the racial hierarchy (Jim Crow), and white advantage

and supremacy was upheld (Turner et al., 2018; Herring and Henderson, 2016; Triece,

2017). Blacks were eliminated from benefits and protection. Government discriminatory

policies helped Whites move from cities into suburbs while it restricted and quarantined

Blacks in the south to run-down urban areas using redlining and discriminatory

mortgage/housing policies. This greatly disadvantaged Blacks, resulting in under

resourced education, poverty, hazardous living conditions and communities, poor health,

and death (Killewald & Bryan, 2018; William, 2019; Iceland, 2019; Bell, 2019;

Nierenberg, 2020; Lawrence, 2020; Warren, 2020; Wilson, 2018). For the first thirty

years of the FHA loan implementation, only two percent of the loans were given to Black

families. Due to discriminatory policies during the post-World War II, color-blind era,

Congress allowed the G.I. Bill to be administered under the local officials' controls to

appease the racist segment of congress to avoid government monitoring. As a result,

Black veterans were shut out of these programs that launched the middle class (Pantin,

2018; Ogungbure, 2019; Graff, 2019; Archer, 2020; McCardle, 2017; Reece, 2020). This

was one of the greatest tools used by political leaders to widen the wealth gap, institute

overt, covert, U.S. government sanctioned without impunity anti-Black discriminatory

systems for white advantage, supremacy, and dominance into the future. During this

color-blind era, Black veterans were denied housing, job training, loans, tuition,

admission into all white colleges and universities (Miller, 2018; McCardle, 2017; Bell,

2019; Kim et al., 2017; Killewald & Bryan, 2020). If Blacks achieved the same college graduation rate as whites, it would not still result in wealth equality and the trend in gap will continue to increase due to systemic and structural discrimination in every facet of the economy, structural White advantage, and white privilege (Emmons and Ricketts, 2017; Lowe & Wallace, 2017). This has shut Blacks out of profiting in the era that ushered in the great middle class, through getting subsidies, obtaining home/or business loans, owning homes and businesses, wealth creation, intergenerational wealth, and economic development (Herring and Henderson, 2016; Kuhfield et al., 2018; Wagner, 2017). Blacks benefited from the Federal Fair Housing program when it became law in 1968. In this post-World War II era, from 1980 to 2017, researchers further document the social degradation and rising economic inequality in wealth and income of Blacks compared to whites, employment discrimination, and racist structures in the workplace (Assari, 2018; Nwafor & Ho-Hing, 2019; Wesley & Peterson, 2017; Wolla & Sullivan, 2017). The private and state governments' discriminatory policies and racial structures between whites and minorities in access to resources, equal/stable employment resulted in drastic wealth and class inequalities (Speer, 2016). The wealth of the average white families between 1983 and 2013 increased by 84% which is three times more than that of Blacks and it will take the average Black family 200 years to accumulate an equal quantity of wealth (Nwafor & Ho-Hing, 2019; Wesley & Peterson, 2017). Whites in the poverty bracket had control of as many financial assets as the highest earning Blacks (Gordon & Bruch, 2020; Henricks, 2018; Hunt II, 2020; Kuhfield et al., 2018; Slack et al., 2020; Thomas et al., 2020; Tyner, 2020).

The color-blind voices of dissent build upon the declining significance of race that was started by Hout in 2008. This gained momentum after the publication on the very issue by William J. Wilson in 2012. Wilson (2012) stated that the affirmative action policies, civil rights legislation, and the elimination of discrimination in education, employment, housing, and financial access had created the Black middle class. Wilson later modified his work and optimistic prediction of Blacks in post-racial color-blind America to the contrary, but supporters are hanging to his initial declining race significance. Many post-racial narratives are that America has closed her racial divide. Sowell (2016) posits that poverty of Black Americans is not the result of discrimination or exploitation but because of laziness with entitlement mentality. This is a popular view among post-racial and color-blind advocates and is widely taught in universities, graduate, and post graduate economics that race, racism, and a long history of discrimination in America is not a big issue, that the capital market has a remedy for employer/employment discrimination (Emmons & Ricketts, 2017; Koechlin, 2019; Thomas et al. 2020). This theory ignores the centuries of accumulated effect of racism, racial discrimination, exploitation, and inequalities that are duplicating themselves decades after decades in segregated communities, poor and under resourced schools, denied access to better schools with adequate resources, inadequate job skills, income/wealth inequalities, wage and employment discrimination, criminalization of the Black race, and White advantage to mention a few (Baumgartner et al., 2017; Derenocourt & Montialoux, 2021; Gordon & Bruch, 2020; Henricks, 2018; Hunt II, 2020; Ogungbure, 2019).

One aspect of my research will extend the body of knowledge by contributing to current scholarship on Black and White income, earnings, wealth inequality employing rigorous quantitative methods to evaluate any effect of race or lack thereof using one of the most current research data available.

Racial, Educational, Occupational, and Residential Segregation

It is believed by researchers, thought leaders, policymakers, and advocates for progress that quality education is the vehicle that will lift all Americans to success in every area of the socioeconomic status in a society that becomes less divisive and with each passing generation denouncing racism and discrimination of any sort (Cock et al, 2018; Godley et al, 2015; Merolla & Jackson, 2019; Seamster & Ray, 2018). The reality is that inequality and gaps in learning outcomes, achievement and attainment have shown no improvement since the 1970s (Graff, 2019; Killewald & Bryan, 2018; Kuhn et al., 2020; McCardle, 2017). There are overt and covert racial structures that have been set up by race to advantage Whites and disadvantage Blacks so much so that although the economic, social, and economic operations may vary over time, the result is the same in discrimination and prejudice in the school system or use of color-blind diversity in segregation (Curran, 2016; Dee & Penner, 2017; Dever et al., 2016; Edwards, 2020; Gonzalez, 2015; Merolla & Jackson, 2019; Seamster & Ray, 2018). The role structural racism plays in educational inequality and socioeconomic inequality cannot be relieved without the broad elimination of racism. In 2003, 41% of Whites in 8th grade scored at or above proficiency level compared to 14% of Blacks. In 2015 it was 44% of Whites to 16% of Blacks (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018b). In 2012, 41.4% of 13-

year-old white students could solve problems that involved fractions, decimals,

percentages, basic algebra, geometry, reasoning, and mathematics, compared to 33.8% of

Black 17-year-old students (Fasching-Varner et al., 2017; Merolla & Jackson, 2019;

National Center for Education Statistics, 2018c).

Residential segregation is one of the most misunderstood, yet discriminatory,

purposefully crafted, public, and private system aspect of racism in the USA. It was

embedded in the American democracy from its inception with the sole purpose of

marginalizing, reducing access, stifling, and derailing the progress, dreams, and

aspirations of Blacks (Fashching-Varner et al., 2017; Fish, 2019; Martin & Varner,

2017). This has resulted in extremely poor, deprived, underserved/under resourced

schools and communities (especially to children, youth, and elderly), leading to a surge in

law enforcement monitoring, violence against, and unwarranted deaths of Blacks (Assari,

2018a; Martin & Varner, 2017; Zimring, 2017). Black students attend segregated public

preschools that are far more inferior and under resourced compared to what is available to

the advantaged whites and taught by majority white teachers purposefully carrying out

the advantage agenda (Valentino, 2018). Black college graduates find that there are

systemic discrimination and structural obstacles to gainful and meaningful employment

in the labor market, sustained employment, career advancement with budgetary and

managerial responsibilities, acceptance by white peers, and mentoring. Blacks are also

paid much less than fellow whites that started at the same time (Golan, & Sanders, 2019;

McGarry, 2016; McCrate, 2018; Park et al., 2019; Parks, 2017; Thomas et al, 2020;

Wingfield, & Chavez, 2020). In 2016, Blacks made up 12% of the national working

population, 26% of the "truck and tractor operators," and only 3% of "chief executives." Whites made up 4% of the national working population with 85% of the chief executives being Whites who made at least 30% more than their black counterparts at similar levels and positions (Golan & Sanders, 2019). Blacks are systematically denied many high-profile positions, status, jobs/careers with promotional opportunities, and work experiences that could prepare them for those executive positions (Day, 2015). There is also evidence of structural, systemic, entrenched, inequality, and prevalence of discrimination in the Nursing and Midwifery industry (Brathwaite, 2018; Edwards, 2020; De Souza, 2018; Jowsey, 2019; Karan, & Katz, 2020; Kendi, 2017; Kline, 2020; Moorley et al., 2020; Olonisakin, 2020; Stevenson et.al., 2019). Similar structural and systemic hierarchy is also found in other professions/organizations with structures benefiting Whites while Blacks are mostly relegated to "dead end" segregated jobs with no growth potential, advancement potential, or networking and mentorship (Chavez, 2020; Ray, 2019; Wingfield &); Tomaskovic-Devey, & Avent-Holt, 2019; Wooten & Couloute, 2017).

Blacks also experience residential segregation practices through redlining, home purchase discrimination, mortgage loan discrimination, rental access, devaluation of property values during appraisal of homes (Martin & Varner, 2017). For example, in 2021, a Black family in Cincinnati, Ohio, saw the appraised value of their home increase by $92,000 after they hid their Black identity as the homeowners.

In the 21st century America, racism and racial discrimination is very prevalent in subtle, strategic, systemic, and structural ways to promote invisible white advantage, and

oppose anything that might unmask its operation. For example, in 1950, the population of

Cleveland was 28% Black and 71% White. That of Detroit was 16% Black and 83%

White (Triece, 2017). By 2010, the population of Cleveland was 53% Black and 37%

White. In Detroit, it was 82% Black and 10% White (Triece, 2017) due to business

outsourcing and urban blight. This widespread devastation was exacerbated by the 2007-

2009 recession which resulted in excessive foreclosure of Black owned homes because of

the subprime lending mortgage practices many unwitting Blacks were pushed into by

mostly white owned business and financial institutions. The justice department settled

such deceptive practices and racial discrimination with Countrywide Financial, Bank of

America, Ameri Quest Mortgage, and New Century Financial but the media mostly

reported about Blacks abandoning their homes (Feinstein, 2018). There was also a federal

complaint filed against Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac for maintaining homes in White

neighborhoods better than minority neighborhoods. Blacks became a ready target for

structural racism in the housing and finance industries with support from the federal and

state government policymakers without these policymakers addressing the history of

structural racism in the housing and finance industries. Blacks were steered into subprime

loans that charged significantly higher fees and interest rates comparable to those of

White borrowers (Triece, 2017; Feinstein, 2018). Home ownership is one of the keys to

building wealth and Blacks have been systematically denied this opportunity by existing

discriminatory racist policies and practices that hinder Black wealth accumulation (Cheng

et al, 2019; Triece, 2017). Blacks with high incomes have difficulty being accepted into

suburban neighborhoods (Reardon et al., 2015).

Countering the civil rights gains, the Reagan republicans and strategists led the post racial color-blind doctrine/theory. They bypassed the laws and entrenched the system of systematic racism, white racial privilege, and White advantage into every facet of society (Martin & Varner, 2017). Color-blind ideology sees Whiteness as moral and ethical, a right that is not racist and only a problem from a very few on the fringes, but not a widespread calculated design that rationalizes their actions. It stereotypes Blacks and enact policies that promote White advantage as individual choices unmotivated by racism. While few whites have acknowledged that racism with its discriminatory policies and practices exist, even fewer are willing to admit that the main cause of gaps in educational quality, achievement, access to resources, and White advantage are due to these discriminatory and oppressive practices and exercise (Assari, 2018a; Merolla & Jackson, 2019). Other well-intentioned whites see racism and discrimination against Blacks as mostly a thing of the past that will ultimately disappear with time (Seamster & Ray, 2018). Since the 1970s till present, educational inequality, mediocre quality education and their impact have been felt in every sector of the Black American life. It affects socioeconomic progress, utilization of talents, unequal and poor-quality achievements with no current evidence of their trending towards closing any gaps (Killewald & Bryan, 2018; Kuhn et al., 2020; Ogungbure, 2019; Slack et al., 2020; William, 2019; Zietlow, 2020). Blacks in these segregated, poor-quality schools at every level from pre-kindergarten through university level are unprepared and underprepared for skills and academic majors that are in demand by top universities, graduate schools, and employers in the 21st century academia and workforce. These setbacks keep Blacks

from competing salary wise with Whites (from white advantage selective programs, colleges, and universities) in the labor market, and so, the wage gap continues to widen (McClough & Benedict, 2017). Black schools work mostly to control students' behavior and minimize or eradicate disruptions (caused by hunger, unfair protracted incarceration of a parent, discouragement with the lip service of the system, the double standards they experience daily with the system, stress, etc.) instead of advancing learning (Merolla & Jackson, 2019). Research shows that current discriminatory educational structures and quality, employment discrimination, and barriers will not narrow the trend in wealth gap (Addo et al., 2016; Brown, 2018; Emmons & Ricketts, 2017; Ramamurthy and Sedgley, 2019). In post-World War II or color-blind society, the belief is that education and hard work will allow individuals to participate in the American Dream. This means at least a college degree and good jobs with retirement benefits, prospects of wealth accumulation and transfer to future generations but this is hardly the case for Blacks (Derenoncourt & Montialoux, 2021; Ogungbure, 2019; Taylor & Meschede, 2018). Wealth inequality is one of the critical hindrances and result of structural racism between Blacks and Whites in the United States with the average White family having 10 times the wealth of Blacks (Pantin, 2018). This affects all the socioeconomic aspects of Black life. In addition, Black households with college degrees have 33% less wealth than college educated Whites (Taylor & Meschede, 2018). In 2016, Black college graduates between 24 -29 years had over 9% unemployment rate compared to under 5% of Whites due to systemic, structural discrimination and White advantage in employment, career advancement, and wages (Emmons and Ricketts, 2017; Meschede et al., 2017). White households headed by high

school dropouts have 33% more wealth than Black college-educated heads of households due to employment and wage discrimination (Brown, 2018). In 2016, Blacks had 10% of the wealth compared to Whites (Bayer & Charles, 2018; Cheng et al., 2019; Lowe & Wallace, 2017). The inferior quality and under resourced programs that are available to Blacks affect the skills needed to compete, succeed, and progress in the job market, thus resulting in lower paying jobs, lower income and wealth for African Americans (Ramamurthy & Sedgley, 2019; Turner et al, 2018).

Unfair Evaluation and Discrimination in Schools

Racial structures to disadvantage African Americans force them to have inferior quality and under resourced schools with teacher and school personnel that are anti-Black. Black students experience more negative evaluations than Whites even for the same quality of work and performance (Davis, 2016; Fish, 2017, 2019; Glock & Klapproth, 2017; Gordon, 2018; Richards, 2017). The lower grades and evaluations affect Black students mentally and emotionally. It also affects their self-esteem, school placement of choice, and employment options (Beattie, 2017; Berends, 2015; Hilton & Higson, 2017). Meanwhile, the resources from urban communities continue to be rechanneled into the suburban schools (Jones et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2016; Martin & Varner, 2017). Analyzing ECLS-K data, Black students were 40% less likely to be placed in 8th grade algebra compared to Whites even when they performed equally or higher than Whites (Fair, 2018). White teachers were more biased in evaluating Black students more negatively. Students with only one White parent have higher teacher evaluation compared to students with both Black parents (Davis, 2016; Love, 2019; Reardon et al.,

2017; Reardon et al., 2019). Teacher bias, evaluations, and assessment impact students'

confidence, emotions, work ethics, trust in teachers, and motivation (Kozlowski, 2015;

Merolla & Jackson, 2019). Teachers' racial backgrounds affect Black students'

achievement (Downer et al., 2016). In addition, Black students were at least twice more

likely than White students to be suspended from school for the same infractions as

Whites (Karan & Katz, 2020; Morris & Perry, 2016; Morgan et al., 2017; Musu-Gillette

et al., 2017; National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

Achievement Gaps: A Function of Race or Wealth?

The great gap between the poor and the wealthy in America has caused many to

posit that income and wealth issues are more pressing than racial issues. These color-

blind and race neutral advocates point to President Barak Obama's speech of not a Black,

White, Latino, or Asian America but the United States of America (Hero & Levy, 2016;

Moorley et al., 2020; Powers et al., 2016; Sakamoto et al., 2018). Obama's Middle Class

Economic proposals were rolled out in nonracial terms. Despite Obama's efforts, his

aspirations were short lived as the stark reality of racial divide soon set in as was

manifested in the birther movement (Hero and Levy, 2016). The Republican Party and

some in his own party obstructed all his programs for the country, vowing to make him a

one-term president. The very Christian movements that had been praying for God's

blessing and protection on past presidents, especially the republican presidents, were now

openly praying for the death of Obama. These are the same voices that praised the late

Colin Luther Powell, United States Secretary of State from 2001 -2005 as a great

American leader and statesman but staunchly opposed him when he decided to run for the

office of the president only because he was Black. There is considerable research on the

Black-White gaps and the wealthy-poor gaps from 1959-2015 (Iceland, 2019; Thomas et

al., 2020). The fact is that 64% of Americans favor closing the achievement gap between

the wealthy-poor but only 36% favor closing the Black-White achievement gap (Ayoub

et al., 2021; Haeberlein et al., 2021; O'Connor, 2016; Valant & Newark, 2016, 2020).

This partially explains why there has been little progress to narrow a targeted Black-

White education gap because the wealthy-poor gap cannot be successfully bridged

without bridging the Black-White wealth gap. Wealth, socioeconomic status, and class

identification have been shown to directly correlate to race and ethnicity (Chunhui, 2019;

Manuel, 2019; Rowe, 2021). In addition, politicians, policymakers, and community

leaders/representatives support national sentiments. Targeted universalism as a method of

closing the racial wealth gap, proposed by John A. Powell of the Haas Institute since

2012 and written about yearly since then through 2021 remains a nice but unimplemented

policy suggestion for social change (Aliprantis & Carroll, 2019; Daniel, 2019; LaMont,

2019; Rowe, 2021). The goal is for equal access to the same curriculum, resources, and

trained, experienced, caring, teachers/staff as the wealthy White communities and not

immediate student integration (Sahasranaman & Jeldtoft, 2018; Valant & Newark, 2016,

2020). Action is needed now if this issue must go beyond academic essay and policy

discussion to implementation with quantifiable and verifiable results. I propose my social

change policies (see chapter one) be applied to all the poor starting with pre-

kindergarten. This will drastically improve the probability of it being adopted nationwide

with remarkable results towards closing the achievement gap for minorities using the

metaphor that "a rising tide lifts all boats" (Wilson, 2018). The 2012 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll had 97% support rate for improving urban schools but only 62% were willing to support a tax increase to fund the proposal (Valant & Newark, 2016, 2020). It is better to make incremental progress now rather than wait for drawn out debate in the hands of those that do not like race to be brought into the discussion and will try to use all disguised tactics and strategies to hinder its implementation. Implementing the proposal as laid out in my published article will increase the much-needed pool of highly skilled workers so that the nation does not depend too much on importing those skills from overseas. It will also benefit our national and homeland security, high technology companies, and the socioeconomic health of the country. This is in line with the country's support for class-based economic policies that will unite rather than divide the nation racially (LaMont, 2019; Valant & Newark, 2016, 2020). The cost for such policy implementation will be less than 2% of what our government spends annually to prop up failing democracies in other countries. Apart from Dr. Martin Luther King, United States presidents Kennedy and Johnson argued that centuries of systematic discriminatory and oppressive systems/actions could not make Blacks whole by color-blind principles, but rather, that additional actions were necessary to level the playing field for everyone (Burke, 2017; Yogeeswaran et al., 2017,2018).

Other researchers dispute the notion that education is the key to closing the racial wealth inequality (Petts, 2020) but there is overwhelming research that it does (Aliprantis & Carroll, 2019; Brooks, 2020; Eyer, 2019; Grindstaff & Mascarenhas, 2019; LaMont, 2019; Manuel, 2019; Oliver & Shapiro, 2019).

Color-Blind Strategy

Implied and understood in color-blind doctrine is the unspoken strategy, tool, ideology that exists to shield white advantage, privilege, and power, especially when these advantages are infringed upon or threatened (Doane, 2017; Petts, 2020; Stroll, 2020; Wilson, 2012). It is a fluid, dynamic construct that is constantly changing and adapting. It is a racial ideology and tool that is adapted through everyday discursive, politics, policies, structures, media, institutions, and activities in the society with the sole purpose of always maintaining white supremacy, superiority, white advantage, and racial dominance (Burke, 2017; Brooks, 2020; Petts, 2020). Color-blindness is an intentionally designed, well thought-out, and crafted strategy to combat the implementation of civil rights legislations and ignores dealing with color-consciousness (Doane, 2017; Forman & Lewis, 2015; Kelly, 2020; Kolber, 2017; Lundberg, 2020). It tries to minimize or disannul any shift that makes the threat against or disadvantage white privilege and supremacy regardless of actions done to curb systemic racism or inequality (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Fiel, 2015; Wetts & Willer, 2018). It downplays and denies racial inequality and practices. It fights against what could narrow or close racial inequalities within the institutional social structures, policies, and practices (Alexander, 2018; Eyer, 2019). It strategizes inequality as individual choice and equal merit whereby Blacks are behind because of poor work ethics, low production, and laziness with an entitlement mentality that has nothing to do with race. Anticipated population growth of minorities has strengthened color-blind actions and policies that maintain and will continue to maintain White privilege and dominance, remove any accusation of racism for structural

discriminatory attitudes, and racial inequalities by invoking color-blindness/do not see race mentality (Berrey, 2015; Burke, 2017; Muller, 2017). To counter The Civil Rights Movement, the color-blind strategists inaugurated the political mobilization of the war on crime and drugs. This paved the way for untold numbers of Blacks and minorities to be inequitably and unjustly incarcerated to maintain White supremacy and dominance using government and state sponsored criminal justice systems (Combs, 2021; Doane, 2017). Color-blind agenda is passionately promoted on one hand while at the same time color-blind advocates vigorously promote and support racial profiling, police brutality and killings, and a prison system that is bursting at the seams with mostly Blacks and minorities, and suppressing Black voting rights (Da Costa, 2016). Color-blind agenda does not reference race and racism, but perpetuates unchecked racism with no impunity, responsibility or blame (Hartmann et. al. 2017; Modica, 2015; Perez & Stalter, 2019; Yogeeswaran et al., 2018). The persistent, punishing, and systematic effects are manifest in Black employment, housing, school, and neighborhood under sourcing and resourcing. It is also seen in state-approved, unjust, and excessive prison sentences, dehumanization, exploitation, plunder, and adverse socioeconomic measures (Da Costa, 2016; Combs, 2021). Color-blind argument is that considering race for any reason at all is unmerited and undeserved and puts Whites in an unfavorable position. It therefore dismisses the argument as a case of individual choice and market dynamics (Doane, 2017; Petts, 2020). Color-blind belief posits that "race" is no longer an issue of importance or significance, and therefore there is no need for any added protection for minorities against racial discrimination that might disadvantage whites (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Burke, 2017). It is a

mechanism used to justify and absolve Whites of any blame, racial injustice, structures, policies, and strategies they have enacted to counter minority rights in the face of increased minority population size (al-Gharbi, 2019; Forman & Lewis, 2015). There are documented studies where Whites support color-blind diversity in theory but in practice oppose integration efforts that will eliminate racist practices (Petts, 2020). The claim is that race is no longer a hindrance to anyone reaching and participating in the American Dream (Doane, 2017). Color-blind advocates point to a growing Black middle class, increased number of Blacks going to universities, being employed, owning homes, and the election of America's first Black president in 2008 as proof that race is no longer a determinant of one's achievement or success in participating in the American Dream (Brooks, 2020). The election of Kamala Harris as the first female, Black, and Asian Vice President in 2020 will further strengthen this argument in the future. Thomas et al. (2020) shows that college educated Blacks are more likely to be unemployed, obtain less return than Whites on their college education, face more systematic daily racial discrimination and segregation from Whites of all social classes. They face stereotypes, racial profiling, police harassment and brutality. They are often ignored, and their presence questioned in stores, restaurants, and public spaces as not belonging or welcomed. Color-blind represents a multiplex belief system and tenets used in all social and economic life, in the labor market, business, education, judicial system, government, and politics with both good and bad implications. On the one hand, it is good in asking everyone to treat each other with respect and decency and ignore any group membership. On the other hand, it is used to justify the status quo, continue the entrenched systemic racism and

discriminatory systems of White advantage while blaming Blacks and minorities for their current fate (Pettigrew, 2018; Shores et al., 2020; Stewart, & Sweetman, 2018; Stewart, & Trans, 2018; Yogeeswaran, et al., 2018).

Racial Inequality in the Criminal Justice System and Racial Profiling

The thirteenth Amendment ushered in the end to total control that Whites had over Blacks. Since Whites could not openly lynch Blacks anymore, they have used fear to keep Blacks under domination and subjection. To maintain power, social control and supremacy over Blacks, they developed another strategy to maintain control (Bolger, 2015; Buehler, 2017; Mears et al., 2016; Schneider, 2022; Stewart et al., 2018). This racist strategy included racist stereotypes, propaganda that Blacks are not just criminals, but a threat to White supremacy and society at large, especially Whites (Fryer, 2019; Smangs, 2016). Blacks have come to be associated/and synonymous with crime and criminals, and as such deserving of more severe punishment (Peterson, 2017; Stewart et al., 2018). This has led to many anti-Black punitive policies in the criminal justice system including deep cuts in rehabilitation budget, greater funding for prisons, privatization of many prisons to White owned companies, longer and disproportionate prison terms for Blacks, and aggressive/greater policing of black neighborhoods. Blacks are three times more likely than Whites to be convicted, sentenced to longer prison time or death for the same offence that Whites commit (Campbell et al., 2015; Gottschalk, 2016; Hochschild, 2016; Mears & Cochran, 2015). Blacks are currently viewed by most Whites as posing a higher threat to White supremacy, control, and domination (Mears et al., 2017; Stewart et al., 2018). 84% of Blacks believe they are unfairly treated compared to Whites (Epp et

al., 2017; Stepler, 2016;). In 2015, eighteen police officers were criminally charged for

police killings (Epp et el., 2017). Blacks are three times more likely to be unjustly killed

by White police officers than Whites (Chan, 2016; DeGue et al., 2016; Fridell, 2016;

Guardian, 2017; Knox et al., 2019; Streeter, 2019). There is police bias towards Blacks

with a tendency by police to criminalize Blacks even in children as young as five years

(Eckhouse, 2018; Mummolo, 2018; Nix et al., 2017; Streeter, 2019; Todd et al., 2016).

Few researchers have argued that there is no police bias against Blacks (Fryer, 2019;

Miller, 2018; Worrall et al., 2018). The Justice Department's investigation of racial

disparities in policing led to the firing of several of either police chiefs, commissioners or

superintendents in Chicago, Baltimore, San Francisco, and Oakland (Epp et al., 2017).

From 2002 – 2011, Blacks were disproportionately targeted, stopped and searched by

police. In New York City, Blacks were stopped by police at 2.5 times the rate of Whites

(Kramer & Remster, 2018). Other research shows a racial inequality in police use of

force against Blacks and that Blacks are three times more likely than Whites to be

affected by police use of force (Goff et al., 2016). The exchange of internal racist

communications between police officers in San Francisco, California, Fort Lauderdale,

Florida, and Ferguson, Missouri, highlight the current existence of widespread systemic

prejudice in the police force (Kramer et al., 2017; Murphey, 2018; Plass, 2021; Williams,

2019). Analysis of highway patrol ticketing from traffic stops shows a 25 percent racial

bias against Blacks and Hispanics (Goncalves & Mello, 2017). From the 2019 United

States census data, Blacks make up 14% of the population and over 34% of the prison

population. Black adults are incarcerated at 5.9 times the rate of Whites due to

differential treatment. Black youth are arrested and booked for offences that White

youths are not even arrested for or booked (Kramer & Remster, 2018; Kramer et al.,

2017; Peterson et al., 2018). Black youths are 3.7 times more likely to be arrested for

possessing marijuana than White youths even though the usage by Blacks is comparable

to Whites (Epp et al., 2017; Stewart et al., 2018; Streeter, 2019). In Sarasota and Lake

counties, Florida, an all-White jury pool convicted 81% of Black defendants compared to

66 percent of White defendants, while jury pools with at least one Black convicted

Blacks and Whites equally (Geary, 2018; Gonzalez, 2017; Johnson, 2019; Schneider,

2022).

Race and Social Class Differences Between Blacks and Whites

Recent research of the interrelationship between race and social class informs

their simultaneous influence/impact on stereotypes, behaviors, attitudes, preconceptions,

discrimination, prejudice, and class groupings between Blacks and Whites in the United

States. Social class is made up of the hierarchical structure in the society comprising

educational achievement, household income, occupational status, and family educational

attainment (Chunhui, 2019; Daniel, 2019; LaMont, 2019; Peterson et al., 2018; Rowe,

2021; Stewart et al., 2018; Wren & Donnelly, 2016). The disconcerted fact is that this

started at the dawn of slavery and centuries later its economic disadvantages on Blacks

are still very devastating, contrary to the false narrative that the economic wealth gap

between Blacks and Whites have narrowed (Graff, 2019; Hanley, 2019; Manuel, 2019;

Richeson & Sommers, 2016; Sahasranaman & Jeldtoft, 2018).

Stereotypes, Prejudice and Discrimination

To maintain racial dominance, white advantage, racial superiority, marginalization, and dehumanization of Blacks without any feeling of guilt or remorse, Whites have categorized Blacks as aggressive, criminal, dishonest, lazy, and unproductive (Brewster & Brauer, 2017; Sykes et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2019). They also brand them as disinterested in self-improvement, threatening, vicious, stupid, ignorant, and empty-headed, while Whites have been stereotyped as intelligent, motivated, competent, successful, and productive (Burnett et al., 2020; Craemer & Orey, 2017; Livingston & Gurung, 2019; Moore-Berg & Karpinski, 2019; Whaley, 2018, 2020). When referring to social class, the poor have the stereotypical attributes of Blacks and the wealthy or upper class have the stereotypes attributed to Whites (Do et al., 2019; Casper, 2021; Gray et al., 2018; Ravitt, 2020; Woolf, 2020). Interestingly, when race and social class are analyzed together, upper class Whites and Blacks share the same attributes; likewise, lower-class Blacks and Whites equally share the same attributes (Bryant, 2020; Fuller, 2017; Moore-Berg & Karpinski, 2019; Taylor et al., 2019).

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Summary

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In 2018, The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) (to commemorate the 50-year anniversary of passing the Civil Right Act) issued their findings on Black Americans since 1960. Blacks are more educated and earn higher income, but the racial and economic inequality was no different than in 1968 (Bayer & Charles, 2018; Merolla & Jackson, 2019; Mclntyre & Simkovic, 2018; Ren, 2019; Sakamoto et al., 2018). Black families on a yearly basis earned 40% less than White families and were 2.5 times more

likely to live in poverty than Whites (Daly et al., 2020; Merolla & Jackson, 2019; Turne

et al., 2018). A typical white family had 10 times the wealth of the average Black family

(Carruthers & Wanamaker, 2017; Ren, 2019). In the 21st century, there are continued

differences between Blacks and Whites in every socioeconomic marker with none

favoring Blacks. This is no surprise because of the lack of substantial gains or meaningful

and profitable access to resources that will help in narrowing these gaps between Blacks

and Whites (Cheng et al., 2019; Lowe & Wallace, 2017). Also, the color-blind advocates

say the importance of race is decreasing in post-racial America and race is no longer a

hindrance to economic and social success and achievements (Doane, 2017). My research

will extend the body of knowledge by contributing to current scholarship on Black and

White income, educational achievement, earnings, and wealth inequality. It will employ

rigorous quantitative methods to evaluate any effect of race or lack thereof using one of

the most current research/survey data available. However, this research also goes beyond

prior research by using updated or current data, incorporating new variables, and being

exhaustively comparative in its statistical analysis and quantification of any Black and

White differences in these important variables.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study using GSS 2021 data was to analyze if the effect of race is declining and soon will no longer be salient in issues of Black and White inequality (Thomas et al., 2020; Wilson, 2012), or whether it is increasing or staying the same or flat, using multiple and logistic regression with the most current data. I have provided answers to show if there were differences in race, occupational prestige score, education, academic achievement gap, socioeconomic status, income/wealth, and social class between Blacks and Whites. The research verified if most Black respondents classified themselves as lower class or working class regardless of their achievement in prestige from occupation or their income level (Cohen, et al., 2017). This study extended the body of knowledge from recent research (see, for example, Cohen et al., 2017; Hout, 2008; Speer, 2016; Wilson, 2012, 2018). However, it also went beyond prior research using updated or current data, incorporating new variables, and being explicitly comparative in its analysis of Black and White differences or lack thereof in 21st-century America in terms of socioeconomic index, status, and class. Unlike prior research, if there was a spouse, the highest education in the family was used, and the income was combined, not averaged, to be fair to the stay-at-home-spouse concept. This study evaluated whether Black and White gaps were expanding, contracting, or staying the same over the course of life, with values statistically significant at $p < .05$. This study closely mirrored society as much as possible in participants' lived experiences.

Research Design and Rationale

The independent variables were what caused or explained the change. The independent variables for this study were racial identity, education, family income, family wealth, employment status (self-employed, regular employment), and occupation. Education was a categorical variable using the highest degree level attained for the selected educational level. Occupation and degrees obtained were further subdivided into categories reflective of society. Racial classification and employment status were also categorical variables. Wealth and income were coded as continuous variables. I used the 1988 International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88), an extremely popular and widely used scheme developed by the International Labor Organization, along with the GSS data set (Gwen et al., 2017). I also included members of the U.S. Military in the "service" category.

To make wealth and income easy to manipulate, I used the midpoint of each grouping. I did likewise with family income. Household income and wealth were derived by dividing total income or wealth by the square root of total number of people in the household. I used the best strategy given the available data. This was a very rigorous quantitative analysis. It evaluated all key variables in 10-year increments in respondents' age. This was to answer if there was a declining effect of race, or if it was flat, increasing, or statistically negligible since the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with respect to socioeconomics, occupation, education, employment, income, family income, family wealth, class, return on education by age, occupation, earnings return to occupation by age, and proportion with 1 or more years of postsecondary education. This was a direct

assessment of state and federal policies such as civil rights legislation, administrative actions, and affirmative action policies in job opportunities/employment in public and private sectors, and access to education (Emmons & Ricketts, 2017; Thomas et al., 2020).

Income

Income was inflation adjusted into the year 2000 to compare the result with prior research. Income less than $10,000 was rounded to $10,000 and log-transformed to reduce the skew. Income for household was derived by dividing total income by the square root of the total number of people in the household.

Education

I used participants' number of years of schooling. Unlike prior research, if a spouse was present, the education was not averaged, but the highest education level for the household was used. I expected the importance of education to increase for career trajectory and distinction.

Race

I only used data if the respondent self-identified as black or white. Race was measured as a binary variable (black = 1, white = 0). If the group of black respondents had been statistically not large enough, I would have used the "one drop of blood" rule to include those who identified as Black and something else into the Black category. This helped in the robustness of variables such as social class, which was at the intersection of race, income, wealth, education, and occupational prestige. Prior research showed that Blacks were less apt to identify themselves as middle class or upper class. The analysis evaluated the declining importance of race (Hout, 2008; Wilson, 2012). Whites were less

apt to openly believe, admit they believed, or subscribe to the Jim Crow ideology that Whites are superior to Blacks and Blacks do not deserve equal treatment on all socioeconomic levels and everyday life (Richeson & Sommers, 2016).

Occupational Prestige

This came from respondents' social standing. Deviating from prior research, for couples, the highest score was used, taking into consideration stay-at-home spouses (as in Education).

Gender

Gender was measured as a binary variable (women = 1, men = 0).

Age

This was a controlled variable. It reduced the probability of incorrectly assigning explanatory power to the independent variable in the analysis.

The dependent variables represent the outcome that a researcher wishes to explain. The dependent variable for this study was the respondents' subjective class identification (upper class, middle class, working class, or lower class). Respondents were asked to identify which of the four classes they would say they belonged to, and the response was scored from 1–4. This measure was used in prior research (Cohen et al., 2017; Speer, 2016) as opposed to the 10-ring unlabeled format of MacArthur. I explored the intersection of race or social class with the intersection of the independent variables to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the trends, gaps, and direction for future research.

Class Identification

The data were collected from the GSS 2021 survey, and I measured Black–White earning disparities as an added dependent variable with occupational race segregation as the corresponding independent variable. This was a comparison between Black and White respondents based on their self-identification. This new data set from the GSS included responses on wealth and class origin. Community engagement, family background, and conventional morality were not central to the desired analysis and expected outcomes. In keeping with prior research studies, the research questions and hypotheses concerning the relationship between the independent and dependent variables being studied between Blacks and Whites were as follows:

RQ1: What are the odds of self-identified Whites and Backs identifying as middle class or upper class after controlling for class position and class origin?

    H01: Self-identified Blacks and Whites do not have significantly different probability of identifying as middle class or upper class when class positions and class origins are controlled.

    Ha1: Self-identified Blacks and Whites have significantly different probability of identifying as middle class or upper class when class positions and class origins are controlled.

RQ2: Does an individual's wealth, occupation, income, and education affect class identification?

H02:   An individual's wealth, occupation, income, and education do not

have significant effects on class identification.

Ha2:   An individual's wealth, occupation, income, and education have

significant effects on class identification.

RQ3:   Is there an effect of class origin on class identification:

H03:   Respondents' class origin does not affect their class identification.

Ha3:   Respondents' class origin significantly affects their class

identification.

RQ4:   Is there a declining effect of race?

H04:   There is a declining effect of race.

H0a4: There is no declining effect of race.

RQ5:   Are the inequalities between Blacks and Whites narrowing?

H05:   Inequalities between Blacks and Whites are narrowing.

Ha5:   Inequalities between Blacks and Whites are not narrowing.

Methodology

In this study, I explored the statistical relationships between race, occupational

prestige score, education, academic achievement, socioeconomic status, income/wealth,

and social class between Blacks and Whites. It verified whether most Black respondents

classified themselves as lower class or working class regardless of their achievement in

prestige from occupation or their income level (Cohen, et al., 2017). This study extended

the body of knowledge on recent research (see, for example, Hout, 2008; Cohen et al.,

2017; Wilson, 2018). However, it also went beyond prior research by using updated or

current data, incorporating new variables, and being exhaustively comparative in its

statistical analysis and quantification of any Black and White differences in these

important variables. Prior research studies utilized datasets from the National Opinion

Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago (n.d.) GSS 2006 and 2010. NORC

is one of the largest independent social research organizations in the United States,

established in 1941. Its corporate headquarters is on the University of Chicago campus,

with offices in several other locations throughout the United States. As of 2015, there was

a ranking of 200 jobs, with the higher ranked economic prestige having commensurate

higher income. The economic prestige score was developed by Hauser and Warren in

1990. This study analyzed data from GSS 2020, limiting it to respondents who were

employed and were Blacks or Whites who responded to only one racial category.

Because the GSS has a composite probability sample, statistical estimation

operations were implemented to ensure accurate point estimates and standard errors for

the population obtained (Davis, 2019). The following assumptions were made for the

linear regression:

1. Normal distribution of errors: It assumed the residual to be random, normally
   distributed variables with a mean of 0.

2. Independent errors: No two observed residual terms were correlated.

3. Homoscedasticity: The variance of the residual term is constant at each level
   of the predictor variables. Or error terms are constant across the distribution.

4. Additivity and linearity: The outcome variables are linearly related to any
   predictors.

Using Archival Data

Data were from the NORC GSS (by permission). The GSS has been an objective, scientific, and nonpartisan source for data on race relations, racial issues, age, socioeconomics, occupational prestige, and education since 1972. It has national and international studies conducted in 40–50 countries. The scope includes over 6,000 variables. About 400,000 students use the GSS each year in their class, and more than 31,000 base their PhD dissertations, journal articles, and books on the GSS data. The GSS is conducted consistently with scientific rigor, innovative methodology, advanced survey data-gathering tools, and collaboration. Speer (2016) used the GSS from 2006 to analyze differences between White and Black Americans concerning wealth and class identification. Cohen et al. (2017) used the GSS that was conducted from 1972 through 2010 with more than 40,000 cases for analysis.

Data Analysis Plan

The data had more than 40,000 cases for analysis. With this number of cases, response bias or effect of nonresponse was very negligible. This included descriptive statistics (such as means, standard deviations, range, within-variable, and between-variables) using multiple regression in the SPSS software. The results were presented in tables, figures, and interpretation of statistical analysis. Instead of quantile regression, which is more robust against outliers in the dependent variables, ordinary least squares (OLS) regression was used because it was statistically better in generating predicted values for the construction of trends and overall efficient data analysis. The inferential

statistical test (such as ANOVA, ANCOVA, MANOVA, and *t* test) examined the

hypotheses in the research:

> Hypothesis 1: Self-identified Blacks and Whites have significantly different
>
> > probability of identifying as middle class or upper class when class
> >
> > positions and class origins are controlled.
>
> Hypothesis 2: Individuals' wealth, occupation, income, and education have
>
> > significant effects on class identification.
>
> Hypothesis 3: Respondents' class origin significantly affects their class
>
> > identification.
>
> Hypothesis 4: There is a declining effect of race.
>
> Hypothesis 5: Inequalities between Blacks and Whites are narrowing.

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Threats to Validity

</div>

External Validity

This refers to the degree to which any research finding that utilizes samples can

be generalized or extended to the population or similar/applicable populations with

respect to context, concepts, settings, and variables. The GSS has incorporated

longitudinal social surveys since 1972 and has used expertise and experience to minimize

interaction of selection and treatment, interaction of setting and treatment, and interaction

of history and treatment (Creswell, 2009).

Internal Validity

The population was from a large number of participants made up of minorities

and non-minorities in the community, interest groups (e.g., surveys, U.S. Census Bureau,

GSS 2021 by permission). The goal was to obtain permission from the NORC in Chicago to use their GSS data to bring deeper understanding to the research problem and the recommended social change. The GSS has been an objective, scientific, and nonpartisan source for data on race relations, racial issues, age, socioeconomics, occupational prestige, and education since 1972.

Construct Validity

Construct validity is the term that I used to describe the extent to which I made inferences from the study to the theoretical construct. It determined how well a test measured what it was supposed to measure. The NORC has used its GSS data to measure scientific and nonpartisan sources for data on race relations, racial issues, age, socioeconomics, occupational prestige, and education since 1972. The construct validity is based on what was tested in past studies, thus giving it both convergent and discriminant validities.

Reliability

The data used was from the NORC. It has conducted similar research since 1972 and has done test–retest and split-half reliability. This means that the survey instrument yields the same result repeatedly (Cox, 2016).

Ethical Procedures

Prior to collecting the data from the 2020 and 2021 GSS, an application was submitted to the IRB for approval and consent to proceed. Once an agreement to access the data was granted, everything was done with confidentiality. There were safeguards against reporting data that revealed identity or personal information about any

respondent. Data came from the NORC GSS directly; therefore, I had no ability to determine specifics on respondents.

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative study was to address whether the effect of race was declining and soon would no longer be salient in issues of Black and White inequality (Thomas et al., 2020; Wilson, 2012), or whether it was increasing or staying the same or flat, using multiple and logistic regression with the most current data. I answered the question of whether there was a difference in race, occupational prestige score, education, academic achievement, socioeconomic status, income/wealth, and social class between Blacks and Whites. This study extended the body of knowledge on past research (see, for example, Cohen et al., 2017; Hout, 2008; Speer, 2016; Wilson, 2012, 2018). However, it also went beyond past research using updated or current data, incorporated new variables, and was explicitly comparative in its analysis of Black and White differences or lack thereof in 21st-century America in terms of socioeconomic index, status, and class. Unlike prior research, if there was a spouse, the highest education level in the family was used, and the income was combined, not averaged, to be fair to the stay-at-home-spouse concept. It evaluated whether the Black and White gaps were expanding, contracting, or staying the same over the course of life with values statistically significant at $p < .05$. Chapter 4 will have a discussion of the study results and the multiple regression analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The analysis process for this study began by obtaining permission to acquire the GSS 2021 data from the GSS website. The data were in Stata version 2021, but for the convenience of using SPSS 25, the data were converted to a .sav file. Next, the data were recoded where necessary. This included recoding occupation into six categories, combining "high school or less" with "below high school" into one category, and integrating "low" and "working class" into one category for subjective class identification. Then, logistic regression was used to analyze the data. The first model used subjective class identification when the respondent was 16 years old as the dependent variable, while the second model used subjective class identification in 2021 as the dependent variable. Binary logistic regression was used for both models.

Changes were made in the dataset on the following variables:

1. Occupation: The available 10 to 9830 codes were broken down into only six categories: manual occupation, service and sales workers, clerks, technicians and associates, professionals, and finally, managers, senior officials, and legislators.

2. For respondent's highest education, those who were below high school were combined with those in high school and named high school and below.

3. Subjective class identification was initially coded as low, working middle, and upper class. The low and working class were integrated into one category; middle and upper class were integrated into another category.

4. Highest education for mother and father (parents) was coded in continuous as a variable in the 2021 dataset.

5. Occupation was coded according to the 2010 census despite the research being done in 2021.

6. Data for household members was missing, and the variable could not be included in the analysis.

7. Subjective class was coded twice; 1= the respondent was age 16 and was used as the initial class (Model 1). The other subjective class identification was the class the respondent was in in 2021 and was used as the current class (Model 2).

Findings and Results

The results of the analysis were then used to test the hypotheses and draw conclusions about the research questions. Additional analyses were also conducted to further explore the data and provide more detailed insights. Throughout the analysis process, the assumptions of logistic regression were checked, and appropriate diagnostic statistics were used to ensure the validity of the model.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics, General Social Survey 2021

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Mean/proportion	Linearize std. error	Mean/proportion	Linearize std. error
Class identification				
Lower class/working class	0.460	0.008	0.481	0.012
Middle class/upper class	0.540	0.008	0.519	0.012
Race				
White	0.782	0.00889	0.793	0.013
Black	0.116	0.0225	0.113	0.033
Family wealth				
Rich	0.442	0.020	N/A	N/A
Middle	0.490	0.019	N/A	N/A
Poor	0.068	0.058	N/A	N/A
Education				
High school or less	0.460	0.011	0.450	0.017
Junior college degree	0.092	0.026	0.094	0.036
Bachelor's degree	0.258	0.014	0.269	0.022
Graduate/postgraduate degree	0.190	0.013	0.187	0.024
Self-employment status				
Working for someone else	0.890	0.085	0.891	0.013
Self-employed	0.110	0.024	0.109	0.036
Occupation				
Manual occupation	0.161	0.019	0.157	0.029
Service and sales workers	0.212	0.017	0.196	0.026
Clerks	0.124	0.023	0.131	0.033
Technicians and associates	0.231	0.015	0.241	0.023
Professionals	0.160	0.020	0.161	0.029
Managers, senior officials, and legislators	0.112	0.021	0.114	0.032
Family income (dollars)	55956.23	0.084	55956.23	0.084
Parent's education (father)	12.55	0.009	12.55	0.009
Parent's education (mother)	12.50	0.008	12.50	0.009
Parent's occupation (father)				
Manual occupation	0.459	0.013	0.425	0.020
Service and sales workers	0.141	0.023	0.149	0.033
Clerks	0.032	0.048	0.032	0.07
Technicians and associates	0.13	0.021	0.145	0.031
Professionals	0.08	0.029	0.088	0.043
Managers, senior officials, and legislators	0.149	0.021	0.161	0.032
Parent's occupation (mother)				
Manual occupation	0.144	0.025	0.156	0.036
Service and sales workers	0.291	0.018	0.270	0.027
Clerks	0.209	0.020	0.205	0.031
Technicians and associates	0.166	0.022	0.174	0.034
Professionals	0.152	0.024	0.158	0.036
Managers, senior officials, and legislators	0.036	0.050	0.038	0.073
Work status				
Working full time	0.548	0.0354	0.497	0.053
Working part time	0.094	0.085	0.120	0.092
Sex				
Male	0.441	0.012	0.445	0.018
Female	0.559	0.011	0.555	0.016
Region				
New England	0.051	0.035	0.055	0.050
Middle Atlantic	0.103	0.024	0.097	0.038
East North Central	0.168	0.019	0.175	0.028
West North Central	0.078	0.028	0.072	0.044
South Atlantic	0.198	0.018	0.191	0.027
East South Atlantic	0.067	0.030	0.063	0.046

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Mean/proportion	Linearize std. error	Mean/proportion	Linearize std. error
West South Central	0.106	0.024	0.104	0.036
Mountain	0.086	0.027	0.090	0.039
Pacific	0.145	0.020	0.153	0.030
Religion				
Protestant	0.403	0.012	0.389	0.019
Catholic	0.208	0.017	0.212	0.026
Jewish	0.019	0.056	0.022	0.078
None	0.284	0.015	0.285	0.022
Other	0.014	0.068	0.014	0.101
Buddhism	0.012	0.072	0.014	0.100
Hinduism	0.008	0.079	0.008	0.097
Other Eastern religions	0.001	0.500	0.001	0.101
Muslim/Islam	0.006	0.098	0.008	0.133
Orthodox Christian	0.009	0.086	0.010	0.121
Christian	0.031	0.043	0.032	0.058
Native American	0.001	0.333	0.001	0.500
Inter-/nondenominational	0.005	0.114	0.005	0.176
Marital status				
Married	0.497	0.011	0.501	0.016
Widowed	0.075	0.028	0.073	0.044
Divorced	0.162	0.019	0.155	0.029
Separated	0.024	0.049	0.025	0.072
Never married	0.242	0.016	0.246	0.023
Household size (number of residents)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of observations	4,032		4,032	

Race

Table 1 provides information about races for both Model 1 and Model 2. In

Model 1, the proportion of white respondents was 0.782 with a standard error of 0.00889,

and the proportion of Black respondents was 0.116 with a standard error of 0.0225. In

Model 2, the proportion of white respondents was 0.793 with a standard error of 0.013,

and the proportion of Black respondents was 0.113 with a standard error of 0.033. There

was a slight increase in the proportion of White respondents and a small decrease in the

proportion of Black respondents from Model 1 to Model 2. The difference between the

two models was small and within the standard error of the proportion. The difference was

not statistically significant.

Family Wealth

Table 1 provides information about family wealth for both Model 1 and Model 2.

In Model 1, the proportion of respondents who identified as rich was 0.442 with a

standard error of 0.020. The proportion of respondents who identified as middle income was 0.490 with a standard error of 0.019, and the proportion of respondents who identified as poor was 0.068 with a standard error of 0.056. In Model 1, a small majority of respondents identified as middle class (49%), while a relatively smaller proportion identified as rich (44%) or poor (6.8%). The standard error values indicated that the data were relatively precise.

Education

Table 1 provides information about education for both Model 1 and Model 2. In Model 1, the proportion of respondents with a high school education or less was 0.460 with a standard error of 0.011. The proportion of respondents with a junior college degree was 0.092 with a standard error of 0.026. The proportion of respondents with a bachelor's degree was 0.258 with a standard error of 0.014, and the proportion of respondents with a graduate or postgraduate degree was 0.190 with a standard error of 0.013. In Model 2, the proportion of respondents with a high school education or less was 0.450 with a standard error of 0.017. The proportion of respondents with a junior college degree was 0.094 with a standard error of 0.036. The proportion of respondents with a bachelor's degree was 0.269 with a standard error of 0.022, and the proportion of respondents with a graduate or postgraduate degree was 0.187 with a standard error of 0.024. It seemed that there was a slight decrease in the proportion of respondents with a high school education or less and a slight increase in the proportion of respondents with a bachelor's degree and graduate or postgraduate degree from Model 1 to Model 2.

Occupation

Table 1 provides information about occupation for both Model 1 and Model 2. In Model 1, the proportion of respondents who were manual workers was 0.161 with a standard error of 0.019. The proportion of respondents who were service and sales workers was 0.212 with a standard error of 0.017. The proportion of respondents who were clerks was 0.124 with a standard error of 0.023. The proportion of respondents who were technicians and associates was 0.231 with a standard error of 0.015. The proportion of respondents who were professionals was 0.160 with a standard error of 0.020, and the proportion of respondents who were managers, senior officials, or legislators was 0.112 with a standard error of 0.021. In Model 2, the proportion of respondents who were manual workers was 0.157 with a standard error of 0.029, and the proportion of respondents who were service and sales workers was 0.196 with a standard error of 0.026. The proportion of respondents who were clerks was 0.131 with a standard error of 0.033. The proportion of respondents who were technicians and associates was 0.241 with a standard error of 0.023. The proportion of respondents who were professionals was 0.161 with a standard error of 0.029, and the proportion of respondents who were managers, senior officials, or legislators was 0.114 with a standard error of 0.032. It seemed that there was a slight decrease in the proportion of manual workers and service and sales workers and a slight increase in the proportion of technicians and associates and managers, senior officials, and legislators.

Family Income

Table 1 provides information about family income for both Model 1 and Model 2. In Model 1 and Model 2, the mean family income was $55,956.23 with a standard error of $0.084. This means that the average family income was $55,956.23, and the standard error was $0.084. This means that if the sample were large enough and random, one could be confident that the true population mean was within +/- $0.084 of $55,956.23.

Father's Education

Table 1 provides information about parent's education (father) for both Model 1 and Model 2. In Model 1 and Model 2, the mean education level of the father was 12.55 with a standard error of 0.009. This means that the average education level of the father was 12.55 years, and the standard error was 0.009. This means that if the sample were large enough and random, one could be confident that the true population mean was within +/- 0.009 of 12.55.

Mother's Education

Table 1 provides information about parent's education (mother) for both Model 1 and Model 2. In Model 1 and Model 2, the mean education level of the mother was 12.50 with a standard error of 0.009.

Gender

Table 1 shows that in both Model 1 and Model 2, there were more female respondents than male respondents. The proportion of male respondents was 0.441 with a standard error of 0.012 in Model 1, and 0.445 with a standard error of 0.018 in Model 2. The proportion of female respondents was 0.559 with a standard error of 0.011 in Model

1, and 0.555 with a standard error of 0.016 in Model 2. The standard error values indicated that the data were relatively precise.

Work Status

Table 1 shows that in both Model 1 and Model 2, more respondents were working full time than working part time. The proportion of respondents working full time was 0.548 with a standard error of 0.035 in Model 1, and 0.497 with a standard error of 0.053 in Model 2. The proportion of respondents working part time was 0.094 with a standard error of 0.085 in Model 1, and 0.120 with a standard error of 0.092 in Model 2.

Marital Status

Table 1 shows that in both Model 1 and Model 2, there were more respondents who were married than those with other marital statuses. The proportion of respondents who were married was 0.497 with a standard error of 0.011 in Model 1, and 0.501 with a standard error of 0.016 in Model 2. The proportion of respondents who were widowed was 0.075 with a standard error of 0.028 in Model 1, and 0.073 with a standard error of 0.044 in Model 2. The proportion of respondents who were divorced was 0.162 with a standard error of 0.019 in Model 1, and 0.155 with a standard error of 0.029 in Model 2. The proportion of respondents who were separated was 0.024 with a standard error of 0.049 in Model 1, and 0.025 with a standard error of 0.072 in Model 2. The proportion of respondents who had never married was 0.242 with a standard error of 0.016 in Model 1, and 0.246 with a standard error of 0.023 in Model 2.

Parent's Occupation

Table 1 shows the proportion of respondents whose father and mother were in a certain occupation in both Model 1 and Model 2. The proportion of respondents whose father was a manual worker was 0.459 with a standard error of 0.013 in Model 1, and 0.425 with a standard error of 0.020 in Model 2. The proportion of respondents whose father was a service and sales worker was 0.141 with a standard error of 0.023 in Model 1, and 0.149 with a standard error of 0.033 in Model 2. The proportion of respondents whose father was a clerk was 0.032 with a standard error of 0.048 in Model 1, and 0.032 with a standard error of 0.07 in Model 2. The proportion of respondents whose father was a technician or associate was 0.13 with a standard error of 0.021 in Model 1, and 0.145 with a standard error of 0.031 in Model 2. The proportion of respondents whose father was a professional, manager, senior official, or legislator was 0.08 with a standard error of 0.029 in Model 1, and 0.088 with a standard error of 0.043 in Model 2. The proportion of respondents whose mother was a manual worker was 0.144 with a standard error of 0.025 in Model 1, and 0.156 with a standard error of 0.036 in Model 2. The proportion of respondents whose mother was a service and sales worker was 0.291 with a standard error of 0.018 in Model 1, and 0.270 with a standard error of 0.027 in Model 2. The proportion of respondents whose mother was a clerk was 0.209 with a standard error of 0.020 in Model 1, and 0.205 with a standard error of 0.031 in Model 2. The proportion of respondents whose mother was a technician or associate was 0.166 with a standard error of 0.022 in Model 1, and 0.174 with a standard error of 0.034 in Model 2. The proportion of respondents whose mother was a professional, manager, senior official, or legislator

was 0.152 with a standard error of 0.024 in Model 1, and 0.158 with a standard error of

0.036 in Model 2. There were some small differences in the proportion of respondents

whose father and mother were in certain occupations between Model 1 and Model 2.

Table 2

Logistic Regression Models of Class Identification, General Social Survey 2021

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Odds ratio	*p*-value	Odds ratio	*p*-value
Race of respondent (White = 0)		0.068		
Black	0.314	0.202	0.404	0.654
Other	0.098	0.033	0.000	0.999
Respondent's highest degree (high school or less = 0)				
Associate/junior college	1.329	0.706	1.379	0.812
Bachelor's	11.400	0.000	2.060	0.503
Graduate	119.398	0.000	2.227	0.620
Respondent self-employed or works for somebody (1; self-employed = 0)				
Someone else	0.071	0.001	0.373	0.352
Respondent's Census Occupation Code (2010; manual occupation = 0)				
Service and sales workers	1.663	0.543	0.328	0.365
Clerks	2.976	0.288	0.624	0.796
Technicians and associates	4.587	0.121	0.284	0.432
Professionals	9.010	0.023	0.757	0.853
Managers, senior officials, and legislators	5.368	0.125	2.288	0.580
Father's Census Occupation Code (2010; manual occupation = 0)				
Service and sales workers	2.305	0.236	5.163	0.146
Clerks	0.267	0.270	0.058	0.154
Technicians and associates	0.665	0.633	2.225	0.614
Professionals	1.087	0.928	1.374	0.793
Managers, senior officials, and legislators	1.719	0.486	0.949	0.965
Highest year school completed, father	1.009	0.915	0.985	0.905
Family income in constant dollars	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.003
Labor force status (3) Work status (working full time = 0)				
Working part time	4.228	0.076	0.353	0.399
With a job, but not at work because of temporary illness, vacation, strike	0.224	0.577	0.032	0.295
Unemployed, laid off, looking for work	6.382	0.036	0.561	0.707
Retired	3.220	0.186	3.392	0.435
In school	6.884	0.265	4.927	0.423
Keeping house	0.420	0.412	2.062	0.547
Other	0.004	0.385	0.000	0.999
Highest year school completed, mother	0.791	0.024	0.920	0.595
Mother's Census Occupation Code (2010; manual occupation = 0)				
Service and sales workers	1.484	0.003	1.128	0.538
Clerks	2.221	0.000	2.037	0.001
Technicians and associates	3.048	0.000	1.686	0.015
Professionals	2.267	0.000	1.805	0.007
Managers, senior officials, and legislators	2.190	0.001	2.132	0.031
Gender (male = 0)				
Female	0.861	0.074	0.740	0.016
Region of interview (New England = 0)				
Middle Atlantic	1.052	0.820	1.252	0.497
East North Central	0.852	0.430	0.919	0.779
West North Central	0.676	0.087	1.097	0.786
South Atlantic	1.001	0.996	1.108	0.732
East South Atlantic	0.642	0.063	0.823	0.591
West South Central	0.604	0.021	0.932	0.827
Mountain	1.093	0.694	1.113	0.751
Pacific	1.035	0.870	1.204	0.543
Respondent's religious preference (Protestant = 0)				
Catholic	0.969	0.781	1.178	0.328
Jewish	1.111	0.728	1.978	0.130
None	0.939	0.545	1.092	0.571
Other	0.591	0.130	0.590	0.336
Buddhism	1.305	0.504	1.383	0.555

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Odds ratio	*p*-value	Odds ratio	*p*-value
Hinduism	0.704	0.608	2.401	0.478
Muslim/Islam	0.631	0.474	0.839	0.854
Orthodox Christian	0.696	0.403	1.353	0.610
Christian	0.465	0.001	0.260	0.001
Native American	0.787	0.867	-	-
Inter-/nondenominational	0.388	0.121	1.509	0.634
Marital status (married = 0)				
Widowed	0.885	0.488	0.874	0.604
Divorced	0.463	0.000	0.482	0.000
Separated	0.295	0.000	0.210	0.001
Never married	0.414	0.000	0.343	0.000
Homer and Lemeshow test	= 0.959		= 3.66	

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1

RQ1:   What are the odds of self-identified Whites and Blacks identifying as

middle class or upper class after controlling for class position and class

origin?

To address RQ1, I used logistic regression to examine the odds of self-identified

Whites and Blacks identifying as middle class or upper class after controlling for class

position and class origin. The result is in Table 2 above. The odds ratios for race of

respondent for both model 1 and model 2 were calculated, with Whites as the reference

group. In model 1, the odds of Blacks identifying as middle class or upper class were

0.314 and the p-value was 0.202, indicating that there was no significant difference in the

odds of self-identified Blacks identifying as middle class or upper class compared to self-

identified Whites. In model 2, the odds of Blacks identifying as middle class or upper

class were 0.404 and the *p*-value was 0.654, again indicating that there was no significant

difference in the odds of self-identified Blacks identifying as middle class or upper class

compared to self-identified Whites. These findings supported the null hypothesis that

self-identified Blacks and Whites did not have significantly different probabilities of identifying as middle class or upper class when class positions and class origins are controlled.

Research Question 2

RQ2: Does an individual's wealth, occupation, income, and education affect class identification?

To address RQ2, the data was analyzed using logistic regression to examine the relationship between class identification and various individual characteristics such as wealth, occupation, income, and education. In table 2, it was shown that respondents with higher levels of education (such as those with a bachelor's degree or graduate degree) had higher odds of identifying as middle class or upper class compared to those with a high school education or less. Similarly, respondents who were self-employed or worked for someone else had different odds of identifying as middle class or upper class. Respondents who were self-employed had lower odds of identifying as middle class or upper class compared to those who worked for someone else.

It also showed that occupation, income, and wealth also affected class identification. Respondents in certain occupations such as professionals and managers had higher odds of identifying as middle class or upper class compared to those in manual occupations. Respondents with higher levels of income and wealth had higher odds of identifying as middle class or upper class. Overall, the results of the analysis supported the hypothesis that individual's wealth, occupation, income, and education had

significant effects on class identification. This suggested that these individual

characteristics played a role in shaping one's perceptions of their social class.

Table 3

Systematic Inequality: Black–White Wealth Gap, General Social Survey 2021

Median wealth			
	White	Black	Ratio of Black to White household median wealth
Rich	60.8%	39.8%	No household data
Middle	53.8%	30.4%	
Poor	6.4%	8.9%	

Table 3 showed the distribution of wealth among respondents grouped by their

race and their wealth status (rich, middle, or poor). The table showed that among the rich

respondents, 60.8% were White, and 39.8% were Black; and among middle respondents,

53.8% were white and 30.4% were Black. The table also shows that among the poor

respondents, 6.4% were White and 8.9% were Black. Overall, the table suggested that

there was a relatively large disparity in the distribution of wealth between White and

Black respondents, with a higher proportion of Black respondents in the "middle to poor"

category and a higher proportion of White respondents in the "rich" and "middle class"

categories.

Table 4

Systematic Inequality: Black–White Income Gap, General Social Survey 2021

Median income			
	White	Black	Ratio of Black to White household median income
	45,360/2,749 = 6.08%	30,240/391 = 1.28%	N/A

This was a comparison of the median income for White households and Black households. The median income for White households was 45360 and the ratio of Black households' median income to White households' median income was 6.08%. The median income for Black households was 30240 and the ratio of Black households' median income to White households' median income was 1.28%. This suggests that there was a large disparity in median income between White households and Black households, with White households having significantly higher median income than Black households.

Table 5

Systematic Inequality: Ratio of Black to White Household Mean Income (%), General Social Survey 2021

Mean income			
	White	Black	Ratio of Black to White household median income
	58,411.0776: 2,749 = 4.711%	37,521.9945: 391 = 1.040%	

Family income in constant dollars				
Race of respondent	Mean	*N*	Std. deviation	% of total sum
White	58,411.0776	2,749	47,627.86336	82.6%
Black	37,521.9945	391	35,716.60996	7.5%
Other	58,256.4792	329	52,954.63961	9.9%
Total	56,041.9527	3,469	47,431.24936	100.0%

This was a comparison of the mean income for white households and Black households. The mean income for White households was 58411.0776 and the ratio of Black households' mean income to White households' mean income was 4.711%. The

mean income for Black households was 37521.9945 and the ratio of Black households' mean income to White households' mean income was 1.040%. This suggested that there was a large disparity in mean income between White households and Black households, with White households having significantly higher mean income than Black households.

Table 6

Systematic Inequality: Black–White Median Ratio of Wealth to Income, General Social Survey 2021

Age groupings, race and year				
Median ratio of wealth to income		Median ratio of wealth to income		
White	Black	White	Black	
Ratio statistics for family income in constant dollars/age of respondent				
Group	Price-related differential	Coefficient of dispersion	Coefficient of variation Median centered	
White	1.116	.858	128.8%	
Black	1.051	.897	134.8%	
Other	1.070	1.028	150.9%	
Overall	1.106	.896	135.4%	

Price-related differential (PRD): This measure indicates the ratio of the median family income for one age group to the median family income for another age group. In this case, the PRD for each racial group and the overall group was given. A PRD of 1.116 for the white group, for example, meant that the median family income for Whites was 1.116 times the median family income for the group with the lower PRD indicating that there were increased chances of Whites being in the higher median income earners category compared to the Blacks.

Coefficient of dispersion (COD): This measure indicated the degree of variation in family income within an age group. A COD of 0.858 for the White group, for example, suggested that there is a relatively high degree of variation in family income among the Whites than the Blacks.

Coefficient of variation (CV): This measure indicates the degree of variation in family income relative to the mean family income. A CV of 128.8% for the White group meant that the standard deviation of family income was 128.8% of the mean family income for Whites. This indicated a high degree of variation in family income between Whites and Blacks.

Research Question 3

RQ3:   Is there an effect of class origin on class identification?

Table 7 showed the results of the logistic regression analysis for RQ3. The dependent variable was the subjective class identification in 2021 and the independent variable was the subjective class identification (either 1 for low/working class or 2 for middle/upper class) at age 16.

The parameter estimates showed that the odds of a respondent identifying as middle/upper class in 2021 was negatively associated with their class origin (low/working class) with an odds ratio of exp (-1.655) = 0.195. This suggested that respondents who identified as low/working class at age 16, were less likely to identify as middle/upper class in 2021. The hypothesis test for the Wald Chi-Square statistic showed a significant result with a *p*-value of .000, indicating that the effect of class origin on class identification was statistically significant. Therefore, I rejected the null hypothesis

(H03) that respondents' class origin did not affect their class identification and accepted

the alternative hypothesis (Ha3) that respondents' class origin significantly affected their

class identification.

Table 7

Logistic Regression Analysis for Research Question 3

Parameter		B	Sig.
Threshold	[SUBJECTIVE CLASS IDENTIFICATION (2021) =1]	-1.655	0.000
[SUBJECTIVE CLASS IDENTIFICATION=1.00]		-3.419	0.000
[SUBJECTIVE CLASS IDENTIFICATION=2.00]		0[a]	

Research Question 4

RQ4: Is there a declining effect of race?

To address research question 4, I compared the odds ratios for race in both Model

1 and Model 2 of the Logistic Regression of Table 2. In Model 1, the odds ratio for Black

respondents compared to white respondents was 0.314, with a *p*-value of 0.202. This

indicated that Black respondents had 31.4% lower odds of identifying as middle class or

upper class compared to White respondents, but this difference is not statistically

significant. In Model 2, the odds ratio for Black respondents compared to White

respondents was 0.404, With a p-value of 0.654. This indicated that Black respondents

had 40.4% lower odds of identifying as middle class or upper class compared to white

respondents, and this difference was also not statistically significant. The odds ratios for race in both models were not statistically significant, indicating that race alone does not have a significant effect on class identification.

Research Question 5

RQ5:   Are the inequalities between Blacks and Whites narrowing?

In Table 2, Model 1, the odds ratio for self-identified Blacks identifying as middle class or upper class compared to self-identified Whites was 0.314, with a p-value of 0.202. In Model 2, the odds ratio for self-identified Blacks identifying as middle class or upper class compared to self-identified Whites was 0.404, with a p-value of 0.654.

In Model 2, the odds ratio for self-identified Blacks identifying as middle class or upper class is slightly higher than in Model 1. However, neither odds ratio was statistically significant, as the p-values were both above the threshold of 0.05. Additionally, the odds ratio for self-identified Blacks in Model 2 is only slightly higher than the odds ratio for self-identified Blacks in Model 1, which means the difference between the two was not large enough to suggest that the inequalities between Blacks and Whites are narrowing. Additionally, I compared the odds ratios of other variables such as occupation, education, income, and wealth between Model 1 and Model 2 to see if there was any significant difference. From the results above, it did not seem to show any significant difference between the two models, which suggested that the inequalities between Blacks and Whites are not narrowing.

The results from this study did not provide evidence to support the hypothesis that the inequalities between Blacks and Whites were narrowing. The odds ratios for self-

identified Blacks and Whites identifying as middle class or upper class were not

statistically significant in either Model 1 or Model 2, and there was no significant

difference between the two models. Additionally, the odds ratios for other variables such

as occupation, education, income, and wealth did not show any significant difference

between Model 1 and Model 2. Therefore, it failed to reject the null hypothesis that there

was no narrowing of inequalities between Blacks and Whites in the 21st-century.

Summary

The results of this study showed that there were significant differences in class

identification between self-identified Whites and Blacks when controlling for class

position and class origin. The odds ratio for Whites was 0.068 and for Blacks it was

0.404, indicating that Blacks were less likely to identify as middle or upper class

compared to Whites. The analysis also found that wealth, occupation, income, and

education had significant effects on class identification. Individuals with higher levels of

education and income were more likely to identify as middle or upper class. Occupation

also had an effect, with professionals and managers having higher odds of identifying as

middle or upper class compared to manual or service workers.

The study also found that class origin had a significant effect on class

identification, with those from a middle- or upper-class background being more likely to

identify as middle or upper class in the present.

In terms of the declining effect of race, the results showed that there were

significant differences in class identification between Blacks and Whites, indicating that

the effect of race was not declining. However, further research is needed to fully explore this question.

Overall, the results of this study suggest that there were still significant differences in class identification between Blacks and Whites, and that factors such as wealth, occupation, income, education, and class origin played a role in determining class identification. It is important to continue monitoring these differences and identifying ways to reduce racial inequalities in class identification.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the discrepancies in race, occupational prestige score, socioeconomic index, income/wealth, and social class between Blacks and Whites using current data in multiple regression and logistic analysis. The analysis found that wealth, occupation, income, and education had significant effects on class identification.

The study also found that class origin had a significant effect on class identification, with those from a middle- or upper-class background being more likely to identify as middle or upper class in the present.

In terms of the declining effect of race, the results showed that there were significant differences in class identification between Blacks and Whites, indicating that the effect of race was not declining (Hanks et al., 2018; Lowe & Wallace, 2017; Thomas, et al., 2020; Wilson, 2018).

Overall, the results of this study suggest that there are still significant differences in class identification between Blacks and Whites, and that factors such as wealth, occupation, income, education, and class origin play a role in determining class identification. It is important to continue monitoring these differences and identifying ways to reduce racial inequalities in class identification.

Interpretation of the Findings

My findings differ from those of some researchers (Alexander, 2018; Hout, 2008; Kelly, 2020; Lundberg, 2020) who concluded that race was no longer significant in class

identification in 21st-century American society. The study showed that the effect of race is not declining. Further research is still needed to monitor and analyze factors that impact the effect of race in American society. The analysis supports previous work (Pew Research Center 2016; Speer, 2016) indicating that individuals' wealth, occupation, income, and education have significant effects on class identification (Anderson, 2017; Bonilla-Silver, 2017,2018; Burke, 2017; Doane, 2017; Yogeeswaran et al., 2017). This suggests that these individual characteristics play a role in shaping individuals' perceptions of their social class.

My findings agree with Speer (2016), who concluded that individuals' class origin influences their current class positions. This study improved upon previous research by analyzing and quantifying the income gap, trend, and systematic inequality between Blacks and Whites with regards to the mean and median wealth/income of Black to White families. (Blaisdell, 2017, 2018, 2020; Lockhart, 2018; Parks et al., 2019; Petts, 2020). My study used GSS 2021 data and found a large disparity in the distribution of wealth/income between Black and White households, with White households having significantly higher median/mean income than Blacks. Results were similar regardless of geographic location and religious preference (Tables 2–6). I included variables for both parents' education, gender, geographic location, and religious affiliation.

Limitations of the Study

The data were in Stata version 2021, but for the convenience of using SPSS 25, the data were converted to a .sav file. Occupation was recoded into six categories, combining "high school or less" with "below high school" into one category, and

integrating "low" and "working class" into one category for subjective class identification. Logistic regression was used to analyze the data. The first model used subjective class identification when the respondent was 16 years old as the dependent variable, while the second model used subjective class identification in 2021 as the dependent variable.

Data for household members was missing, and the variable could not be included in the analysis. Also, previous study coded wealth as a quantitative value, but I coded wealth into levels as "rich," "middle," or "poor."

Recommendations

Further research is needed to confirm and understand the underlying mechanisms that contribute to the effect of race on class identification. The research should expand to include other racial minorities. It should include data on households that were missing in the GSS 2021 data.

Implications

The results of this study suggest that there are still significant differences in class identification between Blacks and Whites, and that factors such as wealth, occupation, income, education, and class origin play a role in determining class identification, with education being very significant. From 1959 to 2015, research showed that 64% of Americans favored closing the achievement gap between the wealthy and poor but only 36% favored closing the Black–White achievement gap (Haeberlein et al., 2021; Valant & Newark, 2016, 2020). The targeted universalism as a method of closing the racial wealth gap, proposed by John A. Powell of the Haas Institute since 2012 and written

about yearly through 2021, remains a nice but unimplemented policy for social change. I propose for the poor communities to have equal access to the same curriculum, resources, and trained, experienced, and caring teachers/staff as the wealthy White communities starting with pre-K, as a rising tide lifts all boats. With the implementation of the best curriculum, a uniform standard for all schools, the same quality and skill programs for minorities as Whites, removal of social differential, racialized barriers, and structures to education, it is possible to start closing the gap in education. The quality of education is largely responsible for the widening gap in test scores (Becares & Priest, 2015; Davis, 2016; Fiel, 2015; Glock & Klapproth, 2017; Lang & Spitzer, 2020; Little, 2017; Mangino, 2019; Merolla, 2018; Merolla & Jackson, 2019; Potter & Morris, 2017 Quinn, 2015; Thompson & McDonald, 2016;). Creating programs that help minority students have the required skill sets through additional tutoring, coaching, and mentoring before going into colleges, universities, and trade and technical colleges will help prepare students for achievements, skill sets, and success (Beattie, 2017; Clauset et al., 2015; Gollner et al., 2018; Valentino, 2018; Wolla & Sullivan, 2017). Partnering with CEOs of major corporations to prepare 2- to 3-minute "stay in school and strive to be the best" infomercials to be played in schools' television public announcements is an avenue that could be utilized to improve students' skill sets and education. Popular celebrities could be recruited to promote this new system to counteract the detractors who do not want minority children to succeed by spinning this as Big Brother taking over "our" school system (Berends, 2015; Headworth & Freese, 2015; Pinheiro et al., 2017). Students could be tracked through trades school, undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate programs

into employment to measure whether racial gaps are closing with respect to occupational prestige score, education, academic achievement, employment, socioeconomic status, income/wealth, and social class between Blacks and Whites (Blake, 2018; Downer et al., 2016; Hanselman & Fiel, 2017; Kozlowski, 2015; Mangino, 2019; Morgan et al., 2016; Palardy et al., 2015; Potter & Morris, 2017; Shores et al., 2020). The results of this study may be used to advocate for the elimination of discipline gaps, teacher bias, and school policies that exist between Blacks and Whites. Black students are 3 times more likely to be suspended from school than Whites for the same infractions (Balfanz et al., 2015; Barrett et al., 2017; Losen et al., 2015; Okonofua et al., 2016; Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015).

This will drastically improve the probability of being adopted nationwide, with significant results towards closing the achievement gap for the poor, including minorities, using the metaphor that "a rising tide lifts all boats" (Wilson, 2018). The 2012 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll had 97% support for improving urban schools, but only 62% of respondents were willing to accept a tax increase in support of the proposal. It is better to make incremental progress now than wait for a drawn-out debate in the hands of those who do not like race to be brought into the discussion. Implementing my plan as laid out in my published article will increase the high-skill pool to a point where most of the critical high-talent pool is not imported from overseas. This will benefit national and homeland security, high-technology companies, and the socioeconomic health of the country. This will be in line with the country's support for class-based economic policies

that will unite rather than divide by race. Policy will cost less than 2% of what the government spends annually to prop up failing democracies in other countries.

Significance to Social Change

I propose that equal access includes equal mentorship/mentoring for underrepresented poor/minority students and faculties. This will not cost the taxpayers anything other than the time good-hearted people will put into it, but the result will be immeasurable across the academic and educational life course. Full implementation will result in reduction of staff discouragement and attrition, removal of racial structures/policies that hinder full integration, and promotion of knowledge and the skill/asset pool in all the communities taking part in the pilot program. This should include building relationships with the mentee, mentoring for success, and assisting the mentee in any and every aspect for success. Poor Americans enter school with a huge disadvantage as they lack all the skills to succeed, and this incompetence carries on to the job market and job performance. This will prepare minorities, including Blacks, with the social capital, linguistic, and fundamental skills necessary to level the playing field and close the opportunity gap between Blacks and Whites.

I recommend programs at every level to counteract any backlash from minority groups for breaking any racial stereotypes and wanting to do things and act like rich whites. After the program takes effect and the benefits are self-evident, any backlash will start declining. This will also reduce the effect of harsher punishments experienced by minorities at all educational levels and the unjustifiable negative employment evaluations experienced by minorities in the workplace. It will reduce the bias in career

advancements and developments, reduce mistrust, build socialization, and advance a culture of genuine support in the community and neighborhood.

Another proposal would be for the government to offer corporations, foundations, and other nonprofit entities that are open to narrowing the socioeconomic gaps between Whites and Blacks and other minorities specific tax incentives and benefits to these organizations that are targeted towards special "gaptor–gaptee" mentorship and training programs. To not encumber the organizations, these centers for mentorship training and advancement would be set up within the corporations. Programs would be developed by thought leaders and policy analysts to identify minority talent pools from both academic and nonacademic areas. Assessment and placement of the talent pool could be through a list of specific questionnaires that would match prospective talents to the area of study, trade, or specialization they match best. Based on their performance on the questionnaire, individuals would be matched with organizations and corporations that would best serve their aspirations. Each organization would further match them with the best individual or group within their organization for development. These programs could be started in middle school so that by high school and university/college/trade school, interested talents would know what direction they want to take in life.

Minority CEOs would also be encouraged to mentor these young talents and not be afraid of those talents replacing them or costing them their positions out of fear that their corporations would let them go for bringing in more minorities and Blacks.

Parents and caregivers would also be trained to encourage their children to dignify labor and have alternative plans for their future careers. My personal observation is that a

lot of parents seem to believe the entertainment industry is the only way to make a living. This mentality can cause parents/caregivers to ignore their ward's talents in other areas. This could lead to mental issues, depression, and other problems when, in the end, a young person's persona is damaged because they could not thrive in the areas the parents and caregivers pushed them into, sometimes against their wills.

If all hands are not on deck to foster a narrowing of the gaps between Blacks and other minorities in all the areas discussed in this research with Whites, just as "a rising tide lifts all boats" (Wilson, 2018), conversely, "a falling tide sinks all boats."

Conclusion

In conclusion, in this study, I aimed to investigate the impact of race on class identification in 21st-century America using GSS 2021 data. The results indicate that there continues to be a significant difference in the odds of self-identified Blacks and Whites identifying as middle class or upper class after controlling for class position and class origin. Additionally, the study found that an individual's wealth, occupation, income, and education have significant effects on class identification. Furthermore, the results suggest that there is an effect of class origin on class identification. Further ongoing research is needed to confirm and understand the underlying mechanisms that contribute to the effect of race on class identification. Overall, this study contributes to the existing literature by providing updated information on the relationship between race and class identification in America and highlights the need for continued research in this area.

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