Racial Equity and Homelessness: Understanding the Intersections

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Why Racial Equity? Why Now?
GEORGE FLOYD

I CAN BREATHE NOW

MAY 25, 2020
A Brief History of Racism and Homelessness
“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

George Santayana
1400s
1900s
### Holyoke Chicopee, MA

#### Areas by Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A “Best”</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B “Still Desirable”</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C “Definitely Declining”</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D “Hazardous”</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Demographics

- Total Population (1940): 53,750
- Foreign-born white: 22.5%

#### Area Descriptions

- **click to select**
American Slavery
246 YEARS

1619

Segregation
89 YEARS

1865

1954

1900

2000
1980s-2000s

Photo Courtesy of Colin Gregory Palmer
Today

African Americans are disproportionately homeless at a rate of 3 to 1 compared to general population.

Native Americans = 8 to 1

Latinos are undercounted in homelessness estimates

(Olivet et al., 2018)
Racial Inequity and Homelessness: Findings from the SPARC Study

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* This paper has multiple first authors with equivalent contributions to study design, execution, analysis, and manuscript development.

ABSTRACT

This study examined race and homelessness in the United States through mixed methods research in eight communities. We compared the race and ethnicity of those experiencing homelessness to the general population and those in poverty using disproportionality metrics. Multilevel logistic regression was used to examine how race and ethnicity were associated with homeless service system outcomes. Qualitative interviews with 195 individuals of color explore pathways into homelessness and drivers of outcomes. Black/African Americans and Native Americans were the most overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness in each community. Whites and Asian Americans were underrepresented. Regression models found race to be a varying predictor of outcomes. Qualitative findings suggest that barriers to housing and economic mobility, experiences of discrimination, and involvement in multiple systems were common factors associated with homelessness for people of color. Findings highlight the need for researchers and policymakers to understand and address homelessness with attention to racial justice. Keywords: racism, homelessness, housing, race, ethnicity, poverty
Structural Racism
Levels of Racism

- Interpersonal
- Institutional
- Structural
In the United States...

People of Color (POC) are much more likely to live in poverty than White people.

Homelessness and food and housing insecurity— all disproportionately affect POC.  

The average Black family would need 228 years to build the wealth of a White family today.  

White people in the U.S. have 13x the net worth of Black people.  

Race-based barriers such as redlining have historically limited opportunities for POC to own real estate and accumulate wealth.  

(1) Pew Research Center (2) The Nation DaHy, 8/8/16
WHO CONTROLS ALL THE WEALTH?

- Population: Whites 77%, African-Americans 13%
- Wealth: Whites 90%, African-Americans 2.6%
African-Americans are 2X as likely to be unemployed.
BLACKS MAKE UP

13% of the General Population

40% of the Prison Population
Pre- and post-poverty is defined as a census tract with a poverty rate of 30 percent or higher.

- **White**: 12%
- **Hispanic**: 45%
- **Black**: 21%
- **Asian Pacific Islander**: 23%
- **American Indian**: 39%

On the x-axis, the values range from 0 to 40, representing the percent of children living in areas of concentrated poverty, by race/ethnicity.
Lifetime Likelihood of Imprisonment

- All Men: 1 in 9
- White Men: 1 in 17
- Black Men: 1 in 3
- Latino Men: 1 in 11
- White Women: 1 in 56
- Black Women: 1 in 11
- Latina Women: 1 in 45

COVID-19 and Communities of Color

- Members of racial and ethnic minorities may be more likely to live in **densely populated areas**

- Research also suggests that racial residential segregation is a fundamental cause of health disparities

- Members of racial and ethnic minorities live in neighborhoods that are **further from grocery stores and medical facilities**

- **Multi-generational households**, which may be more common among some racial and ethnic minority families

- Racial and ethnic minority groups are **over-represented in jails, prisons, and detention centers**
COVID-19's Devastating Impact On African Americans

African American share of state/city populations and COVID-19 deaths (as of Apr 06, 2020)

- Share of state/city's population
- Share of COVID-19 deaths

- **Louisiana** 32% 70%
- **Illinois** 15% 42%
- **Michigan** 4% 41%
- **North Carolina** 22% 22%
- **Chicago** 30% 69%

Sources: 2010 Census, respective state/city health departments
Since the coronavirus outbreak began in the U.S., Hispanic and black Americans are more likely to have been laid off than whites.

Percent of adults in each group who said they have been laid off or furloughed:

- Overall: 19%
- White: 11%
- Black: 16%
- Hispanic: 20%
- Other/Multiracial: 12%

8 Dimensions of Implementing Racial Equity in Homelessness Response Systems
1. Upstream Prevention
2. Cross Sector Collaboration
3. Equity-Based Assessment and Prioritization
4. Data
5. Focus on Specific At-Risk Groups
6. Anti-Racist Organizations
7. Sharing Power/Lived Experience
8. Long-Term Solutions
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