The Web of Urban Racism

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It is conceivable that the Negro question—given the moral filthiness of America—is incapable of solution. Perhaps not all social problems are soluble. Indeed it is only in America that one finds the imperative to assume that all social problems can be solved without conflict. To feel that a social problem cannot be solved peacefully is considered immoral. Americans are required to appear cheerful and optimistic about a solution, regardless of evidence to the contrary. This is particularly difficult for Negroes, who at the same time must endure all the disadvantages of the Job Ceiling and the Black Ghetto, as well as other forms of subordination.

So far, most Chicagons view Negro-white relations negatively—solely in terms of preventing a riot. While all responsible Negroes try to prevent violent conflict, their primary interest is the complete abolition of political and economic subordination and enforced segregation.1

Racism has been a major, but greatly neglected, theme in the history and culture of the United States. Whatever expression the justification and explanations of racism have taken, they have consistently rationalized underlying social relationships of domination and exploitation of persons of African ancestry. The institutional forms for this control of black people have undergone large-scale transformations: from slavery to peonage and Jim Crow, to the web of urban racism. For the present era, it is within the institutional life of metropolitan America—North, West, and South—that the most characteristic structures of racial subjugation are found. Therefore, American racism today cannot be understood apart from the operation of the major social systems within the large cities.

Once there was a time when the reality of racial oppression in the major metropolitan areas was shielded from the view of many white eyes by the welter of seemingly impersonal, market-like relationships that characterize the city. Within the last few years the thrust of the oppressed black people has ripped off that veil, making it easier to discern the underlying social mechanisms and control systems that regulate relations between the races in the modern urban environment. The task at hand in this essay involves a working out of the concepts necessary for comprehending the basic processes of urban racism. Much of the illustrative material is taken from Chicago, which is perhaps the best-studied city in the world. While on the one hand this procedure makes the essay into somewhat of a case study, on the other hand, it is designed to set forth an analytical framework for understanding racism in any major American city.

Before we can comprehend the complex institutions of the present, we must first sketch some of the more important features of their past. Recent scholarship has shown that on the eve of colonizing the New World the English already had an image of the black African as a person apart—an outsider, barbarian, and un-Christian. However, not until a new society was established in North America did they establish the mechanisms for simultaneously incorporating and controlling blacks within a colonial extension of their own culture. “Negro slavery, a product of innumerable decisions of self-interest made by traders and princes in Europe and Africa,” as Professor David Davis has recently pointed out, “was an intrinsic part of American development from the first discoveries. The evolution of the institution was also coeval with the creation of the idea of America as a new beginning, a land of promise wherein men’s hopes and aspirations would find fulfillment.”2 In turn, racism was coeval with American slavery.


The southern plantation system in the days of slavery was the cradle of the original social arrangements that made racism such a lusty offspring of American society. The rapid growth of the new nation was largely based on the exploitation of the black man as a chattel in its fertile fields. For the surpluses of tobacco and cotton so produced provided the export goods for the rapid accumulation of capital which made this nation a major economic power in an exceedingly short period of time. This class control of black slaves took on other dimensions of subjugation when race was added to economic position as a mark of social status. Comparative historical studies conclude that slavery in the United States “handstamped the status of slave upon the Black with a clarity which elsewhere could never have been so profound.” 3 As a particular feature of the nation’s history,

... the Negro became identified with the slave, and the slave with the eternal parish for whom there could be no escape. The slave could not ordinarily become a free man, and if chance and good fortune conspired to endow him with freedom, he still remained a Negro, and as a Negro, according to the prevailing belief, he carried all of the imputation of slavery inside him. 4

Southern society, erected upon inequality of men in law and economics, promulgated the doctrine that slavery was a positive good. Through the generalization of slavery’s disabilities to Negroes as a race, the nonslaveholding whites were provided a symbolic stake in the system.

While uniting the various economically divergent groups of whites, the concept of race also strengthened the ardor of most Southerners to fight for the preservation of slavery. All slaves belonged to a degraded, “inferior” race, and by the same token, all whites however wretched some of them might be, were superior. In a race-conscious society, whites at the lowest rung could identify themselves with the most privileged and efficient of the community. 5

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By this process, racism became something over and above the slave system in which it had originated.

American slavery’s racist definition of blacks was fundamentally accepted in the North, even though only small pockets of blacks resided there. This acceptance of racism provided the irony that during the first half of the nineteenth century northern states concomitantly did away with slavery and erected a system of racial proscription for all persons of color. In 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, “despite some notable advance, the northern Negro remained largely disfranchised, segregated, and economically oppressed.” 6

Abolition of slavery did not mean the abolition of racism. Through the course of the Civil War and Reconstruction, northerners did away with the national power of the slave-owning class. In the course of this operation, they were forced to free the slaves and to rely on the political support of the freedmen. Then once the reins of national power were uncontestably in their hands, the northern bourgeoisie were willing to allow a counterrevolution in the South. The Compromise of 1877 brought “reunion and reaction.” Through violence and disenfranchisement, black men were again reduced to powerlessness. The southern restoration reinforced the plantation system with many new varieties of labor control such as peonage and sharecropping. Racism took on a new institutional form in which it was still effective in subjugating blacks and politically disarming poor whites. However, with the loss of its decisive pre-Civil War national power, this new form of southern racism was less able to protect its system from erosion within and without.

CONTROL, CONFLICT, AND COMMUNITY

American racism has primarily been an affair in black and white. Although such other minorities as Indians, Orientals, and Spanish-speaking groups have been subjected to racial degradation and exploitation in this nation, the dominant institutional forms of American racism have been erected for the subjugation of persons

of African ancestry. While it is both necessary and correct to emphasize the political and economic structures that form the framework of the racist system, certain aspects of social interaction have to be seen as filling out the structure. The control systems have been bolstered in the abstract by ideological justifications, institutionally by normative prescriptions, and individually by adjustments to roles either of superordination for white or subordination for blacks. The saliency of racism in American society is indicated by its pervasiveness in all areas of life from the most formal operations of government to the most casual types of interpersonal contact.

The historic durability of racism is amazing in the light of its most turbulent history. In none of its various institutional forms has it been a smoothly functioning system. Conflict and contradiction have characterized it from the beginning. For the nation as a whole, more constitutional crises have grown out of issues created by racism than from any other single cause. Many of the nation's sectional distinctions and conflicts were largely defined by differences in race and systems of racial controls. Such sectional differentiation provided the fundamental dividing line for the Civil War, the bloodiest conflict in American history.

Racial containment has always had its countertheme of sabotage, protest, and resistance. The slave system, for all its paternalism, required the lash to goad the resistant laborer on and the patrol to apprehend runaways and forestall potential revolts. Legal and political action, protest, and open resistance have been constant themes in Negro life since the Civil War. The massive reliance upon police power as an instrument of control over black communities in the cities is perhaps the best current evidence of this underlying conflict.

Racism's prescribed role of abasement and subordination for Negroes has been consistently contested. Rebels have cast off this role altogether. More frequently, individuals have developed additional roles or modes of action which would bestow some dignity and freedom. Surreptitious resistance, or the self-respect gained through mutual respect in an all-black environment provided the major means of gaining relief from the demands that racism places on one's behavior. Often, this conflict in roles became a basic conflict in one's individual personality—sometimes taking its toll, and sometimes creating amazing strength. In assessing the divergent roles of the tractable slave and the resistor, John Hope Franklin points out: "Any understanding of his reaction to his slave status must be approached with the realization that the Negro at times was possessed of a dual personality: he was one person at one time and quite a different person at another time." Even for many whites too there has been conflict between the racist role of superordination, as a member of the dominant caste, and general egalitarian values. In a smaller number of cases, egalitarian ways of acting have actually contended with the expected role of domination. While American society's system of racial constraints has truly proved its great power in overcoming such obstacles, counterforces continue to develop.

Amidst the ordeals of suppression and resistance the black community took shape. Adapting to the larger North Atlantic culture into which they had been transported by their white masters and hanging on to what could be saved from their various West African heritages, black men in America have constructed a unique community. A less hardy people might well have perished, and certainly would not have persisted to become today the most decisive force for change within American life. The depth of black culture is perhaps best evidenced in that it grew and endured almost secretly beneath the monolithic racial control system of the plantation South. The strength of this culture carried on into the modern urban milieu where now it is developing self-conscious social forms for its full manifestation.

THE URBANIZATION OF RACE

Little more than half a century ago, direct contact between the races took place in a milieu that was rural and southern. On the

* This section is based upon United States Department of Labor, The Negroes in the United States: Their Economic and Social Situation, Bulletin No. 1511 (June, 1969), pp. 63-70; United States Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, Nos. 151, 155, 157, 163.
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crop diversification. This trend was continued into a second phase by the substitution of tractors for mules, herbicides for hoes, and machines for cotton-pickers. The sustained civil rights and political attacks upon the Jim Crow system of white supremacy facilitated the mobility of southern blacks. The pull of the city has primarily been exerted through wartime labor shortages. World War I occasioned the first massive migration to the North. The restriction of European immigration in 1924 created a semipermanent niche for blacks to become the new recruits into the pool of unskilled labor, which frequently became surplus labor. Successive demands for workers in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War have repeated the pattern. The North had other attractions—higher wages, better hours, and a system of racial controls less obvious than the South’s Jim Crow.

The population movement was not confined to the North alone, for it also involved a general shift to urban areas within the South. This internal migration from countryside to city is of major importance, although too often it has been ignored because it was overshadowed by the regional shifts. As the southern population becomes more demographically similar to the northern population, the nature of racism in both regions is beginning to assume greater similarities, especially in metropolitan centers.

Before World War II, the racial practices of the cities within the border states were more akin to those of cities in the South. Since the United States Supreme Court struck down de jure segregation in the Brown decision of 1954, the border cities have become much more similar to northern cities. Today it is difficult to distinguish the racial practices in the border metropolises, such as St. Louis and Baltimore, from their counterparts in the North. With the Supreme Court’s repeated reinforcement of its rulings on the unconstitutionality of Jim Crow laws and the passage of federal legislation to support these procedures, the institutional forms of the racial systems of the larger southern metropolitan areas, such as Atlanta and Dallas, are rapidly becoming similar to those of the border cities. The roles have changed and the South is now taking lessons from the North in matters of race.

188 and Series P-25, No. 359; and Philip Hauser, "Demographic Factors in the Integration of the Negro in America," The Negro American, in Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Fall, 1965, pp. 847-52.
THE STRUCTURE OF URBAN RACISM: A MODEL

The legal code that made the slave system and its successor the Jim Crow system so clear-cut is no longer the shaper of urban racism—North or South. In fact, much of the North has been without segregation laws for almost a century, and today antidiscrimination laws are common for housing, employment, and public accommodations. Within public and private organizations, many of the formal, and even the informal, unstated rules on race have been dropped or modified. Nevertheless, the social institutions have adapted to their historic heritage. Urban racism shows no sign of disappearing and operates almost as if it were sanctioned by statute.

Under these conditions urban racism defies concise definition. It is accurately definable only in terms of its diffusion throughout the operation of the major sectors of metropolitan life and through the procedures by which important institutions of the city establish priorities and choose between competing objectives. The immediate racial barriers, although they are still strong, do not, per se, define urban racism. In fact, within any particular institutional sector of urban life, the racial barriers have numerous fuzzy edges and exceptions. Many organizations which excluded blacks two years ago are now avidly seeking some token black representation. The effectiveness of urban racism is dependent upon the manner in which the racial controls and differentiation in one institutional sector fit together to reinforce the distinctions in other sectors. As the specific barriers become less distinctive and less absolute, their meshing together into an overriding network compensates, so that the combined effect of the whole is greater than the sum of the individual institutions. The minute operations of these institutions are so interrelated and bolster one another so efficiently they form a coherent system of control without the sanction of a legal framework.

Maintenance of the basic racial controls is now less dependent upon specific discriminatory decisions. Such behavior has become so well institutionalized that the individual generally does not have to exercise a choice to operate in a racist manner. The rules and procedures of the large organizations have already prestructured the choice. The individual only has to conform to the operating norms of the organization and the institution will do the discriminating for him.

Our model of urban racism has two major conceptual components regarding institutional structures: 1) Within the major institutional networks that operate in the city there have developed definable black subsectors which operate on a subordinated basis, subject to the advantage, control, and priorities of the dominant systems. 2) A circular pattern of reinforcement takes place between the barriers that define the various black subsectors. A third component regarding power and stability of the entire urban system is essential to our model; but since this deals more with modes of operation than institutional structures, we leave any treatment of this topic to the later section on “Maintaining the Balance.”

The major institutional sectors whose operation and mutual reinforcement provide the basic sinews for the system of racial controls are the housing market and its related field of planning, the labor market, the educational system, and the political structure with the welfare system it controls.

In each of these institutional areas, there has developed historically a dual system of operations in which there is a dominant white system and a subordinate black subsystem. The well established adaptation of both racial groups to these institutional dualities makes it possible to perpetuate such divisions, even though the absolute color line between the subdivisions might not be as strong in specific cases as they once were. This line is infrequently tested, for blacks as a group operate in the black subsector and whites as a group operate in the white subsector. Discrimination and discouragement usually remain sufficiently strong to prevent too many from operating out of their own area. Deliberate exclusion of the large magnitude that was necessary originally to create the subordinate black subsectors is no longer requisite for their perpetuation.

The fact that the black subsectors exist on a subordinated basis is necessary to make the mutual reinforcement among sectors effective. These subsectors have become the primary basis upon which the racial distinctions are institutionally structured. The second-class outcomes for blacks from any one institutional sector
are so strong and enduring because the subordinated subsectors provide concrete organizational forms and procedures which can be bolstered. It is not just attitudes or individually controlled behavior that are reinforced.

In order to have a discriminatory effect, criteria, rules, and procedures within any single organization may now be much less based on race. The racial distinctions and differentiations created in any one institutional area operate as instruments supporting the segregation and unequal treatment that take place in the other institutions. An organization's procedures can be based upon the outcomes of some other institutional operation. These outcomes might not have a racial label but nonetheless have a high racial correlation. A few examples: the school system uses the neighborhood-school policy which, combined with residential segregation, operates as a surrogate for direct segregation; suburbs in creating very restricting zoning regulations, or urban-renewal developments in setting universally high rents, can eliminate all but a very few black families on the basis of income; given the racial differentials produced by the school system, an employer, by using his regular personnel tests and criteria, can screen out most blacks from desirable jobs.

If any single institution, say the school system or the labor market, maintains its present form of operation alone, outside the web of urban racism, its efficiency in racial differentiation would greatly diminish. This is not to say that explicit racial barriers and discrimination no longer exist; it does say that once the fundamental institutional relationships have been established, overt exclusionary barriers become less important for the overall oppressive functioning of the system of urban racism.

The seemingly impersonal institutions of the great cities have been woven together into a web of urban racism that entraps black people much as the spider's net holds flies—they can wiggle but they cannot move very far. There is a carefully articulated interrelation of the barriers created by each institution. Whereas the single institutional strand standing alone might not be so strong, the many strands together form a powerful web. But here the analogy breaks down. In contrast to the spider's prey, the victim of urban racism has fed on stronger stuff and is on the threshold of tearing the web.

This spreading out of the racial controls through such a variety of institutional forms, plus the ideological distortions in the way that they have been viewed, make it difficult to discern the actual social structure that makes urban racism operational. From within the black community it tends to appear that there is just a massive white sea that surrounds a black island. The further down one is on the ladder of status and income, the more this view prevails. To white liberals and sophisticated managers in business and government, urban race relations has the appearance of being a number of problems, related somewhat through the life cycle of blacks. They view the problems as basically solvable through spending more resources on the accepted techniques of social and business management.

At one time it was popular to claim that the environment of the northern city was antithetical to racism. Rural black peasants, it was held, would just need a generation or two to acculturate into the urban melting pot. After all, were they not just the newest immigrants—a kind of black Irishmen? The hard evidence holds to the contrary—racism's roots now are firmly embedded in the urban environment. The major population shift has had little effect on the basic socioeconomic position of blacks vis-à-vis whites in the cities. The racial gap in social benefits is basically not being closed, even in a period of unprecedented prosperity. The Vietnam War is having less of an effect on improving blacks' incomes and occupations than did World War II. In the slum areas of the large cities the number of poor blacks has remained constant since 1960. Truly, the city must have its own technique for locking blacks in. An accurate historic or analytic view can leave no doubt that the functioning of the system still involves a perpetuation of segregation, subordination, subjugation, and exploitation.

What remains to be clarified is the nature of the social structures by which these relations are maintained. In the examination of the individual sectors, most of the ideas and a good deal of the evidence were developed from studies of Chicago. The picture in its broad outlines, however, holds for all major metropolitan areas.
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able and dirty the job the greater the chance of finding a high proportion of Negroes.

Within the racial division of the labor market, the black subsector clearly is in a subordinate position. Jobs are distributed between white and black workers in a way that gives white workers the first opportunity for employment. Expansion of employment opportunities for the black workers occurs only during periods of tight labor markets when certain jobs transfer either partially or fully from the white to the black subsector. Most firms actively recruit black workers only when the pool of white labor is drying up. Furthermore, black workers are concentrated in marginal or declining industries and firms. Under these conditions, a large part of the black labor force forms a pool of surplus labor that is excluded from the normal functioning of the economy.

Historically, wartime tight labor markets have provided the occasions when the surplus labor reserve of black workers has been drawn upon. In subsequent peacetime slackening of labor demand, discrimination has operated to ration off the smaller number of jobs to the white man's advantage and to wipe out most of the relative gains made by the black man. During times of labor scarcity individual firms might drastically change their personnel policies, hiring black workers where none had been employed before or upgrading them into positions that were previously lily-white. Such a process was first instituted during World War I and has been repeated with every succeeding war. The new black workers were recruited from the surplus labor of the rural South and from the unemployed and underemployed in the urban ghettos. Today, since there are relatively few black people left in rural areas, the city provides the major portion of the black surplus labor reserve.

The effects of this dual labor market structure are revealed in the position in the urban economy of black workers vis-à-vis white workers. During the last twenty years of general prosperity their relative standings have remained remarkably stable. Both groups have improved their incomes and upgraded their occupations, but the rate of improvement for blacks has been insufficient to diminish their proportionate distance behind whites. Economic growth and shifts in the occupational mix during this period have provided conditions for the economic assimilation of other groups. Indeed,
if blacks faced barriers in the labor market that were similar to those faced by immigrant ethnic groups, there would have been a remarkable shift in their relative status. The grim facts speak differently. The incomes of black workers and families, when considered on a nationwide basis, have basically remained at a constant percentage of white incomes since World War II. The ratio has fluctuated around 55 per cent—falling as low as 51 per cent in peacetime and rising higher during the Korean and Vietnamese wars. The national figures hide the effect of wage improvement caused by migration out of the South, for in every region the income gap for black males increased in the decade 1950–60. Black women have somewhat improved their positions.6

Unemployment is falling harder on the black worker now than it did right after World War II. The black unemployment rate has increased from a little over one and a half times the white rate in 1948 to over twice the white rate in the mid-1950's. Today, in the major cities, the black unemployment rate is two and a half to four times that of the whites. For Chicago, the latest figures indicate white unemployment at 2.3 per cent of the civilian labor force and black unemployment at 7.6 per cent.

Racial differences in unemployment rates and income are only partially explainable on the basis of differences in education and occupation. In every occupational group and at every level of education, black workers have higher unemployment rates and lower incomes than whites with comparable backgrounds. Studies that take into account variation in education, occupation, and other relevant characteristics have found that between 13 and 38 per cent of the differential between the incomes of black and white men is attributable to discrimination.6 Even unskilled workers are penalized solely on the basis of race. In Chicago, during 1964, black material handlers received 32 cents an hour less than whites of comparable training and background; black janitors received 10 cents an hour less.7

As a result of the extended economic boom, the wartime tight labor market and the changes in public and private policies brought about by the civil rights movement, it is true that a top group of younger, better-trained black workers have improved their conditions enough in the last half dozen years to narrow the gap a little between themselves and their white counterparts. A middle group of approximately one half of the black workers has managed to share reasonably in the prosperity by maintaining its same relative position in regard to whites. However, even the extremely favorable current conditions have not been able to neutralize the effects of urban racism on the one third or more of the families in the cities that constitute the black underclass.

For those blacks trapped in the slum sectors of the ghetto, the United States Department of Labor concludes that “social and economic conditions are getting worse, not better.” This group is not only falling further behind the whites, but they were better off eight years ago before the long boom started. In the Hough section of Cleveland, black families in 1955 had $800 less in real purchasing power than they had in 1960; in South Los Angeles, family purchasing power fell off by $200. Unemployment rates in these areas, even during a boom, generally range upwards of 10 per cent. Regular unemployment rates, however, do not represent the real conditions of the black underclass. Accordingly, the Department of Labor in a special study developed the category of subemployed, which includes the underemployed and the discouraged workers who have dropped out of the labor force altogether. For nine major slum areas across the country in 1966 they found that one of three adult males was subemployed.8 Only in the subsequent two years with the increased tempo of the economy due to the Vietnam War has there been a slight reversal of this downward trend.


Housing and Land Planning

The stark reality of the urban ghettos eliminates the need for citing elaborate statistics to prove the existence of residential segregation and racially dual housing markets. The United States Bureau of the Census shows that segregation within cities and the current concentration of the black population in central cities have increased during the sixties.

The existence of separate housing markets—one for whites and another for blacks—is provable by a study of the operations of the market institutions and by measurement of differentials in market results. Overwhelmingly, real estate brokers refuse to show black properties outside the ghetto or transition neighborhoods. Lending institutions refuse to grant them mortgages for properties beyond these confines. Blacks are restricted to considering purchase or lease only of those units which come on the black market. In turn, whites, because of prejudice and a realistic recognition of the worse conditions in the ghetto, limit their shopping to properties in the white market.

Comparable housing units have different prices depending upon the racial sector in which they are located. Since blacks have a restricted supply of housing and a growing demand, they have to pay a premium or a “color tax.” An Urban League study for Chicago shows that for rental units, which comprise four-fifths of the black

As Karl and Alma Taeuber concluded after their exhaustive study,

In the urban United States, there is a very high degree of segregation of the residences of whites and Negroes. This is true for cities in all regions of the country and for all types of cities—large and small, industrial and commercial, metropolitan and suburban. It is true whether there are hundreds of thousands of Negro residents, or only a few thousand. Residential segregation prevails regardless of the relative economic status of the white and Negro residents. It occurs regardless of the character of local laws and policies, and regardless of the extent of other forms of segregation or discrimination.


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housing, blacks pay 10 per cent more than whites for comparable units. Rapkin, in examining regional and national data, shows systematic patterns of price discrimination against black renters.

Regardless of social or economic status, almost all blacks are locked into the ghetto. Because of the perpetual housing shortage, all social strata in the black community have to pay more for their dwellings. All sections of the ghetto are subject to manipulation which ignores their interests in matters of zoning and land planning. But the worst off are the poor who are locked into the slums. Cut-up apartments, negligent landlords, and inefficient public services characterize these areas. The ghetto is bad not because it is inhabited by black people, but because it is operated as a subjected enclave. The will and interests of others than the inhabitants rule over the black neighborhoods. The ghetto, in this restrictive sense, is not a free community; it is the product of oppression.

At the beginning of this century, the black housing enclaves were no more segregated than the areas in which many of the European immigrant groups lived. However, the immigrant groups dispersed, while the blacks became more segregated. Rigid policing of the ghetto walls was largely organized in the period right after World War I by the real estate industry through restrictive covenants and control of mortgage funds. The encouragement of violence was not unknown. People became conditioned to participating in the housing market along specific racial lines so that even when restrictive covenants were declared unenforceable, the old patterns endured.

A second phase in the shoring up of the ghetto came about after World War II. Urban planning and redevelopment became the major new instruments for keeping black areas subordinated and consolidated during this period. Urban renewal to improve the environment of prestigious institutions and expressway construction to make the city accessible to the suburbanites, displaced many of the families in the ghetto and further diminished an already limited black housing supply. New construction of public housing was so
located as to keep many of the displaced black families within the already established ghettos.

The urban ghettos are increasingly isolated from the majority of the new jobs located in the suburban ring. Transportation is inadequate and costly. Furthermore, the large size and homogeneity of the black areas makes it easy to develop segregated school systems on the basis of neighborhood policies.

**Education**

Educational systems have become a major pillar of racism, precisely because education has become so important in the total scheme of our society. The sophistication of the technology employed in the economy makes educational achievement a prerequisite for a decent job. In 1900, when only 8 per cent of the youth in the nation graduated from high school and unskilled jobs abounded, the urban school systems were not a major instrumentality in creating racial distinctions. Today, when over 70 per cent of all youths graduate from high school and over 50 per cent of the graduates go on to some kind of college, educational institutions which provide markedly different results for black and white children are key to the structure of urban racism. Next to the family, they are the most important institutional molder of the child in our society.

Without the support of any statutory provisions, urban school systems operate very efficiently on a de facto racially segregated basis. This segregation invariably occurs where racial groups are residentially segregated and there is a neighborhood school policy. In the past, many boards of education have gerrymandered school boundaries and used various student transfer policies so as to create all-black or all-white schools. Civil rights pressures have put an end to most of these maneuvers. Nevertheless, with the large size and the homogeneity of the ghettos, no special policies are needed to maintain Jim Crow schools today.

In the larger cities, there are, in effect, two school subsystems—one for blacks and one for whites. These subsystems help define both a spatial and social distance between the two racial groups. In Chicago, for instance, conclusive evidence shows that the extent of racial segregation has been increasing in recent years: in 1965, 80 per cent of the black elementary and 72 per cent of the black high school pupils attended schools that were virtually all black. Six of the public school systems in the ten largest cities had 90 per cent or more of their black pupils in schools that were 90 to 100 per cent black. Even in many of the schools that have bi-racial student bodies, homogeneous groupings and track systems often create a high degree of internal segregation.

As in the case of the other areas of urban life, the status and conditions of the black sub-sectors of the urban school systems are distinctly inferior. Usually, they are located in the central cities which spend less per pupil than the better-off suburbs. The second-class nature of the black section of the city school system can be measured in terms of both the inputs and outputs of the system. In the black schools, the board of education maintains larger classroom size, has a lower per pupil expenditure, concentrates its teacher shortage, is less sensitive to the expressed needs of the community, and has lower expectations for both the pupils and faculties. These lesser inputs are matched by comparable results. By the sixth grade, black pupils have average achievement levels that lag two years behind those of white pupils; this lag increases to more than three years in the higher grades. Moreover, the black pupils incorporate in their own self-images much of the low esteem with which the school system holds them. It should be noted that during the last few years, in response to the pressures of the civil rights movement and with federal grants in aid, there has been some increase in the inputs into the black sub-sectors so that the disparities are no longer so great within the central city. Since the racial differentials in educational inputs constitute only one element of the total system, the net effect of any equalizing of expenditures has been to keep the disparity in educational results from increasing. Further, in spite of any more equitable distribution of educational funds between racial groups as a whole, a recent study of public school expenditures in the Chicago metropolitan area shows that the high-status whites have been able to increase the amounts spent on their children at a faster rate than any other group, black or white. While racial advantage in this regard might be narrowing, class advantage is growing.