The House that Racism Built

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Florence & Laura Norman Professor of Public Health
Professor of African & African American Studies and of Sociology
Harvard University
A Global Phenomenon

In race-conscious societies, such as,

- Australia
- Brazil
- New Zealand
- South Africa
- the U.K.
- United States,

non-dominant racial groups have worse health than the dominant racial group
Life Expectancy Lags, 1950-2010

Source: NCHS, Health United States, 2013
Making Sense of Racial Inequities
The House that Racism Built

Racism
- Ideology of inferiority
- Institutional
- Cultural

Social Forces
- Political
- Legal
- Economic
- Religious
- Cultural
- Historical Events
Racism Defined

- Racism: an organized system, premised on the categorization and ranking of social groups into races and devalues, disempowers and differentially allocates desirable societal opportunities and resources to racial groups regarded as inferior.

- The development of racism is typically undergirded by an ideology of inferiority in which some population groups are regarded as being inferior to others.

- This often leads to the development of negative attitudes and beliefs toward racial outgroups (prejudice), and differential treatment of members of these groups by both individuals and social institutions (discrimination).

Bonilla-Silva, 1996; Williams 2004
Racism and Health: Mechanisms

- Institutional discrimination can restrict socioeconomic attainment and group differences in SES and health.
- Segregation can create pathogenic residential conditions.
- Discrimination can lead to reduced access to desirable goods and services.
- Internalized racism (acceptance of society’s negative characterization) can adversely affect health.
- Racism can create conditions that increase exposure to traditional stressors (e.g. unemployment).
- Experiences of discrimination may be a neglected psychosocial stressor.
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Segregation
Place Matters

Residential Segregation is a striking legacy of racism

- As is the forced removal and relocation of indigenous peoples
- The institutionalized isolation and marginalization of racial populations has adversely affected life chances in multiple ways
Racial Segregation Is . . .

1. ..."basic" to understanding racial inequality in America (Myrdal 1944).

2. ...key to understanding racial inequality (Kenneth Clark, 1965).

3. ...the "linchpin" of U.S. race relations and the source of the large and growing racial inequality in SES (Kerner Commission, 1968).

4. ..."one of the most successful political ideologies" of the last century and "the dominant system of racial regulation and control" in the U.S (John Cell, 1982).

5. ..."the key structural factor for the perpetuation of Black poverty in the U.S." and the "missing link" in efforts to understand urban poverty (Massey and Denton, 1993).
How Segregation Can Affect Health

1. Segregation determines SES by affecting quality of education and employment opportunities.

2. Segregation can create pathogenic neighborhood and housing conditions.

3. Conditions linked to segregation can constrain the practice of health behaviors and encourage unhealthy ones.

4. Segregation can adversely affect access to medical care and to high-quality care.

Williams & Collins, Pub Health Reports, 2001
### Our Neighborhood Affects Our Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unhealthy Community</th>
<th>Healthy Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe even in daylight</td>
<td>Safe neighborhoods, safe schools, safe walking routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to toxic air, hazardous waste</td>
<td>Clean air and environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No parks/areas for physical activity</td>
<td>Well-equipped parks and open spaces/organized community recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited affordable housing is run-down; linked to crime ridden neighborhoods</td>
<td>High-quality mixed income housing, both owned and rental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience/liquor stores, cigarettes and liquor billboards, no grocery store</td>
<td>Well-stocked grocery stores offering nutritious foods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Our Neighborhood Affects Our Health

#### Unhealthy Community vs Healthy Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unhealthy Community</th>
<th>Healthy Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Streets and sidewalks in disrepair</td>
<td>Clean streets that are easy to navigate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burned-out homes, littered streets</td>
<td>Well-kept homes and tree-lined streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No culturally sensitive community centers, social services or opportunities to engage with neighbors in community life</td>
<td>Organized multicultural community programs, social services, neighborhood councils or other opportunities for participation in community life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No local health care services</td>
<td>Primary care through physicians’ offices or health center; school-based health services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of public transportation, walking or biking paths</td>
<td>Accessible, safe public transportation, walking and bike paths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Racial Differences in Residential Environment

In the 171 largest cities in the U.S., there is not even one city where whites live in equal conditions to those of blacks.

“The worst urban context in which whites reside is considerably better than the average context of black communities.”

Sampson & Wilson 1995
Segregation Contributes to Large Racial/Ethnic Differences in SES
Residential Segregation and SES

A study of the effects of segregation on young African American adults found that the elimination of segregation would erase black-white differences in:

- Earnings
- High School Graduation Rate
- Unemployment

And reduce racial differences in single motherhood by two-thirds

Cutler, Glaeser & Vigdor, 1997
## Median Household Income and Race, 2013

Racial Differences in Income are Substantial:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Income Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1 dollar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.15 dollar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>70 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI/AN</td>
<td>62 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>59 cents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- U.S. Census Bureau (DeNavas – Walt and Proctor 2014)
Median Wealth and Race, 2011

For every dollar of wealth that Whites have,:

- Asians have 81 cents
- Blacks have only 6 cents
- Latinos have only 7 cents

U.S. Census Bureau, 2014
-- Large Racial/Ethnic Differences in SES that are consequential for life are not acts of God
-- They are not random events – they reflect the successful implementation of social policies, many of which are rooted in racism
Socioeconomic Status (SES) is a central determinant of the distribution of valuable resources in society.
SAT = Scholastic Aptitude Test
OR

Student Affluence Test?
SAT SCORE by Family Income

SAT Score (Math, Reading & Writing)

Annual Household Income: Dollars


Fair Test, College Board, Wall Street Journal, Oct 7th, 2014
Relative Risks of All-Cause Mortality by Household Income Level: U.S. Panel Study of Income Dynamics

Relative Risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income (Converted to 2013$)</th>
<th>Relative Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 25,000</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000 - 33,000</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33,000 - 50,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000 - 82,000</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82,000 - 115,000</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 115,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P. McDonough, Duncan, Williams, & House, AJPH, 1997
Added Burden of Race
## Life Expectancy At Age 25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>53.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. 0-12 Years</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 12 Years</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Some College</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. College Grad</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>49.9</td>
<td></td>
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<td>50.9</td>
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<td>52.3</td>
<td></td>
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Why Race Still Matters

• Distinctive Social Exposures
  -- Other Aspects of Raisim
  -- High levels of Stressors
  -- Greater Clustering of Multiple Stressors
The House that Racism Built

Racism
- Ideology of inferiority
- Institutional
- Cultural

Individual Discrimination

Segregation

Social Forces
- Political
- Legal
- Economic
- Religious
- Cultural
- Historical Events
The Pervasiveness of Discrimination

Discrimination

Getting insurance
Buying a home
Renting an apartment
Hailing a taxi
Purchasing a car
Suspended from preschool
Receiving a promotion
Cost of bail
Pulled over by police
Arrested for drug–related crimes
Obtaining bank loans
Quality of medical care
Experiences of discrimination are a source of Toxic Stress
Every Day Discrimination

In your day-to-day life how often do these happen to you?

- You are treated with less courtesy than other people.
- You are treated with less respect than other people.
- You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores.
- People act as if they think you are not smart.
- People act as if they are afraid of you.
- People act as if they think you are dishonest.
- People act as if they’re better than you are.
- You are called names or insulted.
- You are threatened or harassed.

What do you think was the main reason for these experiences?
• **Everyday Discrimination: positively associated with:**
  -- coronary artery calcification  (Lewis et al., Psy Med, 2006)
  -- C-reactive protein  (Lewis et al., Brain Beh Immunity, 2010)
  -- lower birth weight  (Earnshaw et al., Ann Beh Med, 2013)
  -- cognitive impairment  (Barnes et al., 2012)
  -- poor sleep  (Lewis et al, Hlth Psy, 2012)
  -- visceral fat  (Lewis et al., Am J Epidemiology, 2011)
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Individual Discrimination

Segregation
- Stereotypes
- Implicit and explicit bias
- Stigma
Where do Negative Racial Stereotypes come from?
Racial Stereotypes in Our Culture

- **BEAGLE Project**
- 10 million words
- Sample of books, newspapers, magazine articles, etc. that average college-level student would read in lifetime
- Allows us to assess how often Americans have seen or heard words paired together over their lifetime

Verhaeghen et al. British J Psychology, 2011
### Stereotypes in Our Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Stereotype</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>violent</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>religious</td>
<td>0.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>lazy</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>cheerful</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>progressive</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>conventional</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>stubborn</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>successful</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>educated</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>dominant</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>leader</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>logical</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verhaeghen et al. British J Psychology, 2011
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLACK</th>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>WHITE</th>
<th>Trait</th>
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<td>WHITE</td>
<td>educated</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>musical</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>selfish</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
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Verhaeghen et al. British J Psychology, 2011
Negative stereotypes about race remain deeply embedded in our culture

Negative Stereotypes Trigger Racial Discrimination
Racial Bias in Medical Care
Race and Medical Care

• Across virtually every therapeutic intervention, ranging from to the most simple diagnostic and treatment interventions to the most high tech ones, minorities receive fewer procedures and poorer quality medical care than whites.

• These gaps persisted even after differences in health insurance, SES, stage and severity of disease, co-morbidity, and the type of medical facility are taken into account.
Ethnicity and Pain Medicine

Percent of Patients with broken bone receiving no analgesia

Hispanics: 55%
NH Whites: 26%

Todd et al., JAMA, 1993
Implicit Bias & Care for Blacks

- More Implicit bias associated with:
  - more clinician verbal dominance*
  - less patient centered dialogue
  - lower patient positive affect*
  - lower perception of respect from clinician*
  - less patient liking of clinician*
  - lower trust and confidence in clinician
  - less likely to recommend clinician to others*
  - less perception of clinician as participatory*
  - longer visits and slower speech (compensation for mistrust?)

Cooper et al., AJPH, 2012; * = significant interaction with race
Disparities in the Clinical Encounter: The Core Paradox

How could well-meaning and highly educated health professionals, working in their usual circumstances with diverse populations of patients, create a pattern of care that appears to be discriminatory?
**Unconscious Discrimination**

- When one holds a negative stereotype about a group and meets someone who fits the stereotype s/he will discriminate against that individual.

- Stereotype-linked bias is an
  - Automatic process
  - Unconscious process

- It occurs even among persons who are not prejudiced.
Faster than the Twinkling of an Eye!

• Studies find that most Americans have rapid and unconscious emotional and neural reactions to blacks

• A millisecond is 1/1000 of a second

• 100 milliseconds - how quickly an individual's race is noticed and whether or not that person is trustworthy

• 300 - 400 milliseconds: time for human eye to blink

• 800 milliseconds: human resting heart cycle time

Fiske et al, Du Bois Review, 2009
Reducing Racial Bias Among Health Care Providers: Lessons from Social-Cognitive Psychology

Diana Burgess, PhD\textsuperscript{1,2}, Michelle van Ryn, PhD, MPH\textsuperscript{1,3}, John Dovidio, PhD\textsuperscript{4}, and Somnath Saha, MD, MPH\textsuperscript{5}
The Devine Solution

• Non-black adults can be motivated to increase their awareness of bias against blacks, their concerns about the effects of bias and to implement strategies which were effective in producing substantial reductions in bias that remained evident three months later.

• Implicit biases viewed as deeply engrained habits that can be replaced by learning new prejudice-reducing strategies including stereotype replacement, counter-stereotype imaging, individuation, perspective taking and increasing opportunities for interracial contact.

Internalized Racism:

Acceptance of society’s negative characterization can adversely affect health
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Individual Discrimination

Segregation
- Stereotypes
- Implicit and explicit bias
- Stigma

Income
- Education
- Employment
- Under-employment

Wealth
- Health
- Incarceration
- Stress

Individual and Collective Resources, Social Resources
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Stereotypes Implicit and Explicit Bias Stigma

Individual and Collective Resources, Social Resources

H
Undoing Racism

Dismantling Institutional Racism
Racism as a System: Implications

- Disparities in one societal domain are not independent of those in other domains.
- Racism is a set of dynamically related components of subsystems.
- There is reciprocal causality of disparities across domains.
- Disparities in one domain are a product of causal processes across multiple subsystems.
- “It is impossible” to come up with remedies for disparities if we fail to acknowledge and address the interdependence across domains.

Reskin, Ann Review of Sociology, 2012
Racism as a System

Arrows reflect emergence of racism and the effects of subsystems (white arrows)

Labor Market & Income

Education

Criminal Justice System

School Segregation

Health Care Sys

Residential Segregation

Credit Markets

Housing Market

Adapted from Reskin, Ann Rev Sociology, 2012
Options for Reducing Racial Inequalities

1. An exogenous force that acts on every subsystem: authoritative entity with mandate to act

2. Act on leverage points
   -- Residential segregation is one

3. Removing institutions from the discrimination system
   -- Success of the Army

4. Increasing accountability, reducing discretion

*Effective solutions to reducing racism must be comprehensive*

Reskin, Ann Review of Sociology, 2012
Purpose Built Communities: Comprehensive

• Based on efforts in Atlanta’s East Lake district

• Purpose Built Communities uses integrative strategies including cradle-to-college educational opportunities, mixed-income housing, early child development programs, employment support and recreational opportunities

• Community engagement and philanthropy

• Key: addressing all of the challenges faced by disadvantaged communities simultaneously

• Purpose Built Communities in Atlanta, New Orleans, Indianapolis, Charlotte, among others
Implementing the Purpose Built Model

A Defined Neighborhood

Mixed Income Housing

Cradle-to-College Education Pipeline

Community Wellness

A Strong Lead Organization

Strong local leadership. A proven national model. Best in class partners.
East Lake Meadows - 1995

**Safety**
- 18x national crime rate
- 90% of families victims of a felony each year
- $35 million a year drug trade

**Housing**
- 100% public housing
- 1400 residents in 650 apartments
- 40% of units unlivable

**Employment**
- 13% employment
- 59% of adults on welfare
- Median income of ~$4,500

**Education**
- One of lowest performing schools in Georgia
- 5% of 5th graders meet state math standards
- 30% graduation rate
## Villages of East Lake - Present

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<th>Housing</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>• 73% reduction in crime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 90% lower violent crime</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• High-quality, privately managed housing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Mixed-income (50% public housing, 50% market rate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1400 residents in 542 apartments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 75% employment in public housing, remainder in job training, elderly or disabled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Median income of ~$15k in public housing households</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ~1500 in Pre-K through 10th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 98% meet or exceed state standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A top performing school in Atlanta and the state</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Economic Policy is Health Policy

In the last 60 years, black-white differences in health have narrowed and widened with black-white differences in income.
Mortality Changes, Men, 1968 to 1978
Ages 35 to 74

Cooper et al. (1981b)
Mortality Changes, Women, 1968 to 1978
Ages 35 to 74

Cooper et al. (1981b)
Median Family Income of Blacks per $1 of Whites

U.S. Life Expectancy at Birth, 1984-1992

NCHS, 1995
Undoing Racism

It is not enough just to open the gates of opportunity. Everyone, irrespective of social group and background, must have the ability to walk through those gates.
Progress (or lack thereof) in Medicine

- In 2014, there were 27 fewer African American males in the first year of Medical School than there had been 36 years earlier, in 1978.

- In the mid-1960s, 2.9% of all practicing physicians in the US were black, and in 2012, 3.8% of all practicing physicians were black (5.2% were Hispanic).

AAMC, Altering the Course, 2015; Deville et al. JAMA Internal Med, 2015
“There is nothing so unfair as the equal treatment of unequal people.”

- Thomas Jefferson
Conclusions

• Racism, in its multiple forms, is alive and well today
• Its most powerful effects are through policies and procedures that are embedded in social institutions
• We need to acknowledge and understand the current manifestations of racism
• We need re-doubled efforts to mitigate its pathogenic effects
• We need to create the political will and support to dismantle societal structures that support racism, ethno-centrism, anti-immigrant sentiments and incivility
"True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it understands that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring."

- - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
A Call to Action

“Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”

- Robert F. Kennedy