



The “Grey” Compromise

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Personal Importance

Ariell Bertrand:

I am a White woman, and I grew up in a family that was well below the poverty line. I experienced the hardship of having parents who are felons and I was homeless for a brief part of my high school. Despite all of this happening, I also realize that both myself and my family are privileged for being White. From learning about the War on Drugs, I believe it is very possible that if my parents were Black they may have been sentenced to actual jail time for their drug charge.



Aliyah Hendricks:

As a Black woman who grew up in Springfield, Missouri (a predominantly White area), I was constantly aware at how much I stood out. Being around people from the South, I was constantly called racial slurs such as “nigger” and “dirt-roller” by White men and women while bystanders remained silent. I learned to label them uneducated and avoided confrontation with them. However, after reading *The New Jim Crow*, I now have a different perspective.



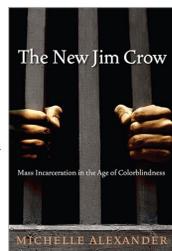
History Between Poor Whites and Blacks

From *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander

- In the early colonial period, Whites and Blacks originally had a common enemy, the rich elites. Although Blacks were the lowest in the social hierarchy, they experienced a lot of the same hardships as indentured White slaves.
- Nathaniel Bacon, a property owner in Virginia, united slaves, indentured servants, and poor people to fight against the ‘planter elite’. The revolution that Bacon attempted was largely unsuccessful, and Bacon’s rebellion struck fear into planter elite.
- The planter elite feared alliance so they began buying slaves directly from Africa who did not speak English, as they would be much easier to control and less likely to form alliances with poor Whites. In order to further the divide between Black slaves and White indentured servants, the planter elite began giving special privileges to poor Whites instead of Black slaves. Poor Whites then had a reason to believe in a racial caste system, such as slavery.

Importance

- The War On Drugs is the current racial caste system in the United States that keeps traditionally marginalized groups second class citizens and creates disparities between poor Black people and poor White people. This is what has led to differences in how poverty affects both whites and traditionally marginalized groups. The rest of this poster is comparing and contrasting the poverty of both groups and showing how change is possible.



Similarities and Differences

Stereotypes and Privileges

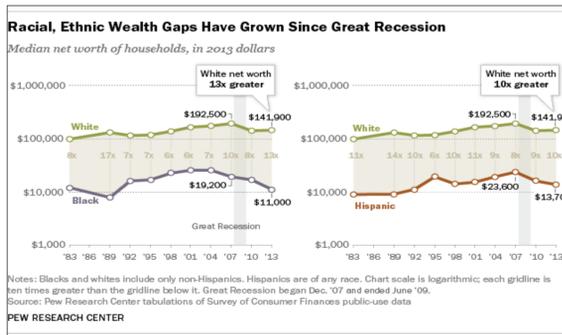
Poor White People Stereotypes	Poor Black People Stereotypes
Trashy	Poverty
Country	Danger
Unintelligent	Distrust
Slow	Criminal
Uneducated	Violent

- While there are stereotypes for both groups, the stereotypes against poor Black people are associated with the system of oppression against them and other traditionally marginalized groups. There is no system of oppression against White people because they are privileged. In a system of White privilege, it is especially crucial for Whites to use this advantage in addressing issues regarding the Black community.

Poverty:

Differences

- The Black poverty rate is 24.1%, which is approximately 10.0 million people (“Basic Statistics”).
- The White poverty rate is 9.1%, which is approximately 17.8 million people (“Basic Statistics”).
- There is a huge wealth gap between White families and Black families. White households, on average, have 17 times more money than Black households (Kochhar and Fry).



Similarities

- More than 12.1 million White children live in low-income families and 6.5 million Black children live in poverty. Children of both races are facing poverty in the millions. Blacks and low-income Whites must work together to enforce a change in poverty-stricken homes. It is crucial to lift children out of poverty and is best done with the help of others.

Similarities and Differences

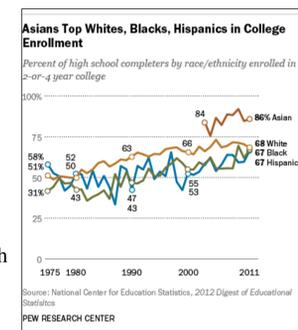
Education:

Differences

- More Black students are surrounded by classmates from a low-income household than White students (Boschma and Brownstein).
- Nationwide about three-fourths of young Black people attend schools where most of their classmates qualify as low income compared to about one-third of White students (Boschma and Brownstein).

Similarities

- In the data for the 2012 enrollment year, after years of disparity between traditionally marginalized groups and White people enrolling in college, it was found that two-thirds of all White, Black, and Hispanic people who received their high school diploma that year enrolled in college (Desilver).



Crime:

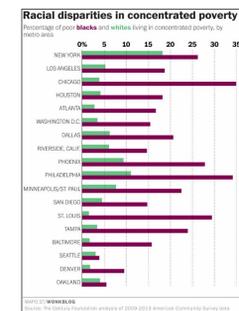
Differences

- Only 2.6 million Blacks report using illicit drugs while 14 million Whites do (Criminal Justice Fact Sheet).
- There are 5 times as many White people using drugs as Blacks, yet Blacks are sent to prison for drug offenses at ten times the rate as White people (Criminal Justice Fact Sheet).
- Blacks are spending nearly as much time for non-violent drug crimes as Whites do for violent crimes (Criminal Justice Fact Sheet).
- According to the 2014 Bureau of Justice Statistics report, Blacks had a violent rate of 51.3 per 1,000 similar to the rate of poor urban Whites at 56.4 per 1,000 (Harrell, et al).

Housing:

Differences

- Poor Black families are much more likely to be living in an area where other families are poor as well (Badger). This creates what sociologists call a “double burden” because they experience their own poverty and the disadvantages of those around them. This is extremely high in metropolitan areas.



Similarities:

- There is less than a 10% difference between the amount of White and Black households occupying public housing. White households occupy 39 percent of public housing, while Black households occupy 48 percent.

Does Segregation Still Exist?

- Between 2000 and 2014 the number of public schools in high-poverty and the percentage of schools that consisted mostly of Black or Hispanic students more than doubled.
- The number of schools grew from 7,009 schools to 15,089 schools (Toppo).
- The number of schools that had more than 75% of the student body made up of one race between 2000 and 2014 grew from 6% to 16% (Toppo).

Unity

- While there are issues that contrast both poor Blacks and Whites, there are many issues that affect them both. It is important that Blacks and Whites work together for a better community.
- When it comes to issues that specifically hurt communities of traditionally marginalized groups, it is extremely important that those that are privileged allow there to be space for members of traditionally marginalized groups to speak out about these issues and give them the resources available to be able to do so. It is not the job of the privileged to tell them how to do whatever they are trying to do, but to simply ‘hand the mic over’ and allow them to do so and support them however they wish.

Making Social Change

- Educating others.** The first step in change begin with informing those around you. The first step in bringing these two groups together is educating yourself and those around you about their similarities and differences.
- Avoid stereotyping.** Whenever you have a preconceived idea of someone, it can affect your conversation and attitude towards him or her. By ridding yourself of prejudice assumptions, you are keeping an open mind to who this person is and what he or she has to say.
- Join or support movements and organizations that seek to change the issues plaguing traditionally marginalized groups today, such as Black Lives Matter or the NAACP.
- Call and write local and national representatives.
- Groups that are privileged in certain aspects of their life - such as educated people, legislators, and people that are involved in the political process need to be made aware of these issues and understand that they have the ability to make significant changes in these areas.

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