CHALLENGING RACIALIZED STRUCTURES AND MOVING TOWARD SOCIAL JUSTICE

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The Two Bookends...
In Sum…

Implicit Bias

Power

Structural Racialization
If we want power, we have to organize. Justice Powell talking to the camber of commerce.
Introducing Systems Thinking

Relationships are neither static nor discrete.

The Newtonian Perspective:

A → B → C → D → E

Social phenomena may be understood by breaking down the sum of the constituent parts.

Systems Thinking:

A → C → D → B → E

Causation is reciprocal, mutual, and cumulative.
What is a system?

- Think of School System compared to teacher
- Think of Health Care system compared to doctor
- Think Criminal Justices system compared to police
Think in loops, not just cause & effect

Disparities may be reinforcing

Gains in one area are often undone over time because of structures — not intent

School Segregation & Concentrated Poverty

Racial & Economic Neighborhood Segregation

Lower Educational Outcomes

Increased Flight of Affluent Families
System Thinking

- Focus on relations between process and environment
- Effect is often delayed even years
- Causation mutual interactive
- There are negative and positive feedback loops
- Emergent
Implementing Systems Thinking

- Our relationship to these systems and the responsiveness of systems is both uneven and racialized.
- While understanding the relationships that exist within a system is important, we need to look for nodes of influence and power.
- Where are the levers that can enact change?
Questions to Consider…

- ... when designing **new policies**:
  - What outcomes do we want?
  - Who should be targeted to benefit?

- ... when developing **new processes**:
  - How should the decision-making table be set, and who should set it?
  - Who should hold decision-makers accountable, and where should this accountability take place?

- ... when defining **new assumptions**:
  - What are our values?
  - What would it look like if equity was the starting point for decision-making?
Structural Inequality

Structural inequality that impact a discreet group can be thought of related to that group.

Can impact any discreet group, women, elderly, people with disabilities

When structural inequality impact racial or ethic groups called structural racialization
Structural Racialization

- How race works today
  - There are still practices, cultural norms and institutional arrangements that help create and maintain (disparate) racialized outcomes

- Structural racialization addresses inter-institutional arrangements and interactions
  - It refers to the ways in which the joint operation of institutions produce racialized outcomes
    - In this analysis, outcomes matter more than intent
Structural Racialization

Context: The Dominant Consensus on Race

National values | Contemporary culture

Current Manifestations: Social and Institutional Dynamics

Processes that maintain racial hierarchies | Racialized public policies and institutional practices

Outcomes: Racial Disparities

Racial inequalities in current levels of well-being | Capacity for individual and community improvement is undermined

Ongoing Racial Inequalities

Adapted from the Aspen Roundtable on Community Change. “Structural Racism and Community Building.” June 2004
A More Complex Understanding

One Dimensional:
One variable explains differential outcomes

Multidimensional:
The individual bars working together to cage the bird

... to an understanding of processes and relationships
These structures interact in ways that produce racialized outcomes for different groups…
Opportunity is....

Racialized...
- In 1960, African-American families in poverty were 3.8 times more likely to be concentrated in high-poverty neighborhoods than poor whites.
- In 2000, they were 7.3 times more likely.

Spatialized...
- Marginalized people of color and the very poor have been spatially isolated from opportunity via reservations, Jim Crow, Appalachian mountains, ghettos, barrios, and the culture of incarceration.

Globalized...
- Economic globalization
- Climate change
- The Credit and Foreclosure crisis
A Tale of Two Neighborhoods...

Low Opportunity

- Less than 25% of students in Detroit finish high school
- More than 60% of the men will spend time in jail
- There may soon be no bus service in some areas
- It is difficult to attract jobs or private capital
- Not safe; very few parks
- Difficult to get fresh food

High Opportunity

- The year my step daughter finished high school, 100% of the students graduated and 100% went to college
- Most will not even drive by a jail
- Free bus service
- Relatively easy to attract capital
- Very safe; great parks
- Easy to get fresh food
Which community would you choose?
Opportunity pathways vary...

- How can we be sensitive to inter- and intra-group differences?

- How do the ladders or pathways of opportunities differ for different people?

- Every institution has built in assumptions, i.e. “stairways” are a pathway – but not for people in wheelchairs, baby strollers.
The highly uneven Geography of Opportunity…

...Some people ride the “Up” escalator to reach opportunity

...Others have to run up the “Down” escalator to get there
People are “differentially situated”

Not only are people situated differently with regard to institutions, people are situated differently with regard to infrastructure.

People are impacted by the relationships between institutions and systems...

...but people also impact these relationships and can change the structure of the system.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vX_Vzl-r8NY
We come from different places. Illuminating people’s different and shared experiences of oppression encourages collective action with others whose experiences may be slightly different.

Young’s 5 Faces of Oppression: Different groups/people experience one or more of these faces throughout their lives

- Exploitation
- Marginalization
- Powerlessness
- Cultural Dominance
- Violence

The Cumulative Effects of Racial and Opportunity Segregation

Segregation impacts a number of life-opportunities

- Impacts on Health
- School Segregation
  - Impacts on Educational Achievement
    - Exposure to crime; arrest
    - Transportation limitations and other inequitable public services
    - Job segregation
  - Racial stigma, other psychological impacts
  - Impacts on community power and individual assets

Source: Barbara Reskin (http://faculty.washington.edu/reskin/)
The Cumulative Effects of Racial and Opportunity Segregation

- Zoning laws prevent affordable housing development in many suburbs
- Municipalities subsidize the relocation of businesses out of the city
- Transportation spending favors highways, metropolitan expansion and urban sprawl
- Court decisions prevent metropolitan school desegregation
- School funding is tied to property taxes
The Arrangement of Structures

- How we arrange structures matters
  - The order of the structures
  - The timing of the interaction between them
  - The relationships that exist between them

- We must be aware of how structures are arranged in order to fully understand social phenomena
Spatial Racism and Inequality

- The government plays a central role in the arrangement of space and opportunities.
- These arrangements are not “neutral” or “natural” or “colorblind”.
- Social and racial inequities are geographically inscribed.
- There is a polarization between the rich and the poor that is directly related to the areas in which they live.
Policies and Structures

- Racialized policies and structures:
  - Promoted sprawl
  - Concentrated subsidized housing
  - Led to disparities between schools
    - Achievement gap
    - Discipline rates
    - Funding disparities
    - Economic segregation
    - Graduation rates
    - Racial segregation
Layers Matter

- Blindside
- To Kill a Mocking Bird
Who’s to blame?
Today,

Institutions and structures continue to support, not dismantle, the status quo. This is why we continue to see racially inequitable outcomes even if there is good intent behind policies, or an absence of racist actors. (i.e. structural racialization)
Historic Government Role

- A series of mutually reinforcing federal policies across multiple domains have contributed to the disparities we see today
  - School Desegregation
  - Homeownership/Suburbanization
  - Urban Renewal
  - Public Housing
  - Transportation
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Opportunity Communities / Housing
The Communities of Opportunity model advocates for a fair investment in all of a region’s people and neighborhoods—to improve the life outcomes of all citizens, and to improve the health of entire regions.

Education
We recognize that public education, like every structure in society that confers benefits to individuals unequally based on race and class, is part of a larger system with lifelong implications for both individual and group-based success.

Talking About Race
We agree that all too often implicit and explicit race talk has indeed been used to divide and alienate. At

GIS/Maps
Inequality has a geographic footprint. We have pioneered the use of maps to communicate the history and presence of

What’s New
New Kirwan Report to U.N. addresses racial discrimination in the U.S. The Structural Racism Report to the CERD Committee (Press Release)
Mind Science
Implicit Bias

- Only 2% of emotional cognition is available to us consciously.

- Racial bias tends to reside in the unconscious network.

- Messages can be framed to speak to our unconscious.
Racial attitudes operate in our “unconscious” (also called “subconscious”) mind.

Usually invisible to us but significantly influences our positions on critical issues.

Negative unconscious attitudes about race are called “implicit bias” or “symbolic racism.”
Framing

How messages are framed affects how they are perceived.
Implicit Association Tests

Racialized outcomes do not require racist actors.
Where is this family sitting?
Where is this family sitting?

When scientists showed a similar sketch to people from East Africa - a culture containing few angular visual cues - the family is seen sitting under a tree. The woman is balancing an item on her head.

Westerners are accustomed to the corners and box-like shapes of architecture. They are more likely to place the family indoors and to interpret the rectangle above the woman's head as a window through which shrubbery can be seen.
Social Categories and Meanings

- Race is a social reality.

- While we are hardwired to categorize in-group vs. out-group, we are “softwired” for the content of those categories.

- Softwiring is social.

- Racial categories and meaning can be constantly be reconfigured.
Social Cognition
Warmth and Competence

Social Cognition: Warmth and Competence

- **Esteemed:** Your own group, who you identify with
- **Pity:** women, elderly, disabled
- **Despised:** African Americans, Undocumented immigrants
- **Envied:** Competent, but don’t really like them: Asians

Persistent Prejudices

- Unconscious biases are reflected in institutional arrangements.

- Prejudice leads to outcomes, and the outcomes reinforce the stereotypes / prejudice.

  Ex: Females aren’t good at math.
  Many females don’t take math classes.
Priming & Stereotype Threat

- Our environment affects our unconscious networks
- Priming activates mental associations
  - Telling someone a scary story activates a frame of fear
- Claude Steele’s “stereotype threat”:
  - For example, tell students about to take a test that Asian students tend to do better than whites, and the whites will perform significantly worse than if they had not been primed to think of themselves as less capable than Asians.

Priming

- Experiment with 7th graders; ~50% white & 50% Black
  - Given a list of values
    - Experimental group: Choose the values that are most important to you and write why they are important
    - Control group: Choose the values that are the least important to you and explain why
  - End of semester – While Black students still did not do as well as whites, the Black students in the experimental group showed a 40% reduction in the racial achievement gap.

- Experiment was repeated with a group of college students and yielded a 50% reduction in the racial achievement gap.

How to Change Our Implicit Biases

- Be aware of implicit bias in your life. We are constantly being primed.

- Debias by presenting positive alternatives.

- Consider your conscious messaging & language.
  - Affirmative action support varies based on whether it’s presented as “assistance” or “preference.”

- Engage in proactive affirmative efforts – not only on the cultural level but also the structural level.
More than just asking people what they think, we need to understand the processes behind how they think.
Awareness Test

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrqrkihlw-s
The Spinning Girl Illusion

Are you right-brained or left-brained?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkJVqhEcHiY&feature=related

OR

Social Cognition: Warmth & Competence

Where do you think your group ranks?

- High Warmth, High Competence: Esteemed In-group
- High Warmth, Low Competence: Pitied Out-group
- Low Warmth, Low Competence: Despised Out-group
- Low Warmth, High Competence: Envied Out-group

Social Cognition: Warmth & Competence

- **High Warmth, Low Competence**: Pity: women, elderly, disabled
- **Low Warmth, Low Competence**: Despised: African Americans, Undocumented immigrants
- **Low Warmth, High Competence**: Envied Out-group: Competent, but don’t really like them: Asians
- **High Warmth, High Competence**: Esteemed In-group: Your own group, who you identify with

Renewing our Communities

Growing opportunity for all
Moving from a transactional to a transformational paradigm requires **structural change:**

- Institutions should allow for participation and dissent of individuals in a democratic society.
- For those in poverty, this participation is denied as they lack access to power, influence, and choice; thus, poverty is maintained.

- Structures act as filters, creating cumulative barriers to opportunity.
- Reorganization of institutions to encourage the “emergence of differences” is one example of transformative thinking.
“Situatedness” and Interests

- Our interests are “situational”
- Not all tensions are personal, some are structural
- Targeted Universalism
  - We may have common goals, but because we are differently situated we may be in sharp contrast.

Solutions?

- **Transactional**: “Discovering” common interests
  - But this operates within the current structure, may limit our choices

- **Transformational**: “Creating” common interests
  - This changes our situatedness, in turn changes our interests and ultimately the structure
Strategies for Growing Together

- Think in new ways
- Talk in new ways
- Act in new ways
Transformative Thinking

- Transformative thinking to combat structural racialization; we need to find new approaches.

- Personal and social responsibility are important: we should maintain them in our advocacy and analysis.

- Approaches should consider the structures and systems that are creating and perpetuating these disparities and work to reform them for lasting change.
  - Challenging policies, processes, and assumptions.
How to Talk about Race

- Focus on **structures and systems** rather than explicit individual action/reaction
- Focus on the **subconscious**—the **implicit bias** that is stored within the mind
- Focus on **relationships**—build **collaborations** and engage in real **discussion**
Using “minority” to refer to people of color is outdated and tends to carry a subordinate connotation.

Whites are projected to no longer be a statistical majority by 2042.

- Context: Numeric or Sociological?
  - We already have “minority-majority” cities, states
Talk about race can reinforce our conscious beliefs or challenge our implicit biases.
Targeted universalism as communication strategy

- Moves beyond the disparities frame

- Focuses on the universal goals shared by all the communities while being sensitive to the targeted strategies that are responsive to the situation of marginalized communities
Promote Universal Policies in Targeted Ways

There is no “one size fits all”
- One vision, many paths
- Process: What is the goal?
- How do we tailor strategies to different groups, who are differently situated, to lift them to that goal.
Strategies for Connecting to Opportunity

**Investing in People**
- Community organizing and leadership development
- Asset and wealth building strategies
- Improving educational opportunities and investments
- Labor force development and worker training
- Support for early childhood education and development
- Family supportive services

**Investing in Places**
- Vacant land redevelopment and land banking
- Developing anchor institutions
- Strategic collaborative investments
- Infrastructure investments
- Foreclosure mitigation and prevention activities
- Supporting minority owned and small businesses
- Public health investments

**Supporting Linkages**
- Regional fair housing strategies
- Policies to support inclusionary housing development
- Opportunity based subsidized housing investments
- Strengthening professional and social networks for businesses and residents in low opportunity areas
Reframing as a Strategy

- Portland, OR.

- Chasm between social justice advocacy organizations and the planning community. Recent dialogue changed the frame from “disparities” to a “universal but targeted” frame that moved all groups closer to the target.

- Outcome: Advocacy organizations are now involved in the planning process to develop Metro's regional plan that will shape investment and development over the next 50 years.

Cleveland, OH.

- Inner suburbs afraid would lose resources to the city, but city recognized that they needed to work with the suburbs. Reframed from fight over current resources, to future distribution.

- Outcome: No current resources would be redistributed between city and suburbs, but future development would be shared more equitably.
Strategy: Changing the Situatedness

- SEIU Union in LA. and undocumented immigrant organizing
  - Black tensions with Latinos in unions
  - Union concerned that not including undocumented workers in union would decrease its effectiveness.
  - When union included undocumented immigrants into its ranks, this changed the structure of tensions among these different groups
    - No longer Blacks against Latinos, etc.
  - Outcome: “Silent structure” that had been operating was revealed—the real beneficiary from tensions among workers were corporations.
    - Workers’ situations were changed, interests were changed, structure was changed.