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CHALLENGE

A Journal of Research on African American Men

Articles

The Political Economy of Black Business Development: African American Urban Representation and Black Business Prosperity*

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Abstract

This paper investigates the relationship between African American local political power and outcomes for African American-owned businesses. It is hypothesized that the presence of an African American mayor and majority in the City Council would indicate a context of greater political power that would facilitate African American-owned business growth. Using regression analysis, we test the impact of local political representation on the number of businesses and sales volume. Our results show that cities with African American mayors have been more conducive than other cities to African American economic development both with regard to the numbers and sales activity. However, concentration of African American political power beyond fifty percent of City Council seats has diminishing returns.

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Introduction

There is a general consensus that issues of economic stability and employment are among the most important now facing African Americans. One line of research has focused on the opportunities for economic improvement through business ownership. While there has been little change over the last quarter of the twentieth century in the earnings gap between races — African Americans earn approximately 76 percent of White American earnings — African Americans have been making notable strides in increasing self-employment. African American-owned businesses are increasing at a faster rate than that of the overall society and at an increasingly rapid rate (U.S. Census 1998). We examine basic tenets that help explain this development by analyzing the reciprocal nature of African American political representation and business enterprise. This study finds that African American political representation at the level of mayor and city council is important to business success because it provides sufficient empowerment for Blacks to be included in local governing coalition decision-making that affects business. We further explore why mayoral leadership and only moderate levels (less than 50%) of Black city council participation appear to be the most supportive situations.

The importance of full civil rights and inclusion in the political process as a prerequisite to increased opportunity in the economic sphere is evident in our society. Basic political economy theory suggests that at the most basic level, civil rights can be viewed as the right to utilize and own productive resources such as land, as well as the right to the proceeds of one's own labor, such that one is not a slave. Civil and political rights are the fundamental bases of economic change and development for Blacks. It is within the civil and political order that the distribution and organization of production is regulated. Participation and representation in this process is indispensable (Butler 1992). The price of participation is sufficient political power.

The relationship between political power and economics should be construed as a symbiotic, albeit, unequal relationship. This type of relationship is clearly seen where business elites trade power based on ownership of businesses limited to ethnic enclaves for a broader and perhaps a more diffuse power that is based on incorporation into the political structure. In essence, they trade economics for politics. A center coalition is formed by a compromise wherein the minority occupies positions in the political structure and multinational business interests are facilitated in the economy. This model reflects the theory of *dependent development*. The dependent development model posits that under conditions of colonization, local businesses could flourish, particularly when import of products and services from core (developed) countries was circumscribed. However, when new opportunities drew foreign investment and involvement institutionally, this brought "integration" into the world economy and the cessation of autonomous economic development. We may apply this model to the African American experience or that of other minority communities: under conditions of segregation (internal

colonization)(Ture and Hamilton 1992)), small (local) businesses served the community, and with civil and political rights came integration into the larger economy and a decline of the Black-owned enclave sector. Dependency theory argues that there ensued the overgrowth of the state sector that provided the means for co-opting indigenous elites and redirecting their attention toward rewards available from government and transnational corporate employment and away from self-employment. However, some variants of this theory suggest that co-optation is never complete; that a conscious minority elite can in turn garner resources in exchange for their cooperation with dominant economic actors.

Much of the analysis of ethnic enterprise, to date has been based on case studies (Clark 1975; Portes and Bach 1985; Waldinger 1997) and some comparative studies (Erie 1988). However, this paper employs a quantitative analysis of a relatively large sample of the largest American cities to assess the relationship of political empowerment to economic prosperity. In particular we focus on the question: if political empowerment is indispensable, is its increase and concentration also an asset to economic development? There is considerable disjuncture in the parameters of studies of the political economy of minority communities. Urban assimilation within the city boundaries was the focus of the earliest social science (urban ecology) paradigms (e.g., Glazier and Moynihan 1964). A paradigm shift began in the late 1960s focusing analysis at the level of the neighborhood or particular job sectors. Theories such as of the ethnic enclave as a third sector (Portes and Bach 1985) and ethnic economic niche development (Waldinger 1986; Model 1993) emerged within this more modern paradigm of minority economic assimilation. The present analysis returns discussion to the level of urban area defined by the city, as a salient parameter for analysis of political impact on economic outcomes. Our results clearly show that cities with Black mayors have been more conducive than other cities to Black economic development with regard to the numbers of Black businesses within a city and the sales activity of a city's Black business community, but there are diminishing returns to the concentration of Black political power when representation tips the fifty percent point

Black Political Power as Useless Economically or a Diversion?

The relationship between political power and economic prosperity among African Americans has been approached from several distinct theoretical frameworks elaborated during the post-60s expansion of political economy theory. Barry Bluestone (1969) proposed a possible interdependence of politics and economics from the perspective of viewing the Black community as an *internal colony*. He wrote:

> There is a form [of Black economic development] which is avowedly political and only secondarily economic in nature... Profits from the enterprise are plowed back into the organization both for further business expansion and for political action... As the economic

> substructure expands, the political organization matures... [leading to] an integrated program of community action.(1969, p.142).

However, he considered the economic resources of the Black community too weak to be effective. The theory of internal colonialism suggested that the Black American community, as a largely segregated discrete entity, was fully dominated by its relations with the greater American society in the manner of a colony, reflecting third world conditions — under-education, unskilled labor, and absence of business connections — hence the capacity to base political power around generation of economic resources was lacking.[1] The good news is that with the passage of almost two generations, Blacks have emerged with top training and corporate and technical experience, and have shifted from providing goods and services in a truncated market comprised of the low income ghetto population (Butler 1991) to participating in the greater economy in emerging sectors of the business, technical, and media services, among others. So while the concern rightly rests with those who have yet to make the transition, the picture of thirty years ago is barely recognizable.

Almost ten years after Bluestone, William Julius Wilson (1978) turned attention to the increased stratification within the Black community and emergence of an intermediary "elite," a larger middle-class. Yet he reported no ties between Black political representation and Black economic development. Drawing insight from the theory of dependent development, he suggested that structural economic changes, brought about by globalization, were causing urban poverty and that "the political power and influence of the cities [was] on the wane..." (1978, p.139). He states,

> It is this *politics of dependency* that changes the meaning and reduces the significance of the greater Black participation in urban political processes. And the militant cry of "Black control of the central city" has a hollow ring when one confronts the hard reality of the deepening urban fiscal crisis that has developed in the wake of industry dispersion and urban population shifts...It becomes clear that the internal resources needed by urban politicians to deal with the problems of the city continue to decrease. To suggest therefore that the solution to the problems of the Black poor is dependent on Blacks gaining political control of the central city is to ignore the fact that the fundamental bases of the urban crisis are not amenable to urban political solutions. (1978, p. 140).

He also states that "the significance of Black political control of the central city is not that it will provide a basis for economic and social mobility in the Black com-

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[1] Of these three "lacks," clearly only the last "lack" was close to absolute, as education and skills were developed to serve niches within the Black community, such as education, health care, business services, and communications (Butler 1991).

munity... but that it will heighten the racial antagonism..." (1978, p. 120).

Again there is good news. First, that since the 1980s, many formerly declining cities have experienced a notable renaissance. Second, as argued by theories of associated dependent development (dos Santos 1998), a dependent condition as opposed to a colonized condition is one with possibilities, albeit, ambivalent ones. For instance, economic capacity may be attained in cooperative association with dominant outside economic forces (the East Asian model), and may (or may not) be used as the basis for autocentered, and potentially independent and competitive economic ownership for the underdeveloped group.[2] Wilson takes for granted the accessibility of white collar jobs and the existence of a Black middle-class, rather than seeing its emergence as the fruit of the on-going struggles and strategies led by Black people, which as we have pointed out above, changed the face of their skills, resources and opportunities since 1969. Given the growth of White-collar jobs, we are now asking the question, what makes not only better jobs, but ownership, increasingly available?

Wilson and Martin (1982) compared Black business development in Miami to Cuban American development as an ethnic enclave. They found no beneficial ties between politics and economics. On the one hand, they found that Black businesses could not rely on government connections as a route to large contracts and enhanced economic capacity. On the other hand, they suggest that Black reliance on government employment decreases interest in business entrepreneurship. Relying on dual economy theory, they argue that an enclave economy becomes dynamic because community-based horizontal and vertical business linkages give "primary sector"-like advantages of market domination and multiplier effects. The Black community businesses did not exhibit these patterns and were stagnating as "secondary sector" businesses. They argue that African American impatience with low earnings in start-up businesses and ease of entry into government jobs are a cause of the continued low level of economic development within the Black community. They cite a study conclusion that "more highly trained Blacks, who could be promising entrepreneurs, seem to prefer jobs with government agencies..."(1982, p. 157). Given this class structure, Wilson and Martin suggest that there is no tie between the business needs of Black entrepreneurs and the government Black elite. They conclude that "as a result, the political power of the Black community often by-passes the Black businessmen. Most of the representatives of the community are either workers or ministers" (1982, p. 157).

This is a very interesting conclusion and is supported by empirical evidence in Black communities across America. However, they somewhat truncate dual economy theory by not employing its analysis of the third sector, the government sector. In a manner similar to dependent development theory of the state, dual

[2] If not, dependent development leads an identity between the elite and the outside economic elite upon which it is dependent and to which it is responsible for reproduction of relations of exploitation within the community.

economy theory views the government sector as a source of advantage that transforms a competitive business into a monopolistic enterprise. Hence, the government sector has a very important role to play and is never simply a source of stagnant bureaucratic positions. Further, we question whether conditions are being created to supercede the Black community class structure with a non-commercial petty-bourgeoisie as the top tier, particularly in cities where the conjuncture of political and economic development is present, such as Atlanta, Detroit, or Silver Spring, Maryland. Do the conclusions pertaining to Miami in 1982, where White, and later Cuban, rather than Black, political power predominated, apply elsewhere? We suggest that Black local political incorporation may be one route to entry into primary sector conditions.

The Government Sector

What are the resources which political control of the government sector might make available? We have found these to be extensive and critical. For instance, theorists of dual economy identified government procurement, licensing, regulation and joint ventures (such as in armaments and aerospace) as routes for firms to attain primary sector conditions of large scale and market domination. Wilson and Martin reflect the importance of this connection with their suggestion that lack of capital may discourage center-economy (primary sector) entry "by preventing competition [by Black-owned firms] for public contracts" (1982, p.157). Waldinger (1996) presents most of the important assets related to government entrenchment in his study of shifts in the share of jobs in particular industrial sectors held by ethnic and racial groups in New York City between 1970 and 1980. Yet, inexplicably, these resources are generally devalued. The reasons may rest in the oft-held (atheoretical and hence, *ideological*) perception that the government sector is fraught with problems and less than forthcoming with solutions (Reed 1995).

Waldinger views the government sector as a diversion. He concludes that Blacks, by moving into government sector jobs, even professional level jobs, have *forgone* involvement in entrepreneurial and corporate sector industries which would ultimately provide greater upward mobility. He argues that White population shifts to the suburbs led to opportunities for minorities in the city to attain jobs of higher status on the job queue as defined by Lieberson (1980). Native-born Blacks are "the big losers" in the shifts because of "their reliance on public-sector employment on the one hand and the persistence of low self-employment rates, on the other hand (1986, p. 395)."

> There is... a line between immigrant business success and the growth of opportunities for the broader ethnic community that is dynamic in a way that has no parallel in the relationship between Blacks and the public sector; this linkage is actually a further source of Black displacement [from business opportunities](1986, p. 395).

The two conditions — low private-sector involvement and low self-employ-

ment — may co-exist. However, the causal processes are unclear at best. Based on associated dependent development theory, we suggest that this occupational structure may provide leverage for increased market opportunities for Blacks to become entrepreneurs over their life-course. While Waldinger denounces this shift of Blacks into government, he is quite clear that public sector employment is the option of choice for some very sound and strategic economic considerations: (1) good jobs in the private sector are frequently unavailable due to discrimination; (2) greater opportunity for career upward-mobility through promotions; (3) higher than average earnings, particularly for Black men, which can lead to capital formation; and (4) greater stability of employment. This last factor has been shown by Oliver and Shapiro (1995) to have a large, if not the largest, correlation to accumulation of family wealth, a critical factor in business start-up. To this may be added, (5) experience with and contacts for government procurement opportunities. Waldinger further establishes that, unlike the Irish public employment sector during the heyday of White ethnic-controlled city "machines," Blacks are over-represented in the ranks of managerial and professional jobs, and that opportunities extend to "the highest levels." He further cites that "these positions are also effective vehicles for movement into higher social class" (1986, p. 392).

It is an open question whether the net benefits of entry into most immigrant business niches outweigh the benefits of entry into the government sector (a comparison that we do not seek to make in this article).[3] It is true that business ownership is one viable route to wealth accumulation, but benefits to individual owners and workers as part of multiplier effects can be very limited. The jobs created in the Hispanic-dominated garment manufacturing sector and those in the Asian-dominated retail sector, are not necessarily of sufficient quality to attract Black Americans. These industries, which may be seen as forming a sort of tertiary sector within the secondary sector, are of the type where competition overwhelmingly takes the form of cost competition. These situations are not necessarily conducive to group economic advancement (Sassen 1991; Sanders and Nee 1987; Bonacich 1987).

Political Power Translated into Economic Power for other Solidarity Groups

Roger Waldinger (1996) provides another model of group use of political power in

[3] A major issue in comparison across ethnicity and race is that African Americans are part of the dominant ethnicity "American," and approximate to the dominant paradigms in economic activities as they are culturally integrated. Thus, there is likely a high tendency for Black businesses of any size, duration or level of success, to be corporations in terms of legal status. Data on these is generally unavailable, as business owner data is primarily collected for sole proprietorships and partnerships (Bates 1993). In contrast, immigrants are more likely to operate in or close to the informal or tertiary sectors, and thus, individual ownership may be the relatively more common business form. This skews comparison of ethnic business success and African American business success, again suggesting that the relative value of development of a government sector or tertiary manufacturing sector is unclear.

his study of Italian use of politics to frustrate attempts to end their construction industry control. While the focus is on the struggle to gain unionized construction employment, this activity is intermediary to construction business development as the forum for development of skills and contacts. Studies of other social minorities who attained political majorities and dominance within cities often concluded that this became a means for group economic advancement (Clark 1969; Dahl 1961; Moynihan 1964). Steven Erie's work,

Rainbow's End (1988), provides a critical assessment of this literature related to Irish Americans. He argues that while the benefits of patronage do appear to have been substantial, the economics of the machine provided uplift for the elites who entered into business but a mixed result for the masses. Public employment, welfare, and patronage-related private sector jobs did provide a significant portion of the Irish immigrant population with economic stability, however, it was stability at the bottom of the middle-class, in blue collar employment, and thus, it did not form the basis for upward mobility into the White-collar middle class for the masses of the Irish. Erie acknowledges that the Irish may have taken functionary positions because of "blocked mobility," and they grabbed at politics as a source of aid in the climb. Erie then suggests that Black political regimes cannot achieve machine status because of the diffusion of control over economic largess to the national level and the fiscal crisis of municipalities, and thus will prove unsuccessful in advancing their group economically.

There is clear evidence that Black urban regimes are not political machines, as they do not (1) emerge at a time of rural/communal-urban transition; (2) regularly organize the electorate; (3) distribute divisible benefits to buy votes; (4) rely on sponsorship of vice for funding or annexation of suburbs; or (5) refrain from group and class appeals. Considering this last point, race and class appeals serve as the foundation as well as an objective of Black politics. African American political incorporation was the product of the mostly second-generation Black power urbanites of the 1970s and 1980s (Reed 1980). We argue that rather than viewing Black political incorporation as an analogous development to machine politics, African American political power appears rather to be its antithesis. While the Irish machines specialized in keeping power though exclusion (initially of second wave immigrants) (Erie 1988, p. 163), Black politics function on the opposite premise: on inclusion and an end to repression (Jones 1978). We suggest that African American political power, and the larger 1960s human and civil rights movement which it helped spur, served as tools for ending exclusion.

Black Political Representation as Helpful to Black Business Associated Dependent Development

Would Black politicians necessarily promote Black businesses instead of responding to the interests of the majority-White corporate sector with its vastly greater

resources? And, if they do focus on minority- or Black-owned businesses, how is political power translated into economic power? What are the mechanisms? Analyses of economic effects of Black political power in urban governments have tend to concur on the structural issues at play, but differ on expectations of the net results of the interplay of Black control over resources of politics and economic constraints of the corporate economy. They concur on the fiscal distress of urban areas and subsequent paucity of resources to effect change, and the structural effects of globalization and the decline in manufacturing and unionized jobs with good returns for low education workers (Eisinger 1988; Reed 1988; Burman 1995). Reed (1998) argues that Black mayoral regimes are characterized by progrowth politics. While Black political empowerment emerged from Black protest, the individuals who assumed office also arose from within "modernizing" urban coalitions led by corporate leaders who promote growth and infrastructural development conducive to their advanced service economy, an economy that progressively creates elite prosperity at the expense of marginalization and impoverishment of the masses. We concur with this model, which we relate to the model of dependent development that emerged from study of the mass impoverishment outcomes of Third World political independence without economic independence (dos Santos 1998). However, the issue here is a narrow one: does Black political empowerment improve the prosperity of Black-owned businesses? A careful reading of the literature on progrowth politics, (associated) dependent capitalism and, center coalitions (Stone 1989) finds that this possibility is strong.

Eisinger (1982) argues that Black mayors pursue a *dual strategy*. The first prong is using their appointment powers to name minorities to head city personnel departments and other major agencies, who have then launched aggressive affirmative action programs, producing a dramatic increase in the minority share of public employment. Black mayors are also using affirmative action to award city contracts to minority businesses. For example, prior to Atlanta's set aside programs, Blacks, while being the numerical majority, received only about one-tenth of one-percent of city contracts. After implementation of the affirmative action program in Atlanta, the proportion of procurement contracts attained by Black businesses increased to nearly 35 percent (Bates and Williams 1995). The second prong consists of a strategy of "trickle down." Black mayors form alliances with the White business community to promote downtown redevelopment "hoping to create private sector job opportunities for minorities" (cited in Erie 1988, p. 263). Eisinger argues that promotion of class unity at the elite level across race is possible because it serves the White multinational elite interest and the successful Black businessmen, who would not have been admitted to the governing coalition if it had been otherwise. A division of labor occurred where Black politicians were left to cope with the problems of crime, strikes, welfare, unemployment, etc., as the responsible authorities serving to deflect attention from the aggrandizement of the White business elite. The Black politicians do enjoy a large measure of loyalty from the

Black poor which provides stability. Thus the Black politicians and business elite are viewed as *compradors* in a system of dependency.

Reed (1988; 1995) accepts that Black political incorporation did lead to benefits to the middle-class and entrepreneurial sector. And although he decries the level of capitulation to progrowth corporate interest policies of Black governments as unnecessary capitulation, he stops short of accepting that Black governments were either useless or mere puppets without agency caught in the web of dependency. As Burman (1995) points out, this dependency does cut both ways and thus some concessions for the maintenance of elite cohesion must be made by the White elites. These concessions are significant for the nascent Black businesses while economically insignificant for the dominant transnational corporate sector. The picture that emerges is a united effort between transnational capital interests and local Black political representation in favor of infrastructural and downtown development conducive to making the city competitive economically. There are concessions made to Black business interests in exchange for Black political cooperation, perhaps to the dismay of the White local business sector who perceive Black entrepreneurs as a threat to their market shares. In the event of a fundamental clash, transnational capital's trump card rests in the mobility of capital as compared to the static basis of Black power (Burman 1995:182). However, for all its vaunted mobility, transnational capital has proven to prefer concessions to departure, particularly given the limited selection of cities which have the resources of world-cities, even second tier world-cities, such as Atlanta. The importance of face-to-face transactions and telecommunications links makes certain cities emerge as increasingly concentrated sites for global control (Sassen 1991), hence mobility may be relative. Far from being insignificant, Black political power retains important capacities to leverage Black business interests, albeit very conditional. The concept of *associated dependent development* has been used to distinguish a situation where the governing minority elite attains sufficient capacity and coordination to extract benefits despite its junior position in terms of the overall economic output (dos Santos 1998).[4] They are organized as a "relatively strong state."

The Politics of Legislating, Networking, and Pressure: Opening Business Opportunity

While Black urban representation and Black economic development differ in significant ways from Irish machine politics and ethnic enterprise, there is evidence that Black politics of economic inclusiveness may be a form of associated depen-

[4] It also argues for a political outcome of democracy with stability despite the escalating demands for economic inclusion and redistribution by the masses. Critics argue the long run incompatibility of democratic rule and economic inequality (dos Santos 1998). However, in the context of U.S. urban politics, stability is likely in the absence of overwhelming outside factors as particular urban populations do not constitute a democratic majority. Urban rebellion, however, is not ruled out.

dent development advancing minority, particularly African American, business interests,. There is emerging information that Black representation does provide a positive institutional environment for Black economic development. Economist Timothy Bates (1997, 1993) finds positive results in his study of 1987 data on 138 cities; and economist Thomas Boston (1999) documents the evolving relationship. There is even evidence that Black political representation, without a majority vote, may make a difference (Feagin 1988), although most evidence points to the effectiveness of Black incorporation within a ruling coalition for effectiveness (Browning, Marshall and Tabb 1986; Sonenshein 1993).

Bates' pioneering work (1997, 1993) provides evidence of the potential of Black urban representation to enhance Black entrepreneurial success. Bates found that Black businesses in cities with Black mayors in 1982 and 1987, were more numerous, larger–had higher gross sales and more employees–and had lower rates of failure than Black businesses in cities with White mayors. The number of Black-owned businesses and the rate of new Black business formation were also higher. He controlled for level of unemployment, theorized to be negatively correlated with the rate of creation of self-employment, and the size of the cities measured in terms of median income, as private purchasing power, or government expenditure. Black urban representation was limited to the presence or absence of mayors. In response to the conventional wisdom that over-representation of Black Americans in government jobs causes a corresponding under-representation in self-employment, Bates writes:

> Lack of opportunities in business certainly has pushed Black Americans onto other career paths in the past. But occupational patterns rooted in a lack of opportunities can change substantially when new doors open. Black mayors in big cities such as Atlanta indeed opened those doors during the 1970s and 1980s; Black self-employment flourished. Clearly, a lack of opportunities thwarts Black entrepreneurship, not a lack of interest.

Further evidence that low Black self-employment rates and success may be better explained by lack of opportunities is provided by a study of the level of interest in entrepreneurship conducted in 1987. Based on a survey of six factors measuring interest in entrepreneurship of young adults of Asian, White, Hispanic and Black heritage, African Americans had the highest scores consistently across measures (Bates and Dunham 1992). Bates argues that Black political representation as mayors corresponds to the development of policies which promote Black business development.

Thomas Boston (1999) emphasizes the transformation in the universe of Black business that occurred with the opening of the formerly closed government contract market by affirmative action, set-aside, procurement and joint venture policies, particularly at the local government level. Atlanta began the process in 1975, two years before federal legislation mandated minority participation in con-

struction contracts, and approximately 200 other cities followed suit within two years. These programs provided opportunities to minority and women-owned firms to diversify out of traditional retail and personal service lines of business. They side-stepped existing "old boy networks" which historically had made government procurement among the least diverse in terms of number of firms participating, and made it instead among the more open markets, as private industry has still tended to exclude minority businesses. He writes:

> *The ability to diversify away from personal service and retail activities into non-traditional industries is the most important legacy of minority business affirmative action policies.* New market opportunities meant faster growth possibilities, greater profitability and increased employment capacity. Black-owned firms that did not receive city contracts directly benefitted nonetheless because affirmative action hastened the decline of racial stereotypes, improved networks between Black and White entrepreneurs, and encouraged private companies to emulate public sector affirmative action initiatives (1999, p. 14).

Further, set-aside and goals programs create an incentive for established White-owned firms to joint venture with minority firms, allowing the latter to build reputations and financial bases that result in future contracts (Hodge and Feagin 1995).

Boston uses regression analysis to see if, among the 88 cities with over 200 Black-owned businesses, there was greater growth where there were affirmative action plans prior to 1987, and finds that this was true but not statistically significant. Therefore, it is not the existence of the affirmative action plan, (in itself), but its effective implementation that is the relevant factor. Boston reports that effectiveness varied from city to city given whether they were actually implemented, suffered legal challenge, the impact of negative images seized upon by local media, and the extent of local opposition (1999, p. 18). In short, the effectiveness of these programs depends upon a complex political balance. We suggest that Black political representation and Black political incorporation — effective Black influence within a ruling coalition — in particular, may be critical factors.

These programs provide opportunities for diversification, for growth to stable and competitive size, for gaining experience, as well as the networking and business ties, which are fundamental to Black start-up businesses. A major factor in the vitality of minority enterprise reported by Boston is the huge disparity in the number of minority-owned enterprises that must "begin from scratch," without prior market shares. Based on a National Federation of Independent Business study, only 49 percent of non-minority entrepreneurs become owners by starting a business; 28 percent purchase an existing business and 15 percent inherit a family business. Among Blacks, as much as 94.3 percent begin new businesses while less than 3 percent enter by each of the other routes (Boston 1999, p. 76). Clearly programs which set-aside a share of a market for minority participation create major incen-

tives for new entrepreneurs to compete.

On the other hand, this incubator effect is not widespread or significantly limiting of existing firms' ability to compete as only approximately 13 percent of all young small businesses nation-wide sell goods and services to the government and they comprise only 3.0 percent of the firms receiving assistance at the state or local level. Bates did find significant improvement in the level of capitalization, the failure rate, and the revenues of firms which received government "assistance." Bates, however, cautions that measuring the level of government assistance may be difficult. Most firms do not view winning a government contract through a competitive bid process when an affirmative action program is in force as involving "assistance" (Bates 1997, p. 227). Hence, the politically created opportunities for minority contracting may not register as benefits depending on how survey questions are structured. Programs of assistance involving finance and managerial training primarily are the type likely to be reported as receipt of assistance.

Further, Boston points to the difficulty in assessing the growth and prosperity of Black businesses because of the limitation that the main form of corporate ownership, Sub-Chapter corporations, are not included in the Census data. Firms which have larger receipts, employ more workers, and have lower rates of failure are often corporations, and there may be proportionately more majority-Black owned businesses organized as corporations (one indicator of success) in cities with high levels of Black representation. Boston reports that 4 percent of Black firms nationwide are corporations, but of those that are approved for participation in the minority-owned program of the City of Atlanta, a whopping 57.9 percent are corporations, with mean revenues of $606,208 in comparison to $44,668 among those firms which were sole proprietors or partnerships (1999, p. 27). Therefore, the currently available census data on business ownership tends to prejudice results against cites where Black business is most successful, providing a very conservative estimate of their vitality.

Measuring Local Associated Dependent Development

While past research has shown that the presence of a Black mayor has a significant positive effect upon Black economic development, it has not provided us with an understanding of the factors that might impede or enhance the effect of Black political power upon Black economic development. How might the effect of a Black mayor upon Black economic development vary by different contexts? We propose that the presence of a Black mayor will reflect the development of Black political empowerment which may be used to create market opportunities for Black businesses both in the government sector and among private firms which interact within the jurisdiction and regulatory reach of urban government. Black representatives may also enact programs which support the emergence and growth of Black-owned firms. The local political context of the city government in which a Black mayor

finds herself or himself matters a great deal. The numbers of politically like-minded city council members on a city council — and for this paper, Black council members — will undoubtedly influence what a Black mayor, or any mayor, can do and hope to accomplish. Having a greater number of political allies clearly gives a mayor greater opportunity and capability to enact his or her policy agenda, and higher levels of Black council representation would ostensibly bolster the power of a city's Black mayor. Browning, Marshall, and Tabb's (1984) concept of *incorporation*, or the degree to which Blacks are in the dominant policymaking coalition, is especially relevant here. Where Blacks exercising political power are incorporated within the ruling coalition, creation of common business interests served the larger corporate sector's need to maintain a favorable and stable political environment of regulatory, planning and financing/bonding support, as argued by Burman (1995).

We argue that the implementation of affirmative action, set-aside and training programs will be most consistent where Black political incorporation took place. Thus, consistent with Browning and Tabb's measure of incorporation, the interaction of a Black mayor with greater levels of Black city council representation is expected to more effectively enhance Black business development than will the interaction of a Black mayor with lower levels of Black council representation.

There are several additional ways that we believe varying context might affect the nature of the effect a Black mayor has upon Black economic development for which we control. First of all, Black mayors in cities with larger Black population percentage might be more likely to foster Black business development than those in cities with smaller Black population percentage because of their ability to draw upon a key constituency that provides the necessary electoral and governing support giving them bargaining power within the ruling coalition. Hence, we expect that Black mayors in cities with larger Black population percentage will have a more significant influence upon Black economic development than those in cities with smaller ones. Another significant factor of context which might influence the nature of a Black mayor's capacity to respond to the needs of Black business is a city's poverty rate. Here it might be argued that a Black mayor would be forced to respond to more economically depressed city environments and thus would be more likely to foster Black economic development than a Black mayor in a more prosperous city. On the other hand, Boston's (1999) work suggests that a higher poverty rate is related to a decreased market which would negatively impact Black business development, so the effect of political representation and poverty rate may to some extent cancel each other rather than enhance support for Black business.

Dataset and Method for Analyses

This analysis of the relationship between African American political power and economic development uses a data set created by merging several data sources. The data on Black-owned firms, their numbers in a city, and their business activity

in a city are compiled by the Census Bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce and are available in the *Surveys of Minority-Owned Business Enterprises* (SMOBE) from the *Economic Census*. We used the 1992 version of these data. Our data set includes firms with paid employees in cities having population sizes of at least 25,000 residents, a total of 259 cities.

Data for our independent variables are drawn from a number of other sources collected in the period 1987-1988. The *U.S. County and City Data Books* provide the data for economic and demographic factors for cities, the total and Black population, the number of civilian jobs, and mean family income. The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies' annual publication *Black Elected Officials: A National Roster* was our reference in determining the presence of Black mayors and city council members. This source is the most comprehensive list of all of the Black elected officials at the federal, state, and local government levels and provides annual data for the presence of Black urban officials for the cities in the data set. The International City Managers Association's annual publication *Municipal Year Book* provided the total number of city council members for each city.

We use regression analysis to estimate models of the number of Black-owned firms with paid employees and their extent of business activity (sales, receipts, and value of shipments) of these firms for each city, our dependent variables. The dependent variables are 1992 data, in consideration of the fact that the effect of elected officials upon Black economic development would take some time to become manifest, and hence, necessarily involves a lag of several years.

The Empirical Model

The goal of the analysis is to explore the effect of the presence of Black elected officials and Black political incorporation on cities' Black economic development, as measured by the numbers of Black-owned firms with paid employees and the business activity of these firms. In this section, we discuss each of the independent variables of the models we use for analysis and our expectations of their effect upon Black business development across cities.

Black mayoral presence is measured by a dummy variable indicating whether a Black mayor governed the city in 1988. *Black city council representation* is a proportional measure dividing the total number of Black city council members by the total number of city council members. We estimate two models: a basic model of Black mayoral presence, and a model of the interaction of Black mayoral presence with varying levels of Black city council representation. Within the second model, we define Black political *incorporation* as the combination of a Black mayor with Black city council representation greater than fifty percent of the seats. The presence of a Black mayor with Black city council representation up to fifty percent of the seats reflects a somewhat lower level of Black representation which we refer to as Black *participation*. We expect both of these interactions to have positive effects

upon Black business development.

The next set of variables control for demographic and economic factors of urban context which affect business outcomes in general, and Black business outcomes in particular, across cities.

Median Family Income and *Per Capita Civilian Employment* provide measures of the economic health of a city. Levels of median income indicate the economic base a city has with regard to economic demand. *Percent of a City's Total Population that is Poor* as discussed above may have a positive impact due to the presence of a Black regime securely in power and focused on poverty alleviation. However, this may not be the case: a larger population of poor citizens may have a negative effect upon Black business development because of higher levels of poverty will necessarily depress the general business environment of a city.

Percent of a City's Total Population that is Black provides a test of how demographic and socioeconomic conditions strongly related to the degree of Black political incorporation affect Black business development. We expect the Black population percentage of a city will have a direct relationship to the numbers and business activity of Black businesses. The relative size of a city's Black community will greatly influence the degree of political incorporation (Jones 1978). Finally, given the historical and current concentration of African Americans in the southern region of the nation, we included a dummy variable for southern cities. We expect the variable *South* to have a positive effect upon Black business development because of the general [drop] concentration of African Americans within the region.

Results

Table 1 shows the twenty-three cities with Black mayors in 1988, the level of Black representation on city council, and several characteristics. Thirteen cities display Black political incorporation as the presence of a Black mayor and Black representative holding more than fifty percent of city council seats. Ten cities show significant Black political participation, defined as presence of a Black mayor and some city council representation, but less than controlling (less than 50%). The percentage of the population which is Black directly relates to this categorization, however, the number of businesses per 1,000 Black population shows no relationship.

Table 2 reports the results from analyses of the numbers of Black-owned enterprises with paid employees within a city and of the business activity of these firms. It is evident that Black political power is an important determinant of Black business formation and activity. Model 1 tested simply the effect of the presence of a Black mayor on numbers of Black enterprises and on the business activity (sales, receipts, and value of shipments) of these firms. The coefficients (180.6 and 204.1) demonstrate a positive, statistically significant effect of increasing both numbers and receipts. This is consistent with the findings of Bates (1995).

Table 1
Cities with Black Mayors and Levels of Political Participation, 1988

City	Participation Level with City Council	Percent Black	Black Businesses Per 1000 Black Population	Total Population
East Orange, NJ	1.000	.88	.311	74,380
East St. Louis, IL	.944	.97	.287	43,795
Gary, IN	.889	.78	.725	123,707
Washington, DC	.692	.67	.765	613,187
Birmingham, AL	.667	.62	.321	269,657
Newark, NJ	.667	.58	.736	286,026
Atlanta, GA	.611	.67	.656	400,218
Compton, CA	.600	.58	1.012	88,620
New Orleans, LA	.571	.60	.397	509,053
Pontiac, MI	.571	.41	.367	72,275
Camden, NJ	.571	.56	.483	86,975
Detroit, MI	.556	.73	.304	1,063,047
Richmond, VA	.556	.54	.589	206,287
Oakland, CA	.444	.44	.912	365,661
Newport News, VA	.429	.33	.370	165,016
Baltimore, MD	.368	.58	.316	746,166
Chicago, IL	.360	.39	.729	2,827,995
Philadelphia, PA	.353	.39	.694	1,606,104
Richmond, CA	.333	.45	.445	84,875
Little Rock, AR	.286	.34	.815	172,328
Inglewood, CA	.200	.53	.900	106,530
Los Angeles, CA	.200	.15	4.654	3,381,688
Chester, PA	.200	.63	.073	42,643

Table 2
Analysis of the Development of Black-Owned Enterprises with Paid Employees, 1992: Weighted Least Square Analyses

Independent Variables	Number of Black Firms with Paid Employees		Sales, Receipts and Value of Shipments of Black Firms with Paid Employees ($1,000)	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Black Mayoral Presence	114.15** (42.31)	—	87,029.64*** (30,645.67)	—
Black Mayoral Presence City Council Representation >50%	—	123.96 (69.86)	—	67,075.14 (50.561.52)
Black Mayoral Presence City Council Representation 0 and < 50%	—	109.72* (49.27)	—	96,026.23*** (35,660.01)
Median Family Income ($)	5.5 x 10⁴ (.001)	5.5 x 10⁴ (.001)	0.28 (0.78)	0.30 (0.78)
Per Capita Civilian Employment	58.63 (107.36)	58.13 (107.74)	48,616.09 (77.759.94)	49,619.83 (77,070.46)
Percent Black	290.64**** (52.42)	280.47**** (53.01)	38,915.62 (37,970.93)	41,308.38 (38,368.71)
Percent Poor	165.37 (161.91)	163.72 (162.69)	88.049.25 (117,272.50)	91.402.76 (117,757.60)
South	21.59 (11.99)	21.65 (12.03)	5,990.55 (8,681.77)	5,853.92 (8,707.70)
Constant	-51.98 (70.27)	-61/17 (70.65)	-38.179.31 (50,898.38)	-39,935.30 (51,133.60)
N	159	159	159	159
Adjusted R^2	39	38	.08	.07

Unstandardized Coefficient Estimated with Standard Errors inParentheses

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.005. ****p<.001.

Values are rounded to 0.01, with some exceptions.

STATA 6.0 was used for the analysis.

Model 2 shows that not only are there significant differences in the numbers and total sales activity of Black firms between cities with Black mayors and those without, there were important differences among Black mayoral cities related to the level of Black representation. Black political incorporation, or the presence of a Black mayor and Black representation as a majority of city council, proved to have little effect on the numbers or receipts of Black firms. Instead, the presence of a Black mayor with a level of Black city council representation below fifty percent showed large and significant interaction effects. Other variables had little direct relationship to Black business outcomes except the percent poor, which was a sig-

nificant positive relationship in three of the four equations. One other contextual variable, the per capita civilian employment rate, was significantly associated with greater numbers of Black businesses when level of representation is taken into consideration.

Discussion

Our findings clearly support the importance of Black mayoral presence to Black business numbers and revenues, as reported by Bates (1995). However, our postulate that more Black empowerment in the form of Black political incorporation should result also in greater numbers and vibrancy of Black businesses has not been borne out unequivocally. Rather, increased political representation, in the form of Black incumbents in *some percent of city council seats but not over fifty percent*, was positively related to Black business success while incorporation involving Black representation in over fifty percent of seats was positive but insignificant. Black political participation beyond the mayoral level may increase (1) the tendency to committed and thus effective implementation; which leads to (2) transformation of opportunity structure; and (3) creating capacity. This is consistent with the analysis of Boston (1999). We theorized, in congruence with dependency theories, the need to consolidate strong state power, even on the local level, as a means for bringing about changed contexts for excluded groups' business opportunities. However, our findings suggest that while racial or nationalist entrenchment and cohesion may be part of the equation of political strength, coalition building may be another. Situations of sharing, or partnership, or diversity, with significant Black participation (city council representation) and leadership (Black mayor), yet also with avenues open to participation by representatives of other racial and ethnic groups in city governance, are the most successful contexts.

This is consistent with the analysis of Butler (1992) who concluded from his historical analysis of Black business success that the existence of successful linkages with the dominant White business and political community are crucial. In cases where these linkages based on mutual cooperation in economic development existed, such as Durham, North Carolina, around the turn of the twentieth century, the Black business community prospered. However, where the Black business community was encompassed almost entirely within a Black community isolated by hostile White society, such as in Tulsa, Black businesses experienced some success, but ultimately faced destruction due to predatory aggression by members of the White society. In general, he points out, if Black businesses appear "too successful" and their economic prosperity is not shared, and perhaps yielding a predominant share of returns to Whites, then a situation of competition and hostility emanating from White interests is likely to ensue. In line with these observations, it may be that where Blacks are perceived as controlling all or most political power, which are generally also situations of high Black population percentages, White dominant

elites opt out of participation economically, leading to disinvestment and declining economic opportunities for all. This is also consistent with Wilson's (1978) discussion of the effects of Black political empowerment.

This finding of the importance of shared political representation to enhancement of Black political effects on economic success is also consistent with associated dependent development theories, such as advanced by Burman (1995). Economic advancement may be a game of balance, of seizing opportunity within the interstices of transnational elite developments. Without political power or economic assets the game cannot be played; and with absolute power, there is no game. So our findings support the importance of Black political power, and the development of influence in other elected government positions; but, they also support the importance of coalition building. This has been seen in analyses of ethnic urban machines which were successful and exhibited longevity. They became not only tools of consolidation of a particular ethnic group's position with respect to government resources, but also a tool for incorporating other ethnic groups into the socio-economic structure (Erie 1988). It is the general exclusion of African Americans from these urban ruling coalitions which drove Black communities to urban rebellion to bring about change in the absence of acceptance and inclusion.

An interesting question for future research is whether the numbers of Black businesses and their activity are increased in situations of Black empowerment*and* diversity. Erie points to a "down-side risk of today's slow-growth politics is that the new rainbow coalition may produce a small pot of gold for the Black political elite, while browns, yellows, and even the Black underclass are left chasing the mirage" (1988, p. 262). If our theory that Black political empowerment is based on politics of inclusion is correct, then we would expect outcomes in cities with Black mayors to be better for Latino, Asian, and women and other disadvantaged group entrepreneurs in general than in cities without Black mayors. Does political empowerment work in the same manner for other disadvantaged groups and does political empowerment of Blacks hold out opportunities for other disadvantaged groups?

Further study of the Black mayoral cities with moderate Black city council representation may turn up other commonalities which underlie their association with enhanced outcomes for Black businesses, such as level of integration, quality of schools, business sectors with unusual growth, etc. We may further ask whether other combinations of racial political participation, such as significant council representation with other minority or White mayors, are also conducive. On the other hand, continuation of the racial divide in privilege in this society, evidenced through unemployment and difficulty of business formation among Blacks, has the effect of magnifying feelings of relative deprivation among emerging Black middle classes, particularly those with (relatively) independent ownership resources. On the ideological level, there is evidence of awareness among Black middle classes, including business owners, that their prosperity and control over assets is not simply the result of individual excellence and is not supported by the status quo (Thernstrom

and Thernstrom 1997). Hodge and Feagin (1995) point out that Black business interests, while congruent in some dimensions with White business interests, are also a form of resistance. Blacks view business development as a source of independence from the conditions of discrimination and prejudice to which they are otherwise subject every day in many jobs. Burman (1995) suggests that the Black upper-middle and upper-classes have the potential to enter into alliance with discontented lower classes, posing a threat which the White elite must check by making concessions, and if pressed, by the threat of flight. Business is a form of freedom and independence for Blacks, which presents a class-politics wild-card within the racialized class formation of the modern world-system.

Conclusion

Political power does give one a stake in the economic game. The attainment of the rights of citizenship and the political rights attendant thereupon laid the basis of African Americans to enter into business opportunities within the dominant market. Historically, power in elected local office and government bureaucracies has been associated with the ability to gain a share of the huge resource exchange that the government sector mediates. The benefits of this political leverage may accrue primarily to elite formations among the minority group. However, there is little evidence that participation and domination of government by oppressed ethnic and racial groups*causes decreased* involvement in entrepreneurship. Instead, a focus on government seems to reflect a rational and strategic response to blocked mobility within the private sector. That government becomes a useful tool for creating conditions of increased opportunity was supported by our findings. However, linear increase in Black political incorporation has limits to its effectiveness in enhancing Black business development. We found that the situation of Black mayoral incumbency and significant but not majority Black political representation on city councils was most conducive to Black business numbers and level of activity. Further research is needed to see to what extent this evidence reflects the importance of a socio-political environment of "sharing" or "partnership" rather than subordination and superordination. It is clear, however, that the nature of ruling coalitions relationship to economic development is complex and important.

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From Microenterprises to Small Businesses in Rural Mexico: The Next Step*

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Abstract

Microenterprises are invaluable at stabilizing family incomes. These microenterprises rely heavily on microfinances and microcredit. However, there is little evidence that these microenterprises grow into small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that lead to wealth creation and truly move families out of poverty. The same restrictions that are often the cause of poverty still work to inhibit the growth of microenterprises into SMEs. The primary inhibitors to this growth are the lack of education, specifically business education, and capital. The authors discovered that these factors are also true for the Afro-Mexican population in the Costa Chica (long coast, in Spanish). A concerted effort is needed to provide greater access to business education and capital so that the region might be able to catch up with the rest of Mexico in terms of economic growth.

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Introduction

The creation of microenterprises, using microfinance and microcredit, to alleviate poverty, while relatively new in official public policy, is based on one of civilization's oldest ideals. An ancient Chinese proverb states "Give a man a fish and you feed him for today; teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime". By the same token, the emphasis on creating microenterprises allows people to use their own skills and resources to improve their household situations. As in the proverb, the programs emphasize the sustainability of such entrepreneurial efforts compared to direct donations of food and money.

In 2004, the senior author participated in a study of microenterprises in rural Mexico among the Afro-Mexican population as part of Morehouse in Oaxaca (MIO), a Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad. The author traveled as a member of this group with the intention of researching microenterprises and microfinance. The co-author joined him in July of 2005 to study the economic development of the community as a result of the microfinancing efforts.

Microenterprises are invaluable at stabilizing family incomes. However, there is little evidence that these microenterprises grow into small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that lead to wealth creation and truly move families out of poverty. The same restrictions that are often the cause of poverty still work to inhibit the growth of microenterprises into SMEs. The primary inhibitors to this growth are the lack of education, specifically business education, and capital. The authors discovered that these factors are also true for the Afro-Mexican population in the Costa Chica. A concerted effort is needed to provide greater access to business education and capital so that the region might be able to catch up with the rest of Mexico in terms of economic growth.

The structure of the paper is as follows. Section two is a literature review on the failure of microenterprises to grow into SMEs. Section three describes the Costa Chica region, the interview subjects, and the interviews the authors conducted during the two visits to the area. Section four analyzes how the experience in Mexico agrees with the literature. The final section addresses future work.

Literature Review on Microenterprises

In essence, microenterprises are the smallest of businesses, often created by the very poor, that generate income to help sustain the individual. Governments and NGOs encourage such microenterprises through various methods, including microfinance, training services, and regulations. "Microfinance refers to loans, savings, insurance, transfer services, and all financial products aimed at low income clients" (International Year of Microcredit 2006). Microcredit can be loosely defined as loaning small amounts of capital by banks and other institutions for the very poor to create these microenterprises (Fairley 1998). It helps those who desire

to be self-employed but who cannot obtain credit through traditional channels (Servon and Bates 1998).

Over the last 25 years, we have seen a huge explosion of microfinance institutions dedicated to this cause in the developing world (Joekes 1999). In 1997, a Microcredit Summit was held in Washington, D.C., to discuss ways to create more opportunities for such ventures. At that time, over 2500 varied institutions were present and the goal was created to reach 100 million of the world's poorest families by 2005. In fact, 2005 was named by the United Nations as the International Year of Microcredit.

Undoubtedly, this microenterprise revolution has had positive effects. Successes such as the Grameen Bank in India and BRAC in Bangladesh have contributed to millions of people, often women, moving out of the ranks of the extremely poor. Since they are entrepreneurial, the microenteprises help create self-esteem and independence (Fairley 1998). In countries like Bolivia, Brazil, and Indonesia millions of the previously unbanked now have access to basic banking services (UNDP 2005).

Still, the question remains: "Are microenterprises effective at eliminating poverty?" According to the literature, the answer to this question is not positive. Mosley and Hulme (1998) posit that microfinance institutions (MFIs) rarely help the poorest of the poor, but more often help those who already have financial stability. They demonstrated that for the very poor microfinance often has a negative impact, leading to more debt. Morduch (2000) agreed, finding that in Bolivia the MFIs most often reached not the very poorest but those just above or below the poverty line. Shaw (2004), in her study of Sri Lankans, discovered that the microenterprises of the "less poor" performed better on average than those of the poor. Servon and Bates (1998), in a study of microenterprises in the US, found that those who had the most success were already educated or possessed specific skills, possessed significant capitalization, and enjoyed strong support networks of family, friends, and mentors.

Even in cases where microenterprises (ME) have been successful in alleviating poverty, concern remains in the growth of microenterprises into small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Grosh and Somolekae (1996) quote a World Bank report on Sub-Saharan Africa, which laments the "missing middle" as the region is filled with countless microenterprises with a few "medium" to "large" firms but with little in between. One would assume that the microenterprises should be a seedbed of experienced entrepreneurs from which the missing middle could grow, but there has been little evidence of that over the years.

Rogerson (2005) found the majority of the entrepreneurial activities in South Africa to be microenterprises. In particular, he found in 2004 that these microenterprises, even if successful, do not grow or create employment. In general he found that the businesses most dynamic and growing in terms of the employment were the already existing medium enterprises.

Servon and Bates (1998) found that small business ownership is often considered working towards lowering poverty, but failed to lead to economic self-sufficiency. Often, poorer families use the microcredit to protect their subsistence incomes rather than using them to create a production income. Although microenterprise is still a very worthwhile goal, and it provides more food, health care, and education to the family, the question remains: "what prevents these microenterprises from growing into SMEs?"

Grosh and Somolekae (1996) detail many of the obstacles that might prevent an ME from expanding to an SME. One of these is access to capital. She comments in her paper that most entrepreneurs are forced to grow dependent only upon retained earnings. This is consistent with Eversole's contention that the difference between a subsistence producer and microentrepreneur is the scale of their retained earnings.

Eversole's (2003) evidence from research in Bolivia and other Latin American countries maintains that the only difference between subsistence producers and microenterprises is one of scale not style. She argues that the only reason some people become microentrepreneurs rather than subsistence producers is their access to greater resources, rather than a radically different approach to running the business. Often for the very poor, their small cushion to be used for reinvestment can be subsumed by the needs of the household, such as an illness or educational needs.

While the world has created many MFIs to give micro loans to help people start MEs, a gap still exists between the micro loans of the MFIs and the regular collateralized loans of mainstream institutions. The amount of capital necessary to expand from a microenterprise to a SME is often beyond the scope of a local microfinance institution with limits on what can be borrowed and not large enough to merit the attention of a mainstream institution. A portion of this lack of access is also self-inflicted. Often the poor are risk-averse as described in Mosley and Hulme (1998). They borrow only enough to protect their subsistence incomes. Only those who are financially stable are more likely to borrow money for promotional activities such as hiring more labor or purchasing more equipment.

Another obstacle to expansion is the increased knowledge and training necessary to run a larger business. Many microcredit institutions are now mandating business training as part of the process of receiving a loan. It is becoming more and more apparent that capital alone is inadequate to create a successful enterprise. Pretes (2002) writes of the Village Enterprise Fund, insisting on training while giving out microequity grants. This vital training includes general management skills, bookkeeping, and ways to grow a business. Rogerson (2004) discusses the successes and failures of the Local Business Service Centers (LBSCs) in South Africa, created as part of the country's push to expand the amount of entrepreneurial activity. Though the LBSC's have had mixed results, more consistent results have been found in the Manufacturing Advice Center (MAC) programs. The MAC programs not

only provided financing, but also delivered business services to SMEs, similar to a business incubator, and created a Business Referral and Information Network which disseminated strategic business advice at all stages of a business life cycle.

Other obstacles to expansion include access to land and the increase in technology. In many countries, little land is needed to run a microenterprise. They are often created on the sidewalk with no official permits needed. However, to have an SME, one often needs a permanent place of business. De Soto (2000) speaks of how it takes seven years in Peru to purchase land and get an official title. He has similar horror stories from other developing nations (De Soto 1989). In countries, such as Mexico until the advent of NAFTA, all land was community owned, known as *ejido* land. It may take years to actually have the land necessary to create a business.

So, we see in reviewing the literature that microenterprises have been successful, but often in the context of helping the moderately poor maintain a subsistence lifestyle. There is less evidence to support that it helps the very poor or that it helps microentrepreneurs grow their businesses into small businesses. The main obstacles are (1) capital, often needed in higher amounts than is offered by MFIs; (2) education — general education increasing the literacy of the population and business education to help build the knowledge of creating a small business; and (3) a strong network of support from family, friends, associates as well as governmental assistance for becoming a part of a more formal trade sector.

Experience in Mexico

The Afro-Mexicans are descendants of the slaves who were brought to Mexico during the colonial period. Though very little has been written about the Mexican slave trade, slaves outnumbered the Spanish by three to one in the sixteenth century and two and one-half times to one in the seventeenth (Vaughn 1995). Over the years, the slaves integrated into the population the same way the Spanish and indigenous people coalesced. However, in two remote areas of the country, near Veracruz and the Costa Chica, much evidence of the African heritage remains.

Unfortunately, racial prejudice still exists in Mexico, even though the government claims to be race neutral due to the mixed heritage of the vast majority of the country (Montiel 1994). Recently, starting with the work of Aguirre Beltran (1908 –1996), the late University of Veracruz professor of anthropology and forerunner in studying the history of Blacks in Mexico, recognition of Mexico's African heritage began to grow. It is undoubtedly true, whether due to racial causes or not, that the Costa Chica is among the poorest areas of Mexico. On almost any measure, the state of Oaxaca ranks among the poorest in Mexico, and the Costa Chica is one of the poorer areas of Oaxaca. The coast has a higher illiteracy rate and a smaller percentage attending high school than the state as a whole and than the country (INEGI 2001). In social terms, the area also has a smaller percentage with running water, plumbing and electricity.

The senior author arrived in the Costa Chica region in late December 2004 and conducted interviews over the next two weeks into January 2005. The interviews were arranged by the nonprofit organization Mexico Negro. The emphasis of the interviews was to meet people who had an interest in or had already created small microenterprises and people who were involved in microfinancial institutions. In addition, a second trip was made during July 2005 along with the co-author to follow up on initial observations and to explore other possibilities that might lead to economic development of this community.

Mexico Negro, over the years, had created several community-based microfinance institutions (*cajas populares*) in response to what was perceived to be a lack of capital sources in the area. Three of the interviews conducted in the winter were with individuals directly involved in these ventures. Two more interviews were conducted in the summer with other local institutions dedicated to microfinance. Initials have been used to protect the anonymity of the interviewees.

January 2005

1. DA – This individual is the president of the small savings & loan (*caja popular*) in Corralero. Members join this *caja* by paying a fee of 30 pesos. They, with two witnesses who stand in for them, are allowed to borrow up to four times their deposits. The interest rate is 60 percent per annum with most loans for only three months. At the end of the year, profits are divided among the members; so the interest on deposits is a respectable 20 percent per annum. The *caja* has 220 members at the present time with an average of 7,000 pesos on deposit. However, this *caja* only has approximately 300,000 pesos in assets, so most of the money is out for loans. The default rate is extremely low.

The majority of the borrowers are women, although there are no gender limitations. Women borrow the money to provide extra income to the family. Some buy fish at the docks and sell them in town for a higher profit. Others borrow the money to open small *tiendas* or little snack stores. Much of the women's money is used for health care and food. It was stated that the men's money was used for education. The community only has a primary school and a televised secondary school. Any student wanting to attend preparatory school (essentially grades 9-12) must leave the community. The vast majority of the money is for productive purposes, not consumer goods.

2. R & S – These two individuals run the small *caja popular* in Lagunillas. R is the Treasurer and S is the President. It is very similar to the one in Corralero having also been started by Mexico Negro. Again, the members generate the deposits. They currently have 95 members with approximately $300,000 under deposit. The interest rates are again 60 percent per annum and the dividends on deposits are slightly higher at 38 percent. They consider the institutions to be a benefit to the com-

munity. Women are the main borrowers, but this may be because men do not want to be seen asking for money. Thus, they often ask their wives to borrow the money for them. The community has a primary school and a secondary school but no preparatory school. Any student desiring to reach that level must travel to Pinotepa Nacional or Cuaji, both of which are approximately 1 hour away.

3. **DE** was the former President of the *caja popular* in Santiago Tapextla, also created by Mexico Negro. It is currently no longer in operation as a man from Pinotepa came in and created a rival. The new *caja* only required 10 pesos to join as opposed to the normal 30 pesos. Gradually, the people in the community shifted over. Unfortunately, this new operation takes the profits back to Pinotepa Nacional rather than having them stay in the community as the first did.

July 2005

4. **Cooperativa Sinvacrem.** This is a small savings and loan institution operating in the town of Pinotepa Nacional. The members of this *caja* can secure a loan for a maximum of five years and the interest rate is 3.5 percent per month. The bank manager shared with the authors the details of the loan structure where most borrowers have to produce their income statement, a valid ID and a credit report. The average loan period was two years and the average loan amount was 500 pesos. However, this bank was experiencing a rising default rate, as most borrowers did not have collateral.

5. **Savings Bank #2.** Another small savings bank operating in the same area was offering loans at the rate of 3 percent a month but had no maximum limits to the amount that can be borrowed. It did not have any stringent conditions attached either but required a cosigner if the borrower could not provide sufficient proof of property holdings. The average loan period in this bank was one year.

6. **HSBC** is the only commercial bank operating in Pinotepa area. The bank manager informed them that they were not in favor of making start up loans to small enterprises. They only catered to individual business loans starting from 5,000 pesos charging 5 percent per month. To qualify for the loan, the business has to be in existence for at least two years.

In addition to interviewing those involved in the local *cajas populares*, the authors interviewed five individuals or groups of currently involved in or planning microenterprises. These groups were interviewed first in January 2005 and again in July 2005.

1. **DE** initiated a farming cooperative, but with little success thus far. He feels the community needs to be taught to work together as opposed to in-

dividual efforts. His current dream is to recreate the farming cooperative with multiple families working small plots of land to grow vegetables that could be consumed by the families with excess going to the markets nearby. Even though this part of Mexico is semi-tropical, most vegetables are imported. He has the technical expertise necessary, having taken a farming course in Oaxaca, but he lacks capital. In his estimation, he only needs $120 (US) to start his own farming plot; but, for the moment, that is completely out of reach. He is not exactly sure where or how he would sell the excess vegetables, but he is convinced it can be done. In July, the authors met him and his group again as a follow up on their entrepreneurial efforts. They now seem to be more organized in a cooperative spirit. The authors spent an entire afternoon with this group teaching them how to develop a business plan and budget, starting from land preparation to harvesting and selling the vegetables in the market.

2. **A, C, and E.** These three men are involved in a fishing cooperative in the coastal town of Corralero, adjacent to the Corralero Lagoon. The cooperatives were started a few years back by the government as a way to crack down on illegal fishing. The men considered the cooperatives a blessing, but they do not work in the traditional sense of cooperatives, since the profits and expenses are not shared equally among the members. They are concerned by the over fishing being performed illegally too near to the coast, but their complaints to authorities have had no effect. According to E, if the over fishing is not curtailed; the local industry will be gone in ten years.

   Their dream is to create shrimp farms within the lagoon as a way to have a more steady income. They are currently halted by the lack of capital and the lack of technical expertise. The men estimate they would need 300,000 pesos to start the shrimp farm. However, every bank to which they have applied has turned them down. They already owe money for the boats they use to do their current fishing in the lagoon.

   E also owns a small open-air restaurant on the strip of land between the lagoon and the Pacific Ocean. Most of the customers are local Mexicans coming to the beach on holiday. There are no hotels in the area, and the tourists sleep in their cars if they are staying overnight. The men remarked that they would love to see a hotel in the area but they were also afraid that if it had a restaurant, it might run the smaller operations out of business.

3. **J & H.** These two young men were part of a group organized by Mexico Negro for the authors to interview. The group lives in the town of Minitan on the Corralero Lagoon. The young men, ranging in age from 16 to 24, are interested in creating a small business so they are not forced to migrate to America. The young men are part of a current inoperable fishing cooperative. They were lax in maintaining the reg-

istration and now must pay large fees to get the official license back. Meanwhile, they are fishing illegally and that hinders their operation. Their desire was to create a shrimp farm in a nearby lake with access to the lagoon. When farming fish rather than shrimp was suggested, their response was that shrimp sold much better in the local markets although they have yet to survey the markets. They had no sense of the money necessary to create this farm, nor technical expertise regarding shrimp farms.

In July, these men were interviewed again with more wide-ranging options for them to pursue. The options included collecting mussels, gathering salt, and tourism. For each topic, the young men were asked about the market size for that endeavor as well as the cost of setting up and maintaining such a business. The group had very general ideas on the market size but had obviously thought little about the requirements necessary to start.

4. F. With three other men in the town of Callejon de Romulo, F had already tried to create two businesses with the support and advice of Mexico Negro. Their first attempt was a tree nursery. Even though this part of Mexico is very rural, a market for trees still exists, as the government wants people to create "living fences" around their fields, where every other post is a small tree. The men made it clear, however, that they were only trying to beautify the community and were not seeking profit so the project only lasted one year.

   Their second attempt was to create a fish farm, raising tilapia. They got a loan from the NGO, Mexico Negro, found a suitable location, and dug a well to provide fresh water for the tanks. However, a split in the group stopped the work, and before peace could be attained, the capital ran out. In July, when we visited this group again, the men indicated that they were still interested in working together on the fish farm if more money could be obtained. They also expressed the need for formal training in how to set up the farming strategy. When asked how they wished to make revenue by selling fish raised in the farm, these men once again had a general idea that the nearby markets would serve as a good outlet, but they have not explored the markets.

5. **The Bakery Women.** At the time of F's interview, the senior author was also able to interview a group of women, including F's wife, who run a bakery cooperative. F built an adobe oven for his wife several years ago. She and the several other women bake bread in the oven each day. Each one makes the same type of bread, but each has a different town for her market so they do not compete with each other. The women were asked if they kept track of their expenses and knew their profit from the venture. They replied that they had a general idea in their heads but had never written it down. They have borrowed money from the government to build a new bakery building and they have already pur-

chased a new gas oven. In July, the authors visited the bakery once again. The building was incomplete due to lack of available labor. The women also complained that they do not have the working capital to keep the bakery running.

6. **Men of San Jose Estancia Grande.** In July, the authors also met a group of men in the town of San Jose Estancia Grande. These men own lands ranging from eight to 76 hectares. But most of the land is used as pasture lands for their cattle and only two or three hectares are used for growing corn. All of these men have only middle school education and a history of early marriage. At the interview, these men expressed eagerness to start fish farming for commercial purpose. When asked what they would like to do with the money earned, most of them wanted to build a house or spend on children's marriage, but none had the concept of investing further in businesses.

Towards the end of their trip in July, the authors also met with Dr. LS of Universidad Del Mar at Puerto Angel, to learn more about fish farms that his institution is helping the "Zapotalito" communities establish near the "Chacahua" town close to Pinotepa Nacional. These farms have started operating two years ago building five earthen ponds. Each pond is 10 meters in diameter and can be harvested three times a year. The authors obtained rich ideas from the professor about creating circular tanks for tilapia farming in these small village communities.

Interpretation and Results

As mentioned above, two main reasons often cited for the failure of microenterprises to grow into SMEs are (1) lack of capital and (2) lack of education, particularly business education. The interviews indicate that both of those resources are in short supply in the Costa Chica region.

The *cajas populares* do a good job of giving the members of the community access to cash for small expenditures. Each of the interviews conducted revealed that a large proportion of the community is involved in the endeavors. The depositors were taking advantage of the access since the large majority (90 percent in the Corralero *caja*) were active borrowers from the organization. The *cajas* appear to be financially sound as they were paying interest on deposits. However, they are not suited to the needs of helping members grow into larger businesses.

One reason is the amount of capital available. For example, the Corralero *caja* had approximately 300,000 pesos on deposit available for loans. However, A, C. & E, the fishermen in Corralero, estimated that it would take $300,000 pesos for them to start the fish farm. It is not feasible to expect the local *caja* to loan all of their money to one group of borrowers. Since their entire source of new members is the village, they would not be expected to grow large enough over the short term,

or to be capable of handling this request for money. The other *cajas* were of a similar size according to Mexico Negro.

When the Bakery Women in Callejon Romulo needed money to build a bakery building and increase the size of their operations, it was necessary to borrow money from the government, but even this amount was insufficient. The government program they accessed only allowed money to be used for infrastructure development. They were forced to acquire volunteer labor to build and still had no money left for operating expenses.

Besides the local *caja* and the government, the other lending institutions that exist might work to generate operating capital, but the amount and the timing would not be sufficient to acquire infrastructure such as a shrimp farm or a building for the bakery. As mentioned earlier, the local commercial bank in Pinotepa did not make small business loans. Consequently, the options for acquiring the large infusions of capital needed to grow a business are few. It is also true that the cost of capital is quite high. The local *cajas populares*, created by Mexico Negro, had interest rates of 60 percent per annum. The Pinotepa Nacional *cajas* had interest rates of 36 percent and 42 percent per annum. While this is not too burdensome when one is borrowing a smaller amount for a three-month limit, it becomes prohibitive when borrowing a large amount for a longer period of time.

Most of the people interviewed are not fully aware of their options, which recalls the second cause: the lack of business education. A majority had not progressed beyond primary school. Although sufficient for normal tasks, more education and a more specialized education are often necessary to properly manage a business larger than a microenterprise. The lack of this kind of business knowledge was seen in every interview.

None of the interviewees had conducted a preliminary market survey in any of the interviews. None was familiar with the idea of a business plan. As mentioned earlier, the Bakery Women did not keep written records of expenses and sales so they could verify their income, a practice that could be a great benefit to them when seeking outside capital. The young men located in Minitan were not familiar with the procedures involved in calculating the expenses that would be required to operate the small businesses mentioned in our interviews.

While most spoke of the technical knowledge needed to start the various ventures, this did not extend to the technical knowledge needed to run a business. The interviewees assumed that special skills and training were not needed to run a business. In essence, they expected those aspects to take care of themselves. If fish or baked goods were produced, one simply took them to the local market to sell. That process does work in microenterprises, it is insufficient to grow a business to the point where wealth can be created and it can be self-sustaining beyond the life of the owner.

Implications and Future Work

In order to help ease the poverty of the Afro-Mexican population located in the Costa Chica region, more needs to be done to help them become self-sustaining. We must, in essence, "teach them how to fish." It is apparent from the interviews conducted in the region that more education is needed for the population, specifically in the area of operating and growing a business. While it is true that more and larger capital sources are necessary in order for businesses to grow, evidence abounds that money by itself is insufficient without the knowledge of how to properly utilize it

It is also true that better business education would help the entrepreneurs to gain access to more capital. Being able to create a business plan showing the market available for any goods or services produced, along with discipline to record and verify expenses and revenues, would allow them to access larger sources of capital. Even with a proper business plan that demonstrates excellent market and revenue potential, the local *cajas*, both in the villages and in Pinotepa Nacional, would be unable to inject a large sum of capital to jump-start a small business. The local commercial banks are not even interested in this type of small business. Consequently, more research is necessary to discover additional sources of capital.

More research is also necessary to understand the type of training that would be most effective in transmitting business knowledge. Given that the majority of the people have only completed an elementary, or possibly secondary, education, a textbook and lecture-based classroom setting would probably not be the most effective. Other options include a business simulation, small group interactions, and apprenticeship training. The type of training to be used is still under discussion, although Morehouse College is currently planning to create a small business workshop to be conducted in the area in the near future.

The most comforting aspect of this study is the realization that the entrepreneurial spirit is very strong in the area. Despite years of marginalization and poverty, the people interviewed are quite optimistic about the potential for economic growth. Little economic development has been taken place in this area and many entrepreneurial opportunities abound. Much of the land is still undeveloped agriculturally. Tourism is practically nonexistent. With greater sources of capital and more business education, the economic possibilities in the area have great potential.

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Control, Punish, and Conquer: U.S. Public Schools' Attempts to Control Black Males*

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Abstract

Policies and procedures that govern public education in the United States have produced a system of control and punishment that impedes the education of Black males. The historical antecedents of this system are reflected in various forms of racism, from denying education to enslaved Blacks through legal segregation in schools during the post-Civil War period. This study reviews the treatment of Black male children attending public schools in the United States. It focuses on contemporary policies and procedures related to special education, alternative schooling, and the practice of "medicating" children with behavioral difficulties to demonstrate how covert forms of racism in public education continue to control and punish Black males.

Introduction

A system of control and punishment is evident in the treatment of Black male children attending public schools in the United States. This system is a byproduct of the rationale developed to defend slavery (Feagin 2000; Hutchinson 1994). Because White males who controlled the school system viewed Black males as a sexual and physical threat, they created myths and manipulated stereotypes to justify the need for social control (Cose 2002; Feagin 2000; Hutchinson 1994).

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Additionally, the background literature illustrates high levels of social control directed toward Black males as a form of social reproduction of racism supported by racist ideologies inside U.S. public education. This form of social reproduction is the process wherein one generation passes on the racist ideology and the concomitant racist attitudes as justification for racial inequality and oppression of the Black population (Feagin 2000). "[T]hese conditions include substantial control by whites of major economic resources and possession of the political, police, and ideological power to dominate subordinated racial groups" (Feagin 2000:25-26). Such transmission is visible in the various policies and services enacted by public school districts. Specifically, these efforts are revealed by public schools' uses of corporal punishment, behavioral stimulants (any form of mind-altering drugs), and alternative education settings (i.e., self-contained classrooms within regular settings and/or satellite facilities away from regular education settings). This article reviews previous research and excerpts from a recent study to show that policies of control and punishment permeate public education and ultimately lead Black males down a path of academic and social disaster.

To appreciate this system of control, it is important to examine the evolution of American public schools. Public education grew out of the general belief that a country could not advance unless the majority of its citizens were educated (Tyack, Anderson, Cuban, Kaestle, Ravitch, Bernard, Mondale, & Meryl 2001). Colonial education reflected principles of the Protestant Reformation that stressed the importance of literacy for learning scripture. This had become the common school movement by the late 18th century, stressing the importance of education for good government. Nineteenth century demographic and economic changes saw consequent changes in public education. It was able to assimilate masses of immigrants and consolidate U.S. national identity, while at the same time embracing, often violently, racial segregation through most of the 20th century. Finally, the post-Civil Rights era of integrated public education evoked earlier political philosophies that argued the importance of good education for good government. Recall that while many of the founders of public education in the United States focused on the idea that education was vital to fostering national progress, democracy, and Protestant values, White males enacted this system for White males. Even after women were granted access to education, minorities, particularly Blacks, were held back; they were the last to receive such access.

The focus of public education moved from promoting Protestantism to meeting the demands of the changing industrial economic system. However, the intent to enact a certain level of control over citizens has been retained. This intent is most evident with respect to people of color, particularly Black males. The social control of Blacks may be traced to the denial of access to education during slavery. Once Blacks were legally allowed access to education, they felt that education would guarantee a better life and opportunities previously denied. Blacks have historically linked education with freedom — education became synonymous with lib-

eration. However, the system of public education was unfair and biased against Blacks because of racist and oppressive policies and procedures intended to exert control over this population. The system persists today in America's public schools.

Social Reproduction of Racism

Before a discussion of public school policies and services, it is important to examine how the portrayal and treatment of Black males in the United States, leads to policies and practices in today's schools. Victimization of Blacks is observable throughout the history of the United States. John Hope Franklin (1965) discussed the existence of two "worlds" in the United States — a White world and a Black world. According to Franklin, these worlds divided from the arrival of the first slave ship in the colonies of America. He describes the feelings of inferiority that Whites projected onto the slaves. This provided the rationale for slavery and discrimination that many Whites have accepted and practiced. This theory of inferiority resurfaces repeatedly in the relationships between Whites and Blacks throughout the history of this country (Feagin 2000; Daniels 2002). Racist ideologies of inferiority validated, and in many ways continue to defend, the two separate worlds of inequality in all major social institutions, including public education. In "The Pragmatic and Politics of Difference," Kal Alston (1999) noted that traditionally, minority groups such as Blacks have never enjoy ed the rights and privileges or the equality granted to Whites in the United States. For example, the privileged have customarily justified their philosophy of inequality by amplifying the differences between Blacks and Whites. This divisive technique created the political concept of "whiteness," to build a unified opposition to racial groups in the U.S. that were different in appearances and culture. For example, Native Americans were considered savages, incapable of self-government and in need of moral guidance. Black males were considered violent, hypersexual, uncivilized, and child-like, irrational individuals at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. In contrast, Whites and, to some extent, European immigrants received much higher moral regard after full ideological and cultural assimilation (Feagin 2000). This ideology has been acknowledged in many scholarly works that describe Blacks as perceived by Whites and other minority groups, as presented in the popular media, and as reflected in some scientific writings (Cose 2002; Feagin 2000; Hutchinson 1994; Tait and Burroughs 2002).

The social reproduction of racism is also apparent in the judicial system. In general, minority male youths have a higher probability of being jailed before they turn 18 years of age than their White counterparts. "Crime control" laws enacted over the past 20 years have affected minority children more negatively than they have affected White children (Brown, Russo, and Hunter 2002). Black male youths in 1992 were 27 percent more likely to be involved in juvenile arrests than other races (Weatherspoon 1998). In 2003, young Black males in the U.S. prison system

continued to outnumber White males disproportionately (Tucker 2003).

Public schools remain principal locations for the social reproduction of racism. The process is managed by teachers and school officials. Kunjufu (1986) argues that U.S. public schools have contributed to the "destruction" of Black school age males through the creation of social barriers such as special education, standardized examinations, and academic tracking. Black students, and to some extent Latino students, are being labeled special education students at an alarming rate (Pressman 1993).

An article in the March 3, 2001, issue of the *Chicago Tribune* cited a 1997 Illinois Department of Education study that noted Black students were almost three (2.9) times more likely to be labeled with a disability than were their White counterparts. Many critics of this practice in special education claim that those "experts" who fought for equality on behalf of all students regardless of race have actually brought about inequality and segregation within special education. The practice of labeling these students and segregating them academically from the regular education population underlies these inequities (Barton and Tomlinson 1984). Thus, public school education sharply diverges from Hiner's (1990) vision of education as "...the entire process by which human beings develop a sense of self and formulate an identity; learn the ways of society so that they may function within it; and define and transmit their culture from generation to generation" (p. 138).

Essentially, there is a dual and unequal system of education in our public schools. This duality has been perpetuated by the manner in which teachers treat students of color, and especially Black males. As early as 1978, Lawrence-Lightfoot noted that teachers

> ...use the dimensions of class, race, sex, ethnicity to bring order to their perception of the classroom environment. Rather than teachers' gaining more in-depth and holistic understanding of the child, with the passage of time, teachers' perceptions become increasingly stereotyped and children become hardened caricatures of an initially discriminatory vision (pp. 85-86).

Researchers continue to note this type of behavior in the schools. Delpit (1995) argues that White teachers operate on stereotypes, social distance, racism, biased research, and ignorance of minority community norms. Irvine (1990) also notes that White teachers are not sensitive to the cultural backgrounds of Black students. They are often unwilling to engage students of color in the classroom. For example, early research has shown that White teachers used negative adjectives more often in reference to Black children while Black teachers used descriptors that are more positive for the same children. Others have also found that White teachers demonstrate little excitement, enthusiasm, or confidence in teaching Black students (Gottlieb 1964; Bruno and Doscher 1981).

These actions have aggravated conflicts between public school systems and Blacks, especially concerning culture and control of Black males. Delpit (1995) dis-

cusses the cultural misunderstandings that occur between White teachers and minority children. She noted that White teachers frequently misread aptitudes, abilities, and intent because of the minority child's cultural communication styles. The unfortunate result is that teachers often adopt methods of instruction and discipline that oppose the norms of the child.

Schools act as mechanical sorters with the tools of evaluation, standardized tests, and rankings based on student academic and social performance. Miron and Miron (1996) examined this phenomenon in two inner city high schools located in Louisiana, one with a racially diverse student body and the other predominantly Black. They found that minority students fall victim to discrimination when school and student cultures clash. In the diverse high school, Black students expressed a general dislike of their treatment by teachers and administrators. The researchers identified the curriculum as a tool used to discriminate against Black students. The school climate was characterized by racial tension and social conflict. In the areas of behavior and academic performance, they found that Whites were subjected to less strict observances than Black students were. In contrast, the predominantly Black school fostered a strong sense of pride and caring. Students regarded teachers as positive influences and mentors. Teachers held high expectations for the students and motivated them to achieve academic success. Miron and Miron's (1996) study provides an instructive example of how cultural conflicts between school and student can create inconsistencies and consequent disparities in education. It also shows some of the immediate consequences of the social reproduction of racism through education. This troubling relationship is most evident in programs for school desegregation and alternative schooling and trends in corporal punishment and behavioral medication trends.

Education for Blacks: Access Denied

From the beginning when Blacks were forcefully "imported" into this country, citizens and slaves alike knew the limits of access to education for African Americans. During slavery, the White elite did not want Blacks to be educated because it could threaten their power (Feagin 2000). Many slaves were subject to physical violence for attempting to get educated. This attitude was apparent in the both the Dred Scott and Plessy decisions. More specifically, the decision in *Dred Scott v. Sanford* (1857) deemed Blacks inferior and ineligible for the privileges of citizens that were available to Whites (Feagin 2000). This paved the way for the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) case, which illustrated that "racism was natural." These decisions by the Supreme Court sent the world a message that Blacks were inferior and thus should be denied those rights freely granted to Whites. The Plessy decision also presaged the Jim Crow segregation of public facilities, hospitals, restaurants, hotels, and other public locations. Importantly, the court decision also created a division between Whites and Blacks within public and higher education. The legalities defending

segregation were part of a Southern redemption rationale that incited White violence against Blacks who did not accept the oppression set forth by White supremacist domination. Indeed, Feagin (2000) estimated that from the Civil War to the 1990s, there were 6,000 lynching incidents, where large mobs gathered in celebration to torture, at times dismember, and murder Blacks.

Many U.S. citizens believe that a shift in public attitudes about race can be traced to the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and the passing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Some believe that the legal victories won by civil rights activists demonstrated that the country was ready to declare racial prejudice un-American. Events, polices, and procedures that are widespread in U.S. public schools challenge and in many ways invalidate this position. For example, a paradox within special education has existed since the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling that desegregated public schools. School districts began to use tracking and ability groupings as a new approach to continue the segregation of White students from Black students. They manipulated policies, labeling Black students and directing them to programs for students identified as mildly retarded. Students who did not meet the eligibility criteria for special education were placed in segregated lower academic tracks. In fact, the 1990 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has done little to remedy the limited educational opportunities experienced by minority students and the racial discrimination emerging from special education policies and procedures in public schools. The Civil Rights Project (CRP) at Harvard University charged that this is a nation-wide problem, particularly for minority students (Harvard University CRP 2001). In a letter to Senator Tom Harkin, the project cited:

> ...widespread agreement among researchers that a major contributing factor to minority over identification and placement in unnecessarily restrictive special education settings is the failure of teachers and administrators in regular education to provide effective instruction in reading and math and to effectively manage their regular classrooms (Harvard University CRP 2001; Toppo 2001).

The nature of controlling access to education by those deemed inferior has been shifted from overt measures to covert techniques wrapped in notions of special education and tracking.

Racial Differences in School Corporal Punishment

In Colonial New England, Puritans viewed children as "creatures of sin" who were ignorant and evil (Ryan 1994). Parents felt responsible for bringing their children into the light of righteousness through religion. The Bible was quoted as a rationale for the use of corporal punishment, with Proverbs such as, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it from him. Withhold not correction from the child; for thou beatest him with the rod, he shall

not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Cryan 1987:148).

Even today, a number of states still use corporal punishment in the classroom. The current trend of corporal punishment is difficult to interpret. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has indicated that the use of corporal punishment has declined in recent years (Bauer 1990). OCR reported in 1988 that 1.5 million incidents of corporal punishment occur each year (Bauer 1990). On the other hand, critics have argued that the OCR has underestimated the number of incidents that occur. Many incidents of informal punishment such as slaps, shoves, and kicks are never officially recorded. In addition, corporal punishment may not be reported if it occurs in a state where corporal punishment is illegal (Bauer 1990). With respect to disaggregated information on Black males, there was no national data until 1994 that examined the use of corporal punishment in schools by race and gender. Gregory (1995) studied the first available national data to distinguish by race and gender set forth by the OCR. He found that out of the national survey of 4,692 public school districts and 43,034 public schools, Black students accounted for 127,103 cases of corporal punishment (44 percent) and White students accounted for 97,420 cases (34 percent). Furthermore, the analysts found that boys were four times more likely to be physically punished than were girls. Black male students were approximately three times more likely to receive corporal punishment than a Black girl or White boy. They were sixteen times more likely to be struck by a school official than was a White girl (Gregory 1995). Earlier, Sandler, Wilcox, and Everson (1985) reported that Black males are more likely than are others in the public school setting to be punished with severity for minor school offenses.

While there remains a dearth of research examining the association between teacher race and frequency and use of corporal punishment, it is widely acknowledged that White teachers outnumber Blacks in most public education settings. Given the low degree of cultural competence among teachers as discussed above, we can expect the disproportionate punishment of Black males to continue. In addition, many schools are stressed by a rising population of children with behavioral difficulties and special needs, a diverse socioeconomic minority population, and escalating bureaucratic expectations. In such climates, teachers, regardless of their race, often find themselves frustrated by these and other dilemmas common to teaching. This can contribute to bias, animosity, and consequent punitive actions directed toward misunderstood populations of school age children. These students and others are dramatically affected in a negative manner. Michelle Wallace, author of *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* (1991), reasoned that when a society practices the punishment of Black males in public, they are essentially sending a message rooted in racist oppression and hatred to others in society. The consequences of corporal punishment can be dramatic for all children, no matter their race. Research has shown that children who have been administered corporal punishment have a tendency to drop out of school. They exhibit increased aggres-

sion, absenteeism, truancy, and tardiness. Bauer (1990) reports that these children also show signs of fear, anxiety, low self-esteem, and even symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in some cases.

Evolution of Pharmaceutical Control of Black Males

Precursors - The Hutschnecker Memo

A request through John D. Ehrichman, Domestic Affairs Advisor, from President Richard M. Nixon to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, was sent on December 30, 1969. The President wanted the Secretary's opinion "as to the advisability of setting up pilot projects embodying some of [the] approaches" presented by Arnold A. Hutschnecker, M.D. in his 1,600-page memo which advised the government to conduct nation-wide testing on all children six to eight years old (Schrag and Divoky 1975:3). This national testing approach proposed means to detect homicidal and other violent tendencies in children. Dr. Hutschnecker, who was at the time engaged in psychotherapy, hoped his proposal for nation-wide testing would allow the children identified as having problems to be subjected to "corrective treatment" (Schrag and Divoky 1975). The children Hutschnecker mentioned would be moved to special camps, counseling sessions, and day care centers that specialized in correcting their violent, delinquent tendencies. In his memorandum to President Nixon, Hutschnecker expressed his belief that it was possible to identify those children with possible "future delinquent tendencies" nine out of ten times. His primary assertion was that one must attack the problem of delinquency with an intervention through the children's minds.

Even though the proposal was eventually abandoned, the perspective revealed in the memo suggested a profound change in attitudes toward children. Ideas similar to those in the proposal are echoed in the Mental Health Early Intervention, Treatment, and Prevention Act of 2000 (NAMI 2000). This act is designed to increase the resources for treatment of people within the criminal justice system through screening, education, and diagnosis. As such, this policy affects the children and adolescents who are in the criminal justice system. It represents an enlightened approach to mental illness, but so far, its application in education has been directed toward efforts of social control.

Current Behavioral Medication Trends

As with the use of corporal punishment, there is a disparity between the number of boys and girls labeled with Attention Deficit Disorder/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/HD). The ratio of boys to girls with ADD/HD is approximately 6 to 1. Breggin (2001) reported that on conduct measures, boys receive higher scores than hyperactive girls. Other studies have documented the greater likelihood of boys being labeled hyperactive and diagnosed with the disorder because boys are generally more aggressive than girls are (Ackerman, Dykman, and Oglesby 1993). For this

reason, ADD/HD is regarded as primarily a male disorder (CHADD 1993).

Slee (1997) examined the relationship between economic changes, changing community dynamics, and student expectations to patterns of increasing school control: "The deviant is not sot scrutinized for crude punishment. S/he is pathologized" (Slee 1997:11). There is little data by race regarding the number of children being diagnosed by ascriptive factors. However, because of the disproportionate number of Black children being assigned special education categories with learning or behavior problems, Black children are among the largest number being treated with psychotropic medication. Since Black males are being punished more and assigned to special education categories more than White children, it can also be expected that they are being diagnosed and treated with behavioral stimulants more than White children (Pressman 1993; Gregory 1995; Fitzgerald 2002).

Diagnostic practices are an area of considerable weakness in the system. Approximately 50 percent of those labeled with a disorder were never properly diagnosed (Safer 1995). It has been argued that physicians diagnosing children with ADD/HD are not using uniform diagnostic instruments, yet the numbers of children being diagnosed with this disorder do not do not seem to be decreasing. The *Conners* and the *ACTeRS* scales are two examples of tests that can be used, but these practices vary within the medical community (Sprague and Jarvinen 1995). According to Gordon (1995), there are no tests, interview questions, or standard rating scales for use by physicians in diagnosing ADD/HD. This lack of uniformity and precise diagnostic procedures generates further vulnerabilities in the system where race-based abuses can result from "manipulating" diagnoses, consciously or not, for controlling Black males.

Fitzgerald's (2002)'*The Circumvention of Public Law-142 and Section 504: the Sorting and Controlling of Black Males* is one of a very few analyses of the intersection of issues related to race, ADD/HD diagnosis, and the use of psychotropic medication. This work investigates the racial ramifications of using psychotropic drugs to control undesirable behavior of Black school age boys. The primary focus of the study is how the federal policy of Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975, (P.L. 94-142), known presently as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990, has become a gateway for the introduction of behavioral stimulants as a means of social control for Black males. Fitzgerald established that the flaws of IDEA promulgated a theme of control among public schools, and to some extent parents, toward the male population of school-age children (Zirkel 2000). The findings suggest that both White and Black males were disproportionately placed within the category of special education and prescribed psychotropic medication in comparison to White and Black females. However, the results also revealed that White and Black males within special education were placed for different reasons: White males were placed primarily for academic reasons, but Black males were placed mainly for behavior concerns. This pattern was also observed in the rationales provided for prescribing behavioral medications.

Consequences of Medical Diagnosis and Drugging

As noted above, little research documents behavioral medication trends by race and class. We do know that in 1996, 1.3 million of the 38 million children in the United States aged 5 to 14 took Ritalin on a regular basis. The distribution varies from state to state, but all regions of the U.S. showed steady increases from 1995. By 1998, 2.5 million children had been prescribed Prozac. The number of prescriptions of Prozac and other similar drugs had tripled by 1999. Some reports indicate that preschool children treated with these medications will suffer enduring effects on their development (Breggin 2001). Surprisingly, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not undertaken any investigations regarding the potential long-term effects of these medications on children. Capturing the rising concern among many, an article published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* stated that the significant increase in number of children being treated with behavioral modifying medications is nothing short of a crisis in the field of mental health. The U.S. uses Ritalin five times more than the rest of the world. Hitti (2005) noted that more than two million American children regularly take Ritalin as treatment for ADD/HD. In 1995 alone, the sale of Ritalin brought in $350 million, suggesting a significant financial motive for the pharmaceutical industry. This industry has developed tactics that target families with children who have ADD/HD or related behavioral diagnoses. For instance, the pharmaceutical companies offer free medication to low-income families. Depending on insurance coverage, some companies allow families with less than $40,000 annual income to receive free Paxil, Prozac, Valium, and other psychotropic medications for their children (North Region Newsletter 1999).

Although this provision may appear generous on the part of pharmaceutical companies, undesirable outcomes are apparent when one considers the links between family income, race, gender, and behavioral medication use. A disproportionate number of Blacks are classified as low income. Blacks also account for a disproportionate number of those receiving medication under low-income provisions. Black males outnumber all others for behavioral medication prescriptions of the most popular ADD/HD drugs – Methylphenidate HCL (Ritalin), Prozac/Prozac Weekly, Wellbutrin/SR, Adderall, and Concerta (Illinois Department of Public Aid 2001). Institutional racism in the public schools, flawed diagnostic practices, increased availability of behavioral stimulants regardless of income, and the tendency to control Black males, reinforce unrestrained labeling of Black boys as students with special needs that require control through medication.

Warehousing Black Males: Alternative Education Settings

In the United States, warehousing practices traditionally include suspension, expulsion, retention, exclusion, and placement in alternative settings. For example, during the 1998-1999 academic year, Black students made up only 17 percent of

the public school student population, but 33 percent of those expelled for periods longer than 10 days (Johnston 2000). Expulsions in Chicago Public Schools rose from 14 in the 1992-93 academic year to 737 for 1998-99. Blacks made up 53 percent of the student population, but 73 percent of those expelled (Harvard University CRP 2001:3). Black males are suspended and expelled at much higher rates than are their White counterparts (Skolnick and Currie 1994; Johnston 2000). Wisconsin reported that 25.5 percent of Black male students had been suspended in the 1997-98 academic year (Harvard University CRP 2001:3). Black males are also less likely to be placed in advanced and honors classes, but more likely than others to have high rates of absenteeism and low scores on standardized examinations (Oakes 1985; Garibaldi 1992). In addition, the response to perceived school violence has caused parents, support staff, teachers, and teachers' unions to exert pressure for measures to separate the "good" students from the "bad" students. In effect, students who are labeled as underachievers are forced into an educational "dead pool" fostered by teacher perceptions that deem these children incapable of learning (Collins 1988). Hilliard (1991) went further to note that Black male children, even at very young ages, are more likely to be labeled by teachers and school officials as less intelligent with more behavioral problems. The labeling of Black students as "at risk," "learning disordered," "slow learners," or "emotionally disturbed," has been linked to low expectations of them by teachers. These labels affect the treatment that students receive from teachers and they can ultimately be used to justify their removal from regular education settings.

Morrow and Torres (1995) observed that the same problems reported by Brookover in 1965 continue to plague the public school system. Race and socioeconomic background of a child have an effect on how the child is perceived and cared for within public schools. Black males are described by the "Five Ds" — dumb, deviant, deprived, disturbed, and dangerous (Gibbs 1988). Goffman (1963) referred to individuals in such stigmatized positions as having "spoiled identities." Exclusion of such unsalvageable individuals is thus justified.

The process of exclusion involves a "warehousing" system of alternative placement for poor, minority, and disabled students. As for Black males, they are most often relegated to separate academic tracks that isolate them from their White counterparts. This separate track is filled with inferior academic instruction that falls short of the active participation and quality of learning that is employed in regular public school settings (Darling-Hammond 1990). The policies that allow the creation and maintenance of alternative schools do not even equip students in these settings with adequate skills to hold positions in entry-level jobs (Dunbar 1999). It would appear that public schools, in their efforts to work with Black males, rarely take into account the consequences of poverty or social class due to institutional racism's blinders (Jordan and Cooper 2003). Moreover, the effects of institutional racism and its social reproduction cause students to internalize their own oppression through socialization that leads them to view themselves as unworthy, worth-

less, and less undeserving than their peers (Hare 1987). Unsuccessful experiences in public schools increase the likelihood that Black males will suffer from low self-esteem and frustration that leads them into a vicious cycle. Frustration leads to deviant and disruptive behaviors that justify placement in alternative settings (Finn 1989; Lonigan, Bloomfield, Anthony, Bacon, Phillips, and Samwel 1999). In fact, alternatively placed children too often follow a pathway from the alternative school setting to juvenile detention centers, and ultimately, to youth or adult prisons.

Example from a Mid-Western Community

Table A below reports data from the 2002-03 academic year of a public school district in central Illinois. The school district serves 9,182 children in a diverse cosmopolitan community of approximately 100,000 people. It has 11 elementary schools (K-5th), three middle schools (6th-8th) and two high schools (9th-12th). There are two alternative placement facilities – one for middle school and one for high school – and four self-contained classrooms within regular education settings for children with emotional and/or behavioral problems. Outside medical/therapeutic or alternative education facilities are used for the placement of children with special education needs that are in combination with behavioral concerns and students with severe emotional disturbances that for one reason or another are not currently identified as special education.

One hundred thirteen students were placed in alternative settings. Eighty-six were males and 27 were females. Black students were almost 80 percent (78.7%) of the overall population and Black males were almost 60 percent (59.3%). This example illustrates the disproportionate involvement of Black males in public school settings designed to control or punish, but not necessarily to educate.

Table A
Population in Behavioral Alternative School Settings by Race and Gender

	Black	White	Total
Male	67	19	86
Female	22	2	27
Total	89	21	113

Conclusion

The offensive against Black males began early in the country's history. In order to justify slavery as part of an ethical order supporting the slaveholding oligarchy, myths surrounding Black males were proffered. This gave way to overt forms of violence seen in the numbers of lynched, castrated, and murdered Black males over the course of U.S. history. The mid 20th century struggles for racial equality and justice in education brought about a decline in overt forms of oppression, but gave

birth to new forms of covert control through tracking, expulsion, alternative placement, introduction to special education, labeling, and ultimately, the medication of Black males as a substitute for education in our public schools.

The social ills of racism, false perceptions of Black males, faulty special education labeling techniques, and the potential dangers of psychotropic drugs such as Ritalin, endanger the education of Black males. These issues must be addressed for the benefit of Black males today and tomorrow. If they are not addressed, the achievement gap between Black male students and others in the public schools will continue to grow. While significant disparities persist between Blacks and Whites in the areas of high school graduation and college matriculation and graduation, the situation is more critical for Black males. If current trends continue unchecked, Black males will find themselves permanently isolated and marginalized in a societal "last place."

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The Mental Health of Black Men: A Problem of Perception*

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Abstract

Black men in our society face enormous challenges. Some of these challenges stem from social attitudes and perceptions about African American men, especially as these perceptions impact education, poverty, employment, and health-related problems. Society's response to social stigma, the treatment of social and mental problems and racism are all evident in African Americans' daily relationships with others. Each of these challenges individually can be devastating; collectively, they become overwhelming and catastrophic. It is this author's supposition that the mechanisms that undergrid the challenges of Black men are embedded in race, ethnicity and culture, and that the pervasiveness and consistency of racism in our society impacts one's quality of life and livelihood. The pervasiveness of racial and ethnic differences in health care delivery, stigma associated with mental illness, and cultural insensitivity among some health care professionals are addressed in this article. Overt prejudice, systemic biases and cultural insensitivity are viewed as contributors to the overall racial gaps in and poor delivery of health care for Black men in our society. These infractions become serious when middle-age Black men are dying at nearly twice the rate of White men of similar age (Men's Health Network 2004); and when more than 1 in 4 adult Black men experience some form of mental health or substance abuse disorder during their lifetime (HHS 2003). This

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article closes with voices of Black men who live with the harsh realities of our health care system and the physical and emotional factors that create negative living environments.

Introduction

Beyond the structural barriers to health care are inadequate insurance coverage, pharmaceutical practices, and poor coordination of mental health and substance abuse services. Social determinants of racial/ethnic health disparities between African Americans and Whites create a divisive gap between all Americans, and especially Americans of color. For African American men and their families, the social divide in health, which is tied to social factors such as socioeconomic status, discrimination, and injurious work and home environments, leads to unevenness in mental and physical health service delivery. The consequences of neglected mental health needs are devastating for Black men, as outlined by the following statistics (Bryant, Ro and Rowe 2003):

- 7% of all African American men will develop depression during their lifetime.
- African American men have death rates that are at least twice as high as those for women for suicide, cirrhosis of the liver, and homicide.
- From 1980 to 1995, the suicide rate for African American male youth (ages 15-19) increased by 146%. Among African American males aged 15-19 years, firearms were used in 72% of suicides, while strangulation was used in 20% of suicides.
- For African American men, especially in urban areas, the abuse of alcohol and its consequences appear graver when compared to statistics for White men, White women or African American women.
- Finding care that is affordable, respectful, and accessible is a major challenge for African American men.
- Black men who have never been involved with the penal system are only half as likely to be hired as a White ex-convict (Ecomania 2005). The inability to care for one's family has serious psychological ramifications for Black men, especially when a White ex-convict has greater marketability than a law abiding Black Man.
- African Americans account for approximately 12% of the population, but they account for only 2% of psychiatrists, 2% of psychologists and 4% of social workers. These statistics address the ratio of African American professionals available to Black clients, especially Black men who struggle with help-seeking behaviors.

- When mental disorders are not treated, African American men are more vulnerable to substance abuse, incarceration, homelessness, homicide and suicide, all of which lead to an absent father or absent male in the home. These occurrences impact negatively upon our children (HHS 1999.)

Current Study

This study explored how external factors such as patterns of treatment, availability of services, acceptability of services, location, hours of operation, transportation needs and cost, as well as internal factors such as stigma associated with mental illness and cultural appropriateness influence the mental health of Black men. The study is specific to Black men and their perceptions of the challenges that impact their health seeking behaviors, as well as those challenges that hinder their personal and professional advancement in today's society.

Method

Sample

Sixty qualifying participants were asked to participate in this study. Five participants were not included because of missing responses on the survey data. Participants self-identified as African American males between the ages of 18 and 62 who voluntarily reported their perceptions and experiences with treatment patterns in physical and mental health settings. This age group was selected to reflect those African American men who are most likely to have received some type of physical or mental health intervention during their lifespan.

Participants were recruited from local churches, fraternities and fraternal organizations through referrals and senior complexes.

Design

This study utilized an exploratory research method that solicited voluntary participation of Black men who have accessed the health care system for medical or psychosocial intervention purposes. This qualitative research design was chosen because of the researcher's desire to explore a subject that is often poorly understood: how social attitudes and access to quality care impact the mental health and status of Black men in our society.

Data Collection

The Patient Satisfaction Survey was used in this study, which is a 15-item survey that uses strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), yielding a range of 0-15 to determine level of satisfaction of received services and perceived attitudes. Sample statements include: I am comfortable asking for help when I need it; I trust my

doctors to provide the best medical treatment for me; and I feel that I am treated equal to others when seeking help. The complete survey is in the appendix of this article.

Findings

Table I presents data on the top 3 systemic issues, or behaviors that were reported by the Black men in this study. These figures show that there were 55 participants in the sample. Of these participants, approximately 21% identified social stigma as their primary issue of concern when seeking treatment, 11% identified inequality in the health care system as a secondary concern; and 10% identified reluctant self-disclosure about receiving or seeking mental health services as problems in their overall help-seeking behaviors.

Table 1
Systemic Issues that Impact the Mental Health of Black Men by Percentages

	%	Ranking
Social Stigma	20.6%	1
Inequality in Health care	10.7%	2
Disclosure about mental health	9.8%	3

n = 55

Table I suggests that African American men are more likely to identify social stigma as a major deterrent to their health-seeking services. This is determined by noting that the larger percentage (20.6%) identified this issue as describing their feelings about their association with the health care system. Inequality in the health care system (10.7%) and self-disclosure about mental health services (9.8%) were secondary concerns.

Fifty percent (n = 25) of the men in this study reported their ages as between 26 and 50. This is the age range when men become more mindful of their health behaviors. According to Fuller and Jackson (2003), men aged 18 – 29 are less likely

Table 2
Participants by Age

Age	#	%
18 – 25	15	30%
26 – 34	12	24%
35 – 50	13	26%
51 – 62	15	20%
Number of Participants	55	100%

to regularly visit a doctor. Reasons for doctor office visits for this age group are athletic testing and evaluation, job screening, and current illnesses that require attention. Table II presents the age groups of the men in this study.

In Table III for interpretation purposes, a higher percentage means less agreement with the statement. The items were reverse scored so that a higher percentage always indicated greater racial and ethnic differences in perception of the health care system. The six most common experiences reported by African American men who sought health care in this study were comfortable seeking help; treated equal to others; disclosure about mental health; trust in health practitioners; doctor/worker understand culture; and experiences with health care practitioners.. This means that the majority of Black men in this study reported problems related to the social environment, the way treatment is offered, and the lack of cultural competence or cultural sensitivity by health care practitioners. It appears that social stigma, or social factors, have significant influence upon the help-seeking behaviors of African American men. Social stigma for the men in this study led to secrecy, withdrawal behaviors, and rejection of services. The fear of rejection from friends, family and colleagues caused many of the men in this study to conceal selected aspects of their medical history. Their reported humiliation within the health care system further led to their disassociation and distrust with the health care system.

Table 3
Perceived Differences in the Quality of Health care Survey Item

	%
Comfortable Seeking Help	20.6%
Treated equal to others	10.7%
Health care system is fair and equal	5.4%
Good experiences with health care	7.8%
Have trust in health practitioners	8.9%
Color of skin impacts health care	4.0%
Treated with respect and dignity	6.4%
Comfortable in self disclosure	1.8%
Effective doctor/worker communication	1.8%
Health care services conveniently located	2.0%
Disclosure about mental health	9.8%
Family and friends treated with respect	1.8%
Doctor/worker understand culture	8.2%
Doctor/worker discusses culture values	5.4%
Doctor/worker call me by first name	5.4%

The need to address these issues is critical, especially as they impact the mental health of all Americans, and Black men in particular. Until these issues are corrected, African American men are likely to continue to experience disparities in health status and in service delivery. Black men will deny themselves needed treatment, only to compound their medical challenges and health problems. Their disassociative behaviors with the health care system will impact their quality of life and diminish their health outcomes.

The verbal reports by Black men in the current study were even more revealing. Many of them reported feeling discomfort and stigmatized when seeking health care services. Reports of being addressed by their first name, experiencing long waits before being seen, experiencing the physician called away by office staff and leaving them unattended in the examining room, physicians taking calls that were not perceived to be an emergency, being addressed in a subordinate manner, or leaving the examining room door cracked or half opened with their bodies "half robed." Several of the Black men in this study reported poor eye contact by their physicians and an unwillingness by their physicians to give detailed information or to provide choices for treatment options. One participant described his "rectal examination" as unduly harsh and degrading. Another participant reported that when he asked his physician questions about his treatment, he was told that "he wouldn't understand" and that "the treatment was complicated." These men seemed to feel an overwhelming amount of racialized disrespect when seen by White physicians. Some participants reported "feeling blamed" for their illnesses and feeling minimized and discredited by their physicians.

Another participant reported feeling ostracized and stereotyped when told by his physician that he "had better stop eating so much grease, collard greens, fried chicken and pork if he wanted to live to see his grandkids." The participant reported that while the physician may have been correct, "it was the manner and way the doctor said it that was derogatory." This participant stated that he comes from "a generation [sic] of obesity and that he has been trying to control his weight for years." The participant felt he would have been more open and responsive to the doctor if he were more sensitive. This particular participant reported that he never returned for a second visit.

Many of the participants in this study reported that they do have insurance and access to care. Their attitude is, "If you're sick, you'll get yourself to the hospital or to a doctor," but "It's the hassle and stigma" that deter them from seeking preventive care. Not a single Black male in this study reported overwhelming satisfaction with their health care professionals.

If the experiences and perceptions of the Black men in this study parallel the experiences or perceptions of other African Americans, then ethnicity and culture indeed are strong indicators of social determinants of health care. This study challenges the notion that race, culture and socio-economic status do not impact treatment. Social attitudes and behavior are at the heart of service delivery for the men

in this study. Access to care for these men was not at issue. An interesting finding of this study was that older Black men expressed greater trust in their doctors than did the younger men in this study, although not to a significant degree. The older Black men stated more trustworthiness in their doctors while younger Black men expressed more skepticism and distrust. One participant, age 35, reported that he had searched WebMD before his appointment and that the doctor actually seemed offended and hostile when he [the patient] asked questions. This participant stated that he was in for a "second opinion" and not for a procedure. Regardless of age and reason for treatment, all of the Black men in this study reported perceived unevenness in treatment by White doctors. All participants in this study who reported seeking "second opinions" felt that their health practitioners were "too quick to push invasive surgery" without exploring options.

Summary

This study's findings suggest that race and culture are important factors for disparities within the health care system, and that perceived inequities by Black men impact their help-seeking behaviors. The need for policymakers, educators, and health practitioners to identify and maximize health-enhancing resources that will reduce the negative effects of psychosocial factors on the mental health of African American men is warranted. The strong discomfort felt by the African American men in this study towards the health care system was a deterrent to their engagement with the health care system. This is a significant finding, especially as the African American male continues to be at greater risk for depression, suicide, chemical dependency, chronic diseases and mental disorders than their White counterparts. The community and health care providers must specifically reach out to African American men and we must do so through education, economics, health promotion and intervention initiatives that are aimed specifically at this population.

Support systems must be put into place for African American men to help them better care for themselves and their families. We must implement outreach programs specifically for men who are vulnerable to environmental and psychosocial stressors; and we must educate our communities, teaching institutions, and primary care facilities on the identification, diagnosis, and treatment of mental and physical health issues of African American men. Equally important is the need for formal and informal support groups for African American men to bond and to talk about issues that affect them, both physically and mentally. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, community leaders, legislators and families must take the lead and encourageß African American men to seek traditional and non traditional health care services and to talk about their fears and concerns. African American clinicians, educators, practitioners, policy makers and community leaders must take a stand for our African American men and denounce the stigmatism that is

often associated with psychosocial illnesses.

Of equal importance is participating in clinical trials, testifying at public hearings, demanding support from public officials, and rebuking the racism and discriminatory practices that exist in our health care system. Lastly the need for culturally sensitive practitioners and open communication that is understood, honest and accurate must be present in all interactions between African American patient/client and practitioner. The ongoing need for treatment with dignity, respect and sensitivity is for the effective delivery of health care.

There is need to overhaul the health care system and to do away with the rhetoric of "equal treatment" and to (1) institute accountability and mandatory training for health care professionals in ethnic sensitive interventions and practices, (2) seek to increase minority enrollment in the sciences, (3) implement policy changes within the health care system, and (4) monitor/patrol service delivery until health care and service delivery become equitable.

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Appendix 1

Patient Satisfaction Survey

Strongly Disagree-**1** Disagree-**2** Neither Agree Nor Disagree-**3** Agree-**4** Strongly Agree-**5**. Thinking back to your doctor/worker visits, please answer each question by circling the numbers that best describe your feelings about your experiences with the health care system.

Survey Questions

1. I am comfortable asking for help when I need it.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I feel that I am treated equal to others when I seek help.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The structure of the health care system is fair and equal.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I always have good experiences when I seek help.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I trust my doctors to provide the best medical treatment for me.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel that the color of my skin sometimes interferes with my ability to readily access the health care system.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am treated with respect and dignity when I ask for help.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am comfortable telling my friends that I seek pr fessional help (i.e., physical, mental and/or social intervention).	1	2	3	4	5
9. My doctor(s) explain treatments in terms that I understand	1	2	3	4	5
10. Health care services are conveniently located near me.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I would have no problem telling someone that I have a mental disorder no matter how minor or severe it is.	1	2	3	4	5
12. My family is treated with respect and dignity.	1	2	3	4	5
13. My doctor/worker(s) understands my cultural values and beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
14. My doctor/worker(s) seems comfortable talking with me about my cultural values and beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
15. My doctor/worker(s) call me by my first name.	1	2	3	4	5

(Over)

Please use the following space to tell me about **one** of your most remembered experiences with the health care system.

Please use the following space to tell me about **one** of your most remembered experiences with your doctor.

What would you like for me to know about your experiences or perceptions of our health care system?

Thank you for your time in answering this survey. If you have any questions or would like a summary report, please e-mail me at ncalloway@cau.edu.

African American Fruit and Vegetable Garden Project: An Intervention to Promote Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Among Incarcerated Juvenile Males*

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Abstract

This study set out to identify a means to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables for incarcerated African American juvenile males through an educational program that focused on planting a garden. Surveys were administered to 125 incarcerated African American juveniles males aged 15 to 17. The program consisted of 39 sessions of 75 minutes each, twice a week for 15 weeks. Sessions focused on fruit and vegetable consumption, gardening, and nutritional knowledge. Prior to the workshops, none of the participants identified fruit and vegetable consumption, gardening and nutritional knowledge. After the workshops, all had increased their nutritional knowledge. Half stated that their fruit and vegetable consumption had increased because of gardening at the correctional facility. Participants also expressed an interest in learning more about gardening. The study concludes that health professionals can educate African American juvenile males about gardening and nutrition to help overcome barriers to fruit and vegetable consumption.

*This paper was originally presented in Atlanta, Georgia, at the Morehouse School of Medicine's 2005 National Conference on Men's Health. All correspondence should be sent to Edward V. Wallace, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Ithaca College, 40 Hill Street, Ithaca, New York 14850 (ewallace@Ithaca.edu).

Introduction

A sentence of imprisonment for African American Juvenile males should not come with a life-long sentence of obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and other health consequences. Messages abound that tell us to eat a minimum of five servings of fruits and vegetables each day, the average American, especially the African American juvenile male who are or have been incarcerated, eats only three and a half servings per day (Foerster, Kizer, Disogra, Bal, Krieg, & Bunch 1995; Subar, Heimendinger, Patterson, Krebs-Smith, Pivonka, & Kessler 1995). Though there are many reasons for this, most of the barriers are imposed by the juvenile correctional system and not self-imposed by the incarcerated youth (Harnack, Block, Subar, Lane, & Brand 1997). Trying to incorporate healthy eating in correctional settings is challenging because finding vendors to provide fresh fruits and vegetables is nearly impossible (Reill 2001). In most cases, budget constraints make it is very difficult to provide fresh fruits and vegetables for an increasing prison population. Across the United States, the average food cost per inmate is $3.71 per day (Stein 2000). Furthermore, correctional facilities may be unwilling to spend public money on healthy foods that they are unsure African American juvenile males will eat, based on their cultural preferences (Stein 2000).

African American males who are not a part of the juvenile correctional system enjoy some resources that address barriers to eating fruits and vegetables. For example, the National School Lunch Program provides food vouchers or free lunch, potentially alleviating this barrier to access fresh fruits and vegetables. However, for those who are incarcerated, such programs are not an option. In spite of the inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption among African American juvenile males, few primary prevention programs have been implemented to increase their fruit and vegetable consumption. The "African American Fruit and Vegetable Garden" project was a pilot program that utilized college students to help African American juvenile males learn about garden maintenance and harvesting.

Table 1

Task Development Time Line for African American Fruit and Vegetable Garden Project

Task	Monthly Time Line for Accomplishment				
	June	July	August	September	October
Needs Assessment	X				
Planning and Goal Setting	X				
Implementation		X			
Gardening		X	X		
Harvesting				X	
Distribution of Produce to Inmates					X
Evaluating					X

Objectives for the participants were to increase the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables among incarcerated African American males by having them establish a garden on the correctional site, distribution of free garden produce among juvenile inmates, and provide opportunities for learning to prepare fresh fruits and vegetables in Upstate New York. The time frame for planting the garden, harvesting, and evaluating the program ran from June to October 2005.

Methodology

The "African American Fruit and Vegetable Garden" project was located at a New York state juvenile detention facility. One hundred twenty-five incarcerated African American juvenile males participated in the study. In order to learn how to grow fruits and vegetables effectively, study participants attended specific workshops on gardening at the correctional facility. This consisted of thirty-nine sessions of 75 minutes each.. College students facilitated the sessions twice a week. Student facilitators were enrolled in a 15-week upper level course at Ithaca College. They received training from experts in agriculture, community nutrition, health promotion techniques, and other relevant topics. The students who led the workshops also served as peer counselors to the study participants.

Prior to the 15-week program, inmates at the correctional facility prepared a raised square plot for the garden on property at the facility. During the instructional program, the study participants completed activities that increased their gardening knowledge and skills. A crucial component of the program was teaching inmates garden maintenance and harvesting. Upon completion of the workshops, inmates were awarded an "African American Fruit and Vegetable Garden" t-shirt and a certificate of completion.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, participants were administered a pre-test before beginning the program and a post-test at the end of the 15 weeks. The instrument consisted of questions about gardening, consumption of fruits and vegetables, and nutrition. These components were evaluated on a five-point scale. A score of 1.0 indicated little or no knowledge about gardening, fruit and vegetable consumption, and nutrition. A score of 5.0 indicated comprehensive knowledge in these areas.

Results

The 2005 growing season ended with 5,006 pounds of produce grown and distributed among the juvenile inmates. The post-test conducted at the end of the 15-weeks evaluated the short-term impact of the intervention on the participants' knowledge about gardening, consumption of fruits and vegetables, and nutrition. The results are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Knowledge of Gardening, Fruit and Vegetable Consumption, and Nutrition (Mean Values)

Knowledge Measures*	Pre-test	Post-test	Change (Pre-Post)**
Gardening	1.80	4.00	+2.20
Fruit and Vegetable Consumption	1.25	4.5	+3.25
Nutrition	1.60	4.00	+2.40

* Values ranged from 1.0 to 5.0
** Changes were significantly different from pre-test to post-test ($p \leq 0.05$)
(N = 125)

The initial mean knowledge score indicates that the inmates participating in the program had very little knowledge about the importance of fruit and vegetable consumption before the "African American Fruit and Vegetable Garden" project. Post-test scores indicate that the participants had increased their nutritional knowledge significantly. In addition, more than half of the inmates in the study stated that their fruit and vegetable consumption had increased because of gardening at the correctional facility. Study participants also expressed a desire to learn more about gardening.

Conclusions

This study has some limitations. The sample was relatively small (N = 125) because the correctional facility only allowed non-violent inmates to participate. Additional information, such as whether the participant lived in a rural or urban setting, where gardening is not as prevalent, would have been useful. In addition, the participants' self-reports of increased consumption would have been more informative with pre-test questions about eating habits and preferences. Despite these limitations, this study suggests the need for a comprehensive approach to educate juveniles about gardening and fruit and vegetable consumption.

African American juvenile males are at high risk for a number of health-related problems including illicit drug consumption (Ruddell and Mays 2004). African American males who are placed in the correctional system should be given the opportunity to learn about fruit and vegetable consumption while they are incarcerated. This approach may encourage them to maintain their fruit and vegetable consumptions upon release. As with many correctional facilities, securing sufficient funds for inmates to eat healthy continues to be one of the biggest challenges. This study shows that health promotion interventions such as the "African American Fruit and Vegetable Garden" can be successfully implemented within the correctional facility. The cost of such interventions might be lowered by charging a modest fee to distribute produce from the gardens to other correctional facilities.

A number of recent studies have demonstrated that low fruit and vegetable consumption, especially for Blacks, increases the risk of health problems such as colorectal cancer, high blood pressure, and coronary heart disease (Houston, Stevens, Cai, & Haines 2005; Sato, Tsubono, Nakaya, Ogawa, Kurashima, Kuriyuama, Hozawa, Nishino, Shibuya, & Tsuji 2005; Alonso, de la Fuente, Martín-Arnau, de Irala, Martínez, & Martínez-González 2004; Dauchet, Ferrières, Arvieller, Yarnell, Gey, Ducimetière, Ruidavets, Haas, Evans, Bingham, Amouvel, & Dallongeville 2004). Some correctional facilities report that they are offering healthier menus for inmates by increasing fresh fruit and vegetable content (Riell 2001). An earlier issue of *Prevention*, a popular consumer nutrition magazine, ported a connection between improvements in delinquents' behavior and diets high in fruits and vegetables (Kinderlehrer 1983). This is another area in need of scientific investigation. While we cannot advocate that a prison system establish a fruit and vegetable garden in all of its correctional facilities, innovative health promotion interventions can educate African American juvenile males about nutrition while they overcome cultural barriers to eating fresh fruits and vegetables.

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