Race, Class, and Socioeconomic Disparities in Metropolitan Cities

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Introduction

Racial Inequality remains to be a major issue in the United States today. While some progress exists, disparity among different socioeconomic characteristics has not changed by much, and the stagnant progress magnifies in metropolitan areas. Much of today's literature focuses on factors and influences on socioeconomic status such as opportunities in the labor market, residential mobility, or job inequality, to name a few. However, this paper will focus on the broader, overarching characteristics that influence socioeconomic status levels in metropolitan areas. Race is undoubtedly an important characteristic to focus on when discussing the influences of socioeconomic status in urban areas, and this paper will discuss and examine race in context to socioeconomic status. Similar to other frameworks, this paper implements a cross-sectional approach to race and class, suggesting that they work together in producing racial inequality in metropolitan cities.

First, I discuss Marxist and Weberian capitalist theories that provide the foundations for inequality to occur. Second, I review the literature surrounding race and class, and some of their specific influences on socioeconomic status. Third, I examine the influence of geography, and how where an individual resides may impact his or her socioeconomic status. Lastly, using data from the 2016 General Social Survey, I use regression analysis to examine the relationship between race, class, and socioeconomic status in urban, metropolitan areas in the United States.

Capitalist Societies

Marxist and Weberian theories on the makeup of capitalist societies are critical to understanding how labor markets and exploitation operates in the United States (Wright 1997). By following the exploitation of workers in the labor market, we can then examine how it exists

in today's society. In this section, we will first address labor markets and how they work in capitalist societies, and secondly, we will discuss Neo-Marxist and Neo-Weberian class models.

Labor Markets

In capitalist societies such as the United States, the labor market is the central construct of the economy, dictating how wages are distributed among the members of the market. Caplow (1954) indicates that labor market processes form the fundamental mechanisms of social distribution in society and exist as the "arenas in which workers exchange their labor power in return for wages, status, and other job rewards" (1954). The relationship between social distribution and socioeconomic status is especially present in urban areas. Often times, an individual's socioeconomic status is associated with their access to social resources such as jobs or housing, which I discuss later. This demonstrates a relationship between the labor market and socioeconomic status, and as Kalleberg and Sørensen (1979) illustrate, structural factors related to labor markets either facilitate or hinder an individual's socioeconomic achievement.

Participation and success in the labor market depends on an individual's ability to sell their labor power in a way that is productive to the economy and the society. Saleable labor power is directly related to one's access to social resources and social ties. Individuals with fewer economic resources utilize social relations and relationships to help compensate for their marginal position in the labor market, and these social relationships vary by social class (Bourdieu 1986, Tigges, Brown, and Green 1998). Labor markets are fundamental characteristics of capitalist societies. The competitive nature of them often produces levels of exploitation related to the modes of production. The separation between the significance production and the market creates the frameworks that dominate class theory; Marxist class analysis and Weberian class analysis.

Neo-Marxist & Neo-Weberian Class Analysis

The roots of capitalism and theories of capitalism revolve around ideas constructed by Karl Marx and Max Weber. Class structure and the control of economic resources are the central ideas of Marxist and Weberian class theory. However, the relationship between individuals and their assets is where the two class theories diverge. Marxist concerns are the means of production and how the ownership of productive assets creates exploitation, while Weberian concerns reside with market capacities and how the control of productive assets shape life chances (Hong Li & Singelmann 1999, Western & Wright 1994, Wright 1997). In other words, the idea of "exploitation" is related to Marxism, while "life chances" is related to Weberian frameworks.

According to the Marxist framework, conflict between classes occur within the control of organizational and skills assets and the means of production (Wright 1997, Hong Li & Singelmann 1999). Conversely, Weberian perspectives focus on conflicts within the markets themselves. The central definition of conflict is different within each framework as well. Weberians see class as a potential basis for disputes, but Marxists view conflict as an intrinsic consequence of class relations (Lareau & Conley 2008). Therefore, conflict differs in each perspective. Weberian class analysis sees conflict as a potential hazard that exists within the class systems, while Marxist class analysis views conflict as a direct result of class separations themselves.

Marxist and Weberian class theories experienced a sociological resurgence in the 1970s and 1980s. Neo-Marxist theories of class developed further into research surrounding social stratification and social class. This deemed necessary for future research on socioeconomic disparities. By challenging the individuality of early Marxist theory, the Neo-Marxist ideas of

social stratification and social class led to the operationalization of socioeconomic status in research studies surrounding class inequalities (Manza & McCarthy 2011, Muntaner et al. 2003). Likewise, Neo-Weberian theories further invoked a distinction between class and status, stating that each are two qualitatively different forms of social stratification (Lareau & Conley 2008). The identified relationship between social class and inequality is where this paper progresses to. How does an individual's class influence their socioeconomic status? And what other factors are driving socioeconomic inequality? An understanding of capitalism, the labor market, and class analysis are critical to answer those questions.

Race in Metropolitan Cities

Capitalism provides the foundations by which individuals face inequality in the United States, and factors such as race and class help us examine the social forces that act on these disparities. Lee (2011) indicates that "evidence of intra-metropolitan socio-economic disparity is apparent in the uneven distribution of socio-economic variables such as income, poverty, occupation, employment, or education among sub-areas within metropolitan regions." Access to social resources has a direct relationship with socioeconomic disparities, and over the next few sections, we will examine race and class factors that affect an individual's access to these social resources. First, we will examine race as a predictor of socioeconomic status, indicating and examining social factors such as segregation, income inequality, and education, that drive the socioeconomic status gap in metropolitan cities.

Racial Segregation

In metropolitan cities, race plays a prominent role in influencing socioeconomic status. Metropolitan racial segregation has profound effects on access to social resources, and urban neighborhoods faced increasing levels of segregation in the 1960s after deindustrialization left

inner cities with a mass of unemployed individuals. The growth of extremely disadvantaged African American neighborhoods after the 1960's produced urban structural environments that are highly constrained in opportunities and influences for residents, resulting in areas that provide high levels of social isolation and restrictions on individuals that may be searching for jobs or better economic opportunities (Krivo et al 2013, Wilson 1987).

Overall segregation trends have improved since 1960, but the extent to which racial segregation has improved for minorities has varied. Hispanic and Asian minorities experience lower levels of segregation, but African Americans remain highly segregated in metropolitan cities, living in areas with considerably higher poverty levels and lack of sustained contact with mainstream individuals and institutions (Krivo et al., Logan 2013). Segregation profoundly impacts the access to social resources, and racial segregation trends indicate that minorities, especially African Americans, experience much more socioeconomic difficulty than their white counterparts. Segregated, poor, and non-white neighborhoods are now home to more than one third of all families in large metropolitan cities, and the social isolation experienced in those neighborhoods purportedly decreases life chances and reduces community viability (Krivo et al. 2013, Reardon & Bischoff 2016)

Social location is an essential influencer of socioeconomic status. Individuals living in poor, segregated neighborhoods experience higher percentages of socioeconomic disparities because, in one sense, where we live affects our proximity to good job opportunities (Charles 2003). In the literature surrounding segregation, although overall trends have declined since the 1960s, minorities and especially African Americans still experience detrimental levels of residential segregation. Claims that race has a profound effect on an individual's socioeconomic

status is evident in research surrounding racial residential segregation, and this particular racial factor drives socioeconomic inequality in metropolitan cities.

Income Inequality - Employment

Many social factors drive the apparent income inequality gap in the United States today. However, relative to the data and methods discussed later, this section will focus on the income inequality gap in metropolitan cities which can be best described by racial discrimination trends in employment. Studies show that employers favor job applicants who are not African American, to the extent that African Americans receive substantially lower percentages of callbacks from employers, suggesting that generalizations occur and prior employer assessment of ability will be lower for African Americans (Farmer & Terrell 1996, Newman & Lennon 1995, Pager & Shepherd 2008, Wilson 2009). Literature suggests that race matters in hiring decisions. In a specific study, Pager (2007) found that African American job seekers are anywhere between 50 and 500 percent less likely to be considered by employers than an equally qualified white counterpart.

Long-term racial discriminatory employment trends emulate this notion on a larger scale. Quillian et al. (2017) examined analyzed data from 24 employment field experiments with over 54,000 applications across more than 25,000 job positions. The results indicate that there is no change in hiring rates over time and that white applicants received 36% than black applicants (Quillian et al. 2017). Racial discrimination in employment is yet another factor that drives the socioeconomic gap in metropolitan cities. So far, literature indicates that African Americans living in cities reside in isolated neighborhoods with limited access to social resources and that these African Americans also experience racial discrimination among their potential employers.

Despite the focus of racial inequalities on adult individuals in metropolitan cities, literature studies document these racial inequalities existing during childhood as well.

Childhood Exposure - Education

Education levels often coincide with opportunity and life outcomes. There is strong evidence that suggests that academic tracks can be successfully used to predict life pathways for adolescents (Neal and Johnson 1996, Crosnoe and Johnson 2011). With evidence pointing to education as an important predictor for life chances, the presence of racial discrimination in schooling drives the black-white gap in school performance. Closing or even shrinking the black to white gap in school performance would result in considerably improved life outcomes, such as higher levels of income, for African American boys (Chetty et al. 2018, Downey 2008). School performance is critical to academic success, which translates to higher percentages of improved life outcomes. Black students who attend high minority enrollment schools gain twelve months fewer mathematical skills and score considerably lower on standardized tests than white students in non-high minority schools (Downey 2008, Ready & Silander 2011). Students higher on the educational spectrum have additional opportunities to do well in school and have higher chances of positive life outcomes, while students who are lower on the educational spectrum seem to have a less clear-cut path to a successful life after school. Literature suggests that African American boys in metropolitan cities, on average, occupy lower spots on the educational spectrum.

Childhood Exposure - Intergenerational Mobility

Recent literature documents the effect of intergenerational mobility on the social status of families in metropolitan cities, and much of this literature suggests that the family that children are born into influence their mobility paths in the future. As a result of joblessness since 1970,

the lower levels of income experienced by African American families had causal effects on social mobility outcomes for them and their children (Chetty & Hendren 2016, Wilson 2009). Income levels of African American families have drastic impacts on the social paths of their children. The repercussions of living in racially segregated metropolitan ghettos increased poverty and decreased income levels for African Americans, and because of this, their children experienced substantially higher rates of downward mobility across generations (Bhattacharya & Mazumder 2011, Chetty et al. 2018, Wilson 2009).

Using longitudinal data from the U.S. Census and American Community Survey, Chetty et al. (2018) focused on the intergenerational gaps between black and white men who grew up in the same Census tract. They found that among children with parents at the 25th percentile, "black boys have lower incomes in adulthood than white boys in 99% of Census tracts … [and] black boys who move to better areas … earlier in their childhood have higher income levels and lower rates of incarceration in adulthood" (2018). Thus, the study concludes that race and racial segregation trends profoundly influence life outcomes of children in metropolitan cities. African American children born to low-income families experience significant obstacles in the path of advancement and social mobility.

Class in Metropolitan Cities

Much of the recent literature argues that an individual's place in the class system matters as well. As Landry and Marsh (2011) indicate, membership in a society's middle class accompanies enhanced life chances that set it apart from the working class, who struggle with discrimination and oppression. However, class inequality does not magically disappear once an individual enters the middle class. Recent literature on class suggests that class and racial disparities exist in the middle class. Middle-class blacks in the United States have more

favorable residential outcomes than poor blacks but still live in notable less affluent neighborhoods than their white peers (Alba, Logan, & Stults 2000, Pattillo 2005). Although middle-class blacks live in more prosperous areas of metropolitan cities, they do not live in as socioeconomically equal neighborhoods as middle-class whites.

Identifying characteristics of middle-class African Americans in Philadelphia, Pattillo (2005) indicates that the average middle-class black person in living in Philadelphia in 2000 lived in a neighborhood with triple the poverty rate, smaller proportions of college educated and employed neighbors, and higher vacancy rates than the average middle-class white person. Similarly, when examining the highly segregated cities Chicago, Cleveland, and Detroit, middle-class blacks are indeed separate from lower class blacks, and although they may live with whites who are less affluent than they are, at no point do middle class blacks reach residential parity with middle class whites (Alba, Logan, & Stults 2000, Alba, Logan & Bellair 1994, Pattillo 1999). Thus, persistent class, as well as racial inequalities work together to leave African Americans at a systematic disadvantage in metropolitan cities.

Geography of Metropolitan Cities

Metropolitan cities are home to a majority of racial disparities, so it is important to discuss at least systematic factors that play a role in inequality in cities. All large metropolitan cities share geographic characteristics that result in the gentrification of minorities and urbanization of the city, and as we progress into the future, technology and modernization will only continue to inhabit urban spaces. This section will switch to the geography of metropolitan cities, and the role of systematic factors and social factors such as urban sprawl and out-migration, respectfully, influence urban racial inequality.

Urban Sprawl

In his book, "The Geography of Opportunity: Race and Housing Choice in Metropolitan America" (2005), Xavier Briggs discusses how location in urban cities matters when it comes to life choices and access to social resources. Briggs (2005), indicates that the United States' metropolitan areas are very sprawling and highly segregated by race and class, and segregation plays a considerable role in determining where African Americans live in the city. As we progress into the future, modernization will play an essential role in the development of largely populated, heterogeneous cities, and metropolitan growth patterns, otherwise known as urban sprawl, may push racial makeup further into inequality.

Urban sprawl is potentially problematic because it represents growth trends and patterns such as suburban development, that typically severely affect intra-metropolitan socioeconomic disparity and polarization (Briggs 2005, Lee 2011). When suburbanization occurs in low-income areas, the previous residents often cannot afford to live in the new community; thus, gentrification pushes lower income residents to further concentrated areas of poverty in the city. As a result, "socioeconomic and ethnoracial groups … spend time in almost completely different parts of the city" (Krivo et al. 2013). The consequences of urban sprawl patterns increase social isolation and negatively influences lower income individual's access to social resources. Using data from the Gini index and the U.S. Census, Lee (2011) discovered that large metropolitan cities that experienced fast urban sprawl exhibited higher income inequality and higher inequality gaps among the subareas. Similarly, in large metropolitan areas such as Atlanta or Dallas, rapid urban sprawl produced high levels of class inequality (2013). While not wholly causal, the results indicate that inequality and segregation can be consequences of urban sprawl.

Out-migration and Residential Mobility

Before current metropolitan growth trends, major urban cities experienced a decline in the prominent industrial activity within the city. The out-migration of middle class and working class blacks after the deindustrialization begun in the early 1970's left inner-city neighborhoods struck with poverty. Wilson (1987) states that since there was no need for middle and working class blacks to live in the cities anymore, they migrated out of the cities to higher income suburbs, which increased the proportion of truly disadvantaged individuals and families in inner-city neighborhoods. Consequently, the regions in inner cities consisted of individuals who are at the lowest levels of the socioeconomic spectrum. The geographic isolation of these disadvantaged individuals in poverty-ridden neighborhoods increased as cities began to re-develop without industry, and these isolated neighborhoods became increasingly difficult to move out of.

Residential mobility, as a result of this deindustrialized isolation, left individuals stuck in the neighborhoods which brought them the most trouble. Residential mobility between black, white, and racially-diverse neighborhoods is the primary dynamic shaping changes in black/white residential segregation, which has severe implications on the present and future mobility options (Charles 2003, South & Crowder 1998). In a study using census data and the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, South and Crowder (1998) conclude that blacks are substantially less likely than whites to move out of racially mixed, low-income areas into predominantly white ones, and suggest that improving the overall capital of African Americans will facilitate the spatial assimilation of them in urban cities.

In large metropolitan cities, segregated, low-income populations remain in areas that were once previously hosted to middle and working class blacks during the industrial revolution. As a result of deindustrialization, the out-migration of middle-class African Americans aided in

the creation of disadvantaged, restricted, and poverty-ridden neighborhoods in metropolitan cities. These inner-city neighborhoods leave their residents trapped inside them, with low hopes of upward mobility to more prosperous areas of the city. As metropolitan cities grow and progress into the future, urban sprawl development trends increase levels of inequality by growing concentrations of poverty, as indicated by Lee (2011). Thus, as the future progresses and modernization is more likely, it is critical to account for the consequences of urban sprawl patterns.

Data & Methods

Begun in 1972, the General Social Survey (GSS) aims to create a nationally representative sample of social change and trends in the contemporary United States population for scientific analysis from social scientists (White & Ciccantell 2007). Before 1994, the survey took place annually, and from 1994 to present, the survey takes place on even years only. The GSS is a 90-minute in-person interview, collecting data on a wide range of characteristics related to U.S. households, ranging from happiness and life satisfaction to the demographics of the respondent's parents and political views. Currently, the GSS is one of the most successful interview surveys and data sets in the United States, with over 50,000 respondents and a response rate of over 70% above that of other major social science surveys (2007).

To avoid redundancy, the current survey design of the General Social Survey to eliminate the chance of respondents knowing the questions before they are asked. Including Spanish speakers, the survey design is a "repeated cross-sectional survey of a nationally representative sample of non-institutionalized adults who speak either English or Spanish … [and] each respondent is asked the replicating core of socio-demographic background items, along with replicated measurements of sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors" (White & Ciccantell 2007).

By including English and Spanish speakers, the GSS includes many more respondents than it would otherwise, and the cross-sectional replicating survey design ensures that responses will not be based on predetermined biases because of prior knowledge of survey questions.

Mentioned previously, the GSS has over 50,000 respondents, as well as over 5,900 variables related to the categories of survey questions. I subset the GSS sample in many ways. First, data from the most recent year, 2016, is selected to explain the most recent GSS trends. Second, metropolitan cities are the central focus for this study, so respondents are split into two binary categories representing respondents living in urban areas that include cities and their suburbs, and respondents living in the regions that are not otherwise urban. The purpose for including residents outside of urban areas is to capture the effect of urban habituation on socioeconomic status scores.

Table 1 identifies the variables I use for the regression analysis, as well as their descriptive statistics. Respondents are split into three racial categories: black, white, and other race. The other race category includes all other races in the GSS that are not black or white. I add the current working status and total family income in 2016 of the respondent, and the current working status variable is split into six categories; full time working respondents, part-time working respondents, unemployed respondents, respondents that are not working by reasons other than merely unemployment, retired respondents, and respondents currently enrolled in school. Finally, the respondent's level of education completed l is included to examine the correlation between socioeconomic status and education level. After selecting the appropriate criteria, my data consists of 15 variables and a sample size of 2,494 respondents; 1,863 white respondents, 410 black respondents, and 221 respondents of races not black or white.

Table 1 - Descriptive Statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
White	2,494	0.747	0.435	0	1
Black	2,494	0.164	0.371	0	1
Other	2,494	0.089	0.284	0	1
Urban	2,494	0.698	0.459	0	1
Total Family Income 2016	2,494	17.552	5.672	1	26
Education Level	2,494	14.874	2.931	1	21
Female	2,494	0.540	0.499	0	1
Current Working Status	2,494	2.811	2.225	1	8

Socioeconomic status influences many aspects to life outcomes, including education, income levels, employment, and access to social networks and resources (Chetty & Hendren 2016, Krivo et al. 2013, Pager & Shepherd 2008, White et al. 1993, Wilson 2009). As a result, I have designated the variable representing the socioeconomic status score of the respondent (SEI10) as my dependent outcome variable to study. The measure of socioeconomic status in the GSS is based on the 2010 Census occupation classification and is estimated from 539 occupational categories created from questions in the survey. To examine the variance in socioeconomic status scores in the General Social Survey, I implement ordinary least squares regression to create four distinct models mapping the variance in SES scores in terms of the independent variables listed previously. Much literature suggests that race alone influences the socioeconomic disparities in metropolitan cities due to social factors such as racial segregation, or racial discrimination in employment. Therefore model 1, or the main effect model, measures the individual effect of race on SES scores of the respondents. Data from various studies suggest (see Alba, Logan, & Stults 2000, Pattillo 2005) that low-income African Americans living in metropolitan and urban cities experience a greater divide in socioeconomic status levels. Model 2 accounts for the urban respondents, measuring the effect that living in urban areas has on SES

scores of respondents in the GSS. Model 3 accounts for class-related variables, such as total family income and current working status, to measure the effect of social class on SES scores. Finally, model 4 accounts for the sex and education level of the respondent to examine the variance of SES scores related to male or female, and level of education.

Results

Table 2 presents each of the four models and the measured effects of each on the socioeconomic status score of the respondent in the General Social Survey. Model 1, or the main effect model, indicates that on average, African American and other race respondents experience lower levels of socioeconomic status scores than white respondents, with a more profound effect relative to black respondents ($p<0.001$). These results coincide with findings from the 2001 National Center for Education Statistics (Jacobson et al. 2001), indicating that black-white gaps in unemployment range 4 and 10 percent in favor of white Americans, and on average, blacks generally earned less per year than whites. Although race alone does not account for much variance among SES scores of the GSS respondents, the statistically significant results indicate that socioeconomic disparities by race are in fact present among respondents.

When controlling for urban respondents in the GSS, model 2 suggests that SES scores are higher on average for respondents living in urban areas compared to respondents living elsewhere ($p<0.001$). Similarly, the beta for black respondents decreased when urban respondents were accounted for, indicating that urban black GSS respondents experience particularly lower SES scores than white respondents, compared to all black GSS respondents to white respondents ($p<0.001$). These findings also correlate with current literature. Model 2 suggests urban respondents experience lower SES on average, with African American respondents experiencing lower SES scores than the reference category of white respondents.

Introducing class related independent variables in model 3 yielded drastic results. On average, there is a positive relationship between the current working status of the respondent and their SES score. Average SES scores for part-time workers is substantially lower than the reference category of full-time workers ($p<0.001$). Conversely, average SES scores for retired respondents are similar to the reference category of white workers ($p<0.001$).

These results are intuitive; retired respondents are most likely retired because they have solid retirement plans, therefore a decent amount of wealth, while part-time respondents most likely have lower income levels than the retired respondents. The total family income of the respondent is also positively correlated with SES scores among GSS respondents. As SES scores increase, the total family income of the respondent increases ($p<0.001$). These findings correspond with current literature as well. As Jacobson et al. (2011) indicated previously, black Americans on average have lower income levels than white Americans; therefore it makes sense to see these results. When controlling for class-related variables, the variance in SES scores increases substantially, suggesting that among GSS respondents, class indicators such as working status and income levels have a high chance of influencing respondent's SES scores.

Table 2 - SES Regression Models

	Dependent variable:			
	SEI10			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Black	-8.063***	-8.438***	-3.633***	-2.702***
	(1.225)	(1.231)	(1.141)	(0.980)
Other	-3.775**	-4.121**	-1.109	1.375
	(1.597)	(1.601)	(1.457)	(1.253)
Urban		2.594***	2.880***	1.467*
		(0.987)	(0.894)	(0.768)
Part-time			-7.311***	-7.228***
			(1.274)	(1.098)
Unemployed			2.721	1.275
			(2.136)	(1.834)
Not working			3.630	2.145
			(2.764)	(2.373)
Retired			4.687***	4.676***
			(1.082)	(0.929)
At school			-0.749	-3.229
			(3.186)	(2.736)
Total Family Income 2016			1.618***	0.873***
			(0.076)	(0.070)
Female				-1.624**
				(0.706)
Education Level				3.848***
				(0.129)
Constant	48.549***	46.830***	17.010***	-25.538***
	(0.520)	(0.836)	(1.674)	(2.075)
AIC	22601.447	22596.54	22101.96	21341.071
BIC	22624.733	22625.648	22165.998	21416.753
Observations	2,494	2,494	2,494	2,494
Adjusted R^2	0.017	0.019	0.198	0.409
Residual Std. Error	22.448	22.422	20.281	17.405
F Statistic	22.753***	17.507***	69.293***	157.967***
Note:				*p**p***p<0.01

Model 4 accounted for the respondent's sex and level of education. When accounting for these variables, right away we see that the overall variance increases from 20% to 40%, indicating that the level of education has a substantial impact on SES scores of the respondents. As SES scores increase, the education levels increase, suggesting that among GSS respondents, higher levels of education are positively correlated with higher SES scores ($p<0.001$). Likewise, accounting for education and class indicator variables, women respondents, on average, have lower SES scores than men ($p<0.01$). These findings coincide with research on education, suggesting that academic tracks are successful predictors of achievement and advancement (Neal and Johnson 1996, Crosnoe and Johnson 2011). Referring to the problem in model 3, the beta for black respondents decreased further in model 4 when accounting for the respondent's sex and level of education. The decrease in betas for black respondents suggests that a large proportion of the effect of race on SES scores, see model 1 in table 2, is explained by other co-variates such as working status, education, and income levels. The removal of the effect status of race in the prior models argues that there are disparate inequalities present in social class factors and structural barriers in education that negatively impacts African American respondents of the General Social Survey.

Discussion / Limitations

The results of the regression models are consistent with current literature on socioeconomic inequality. Social factors such as racial residential segregation, employment discrimination, educational discrimination, and class inequality negatively affect African Americans in metropolitan cities, and the findings correlate with black-white urban trends. However, I am careful implying that the results of my study do not translate to the real urban world. Survey weights were not implemented, and errors for specific variables were higher than

usual. For example, the residual error for unemployed respondents was extremely high, likely because unemployed respondents may be under-represented in the sample. As mentioned previously, the racial makeup of the sample was not equal (1,863 white respondents to 410 black respondents). Literature indicates that unemployment rates for African Americans are higher than those of white Americans, and as an example, unemployment rates for young African Americans in Chicago are six times higher than equivalent young whites (Manzo IV, Manzo & Bruno 2017). Thus, it could be likely that the low percentage of African American respondents in the GSS data accounted for the high residual error, and lack of statistically significant results. Therefore, without research and similar studies reporting the same findings, it deems irresponsible to conclude that this study specifically yields the same results.

The results of models 3 and 4 suggest that there are factors other than race that contribute to socioeconomic disparities in metropolitan cities. Accounting for income levels, working status, and education, the measured race effect on SES levels diminished substantially, suggesting that class inequality and academic tracts account for high levels of variance among SES scores. This is generally consistent with Wilson's (1978) argument that race is becoming less of an influential factor on life chances than class. However, the effect of race is still present and significant among respondents when accounting for income, working status, and education, suggesting with current research and literature that racial disparities among class, education, and employment negatively impact African Americans in metropolitan cities.

Conclusion

The results of this study suggest that, on average, social factors contribute negatively to inequality levels experienced by African Americans in metropolitan cities. Coinciding with current literature, socioeconomic disparities exist in urban cities in the form of discrimination

among education, employment, as well as residential segregation trends. As we progress into the future, urban sprawl and technological advancements have the possibility to affect minority groups residing in metropolitan cities negatively. Further research and policies should address the adverse effects of poor urban planning, as well as examine solutions to reducing or eliminating all racially discriminatory beliefs in the form of employment, housing, and education. As overall income inequality trends decreased slightly, the inequality and socioeconomic troubles that low-income and middle-class African Americans face in metropolitan cities seem to be higher than ever, and results from this study, other studies, and current literature suggest that it is more prevalent now than before.

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