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The Truly Disadvantaged

The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy

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2 Social Change and Social Dislocations in the Inner City

The social problems of urban life in the United States are, in large measure, the problems of racial inequality. The rates of crime, drug addiction, out-of-wedlock births, female-headed families, and welfare dependency have risen dramatically in the last several years, and they reflect a noticeably uneven distribution by race. As emphasized in the previous chapter, liberal social scientists, journalists, policymakers, and civil rights leaders have nonetheless been reluctant to face this fact. Often analysts make no reference to race at all when discussing issues such as crime and teenage pregnancy, except to emphasize the deleterious effects of racial discrimination or of the institutionalized inequality of American society.

As I argued in the previous chapter, one of the reasons social scientists have been reluctant to research these problems until very recently may have been the virulent attacks on the Moynihan report in the latter half of the 1960s.[1] There is no need here for detailed discussion of the controversy surrounding the report, which like so many controversies over social issues raged in great measure because of distortions and misinterpretations. However, it should be pointed out that various parts of Moynihan's arguments had been raised previously by such persons as Kenneth B. Clark, E. Franklin Frazier, and Bayard Rustin.[2] Like Rustin, Moynihan argued that as antidiscrimination legislation breaks down barriers to black liberty, issues of equality will draw attention away from issues of liberty; in other words, concerns for equal resources enabling blacks to live comparable to whites in material ways will exceed concerns of freedom. The simple removal of legal barriers will not achieve the goal of equality, he maintained, because the cumulative effects of discrimination make it very nearly impossible for a majority of black Americans to take advantage of opportunities provided by civil rights laws. He observed, in this connection, that "the Negro community is dividing between a stable middle-class group that is steadily growing stronger and more successful, and an increasingly disorganized and disadvantaged lower-class group."[3]

Like Clark, Moynihan emphasized that family deterioration—as revealed in urban blacks' rising rates of broken marriages, female-headed homes, out-of-wedlock births, and welfare dependency—was one of the central problems of the black lower class. And as had Frazier, Moynihan argued that the problems of the black family, which present major obstacles to black equality, derive from previous patterns of inequality that originated in the slavery experience and have been maintained and reinforced by years of racial discrimination. He concluded his report by recommending a shift in the direction of federal civil rights activities to "bring the Negro American to full and equal sharing in the responsibilities and rewards of citizenship" and thereby to increase "the stability and resources of the Negro American family."[4]

The vitriolic criticism of the Moynihan report, which paid far more attention to Moynihan's unflattering depiction of the black family in the urban ghetto than to his historical analysis of the black family's special plight or to his proposed remedies, helped create an atmosphere that discouraged many social scientists from researching certain aspects of lower-class black life.[5] Meanwhile, significant developments were unfolding in ghetto communities across the United States that profoundly affected the lives of millions of blacks and dramatically revealed that the problems earlier described by Clark, Moynihan, and others had reached catastrophic proportions. To be more specific, one-quarter of all black births occurred outside of marriage in 1965, the year Moynihan wrote his report on the Negro family, and by 1980 57 percent were; in 1965 nearly 25 percent of all black families were headed by women, and by 1980 43 percent were;[6] partly as a result, welfare dependency among poor blacks has mushroomed. And perhaps the most dramatic indicator of the extent to which social dislocations have afflicted urban blacks is crime, especially violent crime, which has increased sharply in recent years. Finally, these growing social problems have accompanied increasing black rates of joblessness.

Although these problems are heavily concentrated in urban areas, it would be a serious mistake to assume that they afflict all segments of the urban minority community. Rather, these problems disproportionately plague the ghetto underclass.

The Tangle of Pathology in the Inner City

When figures on black crime, teenage pregnancy, female-headed families, and welfare dependency are released to the public without sufficient explanation, racial stereotypes are reinforced. And the tendency

of liberal social scientists either to ignore these issues or to address them in circumspect ways does more to reinforce than to undermine racist perceptions.

These problems cannot be accounted for simply in terms of racial discrimination or in terms of a culture of poverty. Rather, they must be seen as having complex sociological antecedents that range from demographic changes to problems of economic organization. But before turning to these explanatory factors, I should like to outline the growing problems of social dislocation in the inner city, beginning first with violent crime.

Race and Violent Crime

Only one of nine persons in the United States is black; yet in 1984 nearly one of every two persons arrested for murder and nonnegligent manslaughter was black, and 41 percent of all murder victims were black. As Norval Morris and Michael Tonry indicate, "Homicide is the leading cause of death of black men and women aged 25 to 34." Furthermore, 61 percent of all persons arrested for robbery and 38 percent of those arrested for aggravated assault in 1984 were black. Moreover, the rate of black imprisonment in 1984 was 6.25 times greater than the rate of white imprisonment.[7]

The disproportionate involvement of blacks in violent crime is clearly revealed in the data on city arrests collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Blacks constitute 13 percent of the population in cities, but, as reported in table 2.1, they account for over half of all city arrests for violent crimes. More than half of those arrested in cities for murders and nonnegligent manslaughter, more than half of those arrested for forcible rape, and 64 percent of those arrested for robbery are black. The rate of black crime is even greater in large urban areas where blacks constitute a larger percentage of the population. Although the FBI does not provide data on arrest by size of city and race, the magnitude and social significance of the problems of violent black crimes in large metropolises can perhaps be revealed by examining data on murder rates provided by the Chicago Police Department.[8]

The 1970s was a violent decade in the history of Chicago. The number of violent crimes in the city began to rise in the mid-1960s and reached record levels in the 1970s. The number of homicides jumped from 195 in 1965 to 810 in 1970. During the severe recession year of 1974, the city experienced a record 970 murders (30.8 per 100,000 population) and 4,071 shooting assaults. Despite the record number of homicides in Chicago in 1974, Chicago's murder rate was actually lower than those in Detroit, Cleveland, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore.[9] In 1981, another recession year, 877 murders were committed in Chicago, the second highest number ever; yet its rate placed Chicago only fifth among the ten largest urban areas in the country (see table 2.2).

TABLE 2.1
Arrests in Cities, by Type of Offense and Race, 1984

Offence	Racial Distribution			
	White (%)	Black (%)	American Indian or Alaskan Native (%)	Asian or Pacific Islander (%)
Violent crime	48.6	50.2	0.7	0.6
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	46.7	52.0	0.6	0.8
Forcible rape	46.4	52.3	0.7	0.6
Robbery	35.2	63.7	0.4	0.7
Aggravated assault	56.1	42.5	0.8	0.6
Property crime	66.1	32.0	1.1	0.9
Burglary	66.2	32.4	0.8	0.6
Larceny-theft	66.1	31.7	1.2	1.0
Motor vehicle theft	63.6	34.6	0.9	0.9
Arson	74.2	24.3	0.8	0.7
Crime total index[a]	62.5	35.6	1.0	0.8

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, *Uniform Crime Reports for the United States, 1984* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985).

[a] Percentage of all crimes by each ethnic group.

In Chicago, like other major urban centers, blacks are not only more likely to commit murder, they are also more likely to be victims of murder. During the 1970s, 8 of every 10 murderers in Chicago were black, as were 7 of every 10 murder victims. In 1983, 513 blacks (other than Hispanic), 108 Hispanics, and 95 whites (other than Hispanic) were victims of murder; of known perpetrators that year, 515 were black, 102 were Hispanic, and 58 were white. In 1970 only 56 of the murder victims were Hispanic, compared with 135 white and 607 black victims. Age changes in the Hispanic population accounted in large measure for their increased involvement in violent crimes—a matter that will be discussed later in greater detail.

Homicides in Chicago were overwhelmingly intraracial or intraethnic. During the 1970s, of those murders where the ethnicity of the offender was known, 98 percent of black homicides were committed by

TABLE 2.2
Murder Rates per 100,000 Population of Ten Largest U.S. Cities, 1979–1984

City	1979		1980		1981		1982		1983		1984		Six-Year Average	
	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank
Detroit	35.9	3	45.7	2	42.1	1	43.4	1	49.3	1	45.3	1	43.6	1
Cleveland	45.6	1	46.3	1	40.7	2	34.0	3	25.9	6	28.0	4	36.8	2
Houston	40.3	2	39.1	3	NA	NA	40.4	2	32.5	2	26.2	6	35.7	3
Dallas	34.8	4	35.4	4	31.8	4	31.5	4	26.8	4	29.8	2	31.7	4
Washington	27.4	8	31.5	6	35.1	3	30.7	5	29.4	3	28.1	3	30.4	5
Los Angeles	27.4	7	34.2	5	29.0	6	27.4	7	26.0	5	24.1	8	28.0	6
Baltimore	31.0	5	27.5	8	28.6	7	28.4	6	25.0	7	27.3	5	28.0	7
Chicago	28.0	6	28.9	7	29.1	5	22.2	9	24.1	8	24.6	7	26.2	8
New York	24.4	9	25.8	10	25.8	8	23.5	8	22.8	9	20.2	9	23.8	9
Philadelphia	21.9	10	25.9	9	21.5	9	19.7	10	18.4	10	15.8	10	20.5	10

Sources: U.S. Department of Justice, *Uniform Crime Reports for the United States, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986).

Notes: The 1979 rate for Los Angeles is slightly higher than that for Washington, D.C., before rounding. The six-year average is slightly higher for Los Angeles than for Baltimore before rounding. The top ten cities in population in the 1970 census (above) are not the same as those of the 1980 census.

other blacks, 75 percent of Hispanic homicides were committed by other Hispanics, and 51.5 percent of white homicides were committed by other whites. This pattern held for the most recent year for which homicide data are available. In 1983, 98 percent of the known perpetrators of black homicide were black, 81 percent of perpetrators of Hispanic homicide were Hispanic, and 52 percent of perpetrators of white homicide were white.[10]

In examining the figures on homicide in Chicago it is important to recognize that the rates vary significantly according to the economic status of the community, with the highest rates of violent crime associated with the communities of the underclass. More than half of the 1983 murders and aggravated assaults in Chicago occurred in seven of the city's twenty-four police districts, the areas with a heavy concentration of low-income black and Latino residents.[11]

The most violent area is the overwhelmingly black Wentworth Avenue police district on the South Side of Chicago. Indeed, in 1983, 81 murders (11 percent of city total) and 1,691 aggravated assaults (13 percent of city total) occurred in this four-square-mile district which contains only 3.4 percent of the city's total population.[12]

The Wentworth figures on violent crime are high partly because the Robert Taylor Homes, the largest public-housing project in the city of Chicago, is located there. Robert Taylor Homes is a complex of twenty-eight sixteen-story buildings covering ninety-two acres. The official population in 1980 was almost 20,000, but, according to a recent report, "there are an additional 5,000 to 7,000 adult residents who are not registered with the housing authority."[13] In 1983 all of the registered households were black and 69 percent of the official population were minors. The median family income was $5,470. Ninety-three percent of the families with children were headed by a single parent. Eight-three percent of the (nonelderly headed) families with children received Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).[14] Unemployment was estimated to be 47 percent in 1980. Although in 1980 only a little more than 0.5 percent of Chicago's more than 3 million people lived in the Robert Taylor Homes, "11 percent of the city's murders, 9 percent of its rapes, and 10 percent of its aggravated assaults were committed in the project."[15]

Robert Taylor Homes is by no means the only violent large housing project in Chicago. For example, Cabrini-Green, the second largest, experienced a rash of violent crimes in early 1981 that prompted Chicago's then mayor Jane Byrne to take up residence there for several weeks to help stem the tide. Cabrini-Green includes eighty-one high- and low-rise buildings covering seventy acres on Chicago's Near North

Side. In 1983 nearly 13,000 people, almost all black, were officially registered there; but like the Robert Taylor Homes, many more reside there than appear in the records of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). Minors were 66 percent of the registered population; 90 percent of the families with children were headed by women; 83 percent of the households were on welfare (AFDC or General Assistance), and 81 percent of the families with children received AFDC in 1983.[16] In a nine-week period beginning in early January 1981, ten Cabrini-Green residents were murdered; thirty-five were wounded by gunshots, including random sniping; and more than fifty firearms were confiscated, "the tip of an immense illegal arsenal," according to the Chicago police.[17]

Family Dissolution and Welfare Dependency

What is true of the structure of families and welfare dependency in the Robert Taylor Homes and Cabrini-Green is typical of all the CHA housing projects. In 1983, of the 25,000 families with children living in CHA projects, only 8 percent were married-couple families, and 80 percent of the family households received AFDC.[18] But female-headed families and welfare dependency are not confined to public-housing projects. The projects simply magnify these problems, which permeate ghetto neighborhoods and to a lesser extent metropolitan areas generally.

The increase in the number of female-headed families in the United States was dramatic during the 1970s. Whereas the total number of families grew by 20 percent from 1970 to 1984, the number of female-headed families increased by 51 percent. Moreover, the number of families headed by women with one or more of their children present in the home increased by 77 percent. If the change in family structure was notable for all families in the 1970s, it was close to phenomenal for blacks and Hispanics. Whereas families headed by white women increased by 63 percent, the number of families headed by black and Hispanic women grew by 108 and 164 percent, respectively.[19]

In 1965 Moynihan expressed great concern that 25 percent of all black families were headed by women. The proportion surpassed 28 percent in 1970, reached 40 percent by 1979, and registered an alarming 43 percent in 1984. By contrast, only 13 percent of white families and 23 percent of Hispanic families were headed by women in 1984, even though each group recorded a significant increase in female-headed families during the 1970s.[20]

In 1984, 73 percent of all female householders resided in metropolitan areas (39 percent in central cities and 34 percent in the adjacent

suburbs); of those who were black and Hispanic, 79 and 91 percent respectively lived in metropolitan areas, with 60 percent of the metropolitan blacks and 64 percent of the Hispanics in the central city. The women householders were younger than in previous years. For example, from 1970 to 1984 the number of female heads of families forty-five years or older increased by nearly 1 million (31 percent), while those under forty-five years of age increased by almost 3.3 million (135 percent), resulting in a decline in the median age from 48.2 years in 1979 to 41.4 years in 1984.[21]

Even if a female householder is employed full time, her earnings are usually substantially less than that of a male worker and are not likely to be supplemented with income from a second full-time employed member of the household. For women who head families and are not employed (including those who have never been employed, have dropped out of the labor force to become full-time mothers, or are employed only part time), the economic situation is often desperate. In 1983 the median income of female-headed families ($11,789) was only 43 percent of the median income of husband-wife families ($27,286); the median income of families headed by black women ($7,999) was only 37 percent of the median income of husband-wife black families ($21,840). In 1983, of the roughly 3.6 million families that reported incomes of less than $5,000, 57 percent were headed by women.[22]

The relationship between level of family income and family structure is even more pronounced among black families. As shown in table 2.3, whereas 80 percent of all black families with incomes under $4,000 were headed by women in 1978, only 8 percent with incomes of $25,000 or more were headed by women; in metropolitan areas, the difference was even greater.

Economic hardship has become almost synonymous with black female-headed families: only 30 percent of all poor black families were headed by women in 1959, but by 1978 the proportion reached 74 percent (though it has remained slightly below that level since then), due, as discussed in the next chapter, to the increase in the number of married-couple parents in poverty in recent years. By contrast, 39 percent of all poor white families were headed by women in 1978, after which the white proportion also decreased slightly.[23] Reflecting the growth of black female-headed families, the proportion of black children in married-couple families dropped significantly, from 63 percent in 1970 to 50 percent in 1978 and 46 percent in 1984. Moreover, 46 percent of black children under eighteen years of age resided in families whose incomes were below the poverty level in 1983, and three-fourths of those were in families headed by females.[24]

TABLE 2.3
Proportion of Families at Selected Income Levels, by Race, Head of Household, and Metropolitan Residence, 1978

Race and Income Level ($)	All Families (%)	Families with Female Heads (%)	All Families in Metropolitan Areas (%)	Metropolitan Families with Female Heads (%)
Black				
Under 4,000	15.9	80.3	70.7	85.1
4,000–6,999	16.2	63.8	70.1	71.2
7,000–10,999	18.3	46.2	74.8	50.7
11,000–15,999	16.7	28.9	76.3	31.8
16,000–24,999	19.2	15.3	82.7	15.4
25,000 and over	13.4	7.7	88.5	7.6
White				
Under 4,000	4.3	42.2	52.4	51.0
4,000–6,999	4.7	27.6	56.2	33.7
7,000–10,999	12.7	19.5	57.7	21.8
11,000–15,999	16.9	13.4	59.9	16.7
16,000–24,999	28.8	7.2	66.0	8.5
25,000 and over	29.5	2.9	75.4	3.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, series P-60, no. 123, "Money Income of Families and Persons in the United States, 1978" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), p. 70.

The rise of female-headed families among blacks corresponds closely with the increase in the ratio of out-of-wedlock births. Only 15 percent of all black births in 1959 were out of wedlock. This figure jumped to roughly 24 percent in 1965 and 57 percent in 1982, almost five times greater than the white ratio. Indeed, despite the far greater white population, in 1982 the number of black babies born out of wedlock (328,879) nearly matched the number of illegitimate white babies.[25] Although the proportion of black births that are outside of marriage is, in part, a function of the general decline in fertility among married blacks (a point discussed below), it is also a reflection of the growing prevalence of out-of-wedlock births among teenagers. For example, despite a sharp drop in the rate of teenage childbearing among both blacks and whites since 1960, the proportion of black teenage births that were out of wedlock increased from only 42 percent in 1960, to 63 percent in 1970, and then to a staggering 89 percent in 1983. A similar pattern occurred among whites—7 percent of the white teenage births were out of wedlock in 1960, 17 percent in 1970, and 39 percent in 1983.[26]

These problems are, to repeat, most acute in ghetto neighborhoods. For example, in the overwhelmingly black and impoverished communities of Chicago (communities with rates of household poverty that exceeded 40 percent in 1980) the proportion of female households increased from 34 to 61 percent in Garfield Park between 1970 and 1980, from 37 to 66 percent in the Near West Side, from 33 to 61 percent in North Lawndale, from 41 to 75 percent in the Near South Side, from 43 to 70 percent in Douglas, from 48 to 78 percent in Oakland, from 40 to 71 percent in Grand Boulevard, from 35 to 70 percent in Washington Park, and from 44 to 65 percent in Riverdale. These alarming trends, in turn, are related to extramarital childbearing. In 1983 nearly three-quarter of all black births in Chicago were out of wedlock, compared to only about half in 1970. Ninety-five percent of all black teenage births in Chicago were out of wedlock in 1983, compared to 75 percent in 1970.[27]

These developments have significant implications for the problems of welfare dependency. In 1977 the proportion of families receiving AFDC that were black (43 percent) slightly exceeded the proportion that were white other than Spanish (42.5 percent), despite the great difference in total population.[28] It is estimated that about 60 percent of the children who are born out of wedlock and are alive and not adopted receive welfare. A study by the Urban Institute pointed out that "more than half of all AFDC assistance in 1975 was paid to women who were or had been teenage mothers."[29]

In this section, I have focused on female-headed families, out-of-wedlock births, and teenage pregnancy because they have become inextricably connected with poverty and dependency. The sharp increase in these and other forms of social dislocations in the inner city (including joblessness and violent crime) offers a difficult challenge to policymakers. Because there has been so little recent systematic research on these problems and a paucity of thoughtful explanations for them, racial stereotypes of life and behavior in the urban ghetto have not been adequately challenged. The physical and social isolation of residents in the urban ghetto is thereby reinforced. The fundamental question is Why have the social conditions of the urban underclass deteriorated so rapidly since the mid-1960s and especially since 1970?

Toward a Comprehensive Explanation

There is no single explanation for the racial or ethnic variations in the rates of social dislocations I have described. But I should like to suggest

several interrelated explanations that represent a comprehensive set of variables—including societal, demographic, and neighborhood variables. In the process, I hope to show that the sources of current problems in the inner city are exceedingly complex and that their amelioration calls for imaginative and comprehensive programs of economic and social reform that are in sharp contrast to the current approaches to social policy in America, which are based on short-term political considerations.

The Effects of Historic and Contemporary Discrimination

Discrimination is the most frequently invoked explanation of social dislocations in the urban ghetto. However, proponents of the discrimination thesis often fail to make a distinction between the effects of historic discrimination, that is, discrimination before the middle of the twentieth century, and the effects of discrimination following that time. They therefore find it difficult to explain why the economic position of poor urban blacks actually deteriorated during the very period in which the most sweeping antidiscrimination legislation and programs were enacted and implemented.[30] Their emphasis on discrimination becomes even more problematic in view of the economic progress of the black middle class during the same period.

There is no doubt that contemporary discrimination has contributed to or aggravated the social and economic problems of the ghetto underclass. But is discrimination greater today than in 1948, when, as shown in table 2.4, black unemployment was less than half the 1980 rate, and the black-white unemployment ratio was almost one-fourth less than the 1980 ratio? Although labor economists have noted the shortcomings of the official unemployment rates as an indicator of the economic conditions of groups, these rates have generally been accepted as one significant measure of relative disadvantage.[31] It is therefore important to point out that it was not until 1954 that the 2:1 unemployment ratio between blacks and whites was reached, and that since 1954, despite shifts from good to bad economic years, the black-white unemployment ratio has shown very little change. There are obviously many reasons for the higher levels of black unemployment since the mid-1950s (including the migration of blacks from a rural subsistence economy to an urban economy with protected labor markets), but to suggest contemporary discrimination as the main factor is to obscure the impact of economic and demographic changes and to leave unexplained the question of why black unemployment was lower not after but before 1950.

The question has also been raised about the association between

TABLE 2.4
Unemployment Rates, by Race, Selected Years, 1948–1984

Year	Unemployment Rate		Black-White Unemployment Ratio
	Black and Other Races	White	
1948	5.9	3.5	1.7
1951	5.3	3.1	1.7
1954	9.0	5.0	2.0
1957	7.9	3.8	2.1
1960	10.2	4.9	2.1
1963	10.8	5.0	2.2
1966	7.3	3.3	2.2
1969	6.4	3.2	2.1
1972	10.0	5.1	2.0
1975	13.8	7.8	1.8
1978	11.9	5.2	2.3
1981	14.2	6.7	2.1
1984	14.4	6.5	2.2

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor, *Employment and Training Report of the President* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1982); and idem, *Employment and Earnings* 32 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, January 1985).

Notes: The unemployment rate is the percentage of the civilian labor force aged sixteen and over that is unemployed. "Black and other races" is a U.S. Census Bureau designation and is used in those cases where data are not available solely for blacks. However, because about 90 percent of the population so designated is black, statistics reported for this category generally reflect the condition of the black population. The black-white unemployment ratio is the percentage of blacks who are unemployed divided by the percentage of whites who are unemployed.

contemporary discrimination within the criminal justice systems and the disproportionate rates of black crime. An answer was provided by Alfred Blumstein in an important study of the racial disproportionality in America's state prison populations. Blumstein found that 80 percent of the disproportionate black incarceration rates during the 1970s could be attributed to the disproportionate number of blacks arrested and that the more serious the offense, the stronger the association between arrest rates and incarceration rates. For example, all but a small fraction of the disproportionate black incarceration rates for homicide, ag-

able and continuous migration of blacks from the South to the North, coupled with the curtailment of immigration from eastern, central, and southern Europe, created a situation in which other whites muffled their negative disposition toward the new Europeans and directed their antagonisms against blacks. According to Lieberson, "the presence of blacks made it harder to discriminate against the new Europeans because the alternative was viewed less favorably."[38]

The flow of migrants also made it much more difficult for blacks to follow the path of both the new Europeans and the Asian-Americans in overcoming the negative effects of discrimination by finding special occupational niches. Only a small part of a group's total work force can be absorbed in such specialities when the group's population increases rapidly or is a sizable proportion of the total population. Furthermore, the continuing flow of migrants had a harmful effect on the urban blacks who had arrived earlier. Lieberson points out:

> Sizable numbers of newcomers raise the level of ethnic and/or racial consciousness on the part of others in the city; moreover, if these newcomers are less able to compete for more desirable positions than are the longer-standing residents, they will tend to undercut the position of other members of the group. This is because the older residents and those of higher socioeconomic status cannot totally avoid the newcomers, although they work at it through subgroup residential isolation. Hence, there is some deterioration in the quality of residential areas, schools, and the like for those earlier residents who might otherwise enjoy more fully the rewards of their mobility. Beyond this, from the point of view of the dominant outsiders, the newcomers may reinforce stereotypes and negative dispositions that affect all members of the group.[39]

The pattern of rural black migration that began with the rise of urban industrial centers in the North has been strong in recent years in the South. In Atlanta and Houston, to illustrate, the continuous influx of rural southern blacks, due in large measure to the increasing mechanization of agriculture, has resulted in the creation of large urban ghettos that closely resemble those in the North.[40] The net result in both the North and the South is that as the nation entered the last quarter of this century, its large cities continued to have a disproportionate concentration of low-income blacks who were especially vulnerable to recent structural changes in the economy.

It should be noted, however, that black migration to urban areas has been minimal in recent years. Indeed, between 1970 and 1977 there was actually a net outmigration of 653,000 blacks from the central cities.[41] In most large cities the number of blacks increased only moderately or declined. Increases in the urban black population during the 1970s were mainly due to births,[42] which indicates that for the first time in the twentieth century the ranks of central-city blacks are no longer being replenished by poor migrants. This could result in an improvement in the average socioeconomic status of urban blacks, including a decrease in joblessness, crime, out-of-wedlock births, teenage pregnancy, female-headed families, and welfare dependency. However, although the Asian and newer European immigrants have benefited from a cessation of migration, it is difficult to determine whether the cessation of black migration to the central city will result in noticeable improvement in the status of urban blacks. There are other factors—such as discrimination, structural changes in the economy, and the size of the population—that affect the differential rate of ethnic-group progress at different periods. Moreover, the growing concentration of poverty in inner-city neighborhoods, to be discussed later, could offset any real gains associated with a decrease in urban migration. Nonetheless, one of the major obstacles to urban black advancement—the constant flow of migrants—has been removed.

Hispanics, on the other hand, appear to be migrating to urban areas in increasing numbers. The comparative status of Hispanics as an ethnic group is not entirely clear because comparable data on their types of residence in 1970 are not available. But data collected since 1974 indicate that their numbers in central cities are increasing rapidly because of both immigration and births. Indeed, in several large cities, including Los Angeles, Miami, San Diego, Denver, and Phoenix, they outnumber American blacks.[43] Although the Hispanic population is diverse in nationalities and socioeconomic status—for example, the median income of Mexicans and Cubans is significantly greater than that of Puerto Ricans—they are often identified collectively as a distinct ethnic group because of their common Spanish-speaking origins.[44] Accordingly, the rapid growth of the urban Hispanic population, accompanied by the opposite trend for the urban black population, could contribute significantly to different outcomes for these two groups in the next several decades. More specifically, whereas urban blacks could record a decrease in their rates of joblessness, crime, teenage pregnancy, female-headed homes, and welfare dependency, Hispanics could show a steady increase in each. Moreover, blacks could experience a decrease in the ethnic hostility directed toward them, but Hispanics, with their growing visibility, could be victims of increasing ethnic antagonisms.

However, Hispanics are not the only ethnic group in urban America

experiencing a rapid growth in numbers. According to the United States Census Bureau, Asians, who constitute less than 2 percent of the nation's population, were the fastest-growing American ethnic group in the 1970s. Following the liberalization of United States immigration policies, the large influx of immigrants from Southeast Asia and, to a lesser degree, from South Korea and China has been associated with reports of increasing problems, including anti-Asian sentiments, joblessness, and violent crime. According to one report, the nation's economic woes have exacerbated the situation as the newcomers have competed with black, Hispanic, and white urban workers for jobs. Moreover, the steady inpouring of immigrants from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China has upset the social organization of Chinatowns. Once stable and homogeneous, Chinatowns are now suffering from problems that have traditionally plagued inner-city black neighborhoods, such as joblessness, school dropouts, overcrowding, violent street crime, and gang warfare.[45]

The Relevance of Changes in the Age Structure

The flow of migrants also affects the average age of an ethnic group. For example, the black migration to urban centers—the continual replenishment of urban black populations by poor newcomers—predictably skewed the age profile of the urban black community and kept it relatively young. The higher the median age of a group, the greater its representation in higher income categories and professional positions. It is therefore not surprising that ethnic groups such as blacks and Hispanics, who on average are younger than whites, also tend to have high unemployment and crime rates.[46] As revealed in table 2.5, ethnic groups differ markedly in their median age and in the proportion under age fifteen.

In the nation's central cities in 1977, the median age for whites was 30.3, for blacks 23.9, and for Hispanics 21.8. One cannot overemphasize the importance of the sudden growth of young minorities in the central cities. The number of central-city blacks aged fourteen to twenty-four rose by 78 percent from 1960 to 1970, compared with an increase of only 23 percent for whites of the same age.[47] From 1970 to 1977 the increase in the number of young blacks slackened off somewhat, but it was still substantial. For example, in the central cities the number of blacks aged fourteen to twenty-four increased by 21 percent from 1970 to 1977 and the number of Hispanics by 26 percent, while whites of this age-group decreased by 4 percent.[48]

On the basis of these demographic changes alone one would expect blacks and Hispanics to contribute disproportionately to the increasing

TABLE 2.5
Age Structure of Racial and Ethnic Groups, 1984

Group	Under 15 Years (%)	65 Years and Over (%)	Median Age (years)
White	20.9	12.6	32.2
Black	27.7	8.1	26.3
Hispanic	32.3	4.0	23.7
U.S. Total	21.9	11.9	31.2

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, series P-25, no. 965, "Estimates of the Population of the United States, by Age, Sex, and Race, 1980 to 1984" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985); and idem, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, no. 396, "Persons of Spanish Origin in the United States, March 1982" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985).

Note: The Hispanic data are for 1982, the last year for which estimates are available.

rates of social dislocation in the central city, such as crime. Indeed, 66 percent of all those arrested for violent and property crimes in American cities in 1980 were under twenty-five years of age.[49]

Youth is not only a factor in crime; it is also associated with out-of-wedlock births, female-headed homes, and welfare dependency. Teenagers accounted for 38 percent of all out-of-wedlock births in 1982, and 78 percent of all illegitimate black births in that year were to teenage and young adult women. The median age of female householders has decreased substantially in recent years, and the explosion of teenage births has contributed significantly to the rise in the number of children on AFDC, from roughly 35 per 1,000 children under eighteen in 1960 to around 114 per 1,000 in 1982.[50]

In short, much of what has gone awry in the inner city is due in part to the sheer increase in the number of young people, especially young minorities. However, as James Q. Wilson has pointed out in his analysis of the proliferation of social problems in the 1960s (a period of general economic prosperity), "changes in the age structure of the population cannot alone account for the social dislocations" of that decade. He argues, for example, that from 1960 to 1970 the rate of unemployment in the District of Columbia increased by 100 percent and the rate of serious crime by over 400 percent, yet the number of young persons between sixteen and twenty-one years of age rose by only 32 percent.

Also, the number of murders in Detroit increased from 100 in 1960 to 500 in 1971, "yet the number of young persons did not quintuple."[51]

Wilson states that the "increase in the murder rate during the 1960s was more than ten times greater than what one would have expected from the changing age structure of the population alone" and "only 13.4 percent of the increase in arrests for robbery between 1950 and 1965 could be accounted for by the increase in the numbers of persons between the ages of ten and twenty-four."[52] Speculating on this problem, Wilson advances the hypothesis that an abrupt rise in the number of young persons has an "exponential effect on the rate of certain social problems." In other words, there may be a "critical mass" of young persons in a given community such that when that mass is reached or is increased suddenly and substantially, "a self-sustaining chain reaction is set off that creates an explosive increase in the amount of crime, addiction, and welfare dependency."[53]

This hypothesis seems to be especially relevant to inner-city neighborhoods and even more so to those with large public-housing projects. Opposition from organized community groups to the construction of public housing in their neighborhoods has "led to massive, segregated housing projects, which become ghettos for minorities and the economically disadvantaged."[54] As the earlier description of the Robert Taylor Homes and Cabrini-Green in Chicago suggests, when large poor families were placed in high-density housing projects in the ghetto, both family and neighborhood life suffered. High crime rates, family dissolution, and vandalism flourished in these projects. In St. Louis, the Pruit-Igoe project, which included about ten thousand adults and children, developed serious problems five years after it opened and "it became so unlivable that it was destroyed in 1976, 22 years after it was built."[55]

In both the housing projects and other inner-city neighborhoods, residents have difficulty identifying their neighbors. They are, therefore, less likely to engage in reciprocal guardian behavior. Events in one part of the block or neighborhood tend to be of little concern to those residing in other parts.[56] These conditions of social disorganization are as acute as they are because of the unprecedented increase in the number of teenage and young adult minorities in these neighborhoods, many of whom are jobless, not enrolled in school, and a source of delinquency, crime, and unrest.

Nonetheless, despite the increase of minority teenages and young adults, there were 6 percent fewer blacks aged thirteen and under in metropolitan areas in 1977 than in 1970, and 13 percent fewer in the central cities. White children in this age category also decreased during this period by even greater percentages: 17 percent in metro-

politan areas and 24 percent in the central cities. By contrast, Hispanic children in this age category increased from 1970 to 1977 by 16 percent in metropolitan areas and 12 percent in the central cities. Thus, just as the change in migration flow could affect the rates of ethnic-group involvement in certain types of social problems, so too could changes in the age structure. Whereas whites and blacks—all other things being equal—could in the near future show a decrease in problems such as joblessness, crime, out-of-wedlock births, teenage pregnancy, family dissolution, and welfare dependency, the growing Hispanic population, owing to rapid increases in births and migration, could very likely experience increasing rates of social dislocation.

The Impact of Basic Economic Changes

The population explosion among minority youths occurred at a time when changes in the economy posed serious problems for unskilled individuals, both in and out of the labor force. Urban minorities have been particularly vulnerable to structural economic changes, such as the shift from goods-producing to service-producing industries, the increasing polarization of the labor market into low-wage and high-wage sectors, technological innovations, and the relocation of manufacturing industries out of the central cities. These economic shifts point out the fact that nearly all of the large and densely populated metropolises experienced their most rapid development during an earlier industrial and transportation era. Today these urban centers are undergoing an irreversible structural transformation from "centers of production and distribution of material goods to centers of administration, information exchange, and higher-order service provision."[57] The central-city labor market, particularly in northern areas, has been profoundly altered in the process.

In a paper on the regional and urban redistribution of people and jobs in the United States, John Kasarda points out that the transformation of major northern metropolises from centers of goods processing to centers of information processing has been accompanied by a major shift in the educational requirements for employment.[58] Whereas job losses in these cities have been greatest in industries with lower educational requirements, job growth has been concentrated in industries that require higher levels of education.

These points are illustrated in table 2.6, which presents employment changes from 1970 to 1984 in industries classified by the average level of education completed by their workers. Industries are divided into those whose workers averaged less than twelve years of schooling (less than high school) in 1982 and those whose workers averaged more than

TABLE 2.6
Central-City Jobs in Industries, by Mean Education of Employees, 1970, 1984 (figures in thousands)

City and Educational Mean of Industry	Number of Jobs 1970	1984	Change 1970–84
New York			
Less than high school	1,445	953	−492
Some higher education	1,002	1,241	239
Philadelphia			
Less than high school	396	224	−172
Some higher education	205	224	39
Boston			
Less than high school	168	124	−44
Some higher education	185	252	67
Baltimore			
Less than high school	187	114	−73
Some higher education	90	105	15
St. Louis			
Less than high school	197	108	−89
Some higher education	98	96	−2
Atlanta			
Less than high school	157	148	−9
Some higher education	92	129	37
Houston			
Less than high school	280	468	188
Some higher education	144	361	217
Denver			
Less than high school	106	111	5
Some higher education	72	131	59
San Francisco			
Less than high school	132	135	3
Some higher education	135	206	71

Source: John D. Kasarda, "The Regional and Urban Redistribution of People and Jobs in the U.S.," paper prepared for the National Research Council Committee on National Urban Policy, National Academy of Sciences, 1986.

thirteen years of education (some higher education). The figures show that all the major northern cities had consistent job losses in industries where employer education averaged less than a high school degree and consistent employment growth in industries where workers on the average acquired some higher education. For example, in New York City the number of jobs in industries with the lower education requisites decreased by 492,000 from 1970 to 1984, whereas those with higher education requisites increased by 239,000. Similar losses and gains occurred in other northern cities. The city of Boston, however, actually added more jobs (67,000) in the higher-education-requisite industries than it lost (44,000) in the lower-education-requisite industries, resulting in an overall growth of 23,000 jobs between 1970 and 1984. Whereas substantial job losses continue in manufacturing and other blue-collar industries in cities in the northeastern region of the country, "their vibrant information-processing sectors are more than compensating for blue-collar job losses, reversing decades of net employment decline."[59]

What are the implications of this transformation of the urban economy for poor minorities? First of all, cities in the North that have experienced the greatest decline of jobs in the lower-education-requisite industries since 1970 have had, at the same time, significant increases in minority residents who are seldom employed in the high-growth industries. Indeed, despite increases in educational attainment since 1970, "black males (over age sixteen) in northern cities are still most concentrated in the education completed category where employment opportunities declined the fastest and are least represented in that category where northern central city employment has most expanded since 1970." This has created "a serious mismatch between the current education distribution of minority residents in large northern cities and the changing education requirements of their rapidly transforming industries bases. This mismatch is one major reason why both unemployment rates and labor-force dropout rates among central-city blacks are much higher than those of central-city residents, and why black unemployment rates have not responded well to economic recovery in many northern cities."[60]

Furthermore, the jobless rate (unemployment and labor-force nonparticipation) among young black males (aged sixteen to twenty-four) has increased sharply since 1969 in the large central cities of the Northeast and Midwest. In the South and West jobless rates among young central-city black males are lower. Kasarda points out that cities in these regions of the United States have either had fewer job losses or have added jobs in industries with lower education requirements. Furthermore, black males in the West not only have lower combined unemployment and labor-force nonparticipation rates than their counterparts in the rest of the nation, they also have higher levels of education. "It is not fortuitous, then, that black males residing in central cities of the West also showed the smallest rises in rates of unemployment and rates of labor-force nonparticipation between 1969 and 1985."[61]

Finally, Kasarda points out that despite the substantial loss of lower-skill jobs in many northern urban centers in recent years, substantial increases in these jobs have occurred nationwide. In the food and drink industry, for example, over 2.1 million nonadministrative jobs were added between 1975 and 1985, which exceeds the total number of production jobs currently available in the combined automobile, steel, and textile industries in this country. "Unfortunately," states Kasarda, "essentially all of the national growth in entry-level and other low education requisite jobs have accrued in the suburbs, exurbs, and nonmetropolitan areas far removed from growing concentrations of poorly educated urban minorities."[62]

Heavily concentrated in central cities, blacks have experienced a deterioration of their economic position on nearly all the major labor-market indicators. Two of these indicators are presented in tables 2.7 and 2.8, which show respectively the proportion who are in the labor force and the fraction who are employed, including those not in the labor force.

Blacks, especially young males, are dropping out of the labor force in significant numbers. The severe problems of joblessness for black teenagers and young adults are seen in the figures on changes in the male civilian labor-force participation rates (table 2.7). The percentage of black males in the labor force fell sharply between 1960 and 1984 for those aged sixteen to twenty-four, and somewhat less for those aged twenty-five to thirty-four. Black males began dropping out of the labor force in increasing numbers as early as 1965, while white males either maintained or increased their rate of participation until 1981.

But even these figures do not reveal the severity of joblessness among younger blacks. Only a minority of noninstitutionalized black youth are employed. As shown in table 2.8, the percentage of black male youth who are employed has sharply and steadily declined since 1955, whereas among white males it has increased only slightly for all categories. The fact that only 58 percent of all black young adult males, 34 percent of all black males aged eighteen to nineteen, and 16 percent of those aged sixteen to seventeen were employed in 1984 reveals a problem of joblessness for young black men that has reached catastrophic proportions.

TABLE 2.7
Civilian Labor-Force Participation Rates for Males Aged Sixteen to Thirty-Four, by Race and Age, Selected Years, 1960–1984

Race and Age	1960	1965	1969	1973	1977	1981	1984
Black and Other Races							
16–17	45.6	39.3	37.7	33.6	31.0	30.0	27.0
18–19	71.2	66.7	63.2	61.3	57.5	54.1	55.4
20–24	90.4	89.8	84.4	81.4	77.7	76.6	77.2
25–34	96.2	95.7	94.4	91.4	90.2	88.3	88.2
White							
16–17	46.0	44.6	48.8	52.7	53.8	51.5	47.0
18–19	69.0	65.8	66.3	72.3	74.9	73.5	70.8
20–24	87.8	85.3	82.6	85.8	86.8	87.0	86.5
25–34	97.7	97.4	97.0	96.2	96.0	95.8	95.4

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor, *Employment and Training Report of the President* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1982); and idem, *Employment and Earnings*, 32 (January 1985).

Note: "Black and other races" is a U.S. Census Bureau designation and is used in those cases where data are not available solely for blacks. However, because about 90 percent of the population so designated is black, statistics reported for this category generally reflect the condition of the black population.

TABLE 2.8
Employment-Population Ratios for Civilian Males Aged Sixteen to Thirty-Four, by Race and Age, Selected Years, 1955–1984

Race and Age	1955	1965	1975	1984
Black and Other Races				
16–17	41.1	28.8	18.4	16.2
18–19	66.0	53.4	38.5	34.0
20–24	78.6	81.6	60.3	58.3
25–34	87.6	90.0	80.4	76.3
White				
16–17	42.2	38.0	41.6	37.8
18–19	64.2	58.3	60.3	60.1
20–24	80.4	80.2	74.3	78.0
25–34	95.2	94.9	89.7	89.5

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor, *Employment and Training Report of the President* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1982); and idem, *Employment and Earnings*, 32 (January 1985).

Notes: The employment-population ratio is the ratio of the employed civilian population to the total civilian population. This excludes those who are either institutionalized or in the armed forces. "Black and other races" is a U.S. Census Bureau designation and is used in those cases where data are not available solely for blacks. However, because about 90 percent of the population so designated is black, statistics reported for this category generally reflect the condition of the black population.

The combined indicators of labor-force participation and employment-population ratios reveal a disturbing picture of black joblessness, especially among younger blacks. If the evidence presented in recent longitudinal research is correct, joblessness during youth may have a long-term harmful effect on later success in the labor market.[63] Increasing joblessness during youth is a problem primarily experienced by lower-income blacks—those already in or near the underclass. To illustrate this fact, table 2.9 provides data on unemployed teenagers living at home. Of the unemployed teenagers living at home in 1977, 67 percent were from families with incomes below $10,000. And among those unemployed teenagers living at home and not enrolled in school, 75 percent were from families with less than $10,000 in income and 41 percent from families with less than $5,000.

If the increasing black joblessness is due to structural changes in the economy, it is also a function of the general weakness of the national economy in recent years. As Frank Levy has clearly shown, the 1973 OPEC oil price increase resulted in both a recession and a rise in inflation which, in turn, decreased real wages by 5 percent in two years. Levy points out that the OPEC oil increase marked the beginning of a period of slow growth in labor productivity ("the measured value of output per hour of labor") which had been the basis of a growth in real wages of 2.5 to 3.5 percent a year from the end of World War II to 1973. However, from 1973 to 1982 labor productivity grew by less than .8 percent each year. Although real wages had regained their 1973 levels by 1979, the fall of the Shah of Iran and the subsequent second OPEC oil price increase effectively renewed the cycle, resulting in a decade of wage stagnation. Levy carefully notes that it was only because the proportion of the entire population in the labor force increased from 41 to 50 percent between 1970 and today (due in large measure to the increased labor-force participation of women, the coming of age of the large baby boom cohorts and lower birth rates), "GNP per capita (i.e., per man, woman and child) could continue to rise even though GNP per worker (wages) was not doing well." In a period of slow growth in labor productivity, efforts to increase money wages only resulted in more inflation. Policymakers responded by running a slack economy; in other words, by allowing unemployment to rise in order to fight inflation.

TABLE 2.9
Unemployed Blacks Aged Sixteen to Nineteen Living at Home, by School Enrollment Status and Family Income, 1977

Family Income ($)	Total (%)	Enrolled in School (%)	Not in School (%)
Under 5,000	32.1	23.6	41.0
5,000–9,999	34.7	35.7	33.6
10,000–14,999	16.8	20.0	13.4
15,000–24,999	12.0	15.0	9.0
25,000 or more	4.4	5.7	3.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Anne McDougall Young, "The Difference a Year Makes in the Nation's Youth Work Force," *Monthly Labor Review* 102 (October 1979):38.

As Levy notes, manufacturing industries, a major source of black employment in the twentieth century, are particularly sensitive to a slack economy and therefore have suffered many job losses in recent years, particularly in the older, central city plants. Moreover, low-wage workers and newly hired workers (disproportionately represented by blacks) are most adversely affected by a slack economy. One of the consequences of increasing unemployment, states Levy, is "a growing polarization in the income distribution of black men. . . . Compared to 1969, the proportions of black men with income below $5,000 and above $25,000 have both grown. Thus black men at the top of the distribution were doing progressively better while blacks at the bottom—between a fifth and a quarter of all black men ages 25–55—were doing progressively worse."

Finally, the economic problems of low income blacks have been reinforced by recent demographic factors resulting in a "labor surplus environment." On this point Levy states: "During the decade, women of all ages sharply increased their labor-force participation and the large baby boom cohorts of the 1950's came of age. Between 1960 and 1970, the labor force (nationwide) had grown by 13 million persons. But between 1970 and 1980, the labor force grew by 24 million persons. Because of this growth, we can assume that employers could be particularly choosy about whom they hired. In 1983, the more than half of all black household heads in central city poverty areas had not finished high school, a particular disadvantage in this kind of job market."[64]

The changes associated with the cessation of black migration to the central city and the sharp drop in the number of black children under age thirteen may increase the likelihood that the economic situation of urban blacks will improve in the near future. However, the current problems of black joblessness are so overwhelming that it is just as likely that only a major program of economic reform will be sufficient to prevent a significant proportion of the urban underclass from being

permanently locked out of the mainstream of the American occupational system. And the strongest case for this argument is found in those inner-city neighborhoods that have recently undergone a social transformation.

Concentration Effects: The Significance of the Social Transformation of the Inner City

In the nation's fifty largest cities the poverty population rose by 12 percent and the number of persons living in poverty areas (i.e., census tracts with a poverty rate of at least 20 percent) increased by more than 20 percent from 1970 to 1980, despite a 5 percent reduction in the total population in these cities during this period.[65]

However, if we closely examine population and social changes in the five largest cities in the United States, as determined on the basis of the 1970 census population figures (i.e., New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Detroit), where nearly half of the total poor population of the fifty largest cities in the United States lived in 1980, we get a clearer picture of the magnitude of the changes that have taken place in both the population and the neighborhoods of large metropolises.

Although the total population in these five largest cities decreased by 9 percent between 1970 and 1980, the poverty population increased by 22 percent (see figure 2.1). Furthermore, the population living in poverty areas grew by 40 percent overall, by 69 percent in high-poverty areas (i.e., areas with a poverty rate of at least 30 percent), and by a staggering 161 percent in extreme-poverty areas (i.e., areas with a poverty rate of at least 40 percent).[66] It should be emphasized that these incredible changes took place within just a 10-year period.

Poverty areas, of course, include both poor and nonpoor individuals. It is therefore worth noting that the increase in the poor population in these areas was even more severe than that in the total population. More specifically, the number of poor living in poverty areas in these five largest cities increased by 58 percent overall, by 70 percent in high-poverty areas, and by a whopping 182 percent in the extreme-poverty areas.[67] The extraordinary increase in both the poor and nonpoor populations in the extreme-poverty areas between 1970 and 1980 was due mainly to changes in the demographic characteristics of the black population.

Whereas the total white population in the extreme-poverty areas in the five largest cities increased by 45 percent and the white poor population by only 24 percent, the total black population in these areas increased by 148 percent and the poor black population by 164 percent

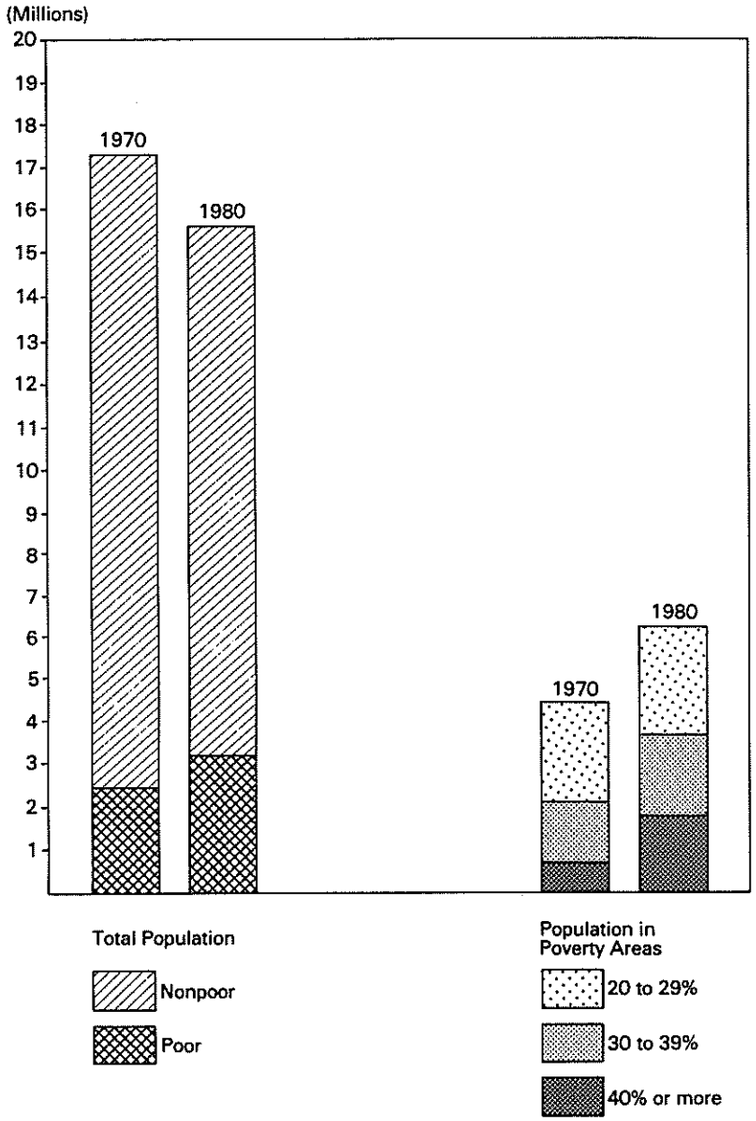

Figure 2.1. Change in population, poverty population, and population in poverty areas in five largest cities (based on 1970 census), 1970–80. *Sources:* U.S. Bureau of the Census. *1970 Census of the Population: Low Income Areas in Large Cities*. PC-(2)-9B. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1973; and *1980 Census of the Population: Low Income Areas in Large Cities*. PC-2-8D. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985.

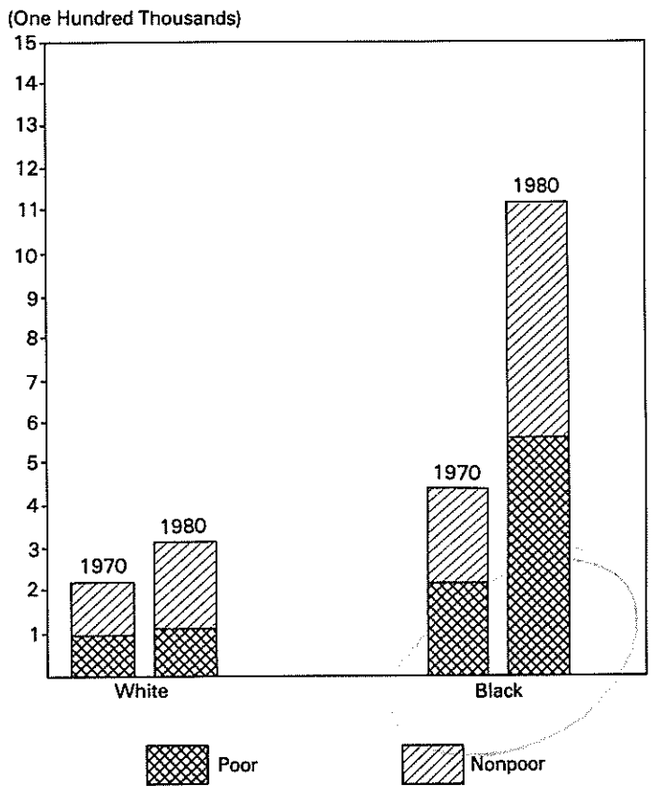

Figure 2.2. Change in population in extreme poverty areas (at least 40% poor) in five largest cities (based on 1970 census) by race, 1970–80. *Sources:* see fig. 2.1.

(see figure 2.2). However, these racial differences become even greater when blacks are compared with non-Hispanic whites. In the 1970 Census the question of "Spanish/Hispanic origin" was asked of only a 5-percent sample of the population; in the 1980 Census this question was asked of everyone. Thus, the data from the 1980 Census make it possible to separate non-Hispanic whites from those whites of Spanish/Hispanic origin who either self-classified themselves as white or marked the category "other" and wrote in entries such as "Mexican," "Puerto Rican," or "Cuban." When these differences are calculated from 1980 Census data, only 47 percent of the more than 306,000

whites living in extreme-poverty areas in these five cities were non-Hispanic, and only 43 percent of the more than 123,000 poor whites in these areas were non-Hispanic. This means that less than 2 percent of the nearly 8 million non-Hispanic whites and only 7 percent of the more than 750,000 poor non-Hispanic whites in these five large central cities lived in extreme-poverty areas in 1980. I will return to the important question of the differences in the ethnic and racial concentration in poverty areas, but first let me examine the factors involved in the growing concentration of urban poverty.

In chapter 1, I emphasized that inner-city neighborhoods have undergone a profound social transformation in the last several years as reflected not only in their increasing rates of social dislocation (including crime, joblessness, out-of-wedlock births, female-headed families, and welfare dependency) but also in the changing economic class structure of ghetto neighborhoods. I pointed out that in the 1940s, and 1950s, and even into the 1960s, these neighborhoods featured a vertical integration of different income groups as lower-, working-, and middle-class professional black families all resided more or less in the same ghetto neighborhoods. I also stated that the very presence of working- and middle-class families enhanced the social organization of inner-city neighborhoods. Finally, I noted that the movement of middle-class black professionals from the inner city, followed in increasing numbers by working-class blacks, has left behind a much higher concentration of the most disadvantaged segments of the black urban population, the population to which I refer when I speak of the ghetto underclass. Sheldon Danziger and Peter Gottschalk have reacted to this thesis and have pointed out that some census tracts could have become more impoverished because "more poor people moved into them or because a greater percentage of existing tract residents became poor." Furthermore, tracts that were not in poverty previously could have become designated poverty areas "either because nonpoor residents moved away or because the number of poor within them increased."[68]

However, if we examine data collected on Chicago community areas from 1970 to 1980, it is clear that several processes are at work resulting in an increase in the number of individuals, particularly minority individuals, living in poverty areas. As shown in figure 2.3, based on the percentage of families with incomes below the poverty line, of the seventy-seven Chicago community areas in 1970 only eight had rates of poverty of at least 30 percent and only one had a rate of poverty that exceeded 40 percent.[69] Over 90 percent of the average population in these eight communities were black in 1970; yet, it is significant to

note that from 1970 to 1980 these communities had a net black migration ("that is, the difference between population at the beginning and at the end of the time interval 'minus' natural increase")[70] of minus 42 percent. This means that nearly 151,000 blacks departed these communities during this ten-year period, leaving behind a much more highly concentrated poverty population. Six of these communities moved from the high- to the extreme-poverty range from 1970 to 1980, and one had climbed from a 44-percent rate in 1970 to a 61-percent poverty rate in 1980. Despite the exodus of 151,000 blacks, the *absolute* number of poor families in these eight communities remained virtually the same (from 26,940 in 1970 to 26,259 in 1980). These data support the hypothesis that the significant increase in the poverty concentration in these overwhelmingly black communities is related to the large out-migration of nonpoor blacks.

The increase in the concentration of poverty in Chicago was not confined to these eight neighborhoods, however. Indeed, whereas only sixteen of Chicago's seventy-seven neighborhoods were designated community poverty areas in 1970, and whereas only one could be classified as an extreme-poverty area by 1980, as shown in figure 2.4, the number of community poverty areas had increased to twenty-six, and nine of these were extreme-poverty areas. In addition to the outmigration of nonpoor blacks from many of these neighborhoods, some have become more poor because of the net minus migration of whites and other nonblacks. This is particularly the case in those twelve community areas with poverty rates in the 20-percent range in 1980. Seven of these neighborhoods were nonpoverty areas in 1970. Between 1970 and 1980, almost 185,000 whites and other nonblacks departed these areas, creating a minus net migration of 29 percent.

Thus, despite the fact that each of the community poverty areas in 1970 had lost population by 1980, the remarkable spread of poverty to other areas by 1980 resulted in a significant increase in the total number of people living in poor Chicago neighborhoods. It is also the case that the number of poor people in Chicago who lived both inside and outside community poverty areas increased by 24 percent from 1970 to 1980 despite an 11-percent decrease in the population. Obviously, part of that increase is due to the rise in the number of people in these poverty areas who became poor during this period. And perhaps one of the major contributing factors is the increase in joblessness.

As revealed in figures 2.5 and 2.6, whereas only five community areas in Chicago had an unemployment rate of at least 15 percent in 1970, by 1980 twenty-five community areas did, and of these, ten (all

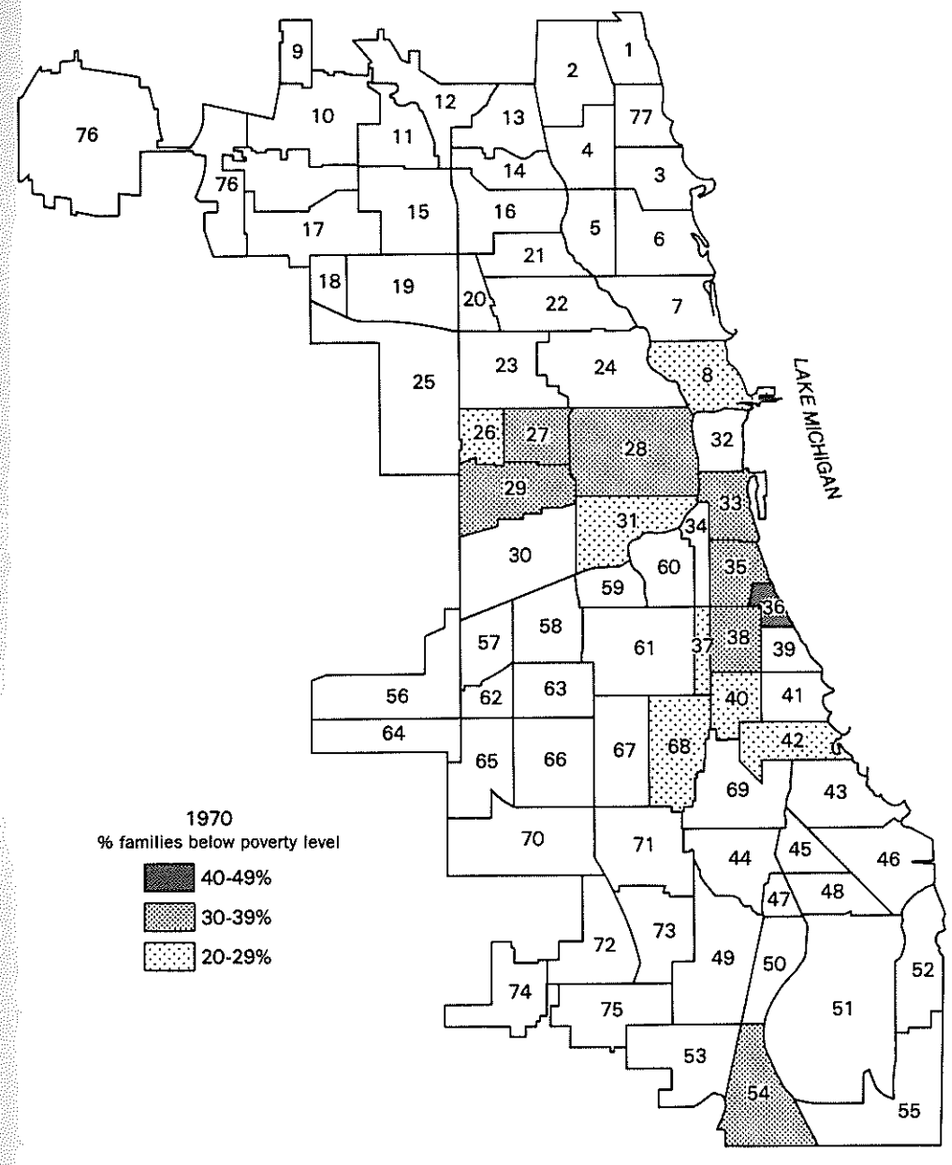

Figure 2.3 Chicago Community Poverty Areas, 1970. *Source: Local Community Fact Book: Chicago Metropolitan Area, 1970 and 1980* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1984).

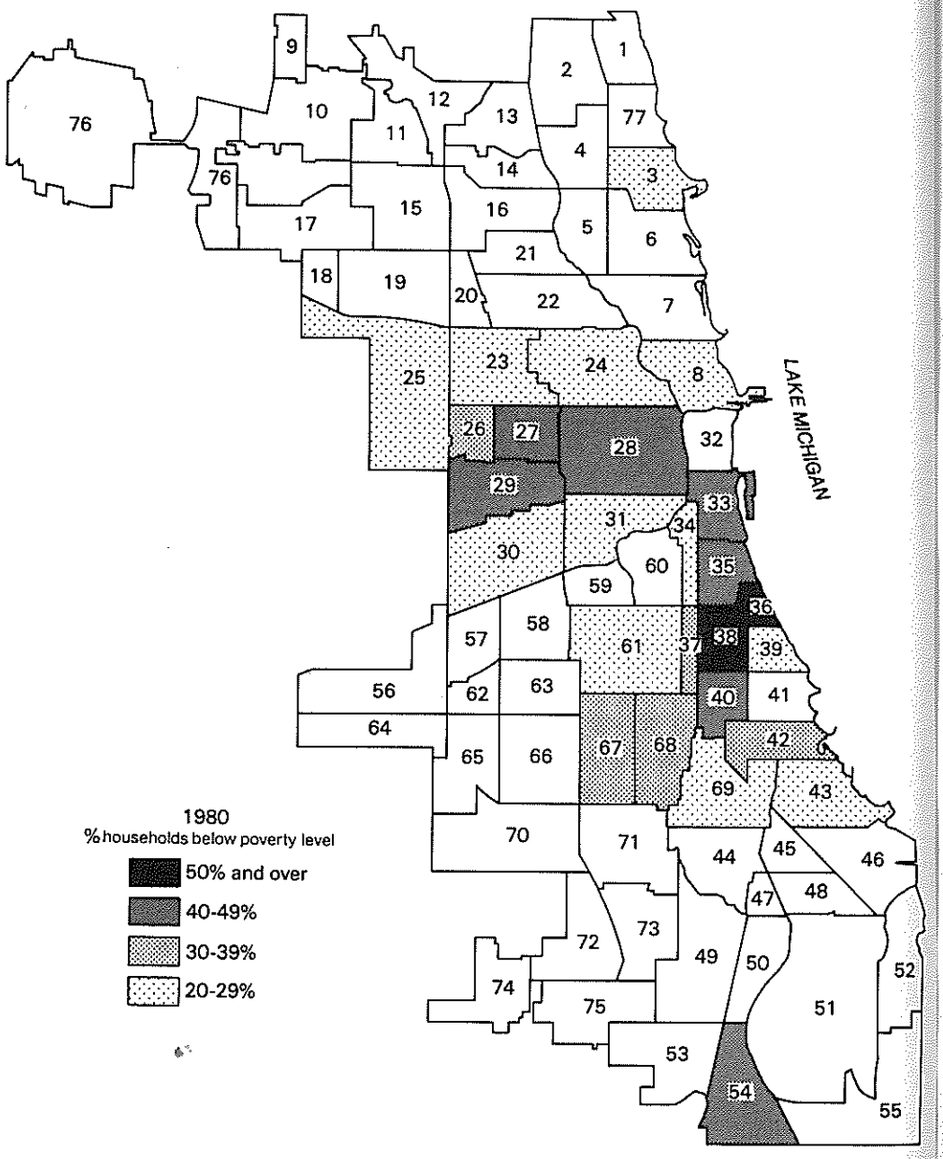

Figure 2.4. Chicago Community Poverty Areas, 1980. *Source:* see fig. 2.3.

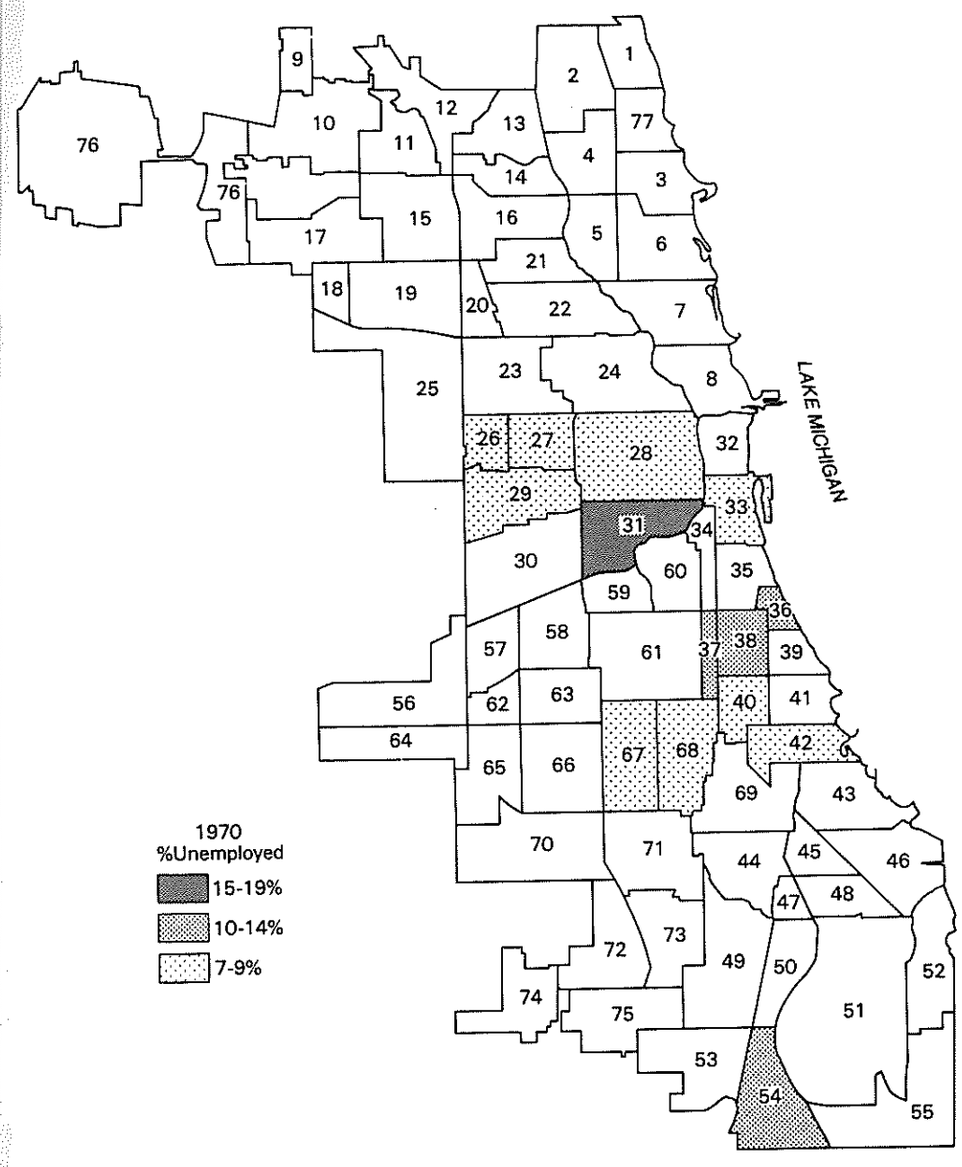

Figure 2.5. Unemployment rates in Chicago Community Areas, 1970. *Source:* see fig. 2.3.

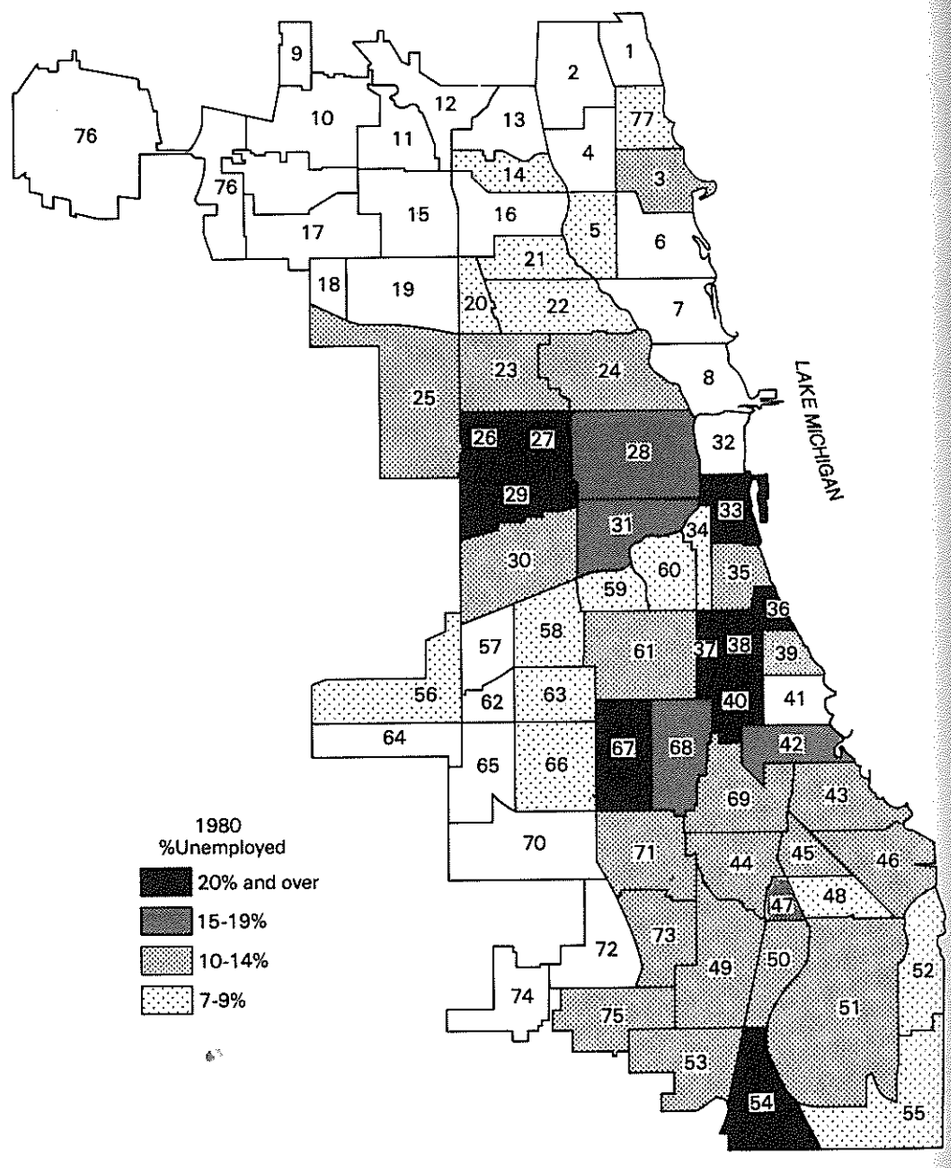

Figure 2.6. Unemployment rates in Chicago Community Areas, 1980.
Source: see fig. 2.3.

predominately black and all high-to-extreme community poverty areas) had rates of at least 20-percent unemployment. As I shall argue, increasing joblessness has its most devastating effect in the most highly concentrated poverty areas.

It is the growth of the high- and extreme-poverty areas that epitomizes the social transformation of the inner city, a transformation that represents a change in the class structure in many inner-city neighborhoods as the nonpoor black middle and working classes tend no longer to reside in these neighborhoods, thereby increasing the proportion of truly disadvantaged individuals and families. What are the effects of this growing concentration of poverty on individual and families in the inner city?

I initially raised this question in systematic form in 1985,[71] and my arguments on the changing class structure in the inner city were later picked up in the popular media.[72] However, instead of focusing on the changing situational and structural factors that accompanied the black middle- and working-class exodus from the inner city, arguments in the popular media tended to emphasize a crystallization of a ghetto culture of poverty once black middle-class self-consciously imposed cultural constraints on lower-class culture were removed. Indeed, Nicholas Lemann, in one of two articles titled the "Origins of the Underclass" in the *Atlantic Monthly* goes so far as to suggest that "every aspect of the underclass culture in the ghettos is directly traceable to roots in the South—and not the South of slavery but the South of a generation ago. In fact, there seems to be a strong correlation between underclass status in the North and a family background in the nascent underclass of the sharecropper."[73] However, as discussed in the appendix, the systematic research on urban poverty and recent migration (that is, migration in the second half of the twentieth century) consistently shows that southern-born blacks who have migrated to the urban North experience greater economic success in terms of employment rates, earnings, and welfare dependency than do those urban blacks who were born in the North (see "Urban Poverty and Migration" in the appendix). For example, one study of southern migrants in six large urban areas (New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles) points out that "the rapid rise that occurred during the 1960s in the number of persons on welfare resulted mainly from an increase in the number of urban nonmigrants applying for welfare." Northern-born blacks were more likely to receive welfare than southern-born blacks, despite the fact that the level of education of blacks born in the North was higher than that of blacks born in the South. In addition, "the migrants (both men and women) have tended to have higher labor-force participation

rates and lower unemployment rates than black natives in the cities in question."[74]

However, the argument that associates the increase of social problems in the inner city with the crystallization of underclass culture obscures some very important structural and institutional changes in the inner city that have accompanied the black middle- and working-class exodus, and leaves the erroneous impression that the sharp increase in social dislocations in the inner city can simply be explained by the ascendancy of a ghetto culture of poverty. The problem is much more complex.

More specifically, I believe that the exodus of middle- and working-class families from many ghetto neighborhoods removes an important "social buffer" that could deflect the full impact of the kind of prolonged and increasing joblessness that plagued inner-city neighborhoods in the 1970s and early 1980s, joblessness created by uneven economic growth and periodic recessions. This argument is based on the assumption that even if the truly disadvantaged segments of an inner-city area experience a significant increase in long-term spells of joblessness, the basic institutions in that area (churches, schools, stores, recreational facilities, etc.) would remain viable if much of the base of their support comes from the more economically stable and secure families. Moreover, the very presence of these families during such periods provides mainstream role models that help keep alive the perception that education is meaningful, that steady employment is a viable alternative to welfare, and that family stability is the norm, not the exception.

Thus, a perceptive ghetto youngster in a neighborhood that includes a good number of working and professional families may observe increasing joblessness and idleness but he will also witness many individuals regularly going to and from work; he may sense an increase in school dropouts but he can also see a connection between education and meaningful employment; he may detect a growth in single-parent families, but he will also be aware of the presence of many married-couple families; he may notice an increase in welfare dependency, but he can also see a significant number of families that are not on welfare; and he may be cognizant of an increase in crime, but he can recognize that many residents in his neighborhood are not involved in criminal activity.

However, in ghetto neighborhoods that have experienced a steady out-migration of middle- and working-class families—communities, in other words, that lack a social buffer—a sudden and/or prolonged increase in joblessness, as existed in the 1970s and first half of the 1980s,

creates a ripple effect resulting in an exponential increase in related forms of social dislocation. The ways in which people adapt to the growing problem of long-term joblessness in such neighborhoods are influenced not only by the constraints they face and the opportunities they have, but also by the repeated ways they have responded to such problems in the past.

Thus, in a neighborhood with a paucity of regularly employed families and with the overwhelming majority of families having spells of long-term joblessness, people experience a social isolation that excludes them from the job network system that permeates other neighborhoods and that is so important in learning about or being recommended for jobs that become available in various parts of the city. And as the prospects for employment diminish, other alternatives such as welfare and the underground economy are not only increasingly relied on, they come to be seen as a way of life. Moreover, unlike the situation in earlier years, girls who become pregnant out of wedlock invariably give birth out of wedlock because of a shrinking pool of marriageable, that is, employed, black males (see chap. 3).

Thus, in such neighborhoods the chances are overwhelming that children will seldom interact on a sustained basis with people who are employed or with families that have a steady breadwinner. The net effect is that joblessness, as a way of life, takes on a different social meaning; the relationship between schooling and postschool employment takes on a different meaning. The development of cognitive, linguistic, and other educational and job-related skills necessary for the world of work in the mainstream economy is thereby adversely affected. In such neighborhoods, therefore, teachers become frustrated and do not teach and children do not learn. A vicious cycle is perpetuated through the family, through the community, and through the schools. The consequences are dramatically revealed when figures on educational attainment in the inner-city schools are released. For example, of the 39,500 students who enrolled in the ninth grade of Chicago's public schools in 1980, and who would have normally graduated from high school four years later in the spring of 1984, only 18,500 (or 47 percent) graduated; of these only 6,000 were capable of reading at or above the national twelfth-grade level. However, the situation is even more bleak for those black and Hispanic students who attended segregated inner-city high schools and who represented two-thirds of the original class of 1984. Of the 25,500 ninth-grade black and Hispanic students who were originally enrolled in these segregated, nonselective high schools in Chicago, 16,000 did not graduate. "Of the 9,500 students who did graduate, 4,000 read at or below the junior level and

only 2,000 read at or above the national average. In these non-selective segregated high schools, then, only 2,000 of the original class of 25,000 students both completed high school and could read at or above the level considered average in the rest of the country."[75] Although these figures do not indicate the proportion of students who left inner-city schools because they moved out of the neighborhoods in which these schools are located, they, nonetheless, suggest a shockingly high degree of educational retardation in the inner city.

In short, the communities of the underclass are plagued by massive joblessness, flagrant and open lawlessness, and low-achieving schools, and therefore tend to be avoided by outsiders. Consequently, the residents of these areas, whether women and children of welfare families or aggressive street criminals, have become increasingly socially isolated from mainstream patterns of behavior.

If I had to use one term to capture the differences in the experiences of low-income families who live in inner-city areas from the experiences of those who live in other areas in the central city today, that term would be *concentration effects*. The social transformation of the inner city has resulted in a disproportionate concentration of the most disadvantaged segments of the urban black population, creating a social milieu significantly different from the environment that existed in these communities several decades ago.

I have already contrasted the situation of a poor black child living in a stable, vertically class-integrated inner-city community with one who lives in a depressed, unstable, and socially isolated inner-city community. I should also point out that whereas poor blacks are frequently found in isolated poor urban neighborhoods, poor whites rarely live in such neighborhoods. Indeed, as shown in figure 2.7, whereas 68 percent of all poor whites lived in nonpoverty areas in the five large central cities in 1980, only 15 percent of poor blacks and 20 percent of poor Hispanics lived in such areas. And whereas only 7 percent of all poor whites live in the extreme poverty areas, 32 percent of all poor Hispanics and 39 percent of all poor blacks lived in such areas. Accordingly, if one were to conduct a study that simply compared the responses of poor urban whites with those of poor urban blacks independent of concentration effects, that is, without taking into account the different neighborhoods in which poor whites and poor blacks tend to live, one would reach conclusions about attitudes, norms, behavior, and human-capital traits that would be favorable to poor whites and unfavorable to poor blacks. In other words, "simple comparisons between poor whites and poor blacks would be confounded with the fact that poor whites reside in areas which are ecologically and economically very different

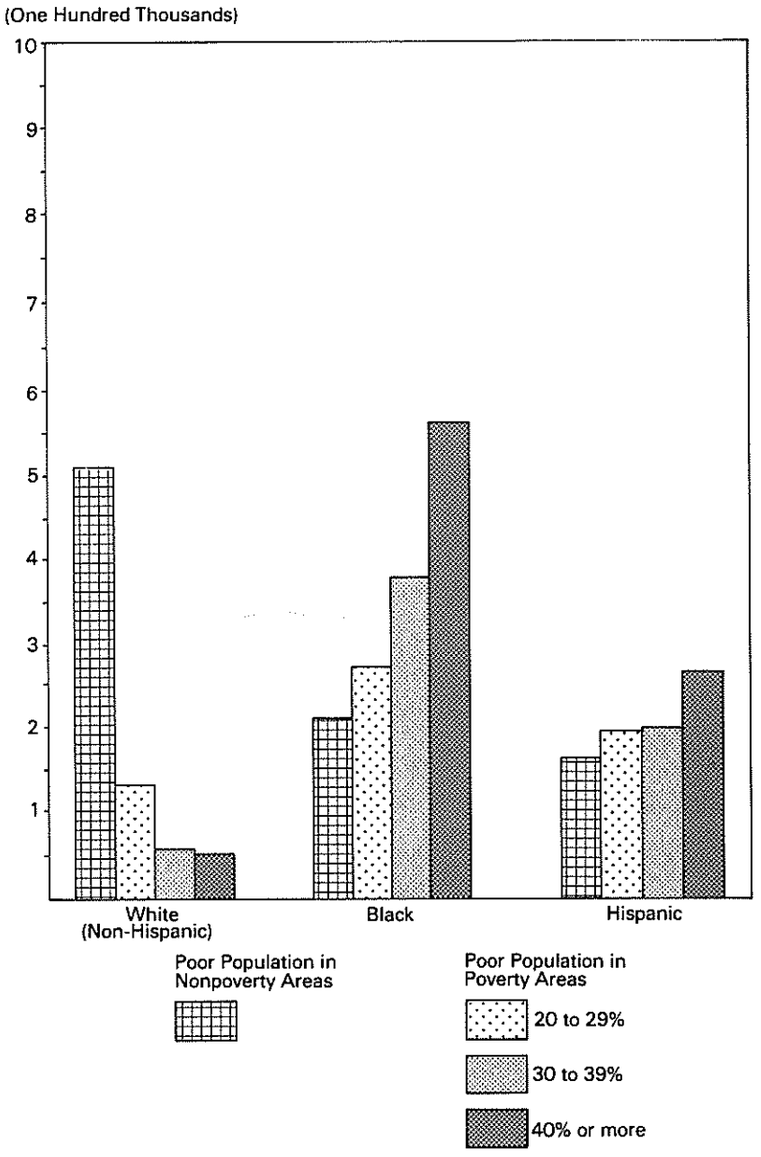

Figure 2.7. Concentration of poor population in nonpoverty and poverty areas in five largest cities (based on 1970 census), 1980. *Source: 1980 Census of the Population: Low Income Areas in Large Cities.* PC-2-8D. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985.

from poor blacks. Any observed relationships involving race would reflect, to some unknown degree, the relatively superior ecological niche many poor whites occupy with respect to jobs, marriage opportunities, and exposure to conventional role models."[76]

What is significant to emphasize, however, is that inner-city communities are not only "ecologically and economically very different" from areas in which poor urban whites tend to reside, they are also very different from their own ecological and economic makeup of several decades ago. Take the problem of social networks. Unlike poor urban whites or even the inner-city blacks of earlier years, the residents of highly concentrated poverty neighborhoods in the inner city today not only infrequently interact with those individuals or families who have had a stable work history and have had little involvement with welfare or public assistance, they also seldom have sustained contact with friends or relatives in the more stable areas of the city or in the suburbs.

The net result is that the degree of social isolation—defined in this context as the lack of contact or of sustained interaction with individuals and institutions that represent mainstream society—in these highly concentrated poverty areas has become far greater than we had previously assumed. What are the affects of this kind of social isolation?

Inner-city social isolation makes it much more difficult for those who are looking for jobs to be tied into the job network. Even in those situations where job vacancies become available in an industry near or within an inner-city neighborhood, workers who live outside the inner city may find out about these vacancies sooner than those who live near the industry because the latter are not tied into the job network. This point is overlooked in the recent widely cited study by David Ellwood.[77] This study questioned the validity of the spatial-mismatch hypothesis because the reported data show that black youth on the west side of Chicago had as high a jobless rate as black youth on the south side despite the much higher concentration of employers on the west side. However, what needs to be considered is youth's lack of access to the job network in both the west-side and south-side neighborhoods.

Inner-city social isolation also generates behavior not conducive to good work histories. The patterns of behavior that are associated with a life of casual work (tardiness and absenteeism) are quite different from those that accompany a life of regular or steady work (e.g., the habit of waking up early in the morning to a ringing alarm clock). In neighborhoods in which nearly every family has at least one person who is steadily employed, the norms and behavior patterns that emanate from a life of regularized employment become part of the community gestalt. On the other hand, in neighborhoods in which most families do not have a steadily employed breadwinner, the norms and behavior patterns associated with steady work compete with those associated with casual or infrequent work. Accordingly, the less frequent the regular contact with those who have steady and full-time employment (that is, the greater the degree of social isolation), the more likely that initial job performance will be characterized by tardiness, absenteeism, and, thereby, low retention. In other words, a person's patterns and norms of behavior tend to be shaped by those with which he or she has had the most frequent or sustained contact and interaction. Moreover, since the jobs that are available to the inner-city poor are the very ones that alienate even persons with long and stable work histories, the combination of unattractive jobs and lack of community norms to reinforce work increases the likelihood that individuals will turn to either underground illegal activity or idleness or both.

The key theoretical concept, therefore, is not *culture of poverty* but *social isolation*. Culture of poverty implies that basic values and attitudes of the ghetto subculture have been internalized and thereby influence behavior. Accordingly, efforts to enhance the life chances of groups such as the ghetto underclass require, from this perspective, social policies (e.g., programs of training and education as embodied in manditory workfare) aimed at directly changing these subcultural traits. Social isolation, on the other hand, not only implies that contact between groups of different class and/or racial backgrounds is either lacking or has become increasingly intermittent but that the nature of this contact enhances the effects of living in a highly concentrated poverty area. These concentration effects include the constraints and opportunities in neighborhoods in which the population is overwhelmingly socially disadvantaged—constraints and opportunities that include the kinds of ecological niches that the residents of these neighborhoods occupy in terms of access to jobs and job networks, availability of marriageable partners, involvement in quality schools, and exposure to conventional role models.

The distinction between *social isolation* and *culture of poverty* will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 6. For now let me say that to emphasize the concept *social isolation* does not mean that cultural traits are irrelevant in understanding behavior in highly concentrated poverty areas; rather, it highlights the fact that culture is a response to social structural constraints and opportunities. From a public-policy perspective, this would mean shifting the focus from changing subcultural traits (as suggested by the "culture of poverty" thesis) to changing the structure of constraints and opportunities. The increasing

social isolation of the inner city is a product of the class transformation of the inner city, including the growing concentration of poverty in inner-city neighborhoods. And the class transformation of the inner city cannot be understood without considering the effects of fundamental changes in the urban economy on the lower-income minorities, effects that include joblessness and that thereby increase the chances of long-term residence in highly concentrated poverty areas.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to show that the factors associated with the recent increases in social dislocation among the ghetto underclass are complex and cannot be reduced to the easy explanation of racism or racial discrimination. Although present-day discrimination undoubtedly has contributed to the increasing social and economic woes of the ghetto underclass, I have argued that these problems have been due far more to a complex web of other factors that include shifts in the American economy—which has produced extraordinary rates of black joblessness that have exacerbated other social problems in the inner city—the historic flow of migrants, changes in the urban minority age structure, population changes in the central city, and the class transformation of the inner city.

However, as discussed in the previous chapter, conservative scholars have placed far more emphasis on ghetto culture and the liberal welfare state as factors related to the increase in inner-city social dislocations. I have already argued against elevating the culture-of-poverty thesis to central explanatory importance and, to repeat, I will elaborate on this position in chapter 6. However, in the next two chapters the welfare-state explanation of the rise of inner-city social dislocations will be critically assessed. In the process, the relationship of basic economic changes and joblessness to the rise of black female-headed families, out-of-wedlock births, and welfare dependency will be more firmly established.

3 Poverty and Family Structure

The Widening Gap Between Evidence and Public Policy Issues

with Kathryn Neckerman

In the early and mid-1960s social scientists such as Kenneth B. Clark, Lee Rainwater, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan discussed in clear and forceful terms the relationship between black poverty and family structure and sounded the alarm even then that the problems of family dissolution among poor blacks were approaching catastrophic proportions.[1] These writers emphasized that the rising rates of broken marriages, out-of-wedlock births, female-headed families, and welfare dependency among poor urban blacks were the products not only of race-specific experiences, but also of structural conditions in the larger society, including economic relations. And they underlined the need to address these problems with programs that would attack structural inequality in American society and thereby, in the words of Moynihan, "bring the Negro American to full and equal sharing in the responsibilities and rewards of citizenship."[2]

There is a distinct difference in the way the problems of poverty and family structure were viewed in the major studies of the 1960s and the way they are viewed today, however. Unlike the earlier studies, discussions in the current research of the relationship between black family instability and male joblessness have been overshadowed by discussions that link family instability with the growth of income transfers and in-kind benefits. Because, as we demonstrate in this chapter, the factors associated with the rise of single-parent families—not only among blacks, but among whites as well—are sufficiently complex to preclude overemphasis on any single variable, the recent trend among scholars and policymakers to neglect the role of male joblessness while emphasizing the role of welfare is especially questionable. But first let us examine the problem of poverty and family structure in its historical context.

Poverty and Family Structure in Historical Perspective

In the early twentieth century the vast majority of both black and white low-income families were intact. Although national information on fami-