

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Winter 2022 **Contemporary Economic Policy**

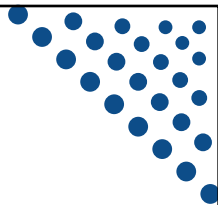
Dominican University
Fall, 2022

National Economic Education Delegation



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Available **NEED** Topics Include:

- US Economy
- Healthcare Economics
- Climate Change
- Economic Inequality
- Economic Mobility
- Trade and Globalization
- Minimum Wages
- Immigration Economics
- Housing Policy
- Federal Budgets
- Federal Debt
- Black-White Wealth Gap
- Autonomous Vehicles
- US Social Policy



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Course Outline

• Contemporary Economic Policy

- Week 1 (10/13): Economic Inequality (Jennifer Alix-Garcia, Oregon St. Univ.)
- Week 2 (10/20): Economic Mobility (Jon Haveman, NEED)
- **Week 3 (10/27): The Black-White Wealth Gap (Jon Haveman, NEED)**
- Week 4 (11/3): The Gender Wage Gap (Mallika Pung, University of New Mexico)

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The Black-White Wealth Gap

OLLI – Dominican University
October 27, 2022

Jon Haveman, Ph.D.
National Economic Economic Delegation

Wealth Concentration Widens the Racial Wealth Divide.

Significantly raising taxes on the ultra-wealthy would generate the necessary revenue for more fair and equitable wealth building programs.



INEQUALITY Institute for Public Policy

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National Economic Education Delegation

- **Vision**

- One day, the public discussion of policy issues will be grounded in an accurate perception of the underlying economic principles and data.

- **Mission**

- NEED unites the skills and knowledge of a vast network of professional economists to promote understanding of the economics of policy issues in the United States.

- **NEED Presentations**

- Are **nonpartisan** and intended to reflect the consensus of the economics profession.



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Who Are We?

- **Honorary Board: 54 members**

- 2 Fed Chairs: Janet Yellen, Ben Bernanke
- 6 Chairs Council of Economic Advisers
 - o Furman (D), Rosen (R), Bernanke (R), Yellen (D), Tyson (D), Goolsbee (D)
- 4 Nobel Prize Winners
 - o Akerlof, Smith, Maskin, Bernanke

- **Delegates: 652+ members**

- At all levels of academia and some in government service
- All have a Ph.D. in economics
- Crowdsource slide decks
- Give presentations

- **Global Partners: 49 Ph.D. Economists**

- Aid in slide deck development



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Available NEED Topics Include:

- Healthcare Economics
- Climate Change
- Economic Inequality
- Economic Mobility
- US Social Policy
- Trade and Globalization
- Minimum Wages
- The U.S. Economy
- Immigration Economics
- Housing Policy
- Federal Budgets
- Federal Debt
- Black-White Wealth Gap
- Autonomous Vehicles



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Credits and Disclaimer

- **This slide deck was authored by:**
 - Darrick Hamilton, Ph.D., The New School
 - Jon Haveman, Ph.D., NEED
- **This slide deck was reviewed by:**
 - Patrick Mason, Florida State University
 - Steven Craig, University of Houston
- **Disclaimer**
 - NEED presentations are designed to be nonpartisan.
 - It is, however, inevitable that the presenter will be asked for and will provide their own views.
 - Such views are those of the presenter and not necessarily those of the National Economic Education Delegation (NEED).



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Outline

- Evidence of disparities
- Why wealth is important
- Sources of disparities
- Policy solutions



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What is Wealth?

- **Income vs Wealth**

- Income is the flow of funds into a households each year.
- **Wealth is a household's NET asset holdings.**
 - o The value of all assets minus the value of all debts.

- **Assets include:**

- Owned homes, cars, stocks, businesses, savings and checking accounts, pensions, life insurance...

- **Debts include:**

- Home mortgages, car loans, credit cards, and any other significant financial obligations (excl regular bills)...

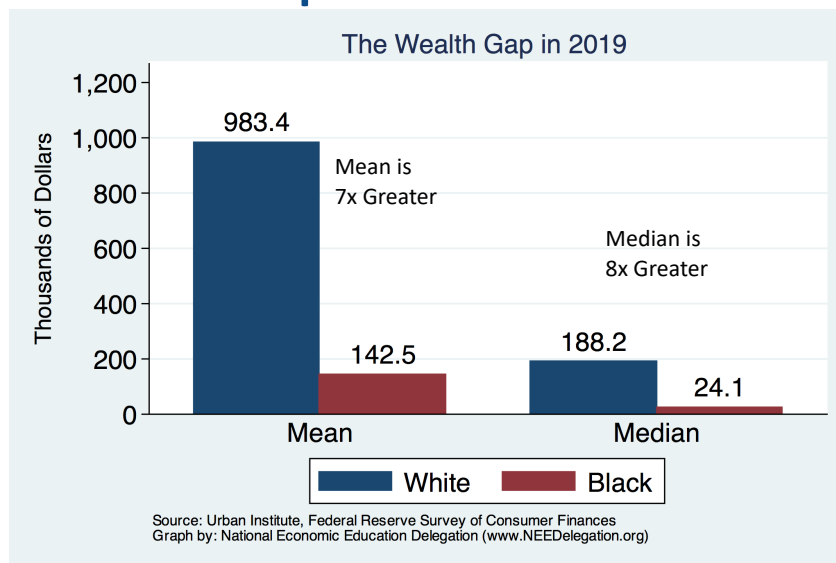


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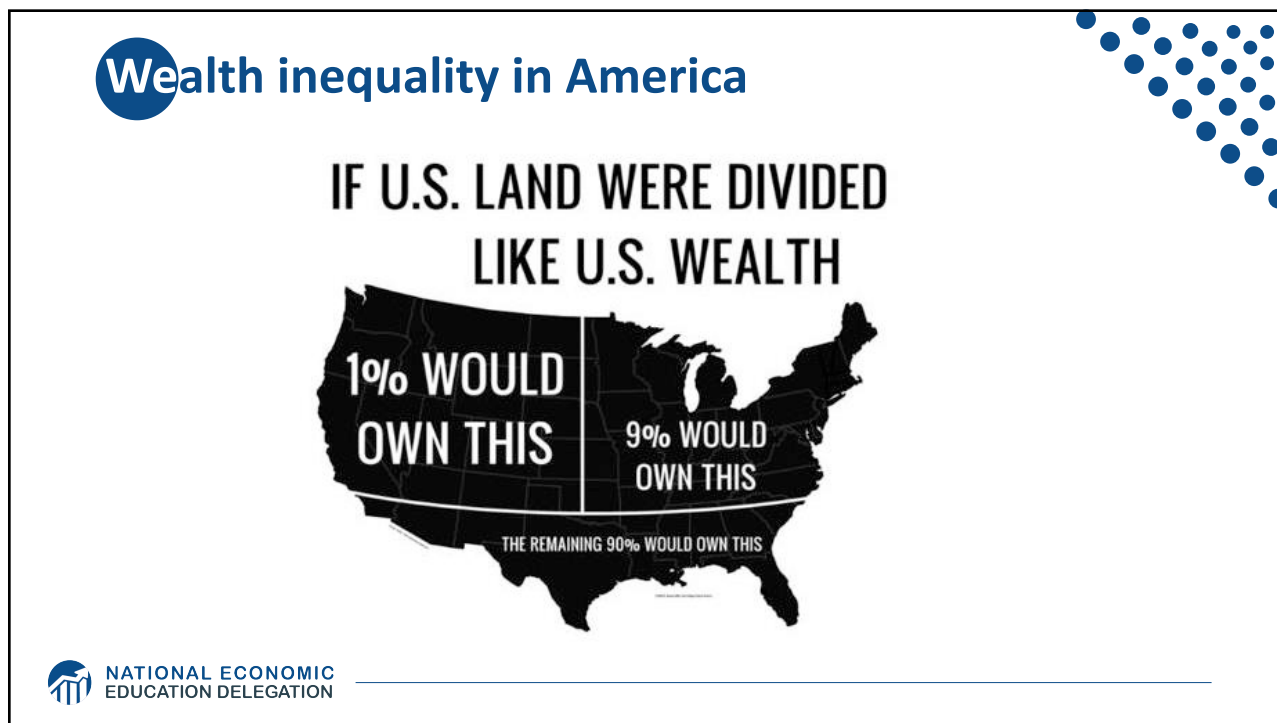
Evidence

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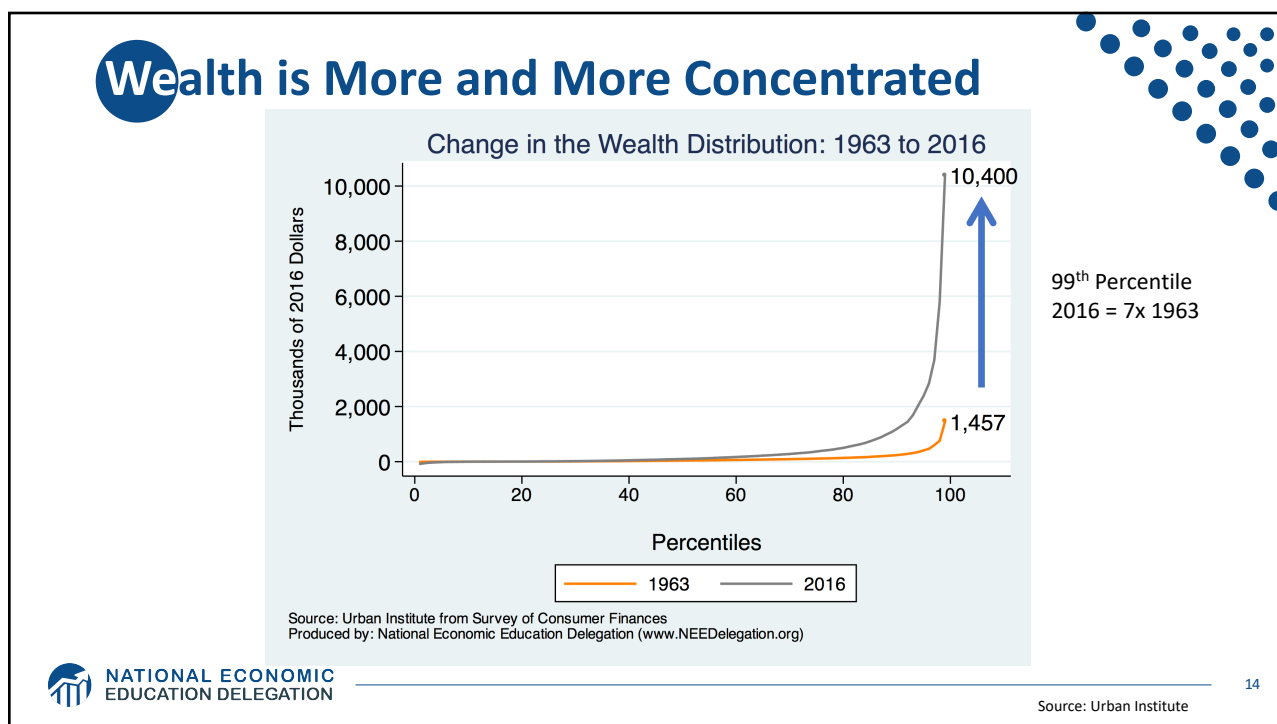
Evidence of the Gap



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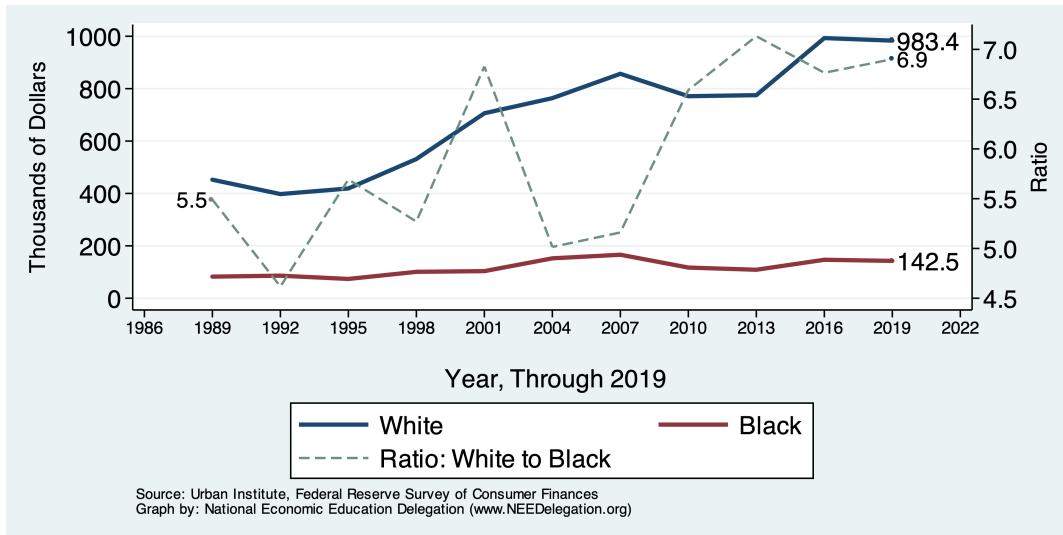


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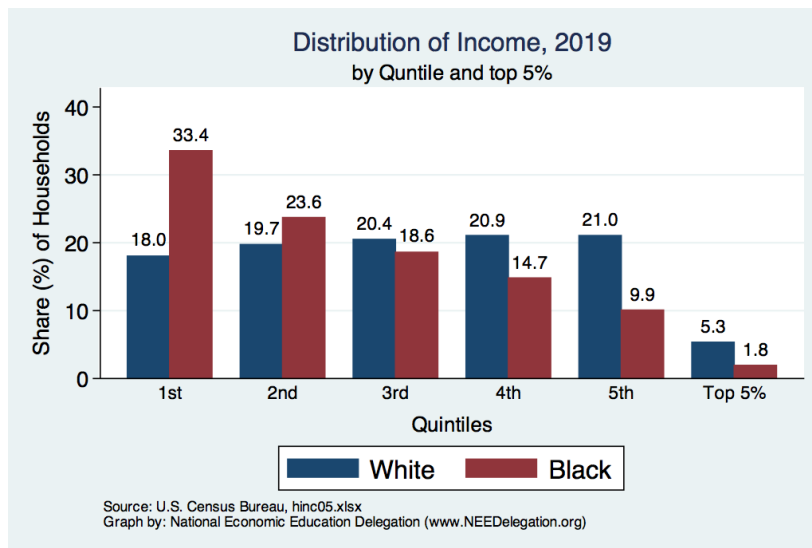
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Wealth Gap Over Time: Mean

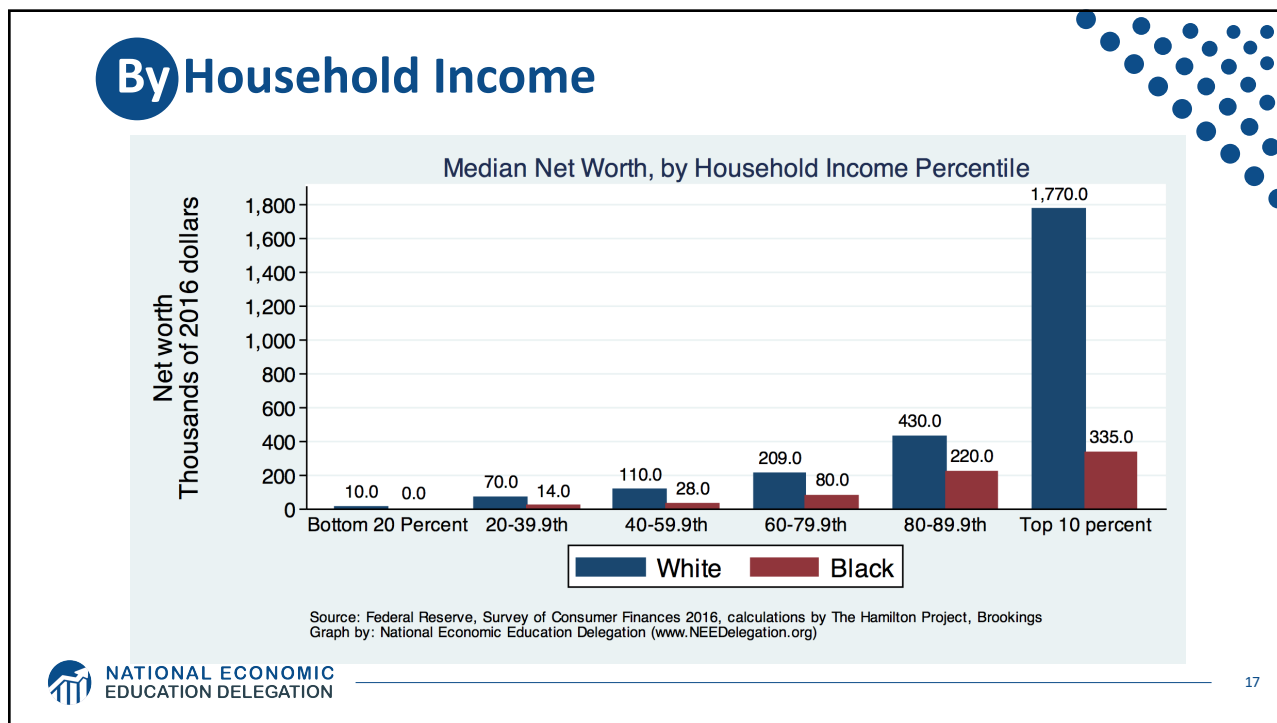


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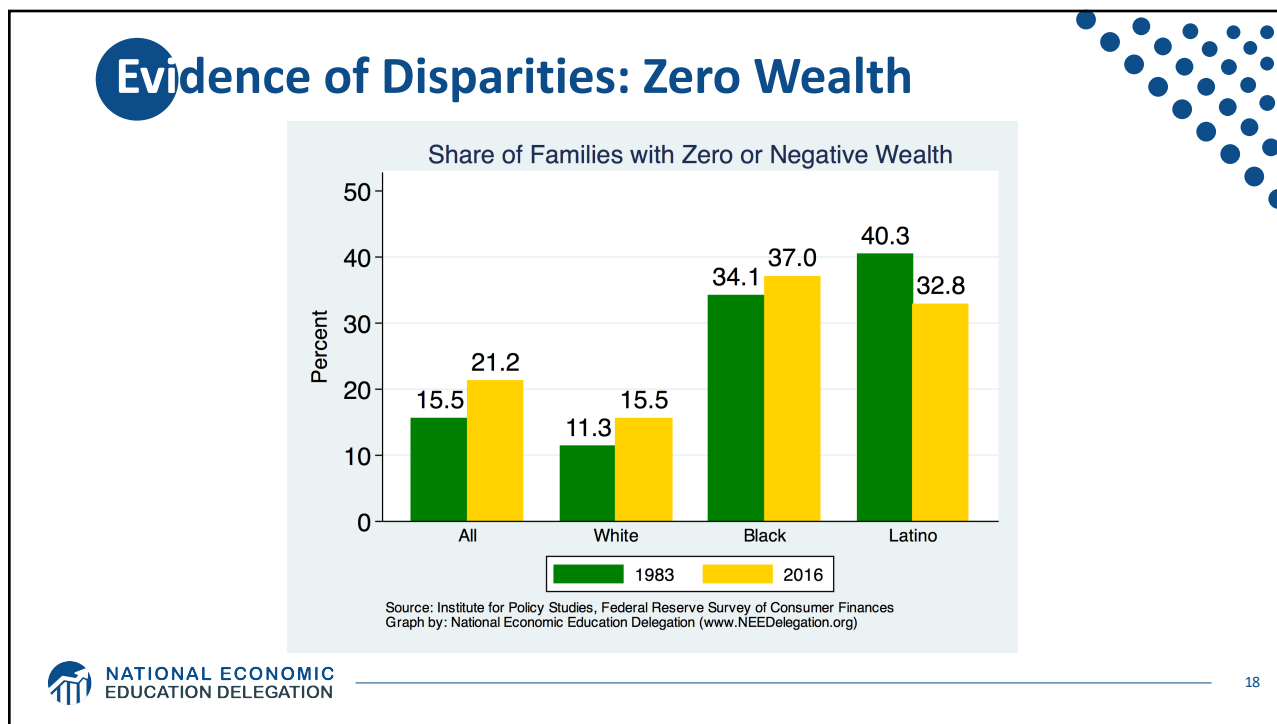
Black Household Incomes Relative to White



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Why Wealth is Important

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Widespread Household Wealth Pays Dividends

- **To individuals in the household**
 - Choices/Agency
 - Wealth is iterative
- **And to broader society**
 - Human capital development
 - Entrepreneurship and innovation

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Household Level Benefits

- **Choices/Life Agency**

- Finance elite education
- Living in good neighborhoods
- Saving for retirement
- Capital to start a business
- Withstand financial hardship
- Better legal counsel
- Exert political influence
- Finance costly medical procedure
- Bequests

- **Wealth is iterative**

- Wealth begets more wealth.
 - Access to higher return investments.
- Wealth transfers across generations.
 - Wealth is sticky.



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Parental Wealth is Important

- **Important pre-estate transfer effects on kids:**

- Influences human capital accumulation.
- Influences the returns to education.
- Adult incomes of offspring.

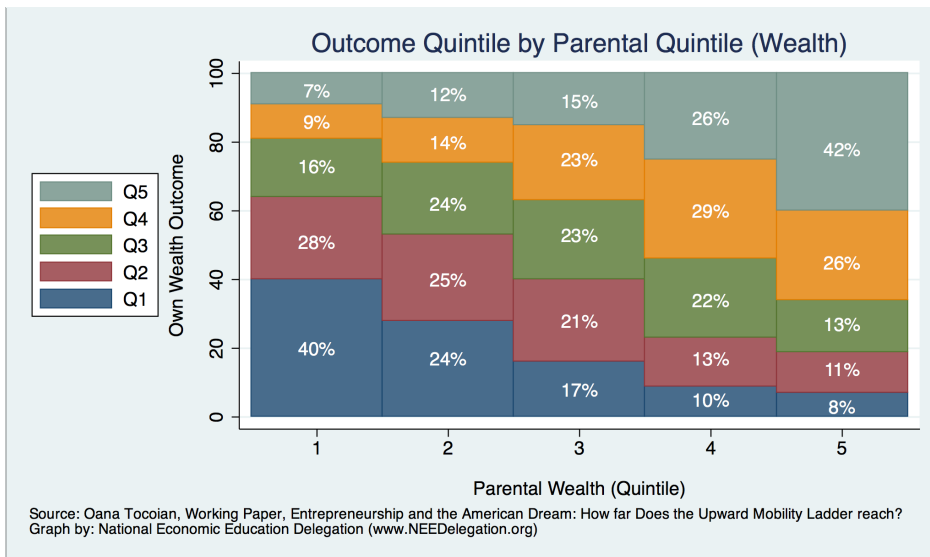
- **There are clearly enormous differences in wealth held by parents of Black and White children.**

- **And it's clear that nurture plays a big role.**



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Wealth Mobility



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Tangible Benefits for the Broader Economy

- More human capital development
- Increased entrepreneurship
- Healthier labor force
- Less social unrest
- Less reliance on social programs
- Smaller stock of student loans

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Sources of Disparities



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Events/Policies with Direct Wealth Implications

- **Slave trade**
 - The first deprivation
- **Slavery**
- **40 acres (and a mule)**
 - The second deprivation
 - Discriminatory distribution of land.
- **Freedmen's Bank**
 - Lax oversight and dissolution.
- **Jim Crow Laws & Economic Policy**
 - Convict leasing, debt peonage, chain-gang, sharecropping, and lynching.
- **Homestead Act**
 - Discriminatory distribution of land.
- **Land theft and destruction**
 - E.g., Black Wall Street – Tulsa, 1921
- **GI Bill**
 - Discriminatory access – Levittown
- **Federal Housing Authority**
 - Redlining
- **And many more.**



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Results for Black Families

- **Much lower accumulation of wealth than among White families.**
- **Implications:**
 - Less financial contribution from parents to children.
 - More difficult access to higher education.
 - Less access to capital for business formation.
 - More likely to live in disadvantaged neighborhoods
 - Fewer role models.
 - Less access to quality education.
 - *Disparities in the capacity – availability of resources - to build wealth.*



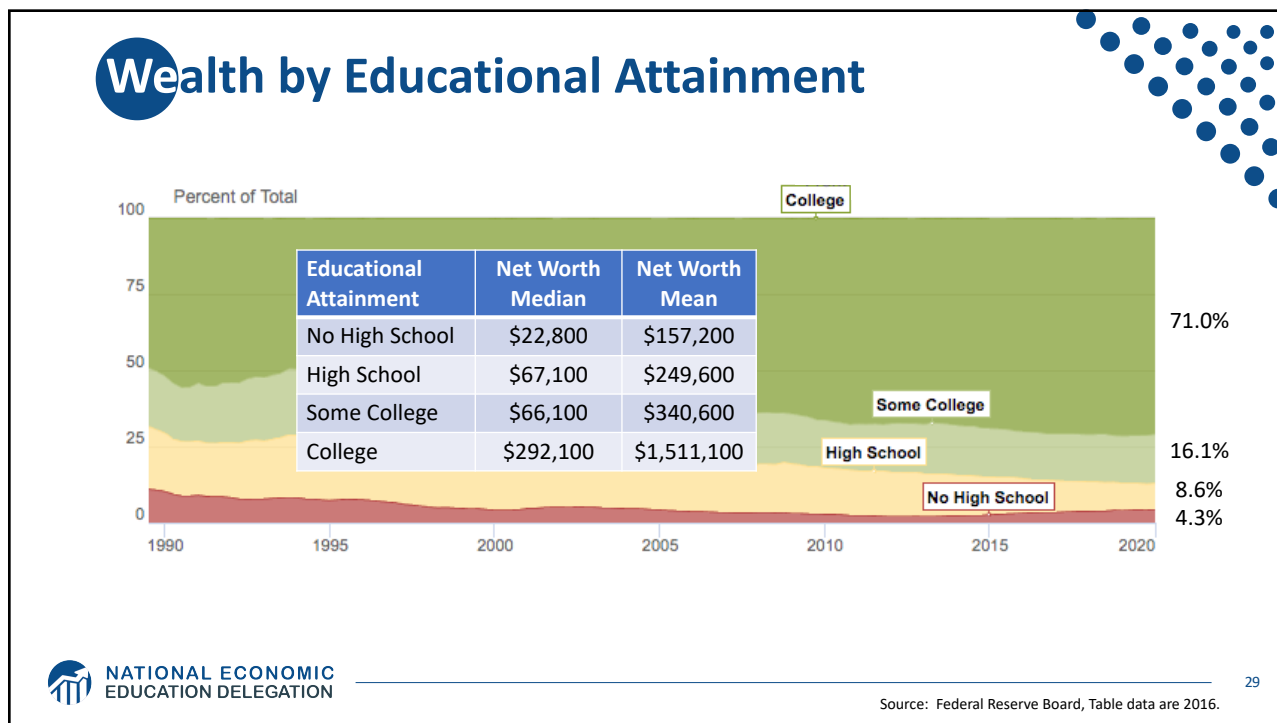
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Potential Explanations: Differences in...

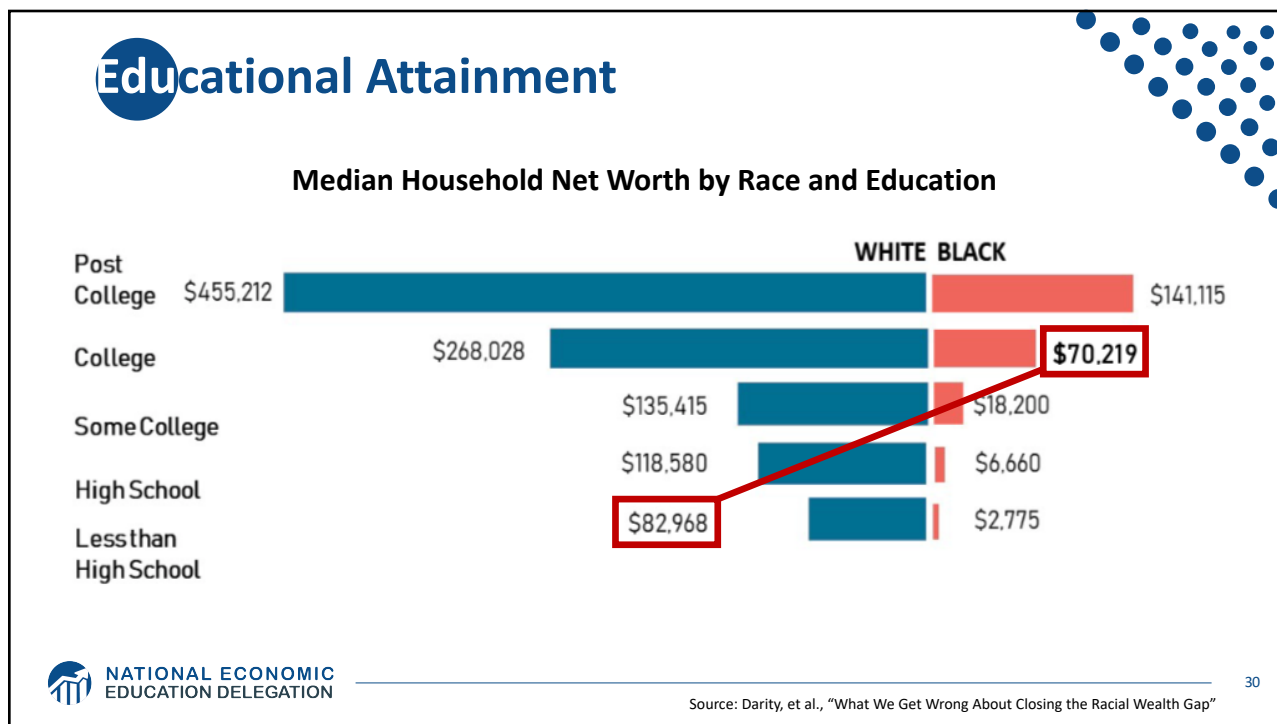
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|---------------------------------|--|
| • Educational attainment | • Soft skills and personal responsibility |
| • Home ownership | • Wages |
| • Increased savings | • Initial endowment |
| • Financial literacy | • Family structure |
| • Entrepreneurship | • Incarceration |



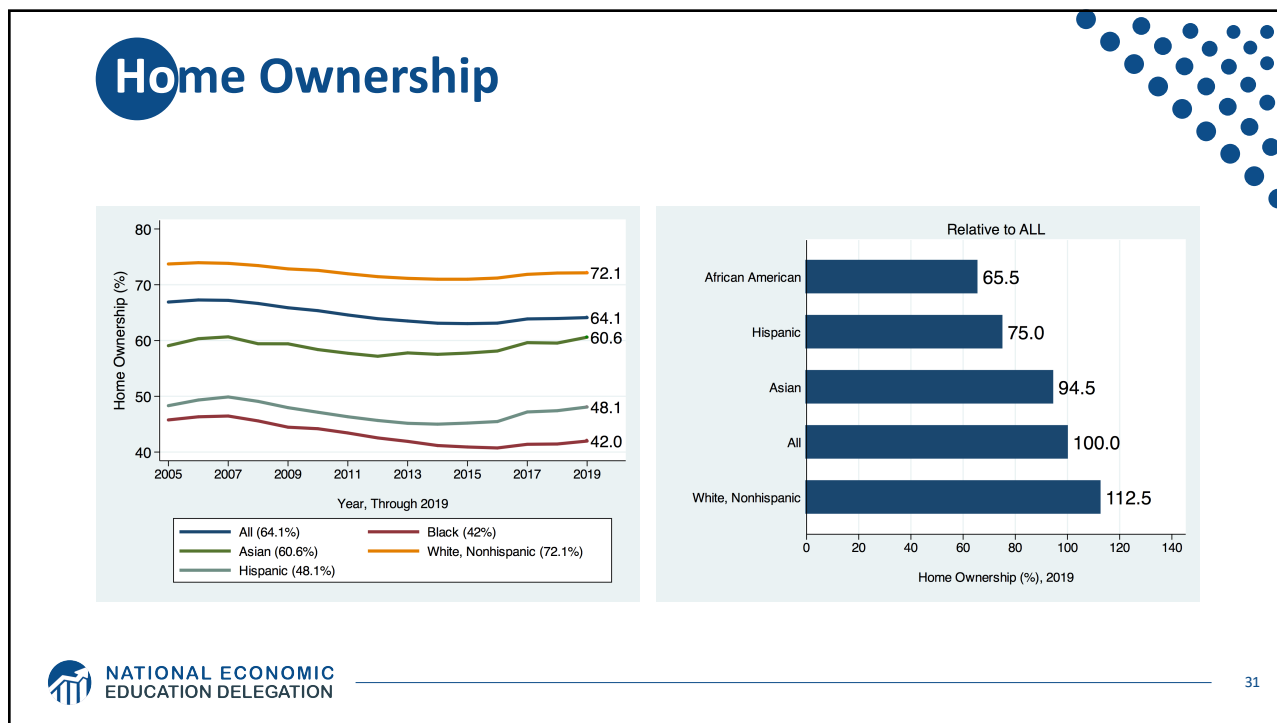
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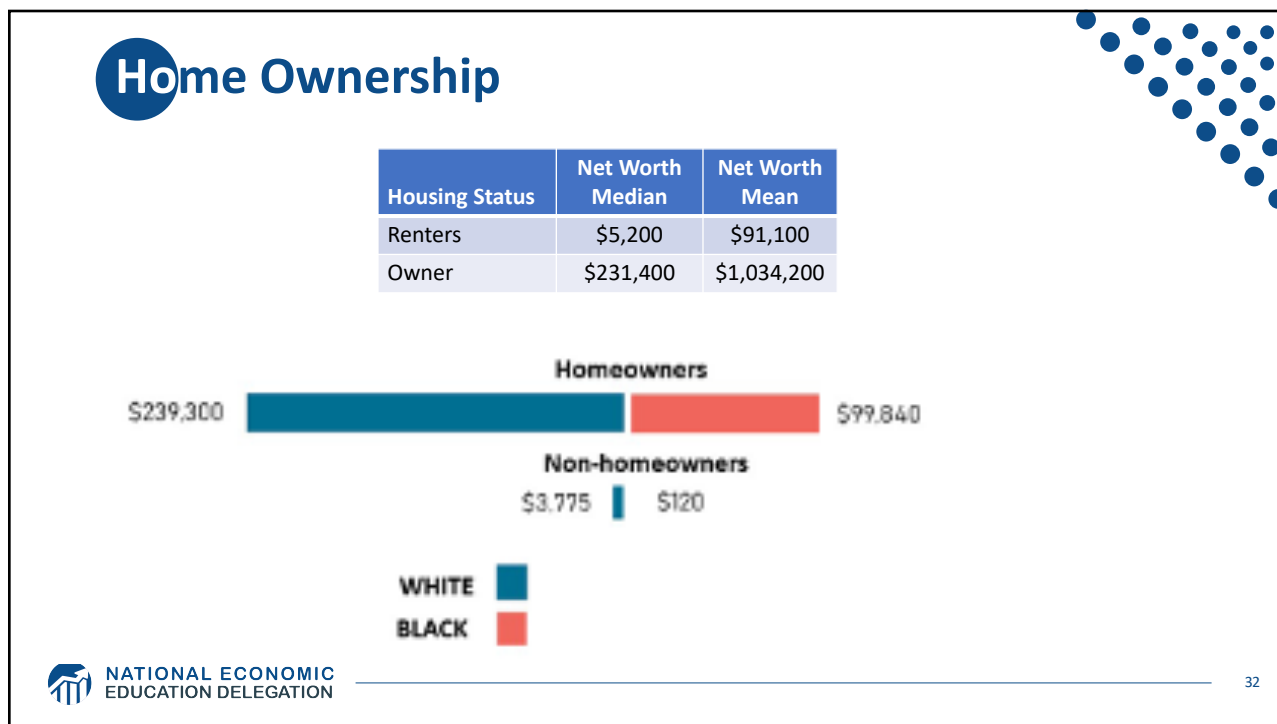
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Wealth Equality Through Home Ownership?

- **Well-documented evidence of historical and ongoing housing and lending discrimination.**
- **What about home prices in minority neighborhoods? Even if they buy, they won't get the appreciation of White neighborhoods.**
 - Home values are 50% lower in majority Black neighborhoods.
 - 23% after adjusting for quality and amenities.



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Source: Brookings, Home ownership while black

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What Determines Differences in Home Ownership?

- **Wealth of parents**
- **Ability to borrow – lending discrimination**
 - At all
 - On equivalent terms to white borrowers
- **Local ordinances – housing discrimination**
- **Lower appreciation rates of homes in majority Black communities**



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Increased Savings

- **Historical evidence generated by economists ranging from Milton Friedman (1957) to Marjorie Galenson (1972) to Marcus Alexis (1971) to Gittelman and Wolff (2004).....**
 - All find that after accounting for household income, Blacks have a slightly higher savings rate than Whites.
- **Risk and reward are higher for White investors.**
 - Controlling for income, this is not clear.
 - Access to and tolerance for higher risk investments is clearly correlated with income.



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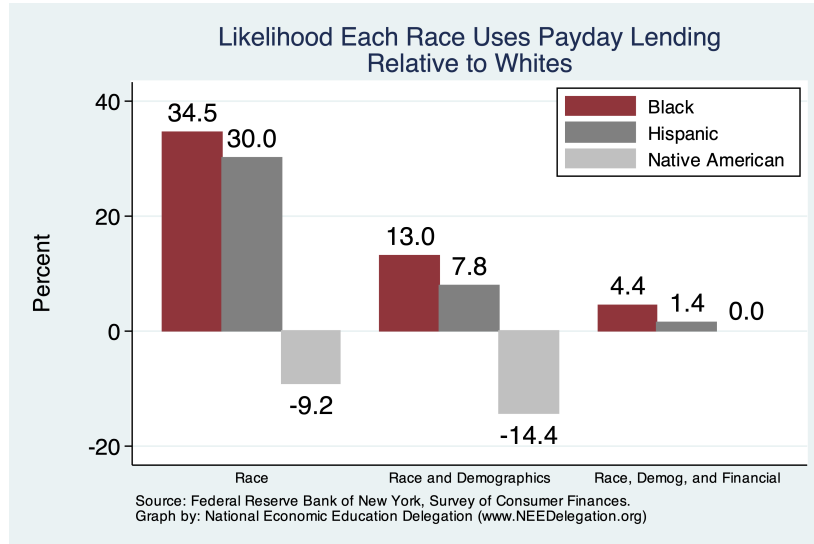
Financial Literacy

- **Financial literacy doesn't matter that much when you don't have any finances to manage.**
- **Controlling for household income, there is no difference in rates of asset appreciation between Black and White households.**



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Use of Payday Lenders



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Entrepreneurship

- **Disparities in access to capital**
 - Wealth disparities
 - o Specifically differences in home equity.
 - o Differences in wealth levels of friends and family.
 - Less likely to rely on banks and more likely to rely on credit cards.
 - Loans have higher int rates and more likely to be declined.
 - Less access to venture funds.
- **Education levels**
- **Previous business ownership by family**
- **Social capital**

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Soft Skills and Personal Responsibility

- **Employability**

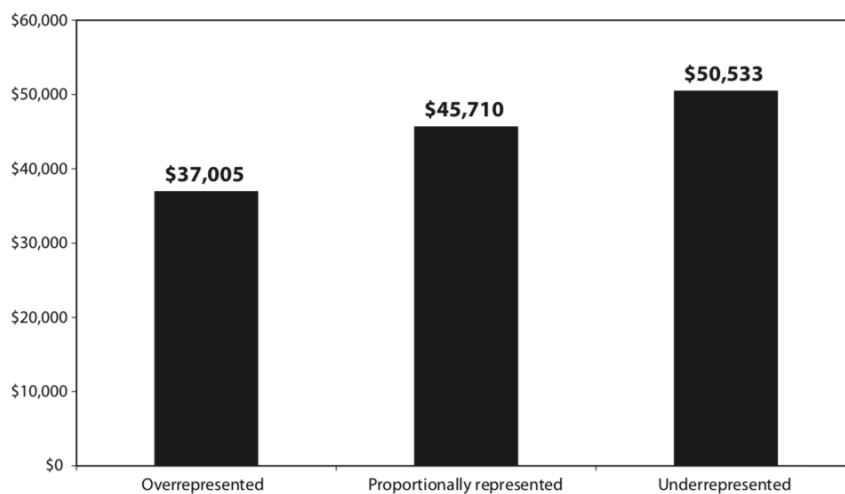
- Show up on time
- Eye contact with customers
- Dress well
- Collaborative skills

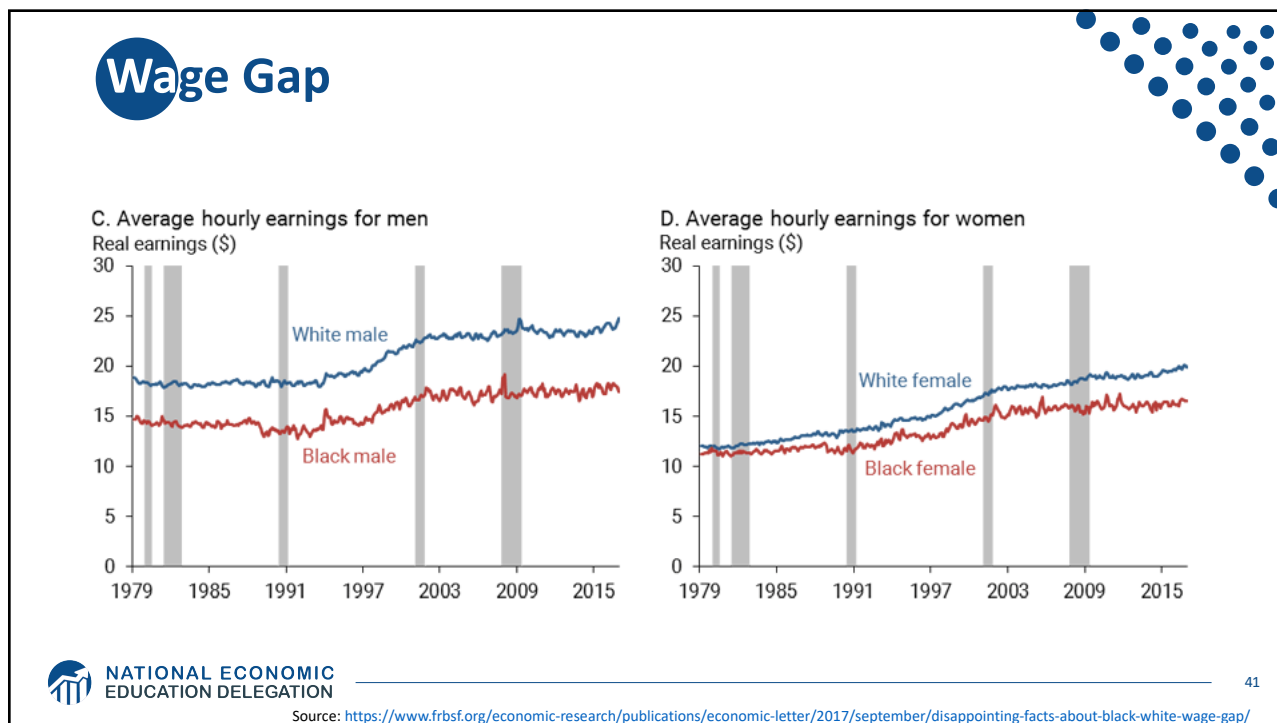
- **Reality**

- Black workers are crowded into service sector jobs.
- Well represented in service, sales and office, and production, transportation, and material moving
- Relatively less well represented in construction, extraction, and maintenance.

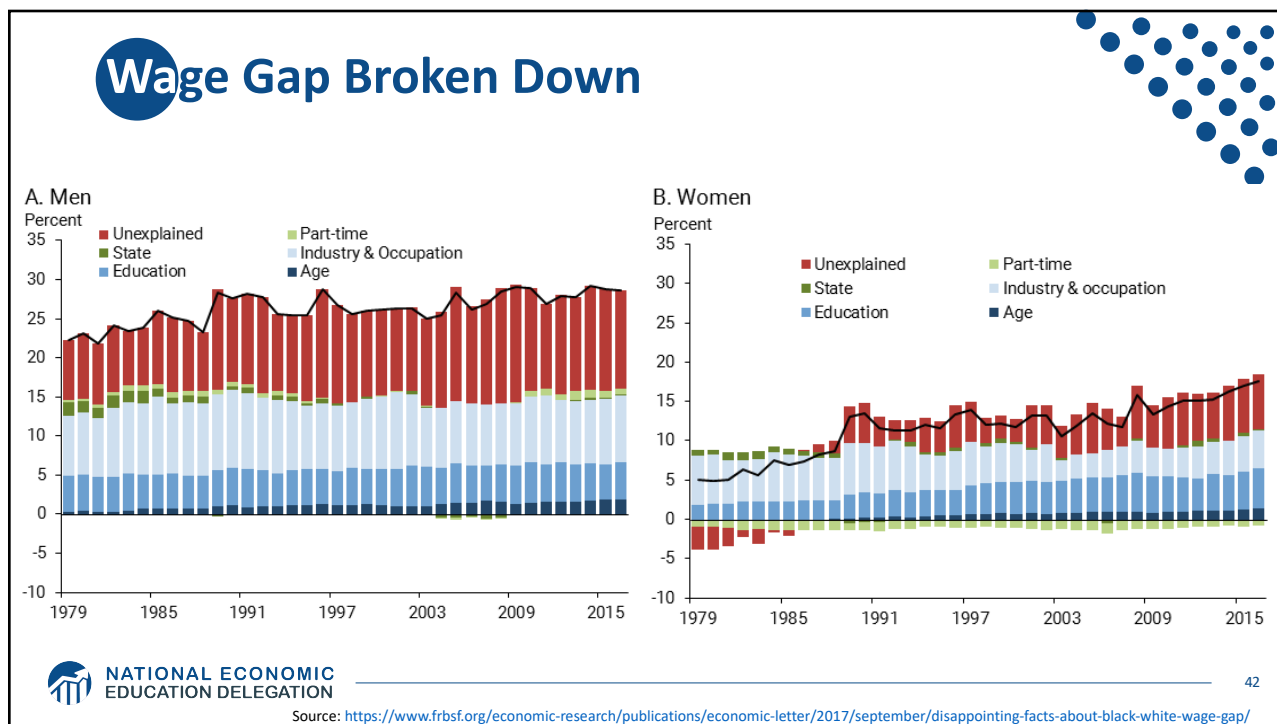
Overrepresented Where Wages are Low

Average occupational annual wage by representation of black men, 2005-07





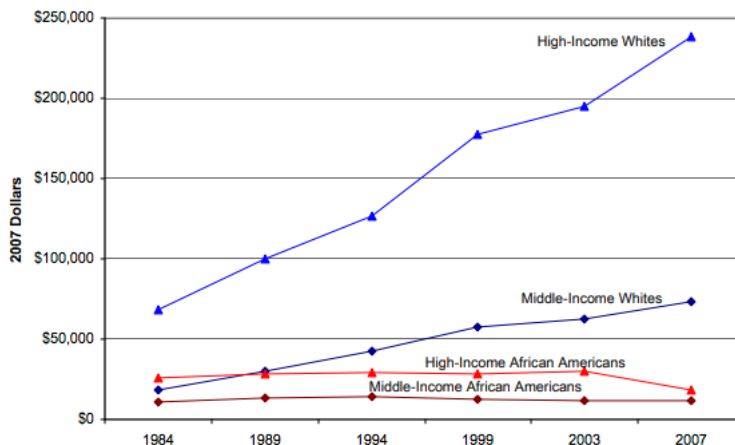
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Equality of Income ≠ Equality of Wealth

Figure 2: 1984-2007 Median Wealth Holdings by Income in 1984
(Not including home equity)



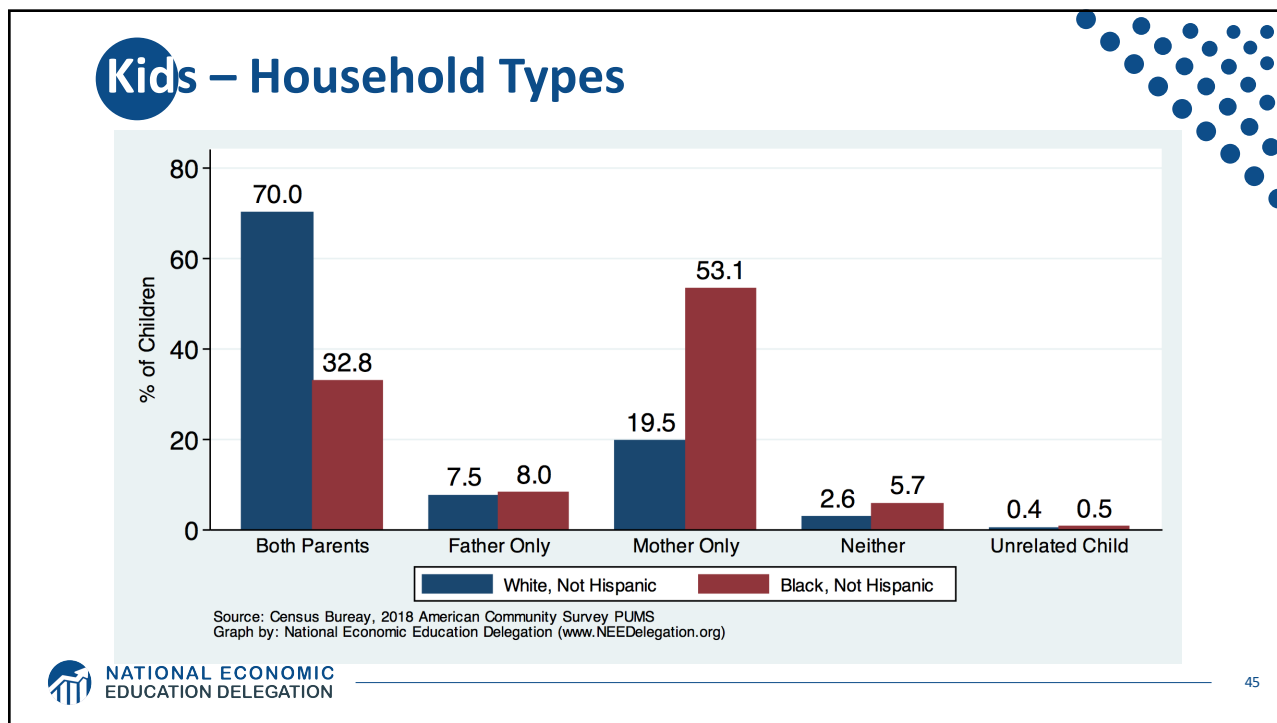
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Family Structure

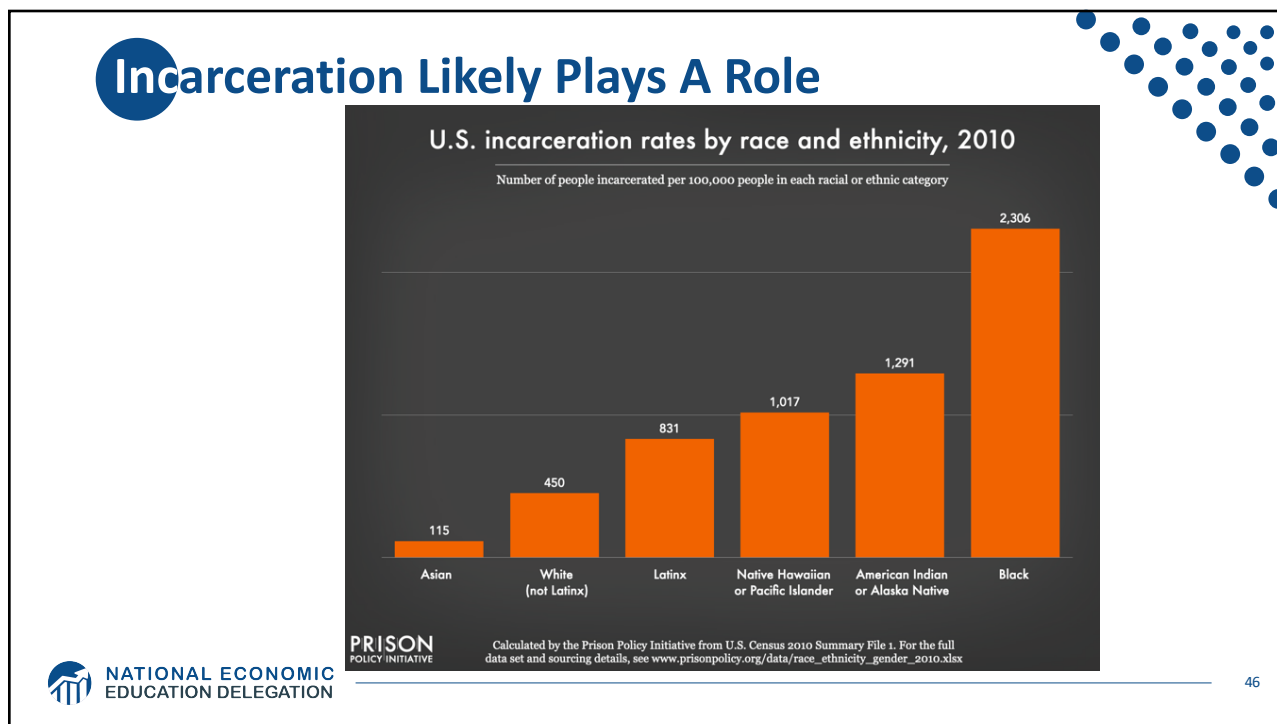
AGE	No Bachelor's Degree				With Bachelor's Degree			
	MARRIED		SINGLE		MARRIED		SINGLE	
	BLACK	WHITE	BLACK	WHITE	BLACK	WHITE	BLACK	WHITE
20-29	\$4,000	\$13,000	\$0	\$2,000	\$7,700	\$18,700	\$-11,000	\$3,400
30-39	\$12,000	\$33,450	\$0	\$0	\$-20,500	\$97,000	\$0	\$7,500
40-49	\$22,501	\$60,000	\$1,000	\$3,006	\$12,000	\$195,000	\$6,000	\$25,000
50-59	\$38,000	\$155,000	\$2,000	\$8,200	\$198,000	\$430,000	\$9,500	\$117,500
60+	\$89,500	\$344,700	\$12,000	\$60,000	\$424,000	\$778,000	\$11,000	\$384,400

Source: Zaw, Khaing, Jhumpa Bhattachayra, Anne Price, Darrick Hamilton and William Darity, Jr. *Women, Race and Wealth* Samuel DuBois Cook Center for Social Equity and the Insight Center for Community Economic Development 2017.

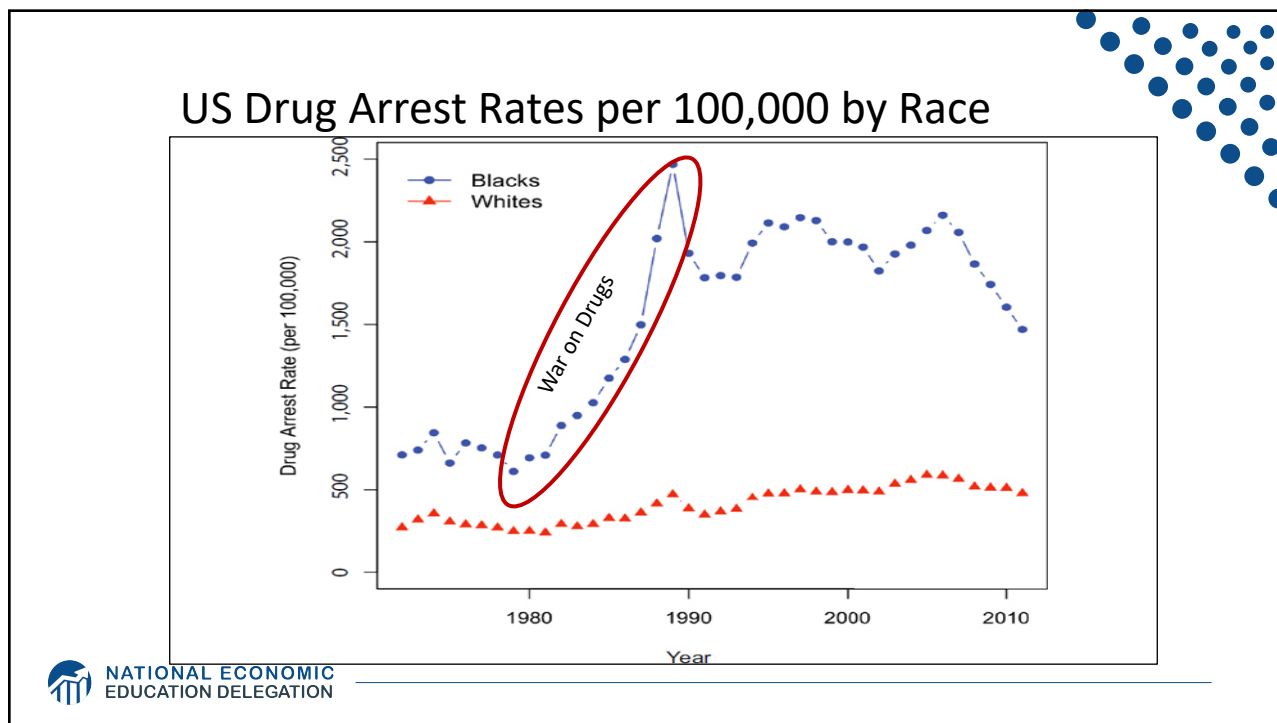
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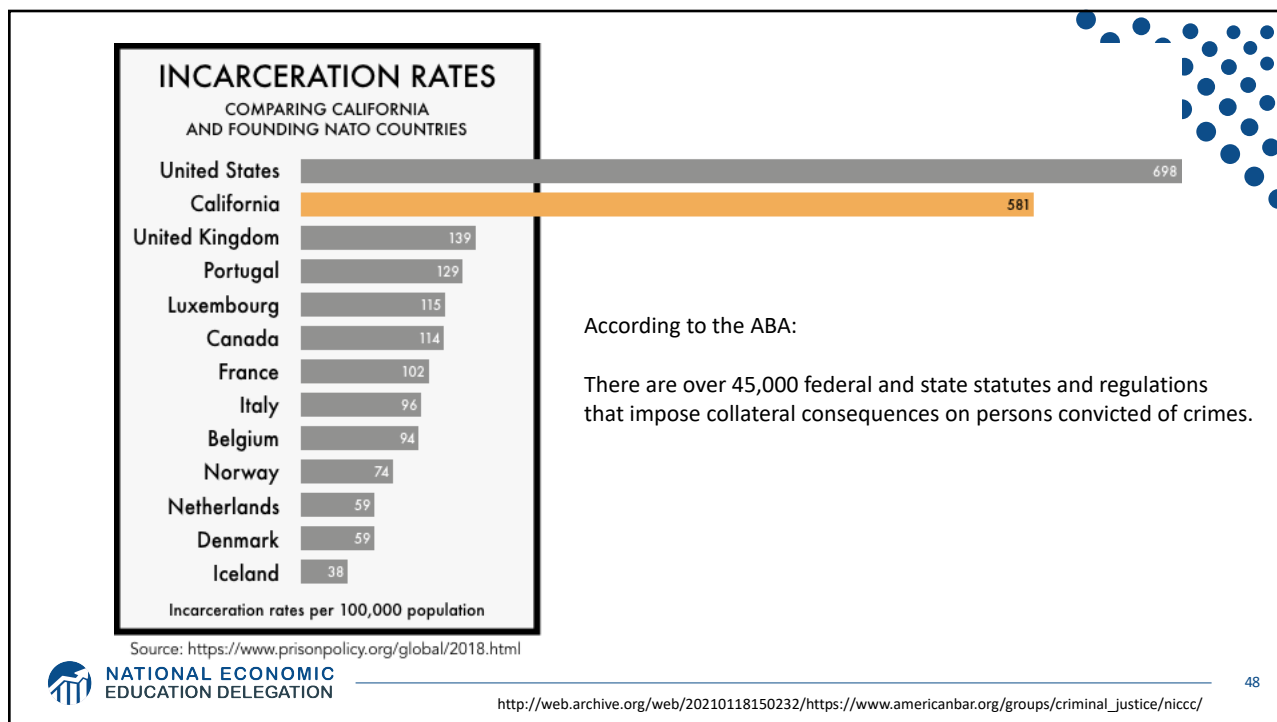
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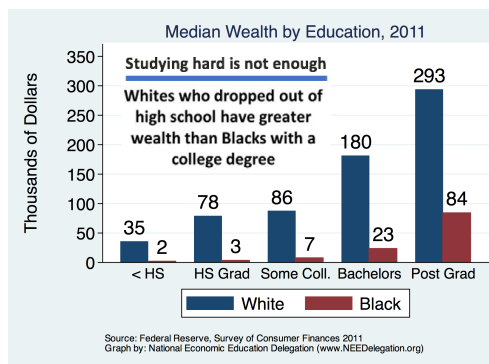
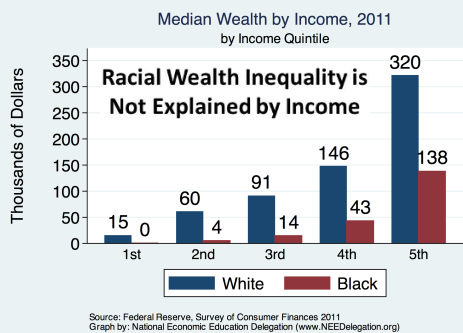
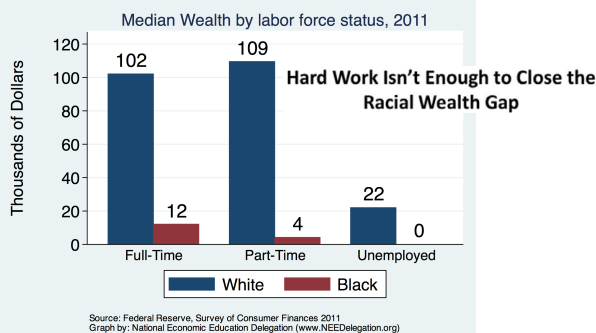


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What is Fundamentally Responsible?

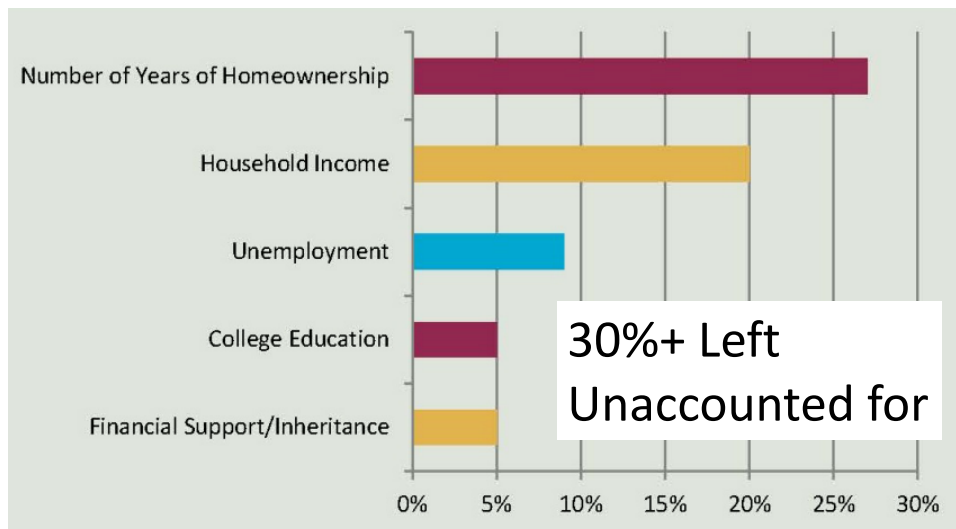
- Individual behaviors?
- Structural characteristics of the economy?
- History – policy and otherwise?

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Accounting for the Wealth Gap



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Policy Options

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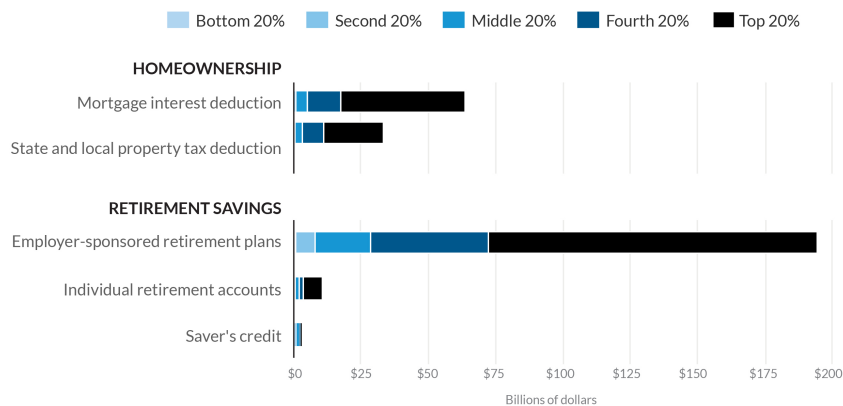
Categories of Policy Areas

- **Housing**
 - FHA and redlining
- **Health Care**
- **Incarceration**
 - Black incarceration rates are very high.
- **Transportation**
 - Interstate system
- **Broadband**
 - Access is inversely related to regional income
- **Education**
- **Workforce**
- **Income support and stability**
- **Asset accumulation**

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Gov't Asset Building Policies

Size and Distribution of Select Asset-Building Tax Subsidies, 2017



Source: Updated estimates from Steuerle et al. (2014).
 Note: "Income" refers to the Tax Policy Center's "expanded cash income" measure, which is described in Rosenberg (2013).

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Specific Policy Options

- **Global solutions that affect all source areas**
 - Child Trust Accounts - "Baby Bonds"
 - Guaranteed minimum income
- **Addressing racial disparities directly**
 - Reparations
 - Aggressive affirmative action.
 - A new Homestead Act.
 - Heavily investing in Black communities.
 - Labor and other laws that address discrimination
 - Enforce more aggressively and make adjustments where necessary to increase efficacy.
 - Fundamental reorientation of asset building agenda.



Other Concrete Policy Options

- Limit the mortgage interest tax deduction and use the revenues to provide a credit for first-time homebuyers.
- Establish automatic savings and retirement plans.
- Reduce reliance on student loans while supporting success in postsecondary education.
- Offer universal children's savings accounts.
- Reform safety net program asset tests, which can act as barriers to saving among low-income families.
- Provide subsidies to promote emergency savings, such as those linked to tax time.



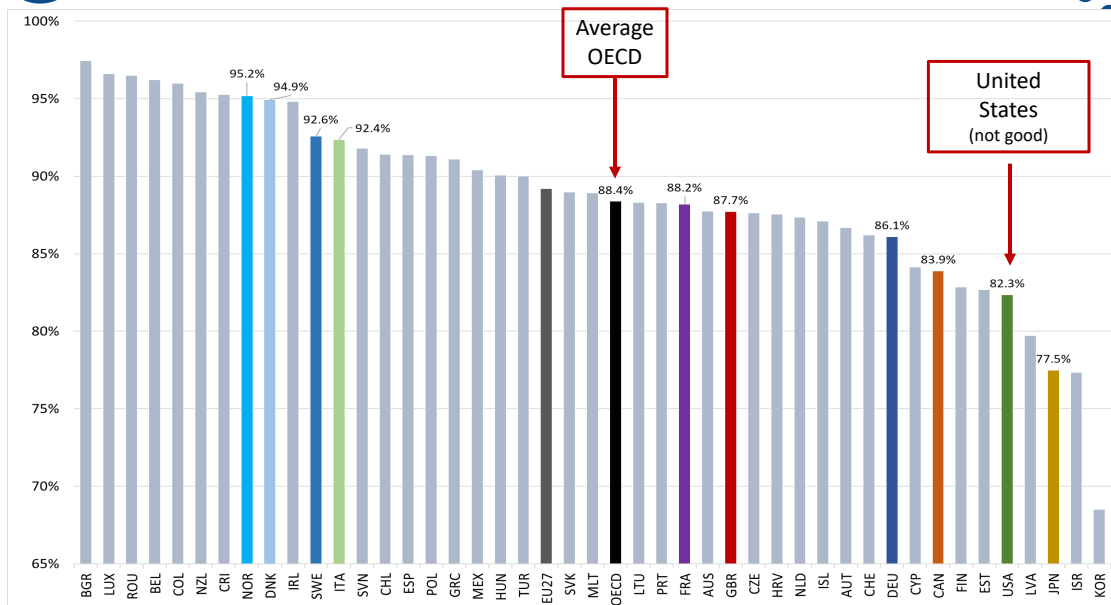
Summary

- **The Black White wealth gap is enormous (2019)**
 - Mean: White wealth is 6.9x Black wealth.
 - Median: White wealth is 7.8x Black wealth.
- **There are many explanations in the common narrative.**
 - Many do not stand up to scrutiny.
- **Government policies have contributed enormously this gap.**
 - Racial dehumanizing permitted these policies.
- **Wealth endowments (parental wealth) are enormously important for determining own wealth in adulthood.**
 - Policies that address this relationship are most likely to be effective.
- **Some form of policy intervention is likely necessary if the gap is to be closed.**



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Gender Wage Gap: Mallika Pung



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Thank you!

Any Questions?

www.NEEDelegation.org

Jon Haveman, Ph.D.

Jon@NEEDelegation.org

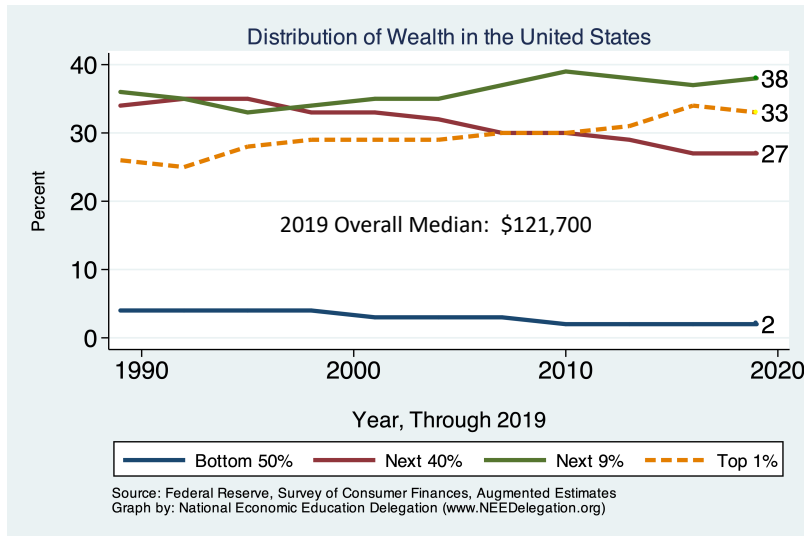
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Overall Wealth Distribution

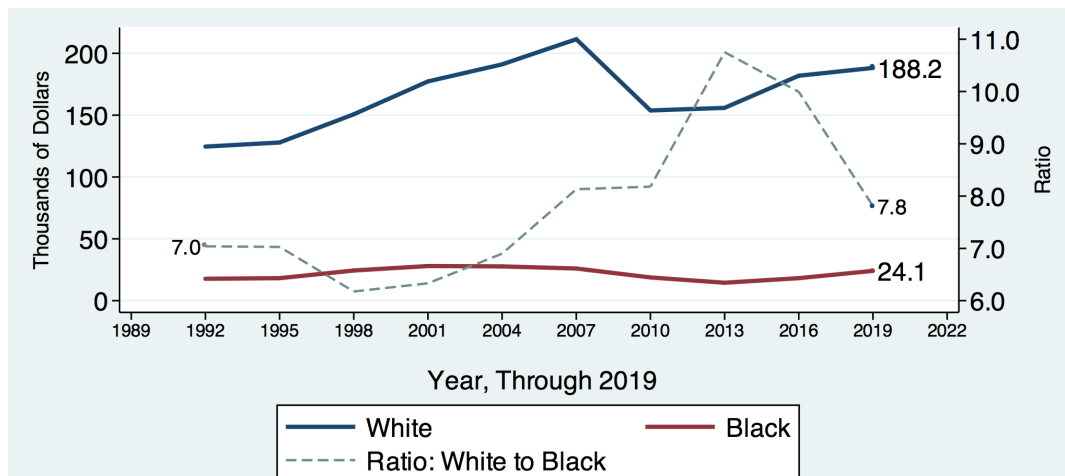


Wealth Disparities, 2019

Race/Ethnicity	Mean Wealth	Share of Families	Share of Wealth	Ratio of Shares
White, non-Hispanic	983.4	64.9	94.6	1.5
Black, non-Hispanic	142.5	14.2	3.0	0.2
Hispanic or Latino	165.5	9.6	2.4	0.2
Other or Multiple Race	657.2	11.3	11.0	1.0

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Wealth Gap Over Time: Median

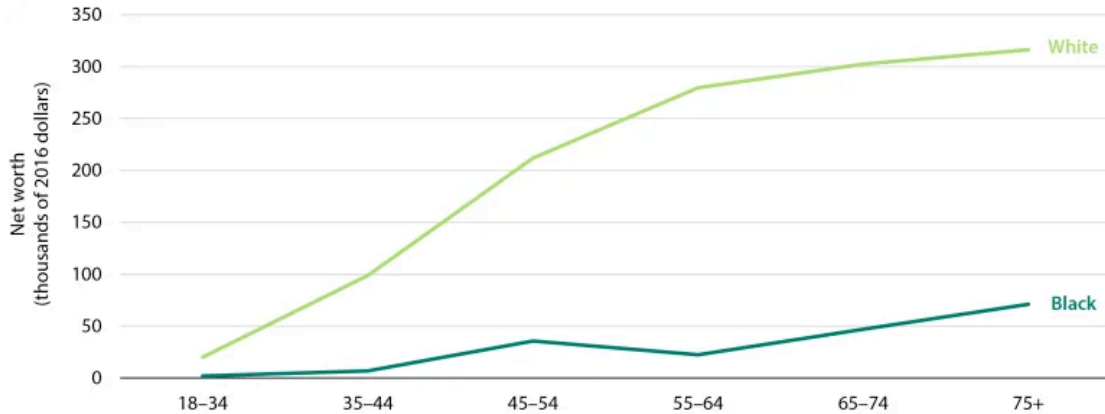


Source: Urban Institute, Federal Reserve Survey of Consumer Finances
 Graph by: National Economic Education Delegation (www.NEEDelegation.org)

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Net Worth by Age and Race

FIGURE 2.
Median Net Worth, by age of Household Head



Source: Survey of Consumer Finances 2016; authors' calculations.
Note: Data are from 2016. Net worth refers to the difference between assets and debt for a household head. Race and ethnicity are those of the survey respondent.



Source: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/02/27/examining-the-black-white-wealth-gap/>

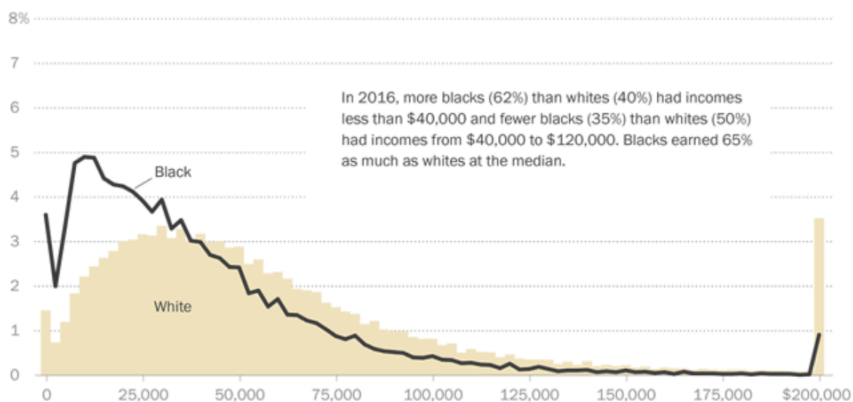
Educational Attainment: Policy

- **How do we increase educational attainment?**
 - Increase universal quality of public schools.
 - Increased/improved counseling in high schools.
 - Reduce costs (including living) of attending college.
 - Increased access to funds for education



Black Household Incomes Relative to White

Shares of whites and blacks with a given level of income, 2016



Note: Whites and blacks include only single-race non-Hispanics. Income is adjusted for household size and expressed in 2016 dollars. See Methodology for details.

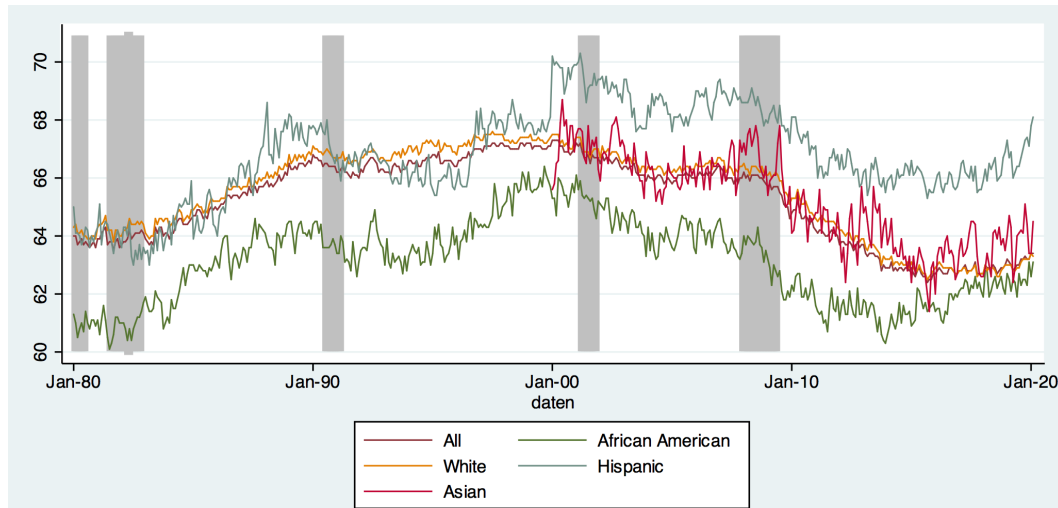
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2016 American Community Survey (IPUMS).

"Income Inequality in the U.S. Is Rising Most Rapidly Among Asians"



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Labor Force Participation



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The Nature of Wealth Holdings

- Liquid assets
- Interest bearing accounts
- Financial accounts

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Asset Ownership by Type, 2011 (SIPP)

	Tangible Assets					Financial Assets			
	Any	Home	Car	Other Motor Vehicles	Other	Any	Checking Account	Retirement Accounts	Other
Total	90%	61%	85%	9%	22%	81%	74%	51%	25%
White	94%	98%	88%	11%	25%	86%	80%	58%	31%
Black	79%	42%	71%	2%	12%	62%	55%	32%	9%

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Buying and Banking Black

- **Assertion: Marshalling the enormous purchasing power of the Black community will drive progress.**
 - More than \$1.3 trillion in buying power.*
- **Assertion: Banking is a source of wealth creation.**
 - Combining the wealth of Black Americans in Black banks could be a source of wealth creation.
- **Problem: Multipliers are short circuited.**



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* Source: <https://www.newswise.com/articles/minority-markets-have-3-9-trillion-buying-power>

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Intro to Fractional Reserve Banking

- **Money is deposited in an account in a bank.**
- **Most of that money is lent out.**
 - The rest is the “reserve”.
- **Suppose lent to purchase a house.**
 - That money is then deposited into an account in a bank.
 - Most of that money is lent out.
 - The rest is the “reserve”.
 - Suppose lent to purchase a house.
 - That money is then deposited....
- **This is how wealth is created in the banking system.**



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Why This Doesn't Work for Black Banks

- **Money is deposited in an account in a Black bank.**
- **Most is lent for the purchase of a house by a Black buyer.**
- **If the seller is white, those funds then get deposited in a White bank.**
 - All of the remaining fractional reserve benefits go now to White banks.
- **Because the money is not allowed to circulate ONLY within the Black community, Black banking will likely have limited capacity to generate wealth.**



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The Multiplier Economy – Spanner in the Works

- **Banking – money goes where money is.**
- **Buying – money goes to buy intermediate inputs, into the White community.**
 - There is a similar multiplier for consumer spending.
 - Money is spent – goes to a Black business
 - That Black business then keeps some of the money, but some leaves the Black community through the purchases of intermediate inputs.
 - The Black economy may simply not be big enough to prevent this leakage.
- **Both approaches to closing the wealth gap are severely limited unless the Black banking sector and economies are walled off from the rest of the country.**



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