

WELCOME TO UVM'S DIVISION OF DIVERSITY,  
EQUITY, AND INCLUSION'S TEACH-IN SERIES

# FINDING ANSWERS TOGETHER

## WHAT IS SYSTEMIC RACISM?

Facilitated by: Dr. Sherwood Smith, Christa Hagan-Howe & Paul Suk-Hyun Yoon

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THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
**DIVISION OF DIVERSITY,  
EQUITY AND INCLUSION**

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**CENTER FOR CULTURAL PLURALISM**

### **You are on "mute" by default**

Only our facilitators will be speaking during the session.

### **Use the Q&A to ask questions**

Our facilitators will do their best to answer your questions and comments during the second half of the session. Chat has been turned off and we will use it for announcements.

### **This session is being recorded**

We'll share the link so you can view the session again or share it with a colleague within 24 hours.

# FACILITATORS



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# LOGISTICS

- “Mute” by default
- Q&A - Questions\* or Comments
- This session **is** being recorded
- Live Captions

\* If we are unable to answer your question(s) during the event, we will answer them within 48 hours.



# SESSION OVERVIEW

- 30-minute Presentation
- Establish a basic understanding of race and racism
- Pivot to Systemic Racism
- Describe & Explain Systemic Racism
- Question & Answer (Q&A)
- Closing Remarks

# GROUP AGREEMENTS

- Stay Engaged
- Speak Your Truth
- Experience Discomfort
- Expect & Accept Non-Closure
- Own Our Own Beliefs
  - "I" statements vs. generalizations

# — RACE —



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# WHAT IS RACE?

Division of humankind based on unsubstantiated perceptions of variation among groups in appearance, capabilities, & ancestry to distinguish or label groups

- More genetic variation exists within racial groups than between racial groups
- Race is a socially constructed reality that reflects & enacts systems of power/privilege

Biological sources of social constructions of race & racial hierarchy as applied to humans (described by Gould, S., *Geometer of Race* and Banks, J., *Historical Construction of Race?*)

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# WHAT IS RACE?

“A specious (invalid) classification of human beings created by Europeans that assigns worth and social status using white as the superior model of humanity for the purpose of establishing and maintaining power and privilege.”

Gould, Stephen, J. (1981) The Mismeasure of Man. N.W. Norton and Company





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# WHAT IS RACE?

“I have taken the name on this variety from Mount Caucasus, both because its neighborhood, especially its southern slope, produce the most beautiful race of men, I mean the Georgian, and because all physiological reasons converge to this, that in that region, if anywhere, it seems we ought with the greatest probability place the autochthones (birth place) of mankind.”

Caucasian: Blumenbach, J. F. (1865) *De generis humani varietate nativa* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed).



# — RACISM —



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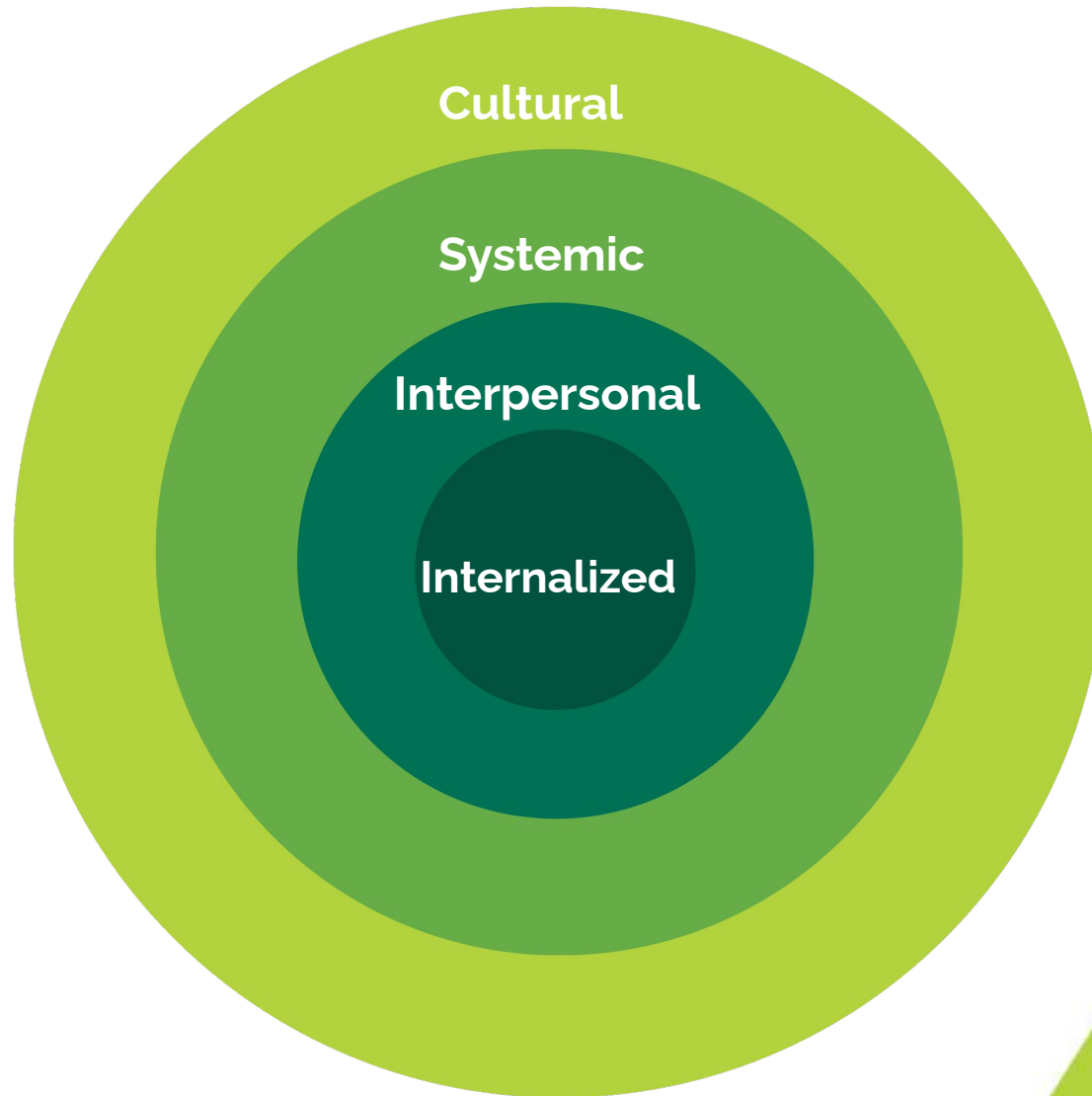
“We define racism as a **pervasive system of advantage and disadvantage based on the socially constructed category of race**. Racism is enacted on multiple levels simultaneously...

Institutional structures, policies, and practices interlock with cultural assumptions about what is right and proper to justify racism. Individuals internalize and enact these assumptions through individual behavior and institutional participation.

**Woven together, these interactions create and sustain systemic benefits for whites as a group, and structure discrimination, oppression, dispossession, and exclusion for people from targeted racial groups.”**



# Four Levels of Racism



# Four Levels of Racism

- **Cultural or Societal**

- Messages that through art, media, societal norms, and cultural assumption reinforce the idea that the white racial group is better than or superior to other racial groups.

- **Systemic**

- Laws, policies, systems that together work to hold and offer opportunities and advantages to white people and disadvantages for people-of-color.

- **Interpersonal**

- Individuals holding prejudice or bias and intentionally or unintentionally acting on racist ideas or assumptions.

- **Internalized**

- Folx from all racial groups receive and internalize messages about groups that they belong to as well as other groups





# SYSTEMIC RACISM



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Eliminate the **racial predictability**  
**and disproportionality** of which  
people in the U.S. have access to  
affordable healthcare, a high-quality  
education, and sustainable wealth.

# LIFETIME OF INEQUALITY

Race and ethnicity can shape a person's life from beginning to end. In the U.S., disparities in health, wealth, and access to education among the four major demographic groups—Asian, white, Hispanic, and black—persist and can be compounded over time. For example, blacks and Hispanics earn less than whites and Asians. Low wages often make it harder to finance a child's education. For people without a college degree, upward mobility can be particularly difficult to achieve.

## FINANCES

The child poverty rate for blacks and Hispanics is more than double the rate for whites and Asians. Higher unemployment rates and lower earnings contribute to the gap.

## EDUCATION

Hispanics and blacks are less likely than Asians and whites to graduate from high school and attend college. Asians significantly outpace all other groups in college enrollment.

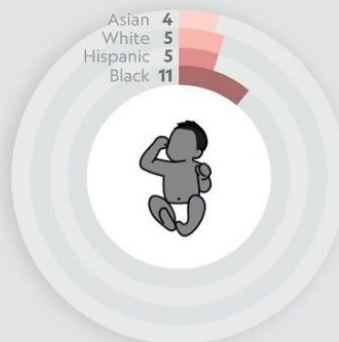
## HEALTH CARE

Blacks have higher infant mortality and lower life expectancy than the other groups. Yet compared with Hispanics, who have similar diabetes rates, blacks have more health insurance coverage.

Race categories (white, black, and Asian) exclude  
people of African ancestry. The Hispanic category

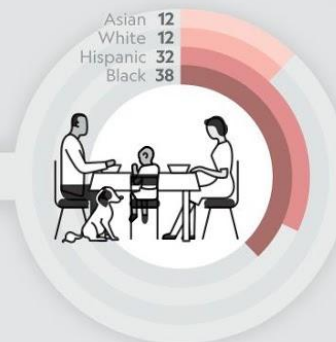
### + RISKY INFANCY

Infant deaths per thousand live births, 2014



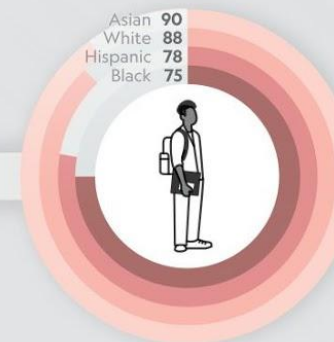
### ○ CHALLENGING CHILDHOOD

Share of children under age 18 living in poverty, 2014



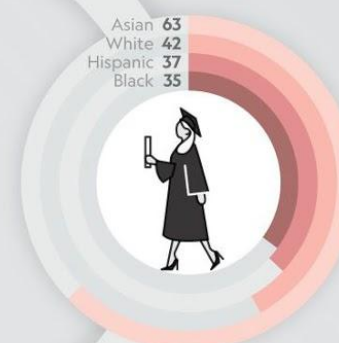
### ▣ GRADUATION GAP

Graduation rate for public high school students, 2014-15 school year



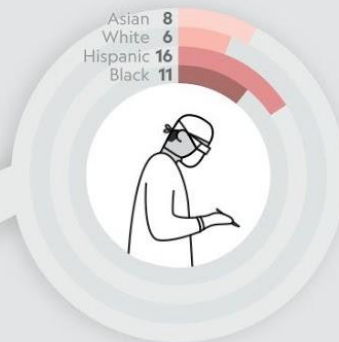
### ▣ DEGREES FOR SOME

Rate of 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college, 2015



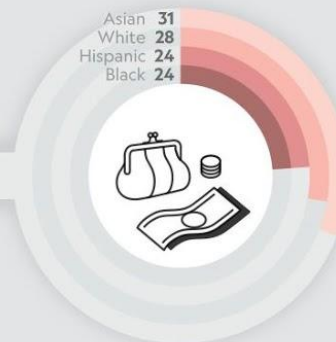
### + LIVING WITHOUT INSURANCE

Uninsured rate, 2016



### ○ EARNINGS GAP

Median hourly wage in dollars, workers with a higher education, 2015



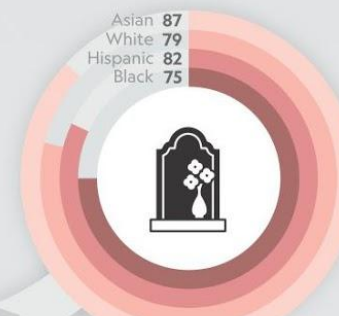
### ○ UNEVEN EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment rate, annual average, 2016



### + DISPARATE LIFE SPANS

Life expectancy at birth in years, 2015



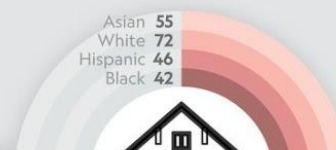
### + HEALTH STRUGGLES

Prevalence of diagnosed diabetes in adults, 2013-15



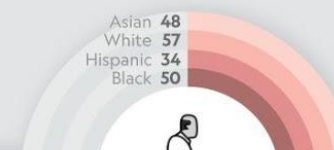
### ○ RENTING VS. OWNING

Homeownership rate, 2016



### ○ UNEQUAL RETIREMENT

Share with private employer-sponsored coverage, 2014



## + LIVING WITHOUT INSURANCE

Uninsured rate, 2016

Asian 8  
White 6  
Hispanic 16  
Black 11



## ○ EARNINGS GAP

Median hourly wage in dollars,  
workers with a higher education, 2015

Asian 31  
White 28  
Hispanic 24  
Black 24



## ○ UNEVEN EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment rate,  
annual average, 2016

Asian 4  
White 4  
Hispanic 6  
Black 8



## + DISPARATE LIFE

Life expectancy at birth,  
in years, 2016

Asian 87  
White 79  
Hispanic 82  
Black 75



## + HEALTH STRUGGLES

Prevalence of diagnosed  
diabetes in adults, 2013-15

Asian 8  
White 7  
Hispanic 12  
Black 13



## ○ RENTING VS. OWNING

Homeownership rate, 2016

Asian 55  
White 72  
Hispanic 46  
Black 42

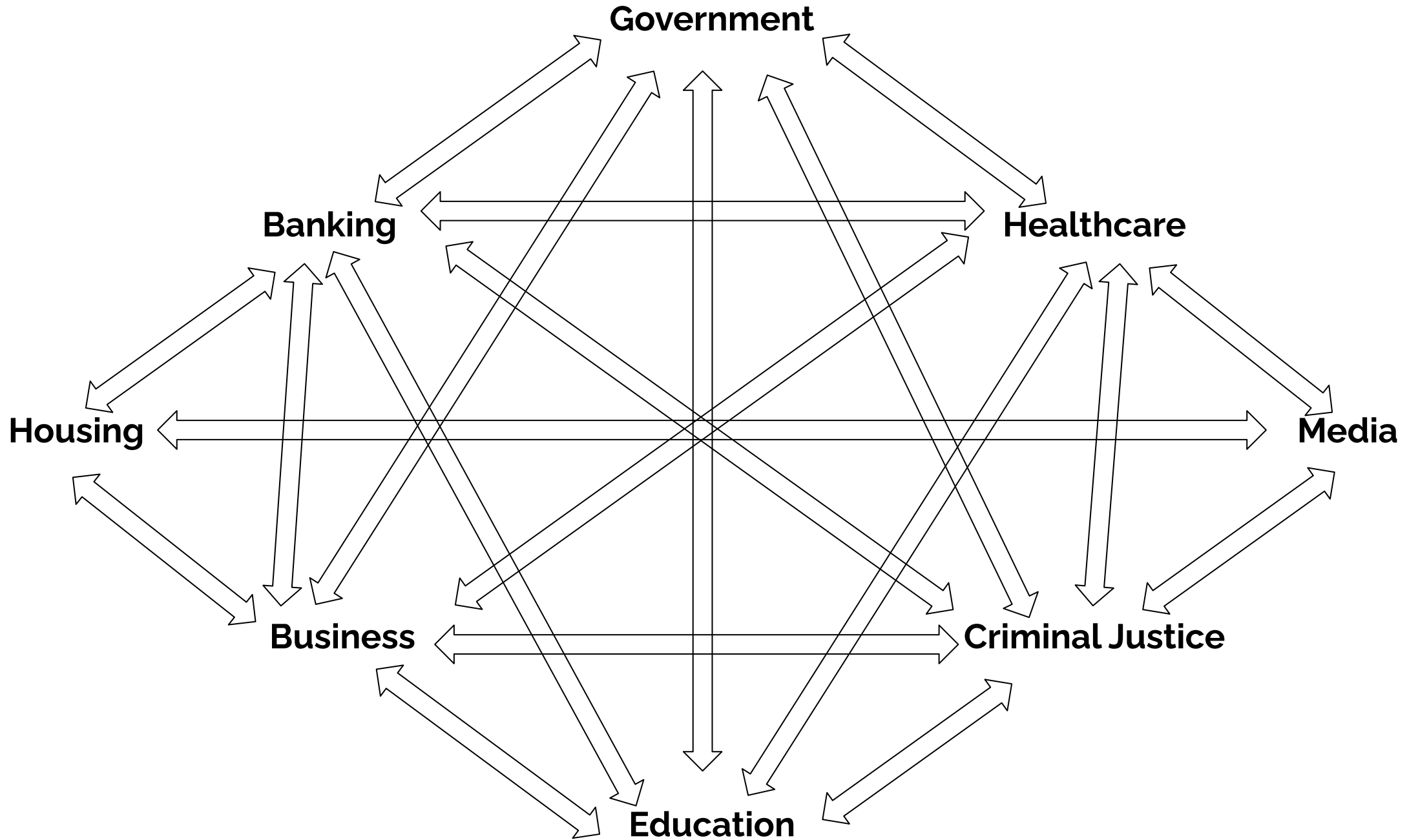


## ○ UNEQUAL RETIREMENT

Share with private employer-  
sponsored coverage, 2014

Asian 48  
White 57  
Hispanic 34  
Black 50







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# SYSTEMIC OR STRUCTURAL RACISM

- an **interlocking set of parts** that together make a whole
- an **established way of doing something**, such that things get done that way consistently and are assumed to be the 'normal' way things get done
- **runs by itself**; does not require planning or initiative\* by a person or group



# Example 1 – Education Research: Eugenics & Tuskegee

The **Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the African American Male** was a clinical study conducted between 1932 and 1972 by the United States Public Health Service.<sup>[1][2]</sup> The purpose of this study was to observe the natural history of untreated syphilis; the African-American men in the study were only told they were receiving free health care from the Federal government of the United States.<sup>[3]</sup>

Investigators enrolled in the study a total of 600 impoverished, African-American sharecroppers from Macon County, Alabama.<sup>[3]</sup> Of these men, 399 had latent syphilis, with a control group of 201 men who were not infected.

The men were initially told that the study was only going to last six months, but it was extended to 40 years. After funding for treatment was lost, the study was continued without informing the men that they would never be treated. None of the infected men were treated with penicillin despite the fact that by 1947, the antibiotic had become the standard treatment for syphilis

The book *The Passing of the Great Race (Or, The Racial Basis of European History)* by American eugenicist, lawyer, and amateur anthropologist Madison Grant was published in 1916. Eugenics was active from 1907 into 1939.

Eventually the Vermont eugenics survey took over the VCCL. Then in 1927, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Buck v. Bell* that forced sterilization was constitutional. That opened the floodgates for Vermont and other states to pass and enforce their compulsory sterilization laws.

Vermont passed its compulsory sterilization law in 1931, the 25th state to do so. The law targeted 'idiots,' 'imbeciles,' 'feeble-minded' or 'insane' persons living in state institutions.

The scientific reputation of eugenics started to decline in the 1930s, a time when Ernst Rüdin used eugenics as a justification for the racial policies of Nazi Germany. Adolf Hitler had praised and incorporated eugenic ideas in *Mein Kampf* in 1925 and emulated eugenic legislation for the sterilization of "defectives" that had been pioneered in the United States once he took power.



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# Example 1 – Educational Testing

Unfair Treatment?

The Case of Freedle, the SAT, and the Standardization Approach to Differential Item Functioning

Maria Veronica Santelices and Mark Wilson

Harvard Review

In 2003, the *Harvard Educational Review* published a controversial article by Roy Freedle that claimed bias against African American students in the SAT college admissions test.... By replicating Freedle's methodology with a more recent SAT dataset and by addressing some of the technical criticisms from ETS, Santelices and Wilson confirm that SAT items do function differently for the African American and White subgroups in the verbal test and argue that the testing industry has an obligation to study this phenomenon



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# Example 1 – Educational Testing

## Standardized Testing

Disappointingly, the black-white achievement gap in SAT math scores has remained virtually unchanged over the last fifteen years. Between 1996 and 2015, the average gap between the mean black score and the mean white score has been .92 standard deviations. In 1996 it was .9 standard deviations and in 2015 it was .88 standard deviations.



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## Example 1 – Educational Testing

1988 to 2005, the past 17 years the racial gap between the scores of blacks and whites has actually increased.

On the math SAT, only 0.7 percent of all black test takers scored at least 700 compared to 6.3 percent of all white test takers.

Thus, whites were nine times as likely as blacks to score 700 or above on the math SAT. Overall, there were 45 times as many whites as blacks who scored 700 or above on the math SAT.





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## Example 2 - Hiring Practices & “Fit”

- 2015 HBR study (Published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*): White applicants receive 36% more callbacks than Black applicants and 24% more than Latinx applicants
  - 24 field experiments
  - Showed little to no change in 25 years
- What does it mean to “fit” into an organization and who decides that?
- Limited racial diversity in social networks of recruiters, hiring managers, etc.
- Ongoing education and awareness



## Example 3 – Housing

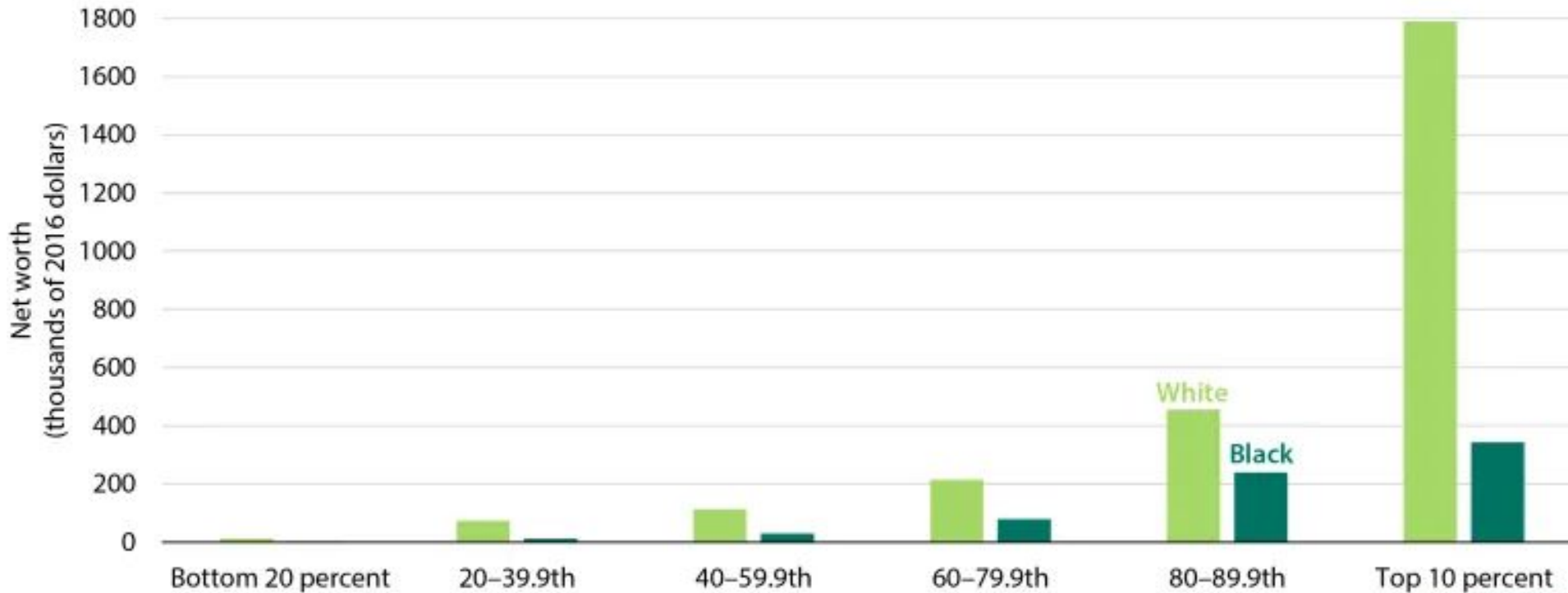
- After World War II, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) helped finance homes for returning veterans and families of veterans.
  - FHA underwriters warned that the **presence of even one or two non-white families** could undermine real estate values in the new suburbs
- These policies resulted in “**redlining**”
- This also resulted in the **subsidization** in the accumulation of wealth in largely white families and the **divestment** of of wealth in BIPOC communities



# Example 3 – Housing

FIGURE 3.

Median Net Worth, by Household Income Percentile



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.

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## Example 3 – Housing

- According to the Brookings, “White families receive much larger inheritances on average than Black families. Economists Darrick Hamilton and Sandy Darity conclude that **inheritances and other intergenerational transfers “account for more of the racial wealth gap than any other demographic and socioeconomic indicators.”**”
- Over the next two decades, the greatest transfer in wealth (\$30 trillion) will occur between Baby Boomers and younger generations
- Roots of this unprecedented transfer in wealth lie in racist housing policies



# SUMMARY

- **Race** is socially constructed
- **Racism** is a “pervasive system of advantage and disadvantage based on race”
- **Four Levels** - Cultural, Systemic, Interpersonal, and Internalized
- **Systemic Racism** is an interlocking set of parts



Q & A



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[go.uvm.edu/systemicracismeval](https://go.uvm.edu/systemicracismeval)



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# FINDING ANSWERS TOGETHER

## CONTINUES!

Resources: [go.uvm.edu/amazing-grace](https://go.uvm.edu/amazing-grace)

Session Two: **Wednesday, June 24, 2020**

Session Three: **Wednesday, July 1, 2020**

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### Q&A Questions

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