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ABSTRACT

In February 2000, researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and other specialists in the field of fathers and families convened the "Employment and Fatherhood: The Education, Work, and Economic Nexus" roundtable. This discussion considered how interrelationships among education and schooling, literacy, employment and employability, and the economy are fundamental to informing current discussions of family support. This report synthesizes the discussion of the conference themes and their implications for policymaking, the directions they indicate for future research, and the lessons they impart for practice. Section 1 of the report contains summaries of the research papers presented, as well as discussants' and participants' commentaries. Topics of papers include family environment and intergenerational well-being, school competition and student achievement, school racial composition and student achievement, the absence of black children in studies of student attitudes, and immigrant families. Section 2 describes the current and emerging issues in father poverty and social vulnerability that emerged during roundtable discussions, including discerning misconceptions about African American educational attainment and engagement, understanding the race effect, rethinking racial concentration in schools, and questioning assumptions about immigrants and their families. Section 3 offers new directions for research that arose from the discussion, including examining outcomes for multiple ethnic groups. Section 4 explores the implications of the issues raised for policymaking, including reestablishing the importance of race in policy discussions and making teachers accountable for their roles in child development. Section 5 describes lessons learned for practice, including empowering parents and focusing on human capital. The roundtable agenda and a list of participants are appended. (KB)

Employment and Fatherhood: The Education, Work, and Economic Nexus Roundtable

Table of Contents

continued

Table of Contents *continued*

Introduction

Discussing the issues that have emerged around schooling, the labor market, and workforce development are critical to developing a comprehensive understanding of how education and labor policies affect the ability of fathers and mothers—particularly low-income and minority parents—to ensure the well-being of their children.

Policy changes coupled with a rapidly shifting economy that increasingly favors workers with more skills and higher levels of education may further disadvantage low-income fathers and parents. These fathers and mothers often have limited schooling and literacy, which may already jeopardize their access to family-supporting jobs. They are over-represented among the intergenerationally poor, who tend to live in blighted urban areas or isolated rural settings. They are also disproportionately African American and Latino—denoting the persistent salience of race and racism as restrictive and defining features of social mobility. They and their children typically have little access to quality schools or learning experiences.

On February 23 and 24, 2000, approximately 50 researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and other specialists in the field of fathers and families gathered at NCOFF to convene the "Employment and Fatherhood: The Education, Work, and Economic Nexus" Roundtable. Participants considered the following questions:

- What are the responsibilities of schools in preparing the children in these families for their future roles as students, parents, members of the workforce, and citizens?
- To what extent is the ability of many low-income families and parents—particularly young adolescent fathers—constrained in contributing to the financial and educational support of their children?

The discussion considered how interrelationships among education and schooling, literacy, employment and employability, and the economy are fundamental to informing current discussions of family support. These issues are particularly critical, given the recent emphasis on welfare-to-work and the replacement of the Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA)-funded Employment Service with the Workforce Investment Act. A primary concern is the effect that recent economic and policy changes have had on the viability of parents, families, and schools.

Policy shifts and economic changes that increasingly favor workers with more skills and higher levels of education may further disadvantage low-income fathers and mothers.

The roundtable was designed to cast a comprehensive focus on the issues of schooling, education, employment, and the economy within the context of current discussions of welfare reform, father involvement, family efficacy, and child well-being. The conversation synthesized the information contained in roundtable papers and provided critical commentary on the implications for research on children's schooling, preparation for higher education, and the workforce; on educational, family, and social service efforts; and on the formulation of policy. Participants also considered strategies for improving fathers' employability from the perspectives of research, policy, and practice.

The primary goals of the meeting, as for all of the roundtable discussions, were to:

1. Present a comprehensive analysis of issues and problems that have been identified in the literature;

2. Deepen the discourse between and among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers around the identified issues;

3. Engage participants in the development of a research agenda, as an initial activity in a longer-term research study;

4. Move the field and the roundtable past the discussion and presentation of ideas to focus intensively on sound research and sustain practice-driven research efforts; and

5. Involve practitioners in meaningful ways in the conceptualization of research projects pursued by NCOFF and others in the field.

Presenters delivered summaries of the key themes and findings from their research papers, after which discussants provided 15-minute responses. The discussants' presentations broadened each paper's scope, placing the issues raised in a wider context or suggesting new ways of conceptualizing them. Moderators led a subsequent discussion among all roundtable participants on the themes introduced and on new directions for research and practice, as well as implications for policymaking.

Several overarching themes, which are discussed in detail in the second section of this report, emerged from the discussion:

- As educational attainment becomes increasingly important to ensuring economic security, policymakers, researchers, and practitioners must deepen their investigation and interpretation of the factors affecting student outcomes—particularly school competition, the racial composition of schools, and family values or characteristics.

- Because the implication of the "race residual" in statistical analyses continues to be either unquestioned or unresolved, researchers should rethink whether race should be a dependent or independent variable, and policymakers should reconsider their assumptions about race when interpreting the results of research that includes these analyses.

- Researchers and policymakers need to retest their theories regarding the black-white achievement gap and reconsider why the gap persists, including investigating the impact of school funding, teacher variables, curricular areas, and test scores on student achievement.

- Policymakers, researchers, and practitioners must not only examine which factors may limit academic achievement but also begin to focus on those characteristics that propel achievement among at-risk youths. They must also consider issues such as the roles of teachers in child development and of age in affecting students' attitudes toward schooling.

- A dialogue that cuts across a number of domains must be developed among researchers and policymakers in order to make systematic changes in the areas of health and human services, education, and workforce development, as well as in the ways policymaking and research interact.

- As the rising percentage of immigrants and minorities are becoming the new majority in the United States, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners need to re-evaluate their notions about immigrant communities, understanding the inherent diversity they exhibit in terms of racial self-identification,

their reasons for emigration, their education and skill levels, their socioeconomic outcomes, and the barriers they face.

This report synthesizes the discussion of these themes and their implications for policymaking, the directions they indicate for future research, and the lessons they impart for practice. The first section of this report contains summaries of the research papers presented at the roundtable, as well as discussants' and participants' commentaries. The second section describes the current and emerging issues in father poverty and social vulnerability that emerged during the roundtable discussions. The third section explores the implications of the issues raised for policymaking. The fourth offers new directions for research that arose from the discussion. The final section describes lessons learned for practice.

Summary of Roundtable Papers

NCOFF asked roundtable participants to explore the issues discussed in five papers: (1) "Family Environment and Intergenerational Well-Being: Some Preliminary Results" by Patrick L. Mason; (2) "School Competition and Student Achievement: An Analysis in Southeastern Michigan" by Pamela J. Jackson; (3) "The African American Composition Effect: What Does It Mean?" by William M. Rodgers III and William E. Spriggs; (4) "There Are No Children Here Either: The Absence of Black Children's Voices in Sociological Studies of Student Attitudes" by Karolyn Tyson; and (5) "Children of Immigrant Families: One-Fifth of America and Growing" by Donald J. Hernandez. This section summarizes the five papers and the related commentary from research presentations. The cross-cutting issues raised during the discussion of these papers are described in the remaining sections of this report.

"Family Environment and Intergenerational Well-Being: Some Preliminary Results"

Presenter: Patrick L. Mason, Florida State University

Discussants: Lauren Rich, University of Pennsylvania
Tukufu Zuberi, University of Pennsylvania

Moderator: Robert Wordlaw, Chicago Jobs Council

"In the current policy environment, there is considerable talk about family values and outcomes for children—both educational and other outcomes," said Patrick Mason of Florida State University. To help inform these conversations, Mason used the Panel Study on Income Dynamics (PSID) to examine outcomes for this survey's 1972 cohort of 6 to 17 year-olds. The panel observed the cohort as it matured from the ages of 17 through 28 in 1983 to 27 through 38 in 1993. Mason's analysis pursued the following questions:

- How much and in what ways does childhood family values and family status matter for young adult socioeconomic outcomes?
- Does accounting for individual differences in childhood family environment eliminate racial and sexual differences in the well-being of young adult workers—i.e., can differences in outcomes be explained by racial and sexual discrimination in the labor market or by variations in attributes such as family environment, education, or experience?
- Does the impact of childhood family environment on young adult well-being vary across racial and sexual groups?

To address these questions, Mason examined the impact of family values and family status on educational attainment, hourly wages, and hours of employment for the 5,384 families in the PSID sample.

His analysis makes a distinction between the impact of family values and family socioeconomic status—with the former defined as behaviors exhibited by the family and the latter indicating social class in terms of annual wages, hours, and years of education. "Why does this distinction matter?" asked Mason. "Values influence skill acquisition, such as educational attainment and certain job market outcomes, while socioeconomic status determines a person's access to individuals in positions of

power and authority who can help to increase their economic well-being." He reported his findings along two general dimensions: race and sex differences in socioeconomic outcomes and family values; and the effect of family values on young adult well-being and socioeconomic status.

Race and Sex Differentials. When examining basic demographic and economic data, Mason found a number of differences in outcomes for the sample along the lines of race and sex. Despite the fact that the sample had identical years of potential work experience and very similar years of education (with only a .6-year difference between blacks and whites), socioeconomic outcomes were dramatically different:

- **Hourly Wage Rates.** Mason calculated wage rates by dividing annual wages by annual hours of employment. He uncovered a large differential between African American and white members of the cohort. On average, white men in the sample earned $3.54 more per hour than African American men and almost $5.00 per hour more than African American women. While both white and African American men earned more than women of both races, the sex differences within racial groups were not as dramatic as the racial differences between groups.

- **Hours of Employment.** Neither African American men nor African American women averaged full-time/full-year employment. Young white males were employed 304 hours more per year than young African American males. Across racial categories, women averaged substantially fewer hours of employment than men.

- **Employment Status.** The unemployment rates in the sample varied dramatically by race—so much so that African American men had an unemployment rate that was three times that of white men (21 percent and 7 percent, respectively). African American women in the sample, whose unemployment rates were 18 percent, were also three times more likely to be unemployed than white women, whose rate was 6 percent. The racial differences in employment were not related to unemployment differences in the sample's various counties of residence. The average unemployment rate in the county of residence for African Americans is 6.4 percent, while the white members of the sample live in counties with average unemployment of 6 percent.

The PSID asks a series of questions related to the home environment and family behaviors in the household. Using these items, Mason identified variables to measure family values, family status, and the status of respondents' grandparents.

Measures of family values include such items as presence of reading material in the home, family aspirations or ambitions, social trust or hostility, religious affiliation, efficacy and planning, and risk avoidance. The data indicate a number of similarities. Both African American and white families reported extensive religious affiliation, but the groups differed substantially in the denominations represented. There were no differences in families' connectedness to potential sources of help—to non-family individuals, relatives, neighbors, community and workplace institutions, social establishments, and media information. Both groups also maintain families with similar aspirations and ambitions.

Some differences do exist, although there is not an expansive gap between the average responses of each group. The sample's African American families are more likely to express a desire to assist their parents and other relatives financially, exhibit a moderately higher degree of financial prudence, and maintain a higher risk-taking environment than white families. On the other hand, white families tend to exhibit a higher degree of efficacy and planning, to maintain an environment that favorably views

the status quo, and to engage in self-help activities. They also are marginally more likely to maintain a long-term planning horizon, maintain a higher level of achievement motivation, and carry out more money-earning acts.

The reading materials variable is one for which respondents reported significant differences. Five to six percent of African American homes had a large amount of reading material visible during the PSID interviews, but 40 percent did not have any reading material displayed at all.

Family status is measured by a combination of family income, wealth, neighborhood status, parental occupational prestige, and quantity and quality of parental education. White respondents ranked higher on all of these variables relative to the backgrounds of African American respondents. For example, the average African American respondent was raised in a family with an annual income of $18,000, while the average white respondent came from a family that earned approximately $36,000.

Although racial differences in education and potential experience were small or nonexistent, racial differences in labor market outcomes were substantial.

Overall, these data present what Mason calls a startling portrait of racial differences in family environment and socioeconomic outcomes for young workers. Although racial differences in education and potential experience (measured by age) are small or nonexistent, racial differences in market outcomes such as hours of employment, hourly wage rates, self-employment, and the probability of employment are substantial. While there are differences in family values and behaviors, they are of a relatively small magnitude and do not uniformly favor a particular race-sex group. Mason's analysis also documents over two generations of racial inequality in the class backgrounds of these young workers: that is, African Americans are much more likely to have been reared in homes of modest socioeconomic status and are even more likely to have had grandparents with a lower socioeconomic status.

Effects of Family Values and Socioeconomic Status on Young Adult Well-Being. Based on this initial analysis, Mason developed a number of hypotheses about the relationship between the status and values of an individual's family of origin and his or her outcomes in young adulthood. Using a statistical model, he examined whether race is a convenient proxy variable for summarizing group differences in childhood family values and socioeconomic status—or whether race-specific differences in labor market outcomes represent the effects of racial discrimination.

Mason's key findings indicate that race matters, even when controlling for a number of items relating to family environment and other characteristics:

All other things equal, African Americans will accumulate 0.29 years of additional schooling than an otherwise identical white worker. "The significant point here is not the size of this differential; rather it is that a racial differential exists and that the differential favors African Americans," said Mason. He believes this finding indicates that African American families on average must foster cultural values that encourage above-average educational attainment.

Yet, African Americans receive an 8.2 percent wage penalty along with a 185-hour employment penalty. Mason believes there is a clear reduction in the demand for African American workers. "These penalties suggest that among young adults, racial discrimination explains 48 percent of the male racial wage differential and 90 percent of the female racial wage differential," he says.

Family values are less important than family class position in determining a young adult's future well-being. Regardless of race, sex, or indicator of well-being, class explains a higher percentage of variation in economic

well-being than family values and is often greater than 100 percent more important. In fact, among African American families, class has a far greater impact on a child's outcomes than it does among whites.

"School Competition and Student Achievement: An Analysis in Southeastern Michigan"

Presenter: Pamela J. Jackson, Coleman A. Young Foundation

Discussants: John Kain, University of Texas-Dallas
James E. Davis, University of Delaware

Moderator: Khari Garvin, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education

Pamela Jackson's study was designed to bring an empirical analysis to speculative debates about the nature of school competition and its effects on the achievement outcomes of students. "The logic of public opinion is that student achievement has been declining, that public school performance is the source of that decline, that public schools perform poorly because they possess monopoly power, and that increasing competition would increase the performance of public schools," explained Jackson. However, she argues that increasing competition through existing measures, such as vouchers, result in distracting and counterproductive debates and even in devastating effects to the resource bases of public schools. She believes instead that a number of social, political, and economic factors have contributed to the changes in student academic performance.

Jackson's study examines the market structure of the education industry and uses measures of student population concentration as proxies for the degree of competition present to analyze the result of competition on student outcomes. The degree of competition was presented in the form of Herfindahl Indexes, which are calculated by determining the market share of each school in the region of analysis. That market share represents the proportion of a region's total enrollment that an individual school or district serves. Jackson used standardized test scores as measures of achievement and included them as dependent variables in pooled regression models to determine the significance of the Herfindahl Indexes. She also used other school, family, and peer input measures in her analysis.

The data were drawn from elementary schools in a region of southeastern Michigan that contains 89 local school districts, with three contiguous counties in Detroit as the urban center. These districts represent a diverse mix of communities and municipalities with suburban, urban residential, and commercial activity. Jackson examined 1,510 schools, of which 75 percent are public institutions; 87 percent of the students in this region attend public schools.

She hypothesized that monopolization occurs when only one or two schools in a region using vouchers become the schools of choice for parents. She expected that:

1. Higher levels of competition would occur in school districts with higher average household incomes;

2. Public school systems perform more efficiently and effectively when their client bases can afford private schooling alternatives; and

3. School districts with lower average household incomes are less likely to be as competitive, because their client bases may be less mobile and more location-dependent, as well as unable to afford private school alternatives.

Her research was intended to establish whether the level of concentration within a school district influences student achievement, where that achievement is a measure of educational out-

put. In this case, she used the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) scores of fourth graders in reading and math.

Jackson's analysis produced the following key findings on how a range of factors positively or negatively affect student achievement:

The Effect of Competition. Educational industry competition does influence student achievement, but in varying ways. When students are young (for example, in second grade), monopolization, or increased concentration, had a positive effect on student achievement. As students aged, however, concentration began to have a negative effect. Jackson believes that the concentration of second graders may allow for the presence of economies of scale in teaching basic foundation skills for mathematics and reading.

Increasing levels of school expenditure to an optimal level of $7,500 per pupil increases academic achievement by 17 percent.

The Effect of School Spending. Increasing levels of expenditure to an optimal level of $7,500 per pupil increases academic achievement by 17 percent. How the dollars are spent also matters. Administrative and instructional expenditures do not have an effect on student achievement. However, spending on operating and maintenance does have a positive impact on student performance. The implications are two-fold: capital modernization and physical plant improvements can influence outcomes for students; and older, urban school districts are at a severe disadvantage due to the need for rehabilitation and maintenance.

The Effect of School Quality. The ratio of pupils to teachers proves to have a statistically significant effect on student achievement although it is more influential on reading than mathematics achievement. As the ratio of pupils to teachers increases by one student per teacher, math achievement declines by about 1.6 percent. The decline in reading is as much as 2.6 percent.

The Effect of Family Background. A parent having some college experience or being a high school graduate had a positive effect on student achievement. Having a bachelor's degree had no effect. Household average income proved to have a significant and positive effect on student performance: for example, a $1,000 increase in average household income in the school district raised MEAP test scores by 0.63 percent.

"The African American Composition Effect: What Does It Mean?"

Presenter: William E. Spriggs, National Urban League

Discussants: Samuel Myers, Jr., University of Minnesota
Fran Jackson, North Carolina Central University

Moderator: Yasmine Daniel, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

William Spriggs of the National Urban League presented the results of a study he conducted with William M. Rodgers III of the College of William and Mary, who is currently serving as the Chief Economist for the U.S. Department of Labor. The authors examined the effect of the racial composition of a school on student achievement, in terms of educational attainment and labor market outcomes such as employment, wages, and occupational type.

"The assumption among researchers has been that students who attend schools that are predominantly black have bad outcomes," said Spriggs. "But what is it about the schools that these findings really point to?" In many studies, the hypothesis being tested is whether exposure to whites has a positive impact on African American student achievement, particularly post-desegregation. Spriggs' study with Rodgers addresses this question as well as the effect of school composition on white students. The authors also address whether the proportion of African

American students in a school serves as a proxy for family background and school resources.

Spriggs and Rodgers used data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLS-Y), which interviewed young men and women in 1979, when they were between 14 and 22. Their empirical strategy was to predict labor market outcomes for African Americans and whites, controlling for the proportion of African Americans attending a school, as well as for local labor market, family, and school factors. As a result, any residual effects that the proportion of African American students had on outcomes could be said to be due to other family and school factors and/or to labor market discrimination. Their analysis revealed a number of findings:

Negative Effects Without Factoring in Family Background, School Quality, or Labor Market Factors. Spriggs found that, before introducing family and school factors, attending a racially mixed or predominately African American high school is shown to have detrimental effects on student outcomes:

- Both white and African American young adults in the NLS-Y receive lower wages, complete fewer years of schooling, have higher unemployment, and have a lower likelihood of working in managerial/specialty occupations. African American students experience a decline in total years of schooling by over two years for each increase in the percentage of black students.

- The data also reveal that outcomes for white students are also adversely affected as the proportion of African American students rises. However, the impact is much smaller for whites than for blacks for education, wages, unemployment, occupations, and test scores.

- Wage declines and the probability of employment in a managerial/professional specialty occupation for whites who attended predominantly African American schools are similar to African Americans who attended predominantly white schools.

Adding Family, Local, and School Factors to the Statistical Models. The authors added controls to their basic model for the local unemployment rate, the African American proportion of the county's population, parents' education, information about reading resources in the home, number of books in the library, and the proportions of full-time teachers and disadvantaged students. According to Spriggs and Rogers, this statistical model explains all of the negative impacts on outcomes for African American students. Specifically, they found:

"The assumption among researchers has been that students who attend schools that are predominantly black have bad outcomes," said Spriggs. "But what is it about the schools that these findings really point to?"

- The negative impact of the proportion of African Americans on years of schooling is shown to be largely due to family background, school social characteristics, and school resources.

- African American students' disadvantages can be fully explained by family and school measures.

- Family and school factors explain the impact that the proportion of African American students has on the probability that an African American is employed in managerial/professional specialty occupations.

However, adding these factors accounts for very little of the negative effects for whites. Even when controlling for family background and school, the percentage of students who are African American still has a negative effect on white students.

Rodgers and Spriggs' analysis raises an interesting issue. "The 'percent black' variable is not driving the negative outcomes for black students," Spriggs said, "when family background and schooling are controlled for." But it does seem to drive the negative effect for white students. "The white students who attend schools that are more black are in the minority. But the black students who attend schools with more black students are not any less disadvantaged," he explained. The key—and the most disturbing—finding in Spriggs' estimation is that school resources are lower in predominantly black schools and that this disadvantage is having real effects on students' outcomes.

"There Are No Children Here Either: The Absence of Black Children's Voices in Sociological Studies of Student Attitudes"

Presenter: Karolyn Tyson, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill

Discussants: Scott Miller, The College Board
Susan McElroy, Carnegie Mellon University

Moderator: Joe Scantlebury, STRIVE New York

Karolyn Tyson's ethnographic study of two all-black elementary schools challenges the dominant view that characterizes African American students as being disengaged and oppositional. As the title suggests, her results call attention to the absent voices of elementary-aged African American students within the sociology of education discipline. The prevailing theories about the relatively low academic performance of African American students tend to center on student attitudes—and many were developed with reference to adolescents. As Tyson contends, little research or attention has focused on the attitudes of younger African American students. As a result, the image of African American adolescents has come to represent much of what is known about—and taken for granted as—the characteristics of elementary-aged students.

In this paper, Tyson presents her findings from participant observation of a cohort of elementary-aged African American students. She argues that the contradictions in findings between her work and that of others are due to the differences in the age cohorts studied. These contradictions signal potential shortcomings in current theories about the achievement of African American students and their attitudes toward school.

Two elementary schools were involved in the study. Both were located in one of the largest cities in the Southeast and both had student populations that were 100 percent black. One principal was an African American man, and one was an African American woman. All of the 16 teachers at one school were African American, and the majority of teachers at the other school (19 of 24) were African American; five were white. Tyson observed one third-grade and one fourth-grade classroom in each school. She spent four days per week in these classrooms, observing students from November 1996 through June 1997.

Her results run contrary to the dominant perception of African American students as being disengaged from school, disinterested in learning, and opposed to achievement. Third- and fourth-grade students at these schools were very achievement-oriented and engaged in the process of learning. Her assessment is captured in the following summary:

Student Engagement. Students openly vied for opportunities to demonstrate competence through classroom participation. Their eagerness to participate contradicts the prevailing assumption that they are disengaged with or opposed to learning and achievement.

Responses to Achievement and Failure. Students were noticeably proud of their academic successes and

visibly embarrassed by their failures. Successful demonstrations of ability usually prompted public celebrations while failures were followed by looks of disappointment and frustration.

Teasing and Ridiculing of Achievement and Failure. While African American adolescents are said to ridicule and ostracize their peers for high achievement, young students ridiculed each other only for low achievement. Everyone was teased; whether objectively high or low achievers, all students were teased for making mistakes or otherwise performing poorly. In addition, rather than being burdened by high achievement, students with poor academic performance were actually burdened by low achievement.

The image of African American adolescents has come to represent much of what is known about—and taken for granted as—the characteristics of elementary-aged students.

Value of Grades. Grades provided a powerful indication of ability for students. When asked about grades that pleased them, most students talked about the highest grades they received. But others also talked about passing grades they earned in subjects or tests they found difficult.

Tyson's findings about how students view themselves as learners and achievers not only challenge commonly-held myths about the attitudes of African American elementary students but also raises questions about what happens between grade levels to change students' school engagement. Tyson suggested two explanations:

The Developmental Process. As they age, students' awareness of lowered expectations, experiences of discrimination, and other negative influences may increasingly affect their academic engagement and performance. By the time they reach adolescence, the enthusiasm they expressed for learning at earlier ages may have become stifled.

Teachers' Negative Reinforcement. The way that teachers negatively or positively reinforce students' behavior may be responsible in part for the perceived change in attitude between elementary school and adolescence. For example, Tyson observed that teachers in all four of the classrooms under observation usually punished students for their unrestrained enthusiasm and excitement. Punishment came in the form of denied opportunities to respond or otherwise participate in classroom activity.

"Children of Immigrant Families: One-Fifth of America and Growing"

Presenter: **Donald J. Hernandez, State University of New York (SUNY)-Albany**

Discussant: **Hillard Pouncy, Rutgers University**

Moderator: **Claudia Grisgoescu, ASPIRA**

Donald Hernandez of SUNY-Albany reported the major findings, conclusions, and recommendations of his work for the committee on the Health and Adjustment of Immigrant Children and Families. The committee was convened by the Board on Children, Youth, and Families under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Medicine. His paper focused on the socioeconomic and demographic risks experienced by children in immigrant families and their implications for public policy.

"These are the children of the new American majority," says Hernandez. "Taken as a whole, immigrant groups and minorities are destined to become the majority population in the United States, and it is essential for us to look at the limited social, educational, and economic opportunities they experience in the United States." The issue not only involves concern for the well-being of these youth but also has national implications. As Hernandez explained, the U.S. Census Bureau predicts that by

2030 the percentage of children who are Hispanic, African-American, Asian, or of some other racial minority will constitute half of the childhood population, growing from nearly 30 percent in 1990. "As the growing elderly population of the predominantly white baby-boom generation reaches retirement age, this population will increasingly depend for its economic support on the productive activities and civic participation of working-age adults who are members of racial and ethnic minorities, many of whom will have lived in immigrant families as children," said Hernandez.

"These are the children of the new American majority," says Hernandez. "Taken as a whole, immigrant groups and minorities are destined to become the majority population in the United States."

Hernandez's report found a number of challenges and opportunities for the children of immigrants in the United States, as described below:

Family Structure. The proportion of children living in one-parent families is substantially smaller for children in immigrant families (17 percent) than for children in U.S.-born families (26 percent). Children in immigrant families are more likely to benefit from strong, stable two-parent family situations than children whose families were born in the U.S.

Parental Employment. For children, generally, negative outcomes have been found to result from instability in parental employment and low parental educational attainment, both of which lead to poverty-level family income. The overwhelming majority of children in immigrant families—like those in U.S.-born families—have fathers who are in the labor force. Their participation rates vary from 88 to 95 percent across the generations.

Parental Educational Attainment. Children in immigrant families differ little from children in U.S.-born families in terms of the proportion of parents who are highly educated. As of 1990, a nearly identical percentage of both immigrants' children and U.S.-born families' children had fathers with four or more years of college. A nearly identical percentage also had mothers who were college graduates. On the other hand, these children are eight times more likely than those born to U.S. families to have a father or a mother who has completed only eight years or fewer of schooling.

Socioeconomic Status. Children in immigrant families are somewhat more likely than their U.S. counterparts to live in official poverty: 22 percent versus 17 percent, respectively. The first generation was particularly likely to live in poverty, at a rate of 33 percent. Most of the poverty among children in immigrant families was concentrated among children with origins in 12 countries.

First and Second Languages. One-fourth of the children of immigrants live in linguistically isolated households, and about two-thirds speak a language other than English in the home. But nearly three-fourths speak English exclusively or very well. In fact, language assimilation occurs very rapidly across generations.

Receipt of Public Benefits. Because parents who are not citizens may be unaware of their children's eligibility for important services or may fear contact with authorities on behalf of their children, a substantial portion of children in immigrant families may be at risk of not receiving important public services or benefits. Prior to welfare reform, legal immigrants were entitled to health and other public benefits; now, greater restrictions on eligibility may have significantly limited the access of children of immigrant families to Medicaid, AFDC, SSI, food stamps, housing, and heating assistance.

Hernandez summarized the four implications that the committee drew from these data, which he believes should guide future policies, programs, and research:

1. Many children in immigrant families are likely to experience unusual circumstances, as well as special chal-

lenges and benefits from culturally specific strengths. Attention needs to be paid, in particular, to the role of bilingualism and biculturalism in adapting to American society, to the role of racial and ethnic discrimination, and to intergroup relations as they affect children.

2. Health and adaptation unfold in the context of two inextricably linked processes: (a) child development; and (b) migration and assimilation. Particular attention should be paid to cross-national social networks, to family traditions and expectations, and to connections to ethnic communities and resources within the U.S.

3. There is no typical immigrant child, and studies of children in immigrant families must attend to the diversity of these children regarding their socioeconomic status, economic opportunities, race and ethnicity, family circumstances, and social contexts.

4. Children in different subgroups may experience very different contexts and outcomes in the assimilation process. These outcomes will be shaped by differences in their age upon entry into the U.S., their generational status, and their parents' mix of assets and resources. Therefore, the nature and causes of different childhood trajectories—and whether they involve assimilation to a middle-class or underclass status—can be monitored and understood only by following children longitudinally over time and across generations, as well as by considering the role of immigration-related factors such as their legal standing upon entry into the U.S.

In addition, Hernandez identified six recommendations that emerged from the National Academy's study:

1. The federal government should fund a longitudinal study of children and youth in immigrant families. The study should measure physical and psychological development, and the range of contextual factors influencing their development.

2. A series of ethnographic studies on the physical and mental health of children and youth in diverse immigrant families should be conducted.

3. Both quantitative and qualitative research should be conducted on the effects of welfare reform and health care reform on children and youth in immigrant families and on how access to and the effectiveness of health care and other services are affected by the provision of culturally competent care.

4. The federal government should collect and code information on country of birth, citizenship status, and parents' country of birth in key national data collection systems, as is now done in the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey.

5. As the federal government develops new surveys or draws new samples to supplement or extend existing surveys, it should select and include subsamples that are large enough to monitor the circumstances of children and youth in immigrant families reliably as a whole, and where feasible for specific countries of origin.

6. Key indicators published in the annual report of the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics should, insofar as possible, distinguish among foreign-born immigrant children, U.S.-born children in immigrant families, and U.S.-born children in U.S.-born families—that is, among the first, second, and third generations of children.

Based on the research presented in the five papers, roundtable participants raised a number of key topics regarding race and socioeconomic status in the examination of employment, education, and outcomes for low-income fathers and their families. Summarized here, they include the following: (1) the misconceptions about African American educational attainment; (2) misconceptions about African American academic engagement; (3) the residual effect of race in results of statistical analyses; (4) the understanding of racial concentration in schools; and (5) assumptions about immigrants and their families.

Teacher behavior—in particular, negative reinforcement of a natural enthusiasm for learning—could cause students to become defensive about achievement or failure.

Discerning the Misconceptions about African American Educational Attainment...

Patrick Mason's findings on the relatively higher levels of educational attainment among African American respondents in the PSID sample are not only consistent with the literature but also contrary to conventional wisdom about racial differentials in educational achievement. Lauren Rich of the University of Pennsylvania mentioned one study in particular on teen mothers, which reported they were more likely to be enrolled in school after the births of their children. "It is a fact that deserves to be more widely known," she said. However, Rich explained that these rates must be interpreted with caution. Despite increased educational attainment among African Americans, there is still a differential with respect to educational achievement. As late as 1994, the average African American student was four years behind an average white student in reading and 3.5 years behind in math.

As Harvard researchers Richard Murnane and Frank Levy have explained, reading and math skills are closely tied to labor market outcomes. Based on their findings, Rich believes that a direct relationship exists between lower employment outcomes for young adults, lower levels of academic achievement, lower quality of schools, and the socioeconomic status of their families of origin. The implication is how to focus on other ways to close the economic gap at a time when Affirmative Action is being challenged. Rich believes that this gap can be narrowed by improving the quality of the education received by African American and other minority students and, as many researchers have suggested, making early connections to the labor force through schooling. One example of the former strategy is the work-based activity included in the School-to-Work Opportunities Act.

...And Educational Engagement

As Tyson and other participants suggested, teacher behavior—in particular, negative reinforcement of a natural enthusiasm for learning—could cause students to become defensive about achievement or failure later in their educational careers. Roundtable participants agreed that the fact that teachers in Tyson's classrooms were predominantly African American raises an interesting point. While white teachers may bring discriminatory notions to their classrooms, even African American teachers can send negative signals to young learners.

Understanding the Race Effect

According to Tukufu Zuberi of the University of Pennsylvania, the residual effect of race in the results of statistical

analyses poses a problematic but significant challenge to researchers, who must address why the residual effect exists and how to approach the issue more appropriately across theory, the interpretation of findings, and methodology. Zuberi discussed the problems inherent in conceptualizing race in the current framework of causal reasoning in the social sciences. As a technique for analysis, statistical regression was established as the social equivalent of scientific experiments—determining relationships by controlling certain components of an experiment and manipulating others to arrive at an observable outcome. In regression equations, dependent variables are the conditions that can be controlled, while independent variables are those that cannot be altered.

Race can be viewed as an unalterable characteristic—not as a "cause" but as a "predictor" that indicates a racial classification. "Researchers must have a thorough understanding of how race plays in society, before using it as a variable in a model. They need to understand their basic assumptions," said Zuberi. For example, certain assumptions play when using the variable "black"—including where it falls (on the right- or left-hand side of an equation). "What does the variable black mean?" Zuberi asked. "You can't just make assumptions about using race as a proxy for what happens to individuals in the world."

Zuberi concludes that unalterable characteristics cannot be a "cause" and should not be expressed as causal relationships, only associations. The distinction is important, because leaving the interpretation open allows the same result to be represented as very different findings—in particular, race as a biological determinant or predictor of cognitive or other abilities. The residual notion can lead to spurious interpretations.

"We're on the brink of a revolution for rethinking why race is on the right-hand side of the equation, rather than the left. Too many researchers look at it as if race is 'propelling' something else without knowing why," said Samuel Myers of the Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota. Instead, he believes that social scientists have an obligation to examine what is driving the effects that race has as an endogenous factor.

Rethinking Racial Concentration in Schools

The topic of racial concentration within schools is one of the most complicated and compelling issues facing social scientists investigating education and labor market outcomes for students. "What explains how schools become majority or nearly completely black?" asked Myers. "Long after desegregation and equal opportunity, we still find heavily concentrated neighborhoods and schools. What's driving that dynamic? Isn't that a more telling underlying factor?" The issue goes beyond regression analyses to the impressions, particularly those held by employers, of the quality of students coming out of schools with high rates of minority students.

"We're on the brink of a revolution in rethinking why race is on the right-hand side of the equation, rather than the left. Too many researchers look at it as if race is 'propelling' something else without knowing why."

Myers' point is that many who study the racial composition of schools are observing the effects of different percentages of racial groups on test scores in states where there is not a great deal of racial diversity. Of the 3,000 counties in the United States, only 5 percent have populations of African American citizens above 2 percent. Both Myers and Spriggs argue that using data to compare student outcomes in "all black" schools versus "all white" schools is really a counterfactual calculation. "For the median African American student," Spriggs explained, "his or her school was not majority black. The real America is a far more complex mix." While there are schools and school districts with majority or 100 percent African American student bodies, these

Characteristics of the Changing Economy

Peter Cappelli, professor of management at The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, summarized the major trends now affecting the economy and the labor market in the United States.

Increased Premium of Educational Attainment. There has been a precipitous decline in the earning power of those with only a high school degree, and an increasing gap between the wages of high school graduates and college graduates.

Increasing Wage Inequality. Wage inequality exists at every level of education and occupation, between demographic groups, and between the lowest and highest wage earners. Individuals who would otherwise appear to be similar in education and experience are earning drastically different rates of pay.

Employer Downsizing and a Reduction in Internal Labor Markets. The restructuring of firms in the 1980s and early 1990s was characterized by massive layoffs, the spinning off of major functions and services within firms to outside vendors, and a focus on core competencies as a strategic advantage. Corporate organizations, including the management hierarchy, now tend to be flatter; as a result, middle management positions are being eliminated and opportunities for internal career ladders and advancement within a firm have declined.

Increasing Contingent Employment and Pay. Outsourcing has led to an increase in part-time, temporary, and project-based employment for contract workers and independent contractors. Economists estimate that as much as 30 percent of the workforce is engaged in either part-time or contract work. In addition, pay—even for regular employees—is increasingly contingent on the performance of the firm. There has been a rise in profit-sharing and stock options as forms of compensation.

Buying Rather Than Making Skill. As employers continue to outsource jobs, tasks, and entire functions within the firm, they also have shifted from using training and investment in employee skills acquisition to "purchasing" those skills by recruiting employees who already possess them from the external labor market.

16

Declining Job Security. In the early 1990s, the rate of job loss for men between the ages of 25 and 55 was double the rate for the previous generation of men at the same age. Tenure is declining at many firms. Employees are also spending more time in the same occupations but with different employers. These trends reflect both the decline in internalized job ladders and the tendency for employers to poach or recruit employees with existing skills from the external labor market.

researchers believe that investigating the effect of attending certain schools over others requires a far more complex approach as well.

Questioning Assumptions about Immigrants and Their Families

Clearly, immigration and outcomes for immigrant parents and their families will become increasingly important social and economic issues in the United States in the first decades of the twenty-first century. As Hillard Pouncy of Rutgers University pointed out, Hernandez's analysis highlighted not only what is currently known about the physical, educational, and financial status of immigrants and their families but also what is not known or understood: how welfare reform affects access to benefits, health care, and employment training; how different communities and their cultures influence the process of enculturation and economic mobility; and how global economic trends affect immigration rates and access to employment.

Many participants noted the recent national controversy over the fate of Elian Gonzalez, a Cuban child who was rescued after his mother died at sea in an attempt to enter the United States as a refugee. At the center of many arguments regarding whether Elian should be allowed to remain in the United States with Cuban relatives or sent home to live with his father in Cuba was a fundamental question about his well-being: Would he have increased opportunities and better outcomes in the United States or in Cuba? As Pouncy noted, that question can only be answered by first defining what those opportunities and outcomes are. Are they captured in the notion of access to educational and economic opportunity, or do other factors, such as being with his father in his country of origin regardless of its political or economic system become the focus?

Edmund Gordon of the University of Texas at Austin stated that he believes it is important to assess the role of racism in many discussions of immigrants—in particular, the often unconscious use of skin color as a marker of inferiority as well as the explanations given of why one immigrant group may fare better over others. "We talk about the work ethic of an immigrant population as a reason for their stability or mobility," said Gordon, "but as opposed to what? Notions of potentiality for immigrant communities tend to be based on ascribing pathologies to darker-skinned populations who are relegated to the supposed underclass." Gordon warns that researchers, policymakers, and practitioners should be careful about the underlying notions upon which they often rely when looking at outcomes for different immigrant groups.

Policymakers, and practitioners should be careful about the underlying notions upon which they often rely when looking at outcomes for different immigrant groups.

In fact, as William Darity of the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill mentioned, the issue can be further examined according not just to race but also to ancestry and the racial identification of a group—for example, the distinction often made between West Indian and non-West Indian blacks. "Analyses of the 1990 Census show that discriminatory outcomes are based in how a group identifies itself racially once in the U.S. If they identify their ancestry according to the terms of race, then their experiences tend to look more and more like those of African American populations over time."

Participants discussed new research directions in the field of fathers and families, identifying new avenues for scholars to pursue. These areas include: (1) being more explicit about interpreting race residuals; (2) broadening the notion of racial composition; (3) retesting theories for explaining the achievement gap; (4) examining the true effects of school competition; (5) investigating success stories as well as employment barriers; (6) examining "irregular" employment; and (7) undertaking basic and applied research on immigration, employment, and outcomes for immigrants and their children. The following section summarizes their recommendations.

Being More Explicit about Interpreting Race Residuals

"Race is not an attribute that immediately gives us a picture of a person's entire life story—biologically or socially—but it can tell us what that person had to deal with," said Tukufu Zuberi. According to Zuberi, "race" is really a measure of the racial discrimination that an individual has had (or will have) to face. Many roundtable participants pointed out that past investigations of this issue have raised two concerns: (1) that researchers have not been collecting sufficient data and (2) that the data have been collected incorrectly. In designing studies, researchers must not make gross assumptions about using race as a proxy for cultural or biological determinants. "Instead," said Zuberi, "let's measure what it's supposed to proxy for: racial stratification and racial discrimination."

John Kain of the University of Texas–Dallas suggested that it is equally important to explore not just the determinants of labor market differentials but also the role that race plays in determining educational outcomes—and access to quality education in the first place. "It's complex," said Kain, "like peeling an onion and trying to understand what the residual is by adding explanatory variables. But we need to keep searching to find the locus or mechanism that caused the differences."

Edmund Gordon emphasized the danger in using race as a proxy for cultural factors. "The argument is that if biological inferiority is not apparent for how race operates, people are now saying that cultural inferiority explains the differential," he said. "Researchers must be clear about what those family values are and how the factors influence the family. We must be equally clear in avoiding the notion of a culture of poverty, as a pathological culture that has detrimental effects on the attainment of education and skills among minority communities." Gordon believes that race is functioning as a proxy for racism, and suggests that ethnographic investigations of institutionalized racism could lead to ways of identifying how racism operates in both the educational system and the labor market.

"[Researchers must avoid] the notion of a culture of poverty, as a pathological culture that has detrimental effects on the attainment of education and skills among minority communities."

As William Spriggs commented, "We must get people to ask why we should put race on the right-hand side of the model. It is one of the most important questions for new doctoral students to answer. What's success? What's race? We can't think of it as being self-evident." Many participants agreed that

younger researchers can help to lead the effort in making the notion of racial discrimination a legitimate issue.

Examining Outcomes for Multiple Ethnic Groups

Claudia Grisgoescu of ASPIRA raised an interesting point about the nature of research on racial composition within schools, as it was discussed at the roundtable. She suggested that the field would benefit from an examination of student outcomes and attitudes across race and ethnicities and over time. Comparisons of labor market outcomes and educational achievement between African American and white students alone neither captures the diversity in most American schools nor breaks down the notion of white achievement as the normative model.

Retesting Theories for Explaining the Achievement Gap

"Several theories account for the black-white achievement gap," said Fran Jackson of North Carolina Central University, who recommended that researchers focus more on schools and the process of schooling than on the various arguments that previously have been used to explain the earnings and educational attainment differential between African Americans and whites. The first, which is based on socioeconomic factors, holds that an increase in income would help a group to achieve parity with whites on other outcomes as well. However, as she pointed out, the gap exists even as income rises for African Americans. Second, there is the pathological theory—the notion that culture promotes negative thoughts and behaviors. The third is the genetics argument recently revived by studies such as Murray and Herrnstein's *The Bell Curve*. Finally, Jackson mentioned the "stereotype threat," or internalized negative stereotypes that any member of a stigmatized group could experience.

"Is the psychology of a classroom with high-achieving white kids different from Tyson's classrooms of African American students?"

While some of these theories may have merit, many scholars do not believe they explain the differential between black and white student achievement in an acceptable way. Fran Jackson's impressions of the implications for researchers include:

Investigating Issues of School Funding. The impact of inequity in funding is one of the key areas that researchers should explore. That investigation should also examine how schools—at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels—are more segregated now than they were in the 1970s and how local tax bases figure into school funding.

Investigating Teacher Variables. Schooling outcomes have a great deal to do with teacher interactions with students, many of which may be influenced by discriminatory notions on the part of teachers, inadequacy in their teaching styles, or negative reinforcement. Researchers should explore teachers' communications styles with different groups of children, including their expectations for higher-order reasoning.

Investigating Curricular Areas. Although studies of classroom curriculum and student achievement are common, relatively few examine these issues critically from the perspective of the cultural and racial experiences of teachers and students. In addition, they rarely include information drawn from the experiences or histories of diverse groups. For example, while many standardized tests claim to be integrated culturally, they include few items about African American history, even though the subject may have been taught in the classroom to all students. What is the standard? For whom is it set?

Investigating Test Scores. Fran Jackson also believes that test score bias

should be investigated. William Spriggs agreed, adding: "The test score issue just isn't addressed because no one wants to honestly engage what the test score really measures." To make his point, Spriggs referred to an example of how this bias can operate. A *New York Times* article reported that one math question was thrown out of a standardized test during its development because more black students than white students answered the question correctly.

"My guess is that kids know it when they see lowered expectations," said Miller. "If you're a high-achieving African American student in a grade where there are not many of you, how does the psychology play out in your engagement?"

Tyson's work demonstrates that African American students come to school with a desire for achievement, while the literature largely claims they do not. "If their attitudes change, something happens in the process of schooling or outside of it to effect that change," she explained. One qualitative approach to identifying where and why that change occurs could be to use Tyson's framework to examine the differences in attitudes between high-achieving and low-achieving students across racial categories and over time—particularly between the critical years of the elementary grades to young adolescence. (Tyson is planning to follow up her study with the same students and with an older class of adolescents.)

"Is the psychology of a classroom with high-achieving white kids different from Tyson's classrooms of African American students?" asked Scott Miller, director of the College Board's National Task Force on Minority High Achievement. Following these students over time would allow researchers to examine whether a disproportionate number of the students observed decrease their academic achievement by the time they reach middle school, when they become aware of lowered expectations, and—most importantly—what the consequences of lowered achievement are. "My guess is that kids know it when they see lowered expectations," said Miller. "If you're a high-achieving African American student in a grade where there are not many of you, how does the psychology play out in your engagement?" As Edmund Gordon explained, some studies of behavior have indicated that when a student is young, values are dictated by the adult world, but as youths age they are more able to determine their own norms and those of their peers.

Examining the Effects of School Competition

According to Pamela Jackson, it is essential to develop better, more holistic measures of student achievement that extend beyond what standardized test scores are capable of measuring. To help prove or disprove the existence of the market power of public schools, she believes that studies like hers should continue to examine competition at other grade levels and for other academic disciplines to determine its significance and value. If school competition does prove to have an impact on student achievement, two next steps for researchers include: (1) determining what drives competition and how it differs across schools with different racial and family income demographics; and (2) determining the maximum thresholds for the degree of competition, finding the critical values to understand how to limit competition or maximize its benefits.

"We need a nuanced analysis of how to think about school choice that is not a *fait accompli*...an assumption that 'choice is better.'"

James Davis of the University of Delaware pointed out how approximations of educational output have been riddled with the clumsy application of models and the use of bad data. "We need a nuanced analysis of how to think about school choice that is not a *fait accompli*," he explained, "an assumption that 'choice is better.'" He believes that analyses like Jackson's are critical now, at a time when the influx of charter schools has made the notion of school choice a viable option in many commu-

nities—with very little empirical data to support the benefits or risks for students.

Investigating Success Stories—as well as Employment Barriers

Most discussions of achievement suffer from a reliance on a deficit perspective—studying only what is wrong with a group of students rather than what they can do right. Robert Wordlaw of the Chicago Jobs Council suggested that researchers investigate why some individuals and families are succeeding, and what common threads in their experiences indicate directions other families might take in their own steps toward self-sufficiency. "We need to have answers, but not necessarily 'causes' about what leads to this success," he explained. Understanding, as well, the systems of support that facilitated successful entry into the labor market are key areas to examine.

Scott Miller suggested that researchers examine the Meyerhoff Scholarship Program on the campus of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). The Meyerhoff Scholarship Program actively recruits high-achieving minority students to study mathematics and the sciences and has produced some of the highest numbers of minorities with postbaccalaureate technical degrees in the United States. Why does this program succeed at a majority white institution? Miller suggested that researchers should pursue this, and other, questions. "Despite the test score differential, the *Shape of the River* tells us that minority students contribute more to their communities, and in the long run ultimately perform as well as white students," he said. Understanding what factors contribute to such success is critical to helping promote minority achievement at all levels.

Wordlaw also believes that researchers should examine instances in which discrimination is blatant on the part of employers. "Is there a place where employers are sending messages like, 'Don't send us African American workers?' Are they administering biased assessment tests that screen out certain applicants?" he asked. The hiring process can be inherently discriminatory, but implicitly so—as employers hide their biases by requiring that applicants possess certain "soft" skills that eliminate entire groups of individuals.

Taking a Closer Look at "Irregular" and "Underground" Employment

Because many fathers in low-income and minority communities have limited access to employment in the mainstream economy, they may pursue non-standard employment relationships, self-employment, or jobs in the "underground economy" to earn a living and support their children. Lauren Rich suggested that researchers should investigate this type of employment further. She has been using the Fragile Families Study—the data that Waldo Johnson used in a previous Roundtable to explore father contributions and involvement—to measure self-employment among low-income fathers. The survey asks men to indicate their status not only as a regular employee but also as a worker being paid unreported wages. It also asks fathers if they engage in illegal activity for profit, such as selling drugs or stolen goods.

Looking more closely at underground economies would allow us to paint a more complete picture of economic well-being in low-income communities.

In Rich's Fragile Families sample, 38 percent of the men surveyed had earned wages from these forms of "irregular" employment, often pursued within the underground economy. After taking those earnings into account, the total income of African American males in the study sample increased by 30 percent. Rich suggests that looking more closely at this sector of activity would allow us to paint a more complete picture of economic well-being in low-income communities. Issues to be explored include the extent to which participation in these economies are detrimental to mainstream employment, as well as which skills learned through irregular employment could be used to secure regular jobs.

As one participant mentioned, the underground economy generates a great deal of discussion in political and educational arenas, but few understand the role that this economy plays in local neighborhoods. Therefore, few also understand the effect it may have on young fathers, mothers, and their families. Researchers and policymakers engaging in this debate seldom rely on the accounts of residents in low-income areas to determine how that market functions. For example, what motivates the participation of young low-income fathers in these economies—a disinterest in or sense of alienation from mainstream economies or an acknowledgement that this market drives the economy of their local neighborhoods?

Undertaking Basic and Applied Research on Immigration, Employment, and Outcomes for Immigrant Parents and Their Children

In addition to the specific recommendations for research developed by the Committee on the Health and Adjustment of Immigrant Children and Families, discussant Hillard Pouncy and other roundtable participants suggested other avenues to pursue when researching outcomes for immigrants and their families. Pouncy mentioned that scholars must ask themselves a fundamental question: What is the purpose of a particular analysis? "New questions about immigration policies will continue to arise, and we as researchers can supply the data that tie into those policies," Pouncy explained. "But we must look critically at the policies that we mean to inform, rather than just answering their call." For example, he suggests investigating whether the children of immigrants would have better access to health care and educational/economic opportunities if they remained in their countries of origin. In many cases, the answer would be "no." But in some cases, the limited outcomes that many immigrant families experience in the United States might be avoided by choosing not to emigrate.

Another example of a potential policy change includes relaxing immigration standards for foreign nationals with the skills—particularly technology-related skills—that the U.S. workforce requires. One participant asked, "What is the relative advantage of increasing immigration over investing in the skills of U.S. citizens to meet rising skill requirements?"

Pouncy also suggested that researchers go beyond mapping migration flows of immigrant groups and families to capture deeper questions about the diversity of experience among immigrants: Who emigrates? Why? What skills and experience do they bring? Where do they settle? How does their ultimate destination in the U.S. affect economic opportunity and family outcomes? "There is a broader issue embedded in this kind of analysis," said Pouncy, "and it is one of demography and diversity, not just rates of immigration."

"New questions about immigration policies will continue to arise, and we as researchers can supply the data that tie into those policies," Pouncy explained. "But we must look critically at the policies that we mean to inform, rather than just answering their call."

Researchers also need to take a step back to examine the broader trends that influence immigration patterns. In particular, studying the influence of market globalization on industries and nations would help policymakers to understand that the factors determining who lives within the boundaries of many states and national entities are increasingly economic. These factors include the choices of individual firms, the location of resources and labor, trends within international industries, and global trade.

Implications for Policymaking

Participants discussed the impact of a changing economy, racial discrimination, socioeconomic status, and educational achievement on employment outcomes. They also identified a series of recommendations to help policymakers conceptualize appropriate interventions. This section provides an account of their discussion.

The roundtable's recommendations for policy included the following: (1) reestablish the importance of race in policy discussions; (2) formulate a continual dialogue between educational policymakers and economists; (3) consider ways of changing not only health and human services but also education and workforce development; (4) change the way policymakers work with researchers; (5) rethink the value of school competition; (6) focus on achievement for all minority students and not just low achievers; (7) make teachers accountable for their roles in children's development; and (8) diversify policies on immigration.

Both education and labor market policies are geared toward improving economic and social outcomes, but few address the reduction of racial discrimination in education, hiring, and employment practices.

Re-Establish the Importance of Race in Policy Discussions

According to Patrick Mason, "Current policy discussions now claim that racism is not a factor in society—but the race differential exists, even in a tight labor market, where you would not think discrimination would take place." Both education and labor market policies are geared toward improving economic and social outcomes for individuals, but few address the reduction of racial discrimination in education, hiring, and employment practices.

For example, many researchers have determined that, on an individual level, an increase in either the quantity or quality of education yields an increase in labor market outcomes. However, when comparing outcomes for groups of individuals with the same educational levels, the gap in earnings remain. As many participants suggested, if labor and education policy actively addressed the role that racial discrimination plays in determining outcomes for minority communities, they would not just encourage additional educational attainment but also address and eliminate the barriers that minimize the return on that education.

In the search for better data to examine the role of race, policymakers can assist researchers in generating richer information-gathering instruments. Scott Miller suggested that national surveys such as the Census could be adapted to obtain better information about race as an identity variable. The wording of questions around workforce and socioeconomic concerns could also be improved to capture the incidence of racial discrimination more effectively.

Talk Across the Camps

Researchers and policymakers tend to focus narrowly within their academic disciplines or policy-related domains, making it difficult for the cross-fertilization of ideas to occur. This narrow focus also inhibits the mounting of studies that could lead to a more nuanced understanding of the effect that educational experiences have on labor market outcomes and, conversely, that socioeco-

nomic background has on educational attainment. "We need a continued dialogue between educational policymakers and economists—groups that rarely speak to one another," said Myers. "It is not an anthropological definition of race that policymakers and economists need; it is an explanation of what factors contribute to making poor-quality schools and what impact that has on a child's future." As Edmund Gordon suggested, economists can establish a high correlation between resources and race, but it is the policymaker who must bring to that statistic the understanding that many African American students cannot get access to those resources. "It is a political, as well as an economic, reality. Some of these trends are politically determined, and it is up to policymakers to bring that reality to light—and to researchers' attention as well," he said.

"It is not an anthropological definition of race that economists and policymakers need, it is an explanation of what factors contribute to making poor-quality schools and what impact that has on a child's future."

Consider Ways of Changing the Entire System

"One of policymaking's overall missions is to address poverty," said Wordlaw. "Even if the issue of race is not specifically voiced, it is still about changing the system—the entire system—to help ameliorate the hardships poverty brings." That system not only includes health and human services but also education and workforce development. As many participants noted, changes in these areas tend to occur in individual silos and domains; rarely are they considered in tandem from the perspective of legislation and major policy initiatives at the federal level. Recent legislation, such as the Workforce Investment Act and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, have tried to build bridges in these areas, but their policies are not as seamless as they could have been. Moreover, they are not linked closely with efforts to establish and enact academic and skills standards or broader educational reforms.

Change the Way Policymakers Work with Researchers

"Part of the problem," said Tyson, "is that it is much easier for policymakers to use research that already affirms public opinion or commonly held beliefs." Tyson and other roundtable participants believe that policymakers have an ethical responsibility to push the envelope and to think "outside of the box"—to work with researchers not just to corral work that supports existing agendas but also to pursue work that might overturn existing notions and lead public efforts in new directions. Gordon agrees, stating, "There shouldn't be a haphazard relationship or interaction between policy and scholarship." Making changes in the status quo would require some policymakers to take significant chances, but to serve the ultimate goal of such a public role requires that dedication.

"Part of the problem," said Tyson, "is that it is much easier for policymakers to use research that already affirms public opinion or commonly held beliefs."

Rethink the Value of School Competition

Pamela Jackson's paper was primarily intended to address the flaws and shortcomings in the ways that competition is discussed in policy conversations around educational reform. For example, are school vouchers methods that will dessimate the infrastructure of inner-city schools, or are they the bridge that could close the gap? Rather than focusing on competition, her analysis points out that school modernization, infrastructure improvement, and class size matter more for positively affecting student achievement.

Given Jackson's findings, both an unquestioned investment in charter schools and a reduction in proposed federal legislation to grant funds to urban school districts for building improvements clearly needs to be revisited. As Diana Slaughter-Defoe of the University of Pennsylvania questioned, "Is the federal government making key policy decisions on charter schools and school choice using bad data?" Roxie Nicholson of the U.S. Department of Labor called for a more informed dialogue between researchers and government officials on this issue. "There is sometimes a problem with policymakers stopping their investigation when they find the research that supports their policy," she explained. "As policymakers, we have to keep pursuing this issue as it is examined in the research, particularly as the public has become increasingly concerned with the effects these policies have on their children's outcomes."

Focus on Achievement for All Minority Students—Not Just Low Achievers

According to Scott Miller, much of academic reform has been focused on "pulling up the bottom." There is some evidence, he suggested, that extraordinary efforts for students at the greatest academic risk results in less attention paid to students who are at lower risk. "It is conceivable that while we try to pull up the bottom, we're not reinforcing the middle and the top," said Miller. Policymakers should consider how to create a mandate within education reform to ensure that students at all levels of achievement receive preparation.

The good news about education reform, explains Miller, is that it is increasingly focusing on the elementary grades, on teaching, and on igniting and maintaining a love of learning. It is the very place where the gaps begin to emerge. The bad news is that policymakers are looking to pull up—and in the case of school vouchers, pull the rug out from under—low-performing schools. Yet, policymakers are operating with few longitudinal examinations and even fewer empirically-driven strategies when mandating reforms.

Make Teachers Accountable for Their Roles in Child Development

Slaughter-Defoe discussed the vast child development literature that identifies how expectations, assumptions, and other factors can limit or propel a young person's potential. And while students' identities are shaped over the course of the institutional process, studies show that within the first two weeks of kindergarten the expectations of teachers can arrange social strata in the classroom. They also demonstrate how the expectations of teachers for students in the bottom strata can perpetuate themselves throughout the primary grades. Policymakers need to consider the role that teachers play in affecting students' expectations of their own achievement. As she suggested, it is not clear that current efforts in education reform address this issue.

"Is the federal government making key decisions on charter schools and school choice using bad data?"

Diversify Policies on Immigration to Match Immigrants' Diverse Experiences

As many participants noted, immigrants arrive with a vast range of experiences, skill and educational levels, and amounts of personal wealth. Yet, beyond relaxing immigration standards for foreign nationals with specific skills, U.S. policy tends to treat different immigrants in an identical fashion, making similar assumptions and enacting similar regulation. Pouncy suggested that policymakers re-examine those assumptions, making distinctions between those who are more likely to require assistance and those who can help close skills gaps in the workforce. How can policy maximize the skills of immigrants who are

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998

Burt Barnow of the Institute for Policy Studies at Johns Hopkins University and Demetra Nightingale of the Urban Institute discussed how key aspects of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) have refocused the ways in which federal investment in employment and training is applied at the local level. Congress passed the WIA in August of 1998, replacing the Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA).

Key Principles. The act intends to streamline the delivery of employment services; empower individuals to seek out their own training providers through a voucher system; allow universal access to all employment and training services; increase accountability through the governance of local Workforce Investment Boards; provide state and local flexibility in determining how the programs are administered; and improve youth programs, particularly for high-poverty areas.

Title 1 Service Categories. *Core services* include universal access to services such as eligibility determination, job search and placement assistance, and career counseling; establishing eligibility for Welfare-to-Work and financial aid; and follow-up services. *Intensive services* are provided to adults unable to obtain employment through core services and offer comprehensive assessment of skills and service needs, group counseling, and case management. *Training services* are available for adults and dislocated workers who were unable to obtain or retain employment through intensive services.

Service Provision. Core, intensive, and training services are delivered through the One-Stop Job Centers established in each local area. Eligible entities (such as educational institutions or community-based organizations) can operate the One-Stop centers. If funds are limited, welfare recipients and low-income individuals receive priority for all three service categories.

Program Flexibility. States and local areas can design centers tailored to their needs. One-Stop centers have discretion over services such as customized screening and referral of participants and customized services to employers, supportive services, and needs-related payments.

Accountability and Administration. Local Workforce Investment Boards are established in each local area and include representatives of businesses, local education entities, labor organizations, community-based organizations, economic development agencies, and One-Stop partners. The boards develop and submit five-year local plans for One-Stop operators and eligible providers of training services, youth activities, and intensive services. They help to ensure effective coordination between workers and employers and economic development activities and employers.

Major Differences Between WIA and JTPA. While JTPA focused on a highly targeted population of low-income and disenfranchised workers, WIA provides services to all workers, regardless of background.

Relationship to Welfare-to-Work. While recipients of U.S. Department of Labor Welfare-to-Work grants are required to participate in WIA, employment programs funded by the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) legislation and administered by the states are not required partners.

professionals and entrepreneurs or those who have skills but serious language barriers? Can these policies be more closely tailored to meeting the specific needs of certain industries?

There are equally difficult questions at the other end of the spectrum. For example, how can social welfare policies be reconfigured to support the health, well-being, and economic opportunities available to immigrants who require assistance? "The paradox in the face of welfare reform," said Pouncy, "is that the older brand of American social welfare may fit better with the migratory patterns of today." In other words, revisiting policies based in universal benefits may help to address the fact that the share of the U.S. population comprised of immigrants and "minorities" will soon become the majority.

Another area of concern among roundtable participants was how policy discussions abuse "culture of poverty" arguments when explaining outcomes for different groups. "Using the term 'work ethic' with different communities is problematic," said Karolyn Tyson. "It may be that fathers in one community have a work ethic, but whether or not they are working is based on something else entirely—whether or not they can find gainful employment." Policymakers' assumptions also must be considered when looking at the tensions that arise in many communities between immigrant groups or between minority populations and new immigrants.

Lessons for Practice

During their discussion, participants identified a series of lessons for educators, practitioners, and program designers. Their recommendations include: (1) parents need to be empowered to voice their opinions about school choice; (2) schools need increased funds to increase quality; (3) practitioners should focus on how the resources available to fathers, mothers, and their families influence a child's outcomes; and (4) the value of community-based organizations (CBOs) should not be underestimated.

"Administrators have a 'captive audience' among low-income residents," said Pamela Jackson. "Many of these parents...do care, but they don't know how to go about addressing the education their children are not receiving."

Empower Fathers and Mothers to Voice Their Opinions about School Choice

In many settings, school choice is touted as a way for urban parents to take control of their children's education, but the reality may be far from the promise. "Some parents have more power than others," explained Karolyn Tyson. "Some have the cultural and social capital to object to substandard education—it has to do with whether and how schools work with the populations they serve."

Some parents have the power to make changes in their schools or move themselves and their children to another district. Others, particularly low-income parents, have neither a voice nor the economic power to relocate. "Administrators have a 'captive audience' among low-income residents," said Pamela Jackson. "Many of these parents can't leave. They do care, but they don't know how to go about addressing the education their children are not receiving."

In addition, the assumption has been that parents in low-income communities would not be interested in engaging their local schools. Practitioners, policymakers, and researchers would all benefit from reviewing their own assumptions about parental involvement. They should re-examine how they approach the role that parents could play and what information might be most relevant to promoting that participation.

What would parents need to know to make better choices or voice their opinions? "It is a major problem in urban areas," says NCOFF Director Vivian Gadsden. "The knowledge among low-income parents about the options available to them and their children is absent in many urban education debates."

Crystal Byndloss of the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill suggested that practitioners in fathers and families programs could help to promote interest and educate parents about the strength of political power at the grassroots level. "It's important to let parents know in particular what's going on in the classroom and that they can have a voice in that process," she said.

Understand that Schools Need Increased Funds to Increase Quality

Even when parents are heard on the issue of school quality, faculty and administrators might not be able to respond. "They are limited by the fact that their resources have been drained," said Pamela Jackson. With urban flight has come the erosion of the tax base for

funding urban schools. How can administrators and educators in poor-performing schools be equipped to make changes in the educational achievement of their students?

Focus on Human Capital Broadly Defined

Rodgers and Spriggs' paper uncovered an important framework for understanding how the resources available to families influence a child's outcomes. As Khari Garvin of the U.S. Department of Education suggested, the notion of resources needs to be broadly defined, as well as properly translated into school and work environments. Those resources include human capital, financial capital, and social capital—in particular, through promoting involvement in schools. How can practitioners, educators, parents, and community-minded employers work to increase students' human capital and improve their access to resources that propel outcomes later in life?

Do Not Underestimate the Value of CBOs in Serving Immigrant Populations

In recent years, community-based organizations have grown as a network of mediating institutions affecting a range of outcomes, from economic opportunity to health, civil rights, and legal assistance. "The value of American practice," Pouncy said, "is that non-government organizations that are based in communities can team up with government or stand alone to serve the specific needs of a specific population." In fact, these organizations may be best suited for working with immigrant communities, both in providing services to families and in providing a much-needed collective voice for expressing their concerns.

In addition, CBOs may be able to help immigrants overcome their fear of deportation or a slowed citizenship process by seeking out social assistance. As Claudia Grisgoescu explained, her experience with immigrant parents reveals reluctance by Latino parents to participate in programs due to fears of governmental retribution. "For some families it is pride, while for others it is a lack of knowledge and fear," Grisgoescu said. "There are multiple areas in which many immigrants require assistance—from health to languages to skill to developmental and enculturation processes—and while community-based organizations cannot do everything, they can help to reassure immigrants of the safety in seeking out services for their children." Such an organization can also help researchers and policymakers by providing more accurate information for policy analysis.

"While community-based organizations cannot do everything, they can help to reassure immigrants of the safety in seeking out services for their children," Grisgoescu said.

Roundtable Agenda

NCOFF Education, Workforce, and the Economy Roundtable
Philadelphia, PA

February 23-24, 2000

Wednesday, February 23, 2000

10:00 – 10:15 a.m.	**Introduction** Vivian L. Gadsden, Director of NCOFF, University of Pennsylvania William Darity, Duke University and University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill; Co-Chair of NCOFF's Education, Workforce, and the Economy Roundtable and Research Team
10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	**Family Environment and Intergenerational Well-Being** **Moderator:** Robert Wordlaw, Chicago Jobs Council **Paper Presentation:** Patrick L. Mason, Florida State University **Discussants:** Lauren Rich, University of Pennsylvania Tukufu Zuberi, University of Pennsylvania
12:00 – 1:30 p.m.	**Lunch Presentation and Discussion** **Topic: The Workforce Investment Act and Welfare Reform** Demetra Nightingale, The Urban Institute Burt Barnow, Johns Hopkins University
1:30 – 3:15 p.m.	**School Competition and Student Achievement:** **Moderator:** Khari Garvin, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Paper Presentation: Pamela J. Jackson, Coleman A. Young Foundation

Discussants: John Kain, University of Texas-Dallas
James Davis, University of Delaware

3:15 – 5:00 p.m. **The African-American Composition Effect in Schools**

Moderator: Yasmine Daniel, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Paper Presentation: William Spriggs, National Urban League

Discussants: Samuel Myers, Jr., University of Minnesota
Fran Jackson, North Carolina Central University

5:00 – 5:30 p.m. **Dinner Meeting**

Speaker: Peter Cappelli, University of Pennsylvania

Thursday, February 24, 2000

8:45 – 9:00 a.m. **Review and Outline of the Day**

William Darity

9:00 – 10:45 a.m. **The Absence of Black Children's Voices in Sociological Studies of Student Attitudes**

Moderator: Joe Scantlebury, STRIVE New York

Paper Presentation: Karolyn Tyson, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill

Discussants: Scott Miller, The College Board
Susan McElroy, Carnegie Mellon University

continued

10:45 – 12:30 p.m.	**Children of Immigrant Families** **Moderator:** Claudia Grisgoescu, ASPIRA **Paper Presentation:** Donald J. Hernandez, State University of New York (SUNY)–Albany **Discussant:** Hillard Pouncy, Rutgers University
12:30 – 2:30 p.m.	**Lunch and Working Groups**
2:30 – 3:30 p.m.	**Roundtable Review and Synthesis, Implications for Policy Next Steps, and Concluding Remarks** William Darity Vivian Gadsden

Participant List

Fathers and Families Second-Tier Roundtable Series
Education, Workforce, and the Economy Roundtable

Name	Position
Dorothy Browne University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill	researcher
Burt Barnow Johns Hopkins University	researcher
Margaret Beale Spencer University of Pennsylvania	researcher
Crystal Byndloss University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill	researcher
Peter Cappelli University of Pennsylvania	researcher
Yasmine Daniel U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	policymaker
William Darity University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill	researcher
James Earl Davis University of Delaware	researcher
Vivian Gadsden University of Pennsylvania	researcher
Douglas Frye University of Pennsylvania	researcher
Khari Garvin U.S. Department of Education	policymaker
Lisa Gilmore U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	policymaker
Edmund Gordon University of Texas at Austin	researcher
Alisha Griffin Department of Human Services	practitioner
Claudia Grisgoescu ASPIRA	practitioner
Darrick Hamilton University of Michigan	researcher
Donna Harris RAND Corporation	researcher/policy analyst
Donald Hernandez SUNY-Albany	researcher

Name	Position
Fran Jackson North Carolina Central University	researcher
Pamela Jackson Coleman A. Young Foundation	researcher
John Kain University of Texas–Dallas	researcher
Patrick Mason Florida State University	researcher
Rebecca Maynard Princeton University	researcher
Susan McElroy Carnegie Mellon University	researcher
David Miller George Sorros Foundation	researcher
Scott Miller The College Board	policymaker
Maurice Moore The Annie E. Casey Foundation	program officer
Samuel Myers, Jr. University of Minnesota	researcher
Norman Newberg University of Pennsylvania	researcher
Roxie Nicholson U.S. Department of Labor	policymaker
Demetra Nightingale The Urban Institute	researcher
Hillard Pouncy Rutgers University	researcher
Ellen Pagliaro The Annie E. Casey Foundation	program officer
Karl Rathemeyer Harvard University/National Center on Fathers and Families	researcher
Marie Persichilli Department of Human Services	practitioner
Valerie Rawlston National Urban League	researcher
Lauren Rich University of Pennsylvania	researcher
Edward Ridgeway National Center for Strategic Planning and Community Leadership	practitioner
Joseph Scantlebury STRIVE New York	practitioner

continued

Name	Position
Stanley Sedo Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations	researcher
Rhonda Vonshay Sharpe Barnard College	researcher
Diana Slaughter-Defoe University of Pennsylvania	researcher
Malcolm Smith Center for Fathers, Families, and Workforce Development	policy analyst
William Spriggs National Urban League	researcher
Judy Taylor Jobs for the Future	researcher
Mark Turner The Urban Institute	researcher
Daniel Wagner University of Pennsylvania	researcher
Howard Wial Keystone Research Center	researcher/policy analyst
Robert Wordlaw Chicago Jobs Council	practitioner
Stanton Wortham University of Pennsylvania	researcher
Tukufu Zuberi University of Pennsylvania	researcher

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