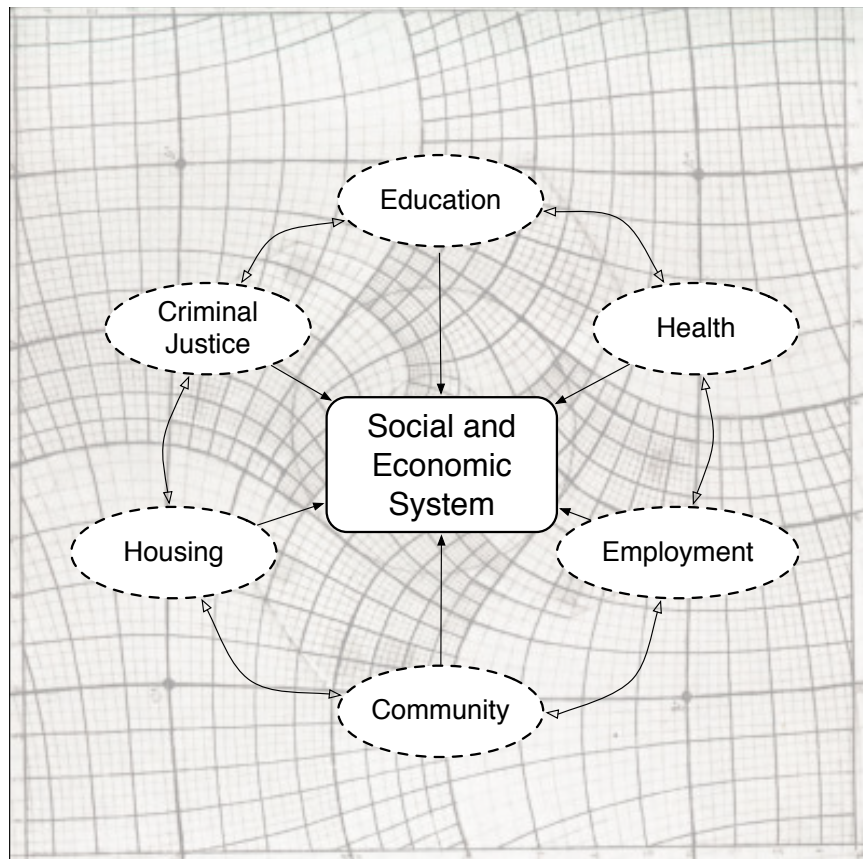


# Race, Power and Policy: Dismantling Structural Racism



Racialization distorts all parts of the System

## Acknowledgements

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We wish we could more thoroughly acknowledge all the contributions to racial justice work that are taking place. Suffice it to say this workbook builds upon decades of work that has been done and that continues to be done by countless organizers and leaders in the struggles for racial justice. We hope our workshops and approaches will add to and enrich our collective practices for racial justice.

Please send your questions, suggestions and feedback to [shinson@grassrootspolicy.org](mailto:shinson@grassrootspolicy.org).

## About the Cover Design

The graphic on the front cover, "Racialization distorts all parts of the system," illustrates two of the ideas that we are concerned with. Jobs, housing, education, and criminal justice are parts of an interconnected system. We often work on "housing" issues or "education" issues, but as we know, they are in reality all deeply interconnected. Each part of the system has been distorted and shaped by hundreds of years of racialization, and this continues to be true today.

The twisted grid lying under the system elements represents the distorting effects of racialization. It is taken from a work by MC Escher.

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## Introduction

Consider these two competing statements about racism in America:

“We are living in a post-racial society.”

— and —

“Racism still occupies the throne of our nation.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In this workshop, we will explore how and why the second statement is a more accurate depiction of the role that race plays in our society today. We will do this by emphasizing the role of race in shaping all of our economic and social institutions throughout US history as well as the cumulative effects of racialization, which include race-based inequities and disparities. In addition, we look for the linkages between systems of racial oppression and persistent economic oppression. We draw lessons from the rich history of struggles for racial and economic justice. Finally, we explore ways in which social change organizers can bring racial justice into all areas of our work, and how, in doing so, we can achieve more fundamental and systemic levels of change in society.

The key points<sup>1</sup> we will emphasize in this workbook are:

1. **Racism** is dynamic and ever-changing. The critical aspect of racism that we must address today is the accumulation and incorporation of long-standing racialized practices into all of our social and economic structures
2. **Structural racialization** is a system of social structures that produces and reproduces cumulative, durable, race-based inequalities.
3. **Racialized outcomes** do not require racist actors. Focusing on individual instances of racism can have the effect of diverting our attention from the structural changes that are required in order to achieve racial justice.
4. Organizers need to explicitly and implicitly challenge all manifestations of **racism** and **racialization** in our work and in our organizations.

**Note for facilitators:** *This workbook was designed for a long weekend session, with the assumption that there will be follow-up with the participants to help them make use of the framing/communication tools and to work on racial justice policy development. Each section can be shortened and revised for shorter workshops. The activities will work for a group as small as 15 or as large as 50.*

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<sup>1</sup> Core concepts for this session include terms like **racialization**, **structural racism** and **racial justice**. Definitions for these and other terms are included in the **Appendix**.

**Suggested Introductory Activity:**

30 minutes

Divide into small groups of no more than 5 people.

Instructions for groups: Have each person introduce themselves to their other group members. Each person takes three minutes to name some specific examples of racism that they know of or have encountered. Make sure each person participates.

**Debrief:** Ask 2 or 3 people to share something they heard in their group. Note the differences and similarities in these stories. We will come back to these examples later in the workshop.

***Racialization.*** The phrase ‘post-racial’ got tossed around a lot after Barack Obama was elected President of the United States. It was as if having a Black President meant all the injustices of the past would somehow melt away, or that they were no longer relevant in American politics. But, we’ve had Black elected officials holding key offices for decades: mayors, police chiefs, council presidents, and a few governors. This has hardly made a change in the economic conditions we find in low- and moderate-income communities of color. Race is deeply embedded in our society, and at the same time social understandings and the implications of race change over time, precisely because race in our society is a social construct that serves political ends. The mayors and the president operate within an economic and power system that constrains what they can do. So we need to understand both the system that we live in and structural racialization, which is part of the system.

Racial differentiation has been created, and is constantly being re-created, to serve a social and or economic purpose. It is maintained through social, legal and political controls (from slavery to Jim Crow laws to ghettoization to uses of ‘law and order’ and the criminal justice system, restrictive immigration policies, etc.) It is reinforced by belief systems, such as the notion of white superiority, and/or associating “American” with whiteness, and asserting U.S. dominance over the Western Hemisphere.

*Racialization* is the process by which racial understandings are formed, re-formed and assigned to groups of people *and* to social institutions and practices, and to the consequences of such understandings. For example, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Africans from diverse nations were categorized under the label ‘Negro,’ which was a racialized category; in the space of one century, different forms of labor were racialized so that ‘worker’ was white and ‘slave’ was Negro; and, over time, different groups of immigrants have been assigned to the broad categories of white (European immigrants) or ‘of color’ (Latin American, African, Asian-Pacific Islander and more recently, Middle Eastern immigrants). This has huge consequences for today’s struggles over immigration policy.

The effects of racialization accumulate over time. Some of the effects are altered, at times sharply, as in the case of the passage of civil rights legislation, but they are not erased, even with the election of the first Black President.

## Section 1: Racialization Throughout US History

We are using a timeline that goes back to early colonial days to illustrate the ongoing processes of racialization. Examples from history help us make the process more visible and concrete. As we move through history, from the colonial era through today, we can highlight how institutional policies, interactions among institutions, and differences in resources or investment over time, produce and reproduce racially unequal outcomes.

### Highlights from the History of Racialization

This section makes use of a comprehensive timeline located at the end of this workbook. The timeline divides U.S. history into five eras: 1) Colonial to Mexican-American War; 2) Civil War to Jim Crow; 3) New Deal to Civil Rights; 4) Civil Rights Era; 5) Post-Civil Rights Era. In each era, we highlight social and economic practices that became mechanisms of domination and control (for example, slavery in the first era gives way to Jim Crow by the end of the second era). We also highlight inspiring examples of organized resistance to domination. Taken together, these histories provide a picture of the cumulative effects of racialization, and how we have inherited these effects in the form of structural racialization. It helps participants understand why significant racial disparities continue more than 45 years after Jim Crow.

**Note for facilitators:** *You can build a number of activities around the enclosed timeline. We suggest a few here. We recommend projecting and/or posting blown up copies of the eras so that people can take a gallery walk, have conversations about events and add things to the timeline. We also have images that illustrate different historical moments that can be posted and/or handed out. If you would like an electronic copy of the timeline, please contact us at NPA or GPP.*

Here are a few of the key moments in US history where race played a central role in shaping economic and social practices. Taken together, these give us a picture of the cumulative effects of racialization.

- 1676. **Bacon's rebellion.** Poor whites and Blacks joined together to gain more economic control. Colonial authorities responded to the rebellion by driving a wedge between Black and White servants. This was a step in the creation of "Black" slaves and "white" workers, and the association of working class with "white."
- 1789. **the Constitution.** The political economy of slavery was expressed in many aspects of the Constitution, not just the 3/5ths provision. Citizenship was racialized — one had to be legally defined as white in order to be a citizen. In practice, at the time, one also had to own property to vote.
- 1846-48. **Annexation of Texas,** the Southwest territories and California. Mexicans who remained in the annexed territories were granted US citizenship, but were not treated the same as the white settlers from the East and the South who flooded into the territories. Mexicans and other Latin Americans, Native Americans and Chinese immigrants posed a challenge to the Black/white color line to which the white settlers were accustomed. Over several decades,

Mexican-Americans and other Latin Americans were lumped together as ‘brown’ or ‘colored’ people. This set the stage for today’s immigration policies.

- 1935-1955. **New Deal through the GI Bill:** Social Security, Labor Law, FHA and the GI Bill. Along with their progressive dimensions, these reforms were shaped and constrained by racialization. The Dixiecrats — white Southern Democrats who promoted states’ rights and Jim Crow segregation — constituted a powerful voting bloc in Congress. Sadly, other Democrats were willing to bargain away the rights of Black women and men in order to win the Dixiecrats’ support for these major reforms. As a result, people of color often were excluded from reforms that helped expand the middle class. These government programs constituted what many have called ‘Affirmative Action for white people.’
- 1960s to the present. **Law and order**, the war on crime, three strikes and you’re out, tough sentencing for crack cocaine: each of these stemmed from the backlash against civil rights, the War on Poverty, and organized action in communities of color. Near the end of the civil rights era, the Right generated a “moral panic” around a racialized picture of crime. By the early 1980s, the “War on Drugs” targeted Black and Brown men and youth, even though drug use and trade among people of color was lower than it was among whites. The results have included grossly disproportionate incarceration rates, families and communities torn apart and the largest prison population of any other advanced industrialized nation. Recent anti-immigrant laws are setting up immigrants of color for similar treatment.

**Activity: Race and Mechanisms of Control**

**2 hours**

Divide into at least small five groups. Assign each group a ‘story’ (sample stories are included in the Appendix; you can develop others, as well) or an image from one of the five historical eras. Have the groups answer the following questions:

1. What is the role of race in this story/image?
2. How is race related to the injustices we see in this story/image?
3. Who benefits from the arrangements depicted in this story/image?

**Debrief.** Bring the groups back together. Have each group share their story/image. Link each story to the shifts in mechanisms of racial control from one era to the next. Era 1: Slavery; Era 2: Jim Crow; Era 3: Ghettoization; Era 4: Criminalization; Era 5: the myth of the post-racial society, while disparities in health, housing, employment, etc. deepen.

**Parallel Experiences in Communities of Color.** While the experiences of African Americans, Native Americans and immigrants of color have differed significantly, there are a number of parallels in experiences that stem from the racialization of citizenship, immigrant status, labor, and criminalization. The disparities and exploitative conditions we see today can be traced through these histories of racialization. One clear manifestation is today’s criminalization of people of color, both native-born and immigrant, as well as the criminalization of those who resist oppressive conditions.

**Citizenship.** Starting with the Constitution and then the first naturalization act in 1790, “white” became the reference point for citizenship; a person’s relationship to ‘whiteness’ determined her or his levels of privileges. It reinforced the use of race as a justification

for enslaving groups of people (African), marginalizing and enclosing groups (Native Nations), and dispossessing and deporting others (Mexican Americans, Asian-Pacific Islanders). It reinforces the uses of race to depress wages, segment the labor force and undermine worker solidarity.

**Immigration and the color line.** In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the color line in the U.S. was Black (enslaved) and white (free, eligible for citizenship). With successive waves of immigration, the color line was shuffled and re-shuffled, so that some immigrants (European) ended up on the white side of the line while others (Latinos, Asian Pacific Islanders, Africans and other non-Europeans) were moved to the expanded 'colored' side. This was not automatic. At some point, European immigrants were faced with a choice: either to join forces with others who were similarly situated, economically and socially, and struggle together for justice and equality, or to strike a bargain with the white ruling class and accept the existing social and economic order. Meanwhile, many Mexican Americans who had found themselves on the wrong side of the border during the annexation of Mexican territories started out as 'white' and eligible for citizenship, then, over time, became 'brown,' and subject to deportation. Asian and Pacific Islander immigrant groups never had the option of becoming white, nor did Native Americans.

**Race and the workplace.** Despite decades of organizing, today, workers' rights are under siege. **A weak labor movement is the structural residue of the racialization of labor relations.** It runs throughout history from slavery through Jim Crow restrictions and the use of chain gangs, to the exploitation migrant workers (Latino, Asian, etc.), and the exclusion of Black workers from many unions, and the scapegoating of workers of color as an excuse for suppressing wages and benefits.

The following activity highlights the racialization of citizenship throughout history and what it suggests for today's many practices that disenfranchise communities of color.

**Activity: Racialization of Citizenship**

**30 minutes**

**Note for Facilitators:** *For this activity, you can use the summaries of four points in history that is included in the Appendix.*

Set up the activity with this: Here are four examples of policies, decisions and practices that all have to do with citizenship in the United States: 1) The Naturalization Act of 1790, 2) the Dred Scott decision, 3) the Repatriation of Mexican Americans and 4) the Japanese Internment during World War II. As you listen to each example, think about the message it gives us about what it means to be a citizen.

Divide into small groups. Hand out the summaries (along with an image, if available). Have one person read each aloud.

**Discussion:**

- 1) Each participant gives a one-word reaction to these examples.
- 2) Which of these examples have you heard before?
- 3) What do these examples tell us about the right to be a citizen?



**Organized Resistance to Racism.** Racial formations and processes of racialization keep changing, in large part because of struggle and resistance: African Americans, immigrants, Native Nations and others have struggled against racial oppression since the early colonial days. With each success (or failure), old control mechanisms were updated and new ones were created. We can trace these transitions on the timeline, too: slavery, Jim Crow, ghettoization in our cities, the racialization of law and order, and so on, interacting with and reacting to social movements.

**Note to Facilitators:** *To explore the history of struggle and resistance, you could highlight a few of these key moments and ask participants to suggest others:*

- **1676. Bacon's Rebellion.** Poor white workers joined together with Black and white indentured servants and slaves in protest against wealthy planters and their colonial lawmakers. The Colony moved quickly to drive a racial wedge between white and Black servants, making legal and social distinctions between 'servants' (white) and 'slaves' (Black).
- **1817. Seminole War of 1817.** As the U.S. made its move to annex Florida, Seminoles resisted with force. The Seminoles also offered sanctuary to fugitive slaves.
- **1830-1865. Underground Railroad.** An extensive network of secret routes and safe houses used by slaves in 19<sup>th</sup> century to escape to free states and Canada.
- **1831-1864. National Negro Convention Movement.** After decades of organizing in free states for abolition, African American leaders created the Negro Convention Movement as a vehicle for Black activism and advocacy. The Convention met for several years, taking on a wide range of issues affecting Black communities in states and nationally.
- **1846-1848. U.S. - Mexican War.** While called the Mexican War in the U.S., Mexicans called it the *Invasión estadounidense de México* (U.S. invasion of Mexico). It can be seen as Mexican resistance to U.S. territorial expansion in the Southwest and Pacific regions.
- **1866-1890s. African American Mutual Aid Societies,** Black-run farm and business cooperatives, Black churches and church-sponsored programs, schools and colleges flourished during Reconstruction, and provided much of the infrastructure for Black civic engagement and civil rights organizing.
- **1880-1896. The Populist Movement.** This mass movement among small farmers and workers in the Midwest and South for greater control over the economy provided a rare moment where we saw instances of cross-race solidarity, as well as corporate and conservative successes in exploiting racial tensions to undermine that solidarity.

- 1910-1965. **The Great Migration.** This refers to a trend that started just before World War I and lasted into the Civil Rights Era. In response to Jim Crow oppression and the loss of agricultural jobs, waves of African Americans left the South for industrial centers in the Northeast, Midwest and West Coast.
- 1935-1955. **The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO)** was a more radical branch of the labor movement and very active during the Great Depression. Early on, the CIO was open to African American workers and Black trade union formations, much more explicitly so than the American Federation of Labor. Many CIO affiliates were active in the early civil rights struggles. But this does not mean that all affiliate unions were welcoming and/or interested in cross-racial solidarity.
- 1941. **Proposed march on Washington.** A Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin and A.J. Muste proposed a march on Washington to protest racial discrimination in war industries and to propose the desegregation of the American Armed forces. The march was cancelled after President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, or the Fair Employment Act.
- 1963. **March on Washington.** This was a key moment in the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The Civil Rights Movement gave momentum and inspiration to many other liberation movements: women, Chicano, American Indian Movement, farmworkers, anti-war, environmental, and LGBT.
- 1982-1988. **South Africa, Central America solidarity,** peace and justice movements.
- 2006-today. **Immigrant rights organizing.** Immigration reform, including a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants living and working in the U.S., and the Dream Act.

**Activity: Putting ourselves onto the timeline.**

**30 minutes**

Make sure everyone has a few post-it notes (or something they can write on and tape to the timeline). Ask people to reflect upon events in their own lives that taught them the value of standing up, joining together with others to right an injustice and fight for a better future.

**Note:** *For participants who have spent part of their lives in another country, encourage them to include formative events from their country, as well. Later, we can look at how these events relate to, or enlarge our understanding of, US history.*

Write your event(s) down, along with the key date(s), and add your name if you want to. Then go post it on the timeline. Once people have posted their notes, ask them to talk with a person standing near them to share and compare stories.

## Section 2: Race and the Political Economy

**How the economy is racialized.** Proponents of the ‘post-racial society’ argument suggest that the economy is ‘race-neutral’ terrain. For conservatives, especially, the economy is about markets, and markets are said to work best when they are left alone, which is to say, when government stays out of the way, or shields markets from outside pressures or social demands. Following this logic about the economy, we should not have laws protecting workers, demanding investments in our communities, or outlawing discrimination.

In reality, the economy is about more than markets, because markets exist within, and reflect, social forces and power relations in society — what we call a *political economy*. To understand the *political economy*, we have to look at the relationships between markets, social institutions, history and culture, and the ever-shifting role of government. Like all other aspects of society, racialization impacts economic arrangements. Its cumulative and structural effects, or *structural racism*, are manifest in ways that perpetuate race-based economic inequities. Racialization and the political economy continually interact, from who controls sources of wealth in society, such as land, labor and capital, to where people live, go to school, get access to transportation and healthcare, and so much more. From the timeline, we can see who has controlled resources and who has been marginalized and/or excluded. This history shapes the political economy much more so than notions of free markets and the invisible hand.

**Race and the role of government.** Throughout US history, we have been engaged in a contest over the role of government in relation to the economy. And while there have always been conservatives who have argued that government should not hold economic institutions — including corporations — to any public purposes, it is only recently that the extreme conservative view has prevailed. You could say that the rules of the game changed in the early 1970s. Racialization was central to this game-changer. Here’s how:

1. Going back to the colonial period, the struggle for ‘states’ rights,’ which was intended to limit federal government powers, was shaped in large part to preserve slavery and the racial order of the time. During Reconstruction, states’ rights were invoked to stop the federal government from protecting the economic and political rights of former slaves (it was called ‘preserving our traditions’ by white elites). When Reconstruction came to an end, states’ rights meant former slave-holding states could implement a new racial order in the form of Jim Crow.
2. Big corporations don’t want government to regulate them or to restrict them or to support workers’ rights to organize and form unions. They don’t want government to compete with them in providing anything that they can make money from (such as housing, healthcare, retirement funds and, increasingly, education, prisons, even the Military).
3. Conservative politicians have supported corporations for more than one hundred years. In the 1960s they took advantage of a familiar old tool — racism — using it to stigmatize government and anything “public.”

4. Think about how race and the role of government were linked in these and other policy arenas:
  - a) Law and order
  - b) Welfare
  - c) Taxes: “my taxes are used to support government programs that benefit *them*.”
5. Therefore, we can’t deal with the attacks on government, or question of taxes, or public employees, without talking about racialization.

**Activity: Role-Play****1 hour**

You are the new Black mayor of a big city. You want to improve the lives of poor residents and people of color in your city. To do that, the city needs to shift spending priorities and raise additional revenues. How do you raise more revenues? If you raise taxes on the rich and the corporations, they say they will leave town. What do you do?

**Debrief:** The mayor inherits a racialized city and a capitalist power system that is focused on making profits and is able to move its investments without any social control. There is no good solution to the mayor’s dilemma without changing the rules of the game and gaining some democratic control over capital.

**Alternative Role-Play Activity:****1 hour**

You are a Latina woman who was recently elected to your state’s legislature. You represent an urban district that is majority immigrant and working class. You want to address issues affecting your constituents such as wage theft. During the election, a lot of conservatives from suburban and rural districts got elected. They ran on a “cut-taxes-slash urban programs-scapegoat immigrants” platform. Their agenda is to slash funding for urban programs and divert revenue to their districts. You have a few liberal and progressive allies who are trying to preserve programs for urban communities. But your allies want you to hold off on proposing legislation to stop wage theft. They say it will trigger anti-immigrant sentiment and divert attention from the critical revenue battle in the state. But your constituents need this bill now. What do you do?

**Debrief:** In this scenario, the new state representative faces many obstacles. How is this scenario related to the current economic crisis and the conservatives’ insistence that we have a revenue crisis? How is it related to the role of race in shaping our economic policies, from taxes to labor laws?

**Racialization and community assets.** We have noted that the racial order and political economy are deeply connected in our social system. One lens to examine this with is wealth, or access to capital. The power to invest capital is largely held by white economic elites. At the individual level, whites have on average 10-12 times as much personal wealth as African Americans.

The following are times when communities of color gained opportunities to control economic resources:

- **Reconstruction, 1865-1877.** As part of emancipation, freed slaves were promised 40 acres and a mule, in addition to freedom. During this time, African Americans built farms, small business and cooperatives, mutual aid societies and political associations. Massive resistance from southern whites brought a premature end to Reconstruction, which was replaced by Jim Crow. The post-Reconstruction racial order ensured that whites would continue to dominate land and capital. Today's struggles of Black farmers are a continuation of this earlier struggle. And it still meets with resistance (witness Rep. Steve King's recent rant on the House floor against 'reparations' to farmers who have proven cases of discrimination).
- **Community Action Programs (Office of Economic Opportunity) 1965.** The Office of Economic Opportunity made millions of dollars available to low income communities in its first year. People who had little or no capital or business experience were able to create new businesses and community institutions, including job-training programs. The mayors and governors demanded more control over these federal programs after the first year, because as people in the communities got a taste of power and some economic independence, they started working toward political power.
- **Community Reinvestment Act, 1977.** By having just a little power over banks, through government regulation, individuals in African American and Latino communities received billions of dollars in mortgages and small business loans they would not have received otherwise.

**Activity: Community-Based Economics**

**45 minutes**

Imagine that our communities collectively controlled serious amounts of capital. What could we do with it? How would we make sure that our collective resources are being used to target and address long-standing racial disparities in our society, around housing, access to loans, quality education, neighborhood development, etc.? Now, think of a big headline that we would like to see in the news 10 years from now, one that reflects the kinds of changes we are fighting for. **What will that headline say?**

**Alternative Activity: Public Purpose****30 minutes**

The Community Reinvestment Act, passed in 1977, requires that banks that have deposits from a given community have a modest obligation to make loans to homeowners and small businesses in that community. Assume that in 2010 pressure from the people created a new law, the Community Control of Investment Act, which required any corporation of a minimum size to operate with a public purpose, that is, to benefit the public, not just operate for profit. What public purposes should corporations operating in your community be subject to?

**Follow-up question:** How do we bring in more explicit goals for addressing racial disparities? Why is this important?



Image from Jacob Lawrence's series of paintings on the Great Migration

### Section 3: Racialization and Forms of Racism

Racialization shapes an institution so that as part of its normal functioning, and without anyone having a consciously racist intention, it produces disparities in outcome by race. A prime example of this is the way in which our criminal justice system has evolved. In general, officials avoid saying or doing things that are overtly racist. As long as the system appears to be operating ‘normally,’ many people do not perceive racism in the system, and many will resist any arguments that point out racial bias in criminal justice practices. And yet, racial disparities abound, in policing, in sentencing, in attitudes about the criminality of youth of color, and in profiling.

#### Different forms of racism

- *Interpersonal*: This refers to prejudices and discriminatory behaviors where one group makes assumptions about the abilities, motives, and intents of other groups based on race. This set of prejudices leads to cruel intentional or unintentional actions towards other groups.
- *Internalized*: In a society in which all aspects of identity and experience are racialized, and one group is politically, socially and economically dominant, members of stigmatized groups, who are bombarded with negative messages about their own abilities and intrinsic worth, may internalize those negative messages. It holds people back from achieving their fullest potential. It also obscures the structural and systemic nature of racial oppression, and reinforces those systems.
- *Institutional*: Where assumptions about race are structured into the social and economic institutions in our society. Institutional racism occurs when organizations, businesses, or institutions like schools and police departments discriminate, either deliberately or indirectly, against certain groups of people to limit their rights. This type of racism reflects the cultural assumptions of the dominant group.
- *Structural*: This refers to the accumulation over centuries of the effects of a racialized society. Think again about the creation of the white middle class and what it means today to have been left out of that process of wealth-creation, home ownership, college education, etc.

The critical aspect of racism that we must address today is the accumulation and incorporation of long-standing racialized practices into all of our social and economic structures, or **structural racism**. Think again about that ‘post-racial society’ idea. If race no longer matters, how do we explain persistent disparities among groups, and disproportionate levels of poverty, incarceration, unemployment, etc. in communities of color. We can’t. Not without a structural racism analysis.

**Facilitators’ Note:** *The following two activities help illustrate the effects of structural racism. The activity “Step Up, Step Back” works best if you have a group of 20 or more people that is racially, ethnically, culturally and economically diverse: African American, immigrant, white, working class, middle class, etc.*

**Activity: Step Up, Step Back****30 minutes**

- Ask participants to stand in a line next to each other in the middle of the room
- Read the following statements to the group, but give people a second to think before they move
- Ask participants to observe how other people are moving as the statements are read
- Tell participants that if their parents or grandparents had different experiences, then they should do the exercise with one parent or grandparent in mind
- After you have read the last statement, have people stay where they are standing, and look to see where others are standing, and where they are in relation to other people

Read the following statements:

- If your parents, grandparents or ancestors were not allowed to attend a college or university because of their race, take one step back
- If you expect to inherit some type of asset (property, cash, stocks, bonds, etc.) from a relative, take one step forward
- If your grandparents or ancestors were ever enslaved, take one step back
- If your grandparents' first language is English, take one step forward
- If you have a parent or grandparent that earned a graduate degree, take one step forward
- If members of your race or ethnicity were legally prevented from voting, take one step back
- If most of your teachers were from the same racial or ethnic background as you, take one step forward
- If you routinely see people from your racial or ethnic group heading up companies and organizations, take one step forward
- If you come from a racial group that has ever been considered by scientists as "inferior," take one step back
- If your parents, grandparents, or ancestors were forced to come to the U.S., take one step back
- If your parents or grandparents have inherited wealth, take one step forward
- If you had a parent, grandparent, or family member that was ever beaten or lynched because of their race, take one step back
- If you have a relative that earns more than \$250,000 per year, take one step forward

Debrief: What patterns or themes did you notice about where people were standing in the end? Why did people end up standing in the positions they were in?



**Activity: Unequal Opportunity Race:****15-20 Minutes**

Note to Facilitators: If you have less time, or a less diverse group, you can use this short video from the African American Policy Forum about the structural disadvantages that people of color inherit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBb5TgOXgNY>

Here are some of additional discussions and activities that help illustrate the interactions of different forms of racism.

**Activity: Interpersonal and Structural Racism****20 minutes**

In groups of two, discuss examples of interpersonal racism you have encountered or heard of recently (or refer to the examples you shared in the opening activity). Then discuss how racialization may have set the stage or contribution to the incident. For example, cities are racialized spatially. Police officers, whether Black or white or Latino, are likely to focus on certain areas of a city, and to profile young people who fit certain stereotypes.

**Activity: Structural Racism and Education****45 minutes**

Where does racialization show up in our kids' lives? Where does it show up in their schools, their neighborhoods, their experiences, and the stories they hear about the police, about education and job opportunities, about what is possible for their lives?

**Debrief:** the implication for education is that, yes, we have to fight for better education for our kids. But we also have to struggle around all the ways in which racialization shapes their lives — education, housing, health care, and jobs are all interconnected, all part of a larger system, each aspect of which is racialized.



## Section 4: Framing, Narrative and Communications

We turn now to the ways in which beliefs shape and reinforce racialized ideas and power.

### Getting Framed

*“What is power? It is the ability to tell people what the problem is, who is responsible and what should be done about it. That’s what power is.”*

– Kevin Phillips

This definition of power recognizes the power of ideas, especially of using ideas to frame an issue for people.

Take a look at the following cartoon. Let’s deconstruct the story that this cartoon tells us about immigration and citizenship.



#### Activity:

In small groups, discuss: What is the problem being presented in this cartoon?  
Are any solutions suggested by this cartoon?  
What is the role of race in this story?  
Where do we see similar ideas in U.S. history?

Here's another example:

**Activity:**

In small groups, discuss the attached picture of a young man wearing low-hanging pants.

1. What assumptions might be made about this young man? Why?
2. In your experience, how valid are those assumptions?

Debrief: draw out the assumptions and beliefs that are triggered by this image.



Each of these examples illustrates the power of ideas and images (or frames) to reinforce the marginalization and criminalization of groups of people based on race.

You just did a 'frame analysis. **Framing** refers to the ways that we use elements of worldview to give meaning to an issue or social problem. A frame brings ideas, themes, beliefs and assumptions together to tell a story. It may take the form of a literal story, or an image, or phrase or headline. Here's an example of the power of a phrase to frame an issue: in debates about immigration, the term 'illegal alien,' or simply 'illegal' carries predefined social meanings and lots of negative associations, many of which are racialized. The term 'undocumented worker' carries a very different set of meanings and associations. Which one is most clearly anti-immigrant?

Frames bring together certain themes to tell a story and to link that story to a larger set of beliefs and assumptions, along with a few facts, which hardly ever 'speak for themselves.' There are many ways to frame a set of facts. Consider how prevailing ideas explain the conditions of people of color in society. In particular, how do they explain why disproportionate numbers of people of color are concentrated at the bottom of the economic ladder? How are problems with public schools being framed today? How have conservatives framed the fact that borrowers of color were more likely to get subprime loans?

Frames exist within a larger set of ideas, which we call 'worldview.'

## Worldview

*“The fish is the last creature to discover water.”*

There is a saying: If you teach a man to go always through the back door, if there isn't a back door there then he will create it, rather than go through the front door. Worldview gets into all of us, we swim in an ocean of it. For example, the mayor of New York appoints a rich white woman to lead the NY Public Schools, because rich white people are right for the job, according to the dominant worldview, despite the fact that, in this case, she has no classroom experience whatsoever.

We all have conceptions and images of our place in our family, our workplace and community, and in political and civic life. We have beliefs about responsibilities, rights and wrongs, and the role of institutions, including government, in our society. These beliefs are linked to assumptions about race, class and gender. And while we each have our own collection of such values and beliefs, which are reinforced by our own experiences, we unconsciously absorb ideas and meanings from our social world, which surround us like water. These socially generated beliefs are what we call **worldview**.

### The dominant worldview

Generally at any given time there is a relatively coherent worldview that is *dominant*. Most people would probably agree about its overall descriptions of how society works, and the values that uphold it. Some communities may have alternative (if overlapping) worldviews that could challenge the dominant worldview, but they may not be visible (or credible) to most of the population. We can see something about how worldview is conveyed by looking at the common sense sayings that we hear almost every day.

**Activity:** Common sense sayings and assumptions.

**25 minutes**

At your table, talk about common sense sayings that you have heard growing up, and that you may hear and use today.

**Note to facilitators:** *Be sure to tailor this activity for your group. If it is mostly an immigrant group, for example, encourage participants to share sayings they grew up with in their countries of origin, in their communities and families. Compare these with commonsense sayings that are most frequently mentioned in the US today.*

Once your group has listed a number of sayings, take a look at them. What do these sayings tell us about politics (and whether we can change anything through politics)? What do they tell us about winners and losers in society, about fairness and equality, about individualism, about immigrants, about race relations, etc?

Discuss in the whole group. What kind of common sense does the dominant worldview rest on? Do we have any examples of an alternative worldview?

Often in exercises about commonsense sayings, we will hear some versions of the following:

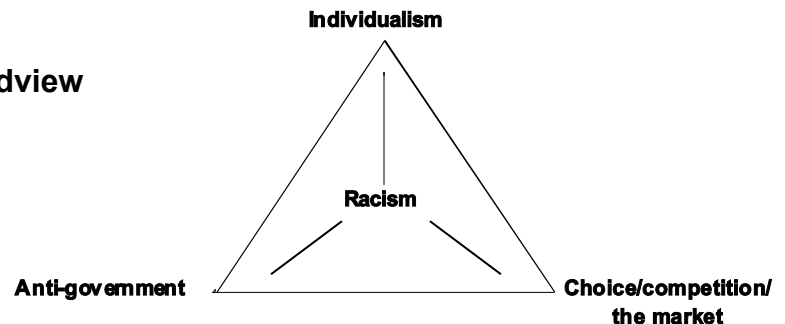
- The nail that sticks out gets hit the hardest.
- Tigers don't change their stripes.
- Only the strong survive.
- You can't fight city hall.

Here are a few that encourage us to act together for social justice:

- Without struggle, there is no progress.
- Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
- An injury to one is an injury to all.
- United we stand, divided we fall.
- Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

### Key elements of the dominant worldview

- hyper-individualism
- limited government
- the free market
- race



You'll see these themes in most frames about the issues we work on.

The Right and big business have been pushing these for at least 2 centuries, but for a long time, white working class folks were resistant to pro-business ideologies. After the civil rights movement, the right deliberately added racism to the first three, creating a much more culturally and politically potent combination. Some examples: public housing, welfare reform, and turning the public against public education using race.

### Internalized worldview and internalized racism

We all internalize elements of the dominant worldview. Sometimes people refer to the ways in which people internalize ideas and assumptions about race as *internalized racism*. In the context of the dominant worldview, ideas about race and racism exist within a larger system of power and of oppressive relationships. In this way of thinking, racism is inseparable from power and domination. This analysis rejects the notion that there is such a thing as 'reverse racism.'

**Activity: Winners and Losers****20 minutes**

The dominant worldview affirms competition: it sorts out high quality from low, the winners from the losers. In this worldview, winners deserve their rewards, and the losers don't. In groups of three, discuss how this element of the dominant worldview has affected you. Are there implications about race in this?

***Elements of a racial justice worldview***

There are elements of other worldviews in working class traditions of solidarity, in African American communities, in immigrant communities, faith traditions, community organizations and many other groups. Native American communities are often particularly aware of their own worldviews and how different they are in relation to the dominant worldview.

If we act within the terrain of the dominant worldview and we accept its assumptions, we implicitly accept many of the fundamental aspects of the status quo. The more we are able to develop an alternative worldview that represents our values and our experiences and wisdom, the more we will be able to win larger struggles.

In developing an alternative worldview, we need to address the key elements of the dominant worldview. As a starting point, we could work from the following:

- The individual develops as part of a community, and each person is the meeting point of their social relationships
- The role of government is to develop the capacities of communities and individuals to govern themselves; and to promote greater equality and justice among all the participants in society.
- Democracy, understood as the active participation of the people in a society, needs to stand master over the power of the government and the power of corporations and the market.
- Racialization and the accumulation of our racialized history are a reality. Racialization has shaped our government, our economic institutions, our conceptions and practices of democracy and indeed, our identities. Hence the need to see and test any conceptions of an alternative worldview and corresponding institutions through the lens of racialization.

**Activity: Racial Justice Worldview****20 minutes**

Where do we see elements of the dominant worldview in ourselves and in our work?  
Where do we see elements of an alternative worldview?

**Activity: Post-Racial Society?****1 hour**

Prepare for a Press conference: *Is this a post-racial society?* This is a current frame that takes race off the table.

1. People talk at their table for five minutes about why we live in a racialized society, not a post-racial one.
2. Four people volunteer to be the group that presents their findings: we live in a racialized society. They have five minutes to prepare their team presentation. The rest of the participants prepare together to be members of the press, who will be asking (perhaps hostile) questions to the presenters.

Debrief in the whole group. How well does our panel present the alternative frame, “structural racism,” to the post-racial frame?

## Narrative, Worldview, and Framing

The idea of *framing* has been used for many years to think about telling stories and using values to communicate more effectively with different groups. More recently, the idea of *narrative* has come into use. Social change movements need to consistently use a set of core values, beliefs and stories (frames) based on those values and beliefs to get their core ideas across, not one frame for one issue and completely different frame for a second issue.

For a social change organization, a narrative is a bundle that includes:

- the set of core ideas and beliefs that are the foundation for what we do and what we fight for.
- an open-ended collection of stories that embody, illustrate, and expand upon the organization’s core ideas and beliefs.

One component of the dominant narrative today is the framing of “illegal:” people coming into this country, looking for a better life, without the proper documents, are “illegal.” Since they have broken the law (by definition of the word), they have to be punished. This frame has been built up over 40 years, by the “war on drugs” and the campaigns around law and order – themselves completely racialized campaigns.



Our work on framing and worldview carries across to narrative. Just as there is a dominant worldview, there is often a dominant narrative that we need to challenge and learn to debate. An issue campaign is an intervention on the terrain of current politics; a narrative is an intervention on the terrain of worldview. Our narrative needs to express our understanding of and commitment to racial justice.



## Section 5: Developing Racial Justice Policies

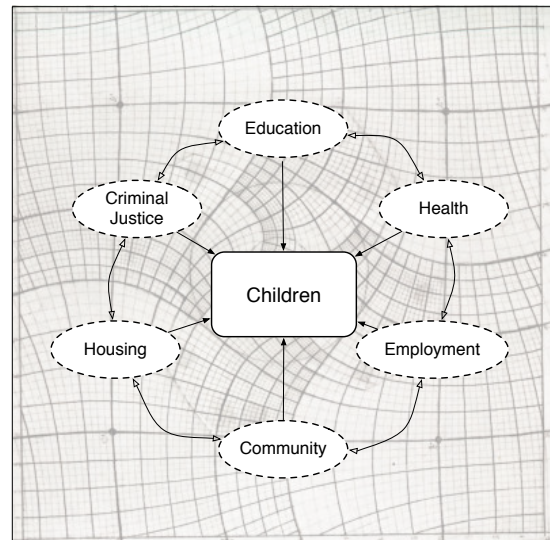
### Racialization and systemic analysis

We've seen that racialization runs through all of our social systems (it is systemic), through all aspects of our society. It is intertwined with economics and with political power. A vision of a better society, a racially just society, needs therefore to take these system questions into account.

This graphic depicts racialization as something like an electric grid running through our society. It affects and distorts each aspect of society: education, health, housing, and so on. It affects our children. Housing and employment and criminal justice are interconnected; they are part of the larger system of society. We can't expect to fix our children's education while leaving everything else untouched — including racialization itself.

Understanding and resisting racialization/structural racism has to be an explicit part of our work. As we work to make race more explicit, here are two things to keep in mind:

- Talking about racialization, analyzing how every issue we work on is shaped by it, how every organization we work with is shaped by it, is a crucial part of our work.
- We have to learn how to do this analysis as part of our daily work. We have to practice putting these questions on the table, on using these issues to frame our issues, and to put them to work in different situations.



Racialization distorts all parts of the System



### From Race-Neutral to Race-explicit.

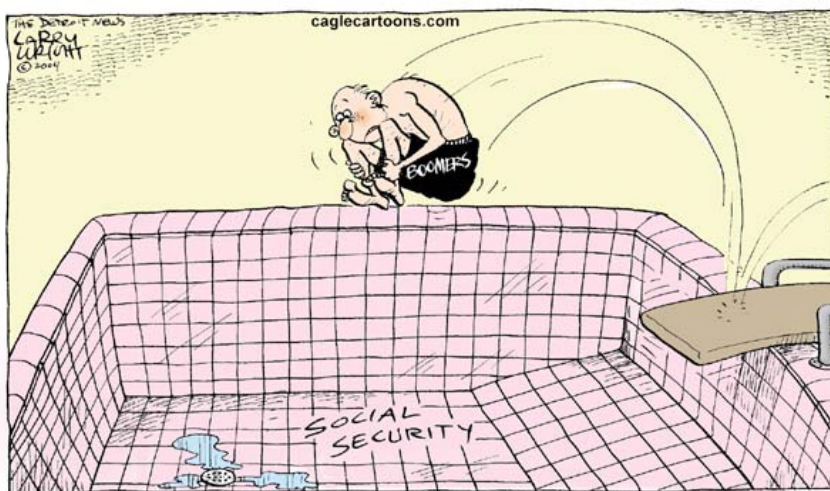
Let's recall how racism can be build-into supposedly "neutral" and "universal" reforms. Consider the consequences of the New Deal legislation: Social Security, labor laws, 30-year instead of 5-year mortgages, and in addition, the GI Bill. These government programs were critical to the creation of the white middle class. Two or three generations of white people were able to buy homes, be assured that their parents would not be dependent on them for support as they aged, and many were able go to college. All of this was less true for African Americans. Some programs, like Social Security, have become more racially inclusive over time, but the consequences of ignoring the different starting points for people of color, and the need to address discriminatory practices, means these programs have not leveled the racialized playing fields.

This cartoon is an example of an attack on a government program. It tells us that the government can't be trusted with Social Security, which will be gone when we retire.

The attack on Social Security goes back to the ways in which Dixiecrats used race to try to limit the scope of the program. They succeeded in excluding categories of workers who were predominantly people of color. The Dixiecrats didn't want black folks to have the security and greater independence that Social Security would give them.

Conservatives want to privatize Social Security so that Wall Street can get its hands on all that money. Who will benefit and who will be harmed if that happens?

Today there is a similar attempt to privatize Medicare, using the federal deficit as a reason to change a government program that has worked extraordinarily well, into a voucher program.



## A Guide to Racial Justice Policy Development

Disparities in education, income, and healthcare between minorities and Whites are all symptoms of structural racism. These all lead to higher rates of incarceration, lack of accumulated wealth, and lower life expectancy. Despite the tremendous economic and social advancement of many people of color in this country, structural racism continues to regulate a vast majority of people of color to a state of almost permanent second-class citizenship.

As we have noted throughout this curriculum, structural racism is embedded in our institutions, customs, and practices, and is perpetuated by policies that affect our everyday lives. Some of these policies are so commonplace that we take them for granted or don't even realize how they're affecting people of color as well as whites in their daily lives. In order to begin dismantling the system of structural racism, organizations committed to racial justice must identify policies that perpetuate the system and develop new policies that will have positive racial impacts. Those policies that perpetuate structural racism have the following characteristics:

- **Allow for the segregation of resources and risks** – redlining, subprime lending (reverse redlining), certain zoning policies, toxic dumping policies, use of property taxes to fund public education
- **Create inherited group disadvantage or advantage** – intergenerational transfer of wealth through estate inheritance, lack of reparations for historical injustices (restitution to Native Americans for lands taken by European settlers), admissions procedures at universities that consider legacy
- **Allow for the differential valuation in human life by race** – curriculum policies that teach certain histories and not others, racial profiling and discretionary sentencing
- **Limit the self-determination of certain groups of people** – policies that result in disproportionate incarceration rates for minorities and their subsequent disenfranchisement, lack of proportional representation elections and decision-making.

The following are examples of historical policies that have perpetuated structural racism. These policies all fall into one of the above categories.

- **National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).** As noted, some reforms that were assumed to be race neutral have perpetuated race-based inequities. NLRB is one example, because it excluded farm and domestic workers (who were predominantly African American in the 1930s) to appease Dixiecrats.
- **Mandatory Minimum Drug Sentencing.** In the 1980s, this became a key mechanism in the War on Crime, which targeted communities of color in the wake of the civil rights movement.
- **Zero Tolerance Policies in Schools.** This became another mechanism for criminalizing and stigmatizing youth of color, instead of addressing systemic problems affecting our schools.

**Activity:**

Break participants up into groups of 3-4 and have them answer the following questions:

- What are some of the policies in effect in your city or state that you think may possess these qualities, which perpetuate structural racism?
- What would you do to address these policies?

Bring participants back together and call on a few groups to do report backs

It is important for racial justice organizations to be proactive in developing policies that begin to dismantle the system of structural racism. Organizations cannot passively assume that legislators will introduce policies that have positive racial impacts (even when they want to do something positive). Advancing a racial justice policy agenda should be a central component of racial justice organizing efforts. As a key aspect of strategy development that we will explore in a follow-up session, groups can develop tools for assessing current opportunities for advancing elements of a racial justice agenda. To get us started, let's talk about some criteria that organizations can use when developing policies that will have a positive racial impact.

**Note to facilitators.** *You could start this by suggesting one, then asking the group to generate others. Draw out the rest, and/or add them in, as needed. Or, if time does not allow and/or the group is not ready to generate a list, you can hand these out and discuss and illustrate how you would apply them to a couple of issues.*

▪ **Criteria for Policy Development**

- The policy should have a universal goal (*increasing the number of homeowners*), with strategies to achieve the goal that target people of color (*incentives for first-time homebuyers, especially in underserved communities*)
- The policy should explicitly address disparate outcomes based on race, and provide mechanisms to reduce those disparities (public health programs, transportation equity, etc.)
- The policy should ultimately increase access to both public and private resources for people of color who were previously denied equitable access to those resources
- The policy should allow for people of color to fully express themselves both culturally and spiritually
- The policy should increase civic participation for people of color, and/or remove any barriers to participation
- People of color should be involved in the process of developing the policy

**Activity:**

Break participants up into groups of 4-6 based on the issues they organize around locally

- Give the small groups 35-45 minutes to develop the framework for a policy around their issue that will have positive racial impacts, using the above criteria as a foundation
- Bring everyone back together in one large group, and have each group sit in the center of the room fishbowl style to answer the following questions:  
Describe the policy your group came up with
- How will this policy benefit people of color in your city or state
- How will the policy have broader appeal than just to people of color
- After the group in the fishbowl has gone, allow 5-10 minutes for other participants to ask them questions

If time permits, select an issue that none of the participants currently work on, and have them go through the exercise as a practice run. Be sure to reduce the allotted time for small group discussion, and only have one or two groups present in the fishbowl.

## Worksheet for Policy Development

- Develop a Universal Goal that a wide range of people can aspire to together.
- Since different groups of people need different supports to reach that shared goal, what will each different group of people need?
- Are there subgroups within each group that have particular circumstances that need to be addressed in a targeted way?

### **Universal Goal:**

**Joyful and meaningful education for all children**

### **Targeted Strategies**

#### *Group: Middle class children of all races*

- Resources and supports to cultivate, retain and nurture good teachers & administrators

#### *Group: Low Socio-economic status children*

- Resources and supports to cultivate, retain and nurture good teachers & administrators
- Nutritious meals, stable housing, medical care

#### *Group: African American children*

- Resources and supports to cultivate, retain and nurture good teachers & administrators
- Nutritious meals, stable housing, medical care
- Curriculum and pedagogical approaches that counter unconscious impact of pervasive negative stereotypes on decision making and assumptions

#### *Group: Recent immigrants*

- Resources and supports to cultivate, retain and nurture good teachers & administrators
- Nutritious meals, stable housing, medical care
- Curriculum and pedagogical approaches that counter unconscious impact of pervasive negative stereotypes on decision making and assumptions
- English language supports, First language supports, interpretation/outreach in parent's first language

Group:

*Developed by Connie Heller*

## Targeted Universalism and Policy Development

**Note to Facilitators:** *This is another way of guiding participants through a process of bringing racial justice into their policy development.*

**Targeted universalism** (taken from the work of John Powell). The basic idea: Raise everybody up and eliminate inequities.

**Definition:** A targeted universal policy includes the needs of both the dominant and minority groups, but pays particular attention to the situation of the minority group. A targeted universal policy improves the lives of dominant and minority groups, but in addition it closes the gaps, the disparities, between the groups.

*Why targeted universalism:*

- Policies that only provide help to a minority (target) group have become harder to achieve. They have been framed as programs that show favoritism toward a certain group. And targeted policies are not effective at addressing the fact that the middle class is increasingly under attack. Pragmatically, our ability to pass or retain targeted programs is very low. We have a much better chance with targeted universal policies.
- Universal policies that appear to cover the entire population are easier to achieve, but they are not truly universal. They fail to account for the fact that people are situated differently in economic and social terms; their outcomes often reinforce existing inequalities. Social Security has been seen as a great example of universal programs, yet when it was passed it benefited able-bodied white males working outside the home for pay. Over the years, changes have been made to Social Security so that now it is much closer to a targeted universal program.
- Strategically, we need to build a large, permanent multi-racial coalition for social change in this country. To do so, we need to build cross-racial and class solidarity. Strictly universal or targeted policies can easily be used to divide such a coalition; targeted universalism offers better opportunities to strengthen cross-race and class alliances.
- Transformation: though African Americans and people of color are impacted most sharply by racism, all people are hurt by it. Transformative programs based on targeted universalism must be accompanied by transformative ideas and beliefs, to inspire whites to link their fates to non-whites and to stop divisive race baiting.

Having a policy that exemplifies targeted universalism complements talking about a racial justice analysis, it doesn't lessen the need for it. Consider how different the health care reform debate would be if our starting point were addressing racial inequities in health outcomes.

*Examples of targeted universalism:*

- Stimulus funds. Money can be given to road-work across the states (universal), but may do nothing to bring new transportation, including jobs, to investment-deprived communities of color. To add "targeting," include specific incentives and enforcement to ensure fair access to minority communities; all projects should

require local resident hiring goals and create a link to community-based groups as the first contact for construction jobs.

- Housing: create policies that are intended to remedy the results of discriminatory housing practices, such as red-lining. Decades of public and private policies have left minority communities starved of affordable housing and much-needed investment.
- Criminal code: end ex-felon disenfranchisement; end sentences for non-violent crimes.
- Education: K-12 education is “universal,” but to make education deal with the long history of structural racialization and oppression in minority communities, there have to be targeted resources allocated to those communities.

The idea of targeted universalism addresses ways to formulate policy that takes structural racialization into account. In the appendix there is a checklist that we can use back at home to work through more aspects of our work (from Isaiah – Kirwan Guide). Here is an abbreviated set of questions.

**Activity:**

Using a policy area that folks in the room are working on, go through the following questions:

1. Who benefits? Can we make it more beneficial to our communities?
2. What groups are burdened by this policy? Can the burdens be more equitably distributed.
3. How are people of color included in the decision-making process?
4. What were the criteria used to make the decision? Could there be other criteria?
5. How can we better address equity, closing the disparities?
6. What is an equitable, participative, and effective public process?

## Appendix

### Sample stories from the history of racialization.

The following stories can be used for the first activity in Section 1. They each capture a moment in time, in one of the historical eras, in which race is a critical element.

**1. Poor Blacks and whites, servant and free, join together.** Background: In 1676, in the Virginia Colony, small-farmers and farm laborers were frustrated by the power of large landowners to set prices and control large tracts of land. Both non-land-owning whites, including both white and black indentured servants and slaves joined what became known as Bacon's Rebellion

Backlash: Race-based restrictions were instituted after the rebellion. Black indentured servants and slaves lost the right to assembly, to carry weapons, to earn and save money on the side. Meanwhile, conditions improved for white indentured servants.

**2. Strike crushed by invoking immigration status of workers.**

The **Bisbee Deportation of 1917** was the illegal deportation of nearly 1300 striking workers to the desert of Hermanas, New Mexico. Over 2000 copper mine workers in Bisbee, Arizona, many of Mexican descent, organized with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), presented a list of demands for safer conditions and a better pay rate to the Phelps Dodge Corporation and went on strike when the demands were not met. In solidarity, about 1000 workers from other local mines went on strike at the same time. The workers were met by the local sheriff and 2200 armed vigilantes who forced them onto cattle cars. Those who refused to renounce the union were transported for 16 hours then dropped off in a remote desert with no money, transportation, food or water. The Governor of New Mexico did not want to deal with 1300 homeless workers in his state, so he called in the US Army to escort them to a nearby city where they could arrange for travel back home.

Sheriff Harry Wheeler, when questioned by the Arizona Attorney General about his role in the deportation, stated, "It became a question of 'Are you American, or are you not?' He told the Attorney General: "I would repeat the operation any time I find my own people endangered by a mob composed of eighty percent aliens and enemies of my Government."

**3. Cross-race worker solidarity during the Great Depression:**

In 1934 a group of African Americans and whites formed the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union (STFU) in Tyronza, Arkansas. The interracial organization adopted two goals: to protect Arkansas sharecroppers from eviction by planters and to ensure that the sharecroppers received their share of the money due from Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) payments. The STFU appealed to the federal government to end AAA policies that in effect rewarded large planters by allowing them to eliminate their work force. The organization adopted a written policy of passive resistance. In 1935 the union staged a successful cotton pickers' strike that raised the price for picking cotton to seventy-five



cents for one hundred pounds. The next year's cotton choppers' strike failed to gain its demands amidst violence and evictions.

#### **4. Legal definitions of 'Black' and 'White' Affirmed.**

**Background:** How is it that a Black woman cannot have a white child but a white woman can have a Black child? It all started with the economic imperative to reproduce slave labor and regulate the offspring that resulted from white overseers' sexual abuse of Black women.

**The Story:** In 1984, Susie Guillory Phipps unsuccessfully sued the Louisiana Bureau of Vital Records to change her racial classification from Black to white. The descendant of an eighteenth-century white planter and a Black slave, Phipps was designated as "Black" in her birth certificate in accordance with a 1970 state law which declared anyone with at least one-thirty-second "Negro blood" to be Black.

Phipps lost her case. The highest court of the land upheld a state law that quantified racial identity, and in so doing affirmed the legality of assigning individuals to specific racial groupings.



## The Racialization of Citizenship

The following examples can be used in the second activity in Section 1. We are looking at a wide swath of time to illustrate how race is intertwined with notions of citizenship. Here are four examples of the role of race in who is considered a citizen, and what it means to be a citizen.

- **Naturalization Act of 1790:** This was the first immigration law passed in the U.S., and it stated that in order to become a citizen, an immigrant to the U.S. must be in the country for at least two years, and be a “free white person” of “good moral character.” Slaves and free African Americans were thus clearly excluded from naturalization.
- **Dred Scott Supreme Court Decision of 1857:** Dred Scott was born a slave in Virginia. He was purchased by a US Army doctor, who over the years took assignments in several free states that outlawed slavery while keeping Scott in bondage. Scott sued for his freedom. The justices of the Supreme Court stated that the writers of the Constitution viewed Black people as inferior and did not intend for the Constitution to protect them, so they declared the lawsuit invalid. Furthermore, they declared that slaves of African descent and their descendants forever into the future could never become US citizens.
- **Mexican Repatriation:** Between 1929 and 1939, close to one million people of Mexican descent were deported or pressured to leave the US. About 60% of them were US citizens, many of whom had never been to Mexico. The campaign was a response to the Great Depression. The Secretary of Labor scapegoated “illegal immigrants” (one of the earliest widespread uses of the term) as exacerbating the problem and “taking American jobs.” In 2006, then-Representatives Hilda Solis and Luis Gutierrez called for an apology from the US Government for the Repatriation. To this day such an apology has not been given.
- **Japanese Internment:** After the attack on Pearl Harbor and the U.S. entry into World War II, anti-Japanese hysteria rises throughout the country. Japanese-Americans are accused of being disloyal. Starting in 1942, over 100,000 persons of Japanese descent on the West Coast are forcibly removed and held in specially-built detainment facilities referred to as “War Relocation Camps.” Although 2/3rds of detainees are US citizens, all are treated as “enemy aliens.” In 1944, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that the internment order is constitutional. The U.S. government later apologizes and pays reparations to the people who were interned.

- 1) Each participant gives a one-word reaction to these examples.
- 2) Which of these examples have you heard before?
- 3) What do these examples tell us about the right to be a citizen?

## Glossary

The key terms that we will use throughout this session help us understand the complex and changing nature of racism in our society. We are introducing many related terms that help get at the different ways in which racism is experienced, institutionalized and understood, as well as the ways in which race and racism change throughout history.

### What is *race*?

The meaning of ‘race’ is constantly shifting and being contested. Its uses in a society have more to do with power relations, economic arrangements, social norms and prevailing ideologies than with physiological differences between and among human beings (such as skin color). Race as a way of categorizing groups of people most often is used to explain, justify and/or maintain inequalities and oppressive social practices. While concepts of race have varied and changed over time — often in response to resistance and struggle — **race remains at the center stage of US history.**

### Understanding racism.

Because racism involves ideology, structures, policies and practices, it is best understood as having several manifestations: *interpersonal*, *institutional* and *structural* (we define each of these below). Taken together, we can offer a working definition of racism: Racism is a system that consists of policies, practices, and norms that structure opportunity and assign value based on physiological characteristics such as skin color. Racism unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities and undermines the realization of the full human potential of the whole society.

### Forms of racism

- **Interpersonal Racism:** This refers to prejudices and discriminatory behaviors where one group makes assumptions about the abilities, motives, and intents of other groups based on race. This set of prejudices leads to cruel intentional or unintentional actions towards other groups.
- **Internalized Racism:** In a society where one group is politically, socially and economically dominant, members of stigmatized groups, who are bombarded with negative messages about their own abilities and intrinsic worth, may internalize those negative messages. It holds people back from achieving their fullest potential and reinforces the negative messages which, in turn, reinforces the oppressive systems.
- **Institutional Racism:** Where assumptions about race are structured into the social and economic institutions in our society. Institutional racism occurs when organizations, businesses, or institutions like schools and police departments discriminate, either deliberately or indirectly against certain groups of people to limit their rights. This type of racism reflects the cultural assumptions of the dominant group.
- **Structural Racialization:** While most of the legally based forms of racial discrimination have been outlawed, many of the racial disparities originating in various institutions and practices continue and accumulate as major forces in economic and

political structures and cultural traditions. Structural racialization refers to the ways in which social structures and institutions, over time, perpetuate and produce cumulative, durable, race-based inequalities.

**B. Evidence of structural racialization.** All of the discrepancies between whites and communities of color that we see today: the wealth gap, the education gap, higher incarceration rates, higher unemployment rates, and disparities in health outcomes, are evidence of structural racialization. Segregation in housing and discrimination in lending have cumulative effects: fewer sources of family wealth, as well as fewer investments in, and limited services for, communities of color. Likewise, patterns of residential discrimination and disinvestment affect the quality of schools in communities of color.

The thing to remember about structural racialization is that **racialized outcomes no longer require racist actors**. It is built-into the institutions and practices. Getting rid of a racist person does not change the practices. The critical aspect of racism that we must address today is the accumulation and incorporation of long-standing racialized practices into all of our social and economic structures.

**3. Racialization.** Part of the ways in which race as a category is constructed is through the process of ‘racialization,’ which can consist in attributing ‘race’ (and its associated meanings) to something – a status, or a practice, or an institution. Institutions that appear to be neutral can be racialized, shaped by previous racial practices and outcomes so that the institution perpetuates racial disparities, or makes them worse. This is true of the criminal justice system, the education and health systems in our country, and so on.

A primary example of this is how labor became racialized; over several decades, slave labor went from a status of limited servitude — a position held by European immigrants as well as Caribbean, West Indian and African immigrants in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century America — to perpetual servitude (for life), a position that, by the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, was held only by people of African descent (who arrived from the West Indies, or directly from Africa, or who were born to women of African descent).

#### *Racialization and worldview*

The racialization of labor meant that being Black became associated with being subordinate, unequal, less than fully human. An **ideology of race** grew up around slavery.

To be sure, racist ideologies and notions of superiority predated slavery. What is unique about the way in which racist ideology interacted with the institutionalization of slavery is the way in which race, especially defining ‘white’ citizenship in opposition to the status of people of color, became an organizing principle for society. In this we see the interplay between *practice* — chattel slavery — and *ideology* — white supremacy. Racism is about a lot more than malicious acts that are intentionally perpetrated by one group of people against another. It is woven into the fabric of society, and reflected in every institution.

#### **4. Racial Justice**

Historic patterns of racism have created deep disparities between whites and people of color in this country. The struggle for racial justice must address the ongoing practices that perpetuate these disparities and actively seek to dismantle them. In addition, this struggle must expand our notions of a good and just society.

Racial justice refers to a wide range of ways in which groups and individuals struggle to change laws, policies, practices and ideas that reinforce and perpetuate racial disparities. Proactively, it is first and foremost the struggle for equitable outcomes for people of color. This includes struggles for a society based on inclusion, justice, equity, respect for diversity and difference. Sustained, dedicated action is needed in order to root out structural forms of racialization and to dismantle them through policy initiatives as well as through cultural awareness, and by creating new practices and relationships in our communities.

It also means addressing underlying economic conditions that perpetuate exploitation and gross inequalities in wealth and income. Whether the specific campaign is about affordable housing, predatory lending, banking reform, immigrant justice, healthcare or racial profiling or criminal justice reform, applying a racial justice lens will sharpen our focus while also deepening our analysis and broadening our sense of what we are aiming for.

## History of Racialization Timeline

Racialization runs throughout US history. In the following timelines we have tried to capture some key moments that can be used to illustrate the history of racialization, and that can be starting points for discussion. The timeline is not an attempt to be comprehensive but rather selective – we are interested in any suggestions or thoughts as to what other events might be included in the timeline (as we welcome suggestions about the workbook as a whole).

The timeline is divided into five periods, in part for reasons of visual display. The periods are:

1. Colonial Era through the Mexican-American War
2. The Civil War through Jim Crow
3. New Deal to Civil Rights
4. The Civil Rights Era
5. The Post-Civil Rights Era

Each timeline is divided into three bands. The top band concerns events more directly about African-American history. The middle band is about the history of Latinos and other People of Color in this country. And the bottom band is composed of General Events that we think provide some context. There are many events that could belong in all three bands, or perhaps should be placed differently.