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Defining the Underclass

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POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

Perspective

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Fewer Chances to Move Up to Higher Office

The defeat last month of Richard Hatcher, mayor of Gary, Indiana, raises anew questions about the long-term political prospects for successful black elected officials. For most white officials, the future generally offers opportunities to move up to higher office. For most blacks, this is often not the case, and Dick Hatcher seems to be no exception.

In a state that is heavily Republican and only 7 percent black, Hatcher, an outspoken liberal Democrat and champion of black causes and Jesse Jackson's presidential ambitions, has virtually no place to go in Indiana politics or, it would seem, in national politics. The barrier is not lack of ability or of ambition; rather it is his race and, perhaps to a small degree, his brand of Democratic politics.

Contrast the future prospects of Richard Hatcher with those of Richard Lugar, who was elected mayor of Indianapolis in 1967, the same year Hatcher won office. After several terms as mayor, Republican Lugar was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1976 and served as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee from 1981 to 1986. He may well emerge as a presidential candidate in 1988 or 1992.

Without a decent shot at winning higher office, many talented and ambitious black elected officials choose to remain in place for many years, ultimately to face an accumulation of citizen complaints or defeat or both. Hatcher has governed Gary for 20 years. Newark Mayor Kenneth Gibson, upset last year in a primary election, held office for 16 years. Detroit's Coleman Young has been mayor for 15 years. Tuskegee's Johnny Ford and Washington, D.C.'s Marion Barry have been mayors for 16 and 9 years, respectively. And Tom Bradley has been mayor of Los Angeles for 15 years, during which time he mounted two unsuccessful campaigns for the California governorship.

One thing all of these and other black elected officials have in common is limited opportunity for political advancement. Furthermore, unlike many of their white counterparts, few of these officials get offers from corporations or appointments to executive positions. Given these prospects, the attraction of elective office may begin to wane for some of the most capable black aspirants.

There are exceptions, of course, but they are few. Edward Brooke was a U.S. senator for one term. Douglas Wilder went from the Virginia Senate to the lieutenant governorship. There are only five other black officials (excluding judges) holding statewide office. We will be better able to test the validity of these exceptions when and if Wilder runs for governor in 1989 and when the next black senator is elected.

What does the future hold for Dick Hatcher? His reply: "I don't see anything I want to do at this time that is available to me. My family has had to make sacrifices over the years because of my role in public office. Now, my first thought is how to provide for their economic security."

No doubt Dick Hatcher will face the future with the same aggressiveness, optimism, tenacity, and sensitivity that characterized his stewardship in Gary and his national efforts to galvanize black Americans into a cohesive political force.

In the eyes of black Americans, Dick Hatcher has already won a higher position—a well deserved seat at the table of our heroes. ■

Eddie N. Williams

PRESIDENT

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Despite Long History, Black Philanthropy Gets Little Credit as "Self-Help" Tool

by Emmett D. Carson

In much of what has been written about the need for greater self-help to address the problems of poverty, crime, joblessness, and teenage pregnancy in the black community, there has been little acknowledgment of our long and prestigious tradition of philanthropic activity. This historical lapse is regrettable because it has led many to conclude incorrectly that the only familiarity that blacks have with philanthropy is as recipients and not as givers. Such impressions are destructive because they misinform young blacks about their history and reinforce negative stereotypes about black initiative.

One reason little has been written about black philanthropic activity is that the word "philanthropy" evokes images of large foundations and wealthy philanthropists, of which the black community has had few. By expanding the concept of philanthropy to encompass the giving of money and goods as well as time, blacks emerge as having had a strong, substantial philanthropic tradition. Such philanthropy has been important in two respects. First, black philanthropy was critical to aiding the poor and playing a key role in the development of the first black schools, banks, and insurance companies. Second, black philanthropy has been an essential component of virtually every black protest movement in history.

Early Beginnings

The beginnings of organized black philanthropy can be traced to the early black churches, mutual aid societies, and fraternal lodges. In many respects, these organizations represented much of the collective black leadership in the 1700s and 1800s. It was not unusual for a black church to have its own mutual aid society or fraternal organization. Because members of both groups were required to pay regular dues, the members of these organizations were more likely to have more stable employment and, in some instances, better education than other blacks in the community.

As the name implies, mutual aid organizations provided its members with a variety of services including sick dues, burial insurance, and, occasionally, support for a deceased member's widow and children. It is interesting to note that these are all services that are now provided by the government. However, it would be a grave misreading of history to think that these organizations only operated for the benefit of their members. On the contrary, they were at the forefront in addressing the major issues that confronted the black community and providing community service through charitable activity. Through philanthropic activity, these organizations, as well as the black church, provided basic necessities to the poor, free and/or subsidized education, and the financial and manpower resources to help challenge social injustices. (See box on page 4 for a discussion of early examples of black philanthropic organizations.)

Dr. Carson is a research associate at JCPS.

Banks, Insurance, and "Public Power"

It should be noted that early black philanthropic activity had several unanticipated benefits. In his seminal work on the development of black businesses, Abram Harris suggests that as the number of mutual aid societies and fraternal organizations grew, their increasing financial needs led directly to the creation of the first black banks and insurance companies.

The majority of blacks continue to be vigorously engaged in nearly every aspect of philanthropic activity ranging from cash contributions to donations of goods and voluntarism.

In addition to providing charitable services to the poor and cultural programs for socio-economic advancement, black philanthropic activity has been used as a mechanism by which to implement and sustain protests against the larger society. David Mathews, president of the Kettering Foundation, has suggested that philanthropic activity is a political force that provides, among other benefits to the political process, "public power." Public power is defined by Mathews as the ability of philanthropic activity to raise the public's consciousness to a state where it can influence public decision-making:

> We are impressed nowadays with formal power—the power of position, money, and law. We tend to lose sight of more basic political power: the power of ideas and ideals, the power of relationships, and the power of commitments. But such power has great force as has been vividly demonstrated in events ranging from neighborhood revitalization to protests against the Vietnam War.

An early example of black philanthropic activity being utilized as public power was the Underground Railroad.

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Black Philanthropy

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In recounting the accomplishments of the Underground Railroad, few acknowledge the extent to which it relied on black charitable giving and voluntarism for much of its success. The Underground Railroad sponsored national and international fund-raising campaigns, used volunteers as railroad "conductors," used the homes of supporters as railroad "stations," and lastly, provided escaping slaves with food, clothing, shelter, new identity papers, and money. Many of the black mutual aid societies and fraternal organizations were actively involved in supporting all aspects of the railroad's operation.

A more recent example of blacks using the public power of philanthropic activity to challenge social injustice is the civil rights movement. It would not be much of an overstatement, if at all, to suggest that the civil rights movement was perhaps the greatest mobilization of charitable activity of any group to be witnessed to date in America. Between 1957 and 1968, the various civil rights organizations assembled thousands of individuals into a national protest movement that raised money, collected and disbursed food, and recruited volunteers to participate in boycotts, sit-ins, and marches across the country. It would be hard to overemphasize the high level of volunteer participation, which often included children, that was required for the success of countless demonstrations.

These examples illustrate the long and prestigious tradition of philanthropic activity that has existed in the black community. In light of this history, it is interesting to note that current discussions about black self-help have evolved in such a manner as to suggest that philanthropic activity is itself a "conservative" approach for achieving black economic progress. It is not. At various times in history, black philanthropic activity has served as the centerpiece of liberal, conservative, and nationalistic strategies for black socio-economic progress.

Current Survey

In an effort to obtain current data on the philanthropic activity of black Americans, the Joint Center for Political Studies added 30 questions on philanthropy to its 1986 JCPS Gallup Poll. The nationally representative survey is unique in that it oversampled blacks and contains extensive questions on several aspects of black philanthropic activity including attitudes toward charity, charitable giving and voluntarism through different types of organizations, and donations of food, clothing, and other goods.

The preliminary findings suggest that black traditions of charitable giving and voluntarism remain strong.

- Over 67.3 percent of all blacks surveyed reported having given money to a charitable organization in 1985. This includes 76 percent of blacks with incomes over $25,000, 77 percent of blacks with incomes between $12,000 and $25,000, and 58 percent of blacks with incomes under $12,000.
- Over 68 percent of all charitable dollars in the black community in 1985 went to the respondent's own church; 7 percent went to religious organizations and hospitals; 6 percent to social welfare organizations; 4 percent to educational organizations; and only 1 percent to political organizations.
- 54 percent of blacks surveyed reported having made a charitable contribution to the church. This compares to 24 percent who made contributions to

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State Laws Curbed Early "Self-Help" Societies

One of the earliest recorded mutual aid societies was the fraternal society known as African Lodge No. 459, founded in Boston in 1787 by Prince Hall. The lodge is widely recognized as the beginning of black Masonry in the United States. The lodge not only provided health and life insurance programs for its members, it provided Boston's black community with leadership. The lodge was active in the abolitionist movement and sponsored regular programs to aid the poor, including collecting and distributing free food and firewood during the winter months.

The multifaceted character of African Lodge No. 459 was typical of mutual aid societies and fraternal organizations that would follow it. For example, during the great plague that struck Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1793, the Free African Society provided the city with an extensive array of voluntary aid including nursing and burial services. The Free African Society that was founded in Boston in 1796 was so widely recognized for its community service and charitable activities that in 1808, two hundred blacks attended a commemoration program in the organization's honor.

Black literary societies such as Baltimore's Young Men's Mental Improvement Society for the Discussion of Moral and Philosophical Questions of All Kinds, the Young Men's Literary and Moral Reform Society of Pittsburgh and Vicinity, and the Philadelphia Library Company of Colored Persons were active in providing books and establishing libraries. The Brown Fellowship Society, founded in 1790, provided free and subsidized education for free black children in Charleston, South Carolina.

As testimony to the leadership and services provided by these organizations, by 1835, several states, including Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina, had passed legislation that prohibited blacks from having "lyceums, lodges, fire companies, or literary, dramatic, social, moral, or charitable societies." Laws such as these made it necessary for many of these organizations to operate in secrecy.

Justice Marshall's Constitutional Critique

"Defective" Original Document Did Not Survive Civil War, Says Nation's Only Black Justice

Editor's Note: Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall's speech to the San Francisco Patent and Trademark Law Association in Maui, Hawaii, on May 6, 1987, has sparked an overdue discussion of blacks and the U.S. Constitution. Though some commentators criticized Marshall and a conservative legal foundation called for his ouster, his views are likely to be the focal point at several educational conferences that will be held this year. (See box for details of selected list of scheduled events.)

The following is a partial text of Justice Marshall's speech.

1987 marks the 200th anniversary of the United States Constitution. A commission has been established to coordinate the celebration. The official meetings, essay contests, and festivities have begun.

The planned commemoration will span three years, and I am told 1987 is "dedicated to the memory of the Founders and the document they drafted in Philadelphia." We are to "recall the achievements of our Founders and the knowledge and experience that inspired them, the nature of the government they established, its origins, its character, and its ends, and the rights and privileges of citizenship, as well as its attendant responsibilities."

Like many anniversary celebrations, the plan for 1987 takes particular events and holds them up as the source of all the very best that has followed. Patriotic feelings will surely swell, prompting proud proclamations of the wisdom, foresight, and sense of justice shared by the Framers and reflected in a written document now yellowed with age. This is unfortunate—not the patriotism itself, but the tendency for the celebration to oversimplify and overlook the many other events that have been instrumental to our achievements as a nation. The focus of this celebration invites the complacent belief that the vision of those who debated and compromised in Philadelphia yielded the "more perfect Union" it is said we now enjoy.

I cannot accept this invitation, for I do not believe that the meaning of the Constitution was forever "fixed" at the Philadelphia Convention. Nor do I find the wisdom, foresight, and sense of justice exhibited by the Framers particularly profound. To the contrary, the government they devised was defective from the start, requiring several amendments, a civil war, and momentous social transformation to attain the system of constitutional government, and its respect for the individual freedoms and human rights, we hold as fundamental today. When contemporary Americans cite "The Constitution," they invoke a concept that is vastly different from what the Framers barely began to construct two centuries ago.

"We the People"

For a sense of the evolving nature of the Constitution we need look no further than the first three words of the document's preamble: "We the People." When the Founding Fathers used this phrase in 1787, they did not have in mind the majority of America's citizens. "We the People" included, in the words of the Framers, "the whole Number of free Persons." On a matter so basic as the right to vote, for example, Negro slaves were excluded, although they were counted for representational purposes—at three-fifths each. Women did not gain the right to vote for over a 130 years.

These omissions were intentional. The record of the Framers' debates on the slave question is especially clear: The Southern states acceded to the demands of the New England states for giving Congress broad power to regulate commerce, in exchange for the right to continue the slave trade. The economic interests of the regions coalesced: New Englanders engaged in the "carrying trade" would profit from transporting slaves from Africa as well as goods produced in America by slave labor. The perpetuation of slavery ensured the primary source of wealth in the Southern states.

> ***The effects of the Framers' compromise have remained for generations. They arose from the contradiction between guaranteeing liberty and justice to all, and denying both to Negroes.***

Despite the clear understanding of the role slavery would play in the new republic, use of the word "slaves" and "slavery" was carefully avoided in the original document. Political representation in the lower House of Congress was to be based on the population of "free Persons" in each state, plus three-fifths of all "other Persons." (Article 1, section 2.) Moral principles

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Marshall's Constitutional Critique

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against slavery, for those who had them, were compromised, with no explanation of the conflicting principles for which the American Revolutionary War had ostensibly been fought: the self-evident truths "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

It was not the first such compromise. Even these ringing phrases from the Declaration of Independence are filled with irony, for an early draft of what became the Declaration assailed the King of England for suppressing legislative attempts to end the slave trade and for encouraging slave rebellions. The final draft adopted in 1776 did not contain this criticism. And so again at the Constitutional Convention eloquent objections to the institution of slavery went unheeded, and its opponents eventually consented to a document which laid the foundation for the tragic events that were to follow...

Upcoming Conferences on Race and the Constitution

- *"Black Americans and the Development of the U.S. Constitution."*

The Joint Center for Political Studies and the Smithsonian Institution will jointly sponsor a conference to explore the character and extent of black influence on the Constitution. While the conference will consider the impact of constitutional decisions on blacks, the emphasis will be on the role of blacks in shaping today's Constitution through their own actions. The conference will also assess the effects of black-induced constitutional change on the quality of government and the status of the individual in the society.

The conference will have three objectives. One is to increase public understanding of the process of constitutional development and the distinct impact of race and racial issues in that process. Another is to help black Americans to better understand and appreciate their own distinct contributions to the development of the Constitution and our system of government. Such understanding not only clarifies the historical record, it is likely to inspire pride in and support for the political system. A third objective is to focus attention on the continuing dilemmas that race poses for the Constitution and to underscore the need to urgently and creatively address this unfinished business in constitutional development.

The conference will be held at the Smithsonian Institution on November 11-12, 1987. For more information, please contact Jean Jalloh, Joint Center for Political Studies, (202) 626-3533.

- *"The Constitution and Race: A Critical View."*

Sponsored by the National Conference of Black Lawyers, the conference will be held at Harvard University, from September 11-13, 1987. For more information, call (212) 864-4000.

- *"Toward a More Perfect Union."*

Several educational forums are scheduled, including a conference in early December. For more information, call Marcia Levy, executive director, at (212) 614-6450.

Dred Scott Case

No doubt it will be said, when the unpleasant truth of slavery is mentioned during this bicentennial year, that the Constitution was a product of its times, and embodied a compromise which, under other circumstances, would not have been made. But the effects of the Framers' compromise have remained for generations. They arose from the contradiction between guaranteeing liberty and justice to all, and denying both to Negroes.

The original intent of the phrase, "We the People," was far too clear for any ameliorating construction. Writing for the Supreme Court in 1857, Chief Justice Roger Taney penned the following passage in the *Dred Scott* case, on the issue of whether, in the eyes of the Framers, slaves were "constituent members of the sovereignty," and were to be included among "We the People":

> We think they are not, and that they are not included, and were not intended to be included.... They had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race...; and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit....[A]ccordingly, a negro of the African race was regarded...as an article of property, and held, and bought and sold as such....[N]o one seems to have doubted the correctness of the prevailing opinion of the time.

And so, nearly seven decades after the Constitutional Convention, the Supreme Court reaffirmed the prevailing opinion of the Framers regarding the rights of Negroes in America. It took a bloody civil war before the 13th Amendment could be adopted to abolish slavery, though not the consequences slavery would have for future Americans.

The 14th Amendment

While the Union survived the Civil War, the Constitution did not. In its place arose a new, more promising basis for justice and equality, the 14th Amendment, ensuring protection of the life, liberty, and property of *all* persons against deprivations without due process, and guaranteeing equal protection of the laws. And yet almost another century would pass before any significant recognition was obtained of the rights of black Americans to share equally even in such basic opportunities as education, housing, and employment, and to have their votes counted, and counted equally. In the meantime, blacks joined America's military to fight its wars and invested untold hours working in its factories and on its farms, contributing to the development of this country's magnificent wealth and waiting to share in its prosperity.

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June 1987

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

Inside This Issue

- **Two national polls show Jesse Jackson leading all Democratic presidential contenders, but, if the election were held today, "undecided" would win.**
- **After long terms in office, three black mayors have been replaced by politicians with a new political style—but there is little evidence of a generational change in black politics.**
- **If Republican Senator Bob Dole declares for the presidency, his South Africa policies may hinder his quest for black votes.**
- **Across the nation, Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley is likely to face strong opposition if he runs for a fifth term in 1989; a congressional committee has approved legislation granting statehood and full congressional representation for the District of Columbia; church leaders in New York City are planning a massive registration and turnout campaign aimed at electing a black mayor; and, Mississippi state Senator Henry Kirksey is planning a run for lieutenant governor.**

They're Off to the Presidential Races With Jackson Leading

If the 1988 presidential elections were held today, **Mr. Undecided would win. Though voters cannot decide who he will be, by a margin of 37 percent to 29 percent, they favor the eventual Democratic presidential nominee,** according to a *New York Times*/CBS poll taken May 11-14. None of the contenders have captured large blocs of voters: Only 16 percent of the Republicans and 17 percent of the Democrats said their minds were made up about whom they would support. Thus, as far as the polls are concerned, it is still anybody's race in both parties, a fact that delights most of the announced and potential contenders... **In the lead, and demonstrating the most momentum, is JESSE JACKSON, whose support rose in two major national polls.** In the June 4, 1987, ***Washington Post*** **poll, Jackson, with 22 percent, had a wide lead over his next-best Democratic rivals, Massachusetts Governor MICHAEL DUKAKIS and Illinois Senator PAUL SIMON, who both got 13 percent. Jackson's support rose from 13 percent in a *Post* poll in March. In the *New York Times*/CBS polls, Jackson's support rose from 10 percent on May 5-6 to 17 percent on May 11-14.** Jackson's support rose among blacks from 35 percent to 51 percent, among younger voters (under 30) from 20 percent to 32 percent, and among his firm supporters—voters saying their minds were made up—from 2 percent to 8 percent. Jackson also appeared to be doing slightly better with white Democrats (8 percent) than he did in 1984 (2 percent). **Only Massachusetts Governor MICHAEL DUKAKIS outran Jackson among whites (with 13 percent).**

Media Reaction: **At first the media almost unanimously found it difficult to treat Jackson as part of the actual horse race for the presidency.** The *New York Times* article about their most recent poll was headlined "Jackson Tops Poll (Not Counting Cuomo)"—thereby giving almost equal billing to a Democrat who continues to reiterate that he will not run for president in 1988. The *Washington Post* story on the post-GARY HART state of the Democratic presidential campaign led with Dukakis being catapulted into the favorite's role in New Hampshire. In other ways, too, Jackson as frontrunner has been treated differently: **for example, there have been no news articles which compare how Jackson might do head to**

head with potential Republican nominees—the kind of Hart versus Bush, Hart versus Dole stack-ups that were constantly reported when Hart was frontrunner. Some newspaper columnists and television reporters have stated as a fact—without explanation—that Jackson cannot win and that he is the frontrunner "temporarily and by accident."...Others, like DAVID BRODER, WILLIAM RASPBERRY, RICHARD COHEN, JUAN WILLIAMS, all of the *Washington Post*, and columnist JACK ANDERSON have begun to treat Jackson as frontrunner. This new status has brought with it some negative attention like Juan Williams' article in the *Washington Post* (May 31, 1987, "Outlook") which asks "Is Jackson Really Good for Blacks?"

Black Leadership: **Among blacks, the pressure is growing to endorse Jackson or no-one at all.** This was evident at the annual meeting of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) in late May, where some Jackson supporters pushed for an early endorsement of their candidate. Though the CBTU decided not to endorse Jackson for the present—because it would conflict with their greater interest in ensuring that the AFL-CIO does not endorse a candidate in 1988—they promised to review the issue at a later date...**The pressure on leaders of the CBTU is likely to be felt increasingly by many other black leaders.** Unlike in 1984, few will have already committed themselves before Jackson enters. **Still—so far, few black leaders have marched forward to openly endorse Jackson. Some, such as Mayor ANDREW YOUNG (D-Atlanta), have already indicated that Jackson is not their first choice, and others, such as Mayor HAROLD WASHINGTON (D-Chicago), have said the Democratic contenders are all good men.** On the other hand, sources report that 15 of the 23 Congressional Black Caucus members promised in a private meeting with Jackson to support and work actively for him in their districts and states. Calls to offices of CBC members revealed that **Congressmen LOUIS STOKES (D-Ohio), GUS SAVAGE (D-Ill.), CHARLES HAYES (D-Ill.), MERVYN DYMALLY (D-Calif.), MAJOR OWENS (D-N.Y.), and RONALD DELLUMS (D-Calif.) are supporting Jackson.** Leaning towards supporting Jackson are: Congressmen ED TOWNS (D-N.Y.), MIKE ESPY (D-Miss.), JOHN CONYERS (D-Mich.), and MICKEY LELAND (D-Tex.). A staff member for Rep. JOHN LEWIS (D-Ga.) reported that he is presently uncommitted, but would support Senator SAM NUNN (D-Ga.) if he enters the race, and a staff member for Rep. ALAN WHEAT (D- Mo.) said he is supporting Missouri Rep. RICHARD GEPHARDT. All other CBC members' staffs said their congresspersons were "uncommitted."

No Change of the Guard but a New Political Style Is In

Though several signs in the last few years point to the changing face of black politics, **there is little evidence that the old guard is yielding place to a new generation of leaders.** The evidence in support of the "change" thesis is that many well-known names of the past have already left, or will soon leave, public office. Among them are: former two-term Mayor ERNEST "DUTCH" MORIAL OF New Orleans, former four-term Mayor KENNETH GIBSON of Newark, and, most recently, five-term Mayor RICHARD HATCHER of Gary. **But, are their successors part of the new generation?** SHARPE JAMES of Newark, for example, was an early Gibson supporter and was elected to the city council in the year that Gibson was elected mayor. THOMAS BARNES won his former county assessor's seat with the aid of Richard Hatcher and was an early Hatcher supporter. And SIDNEY BARTHELEMY served in the city council during Morial's tenure as mayor. **Even in other recent elections, there is little evidence of generational change.** JOHN LEWIS and JULIAN BOND are in the same generation—both were leaders in the student segment of the Civil Rights Movement. KWEISI MFUME took PARREN MITCHELL's congressional seat in Baltimore—but it was Mitchell's decision to retire. MIKE ESPY won the Mississippi congressional seat that state Rep. ROBERT CLARK had been unable to win, but a few thousand votes could have reversed the outcome in both of Clark's losses and in Espy's victory. Yet, these cases hardly add up to a preference for a new generation...The new faces may not be from the next generation but they represent new approaches. Newark Mayor James sharply criticized Gibson for doing little or nothing about Newark's ongoing problems of crime and economic deterioration. Barnes, in Gary, took a similar approach—not only criticizing the state of economic underdevelopment and high unemployment in the city, but also the corruption charges against several high ranking officials in Hatcher's administration. **They both called for a new way of doing things, a new effort at solving problems by a new official. Both heard their calls heeded.**

One reason for the defeat of "old guard" blacks may be that, unlike their white counterparts, they stay in lower or local office longer. **As noted in this month's "Perspective" column, local black elected officials face great difficulty in catapulting to higher office,** particularly in jurisdictions which are not majority black. **Indeed, if Kenneth Gibson could have become governor of New Jersey, as he sought to do in 1985, he would not have been around to be defeated as mayor of Newark in**

1985...A second factor responsible for the change of the "old guard" is that, **even in some majority-black districts, whites sometimes hold the balance of power or the pivotal votes.** More specifically, as whites have begun to give up efforts to defeat black candidates in majority-black areas, they have begun to choose which of the two black candidates they would prefer— usually the candidate who appears to be more moderate. This tactic was successful in the New Orleans mayoral race and in the 5th congressional district race in Georgia, where white voters decided the election and the majority of blacks voted for the losing candidate...**In short, the old guard is, in some cases, being replaced by a group of new black politicians who are better at presenting themselves as pragmatic, independent, and experienced.** One needs only to point to L. DOUGLAS WILDER, the lieutenant governor of Virginia, to see how this fiery orator, who was often viewed as a black militant and liberal in his state representative and senatorial years (when he represented heavily black districts), managed to transform his image into that of a moderate/conservative in his race for his statewide seat. **Rather than being from a new generation, the new faces are likely to be those who have adopted a new political style—perhaps to appeal to whites.**

STEPping on the Toes of the Democratic Leadership Council

TL reported last month that the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) had created a Super Tuesday Education Project (STEP) "committed to wooing conservative whites." *TL* added that, although DLC officials deny it, one theory is that if enough white conservatives return to the Democratic fold they can dilute the impact of the southern black vote. **According to WILL MARSHALL, staffer for the DLC, this simply is just *not* the intent of STEP.** Marshall says the two-fold goal of STEP is to encourage citizens in general to exercise their constitutional right to participate in the presidential nomination process and to encourage all candidates to address issues of national concern— whether these efforts benefit Jesse Jackson or any other candidate. Toward this effort, STEP will hold public forums, voter education programs, candidate debates, and other events. A DLC fact sheet on STEP points out that it has targeted the 20 states with contests on Super Tuesday (March 8, 1988) "because they represent the first broad-based test of the primary season. As such, they could constitute a kind of national referendum on issues of overriding importance to the public." The states holding primaries on March 8 are: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. Marshall says no groups are to be excluded from its plans and indeed a number of prominent black leaders will be invited to its June 22 "Super Tuesday Summit" in Atlanta. **Moreover, Marshall points out that the DLC, whose membership now numbers 175, recently has gained several new black members, including Chicago Mayor HAROLD WASHINGTON, Louisiana state Senator WILLIAM JEFFERSON, U.S. Representatives CARDISS COLLINS (Ill.), MIKE ESPY (Miss.), FLOYD FLAKE (N.Y.), JOHN LEWIS (Ga.), AND LOUIS STOKES (Ohio).**

Will Blacks Support Dole Despite His South Africa Policies

In an April 2nd column entitled "Dole's Record of Excuses," *Washington Post* columnist **DOROTHY GILLIAM decried Kansas Republican Senator ROBERT DOLE's most recent positions on the southern Africa region and his enlistment of JOHN SEARS, a registered lobbyist for the government of South Africa, as an adviser to his own presidential campaign.** Last year, Dole voted to sustain President Reagan's veto of a bill sanctioning South Africa's apartheid system and, more recently, the former Senate majority leader has sided with groups that are seeking to topple the legitimate Mozambican government, a government that even the Reagan administration is seeking to work with. **Gilliam quotes TransAfrica Executive Director RANDALL ROBINSON's conclusion that** Senator Dole is "one of the faces behind apartheid." Senator Dole, a likely presidential candidate in 1988, responds that he has "a good civil rights record" and calls criticism of him "shortsighted." Speaking in Dole's defense, **SHEILA BAIR, a former Dole staffer, points out that Dole was exceptionally influential in the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act in 1982; supported the Martin Luther King holiday; disagreed with the Justice Department in *Thornburg v. Gingles* (voting rights), *Grove City* (civil rights), the Executive Order on affirmative action; and has tirelessly advocated that the GOP reach out to black voters.** Gilliam, however, was not persuaded: "Dole's domestic civil rights record is not the issue here. South Africa is..." If Dole seeks black votes in his presidential race, which he says he will, the flap over his actions toward South Africa have likely only just begun.

Across the Nation

CALIFORNIA. Some political observers in California believe **Los Angeles Mayor TOM BRADLEY,** who broke records by being elected to a fourth term in 1985, **could be in trouble if he tries to make good on his "firm decision" to seek a fifth term in 1989.** They believe voters are ready for a change and that his vulnerability increased after his devastating loss in the governor's race last year. His expected opponent is West Side City Councilman ZEV ZAROSLOVSKY, who is viewed as the leader of the city's emerging slow-growth movement, a combination of angry homeowners and environmentalists. Many of Bradley's supporters believe that his 14-year reign at City Hall has been marked by the highly successful downtown revitalization and the expansion of Los Angeles International Airport and the Port of Los Angeles, but some critics say that Los Angeles is a world class city and its objectives have changed but that Bradley has not. **Nevertheless, Bradley should be considered a favorite at this writing.**

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. With the support of five members of the Congressional Black Caucus, **the House District of Columbia Committee approved, 6-5, a bill that would grant D.C. statehood and full representation in Congress. Congressman WALTER FAUNTROY (D-D.C.) announced he will wage a nationwide campaign, linked to the bicentennial celebration of the Constitution, to gain passage in the full House of Representatives in September.** . . .Opponents of statehood gained a vocal ally when Congressman STAN PARRIS (R-Va.) took over as the new ranking member of the House District Committee to replace the late Congressman STEWART MCKINNEY (R-Conn.). Parris had this to say to D.C. residents who complained they lack full representation in Congress: "I'd say buy a house in Alexandria [Va.] Love to have you." Parris also told the *Washington Post:* "It's not just the rights of the 600,000 people [in the District of Columbia]. How about the rights of the 220 million people who call this the nation's capital? . . . I think it's a tradeoff, if you will, of whose rights are superior." . . .On another front, **former civil rights leader JAMES FORMAN has launched a referendum drive to ensure D.C. elections will be held this November to elect "transitional" representatives to Congress.** Foreman has already declared as a Democratic candidate for one of the two transitional senators who will be chosen if the elections are held, according to Washington's *City Paper.*

ILLINOIS. In the ongoing "musical chairs" of Illinois politics, **the latest report is that the leading foes of Mayor HAROLD WASHINGTON** (including Cook County Democratic Party Chairman EDWARD VRYDOLYAK) **are all considering switching to the Republican party.** If these prominent local Democrats were to change parties, it could cause a major shake-up in Chicago and Illinois politics. Indeed, if just two Democrats switched allegiance in the Illinois Senate, Republicans would have a majority for the first time since 1974. Not everybody is thrilled about the move, including the Illinois GOP chairman, DONALD TOTTEN, who told the *Washington Post,* "You put together the chairman of the Democratic party with the Republican party and you've got something. I'm just not sure what."

In East St. Louis, **the primary election for mayor and treasurer will be repeated on July 14 after a circuit court judge invalidated the February 24 primary** because about 1,200 voters had also signed independent candidates' petitions—a violation of state law. In a strange turn of events, the East St. Louis Democratic City Central Committee is seeking a candidate for mayor who will run as a surrogate of CLYDE JORDAN, who brought the lawsuit but died of lung cancer before the court ruling. Ironically, the committee has said that they also welcome incumbent Mayor CARL OFFICER to meet with them to be considered as Jordan's surrogate.

MASSACHUSETTS. Conservative "self-help" advocate Dr. GLENN LOURY withdrew his name from consideration for the post of undersecretary of education after being arraigned on charges of assaulting and threatening to kill a 23-year-old woman who said she shared an apartment with him. Loury pleaded innocent in Boston Municipal Court and a trial date was set for July 9, 1987. The *Boston Globe* also reported that Loury had faced many questions about his delinquency in repaying student loans and quoted him as saying, "It is obviously not something I am proud of. I let it slide a long time and eventually paid it off in a lump sum."

MISSISSIPPI. State Senator HENRY KIRKSEY, one of Mississippi's most prominent leaders, **is passing up the chance for reelection this year in favor of a run for lieutenant governor. His mission: to abolish the post of lieutenant governor.** According to Senator Kirksey, the lieutenant governor's position is simply used as a "stepping-stone" for those who want to run for higher office and build their own power bases. Kirksey said that eight states already do not have lieutenant governors and there's no evidence that these states have suffered. Whether elected or not, Kirksey says he will continue to press for abolishing the office.

In Hollandale, civil rights activist and former school board member HELEN PERKINS became the first black and the first woman to take the oath of office as mayor.

NEW YORK. **Rev. CALVIN BUTTS,** executive minister of the Abyssian Baptist Church in New York City, **Rev. BEN CHAVIS,** executive director of the United Church of Christ, **and their supporters have kicked off a "grassroots" voter registration drive that is seeking to lay the groundwork for electing a black or Hispanic as mayor of the city.** Butts is considering running in the 1989 primary for mayor himself. The aim of the group is not only to register more blacks in the context of a broad voter education campaign, but also to build a black and Hispanic coalition in which both groups have equal strengths in an effort to take over the mayor's office.

PENNSYLVANIA. In the Democratic mayoral primary in Philadelphia, **black turnout exceeded white turnout for the first time in the city's history; 96 percent of blacks voted for incumbent Mayor WILSON GOODE** and 88 percent of whites voted for his challenger, EDWARD RENDELL; **and Goode won the Democratic nomination with 56 percent of the vote.** Goode will now face former Mayor FRANK RIZZO (R), who switched parties in a comeback attempt. Given the sharp racial polarization in the primary results, the general election may be close, but Goode is favored to win.

Pittsburgh's first black police chief, WILLIAM H. MOORE, saying his superiors had rendered his position powerless and were forcing him "to play the role of a token," resigned from office, according to the *Pittsburgh Inquirer.* Moore, who was appointed by Mayor RICHARD CALIGUIRI only a little more than a year ago, said the Department of Public Safety had excluded him from "all significant decisions concerning the Bureau of Police . . . and had rendered the office of chief of police totally ineffectual and void of authority." Black community leaders REGINALD PLATO and RONALD SAUNDERS have urged Mayor Caliguiri to "request the immediate resignation" of the head of the Public Safety Department, but Caliguiri has rejected their requests.

SOUTH CAROLINA. In Bishopville, for the first time ever, the city council has a black majority. Councilmembers ALEXANDER CODELL BOYD, MCPHINE BROOKS, ROBERT MELTON, and PHILIP BRADLEY compose the majority of the six-member council. Brooks is the first black woman to ever be elected to the city council.

In Chester, South Carolina, voters elected their first two black city council candidates—one of them a woman—in early May. DAISY ATKINSON, a retired schoolteacher, became the first woman and one of the first blacks elected to the council when she took 55 percent of the vote to win her Ward 3 race. JAMES GORE, a local funeral director, won the Ward 4 race with 59 percent of the vote over the incumbent. Atkinson and Gore are distant cousins. Fifty-seven percent of the city's population is black.

Black Philanthropy

(Continued from page 4)

social welfare organizations; 20 percent who contributed to educational organizations; and 9 percent who contributed to political organizations.

- 52 percent of all blacks surveyed reported having contributed food, clothing, or other property to a charitable organization in 1985.
- 50 percent of all blacks surveyed reported having volunteered to work with some type of charitable organization. A total of 40 percent of blacks reported having volunteered through their church or religious organization, while 11 percent performed volunteer work for an educational organization, and 5 percent performed volunteer work for a social welfare organization.
- 70 percent of all blacks surveyed reported having given money, food, clothing, or some other service to the homeless, a needy neighbor, a needy relative, a needy friend, or a needy individual. A total of 16 percent of blacks with incomes over $25,000 reported that they had not aided any of these individuals, compared to 26 percent of blacks with incomes between $12,000 and $25,000, and 36 percent of blacks with incomes less than $12,000.
- With regard to attitudes toward charity, when asked how much confidence they had in charitable organizations to help the poor, 18 percent of blacks responded "a lot," 47 percent said "some," 22 percent reported "very little," and 6 percent answered "none."

The findings above provide a strong challenge to the proposition that blacks are not actively involved in charitable efforts to help the poor. The data confirm that the majority of blacks continue to be vigorously engaged in nearly every aspect of philanthropic activity ranging from cash contributions to donations of goods to voluntarism. In addition, the findings indicate that blacks with greater incomes have not, as some have suggested, abdicated their responsibilities to be actively engaged in charitable activities to help the poor.

Discussions about black self-help suggest that philanthropic activity is itself a "conservative" approach for achieving black progress. It is not.

These findings should provide a basis for discussing how black philanthropic activity can be further refined as a strategy of self-help for blacks to address the myriad problems which face our community. ■

Marshall's Constitutional Critique

(Continued from page 6)

What is striking is the role legal principles have played throughout America's history in determining the condition of Negroes. They were enslaved by law, emancipated by law, disenfranchised and segregated by law; and, finally, they have begun to win equality by law. Along the way, new constitutional principles have emerged to meet the challenges of a changing society. The progress has been dramatic, and it will continue.

The men who gathered in Philadelphia in 1787 could not have envisioned these changes. They could not have imagined, nor would they have accepted, that the document they were drafting would one day be construed by a Supreme Court to which had been appointed a woman and the descendant of an African slave. "We the People" no longer enslave, but the credit does not belong to the Framers. It belongs to those who refused to acquiesce in outdated notions of "liberty," "justice," and "equality," and who strived to better them.

New constitutional principles have emerged to meet the challenges of a changing society. The progress has been dramatic, and it will continue.

And so we must be careful, when focusing on the events which took place in Philadelphia two centuries ago, that we not overlook the momentous events which followed, and thereby lose our sense of perspective. Otherwise, the odds are that for many Americans the bicentennial celebration will be little more than a blind pilgrimage to the shrine of the original document now stored in a vault in the National Archives. If we seek, instead, a sensitive understanding of the Constitution's inherent defects, and its promising evolution through 200 years of history, the celebration of the "Miracle at Philadelphia" will, in my view, be a far more meaningful and humbling experience. We will see that the true miracle was not the birth of the Constitution, but its life, a life nurtured through two turbulent centuries of our own making, and a life embodying much good fortune that was not [of our own making].

Thus, in this bicentennial year, we may not all participate in the festivities with flag-waving fervor. Some may more quietly commemorate the suffering, struggle, and sacrifice that has triumphed over much of what was wrong with the original document, and observe the anniversary with hopes not realized and promises not fulfilled. I plan to celebrate the bicentennial of the Constitution as a living document, including the Bill of Rights and the other amendments protecting individual freedoms and human rights. ■

The problems of the underclass and the search for solutions to these problems will be a central focus of the Joint Center's research agenda over the next few years. On March 5, 1987, the Center brought together a distinguished group of scholars (see list of participants on page 11) to determine whether they could agree upon a definition of the underclass for purposes of research. A summary of their discussions is included in this conference report, which was written by the Center's principal researcher on underclass issues, Katherine McFate. Follow-up reports will appear in Focus *and other JCPS publications over the course of the research project.*

Defining the Underclass

Researchers Ask Who Is Included and What Are the Policy Implications

by Katherine McFate

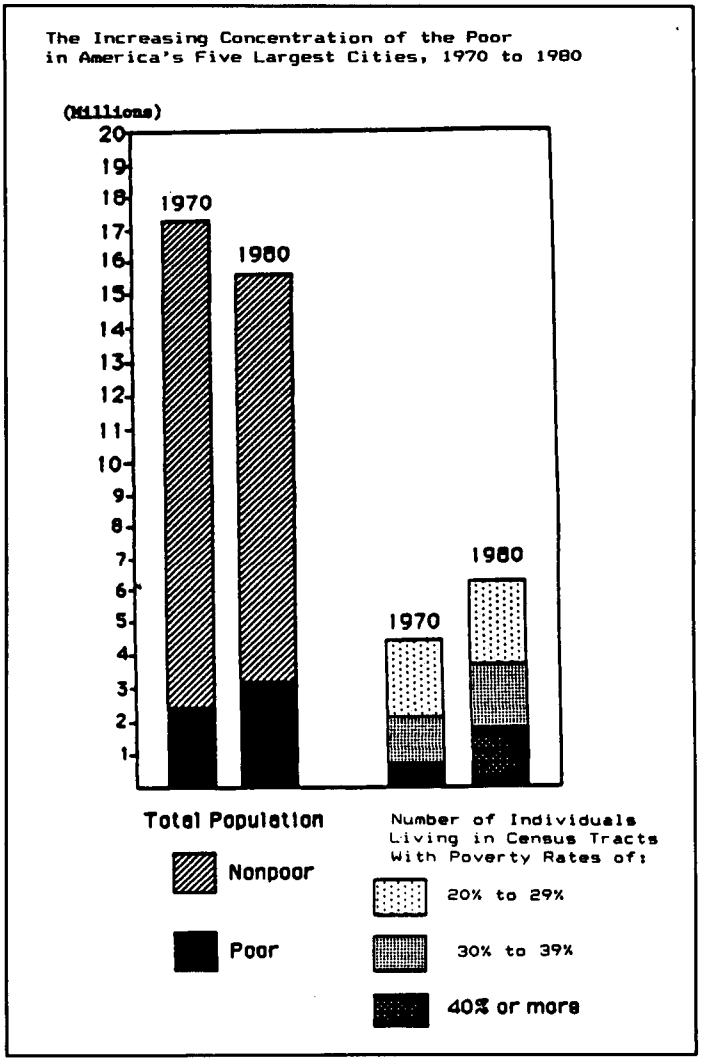
There is much confusion as to exactly what the term "underclass" means: different analysts use the word to define different populations. While this conceptual fuzziness might lead some to conclude that the term should be scrapped altogether, the idea of an American underclass has captured the attention of the media, the public, and policy makers. (See box on page 10 for a discussion of the term's origins and popular usage.) If these groups are going to use the term, it is important that researchers define it in a way that allows for the systematic collection of information on the causes and characteristics of the problem.

Until some sort of common definition is reached, researchers will not be able to agree upon such basic questions as the size and location of the underclass population or to collect a common body of knowledge to guide policy and future research. The emphasis here is understandably on "research" and "researchers," but a clear definition is also needed by the public, journalists, policy-makers, etc., if they are to talk intelligently about this problem.

Poor Now More Isolated

The conference began with a presentation by Professor William J. Wilson of the University of Chicago, who argued that the emergence of an American underclass is the result of the changing nature and character of poverty over the past 15 years. Using his own data on the underclass, Wilson showed that the poverty population of the nation's five largest cities (New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Detroit) had increased by 22 percent between 1970 and 1980, though the cities' total population had decreased by only 9 percent. Professor Wilson's data also showed that the number of individuals living in census tracts with a poverty rate of at least 40 percent increased by a staggering 161 percent (see chart on this page). Said Wilson: "These incredible changes took place in just a 10-year period." Wilson's results show that the poor who live in urban areas are more heavily concentrated in certain poor neighborhoods than was the case in previous decades and they are more isolated from other classes in society.

"Social isolation implies that contact between groups of different class or racial backgrounds is either lacking or has become increasingly intermittent. . .," Wilson



said. This lack of contact heightens the effects of living in areas with a high concentration of poor people, in which the population is overwhelmingly socially disadvantaged. Individuals in these neighborhoods do not have access to job networks or quality schools, cannot find appropriate marriage partners (individuals with a steady source of support), and are not exposed to conventional role models. Extreme social isolation and spatial concentration effectively limits the opportunities available to the urban poor and narrows their horizons.

Trapped by Behavior

Other participants, notably Dr. Isabel Sawhill of The Urban Institute, and Professor Christopher Jencks of Northwestern University, argued that concern with the underclass was not simply the result of a more entrenched, concentrated poverty. Policy makers have shifted their focus from concern with poverty *per se* to concern with certain behaviors—such as welfare dependency, teen pregnancy, school failure, nonparticipation in the labor market, and participation in the illegal economy—that society views with disfavor, Sawhill asserted. She pointed out that since an increasing number of young people and children seemed trapped in poverty by these behaviors, policy makers and the public are concerned that a permanent underclass might be developing.

The public and the media use the word underclass to mean something different from "the poor," Sawhill maintained. "[W]hat's motivating public concern is not so much compassion. . . but fear [and] concern about some kind of intergenerational transmission of behaviors and status."

The Size of the Underclass

Estimates of the size of the underclass are obviously determined by definitional parameters. If all persistently poor individuals (i.e., individuals poor for 8 of the last 10 years) who are not disabled or aged are defined as part of the underclass, then 23.5 percent of the poor, or 7.8 million persons, are underclass. Much of this poverty is to be found in small towns and rural areas. If the underclass is defined as all poor blacks and Hispanics that live in poor areas of the nation's largest cities, then less than 16 percent of the poor population, or 5.2 million individuals, would be classified as underclass.

If we confer underclass status only to individuals living in census tracts with a high incidence of joblessness, high school dropouts, welfare dependents, and female-headed families, then only 5 percent of the population, or 1.6 million Americans, would qualify as underclass. Everyone in these census tracts are urban dwellers and a majority are black and Hispanic.

Two-sided Debate

These contrasting perspectives set the stage for a two-sided debate about the nature of the underclass problem. On one side, Professor Wilson and Robert Aponte, project director of the underclass project at the University of Chicago, and Dr. Peter Gottschalk, of the Institute for Poverty Research and Boston College, argued that it is deprivation that defines the underclass. Individuals who comprise the underclass lack opportunities and live in neighborhoods with high concentrations of unemployment, crime, and deviant behavior—but the underlying problem is poverty. Said Gottschalk:

> It seems to me that people are constantly confusing the cause of the problem with the problem itself. . .[We] study this problem because we're concerned that certain people have a very poor [quality of life]. They aren't getting the fruits of society. . .
>
> If you tell me that we can't measure whether you're deprived on the basis of income, we'd also have to know about whether you're likely to get mugged when you go to get the mail—then I'll say neighborhood characteristics should be in my definition of the problem. If you further tell me that work itself has value for a person and that a person is deprived if [he or she does not] have work—then I will include [lack of employment in my definition]. What I don't want us to do is say that behavior is the problem. . .

Several participants sharply disagreed with Gottschalk's assessment, asserting that it is behavioral deviance that sets the underclass apart from the rest of society and distinguishes them from other poor people. As Jencks told Gottschalk:

> If you don't believe pathological behavior is really a problem worth worrying about, the correct position to take is to stop worrying about the underclass and go back to talking about poverty, which is a perfectly feasible position to take. But it's a tactical error to import poverty back in under the rubric of the underclass.

Dr. Sawhill and Dr. Erol Ricketts, both of The Urban Institute, presented evidence from their research that showed that if the underclass is defined by behavioral deviance, there is a difference between the underclass and the poor. Sawhill and Ricketts defined "underclass areas" as census tracts with a high proportion of *all* of the following: (1) 16-19 year olds out of school and not employed; (2) males aged 19-64 who were not working regularly; (3) female-headed households with children; and (4) households receiving public assistance. They found that 40 percent of underclass tracts are *not* in areas of extreme poverty, and that 72 percent of the census tracts with high poverty rates are *not* underclass tracts by this behavioral definition. "Ultimately," these

(Continued on page 11)

The Discovery of an Underclass

The term "underclass" is relatively new to public discourse. It was not until 1980—when journalist Ken Auletta popularized the term in a series of *New Yorker* articles—that the term became a household word. Auletta studied the "hard-core unemployed" and found that these individuals did not conform to or even appear to understand the norms and expectations related to the work world. Auletta described how the chaotic and uncertain personal lives of his subjects interfered with their ability to participate in the mainstream economy.

Auletta took the view that "underclass" individuals behave differently and adhere to values that are very different than those of most Americans. A number of articles that reinforce this message have appeared in the media more recently—by Leon Dash in the *Washington Post* in the spring of 1986; by Nicholas Lemann in *The Atlantic* in the summer of 1986; by Bill Moyers in a CBS documentary, "The Vanishing Black Family," that appeared last spring; and by Hodding Carter, in a PBS special, "Crisis on Federal Street" early this year.

Popular Misconceptions

The popular portrait of the underclass is not consistent with available research data and information. Journalists and others focus on attitudes or values to explain why the underclass is different from the rest of society. But the evidence from national surveys and over-time studies indicates that the values and attitudes of the long-term poor do not differ significantly from the rest of the population and that values and attitudes held early in life are not related to later economic well-being.

Another view reinforced by the media is that the underclass, in the words of Professor Richard Nathan of Princeton University, is "a shorthand expression for the concentration of economic and behavioral problems among racial minorities (mainly black and Hispanic) in large, older cities." This is an overstatement. Problems of dependency, joblessness, and homelessness are not exclusively minority problems.

Even conservative analyst Charles Murray is lobbying against making "black" synonymous with the underclass or the dependent poor. Murray is now studying areas with a heavy concentration of white welfare recipients to try to explain how local "cultures of dependency" develop in response to the availability of government programs like AFDC.

Likewise, long term joblessness and/or intermittent underemployment is becoming a problem for increasing numbers of white displaced workers who are victims of plant closings, lay-offs, or the economic depression of rural areas. And there are many white faces among the homeless who wander our streets. While minorities are overrepresented among the underclass, the underclass is not comprised exclusively of minorities.

Working Poor Are Excluded

There is some agreement that the underclass includes members of the following groups:

- long-term welfare recipients, especially those who receive AFDC after becoming an unmarried teenage mother;
- the long-term jobless or underemployed, especially young high school dropouts;
- the homeless; and
- participants in the illegal economy.

In describing the underclass, most analysts exclude the working poor and household heads who have legitimate reasons for nonparticipation in the labor force (such as a disability). Persistent poverty status (being poor for 8 or 10 years at a stretch), by itself, is too broad and too narrow a definition. It is too broad because it could include single, working parents with dependents, the retired elderly, and the disabled. It is too narrow because it would exclude a group that most analysts would include—individuals who are profitably engaged in illicit economic activities.

The one behavioral characteristic that individuals in the four groups listed above share is nonparticipation in the mainstream economy. This one behavior is strongly associated with others—failure to complete high school, early (out-of-wedlock) childbearing, long-term welfare dependency, and participation in the illicit economy.

(Continued from page 9)

researchers concluded, "policy makers and researchers must decide whether they are more interested in low income or in deviant social behavior. While the two are highly correlated, they are not the same thing."

Emerging Synthesis

During the session, a synthesis between the two positions began to emerge from the group. As Sawhill summed it up:

> [We're moving] towards a compromise position here, which accommodates the various theories of this literature—it's a concentration of both social ills and dysfunctional behaviors and low income in certain neighborhoods or communities.

Consensus formed around a definition of the underclass as "poor people who live in a neighborhood or census tract with high rates of unemployment, crime, and welfare dependency." Such a definition highlights the concentration effects of both hardship and dysfunctional behaviors.

Conference participants noted that if the underclass is defined by social isolation, spatial concentration, and dysfunctional behavior, the underclass population turns out to be predominately minority and primarily urban, a description reflected by images of the underclass in the popular media. Sawhill pointed out that her research, using a behavioral definition, showed that there were *no* "underclass" census tracts outside of urban areas.

The definition that the conference participants ultimately reached seemed to fit well with the group that Joan Maxwell, of the Greater Washington Research Center, suggested Congress is most concerned with:

> They are long-term poor; they have a weak attachment to the labor force; they live in an urban area; they are in a population that is under [age] 40 or perhaps under 30; there are many of them; and their unemployment rates are disproportionate to whatever [rate] prevails in the area.

Research Questions

Over the course of the day-long discussion, participants identified several research questions with important implications for public policy.

- *What factors contribute to high rates of joblessness in underclass areas?*

Joblessness among the urban poor is the core of the underclass problem. However, participants agreed that much more research is needed to understand the *causes* of joblessness, particularly among minority males in central city poverty areas. Wilson and others have argued that the loss of manufacturing jobs from central city areas has disproportionately affected the central city poor, particularly minorities. But Professor Harry Holzer, of Michigan State University, pointed out that the effects of "de-industrialization" are still largely unknown. Unresolved issues include: (1) the effect that large-scale structural changes in the economy have had on the number and quality of jobs available in central city and metropolitan areas; (2) whether the "suburbanization" of job opportunities has contributed to rising rates of joblessness among inner city minorities; (3) the relative importance of basic skills, job search methods, and employer discrimination in explaining disproportionately high rates of unemployment among

(Continued on page 12)

List of Conference Participants

- William J. Wilson, Professor of Sociology, University of Chicago
- Sheldon Danziger, Director, Institute for Poverty Research
- Christopher Jencks, Professor of Sociology, Northwestern University
- Isabel Sawhill, Senior Research Associate, The Urban Institute
- Sara McLanahan, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Wisconsin
- Robert Reischauer, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution
- Mark Hughes, Assistant Professor, Public and International Affairs, Woodrow Wilson School
- Peter Gottschalk, Professor of Economics, Boston College
- Harry Holzer, Assistant Professor of Economics, Michigan State University
- Mary Corcoran, Associate Professor of Political Science and Public Policy, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
- Jennifer Hochschild, Professor of Political Science, Princeton University
- Robert Aponte, Project Coordinator, The Underclass Project, University of Chicago
- Erol Ricketts, Visiting Fellow, The Urban Institute
- Michael Fix, Research Associate, The Urban Institute/Rockefeller Foundation
- James Gibson, Director of Equal Opportunity Division, Rockefeller Foundation
- Joan Maxwell, Senior Associate, The Greater Washington Research Center
- Angela Blackwell, Attorney, Public Advocates, Inc.
- Milton Morris, Director of Research, JCPS
- Katherine McFate, Research Associate, JCPS
- Margaret Simms, Deputy Director of Research, JCPS
- Emmett Carson, Research Associate, JCPS

Conference Report

(Continued from page 11)

minority youths; and (4) the extent to which illegal alternatives lure employable people away from legitimate work. Until we have a clearer understanding of the factors implicated in the disproportionately high rates of unemployment among inner city minorities, policy makers cannot know what policies will be most effective—job creation, wage subsidies, education and training programs, or job placement.

- *What are the effects of living in areas with a heavy concentration of poverty, joblessness, and welfare dependency?*

Researchers agreed that the confluence of high rates of poverty, joblessness, welfare dependency, and crime in certain neighborhoods may make treatment of each of these social problems more difficult. However, until careful research documenting the extent and impact of "multiplier" or "concentration effects" is carried out, the research community can offer policy makers little guidance about whether to develop dispersal strategies or to utilize existing demographic patterns to more efficiently deliver services.

If the concentration of poverty and its associated social ills make remediation more difficult, is dispersal the answer? Some researchers suggested that legislators should focus on housing policies—particularly those related to low-income housing. Scattered-site public housing or housing vouchers could reduce the density of poor families in inner city areas. Another dispersal strategy would involve integrating schools and neighborhoods on the basis of economic level rather than race.

On the other hand, concentration might have a positive side, making it easier to target the provision of remedial education, child care, or training programs to certain neighborhoods. The guaranteed college scholarship program established for one graduating class in a Harlem public school by private philanthropist Eugene Lang was cited as an example of the positive effects of remediation in high density areas. Besides directly benefiting eligible youngsters, this program has had positive ripple effects, encouraging the siblings and friends of participating youngsters to go to college, too.

- *Will the welfare reforms currently underway help solve the underclass problem?*

A number of participants were concerned that the welfare-to-work reforms currently being considered are punitive by intent and based on assumptions about the effects of welfare that had been refuted by research. But Sara McLanahan, of the Institute for Poverty Research and the University of Wisconsin, and Sawhill argued that some of the programs now being enacted provide remedial education, job training, childcare, and extended health benefits that could actually help poor, single heads of families lift themselves out of poverty.

It was agreed that the real innovations in welfare-to-work programs that are currently underway were the result of initiatives that occurred at the state or local level and this was likely to continue to be the case. This creates the potential for great inequity in the kinds of services (remedial education, job training, placement, child care) available to AFDC recipients in different areas of the country. Participants pointed to the need for careful evaluations of the demonstration projects currently underway before a particular program is hailed as "the" most effective model to be used. Serious welfare reform is expensive and program directors must be careful not to oversell their results and unrealistically raise expectations about the positive effects that can occur.

James Gibson, of the Rockefeller Foundation, which provided support for the conference, ended the afternoon with an appeal for the scholars present to commit themselves to conducting research on these important issues and to actively work to insure that their findings reach public officials and policy debates relating to the underclass. ■

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