

**The Disintegration of the Black Lower Class Family:
Charles Murray and William Julius Wilson on the
Growth of a Ghetto Underclass**

Losing Ground. By Charles Murray. (New York: Basic Books, Inc. 1984). Referred to in the text as LG.

"The Two Wars against Poverty: Economic Growth and the Great Society." By Charles Murray. In *The Public Interest* 69 (Fall 1982). Referred to in the text as TWAP.

"Have the Poor Been 'Losing Ground'?" By Charles Murray. In *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 100, no. 3 (Fall 1985). Referred to in the text as HPBLG.

"No, Welfare Isn't Really the Problem." By Charles Murray. In *The Public Interest*, 84 (Summer 1986).

The Truly Disadvantaged. By William Julius Wilson. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). Referred to in the text as TD.

The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions. By William Julius Wilson. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). Referred to in the text as DSR.

"Poverty and Family Structure." By William Julius Wilson and Kathryn M. Neckerman. In *Fighting Poverty*, eds. Sheldon H. Danziger and Daniel H. Weinberg. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

The period from 1961 to 1965, that is, the period spanning the entire Kennedy administration and the first two years of Lyndon Johnson's presidency, was in many ways a period of great hope in America in regard to the resolution of what at that time was known as "the Negro problem." A generation of liberal reformers who had grown up on Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* and who had witnessed firsthand the murderously destructive effect which racial hatred and theories of racial superiority had recently visited upon European civilization, was determined to eradicate the

system of racial subordination and segregation that had successfully kept the African American "in his place" since the end of the nineteenth century. The can-do optimism of the New Frontier and early Great Society periods found expression in the widespread belief that the vast bulk of the black population of America would be able to rise socio-economically and integrate into middle-class life once all artificial barriers to advancement had been removed. Black progress, it was hoped, would be sped along not only by the elimination of discrimination but by an aggressive anti-poverty program that would provide free education, job training, health care, business loans, and decent housing to all poor Americans. With the aid of the federal government, strong leadership at the presidential level, and the general good will of the American people, the black population of America, it was said at this time, would be able to advance into mainstream society much the way the Irish, Germans, Italians, Jews, Poles, Hungarians, Chinese, Japanese, and other immigrant groups had done previously. This optimism was buoyed by the unprecedented legislative successes of the period, which in the form of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, together with President Kennedy's Executive Order 10,925 and President Johnson's Executive Order 11,246 (both of which banned discrimination on the part of firms doing business with the federal government) constituted the most comprehensive legal attack on racial discrimination and segregation since the era of Reconstruction. The optimism of the period is well reflected in the title of an article by Irving Kristol that appeared in the September 11, 1966 issue of the *New York Times Magazine*: "The Negro Today Is Like the Immigrant Yesterday."

Not everyone at this time, of course, was optimistic. The journalist Charles Silberman, for instance, had written a series of influential articles for *Fortune* magazine in the early 1960s, which were later expanded into the best-selling book *Crisis in Black and White*,¹ which questioned the ability of Southern black migrants to the Northern cities to assimilate unaided into middle-class white society. Black leaders in general were also not as sanguine as many of the early Great Society enthusiasts. The National Urban League Director Whitney M. Young, Jr., for instance, spoke for many black leaders when he stated in his impassioned manifesto *To Be Equal* (1964)² that nothing short of an all-out domestic Marshall Plan for America's black poor would enable the Negro to attain full equality and full participation in the rewards of American citizenship. The optimists, however, were clearly dominant among the white liberal elite of the country throughout 1964 and 1965, especially after the landslide victory of Lyndon Johnson and his liberal running mate Hubert Humphrey in November of 1964 over the conservative and laissez-faire oriented Barry Goldwater seemed to establish a strong national consensus

1. (New York: Random House, 1964).

2. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

behind liberal civil rights policies. White liberals at this time generally believed that a great turning point in American history had occurred as a result of the successes of the non-violent black protest movement—a movement that had progressively gained in strength since the days of the Montgomery bus boycott of the mid 1950s—and it is probably safe to say that most white Americans at this time, regardless of their political or ideological persuasion, thought the future for blacks in America looked very promising.

It was during this period that Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a little-known assistant secretary in the Department of Labor, began to have grave misgivings about certain disturbing trends that were taking place at the time in the inner city black ghettos of the larger metropolitan areas. Within weeks after Johnson's landslide victory, Moynihan had come to the conclusion that the great battles against segregation and discrimination were now largely won, and that a new emphasis would be required on the part of public policy to help reverse the trend toward black family dissolution which he saw occurring in central Harlem and other black urban ghettos throughout America. The result of Moynihan's studies and reflections in late 1964 and early 1965 was a 78-page internal DOL memorandum, first completed in March of 1965, which bore the title, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action.*³ It is no exaggeration to say that this modest report, which combined insights culled from the disciplines of economics, history, sociology, and psychology, and represented a distillation of more than forty years of scholarly research on America's greatest domestic "dilemma," proved to be one of the most prescient pieces of social science analysis ever written. In it Moynihan sought to strike a tone of urgency in order to convince policy planners in the executive branch in Washington that the situation in the inner city ghettos had been deteriorating rapidly since the Second World War, and that it had now reached a crisis stage and would continue to decline unless the federal government committed itself to a national policy that sought to stabilize the disintegrating black family structure.

"The United States is approaching a new crisis in race relations," the report began. Though the old style of segregation and discrimination was doomed, great new challenges now posed themselves, the report continued, if Negroes were to compete successfully with other ethnic groups for the desired benefits of American society. "Three centuries of sometimes unimaginable mistreatment have taken their toll on the Negro people," Moynihan explained, and the result was that without special efforts on the part of government many Negroes would not be able to compete on equal terms with the members of other racial and ethnic groups in America.

3. The Moynihan Report itself, together with an extensive monograph describing the controversy it provoked, is reprinted in Lee Rainwater and William Yancey, *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1967).

The harsh fact is that as a group, at the present time, in terms of ability to win out in the competitions of American life, [Negroes] are not equal to most of those groups with which they will be competing. Individually, Negro Americans reach the highest peaks of achievement. But collectively, in the spectrum of American ethnic and religious groups, where some get plenty and some get none, where some send eighty percent of their children to college and others pull them out of school at the 8th grade, Negroes are among the weakest. (Introduction)

Moynihan then went on to explain how the situation was actually getting worse in the urban ghettos and that in terms of social mobility the Negro population was polarizing into a middle-class group that was becoming increasingly successful and a disorganized lower class that was becoming ever more dysfunctional and pathological:

The most difficult fact for white Americans to understand is that ... the circumstances of the Negro American community in recent years has probably been getting worse, not better.... The gap between the Negro and most other groups in American society is widening. The fundamental problem, in which this is most clearly the case, is that of family structure. The evidence-not final, but powerfully persuasive-is that the Negro family in the urban ghettos is crumbling. A middle-class group has managed to save itself, but for vast numbers of the unskilled, poorly educated city working class the fabric of conventional social relations has all but disintegrated. There are indications that the situation may have been arrested in the past few years, but the general post-war trend is unmistakable. (Introduction)

The report went on to establish its case through an array of charts and statistics which highlighted the high incidence of black divorce and spouse abandonment; the high rates of black illegitimacy, welfare dependency, unemployment, delinquency, crime, and narcotics addiction; as well as the low scores of black students on standardized tests and other measures of academic performance. The report also offered an elaborate historical explanation for how this "tangle of pathologies" had come about, with the emphasis being on the various ways that slavery and the brutal Southern system of caste subordination had undermined the traditional male role of breadwinner and dominant force in the family. The lower class black family, Moynihan said, had a matriarchal structure that was not only out of line with the patriarchal structure dominant in the rest of the society, but was dysfunctional in terms of providing the young with the means for acquiring discipline, respect for authority, and the other sorts of products of socialization that were needed for success in a competitive environment. In one of the more memorable passages of the report Moynihan wrote:

... segregation, and the submissiveness it exacts, is surely more destructive to the male than to the female personality. Keeping the Negro 'in his place' can be translated as keeping the Negro male in his place: the female was not a threat to anyone. Unquestionably, these events worked against the emergence of a strong father figure. The very essence of the male animal, from the bantam rooster to the four-star general, is to strut. (16)

In addition to the legacy of slavery and segregation, Moynihan also saw the black male's dominant role in the family being undermined by the often bewildering transition from the rural Southern farm to the large Northern city, and by the lack of well-paying jobs *for* black men, especially during downturns in the business cycle. On this latter *topic* he offered a trenchant quotation from Whitney Young's *To Be Equal*:

The effect on family functioning and role performance of this historical experience [of economic deprivation] is what you might predict. Both as a husband and as a father the Negro male is made to feel inadequate, not because he is unlovable or unaffectionate, lacks intelligence or even a gray flannel suit. But in a society that measures a man by the size of his pay check, he doesn't stand very tall in a comparison with his white counterpart. To this situation he may react with withdrawal, bitterness toward society, aggression both within the family and racial group, self-hatred, or crime. (34)

Another quotation from the sociologist Robin M. Williams, Jr., reporting on a study conducted among the black population of Elmira, New York, described the alarming incidence of fragmentation in black families compared to the families of other ethnic groups:

Only 57 percent of Negro adults reported themselves as married [with] spouse present, as compared with 78 percent of native white American gentiles, 91 percent of Italian-Americans, and 96 percent of Jewish informants. Of the 93 unmarried Negro youths interviewed, 22 percent did not have their mother living in the home with them, and 42 percent reported that their father was not living in their home. One-third of the youths did not know their father's present occupation, and two thirds of a sample of 150 Negro adults did not know what the occupation of their father's father had been. Forty percent of the youths said that they had brothers and sisters living in other communities.... (34)

Moynihan did not in his report offer specific policy proposals, in part it would seem because he did not want to distract from the report's main purpose, which was to draw official attention to the seriousness of the problems in the inner city ghettos and to focus on the stability of the black

family as the central means of addressing those problems. Moynihan left no doubt, however, that to deal with the deteriorating situation, a national effort would be required beyond anything previously contemplated by public officials. Toward the end of the report he wrote:

Three centuries of injustice have brought about deep-seated structural distortions in the life of the Negro American. At this point, the present tangle of pathology is capable of perpetuating itself without assistance from the white world. The cycle can be broken only if these distortions are set right. In a word, a national effort towards the problems of Negro Americans must be directed towards the question of family structure. (47)

Response to the Moynihan Report

The Moynihan Report was intended as a confidential internal Labor Department memorandum but in the late summer of 1965 a decision was made at the White House to release it to the general public. While some prominent liberals greeted the report with considerable enthusiasm, the more general response among left-leaning intellectuals, both black and white alike, was one of impassioned outrage and vituperation that even with the advantage of hindsight, is difficult to comprehend. Moynihan was frequently attacked, usually in bitter or sarcastic terms, for placing the blame for the dissolution of the inner city black family on the black population itself rather than on the racist practices of the larger white society, and it was not infrequently suggested or hinted that Moynihan himself was a racist. Despite the fact that the charges were completely ludicrous, with no foundation whatever in reality-the Moynihan Report had placed the blame for the disintegration of the lower-class urban black family on a combination of economic, sociological, and historical forces, with white oppression being seen as dominant among the latter-the view that the report perversely "blamed the victim" came to dominate liberal intellectual discussion of the matter especially after a particularly virulent review appeared in *The Nation* magazine (November 22, 1965) by the psychologist William Ryan. (It was Ryan who popularized the phrase "blaming the victim" in a subsequent book by that title).

Why the contents of the report were so distorted is difficult to say. In part the distortions seem to have been a result of the intrinsically sensitive nature of the material itself, since the candid discussions of illegitimacy, male joblessness, and poor academic performance among blacks dealt with issues about which powerful anti-black stereotypes existed that some might see only confirmed by the report's findings. A more important factor, however, seems to have been the coincidence that the report was released during the violent ghetto riot in the Watts section of Los Angeles. This riot produced a major change on the part of important black intellectuals and civil rights leaders,

many of whom came to feel that in their preoccupation with dismantling the Jim Crow system and guaranteeing voting rights in the Deep South they had ignored the deteriorating plight of the black poor in the inner city Northern and Western ghettos. Moynihan's characterization of much of ghetto behavior as "pathological"-a term he had borrowed from Dr. Kenneth Clark, whose book *Dark Ghetto,*' published in the same year as the Moynihan Report; would come to conclusions about the situation among inner city blacks that harmonized well with Moynihan's own analysis-produced a new defensiveness among many black leaders in regard to the inner city black poor that would henceforth preclude any candid assessment of the disordered lives that many ghetto residents led. A new black pride movement was also beginning to gain momentum at this time, and Moynihan's report, in its honest though unflattering depiction of the illegitimacy, delinquency, and black-on-black crime in the inner city ghetto, could only appear to many to undermine the basis of this pride and to provide ammunition for anti-black racists who did not wish black people well. Years later Moynihan would explain the hostile reception his report received in the following manner:

. . . hours after the [1965] Voting Rights Act was signed, the riot broke out in Watts.... In the midst of the crisis, the White House made public my report. Suddenly the subject of family structure came to be associated with this painful new circumstance, which is to say, riotous and self-destructive behavior on the part of a group previously (and accurately) depicted as singularly victimized. With the onset of rioting, black spokesmen were in a defensive position in America, no matter how much whites were blamed for having made it possible or inevitable. These spokesmen made it impossible to face up to what *was* really happening in the ghettos.... Black leaders took every such effort at discussion as a white, racist attempt at self-exculpation, an evasion of responsibility for the black condition..

It is now about a decade since my policy paper and its analysis. As forecasting goes, it would seem to have held up. There has been a pronounced "up-and-down" experience among urban blacks. That is to say, the measures of social well-being then employed have moved in the two contrary directions I forecast [i.e. some ascend into the middle class while others descend into the underclass]. This has been accompanied by a psychological reaction which I did not foresee, and for which I may in part be to blame. Allow equivocation here. I did not know I would prove to be so correct. Had I known, I might have said nothing, realizing that the subject would become unbearable, and rational discussion close to impossible. ...

One of the results of the controversy surrounding the Moynihan Report was that serious research into the problems of family disorganization in the

4. (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

5. "The Schism in Black America," *The Public Interest* (Spring 1972), 7, 15.

inner city ghetto was effectively terminated. While a few studies that had been underway at the time the controversy broke were eventually completed and published (the most important of these were Elliot Liebow's *Tally's Corner*,⁶ David Schultz's *Coming Up Black*,⁷ Ulf Hannerz's *Soulside*,⁸ and Lee Rainwater's *Behind Ghetto Walls*),⁹ for the most part white social scientists avoided research into the problems of black families out of fear of provoking the sorts of reactions that the Moynihan Report had encountered. From the late Sixties onward the only type of research into lower-class black families that was generally acceptable in mainline liberal intellectual circles was research which focused on the strengths and positive qualities of these families. While some of the works which were produced under these circumstances managed to highlight important adaptive features of the female-headed black household, at the same time they tended just as often to romanticize ghetto family life and to downplay the degree of suffering, disorganization, and violence which afflicted so many ghetto families: The most influential works of this latter type were Carol Stack's *All Our Kin*,¹⁰ Andrew Billingsly's *Black Families in White America*,¹¹ and Joyce Ladner's *Tomorrow's Tomorrow*.¹² In these works the authors rejected the characterization of the mother-only black family of the inner city as broken or disorganized, and claimed instead that the matriarchal black family form was a creative adaptation to poverty and discrimination, that in many ways was a superior kind of organization to the two-parent white middle-class family. Lower-class black families, it was said, had a highly-developed communal kinship network that engendered a spirit of mutual cooperation and mutual aid in stark contrast to the destructive individualism and competitiveness that white bourgeois families were said to produce. To judge the ghetto family by white standards was seen as a form of cultural myopia if not cultural imperialism. The black family, Andrew Billingsly contended in the aforementioned work, was "an absorbing, adaptive, and amazingly resilient mechanism for the socialization of its children and the civilization of its society" (33).

From Crisis to Catastrophe

The intellectual fallout from the Moynihan Report controversy was to persist for a period of more than fifteen years. During this time scholars as well

6. (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1967).
7. (Engelwood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1969).
8. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).
9. (Chicago: Aiding, 1970).
10. (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).
11. (Engelwood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1968).
12. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971).

as journalists scrupulously avoided drawing attention to aspects of inner city ghetto life that might prove stigmatizing or stereotyping to the black population that lived there. By the early 1980s, however, the intellectual climate began to change very rapidly and by the latter part of the decade the black urban underclass had become a major focus of public concern, both in scholarly and intellectual circles as well as in the popular press. Part of the reason for this shift in focus seems to have been the emergence of a new conservative mood in the electorate following the two victories of Ronald Reagan and the rise of a self-confident conservative intelligentsia that was much less concerned about the sensitivities of liberal black leaders than their white liberal counterparts. Another reason for the shift seems to have been the popularization of the works of a number of black feminist writers, who often painted a picture of the violence that existed in many lower-class black households, and the irresponsibility of many lower-class black males, that was more candid and more shocking than anything white liberal scholars would ever have done. Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*,¹³ which was made into a hit movie, and Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place*,¹⁴ that provided the basis for a nationally broadcast TV drama, were among the more influential of these feminist works.

Clearly, however, the most important reason for the lifting of the taboo on candid assessments of ghetto life was the deteriorating conditions that were to be found in the ghetto itself. When Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote his report, the conditions of black families living in inner city ghettos had reached crisis proportions, with the dimensions of the problem perhaps best indicated by the 43% out-of-wedlock birth rate that Moynihan reported for central Harlem. By 1980 the stable two-parent black family in the inner city ghettos had all but disappeared: A 1979 survey of births in Harlem Hospital found that almost 80% were out of wedlock, and a similar pattern was to be found in the inner cities of most other large metropolitan areas. The statistics that gradually accumulated during the Seventies and Eighties tell a tale of family disorganization, of personal suffering, and of a climate of violence in poor black neighborhoods that is difficult for outsiders even to imagine. To give just a sampling of those statistics: By the mid-Eighties a majority of black children were living in single-parent families, and of these almost 60% were living below the official government poverty level. Moreover, whereas most whites who are poor only remain poor for a relatively short period of time, the average poor black child according to an important 1983 study was found to be in the midst of a poverty spell that would last two whole decades. Black women who give birth to children out of wedlock are rarely able to marry, and those who do manage to find mates will face high incidence of divorce and separation.

13. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982).

14. (New York: Viking Press, 1982).

According to one widely-quoted estimate by Larry Bumpass, if the 1980s rates of divorce, separation, and out-of-wedlock births continue, 86% of black children will spend at least part of their childhood in a single-parent family. Among black children living in the inner city ghetto the figure is very close to 100%. What this means of course is that black children in the inner city will not only grow up without a working father present in the home, but will live in a neighborhood where most other children grow up under similar circumstances and the influence of the stable two-parent family is all but unknown.

Crime statistics reveal an equally depressing picture. According to a study by the National Bureau of Economic Research, one quarter of all the income reported by inner city black youth is from crime. A quarter of black males between the ages of 20 and 29 are currently in jail or on probation or parole. One recent study, widely reported in the news media, suggested that there are currently more college-age black males in jail or otherwise under supervision of the criminal justice system than there are in college. Virtually all ghetto families have been victimized by one or another type of serious crime, and violent crime in particular produces a mood of fear and suspicion that pervades all of black ghetto life. Blacks are currently six to seven times as likely as whites to be murder victims, with homicide now being the leading cause of death among young black males. According to one estimate by an MIT researcher and his associates, the chances of an inner city black male being murdered if he were to spend his entire life in the ghetto are many times higher than the chances of an American soldier being killed during World War II. The situation is probably worst in government-subsidized inner city housing projects. To give one egregious example: in Chicago's Cabrini-Green, a huge 13,000-resident federally-subsidized housing complex, ten people were killed and thirty-five wounded by gunfire in just one particularly violent nine-week period beginning in January of 1981. Over the same period, more than fifty illegal firearms were confiscated, as project residents were subject to an onslaught of violence led by four major teenage gangs. The streets and housing projects of many inner city neighborhoods have become virtual war zones reminiscent more of Lebanon than of a nation supposedly at peace, with rival teenage gangs fighting over turf, and black drug dealers shooting not only one another, but many innocent bystanders as well. Along with the drug dealers and gang members, ghetto residents must also contend with neighborhoods that are often overrun by pimps, prostitutes, winos, muggers, and a wide assortment of deranged and pathetic street people who have made safe and wholesome community life in the ghetto all but impossible. By the late Seventies and early Eighties, even the most casual observer of the inner city slum got the feeling that in some fundamental sense civilization had broken down.

Enter Charles Murray

How did the catastrophe of the inner city black ghetto come about? By the mid-Eighties this question became ever more pressing, and the most controversial and widely-discussed answer came in the form of a sensitive and cogently-argued book by Charles Murray, *Losing Ground: American Social Policy 1950-1980*. Unfortunately, Murray's book immediately got caught up in the ideological controversies of the middle Reagan years, and as is often the case in such circumstances, both supporters and opponents of Murray often failed to appreciate the subtlety and complexity of the arguments that Murray's book offered. Murray, a former member of the Peace Corps who had spent his undergraduate years at Harvard College and received his Ph.D. from MIT, wrote *Losing Ground* as a disillusioned New Frontiersman whose work in the late Seventies as a professional evaluator of federal anti-poverty programs had helped to convince him that many of the dramatic policy changes of the mid- and late Sixties in regard to America's poorest citizens had seriously backfired and greatly exacerbated the conditions they were intended to alleviate. The idea of unintended consequences is certainly nothing new to social scientists, but what makes Murray's book so valuable is its ability to combine a quantitative approach to analyzing the problems of the black poor with a psychological sophistication and keen understanding of the motivations and thought processes of lower-class people that is rarely to be found among quantitatively-oriented social scientists, especially those from middle- and upper-middle-class backgrounds. What makes *Losing Ground* unique is its ability to combine extensive data analysis with insights into the world of poor people that one generally encounters only in the works of social anthropologists.

Like all observers of the black ghetto, Murray asks how it could have come about in the late Sixties that so many young blacks seemed to give up on getting ahead in the world at the very moment when other blacks were demonstrating that it was now possible to do so. "If in the early 1960s," Murray wrote in an early article which anticipated much of the more detailed analysis of *Losing Ground*, "one had foreseen the coming decade of sweeping civil rights legislation, an upsurge in black identity and pride, and a booming economy in which blacks had more opportunities than ever before, one would not have predicted massive family breakup as a result. The revolutionary change in black family composition went *against* the grain of many contemporaneous forces" (TWAP, 15). Black males, Murray points out in *Losing Ground*, had participated in the labor force at rates roughly equal to, or even higher than, those of their white counterparts from the turn of the century until the early Sixties. But by the early Seventies, a gap began to open up between the labor force participation rates of the two populations as many young black males

seemed to be giving upon the idea of steady work. At the same time that young black males were dropping out of the labor force, young black females in ever increasing numbers were having babies out of wedlock, with the fathers of their children showing ever less inclination either to marry the mother or to provide long-term support.

Murray rejects the view that would try to explain the increase in black male unemployment and black out-of-wedlock births as a result of the decreased demand for unskilled labor in an increasingly high-tech-oriented economy. Unskilled older black males in the late Sixties did not encounter the same sorts of problems of finding and keeping a low-skilled job as young black males, Murray points out, and the rise in irregular employment among the latter group, together with the rise in both out-of-wedlock births and welfare dependency among young black females, was too precipitous, occurring over too short a period of time, Murray argues, to be explained by long-term structural economic forces. The real sources of the decline in poor inner city black families, Murray believes, are to be sought in counterproductive public policies that were instituted during the "generous revolution" of the Great Society period. Although most of the reviewers of *Losing Ground* paid heed only to what Murray had to say about changes in welfare policy, *Losing Ground* criticizes not only Great Society welfare policies, but policies instituted during the Great Society period in the three additional areas of education, crime control, and what Murray calls the allocation of status rewards. The policy changes in each of these four areas, Murray argues, while instituted for the noblest of reasons, had the effect of radically altering the status and incentive structures of the world in which poor black people lived and did so in such a way that made it rational for the poor of any race to act in the short term in a manner that was detrimental to their long-term interests. Murray writes in this regard:

It is not necessary to invoke the *Zeitgeist* of the 1960s, or changes in the work ethic, or racial differences, or the complexities of post-industrial economies, in order to explain increasing unemployment among the young, increased dropout from the labor force, or higher rates of illegitimacy and welfare dependency. All were results that could have been predicted (indeed, in some instances were predicted) from the changes that social policy made in the rewards and penalties, carrots and sticks, that govern human behavior. All were rational responses to changes in the rules of the game of surviving and getting ahead. (LG, 154455)

The most compelling explanation for the marked shift in the fortunes of the poor is that they continued to respond, as they always had, to the world as they found it, but that we-meaning the not-poor and undisadvantaged-had changed the rules of their world. Not of our world, just of theirs. The first effect of the new rules was to make it profitable for the poor to behave

in the short term in ways that were destructive in the long term.... We tried to provide more for the poor and produced more poor instead. We tried to remove the barriers to escape from poverty, and inadvertently built a trap. (L.G., 9)

In the area of welfare policy, Murray singles out no less than eight important changes that occurred between 1965 and 1970, all of which, he contends, tended to undermine the lower-class male provider role and make it rational for poor women to have children out of wedlock and rely on the welfare system for their support. These changes included the following: a) more generous public assistance payments to single mothers with dependent children under the Federal Aid to Families with Dependent Children program (AFDC); b) a vast expansion in the federal Food Stamp program; c) the introduction of the Medicaid program that provided free medical benefits for the poor; d) increases in public-housing assistance; e) changes in HEW guidelines that eliminated intrusive at-home welfare eligibility checks; f) the 1968 Supreme Court decision in *King v. Smith*, which struck down the man-in-the-house restriction that tried to limit AFDC payments to single women not living with a male companion; g) the 1969 Supreme Court ruling overturning local residency requirements for welfare eligibility; and h) the Congressional thirty-and-a-third rule, which allowed welfare recipients to supplement their welfare-benefit package with their own part-time earnings (the first \$30 could be kept in its entirety, after which \$1 could be kept out of every \$3 earned). These changes, Murray contends, together with a much more tolerant and supportive attitude on the part of the white cultural elite towards welfare reciprocity itself even among the young and able-bodied, radically transformed the benefit and incentive structures in which the lower-class poor operated. These changes, Murray argues, had the effect of making the welfare system a more attractive option for many poor women than reliance on the low wages of a young unskilled male worker who had little immediate chance of securing a job that paid a middle-class wage.

It was these multifarious changes in the welfare system, according to Murray, that were largely responsible for the fact that the AFDC caseload, which had increased a mere 7% during the entire decade of the 1950s, and 24% during the period 1960-1965, increased an astounding 125% during the period 1965-1970 (the rise leveled off after this time, with the caseload increasing 29% between 1970 and 1975, and only 3% between 1975 and 1980). These changes also contributed, according to Murray; to the tremendous increase in the late Sixties in black out-of-wedlock births and to the decline over the same period in two-parent black households. To illustrate the disincentives to marriage and stable two-parent family life that such changes produced, Murray offers the reader a much commented upon thought experiment involving a hypothetical unmarried couple, Harold and Phyllis,

who have just graduated from high school and are expecting a child. The couple, who have no intention of going on to college, must decide in the experiment whether they are to marry and live off the earnings of Harold's minimum-wage job, or not get married and try to live, either in whole or in part, off of the benefits of the welfare system. Murray tries to show, using the level of welfare benefits that were available in Pennsylvania (an industrial state that Murray says is typical of the states in which the majority of welfare recipients live), that in 1960 it would not have been a rational choice, at least not from a purely economic standpoint, for Phyllis to have remained unmarried and to have tried to live off public assistance if she had had the option of marrying Harold and living off his minimum-wage job. If she had gone on welfare in 1960, moreover, not only would she have done worse in purely economic terms than she would have done if she had married Harold, but she would not have been able to have Harold around as a live-in companion without jeopardizing what meager welfare benefits she might receive. By 1970, however, changes in welfare policy, Murray tries to demonstrate, had produced a very different set of options. With the expansion in the Food Stamp program, more generous AFDC payments, the addition of Medicaid and various housing subsidies, as well as the possibility of supplementing government payments with part-time work, someone in Phyllis's position in 1970, Murray contends, would have been better off in several ways by not marrying Harold and allowing herself and her child to be supported by the welfare system. Since Murray assumes in the thought experiment that Harold and Phyllis desire to remain together, at least for the immediate future, the best option for both to have taken in 1970, Murray says, was for the couple to live together unmarried, supporting themselves with Phyllis's welfare check as well as with any additional income which Harold may have been able to bring in from his outside work. The welfare system provided a more generous (and more secure) package of benefits in 1970 than a woman could get from a minimum-wage-earning husband, Murray contends, and after the invalidation of the man-in-the-house rule in 1968, a live-in lover who worked, unlike a live-in husband who worked, was no threat to a mother's receipt of AFDC benefits. Under such circumstances, says Murray, it would be a better option for Phyllis to live with Harold unmarried since she would get companionship and certain other benefits of marriage without its financial disabilities and risks. Moving in with Phyllis without marrying her would also be the best option from Harold's perspective, according to Murray, since he would be able to supplement her welfare check with his own earnings but would not be under any obligation to stay with her or the child should he get tired of either.

An important theme in Murray's treatment of welfare policy is the difficulty-if not the impossibility-of designing a system that provides an incentive for people to get off of welfare without at the same time giving other people who are not on welfare a greater incentive to come aboard the system.

To illustrate his point Murray offers another thought experiment of a hypothetical government program designed to reduce cigarette smoking by offering bonuses to people who quit. No matter how such a program is designed, Murray tries to show, it is likely to have either no net beneficial results or very possibly negative results, since there will always be some people who engage in the unwanted behavior in order to become eligible for the rewards of the program, and the harm thus brought about will probably offset any good that is done. In the context of late Sixties welfare policy designed to improve the lot of the poor, Murray points to the thirty-and-a-third rule as an illustration of his point on this matter. This rule, which was intended to give people already on welfare an incentive to seek outside work so that they might eventually become independent, had the unwanted effect of making welfare a more attractive option for those who were not yet welfare dependent. Murray acknowledges that some people have absolutely no choice in terms of being in the negative condition for which government programs offer some type of benefit or relief. "Paraplegics receiving Medicaid," he says by way of illustrating this point, "cannot easily be seen as 'rewarded' for becoming paraplegics by the existence of free medical care" (LG, 213). But while some people are in an undesirable condition completely involuntarily, in most instances, Murray believes, voluntary action will play some role, whether large or small, in shaping the conditions people are in, and in such cases, he believes, changes in incentive structures will often have a considerable impact on what people do.

Besides changes in welfare policy, the quality of life in the inner city ghetto was adversely affected in the late Sixties, Murray charges, by a number of important changes in the areas of educational policy and crime control. In the area of educational policy Murray singles out the increasing reluctance on the part of school administrators during this period to suspend disruptive students or to use the sanctions schools had traditionally used to maintain classroom discipline and to provide for a healthy learning environment. Since they often lack the backing of strong achievement pressure from their homes and peer groups, inner city students in particular, Murray says, need the support of dedicated teachers who will demand from them regular attendance, punctuality, and the regular completion of homework assignments. In the past, to be effective, these demands, Murray says, had to be backed up by the threat of various sanctions, including in-school disciplinary measures, failure to promote a student to the next grade, or outright suspension or expulsion. But in the late Sixties, says Murray, these sanctions came into increasing disuse as more and more schools adopted a policy of demanding very little from their students academically, of tolerating greater degrees of disruption, and of automatically promoting all students to the grade level commensurate with their chronological age. The effect of these new policies in the classroom, Murray believes, was disastrous, as teachers became demoralized over their

inability to get students to work, and many of the ablest and most ambitious students left the public-school system in order to enroll in private or parochial schools that offered a better environment in which to learn.

Murray attributes the changes in educational policies during this period to a number of factors. One, he suggests, was simply ideological. The idea began to gain ground during the late Sixties, Murray says, that inner city black culture had a dignity and uniqueness of its own and that it was wrong to try to force inner city youth to master standard English and the sorts of skills typically taught in white middle-class suburban schools. Radical critics of the period often viewed the imposition of the traditional American school curriculum upon lower-class blacks as a form of cultural imperialism that helped to undermine the basis of black self-esteem. The idea also gained ground at this time that schools in general were too authoritarian and should be more flexible in allowing students to develop according to their own inclinations and desires. Murray mentions in this context an influential book of the late Sixties by Jonathan Kozol, *Death at an Early Age*, which had called for a much more loosely-structured curriculum in the public schools.

Besides ideological factors, educational policies during this period, Murray says, were influenced by important changes in judicial interpretations of constitutional rights. The Supreme Court decision in *Gault v. Arizona* (1967), Murray explains, was the key factor here, since its effect was to extend new due process rights to students facing disciplinary suspension which had not existed previously. While this new concern with student rights no doubt prevented certain abuses of disciplinary authority, Murray concedes, one of the effects of this new emphasis on student rights, he says, was to make it much more difficult for teachers and school officials to deal with disruptive students. "Teachers and administrators," says Murray, "became vulnerable to lawsuits or professional set-backs for using the discretion that had been taken for granted in 1960. . . . The rebellious students could make life considerably more miserable for the teacher than the teacher could for the students—through their disruptive behavior in class, through physical threats, or even through official channels, complaining to the administration that the teacher was unreasonable, harsh, or otherwise failing to observe their rights" (LG, 173). The result of all this, says Murray, is that by 1970 almost no learning went on in inner city schools.

Changes in crime control policy also impacted adversely on the quality of life in the inner city ghetto, according to Murray's analysis. Applying a rational choice-type model to crime, Murray says that whatever other factors may be involved, the easier it is to get away with a crime without being caught, or if caught, without being punished by a jail term, the more likely it will be that people will engage in criminal behavior. He applies the insight of this simple proposition to the observed declines in apprehension and incarceration rates, and to the new protection of the rights of the criminally accused that came

about during the Sixties and Seventies. Regarding the latter development, Murray acknowledges that increased concern over the rights of the criminally accused had the positive effect of extending equal justice to the poor, but it also had the negative effect, he says, of making it less risky for criminally-inclined people to indulge their criminal propensities, with the result that ghetto neighborhoods became much less safe.

One of the most important changes in criminal justice practices that occurred during this period, Murray stresses, was a dramatic decrease in the punishment of juvenile offenders. Juvenile delinquents in the Sixties were increasingly put on probation rather than sent to reform school or jail, Murray explains, and even if juvenile offenders did do time in a penal institution, it became the practice of the time to seal their official records so that having a police record in the Sixties and Seventies was a much less serious matter for a juvenile than it had been a decade before. Murray uses juvenile incarceration statistics from Cook County, Illinois (which includes Chicago), to illustrate his general point of how easy it was for young people to get away with crime: despite soaring increases in juvenile crimes over the previous ten years, by the mid-Seventies Cook County juvenile offenders had to be arrested an average of 13.6 times before they were first committed to a reform school. Murray also offers national statistics showing a steep drop in the odds of being apprehended for a burglary or robbery, and when this declining apprehension rate is seen in conjunction with the declining risk of being sent to prison after one has been apprehended and convicted, the true decline in the deterrent value of the criminal-justice system is made abundantly clear.

The three factors of changes in welfare policy, changes in educational policy, and changes in criminal justice practices, Murray says, not only acted individually to bring about the catastrophe of the inner city ghetto, but displayed a certain interactive or synergistic effect in which each factor served to reinforce the destructive potentials of the other. Summarizing a good deal of the argument of *Losing Ground*, Murray writes:

My proposition is that the environment in which a young person grew up changed in several mutually consistent and interacting ways during the 1960s. The changes in welfare *and* changes in the risks attached to crime *and* changes in the educational environment reinforced each other... .

None of the individual links is nearly as important as the aggregate change between the world in which a poor youngster grew up in the 1950s and the one in which he or she grew up in the 1970s. All the changes in the incentives pointed in the same direction. It was easier to get along without a job. It was easier for a man to have a baby without being responsible for it, for a woman to have a baby without having a husband. It was easier to get away with crime.... Because it was easier to get away with crime, it was easier to support a drug habit. Because it was easier to get along without aid, it was easier to ignore education. Because it was easier to get along without a job,

it was easier to walk away from a job, and thereby accumulate a record as an unreliable employee. (LG, 167, 175)

Status Rewards

In many ways what Murray has to say about the shift in "status rewards" that occurred during the Great Society period is the most valuable part of *Losing Ground*, though it is a part that critics and reviewers have generally ignored. While the very term "status rewards" is intended to link the ideas subsumed under this label to an economic type of rational choice or utility-maximization theory, in actuality Murray treats under this theory certain fundamental changes in social attitudes and cultural values that occurred during the late Sixties which are not normally thought of within the context of an economic or utility-maximizing model. One of the problems with *Losing Ground*, in fact, is that it is a much richer book, with a much more subtle and complex understanding of what occurred in poor inner city neighborhoods in the late Sixties, than is sometimes suggested by Murray's own characterization of what he is trying to do in the book. Murray's theory is much less parsimonious than he would lead us to believe, though given the complexity of the actual problem, lack of simplicity or parsimony is hardly a fault. The changes in cultural values with which Murray deals occurred, he says, primarily among the intellectual and cultural elite rather than among blue-collar workers or more traditionally-minded white-collar conservatives, though their effect was still enormous, he believes, as they helped to destroy the basis of independence and personal dignity among the working poor.

Before the late Sixties, Murray explains in this context, it was almost universally accepted in American culture that healthy people of working age should get jobs to support themselves, should care and provide for their families, and in general should carry their own weight and get by in the world without being a burden on others. Financial independence and self-reliance were considered very important American values, and barring great depressions, the death of a working spouse, or other extreme circumstances beyond a person's control, able-bodied people were not supposed to seek outside aid from government or from public charities. Irresponsible or improvident people who neglected their families or had children out of wedlock, and as a result became burdens on the public treasury, were severely condemned by the mores of the general community, Murray points out, with the sharpest condemnation often coming from the ranks of the working poor and working lower-middle class, who often prided themselves on their own hard work and independence and *on* the fact that they had never taken a penny of public welfare. Before the late Sixties, Murray explains, "a person who was chronically unable to hold onto a job, who neglected children and spouse, was a bum

and a no-good, consigned to the lowest circle of status" (LG,180).

Until the Great Society reform period, Murray says, the thinking among America's intellectual and cultural elite tended to agree with this general American view regarding the value of self-reliance and the universal requirement that all healthy adults should seek economic self-sufficiency within the context of a stable family structure. Elite opinion also agreed with the important and commonly-drawn distinction between a deserving and an undeserving poor. In the late Sixties, however, there was a radical shift in opinion on these matters, Murray explains, as a new wisdom emerged among the cultural and policymaking elite, which sought to obliterate the distinction between the worthy and unworthy poor by suggesting that all poverty was the result of outside forces totally beyond the control of individual poor people. The poor, says Murray, were "homogenized" as poverty was no longer associated with indolence or vice but with faults inherent in the American social and economic order itself. If a person was poor, if a young woman gave birth to a child out of wedlock, which neither she nor her family could support, or if a man neglected his spouse or family, it was the system that was to blame according to this new wisdom, Murray explains. Under this new elite wisdom, Murray says, welfare dependency, even by the young and healthy, was radically de-stigmatized, and public financial assistance for all who were below a certain level of income came to be seen as a fundamental human right or entitlement which the taxpayers were obligated to honor. The older middle-class and working-class norms of self-reliance and self-sufficiency, Murray says, were attacked most vehemently by the welfare rights advocates of the late Sixties, who were most vocal in their insistence that all who were on the dole should be able to consider their assistance as a right and not a charity. Within elite circles, adherence to the older distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor came to be looked upon as callous and reactionary.

The effect of treating all welfare-dependent people as victims, however, Murray contends, is not without consequence for the well-being of poor people. Telling people that they are not responsible for their behavior because "the system is to blame," and encouraging people to believe that they have little control over their lives, engenders, Murray believes, a sense of fatalism and helplessness, as well as a tendency toward irresponsible excuse-making, that seriously undermines upward mobility and the capacity of the poor to cope with their day-to-day problems. Writing more as a pragmatist than a moralist, Murray says: "By taking away responsibility-by saying, 'Because the system is to blame, it's not your fault . . .,' society also takes away the credit that is an essential part of the reward structure that has fostered social and economic mobility in the U.S." (LG,186). If society can't blame individuals for bad behavior, Murray argues, it can't *very* credibly praise them for good behavior either. It's like the teacher who gives all his students A's.

The grading system under such circumstances ceases to serve as an incentive system and many of the students will not work very hard as a result. In an article in the *Political Science Quarterly* defending the argument of *Losing Ground*, Murray says that the message that the elite was transmitting to struggling poor people in the late Sixties was this: "When things go wrong, there are ready excuses; when things go well, it is luck" (HPBLG, 11).

Among poor people, blacks in the late Sixties, says Murray, were singled out for special consideration among elite opinion-makers and the effect was even more devastating than the opinion shift in regard to the poor in general. The new white elite attitude was driven, Murray says, by white guilt and white confusion over the mid-Sixties ghetto riots, which produced, he believes, the general conviction among the white intelligentsia and the white policymaking elite that blacks were owed a special debt for their past victimization, and that because of this victimization blacks should not be held accountable for what they do. This attitude Murray characterizes as a form of condescension that not only undermines the kind of status reward system that leads to upward mobility, but undermines as well the capacity of a people to achieve a sense of personal dignity and self-respect. Murray writes in this regard:

It was a very small step from that premise [i.e. that it was not the fault of the poor that they are poor] to the conclusion that it is not the fault of the poor that they fail to pull themselves up when we offer them a helping hand. White moral confusion about the course of the civil rights movement in general and the riots in particular created powerful reasons to look for excuses. It was the system's fault. It was history's fault. (LG, 39)

Whites began to tolerate and make excuses for behavior among blacks that whites would disdain in themselves or their children. (LG, 223)

... the intelligentsia and the policymakers, coincident with the revolution in social policy, began treating the black poor in ways that they would never consider treating people they respected. (LG, 222)

The white elite could not at one time cope with two reactions. They could not simultaneously feel compelled to make restitution for past wrongs to blacks and blame blacks for not taking advantage of their new opportunities. The system *had* to be blamed, and any deficiencies demonstrated by blacks had to be overlooked or covered up-by whites. A central theme of this book has been that the consequences were disastrous for poor people of all races, but for poor blacks especially, and most emphatically for poor blacks in all-black communities-precisely that population that was the object of the most unremitting sympathy. (LG, 223)

The moral agonizing among whites was strikingly white-centered. *Whites*

had created the problem, it was up to *whites* to fix it, and there was very little in the dialogue that treated blacks as responsible actors. Until July 1964 most whites (and most blacks) thought in terms of equal access to opportunity. Blacks who failed to take advantage were in the same boat with whites who failed to take advantage. By 1967 this was not an intellectually acceptable way to conceive of the issue. Blacks were exempted. Once more, in a new and curious fashion, whites had put up the "Whites Only" sign. (LG, 33)

Besides discouraging upward mobility, personal dignity, and economic independence, the shift in elite opinion during the late Sixties, Murray contends, had the effect of dramatically worsening the quality of life and sense of personal well-being among the working poor. These are the people who often did not live much above the standard of living of the welfare poor, but who had always enjoyed a much higher status in society because of the appreciation others felt for the sacrifices they made in remaining self-sufficient and not burdening anyone outside of their extended family. But one of the inevitable consequences of "homogenizing" the poor, Murray believes, was to withdraw status and praise from those who struggled to remain off of welfare. And as status and praise were withdrawn from the working poor, the quality of life for such people, Murray says, dramatically declined. Their situation, moreover, was made even less tolerable by the tendency of the white elite to treat certain menial jobs as too demeaning to ask welfare recipients to perform. "When social policy reinforces the ethic that certain jobs are too demeaning to ask people to do, says Murray, "it was those who preferred such jobs to welfare whose basis for self-respect was stripped from them" (LG, 201). Although Murray does not mention the fact, it was the very working poor that he describes who protested in anger in the late Sixties against the withdrawal of public recognition of their efforts with the popular bumper sticker of the period, "I fight poverty, I work." When the working poor receive no greater status in society than the welfare-dependent poor, Murray stresses, there will be little incentive for poor people to work. Indeed, he suggests that when working provides no greater benefits in terms of standard of living or social status than remaining idle, the person who works at a menial job may come to see himself as a fool or a chump.

Assessment of Murray

Losing Ground was widely reviewed in scholarly journals and popular magazines and created a sensation in Washington, where Murray's final thought experiment, suggesting that America's poor would be much better off if most of the reforms of the Great Society were scrapped, was enthusiastically embraced by many conservative supporters of the Reagan administration. Not since the publication of Frederick Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* in the

mid-Forties had a book provoked such strong reactions from both the Left and the Right, though as previously suggested, this situation did not always contribute to a conscientious understanding of Murray's often complex arguments. The attack on *Losing Ground* from the left-liberal side of the political spectrum was often fierce, with Robert Greenstein's widely-read article in *The New Republic*, "Losing Faith in *Losing Ground*," setting the tone for a good deal of the subsequent discussion and debate."

Critics of Murray tended to present two sets of data which, they contended, called into question his basic belief that increases in welfare expenditures between 1965 and 1970 caused an increase in the rate of out-of-wedlock births, female-headed households, welfare dependency, and marital instability among the black poor. If the level of welfare generosity had all these bad effects, critics argued, then one would expect to find much higher incidence of such conditions in states with generous benefits as compared to states that offered much more meager welfare aid. The gap between generous and stingy states was enormous, critics pointed out—in 1975, for instance, Mississippi offered a family of four only \$60 in AFDC funds, while California offered more than \$400—and even when one added in the value of food stamps, which were uniform across states, the gap between states was still very wide. Moreover, if generous welfare expenditures were responsible for the rising illegitimacy and other negative trends of the late Sixties which Murray listed, one would expect these trends to have reversed themselves in the Seventies, Murray's critics argued, since the real value of AFDC benefits declined sharply over this decade as states failed to adjust their benefit levels to the inflationary rise in the cost of living. Yet neither of these two conditions obtained, Murray's critics pointed out. The most exhaustive series of regression analyses of the available data on births to unmarried women across states could find no evidence that AFDC levels affected the decisions of young unmarried women to bear children, and the authors of the study concluded that AFDC, although having considerable influence on the ability of a young unmarried woman to form her own separate household, had no effect on rates of illegitimacy.¹⁵ Given the fact that the rate of illegitimacy and of female-headed households continued to rise throughout the Seventies despite declining real rates of AFDC and food stamps, the thesis of *Losing Ground*, critics concluded, must be wrong.

Murray has responded to such criticisms on at least three occasions,¹⁶ and the counter-arguments he offers are persuasive. Many of the critics of *Losing Ground*, Murray rightly charges, attack a stick figure caricature of what is actually argued in the book. To begin with, most critics have zeroed in almost exclusively on what is said about Great Society welfare policies, ignoring all

15. Greenstein's article appeared in the March 25, 1985 issue of *The New Republic*, 12-17.

16. David Ellwood and Mary Jo Bane, "The Impact of AFDC on Family Structure," in *Research in Labor Economics*, vol. 7, Ronald Ehrenbert, ed. (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1985).

that is said in *Losing Ground* about changes in criminal justice procedures, changes in educational policy, the de-stigmatization of welfare reciprocity, the changes in status rewards for the working poor, and the mutual enhancing effect of all the late Sixties changes taken together. Moreover, even in regard to late Sixties welfare policy, most of Murray's critics acted as if he had treated AFDC alone, or AFDC augmented by food stamps, as responsible for the disintegration of the black lower class family, completely ignoring all that he had to say about the other six or seven significant changes in welfare policy enacted during this period.

To his critics' charge that rates of out-of-wedlock births and female-headed households should show some positive correlation with the vast differences across states in AFDC levels if the basic thesis of *Losing Ground* is correct, Murray points out that the true differences in the total welfare benefit package across states is really quite small once one adds in the value not only of AFDC, but of food stamps, Medicaid, housing allowances, and other available benefits. In addition, Murray says; when one views the total benefit packages in terms of local costs of living as well as local standards of living, they begin to look very similar. Murray offers in this context figures from a 1978 General Accounting Office study which indicate that the total monthly benefit package available to a poor unmarried mother in the low benefit area of New Orleans was \$654 if housing benefits were obtained, and \$511 if they were not; in the very high benefit area of San Francisco, by contrast, the value of the total package was \$867 with housing benefits, and \$734 without. Even as they stand, these figures do not indicate a tremendous difference across states, Murray contends, and what difference there is, he says, almost disappears when the standard of living in each area is taken into account. The total welfare benefit package in San Francisco (with housing benefits) represents 65.6% of the median household income for that area, while the comparable figure for New Orleans is 66.4% (without housing benefits the figures are 55.5% and 51.9% respectively).

Murray rejects the view, however, that poor women micro-manage their fertility rates in response to incremental changes in welfare benefit packages. Poor women, he says, often want to have a baby to have someone to love, and if they do not have much of a prospect for an interesting job or for marrying a high-wage earning husband, they may well decide to have a child out of wedlock *if* the welfare system will allow them to live at what they consider to be a minimally acceptable level. What level this is will vary from person to person, Murray explains, but the individual threshold points will tend to

17. Along with his two articles "Have the Poor Been 'Losing Ground?'" and "No, Welfare Isn't Really the Problem," Murray has responded to arguments of critics in "How to Lie With Statistics," *National Review* (February 28, 1986), 39-41.

cluster together so that there will be a great jump in the number of people availing themselves of the welfare option once the total welfare benefit package reaches the minimum level of acceptability at which many young unmarried women are clustered. In addition to the size of the total benefit package itself, says Murray, the attractiveness of the welfare option will be enhanced by such changes in welfare regulations as the thirty-and-a-third rule and the elimination of the man-in-the-house restriction. These changes were not repealed by the inflation of the Seventies, and the welfare benefit package still remained high enough throughout this period, Murray believes, to enable poor young women to have a child out of wedlock which they otherwise would have avoided having (either through sexual abstinence, contraception, marriage, adoption, or abortion). In addition, as a result of the total ensemble of policy changes in the late Sixties, Murray contends, the destructive trends that developed in the inner cities began to take on a life of their own, as community standards broke down, two-parent stable families disappeared, crime and the benefits to be gained from crime increased, and schools ceased to be a means of upward mobility. Under such circumstances, Murray does not see it as surprising that a decline in the real value of AFDC and food stamp benefits in the late Seventies did not produce a return to lower levels of illegitimacy and single-parent families.

If one surveys the whole range of policy changes during the late Sixties which Murray focuses on in *Losing Ground*, the contention seems unassailable that their overall effect on the stability of the inner city black family was largely negative. To use Murray's own instrument of the thought experiment, one might ask what would have happened in the 1970s if most of the Great Society reforms he excoriates had never been enacted, and the country instead had moved in the opposite direction in terms of both public policy and public philosophy. What would have happened, for instance, if Senator Goldwater had won a landslide victory in 1964 comparable to that of Lyndon Johnson, and with the backing of a Congress overwhelmingly Republican and viscerally anti-welfare, his administration had successfully proceeded, a) to pressure states to reduce their AFDC benefits to 2/3 of their 1950 levels; b) to eliminate the food stamp program for all but the elderly and disabled; c) to defeat all attempts to pass a Medicaid bill; d) to require twelve or more unannounced at-home eligibility checks per year for AFDC recipients; e) to make any attempt to supplement welfare benefits through unreported outside earnings a felony crime comparable to income tax evasion; f) to appoint judges to the Supreme Court who would find nothing constitutionally suspect about a rigorously enforced man-in-the-house restriction; and g) to require all able-bodied welfare recipients not caring for very young children to work at least 20 hours per week, if need be, at special WPA-type jobs?

While Murray's critics claim that "welfare" has had no effect on the rise in the rate of out-of-wedlock births and female-headed households among

urban blacks, it is simply inconceivable to anyone with the least bit of common sense or intuitive understanding of human nature that such a scenario as that described above would have been consistent with the actual experienced rise in out-of-wedlock birth rates among inner city black residents from the 40% range that Moynihan reported for central Harlem in the early Sixties to the 80+% range of the early 1980s. Whatever other factors may have been at work in bringing about such developments, the fact remains that a kinder and more generous welfare system will enable significant numbers of people to engage in types of behavior regarding childbirth and employment, which they would not have engaged in otherwise (either because they themselves had thought of the negative consequences, or because one or more of their parents or guardians had).

The paradoxes and unanticipated consequences of a generous system of poor relief is one that has been recognized by perceptive observers for two centuries or more, and is certainly not the discovery of Charles Murray. In the nineteenth century, it was well recognized by philanthropists and Social Darwinists alike. One of the clearest statements on the subject is to be found in Alexis De Tocqueville's "Memoir on Pauperism," which he published in 1835 based on his own observations of the effects of the English poor laws. "Almost two and a half centuries have passed since the principle of legal charity was fully embraced by our neighbors [in England]," Tocqueville wrote,

and one may now judge the fatal consequences which flowed from the adoption of this principle.... Man, like all socially organized beings, has a natural passion for idleness. There are, however, two incentives to work: the need to live and the desire to improve the conditions of life. Experience has proven that the majority of men can be sufficiently motivated to work only by the first of these. The second is only effective with a small minority. Well, a charitable institution indiscriminately open to all those in need, or a law which gives all the poor a right to public aid, whatever the origin of their poverty, weakens or destroys the first stimulant and leaves only the second intact.... I recognize not only the utility but the necessity of public charity applied to inevitable evils such as the helplessness of infancy, the decrepitude of old age, sickness, insanity. I even admit its temporary usefulness in times of public calamities which God sometimes allows to slip from his hand.

But I am deeply convinced that any permanent, regular, administrative system whose aim will be to provide for the needs of the poor, will breed more misery than it can cure, will deprave the population that it wants to help and comfort. ...¹⁸

One can view much of Murray's argument in *Losing Ground* as a sustained

18. In *Tocqueville and Beaumont on Social Reform*, Seymour Drescher, ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 14, 24-25.

attempt to demonstrate the truth of Tocqueville's insight, though it must be kept in mind that the number of people who become "trapped" by the welfare system represent only a small minority of the people who actually use it. As a number of Murray's critics have correctly pointed out, most users of welfare do not become permanently dependent, a fact which the reader of *Losing Ground* could easily lose sight of.

Even more unassailable than *Losing Ground's* analysis of the disincentives created by Great Society welfare policies is its analysis of the effects of de-stigmatizing welfare reciprocity among the able-bodied and diminishing the social status of the working poor. Many blacks of an earlier generation often tell of what a disgrace it was to be on welfare even during the Great Depression era of the 1930s, when honest work was frequently hard to find even for the most eager and ambitious. The *Ebony* publisher John H. Johnson, for instance, relates his own family's experience of being on welfare in the city of Chicago between 1934 and 1936: "What I remember most about my days on welfare," Johnson recalls in his autobiography, "was the shame. I used to sit on a stoop with a group of young men and watch the welfare trucks cruising the neighborhood. The trucks would drive up to my house, and someone would say, 'They're going to *your* house.' And I would say, 'That's not my house.' We knew the trucks were going to our houses; we were just too ashamed to admit it."¹⁹ Whatever one may say in criticism of the social norms which encouraged young men such as Johnson to feel as they did, such norms certainly had the positive effect of encouraging all self-respecting people to get off of welfare and become economically self-sufficient as soon as they possibly could. The effects of de-stigmatizing welfare reciprocity are perceptively analyzed by another black writer, Bernard Gifford, a former deputy chancellor of the New York City Board of Education:

In many ways the kids today are victims of liberal victories. One of the battles we fought in the 1960s was to take the stigma away from people who are poor and place it on society; to emphasize the structural barriers to poverty. That needed to be done. We were successful in saying to society: there are real structural impediments. The problem was that we shifted the focus of attention from local institutions—family, church, neighborhood organization—to government. We undermined those institutions and made it possible for people to accept welfare... .

My mother was always ashamed to be on welfare. My brother was ashamed. I was ashamed. And though we grew up in a neighborhood where it was prevalent, we never accepted it. And what is different now is that I see lots of people accepting dependency. No one ought to be ashamed to be poor. Yet I'm convinced that the shame we felt being on welfare made us get away and escape repeating this cycle.¹⁰

19. *Succeeding against the Odds* (New York: Warner Books, 1989), 74-75.

20. Quoted in Ken Auletta, *The Underclass* (New York: Random House, 1982), 301.

What Gifford has to say here, of course, fully confirms Murray's analysis.

But It Didn't Start with the Great Society

Murray's analysis of the policy changes in the late Sixties in the four areas with which he deals has certainly gone a long way toward explaining what happened in the inner city ghettos in the decade which followed this period. No one who wants to understand the breakdown in black urban family life over the past twenty years can ignore the weight of what Murray has to say on these matters. Nevertheless, there are limitations to the *Losing Ground* approach which should be obvious to anyone who has ever read the Moynihan Report or any number of other accounts of inner city black slum life during the period of the late Fifties and early Sixties. The simple fact of the matter is that the trends in the inner city ghettos with regard to such developments as family dissolution, out-of-wedlock births, low labor force participation, poor academic performance, and rising crime and delinquency were cause for alarm among knowledgeable observers years before any of the Great Society programs that Murray criticizes were ever instituted.

As early as 1961, for instance, Harvard educator James Bryan Conant responded with shock and horror at the situation he had observed in many inner city black slums. In his widely-read and influential book *Slums and Suburbs*, Conant wrote:

... I am convinced we are allowing social dynamite to accumulate in our large cities.... In some slum neighborhoods I have no doubt that over a half of the boys between sixteen and twenty-one are out of school and out of work. Leaving aside human tragedies, I submit that a continuation of this situation is a menace to the social and political health of the large cities....

In some [Negro slums] there are very bad gangs with gang warfare among the boys. There are also vicious fights outside of school between Negro girls. The condition in one such neighborhood was summed up to one of my staff by a principal of a junior high school who said even he was shocked by the answers to a questionnaire to the girls which asked what was their biggest problem. The majority replied to the effect that their biggest problem was getting from the street into their apartment without being molested in the hallway of the tenement. He went on to say that the area had a set of social customs of its own. The women, on the whole, work and earn fairly good wages, but the male Negro often earns less than the woman and would rather not work at all than to be in this situation. As a consequence, the streets are full of unemployed men who hang around and prey on the girls. The women are the centers of the family and as a rule are extremely loyal to the children. The men, on the other hand, are floaters, and many children have no idea who their father is. Similar reports from principals and teachers can be heard by the attentive and sympathetic visitor to the Negro slums of any one

of several cities... What is terrifying is that the number of male *youth* in this category is increasing almost daily.

Such descriptions sound all too contemporary. An equally depressing picture of inner city slum life during the early Sixties is offered by Charles Silberman in his *Crisis in Black and White*:

... in Northern industrial centers one out of every three Negro workers has suffered unemployment in the last several years . . . in some Negro neighborhoods, the unemployment rate may run as high as 40 percent. To anyone walking through the Negro neighborhoods of any large city—and to the children who grow up in them—few sights are more familiar than the groups of idle Negro men congregating at street corners, or the lonely Negroes sitting on their front stoops all day long, sipping wine from bottles discreetly hidden in brown paper bags. (40)

Descriptions similar to those of Bryant and Silberman can be found in the writings of many other observers (Claude Brown's account of growing up in Harlem in the Fifties in his *Manchild in the Promised Land*;²² and the description of the disorganized black lower class of Depression-era Chicago in Horace Cayton and St. Clair Drake's *Black Metropolis*²³ are two of the best), but there is no need to belabor the point. Contrary to the impression one would get from *Losing Ground*, the problem of black urban family disintegration is one which first reached alarming proportions during the Great Depression, and although the situation improved considerably during the high employment years of the Second World War, it began a gradual deterioration throughout the Fifties and early Sixties that would continue at an accelerated pace after this period. Murray makes a very impressive case for the view that this process of deterioration intensified in the late Sixties and early Seventies in response to major changes in public policies and elite opinions, but he is wrong in suggesting that it all started with the Great Society, or that most problems that existed in poor black neighborhoods prior to the Great Society would have worked themselves out except for the changes of this period. ("It is genuinely an open issue," Murray wrote in an early article anticipating much of the arguments of *Losing Ground*, "... whether we should be talking about spending cuts, or whether we should be considering an overhaul of the entire welfare system as conceived in the Great Society. If the War on Poverty is construed as having begun in 1950 instead of 1964, it may fairly be said that we were winning the war until Lyndon Johnson decided to wage it" (TWAP, 16).

21. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 2, 19-20.

22. (New York: New American Library, 1965).

23. (New York: Harper and Row, 1945).

Daniel Moynihan is certainly correct when he takes Murray to task on this score. "Murray's work is concerned primarily with the growth of an urban minority underclass," Moynihan remarked in his Godkin lectures at Harvard (later published as *Family and Nation*). "But that is precisely what I did predict in 1965, using data series that ended in 1964, before any of the events that he asserts have brought about these 'turns for the worse'. . . . *Losing Ground* attributes developments that trouble the author to government actions that mostly began *after these* developments had commenced as clearly recognizable statistical trends."²⁴ Whatever one may say of Murray's work, it seems clear that more must be considered in understanding the catastrophe of the inner city black ghetto than the bad public policies and bad elite opinions of the 1960s.

William Julius Wilson and the Changing Structure of the Urban Economy

If the factors Murray describes in *Losing Ground* only partially explain the deteriorating situation in the inner city black slums, and if certain long-term trends are apparently involved that predate the reforms of the Great Society period, what other factors need to be explored? Since the publication of *Losing Ground* by far the most important work to address itself to this question is William Julius Wilson's *The Truly Disadvantaged*. Wilson, a University of Chicago sociologist and recent past president of the American Sociological Association, sees himself in this work as one who is seeking to restore an older approach to the problem of black family dissolution that would place much of the blame for the current situation on certain fundamental changes in the nature of the modern urban economy. Wilson spends a good deal of time in his book in addressing some of the arguments in *Losing Ground*, and while he doesn't dismiss Murray's work entirely, his review of the anti-Murray literature, together with his own studies of the urban poor in Chicago and elsewhere, have convinced him that Murray greatly overemphasizes the effect of Great Society welfare policies in explaining the growth of an urban underclass, and greatly underestimates or ignores completely what Wilson sees as the most important explanatory variable, namely, black male joblessness brought about by the decline in the number of low-skilled inner city jobs.

Although Wilson is writing from the perspective of a left-oriented social democrat, he is highly critical of the behavior of many left and left-liberal oriented writers, who, he charges, ignored for many years the deteriorating conditions in the inner city ghettos, and left the field open for conservative theorists to propound explanations of dubious validity. Wilson observes:

24. *Family and Nation* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), 134-35.

The liberal perspective on the ghetto underclass and inner city social dislocations is less persuasive and influential in public discourse today, because many of those who represent the traditional liberal views on social issues have failed to address straightforwardly the rise of social pathologies in the ghetto.... Some liberals completely avoid any discussion of these problems, some eschew terms such as *underclass*, and others embrace selective evidence that denies the very existence of an underclass and behavior associated with the underclass or rely on the convenient term racism to account for the sharp rise in the rates of social dislocation in the inner city.... The combined effect of these tendencies, is to render liberal arguments ineffective and to enhance conservative arguments on the underclass, even though the conservative thesis is plagued with serious problems of interpretation and analysis. (TD, 12-13)

Like Murray, Wilson finds theories that would try to explain recent underclass growth in terms of ongoing racism and discrimination thoroughly implausible. The underclass increased the most in size, he points out, during the decade of the 1970s, which was a period following the enactment of the most comprehensive civil rights legislation in the nation's history, and the decade which also saw the implementation of affirmative action policies designed to grant special consideration to black job applicants. Discrimination in recent times, Wilson suggests, is certainly less than it was in the 1940s, yet the black male employment picture then was much better than it was in the Seventies and Eighties. Moreover, the racism and discrimination theory, Wilson believes, cannot explain the very considerable success of the black middle class during the same period when the condition of the black lower class was deteriorating so rapidly. Wilson also rejects theories of the underclass, such as those proposed by Edward Banfield in his *The Unheavenly City*, which would stress differences in individual moral or behavioral factors, or the existence of a "culture of poverty," as causal agents. Poor inner city black males, Wilson insists, share values and aspirations similar to those of mainstream society, though their aspirations, Wilson thinks, are usually thwarted by circumstances beyond their control.

If neither Great Society welfare policies, nor continuing racism, nor a "culture of poverty," offer much of an explanation for the disintegration of the lower-class black family and the many other pathologies of the inner city ghetto, how is the situation to be explained? In answer to this question Wilson develops at length his thesis concerning the basic changes in the structure of American industry and the impact these changes have had in increasing the joblessness of young black males. Wilson's argument goes something like this: When the hordes of European immigrants poured into America in the early decades of this century, America was an industrializing nation with an expanding blue-collar job market that offered great employment opportuni-

ties for those with little skills and without even a command of the English language. A healthy body and an eagerness to work were all that were usually necessary to find employment in the great industrial centers of the Northeast and Midwest, and what involuntary unemployment existed was usually brief in duration and tied to the ups and downs of the business cycle. In the last several decades, however, American industry has undergone a major restructuring. This restructuring has been characterized by a dramatic decline in the number of manufacturing jobs in the older central cities, as steel, rubber, auto, and other traditional smokestack industries have declined in size due to foreign competition and the movement of manufacturing facilities abroad. Where increases in manufacturing jobs have occurred, it has usually been not in the central cities, but in the suburbs, where lower taxes, less congestion, and improved road transportation have provided a more congenial environment than that available in the urban metropolis. For example, in the 25-year period between 1947 and 1972, the number of manufacturing jobs in the 33 largest metropolitan areas declined by 880,000 at the same time that manufacturing employment in their surrounding suburbs grew by 2.5 million. Over the same period, these cities lost 867,000 jobs in retail and wholesale trade while their suburbs added millions of jobs in these same categories. As the central cities were losing many jobs in manufacturing, as well as in retail and wholesale trade, the black population of these same cities was burgeoning due both to natural population growth and to the enormous influx of unskilled agricultural laborers from the rural South. Between 1950 and 1980, for instance, the black population of the 33 largest metropolitan areas increased by over 5 million. Since most young blacks living in the inner cities do not own automobiles and are not tied into the sorts of information networks that would enable them to exploit many of the opportunities for employment in the surrounding suburbs, the result of these simultaneous changes has been increasing black joblessness, particularly among black male youth.

The central cities have, it is true, gained jobs in many categories other than manufacturing and trade. But the job growth has been in such areas as information processing, financial services, business administration, and various high-tech fields all of which have educational and training requirements that place them beyond the reach of most inner city black residents. Inner city black residents are thus mismatched for jobs both geographically and educationally, and the result is ever lower levels of participation in the regular urban labor force. Unlike the situation confronting the Southern and Eastern European immigrants who came to America before the First World War, blacks today living in America's largest cities confront an employment situation where there seems little room for those who do not possess a special skill or a minimum of two years of college education. Even a high school diploma doesn't go very far anymore.

Such, in briefest outline, is the substance of Wilson's basic argument. Black

male joblessness caused by basic changes in the nature of urban jobs and urban job requirements, is the key to understanding the pathologies of the ghetto, he believes, and particularly the rise in female-headed households and out-of-wedlock births. Since the possibilities of a steady job are so poor for so many unskilled black youth, many young black women, he says, see very limited prospects for being able to marry a black male who will be capable of fulfilling the traditional male role of breadwinner and provider. Wilson constructs what he calls a "male marriageable pool index" that relates the rates of employed civilian men to women by race and age group, and he uses this index to show how the proportion of young black males who are in an economic position that would enable them to support a family has steadily declined since the 1950s. The number of marriageable black men is much lower among blacks than among whites due to greater black male joblessness, as well as much higher black rates of mortality and incarceration. Lacking the prospect of marrying a man with a stable job, young black women, Wilson contends, turn to out-of-wedlock births as the only means of fulfilling their natural human desire to have children. Out-of-wedlock births and female-headed households, while not seen as an ideal situation, are nevertheless accepted within the inner city black community because of the absence of a better alternative. Wilson quotes in this context from Kenneth Clark's *Dark Ghetto*:

In the ghetto, the meaning of the illegitimate child is not ultimate disgrace. There is not the demand for abortion or for surrender of the child that one finds in more privileged communities. In the middle class, the disgrace of illegitimacy is tied to personal and family aspiration. In lower-class families, on the other hand, the girl loses only some of her already limited options by having an illegitimate child; she is not going to make a 'better marriage' or improve her economic and social status either way. On the contrary, a child is a symbol of the fact that she is a woman, and she may gain from having something of her own. Nor is the boy who fathers an illegitimate child going to lose, for where is he going? The path to any higher status seems closed to him in any case. (ID, 73-74)

The destructive effect of male joblessness on family and community life in the ghetto has been made worse, Wilson believes, by the exodus of the more stable middle-class and working-class elements from inner city ghetto communities. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s and even into the 1960s, Wilson explains, middle-class and working-class blacks often lived in the same inner city neighborhoods as the poor and the unemployed. Black professionals—doctors, lawyers, teachers, social workers, etc.—not only had poor blacks as clients, but lived very near to those whom they served. Their children attended the same schools, played on the same playgrounds, and sometimes

attended the same churches. It was this stable middle and working class, Wilson says, that provided most of the community leadership in the ghettos and helped to establish strong community sanctions against aberrant behavior. Black inner city communities in these earlier decades were often a source of positive identification for the residents who lived there, Wilson explains, and the more stable and hard-working elements tended to set the standards for the community as a whole.

Ironically, it was in part as a result of certain civil rights victories, according to Wilson, that ghetto communities were deprived of this critically important stable element. As long as access to more desirable neighborhoods in the suburbs or in predominantly white sections of the cities was denied to the more successful blacks, they were forced to remain in the all-black central city ghettos. But with the invalidation of racially restrictive covenants by the Supreme Court (the critical case was *Shelley v. Kraemer* in 1948), and the passage of fair housing laws by many states and by the federal government in the 1960s, many middle-class and working-class blacks, began to move out of the ghettos, leaving behind the worst-off elements. As a result of this exodus, ghetto communities became dominated by female-headed households, unemployed or only episodically-employed young men, drug addicts, alcoholics, the mentally disturbed, in addition to a large criminal population. Growing up in neighborhoods with few male breadwinners to serve as role models for the youth, the youth in the ghettos, Wilson explains, were not able to develop the kinds of habits of regularity, punctuality, cooperativeness, etc., which would enable them to succeed at a mainstream job. "In neighborhoods in which most families do not have a steadily employed breadwinner," Wilson writes, "the norms and behavior patterns associated with steadywork compete with those associated with casual or infrequent work.... The combination of unattractive jobs and lack of community norms to reinforce work increases the likelihood that individuals will turn to either underground illegal activity or idleness or both" (TD, 61).

Today's inner city youth differ from the inner city youth of a generation ago, according to Wilson's analysis, not because of changes in their basic attitudes or cultural values, but because of this greater social isolation. The most disadvantaged elements of the black lower class are now concentrated in neighborhoods where they have little access to people who are capable of providing the young with information on available jobs or initiating them into the norms and behavioral patterns required of a reliable worker. This social isolation and concentration effect only serves to exacerbate the problem of declining blue-collar jobs in the central city, Wilson stresses. And when the youth no longer aspire to mainstream jobs, Wilson argues, they no longer have much of an incentive to prepare themselves in school to gain the basic literacy skills and other qualifications necessary to acquire such jobs. Teachers in inner city schools where such youth predominate become demoralized and

begin to lose interest in teaching. As a result inner city schools almost cease to be educational institutions and drop-out rates often reach 50% or more.

Wilson makes a series of policy proposals designed to enhance the life chances of the truly disadvantaged in the inner cities, though he acknowledges that his proposals, which, if enacted, would bring the American welfare state more into line with the more highly-developed welfare states of Northern and Central Europe, lack current political feasibility. He supports a program of universal child care for working mothers; universal family assistance payments to all families with children; more extensive job training and education programs; and better enforcement of child support judgments. Wilson stresses that to gain widespread acceptance, such programs must be universal in scope rather than race-specific, and like the policies of the New Deal-but unlike the policies of the Great Society-they should try to help the most seriously disadvantaged in ways to which the better-off can positively relate. Wilson is highly critical of affirmative action policies in this regard, since they lack support among most white people and generally help, he believes, only the better-off blacks. Wilson also supports a policy of national economic planning designed to promote simultaneously, full employment, economic growth, and low inflation, though he gives us no blueprint or theory as to how this is all to be achieved, and indeed, few it would seem except the most naive of old-style Keynesians will see his recommendations on this score as very helpful.

Assessment of Wilson

In focusing attention on the structural changes in the American economy, Wilson has certainly added to our understanding of the problem of the black ghetto. Whether one speaks of "automation" as analysts did in the 1950s and 1960s, or "de-industrialization" as they did in the 1970s and 1980s, there can hardly be any doubt that in the largest urban areas in America the number of high-paying factory jobs that require little skill has been diminishing for many decades. The sociologist John Kasarda, whose studies Wilson has relied upon heavily, has demonstrated this fact with abundant evidence. To give just one example from Kasarda's data: Between 1970 and 1980 the number of jobs in the city of Boston requiring less than a high school education decreased by 58.7%; in Chicago the figure was 41.8%; in Cleveland 48.2%; in Detroit 55.0%; in New York 40.4%; and in Philadelphia 47.2%. The number of jobs requiring only a high school diploma also dropped over this period in each of these same cities, though at a considerably lower rate. By contrast, the number of jobs requiring some college study *increased* very substantially in each of the six cities (in Boston by 32.1%, in Chicago by 43.9%, in Cleveland by 53.5%, in Detroit by 48.4%, in New York by 61.0%, and in Philadelphia by 57.4%), as did the number of jobs requiring a four-year college degree or more

(the increases for the six cities were 71.4%, 56.7%, 31.0%, 35.3%, 47.3%, and 57.4%, respectively). In all, between 1970 and 1980 the six cities lost a total of almost 1.45 million jobs requiring a high school education or less, while they gained a total of more than 995,000 jobs that require at least some college experience, (Kasarda, "Urban Industrial Transition and the Underclass," in *The Ghetto Underclass: Social Science Perspectives*, 31). These figures indicate major employment shifts of very considerable magnitude, and any theory of black family disintegration and underclass growth must certainly take them into consideration. With Wilson's basic contention there can be little argument: it is unquestionably more difficult today for an inner city youth to find a good paying job without a special skill or some college training than it was in the 1940s or in the decade preceding the Great Depression.

Wilson's argument about the exodus of stable middle-class elements from the ghetto and the resulting social isolation of the lower-class families that remained there is also important and draws attention to the often neglected element of neighborhoods in understanding the quality of life in the inner city. Youth from broken homes or single-parent families have a much easier time assimilating mainstream values and integrating into mainstream society—particularly into the world of regularized work—if they are fortunate enough to live in neighborhoods where most other families have working fathers present than they are in neighborhoods where most of their friends and schoolmates come from families similar to their own. This is a simple, common-sense observation, though one easy to overlook. Conversely, even an intact husband-wife family with a working father present that lives in an area where 80 or 90 percent of the children come from households led by unwed mothers will have great difficulty insulating its offspring—particularly its male offspring—from the destructive effects of local street gangs and the local teenage peer group culture no matter how conscientious the family may be in trying to raise its children according to general American norms. Unless it can construct a countervailing environment centered around a conservative church or a small network of stable relatives and friends, there is a very high probability that even children from intact families will be lost to the surrounding ghetto environment. Again, this is a common-sense observation, that nevertheless is easy to overlook, and we have Wilson to thank for drawing our attention to these important facts.

Wilson's analysis, however, can be criticized on a number of grounds. One obvious criticism—one made by Christopher Jencks in a long review of *The Truly Disadvantaged* in *The New Republic*²⁵—is Wilson's tendency to dismiss or ignore important moral and cultural changes of the last twenty-five years that have surely had a significant impact on the decay of stable family life in the ghetto. Specifically, he has given short shrift to the enormous changes in

attitudes toward divorce, out-of-wedlock births, and the obligations of responsible parenthood among the supposedly stable middle class, both black and white, that is expected to provide the role models and set the norms for inner city communities. Wilson does acknowledge in one or two places that the sexual revolution among the middle class may have had some harmful effects in the ghetto, but he drops the matter almost as soon as he mentions it on the grounds that there is no way to measure the effect. Precise measurement in the area of cultural and attitudinal changes may not be attainable, but an inability to measure a phenomenon precisely is hardly a reason for ignoring it, and Wilson would seem here to be displaying what Professor Jennifer Hochschild has recently characterized as the ostrich response of so many commentators on the underclass—that is, the "almost irresistible tendency" on the part of such commentators "to focus on that part of the problem that fits their own preconceptions" to the neglect of other aspects of the problem that may be equally important though they don't fit so well into their interpretive framework or policy agenda.

A decline in marriage, an increase in divorce and spouse abandonment, and an increase in out-of-wedlock births has been a pervasive phenomenon throughout American society since the mid-Sixties, and it has been accompanied by, and in part has resulted from, radical changes in the older cultural values that had once prescribed lifelong marriage, sexual fidelity within marriage, and dedication to spouse and children as the only truly proper mode of family existence. The disintegrating forces which observers noted in the ghetto in the late Fifties and early Sixties were surely reinforced by the decline in these once pervasive cultural norms, which were weakened by successive attacks, first from the *Playboy* philosophy of the late Fifties and early Sixties, then from the drug-and-drop-out culture of the later Sixties, from the anti-family feminism of the late Sixties and Seventies, and finally from the "me generation" hedonism and narcissism of the late Seventies and Eighties. The 25-year period from 1965 to 1990 might be described as that in which much of the middle class itself lost its moorings and progressively abandoned its attachment to traditional middle-class values. The sturdy bourgeois family man of the 1950s was to give way to the cocaine-snorting yuppies and buppies of the Eighties, who were hardly in much of a position to teach the lower classes about the sanctity of home and hearth, even if they had lived in the same neighborhood.

In his review of Wilson's book, Christopher Jencks has described these general cultural changes and the effects that they have had on lower-class family life, that provides an important addition or corrective to Wilson's economic interpretation. What Jencks says in this regard is worth quoting at some length:

My own calculations show that the marriage rate among black men with

steady, well-paid jobs declined almost as much between 1960 and 1980 as the marriage rate among all black men. Marriage must, therefore, have been losing its charms for non-economic reasons as well.

The stable two-parent family is losing ground throughout American society. The trend is the same in Beverly Hills as in Watts. . . . Single parenthood began its rapid spread during the 1960s, when elite attitudes toward sex, marriage, divorce, and parenthood were undergoing a dramatic change. This change was obvious in the mass media, in the law, and in the widely publicized activities of celebrities. In the space of a decade we moved from thinking that society ought to discourage extramarital sex, and especially out-of-wedlock births, to thinking that such efforts were an unwarranted infringement on personal liberty. . . .

... Americans have always believed that every couple had a God-given right to conceive children, but until recently we assumed that this right carried with it an obligation to many, to live together, and to support these children. To enforce this obligation we exerted very strong social pressure on couples to many if they conceived children, and to stay married thereafter.... Even when almost every 'respectable' adult thought unwed parenthood, desertion, and divorce immoral, it was hard to keep families together in poor communities. Now that the mass media, the schools, and even the churches have begun to treat single parenthood as a regrettable but inescapable part of modern life, we can hardly expect the respectable poor to carry on the struggle against illegitimacy and desertion with their old fervor. They still deplore such behavior, but they cannot make it morally taboo. Once the two parent norm loses its moral sanctity, the selfish considerations that always pulled poor parents apart often become overwhelming.

In making this 'cultural' argument, I do not mean to deny the importance of the economic factors that concern Wilson. I only want to suggest that economic factors alone cannot explain the changes that began in the 1960s. It is the conjunction of economic vulnerability and cultural change that has proved disastrous. (28-30)

Another important cultural trend which Wilson does not consider, but which has certainly had a negative impact on ghetto youth, is the decline in the once venerable American work ethic, which demanded of all able-bodied people not caring for children that they seek gainful full-time employment, even if at a modest wage. Wilson does not consider supply side factors in explaining the low labor force participation rates of black youth, but certainly during upswings in the business cycle the conclusion is inescapable that many young blacks fail to seek employment not because of a lack of jobs but because the jobs that are actually offered are in the low-paying service sectors of the economy and are often seen as too demeaning or too unremunerative to be

worth the effort. Wilson had drawn attention to this fact in his earlier book, *The Declining Significance of Race*, but for reasons that are not clear he ignores the problem entirely in *The Truly Disadvantaged* and does not distinguish sufficiently between a situation in which there is a lack of jobs for the unskilled and a situation in which there is a lack of *high-paying* jobs. Certainly in the high-employment years of the late Eighties there was no lack of unskilled jobs in most of the northern cities—indeed, many security guard agencies, janitorial services, fast-food chains, and other employers of unskilled workers found themselves forced to raise their starting wages to thirty, forty, or even fifty percent above the official \$3.35 minimum wage in order to attract sufficient numbers of employees—and any conscientious youth at this time who was willing to work had little difficulty finding employment. But inner city youth, like youth outside the ghetto, are often choosier than their parents and grandparents were in the sort of work they will do (in one 1980 study of unemployed youth 16 to 21 years old, almost half listed an amount 50% or more above the current minimum wage as the minimum they would accept before working) and the result of this greater choosiness is often a spotty employment record and generally poor work habits and work attitudes that make it difficult for them to take advantage of a "good job" even if such should come their way. Wilson had treated these issues very candidly in his earlier work, though perhaps so as not to give ammunition to his conservative critics, he fudges over these same issues in *The Truly Disadvantaged* and fails to consider the impact of important attitudinal changes in this area. Some of Wilson's statements in his earlier book are worth recalling, for like Jencks' comments, they supplement without negating the structural economic interpretation of *The Truly Disadvantaged*:

Unlike the occupational success achieved by the more talented and educated blacks, those in the black underclass find themselves locked in the low-paying and dead-end jobs of the non-corporate industries.... Many of these jobs go unfilled, and employers often have to turn to cheap labor from Mexico and Puerto Rico. As Nathan Glazer has pointed out, "Expectations have changed, and fewer blacks and whites today will accept a life at menial labor with no hope for advancement, as their fathers and older brothers did and as European immigrants did."

It is not surprising . . . that recent studies of unemployment in the urban core reveal that blacks do not experience any special employment barriers in the casual, low-paid, and menial jobs of the low-wage sector. In fact, many of these jobs remain unfilled despite the extremely high unemployment rate of blacks in the inner city. Employers constantly complain of the difficulty of attracting and keeping a stable work force and often comment that some blacks seem to be more willing to go on welfare than to accept available work... .

It is no doubt true that in recent years, attitudes concerning low-status work have changed. Workers today are less willing to accept the kinds of low-paying and menial jobs that their grandfathers or fathers readily accepted. ... The underclass also knows that illegal activities, in many respects, provide a more lucrative alternative to low-wage employment. It was estimated in a recent study that roughly 20 percent of the adult residents in Harlem lived entirely on illegal income in 1966. (DSR, 16, 106-108)

Beyond Murray and Wilson

Murray and Wilson have unquestionably enhanced our understanding of the problem of the inner city black poor, and although neither writer thinks very much of the work of the other, their analyses should be seen as complementary rather than contradictory. Combining their two perspectives, we get a picture of an inner city environment in which high-paying blue-collar jobs have been steadily shrinking since the 1950s; better-off middle-class blacks have been moving out to the suburbs or at least away from the older inner city black areas; numerous changes in government policy have made welfare a more attractive option for an unwed mother than was the case in the 1950s; welfare reciprocity for the able-bodied, along with unwed motherhood, have lost their social stigma; there are much fewer status rewards accruing to the working poor who carry their own weight and refuse to take government handouts than was the case previously; crime has gotten out of control due in part to lax law enforcement and a belief that the poor and disadvantaged are not responsible for their actions; and discipline in the inner city schools has collapsed so that almost no learning can take place. To this picture we might add the insight of Jencks that the reduced commitment to marriage, children, and family life on the part of the cultural elite and a broad spectrum of the middle class encouraged the general growth of individual selfishness, which, in combination with the other problems of the ghetto, helped to create a social disaster,

What are we to make of this composite picture? Does it really explain the catastrophe of the inner city ghetto? Surely it is part of an explanation, but it fails to address itself to one of the obvious questions involved here, namely, why is it that American-born blacks, but not to the same extent the members of any other ethnic group (with the possible exception of Puerto Ricans), have been so susceptible to the destructive social and economic forces in the inner city that Murray and Wilson describe? No other ethnic group in America's cities has a problem with crime, delinquency, poor school performance, and out-of-wedlock births nearly as severe as black Americans (again excepting possibly Puerto Ricans), nor as much difficulty seeing to it that their children advance into the ranks of the (broadly defined) middle class. If generous

welfare benefits, lack of high-paying blue-collar jobs, the movement of wealthier and more successful people to better neighborhoods, a decline in status rewards for being poor but independent, along with changing attitudes towards sex and marriage, can produce an underclass-as the reader of Murray and Wilson might reasonably infer-why hasn't such a class developed on anything like the scale one finds in America in the more highly developed European welfare states? Most of the welfare states of Northern and Western Europe never had as strong a tradition of self-reliance as in America, they have undergone similar structural economic changes as in America, their more successful citizens presumably like nicer neighborhoods just as much as Americans do, they have had similar changes in attitudes towards sex and marriage as in America, and they offer much more extensive welfare benefits than in America. Yet they do not have anything like the problem America has with a permanent inner city underclass. Moreover, if the factors that Murray and Wilson describe produce an underclass, why do most of the current immigrants to the United States, including the vast bulk of non-white immigrants from Asia, Africa, and the Afro-Caribbean, seem so immune to this process? Why in short, the reader of Murray and Wilson must ask, has it been preeminently American-born blacks who have shown such a high degree of susceptibility to being trapped by the welfare system and displayed such low levels of adaptability to structural changes in the economy?

To answer questions of this kind, it would seem, one must turn to certain salient features of black history, black culture, and the black experience in America none of which Murray or Wilson show much interest in investigating. One can only speculate on the reasons for their disinterest in such matters-residual fallout from the Moynihan Report controversy may be part of an explanation, as well as the general bias against cultural and historical approaches by much of contemporary social science-but it is certain that even by combining the rational choice-type of incentive and disincentive model which Murray offers to analyze the policy changes of the late Sixties, with Wilson's structural unemployment and middle-class-exodus models, something is radically missing from our understanding of the "dark ghettos" of the inner cities. In his Labor Department memorandum, Daniel Moynihan had tried to explain how the legacy of past brutalization and oppression continued to have a great impact on black communal life in the urban North long after black people had escaped from the horrors of slavery and life in the Jim Crow South. Here Moynihan was continuing in a tradition of interpretation that had held the historio-cultural and historio-psychological dimensions of the black experience in America to be of utmost importance for understanding contemporary black problems. Virtually every social scientist of note who wrote on black issues from the 1930s to the 1960s shared Moynihan's view on this matter, and indeed, to anyone whose mind is not constrained by methodological dogmas or partisan political agendas Moynihan's view here would seem to

be a simple postulate of commonsense. History and culture do matter and the idea that one can gain a good understanding of what has happened in Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Detroit, Watts or South Chicago by an explanatory model that ignores black-specific factors should be viewed with utmost skepticism.

Within the context of the present review article it is not possible to deal with all the cultural, historical, and psychological factors which would need to be explored in order to understand the catastrophe of the ghetto. Some of the more salient of these factors, however, can be set forth briefly. It must first be understood that a very large percentage of the current inhabitants of the black ghettos—very possibly a majority—are first, second, and third generation descendants of an involuntarily displaced rural peasantry that was forced out of the cotton-agricultural economy of the South in three successive waves between 1915 and 1970. The first wave, which began at the time of the First World War and extended through the 1920s, might be designated the Boll Weevil Migration, since it resulted from the destructive effect of the snout beetle or boll weevil on Southern cotton production; the second wave, which lasted throughout the 1930s, might be designated the Depression Migration, since it was driven by the collapse of agricultural prices on the eve of the Great Depression and the resulting bankruptcy of many landowners (who were often forced to dismiss their black tenants), as well as by the agricultural policies of the New Deal, which, in paying landowners not to grow crops, often diminished the demand for black sharecroppers and black agricultural laborers; and the third wave, which began in the late Forties and continued into the late Sixties, might be referred to as the Great Automation Migration, since it resulted from the introduction into Southern agriculture of tractors and automatic cotton-picking machines, which, in conjunction with the introduction of chemical weed-killers, practically eliminated the need for black agricultural labor, and more than any other factor in this century, was responsible for the massive migration of black people from farms to cities.

Of the three migrations, the first is much less important than either of the other two mainly because it was so small relative to the total number of blacks migrating to the Northern cities during the same time period. (Most black people who migrated to the Northern cities between the beginning of the First World War and the beginning of the Great Depression were "voluntary" economic immigrants, who were not "pushed" out of the South due to unemployment, but rather, as a voluntarily self-selected group, were "pulled" to the great industrial cities of the North and Midwest for much the same reasons that the Southern and Eastern European immigrants had been "pulled toward these same cities in the previous generation—i.e. to advance themselves and their children and to carve out for themselves a better life). The Depression Migration and the Great Automation Migration, however, each had considerable impact on the Northern cities, and it is no exaggeration

to say that it was the involuntarily displaced agricultural workers who migrated north during these two immigration waves, and even more so their first and second generation offspring, who, in conjunction with all the sorts of factors that Wilson, Murray, and Jencks describe, transformed the inner city black areas from the vibrant and thriving communities they had often been in the 1920s to the dangerous ghettos they were to become in the Fifties, Sixties, and Seventies: Of the two migrations, the Great Automation Migration was by far the more important since it dwarfed in sheer size both of the two previous rural migrations and drew into the urban environment many of the most backward and socially isolated black peasants of the Deep South, who had experienced the Southern system of caste subordination and oppression at its most brutal and dehumanizing.

To give some indication of just how massive the exodus from Southern agriculture was during the post-World War II period, consider the following: according to the 1940 census more than 40% of blacks worked on farms, the vast bulk of the farms being in the South; when the 1970 census was taken, this figure had dropped to a mere 4.4%. Over the decade of the 1950s, the net black out-migration from the six Deep South states of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, Arkansas and Louisiana was a staggering 1.2 million, with Mississippi and Alabama accounting for 547,000 of these. The state of Mississippi alone during the Fifties had a net loss in its black population of 323,000, almost a quarter of its entire black population, and a figure roughly equal to the total net out-migration of blacks from the entire South during the decade of the 1930s. Charles Silberman has rightly described the post-World War II black migration out of the agricultural South as one of the great migrations of history, and the authors of the most important demographic history of blacks in America do not exaggerate much when they describe the rural-to-urban migration that took place during the 1950s as "the relocation of black America."²⁶ Not surprisingly, the most frequent destination of the black migrants were the states with the largest industrial cities, with New York, Illinois, California, Ohio, Michigan, and New Jersey showing the greatest net gain in their black populations over this period.

As Oscar Handlin and other historians have documented, the problem of adjusting to life in a complex, competitive, work and achievement-oriented urban environment is always difficult for people from a rural peasant background, but at least four salient factors distinguished the post-World War II black immigrants from the Deep South from many other rural immigrants who have come to America, which, when taken together and in conjunction with the various exogenous factors analyzed by Wilson, Murray and Jencks, made it extremely unlikely that either the immigrants or their children would

26. Rex Cambell and David Johnson, *Black Migration in America: A Social Demographic History* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1981).

be able to meet the challenges of the new urban environment. These factors were, a) the general poverty, illiteracy, and social isolation of the population; b) the lack of an entrepreneurial tradition or experience with buying and selling, and more generally, the lack of a tradition of self-improvement; c) the involuntary nature of the immigration itself and the resulting non-selectivity of much of the immigrant population; and d) the legacy of Southern violence, oppression, and extreme negative psychological conditioning. Each of these factors requires further elaboration.

To begin with the first factor it is important to realize just how impoverished, socially isolated, and intellectually backward the typical black sharecropper was who lived in the cotton growing regions of the Deep South before the massive migration of the post-war period. Other than a few pieces of usually second-hand household furniture, assorted housewares, and a tiny amount of inexpensive clothing and other inexpensive personal items, the typical sharecropper owned virtually nothing. He lived in a small decrepit shack lent to him by his landlord that lacked both electricity and indoor plumbing; he received an amount of food and money from the landlord that was just enough to keep himself and his family going; he owned no tools, no capital, no draft animals; and he had almost no savings other than the few dollars he might have in his home for personal items and foodstuffs. Although not subject to periodic famines, the typical sharecropper family led a truly subsistence-level existence that was little better than that of a medieval serf. When forced to migrate North, the family had almost no financial resources with which to begin life in the new environment.

The typical sharecropper was not much better off in terms of his educational resources or exposure to knowledge and ideas. In 1940 the average black adult in the South had less than five years of education, and even this low figure offers an exaggerated picture of the level of intellectual achievement among Southern blacks. Black schools in rural areas of the South were typically operated for only six or seven months out of the year (white schools were run for nine months), and per pupil expenditures were usually only a small fraction of what they were for white schools, despite the fact that per pupil expenditures for white schools in the South were the lowest in the nation. One study of black schools in Alabama in the late 1930s showed a per pupil expenditure that was less than 15% of the national average for all students. Throughout the Thirties and Forties the pay for teachers in many rural Southern black schools was so low that in many cases schools had to employ teachers who themselves were only barely literate and barely able to do grammar school level arithmetic. A standard achievement test administered to over 300 black Alabama school teachers in the early Thirties resulted in an average test score that was below the national average for ninth graders.

The typical sharecropper home contained neither books, nor periodicals, nor newspapers. In his classic study of 612 sharecropper families in the

cotton-growing regions of the South, Charles S. Johnson found that only nine of the families-less than 1.5% received a daily newspaper. The vast majority of sharecropper homes-over 85%-received no newspapers, magazines, or periodical literature of any kind, not even a monthly farm journal. As Johnson remarked of these families: "Reading and writing are not a serious part of the routine of daily life for either adults or children."²⁷ The displaced sharecropper who migrated North could thus bring with him no more intellectual resources than financial ones.

Poverty and illiteracy by themselves have certainly not been an insuperable barrier to social and economic advancement for immigrants to America. Many immigrants coming to America have been poor, and in the English language at least, the vast majority have been illiterate. But the poor and illiterate blacks who migrated to the Northern cities from the Deep South in the Fifties and early Sixties also lacked what was often so decisive to the success of many foreign immigrants to these shores, namely, some rudimentary experience in buying and selling and in the ways of a market economy. Small business has often been a lifeline for many ethnic minorities that have emigrated to America-Chinese, Jews, Italians, Armenians, Greeks, and West Indians in the early decades of this century, for instance; Koreans, Vietnamese, Asian Indians, and Arabs today-but Southern-born blacks and their offspring never developed the kind of enterprising business spirit that one finds in these other groups. The few black-owned businesses that have existed in the Northern cities have usually been confined to personal services or to specialty products purchased mainly by a black clientele (e.g. barber shops, beauty parlors, funeral homes, black-oriented cosmetic shops, etc.), and only rarely has black business been able to compete successfully in non-black markets. Even in the inner city ghetto itself, the proprietors of small businesses have most frequently been foreign-born immigrants-Jews in the Twenties and Thirties, for example, and Asians today-while one of the few cases where there was a large black business presence in the inner city, that is, in New York's Harlem during the Twenties and Thirties, the businesses were usually owned not by Southern-born blacks, but by West Indians. Many reasons have been offered to explain the low participation of blacks in small business, and each must be carefully evaluated, but part of the reason is certainly to be sought in the rural Southern background from which most blacks have come.

Unlike many European peasants, black sharecroppers not only owned nothing, but had little experience in selling at market even small quantities of produce. All buying and selling operations on the cotton plantation were usually conducted by the landowner, who alone was responsible for all business and financial matters. The Southern sharecropper system was

27. *Shadow of the Plantation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934, 1966).

specifically intended, in fact, to discourage individual initiative and entrepreneurship among blacks, and to keep the black sharecropper dependent upon the landlord for his day to day sustenance. Together with the general rules of caste subordination which existed in the South, the Southern sharecropping system seems to have been successful in producing exactly what Southern cotton growers wanted it to produce—namely, a black labor force that was extremely docile, dependent, and submissive. Our best source for understanding the effect of the sharecropper system on Southern black attitudes, habits and personality formation is John Dollard, whose magnificent *Class and Caste in a Southern Town*,²⁸ first published in 1937, is still indispensable reading for anyone who wants to understand the genesis of many of our contemporary urban problems.

According to Dollard, the institution of the "furnish," in which the landlord, in addition to providing the sharecropper with a small shack to live in, advanced him a small monthly allotment of money or credit to take care of his basic subsistence-level needs, was specifically designed to instill in the poor black agricultural laborer a sense of infantile dependency and subservience. According to Dollard's own observations and the testimony of many of his informants, both black and white, the system was very successful in achieving its goals:

Middle class Negro informants uniformly deplored the passivity of lower class Negroes and often reproached them with it. One said he believed that many tenant farmers do not care much whether they make money out of a crop or not. They are satisfied with a secure furnish, take it easy, and let the white man worry. . . . A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush to lower class Negroes: Informant believed that habits which might lead to advancement are especially weakened by the security of the furnish. So long as they have a living, however meager, and the indefinite guarantee of this living, [Negro sharecroppers] are not forced to save; they always know that they will be furnished a house the year around and food for six or seven months while the crop is growing. Under these circumstances the Negro cropper experiences none of that institutional pressure which produces an ambitious and aggressive attitude toward economic life... .

The furnish system is a kind of permanent dole which appeals to the pleasure principle and relieves the Negro of responsibility and the necessity of forethought. Very important in the above account are the personal dependence and attitude of passive expectation of the tenant toward his landlord. . . . One can think of the lower class Negroes as bribed and drugged by this system. The effect of the social set-up seems to be to keep [lower class]

28. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1937). See also on the problems of the lower-class sharecroppers in their adjustment to life in the northern city, the excellent two-part article by Nicholas Lemann, "The Origins of the Underclass," *Atlantic*, June 1986, 31-36; July 1986, 54-68.

Negroes infantile, to grant them infantile types of freedom from responsibility, and also to exercise the autocratic control over them which is the prerogative of the patriarchal father. The shift from a clinging, dependent adjustment to parents over to an independent attitude toward the world is always perceived as slightly traumatic by children. Parents at least are careful to enjoin the child to 'act like a big boy,' and so on, as a means of persuading him to abandon infantile adjustments. The southern caste set-up, on the other hand, encourages the lower class Negro to 'act like a little boy'; and this in fact he does. (402-405)

Besides the infantile dependency encouraged by the practice of the furnish, the Southern caste system itself, Dollard says, provided ample disincentives to socio-economic advancement not only for poor black sharecroppers, but for all blacks regardless of their occupation. Southern whites generally believed that blacks had a definite "place" in society, and as Dollard explains, any attempt to rise above this place by efforts to improve one's social and economic position might be interpreted by whites as a hostile act of aggression against the caste system itself and a threat to specifically white prerogatives:

Strange as it may seem, this effort on the part of Negroes [to improve their socio-economic position] is perceived by the white caste as an affront. Holding a prestigious job, owning a large tract of land, having a special talent by which the Negro competes with white people are forms of activity which are defined as aggressive. It is plain to see how the caste situation tends to discourage or prevent vertical social mobility in Negroes. In Southerntown, at least, resentment at Negro 'rising' is felt not only by lower class white people, but by the middle class people as well... .

The Southern jealousy of the Negro who 'rises' or threatens to rise in a socioeconomic sense tends to discourage him from acquiring the social treasure of good habits. It is mildly dangerous for a Negro to be too prosperous, to have too fine a house, too good a car, or any other sign of social advancement. He meets at once the possibility that whites will think he has a position that should be held only by whites...

Every Negro who has achieved advancement beyond lower class status in Southerntown has been made aware of this envy and resentment at his aggressive mobility. Such Negroes are said to go beyond their station, that is, to threaten the fixed inferior and superior positions of Negro and white castes. The individuality and independence which go with landownership, for example, seem to be defined as aggressive behavior on the part of a Negro.... Although it does not happen often, the threat of being driven off one's own land is always there—the homes and barns of the innocent and upright may be destroyed. The knowledge that this can happen has a

tendency to discourage the capable Negroes from saving and building up farms of their own. (297, 428-429, 298-299)

One doesn't need much of a sociological imagination to predict that people with the sort of background and past experience that Dollard describes in these paragraphs are not likely to become successful and aggressive entrepreneurs should they find themselves moving to the urban industrialized centers of the North. Those whose skills are limited to picking cotton, hoeing weeds, and milling cows, but who have had little experience with money and markets, or with the risks and rewards of private economic initiative, are not likely to take advantage of new entrepreneurial opportunities in small businesses even if such opportunities should present themselves in great number.

Poverty and illiteracy, together with a total absence of a tradition of entrepreneurship and self-improvement are background characteristics that under any circumstances would provide formidable obstacles to an immigrant population's upward social and economic advancement in an urban economy. The members of the Great Automation Migration, however, were handicapped by two additional factors, each of which was probably of significantly greater importance than the total combined impact of these other factors. The first of these was the involuntariness of the immigration itself and the resulting (relative) non-selectivity of the immigrant population. If we define a "voluntary" economic immigrant as a person who has the opportunity to remain employed at his traditional occupation without his standard of living being threatened, but despite this possibility chooses to migrate in order to improve the social and economic position of himself or his family; and if we define an "involuntary" economic immigrant as someone who does not have such an option but is forced to move because he loses his job or otherwise is prevented from living in the manner in which he has traditionally lived, then it is clear that there are major differences between the typical voluntary and the typical involuntary economic immigrant that will be of major significance in terms of their ability to succeed in an achievement-oriented market economy. The self-selection process that determines who migrates and who stays behind in the case of voluntary immigrants will result in an immigrant population very different in character than one in which this self-selection process has not operated or has not operated to the same degree.

Voluntary economic immigrants typically migrate for the specific purpose of getting ahead in life and seeing to it that their children get ahead. They are often single-minded in the pursuit of this goal and are often willing to adapt themselves to whatever is necessary to achieve their ends. In comparison to the involuntarily uprooted, voluntary immigrants will typically show a greater degree of dissatisfaction with their lowly economic and social position; they will have a higher level of ambition, aspiration and energy; they will display higher levels of self-confidence and correspondingly lower levels of self-

doubt and feelings of inferiority; they will display a greater willingness to take calculated risks to further their economic advancement; they will have more clearly defined life-goals and a more focused direction to their efforts to achieve these life-goals; they will have greater confidence in their ability to alter their personal situation in a positive manner through personal sacrifice and hard work; they will have a higher degree of optimism and greater faith in the future; and in general, they will display a more creative use of their talents and capacities.

Involuntary immigrants, on the other hand, will typically be less adaptable, less ambitious, and have lower levels of aspirations. They will have less confidence in themselves, have less well-defined goals, and will be less willing to take risks or make sacrifices for the future. Moreover, by the very fact that they have been involuntarily uprooted and forced to move to a strange and perhaps bewildering environment where they do not necessarily desire to be, involuntary immigrants will be more inclined to be fatalistic about life, to believe that everything depends on "luck," to be more pessimistic and self pitying, to have less faith in a benign future, and to have less confidence in their own capacities to alter their life for the better.

Although they are not the sorts of things with which quantitative-oriented social scientists like to deal, these differing attitudes, motivations, and psychological characteristics can be enormously important in determining who gets ahead and who does not in a competitive environment. Psychic disadvantages, however, are not the only disadvantages from which the involuntarily uprooted suffer. In comparison to voluntary immigrants, involuntary immigrants will be less likely to have planned long in advance and to have saved up money to help support themselves in their emigration; they will be less likely to possess marketable skills; and they typically will not have as capable a support network of family and friends in the area to which they have migrated that will be able to help them in making a successful adjustment. This last factor is particularly important, since it is often these individual support networks which provide the new immigrant and his family with valuable information regarding jobs and the ways of getting ahead in the new city, and can often lend the immigrant money or provide other goods and services in time of need. Success or failure in the new urban environment can often depend on the degree of support an immigrant receives from such private networks.

The difference between the voluntariness and involuntariness of an immigrant group is well illustrated in the relative success of recent black immigrants from Haiti. Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere, its people are largely illiterate, and few Haitians can speak English. Yet the poor Haitians who have migrated to the United States in recent years seem to be displaying patterns of upward social and economic mobility very similar to those of earlier European immigrants. In Miami, for

instance, where the Haitian population is very substantial, a thriving Haitian community has emerged that stands in starkest contrast to the inner city black communities in most American cities. Many of the small businesses in the Haitian area are Haitian owned, and employers throughout Florida are said to prefer Haitian workers to native Americans, whether black or white, because of their greater reliability and greater eagerness to work.

The examples of the Haitian immigrant, and indeed, of successful black immigrants from many other areas of Africa and the Afro-Caribbean, also helps to illustrate the final handicap under which the members of the Great Automation Migration had to labor in their attempted adjustment from farm to city. This is the fact that the black migrants from the Deep South, unlike foreign-born black immigrants from Africa or the Afro-Caribbean, had been socialized into the ways of a white-dominated caste society that not only had a subordinate place assigned to blacks, but tried to convince blacks through generations of the most brutal and pervasive negative conditioning that one could possibly imagine, that this was their rightful place because of their alleged mental inferiority and innate childlike immaturity. The destructive effect of the inferiority doctrine upon black self-confidence and the black self-image can hardly be underestimated, and of the four factors distinguishing the members of the Great Automation Migration from many other rural immigrants who have come to America, it is this which arguably has had the most harmful and the most long-lasting effects in preventing black adjustment to the demands of an increasingly high-tech and information-oriented economy.

Every aspect of social life in the Deep South was designed to convince black people that they occupied a lower order of humanity than that occupied by the superior whites. Whether it was the requirement that blacks allow whites to be waited on first in retail establishments; that they give up their seats on crowded busses and trains to white people; that they address white people by such deferential titles as "Mr.," "Mrs.," "Sir," or "Boss," while they themselves, no matter how prominent or mature in years, were addressed by their first names in the manner in which one would address a child; that they enter a white household only through the back door and never shake the hand of a white person-these and dozens of other social customs in the Deep South were intended to reinforce the general Southern view that black people were so lowly and degraded, so animal-like and inferior, so mentally and morally unfit for any kind of higher civilization, that they would never be capable of living together with white people on a level of social equality.

For understanding some of the psychological effects of Deep South customs on black development, John Dollard is once again one of our best sources. His description of the brutality of some of these customs, together with the social and psychological effects they were intended to have, is chilling, especially when one considers how widespread such customs were and how generally accepted within the dominant white society.

Violations of caste custom may also lead to the beating of a Negro. A local informant told me of a Negro physician who came down from the North to practice in a southern town. He had resolved to accept the situation and do the right thing. But one day in talking to a drugstore clerk he occasionally forgot and said "yes" and "no." The clerk flew into a rage and bellowed at him, "Say, nigger, can't you say 'Yes, sir?'" The doctor corrected his mistake. That evening a group of young white men called at his house, took him out into the country, and beat him severely. Subsequently he had to leave town....

Southern white informants are not reticent about the use of assault on Negroes; rather *they* talk about it with a self-confident satisfaction. One declared, for example, that the "nigger" is all right in his place.... He mentioned the case of a "nigger" who once worked for him and refused to do something he was told to do. Informant got his blackjack and beat him about the head until he was unconscious. When the "nigger" woke up informant asked him if he wanted any more. The Negro replied, "No, boss, Ah's got enough." Informant did not discharge the Negro but sent him back to the job and "he was one of the best niggers I have ever had." Informant said he has, on occasion, broken all the knuckles of his right hand, exhibiting same, hitting "niggers." Another white man said that the only thing to do with "uppity niggers" is to smash them down. If they get "sassy," hit them; that is all they understand.

A Negro man related the story of a friend who was appointed postmaster of a little town in the South. The white people resented the appointment and threatening rumors began to circulate concerning what the whites would do if the postmaster did not get out. Informant worked occasionally with his friend but finally, in face of the hostility of the white people, decided to quit. The postmaster stayed on. A few weeks later he was caught by a gang of whites and beaten so badly that he died shortly afterwards... .

There are, of course, other forms of aggression besides the direct physical violence which we have been discussing. One of them is undoubtedly moral intimidation, that is, an attack on the self-esteem of another individual. This type of aggression is a chronic policy of the white caste in the South; its aim seems to be to humiliate the Negro, to put him on another and lower scale of humanity.... One of [the forms of personal derogation of Negroes] is the caste etiquette which is compulsory for Negroes. A white friend gave me some instruction on this score immediately after I arrived in Southerntown.

.. Of course, at first I made mistakes and on one occasion a white friend gently reminded me, "You know, down here we never refer to a Negro as 'Mr.' or 'Mrs.'; they don't expect it and we never do it. We always call them by their first names no matter if they are doctor or preacher or teacher or anything else. If we should call them 'Dr' or 'Mr.' or 'Mrs.,' they would get

the idea that they were somebody and get real cocky...."

Another form of personal derogation of Negroes is to apply the special and unfavorable designation, "nigger," to them. It stamps the Negro as an inferior man and seems to isolate him from the community of human sympathy and cooperation. At first it was jarring to hear the word used, but I heard it repeated so often that eventually it lost its shock for me.... There are many forms of personal derogation of Negroes which are hard to classify. One of these, for example, is that Negroes are expected to "wait" or stand at the end of the line until white persons are through. In the case of Negroes and whites waiting in a professional or business office, it is taken for granted that whites are served first. A Negro employee of a white boss was maddened by having eternally to wait for conferences until no white people were about. The white employer understood quite well, as indeed did his employee, that he could not afford to let it be said that he let a white person wait while he talked to a Negro. This sort of thing is extremely discouraging and disheartening, as probably it is meant to be. It is difficult to keep up a tone of active self-feeling and self-respect when one constantly receives these signs of negative evaluation from others. (339-344)

It is often said that under the constraints of the Jim Crow system, black people developed two faces (or two personalities), a role-playing one which they displayed before white people, and their true face (or true personality), which they exhibited only when they were alone among each other. There is no doubt much truth in this observation, and certainly for anyone who wanted to preserve even a minimal sense of human dignity, such a double life was an absolute necessity. But it would be the height of foolishness to suppose that the efforts to convince black people that they were innately inferior to whites was without its harmful effects. On the contrary, it would seem to be only the very exceptional person, or the person fortunate enough to have a very exceptional and supportive family, who could come through such an experience psychically unscathed. In the great majority of cases, the more reasonable assumption would seem to be that the systematic effort over generations to convince black people that they were inferior to whites had just the effect it was intended to have, and that, at the very least, the inferiority doctrine sowed the seeds of self-doubt among black people that has served to undermine the self-confidence of even the most able and ambitious. As Andrew Billingsly (in a more characteristically lucid moment) reminds us: "It should not be difficult to discern that people who, having been told for 200 years—in ways more effective than words—that they are subhuman, should begin to believe this themselves and internalize these values and pass them on to their children and their children's children" (*Black Families*, 49). The Deep South sharecropper, the most backward, illiterate, and poorest of all blacks, no doubt

internalized these negative values more readily than anyone else.

The Second Generation and the Disintegration of the Ghetto

What happened to the displaced sharecropper when he came to live in the big city? How successful was he at getting and keeping a job, at establishing and maintaining a stable family relationship, and most importantly of all, at preparing his children for the great challenges posed by life in a new competitive urban environment where one's "place" was no longer ascribed (at least not in the same way it had been in the rural South), and upward socio-economic mobility was not only permitted of immigrants and their children, but was even expected of them? While a comprehensive history of the Great Automation Migration has yet to be written, from what we do know it seems that for many displaced sharecroppers, the move to the great Northern metropolis proved to be a disaster-frequently for the ex-sharecroppers themselves, and even more frequently for their children. When the displaced sharecropper entered the world of the Northern industrial city, one populated by immigrants from many parts of the world who had come to America explicitly to get ahead, he entered an alien universe where a new competitive work-and-achievement game was being played that he was singularly ill-prepared to master. Indeed, he was almost preprogrammed to fail. His background and conditioning, the circumstances of his migration, his poverty, illiteracy and lack of useful skills, together with the racial discrimination he inevitably faced (which was much greater than that faced by the members of most other immigrant groups) all conspired to insure that he would not do very well in terms of the self-improvement values of the new urban culture.

The results were predictable: Some get discouraged by their inability to secure a high paying job or one that offers the possibility for advancement. Others are resentful over the fact that while they had important tasks to do on the farm which women could not do as well, in the urban North, where male-status primarily depends upon earning power, they can earn no more at most of the low-skilled jobs that are available to them than their wives can earn as domestics. And in the impersonal atmosphere of the big city, of course, many succumb to the all-too-human vices of gambling, alcoholism, and womanizing, which had previously been kept under a much greater degree of social control in the small Southern towns and rural areas from which they had come through the general surveillance of the local community and the influence of the local black church. Family desertion by the male seems to have been a common response to many of these developments.

Still, for the Southern-reared sharecropper, as well as for many other lower-class blacks reared in the Deep South, life in the urban metropolis may be experienced in more positive terms. After all, the standard of living the

Southerner encounters in the urban North, even at the wages of the lowest paid janitor, hotel worker, elevator operator, or other service worker, is a vast improvement over the abject poverty of the rural South; and since the rural black Southerner has been conditioned in his formative years not to have high aspirations or ambitions, the fact that he might not do as well as the members of certain other immigrant groups in America may not be so disturbing. In the urban North, even the poorest Southern migrant will usually be able to live in a structurally sound building—one that has glass windows and efficient indoor heating, electric lighting and electric refrigeration, hot and cold running water, and even a flush toilet. Most of these apartments, moreover, will be outfitted with serviceable second-hand furniture, and in time many migrants will be able to add to their household items their own radios and television sets. Although his living arrangement may seem shabby by middle-class standards, in comparison to his former existence in the falling-down shacks of the cotton plantation, with their dirt floors, leaking roofs, stinking outhouses, sparse furnishings, and lack of electricity, the sharecropper's new home in the North will offer many material advantages. There are other advantages as well. In the North black people no longer have to face the daily humiliation of the Jim Crow system; they are no longer subject to lynching or mob violence (or to the legal lynching that often passed for justice under the Southern court system); they have access to much better medical care; and both their rights and their interests are much better cared for by the Northern urban political systems that have become increasingly solicitous of black votes. All in all, life under such circumstances for the transplanted sharecropper, even if he must toil for the rest of his days at a low-status job, may be seen as quite tolerable.

Where the real problems begin to emerge, and indeed on such a scale that they will eventually overwhelm and ultimately destroy the black inner city ghettos, is in the second generation. One might speak here of a weak father/delinquent son syndrome. Children who have been raised in the North will typically develop Northern-style aspirations and desires. They will see that upward mobility is possible in the North and no white caste system will try to instill in them the conviction that they must stay in their assigned "place." Given a normal level of youthful energy and enthusiasm, they will probably want to "make something of themselves" and advance according to the accepted American pattern. And yet, their parents will be almost totally useless to them in terms of providing them with the guidance, know-how, and resources that are necessary to achieve their desired ends. Whether one is talking about money or start-up capital, a dedication to educational advancement, above average levels of self-discipline, entrepreneurial skills, high levels of self-confidence, familial "push," or the special habits of perseverance and dedication to long-range plans, the displaced sharecropper will not be able to provide his offspring with what it takes to advance in the Northern industrial city. Moreover, the children of the Deep South migrants no longer

remember the poverty of the rural South, so what may have satisfied their parents in terms of their improved socio-economic status in the North cannot possibly be satisfying to them. Their frustrations will grow. The problem will be particularly acute in the case of males, since it is males who have traditionally held the role of breadwinners and providers in American society (as in almost all societies), and have been under the most social pressure to advance themselves in terms of their occupational and economic status. However successful he may be at holding down a low-paying menial job, given his ignorance of the ways of an urban industrial society and his past conditioning to be docile and passive, the black peasant migrant from the rural South will prove a total failure as a guide and role-model to his male offspring under the new competitive conditions of the urban North.

As the sons of the Deep South migrants begin to enter their critical teen years, where rebelliousness is normal, and forceful and creative parenting most crucial, they begin to lose respect for their fathers, who will increasingly appear to them as ignorant country bumpkins, if not contemptible Samboes and Uncle Toms. The situation will be even worse, of course, if their father has deserted the family and their mother alone is responsible for their discipline and upbringing. Confronted with the intolerable situation of rising desires and expectations that have been induced by growing up in an upwardly mobile society, and a realization of the fact that, given their meager familial resources, they will have little chance of succeeding along a conventional career and achievement path, the male teenagers will have a very powerful incentive to drop-out of mainstream society and renounce the traditional male husband/provider role. Since such teenagers will typically live in neighborhoods where there will be large numbers of other teenagers from similar backgrounds as themselves, the stage will be set for the emergence of delinquent gangs and deviant teenage peer group cultures that will provide alternative conceptions of what it means to be a man.

To understand the disintegration of the ghettos that took place from the early Sixties to the late Seventies, one must understand, in addition to the factors that Murray, Wilson, and Jencks analyze, that it was during this period that the Northern-reared male offspring of the Great Automation Migration entered the turbulent period of their adolescent years and the years of their young adulthood. One must also understand the enormous attractiveness that the teenage gang and the values of the male street culture can have for lower-class adolescents, even for those who come from fairly stable homes. Compared to the humdrum existence of life along a more conventional work and achievement path (even if one has confidence that one can succeed along such a path), the thrills and excitement of being together with one's buddies on the street can be enormously alluring. For those who are corrupted by their influence, however, the gangs and deviant peer group cultures will virtually

destroy a young man's chances of becoming an effective husband or family man. The values of the gangs and adolescent peer groups represent a complete inversion of the bourgeois family ethic: Maleness comes to be identified with sexual prowess and the ability to con and exploit a string of transient sexual partners; women are referred to contemptuously as "bitches" and "whores," while fathering children out of wedlock for whom one takes no responsibility comes to be seen as a crucial rite of passage and proof of one's manhood; students who work hard at school in order to advance themselves according to mainstream norms are denounced for "acting white"; pimping, drug-dealing, numbers-running, fencing stolen goods, and other forms of street hustles and criminal activities come to be seen as vastly preferable to less exciting (and much less remunerative) conventional jobs; getting high on dope becomes the major form of recreation; an emphasis on toughness, manipulation, and violence comes to dominate relationships with outsiders; and Superfly comes to replace the church-going family man as the dominant figure to emulate.

In a community where such values come to prevail, it is not hard to understand why there are so few "marriageable black males," why young black women might give up on finding a stable husband, and why the level of crime, delinquency, and street violence reach such a point that normal community life becomes impossible and those with the financial means move away. The problem of the second generation was compounded in the 1960s by the sheer number of black youth in the ghetto. During this decade the number of black teenagers living in central cities increased by almost 75%, thus compounding the "second generation effect" with a "critical mass" effect. As more and more black male youth dropped out of mainstream society and hung out in street gangs and other deviant peer groups, the more stable elements of the ghetto community were simply overwhelmed and could not control the destructive explosion which so large a number of improperly guided adolescents unleashed.

The "second generation effect," it should be understood, is not peculiar to rural Southern black migrants, nor is it a phenomenon that has only appeared since the Second World War. Oscar Handlin, one of our acutest observers of immigrant life in America, sees the problem of second generation delinquency as one that to some extent affected *all* of the immigrant groups that came to America's large cities, though of course, it was a much more manageable problem in the case of some groups than of others. Speaking of the high rates of "intemperance, prostitution, pauperism, gambling, criminality, and juvenile delinquency" that observers complained of in New York City's slums during the latter part of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century, Handlin says that such problems were in part

the results of the destruction of old habits and of the shocking effects of new

conditions. The disruption of family ties and the dissolution of the authority of accepted values unsettled the norms of personal behavior and left the individual confused and therefore vulnerable at moments of crisis. That was why the second generation was in a particularly precarious situation. Compelled to devise their own standards, its members often found those in conflict with the rules of established society, so that street sports and gang activity verged almost imperceptibly over into crime and vice. The degree of susceptibility to one or another of these disorders varied from ethnic group to ethnic group, although none was altogether free of them.²⁹

The closest historical parallel to the experience of the Great Automation Migration was undoubtedly that of the potato famine generation of Irish Catholic immigrants. The similarities are indeed striking, and Daniel Moynihan's prescient sociological analysis of the disintegration of the black family seems to have been partially the result of insights he had gained from his earlier study of the Irish Catholic experience in America. Like the displaced sharecroppers of the Great Automation Migration, the Irish Catholic immigrants of the late 1840s potato famine generation were an involuntarily uprooted rural peasantry, who came to the urban centers of America not because they wanted to come, but because they had no choice. Like the black sharecroppers, they were a destitute population, unskilled and often illiterate, with little experience in the ways of entrepreneurship or self-improvement. And also like the black sharecroppers, they were an oppressed and despised people, ruled by an alien race, that did everything it could to degrade and humiliate them, and to convince them that in comparison with the Protestant Anglo-Saxons they were inferior and animal-like beings. The Irish response to urbanization in America paralleled that of the rural blacks: family life became disorganized; husbands often abandoned their wives; alcoholism and within-group violence became rampant; the male youth turned to crime and delinquency; the areas of the cities in which they lived became dangerous slums from which respectable people fled; many became burdens on private and public eleemosynary institutions; and the more incorrigible among the young men filled up the public jails (hence our term "paddy wagon").

The Irish analogy, however, should give some reason for hope, for though the movement was very slow, Irish Catholics would eventually develop a very strong family structure that conformed to the general American middle-class pattern. What will become of the inner city black family is, of course, impossible to predict. It would seem as if it has reached the point where its situation can hardly get any worse. But one thing can be said with a high degree of probability, and that is that for improvement to take place a candid assessment of what has gone wrong and what needs to be done must be

29. *The Newcomers: Negroes and Puerto Ricans in a Changing Metropolis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), 37.

undertaken by all interested parties. We have people such as Murray and Wilson to thank for shedding light on important aspects of this continuing dilemma.

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