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Compensatory Education: Approaching the Problem from the Wrong Direction

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Abstract

The American approach to disparities in educational achievement is deficit focused and based on false assumptions of equal educational opportunity and social mobility. The labels attached to children served by compensatory early childhood education programs have evolved, e.g., from "culturally deprived" into "at-risk" for school failure, yet remain rooted in deficit discourses and ideology. Drawing on multiple bodies of literature, this thesis analyzes the rhetoric of compensatory education as viewed through the conceptual lens of the deficit thinking paradigm, in which school failure is attributed to perceived genetic, cultural, or environmental deficiencies, rather than institutional and societal inequalities. With a focus on the evolution of deficit thinking, the thesis begins with late 19th century U.S. early childhood education as it set the stage for more than a century of compensatory education responses to the needs of children, inadequacies of immigrant and minority families, and threats to national security. Key educational research and publications on genetic-, cultural-, and environmental-deficits are aligned with trends in achievement gaps and compensatory education initiatives, beginning mid-20th century following the *Brown vs Board* declaration of 1954 and continuing to the present. This analysis then highlights patterns in the oppression, segregation, and disenfranchisement experienced by low-income and minority students, largely ignored within the mainstream compensatory education discourse. This thesis concludes with a heterodox analysis of how the deficit thinking paradigm is dependent on assumptions of equal educational opportunity and social mobility, which helps perpetuate the cycle of school failure amid larger social injustices.

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Introduction

The American approach to disparities in educational achievement is deficit focused and based on false assumptions of equal educational opportunity and social mobility. The rhetoric and practices associated with compensatory education have long been rooted in deficit thinking that attributes school failure to perceived individual-level deficits, rather than institutional and societal inequalities. U.S. compensatory education programs have historically been in response to the plights of young children from low-income and minority families (Beatty, 1995; 2012). Since mid-20th century, compensatory education efforts have increasingly focused on disparities in academic achievement, in which low socioeconomic status (SES) and minority students have "persistently, pervasively and disproportionally" underperformed on traditional assessments of academic achievement when compared with their middle- and upper-SES and White peers (Valencia, 1997, p. 1).[1] Despite a long history of attending schools that are inequitably financed, racially and ethnically segregated, tedious and stale in curricula delivery, and ethnocentric (Books, 2004; Oakes, 2005; Kozol, 1991, 2012; Condron & Roscigno, 2003; Callahan, 2005), the chronic school failures of low-SES and minority students have led to the presumption of genetic, cultural, and environmental deficiencies (Valencia, 1997, 2010, 2012; Pearl, 1997) to explain the differences between low- and high-achieving students.

The belief that racial, ethnic, and class disparities in educational achievement are caused by individual deficiencies has prevailed for most of the history of U.S. public education and is evident in the ideology and implementation of educational programs intended to compensate for

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[1] While the trends in disproportionate academic achievement among minorities include Black, Latino, *and Native American* students, this text is primarily focused on the deficit thinking attached to Black and Latino populations. Native American populations, however, have by no means been excluded from deficit-focused practices, policies, or beliefs.

those deficiencies. And yet, the racial, ethnic, and class disparities in educational opportunities and achievement have remained (Hemphill & Vanneman, 2010; Reardon, 2011; U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013). This thesis is motivated by the premise that the framing of, and solutions for, disparities in educational achievement have contributed to their intractability. Maintaining an emphasis on individual-level deficiencies fails to account for the long history of institutional oppression and segregation experienced by minority populations in the United States, or for the striking disparities between the schools attended by children from different socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Compensatory education initiatives, both old and new, ignore the lack of equal educational opportunity, the low probability of upward social mobility (McCall, 2013), and other legacies of racism (Love, 2010) and classism (Katz, 2013) in the U.S.. The evolution of deficit discourses in education since the mid 20th century is dependent on the American belief in equal opportunity and has exacerbated the differences between low- and high-achieving, minority and majority, and low- and middle- or upper-income children and students, in spite of intentions to do the very opposite.

Methodology and Conceptual Framework

This thesis draws on several bodies of scholarly literature as content for the analysis of select historical and present-day political, social, and cultural contexts in which early childhood and compensatory education programs have been implemented. In order to fully appreciate the nuances of the labels attached to compensatory education, it is important to consider how the premises behind them have been shaped by American beliefs and values, educational literature, societal and political forces**,** and other major efforts toward educational reform over time. These changing contexts are examined with a particular focus on the evolution of the discourses sur-

rounding the children targeted by these programs and their relation to the deficit thinking paradigm. Before examining the relationship between the changing contexts and evolution of the discourses of compensatory early childhood education, it is first necessary to provide an overview of the concept of deficit thinking.

Deficit Thinking

Modern deficit thinking is rooted in racist discourses which evolved from the early 1600s to the late 1800s and fostered beliefs that racial and ethnic minorities were mentally, physically, or culturally inferior to Whites (Menchaca, 1997). These racist discourses and the resultant deficit thinking, as noted by Menchaca, were used to "justify the economic [and educational] exploitation of people of color and to deny them the social and political rights enjoyed by whites" (1997, p. 37). With regards to education, the deficit thinking paradigm popular in the 20th and 21st centuries, as conceptualized by Valencia (1997, 2010) and others (Pearl, 1997a; Foley, 1997; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997; Dudley-Marling, 2007; Gorski, 2008**),** posits that low academic achievement, particularly among low-SES and minority students, is due to the individual deficiencies of students, their families, or their cultures. The modern version of deficit thinking, while similar to that of earlier centuries, operates on a more surreptitious level, through discrete disenfranchisement and the labeling and sorting of low-income and minority students into deficit-focused categories and classrooms.

Deficit thinking envelopes a wide variety of theoretical explanations for assumed deficits at the (1) cultural, (2) environmental, or (3) genetic level.[2] The cultural deficit model implies that specific aspects of an individual, or in some cases combined, culture(s) are responsible for dis-

[2] All three models are discussed in depth in Chapter 2

proportionate outcomes in education, life, health, and income. The cultural deficit model, largely based on an extension of the "culture of poverty" theory, is also referred to as the *cultural deprivation model,* the *cultural disadvantagement model,* or the *social pathology model,* (Pearl, 1997a, p. 133). This model names the family unit as the carrier of the pathological culture. The accumulated environmental deficit theory postulates that irreversible cognitive deficiencies stem from a lack of intellectual stimulation in poor homes (Valencia, 2012, p. xiv). This model is often restricted to evaluations of language development and has encouraged a variety of preschool and other targeted interventions (Pearl, 1997a). While more narrowly targeted than the broadly applied cultural deficit model, Pearl (1997a) asserts that the accumulated environmental deficit model is also cultural "to the extent that it [is] the culture of the lower class that allegedly organize[s] a life without the necessary intellectual stimulation—that is, the absence of books and other printed material, the limited exposure to adequate language, and so on" (p. 148). The genetic deficit model, conversely, argues for inherited and unchanging biological differences in intelligence and ability between races. No matter the transmitter of the assumed deficits, however, deficit thinking necessitates the creation of *otherness* between differing groups of students, families, and cultures. Through the attachment and labeling of internal deficiencies, the rhetoric of deficit thinking leads to the de-humanization of children, students, and families who deviate from the norms established and expected by society.

Public policies that utilize deficit thinking, then, target and characterize large groups of individuals as both *homogenous* and in need of *fixing* according to one or more assumed deficits. Inherent to the deficit thinking paradigm is the use of well-established negative stereotypes about poor and minority groups and individuals and the simultaneous denial of the historical and systematic isolation and deprivation experienced by poor and minority populations (Gorski, 2008).

Rather than addressing disparities at the institutional or societal level, when framed through the lens of deficit thinking, societal problems supposedly *caused* by disadvantaged populations can only be fixed by *changing the characteristics* of those populations. As conceptualized by Valencia (1997, 2010), the deficit thinking paradigm is characterized by features and processes of: 1) blaming the victim, 2) oppression, 3) pseudoscience, 4) temporal changes, 5) educability, and 6) heterodoxy (1997, p. 3).

Blaming the Victim:

The process of blaming the victim was first conceptualized by Ryan in 1971 as a direct reaction to the rise of the label "culturally disadvantaged" and the wealth of deficit-focused public policies that arose in the 1960s. The process of blaming the victim encompasses four steps which, as illustrated by Ryan (1971), happen "so smoothly it seems downright rational" (p. 8): (1) the identification of social problems related to advantage by victim-blamers or authority figures, (2) the use of studies to establish differences between the advantaged and the disadvantaged, (3) the establishment of these differences as the cause of the social problems, and (4) the intervention of the government in order to correct the established differences (perceived as deficiencies) (Ryan, 1971; Valencia, 1997, 2010). The process of blaming the victim, however, is not isolated to educational practices, as Ryan further notes:

> In education, we have programs of "compensatory education" to build up the skills and attitudes of the ghetto child, rather than structural changes in the schools. In race relations, we have social engineers who think of ways of "strengthening" the Negro family, rather than methods of eradicating racism. In health care, we develop new programs to provide health information (to correct the supposed ignorance of the poor) and to reach out and discover cases of untreated illness and disability (to compensate for their supposed unwillingness to seek treatment). Meanwhile, the gross inequalities of our medical care delivery systems are left completely unchanged. As we might expect, the logical outcome of analyzing social problems in terms of the deficiencies of the victims is the development of programs aimed at correcting those deficiencies. *The formula for action becomes extraordinarily simple: change the victim*. (1971, p. 8).

This tendency to blame the victim, and the history of public policies that adhere to its formula, is rooted in the "law of parsimony" or "Ockham's razor" (Valencia, 2010, p. 8). That is, blaming the victim and developing policies aimed at changing the victim are simply easier, less complex, and more efficient than blaming and trying to change already well-established and complex systems and institutions. As asserted by Pearl (1997b, p. 151):

> Deficit models, with their person-centered frameworks, were attractive to scholars and policymakers in that they were more parsimonious theories than ones that examined the complexity of institutionalized inequity. They were also safer. These deficit theories could ignore external forces—that is, the complex makeup of microlevel and macrolevel mechanisms that helped structure schools as inequitable and exclusionary institutions. By accepting the simplicity of the cultural and accumulated environmental deficit models, scholars and policymakers were excused from addressing the real issues of inequality.

This methodology of blaming the victim is then the route by which deficit thinking translates into action, and ultimately into oppression. Political and social practices in blaming the victim have long influenced both the implementation of compensatory education programs and their attached rhetoric, and are examined in Chapters 1 and 2 of this text.

Oppression:

When used by figures of authority to characterize large groups of people as the source of social problems, and to prescribe interventions to correct the perceived deficiencies of these populations, deficit thinking then results in a form of oppression. The deficit thinking-fueled oppression of poor and minority students has taken many forms, including (but not limited to) compensatory education programs, school segregation, compulsory ignorance laws, ability tracking, zero-tolerance discipline policies, high-stakes testing, ethnocentric curricula, income inequality, uneven allocation of school resources, residential segregation, and segregation-enforcing federal and state public policies. As framed by Valencia, this oppression represents "the cruel and unjust use of authority and power to keep a group of people in their place" (1997, p. 3-4). Trends in

these mechanisms of oppression, and their consequences, are discussed in detail in chapter 3.

Sustained by racial and class prejudices, the oppression of economically disadvantaged and minority students and children subsequently leads to the perpetuation of racial and class differences, and therefore legitimizes further applications of victim blaming and deficit thinking. In our capitalist society, where the distribution of limited resources is largely based on assumed merit, the oppression of low-SES and minority populations ensures that they do not become perceived as deserving of the same quality or quantity of resources had by members of the predominantly White middle- and upper-classes. The mechanisms of blaming the victim are also necessary to the continuation of these oppressive practices and policies. If members of these supposedly "deprived" populations could effectively disprove society's orthodox perceptions of their deficiencies, and instead succeed in blaming oppressive institutions, practices, and policies, the resulting redistribution of resources and systematic change would profoundly alter the long-established structure of power and wealth in America.

Pseudoscience:

The pseudoscience inherent to the deficit thinking framework is represented by a wide variety of research supporting the establishment of deficits in low-SES and minority peoples, and aiding in the methodology of blaming the victim. According to Valencia (1997),"[t]he deficit thinking model is a form of pseudoscience in which researchers approach their work with deeply embedded negative biases, pursue such work in methodologically flawed ways, and communicate their findings in proselytizing manners" (p. 10). While often camouflaged in a guise of the scientific method—that is, beginning with a sound hypothesis, collecting data and controlling for independent variables, and resulting in an objective and empirical conclusion, which may or may not verify the initial hypothesis—much of the research supporting individual, cultural, environ-

mental, and genetic deficits is methodologically flawed and has been effectively disproven as racist, reductionist, and/or ethnocentric. While some may argue that this flawed research not an intentional form of pseudoscience, at issue is the "*degree of vigor* with which the researcher pursues hypothesis verification" and the "*degree of researcher bias* (which is ubiquitous)" (2010, p. 12). Defined by Blum (1978) as a "process of false persuasion by scientific pretense" (cited in Valencia, 1997, p. 12), deficit-focused pseudoscience has long driven the implementation, practices, and rhetoric of compensatory education programs, despite evidence to the contrary.

Temporal Changes

Characterized by Valencia (1997) as a "dynamic and chameleonic concept," deficit thinking and its manifestations are shaped by trends in political and social challenges, values, and beliefs (p.6). With regards to this temporal flexibility, Valencia makes two points:

> First, deficit thinking, though dynamic in nature, is shaped more by the ideological and research climates of the time—rather than shaping the climates […] Second, the fluid aspect of deficit thinking is not seen in the basic framework of the model, but rather in the transmitter of the alleged deficits. The basic characteristics of the model (endogenous; imputation; oppressive) are fairly static. (1997, p. 7)

These dynamic and fluid expressions of deficit thinking are evident, for example, in the general evolution of deficit transmitters from genetic causes prior to World War II, to cultural causes in the 1950s and 1960s, and finally to environmental causes beginning in the 1970s. It is important to note however, that while this has been the general trend, and indeed the one followed by government-assigned deficit-labels, each of the three models of deficit thinking have retained prominence in selective educational research, literature, and practice. Despite the current institutional focus on environmental-deficits, for example, pseudoscientific research on genetically- and culturally-transmitted deficits have persisted well into the twenty-first century.

Educability:

The educability feature of the deficit thinking model refers the belief that the ability to be educated is primarily dependent on the individual, and not on the educational or social environment. With this in mind, deficit thinking has fostered the presumption that low-SES and minority students have low levels of educational achievement because they, as *individuals,* are not as educable as their middle- and upper-SES White and Asian counterparts. This belief is evident in the tendency of deficit thinkers to not only describe, explain, and predict the behaviors of low-SES and minority populations as "pathological" and "deficits," but also to provide a "*prescription*" for how to modify said behavior (Valencia, 1997, p. 7, 2010, p. 14). These prescriptions are almost exclusively targeted toward modifying or *fixing* the individual or group, rather than modifying the educational system as a whole.

This individual focus on perceptions of educability is apparent in a long history of the use of compensatory education and pull-out programs, low-track classrooms and curricula, language programs for low-SES Black students and students who are limited-English-proficient (LEP), assignment to classes for the mentally handicapped, and the attachment of parental education programs to compensatory programs like Head Start.[3] As illustrated by Dabney,

> The historical emphasis upon capacity for learning has been to perceive school learning as primarily dependent upon the presumed ability of the student, rather than upon the quality of the learning environment. However, there appears to be a growing recognition that school failure and student achievement are socially determined. Even so… such recognition has not prevented new interpretations of these failures which blame the victims and often co-exist with arguments about innate or class deficiencies. (1980, p. 13, cited in Valencia, 1997, pp. 8-9).

This perspective necessarily ensures that the low educational achievement of low-SES and minority students is not perceived as the fault of a society and educational system that has failed to accommodate them. Rather, the conventional view is that, because they were not educable in the

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[3] Discussed further in chapters 1 and 3.

first place, their assignment to low-ability classes, for example, was appropriate for their assumed intellectual expectations, and provided the highest level of instruction they could effectively acquire. These presumptions ultimately place nearly the entire burden of educational attainment on the shoulders of low-SES and minority children and students who face low teacher expectations, are disproportionately placed in low-track and special education classes, and are segregated from their peers. This removal of responsibility from both teachers and the educational system as a whole effectively segregates and oppresses low-SES and minority students, diminishes their potential for academic achievement, and facilitates the continuation of deficit thinking (Oakes, 2005).

Heterodoxy

The last characteristic of deficit thinking, heterodoxy, is based in the entrenchment of deficit thinking in orthodox scholarly literature, ideology, and political practice. The orthodoxy of deficit thinking, like the techniques of blaming the victim, is grounded in racial and class prejudices, competition for resources and power, and parsimony (the ease and efficiency of blaming the victim over the system). As a result, the works of anti-deficit thinkers and researchers have formed a discourse of heterodoxy, defined by unconventional opinions, dissent, and nonconformity (Valencia, 2010, p. 16). Other contributions to this growing heterodox discourse include works on elite discourse and racism (e.g., van Dijk, 1993; Tarman & Sears, 2005), the growth of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a mode of analysis (e.g., Love, 2010; Garcia, 2014), and reconceptualists in early childhood education (e.g., Bloch, 1987; Swadner & Lubeck, 1995; New & Mallory, 1996; New, 2003). More recently, the movement of anti-deficit heterodoxy has included legal action on school financing, bilingual education, school segregation, higher education financing, high-stakes testing, school closures, and undocumented students (Valencia, 2008, 2010,

p. 17).

The following chapters will describe the extent to which progress has been made in some of these areas, even as the orthodoxy and parsimony of deficit thinking has ensured its continued prevalence in American political, educational, and societal beliefs and institutions. Chapter 1 provides a brief history of U.S. early childhood education programs and the American tendency to use education to solve societal and national security problems. Chapter 2 examines trends in the history of the "achievement gap" and the framing of poor and minority children as represented in primarily-pseudoscientific publications related to the genetic deficit, cultural deficit, and environmental deficit models of deficit thinking in three time periods, from the 1950s in to the twenty-first century. Chapter 3 then provides a selective overview of the persistent and evolving systematic oppression, segregation, and disenfranchisement of poor and minority students within the U.S. from the 1950s into the twenty-first century in the contexts of (a) school segregation and integration, (b) residential segregation, (c) income inequality and the concentration of poverty, (e) within school segregation, and (d) disparate early childhood educational opportunities. The literature reviewed will address selected, key contexts of the political, professional, scientific, and public discourses of compensatory education as they relate to the characteristics and models of deficit thinking. This work then concludes with an analysis of how the popularity and use of both deficit thinking and compensatory education programs are dependent on false assumptions of equal educational opportunity and upward social mobility.

It is also important to note however, before examining the history and evolution of this topic, that the consequences of growing up in poverty, segregation, and negative stereotypes on early childhood development and academic achievement (as well as health) are both real and significant. This analysis is not intended to diminish or negate the vast collection of non-pseudo-

scientific evidence and research that has proven the validity of these effects; but rather seeks to illuminate how they, their associated discourses and their resulting disparities, have helped shaped the deficit-focused rhetoric surrounding compensatory education. Statistically speaking, the children now labeled as "at-risk" are indeed at risk for school failure and many benefit significantly from compensatory education programs. Nevertheless, an analysis of the rhetoric associated with these programs reveals a deeply rooted and persistent individual-level and deficit-focused approach to framing differences which has ignored larger, systematic and institutional inequalities.

Chapter 1

Early Childhood Education as Interventions into the Lives of Children and Families and as Solutions to Societal and National Security Problems

> Although the use of the concept of risk to define children's status is a twentieth-century practice, nonetheless fears for children's well-being, and efforts to save children when parents have failed or are absent, are evident in past centuries. Moreover, the notions of what dangers might compromise a child's well-being have changed dramatically over time. (Wollons, 1993, p. x)

> Perhaps no field surpasses public education as the space into which public anxieties, terrors, and "pathologies" are so routinely shoved, only to be transformed into public policies of what must be done to save "us" from "them". (Fine, 1995, p. 77).

The public school system in America has long been the primary institution charged with not only educating students, but also with shaping children and adolescents into productive and successful citizens capable of contributing to society. Because of this dual charge, the education received by children of all ages has largely fluctuated according to the social norms and standards of success as well as the immediate needs of society at any given time. In addition to the use of education as a means of addressing actual or perceived societal problems at the local or national level, compensatory education and educational reform initiatives have also been driven by national security concerns at the global level. By linking the well-being and academic success of children to both societal stability and national security, the goals of compensatory education ironically place the weight of responsibility on the shoulders of children and families for whom these programs were designed, while denying the roles played by larger socio-political institutions and society as a whole in the creation of their presumed deficits.

In order to fully appreciate the deficit-premises of early childhood compensatory educa-

tion rhetoric, it is first necessary to review the history of early childhood education (ECE) and intervention in America. This chapter, therefore, provides an overview of the historical goals of ECE and the societal and national security problems that have necessitated ECE interventions and the development of compensatory education programs. The use of what is now referred to as "early care and education" as a way to provide for the needs of poor children and as a cure for broader social problems dates back to the late 19th century. As such, the kindergarten laid the foundation for practices and much of the rhetoric in 20th and 21st century ECE programs and policies. Two types of services are worth describing briefly as they reveal the beginnings of the deficit paradigm: the kindergarten and the nursery school.

The kindergarten was first established in Germany in the early 1800s by Freidrich Froebel, and gained traction in the United States in the later part of the century.[4] Building off the observations of early educators who traveled to Europe to see Froebel's kindergartens first hand (New, 2003), early advocates of formal kindergarten focused on the potential benefits for very young poor children ranging in age from 2- 5 years old, with a particular emphasis on children of immigrants living in the "urban slums" (Shonkoff & Miesels, 1990, p. 5). Linking school failure and urban crime with immigrants and minorities, social Darwinians and hereditarians seized on the potentials of Froebel's kindergarten as they "turned to local governments for the solutions that would shield the community against their disruptive and unsavory influences" (Wollons, 1993, p. xiv). The U.S. kindergarten was therefore premised on the theory of cultural deprivation and the notion that poor immigrant parents could not provide their children with an adequate foundation for success (Lazerson, 1970, p. 96). As depicted by the editor of *Century Magazine,* the kindergarten provided "our earliest opportunity to catch the little Russian, the little Italian,

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[4] The first public kindergarten was established in 1872 in St. Luis (Shonkoff & Miesels, 1990, p. 5)

the little German, Pole, Syrian, and the rest and begin to make good American citizens of them" (Gilder, 1903, p. 390; cited in Lazerson, 1970, p. 89). This rhetoric about the role of the kindergarten—defined as "the place to start training minds, morals, and muscles for the uplift and improvement" *not of the child*, but "of the social order"—is representative of an early attempt at early childhood intervention and compensatory education (Cravins, 1993, p. 10).

Because of the real and assumed deficiencies associated with "slum life," it was determined that "slum children needed special educational techniques" (Lazerson, 1990, p. 93). The mixed-age kindergartens for the urban poor were characterized by the cultivation of orderly behavior and discipline, which were supposedly absent in the "slum" home life. As depicted by Lazerson, "In the slum, where school discipline seemed to define the educational process itself, kindergartens became tiny military camps whose inhabitants marched, sang, and spoke in unison" (1970, p. 93). After the turn of the century, driven by the categorization of children and a new focus on educational testing, a clear distinction began to emerge between the kindergartens attended by children of different SES. The kindergartens attended by children from the middle- and upper-classes were similar to those observed in Western Europe, including those inspired by Froebel as well as Maria Montessori and other Western European early educators. Although far from identical to their European counterparts, many were characterized by an atmosphere of independence, free play, and the removal of inhibitions and restraints (Lazerson, 1970). While its purpose eventually shifted to a focus on early school readiness and away from "rescuing" children, throughout the 20th century, the primary objectives of the U.S. kindergarten continued to "alternate between an emphasis on early academic achievement and the nurturing of noncompetitive social and emotional development" (Shonkoff & Miesels, 1990, p. 5).

The nursery school movement began in the 1920s in the U.S., and focused primarily on

facilitating the social-emotional development of children and placed a significant emphasis on parental involvement. The availability of nursery schools increased dramatically during the depression in the 1930s via federal relief programs which subsidized unemployed teachers. Prior to the 1940s, the utilization of day-care services was largely confined to the working poor. Both kindergartens and day nurseries for the children of working mothers, as noted by Bloch (1987), combined concern for children's well-being and health with fears that "unemployed and uneducated poor immigrant families and their children were the foundations of an immoral and vice-filled society'" (Bloch, 1987; cited in New, 2003, p. 225). Distinctions between day-care centers and nursery schools were blurred and their use increased dramatically with the onset of World War II and the entrance of large numbers of middle-class women into the work force. Federal support for child care, however, stopped with the end of World War II and the availability of child care programs was significantly reduced. As described by Shonkoff and Miesels (1990), "Without public resources, nursery schools drifted from their early mission of serving poor children and became increasingly available only to those who could afford private tuition" (p. 6). Not considered to have the same positive developmental or societal effects, however, nursery schools and child-care in general in the U.S. never attained the status or level of public support as the kindergarten.

Following this first wave of the kindergarten and nursery school, by the late 1950s and early 1960s, the extent of poverty and civil unrest in the U.S., primarily among Black families, became a highly visible social and political problem (Bailey & Danzinger, 2013). As a result, the goals of the first federally funded compensatory education programs were to fight and prevent poverty. In addition to the societal problems caused by poverty, the 1950s and 1960s represented a time when the U.S. was aggressively confronted with international scientific competition as

well as growing awareness of racial inequality and high levels of civil unrest. In the 1950s, the relationship between education and national security was based in the Soviet launch of the Sputnik satellite and the subsequent National Defense Education Act (NDEA). The launch of the satellite Sputnik by the Soviet Union on October 4, 1957 served as a catalyst to the NDEA, which was signed into law on September 2, 1958 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The NDEA provided funding to education at all levels in an attempt to increase the the scientific and technological capabilities of American citizens and enable them to compete adequately against the Soviet Union (Steeves, et al., 2009). In addition to the push by international competition, the importance of parenting and positive early childhood environments was bolstered by new and emerging research findings on children's early cognitive development, beginning in infancy (Hunt, 1961). By extension, the concept of ECE "seemed a logical approach to social problems, combining the possibilities for school achievement by the individual, and for community reform through the involvement of parents [most often mothers, in the home] and para-professionals in the classroom" (Lazerson, 1970, p. 96).

In 1965, President Johnson capitalized on the growing knowledge about children's development and early learning and declared an "unconditional war on poverty" that aimed "not only to relieve the symptoms of poverty, but to cure it and, above all, prevent it" (Bailey & Danzinger, 2013, p. 1). With the implementation of Project Head Start and Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty, the U.S. government again targeted children deemed "culturally deprived" in an effort to compensate for perceived cultural deficits through a more comprehensive form of compensatory education (Zigler & Kagan, 1982). Both Title I and Head Start aimed to eliminate poverty and the perceived cycle of cultural deprivation by directing additional funds toward children from low socioeconomic

status (SES), often minority, families (Stein, 2001; Gibbs, 2013; Wise & Rothman, 2010). As with the kindergartens in the earlier part of the twentieth century, the implementation of Head Start began with a "fundamental hostility to the home and life styles of the poor, and [sought] to overcome the gap between social classes by creating a bridge between school and home" (Lazerson, 1970, p. 96)

Passed only one year after the Civil Rights Act became law in 1964, both of these programs (Head Start and Title 1) were established at a time when the country remained in the midst of great social and racial upheaval (Brauer, 1982). As noted by Lubeck and Garret (1990) these compensatory education policies represented the first broad scale commitment of the federal government to addressing the problems of young and minority children (p. 331). By the middle of the 1960s—and at a time when U.S leaders wanted to show both solidarity and strength following the Civil Rights Movement and strife over the desegregation of public schools—national attention on education shifted to the need to address the low academic achievement of low-SES and minority students.[5]

Compensatory education programs, motivated by socio-political concerns and the growing needs of children and families, continued to be developed throughout the last quarter of the 20th century. Directly following the implementation of Head Start, the New York State Experimental Prekindergarten Program began serving financially disadvantaged children in 1966, and succeeded in improving the school readiness of its children. Other states began to follow suit in the following decades and by 1980, ten states had state funded and administered compensatory

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[5] The use of the word strife is by no means intended to diminish the extreme levels of violence, hatred, and resistance directed toward Black Americans before, during, and after the Civil Rights Movement. For the purposes of this text, however, the era defined by the Civil Rights Movement is only discussed in relation to its influences on the oppression and segregation of minority students and the discourse associated with compensatory education.

preschool programs (Gilliam & Zigler, 2001), a majority targeted toward children of low-income families. This boost in state-level preschool programs for low-SES children occurred in part due to the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments in 1986 (PL 99-457). Through the IDEA Amendments, preschool children who met certain disability criteria were extended special education services (Gilliam & Zigler, 2001). As illustrated by Gilliam and Zigler,

> The advent of these special education preschool programs in state departments of education offered a framework for some states to provide preschool programs for financially-disadvantaged preschoolers by expanding the criteria of eligibility to include these at-risk, albeit non disabled, preschoolers. (2001, p. 442).

Financial disadvantage, then, was officially labeled as and considered a disability. This expansion of special education services also ensured that preschool services remained compensatory in nature, as opposed to an educational right had by all children.

In the following decade, in addition to the IDEA Amendments, the expansion of state-level preschool programs was encouraged by the Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994, which was endorsed by the governors of all 50 states and President George H. Bush in 1990 (Gilliam & Zigler, 2001). Out of six legislated educational goals for the nation by the year 2000, the first was that "all children will start school ready to learn," with the primary objective that "all children will have access to high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school" (Gilliam & Zigler, 2001, p. 443). Beyond academic goals, further objectives of the Goals 2000 Act included supporting the inclusion of physical education, health care, nutritional programs, and parent training and support programs into preschools. In 1995, Georgia became the first state in the nation to offer state-funded, universal preschool for 4-year-olds (originally established in 1993), this time for *all* four-year-olds (Bar-

nett, et al., 2014). The number of state-level preschool programs grew to 33 by 1998 (Gilliam & Zigler, 2001).

In the midst of this gradual increase in compensatory ECE programs throughout the final decades of the 20th century, the labels assigned to recipients of compensatory education programs began to change. "Children of low-income families" replaced "poor children" and the "culturally deprived" label fell out of favor in the 1970s and was replaced with the label "economically deprived". In the mid 1980s, the label of "at-risk" for school failure then gained popularity and remains in use today. The early 1980's represented another point in history when the United States found itself pressured to maintain an appearance of strength and confidence, while simultaneously unable to deny declining and unequal academic outcomes. The establishment of the "at-risk" label was largely influenced by a report published in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, which was appointed by President Ronald Reagan. The report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (ANAR), highlighted "indicators of risk" including: constant declines in achievement tests, illiteracy (particularly among minority youth), and lack of "higher order" intellectual skills (Gardner, 1983, p. 11). Painting a grim picture of the American education system, its students, its content, and its organization, ANAR laid the foundation for the increases in federal involvement, standardization, and testing (commonly described as the "standards" or "excellence" movement) that became commonplace in the transition to the 21st century and continue today. The fear that stemmed from being outperformed by other countries a mere twenty years after the threat posed by Sputnik was both woven into the language of ANAR and ingrained in the American psyche. At a time when acknowledging deeply rooted and persistent gender, racial, ethnic, and economic divides within American society would put national security at risk, the Education Commission focused on problems that were deemed

"fixable." The statement that "the current declining trend […] stems more from weakness of purpose, confusion of vision, underuse of talent, and lack of leadership, than from conditions beyond our control" is particularly illuminating to the importance of the American values of work ethic and equality of opportunity, and also to the denial of existing social inequalities (Gardner, 1983, p. 15).

The educational, sociological, psychological, biological, and economical research on educational success and achievement gaps also saw significant gains at the turn of the century. Additionally, new advances in scientific technologies including neuroscience, epigenetics, stem cell research, and the growth of the bioscience industry in genetics (the Human Genome Project) spurred more in-depth research of child- and brain-development (Katz, 2013). By examining the life outcomes of children who participated in compensatory ECE programs 40 years after they were established in the 1960s, researchers determined that quality early childhood interventions have dramatic influences on the future health, economic potential, social standing, and overall life success of participants, when compared to control groups (Heckman, 2008; Gibbs et al., 2013). In addition to directly affecting the children who participate, these results suggested that ECE interventions can have a wide variety of social, economic, and health benefits for society as a whole (Karoly, Kilburn, & Cannon, 2006; Iruka, Burchinal, & Cai, 2009). Much of this research continued to provide evidence of the environmentally-transmitted differences between children of different races, classes, and ethnicities, therefore reinforcing long established rhetoric, political prejudice, and social stereotypes. The new science of epigenetics gave renewed "scientific sanction for early childhood education and other interventions in the lives of poor children" (Katz, 2013).

At the international level, meanwhile, the United States has continued to face high levels of educational and economic competition. A 2012 report by an Independent Task Force on U.S. Education Reform and National Security, sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), asserted that: "The United States' failure to educate its students leaves them unprepared to compete and threatens the country's ability to thrive in a global economy and maintain its leadership role" (CFR, 2012). The Task Force argued that the U.S. "will not be able to keep pace—much less lead—globally unless it moves to fix the problems it has allowed to fester for too long" (CFR, 2012). Additionally, The 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, which score student assessments from 43 OECD countries, showed the U.S. scoring 27th in mathematics, 17th in reading, and 20th in science (OECD, 2012). America's international standing and the new wealth of research on the benefits of ECE interventions have strongly reinforced the American traditions of, and beliefs in, compensatory education and using education to solve social and national security problems.

As large proportions of students in the U.S. have continued to fall behind their age-appropriate academic expectations, the notion of children who are "at-risk" for academic failure has remained a focal point for education professionals, researchers, and politicians. Since the implementation of Head Start and the addition of state-level programs in the following decades, the popularity and availability of compensatory early childhood programs has continued to rise. Today, out of the current 40 state-funded pre-kindergarten programs, only five states have made commitments to offering universal, voluntary pre-K for all four year olds and 29 have income eligibility requirements (Barnett et al., 2014). The compensatory nature of so many of these programs has specifically targeted and greatly expanded the proportion of children in the U.S. who are officially labeled as "at-risk" for school failure. There remains, however, no national-level

public system of care or education for children before the age of five, and even fewer opportunities for children under the age of four. Ultimately, as noted by Saraceno, "only when a family is perceived as unable to meet its socially defined responsibilities toward its children, does the government intervene" (1984, p. 353).

In the midst of these changes, disparities in income and educational and life outcomes according to race and ethnicity have remained high. As a result, children from minority and low income families are continually segregated from their peers through the automatic classification of being "at-risk" for school failure. By shaping the material and cultural conditions of childhood needs and development, how compensatory education programs have been implemented, targeted, and legitimized has defined what is considered "normal" or "deviant" for children and their families. While separate from the current influx of state-level preschool programs targeting "at-risk" children, Head Start and Title I continue to hold similar criteria for student eligibility as many of these programs and, likewise, assume deficits on the part of the student and the family. By continuing to separate the causes of disparities in educational outcomes from the persistent oppression and segregation of poor and minority students and their families, the discourse of compensatory education has created an unnecessary dichotomy between "at-risk" children and "normal" children, their abilities, and their needs.

Conclusion:

The popularity of compensatory education programs, at the early childhood level in particular, has been been fueled by beliefs in and perceptions of the low educability of low-SES and minority students. These perceptions have combined with increasing awareness of early childhood development as a strong predictor of subsequent school achievement—perceptions fueled

by pseudoscientific research on individual, cultural, and environmental deficits impacting young children and their families at an early age. The very notion of *compensatory* education—its underlaying ideology, assumptions, and implementation—is anchored in deficit thinking. The definition of the term compensatory, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is "reducing or offsetting the unpleasant or unwelcome effects of something" (2016). When applied to education, compensatory exclusively refers to intervention programs aimed at offsetting the "unpleasant or unwelcome effects" of the perceived genetic-, cultural-, or environmental-deficits associated with poverty, race, and/or ethnicity. While a non-deficit interpretation of the term compensatory may allow one to view educational interventions as compensating for the lengthy history of oppression and segregation experienced by poor and minority populations, an examination of the discourse, ideology, and practices of compensatory education programs, unfortunately, quickly reveals that this is not the case.

Chapter 2

The Need to Explain Differences and the Framing of Children in Compensatory Education: Five Characteristics and Three Models of Deficit

> What happens when a category of student is constructed, through language, as a uniform group in need of improvement? How can administrators and teachers cope with such a demand as that which Congress has placed on them? A category has been created, and along with it, a charge to change the members of that category (Bomer, et al., 2008).

The framing and labeling of children in early childhood compensatory education programs, like the use of education to solve societal and political problems, is largely based on low societal expectations for their assumed developmental and learning potential. These low expectations, and the resultant labeling of children and families, are historically rooted in majoritarian and professional evaluations of children's and families' behaviors and abilities and are increasingly defended by disparities in academic achievement between students of different races, classes, and ethnicities. This chapter therefore examines the interplay between these evaluations, disparities, and their explanations. By highlighting trends in "achievement gaps" beginning in the 1950s, this analysis illuminates the political and social need to label, explain, and address differences between students. Further, this chapter analyzes the evolution of the three models of deficit discourse—genetic, cultural, and environmental—through key research and widely cited works that have provided pseudoscientific and deficit-focused evaluations and explanations for the persistence of achievement differences throughout the last half of the twentieth century, to date.

Consistent with Valencia's conceptualization of deficit thinking (1997, 2010, 2012), this discourse has effectively blamed the victims, focusing on pseudoscientific research and assumed deficiencies transmitted by genetic, environmental, and cultural factors. In addition to blaming

the victim, four other characteristics of the deficit thinking paradigm are evident in this analysis: pseudoscience, temporal changes, educability, and heterodoxy. Because many low-SES and minority students have traditionally performed poorly on assessments of academic success, when compared to their middle- and upper-SES and White classmates, this failure has been consistently attributed to individual characteristics associated with class, race, and ethnicity. Increasingly referred to as the "achievement gap," these disparities contributed to the first implementation of federally funded compensatory education programs in the U.S. and continue to influence education policies and practices today. While originally focused on achievement disparities between Black and White students, the "achievement gap" research soon expanded to include comparisons between White and all non-White students as well as between socioeconomic statuses (SES). As discussed in Chapter 3, the systematic segregation and disenfranchisement of poor and minority students has been, and remains, a driving force behind these disparities in educational success. The discourse surrounding compensatory education, however, has evolved independently of the systematic factors that necessitated its creation.

The official labeling of children served by compensatory education programs has been informed by and evolved with the socially and scientifically accepted standards of the time. Despite an increasing body of heterodox literature critiquing the deficit approach, however, as revealed in the following analysis of student achievement and educational discourse over time, this chapter demonstrates a continuity in genetic, cultural, and environmental deficit-based perceptions of children and their abilities. This attachment of educational expectations to young children, based on the educational achievement of other students with similar characteristics, is also reflective of deficit thinking perceptions of educability. By implying that children's likelihood for academic success is directly related to the individual characteristics of their culture or family,

rather than the characteristics of their societal or learning environment, the labels attached to compensatory education programs effectively remove all responsibility from educational, political, and societal institutions.

The 1950s and 1960s

The *Brown v Board of Education* ruling in 1954, which concluded that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" was a great turning point for the education of minority students in America. By outlawing segregated educational facilities, the *Brown* decision acknowledged that segregation based on race violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and had detrimental effects on Black Americans and students.[6] The *Brown* decision also lead to the creation of a system in which integrated schools became viewed as equal, neutral, and "color blind," thereby opening the door for comparing the academic achievement of Black and White students and the establishment of what is now referred to as the "achievement gap" (Love, 2010). Further, while the *Brown* decision theoretically provided legal access to integrated educational opportunities, its decree was not immediately enforced by the federal government or taken seriously by many Southern states.[7] As large scale efforts at integration in highly diverse cities revealed significant disparities in academic performance between Black and White students (Ravich, 1983), however, *Brown* simultaneously provided the means by which to justify the continued subjugation, segregation, and disenfranchisement of Black students.

As a result of the "achievement gap" illuminated by integration, combined with the newly

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[6] The historical context of the *Brown* decision and its aftermath, including White responses and the backlash thesis, is discussed further in chapter 3.

[7] The actual integration of schools in many southern states did not begin until after the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964.

assumed-equality of schools, the end of the 1950s also saw the first conceptualization and use of the terms "culturally deprived" and "culturally disadvantaged" as explanations for the persistent differences in educational outcomes for poor and minority students (Martinez & Rury, 2012; Ravitch, 1983). The first appearance of the term "culturally deprived" in the mainstream media took place in an article in the *New York Times* in 1956, which focused on "enrich[ing] the backgrounds" of children in "slum" schools (cited in Martinez & Rury, 2012, p. 5). However, as noted by Martinez and Rury (2012), its "matter-of-fact usage suggests that it had already become commonplace" (p. 5). This label was then attached to the children served by the Head Start program, which began in 1965 as part of the Johnston Administration's War on Poverty.

While the funding for Head Start and other compensatory education programs was intended to target all children living in poverty, its discourse focused largely on Black children, and the term "culturally deprived" was often perceived as an automatic reference to African American culture (Beatty, 2012; Valencia, 2012; Baratz & Baratz, 1970). The same year as the establishment of Title I and Head Start, President Johnson also signed the Immigration Act of 1965, which abolished the National Origins Formula and resulted in unprecedented numbers of Asians and Latin Americans emigrating to the U.S., significantly adding to the diversity of American classrooms. Framed as a Black-White binary, however, Mexican Americans were commonly forgotten from the compensatory education discourse (Beatty, 2012; Martinez and Rury, 2012). And yet, Mexican Americans were not immune to the low expectations and stereotyping associated with the concept of deficit thinking (Valencia, 2012). The concept of "cultural deprivation" and the deficit thinking theory, then, became the key theoretical bases for the development of compensatory education policies in the next decades (Beatty, 2012; Valencia, 2012).

The terms "culturally deprived" and "culturally disadvantaged" were first used in a liberal

effort to deemphasize the perception that disparities in educational outcomes and attainment were rooted in biological or genetic factors (Martinez & Rury, 2012). As discussed in chapter 1, genetic deficit theories were pervasive in the psychological, educational, and political fields from 1890 to 1930, and fostered the emergence of the theories of deficit thinking (Valencia, 1997; 2012) and the "culture of poverty" (Lewis, 1961; Stein, 2004). The ability to discount this previously wide-held and deeply-rooted perception was made possible by changes in a number of beliefs regarding learning and development, many of which took place after World War II. These beliefs, according to Hunt (1966) included the notions of: 1) fixed intelligence; 2) predetermined development; 3) the fixed and static, telephone-switchboard nature of brain function; 4) that experience in the early years, and particularly before the development of speech, is unimportant; 5) that whatever experience does affect later development is a matter of emotional reactions based on the fate of instinctual needs; and 6) that learning must be motivated by homeostatic need, by painful stimulation, or by acquired drives based on these (p. 236). Because most educational and academic commentators presumed schools to be more or less equal after integration, they were then left to choose between a biological or an environmental explanation for unequal outcomes (Martinez & Rury, 2012). Given this choice and the change in beliefs listed above, Martinez and Rury conclude that, "it is little wonder that [they] chose the latter" (2012, p. 4).

This choice was reinforced by the theory of the "culture of poverty," first postulated by anthropologist Oscar Lewis (1959, 1961, 1964, 1966), who studied families in the urban United States, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. The theory described the culture of people living in poverty as both universal and inherited, an unproductive and helpless culture that, without intervention, would pass on from generation to generation (Lewis, 1961). Among the 70 different universal characteristics Lewis associated with the "culture of poverty," were: low levels of literacy and

education; lack of effective participation in major institutions; critical attitudes toward basic institutions and dominant classes (including the government and the police); aversion to marriage; frequent abandonment of wives and children, resulting in female-centered families; widespread belief in male superiority; lack of community organization beyond the level of the nuclear and extended family; crowded, gregarious, and poor housing conditions; strong feelings of helplessness, dependence, marginality, and inferiority; lack of savings, property ownership, and food reserves, and frequent pawning of personal goods; a strong present-time orientation, lack of impulse control, and little ability to plan for the future or defer gratification; weak ego structure; a high tolerance for psychological pathology of all sorts; and a high incidence of maternal deprivation (1966, pp. xlv-xlviii). While Lewis contends that some of these characteristics have positive adaptive functions (low aspirations, for example, can help reduce levels of frustration, and the legitimization of short-range hedonism can foster the possibility of enjoyment and spontaneity), he concludes that:

> on the whole it seems to be that it is a relatively thin culture. There is a great deal of pathos, suffering and emptiness among those who live in the culture of poverty. It does not provide much support or long-range satisfaction and its encouragement of mistrust tends to magnify helplessness and isolation. Indeed, the poverty of culture is one of the crucial aspects of the culture of poverty. (1966, p. lii)

The solution to eliminating the "culture of poverty," then, according to Lewis, required not only the elimination of physical poverty but also the elimination of the culture of poverty as a way of life, the incorporation of the poor into the middle class and, wherever possible, "some reliance upon psychiatric treatment" (1966, p. lii). The characteristics and framework of the problems and culture attached to poverty—and particularly how they were inherited by children—as established by Lewis, were then used as justifications for proposed policy solutions by policymakers and the classification of low achieving poor and minority students as "culturally

deprived" (Stein, 2004). Moreover, the implication that ending the cycle of poverty required eliminating the "culture of poverty" as "a whole way of life" (Lewis, 1966, p. lii) bolstered the already established beliefs of many White Americans (particularly in the South) that Black behavior, language, and culture were pathological and inherently backward.

The universal attachment of these characteristics to large and highly-diverse groups of people living in poverty encouraged stereotyping, a biased assessment of other cultural characteristics, and a focus on individual traits and deficits as connected and reflective of a larger, destructive culture. Lewis, however, did not neglect to describe what he saw as the institutional and societal origins necessary for the development of an underclass and the resulting culture of poverty. He argued that the "culture of poverty" originated due to external, systematic, and institutional factors as "both an adaptation and a reaction of the poor to their marginal position in a class-stratified, highly individuated, capitalistic society" (1966, p. xliv). In fact, one of the conditions laying the groundwork for the generation of the "culture of poverty," according to Lewis (1966), is "the existence of a set of values in the dominant class which stresses the accumulation of wealth and property, the possibility of upward mobility and thrift, and explains low economic status as the result of personal inadequacy or inferiority" (pp. xliii-xliv).[8] And yet, despite these societal contributors and requirements, he also contended that the absorption of the values and attitudes inherent to the "culture of poverty" by young children prevented them from taking full advantage of potentially beneficial resources or opportunities in the future. While Lewis hypothesized that the initial creation of the "culture of poverty" and its attendant characteristics were

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[8] In addition to: "(1) a cash economy, wage labor and production for profit; (2) a persistently high rate of unemployment and underemployment for unskilled labor; (3) low wages; (4) the failure to provide social, political and economic organization, either on a voluntary basis or by government imposition, for the low-income population; [and] (5) the existence of a bilateral kinship system rather than a unilateral one" (Lewis, 1966, p. xliii).

due to systematic factors beyond the control of the impoverished individual, then, the proliferation of these characteristics, their societal and individual consequences, and the cycle of poverty were blamed on poor parents and families passing on their deleterious attitudes and values. In 1969, Lewis' theory was echoed by the National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children which, for example, portrayed the beneficiaries of Title I as "held back in their learning efforts by poverty and its attendant deprivations—social, cultural, and physical" (1969, p. 1; from Stein, 2001, p. 139).

The theory of the "culture of poverty" was picked up by Michael Harrington in 1961 in his book *The Other America,* which has been widely credited with influencing the ignition of the Johnson Administration's War on Poverty in 1965.[9] Harrington addresses many of the same characteristics of the "culture of poverty" and the institutional and societal contributions as those discussed by Lewis. Harrington's illustration of the poor as the *other* America—as fundamentally different from and also misconceived by and largely invisible to the larger society—rather than an anthropological exercise, was a plea for action, awareness, and compassion. Despite Harrington's empathy and indignation, and the noble intentions of both his plea and the War on Poverty that followed it, *The Other America* still categorized the poor as intrinsically and unfavorably different from the rest of society. At a time when differences were perceived as deficits, and many of the poor were also minorities, racist and classist motivations underscored much of the subsequent research and commentary on the *other* America.

Another highly influential report, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action,* was published in 1965 by the U.S. Department of Labor. Written by the assistant secretary for policy

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[9] The relationship between *The Other America* and the War on Poverty is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

planning and research, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the "*Moynihan Report"* reinforced the concepts of the "culture of poverty" and attributed many of the characteristics established by Lewis (1959; 1961) to a "culturally deprived" Black family structure. The *Moynihan Report* focused on the perceived dissolution of the "Negro family" in the urban ghetto, labeled by Moynihan as a "tangle of pathology" (Moynihan, 1965, p. 29**;** Greenbaum, 2015, p. 3). This "tangle of pathology" encapsulated all of the perceived and alleged deficits commonly associated with lower-class Black culture, including absent fathers, unmarried parenthood, teen pregnancy, "matriarchal" dominance of family life, adult crime, juvenile delinquency, and educational failure (Moynihan, 1965, pp. 29-43**;** Greenbaum, 2015)**.** Moynihan based his arguments on a single statistic from the early 1960s, popularly known as "Moynihan's scissors," which showed *increasing* welfare enrollment by Black women simultaneously corresponding with a *decrease* in unemployment for Black men (Greenbaum, 2015, p. 4). Despite being an employee of the U.S. Department of Labor, Moynihan focused primarily on the psychological effects of male unemployment, rather than on developing potential measures to increase Black male employment. The *Moynihan Report*, as illustrated by Greenbaum (2015) "came to be regarded by both supporters and detractors as an indictment of African American culture, a pessimistic warning that legal rights and safety net programs would not be enough" (pp. 2-3). This perception again took responsibility away from oppressive political and societal institutions, and further encouraged negative racial stereotypes and *otherness,* and the trend of blaming the victim.

The belief in environmental explanations and familial deficits as the source of academic differences was again reinforced by what was arguably the most influential report on education of the 1960s, *Equality of Educational Opportunity,* by James Coleman and colleagues, published in 1966. Popularly known as the *Coleman Report,* Coleman and colleagues examined levels of

inequality in school characteristics, segregation, and achievement across the nation and in different geographical areas.[10] The *Coleman Report* found that, in addition to inequalities in school characteristics and quality, there were significant differences in test scores between minority and majority students, with the lone exception of "Oriental Americans" (1966, p. 20). **Table 1** (located in Appendix A), replicated from the *Coleman Report* illustrates these differences across the racial and ethnic groups tested in the fall of 1965 (1966, p. 20).[11] As is evident from this table, the median test scores for Black ("Negro") students and Latino/a ("Puerto Ricans" and "Mexican Americans") students were as much as one standard deviation below those of White students in the first grade, marking a significant gap in achievement at the beginning of school. This gap increased for every minority group on both verbal and nonverbal skills on 12th grade tests, showing an increasing decline in minority achievement compared to their White peers. Importantly, with regards to the validity of these tests and the consequences of their results, the *Coleman Report* noted that:

> These tests do not measure intelligence, nor attitudes, nor qualities of character. Furthermore, they are not, nor are they intended to be, "culture free." Quite the reverse: they are culture bound. What they measure are the skills which are among the most important in our society for getting a good job and moving up to a better one, and for full participation in an increasingly technical world. Consequently, a pupil's test results at the end of public school provide a good measure of the range of opportunities open to him as he finishes school—a wide range of choice of jobs or colleges if these skills are very high; a very narrow range that includes only the most menial jobs if these skills are very low (1966, p. 20).

Despite acknowledging the inherent cultural bias of these test scores (something that is difficult for many researchers and test administrators to do today [Love, 2010]) and the inequalities in the schools attended by minority and majority students, however, the *Coleman Report* implied that

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[10] Findings on school inequalities and segregation from the *Coleman Report* discussed in Chapter 3.

[11] The labels for racial and ethnic groups used in this table are copied directly from the *Coleman Report* (1966) and reflect the terms common with the time it was written and published.

the culture the tests were "bound" with, the White middle-class culture, was inherently better than the minority culture that led to the reduced test scores. The *Coleman Report* then went on to conclude that students' family backgrounds played a larger role in performance disparities than inequalities in school resources and quality (1966; Gamoran & Long, 2006). In addition, the *Coleman Report* noted that the strengths or weaknesses of school facilities, teachers, and curriculums had a stronger impact on minority student achievement than on the achievement of majority students (1966, p.22). The *Coleman Report* also claimed that the racial and socioeconomic composition of the student body had a significant impact on the achievement of poor and minority students: Black students with more White classmates and low-SES students with more high-SES classmates scored higher (1966, p. ; Gamoran & Long, 2006, p. 6). Despite these additional findings, however, the impacts of family background, and therefore perceived cultural- and familial-deficits, became the main focus for much of the educational and social policy that followed (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Although the findings of the *Coleman Report* were largely used to support school integration, they also reinforced the beliefs of minority, specifically Black, behavior as pathological and the ideals of the White middle- and upper-class student as superior and the standard against which all other students were judged (Ladson-Billings, 2006). The conclusions of the *Coleman Report,* combined with the unrest, violence, and racist rhetoric that pervaded the 1960s, reinforced beliefs that the causes of the disparities in academic achievement were rooted in individual- and environmental-level deficiencies (Ladson-Billings, 2006), rather than in the inabilities of society and the education system to adapt to different needs and cultures, or to actually provide adequate and equatable resources and opportunities (Riele, 2006; Lubeck & Garett, 1990). Opening the door for further research on racial and ethnic academic comparisons and family and cul-

tural influences, after the publication of the *Coleman Report,* the concept of the "achievement gap" and the effectiveness of programs intended to reduce it continued to receive significant focus and concern among educators, researchers, and politicians.

The focus on program effectiveness and student achievement extended to Head Start shortly after its implementation. The Westinghouse Learning Corporation (WLC) and Ohio University released the first national evaluation of Head Start in 1969. In a comparison of 2,000 participating children in a nationally representative sample of Head Start centers to 2,000 nonparticipating children, most of whom received in-home care, the evaluation found no improvement in the cognitive or affective skill development of children who participated in the summer program, and only marginal improvements for children who participated in the year-round program. The marginal improvements for year-round participants were manifested in school readiness assessments conducted in first grade, but all improvements had "faded out" by the time participants reached second and third grade (Gibbs, Ludwig, & Miller, 2013). The WLC report was widely criticized for its emphasis on cognitive outcomes and its exclusion of the possible role played by primary school quality. Nevertheless, the evaluation contributed to negative perceptions of poor and minority children and their ability to be educated.

Because of the "fade out" of Head Start effects, and despite the new focus on environmental and cultural deficits, a renewed quest for genetic bases for the "achievement gap" resurfaced in 1969, fueled by an article titled *How Much Can We Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?,* by Arthur Jensen.[12] Citing the failure of Head Start to sustain higher IQ scores for "deprived" Black children, Jensen argued against the "social deprivation" hypothesis to explain the

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[12] See also: Shuey, A. (1958, 1966). *The Testing of Negro Intelligence.*; Garrett, H. E. (1961)."The Equalitarian Dogma".; Eysenck, H. J. (1971). *Race, Intelligence and Education.*; Herrnstein, R. J. (1971). "I.Q.".; Jensen, A. R. (1972). *Genetics and Education.*; Herrnstein, R. J. (1973). *I.Q. in the Meritocracy.*; Jensen, A. R. (1973). *Educability and Group Differences.*

Black-White gap in IQ test performance and instead called for scholars to look for "internal causes" (Conwill, 1980, p. 97). Arguing against the notion of "fixed intelligence" critiqued by Hunt in 1961, Jensen claimed that intelligence was a phenotype, rather than a genotype. In short, Jensen argued that changes in environmental and SES factors could only account for a small difference in IQ, or a boost of 20 to 30 points, but could not provide a sustained, or permanent, increase in IQ over time. Given the fact that Black students scored on average one standard deviation below White students on IQ tests, and because changes in environmental conditions and between SES groups could not account for sustained differences in IQ over time, then, Jensen concluded that it was necessary to question if there was a difference in intelligence according to race (1969, pp. 79-82; Cornwill, 1980, p. 99). Rather than educational interventions, Jensen proposed specialized classroom techniques that emphasized associative learning (such as trial-and-error learning and memorization), rather than critical thinking skills. Jensen feared that because populations with lower IQ's tend to have more children, the national IQ, as a whole, was declining (1969, p. 93). With regards to Head Start and other welfare policies, Jensen went so far as to ask "[i]s there a danger, that current welfare policies, unaided by eugenic foresight, could lead to the genetic enslavement of a substantial segment of our population?" (1968, p. 95). Jensen "argued that the rights of children yet unborn be protected from being born and raised by retarded parents who would pass on genetic deficiencies to their offspring" (Cornwill, 1980, p. 99). Jensen's work not only deemphasized the impacts of environmental or cultural deficits, his call to examine the potential genetic inferiority of Black Americans also reinforced deficit thinking, the idea of race as pathological, and the othering of poor and minority students.

Within the context of this hateful rhetoric, although much of the Civil Rights Movement was defined by sit ins and peaceful protests, the fight for equal rights was marred by both vio-

lence toward and blatant hatred of Black Americans, including students and children. This fight for equality also put Black lives and actions into the spotlight at a time when many White Americans—including politicians, teachers, and average citizens—were searching for vulnerabilities and deficiencies as justifications for continued segregation and the denial of equal rights. The "culturally deprived" label and the genetic-deficit argument proposed by Jensen, then, underscored notions of difference and provided the vulnerabilities society was searching for. Throughout the 1960s, the compensatory education movement, its effectiveness, and its associated discourse were full of tensions among policymakers, education professionals, researchers, and psychologists (Beatty, et al., 2012). While both compensatory education policies and their associated discourses were originally accepted in many of the mainstream Black and Mexican American press (Martinez & Rury, 2012), they fell out of favor by the end of the decade due to criticisms regarding their negative stereotypes, associations with the deficit thinking theory, and negative portrayals of the "culture of poverty" (Beatty, et al., 2012, p. 2). As a result, from the 1970s until the mid 1980s, the term "culturally deprived" was replaced with the term "economically deprived" (Valencia, 2012; Swadner & Lubeck, 1995). Despite this change in labeling, however, the negative stereotypes attached to the term "culturally deprived" and beliefs in genetic differences between races continued throughout the transition into the 21st century.

The Transition to the 21st Century

Despite significant gains in and changes to the civil rights of minorities in America with the Civil Rights Movement, disparities in academic outcomes according to both race and class continued throughout the transition into the 21st Century. During this time, the income test score gap began to replace the racial test score gap, and new expectations and labels for poor and mi-

nority students emerged with the beginning of the "Standards" or "Excellence Movement" in educational reform. As a result of the combination of these persistent differences in achievement and new expectations, the rhetoric of deficit thinking both evolved and persisted in the realm of early childhood education. With the end of the Civil Rights Era, as Black Americans were finally granted equal civil rights and protection under the law, many White Americans (including politicians and education professionals) viewed their role in the segregation and disenfranchisement of minorities as no longer relevant. With all things considered equal, then, the continuation of racial and ethnic disparities in academic and life outcomes were no longer viewed as the responsibility or fault of politics or the American education system. As a result, the blame for these disparities began to fall on poverty rather than race and culture, and in the 1970s the terms "economically deprived" and "economically disadvantaged" became more common.

Despite this change in perceptions, however, achievement gaps according to race and ethnicity increased between 1965 and the early 1970s. By 1971, data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed that the reading gap between Black and White 17-year-old students had increased to 1.2 standard deviations in reading and 1.33 standard deviations in math (each compared with 1 standard deviation in 1965). As illustrated in **Figure 1** (located in Appendix A), after decreasing significantly throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, these gaps saw a sharp increase in the late 1980s and early 1990s, yet by 1996 the gap in standard deviation units had again declined to 0.69 standard deviations in reading and 0.89 standard deviations in math (Gamoran & Long, 2006, p. 5; Jencks & Phillips, 1998, p. 3). The increase in test score gaps during the late 1980s and early 1990s coincided with growing opportunities for school choice, a number of court rulings in the 1990s which effectively halted active government involvement in school desegregation, and a significant increase in the minority student population

(discussed in detail in the Chapter 3).[13] Amid the fluctuating but overall decline in the Black-White achievement gap, the discourse associated with compensatory education in the transition to the 21st century remained focused on drawing comparisons between high-achieving and low-achieving students and the effectiveness of educational interventions. Despite the reduction in the use of the labels "culturally deprived" and "culturally disadvantaged," both compensatory and racial rhetoric remained individual- and deficit-focused and the concepts of the "culture of poverty" and "inherited intelligence," discussed in the previous section, continued to exert substantial influence in the next three decades.

The concepts attached to the label of "cultural deprivation" and the goals of early childhood interventions came under fire in 1970s by a wide variety of minority rights activists and education reformers (Labov, 1970; Ryan, 1971; Valentine, 1971; Baratz & Baratz, 1970). One of the most cited critiques of the discourse and goals of early childhood interventions, titled *Early Childhood Intervention: The Social Science Base of Institutional Racism,* was published by Baratz and Baratz in 1970. Written in response to "the present political and academic furor over the efficacy—and therefore the future—of such early-intervention programs as Head Start" Baratz and Baratz (1970, p. 30) questioned the goals of intervention programs that promoted the perception of Black behavior as pathological. While Baratz and Baratz were clear to state that they did "not question the legitimacy of early childhood programs when they are described solely as nursery school situations and are not based on the need for remediation or intervention," they argued that "the theoretical base of the deficit model employed by Head Start programs denies obvious strengths within the Negro community and may inadvertently advocate the annihilation

[13] There is no conclusive evidence that this change in desegregation policy directly impacted student achievement.

of a cultural system which is barely considered or understood by most social scientists" (1970, p. 30). By denying cultural differences, Baratz and Baratz argued that social science research on Black Americans "has been postulated on an idealized norm of 'American behavior' against which all behavior is measured" (1970, p. 31). By equating equality with sameness, Baratz and Baratz describe how Black behavior—including that of the children served by Head Start and other compensatory early childhood programs—was then described "not as it is, but rather as it deviates from the normative system defined by the white middle class" (p. 32). Baratz and Baratz focused on social scientists' concern over and descriptions of Black language proficiency (discussed in chapter 3) and concluded that "the ethnocentrism of the social pathology model, which defines a difference as a deficit, forces the misguided egalitarian into testing a racist assumption that some languages are better than others" (p. 34). While the label of "culturally deprived" had largely fallen out of favor by 1970, the ideology behind the label and the goals behind early childhood interventions remained constant. In fact, as illustrated by Baratz and Baratz,

> Postulation of one deficit which is unsuccessfully dealt with by intervention programs then leads to the discovery of more basic and fundamental deficits. Remediation or enrichment gradually broadens its scope of concern from the fostering of language competence to a broad-based restructuring of the entire cultural system. (1970, p. 35).

Nevertheless, the ethnocentrism of the social pathology model highlighted by the authors was instrumental in expanding the previously limited perceptions of researchers and professionals with regards to deficit-focused interventions.

In 1978, John Ogbu reinforced the notion of Black behavior as pathological with the introduction of the "oppositional culture hypothesis" in his book *Minority Education and Caste: The American System in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. As illustrated by Harris (2005), the "oppositional culture hypothesis" (or resistance model) posits that "historically oppressed minorities such as Black Americans resist school goals" (p. 3). This hypothesis quickly became the most

popular theory used to explain the Black-White "achievement gap" throughout the remainder of the 20th century. According to the "oppositional culture hypothesis," Black students develop a negative relationship toward schooling, due to the belief that learning or acquiring knowledge is a form of "acting white" (Harris, 2005, p. 3). Ogbu's assumptions, according to Harris, "imply that outside of cultural transformation, little can be done to close the racial achievement gap because Blacks do not want to learn" (2005, pp.4-5). Black culture was therefore not only labeled as "deprived" but also as "oppositional" to education in general. Like the solutions proposed by Lewis, the "oppositional culture hypothesis" posits that the elimination of the racial achievement gap (like the elimination of poverty), first required the the elimination of a culture as a way of life. Both the critique of interventionist practices by Baratz and Baratz (1970) and the development and popularity of the "oppositional culture hypothesis" by Ogbu (1978) illustrate the ethnocentric and deficit-focused nature of the discourses surrounding children targeted by compensatory education programs. Baratz and Baratz note that while the social pathology model was seen as a satisfactory replacement for the genetic inferiority model by liberals, both models imply that something is "wrong with the black American" (1970, p. 32). The major difference between the social pathology model and the genetic model, according to Baratz and Baratz, "lies in the attribution of causality, *not* in the analysis of the behaviors observed as sick, pathological, deviant, or underdeveloped" (1970, p. 32).

Beyond racial- and ethnic-achievement gaps, the transition into the 21st Century was also an era of increasing income inequality and disparities in academic achievement between the rich and poor. Bailey and Dynarski (2011) illuminate how, between the early 1960s and the early 1980s, the graduation rates for children born into low-income families increased only four percentage points (from 5 to 9 percent), while graduation rates for children born into high-income

families increased twenty-one percentage points (from 33 to 54 percent). As educational inequality began to widen in the 1980s, the term "at-risk for school failure" was first introduced in order to distinguish between low achieving poor and minority students and their high achieving, often White, middle-class counterparts (Martinez & Rury, 2012). The "at risk" label stemmed directly from the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (ANAR) in 1984, and framed low-achieving students as a direct threat to the national security of the country.

The findings of ANAR also spurred the beginning of the "Standards" or "Excellence Movement" in education. The key tenant of the Standards Movement is that "all students can learn and that all students should be held to a high standard of performance" (Deschenes, et al., 2001, p. 525). Combined with the assumed-equality of schools, the Standards Movement resulted in a streamlining of curricula and a substantial increase in high-stakes testing. This streamlining of curricula and the creation of universal high standards again placed the White, middle-class student as the norm against which all other students were compared. While the "at risk" label, at a glance, does not overtly point to individual or cultural characteristics as the cause for a greater likelihood of academic failure, the inferences of disadvantage, deprivation, and discrimination remain rooted in the deficit ideology behind the label. This inference is made clear, in part, by the almost exclusive use of the term "at risk" to describe the same "poor" and "minority" children, who were previously labeled as "deprived" (Martinez & Rury, 2012, p. 24). By highlighting environmental characteristics commonly associated with poor and minority families as factors that pose a "risk" to children's academic achievement, the "at risk" label subtly reinforces deficit-focused rhetoric and the ideology behind both the "culture of poverty" and accumulated environmental deficits. For children attending compensatory early childhood programs in particular, the categorization of being "at risk for school failure" before ever entering school due to assumed

family and cultural characteristics directly implied that the blame for their risk remained in individual-level deficits, rather than in the social, political, and educational systems that were unable to accommodate their needs. Martinez and Rury (2012), for example, argue that "[i]n this respect, the new expressions can be seen as simply a somewhat more polite way of denoting the controversial ideas of the past" (p. 24).

Meanwhile, much of the educational research following the introduction of the "at-risk" label focused on accumulated environmental deficits. One of the most widely cited examples of such pseudoscientific research is the study done by Hart and Risley in 1995 on environmentally created linguistic deficiencies. Examining the quality and quantity of language used in households of different races and SES, this study found that the vocabulary growth of three-year-old children was strongly correlated with SES. They found, for example, that the average three-year-old from upper-SES families demonstrated a vocabulary of over 1000 words, compared to a vocabulary of around 500 words for the average three-year-old from a family on welfare (1995). While there may indeed be a difference in the number of words spoken and heard by children in different families, however, worse than their findings was Hart and Risley's attribution of these findings to whole groups of people based on SES and their conclusion that poor parents transmit a "culture of poverty" to their children via their language practices (p. 2). Dudley-Marling and Lucas (2009), for example, critique Hart and Risley for their deficit perspective and methodological limitations and highlight "the willingness—even eagerness—of many educators and educational policy makers to accept explanations for academic failure that implicate the language and culture of poor children and their families as the cause for their academic struggle" (p. 367). With regards to the methodological limitations of the study, all findings were based on only six welfare families, all of whom were Black and lived in Kansas City; the population of low SES

families in the U.S., in contrast, is highly geographically, linguistically, racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse (Dudley-Marling & Lucas, 2009; DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2015). In addition, of the thirteen upper-SES, or "professional" families examined in contrast to the welfare families, only one was Black and the other twelve were White. As of 2009, the study by Hart and Risley (1995) has been cited in Congressional hearings and over 600 articles published in scholarly journals (Dudley-Marling & Lucas, 2009), and their findings have been applied to explain the perceived language deficiencies of low-SES children all over the country. This example of pseudoscience aligns with two occurrences set forth by Blum (1978): "First, there must be attempts at verification which are grossly inadequate. Second, the unwarranted conclusions drawn from such attempts must be successfully disseminated to and believed by a substantial audience" (p. 12, cited in Valencia, 1997, p. 6)

Despite the new research focus on accumulated environmental deficits, both genetic- and cultural-deficit theorizing also continued well into the transition into the 21st century and remained prevalent in American research and thinking. The most prominent example of genetic-deficit ideology during the transition to the 21st century is *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*, published in 1994 by Hernstein and Murray.[14] While neither Hernstein (a psychologist) nor Murray (a political scientist) had backgrounds in genetics or biology, the authors made a direct link between the "achievement gap" and genetic differences between racial groups (Fredrickson, 1981; Duster, 2003). Reflective of the new eugenics ideology,

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[14] Other examples of genetic-deficit research during the transition to the 21st century include: Eysenck, H.J. (1971). *Race, Intelligence and Education.*; Hernstein, R. J. (1971). *"I.Q.".*; Jensen, A. R. (1972). *Genetics and Education.*; Hernstein, R. J. (1973). *I.Q. in the Meritocracy.*; Jensen, A. R. (1973). *Educability and Group Difference.*; Osborne, R. T., & McGurk, F. (1982). *The Testing of Negro Intelligence.*; Dunn, L. M. (1987). *Bilingual Hispanic Children on the U.S. Mainland.*; Pearson, R. (1991). *Race, Intelligence and Bias in Academe.*; Rushton, J. P. (1995). *Race, Evolution, and Behavior.*; Levin, M. (1997). *Why Race Matters.*

Hernstein and Murray recommended both positive and negative eugenics policies in order to increase the IQ of the nation and remedy the social problems caused by the underclass. Positive eugenics policies included encouraging "smarter women to have higher birth rates than duller women" (cited from Engs, 2005, p. 18). Potential negative eugenics policies, on the other hand, included preventing immigrants with low IQs from entering the country and discouraging high birth rates among those with low IQs by ending welfare programs (Engs, 2005). While *The Bell Curve* was highly controversial and even referred to as "[p]erhaps the most incendiary social scientific publication of the late twentieth century" (Borer, 2010, p. 40), it was an international best-seller and brought the topics of race, class, and intelligence back to the forefront of American public consciousness.

The cultural deficit model was also reestablished in the 1990s with another influential and controversial book, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty,* self-published in 1995 by Ruby Payne. In conjunction with professional development workshops, Payne's *Framework* sought to help middle-class teachers in understanding the lives, minds, and values of children from impoverished families. This framework was necessary, according to Payne, because: "An understanding of the culture and values of poverty will lessen the anger and frustration that educators may periodically feel when dealing with these students and parents" (2005, p. 45). Influenced by Lewis (1961) and Moynihan (1965) and relying almost entirely on disproven stereotypes, Payne (2005) described people in poverty as criminals (pp. 37-38), bad parents (p. 37), violent and "on the streets" (p. 74), disloyal (p. 74), promiscuous (pp. 24-25), and unmotivated addicts (p. 148). As the solution for these problems, reasserting the connection between her framework and Lewis' "culture of poverty" (1961), Payne (2001) calls on predominantly middle class teachers to teach their poor students the "hidden rules of the middle class" (p. 59).

Rather than an exclusive focus on economic status, Payne describes poverty as the degree to which an individual lacks any one of the following resources: financial resources, emotional stability, mental skills, spiritual guidance, physical health, support systems, relationships/role models, and knowledge of middle class hidden rules (p. 7). In reference to these resources, and reinforcing the alleged cultural deficits attached to poverty, Payne stated,

> …the reality is that financial resources, while extremely important, do not explain the differences in the success with which individuals leave poverty nor the reasons that many stay in poverty. The ability to leave poverty is more dependent upon other resources than it is upon financial resources (2005, p. 8)

Payne also distinguished between generational poverty (being in poverty for two generations or longer) and situational poverty (shorter time and caused by circumstance, i.e. death, illness, divorce) (p. 3). According to Payne, while individuals in situational poverty are often "too proud to accept charity," individuals in generational poverty "believe society owes them a living" (2005, p. 47). Payne also asserted that individuals only leave generational poverty for one of four reasons:

> a goal or vision of something they want to be or have; a situation that is so painful that anything would be better; someone who 'sponsors' them (i.e., an educator or spouse or mentor or role model who shows them a different way or convinces them that they could live differently); or a specific talent or ability that proves an opportunity for them (p. 61)

By portraying poverty as choice, here and elsewhere, Payne bolstered the deficit-theory and classist nature of her argument, and encouraged the same mindset from teachers. Nowhere in her framework, however, did Payne address the persistent disparities in educational resources and quality that have long plagued students from low-income families (Gorski, 2005). In fact, rather than addressing the lack of sufficient funding, inadequate facilities, unlicensed teachers, (NCTAF, 2004), less rigorous curricula (Barton, 2004), and high student-to-teacher ratios (Barton 2003) that characterize many high-poverty schools (Gorski, 2005), Payne blamed the "diffi-

culties" associated with teaching poor children on the "hidden rules" of the "culture of poverty" and the reduction of the middle class, stating:

> One of the reasons it is getting more and more difficult to conduct school as we have done in the past is that the students who bring the middle-class culture with them are decreasing in numbers, and the students who bring the poverty culture with them are increasing in numbers. As in any demographic switch, the prevailing rules and policies eventually give way to the group with the largest numbers (2005, p. 61).

A Framework then continues with fourteen imagined "scenarios" for teacher/readers to practice evaluating. These scenarios, as described by Gorski (2006), portray "people in poverty as morally deficient, carriers of all of the class and race stereotypes that already pervade U.S. society, and in dire need of the refinement of middle and upper class cultures" (p. 5). Like Lewis' depiction of the "culture of poverty" (1961), Payne's work has been subject to criticism by scholars from a wide variety of disciplines (Ng & Rury, 2006; Gorski, 2006, 2008; Dworin & Bomer, 2008; Bomer, et al., 2008; Osei-Kofl, 2003; Bohn, 2006). In a critical discourse analysis of Payne's *Framework,* Dworin and Bomer (2008) argue that the language used to describe the poor—their needs, their values, and their culture—builds on America's long established, deficit-focused discourse about poverty and activates and reinforces readers' pre-existing assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge about the "culture of poverty" (p. 105). Criticizing her use of a deficit-centered approach, Gorski (2006) argues that: "*A Framework* consists, at the crudest level, of a stream of stereotypes and a suggestion that we address poverty and education by 'fixing' poor people instead of reforming classist policies and practices" (p. 4). Payne's framework, as described by Osei-Kofl (2005), "presents families in poverty through homogenizing, stereotyped caricatures, as stick figures lacking any complexity, depth, or 'realness'" (p. 370). In examining elements of oppression in Payne's framework, Gorski (2008) contends that: "Many of Payne's (2005) assertions are so blatant in their classism that they sound more like satire than scholar-

ship" (p. 136). These criticisms aside, it is impossible to deny the influence that Payne's book and its subsequent editions have had in classrooms across the country and in the strengthening of beliefs related to the "culture of poverty" myth. By ignoring the larger, systematic inequalities experienced by impoverished children, families, and communities, while suggesting that impoverished children are both frustrating to teach and morally deprived, Payne encouraged teachers to look at their students through a lens of deficit, rather than potential.

While the transition to the 21st century produced a number of advancements in the ideology, evidence, and rhetoric associated with compensatory education—much of it away from individual- and cultural-level differences and toward larger scale, institutional- and society-level inequalities (e.g., Katz, 1990; Kozol, 1991; Oakes, 1985; NCAS, 1985; Fischer, 1996; Kagan, 1990; Swadner & Lubeck, 1995; Lubeck & Garrett, 1990; Valencia, 1997)—the continued prevalence of individual-, genetic-, and cultural-level deficit-focused rhetoric in the educational and sociological literature was reflective of many Americans' perceptions of, and expectations for, the academic success of poor and minority students. Like the discourse associated with compensatory education, whether the causes behind it are cultural, individual, or societal, the rhetoric attached to the "achievement gap" and the "culture of poverty" necessarily differentiates student behaviors and outcomes as either "normal" or "pathological." This differentiation, in turn, requires poor and minority students and children to conform to the educational system already established by the White middle-class, rather than the educational system adapting to its diverse, and ever changing, student population. As we entered the 21st century, social scientists, educators, and politicians were confronted with even more new research, evidence, and an ever growing knowledge base regarding the intricacies and risks associated with child development and student achievement. And yet, despite this plethora of new information—or perhaps because of it

—American society remained plagued by the need to explain differences in student achievement and the tendency toward a deficit-focused framing of children.

The 21st Century

Between 1971 and 2004, the NAEP Black-White achievement gap at all three grade levels was significantly reduced. No significant narrowing of the gap has taken place since the 1990s, however, with the lone exception of reading at the fourth grade level. Despite declines in reading and math score gaps at the end of the 1990s, by 2004 the Black-White gaps for 13-year-olds in reading and 17-year-olds for math and reading were actually higher than they were in 1990 (Gamoran & Long, 2006, pp. 5-6). The Black-White achievement gap has also persisted with regards to course level enrollments, grade point averages, graduation rates, and rates of participation in special needs and gifted programs, and remains significant even when allowing for disparities in family income, schooling, and wealth (Ogbu, 2003). In the 2009-2010 academic year, 16 percent of Black students had less than a high school education, 13 percent had earned bachelors degrees, and 6 percent had earned advanced degrees, compared to 12 percent, 19 percent, and 10 percent, respectively, for White students (Powell, 2016). The growing population and disparities in academic achievement of Latino students has also expanded the concept of the "achievement gap" beyond its original Black-White focus. In 2012, the dropout rate for Black students was 7.5 percent and 12.7 percent for Latinos, compared to 4.3 percent for White students (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013). The gap in early skills between White and Latino children is also significant, especially regarding the recent increase in the Latino population (Laosa & Ainsworth, 2007). As of 2012, 53 million Latinos were living in the US, making Lati-

nos the largest racial group in the nation (Pew Research Centers, 2013). Latinos make up only 12.5 percent of the US population as whole, but 21 percent of all children under age five (Laosa & Ainsworth, 2007). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the achievement gap in reading between White and Latino students has remained relatively constant—between 24 and 26 points—from 1992 to 2009 (Hemphill & Vanneman 2010).

As income inequality has continued to grow, so has the income gap in academic achievement. As of 2003, children from low-SES households scored at least 10 percent lower than the average on national achievement exams in mathematics and reading (Hochschild 2003) and were much more likely to be absent from school throughout their educational experience (Zhang 2003). Compared to children born in 1975, the achievement gap between children from low- and high-SES families increased by 30 to 40 percent for children born in 2001 (Reardon, 2011). Additionally, low-SES children are twice as likely to repeat a grade, to be expelled or suspended, or drop out of school and 1.4 times as likely to be identified as having a learning disability in elementary or high school (Dahl & Lochner 2008). Dropout rates for high school have also steadily increased for children living in poverty, a stark contrast to the declining dropout rates nationally (Muijs, 2004). In 2008, children from low-income families had a dropout rate of 8.7 percent compared to 2.0 percent dropout rate of peers from high-income families, with severe implications for their representation in higher education and the perpetuation of the vicious cycle of poverty (NCES, 2013).

The current political, professional, and social needs to explain why differences in academic achievement have persisted along the lines of race, ethnicity, and class are rooted in the contrast between the drastic rise in population and classroom diversity that has taken place since the 1960s and the continuing colorblind mindset of American politics and society. The fall of 2014

represented the first time in U.S. history that the overall number of Black, Asian, and Latino students surpassed the number of non-Hispanic White students in public k-12 classrooms (Maxwell, 2014). However, since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, U.S. society and its educational and political systems have, for the most part, stopped considering race or ethnicity as relevant factors (Orfield, 2014), focusing, instead, on factors associated with poverty and language. Nevertheless, this change in focus has failed to rid the rhetoric or perceptions associated with compensatory education of their grounding in deficit thinking. Even the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires schools to report student achievement according to race, ethnicity, "children of poverty" and other so-called subgroups (No Child Left Behind, 2002; Noguera, 2008). In addition to reinforcing the long-established deficit focused rhetoric of compensatory education, NCLB ensured that the improvement of test scores for "children of poverty" became a primary focus for every school in the country (Bomer, et al., 2008).

From its first use in 1983, to 2010, the "at-risk" label had been cited in the educational literature 1,255 times (Valencia, 2010). The number of citations reached its peak in the early 1990s, with 100 hits in 1991 and 92 hits in 1993. Between 1994 and 2008, citations of the "at-risk" label reached a "relative plateau," averaging close to 50 citations a year (Valencia, 2010). Factors strikingly similar to many of Lewis' universal characteristics of the "culture of poverty" (1961) have regained both political and professional interest as sources of "risk." A 2008 study by the National Center for Children in Poverty, for example, found that family risk factors for chronic absenteeism in early childhood education for children from impoverished households include: (1) Teenage mothers; (2) Single-parent households; (3) Low maternal educational attainment; (4) Unemployment; (5) Poor health of family members; (6) Food insecurity; and (7) Large families, defined as having four or more children (Romero & Lee, 2008). The "at-

risk" label, in addition to referencing some of the characteristics of the "culture of poverty," is a model based on assumed accumulated environmental deficits. While the "at-risk" label can have a wide variety of different meanings and implications (Lubeck & Garrett, 1990; Beatty, 2012), as described by Marian Wright Edelman (1989), President of the Children's Defense Fund, the list of children considered "at-risk" most often includes: "minority children, poor children, teenage parents and their children, the physically or emotionally handicapped, abused and neglected children and others in the child welfare system, and the homeless" (p. 20). In North Carolina's public NC Pre-K program, for example, children are considered "at-risk" and eligible for enrollment according to the following criteria: four years of age by August 31st, a family income at or below 75 percent of the state median income (SMI), having a developmental delay or identified disability, having limited English proficiency, having a chronic health condition, or children with parents who are active duty military personnel (DCDEE, 2014). In addition to a disproportionate number of Black students considered "at-risk" due to the links between race and class (Rugh & Massey, 2013), many Latino children are then automatically characterized as "at-risk" due to their limited English proficiency. The "at-risk" label, therefore, presumes the academic failure of children based on the criteria listed above, while continuing to ignore the role of society and its institutions in the creation and sustainment of these criteria.

Beliefs in the "culture of poverty" and cultural deficits have also maintained firm standings in the American psyche in the twenty-first century, thanks to a wealth of research on the impacts of poverty and deficit-focused books designed to train new teachers. The most recent (5th) edition of Ruby Payne's *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* was published in 2014, and (partly thanks to the requirements of NCLB) has continued to exert substantial influence. While Payne's framework has received substantial criticism since its original publication, as of 2008,

her professional development program was central to district offerings in thirty-eight states (Bomer, 2008). Additionally, despite the fact many of her claims are offered without any supporting evidence, and the undeniable classist and deficit-focused underpinnings of her rhetoric, Payne has become the prevailing voice on poverty and class within the body of U.S. education literature (Gorski, 2008; Ng & Rury, 2006; Bohn, 2006), and conducts roughly 200 seminars a year (Osei-Kofl, 2003). Payne's work also laid the foundation for other preservice teacher textbooks providing advice on how to teach "at-risk" students. One such textbook, titled *Saving Our Students, Saving Our Schools: 50 Proven Strategies for Helping Underachieving Students and Improving Schools,* was published by Robert D. Barr and William H. Parrett in 2008. Like much of Payne's work, Barr and Parrett stereotype and pathologize poor children and their families. In strategy #6 ("Work With The Externally Centered Student"), for example, the authors claim:

> Children of poverty grow up being externally centered and believing that external events control their lives. They see no relationship between hard work, sacrifice, self-reliance, and success. These students often arrive at school with little or no concept of educational success and the reality that this success often depends on their efforts to conform to classroom procedures. (2008, p. 70, cited in Valencia, 2010, pp. 116-7)

Along this same line, Payne (2005) asserts that, to people living in poverty, education is "valued and revered as abstract but not as *reality*" (p. 42, cited in Valencia, 2010, p. 79). This assertion, that low-SES and minority peoples do not value education, is perhaps the most harmful of all of the universal characteristics attributed to the "culture of poverty." It emboldens the beliefs that students and families are "culturally deprived" and therefore are not deserving of either the extra effort required by teachers to accommodate them in their classrooms or the provision of equal educational resources and opportunities. As critiqued by Foley (1997), "For anyone wanting to indict the poor, the culture of poverty theory is a powerful metaphor that spawns a sweeping, holistic image. It provides public policy makers and the general public with a relatively nontech-

nical, yet 'scientific' way to categorize and characterize all poor people" (p. 115).

Not to be forgotten, research on genetic deficits has also continued into the twenty-first century. Since the 1990s, the same scientific advances that sanctioned ECE interventions (neuroscience, epigenetics, stem cell research, and the Human Genome Project, discussed in chapter 1) have also fueled hereditarian research on intelligence. John Phillipe Rushton and Author Jensen, in their review of "Thirty Years of Research on Race Differences in Cognitive Ability" (2005), assert that "Throughout the history of psychology, no question has been so persistent or so resistant to resolution as that of the relative roles of nature and nurture in causing individual and group differences in ability" (p. 235). Indeed, the presumption that differences in measured I.Q. and ability are caused by genetic differences between races and ethnicities has proved remarkably resilient in the face of overwhelming criticism and evidence to the contrary. Expanding on the research conducted in previous decades, the pseudoscientific research on genetic deficits during the 21st century, with the exception of *Race* by Sarich and Miele (2004), has largely focused on international comparisons of racial intelligence.[15] Due to length constraints, this chapter provides only a brief overview of selected hereditarian conclusions and research conducted in the 21st century.

John Phillipe Rushton, in the third unabridged edition of *Race, Evolution, and Behavior* (2000), presents a model for understanding the evolutionary history of racial differences. This model, according to the back cover, uses evidence from anthropology, psychology, sociology, and other scientific disciplines to show that: (a) "There are at least three biological races (subspecies) of man— Orientals (i.e., Mongoloids or Asians), Blacks (i.e., Negroids or Africans), and

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[15] See also: Rushton, J. P. (2000). *Race, Evolution, and Behavior.*; Lynn, R. & Vanhanen, T. (2002). *IQ and the Wealth of* Nations.; Sarich, V.. & Miele, F. (2004). *Race.*; Lynn, R. (2006). *Race Differences in Intelligence.*; Lynn, R., & Vanhanen, T. (2006). *IQ and Global Inequality.*; Hart, M. H. (2007). *Understanding Human History.*; Lynn, R. (2008). *The Global Bell Curve.*

Whites (i.e., Caucasoids or Europeans)"; (b) "There are recognizable profiles for the three major racial groups on— brains size, intelligence, personality and temperament, sexual behavior, and rates of fertility, maturation, and longevity"; (c) "The profiles reveal that ON AVERAGE — Orientals and their descendants around the world fall at one end of the continuum, Blacks and their descendants around the world fall at the other end of the continuum, [and] Whites regularly fall in between"; and concludes that (d) "This worldwide pattern implies evolutionary and genetic, rather than purely social, political, economic, or cultural causes" (Rushton, 2000, back cover). Lynn and Vanhanen, in *IQ and the Wealth of Nations* (2002), address the question "why are some countries so rich and others so poor?" and conclude that the answer lies in differences in country's "national IQ" (p. 183) and that "Intelligence differences between nations will be impossible to eradicate because they have a genetic basis and have evolved over the course of tens of thousands of years" (p. 195; cited in Valencia, 2010, pp. 57, 59). In 2010, Rushton and Jensen again underscored their beliefs in racial differences in intelligence with an analysis of NAEP test scores. Analyzing the combined means of the reading and mathematics scores from the NAEP long-term assessment tests from 1975 to 2008 for White, Black, and Hispanic 17-year-olds and White 13-year olds, the authors found that the gap between Black and Hispanic and White 17-year-olds had not closed, and "has barely closed relative to White 13-year-olds" (Rushton, 2012, p. 500). Thus, this persisting gap in achievement between races, according to Rushton and Jensen, serves to demonstrate how "heritable *g* [general intelligence] provides evidence of a significant genetic contribution to Black-White differences" (Rushton, 2012, p. 501).

This hereditarian research, now and in the past, rests on two assumptions: (1) that race is biologically, rather than socially, constructed (Suzuki & Aronson, 2005) and (2) that IQ tests and test scores are accurate measures of intelligence (Nisbett, et al., 2012). The social definition of

race places emphasis on the "social meanings or interpretations of these [physical] features made in society" (Suzuki & Aronson, 2005, p. 323). With the exception of this hereditarian research, it is widely accepted within social science disciplines that race is a socially constructed and defined concept (Jencks & Phillips, 1998**;** Naman, 2009). As illustrated by Naman (2009), "Unlike gender, which has clear and biological attributes, racial classifications have no biological determinants and only become meaningful when categories are developed and meanings are ascribed to them" (p. 27). Race has become inextricably linked to deficit, and it is these meanings that have influenced American thought systems, social interactions, and behaviors (West, 1993).

As noted by Nisbett and colleagues, critics of IQ tests attest that all measurement is imperfect, no single measure is completely free from cultural bias, no single test can capture the complexity of human intelligence, and there is the dangerous potential for misuse of intelligence test scores (2012, p. 131). Whether transmitted via genetics, culture, or the home environment, the research that has influenced U.S. education policy and practices has continued to deny the impacts of society on educational attainment. Most of this research also has a tendency to focus on the effects of only one factor—i.e. nature versus nurture or genes versus culture or environment—and ignores the fact that we do not exist, and children do not learn or grow up in, a vacuum. When combined, the cultural and environmental deficit models promote the use of early childhood intervention programs. However, when the prevailing beliefs of the genetic deficit model are added into the mix, the effectiveness of these interventions comes into question, along with the worthiness of the children and families that benefit from them.

Conclusion

The publications discussed in this chapter are representative of five of the six characteristics of deficit thinking: blaming the victim, pseudoscience, temporal changes, educability, and heterodoxy.[16] All three deficit models assume that all children and students have the equal means and opportunity to reap the rewards offered by society, and therefore imply that the inability of low-SES and minority students to do so is their fault, effectively *blaming the victims*. While the genetic deficit model asserts that external attempts at salvation are futile, the cultural- and environmental-deficit models frame low-SES and minority children and families as people to be *pitied* and *fixed* or *saved*. The *pseudoscience* characteristic of deficit thinking is evident in the fact that, although some of the publications examined in this chapter were likely inspired by good intentions, far too many have foundations in racial- and class-prejudices and ethnocentrism. As with earlier invocations of science, as asserted Katz (2013), "popular understanding fed by media accounts threatens to run ahead of the qualifications offered by scientists and the limits of evidence" (p. 8). The *temporal changes* of deficit thinking are reflected in the changing terminology and social acceptance of the labels attached to children served by compensatory education programs. Since the 1960s, the official language associated with compensatory education has largely shifted to focus on SES and environmental deficits, rather than the inflammatory cultural and genetic deficits focused on in the past. Meanwhile, however, the cultural and genetic associations with academic achievement, familiar in the 1960s, have continued to influence educational research, ideology, and perceptions of the *educability* of low-SES and minority students. Indeed, a variety of research from the 1960s through the early 2000s, as discussed in this chapter, focused on cultural and genetic differences and their relationships with disparities in academic achievement. Much of this literature also provided prescriptions of various methods for poor and

[16] The sixth characteristic, oppression, is addressed in detail in chapter 3.

minority students to "fix" the deficiencies in their culture or environment in order to close the "achievement gap." Last but not least, the *heterodoxy* characteristic of the deficit thinking paradigm is apparent in this and others' critiques of the deficit-thinking literature discussed in this chapter.

When compared to the "culturally-deprived" label, the "at-risk" label does not immediately or directly imply an image of an entire race or class of people as wholly and universally deprived. Perhaps worse than the sharply stereotypical and racist label of "culturally deprived," which can be refuted based on those factors alone, the "at-risk" label makes subtle jabs at the people and children it classifies. Regardless of the current governmental acceptance of the environmental transmission of deficits to children who are thus deemed "at-risk" for school failure, societal beliefs in culturally and genetically-transmitted deficits remain widespread. The cultural- and genetic deficits—and therefore the assumed low educability—of poor and minority children are now simply implied; they have become so ingrained in the American psyche that the low academic achievement of poor and minority students is seen as unfortunate, but not surprising. These beliefs impact the treatment of children who differ from the well-established norm and the allocation of resources to programs (educational and otherwise) that are intended to help them and their families. The intelligence and abilities of the children designated as "at-risk" for school failure are thus constantly questioned and doubted, while the oppression they experience at the hands of societal and educational institutions is often ignored or denied.

Chapter 3

Deficit Thinking as Oppression:

The Segregation and Disenfranchisement of Poor and Minority Students

> However diverse the United States has become in aggregate, the daily events and experiences that make up most Americans' lives take place in strikingly homogeneous settings (Sugrue, 2008, p. 6).

The segregation and disenfranchisement of poor and minority populations is an unfortunate yet undeniable trend in the history of education, and life in general, in the United States. Despite the deeply held American values of equal opportunity and equal rights, the education received by a majority of children from low income and minority backgrounds has long been characterized by substandard facilities and teachers, unequal funding, and segregated classrooms. In addition, as a result of an education system that does not provide universal education before the age of 5, there has remained a significant gap in access to early childhood education (ECE) for children from different SES, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Although the discourse surrounding compensatory education, from "culturally deprived" to "at-risk," places the blame for disparities in educational achievement on students and families, the systematic segregation and disenfranchisement of poor and minority students has played an indispensable role in their persistence. By ignoring the unequal system in which students live and are educated, the deficit-focused discourse of compensatory education necessarily establishes the standards set by the White middle-class as the "norm" against which all other children, students, and families are compared.

This chapter examines trends in deficit thinking-driven oppression that have been fostered by the segregation and disenfranchisement of poor and minority students from the 1950s

into the 21st century. Both the segregation and oppression of poor and minority students is, and has been, varying and multidimensional, ranging from physical violence and protests against minority students and deliberate racial segregation in schools, to residential and class-based segregation, segregation within schools, and unequal distributions of resources. The analysis of the oppression of poor and minority students is organized according to the following categories: 1) school segregation and integration, 2) residential segregation, 3) income segregation and the concentration of poverty, 4) within-school segregation and disenfranchisement, and 5) disparate early childhood opportunities and compensatory education. These forms of segregation and disenfranchisement, when combined, exert substantial influence on the academic and life outcomes of poor and minority children and the resulting persistence of deficit-focused perceptions, practices, and rhetoric.

School Segregation and Integration:

The 1950's and 1960's represented periods of significant change in the social and political landscapes for poor and minority populations in the United States (Orfield, 2000). Before 1954, racial segregation and inequality in schools, and all of society, was the norm and many Whites were strongly opposed to not only the desegregation of schools, but also the very prospect of providing Blacks with an education (Valencia, 2010). The original forced segregation of Mexican American and African American students into separate and unequal schools was predicated on the widely accepted views of these children as "intellectually inferior, linguistically limited in English, unmotivated, and immoral—all characteristics, officials asserted, that would hold back the progress of White classmates if racial mixing in schools were permitted" (Valencia, 2010, p. 11). In 1954, however, the Supreme Court overturned the "sepa-

rate but equal" doctrine established in 1896 in *Plessy v. Ferguson,* with the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that decided separate educational facilities were inherently unequal. The passing of *Brown,* however, produced little of its intended effects on the integration of schools or the equal treatment of Black Americans in society. Despite the great promise of this ruling, the actual integration of schools was slow to follow and Black students remained the victims of continued violence, stereotypes, and systematic disenfranchisement throughout the remainder of the 1950s and 1960s (Klarman, 1994).

Rather than its intended effect, the passage of *Brown* spurred profound, violent, and televised reactions of White, conservative Southerners to the proposed integration of schools. As White men determined to maintain the racial status quo and uphold Jim Crow took public office across the South, Southern law enforcement officers used nearly every means available to them to suppress civil rights demonstrations and the integration of Blacks into White schools and society. The methods (often sanctioned by Southern politicians) used by Southern law enforcement included, but were not limited to, high-pressure fire hoses, police dogs, truncheons, and tear gas (Klarman, 1994). The widely publicized use of such violent and inhumane tactics against Black students and civil rights and integration activists converted millions of previously apathetic Whites (mostly in the North) into active and enthusiastic supporters of the civil rights movement and more progressive legislation (Klarman, 1994). The extent of the White resistance following *Brown* eventually pushed the federal government into action and brought issues of civil rights and racial segregation into the spotlight.

Immediately following *Brown,* integration did start slowly in some states in the peripheral South, such as Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, and Kentucky. By 1962-1963, however, not a single Black student had attended an integrated public grade school in Alabama, South Carolina, or

Mississippi. It was not until the 1964 Civil Rights Act that the desegregation of schools began in earnest. In fact, many of the laws requiring segregation by race in Southern states were not even officially repealed following *Brown*, and much of the integration that did occur was merely a form of token desegregation, initiated by individual law suits (Cascio, et al., 2008). When the Civil Rights Act was signed into law, 98% of Black students in Southern schools were still in all-Black schools and nearly 100% of White students were in virtually all White schools (Orfield 2000). Legitimate attempts at the full integration of schools in the South took an additional five years. These years were characterized by increased violence, race riots, White flight, and escalating racial tension (Lewis, 2006).

The Civil Rights Act directly impacted school desegregation by granting the U.S. Attorney General the authority to sue school districts that discriminated against students on the basis of race, and by granting the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) the authority to withhold federal funding from such districts (Cascio, et al., 2008). While the HEW desegregation guidelines in 1965 required only a small number of Black children to be moved into White schools, by 1968 districts were required to establish plans to eliminate racially identifiable schools within one year. Another part of President Johnston's War on Poverty, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), allocated more federal funds to school districts with higher percentages of children living in poverty, and served as a form of compensatory education. Because they stood to loose larger federal grants if they failed to desegregate, then, schools in poorer districts were more likely to integrate between 1964 and 1968 (Cascio, et al., 2008). The Supreme Court also took federal involvement in the integration of schools a step further in 1968, with the decision in *Green v. New Kent County,* which required districts to make affirmative steps toward desegregation, as opposed to counting on Black families' exercise of

"free choice" (Cascio, et al., 2008). In 1971, the use of busing to achieve racial balance in schools was then upheld in the Supreme Court decision *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg*. Because integration in large cities was prevented by the residential isolation and segregation of Blacks, the Supreme Court unanimously upheld a federal judge's order that busing be used to obtain a ratio of approximately 71 percent White and 29 percent Black in each of the schools in Charlotte (Farley, et al., 1980; Cascio, et al., 2008). However, Cascio and colleagues (2008) estimated that by 1976, the desegregation of only about half of Southern school districts had been supervised by the court.

After the Civil Rights Act, the integration of Black students into majority White schools continued into the 1970s and -80s, particularly in the South. The percent of Black students in schools with a majority of White students in the South leapt from two percent in 1964 to 33 percent in 1970, and reached its peak at 44 percent in the late 1980s (Orfield & Lee, 2006). However, because much of the efforts and progress toward school integration took place in the South, the "de facto segregation" of schools in the North was largely ignored (Institute on Race and Poverty, 1997, p. 13). For the nation as a whole, as evidenced by **Table 2** (located in Appendix B), the early 1970s and -80s saw a significant decline in school segregation according to race (Orfield & Lee, 2006). The late 1980s and early 1990s, however, then saw an increase in the racial segregation of public schools, and in the 1980s Latino students officially became more segregated than Black students. The increasing segregation of Latino students can also be understood from the other end of the spectrum: from 1970 to 1994, the percentage of White students in schools attended by Latino students decreased from 43.8 percent to 30.6 percent (Orfield, 1997; Institue on Race and Poverty, 1997).

While most Latino rights activists were focused on fighting for bilingual education rather than against segregation, equal educational access for Latino students was not put into law until almost a decade after the *Civil Rights Act* and two decades after the *Brown* decision. The right to desegregation for Latino students was established by the Supreme Court with the *Keyes* case in Denver in 1973 and, but for a few locations, was never seriously enforced (Orfield & Lee, 2006). When the integration of schools was successful, however, minority students who had previously attended segregated and poorly resourced schools were suddenly placed in direct comparison and competition with the cultural and educational standards set by White, middle-class students. With regards to Mexican American students, the cultural conflicts and superiority-inferiority relationship created by this sudden and unfair comparison were highlighted by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in 1972, which found that:

> The dominance of Anglo values is apparent in the curricula on all education levels; in the cultural climate which ignores or denigrates Mexican American mores and the use of the Spanish language; in exclusion of the Mexican-American community from full participation in matters pertaining to school policies and practices (cited in Martinez & Rury, 2012, pp. 13-14).

In the 21st century, the segregation of Latino students has dramatically increased across the country, and most severely in the West. The percentage of Latino students in intensely segregated and concentrated settings has actually increased from 12 percent in 1968 to 43 percent in 2009. According to a report by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, in 2012, the typical Latino student attended a school where two-thirds of their classmates are poor, less than a quarter are White, and nearly two-thirds are other Latinos (Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012). Likewise, for typical Black students, an average of 64 percent of classmates are low-income, compared to 37 percent for the typical White student and 39 percent for the typical Asian student. In addition, as of 2012, 14 percent of Latino students and 15 percent of Black students

nationwide attend "apartheid schools," where White students make up only 0 to 1 percent of enrollment (Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012).

The resegregation of schools by race, and the steady growth of segregation by ethnicity, in the late 1980s and early 1990s was primarily driven by three factors: (1) Supreme Court decisions, (2) the increasing minority population, and (3) the expansion of school choice. In 1986, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit upheld a district court ruling on the finding that a Norfolk school board's return to a neighborhood school program was not racially motivated (627 F. supp. 814 (1983)) (Clark, 1987). The appeals court, in agreement with the district court, ruled that, in the absence of an intent to discriminate, although White flight could not be used as an excuse for failing to desegregate schools, it could be considered in the establishment of a voluntary integration plan and the return to a neighborhood school system, where busing would not be utilized in order to achieve integration in racially segregated neighborhoods (Clark, 1987). In the early to mid 1990s, before full integration of public schools had been achieved, the Supreme Court also authorized school districts to relax desegregation standards, to dismantle desegregation plans, and placed an emphasis on local control over desegregation as the primary goal (Orfield & Lee, 2006).[17] The courts' decisions to relax integration standards were largely influenced by patterns of White flight and the public conflict and concern over the busing required to achieve integration. As a result of the busing dispute and the aforementioned court decisions, from 1986 to 2002, the resegregation of schools became the norm (Orfield, Frankenberg & Lee, 2002; Kenty-Drane, 2009). The increase in the minority population in the 1980s and 1990s was largely due to a combination of immigration and higher minority birthrates. As a small but rapid-

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[17] *Board of Education of Oklahoma v. Dowell,* 498 U.S. 237, 1991; *Freeman v. Pitts,* 503 U.S. 467, 1992; *Mixxouri v. Jenkins,* 115 S. Ct. 2038, 1995

ly growing minority, Latino students represented only one-twentieth of the student population enrolled in 1970 (Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012). Between 1986 and 1996, the number of Latino students in public elementary and secondary schools increased by 45 percent, compared to 14 percent for Black students, and only 3 percent for White students (Clotfelter, 2001). This trend has continued, and the fall of 2014 represented the first time in U.S. history that the overall number of Black, Asian, and Latino students surpassed the number of non-Hispanic White students in public k-12 classrooms (Maxwell, 2014).

The third driver of the resegregation of schools, school choice, or allowing students and parents to choose between different schools, originally became prominent in direct response to *Brown,* as a way to avoid integration (Forman, 2005). After a decline following the Civil Rights Act of 1964, school choice programs then saw a resurgence in the early 1990s (Renzulli & Evans, 2005), and by 1995, the U.S. had roughly 250 charter schools (Wallice, 2013).[18] By 1998, that number had increased to about 800 charter schools across 33 states, which had an enrollment of approximately 170,000 children (Wallice, 2013). School vouchers, or the use of public funds to send children to public or private schools of their choice, were first initiated in Milwaukee in 1990 (Wallice, 2013), increased substantially throughout the decade, and remain a topic of political contention today. The early 1990s, then, represented a time characterized by the simultaneous elimination of desegregation programs combined with expanding school choice, or "free-market," reforms (Saporito & Sohoni, 2006). While there is substantial disagreement over the costs and benefits of school choice programs (including charter schools, magnet schools, and school vouchers), and whether they increase racial and ethnic segregation on one hand, or benefit minorities on the other (Davis, 2012; Fiel, 2013), substantial evidence suggests that school

[18] Charter schools were first authorized by a Minnesota law in 1991 (Wallice, 2013)

choice can exacerbate racial isolation and imbalance (Bifulco and Ladd 2007; Saporito and Sohoni 2006; Skink and Emerson 2008), and promote "White flight" in integrated areas (Renzulli & Evans, 2005). In addition, Saporito (2003) found that "*laissez faire"* school choice policies can contribute to the deterioration of educational conditions in the remaining public schools (p. 181).

The presumed integration of schools following the 1960s and the resegregation that began in the late 1980s had a number of different effects on the continued application of deficit thinking to poor and minority children served by compensatory ECE programs. The successes of the Civil Rights Movement and the preceding color-blind view of education and politics meant that the continued segregation and negative consequences of school integration were not perceived by the public majority as the fault of primarily-White institutions or systematic inequalities. Rather, as disparities in academic achievement continued, the methodology of blaming the victim reinforced the belief that something was inherently wrong with poor and minority genes, families, and/or cultures. Beyond blaming the victim, the factors contributing to school segregation are also reflective of other external and societal mechanisms of oppression, including residential and income segregation. Indeed, as noted by Charles Thompson, the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of *The Journal of Negro Education,* in the year following *Brown,* "segregation in education is not an isolated phenomenon, but is an integral part of the general problem of caste restrictions in other areas of our national life"" (1954, cited in Franklin, 2007, p. 224).

Residential Segregation:

> *The high degree of black residential segregation is unprecedented and unique. No other group in the history of the United States has ever experienced such high levels of segregation sustained over such a long period of time* (Massey, 1994, p. 473).

The state of racial- and ethnic-residential segregation in America is owed to a variety of connecting and overlapping factors, including federal public policy, official and unofficial private real estate practices, and the prejudices and collective actions of White home owners (Sugrue, 2008; Massey, 1994). The patterns of institutional discrimination, White prejudice, and racist public policies established early in the twentieth century all but assured the continuation of residential segregation. As of 1980, according to a study by Massey (1994), the high levels of residential segregation for Blacks could not be attributed to SES, education, or occupation, and Black families earning under $2,500 were just as segregated as those earning over $50,000. Referred to as "the linchpin of racial division and separation" by Thomas Sugrue (2008, p. 1), residential segregation by race and ethnicity has fostered profound inequalities in school quality and access, employment opportunities, and in income and multigenerational wealth accumulation. This limiting of interracial and interethnic contact hardens perceptions of racial and ethnic differences and reinforces notions of deficit thinking.

The federal government played a critical role in the residential segregation of minorities by facilitating the exodus of businesses and White middle class residents out of central cities in the mid twentieth century. The tools used by the federal government included: mortgage redlining, exclusionary zoning, federal housing programs, and politically fragmented metropolitan regions. The Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), created in 1933, and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), created in 1934, instituted mortgage redlining with "neighborhood security maps" and restrictive covenants which prevented the provision of mortgages in neighborhoods with "inharmonious racial and ethnic groups," which were deemed unstable (Sugrue, 2008; Massey, 1994). These practices, established by the FHA, were quickly picked up by private lenders and, as noted by Massey, "the practice of redlining became institutionalized throughout

the lending industry" (1994, p. 478). As a result, post WWII, while Whites were buying houses in unprecedented numbers, a disproportionate number of Blacks were renters, and thus prevented from accumulating wealth to pass down to their children. While homeownership for Blacks jumped from 35 percent in 1950 to 44 percent in 1980, only 46.3 percent of Blacks were homeowners in 2000, compared to 71.3 percent of Whites. Likewise, with the lone exception of New Mexico, Lantino households have maintained homeownership rates in the low to mid 40s, reaching only 46 percent in 2000 (U.S. Census, 2011). While the homeownership rate for all minorities reached a peak of 50.6 percent in 2010, by 2013 it had fallen back down to 47.4 percent as a result of the recession (Kochhar & Fry, 2014).

Residential segregation has also been bolstered by public housing and urban renewal programs, administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) beginning in 1945. Goering and colleagues (1997) note that before the civil rights and fair housing laws of the 1960s were passed, nearly 700,000 units of public housing were constructed and conformed to already established patterns of racial segregation. As concentrated poverty and urban ghettos expanded, White city councils, with federal support, prevented Black neighborhoods from encroaching on White business districts and institutions through so-called urban renewal programs. The Black residents who were displaced by these renewal programs were then placed in public housing developments, the construction of which was blocked from taking place outside of already established Black areas, most of which were characterized by concentrated poverty (Massey, et al., 1994; Bickford & Massey, 1991). Examining HUD data gathered in 1977, Nelson and colleagues found that while White residents of public housing were most likely to reside in developer owned, low-density, and scattered-site projects, Black households were more likely to be found in high-density, centralized structures, owned and operated by local authorities (2004).

A study commissioned by HUD in 1994 found that 55 percent of all public housing units were located in census tracts of concentrated poverty (Goering, Kamely, & Richardson, 1994). Another study by Goering and colleagues in 1997 found that the average Black family in public housing lives in a project that is 8% White and 85% Black, with 25% of tenants working, 80% below the poverty level, and 53% single-female-headed households with children. The projects lived in by typical White family, on the other hand, were characterized as 27% Black, and 60% White, with 27% of tenants working, 74% under the poverty level, and 47% single-female-headed households with children (Goering, et al., 1997). While Whites living in public housing were still surrounded by concentrated poverty, then, Black residents experienced higher levels of both segregation and poverty concentration.

The roles of private actors have included private housing discrimination, racial steering, and private mortgage redlining. From the 1930s through the 1960s, as noted by Sugrue (2008), the National Association of Real Estate Boards issued specific guidelines that a realtor: "should never be instrumental in introducing to a neighborhood a character of property or occupancy, members of any race or nationality, or any individual whose presence will be clearly detrimental to property values in a neighborhood" (p. 2). Although discrimination against minorities by property owners, landlords, and real estate brokers was outlawed in 1968 by the federal Fair Housing Act, real estate agents quickly resorted to "steering" White home buyers into all-white neighborhoods and communities, and minority home buyers into predominantly-minority or racially transitioning neighborhoods (Sugrue, 2008). A number of different studies have documented the prevalence of racial "steering" practices by real estate agents after 1968 and well into the 1990s (Sugrue, 2008; Galster, 1987; Yinger, 1991a; Yinger, 1991b). As articulated by Sugrue, "discriminatory real estate practices assure that blacks and Hispanics do not have the same de-

gree of choice when they are house hunting as do whites" (2008, p. 4). The Housing Discrimination Study (HDS), carried out by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1988 concluded that housing was made systematically more available to Whites in 34 percent of transactions in the sales market and 45 percent in the rental market. The HDS also found that Whites received more favorable credit assistance in 17 percent of rental transactions and 46 percent of sales transactions. With regards to access to available housing, the HDS determined that the probability that a shown unit was recommended to Whites and not Blacks was 91 percent, and the likelihood that an additional unit was shown to Whites and not Blacks was 65 percent (Massey, et al., 1994). Taken together, the HDS determined a likelihood of 53 percent for experiencing discrimination according to race in both the sales and rental markets (Massey, et al., 1994).

At the individual level, White reactions to Black newcomers and racially changing neighborhoods ranged from physical violence and arson to relocating into the suburbs and avoiding racially-diverse cities, often referred to as "White flight". In 1950, 70% of the metropolitan population of America resided in central cities; however, there was a mass migration of affluent Whites into the suburbs following WWII. While Whites in the North appeared to accept the integration of Blacks into society in principle, it quickly became clear that many were reluctant to also accept it in practice (Massey, et al., 1994). White flight and racially segregated neighborhoods were most prominent in the Northeast and Midwest and plagued many major metropolitan areas. Between 1950 and 1960, for example, the city of Chicago gained 320,000 Black residents and lost 399,000 White residents, and the suburbs gained over one million White residents. A similar pattern took place in the city of Philadelphia, which gained 153,000 Black residents and lost 225,000 White residents, while the suburbs gained 700,000 White residents (Sugrue, 2008).

The few Black residents who did move into the suburbs, meanwhile, were often segregated into confined and established Black enclaves. The resulting increase in residential segregation, then, led to geographically concentrated poverty, and the emergence of the urban 'underclass' (Massey, 1990). Rather than segregation according to neighborhoods, this mass movement led to racial segregation along the lines of cities and suburbs and, in 1990, only one-one-third of White metropolitan residents resided in central cities, compared to more than two-thirds of Black metropolitan residents (Institute on Race and Poverty, 1997).

The integration of schools also contributed directly to the racial and ethnic segregation of neighborhoods—and, therefore, the continued and re-segregation of schools in many areas. The mass exodus of White, middle-class families from neighborhoods with schools undergoing racial integration left many poor and minority students and families geographically isolated. White flight was also more likely to occur in school systems with mandatory bussing policies to ensure integration, in cities with large minority populations, and with accessible alternatives for White residents, such as suburbs (Clark, 1987). As noted by Clark (1987), "to the extent that most mandatory desegregation plans are also busing plans, white avoidance is the unwillingness of whites to have their children undergo mandatory reassignment away from their local neighborhood schools" (p. 212). Rossell (1983) also found that greater required busing distance resulted in higher levels of White flight. White parents with higher levels of education and income were also more likely to remove their children from public schools undergoing integration (Rossell, 1983). In some cases, however, rather than relocating to different districts, White parents simply moved their children into private schools (Clark, 1987).

While there remains some contention over the factors contributing to White flight and their respective degrees of influence (Clark, 1987; Crowder, 2000; Gotham, 2002; Wurdock,

1981), a variety of studies over the last sixty years have concluded that the racial and ethnic makeup of neighborhoods exerts a significant influence on the decisions of Whites to leave racially diverse neighborhoods (Crowder, 2000; Clotfelter, 1979, 2001; Coleman, Kelley, & Moore, 1975; Farley, Richards, & Wurdock, 1980; Wurdock, 1981; Bobo & Zubrinski, 1996; Clark, 1987, 1991; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo, 1997; Rapkin & Grigsby, 1960; Taeuber & Taeuber, 1965; Denton & Massey, 1991; Schelling, 1971, 1972; Grodzins, 1958). This relocation of White residents is a primary factor in the resegregation and destabilization of integrated neighborhoods. The White flight phenomenon continued well past the 1970s; a study by Farley and colleagues in Detroit in 1994 found that 15% of Whites would leave a neighborhood that was up to 20% Black, and 41% would move out of a neighborhood that was one-third Black (Farley et al., 1994). Other studies found similar results in other U.S. cities (Bobo & Zubrinski, 1996; Clark, 1991), and in national-level opinion surveys (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo, 1997). Beyond the Black-White dichotomy, survey data also indicates that Whites tend to exhibit negative stereotypes about all non-White groups (Bobo and Zubrinski, 1996).

Increased residential segregation and poverty concentration also had roots in the elimination of well-paying jobs for many unskilled minorities that resulted from the rise of the private sector, the decline of manufacturing, the suburbanization of blue-collar employment, and the growing income inequality that defined the economy of the 1970s (Wilson, 1987; Massey, 1990; Duncan & Murnane, 2011). The greatest concentration of poverty, however, took place in areas where residential segregation was already the norm. Using a simulation to replicate the economic conditions observed among Blacks and Whites in metropolitan areas in the 1970s, for example, Massey (1990) found that in racially segregated cities "a simple increase in the rate of minority poverty leads to a dramatic rise in the concentration of poverty" (p. 329). Students living in areas

of concentrated poverty were therefore segregated not only by race and ethnicity, but also by class.

The deterioration of formally White neighborhoods—fueled by disinvestment, racially-biased lending practices, population flight, and limited access to employment—is then commonly blamed on the perceived depravity of the new minority residents and used as justification for continued segregation, discrimination, and deficit thinking (Sugrue, 2008). This geographic and resource distance between Whites and minorities, and between the middle class and the poor, fosters mistrust, misinformation, and a perception of unaligned common interests that fuels negative stereotypes related to race, ethnicity, and poverty (Sugrue, 2008). As a result, combined with the prevalent White middle-class belief in the equality of opportunity provided by the capitalist system and denial of the persistent disenfranchisement experienced by minorities, many White conservatives are unwilling to support the spending of their tax dollars on welfare assistance or programs for neighborhoods or cities that are primarily composed of minorities, thereby fueling further segregation and disenfranchisement. The discriminatory practices associated with residential segregation have a cumulative effect on the well-being, education, and income of poor and minority families and children, which are often passed down through generations (Massey, et al., 1994). With regards to wealth accumulation, for example, while middle- and upper-class Whites can frequently count on receiving some inheritance from their parents (mostly accumulated via real estate) and a mortgage to purchase a home, the patterns established by the history of residential segregation mean that many minorities cannot say the same, thus perpetuating the cycle of inequality and segregation (Sugrue, 2008)

Income Inequality and the Concentration of Poverty:

At the national level, the three decades following the Second World War were characterized by gains in the economy and intergenerational economic and educational mobility, and significant reductions in levels of child poverty. The percentage of children living below 100% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL), for example, steadily decreased from 27.3 percent in 1958 to 14.0 percent in 1968. Income inequality, however, began to rise significantly in the late 1970s. This increase in income inequality had a variety of negative and segregating effects on educational attainment for low income families. In addition to contributing to the increase in residential segregation and poverty concentration, rising income inequality led to reductions in educational mobility, resources available to invest in children, and access to quality child care. By the 1990s, educational mobility had significantly reduced, with more than 20 percent of men and slightly less than 20 percent of women completing less schooling than their parents, compared to less than ten percent of men and women before 1970 (Duncan & Murnane, 2011, p. 6).

As mentioned in the previous section, residential segregation and income inequality also directly contributed to the concentration of poverty in many neighborhoods in central cities across the country.[19] As noted by the Institute on Race and Poverty (1997), beyond a high percentage of individuals living in poverty, in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty, "all residents face substantial limitations to life chances as the neighborhood cannot sustain itself economically" (p. 9). The denial of mortgages due to federal and private mortgage redlining (discussed in the previous section) and the lack of commercial resources also meant the denial of capital and investment in minority populated communities, leading to the deterioration of buildings, the stagnation of housing prices, vacant lots, and the prevention of Whites from buying

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[19] Concentrated poverty can be defined as neighborhoods where 40% or more of residents fall at or below the poverty line.

homes in racially diverse areas (Massey, et al., 1994). Between 1970 and 1990, the number of census tracts with 40% or more residents in poverty (concentrated poverty) grew from 1,177 to 2,726 and, in 1990, the racial/ethnic composition of individuals living in concentrated poverty was 23% White, 52% Black, and 24% Hispanic (Institute on Race and Poverty, 1997). By 1993, compared to 10% of residents residing in suburbs, 22% of central city residents were at or below the federal poverty line (Institute on Race and Poverty, 1997).

Income inequality and poverty also directly contribute to disparities in school funding and quality, which differ significantly both between and within different states and school districts. In the racially segregated schools in 1940 and 1954, public spending per pupil in Black schools was 40 percent and 60 percent, respectively, of that spent per pupil in White schools (Books, 2004, p. 82). In 1973, the Supreme Court ruled in *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* that, because education is not a fundamental right protected by the Constitution, a system of school funding that disadvantages children in property-poor districts is not necessarily unconstitutional (Books, 2004, p. 81). In the districts represented in this case, the Edgewood district (which was 96% non-White and low income) received only $26 per pupil from local taxes, compared to the $333 per pupil from local taxes in the Alamo Heights district (which was predominantly White and wealthy) (Books, 2004, p. 87). As a result of this ruling, disparities in school funding both between and within states and districts have continued unchecked. The average state spending per pupil in 2002, for example, according to the NCES, ranged from a low of $4,769 in Utah to a high of $11,009 in the District of Columbia (Park, 2003; cited in Books, 2004, p. 64). Disparities in per-pupil spending within states, between the 25% of districts with the highest percentages of child poverty and the 25% of districts with the the lowest percentages of child poverty, likewise, range from a gap of $2,152 per student in New York, $2,060

in Illinois, $1,535 in Montana, and $1,248 in Michigan (Education Trust, 2002, p. 2; cited in Books, 2004, p. 64). In 1997, the U.S. General Accounting Office found that in 37 states, wealthy districts had an average of 24 percent more funding per pupil than poor districts, despite the fact that in 35 of those states, the poor districts were taxed at a higher rate (Books, 2004).

Moreover, the uneven distribution of resources to schools attended by poor and minority students goes beyond the use of local property taxes to fund schools and between district inequalities, and extends into within district inequalities. In a study of 89 elementary schools in a large, urban school district, Condron and Roscigno (2003) found that disparities in spending corresponded with the class and racial composition of schools. These spending differences within districts are caused by spending discretion at the *local* level, which can therefore decrease the effects of federal Title I funds (Condron & Roscigno, 2003). Disparities are also persistent in the condition of school buildings and facilities. In 2001, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) found that, in addition to inadequate schools in rural areas, "the largest portion of schools reporting deficient conditions are in central cities serving 50% minority students and 70% poor students" (Books, 2004, p. 65). With regards to the disparities in school conditions and opportunities between students form low- and high-income families, Kozol (1991) argued that the state, "by requiring attendance but refusing to require equity, effectively requires inequality. Compulsory inequality, perpetuated by state law, too frequently condemns our children to unequal lives" (p. 56; cited in Books, 2004, p. 64).

The increase in income inequality in the 1970s has also had disproportionate effects on children, who have been more likely to live under the federal poverty level (FPL) than adults since the mid 1970s (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2015). While the overall percentages of children living below 100% of the FPL from 1975 to 2000 have decreased for all races and ethnicities, as

illustrated in **Table 3** (located in Appendix B), the percentages of Black and Hispanic children living in poverty have remained significantly higher than than those of Non-Hispanic White children. Income inequality also contributed to the segregation of children from low-SES families into schools of concentrated poverty. This trend, of sorting children into schools attended by classmates with similar economic standings, increased during the 1980s (Duncan & Murnane, 2011, p. 9). Because school funding is attached to property taxes, school systems in low-income communities have remained under-resourced, with less-qualified teachers and high teacher-to-student ratios. Schools in areas of concentrated poverty also frequently have inadequate facilities and learning materials, less successful peer groups, and high levels of teacher turnover (Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012). As a result, low socio economic status (SES) has strong correlations with low educational attainment, high risk factors, and poor health outcomes. The negative and cumulative effects of poverty and income inequality, however, are not restricted to metropolitan areas. African Americans living in rural areas, according to the NIH Family Life Project, regardless of education levels, also have significantly higher cumulative risk scores, live in deeper poverty, and have twice the poverty rates of their White counterparts (Vernon-Feagans & Cox 2013).

In addition to segregation, the concentration of poverty has a wide variety of detrimental effects on neighborhoods and life outcomes. Neighborhoods with highly concentrated poverty tend to have high levels of crime, which can create difficulties when recruiting qualified teachers and contribute to high levels of stress for both children and families. Perhaps as a result of this concentration of poverty in the 1970s, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the term "culturally deprived" was then joined by the labels of "economically deprived" and "economically disadvantaged" during this decade. With regards to deficit thinking, these terms represented the most

accurate and least individually-deficit-focused classifications for low-achieving students. However, the high-stakes testing and the standards movement of the 1980s and the introduction of the "at risk" label promptly returned public and professional attention back to assumed individual, familial, and cultural deficits.

Entering the twenty-first century, disparities in income according to race and ethnicity have remained persistent and, in fact, have grown since the end of the Great Recession. As of 2013, the median wealth of White households was 13 times the median wealth of Black households and ten times that of Latino households (Kochhar & Fry, 2014). Despite the nation-wide economic recovery after the Great Recession, as of 2014, the gap in median household wealth between Black and White families has reached its highest point since 1989, and the White-to-Latino wealth gap has returned to the level of 2001 (Kochhar & Fry, 2014). Poverty among children, in particular, has also maintained high percentages, with a greater concentration in the Southern states. Despite the variety of federal- and state-level policies aimed at combating poverty, the percentage of children living in both poverty and extreme poverty has steadily increased since 2000 (Romero & Lee, 2008). Compared to 44 percent in 2008, as of 2014, according to the National Center for Child Poverty, an estimated 47 percent of children under the age of 3 in the U.S. (5.3 million) live in households that fall below 100 percent of the FPL, and 24 percent live in households at or above 200 percent of the FPL (defined as low-income) (Jiang, Ekono, & Skinner, 2016). When broken down by race and ethnicity, the percentages are even more striking: compared to 34 percent of White infants and toddlers, 70 percent of Black infants and toddlers and 64 percent of latino infants and toddlers live in low-income households (Jiang, Ekono, & Skinner, 2016).

The deficit-focused stereotypes and educational conditions associated with poverty have

also been found to have a variety of detrimental impacts on the educational experiences of poor children: Poor children are twice as likely to repeat a grade, to be expelled or suspended, and 1.4 times as likely to be identified as having a learning disability in elementary or high school (Dahl & Lochner, 2008). In 2012, children from low-income families had a dropout rate of 11.8 percent compared to 1.9 percent dropout rate of peers from high-income families, with severe implications for their representation in higher education (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013). These disparities in educational outcomes, however, are then used to reinforce the segregation, discrimination, and deficit-thinking that led to them in the first place. Furthermore, for many deficit-thinkers, the high dropout rates for low-SES students strengthen the belief that economically disadvantaged people do not value education, and therefore do not deserve equitable educational conditions or resources (Gorski, 2008).

In the year 2016, the level of income inequality has reached an all-time high. In 1974, for example, the poorest 20 percent of Americans received 5.7 percent of the national income, compared to only 3.6 percent in 2014. Today, the top 20% of the income distribution owns 88.9% of the nation's overall wealth, the second 20% owns 9.4%, the third 20% owns 2.6%, and the bottom 40% owns -0.9% (Powell, 2016). This negative percentage means that the people in the bottom 40% of the income distribution actually owe more than they own. Meanwhile, real wages have increased 156 percent for the top 1 percent of the income distribution and 362 percent for the top 0.1 percent of the income distribution since the 1970s, yet have remained relatively stagnant for most U.S. workers. This level of income inequality is directly correlated with the uneven distribution of opportunity, mobility, and influence.

Within-School Segregation and Disenfranchisement:

Despite the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the beginning of school integration, and the (largely theoretical) support of Northern Whites and the federal government, Black students remained marginalized and stigmatized throughout the country, in schools, and in the classroom. While the legal segregation and disenfranchisement of Black Americans came to an end with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, poor and minority populations quickly began to experience segregation and disenfranchisement on different and more subtle levels in the following decades. After integration, the minority students who attended integrated schools were frequently separated into groups according to their race or ethnicity through extensive tracking programs, were often systematically excluded from high-level academic curricula, and, as a result, were placed in lower-track classes and fell behind their White peers (Martinez & Rury, 2012). In addition to the within-school segregation caused by tracking practices, poor and minority students were also often ostracized from their teachers based on race/ethnicity and class, and from personally relevant learning materials as a result of ethnocentric curricula. These trends, which became commonplace in the mid twentieth century, have continued into the present day and, despite heavy critique from the social sciences, can be found in public schools across the country. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, these practices are also exemplary of the concept of educability inherent to deficit thinking: giving credit to teachers for student success, while simultaneously blaming the students who fail for their failure.

Tracking, the sorting of students based on assumed educational abilities and needs into separate classes and programs of instruction, has been conventional practice in American schooling for nearly a century (Oakes, 1987). The bases for tracking have generally included IQ tests, student grades, and standardized test scores, all of which can be subject to biased implementation and interpretation. Tracking occurs at both the curriculum and ability levels, and can differ sig-

nificantly according to extensiveness, placement criteria, flexibility, and specificity. At the curriculum level (most common in high schools), students are classified and assigned a series of courses designed for either vocational students, general track students, or college-preparatory students. The ability grouping variety of tracking (widely used in middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools), divides academic subjects into classes with different levels of difficulty for students with different perceived levels of ability (Oakes, 1987). This characterization and placement of students into different curricula trajectories and class difficulties/abilities, often based on the perceived deficits of poor and minority students, then results in the resegregation of students, by both race and class, within schools and despite any attempts at integration. The tracking of poor and minority students into low-ability classes became pervasive immediately following the *Brown* decision (and, in fact, dates back to 1920 cite) and served as a method to re-segregate schools that had been forcefully integrated.

The national decline in test scores in the 1980s and the subsequent emergence of the standards movement then led to significant increases in high-stakes, standardized testing and an increased focus on the low academic success of poor and minority students. By 1991, the use of ability grouping in math classes was two thirds higher in the U.S. than in other countries (Spring, 2000). As a result, racial and ethnic minority and low SES children continued to be disproportionately placed in low-ability tracks and in either general or vocational groupings in junior high and high school throughout the 1980s and -90s (Kao & Thompson, 2003; Slavin & Braddock, 1993; Oakes, 1985; Joseph, 1998). Moreover, even high-achieving minority students are often exposed to less rigorous curriculums and academic standards, and have teachers who expect less of them because of their race compared to their White peers (Azzam, 2008; Hughes, Gleason & Zhang, 2005). This disproportionate placement of poor and minority students in low-

track classes and exclusion from college-preparatory curricula is a profound example of deficit-thinking-driven oppression.

In addition to the use of grades, IQ tests, and standardized test scores, perceived language deficiencies have long served as justification for tracking minority students into lower-ability classes and curricula. The established belief that any linguistic system other than standard English is deficient and inferior led to bias perceptions of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and reinforced the pseudo-logic behind compensatory intervention programs. As noted by Baratz and Baratz (1970), "the failure to recognize and utilize existing cultural forms of the lower-class Negro community to teach new skills…constitutes a form of institutional racism" (p. 29). More recently, the popular belief of environmentally created linguistic deficiencies has been fueled by a seminal study by Hart and Risley (1995) (discussed in more detail in Chapter 1). While intended to examine the effects of SES on language proficiency, the study by Hart and Risley compared the language of exclusively Black families on welfare to the language of upper-SES families, of which twelve out of thirteen families were White. A perfect example of pseudo-scientific research, Hart and Risley reinforced the perception of Black language as deficient and pathologized the home environment of low-SES Black families.

With regards to limited-English-proficient (LEP) students, according to Callahan (2005), "English learner programs often place students in modified instruction, which translates to less linguistically and academically rigorous instruction than mainstream instruction" (p. 306). While their non-LEP classmates receive instruction in areas of science, math, and literacy, most LEP students participate in an English-only curriculum beginning in elementary school, and are therefore underprepared to compete with their peers at the same academic levels when they reach middle and high school (Callahan, 2005). In addition to low-level coursework, LEP students are

also often physically removed from interacting with their non-LEP classmates and fall victim to low teacher expectations (Callahan, 2005; Katz, 1999). As noted by Gándara and Rumberger (2009), for example, in 2008, Arizona mandated four hours of remedial English per day for its LEP students, leaving almost no time for additional instruction. These findings are especially relevant given the increase in the population of language-minority children. From 1979 to 2006, compared with a 20 percent increase in the total population of school-age children (ages 5-17), the population of children who spoke a language other than English increased 185 percent (Gándara & Rumberger, 2009, p. 754) Examining the academic achievement of LEP students in a rural high school in northern California, a 2005 study by Callahan found that track placement played a significantly larger role in LEP students' academic achievement than English proficiency. With regards to the deficit nature of English learner programs, Callahan argues that: "Constructions of English learners as deficient, bilingual programs as compensatory, and ESL classrooms as linguistic rather than academic speak to the marginalization of English learners in U.S. schools" (Callahan, 2005, p. 322).

In addition to placement in lower-track classes, poor and minority students are also disproportionately placed in classes for the mentally handicapped. Following Brown, perhaps to help curb White flight from the district, newly admitted Black students were often placed in special education classes located in separate schools or different parts to the building. In Washington, DC, for example, between 1955 and 1956, enrollment in special education classes doubled, and was composed of over 77 percent Black students (Connor & Ferri, 2005). Howe and Edelman (1985) note that in 1980-81, compared to 1.06 percent of White students, 3.35 percent of Black students were assigned to such classes. From 1963 to 1973, the specific labels attached to special education classes and needs were also highly racially segregated, with Black students

overrepresented in subjectively classified labels of Emotional Disturbance (ED), Mental Retardation (ER), and White students overrepresented in the labels of Gifted and Learning Disabilities (LD). These labels, then, have shown to have impacts on the restrictiveness of the educational environment experienced by different students. In the 1997-98 school year, for example, the U.S. Department of Education found that 82 percent of students labeled MR, and 70 percent of students labeled ED, spent more than 21 percent of school time outside of regular education classrooms, compared with only 56 percent of students labeled LD (Connor & Ferri, 2005). As of 2002, Black students make up only 14.8 percent of the national student body population, but 20.2 percent of the enrollment in special education classes (Parrish, 2002; Connor & Ferri, 2005, p. 111).

Regardless of the type of tracking or policy differences between schools, students are judged on academic performance and expected post-secondary trajectory, and the instruction and curriculum they receive is tailored to their perceived needs and abilities (Oakes, 1987). With regards to educational experiences, a wide variety of research has found that lower-track classrooms tend to have low-level curriculum and instructional approaches (characterized by repetitiveness, rote learning strategies, etc.), fewer resources (books, computers, learning materials, etc.), and less powerful learning environments (forcing students to work in homogeneous groups, lower levels of and less useful feedback, less time spent on high-order and critical thinking skills, and not engaging students in discussion) (Reilly & Mitchell, 2010; Oakes & Stuart Wells, 1998; Raudenbush, Rowan, & Cheong, 1993; Slavin, 1987; Slavin & Braddock, 1993). Oakes and colleagues also found that, at a minimum, tracked students are open to more ridicule from peers, are at greater risk for dropping out, fail classes at a higher rate, and report more feelings of alienation (Oakes, 1983, 1986a, 1986b, 1986c, 1986d, 1987, 1988, 1992, 1995; Oakes & Guiton, 1995;

Oakes & Lipton, 1992; Oakes & Stuart Wells, 1998). Tracking influences not only the courses available to and taken by students, but also the knowledge and skills they have access to, the resources and quality of teachers, the quality of instruction, peer socialization, and both present and future academic expectations (Oakes, 1987). With regards to instructional quality, Oakes (1987) notes differences between high- and low-track classes in teaching strategies, allocation of time (both for homework and in class), and in class climate. The class climate in high-track classes is often characterized by a wider variety of better organized learning tasks and teachers who are warm, supportive, clear, and enthusiastic. The class climate in low-track classes, on the other hand, is frequently characterized by hostility, disruption, and alienation (Oakes, 1987). Because track placement is more or less crystallized by middle school or junior high (Oakes, 1987), students who are categorized as low-achieving at a young age often fall into a cycle of low expectations, instructional quality, and access to knowledge; or, as Oakes puts it, "a cycle of restricted opportunity, diminished outcomes, and exacerbated differences" (1987, p. 19). As illustrated by Chambers, "Black and White students may have attended the same 'desegregated' schools, but rarely did they share the same classrooms" (2009, p. 419).

In addition to tracking and its resultant within-school segregation, the schools attended by poor and minority students are also characterized by poor funding and resources. Coleman and colleagues found that minority children in 1966, on average, attended elementary schools with a higher average number of pupils per classroom than White children (with averages of 30-33 and 26, respectively) (1966, p. 9). The *Coleman Report* also found that regional differences in school characteristics were often greater than those between White students and minority students. While the inequality in classroom size was found to be reversed in some metropolitan areas, the metropolitan Midwest, for example, had an average of 54 pupils per room for Black students and

33 per room for White students. In noting these regional differences, Coleman and colleagues state that "there is not a wholly consistent pattern—that is, minorities are not at a disadvantage in every item listed—but there are nevertheless some definite and systematic directions of differences" (1966, p. 9). On a national level, in addition to larger classroom sizes, minority students were found to have less access to language, chemistry, and physics laboratories, insufficient supplies of textbooks, fewer books per pupil in school libraries, and less access to both curricular and extracurricular programs, including college preparatory and accelerated curriculums (Coleman, et al., 1966).

Another aspect of the disenfranchisement of poor and minority students is evidenced by the growing disconnect between teachers and students (Naman, 2009; Latham, 1999). From 1960 to 2009, while the percentage of White teachers remained at approximately ninety percent, the percentage of minority students has grown from less than twenty percent to more than forty percent (Naman, 2009). As of 2009, Black students made up seventeen percent of the school age population, while Black teachers made up only six percent of teachers nation-wide (Naman, 2009). This disproportion of White teachers to minority students represents a imbalance in authority and perpetuates perceptions of White superiority. In many cases, and especially in early childhood settings, in addition to educational authority, teachers represent counselors, advocates, surrogate parent figures, role models, and disciplinarians (Naman, 2009; King, 1993). Because many White teachers and even middle-class Black teachers have little familiarity with the life experiences of poor and minority students, Delpit explains, they often operate from a deficit perspective and view students as damaged, dangerous, and "other people's children," rather than "the vulnerable and impressionable beings before them" (1995, p. xiii; Naman, 2009, p. 26). As with other aspects of the deficit thinking paradigm, these negative stereotypes and this creation

of "otherness" frequently leads to lowered expectations and less rigorous academic instruction (Ogbu, 2003; La Fontant, 1999; Naman, 2009). Additionally, Delpit (1995) notes that because White children often have more access to the dominantly accepted culture at home, they are less dependent on teachers to serve as guides for academic success (p. xiii; Naman, 2009), therefore encouraging the perception of minority students as "culturally deprived" and in need of compensatory aid.

In addition to a higher likelihood of being placed in low-track classes and curricula, Black students are also more likely to experience harsh disciplinary action compared to their White peers, even before entering Kindergarten. According a report by the Department of Education (2014), from 2011 to 2012, Black children represented 48 percent of preschool students who received two or more out-of-school suspensions, despite making up only 18 percent of total preschool enrollment. This trend continues from Kindergarten through the completion of high school, where Black students make up only 16 percent of students enrolled, and 32 to 42 percent of students suspended or expelled (US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014). This excessive use of zero tolerance disciplinary programs against minority students, in addition to taking away from time spent in school, has also contributed to what is commonly known as the "school to prison pipeline". Between 1985 and 2000, according to the Justice Policy Institute (Zeidenberg & Schiraldi, 2002) state spending on education increased by 24 percent, while state spending on prisons increased by 166 percent (over $20 billion) (Love, 2010). During that time, "38 states and the federal system added more African American men to their prison systems than they added to their respective higher education systems" (Zeidenberg & Schiraldi, 2002, p. 2). The percentages of Black men in prison are disconcertingly similar to the percentages expelled or suspended, with Black Americans making up 13 percent of the general population and Black

men making up 30 percent of the prison population. The numbers are similar, though not as drastic, for Latinos, who make up 17 percent of the general population and 22 percent of the prison population (Powell, 2016).

As discussed in Chapter Two, the belief that Black intelligence was inherently and genetically inferior to White intelligence persisted long after 1964 and throughout the following decades. In addition, the theory of the culture of poverty encouraged the belief that eliminating physical poverty necessarily required the elimination of its corresponding cultural characteristics, many of which were reflective of both Black and Latino culture in America. White, middle class, or Anglo values and expectations were therefore also set as the standard for minority students throughout the transition to the 21st Century. As noted by Martinez and Rury, "[e]qual education left little room for cultural differences associated with race, and the influence of white middle-class role models extended even to compensatory education" (2012, p. 14). Fortified by the already-established belief in White superiority and Black and Latino inferiority and the fear of integration that embodied much of the South, the bias and stigma attached to Black and Latino cultural norms has effectively eliminated culturally or historically relevant curricula in many schools. In fact, as noted by Marian Wright Edelman, the President of the Children's Defense Fund, a geography textbook published by McGraw Hill in 2015 referred to African slaves as "workers from Africa" under a section titled "Patterns of Immigration" (2015). The public outrage over the book's mischaracterization of the horrible realities of slavery elicited an apology from McGraw-Hill and the distribution of revised text books and/or corrective stickers to all of the schools that owned the faulty edition.

This distortion of the brutal oppression and enslavement experienced by Black Americans, however, is representative of both the ethnocentric nature of the American school system

and the tendency of White Americans to gloss over their roles in the disenfranchisement of minorities. Although deliberate racial and ethnic discrimination and segregation are no longer legal or considered socially acceptable, negative attitudes and prejudices have expanded to include Hispanics, Asians, and poor Whites, in addition to Blacks. Moreover, limited tolerance of racial mixing, negative racial and poor stereotypes, and low support for civil rights enforcement and welfare policies have remained pervasive in many parts of American society (Rugh & Massey, 2013). The legal right to integrated educational facilities granted in *Brown* did not imply or require the even distribution of resources nor equal respect for linguistic, cultural, historical, or socioeconomic differences. In addition, support for equal civil rights from Northern Whites and the federal government did not necessitate the perception of minority students as actually equal to their new White classmates. These deficit-focused perceptions have prevailed in the twenty-first century, and because many minorities now attend schools that are considered both integrated and equal (despite the evidence to the contrary), the oppression that takes place within schools remains largely ignored. In addition to the oppressive nature of these trends, many of these practices are also characteristic of the educability factor of deficit thinking. That is, rather than addressing inequalities within the school system as a whole, these practices focus on addressing disproportionate academic achievement at the individual level.

Disparate Early Childhood Opportunities and Compensatory Education:

In addition to segregation between and within schools, between neighborhoods, and by income, poor and minority students have historically experienced striking differences in early childhood education access and quality compared to their White, middle class peers. A majority of the preschool programs attended by poor and minority children are compensatory in both ide-

ology and practice. These programs therefore automatically assume individual, familial, or cultural deficits based on deficit-thinking-centered perceptions of race, ethnicity, and poverty. The children who attend these compensatory ECE programs, then, enter school already labeled as fundamentally *different* from their classmates. In addition to the Head Start program, because few state-level preschool opportunities were available during the 1970s and 1980s, this section focuses primarily on trends in access during the 1960s and 1990s, and into the 2000s.

The 1960s represented the beginning of widespread participation in and access to early childhood education programs by three- and four-year-olds in the U.S.. Despite the overall increase in participation and access, however, disparities in which children had access to care remained persistent. In 1965, despite the creation of the Head Start program, three- to five-year-old children from families in the highest income group were more than twice as likely to be enrolled in early education (37 percent) than those from families in the lowest income group (15 percent) (Bainbridge, et al,, 2005). In addition, regardless of the passing of the Civil Rights Act, Blacks across the south continued to be subjected to unequal, and often violent, treatment at the hands of state governments. In fact, because the civil rights of Blacks in the Southern states were not adequately or effectively protected at the establishment of Head Start in 1965 (even though it was established one year after the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964), the federal government opted to allocate funds directly to the thousands of local Head Start providers across the country, rather than trusting state governments to allocate the funds within their states (Gibbs, et. al., 2013). By 1969, the gap in access according to income had been slightly reduced; the portions of children in the highest and lowest income groups enrolled in early education programs had increased to 41 percent and 23 percent, respectively. Despite this overall increase in enrollment and the provision of ECE programs by the federal government, however, enrollment in ECE re-

mained strongly tied to family income, and therefore also to race and ethnicity.

After the 1960s, enrollment in ECE programs for three- to five-year-olds increased significantly. As noted by Bainbridge and colleagues, for example, between 1968 and 2000 the enrollment of four-year-olds increased from 23 percent to 65 percent (2005, p. 730). Gaps in enrollment according to race, ethnicity, and family income, however, have remained persistent. Bainbridge and colleagues (2005) note that for Latino children, in particular, enrollment rates range from 5 to more than 20 percentage points lower than other children. Access to preschool programs for children from low-income families expanded again during the 1990s, with state-level preschool programs open in 33 states by 1998, up from only 10 in 1980. Despite this massive increase in access to preschool, however, in the middle of the 1990s over half of all low-income children remained without access to any preschool programing (National Education Goals Panel, 1996; Gilliam & Zigler, 2001). The risk factors that determined educational disadvantage during the 1990s, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), were: 1) living in a household whose income is low, 2) being a member of a minority racial-ethnic group, 3) living in a home where the primary language spoken is not English, 4) living with one parent, 5) living in a large household, 6) having a disabling condition, 7) having a mother who has not completed high school, and 8) having a mother who first became a parent as a teenager (Hofferth et al., 1993, p. iii). As of 1999, state funded preschool programs were only able to serve a median of 43% of the eligible children in their respective states (Ripple et al., 1999). Because some of the preschool services in many states (about two-thirds) were provided through contracts with local Head Start grantees, however, the percentage of children served by state-level preschool programs may actually be lower (Gilliam & Zigler, 2001).

The connections between income and early childhood educational opportunities are

present with regards to both family investments and access to preschool programs. A 1993 study found that risk factors associated with the lower enrollment of some "at-risk" children in preschool programs included living in a large household, low household income, low maternal education, and mothers who became pregnant in their teens (Hofferth, et al, 1993). As noted by Duncan and Murnane and based on consumer expenditure surveys, between 1972 and 1973, high-SES families invested roughly $2,700 more per year on child enrichment compared to low-SES families. That figure then jumped to a difference of $4,386 between 1983 and 1984, and $5,802 between 1994 and 1995 (2011, p. 11). The difference in spending on enrichment programs between high- and low-SES families soared to $7,557 between 2005 and 2006 (Duncan & Murnane, 2011, p. 11). With regards to access, in 1991, according to the Current Population Survey (CPS), compared with 54 percent of children from families with annual incomes above $50,000, only 23 percent of children from families with incomes under $10,000 were enrolled in nursery schools for 3- and 4-year-olds (Hofferth et al., 1993). For center-based programs in 1990, the proportion of 4-year-olds from families with incomes under $15,000 was 60 percent, compared with 70 to 79 percent of children from families with incomes of $35,000. Due to the income requirements of Head Start and many state-level preschool programs, children from lower-middle income families (defined as incomes between $15,000 and $25,000 or $25,000 to $35,000) were actually less likely to be enrolled in center-based programs than children from low- or high-income families (with 43 and 52 percent enrollment, respectively).

While Head Start and a variety of state-led programs provide early childhood education programs for children from low-income families, a disproportionate number of poor and minority children have little or no access to high quality programs before the age of 4, and many before the age of 5. Those who do have access, meanwhile, continue to be segregated into different pro-

grams, schools, and districts based primarily on income. However, because of the persistent wealth gap between races and ethnicities, segregation based on income often inadvertently results in segregation by race and ethnicity. For example, a recent study found that while White children make up 42 percent of Head Start participants on a national scale, Head Start participants in urban cities were 60 percent non-Hispanic Black, 21 percent Latino, and only 7 percent non-Hispanic White (Zhai, Brooks-Gunn & Waldfogel, 2011). As of 2009, according to the U.S. Department of Education, 37 percent of Latino students were English language learners in grade 4, and 21 percent in grade 8 (Hemphill & Vanneman, 2010). Preschool programs taught solely in English, then, often neglect the needs of English Language Learners (ELL) and contribute to the growing divide in academic achievement between Latinos and non-Hispanics.

As educational testing and grouping led to program differentiation, the turn of the century also presented significant developments and disparities in the ideals behind and access to early childhood education programs. The policies and provisions of early childhood education programs evolved as two separate and distinct systems: the kindergarten, for the children of the upper- and middle-classes; and the day nursery, established as part of the child welfare system for children from low-income families (Lubeck & Garret, 1990; Steinfels, 1973; Lazerson, 1970; Saraceno, 1984). While the kindergarten was focused on the education of young children, the day nursery—mainly church-led programs and Head Start—was primarily focused on children's physical welfare (despite its emphasis as a "whole child" program [Gibbs, 2013]), with the concept of "cultural deprivation" reinforcing the benefits of removing children from their home environments (Lubeck & Garret, 1990). Additionally, while other countries have relatively concrete notions, the US continues to fluctuate between day care, child care, preschool, pre-K, stay-at-home parents or relatives, and babysitters. As a result, at the individual level, the care received

by children differs based on SES, parental education, accessibility, and availability. Although members of the upper and upper-middle classes have embraced the importance of ECE and often invest significantly in quality programs, those in the middle and lower classes are not only deprived of resources, but also of information regarding what is available and what factors are important or make a difference. Children from families with low-SES, then, often receive fragmented, erratic, and highly fluctuating care, during a time when consistency and stability are crucial for the development of healthy attachment and social behaviors. ECE is also often considered as only necessary between the ages of four and five, by both parents and policy makers, leaving children from the ages of zero to three, especially those from low-SES families, with poor and inconsistent care (Ramey 2005).

Furthermore, despite recent growth, Head Start is only able to serve half of the eligible children in the US, leaving millions of children living below the poverty line with virtually no access to quality care outside of the home (Barnett, et al., 2014). In fact, from 2006 to 2013 enrollment in Head Start for children ages three to five living below the FPL decreased from 42 percent to 34.3 percent, and reached its lowest point of 32.2 percent in 2011. Enrollment in Early Head Start for children ages birth to three living below the FPL, on the other hand, has increased from 2.5 percent to 4.1 percent (Child Trends, 2015), albeit from an almost nonexistent starting point. In addition to Head Start and Early Head Start, the increase in state-level preschool programs has expanded access to ECE for 3- and 4-year-olds, however, a significant majority of low-SES children still do not attend any form of preschool. When combining Head Start, Early Head Start, and state or local preschool programs, between 2011 and 2013, 63 percent of children ages 3 and 4 living below 200 percent of the FPL did not attend a preschool or nursery school, compared with 46 percent of children ages 3 and 4 living at or above 200 percent of the

FPL (Kids Count Data Center, 2015a).[20] When broken down by race and ethnicity in the same time period, 63 percent of Latino children ages 3 to 4 did not attend preschool, compared to 52 percent of Black children and 51 percent of White children (Kids Count Data Center, 2015b). Notwithstanding these disparities, however, poor and minority students continue to be perceived by many educators, policymakers, and average citizens as having an equal chance at success, and they and their families continue to be blamed for their failures (McCall, 2013).

Conclusion:

The significant demographic, social, and economic transformations that have taken place over the past sixty six years have resulted in new, often symbolic, forms of oppression, segregation, and disenfranchisement (Tarman & Sears, 2005; Rugh & Massey, 2013). A wide variety of social, political, and educational institutions help contribute this continued segregation in schools and neighborhoods, which results in disproportionate academic achievement and life outcomes for poor and minority students (Rugh & Massey, 2013; Heckman, 2014), and therefore promotes the viability of deficit-thinking centered approaches and rhetoric. While many significant steps have been made toward a more equal society and equal access to education, poor and minority students and children remain systematically deprived of high-quality, inclusive education, particularly at the early childhood level.

These patterns of systematic oppression, segregation, and disenfranchisement have all but assured the continued academic underperformance of poor and minority students and the over-representation of minority students in compensatory education programs. The racial, ethnic, and

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[20] In 2012, 200 percent of the FPL for a family of two adults and two children was $46,566 (Kids Count Data Center, 2015).

class segregation of students into isolated and under-resourced neighborhoods, schools, classrooms, and targeted compensatory education programs has hardened preconceived and historically prominent notions of difference, otherness, and deficit. The between- and within-school, residential, and class segregation of poor and minority students that has resulted from decades of federal- and state-level public policies and White, middle- and upper-class prejudice has made it nearly impossible for many poor and minority students to rise to the expectations established by America's supposedly meritocratic society. As noted by Massey (1994), "unless efforts are made to attack the forces of racial segregation, other efforts to improve the welfare of African Americans will fail" (p. 471). So long as American political and social institutions remain determinedly ignorant of their roles in the oppression of poor and minority children and students, the attachment of deficit-thinking rhetoric and practices to educational needs and outcomes and the implementation of programs that are compensatory in both ideology and practice are bound to continue.

Conclusion

Building on the practices established over the previous century, the use of education to intervene in the lives of children and families and to solve societal problems has remained a key tenant of American policy and society. The achievement gap, meanwhile, has remained an area of critical focus in educational research. This function of education, however, and the establishment and labeling of differences, or gaps, between high- and low-performing students necessarily rest on the presumption of equal educational opportunity. Belief in equal opportunity and the ability to succeed in life, regardless of ones starting point, is perhaps the most central ideology to the American Dream. It is fundamental to the right to pursue happiness and just deserts; It is what makes Americans proud of their country and their heritage and what many believe separates America from the rest of the world. Regardless of political, religious, or personal beliefs, a significant majority of Americans hold firm in their faith that, if a person works hard enough, he or she can overcome all obstacles (McCall, 2013). A review of the research addressed in this thesis, however, supports the argument that the American Dream and the belief in equal educational opportunity directly contribute to the application of deficit thinking and may actually be detrimental to the educational success of low-SES and minority Americans. The foundations for this conclusion may be separated into three categories: (1) the persistence of American beliefs in the likelihood of upward social mobility; (2) the actual and unacknowledged low probability of upward social mobility in the U.S.; and (3) the resulting stigmas associated with low educational attainment (Prince, 2014).

In *The Undeserving Rich: American Beliefs about Inequality, Opportunity, and Redistribution,* Leslie McCall (2013) introduces five tropes that distinguish important differences in per-

ceptions of and priorities for opportunity for Americans: (1) the level playing field, attained through equal opportunities to prepare for the labor market, especially through education; (2) bootstraps, the ability to "get ahead" in life through perseverance and hard work; (3) rising tide, the equal availability of good jobs; (4) equal treatment, through equal pay and job opportunities for individuals with equal qualifications, regardless of characteristics unrelated to job performance (such as gender, class, race, or sexual orientation); and (5), just deserts, through compensation proportionate with performance and contribution (p. 141). It is a combination of the beliefs and realities surrounding these tropes that have led to the problematic perception of American meritocracy (Prince, 2014) and application of deficit thinking to low-SES and minority students and children.

Belief in the bootstraps and just deserts tropes is iconic in American ideology and has greatly influenced U.S. public policies. Swayed by the stories of Americans—of different races, sexes, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds—who have overcome all odds to become highly successful, the subscription of citizens and policy makers to the bootstraps trope has remained significant despite the persistence of economic and social barriers. McCall references one of the questions asked by the General Social Survey (GSS): "the way things are in America, people like me and my family have a good chance of improving our standard of living" (2013, p. 113). While the degree of American optimism about the chances for upward social mobility has fluctuated since 1987, an average of nearly two-thirds of Americans have either agreed or strongly agreed that their chances for mobility are good. The perseverance of the belief in the bootstraps trope leads to the notion that if an individual, or a group of individuals, is unable to pull himself out of poverty or unemployment, it is due to his own deficits or shortcomings and a lack of effort, intelligence, or ability. In this sense, the just deserts trope comes into play, with the

belief that the wealthy or White have earned their place at the top through their contribution to society, and the poor, Black, or Latinx have earned their place at the bottom due to cultural, genetic, and/or environmental deficiencies (Prince, 2014).

The realities surrounding the three remaining tropes of opportunity—the level playing field, the rising tide, and equal opportunity—highlight the problems causing, and created by, low social mobility. It has become increasingly evident that the playing field is not level, the rising tide is only lifting a small percentage of boats, and opportunities are far from equal. As discussed in Chapter Three, the social and economic barriers to opportunity faced by minorities and those at the bottom of the income distribution are real and significant. The actual probability of upward social mobility in the U.S. is low when compared to Europe and the perceptions of American society. McCall acknowledges that "it remains somewhat of a paradox that our convictions are so strong and our evidence so weak" (2013, p. 97). According to the Brookings institute, as of 2007, the children of parents in the top of the income distribution have a 39 percent chance of staying at the top when they reach adulthood, while the children of parents in the bottom of the income distribution have a 42 percent likelihood of remaining at the bottom**.** The percentage of children remaining in the bottom income bracket in other wealthy countries, by comparison, is much lower (25 to 30 %) (Brookings, 2007). In the United States, an average of only 6 percent of children born into the bottom of the income distribution reach the top by adulthood. The prospects for minorities are even worse. While 68 percent of White children from middle income families will have a higher income than that of their parents, that likelihood decreases to only 31 percent for Black children. Additionally, 45 percent of Black children born into the middle class (compared with 16 percent of White children) fall into the bottom rung of the income ladder (Brookings, 2007). These inequalities—however apparent and despite their foundation in the

inherent inequalities of the political, social, educational, and economic systems—are too often justified as stereotypical and inevitable outcomes due to individual deficits (Prince, 2014).

Since the *Brown* decision in 1954, discussions on education have shifted away from the lack of equal educational opportunities—which would allow low-SES and minority students to perform on the same level as their middle- and upper-SES and White classmates—to a deficit-focused discussion surrounding the lack of equal achievement—or the inability of low-SES and minority students to perform on the same level as their middle- and upper-SES and White classmates. Despite the prominence of other achievement gaps (e.g., international, gender, and special education), *the* "achievement gap" most often refers to the one between suburban, middle-class White students and poor Black students from urban schools (Cross, 2007). This focus on *the* "achievement gap," and its highlighting of individual-level differences, has been one of the strongest driving forces behind the continuation of deficit-focused rhetoric and is inherently related to perceptions of race. Spurred by the publication of the *Coleman Report* in 1966, the wave of research on the "achievement gap," sought to examine and single out various possible factors contributing to its persistence. The creation of a Black-White achievement dichotomy is evident in nearly all of the literature related to the topic. Additionally, although Asian students began, and have continued, to outperform White students in nearly every test subject, there has been "no inference that White people may be inferior to Asian people, either culturally, intellectually, in their communities, or in their family lifestyle or values" (Love, 2010, p. 229). As noted by Love (2010), in a Critical Race Theory analysis of the achievement gap, this belief in equality of educational opportunity leads to the presumption that if "African Americans worked harder and fixed the things that are wrong with them (their culture, their language, their community and

neighborhoods, their families, their ethics, their values), they too could have their fair share of the American dream" (p. 232).

These presumptions extend beyond cultural deficiencies associated with race, however, to include those associated with language, ethnicity, and poverty. In addition to the broadly applied "at-risk" for school failure label, the labels "Title-I student," "Head Start student," "English language learner" (ELL), and "limited English proficient" (LEP) have all become synonymous with deficit thinking. The negative stereotypes associated with the inability to move up the income and/or education ladder create animosity between classes, races, and ethnicities and lead to additional educational, employment, and economic barriers that the poor and minorities must either embrace or struggle to surpass. This struggle, however, necessarily takes place in a society that punishes children and students (through segregation, tracking, and other forms of oppression and disenfranchisement, as discussed in Chapter Three) for the inability of their families to achieve the American dream. The American approach to the problem—the deficit-framing of the disparities in educational achievement and the use of early childhood interventions to compensate for said deficits—has therefore exacerbated it by continuing to deny or ignore societal and institutional inequalities while simultaneously promoting the myth of meritocracy.

When people ask me about my thesis, one of the first things I tell them is that the label attached to the (primarily Black) children served by Head Start in the 1960s was "culturally deprived." Every person who was born after 1970 was shocked by the blatant racism, ethnocentrism, and general negativity of this label (and, I admit, I had the same reaction). And yet the "at-risk" label (or the others mentioned above) causes no sharp intake of breath or indignation; rather, it is viewed by many as reasonable, concise, and unfortunately accurate. In a recent conversation with a good friend who was about to embark on an internship teaching art classes in

rural North Carolina, she informed me that "most of the kids are really low-income, so I know that's going to be difficult and frustrating." My friend is a liberal, compassionate, well-educated, and socially-aware individual, and I was surprised to hear her make a comment so laden with stereotypes and classism. However, upon reflection, it dawned on me that, before diving headfirst into the heterodox literature of deficit thinking, I wouldn't have questioned her statement. We (White and middle- and upper-SES Americans) commonly associate difficulty and frustration with individual students who have been historically disenfranchised, rather than with the systems that have oppressed them and their families for centuries. Indeed, as a member of the majority, I have too often been easily swayed by deficit-focused rhetoric which allows me to ignore my own privilege. Suffice it to say, I am now acutely aware of how deficit-focused and oppressive our societal and educational institutions are, and the authors of the heterodox literature addressed throughout this thesis are working tirelessly to enlighten the rest of us.

After electing our first Black President and fifty years after the Civil Rights Movement, many Americans are under the impression that we are finally living in a land of true equal opportunity, and remain unaware of the levels of institutional inequality and segregation still experienced by many of their fellow citizens. Although not directly related to the discourse surrounding early childhood compensatory education, it is necessary to note that 2015 has seen a resurgence of race- and ethnicity-driven hatred and discriminatory rhetoric on a national scale. In a year where the news was filled with stories on unarmed Black men and women killed by White police, a rise of social Darwinism rhetoric, anti-welfare and anti-poverty policies, and anti-immigration and anti-minority rants by presidential candidates, it is clear that the assumed deficits of poor and minority people and children remain deeply ingrained in a large portion of the American psyche. The segregation and disenfranchisement of this large, and ever growing, portion of

the American population, meanwhile, remains both multidimensional and cumulative as the nation continues to view differences as deficits and blame individuals instead of institutions.

Table 1:

Nationwide median test scores for 1st- and 12th-grade pupils, according to race and ethnicity, fall 1965

Test	Puerto Ricans	Indian Americans	Mexican Americans	Oriental Americans	Negro	Majority
1st Grade:						
Nonverbal	45.8	53.0	50.1	56.6	43.4	54.1
Verbal	44.9	47.8	46.5	51.6	45.4	53.2
12th Grade:						
Nonverbal	40.3	47.1	45.0	51.6	40.9	52.0
Verbal	40.1	43.7	43.8	49.6	40.9	52.1
Reading	42.6	44.3	44.2	48.8	42.2	51.9
Mathematics	43.7	45.9	45.5	51.3	41.8	51.8
General Information	41.7	44.7	43.3	49.0	40.6	52.2
Average of the 5 tests	43.1	45.1	44.4	50.1	41.1	52.0

Source: Coleman, J. S., Campbell, E. Q., Hobson, C. J., McPartland, F., Mood, A. M., Weinfeld, F. D., et al. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity* . Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. p. 20

Figure 1:

Black-White average score gap trends in the 1971-1999 NAEP reading and mathematics

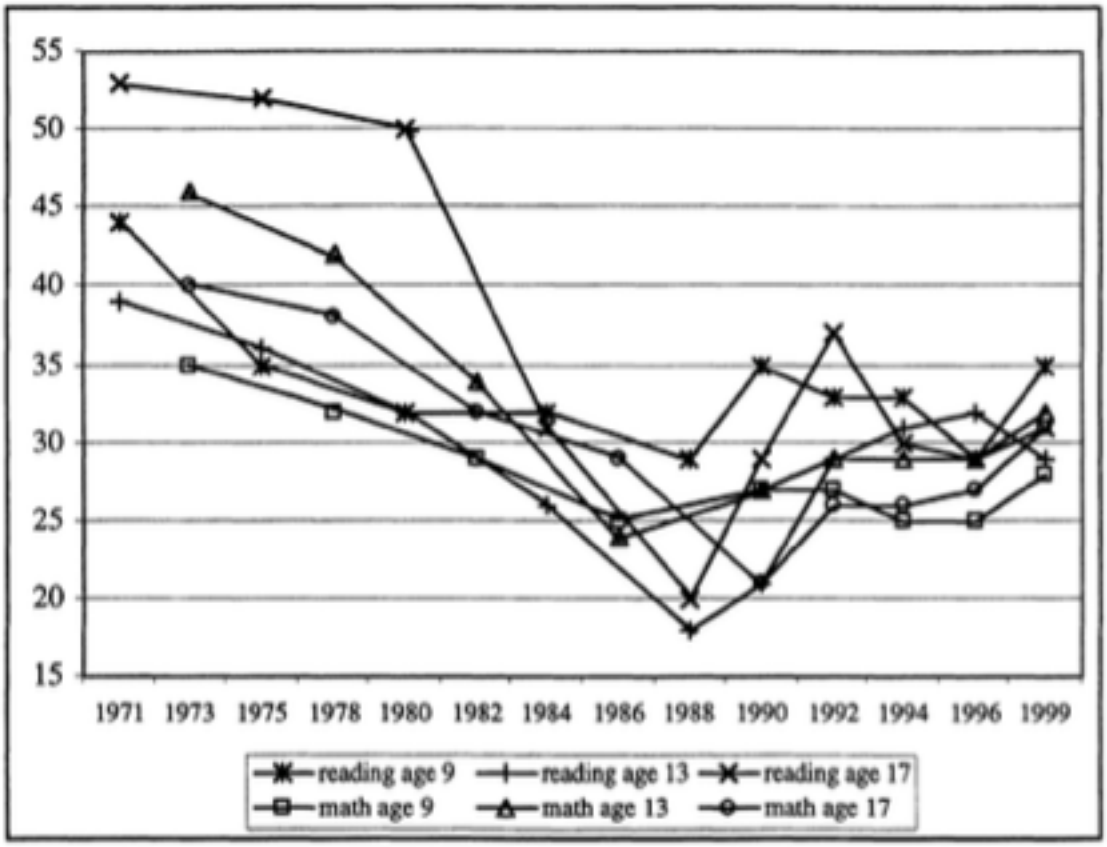

FIGURE 1. *Black-White average score gap trends in the 1971–1999 NAEP reading and mathematics.*

Source: Lee, J. (2002). Racial and ethnic achievement gap trends: Reversing the progress toward equity? *Educational Researcher, 31*(1). p. 4

Table 2:

Percentage of Black and Latino Students Attending Predominantly Minority and 90-100% Minority Schools

	Predominantly Minority (>50%)		90-100% Minority	
	Black	Latino	Black	Latino
1968-1969	76.6	54.8	64.3	23.1
1972-1973	63.6	56.6	38.7	23.3
1980-1981	62.9	68.1	33.2	28.8
1986-1987	63.3	71.5	32.5	32.2
1991-1992	66.0	73.4	33.9	34.0
1994-1995	67.1	74.0	33.6	34.8

Source: The Institute on Race and Poverty (1997). Examining the relationship between housing, education, and persistent segregation. (Report to the McKnight Foundation) June, 1997. p. 14

Table 3:

Percentage of Children in the United States Under Age 18 Living Below 100% of FPL by Race/ Hispanic Origin: 1975-2000

Race/ Ethnicity	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Non-Hispanic White	10.8	11.8	12.8	12.3	11.2	9.1
Black	41.7	42.3	43.6	44.8	41.9	31.2
Hispanic	33.1	33.2	40.3	38.4	40	28.4
Asian or Pacific Islander				17.6	19.5	12.7

Source: Child Trends Databank (2015). *Children in Poverty.* from: http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=children-in-poverty. December, 2015

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