

America Fifty Years After the Kerner Commission Report

Education and the Path to One Nation, Indivisible



LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE

#KernerAt50

The Context

1963 – Birmingham march & church bombing; March on Washington; JFK assassinated

1964 – Riots in cities in response to discrimination & police violence; Civil Rights Act passed

1965 – Selma & Montgomery marches; police violence; Voting Rights Act; Malcolm X assassinated

1966 – Civil rights actions; anti-Vietnam War activism

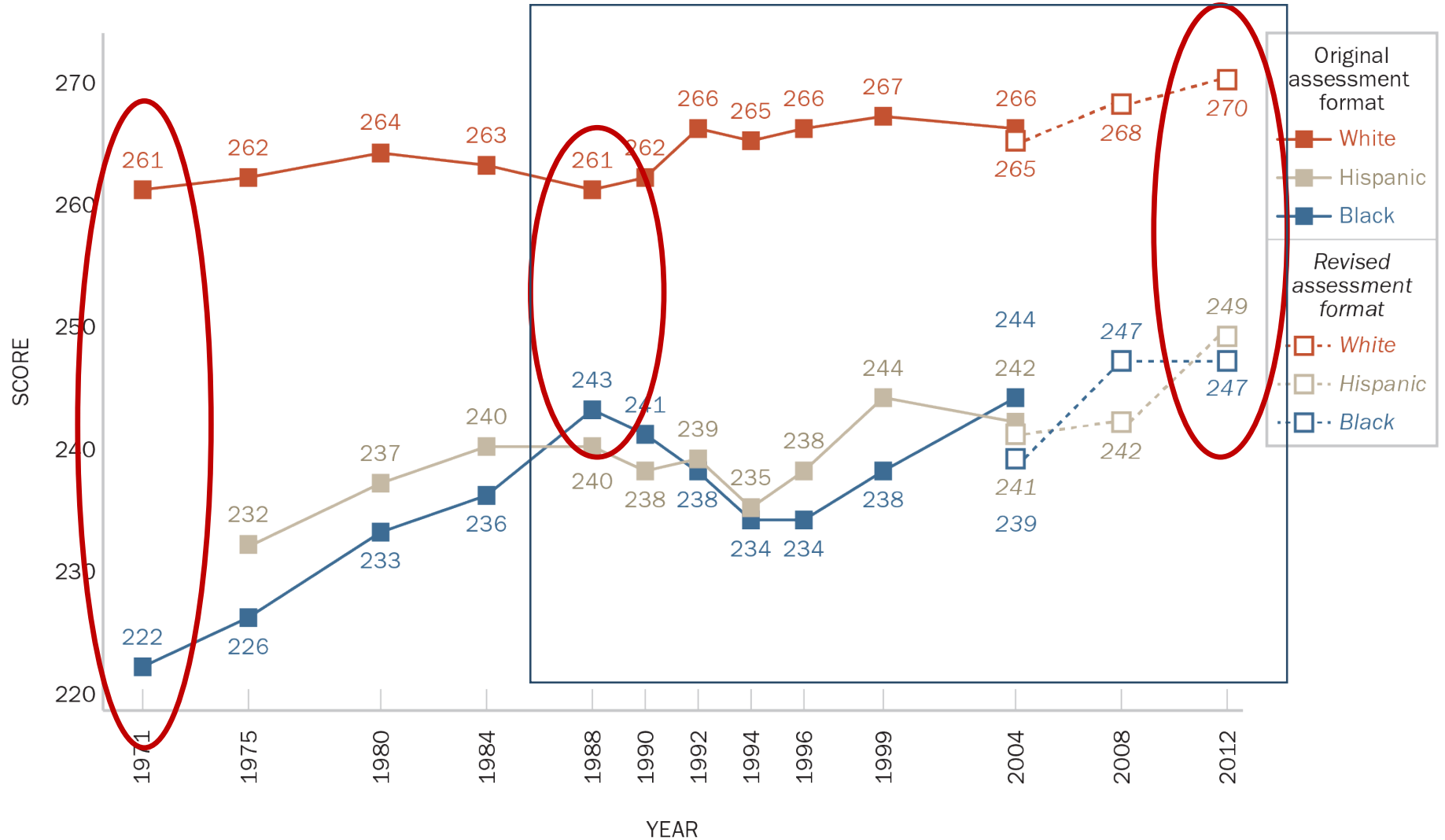
1967 – Riots sparked by police violence

1968 – Fair Housing Act; Kerner Commission Report released; MLK and Robert Kennedy assassinated

What Followed?

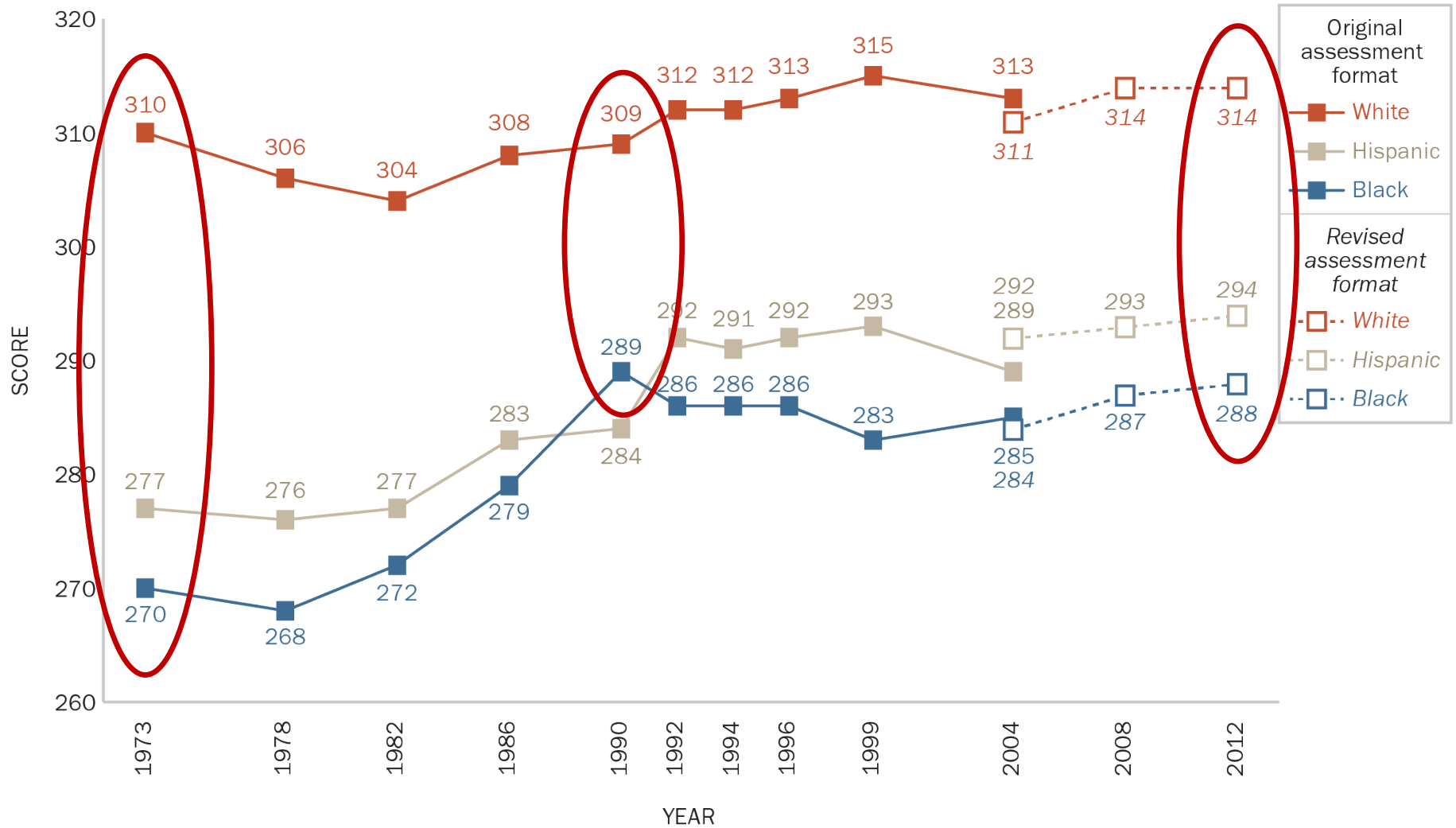
- **War on Poverty / Great Society Programs:**
 - Employment and training programs
 - Housing and urban renewal investments
 - Health and social services, welfare supports
 - Summer school and jobs for youth
- **Education Investments**
 - Elementary & Secondary Education Act
 - Education for All Handicapped Children Act
 - Desegregation Assistance Act & magnet schools
 - Teacher corps, Loan forgiveness for teachers
 - Higher education scholarships (Pell and others)
 - School finance reforms

Average Reading Scale Scores on the Long-Term Trend National Assessment of Educational Progress for 13-Year-Olds, by Race/Ethnicity, Selected Years, 1971–2012



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2013). *The Nation's Report Card: Trends in Academic Progress 2012* (NCES 2013-456). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, table 221.85.

Average Mathematics Scale Scores on the Long-Term Trend National Assessment of Educational Progress for 17-Year-Olds, by Race/Ethnicity, Selected Years, 1973–2012



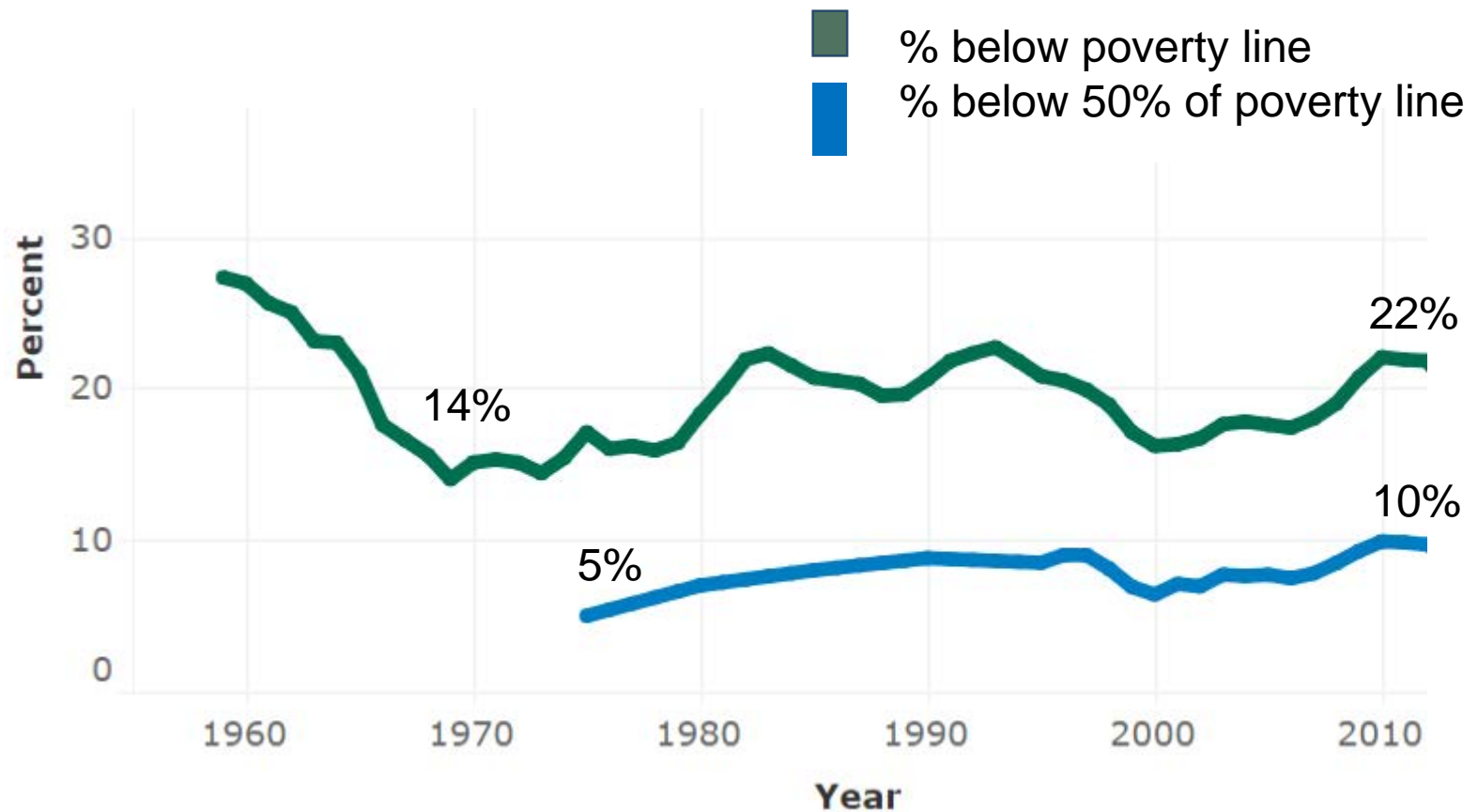
Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2013). *The Nation's Report Card: Trends in Academic Progress 2012* (NCES 2013-456). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, table 222.85.

What Happened Then?

During the 1980s:

- Federal aid cut from 12% to 6% of school spending
- Programs aimed at poor communities cut
- Desegregation assistance ended
- Federal aid to states for health, mental health, housing also cut
- States cut education budgets to deal with shifting responsibilities

% of Children in Poverty



Degree of Segregation in Relation to Court-Ordered Desegregation Plans

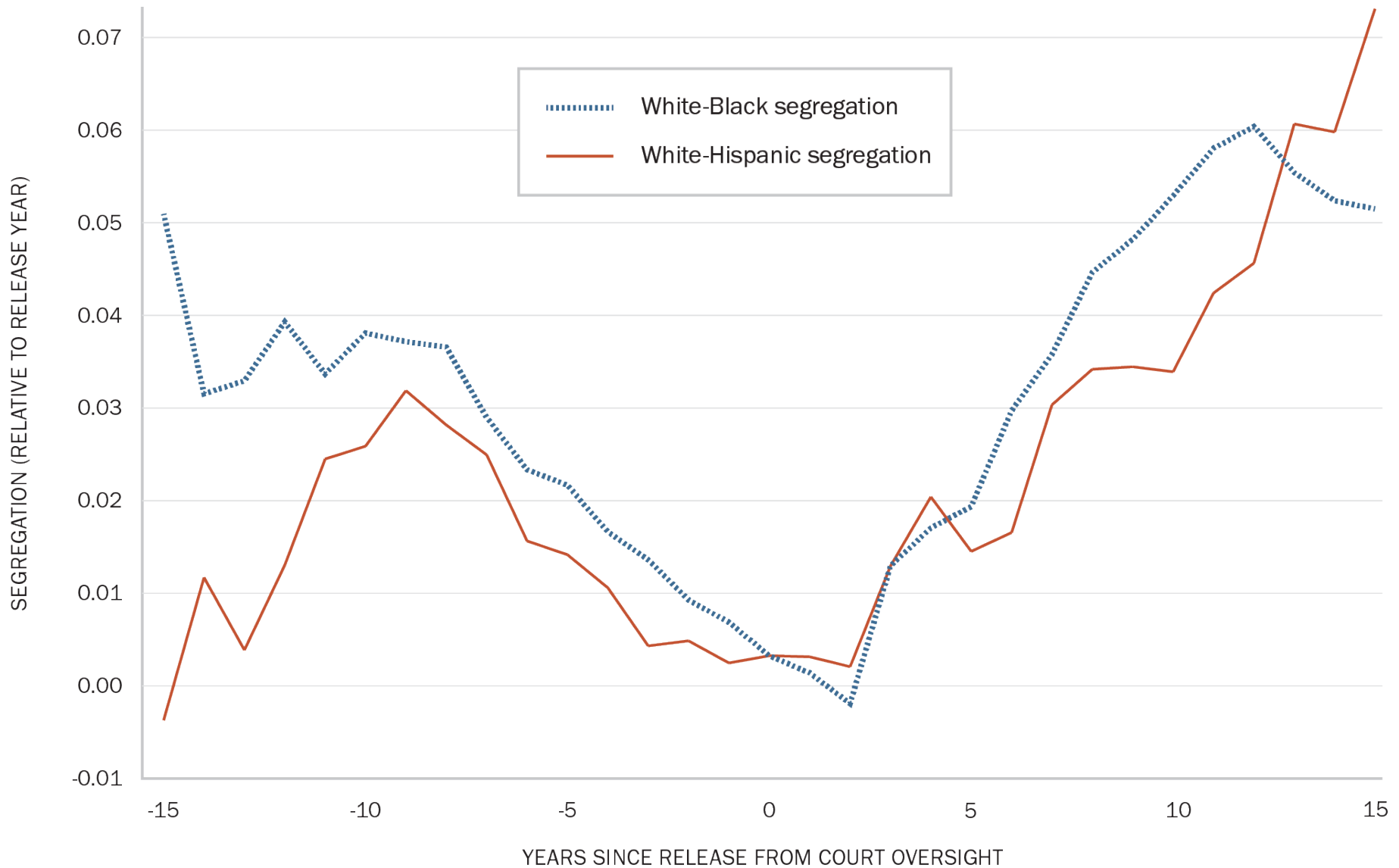
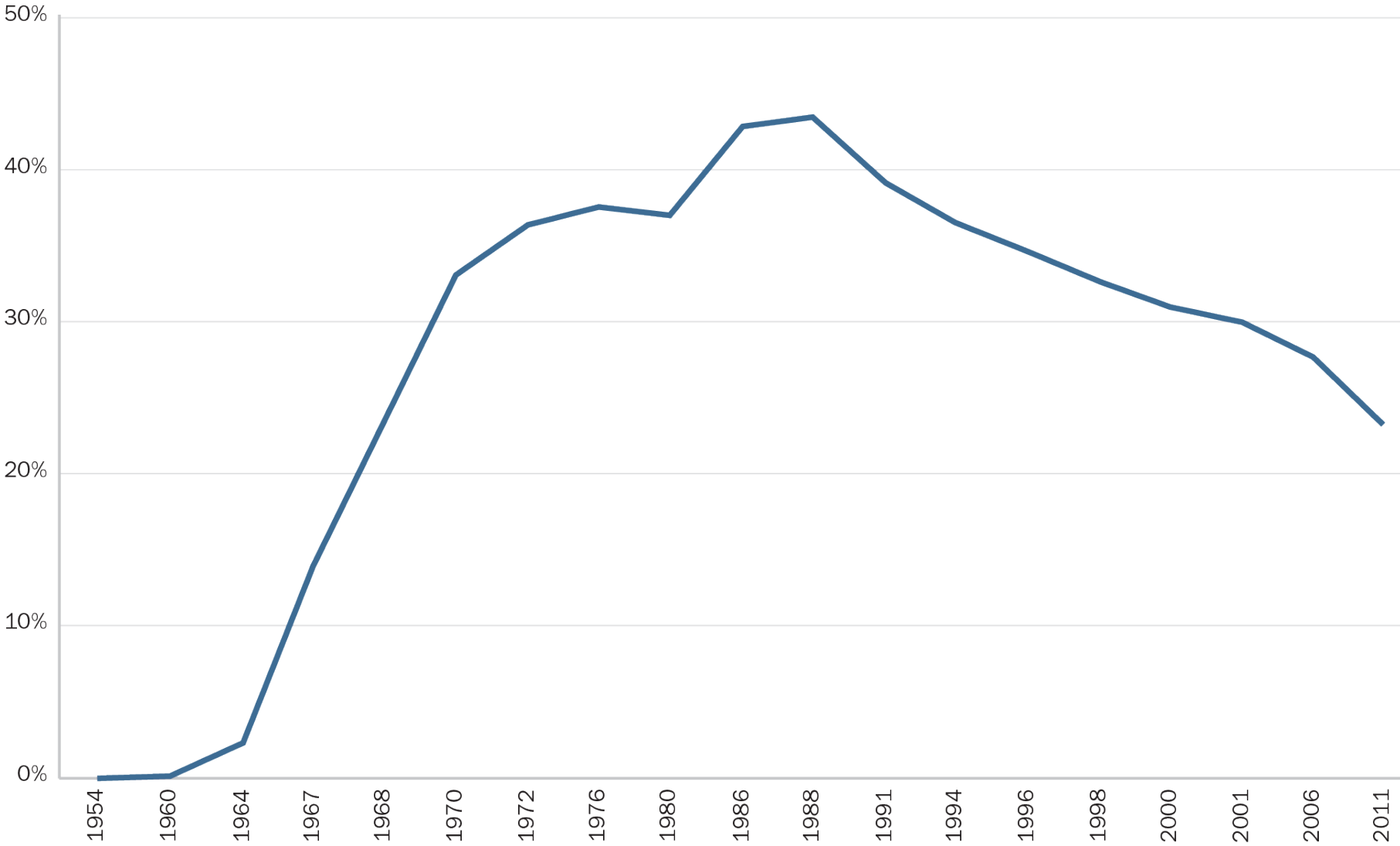


Figure developed from data in Reardon, S., Grewal, E. T., Kalogrides, D., & Greenberg, E. (2012), *Brown fades: The end of court-ordered school desegregation and the resegregation of American public schools*. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 31(4): 876-904.

Proportion of Black Students Attending Majority White Schools

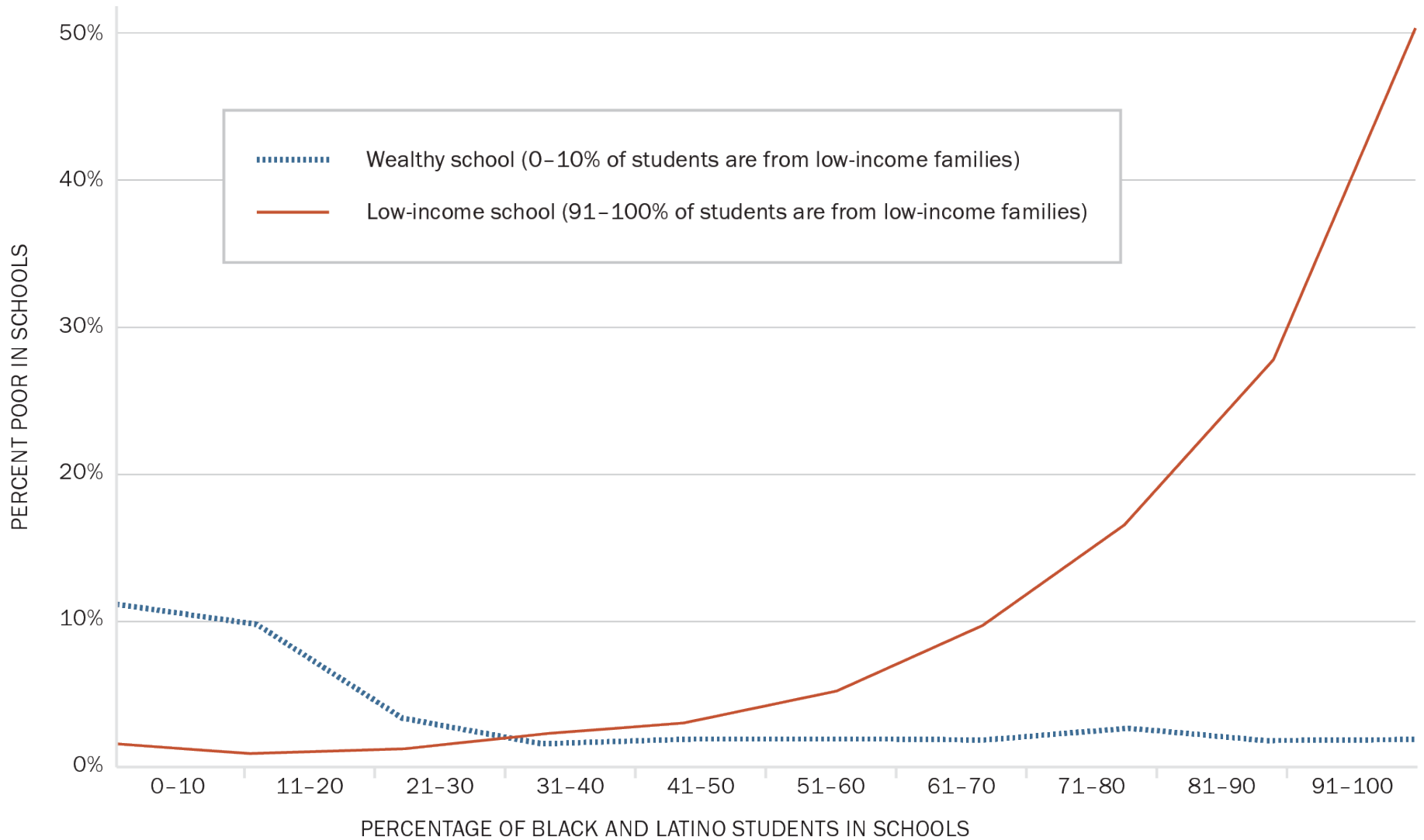


Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey data. Data prior to 1991 obtained from the analysis of the Office of Civil Rights data in Orfield, G. (1983). *Public school desegregation in the United States, 1968–1980*. Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political Studies.

Where are We Now?

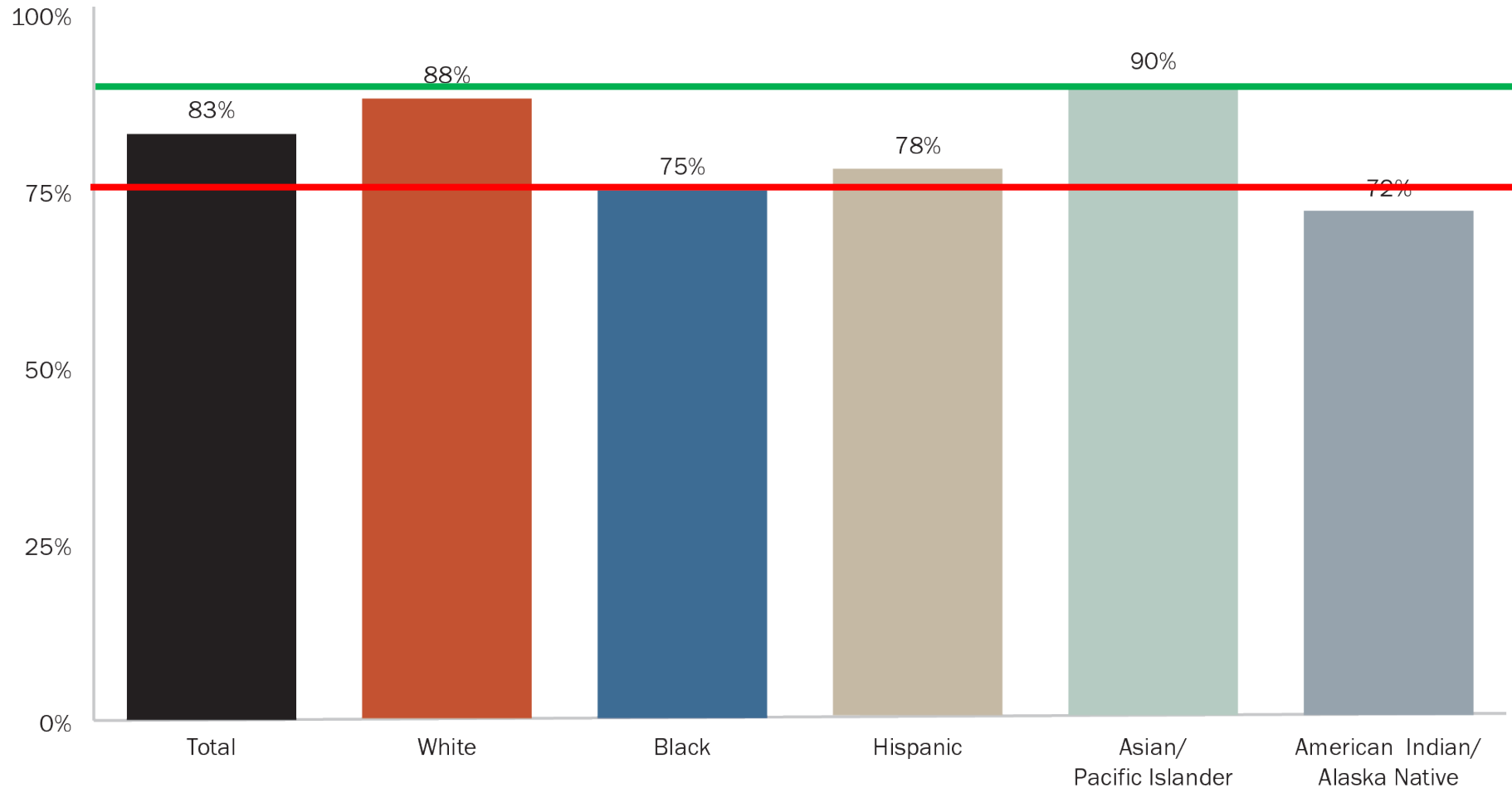
- Segregation has increased
- Childhood poverty has increased by 50%
- Poverty is more concentrated in communities and schools
- Income and wealth disparities have grown
- Gaps in achievement and attainment have grown

Proportions of Black and Latino Students in Schools by Poverty Concentration



Source: Orfield, G., & Frankenberg, E. (2014). *Brown at 60: Great progress, a long retreat and an uncertain future*. Los Angeles, CA: Civil Rights Project. <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/brown-at-60-great-progress-a-long-retreat-and-an-uncertain-future/>.

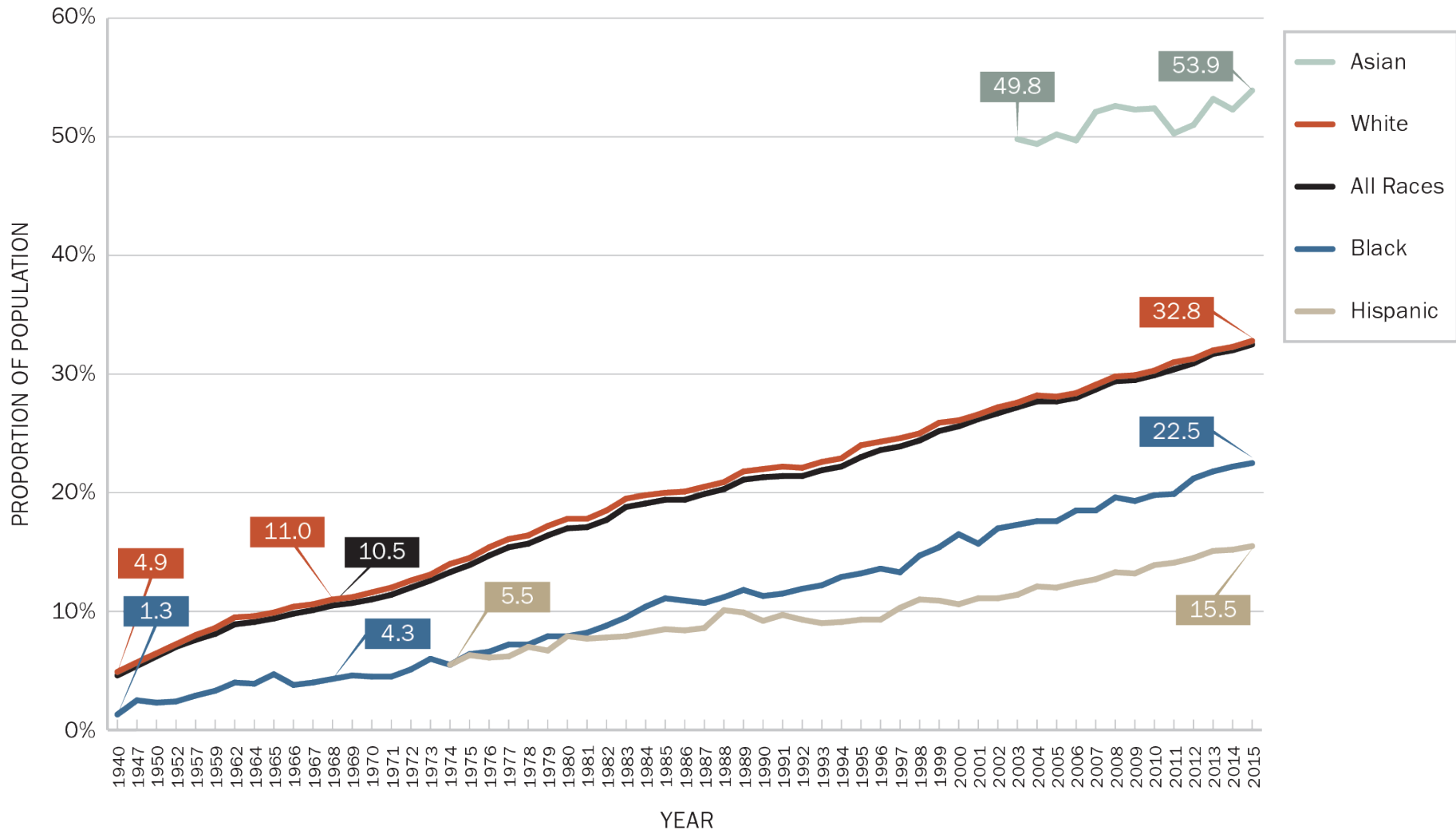
Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate for Public High School Students by Race/Ethnicity, 2014–15



Note: The adjusted cohort graduation rate is the percentage of public high school freshmen who graduate with a regular diploma within 4 years of starting 9th grade.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Consolidated State Performance Report, 2014–15. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 219.46.

Proportion of Population 25 Years and Older with 4 or More Years of College, 1940–2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Current Population Statistics. Table A-2. Percent of People 25 Years and Over Who Have Completed High School or College, by Race, Hispanic Origin and Sex: Selected Years 1940 to 2015. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/education-al-attainment/cps-historical-time-series.html>.

The Costs of Inequality



If Hispanic and African American student performance grew to be comparable to white performance and remained there over the next 80 years, the ... impact would be staggering—adding some \$50 trillion (in present value terms) to our economy—more than three times the size of our current GDP. (This) represents the income that we forgo by not ensuring equity for all of our students.”

—*For Each and Every Child*,
Report of the Excellence and Equity Commission, 2013

Tackling the Agenda that Matters Most

"On some positions, Cowardice asks the question,
'Is it safe?'

Expediency asks the question, 'Is it politic?'

And Vanity comes along and asks the question,
'Is it popular?'

But Conscience asks the question 'Is it right?'

And there comes a time when one must take a position that
is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must do it
because Conscience tells him it is right."

—Martin Luther King, 1968

RACIAL CRISIS 50 YEARS LATER

Gary Orfield, Civil Rights Project

Self-perpetuating inequality in a vacuum of civil rights & social policy

MASSIVE RACIAL CHANGE IN SCHOOLS

- IN 1970, 79% WHITES, 15% BLACKS, 5% HISPANICS, .5% ASIANS, 1% INDIANS

A BLACK-WHITE SOCIETY

- IN 2013, 50% WHITES, 15% BLACKS, 25% HISPANICS, 5% ASIANS, 1% INDIANS

A FOUR RACE SOCIETY

DESEGREGATION ABANDONED

INTENSE DOUBLE SEGREGATION OF BLACKS AND LATINOS BY RACE & CLASS

ALL PROGRESS OF LAST HALF CENTURY LOST AFTER SERIES OF NEGATIVE SUPREME COURT DECISIONS

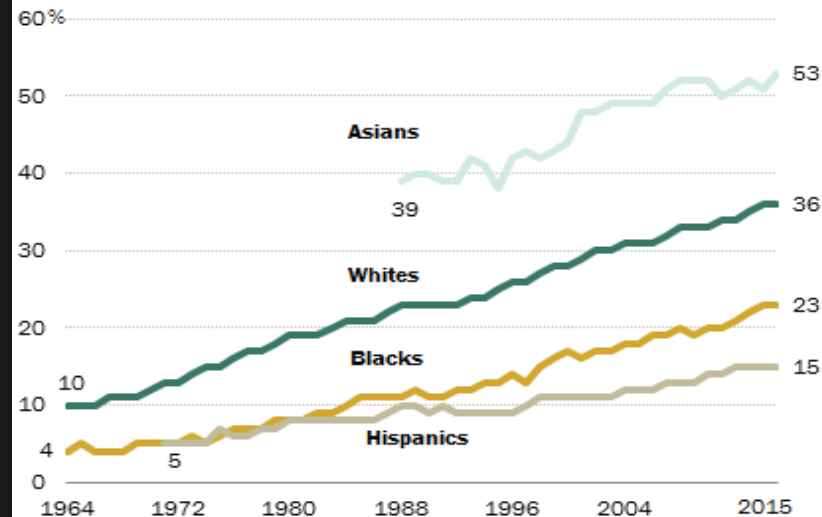
DIRECTLY LINKED TO UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & OUTCOMES

STUDENTS OF COLOR NOT PREPARED FAIRLY FOR COLLEGE

LARGE GAP IN COLLEGE COMPLETION

Whites more likely than blacks to have college degree

% of U.S. adults ages 25 and older who have at least a bachelor's degree



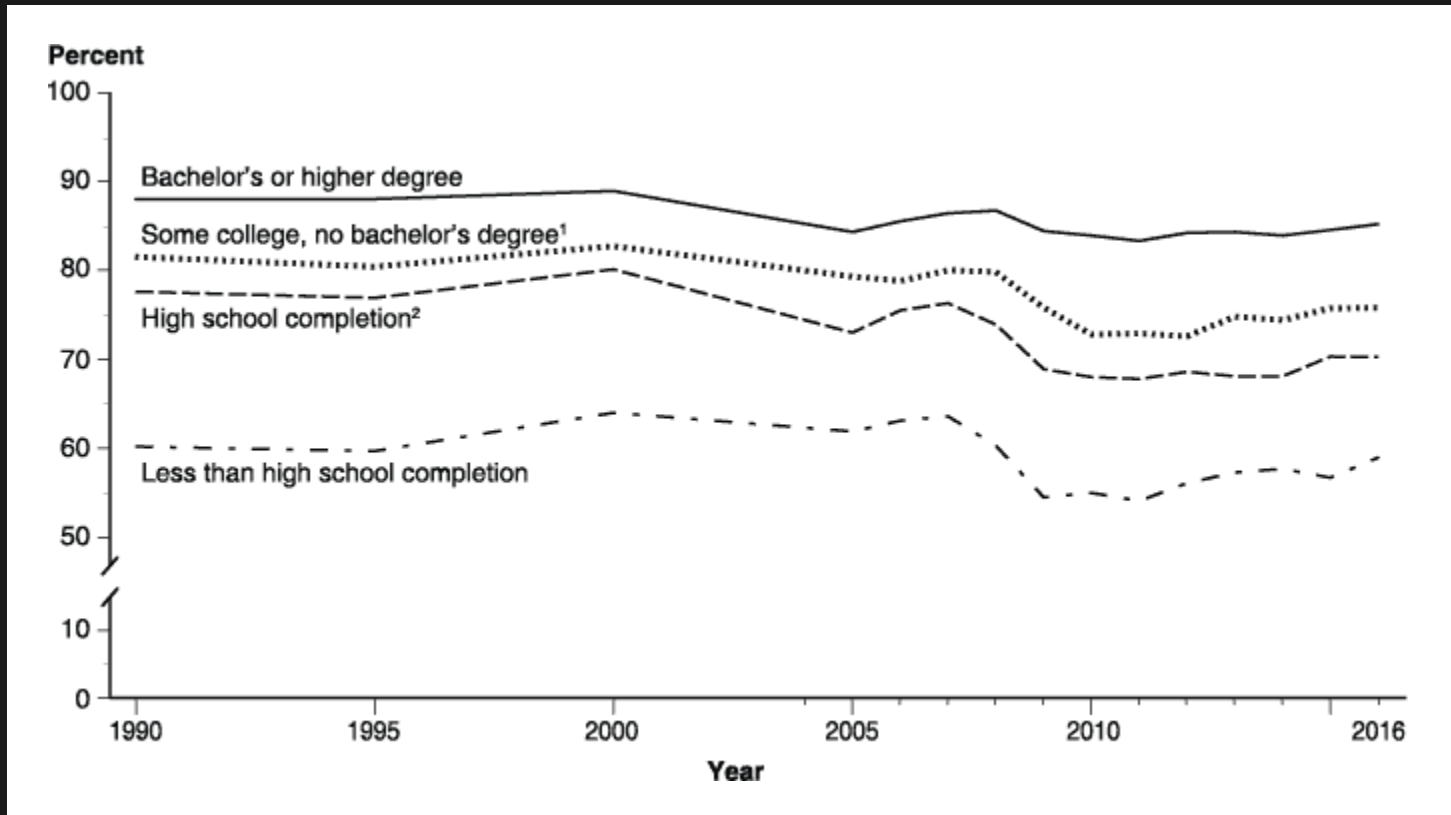
Note: Whites, blacks and Asians include only those who reported a single race. Native Americans and mixed-race groups not shown. Data for whites, blacks and Asians from 1971 to 2015 include only non-Hispanics. Data for whites and blacks prior to 1971 include Hispanics. Data for Hispanics not available prior to 1971. Hispanics are of any race. Data for Asians not available prior to 1988. Asians include Pacific Islanders. Prior to 1992 those who completed at least 16 years of school are classified as having a bachelor's degree.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulation of the 1964-2015 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (IPUMS).

"On Views of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites are Worlds Apart"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

LARGE JOB GAPS BY EDUCATION LEVEL



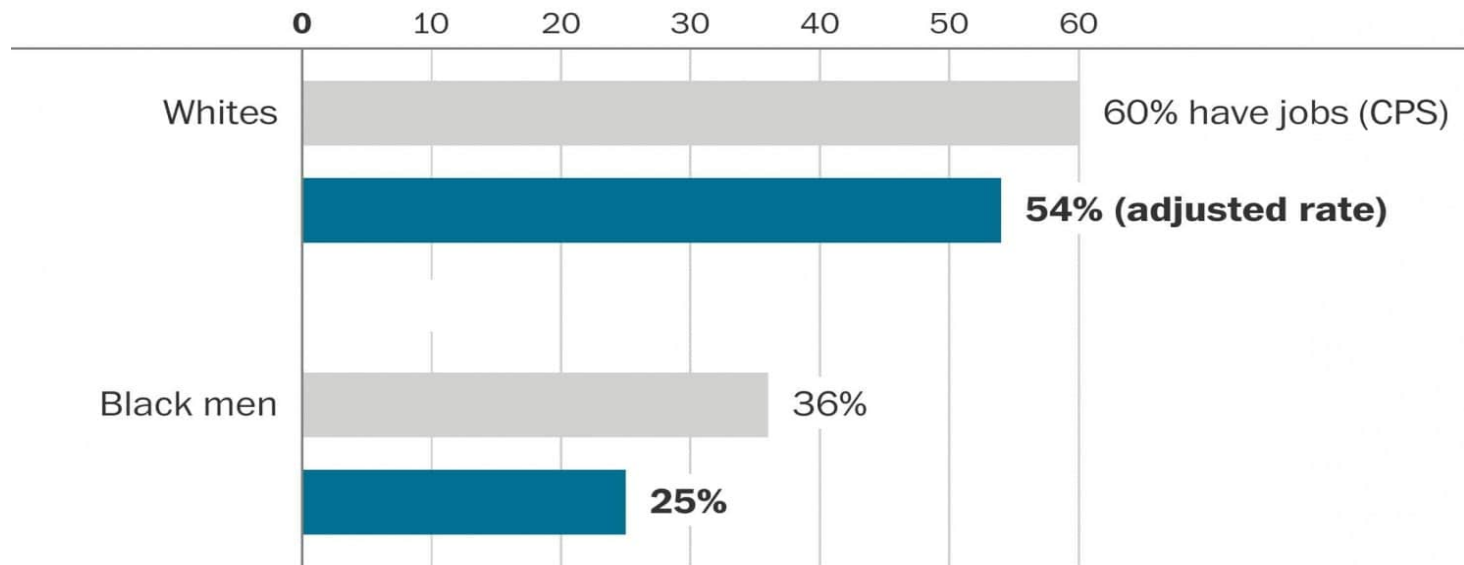
LIFETIME PROBABILITY OF MALE IMPRISONMENT BY RACE

- Blacks 1 in 3
- Latinos 1 in 6
- Whites 1 in 17
- Impacts on life, families, & communities

DROPOUT JOB STATISTICS MUCH WORSE, CONSIDERING LARGE IMPRISONMENT

The actual fraction of men who have jobs is lower, after accounting for mass incarceration

Data for male HS dropouts aged 20-34



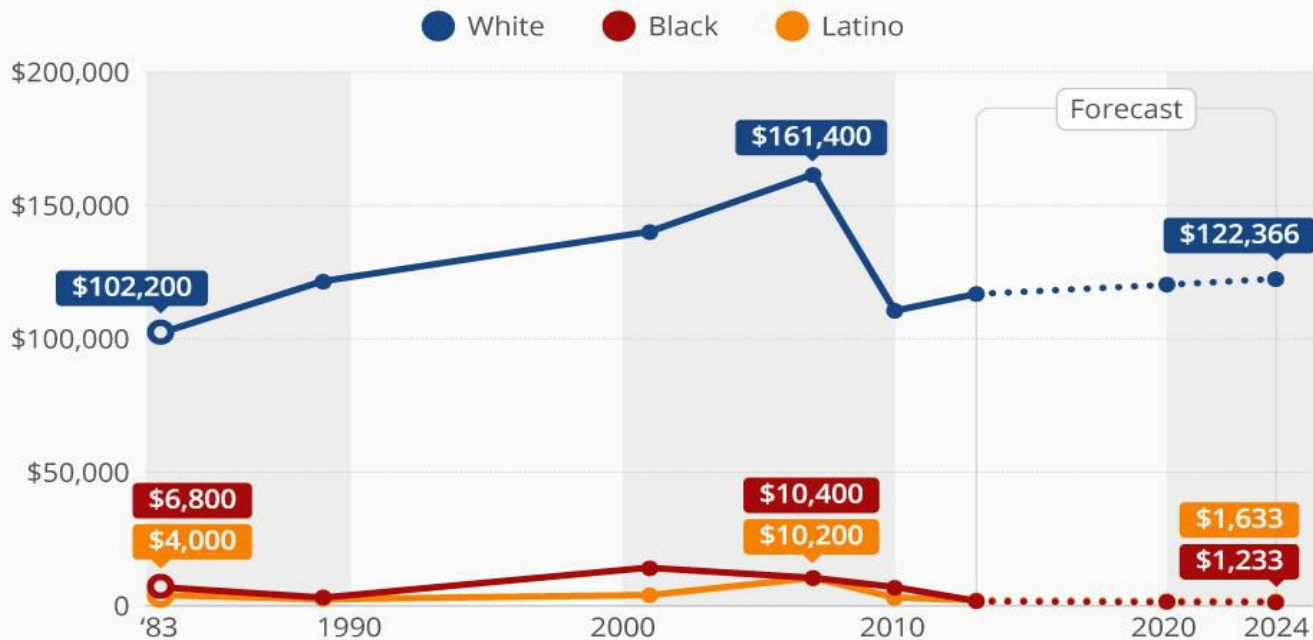
Source: Census CPS and ACS

WAPO.ST/WONKBLOG

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD WEALTH BY RACE

Racial Wealth Inequality Is Rampant In The U.S.

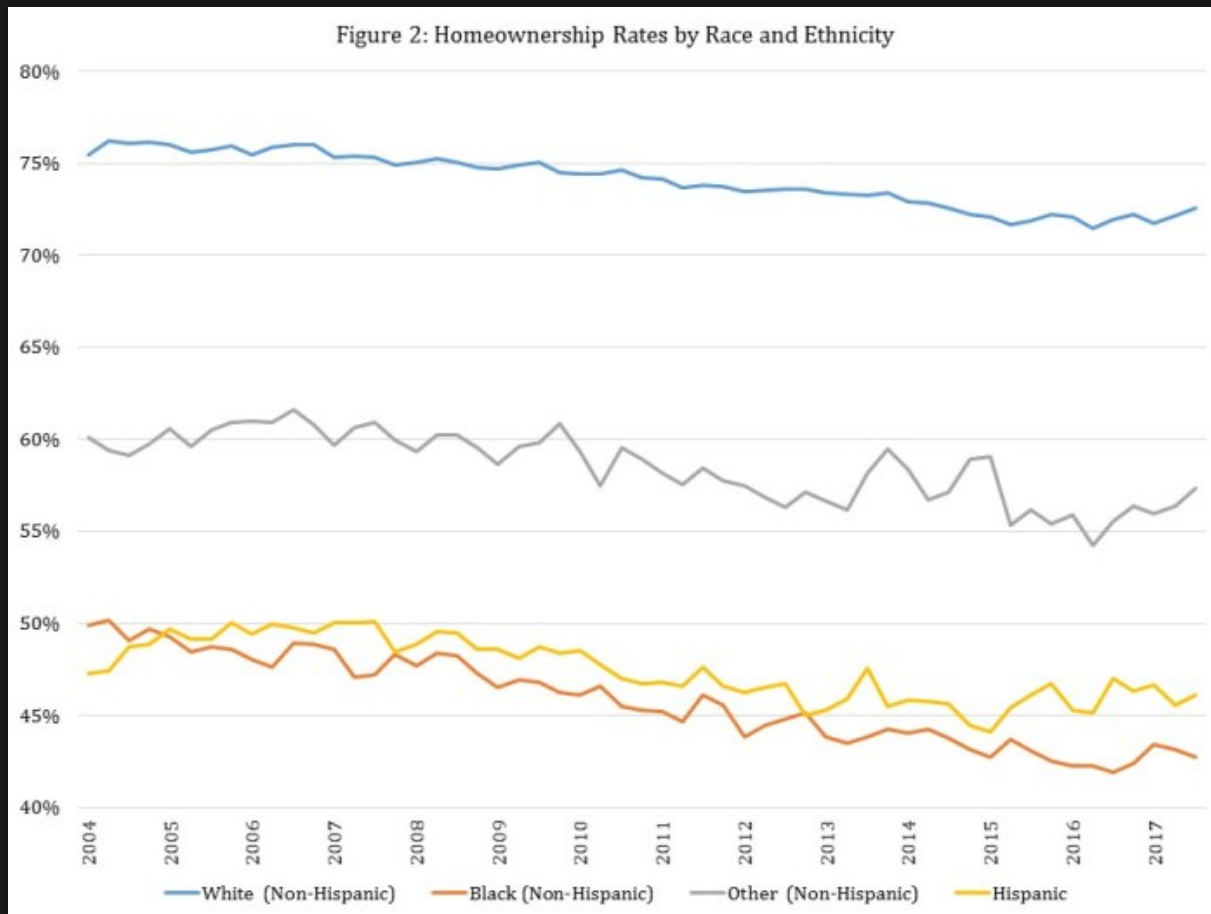
Median household wealth by race/ethnicity in the United States (1983–2024)



@StatistaCharts

Source: Prosperity Now & Institute For Policy Studies

MASSIVE HOMEOWNERSHIP GAP BY RACE

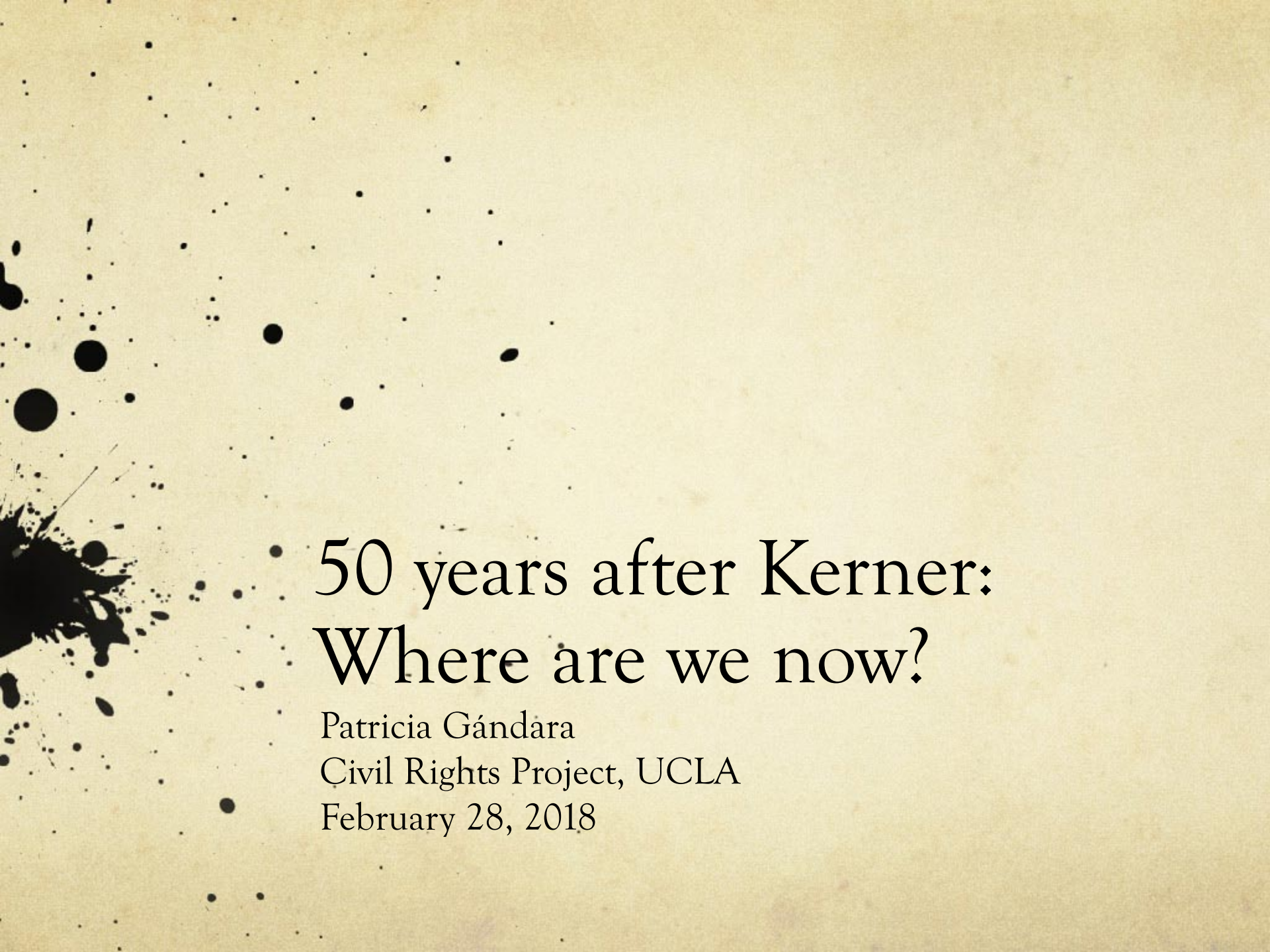


THE VICIOUS CYCLE

- LOW EDUCATION & JOB DISCRIMINATION MEANS LESS EMPLOYMENT, LOWER WAGES
- LOW WAGES AND HOUSING DISCRIMINATION MEANS WEAKER NEIGHBORHOODS AND SCHOOLS, MORE EXPOSURE TO CRIME
- GREATLY INCREASED CHANCE OF INCARCERATION & END OF EDUCATION
- WEAKER SCHOOLS MEAN LOWER SUCCESS IN COLLEGE
- LESS ABILITY TO BUY HOMES IN AREAS WITH GOOD SCHOOLS AND VALUE INCREASE MEANS FAR LESS WEALTH
- LESS WEALTH AND DISCRIMINATION MEAN THAT CHILDREN WILL FACE THE SAME SYNDROME
- [ALL OF THESE THREATS ARE MULTIPLIED FOR FAMILIES THAT ARE UNDOCUMENTED]

THE NEXT CIVIL RIGHTS REVOLUTION

- Must be attack on poverty as well as racial inequality & prejudice
- Provide access to the good public schools of the region
- Expanded college access, funding, and support
- Fair access to housing and neighborhoods
- Need race-based remedies for race-based inequalities & discrimination
- End massive incarceration and re-integrate former prisoners
- End obstacles to voting
- Solution to immigration crisis for long-term residents
- Commitment to racial justice and training in all institutions



50 years after Kerner:
Where are we now?

Patricia Gándara

Civil Rights Project, UCLA

February 28, 2018

US has changed radically since Kerner, but not in ways we had expected

- When **Kerner Report** released, immigration was at an **historic low**: less than 5% of population, fewer than 10M, and **mostly European**: US was **Black & White**
- Today, 13.5% of the population are immigrants; about 44 million, but now US is **multiracial**.
- As a percentage, still lower than peak in 1890 (14.8%)
- Mexicans are 26% of immigrants; more than 3X as many came from India and China in 2016 as Mexico;
- And the South is once again a focus of racial challenges

Children of immigrants

- One in four (25%) school age children in the US is a child of immigrants (at least 1 parent)
- But 90% of “immigrant children” are born in the US; they’re OUR kids!
- More than half of US-born immigrant children live at or near poverty in often triply segregated conditions
- 40% of immigrant children live in families in which neither parent is a citizen (may be legal, but can’t vote)
- Fastest growth is in the South and N & S Dakota!

Immigrant students & families are under siege from ICE

- We have surveyed more than 730 schools in 12 states:
- Random raids and deportations of parents of citizen children have students terrorized,
- 90% of administrators surveyed reported they had observed behavioral or emotional problems in immigrant students; 25% said this was extensive, especially in the South – Republican stronghold with more pro-Trump, anti-immigrant harassment
- *“Several students have arrived at school crying, withdrawn and refusing to eat lunch because they have witnessed deportation of a family member. Some students show anxiety symptoms ... All of this impacts their ability to focus and complete work, which further affects them academically.”*
[Tennessee counselor]

Kids losing ground in school

- 70% of administrators reported academic decline among their immigrant students; 1 in 6 counselors reported this to be “extensive.”
- Many teachers report excellent college-bound students giving up on school because they doubt their future in the US.
- *“They are not thinking about college, or the test next week, or what is being taught in the classroom today. They are thinking about their family and whether they will still be a family; whether their family will remain intact.”* [Tennessee Administrator]

Framed as a “problem,” these immigrant students are primed to be excellent learners

- Defined by what they don't have (EL), they possess 5 ASSETS that give them a special learning advantage
 - **Resilience** (persistence)
 - **Collaborative** orientation to learning
 - **Hopefulness** (optimism; “American Dream”)
 - **Bilingualism** (confers real cognitive benefits)
 - **Multi-cultural** (ability to see things from multiple perspectives—innovation & creativity)

We are squandering a huge asset!