

# **Echoing Moynihan's Call for National Action: The Critical Disconnect Between the Poor and Gainful Employment\***

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## **Introduction**

I am delighted to be this year's recipient of the Daniel Patrick Moynihan Prize because it is named in honor of a person I truly admired. And I thought it would be fitting in this inaugural Daniel Patrick Moynihan Lecture on Social Science and Public Policy to reflect on his prophetic comments as they relate to recent trends in the occupational clustering and unemployment of minority groups.

As many of you know, one of Senator Moynihan's purposes in writing *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* was to call attention to the interconnected and complex patterns linking unemployment and underemployment to family stability. Using high-octane language he had hoped to generate real, comprehensive, and ultimately successful national public policies to tackle the problems created by urbanization, joblessness, residential segregation, and the inadequate education of blacks in urban areas.

These fundamental concerns were mainly ignored in the controversy that ensued from press accounts of the Report's depiction of black family fragmentation. Regrettably, the structural roots of the problems that Senator Moynihan sought to address, and which motivated his core arguments, were often omitted or seriously downplayed during this controversy.

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Senator Moynihan did elaborate on his concerns about the impact of joblessness in the black community in several subsequent publications, including a 1965 article published in *Daedalus*, entitled, “Employment, Income and the Ordeal of the Negro Family” (Moynihan 1965b). In that article he stated: “From the very outset, the principal measure of progress toward equality will be that of employment. It is the primary source of individual or group identity. In America what you do is what you are: to do nothing is to be nothing; to do little is to be little. The equations are implacable and blunt, and ruthlessly public . . . Employment not only controls the present for the Negro American; but, in a most profound way, it is creating the future as well” (Moynihan 1965b, pp. 756-747).

Senator Moynihan not only presented statistical evidence to support his claim that unemployment among blacks was far outpacing that of whites, he also suggested, even by the mid-1960s, that the occupational concentration of black men in the manufacturing industry was working to their disadvantage. He noted “the steady decline or stagnation in manufacturing employment in the Northern and Western cities” (Moynihan 1965b, p. 754), and pointed out that whereas manufacturing employment in the nation increased by 3.0 percent between 1960 and 1964, it actually decreased by an averaged of 2.0 percent in the cities of New York, Newark, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, St. Louis, and Cincinnati—cities that had disproportionately higher rates of working-age black residents.

Although employment in manufacturing picked up again slightly near the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Senator Moynihan’s observations foretold an ominous trend in the declining employment opportunities of semi- and unskilled black men in an occupational sector in which they had historically fared well. He stated: “the basic question concerning the future employment of Negroes is whether the pattern of opportunity is shifting to make it easier or more difficult for them to move into line with the work force in general. We must also question whether or not the existing patterns of employment are affecting the Negro potential for

taking advantage of the opportunities which arise in the future.” (Moynihan 1965b, p. 755).

In my remarks this afternoon, I will consider some of the same structural impediments to stable employment that Senator Moynihan highlighted, including changes in the structure of the U.S. labor market that have seriously diminished the job stability of workers in vulnerable occupational sectors, such as manufacturing, and I relate these changes to some of the central issues and concerns that Moynihan publically raised in 1965, both with the publication of his famous Report on the Black Family and his *Daedalus* article.

In his State of the Union Address on February 13 of this year, President Barack Obama urged that young people be given the opportunity to obtain the skills training and education that will enable them to find a stable job in the modern labor force. To this end, the president proposed that high schools be better equipped to ensure a real path from school to work for non-college-bound youth.

Today, the likelihood that young Americans with a high-school diploma or less—who are disproportionately disadvantaged people of color—will obtain such a job is much lower than it is for their counterparts who go on to college. Senator Moynihan’s concerns about the diminishing employment prospects of less skilled adults notwithstanding, in the past those without an advanced education or specialized skill did not face the enormous disadvantages confronting their counterparts today.

Indeed, changes in employment since the 1960s have seriously diminished the earnings and job stability of many working Americans whose skills have not kept pace with the shifting requirements of the labor market. The Great Recession (which officially lasted from December 2007 through June 2009) magnified this problem. Sociologist Arne Kalleberg (Russell Sage 2011) argues convincingly that industry restructuring, globalization, deregulation, and the decline in unionization are causing the dramatic increase in unstable, lower-wage jobs and concomitant decline in “relatively low-skill, traditional, middle-class

jobs with good pay and benefits, job stability, and steady promotions” (p. 14). Workers from all racial and ethnic backgrounds who hold jobs in the most vulnerable occupational sectors have been affected: they face working reduced hours, taking a lower-paid position, or leaving the workforce permanently.

This is particularly true for black and Latino workers, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, who must contend with other unique circumstances that seriously curtail their ability to compete for good jobs. For example, historical patterns of occupational clustering in manufacturing and low-paying service jobs have disproportionately exposed them to unstable employment during economic downturns. In addition, the institutional failures of urban schools and community colleges have constricted minority students’ preparedness for gainful employment in an advanced economy. Finally, the neighborhoods of low-income black and Latino families, deprived of important resources that contribute to social mobility, have also affected their employment prospects.

These structural and institutional conditions undoubtedly contributed to the disproportionate rates of unemployment that black and Latino males have experienced, compared to white men, since the mid 1970s. When the *national* unemployment average hit double digits in October 2009—for the first time in more than a quarter-century—it was major news. But unemployment among black men had *already* been in the double digits for most of the last several decades. Unemployment rates also topped 10 percent among Latino men during the Great Recession—but not among white males.

Unemployment rates alone do not reveal the full extent of the jobs crisis affecting many low-income Americans. Figure 1 shows the combined rates of unemployment and involuntary part-time employment among males by racial and ethnic group. (Involuntary part-time workers are those who would like to work a 40-hour-per-week job but have had their hours curtailed or are unable to find full-time employment.)

As the data indicate, economic cycles— particularly the deep recessions that the United States experienced recently and in the early 1980s [seen in the parallel gray bars]—affected rates of unemployment and underemployment among black and Latino males much more severely than among their white counterparts. And the differences would have been even more severe if employment-to-population ratios had been used in these calculations, which capture those who have dropped out of the labor force and are therefore not included in the official unemployment rates.

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Figure 1

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But the problem is not merely cyclical: restoring the jobs lost during the Great Recession will *still* leave a disadvantaged population mired in an employment crisis. Beyond the need to create sufficient demand to get the recently unemployed back to work, we must better understand the unique problems facing minorities in poor urban communities, which require more focused solutions to the obstacles keeping them from gainful employment.

## **Occupational Clustering**

Minority workers who face barriers to employment and are concentrated in specific sectors of the economy are handicapped when economic downturns or shifts in the labor market diminish employment opportunities in those sectors. Figure 2 illustrates, based on fairly broad categories, how the occupational clustering of black and Latino male workers, as compared with white workers, has progressed for more than a quarter-century. Blacks are heavily concentrated in manufacturing.

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## Figure 2

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The civil-rights reforms and job-creation efforts in 1960s and early 1970s opened up better employment opportunities and helped to boost their economic progress after decades of widespread discrimination.

Many of these gains came in manufacturing and goods-producing industries where black workers were already well represented. But the gains were fragile, and “middle skilled” blue-collar jobs – those that economists David Autor and Frank Levy of MIT and Richard Murnane of Harvard describe as being acquired through routinized on-the-job experience – were increasingly relocated offshore or to less industrial areas of the country or were replaced by production-enhancing technology. The restructuring of the U.S. labor force provided fewer opportunities for on-the-job skills acquisition and pushed less educated minority workers down the earnings ladder distribution in those very sectors in which their predecessors had made inroads decades before.

We also see from Figure 2 that Latinos are seriously *underrepresented* in white-collar occupations and *over-concentrated* in blue-collar jobs relative to whites. According to a 2005 Pew Research Center Report, Latinos tend to be clustered in low-paying service jobs, such as household, building, and grounds cleaning, as well as in farming and construction labor. Meanwhile, their growing concentration in these occupations coincided with expansions of lower-paying jobs in the service sector and significant immigration of Latinos, especially from Mexico, between 1990 and 2000. Language and legal-status barriers, and the lack of a U.S.-based secondary education, have hindered such workers who may be seeking jobs in other, better-paying industries.

Although self-selection may result in some of the over-concentration of black and Latino workers in certain industries, it is implausible—given the enormous wage differentials that can separate

blue- and white-collar jobs—that most people would voluntarily choose jobs rated lowest in terms of pay, health and retirement benefits, autonomy, and flexibility. More importantly, the status and earnings potential represented by educational attainment, particularly postsecondary credentials, have increased in importance and lucrateness for workers even as the quality of education in poor urban schools has declined.

### **The Labor Force Experiences of Black and Latino Women**

The labor force experiences of black and Latino women over the past fifty years have also been impacted by notable economic changes. Unlike black male earners who were disproportionately impacted by the deindustrialization that was at full throttle by the 1970s, black females were spared the full brunt of this economic restructuring because of their lower representation in the manufacturing industry. Therefore, the disappearance of manufacturing jobs from urban areas did not directly impact low-skilled black women nearly as much as it did black men (Dozier 2010).

Whereas black women were more likely to be engaged in private household employment prior to the 1960s, more lucrative sectors of the economy, especially clerical work in the public sector had become increasingly available to them by the mid-to-late 1960s (King 1993). From there black women made slow but steady inroads into more professional type employment opportunities as shown in Figure 3, notably in education and the health professions.

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Figure 3

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The passage of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 prohibited discrimination in government and provided job opportunities

and career advancement for blacks well in advance of opportunities that later opened up for them in the private sector (Waldinger 1996). Consequently, between 1950 and 1980 the percentage of black females working in the public sector tripled, while the percentage of those working in the private sector sharply decreased, by the same margin (Burbridge 1994).

By 1990 almost half of all black women in the labor market were either working directly for the government or were employed in health, education or social service industries that relied heavily on government funding. In sharp contrast, by 1990 over 70% of black men continued to rely on the private sector to earn a living (Burbridge 1994). Arguably, this gendered sorting of black male and female workers may have contributed to their divergent success in the labor force and helped to actualize some of the troubling omens Moynihan described in his Report on the Negro Family.

Rebecca Blank and Heidi Shierholz's (2006) research shows that since the late 1970s, compared to low-income men, low-income women, including blacks and Latinas, have fared much better in terms of their ability to stay working and rack up the experiences necessary to boost their earnings. On the other hand, Blank and Shierholz report that less-skilled men – both high school graduates and high school dropouts – experienced real wage declines from 1979 through the mid-1990s. Their wages rose after 1995 but nevertheless remained below where they were in 1979 (for example, in 2004 male high school dropouts earned \$9.27 per hour, 15% below the 1979 level). In comparison, less skilled women showed rising wages over this period.

In addition, less-skilled women's likelihood of being in the labor market rose across the board for all women, regardless of their level of prior experience. In contrast, less-skilled men's likelihood of working fell at every level of experience between 1979 and 2000.

The combination of declines in male wages and increases in female wages therefore led to a narrowing of gender wage differences among the less skilled. Reflecting on these trends Jennifer Glass, Marta Tienda



and Shelley Smith deduced that “the aggregate effects of the two processes of occupational upgrading and service industry growth . . . indicate that minority women benefited more than minority men by the (recent) shifts toward a service economy” (1988:274).

That said, while black women may have been better situated for a post-industrial society compared to black males, neither they nor Latino women have fared as well as white females in the labor market. Black and Latino women remain overly concentrated in the bottom-quartile of women’s wages in clerical, professional, managerial and sales work, which represented the growth occupations in the post-industrial period.

As Blank and Shierholz (2006:47) point out, these differences in terms of earnings and occupational concentrations “may reflect discrimination in the labor market against workers of color, or it may reflect differential skills levels that are not well measured. . . . For instance, black or Hispanic workers may have attended worse schools, or Hispanic workers may have more limited English skills.”

As we reflect on these recent trends, we should acknowledge Moynihan’s prophetic observations in the mid-1960s concerning occupational sorting and increasing underemployment of black males, as well as the implications of these employment woes for changes in black family dynamics. Unfortunately, these insights did not gain the attention they merited because of the emotional controversy over the Moynihan Report’s depiction of the fragmented black family, following its public release.

But there is another trend since the release of the Moynihan report that should be acknowledged. Even though less-skilled black women have in general fared better in the labor force compared to less-skilled men, they nevertheless have seen their earnings stagnate in recent decades. Studies by labor economists point to the importance of job matching and experience accumulation as important strategies for long-term earnings growth.

Low-skilled minority workers, lacking adequate access to job leads or connections with employers frequently bounce from one low-paying, undesirable job to another. The fortunate ones, often by a stroke of good luck or having a well connected family member, may eventually obtain a good job, with reasonable pay, health benefits, functional autonomy and enough flexibility that will allow them to balance work and family obligations. However, in general, the chances of low-skilled minority women obtaining such positions are becoming increasingly slim and the obstacles that can prevent it are gaining in magnitude, including the spatial and social distances that separate them from so-called good jobs.

### **The Neighborhood Effect**

In particular, the neighborhoods in which families send their children to public school and encounter one another outside the home also matter considerably in terms of their economic, social, and physical well-being. Increasingly, residential patterns mean that poorer black and Latino families are not only segregated from whites, but are also increasingly less likely to live close to wealthier, more educated, and better-employed fellow blacks or Latinos.

Lacking the financial, human, and political resources of the wealthy, institutions (such as schools) in poorer neighborhoods have declined in quality, in turn adversely affecting the education and life chances of children born to poorer families. Disadvantaged urban blacks are heavily concentrated in such neighborhoods.

Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in many inner-city black ghettos that experienced significant depopulation since 1970. This pattern represents an important change in the formation of neighborhoods. In the earlier years communities undergoing racial change from white to black tended to experience an increase in population density, as a result of the black migration from the South. Because of the housing demand, particularly in the late stages of the succession from white to black, homes and apartments in these

neighborhoods were often subdivided into smaller units (Quillian 1999).

However, 1970 marked the end of the great migration wave of blacks from the South to northern urban areas, and several developments affected the course of population movement into and out of the inner cities after that time. Improvements in transportation made it easier for workers to live outside the central city, and industries gradually shifted to the suburbs because of the increased residential suburbanization of the labor force and the lower cost of production. Because of the suburbanization of employment and improvements in transportation, inner-city manufacturing jobs were no longer a strong factor pulling migrants to central cities (Quillian 1999).

So with the decline of industrial employment in the inner city, the influx of southern black migration to northern cities ceased and many poor black neighborhoods, especially those in the Midwest and Northeast, changed from densely packed areas of recently arrived migrants to communities gradually abandoned by the working and middle classes who have increased their efforts to move from concentrated black poverty areas to more desirable neighborhoods throughout the metropolitan area, including white neighborhoods (Wilson 1987, Wilson 1996, Quillian 1999).

With the departure of higher-income families, the least upwardly mobile in society are left behind in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty and deteriorating physical conditions. These neighborhoods offer few jobs and typically lack basic services and amenities, such as banks, grocery stores and other retail establishments, parks, and quality transit (Wilson 1987; Wilson 1996; Fox, Treuhaft, and Douglass 2006). Two of the most visible indicators of neighborhood decline are abandoned buildings and vacant lots. According to one recent report, there are 60,000 abandoned and vacant properties in Philadelphia, 40,000 in Detroit, and 26,000 in Baltimore (Fox, Treuhaft, and Douglass 2006).

Latinos reside in urban neighborhoods that are less segregated than those occupied by blacks and they tend to be densely populated as their ranks are constantly refueled by poor immigrants flowing in, which has often resulted in a revitalization of some inner-city neighborhoods (Sampson 2012). Moreover, as one of my researchers in Chicago put it: “Mexican immigrants living in Chicago poverty areas may well be residents of crowded and dilapidated buildings, but they are surrounded by small local businesses, many of them owned and operated by persons of Mexican origin, and by Mexican-targeted social service agencies. Poverty-track blacks are more isolated from jobs and from employed neighborhoods than are immigrants” (Van Haitsma, quoted in Wilson 1996).

Nonetheless, Latinos still tend to live around other native-born and immigrant Latinos in less resourced older neighborhoods. Consequently, as Princeton sociologist Douglas Massey and his colleagues have pointed out, race, ethnicity, and class segregation are becoming “the key nexus in defining urban spatial structure and determining the location of people within it” (Massey et al, 2009: pp. 87-88).

It is probably safe to assume that such residential separation also affects the sharing of information about what constitutes a quality education or the pathway to a college degree. When the occupational clustering described earlier is considered, it seems likely that any leads job seekers may obtain from these networks are seriously limited to the narrow range of job categories and job quality already represented in these communities.

Indeed, the central city/suburban employment balance that has shifted markedly to the suburbs has affected both black and Latino inner-city neighborhoods. Over two-thirds of metropolitan employment growth since 1980 has occurred outside the central city: manufacturing is now over 70 percent suburban, and wholesale and retail trade is just under 70 percent (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1999).

The suburbs of many central cities, developed originally as bedroom localities for commuters to the central business and manufacturing districts, have become employment centers in themselves. For example, in Detroit, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, less than 20 percent of the jobs are now located within three miles of the city center (Fox, Treuhaft, and Douglass 2006).

Accompanying the rise of suburban economies has been a change in commuting patterns. Increasingly, workers completely bypass the central city by commuting from one suburb to another. “In the Cleveland region, for example, less than one-third of workers commute to a job in the central city and over half (55 percent) begin and end in the suburbs” (Fox, Treuhaft, and Douglass 2006:32).

Sprawl and economic stagnation reduce inner-city residents’ access to meaningful economic opportunities and thereby fuel the economic decline of their neighborhoods. For example, in Cleveland, although entry-level workers are concentrated in inner-city neighborhoods, 80 percent of the entry-level jobs are located in the suburbs. And there is little public transportation between these neighborhoods and jobs (Fox, Treuhaft, and Douglass 2006).

Also the experiences of children in racially and socioeconomically segregated neighborhood schools affect their learning in tangible ways. There is strong evidence that low-income blacks and Latinos receive educations qualitatively different from those of their white peers. Not only are they more likely to be educated in classrooms with mostly other poor minority students, but they are less likely to be placed in Advanced Placement (AP) classes and more likely to be suspended.

The dissimilarities do not end there. Blacks and Latinos from poor neighborhoods are also more likely to attend a community college than a four-year, degree-granting university. Georgetown economist Harry Holzer’s (Holzer and Nightingale, 2009) research shows that, just as with high school, there are extremely high dropout rates among

minorities enrolled in these institutions. And those who remain are more likely to populate remedial classes and less likely to graduate with a marketable degree.

All this is unfolding as the so-called “college premium”—the financial and social benefits enjoyed by college graduates compared to those who are not—has increased considerably. Graduates from selective universities and those with advanced degrees have done well in the labor market during the past 30 years, as Harvard economists Claudia Goldin and Larry Katz (2008) carefully demonstrate in *The Race Between Education and Technology*. Meanwhile, high-school diploma holders and dropouts, in particular, have seen their marketability decline sharply during the same period across *all* racial groups. These shifts are fueled in part by rising demand for better-educated workers at the expense of those with less.

Finally, poor urban neighborhoods are also at a disadvantage when it comes to absorbing the impact of the federal, state, and local budget cuts that commonly accompany economic downturns. Layoffs in the public sector are particularly hard for blacks, who have had better success finding well-paying public-sector jobs than jobs in private industries. But budget cutbacks also involve the loss of funding for many government-supported social programs that engage youth in afterschool activities, counsel single mothers, provide job training and employment services, keep class sizes low, underwrite prisoner reentry programs, provide healthcare, and a range of other initiatives that in good economic times are touted as critical interventions for families’ well-being.

These cutbacks, combined with job instability, earnings disruptions, and general economic malaise, mean that the real impact of a recession cuts much, much deeper into the fabric of these communities in particular, and the negative repercussions can extend far longer, even across multiple generations, than official economic figures convey.

## **Education, Training, and a Comprehensive Jobs Agenda**

Together, the clustering of full-time and irregularly employed blacks and Latinos in occupations that are unstable, low-wage, and poor quality, and the poor's physical concentration in depressed neighborhoods give rise to a more insidious segregation defined by race, ethnicity, and social class. Such patterns disconnect disadvantaged workers and job seekers from important practical knowledge and socialization experiences that are imperative for getting ahead in the modern economy.

A comprehensive, far-reaching, inclusive, schools and jobs initiative would help fill the gap that hinders minority workers from acquiring or reconnecting with jobs. We now have a good deal of knowledge, much of it based on scientific evidence from randomized clinical trials or other sophisticated evaluation methods, about the kinds of educational and vocational interventions that could best succeed and under what conditions if brought to scale.

For example, we know a lot more about how to structure strategic partnerships and connect training directly with jobs to bolster students' chances of making a successful transition from school to work. In his State of the Union address, the president mentioned a fairly new high-school initiative in Brooklyn that partners with IBM to help train the next generation of workers. Similarly, major employers such as Caterpillar Inc. are partnering with area community colleges, vocational schools, and the Department of Labor to create apprenticeship programs that provide the skills training for occupations that address the company's needs.

There are other good models of such partnerships, some of which have been around for a lot longer and have undergone rigorous evaluations to test their effectiveness. Career Academies, operating out of approximately 2,500 urban high schools around the country, for instance, combine academic instruction and training targeted to specific industries in partnership with local employers. The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) recently completed a

comprehensive 13-year evaluation of this initiative and found strong and sustained positive effects on students' employment outcomes, most notably in earnings, especially for black males.

However, to reach a broader range of workers such initiatives should be part of a more comprehensive employment policy, one that also takes seriously the issue of large-scale jobs creation, as well as the work and family obligations that low-income adults struggle to balance. For example, legislation that would target areas of high unemployment with job creation strategies, including the creation of public sector jobs in these areas should be a priority. Such initiatives would not only address unemployment in, say, black inner-city neighborhoods, which feature high rates of joblessness, but also unemployment in white, Latino, and Asian areas marked by high jobless rates.

Congressman George Miller of California introduced a bill before the House in 2010 (The Local Job for America Act) that features such a program. This bill sets aside 75 billion over two years to save and create a million public and private jobs in states and municipalities with the highest jobless rates. His bill calls for, among other things, the creation of public sector jobs and funds salaries for private sector on-the-job training. That bill failed to make it through Congress, but was reintroduced by Representative Miller and is still being deliberated on.

Furthermore, serious efforts to improve the K through 12 education and vocational training of students in public schools is now getting the sort of attention that it has lacked for decades. But the situation is chronic and real and measurable improvements are urgently needed. Therefore, a recent report by researchers at Rutgers University (Barnett et al., 2012) showing the dramatic drop in state funding for quality preschool programs raises deep concerns. These numbers should be going up, not down.

The loss of these funds could seriously undermine efforts to ensure that the children of low-income parents acquire the fundamental cognitive skills that future education and training efforts can build on to ensure later economic self-sufficiency. Furthermore, the loss of these



child-care placements puts an enormous burden on low-income parents to find alternative solutions to childcare while they strive to upgrade their employment skills. These efforts need to be supported and encouraged.

In addition, community colleges can play a more responsible role in the vocational preparation of adults in urban communities – a group that comprises the majority of their student population. President Obama’s Promise Neighborhoods, which is patterned after the Harlem Children’s Zone—a comprehensive, wrap-around support strategy developed by Geoffrey Canada in Harlem New York to ensure that children receive a quality education—should now be expanded to include networks of for-profit and nonprofit providers that work in tandem with community colleges to ensure, among other things, that students graduate on time with a marketable degree. Such strategies might include better collaboration between these colleges and area employers to help train a workforce to take advantage of jobs in growth sectors. Employers should also recognize the benefit, to themselves and their employees, of ensuring that employees’ skills are constantly being upgraded so they can improve their earnings potential while continuing to contribute to the productivity of the company.

Community colleges should also partner with quality child-care facilities to allow single parents the opportunity to enroll their children in programs during nonstandard times such as evenings or weekends while the parents attend class. And, federal initiatives should take a fresh look at some of the innovative demonstration programs that existed around the country in the period leading up to welfare reform. Some of these programs were implemented on a small scale but the evaluation results were promising. The New Hope initiative in Milwaukee Wisconsin for example, which operated from 1994 to 1998 provided a number of well integrated supports to low-income working adults, which helped them find full-time employment and increase their financial security.

The supports included monthly earnings supplements that helped low-wage workers find their economic footing while earning an entry-level wage. Help with quality child-care and subsidized health care as well as individualized assistance in procuring employment contributed to appropriate job matches. The evaluation results found sizeable gains in terms of weeks worked and earnings among the adults enrolled in the program. In later years some of these gains began to fade but the initial benefits were encouraging and suggest to me that coordinated efforts to help unskilled young adults transition to employment coupled with long-term skills upgrading along with the provision of quality child care can have a beneficial impact on two generations of low-income family members.

I suggest these kinds of broad-based initiatives with few illusions that they are feasible in this political climate. Rather, I raise them for many of the same reasons that Senator Moynihan so fervently pushed for a national family policy in the 1960s despite the considerable backlash he experienced.

Because unemployment and underemployment are linked with pervasive social problems and economic maladies that affect all workers, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or age, a more inclusive, far-reaching initiative would elevate the skills and job opportunities of many Americans. But poor and working-class blacks and Latinos have been on the ropes since well before the Great Recession. Without coordinated, deliberate intervention at the policy level, the outlook for their economic future is very bleak indeed. Senator Moynihan highlighted and worried about these trends several decades ago; unfortunately his call for national action has yet to be heeded. Thank you.

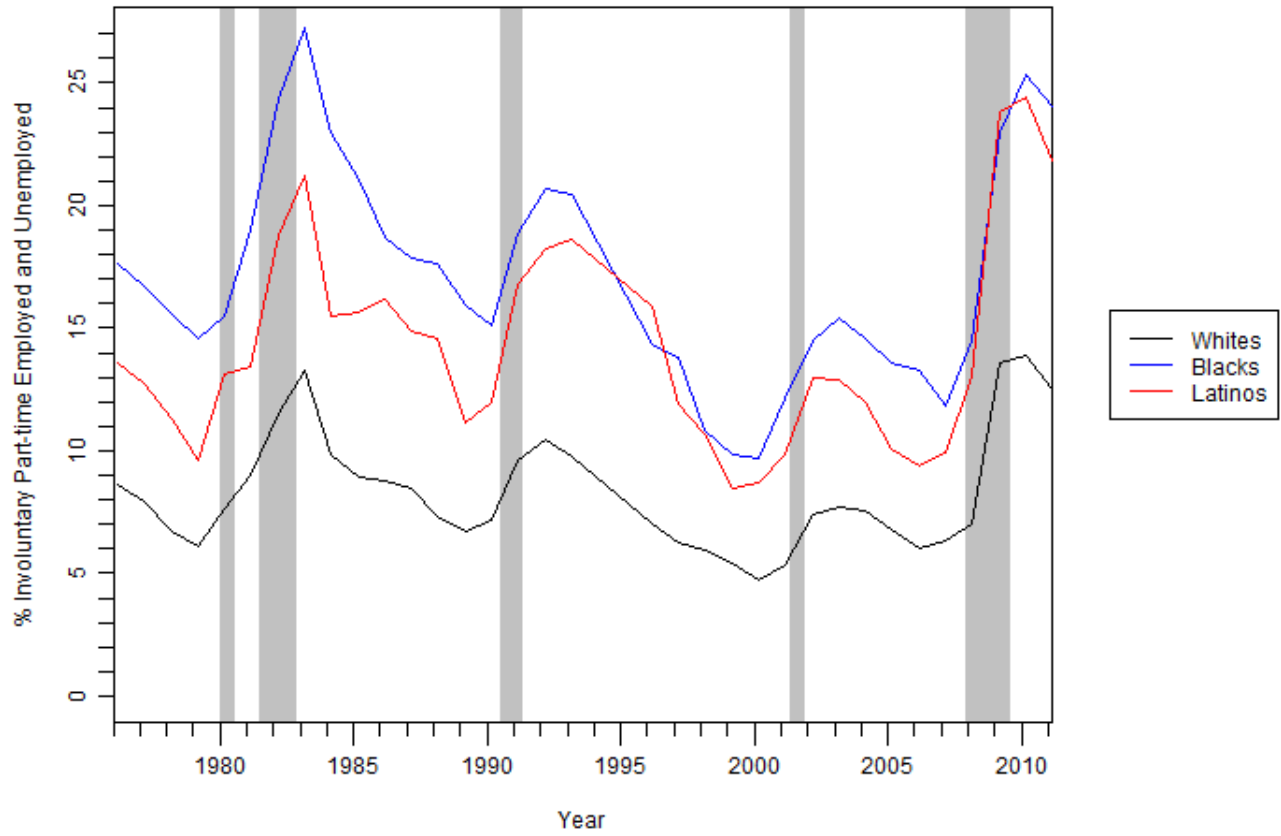
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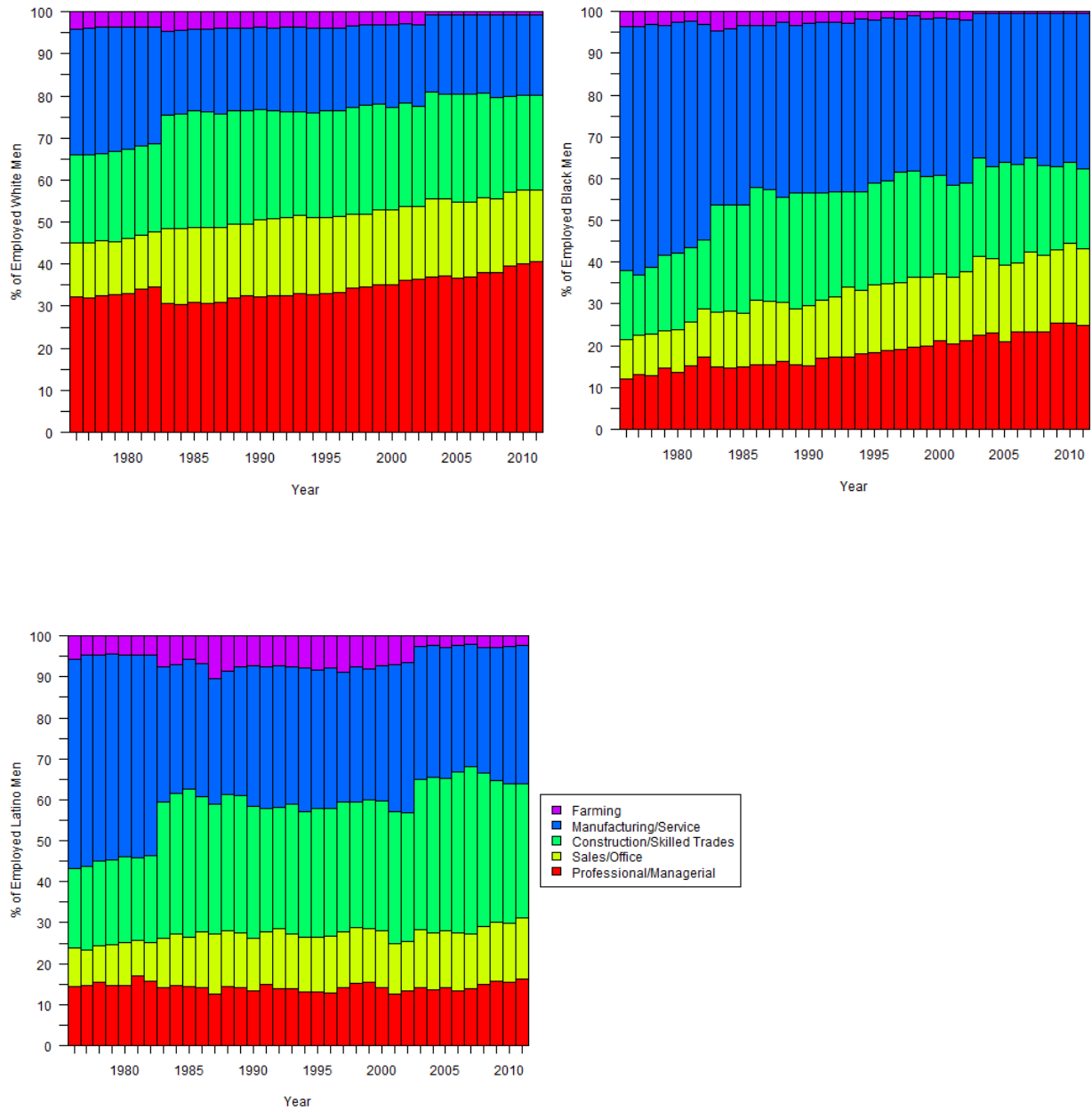
Figure 1: Rates of Part-time Involuntary Employment and Unemployment Among Male Workers 16+ by Race and Ethnicity



Source: Authors' tabulations based on Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey March Supplement

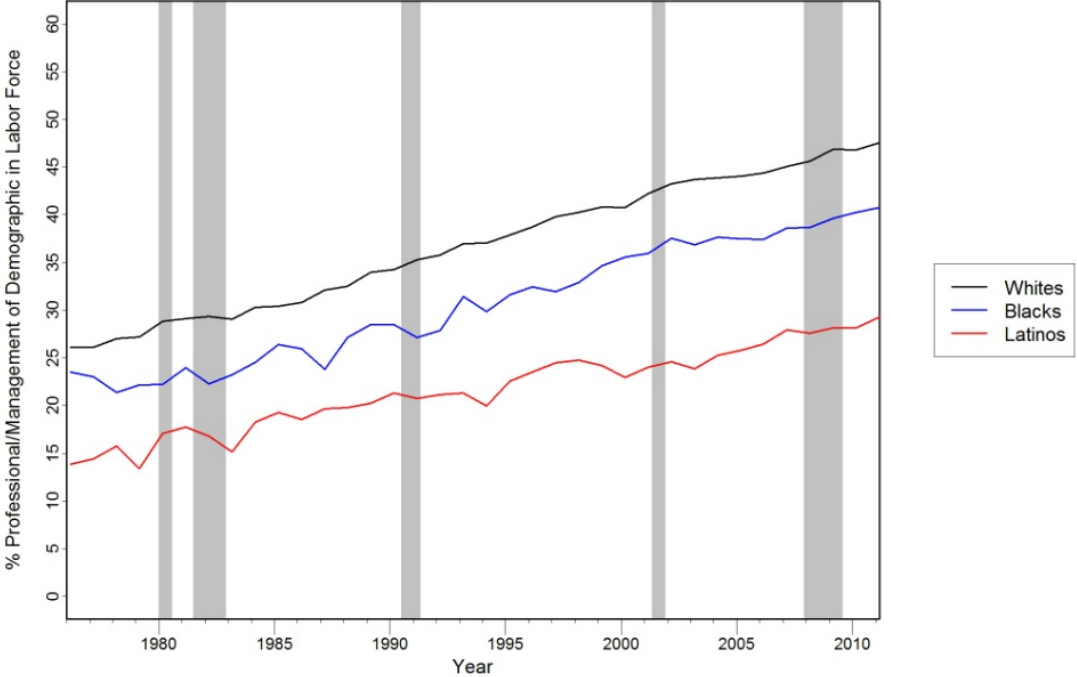
Shaded areas indicate recession periods

Figure 2: Occupational Clustering Among Male Workers 16+ by Race and Ethnicity



Source: Authors' tabulations based on Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey March Supplement

Figure 3: Rates of Female Workers 16+ in Professional or Managerial Positions, 1976-2012



Source: Authors' tabulations based on Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey March Supplement

