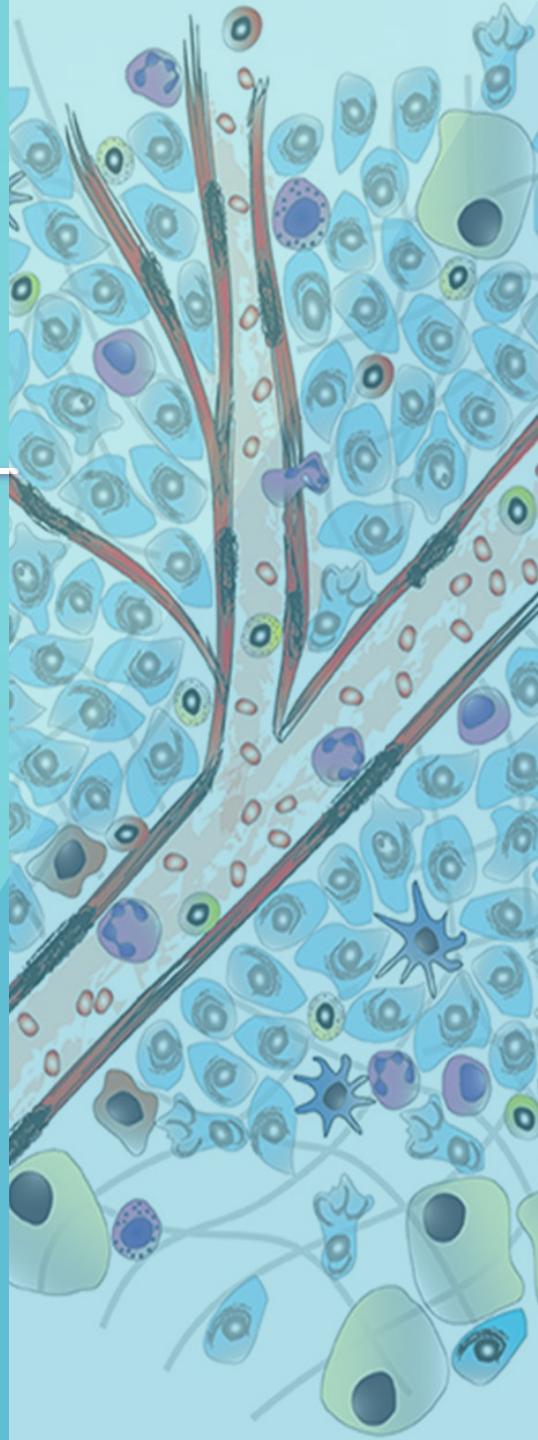


**National Academies Workshop on  
Promoting Health Equity in Cancer  
Care: Overview of Social Determinants  
of Health Inequities in Cancer Care**



**Structural Racism as a Root Cause  
of Cancer Care Disparities**

**Zinzi D. Bailey, ScD, MSPH**  
**October 2021**





# Agenda

- 1 Unpacking racial/ethnic inequities in cancer**
- 2 Highlighting the role of structural racism in driving racial/ethnic inequities**



# Racial/Ethnic Inequities in Cancer

# EXAMPLES OF CANCER DISPARITIES



## BREAST CANCER

**African American** women are nearly twice as likely as white women to be diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer and are much more likely than white women to die from breast cancer.



## KIDNEY CANCER

The highest rates of kidney cancer cases and death in the United States occur among **American Indians/Alaska Natives**.



## LIVER CANCER

Rates of liver cancer are higher among **American Indians/Alaska Natives** and **Asian and Pacific Islanders** than other racial/ethnic groups.



## PROSTATE CANCER

**African American** men are more than twice as likely as white men to die from prostate cancer.



## CERVICAL CANCER

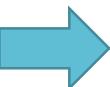
**Women in rural areas** are twice as likely to die from cervical cancer as women in more urban areas.



## MULTIPLE MYELOMA

**African Americans** are twice as likely as whites to be diagnosed with and die from multiple myeloma.

## Root Causes



Genetic and  
Biological Factors



Health Care  
Access



Socioeconomic  
Factors



Chemical and  
Physical Exposures

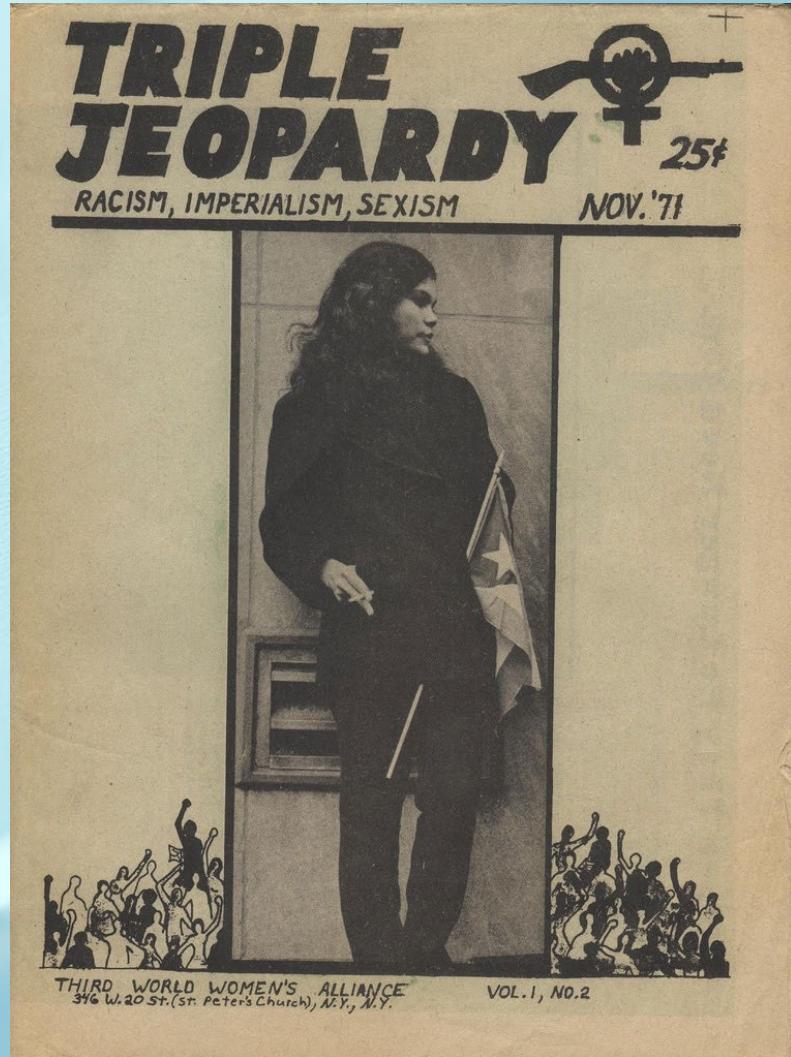


Diet



Physical  
Inactivity

# GETTING AT THE ROOT CAUSES



## LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH

- CANCER
- HEART DISEASE
- COMPLICATIONS FROM DIABETES

## CONTRIBUTING RISK FACTORS

- Family History
- Cigarette Smoking/Tobacco Use
- High Blood Pressure
- High Blood Cholesterol Levels
- Environmental Factors
- Diabetes

- Obesity
- Poor Diet (Access to Fresh Fruits & Vegetables)
- Physical Inactivity
- Stress
- Poor Hygiene
- Radiation/Sun Exposure

## SOCIAL DETERMINANTS

- Income Instability
- Socioeconomic Status
- Inadequate Housing
- Food Insecurity
- Transportation
- Access to Services
- Discrimination by Race, Gender or Class
- Social or Environmental Stressors
- Education

## GENETICS

## Social Determinants of Health Inequities



### Social Inequities

- Racism
- Sexism
- Classism
- Heterosexism

## Social Determinants of Health



### Institutional Inequities

- Public sector
- Private sector
- Laws/ regulations



### Living Conditions

- Physical conditions
- Social environment
- Work environment
- Services available

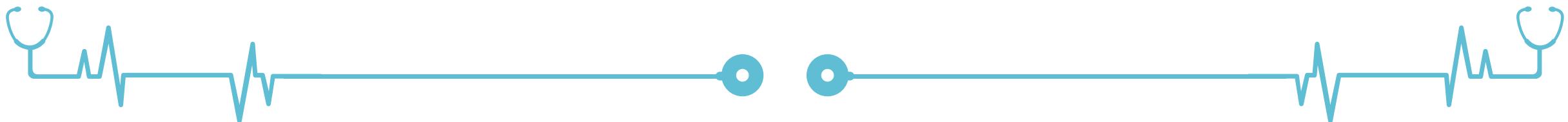


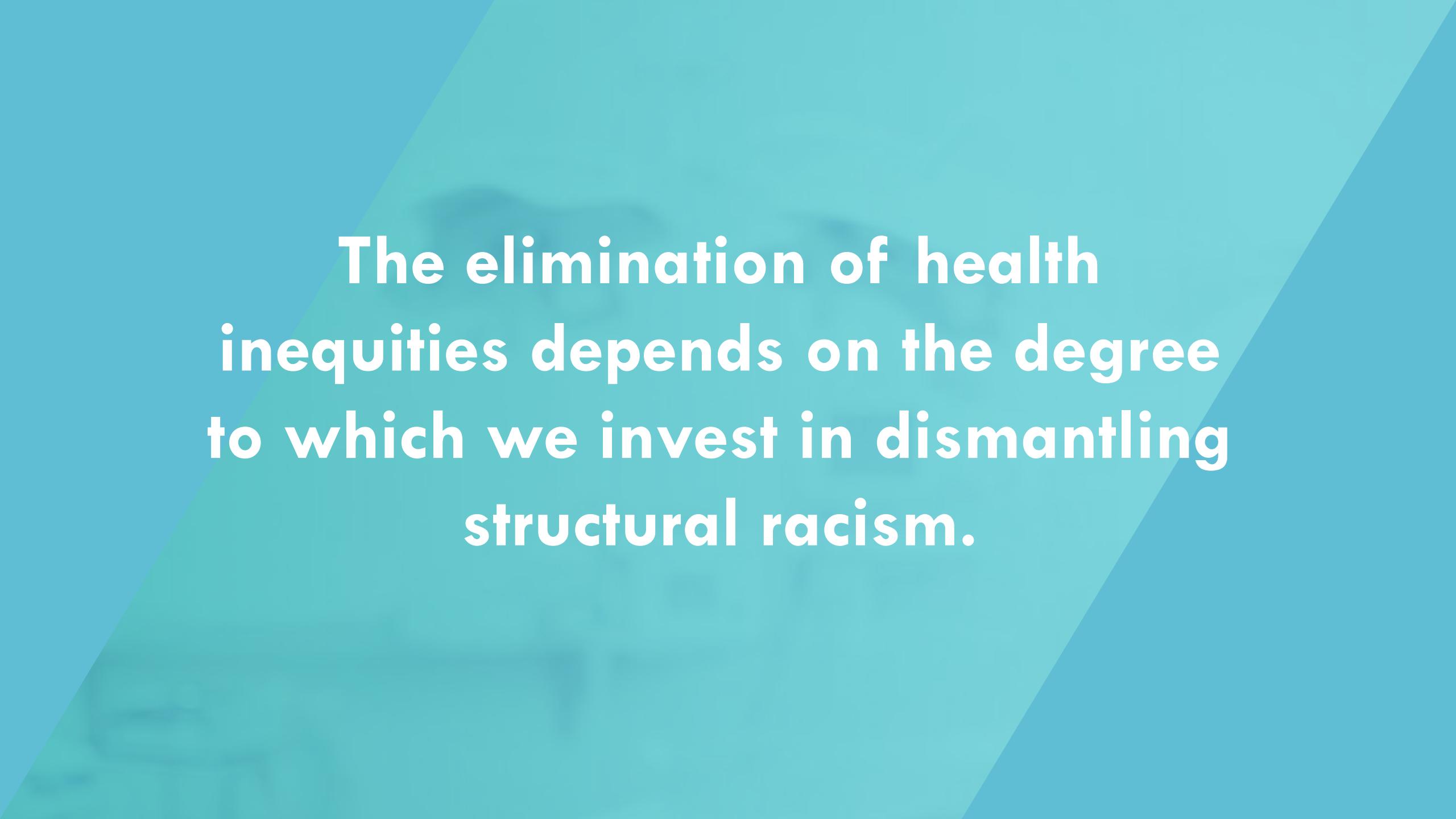
### Health & Health Inequities

- Risk factors
- Disease & injury
- Mortality

UPSTREAM

DOWNSTREAM





**The elimination of health  
inequities depends on the degree  
to which we invest in dismantling  
structural racism.**



# The Role of Structural Racism in Racial/Ethnic Inequities

# WHAT IS RACISM?

Racism is an **organized social system** in which the dominant racial group, based on an **ideology of inferiority**, categorizes and ranks people into social groups called “races” and uses its power to **devalue, disempower, and differentially allocate valued societal resources and opportunities** to groups defined as inferior.



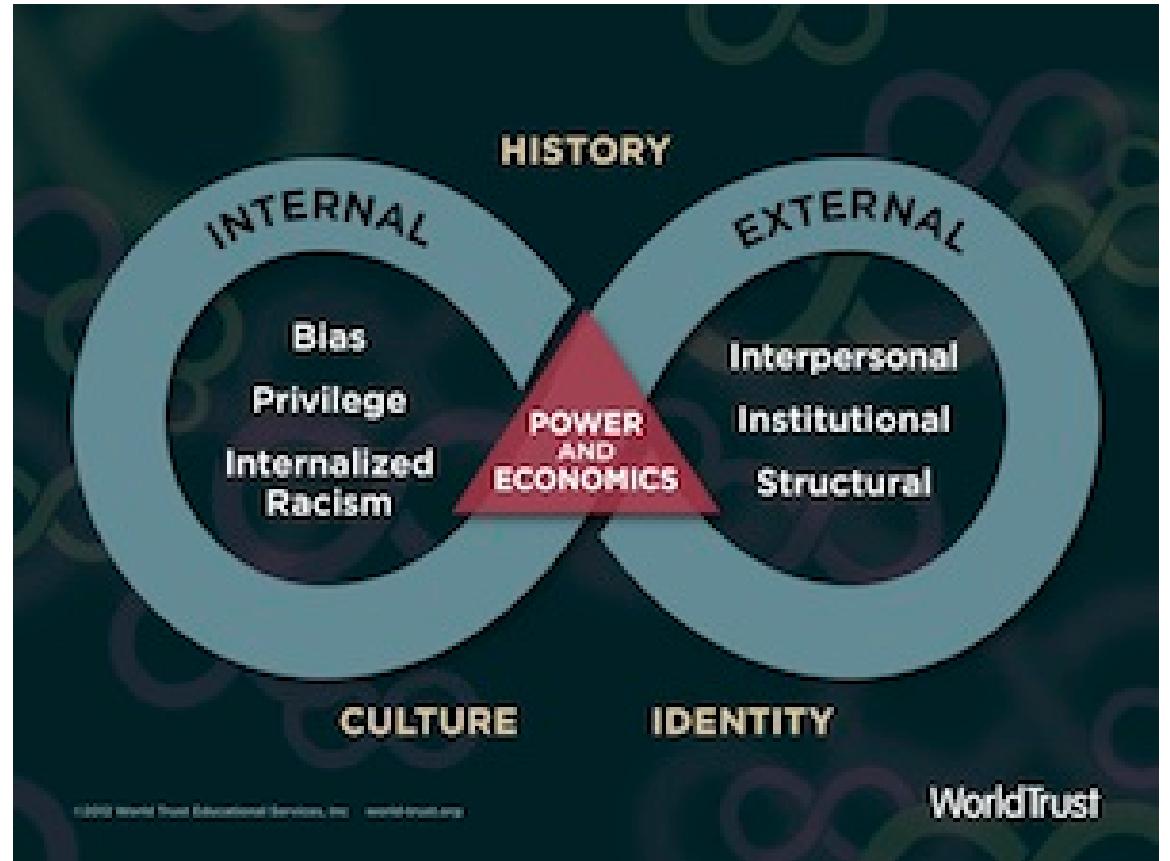
(Williams et al., 2019)

# LEVELS OF RACISM

Internalized racism

Interpersonal racism

Institutional racism



# STRUCTURAL RACISM

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## America: Equity and Equality in Health 3



### Structural racism and health inequities in the USA: evidence and interventions

Zinzi D Bailey, Nancy Krieger, Madina Agénor

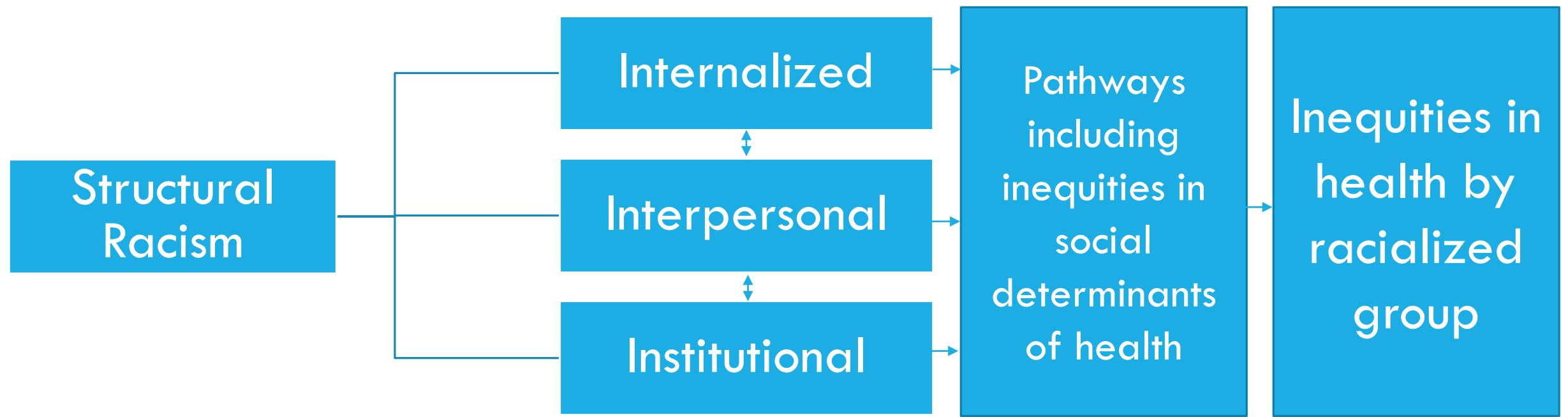
Despite growing interest in underrepresented groups, many health care providers, makers, scientists, elected officials, and advocates remain reluctant to identify structural racism in their work. This is the third in a Series on equity and equality in health.

#### **Panel 1: Definitions of structural racism and institutional racism**

Many academics use structural racism and institutional racism interchangeably, but we consider these terms as two separate concepts.

Structural racism refers to “the totality of ways in which societies foster [racial] discrimination, via mutually reinforcing [inequitable] systems... (eg, in housing, education, employment, earnings, benefits, credit, media, health care, criminal justice, etc) that in turn reinforce discriminatory beliefs, values, and distribution of resources”, reflected in history, culture, and interconnected institutions.<sup>9</sup> This definition is similar to the “Über discrimination” described by Reskin.<sup>10</sup>

# RACISM & HEALTH INEQUITIES



# PATHWAYS BETWEEN RACISM & HEALTH

Economic injustice and social deprivation

Environmental and occupational health inequities

Psychosocial trauma

Targeted marketing of health-harming substances

Inadequate healthcare

State-sanctioned violence (including forced displacement)

Political exclusion

Maladaptive coping behaviors

Stereotype threats

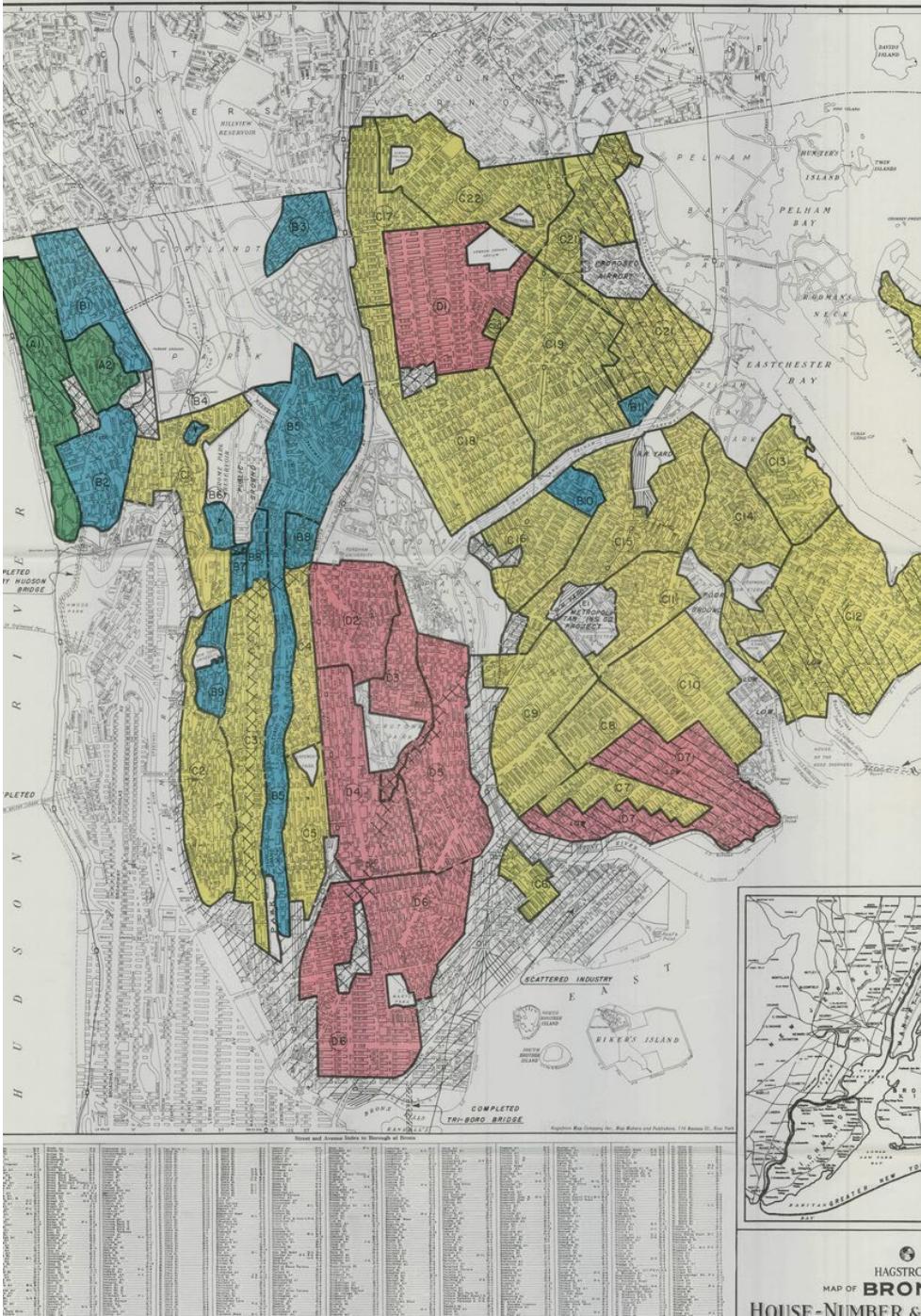
(Bailey et al, 2017)

# RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION

Reinforces all other forms of racism

Integral to U.S. history

Seemingly operating in the housing sector



# RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION - REDLINING

## The Home Owners' Loan Corporation (1934-1968):

Created an inventory of all residential areas in the U.S. to assist banks in making loans

- Color-coded denial or limitation of financing/refinancing to certain neighborhoods based on racial/ethnic composition (used widely including by the Federal Housing Administration)
- Hundred secret maps of “residential security”

A – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade (green)  
Free of black & foreign-born white residents. Lenders encouraged to offer max amount

B – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade (blue)  
Lenders advised to make loans 10-15% below max

C – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade (yellow)  
Subject to “infiltration of a lower grade population”

D – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade (red)  
Lenders often refused loans. Often closest to downtown, or next to factories or railroad tracks

# IMPLICATIONS OF REDLINING

Concentrated investment in White suburbs, which simultaneously segregated racialized groups and hastened the decay of the “inner city”

Coupled with:

- restrictive covenants
- disparate impact of zoning/local land use policies
- discrimination in historical & current rental/mortgage markets

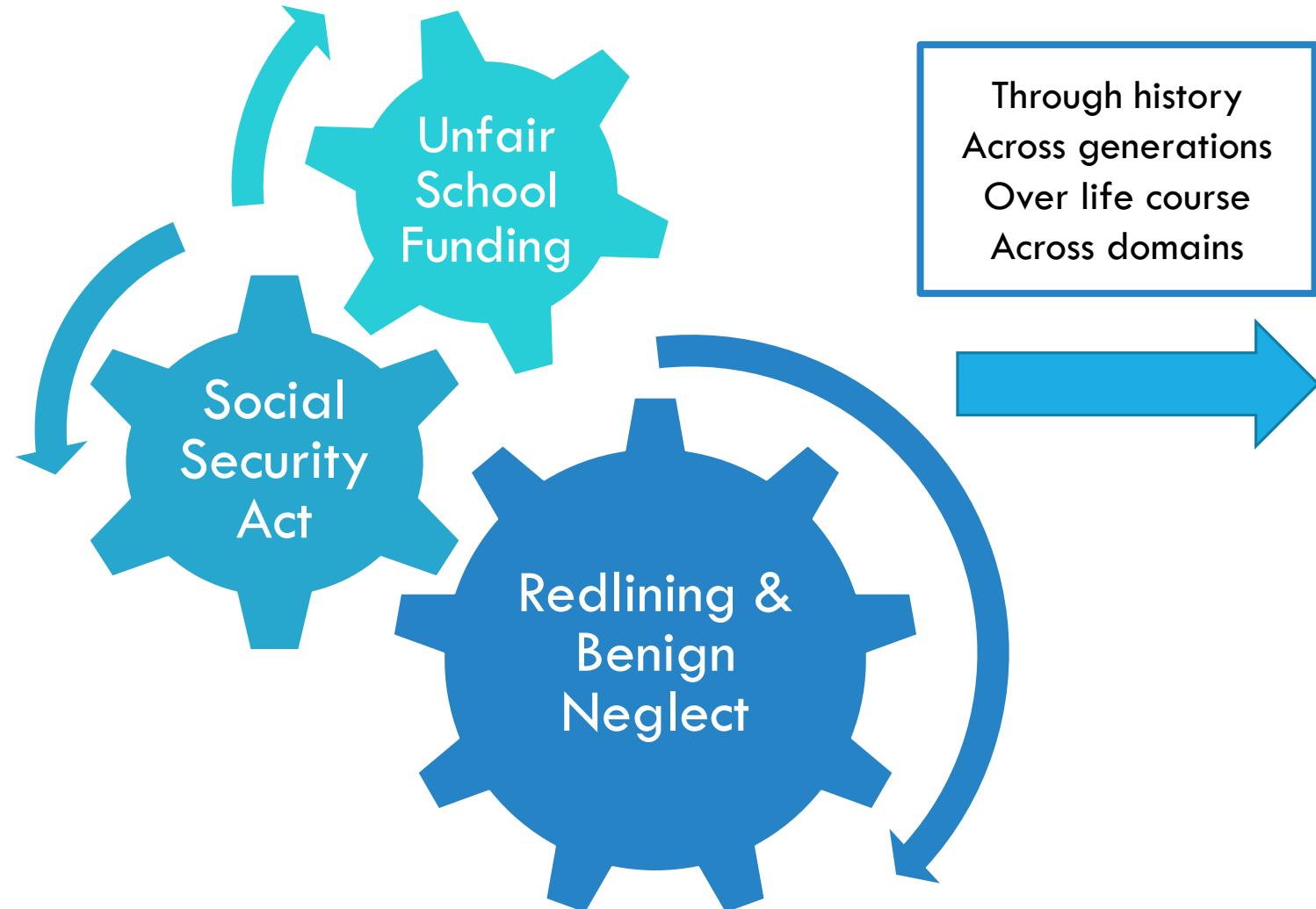
# RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION

Sets stage for “color-blind” distribution of resources over time:

- Environmental hazards (example: toxic waste, Flint)
- Inadequate healthcare (segregated services)
- Inadequate education (segregated schooling)
- State-sanctioned violence (including police violence, incarceration, forced migration, urban “renewal”)

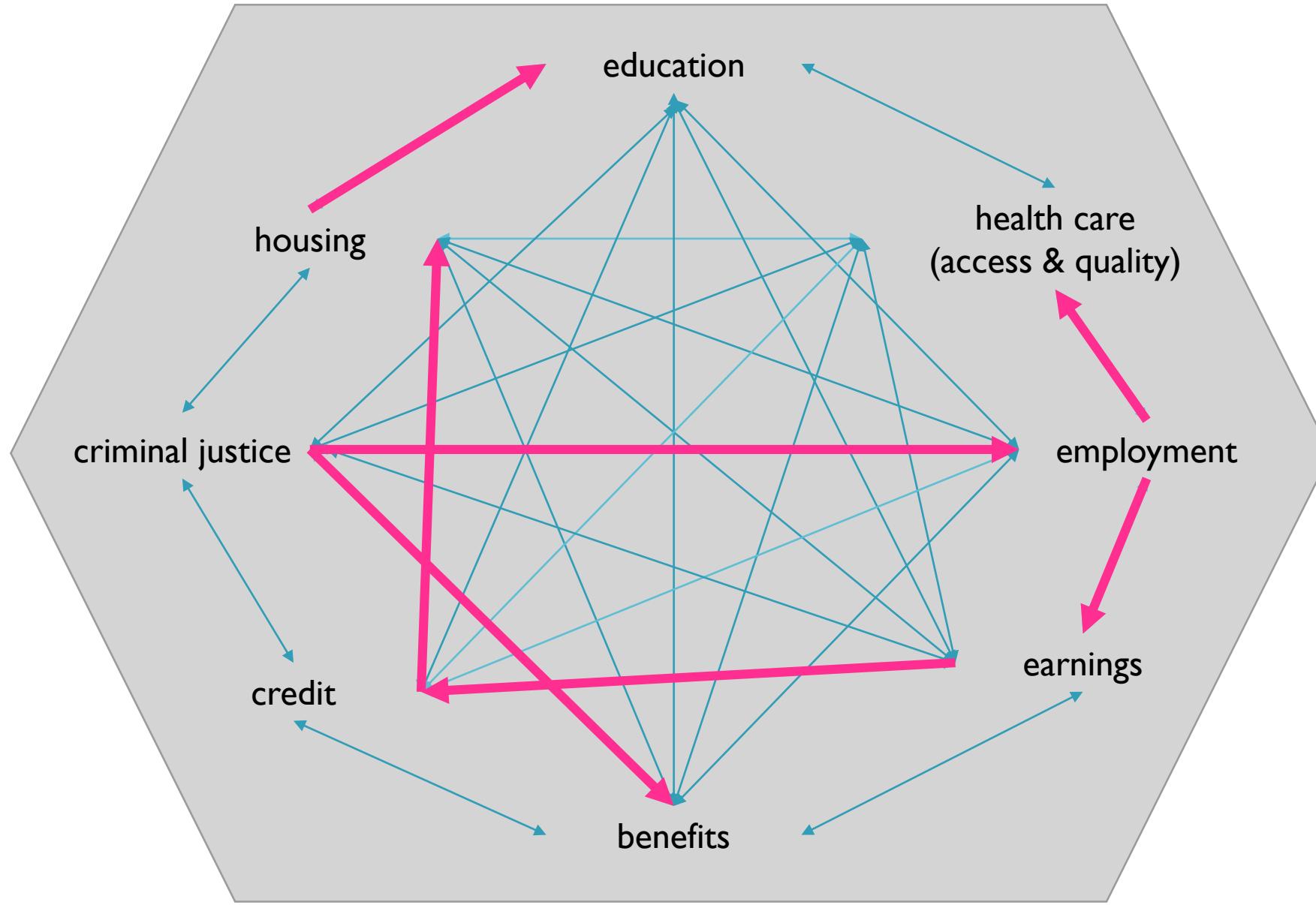
\*\*Municipal disinvestment (“benign neglect” & planned shrinkage), blight\*\*

# STRUCTURAL RACISM OF SEGREGATION



Differentials in:

- intergenerational wealth, education, income
- intergenerational exposure to concentrated poverty
- intergenerational exposure to low quality hospitals, schools, jobs



# KEY COMPONENTS OF STRUCTURAL RACISM

Mutually reinforcing inequitable systems/institutions

Institutions in different sectors/domains (housing, education, healthcare, media, criminal justice) at different levels

Reinforcement of discriminatory beliefs (with impacts institutionally, interpersonally, & individually)

Normalization and legitimization of historical, cultural, institutional, and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color



# Thank You!



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