

Incorporating Novel Measures of Racism to Advance Social Mobility Research

The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

Committee on Population and Committee on National Statistics

**Workshop on Strengthening the Evidence Base to Improve
Economic and Social Mobility in the United States
February 14-15, 2022**

Tyson Brown, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Sociology
Director, Center on Health & Society
Duke University

Acknowledgement

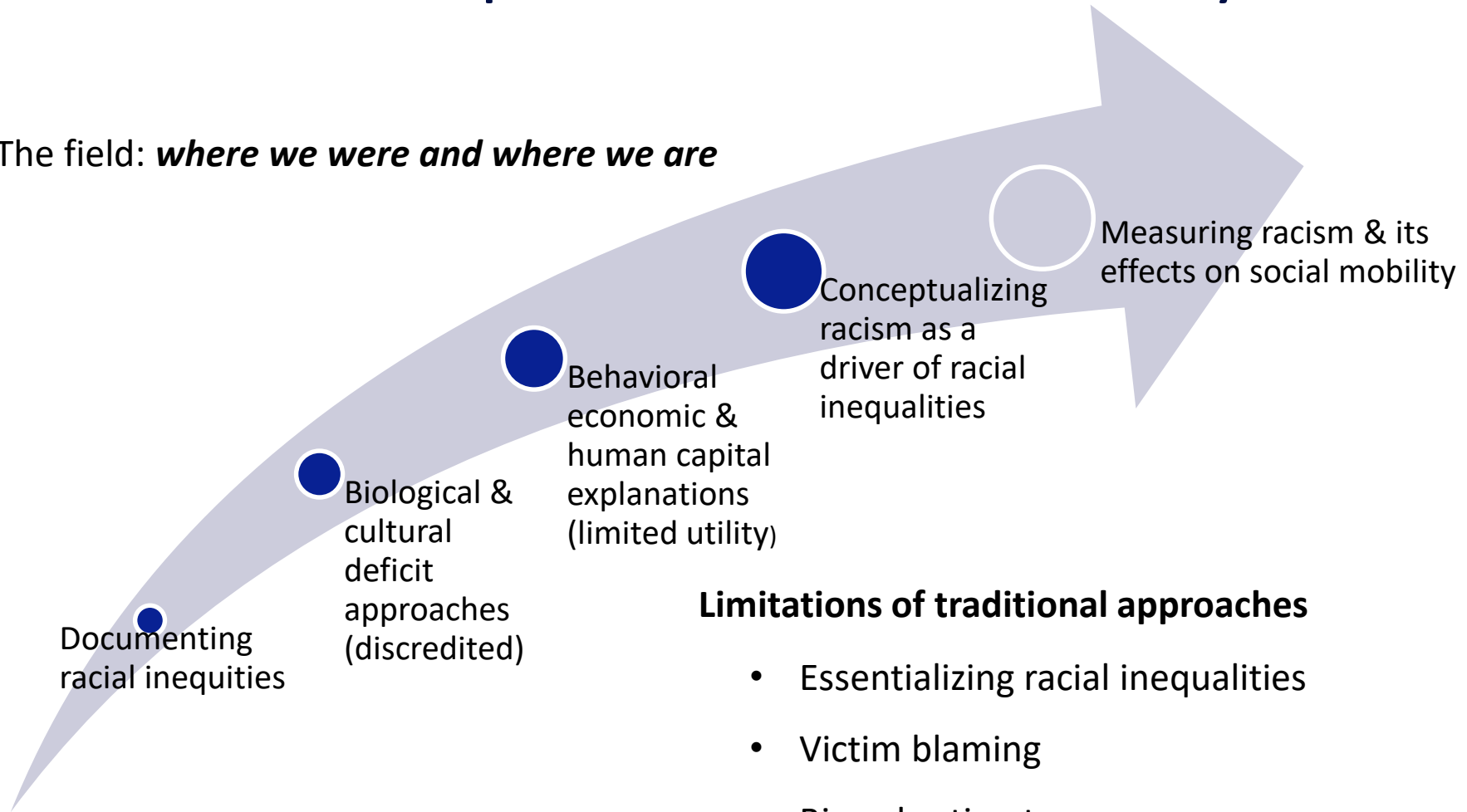
This research received support from the Centers on the Demography and Economics of Aging Program award to the Center for Population Health and Aging (P30 AG034424) at Duke University by the Division of Behavioral and Social Research at the National Institute on Aging.

Duke

POPULATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE
at the Social Science Research Institute

Trajectory of Research on Racial Inequities in Social Mobility

The field: *where we were and where we are*

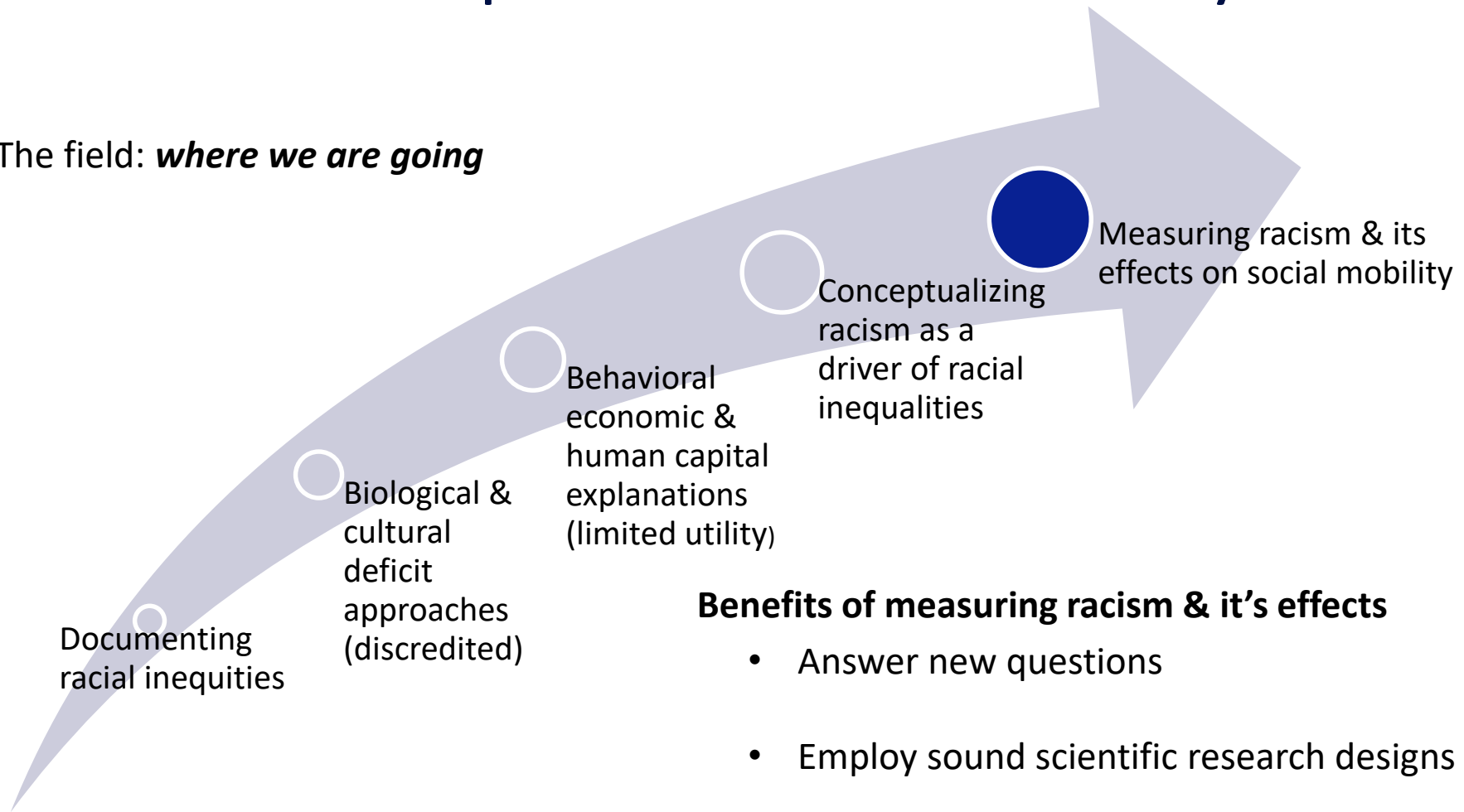


Limitations of traditional approaches

- Essentializing racial inequalities
- Victim blaming
- Biased estimates
- Incomplete understanding

Trajectory of Research on Racial Inequities in Social Mobility

The field: *where we are going*



Benefits of measuring racism & its effects

- Answer new questions
- Employ sound scientific research designs
- Build a knowledge base to inform efficacious racial equity solutions

Adapted from Hardeman et al. 2021

Research Priorities and Data Needs for Studying Mobility by Race

Utilize

Utilize core tenets of race theory to guide measurement approaches

Develop

Develop novel, theory-driven measures of structural racism (SR)

Map

Map SR to understand the spatial distribution of discriminatory contexts

Estimate

Estimate the impact of SR on racialized social mobility processes

Build

Build a publicly-available data infrastructure on contextual measures of racism to catalyze research on differential mobility processes

What is Structural Racism?

- Distinct from individual-level discrimination
- Complex, de facto phenomenon
- Contemporary SR is often “hidden” or not directly observed
- Insufficient progress on measurement has hindered our ability to quantify the consequences of structural racism

What is Structural Racism?

RETHINKING RACISM: TOWARD A STRUCTURAL INTERPRETATION*

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva
The University of Michigan

The study of race and ethnic conflict historically has been hampered by inadequate and simplistic theories. I contend that the central problem of the various approaches to the study of racial phenomena is their lack of a structural theory of racism. I review traditional approaches and alternative approaches to the study of racism, and discuss their limitations. Following the leads suggested by some of the alternative frameworks, I advance a structural theory of racism based on the notion of racialized social systems.



ANNUAL REVIEWS **Further**

Click here for quick links to Annual Reviews content online, including:

- Other articles in this volume
- Top cited articles
- Top downloaded articles
- Our comprehensive search

The Race Discrimination System

Barbara Reskin

Department of Sociology, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98195;
email: reskin@u.washington.edu

“Racism is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (which is what we call “race”), that unfairly disadvantage some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources”.

Camara Phyllis Jones (2002)

Annu. Rev. Sociol. 2012. 38:17–35

First published online as a Review in Advance on
May 1, 2012

Keywords

cumulative advantage/disadvantage, racial disparities, racial inequality, systems perspective

What is Structural Racism?

Systematic racial exclusion from power, resources, opportunities and well-being

Tenets of Theories of Structural Racism

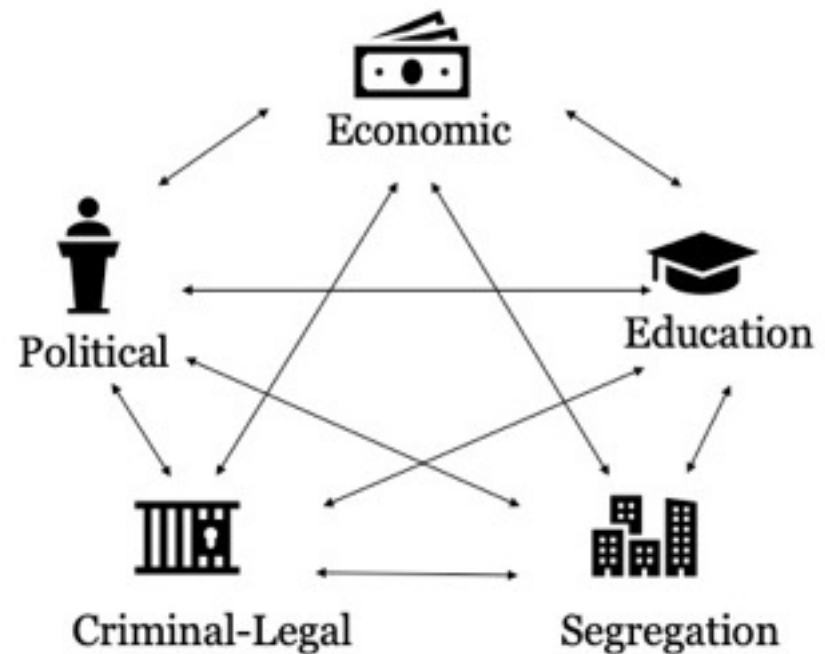
Multifaceted

Interconnected

Institutionalized

System of relational subordination

Manifests in racial inequalities



Brown & Homan (under review)

Limitations of Prior Research

Measurement Error, Biased Estimates and a Limited Understanding of the role so SR due to:

- Investigating a single observed indicator of SR
- Examining several indicators of SR *separately*, potentially masking interrelationships and the effects of SR
- Disproportionate focus on SR at the meso level (neighborhoods & counties), largely ignoring macro-level SR

Measures of Structural Racism

State-level measures from prior studies

| Domain | Measures | Data Source |
|-------------|---|--|
| Judicial | Ratio (B:W) of incarceration Blacks' disproportionate level of disenfranchisement | Vera Institute of Justice The Sentencing Project |
| Educational | Ratio (W:B) of proportion with a bachelor's degree | IPUMS CPS (authors' calculation) |
| Economic | Ratio (B:W) of unemployed rate Ratio (B:W) of poverty rate Ratio (W:B) of proportion who are homeowners | IPUMS CPS (authors' calculation) IPUMS CPS (authors' calculation) IPUMS CPS (authors' calculation) |
| Political | Ratio (W:B) of proportion who voted in 2008 Level of Black's political underrepresentation in state legislatures | U.S. Census National Conference on State Legislatures |
| Segregation | State-level dissimilarity Index (Black-White) of residential segregation | National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center |

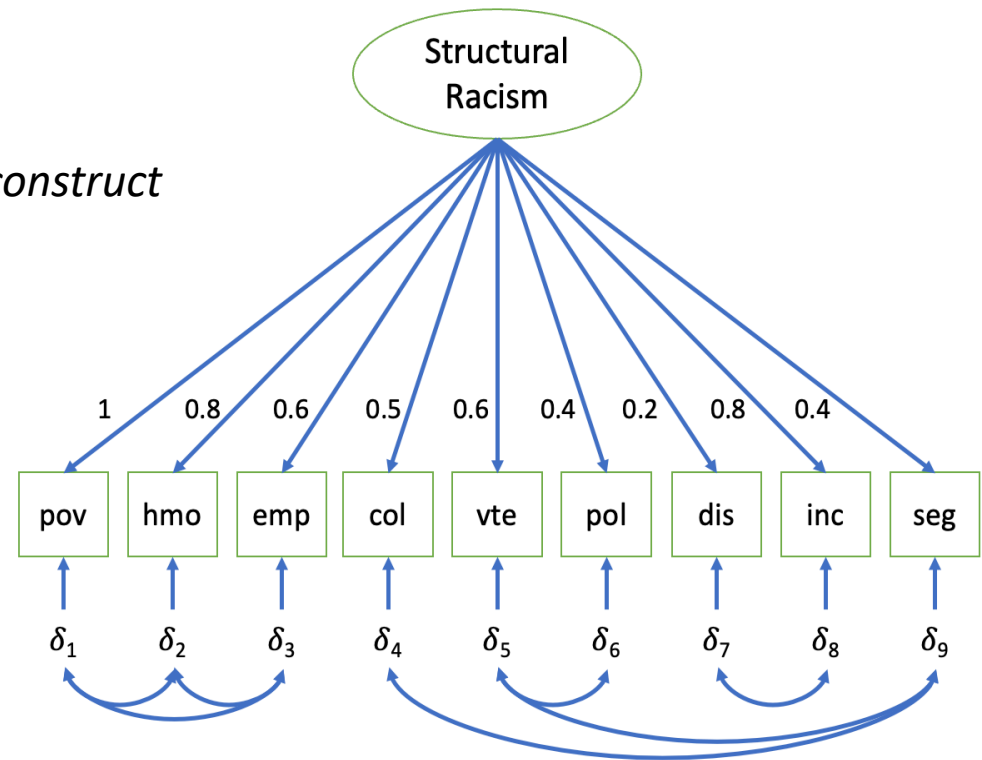
Homan et al. 2021; Lichter et al. 2015; Lukachko et al. 2014; Mesic et al. 2018; Wallace et al. 2017

Proof of Concept: A Theory-Informed Empirical Measure of SR

SR indicators reflect an underlying latent construct

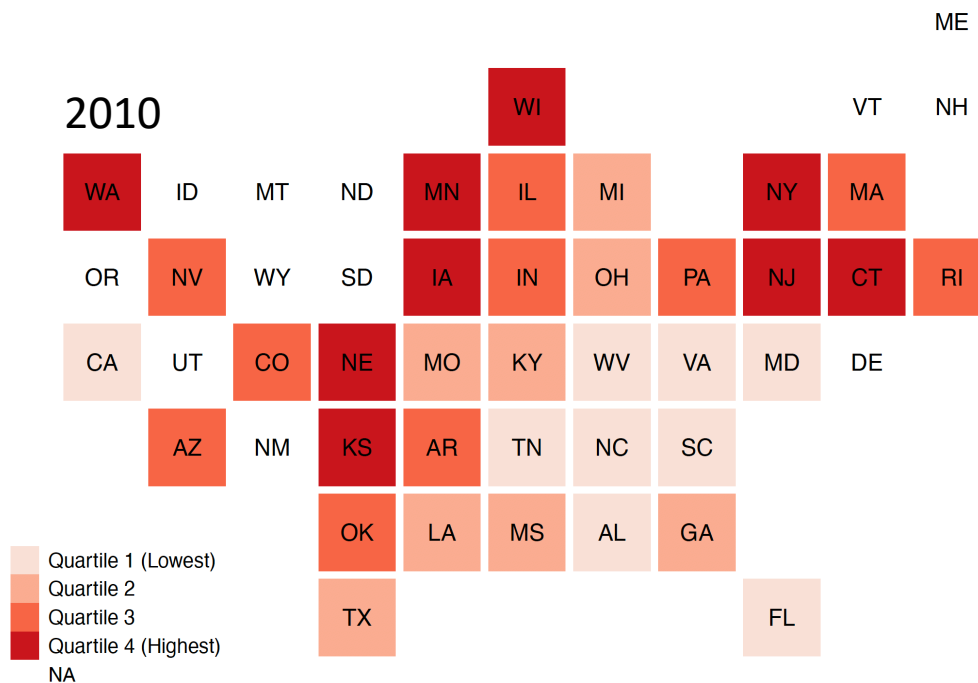
CFA measurement model fits well

- Chi-Sq non-sig
- Negative BIC
- RMSEA= .08
- TLI=.93; CFI= .96
- Omega Total= .89



Brown & Homan (under review)

Geography of Structural Racism (Latent Scale)



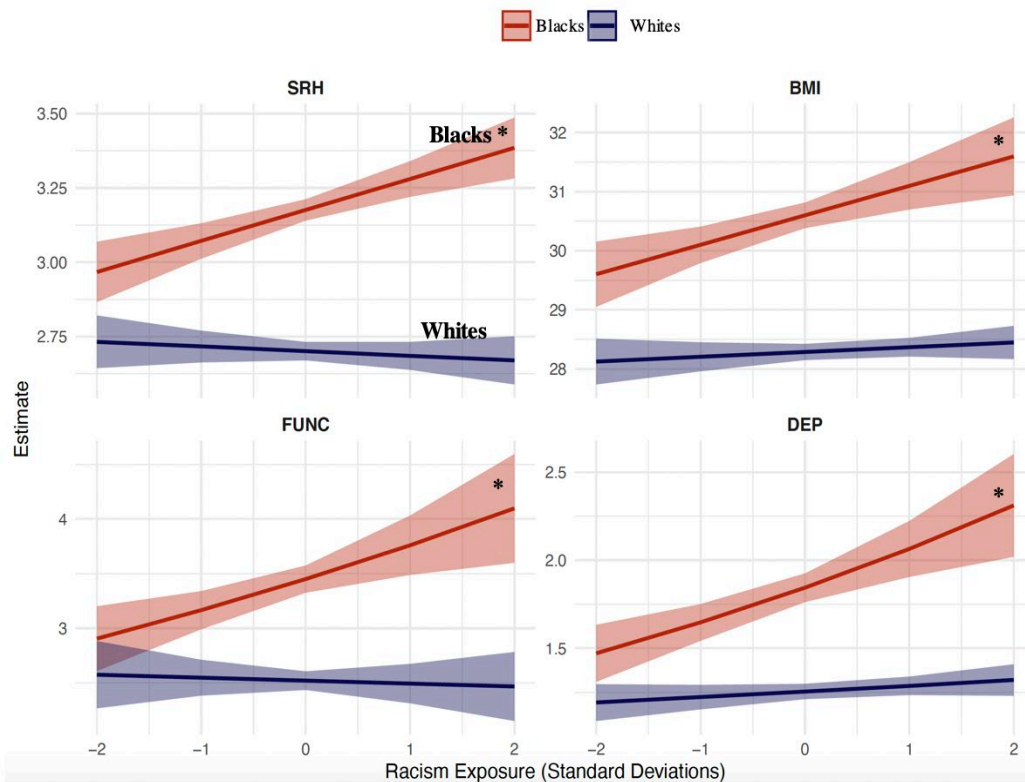
States are racializing institutional actors

Substantial variation in SR across U.S. states

Source: Brown & Homan (under review); Homan, Brown and King (2021)

Criterion-Related Validity of Latent SR Measure

Relationship between SR Exposure & Health, by Race



State-level SR is predictive an array of health outcomes (net of potential confounders)

Exposure to higher levels of SR is associated with worse health for Black People—but not whites

HRS Health data

Source: Brown & Homan (under review)

Innovative Measures to Capture Multidimensional Aspects of Racism

To what extent are there distinct typologies of structural racism in the U.S., and how might they impact racialized social mobility?

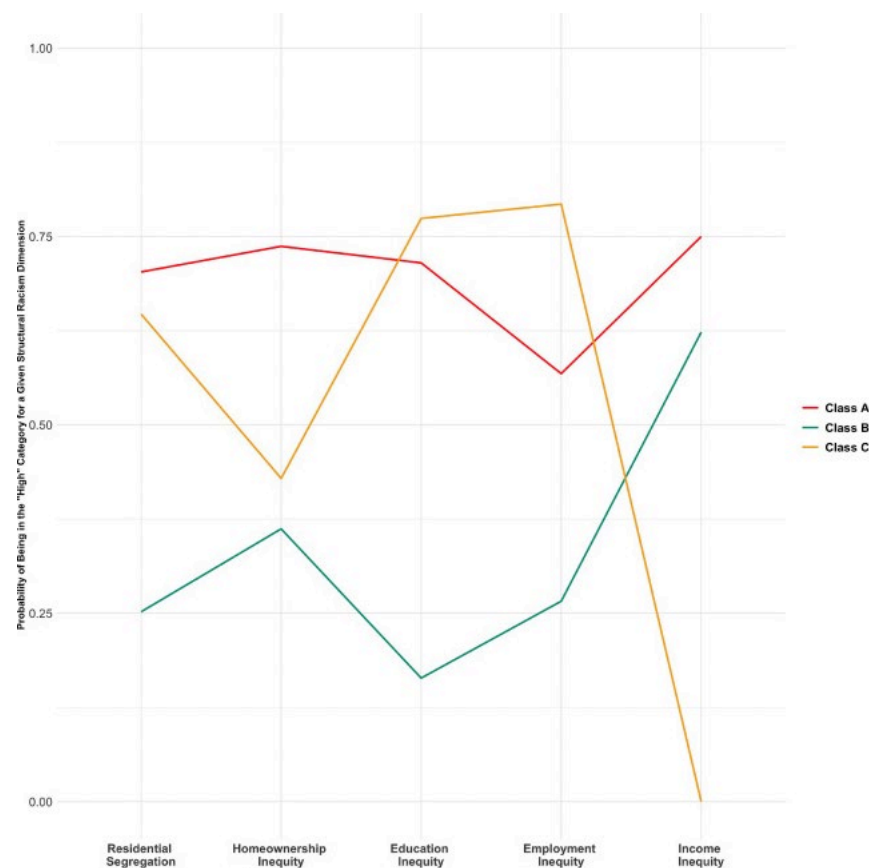
By Rachel R. Hardeman, Patricia A. Homan, Tongtan Chantararat, Brigitte A. Davis, and Tyson H. Brown

OVERVIEW

Improving The Measurement Of Structural Racism To Achieve Antiracist Health Policy

DOI: 10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01489
HEALTH AFFAIRS 41,
NO. 2 (2022): 179-186
This open access article is
distributed in accordance with the
terms of the Creative Commons
Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license.

Latent classes of structural racism



Source: Chantararat, Van Ripper & Hardeman 2021

Racialized Legal & Policy Contexts

Developing a Database of Structural Racism–Related State Laws for Health Equity Research and Practice in the United States

Public Health Reports
2021, Vol. 136(4) 428–440
© 2021, Association of Schools and
Programs of Public Health
All rights reserved.
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/0033354920984168
journals.sagepub.com/home/phr



Madina Agénor, ScD, MPH¹ ; Carly Perkins, JD²; Catherine Stamoulis, PhD^{3,4};
Rahsaan D. Hall, JD⁵; Mihail Samnaliev, PhD^{3,6,7}; Stephanie Berland, JD²;
and S. Bryn Austin, ScD^{4,7,8}



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

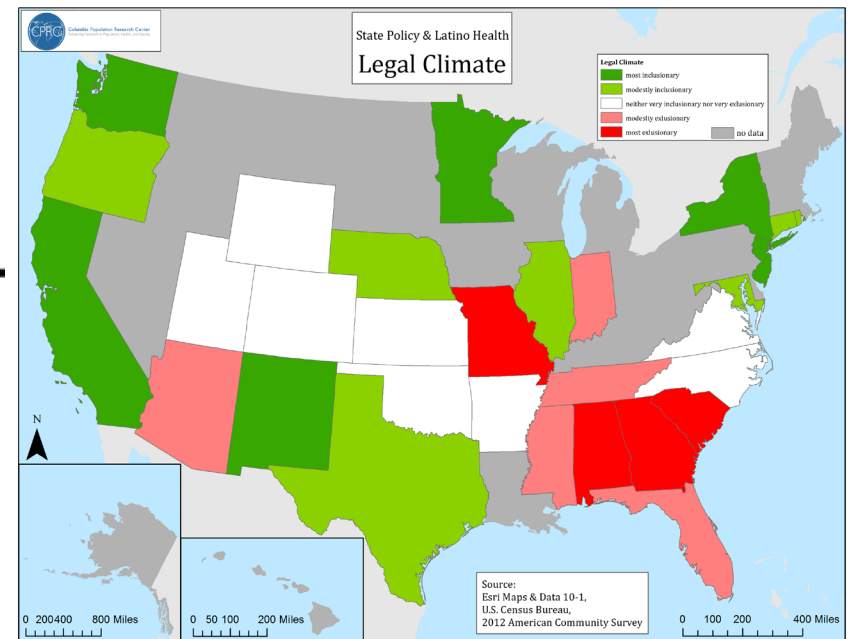
Social Science & Medicine

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/socscimed

State-level immigration and immigrant-focused policies as drivers of Latino health disparities in the United States

Morgan M. Philbin^{*}, Morgan Flake, Mark L. Hatzenbuehler, Jennifer S. Hirsch

Department of Sociomedical Sciences, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, New York, NY, United States



Map source: Philbin 2022; Also: Samri, Nagle and Coleman-Minahan 2021

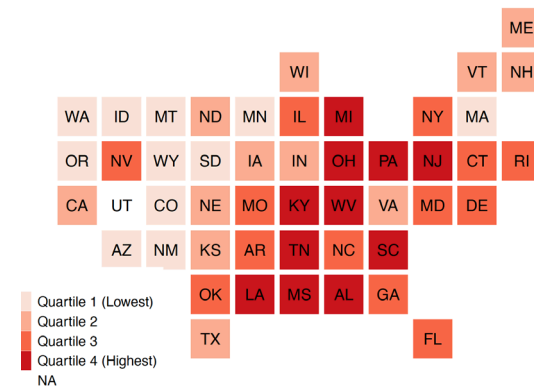
Measures of Cultural/Ideological Anti-Blackness

To understand how social mobility is shaped by cultural/ideological racism, scholars can utilize novel contextual measures, including:

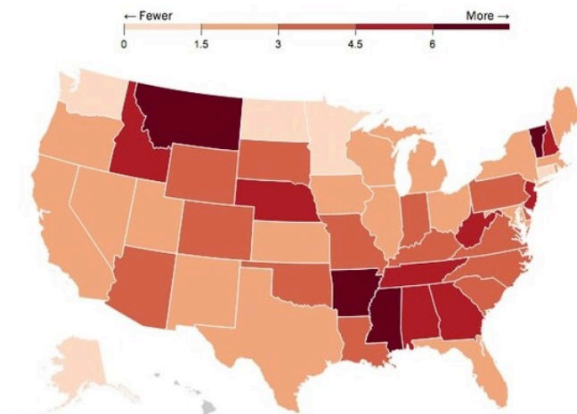
- Racial animus
- Hate speech
- Racial attitudes
- Explicit and implicit biases

Examples of data sources: ANES, Gallup Analytics, GSS, IAT, Pew Research Center, search engines, websites.

N-word searches (per capita)



Hate Groups (per capita)



Sources: SPLC; Stephens-Davidowitz 2014

Measures of Historical Racial Oppression

How is contemporary social mobility directly and indirectly affected by historical racism?





The Historical Role of Race and Policy
for Regional Inequality

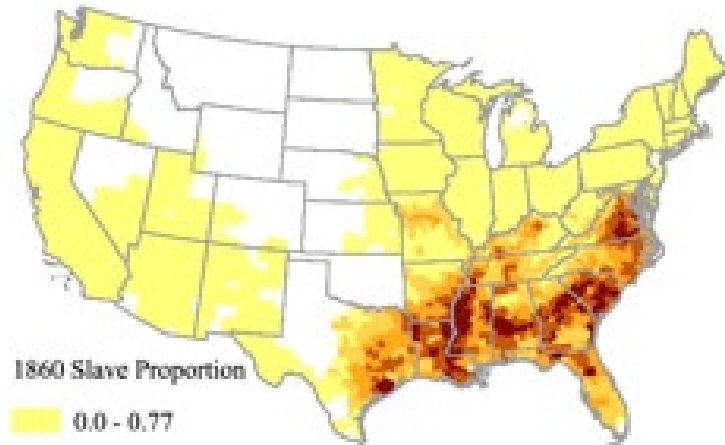
Bradley L. Hardy, Trevon D. Logan, and John Parman

**Wealth Implications of
Slavery and Racial
Discrimination for African
American Descendants
of the Enslaved**

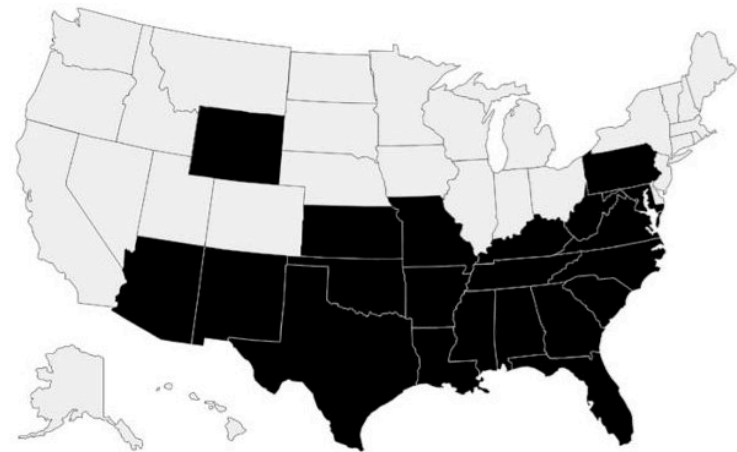
The Review of Black Political Economy
2020, Vol. 47(3) 218-254
© The Author(s) 2020
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/0034644620926516
journals.sagepub.com/home/rbp


Thomas Craemer¹ , Trevor Smith²,
Brianna Harrison³, Trevon Logan⁴ ,
Wesley Bellamy⁵ and William Darity Jr.⁶

Enslaved Population, 1860



Jim Crow Laws

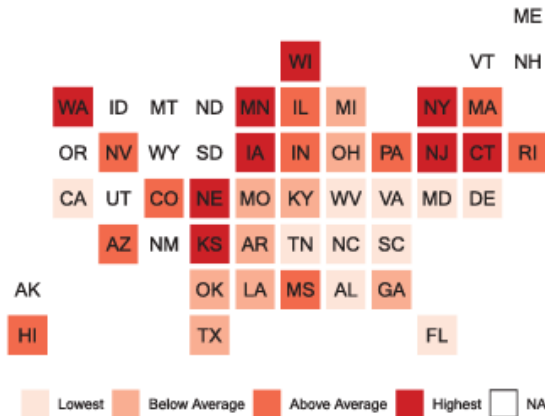


Bloome & Muller 2015; Darity & Mullen 2020; Jhacova et al. 2021; Muller and Wildeman 2016

Maps: Krieger et al. 2013; Payne et al. 2019

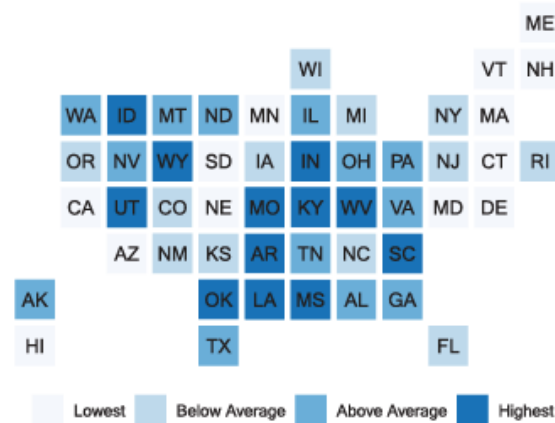
Measures of Structural Intersectional Injustice

Structural Racism

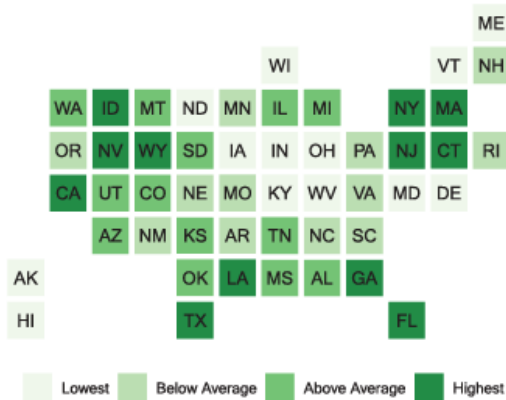


How do intersecting forms of structural oppression shape mobility processes?

Structural Sexism



Economic Inequality



Map source: Homan, Brown & King 2021

See: Brown 2012; Collins & Bilge 2016

Advancing Social Mobility Research

To advance research on racialized social mobility processes and provide a knowledge base to inform efficacious racial equity solutions, we must:

- Incorporate novel new measures of structural racism
- Build a publicly-available data infrastructure on contextual measures of structural racism to catalyze research on differential mobility processes