Mobility in the Negro Community

guidelines for research on social and economic progress

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U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is a temporary, independent, bipartisan agency established by Congress in 1957 and directed to:

- Investigate complaints alleging that citizens are being deprived of their right to vote by reason of their race, color, religion, or national origin, or by reason of fraudulent practices;
- Study and collect information concerning legal developments constituting a denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution;
- Appraise Federal laws and policies with respect to equal protection of the laws;
- Serve as a national clearinghouse for information in respect to denials of equal protection of the laws; and
- Submit reports, findings, and recommendations to the President and the Congress.

Mobility in the Negro Community

guidelines for research on social and economic progress

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FOREWORD

In carrying out its responsibilities, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has become convinced that denials of civil rights cannot fully be understood apart from their social and economic context. By the same token, the extent to which public programs and policies are serving to assure equal opportunity for all Americans cannot be evaluated solely by determining whether appropriate nondiscrimination clauses are required. A critical test of whether inequity is being eliminated lies in the objective measurement of social and economic progress for all segments of the population. And the effectiveness of Federal and other public programs must be measured by determining whether they are closing the gap between the social and economic conditions of minority group members and the more affluent majority. In its work, the Commission has found too little concern with this practical test of equality and too narrow a measure of the effectiveness of public program efforts.

The Commission has followed with interest recent efforts to develop systematic procedures for measuring progress in the Nation's economic and social health such as the Panel on Social Indicators appointed by the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare.

If such procedures can be constructed, they will provide a valuable tool for those whose primary concern is eradicating inequities from American life which are based on the color of a man's skin, or on his religion, or on his national heritage. Through the systematic collection and analysis of data that have not been collected, are unavailable on a timely basis, or which are unused, it would be possible both to identify more accurately the social and economic needs that currently are unmet and to establish clearer national goals with realistic timetables toward which Federal programs and policies should be directed. It would also increase the ability to measure the current capacity of Federal programs to meet the total social and economic needs of the Nation and the contribution they are making toward achieving current national goals.

With these interests in mind, the Commission asked Dr. Eli Ginzberg, director of the Conservation of Human Resources Project at Columbia University, to prepare a paper which would provide some guidelines for a research program designed to measure and evaluate the social and economic mobility of the Nation's Negro population. Specifically, Dr. Ginzberg was asked to:

1. Evaluate data currently available on the social and economic mobility of lower class and middle class Negroes;

2. Delineate the social and economic factors that will influence the rate at which Negroes will continue to be upwardly mobile;

3. Develop preferred strategy and tactics for research in order to:

   a. evaluate the current widespread hypotheses that there is a widening gap between

      (1) Negroes and whites

      (2) lower class and middle class Negroes

   b. assess the extent to which racial and class factors may be the key determinants of such widening gaps;

4. Delineate additional data to be developed in order to carry out research strategy.

This paper, in which Dr. Ginzberg was assisted by his associate, Dr. Dale L. Hiestand, is the response to the charge. The opinions expressed in it are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Neither the authors of the paper nor the Commission regards it as a final word. Rather, it is hoped that this paper will provide a foundation which government and nongovernment researchers will find useful as they develop their own programs on the subject.

THE DIMENSIONS OF MOBILITY

Mobility is a slippery concept. It means a great many different things to different people. Yet it lies close to the heart of American democracy, which holds that every man has the right to strive to improve his life circumstances and to enjoy the benefits of his efforts.

Since the concept of progress, individual and group, is critical to our ideology and to our experience, it is noteworthy that so few studies have been made about the mobility of the American population—either white or Negro. We know very little about the processes involved, for example, in the advance of the many different immigrant groups—Irish, German, Italian, Slavic, Jewish—who came to the United States in such large numbers in the decades after the Civil War. Nevertheless, even without careful investigations, we do have a prototype of what occurred. With the public school as the principal instrument of assimilation, the children and particularly the grandchildren of the immigrants were able to shed the customs, traditions, and folkways of their countries of origin and adapt and assimilate to the conditions of life in the United States. Once this transition from the old to the new was accomplished, the offspring of the immigrants were able to participate fully in the mainstream of American life and to go as far and as fast as their talents would permit.

This is the model which we have accepted although we have no reliable information about the rate at which the newcomers progressed or the processes which speeded or inhibited their advance. One reason for the conspicuous neglect of this central issue in our national experience has been our underlying ambivalence toward the middle class, which we see as the carrier of European elitism with its emphasis on refinement, culture, and class distinction. There has been an unresolved conflict between the thrust of American democracy towards egalitarianism and the hope and promise that every man should and could better himself through his own efforts and advance up the socioeconomic scale.

But the time is long past when a candidate for president could gain votes by claiming that he was born in a log cabin. Prosperity liquidated whatever concern originally existed when the sons of immigrant workers became middle class tradesmen and professionals. One difficulty, then, in formulating the problems involved in a study of mobility of Negroes stems from the fact that we know so little about the mobility of whites.

Moreover, opportunities for Negroes to advance educationally and occupationally opened up much later than they had opened up for immigrant whites. The only other fact that we know is that Negroes confront an uniquely different situation when they seek to advance. They carry their color with them and as long as the white majority is prejudiced against men of color, educated and skilled Negroes encounter difficulties in seeking to advance further. The immigrant whites could lose their past. Negroes carry their past with them.

Despite their late start there is today a substantial segment of the Negro population which is middle class. Nevertheless, marked inequalities continue to exist in the middle class status of whites and Negroes. A critical question that now faces both the Nation and its Negro citizens is how rapidly and with what changes in social policy these inequities can be overcome so that Negroes will be able to move up the economic and social scale at a sufficiently rapid rate that will soon enable them to enjoy their share of the good things in life.

The focus of this paper on the growth of the Negro middle class derives not only from the significance of middle class status for all who have achieved it or will achieve it, but also because the prospects of those lower on the scale are greatly affected by the movement of others higher on the scale.

White-collar and highly skilled middle class occupations are expected to be the most rapidly growing sector of the economy in the decades ahead. The more rapidly substantial numbers of Negroes advance into this sector, the less competition there will be for the relatively limited number of lower skilled jobs.

From time to time scholars have called attention to the fact that not all Negroes belong to the group of poorly educated people who hold the least desirable

jobs, earn the lowest incomes, and live in the poorest sections of the city. More than 60 years have passed since W. E. B. DuBois advanced his concept of the "talented tenth"; and a generation has passed since E. Franklin Frazier analyzed the *Black Bourgeoisie*. But except for these and a few other examples, the scholarly community, government, and the public tend to see Negroes primarily as a single undifferentiated mass of disadvantaged people tied by the heritage of color, sharing the misfortunes and disadvantages of those who are at or close to the bottom of the economic and social hierarchy.

The large and visible numbers of poor Negroes on southern farms and, recently, in southern and northern cities have reinforced this image of a group swamped by pervasive poverty. The further facts that, until recently, so few Negroes had risen to professional positions within the established structure and that the white community had little or no contact with successful Negroes further strengthened this image.

Additional reasons imbedded in our history help explain the neglect, in fact, the distortion, of concepts and beliefs about Negro mobility. Advancement up the economic and social scale in our economy depends primarily on access to preferred jobs, and secondarily on control over property. Until the beginning of World War II, Negroes both in the North and in the South, urban as well as rural, were severely constricted in their efforts either to obtain a good job or to acquire any substantial amount of property. The issue of Negro advance into the middle class is very recent; it has gained meaning and significance only within the past generation.

Understanding has been further inhibited by the fact that changes in the absolute and particularly the relative position of groups on the economic or social scale involve cumulative actions over a considerable span of time. No individual, much less a group, is likely to experience substantial changes in fortune and position from one year to the next, even from one quinquennium to the next. Mobility involves generational shifts—from fathers to sons and grandsons. Hence, much of what is currently being induced about Negro mobility derives from a foreshortened perspective.

There are additional complications in the path of clarity. The last decade has witnessed more pervasive changes in the structure of race relations than have occurred at any time since the end of the Civil War. Of course many Negroes and whites are justifiably restive about how much remains to be done before Negroes will finally be freed of all the special disabilities from which they have suffered as a result of segregation and discrimination. But a great many of these barriers and hurdles which have greatly interfered with their mobility are being lowered or removed. However, time is required before the favorable consequences of environmental alterations can be felt throughout the system: access to improved public services; access to preferred jobs; access to promotion. The only data we have with which to measure changes in Negro mobility are data from the past. But the past is likely to be less than a trustworthy guide to the future.

There is another dimension of mobility which is troublesome. What meaning should be ascribed to findings that in contrast to a decade or two ago a much larger proportion of Negroes are now in white-collar jobs earning incomes that enable them to live decently, but that during this same period the position of many whites has likewise improved substantially? Is the critical question the absolute or the relative position of the Negro minority?

The answer is both. It is a matter of great importance whether few or many Negroes hold desirable jobs and earn decent incomes. But it is and should be a matter of broad concern whether the position of Negro families on the national scale is drawing closer to or farther apart from that of white families. The well-being of a minority depends on its relative as well as its absolute position. Full participation in a democratic society implies that the position of the several groups comprising the minority be similar to the pattern of the majority.

In our attempt to conceptualize the problem of Negro mobility, we will proceed with a simplified rather than a complex model.

We can stipulate that more and more Americans are becoming white-collar workers; that more and more of them own their homes; that their children not only complete high school but that many of them attend junior or senior college or technical school; that they earn sufficient income to own a car, accumulate many household appliances, take annual vacations, and are able to put money aside. These are the trappings of what we can loosely define as middle class. To sharpen the picture slightly we are considering as middle class, families that have an income above the average, that is, in excess of $6,500 annually.

One simplified approach to the question of Negro mobility would be to determine the number and proportion of Negro families that have all, or most, of the characteristics of middle class families. Another would be to identify the keys which enable a man and his family to acquire this status. The principal keys are a

man's job, his income, his education, and his style of life.

A brief word about each. There are a considerable number of laboring and service jobs which pay so little that the incumbents cannot hope to earn an annual income of $6,500. Even if the wife or adolescent children work part-time or part of the year to supplement the father's full-time earnings, the family is unlikely to reach this level.

The question of jobs and income can be inverted. Does it follow that operatives and craftsmen who earn $6,500 or more belong to the middle class even though they are blue-collar workers? It would be unduly constrictive to say that they are not, solely because they work with their hands in earning their livelihood.

But what of the other criteria—their education and their style of life? Many blue-collar workers who have a substantial income have not completed high school, and many have a style of life similar to that of families who are low on the income scale. A considerable proportion put little or no pressure on their children to prepare for or attend junior or senior college. Nevertheless, despite the substantial non-fit between our definition and the actuality of their work and life, we will consider these successful blue-collar workers as members of the middle class since adequate income can open the door to the middle class whether or not one adopts its trappings.

What about others who are white-collar workers, who have acquired considerable education, who aspire to a college education for their children, but whose earnings fall short of the $6,500 mark? Since many of these families, despite their shortfall in income, manage to or aspire to live like their more affluent neighbors, we will consider them on the periphery of the middle class.

There is another important factor. A school teacher with an only child who earns $4,500 a year in the South may be more a member of the middle class than a blue-collar workers in Detroit with five children who earns $8,000 annually. We see then that there is a large penumbra around the middle class.

Because of the linkages among education, employment, income, and style of life, it is essential to consider the important institutional factors that facilitate or retard the efforts of Negroes to reach the threshold of the middle class.

The fastest growing sector within the occupational hierarchy consists of professional and technical jobs. Those who qualify for these positions, initially or after a period of employment, are in a preferred position to earn above average incomes. In turn, graduation from college, or at least from junior college, is the preferred way into these preferred jobs. Hence the ease or difficulty with which Negroes can complete high school and obtain a junior or senior college degree will significantly influence the number who will be upwardly mobile. For they will be in the best position to qualify for better paying white-collar jobs at the managerial, sales, and clerical levels as well as for preferred service and blue-collar positions.

The deep and continuing concern of civil rights leaders with the quantity and particularly the quality of the educational opportunities available to Negro children and young people is well founded. They are correct to stress preparation for work: failure at this point in the process casts a large shadow ahead. It has been, and it will continue to be, very difficult for poorly educated Negroes to rise on the economic and social scale. One critical factor in mobility, therefore, is the access of Negroes to quality education.

A second factor relates to the ease or difficulty with which Negroes can make a satisfactory attachment to the world of work. For many decades segregation and discrimination in employment resulted in the arbitrary exclusion of Negroes from preferred jobs. Frequently they were not hired at all; in other instances they were hired only for low-level jobs and were blocked by various devices from advancing up the ladder. The extent to which these arbitrary barriers are being reduced and removed and the extent to which various employers, both in the profit and the not-for-profit economy, are taking positive actions to hire or promote Negroes into preferred positions will determine their upward mobility.

In addition to the important tripod of education, employment, and income, some consideration must be given to the important dimensions of the "style of life" if only because the willingness of individuals to strive to improve their position is related to the possible gains that they can see for themselves and their children. It is one of America's strengths that a man is judged not by the accomplishments of his forebears, but by his own competences. The self-made man has long had national respect and esteem. In the United States nobody was expected to spend his entire life in poverty if he was born in poverty. That is, nobody but the Negro who for a very long time was estopped by law and later, by tradition, from improving his conditions. The constraints placed on Negroes' finding housing outside of the slum or ghetto and taking up residence next to whites of comparable education and income have been a major deterrent to their mobility. Without carefully designed and executed studies it is

difficult to estimate the actual reduced motivation for Negro adults and children because of arbitrary confinement to the ghetto. But we cannot neglect the role that segregated housing has played and continues to play in the efforts of Negroes to advance.

A few additional facets of Negro mobility should be noted. The small number of Negroes who achieved middle class status in previous generations reflected their opportunities within a segregated society—the physician who treated Negro patients; the undertaker who buried Negroes; the professor who taught in a Negro college. However, the poverty of the Negro masses set severe constraints on the size of the Negro middle class. The critical aspect of the breakdown of the walls of segregation and discrimination characteristic of the post-World War II era has been that more and more Negroes have had an opportunity to compete for the better jobs in white society. This breakout, the full dimensions of which are still to be revealed, has basically altered the nature of the problem.

While the focus of the present analysis is on upward mobility, it is important to note, at least in passing, that the same forces that have enabled many to move up the economic and social scale may also have led some to retrogress. The adage, "from shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves in three generations" may apply here. In considering the rate at which Negroes are advancing to middle class status, some attention should also be paid to the possibility of slippage that may be occurring among the children of those who earlier had achieved such status.

While better jobs are the principal key to higher incomes, the acquisition of property through various types of businesses provides another avenue to economic advancement. The growth of an entrepreneurial class among Negroes has been exceedingly slow, not only because most Negro businessmen were forced to limit their dealings to the poverty-stricken Negro community, but also because they did not have access to the supports available to many of their competitors in the form of credit, contracts, membership in cooperatives, insurance. Some analysts would add a further dimension—the lack of an entrepreneurial tradition among Negroes.

The explanation of the past is less important than the prospects for the future: One consequence of the Negro community's growing economic well-being is the broadening and deepening of the Negro market for goods and services. While without broad business experience, acumen, and connections it is not easy to realize the full or even the predominant advantages of this increasingly important market, there are signs that many Negroes are looking to business, both within the ghetto and outside, as a way of earning a good livelihood. And there are signs that many corporations and governmental agencies are increasingly responsive to the importuning of the Negro leadership to assist the growth of Negro businesses. Once again the data from the past may fail to reflect correctly what lies ahead.

No attempt has been made in this section to establish a set of categories within which to study the problem of Negro mobility. Instead we called attention to the strategic factors that in our opinion will condition the rate at which more and more Negroes will be able to advance up the social and economic scale and achieve middle class status. We have stressed the fact that the subject of Negro mobility has taken on significance since the end of World War II and this in turn has led us to stress the dangers and the pitfalls of becoming mired in the data derived from past experience. While no social analysis can be informed without looking at history, a preoccupation with the past in a period of rapid change can prove disastrous.

The more rapidly the environment is changing, the more it becomes incumbent on the research investigator to be sensitive to the new.

We have pointed out that it is almost impossible to draw hard and fast lines to bound the middle class in American society. Families may qualify with regard to one or more criteria and fail on other counts. The absence of a consensus about the characteristics of people who fall outside of the middle class either because they have less desirable social and economic characteristics or because they belong to an intellectual, social, or economic elite makes the delineation of the middle class even more difficult. In the face of these difficulties, we will set forth the criteria which we will employ in this paper.

(a) *Income:* All families with income above the average for the population as a whole.

(b) *Occupation:* All individuals who are in professional, technical, managerial, proprietary, clerical, and sales occupations, i.e., the white-collar occupations.

(c) *Education:* All individuals who have graduated from high school, which is the generally accepted minimum education for white-collar employment.

Using these criteria, we can obtain suggestive evidence as to the size of the middle class among the Negro population.

In 1963, as Table 1 shows, nearly 6 percent of all nonwhite families had an income of $10,000 or more. An estimated 16 percent more had more than the median income for all white and nonwhite families ($6,249). We can say that these families had attained a good to marginal middle income status. Another 21 percent earned less than the average, but over $4,000 per year. Many children in these families have a fairly good chance to achieve middle class status later in life especially if they complete high school and junior or senior college.

An additional 14 percent of nonwhite families were between $4,000 and $3,000—or poverty level. Of these, only an occasional child is likely to obtain the type of schooling and other developmental experiences and exposures that will put him on the path of achieving middle class status. And of the 43 percent of the nonwhite families whose income was below the poverty level, the likelihood of any child's making the transition is small.

	All Families	White	Nonwhite [1]
$10,000 and above	19.9	21.5	5.7
$7,000 to $9,999	22.5	23.8	10.8
$6,000 to $6,999	10.2	10.5	7.3
$4,000 to $5,999	20.1	20.1	19.6
$3,000 to $3,999	8.7	8.2	13.5
Under $3,000	18.5	15.9	43.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Median income	$6,249	$6,548	$3,465

[1] Most census data are in terms of nonwhite rather than Negroes. However, since Negroes account for about 92 percent of all nonwhites, we are using the terms interchangeably in this analysis.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

TABLE 1.—Percentage Distribution of White and Nonwhite Families, by Income, 1963

One additional dimension of the income criterion warrants exploration. A family which achieves middle or upper income status on the basis of income from a single job should be distinguished from one in which it is attained by virtue of multiple jobs or multiple income-earners. In 1963, for instance, in 75 percent of the nonwhite families with incomes of $7,000 and over, the wives had worked, but this was so in only 51 percent of white families. Indeed, 38 percent of all nonwhite wives who worked were employed full-time, compared to 23 percent of the white wives.

Table 2 presents occupational data. It shows that 17 percent of all Negro men employed and 26 percent of all Negro women employed were in white-collar or middle class occupations in 1966. This represents a substantial advance over 1940, when the respective figures were 6 and 7 percent. For the employed white population, 41 percent of the men and 62 percent of the women were in white-collar occupations in 1966.

With regard to our education criterion, Table 3 reveals that in 1966 about 30 percent of nonwhite males and families qualified for status in the middle class—a doubling of the proportion in 1950. However, the proportion of nonwhites in 1966 who qualified was still only slightly more than half that of the white population.

We find that today at least one-sixth and possibly one-fourth of the nonwhite population can be classi-

Occupational Group	White		Nonwhite	
	1940	1966	1940	1966
Males, total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
White-collar workers	30.3	40.8	5.6	17.1
Professional, technical, and kindred workers	5.9	13.0	1.9	5.4
Managers, officials, and proprietors, except farm	10.6	14.1	1.6	3.8
Clerical and kindred workers	7.1	7.1	1.2	6.2
Sales workers	6.7	6.5	.9	1.6
Other workers	69.7	59.2	94.4	82.9
Females, total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
White-collar workers	51.2	62.2	6.7	25.7
Professional, technical, and kindred workers	14.3	14.4	4.3	8.3
Managers, officials, and proprietors, except farm	4.3	4.9	.8	1.5
Clerical and kindred workers	24.6	34.9	1.0	13.7
Sales workers	8.0	8.0	.6	2.2
Other workers	48.8	37.8	93.3	74.3

Note.—1966 estimates are not completely comparable with 1940.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

TABLE 2.—Percent Distribution of Employed Persons by Occupational Group, Race, and Sex, April 1940 and April 1966

	Male		Female	
	White	Nonwhite	White	Nonwhite
	1966			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
College:				
4 years or more	13.3	5.0	7.7	4.4
1 to 3 years	9.2	5.3	9.4	5.4
High school: 4 years	28.8	17.4	35.9	21.2
Less than 4 years of high school	48.7	71.3	47.0	69.0
	1950			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
College:				
4 years or more	7.9	2.1	5.4	2.4
1 to 3 years	7.4	2.9	8.2	3.1
High school: 4 years	19.3	7.6	24.6	9.2
Less than 4 years of high school	65.4	77.4	61.8	85.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

TABLE 3.—Percent Distribution of Persons 25 Years Old and Older by Years of School Completed, 1950 and 1966

fied as middle class or above. An approximately equal number are so situated that they may well be able to achieve middle class status in the decade ahead. Such a projection fits the data presented so far: the relative proportion of the nonwhite population who meet our definition of middle class has approximately doubled every 10 years: from 1 in 16 in 1940 to 1 in 8 in 1950 to 1 in 4 in the 1960's.

These are national data. The proportion of Negroes who have achieved middle class status varies considerably among regions, states, metropolitan areas, and even among neighborhoods within large urban complexes. In 1964, for instance, nearly one-third of the nonwhite families in the northeast and north-central regions had more than the national median income. At the two extremes were the West, with over 40 percent, and the South, with less than 15 percent of nonwhite families with incomes above the national median. These and other variations should be further explored, particularly with an eye on uncovering the factors which facilitate or retard the mobility of Negroes.

Other investigators might use additional or different criteria for assessing middle class status such as attitude, expectations, family structure, social behavior, and church and organizational membership. These might result in larger or smaller estimates of the size of the Negro middle class. Still other investigators might prefer to define the Negro middle class as those who occupy a middle position within the Negro community itself. For some purposes, such as assessing the cohesion and the conflict among Negro groups, such an approach might prove useful and instructive. For the present purpose, however, it seems best to use essentially the same standards for both the white and nonwhite population. This will enable us to be responsive to the extent to which the goal of equality is being attained.

More understanding of the progress which the Negro has made as well as of the barriers which still confront him could be obtained by determining how many Negroes enjoy middle class status on all three counts: income, occupation, and education. It would also be instructive to shred out the remainder into those who qualify on two counts and those who qualify on only one count. Some of these data for whites and nonwhites have already been worked out, at least in part, in reports relating occupation to education, income distribution within occupations, and income distribution within educational classifications. If these were further classified by age, trends would be clarified. Such data would also point up areas for further research, particularly into basic difficulties in the way of Negroes' attaining full middle class status.

A WIDENING GAP—NEGROES AND WHITES?

The continuing and extremely rapid growth in the social and economic well-being of the large majority of the American population, however welcome in general, has been a source of anxiety for members of minority groups and those concerned with their progress. Some fear that there has been a widening gap between the white majority and the Negro minority. They surmise that instead of a movement toward equality, recent developments may be resulting in a bifurcation of American society.

There has been a second realm of anxiety, which may be a contradiction of the first. Some believe that because of the rapid growth of a Negro middle class, a bifurcation is occurring within the Negro community, with the Negro middle class increasingly separated in occupation, income, status, and outlook from the vast majority of Negroes.

While some discussions of "gaps" have been couched in more general terms of social attitudes and outlook, the major analyses have been in terms of occupation and income, which are more susceptible to objective analysis.

A variety of statistical techniques has been used or can be used in measuring the gap between whites and Negroes and assessing whether it is narrowing or widening. These include:

(a) Changes over time in absolute differentials between the white and Negro populations.

(1) *Occupation:* For instance, in 1910 the average white male worker was in a semi-skilled occupation, while the average Negro male was a farm worker. In 1966, the average Negro male was a laborer, while the average white male was a skilled worker. Whether this represents an increasing or decreasing gap cannot be readily determined because of the weaknesses of our occupational scale.

(2) *Income:* The analysis can be formulated somewhat more objectively if income measures are used. In 1947, for instance, the median income of white families was $3,157 and that of nonwhite families was $1,614 with a differential of $1,543. In 1963, the median income of white families was $6,548 and of nonwhite families $3,465, with a differential of $3,083. Even when adjusted for changes in the purchasing power of money, the absolute differential increased by $706.

(3) *Education:* Between 1940 and 1960 the median number of years of school completed by whites increased from 8.7 to 10.9 years, while that for nonwhites increased from 5.8 to 8.2 years. Thus the differential narrowed slightly from 2.9 to 2.7 years.

(b) Changes over time in terms of indices of relative position.

(1) *Relative occupational position:* An index which takes account of the changing occupational distribution but not of changes in earnings in these fields shows that the occupational position of Negro men relative to that of white men increased from 81.4 to 82.1 between 1950 and 1960, indicating a modest narrowing in the differential.

(2) *Relative income position:* The above 1947 and 1963 income data indicate that the median income of nonwhite families was 51 percent of that of white families in 1947 and 53 percent in 1963, again pointing to a modest narrowing of differentials.

(c) Number of years between the dates at which the white population reached successively higher goals on particular scales and the dates at which the Negro population reached these same goals.

(1) Average level of income, adjusted for changes in purchasing power.

(2) Average occupational level.

(3) Average level of education completed.

(4) Percent above a stipulated income level, adjusted for changes in purchasing power.

(5) Percent in particular occupational categories, such as:

a) Nonfarm employment

b) White-collar employment

c) Professional and managerial employment

(6) Percent completing a selected level of education.

Each of the foregoing approaches has a contribution to make toward the assessment of whether the gap between Negroes and whites has been widening or narrowing. But for the reasons outlined below each of these approaches contains limitations, some more serious than others. At a minimum, we should be aware of the major limitations before making sweeping conclusions about such a basic problem.

(a) A major shortcoming of the foregoing types of comparisons is that statistical measures have not been full explored. As an example, an index of relative occupational position is composed by considering only those who are employed or who are in the labor force. Thus, if trends in the economy and technology lead to a reduction of unskilled jobs and many Negroes withdraw from the labor force for lack of opportunities for work, the consequent rise in the relative occupational position of the Negro labor force masks the fact that their employment status has in fact worsened. Similarly, the significance of comparisons based on the median number of school years completed needs to be interpreted in light of the fact that although two groups have about the same median, i.e., high school graduation, the comparative numbers at this level, as well as above and below the median, may differ significantly.

(b) A second shortcoming reflects the fact that most comparisons are based on national norms. The comparisons of trends that have been worked out for regions or States, such as for relative occupational or income positions, have shown, for instance, that within a particular area the position of Negroes may consistently worsen while their national position is enhanced, presumably because of migration. In migrating from southern areas where they hold an average position to a northern region where their relative position is poor, Negroes may actually better themselves. At the same time, however, this migration may cause the positions of Negroes in both South and North to decline. Such complex interactions remain to be investigated.

(c) A third limitation of most comparisons is that they do not reveal the basic factors which underlie the trends. For instance, one can analyze trends in income gaps to determine whether they reflect changes in occupational patterns, in age distribution, in educational levels, in discriminatory practices, or still other potent factors. So far, this kind of disaggregation has not been attempted; the literature for the most part is scanty and superficial.

(d) A source of fundamental weakness is the inadequacy of the basic data both as to coverage and depth. In fact, this weakness is a direct cause of the limitations outlined above. A few examples of weaknesses in the data follow:

(1) The percentage of nonresponse for many questions has been consistently higher among those who are poorly educated, with low incomes, and low occupational status. For these and other reasons, even basic facts about the Negro population are far from complete. This lack of data results to an unknown extent in inaccurate averages.

(2) The percentage of nonresponse has varied greatly from time to time. Thus, successive sets of data may be faulty, in different degree, and may obscure actual changes in conditions. Even the directions of the changes may not be clear. Although survey techniques have improved over the years, the 1960 census clearly had poorer quality than the 1950 census.

(3) Many samples have been so small that many white-nonwhite comparisons are not reliable. Only the most general national and regional comparisons can have reasonable validity, and even these fluctuate considerably from one report to the next. For instance, the ratio of median income of nonwhite families to that of white families changes greatly from year to year, often without apparent reason.

The foregoing discussion indicates that both the quantity and quality of census data are inadequate, particularly when they are used to support an investigation of such a subtle matter as changes in relative position of various groups within the population. To illustrate: The monthly survey of the labor force covers 35,000 households, of which approximately 3,500 are Negro. Such a survey yields relatively few statistics according to race.

The concept of a gap implies that there is a substantial difference between the Negro and white populations. This is implicit in most of the comparisons discussed above—between the means, medians, or other specific points in the distribution of the white and Negro populations. However, instead of being at two distinct levels, the distributions of the two populations in terms of income, occupation, education, or otherwise, overlap substantially over a broad range. As far as we know, no analyst has yet developed a statistical measure to summarize the degree of overlap. Such a statistic might be called a measure of integration. It is badly needed for then we could begin to answer whether there has been a trend toward more or less integration in income, educational levels, occupations, or other criteria.

A WIDENING GAP—LOWER AND MIDDLE CLASS NEGROES?

The possibility that there is a widening gap between different groups within the Negro population has not been effectively studied. E. Franklin Frazier, in his *Black Bourgeoisie,* stipulated a substantive gap. He argued that the Negro middle class is largely unconcerned with the Negro lower class and seeks to insulate itself from the lower class. Among other ways, upper class Negroes attempt to have their sons and daughters intermarry which facilitates their inheriting and solidifying their parents' position.

It is difficult to conceptualize a gap between lower and middle class Negroes because it is not easy to divide Negroes into two distinct groups. Such a sharp dichotomy is not realistic, for within the Negro population there is a spectrum of families who approach the indices we have used here to denote class: income, occupation, and education. There are no definite lines which separate the middle class from others. The concept of a widening gap, therefore, cannot be examined by comparing trends in the absolute and relative differences in the two groups.

There are two ways in which the concept of a gap can be formulated:

(a) The development of a bifurcation between a large group whose circumstances are poor in terms of occupation, income, and education, and who remain in essentially the same position or even deteriorate, and those who start from a somewhat better position and continue to advance. In effect this assumes that those in the lowest rank remain in the lowest rank, while those in a somewhat better position achieve increasingly better positions; the relative number of those in a "somewhat better position" declines as those in an "increasingly better position" grows.

(b) A somewhat less sharp formulation would hold that, although a continuum without sharp breaks in the distribution prevails, the degree of inequality may increase as a relatively small number at the top receives an increasing share of the group's total rewards.

Some analyses of the question of whether incomes are becoming more equally distributed within the Negro community have been conducted, but to our knowledge no comparable study has been attempted to assess changes in the equality of Negroes' education, occupational opportunity, and other attributes of status.

In the matter of income distribution, Andrew F. Brimmer has reported: "A particularly distressing trend is evident in the distribution of income within the Negro community: the middle and upper income groups are getting richer, while the lowest income group is getting poorer." Assessment of his data, which divide all nonwhite families into five income groups of equal numbers, reveals that:

(a) The position of the lowest income group was not enhanced as much as that of the average Negro family during the period 1947 to 1960. The poorest 40 percent of the families received 15 percent of the total income of all Negroes in 1947, and only 13.5 percent in 1960. These families earned $2,750 or less in 1960.

(b) The major gains in relative position were made by the next 40 percent of the families. They received 39 percent of the total income of Negro families in 1947 and 42 percent in 1960. However, the 1960 incomes of these famiiles ranged from between $2,750 and $6,500. This wide range includes the middle and upper middle income groups within the nonwhite population, but nearly all of these families had less than the median income of white families.

(c) The upper fifth of the nonwhite families who represent nearly all families which would be designated middle and upper class by our criteria earned 46 percent of total nonwhite income in 1947 and 45 percent in 1960.

These data show that the Negro middle class—as distinct from those in the middle of the Negro income distribution—has, if anything, fallen behind. However, there has been little change in the income distribution within the Negro community. The changes are of the order of one or two percent and are insignificant; they may even reflect inaccuracy in statistical reporting.

A sharpened bifurcation or increased inequality within the Negro community may be the fact, but the

data to support this thesis have not yet been developed. From the statistics at hand, it would be possible to construct indices of education received, or educational expenditures per student, and of occupational attainment and to assess whether these signs of social progress are being equally distributed within the Negro population. It has been said that a Negro youngster who does well in school today, rather than being discriminated against, is sought after by colleges and offered scholarships, fellowships, and other types of support. Similarly, there are some Negroes who succeed in obtaining jobs at the bottom of executive rungs of government or business and who will progress on the ladder.

It may well be that a minority of Negroes are in a good position to advance while many others remain in a very poor competitive position with the consequence of a growing gap between the two. But the problem is more complicated. Many, if not most, middle class Negroes live in a neighborhood with those much lower on the income scale. The relations among the more affluent and the more deprived members in the Negro community cannot always be easily distinguished. This is underscored by the language of Harlem where the terms Black Men, Negroes, and Muslims carry a host of distinctive connotations. There may be a widening gap among Negroes but its characteristics and dimensions remain to be investigated.

DATA COLLECTION

We have drawn certain tentative conclusions about Negro mobility on the basis of existing data. But our most important finding is the inadequacy in the quality and quantity of the available data for definitive judgments about this complex aspect of race relations.

Data collection in a democracy, particularly by agencies of government, is inevitably conditioned by concerns with public policy. The simple fact is that until recently the American public had very little interest in the Negro, and even less about the rate of his progress up the economic and social ladder. As a consequence government agencies collected little information that would help to illuminate this problem.

Moreover collection of data about Negroes during the last 15 years has been made vastly more difficult by the frequent insistence of Negro leaders and others that designations of race be interdicted since they had been used for so long to further discrimination. However, without reliable information about how Negroes fared in the past and are faring now, it is almost impossible to reach valid judgments about their progress.

The major source of national data has been the decennial census; however, the full results of each census are not published until 3 to 5 years after the data have been collected. Several critical studies of Negro mobility, which have used the 1960 census, have not yet been published. This means that the lessons learned, at least as they relate to the collection of data, cannot be incorporated into the 1970 census.

We have noted that studies of the Negro minority were handicapped by the absence of refined information and by the inadequacy of most sample studies. The more rapid the changes of the environment within which the minority lives and works, the greater is the need for more and better data to probe their meaning and to estimate their portent for the future.

A first conclusion, therefore, is the need for a substantial improvement in data collection, particularly by the Federal Government, with regard to such fundamentals as the quantity and quality of the education that Negro children and young people are receiving; the jobs for which Negroes are being hired and the promotions which they receive; the incomes which individuals and families are able to earn; and their spending patterns with special reference to the location and quality of the housing which they are able to buy or rent.

We will take each of these in turn. We know from the detailed analyses of James Coleman and Bernard Karpinos, among others, of the wide gaps between years of schooling completed and educational competence. (See Table 4.) A significant proportion of Negro high school graduates and a minority of those with some college were unable to pass the Armed Forces Qualification Test for acceptance into military service. Until recently the passing mark on this test was the equivalent of an eighth grade education.

While the formal trappings of an education in the form of diplomas and degrees are important for easing

TABLE 4.—Percent of Male Youths in Mental Qualification and Educational Attainment Groups, By Race, 1960

Years of school completed	Mental Qualification Percentile Score					
	100–93	92–65	64–31	30–10	9–0	Total
	White					
None		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.6
Elementary school:						
1–4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.0	1.3
5–6	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.9	1.0	2.0
7–8	0.0	0.4	2.4	4.3	1.4	8.6
High school:						
1–2	0.2	1.9	6.3	5.0	0.8	14.2
3–4	3.6	15.4	22.4	6.4	0.3	48.1
College:						
1–2	4.4	9.3	6.3	0.7	0.0	20.7
3–4	1.5	2.0	.9	0.1	0.0	4.5
5 or more	0.0	0.0	0.0			0.1
Total	9.8	29.0	38.6	17.7	4.9	100.0
	Negro					
None				0.1	0.9	1.0
Elementary school:						
1–4			0.1	0.4	4.6	5.0
5–6			0.1	1.2	5.6	6.9
7–8			0.8	5.5	8.9	15.2
High school:						
1–2		0.2	3.0	11.6	7.7	22.5
3–4	0.2	2.0	14.8	20.1	3.1	40.2
College:						
1–2	0.2	1.3	4.2	2.2	0.0	7.8
3–4	0.1	0.3	0.8	0.3		1.4
5 or more		0.0	0.0			0.0
Total	0.4	3.9	23.7	41.2	30.8	100.0

Source: Karpinos, Bernard D., "The Mental Qualification of American Youths for Military Service and its Relationship to Educational Attainment," 1966 Social Statistics Section, Proceedings of the American Statistical Association, p. 106.

a person's occupational and income mobility, most employers are also concerned with what lies back of the certificate. Any monitoring of Negro progress would have to include measures of educational attainment that go beyond grade completion and at this time no provision exists for the systematic recurrent collection of such data. We hope that the Congress will look with favor on providing funds for the replication of James Coleman's survey (*Equality of Educational Opportunity*) for the U.S. Office of Education on the quality of education or some modification of it at intervals long enough to take account of changes in the institutional structures affecting the quality of education provided for disadvantaged children. However, these intervals should not be so long that the public will remain in ignorance as to whether various governmental and nongovernmental efforts are making a significant impact. At a minimum, the rich body of data bearing on educational exposure and achievement collected by the Armed Forces Induction Stations and by other agencies of the Department of Defense should be subjected to the same type of searching analysis provided by Dr. Karpinos.

We also hope that the U.S. Office of Education will be encouraged to explore with the Departments of Education of the several States how they might set up and systematically analyze the educational competence of various groups of students. Since education represents such an important key to Negro mobility, the country can ill afford to remain in ignorance about the progress that Negroes are making through the school system. If in the future, as in the past, large numbers of them fail to benefit significantly from the education to which they are exposed, remedial programs must be instituted. It will not be possible for any large number of Negroes to advance unless they first become reasonably educated.

The data on employment are considerably better since the Federal Government collects periodically sample information on employment and occupation by race. Moreover these materials can be illuminated by relating them to the average earnings of all workers. While finer breaks would be desirable, particularly those which would permit an analysis of the experiences of Negroes belonging to different age groups, information about employment is better in quantity and quality than about any other critical aspect of Negro mobility.

A vast accumulation of data is rapidly becoming available as a result of the reports required by law to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Again, we hope that adequate appropriations will be made available to the EEOC so that it can improve the statistical reporting systems, speed the analysis of the data, and publish the findings for the use of interested persons and organizations. There is no question that the annual reports of the EEOC will provide one of the best measures of Negro mobility.

There are two aspects of income. One has already been alluded to in the discussion of occupational status: that is, what a man can earn under varying conditions of employment (full-time and other) in different fields. And men are the principal income earners in most families, surely most middle class families and those aspiring to become middle class. However, although the Federal Government collects and publishes annually considerable information about family income, more information would be desirable about the employment of all members of the family whose earnings contribute to the total. For instance, during the past decade there has been a steady rise in the number and proportion of Negro families which have an annual income of $10,000 or more. It would be desirable to know more about the occupation of the principal wage earner in these families; whether some of his income represents reward for activities other than formal employment; and the number of persons contributing to the higher family incomes. Much of this is now clouded. If it were illuminated we would be able to understand more about Negro mobility.

From certain periodic studies we know that the spending patterns of Negroes differ from those of the white majority in the same income bracket. But we need to know much more about these differences, particularly those facing Negroes who seek improved housing inside and outside the ghetto. Basic to economic and social mobility is the possibility of relocation from poorer to better neighborhoods as families earn more income and as they seek to improve their standard of living. But constraints on Negroes have been maximum in restricting their freedom as to where to buy or rent housing.

The census collects information about housing by race which permits gross insights and comparisons. But it tells us very little except by indirection about the extent to which discrimination in housing has influenced and continues to influence the ability of Negroes to become economically and socially mobile. We need vastly improved information about the movement of Negroes from one area to another within the larger cities, from the central city to the suburbs, and about their location and relocation within suburban areas.

Major efforts are required to improve data collection. Many weaknesses were revealed in the collection

of information about housing in the 1960 census which should be remedied in the census for 1970. But even good figures once a decade are grossly inadequate. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in connection with its several planning and urban renewal programs, should start survey and reporting systems that would yield periodic information—at least on a triennium basis—about the extent to which Negroes are escaping from the ghetto and at the same time collect information about the quantity and quality of housing within the ghetto.

In addition, understanding of the forces which facilitate and retard Negro mobility has been limited by the paucity of specialized studies, particularly studies relating to the three principal areas of education, employment, and income. It is only through more sharply focused studies that we will be able to learn more about the strategic factors and the way in which they tend to increase or limit the number of Negroes who are able to achieve middle class status.

We set out below a series of suggestive studies and investigations which might add substantially to our knowledge both of the dynamics of Negro mobility and of the policies and programs that could be initiated or strengthened to expand the numbers who would be able to move up the ladder.

EDUCATION AND MOBILITY

In the educational field it would be desirable to study systematically the several groups of Negro scholarship and fellowship winners, particularly those who are studying or have studied at strong colleges and universities. It would be important to learn more about their families, the schools they attended, and other facts about their background and development. We need to know about the factors that enabled a group of Negroes from low-income homes to take several giant steps ahead in their educational preparation for work and life.

Such a study, however, should do more than look backward. It should also seek information about the college and postcollege experiences of this group. Did they in fact do well in college and in their graduate studies? Did they select occupations that would assure them prestigious work and income? Have they been successful during at least the early years of their careers?

What about those who won scholarships but fell by the wayside, either in college or later on? Can factors contributing to success or failure along the educational route be differentiated and evaluated? What types of supportive services might be introduced or strengthened that could reduce these losses? Several experimental groups could be investigated: past winners; present incumbents; and if a large-scale ambitious project were undertaken, future winners could be followed up over a period of years.

The same approach could be applied to other groups, such as the top 1, 5, or 10 percent of the Negro graduates of high schools. Efforts could also be made: (1) to study records of alumni who stood at the top of their class; (2) focus on recent graduates who would be easier to identify; or (3) set up a more elaborate project for following a group of future high school graduates.

Another type of investigation to explore the interrelations between education and Negro mobility might locate Negro students, at varying stages of their development, who have transferred from less well staffed and equipped, segregated and quasi-segregated schools into stronger institutions with predominantly white students and stronger faculty and curricula. It would be possible to learn from such studies the significance of the educational environment on the aspirations and achievements of various groups of Negro students. Kenneth B. Clark, among others, has sought to explore this problem with regard to a group of Negro students attending integrated northern colleges. However, the design and carrying out of this type of investigation is difficult because so many factors other than the quality of the institution affect student performance.

One of the major errors that is continually committed by all who deal with minority problems, sympathetically or critically, is to develop blanket judgments about large numbers of people and institutions. One such judgment relates to the poor quality of ghetto schools and the ways in which all who attend them are likely to be seriously, if not permanently, handicapped. It would be well to explore whether such a blanket indictment can be sustained or whether in fact there are ghetto schools that have succeeded in graduating a reasonable number of young people who are well prepared to move up the educational ladder. If such schools can be identified, their structure and operation should be studied to learn wherein they differ from the many other schools with much the same student body and resources which fail to perform at a comparable level. The object of such an inquiry would be not only to delineate the sources of strength leading to superior performance, but to see how they might be transferred to the weaker institutions. It has been stated before, but we stress again that failure on the part of the educational system to develop Negro potential can prove a major drag on Negro mobility.

At the present time more than half of all Negroes who attend college are enrolled in segregated colleges in the south. Those Negro colleges cater to the overwhelming proportion of southern Negroes in search of a higher education and they also attract a considerable number of northern Negroes. While there have been a few studies dealing with the Negro college, particularly that of Earl McGrath, there are no comprehensive studies of the graduates of these southern institu-

tions. Do they make a place for themselves in competitive America? Do most of them achieve middle class status?

While few, if any, of these colleges have good alumni records, it should be possible to design and carry out at least sample studies of recent groups of graduates from selected stronger institutions which could provide some important insights into the linkages between the education which their graduates received and their later occupational development.

Because of the high proportion of college students who interrupt their course of study or who do not acquire a degree, it would be desirable to elicit the cooperation of a group of Negro colleges which would participate in a longitudinal study of a sample, or the whole, of one or more freshman classes so that, within a few years, much more information would be available about this important facet of Negro education which is so closely linked to Negro mobility.

It would also be desirable to undertake similar studies of selected groups of Negro students in northern institutions. However, such undertakings would be more difficult to plan and follow through although the obstacles are by no means insuperable. The juxtaposition of three major State educational complexes in Michigan in an area with a substantial Negro population—the University of Michigan, Wayne State, and Michigan State—suggests one locale for a northern study.

Another type of investigation related to education but not confined to it would be a study of the guidance that Negro students receive at varying stages of their development about their educational and occupational opportunities. Until very recently, the barriers to the entry of Negroes into many professional occupations were so great that few ventured and fewer succeeded. Educated Negroes kept on a few well-trodden paths: teaching, ministry, medicine. However, within the past decade there has literally been a revolution in the opportunities for qualified Negroes to obtain specialized education and training and employment in a great many fields formerly closed to them.

The question that arises and about which we know little is the extent to which the reality of these new opportunities has permeated throughout the Negro community and whether they actually affect the planning and actions of large numbers of Negro youth. As our recently completed study on *The Middle Class Negro in a White Man's World* indicates, the revolution in opportunity has unquestionably affected some, probably many, Negro youth. But there is disquieting information in our study and in others which implies that much more needs to be done to help young Negroes translate the meaning of these new opportunities into constructive plans for their future. It would be possible to mount a large-scale investigation of the educational and occupational planning of different groups of Negroes at different levels of development in different regions of the country to determine their awareness of the new realities and to assess the extent to which they are acting to take advantage of them. Such an investigation, properly structured and carried out, would help pinpoint the major deficiencies in guidance and would also prove suggestive as to remedial actions.

Whether or not individuals are able to rise one or two rungs on the economic and social ladder reflects not only their initial opportunities but also whether, if they fail, they have a second chance. For this reason it would be desirable to study groups of Negroes who have availed themselves of GI benefits and have returned to school or specialized training; this study would permit us to learn how many of this group as a result of this second chance obtained good jobs at good pay. It would be desirable to design the study so that it contains at least two groups: individuals who did not take advantage of their veterans' benefits, and those who made partial or full use of them. Such a study might seek to assess the differences between those who took advantage of their benefits and those who did not and the career consequences for those who took advantage of a second chance.

In cities with heavy Negro concentration it might be possible to undertake a parallel type of study focused on individuals who avail themselves of evening college courses in contrast to others who are qualified but do not take these courses. Once again the effort should be focused on determining whether individuals who had fallen off the educational or training track were able, when they had a second chance, to reach a higher rung on the occupational ladder, one that would help them move from a lower into a middle income level.

Studies of mobility, while concentrating generally on the movement of individuals from a lower to higher level, should not ignore the reverse movement. It is a matter of considerable importance whether the children of those who acquire middle class status are able to maintain it. This means that we need investigations that are focused on the relations between generations. Some time ago, the census published a small study of the educational attainment of children whose fathers had attended or graduated from high school and college. Negroes whose fathers were college graduates were much less likely to be college graduates themselves than were whites. Such generational-type studies

should be undertaken not once, but periodically to determine the pattern if any, not only among Negroes compared with whites, but also between Negro men and women as well as among Negroes of different age groups.

A quite different type of investigation bearing on the relation of educational opportunity to mobility would be a study of two or more groups of Negro youngsters from families just below the middle class who attended primary and secondary schools at which governmental expenditures per child vary substantially, as they do among certain Southern States or between selected southern and northern cities, and to estimate the proportions who were accepted by better colleges, a dummy index of their later entrance into the middle class. If test scores on college entrance examinations made by these students could be obtained, the findings relating to educational attainment could be refined.

The foregoing are indicative of the range of studies that should be initiated and carried out by various individuals or groups, from the alumni office of a Negro college to the Federal Government, for a deeper understanding of the relations which exist between educational opportunity and later mobility. As understanding of these relations is developed, better policy can be established and implemented to broaden the opportunities for more young Negroes to obtain the type of education and training that will enable them eventually to gain middle class status. High educational attainment cannot guarantee it, but it can surely go a long way toward making it possible.

EMPLOYMENT AND MOBILITY

Whether or not Negroes achieve middle class status depends finally more on the jobs they get than on any other single factor. This leads us to the importance of learning more about Negroes with higher occupational status and the sectors of the economy within which they have progressed.

A first investigation might be to study in detail the specific occupational areas which Negroes have succeeded in entering where they are able to earn incomes that underwrite their middle class status. Such a study should be concerned not only with increasing our understanding of the specific fields that currently provide the occupational precondition for middle class life but should also assess the changes that have been occurring in the relative growth of these fields. Moreover, it would be important in these as in many other similar investigations, to draw parallels and differences between Negroes and whites, and between Negro men and women. Such further comparisons should yield important additional insight into the processes of Negro mobility.

The large-scale collection of information by occupational level and by establishment which underlies the reporting system of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission provides an unique resource for learning more about Negroes who succeed in rising to professional and managerial positions. Efforts directed at learning more about the characteristics of industries and companies in which large numbers of Negroes have risen to high level jobs should be included in the early exploitation of these data.

The EEOC reports can be analyzed along many different axes: by type of industries, by ownership of companies, by size of establishment, by location, and other important variables. Moreover, the fact that the EEOC receives detailed reports annually from a broad sector of American enterprise means that the base now exists, or will soon exist, for studying changes in Negro employment, including the numbers entering middle class occupations, over short as well as long time intervals.

We know from earlier studies that opportunities for Negroes in Government employment have enabled large numbers of them to achieve professional or managerial status. It is important for the U.S. Civil Service Commission to improve and refine its collection of occupational information by race and sex so that this important avenue for Negro advancement can be kept under careful study. Information about the occupational distribution of Negroes in Federal employment should be periodically collected and the results should be tabulated and published so that investigators outside of Government will have an opportunity to analyze significant findings and trends.

Parallel data on the experience of Negro servicemen, both enlisted and officers, should also be periodically collected, tabulated, and released. The Armed Services represent the most desegregated sector of American society and many Negroes have benefited greatly from the opportunities that have been opened to them to advance in the services. Clearly the attainment of officer rank is *prima facie* evidence of a Negro's middle class status. The numbers of Negroes who become officers is an important criterion of their advancement up the economic and social scale. The numbers who become noncommissioned officers, especially in the higher grades, are likewise worthy of attention. Upon retirement these Negroes may be in a preferred position to make a transition into the civilian economy which will assure them the type of job and income that will enable them to become middle class.

Much more difficult to study but from many viewpoints much more important are the trends in the employment of Negroes in State and local governments. These two sectors have been and are likely to continue to be among the fastest growing in the entire economy. The slow but steady increase in the political influence of the Negro minority in many States and cities makes such studies significant; it has long been a hallmark of American life that desirable positions in the government arena are apportioned among constituencies according to their influence and power. It remains to be seen whether this will continue to be the pattern now that the Negroes' political power and in-

fluence are growing. One should watch with particular interest the South where until recently Negroes had almost no opportunity for professional employment except in a few segregated areas such as in teaching.

Although the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights currently has under way a special study of governmental agencies in certain standard metropolitan areas, we need further systematic collection, on a recurrent and more extensive basis, of data relating to the employment of Negroes in State and local government. This task should be assumed by an appropriate Federal agency and the results of periodic comprehensive surveys should be expeditiously published so that students interested in developments in Negro employment and mobility will be able to follow the trends in this important sector of our economy.

The importance of extended coverage of employment trends in State and local governments is further indicated by the need to assess the impact of desegregation in fields which previously provided protected employment for many Negroes, such as the public educational system of the South. There have been some *ad hoc* studies focused on Negro teachers who lost their jobs as a result of desegregation. But the process of desegregation is still in its early stages and its impact extends far beyond education. Moreover, while the negative factors in the situation bear watching, it is important to determine whether and at what speed job opportunities in public employment are being opened up for Negroes in areas previously closed to them. It would indeed be a mockery of the aims of the civil rights movement if desegregation in the South results in a shrinkage of the Negro middle class because whites compete for jobs previously reserved for Negroes, while at the same time it becomes difficult for Negroes to gain access to desirable jobs which are now theoretically open to them.

But the history of race relations, particularly in the South, does not justify neglecting potential alterations in job patterns. It may well be that desegregation, which is now gaining momentum, is the prelude to a substantial increase in the numbers of Negroes who can qualify for and obtain good jobs in State and local governments and thereby improve their economic and social position. However, we cannot make such an optimistic conclusion without adequate data collection and study. In fact one important contribution of such studies would be to alert interested groups about untoward trends that might develop—such as the earlier instance of the discharged teachers—and to indicate the rate at which favorable developments are occurring and the desirability of designing new policies and programs to speed incipient but slow moving changes.

The last dimension of the impact on employment of desegregation is pertinent not only for the arena of local and State government in the South but also for the private economy. Historically, the Negro middle class was based on the dual economy of the ghetto: in various fields Negroes were able to attract a clientele and earn a satisfactory income because there was a demand for their specialized services by other Negroes. This applies to the Negro physician as to the Negro undertaker. But with the walls of segregation coming down, it is important to study two new situations. One is the impact on various professions and enterprises which formerly catered exclusively to Negroes and which were protected from white competition since the whites did not seek this business. We would like to see case studies of cities such as Atlanta and Chicago with substantial Negro populations and with a recognized Negro middle class in order to assess the extent to which established routes to middle class status for Negroes are becoming obliterated by the changes in race relations that are bringing in their wake significant alterations in consumer spending, interracial competition, and employment patterns. The starting point for these studies might be through contact with clubs or other organizations composed of the Negro middle class.

But the other side of the coin and the more important is the changing professional and business practices brought about by a reduction in racial antagonisms and which are enabling more Negro professionals and businessmen to broaden their clientele to include people other than Negroes. Even more important are the developments in the ghetto and outside whereby Negroes are able to establish or expand businesses, including those operated as agencies or by franchises.

These studies might be designed after consultation with banks that operate in the area, or with such government agencies as the Small Business Administration. With regard to professionals, contact might be made through various organizations in which they customarily hold membership.

The thrust of such exploratory studies should be to learn about the conditions and circumstances that enable Negro businessmen to broaden and deepen their operations, and that enable Negro professionals to extend the scope and scale of their practices. In connection with the study of Negro professionals, it would

be important to note, whether and to what extent most of their gains are associated with improvements in the standard of living of the Negroes themselves.

Another approach would be a sharpened focus on selected industries that have been undergoing rapid expansion, such as health services, electronics, and education, and to determine through statistical and case study approaches how Negroes fare with regard to preferred positions in these industries. Although the employment gains of a minority are not directly dependent on their experiences at the frontiers of the economy—see Dale L. Hiestand's *Economic Growth and Employment Opportunities for Minorities*—this experience is connected with the rate at which they are likely to make gains. If they can obtain jobs and advance in the fast growing sectors, their overall rate of progress is more likely to be rapid. Equally important would be findings that indicate that they are poorly represented in the sectors making most rapid progress. We would then have to ask why this is so and whether remedial actions could enable more Negroes to take advantage of the rapid increase in opportunities that are opening up. In this connection such factors as educational qualifications, residence, geographic mobility, patterns of work, and similar factors would have to be delineated and assessed.

A major complaint of many civil rights leaders has been that municipal governments have not given even a modest share of lucrative government contracts to Negroes even when it concerns the building, maintenance, or repair of structures within the ghetto itself. While part of the explanation lies in the fact that Negro businesses are underdeveloped, we must avoid a circular trap. Small Negro contractors may find it difficult to expand because they are unable to obtain these contracts. Studies should be undertaken of the conditions prevailing in a selected number of cities with large Negro populations to assess the general and specific factors that prevent Negroes from bidding successfully on government contracts. It may be that modest adjustments on bonding, methods of payment, and other conditions could add substantially to the growth potential of small Negro businesses. It is difficult to conceive of a continuing rapid expansion of the Negro middle class without an expansion in Negro businesses.

A generational perspective on employment trends should be sought. It would be desirable to identify a group of middle class Negro families in different sized communities in various parts of the country and to trace out the occupational and social status of their children. One dominant reason that so many Americans in every generation have striven to improve their circumstances is to give their children a better start in life. We assume that most children of middle class parents succeed in maintaining or improving on the status of their parents. But we know that some slip back. It would be desirable to study samples of both Negro and white middle class families, which are occupationally matched and to estimate the difference in the job and social levels of their offspring. Such studies would add important new dimensions to our understanding of the dynamics of mobility.

These suggestions for studies of employment in relation to mobility are indicative of the wide range of inquiries that might be undertaken to deepen our understanding of how Negroes are faring in the labor market, and particularly how many of them are succeeding in obtaining preferred employment. It is impossible to design and implement improved public and private policies aimed at broadening opportunities for Negroes without more control over these strategic considerations of Negro employment. The job is the key.

INCOME AND HOUSING

A major reason that the job is the key to social status is the fact that the income a man earns and the standard of living his family enjoys depend on his success in the world of work. But in the case of Negroes, attention must also be directed to where he lives. Unlike other Americans Negroes are usually not able to choose their place of residence. And much follows from this constraint. For instance, the value of the Negro's dollar is reduced when he pays relatively more for rent and the goods that he buys. Another serious consequence following upon their residence is the quality and quantity of public services to which Negroes have access.

Because of our engrained tendency to think of income primarily in terms of private earnings, we tend to overlook that Federal, State, and local taxes provide many families with basic services that greatly condition their present and future circumstances, such as subsidized housing, education, health, and recreational services.

Few, if any, studies have been carried out comparing the *real* standard of living of Negro and white families who have the same incomes in different parts of the country. It would be desirable to undertake some sample studies in communities of different size and in different neighborhoods within the same community from the viewpoint of the benefits that families receive from public services. Whether or not Negro children may eventually enter the middle class may depend, first and foremost, on where the family lives which will greatly influence whether they will be able to secure the type of schooling that will put them on the path.

It is a hallmark of a truly democratic society that people are permitted to spend their income as they see fit, but this is simply not true in the case of Negroes when it comes to the basic factor of housing. Here, discrimination bears heavily. In a great many cities Negroes must find homes in the ghetto. They are unable to buy or rent in areas of their preference. Too little is known about the impact of housing discrimination on Negro mobility but it must be substantial. Living in a ghetto means that the neighborhood influences to which children are exposed, the schools which they attend, the recreational facilities available to them, the friends which they make are all heavily determined by the fact of the ghetto. Studies are needed which trace in as concrete a manner as possible the ramifications of ghetto residence, particularly its effect on the developmental experiences of Negro children whose families have sufficient income to live elsewhere but who are unable to find suitable housing in other areas.

Additional studies, which are more subtle to design and carry out, would relate constriction to the ghetto to the aspirations and behavior of adults and children. One of the dynamic factors in mobility is willingness to strive to earn more so that one can live in better circumstances and can enable his children to live better. What does it imply, therefore, for the values and drive of Negroes when they see little or no prospect of escaping from the oppressive influences of the ghetto? Among the studies which should be undertaken are those directed toward tracing out the differences in the quality of developmental experiences of Negro youth in families with approximately the same level of income, some of whom have escaped from the ghetto and others who have not.

So far we have discussed discrimination in housing primarily from the viewpoint of its unfavorable influence on the developmental opportunities available to Negro children. But its impact cuts deeper. A dominant characteristic of American business and professional life is the necessity facing so many men in managerial and professional functions to relocate themselves and their families as they move or are transferred from one position to another. In fact advancement up the occupational and income ladder within the academic world and in corporate empires is closely linked with geographic mobility. If a company has its branch factories, offices, and laboratories in large metropolitan communities, Negroes can usually locate without undue problems. But a great many branch locations and academic and research institutions are in outlying areas, frequently in towns and small cities in which renting or selling desirable homes to Negroes is interdicted by local tradition. When this is the case, a university cannot make an offer to a Negro teacher or a company

cannot transfer a Negro executive. Under these circumstances Negroes inevitably suffer career retardation.

The young Negro executive has even more of a problem when it comes to various clubs and other voluntary organizations which provide the setting within which important contacts are made, business transacted, and other important linkages with important career implications are established. Since the thrust of this analysis is on Negro mobility—on the opportunities for Negroes to enter into and advance within middle class society—considerations of housing and community contacts loom particularly important.

It is suggested that studies be made of a group of large companies with Negro executives on their staffs to determine the extent to which they have encountered problems in the assignment and reassignment of Negroes as a result of discrimination in housing, particularly with an aim of discovering whether they have evolved any satisfactory way of removing this particular stumbling block. It would also be interesting to review the experience of these companies when they pay the entrance fees of their executives into various business and social organizations and how they have dealt with situations when such organizations have previously not admitted Negroes. In short, the whole panoply of external relations between the corporate executive and his community should be delineated and periodic probings made to learn about the problems encountered and the solutions developed as more Negroes make their way up the managerial ladder.

The same considerations have relevance for studying the prospects of Negro scientists and scholars in seeking to advance in their careers. Here, too, informal contacts play a large role and the social cannot be strongly differentiated from the professional.

Another dimension of this issue of location and the ability of middle class Negroes to obtain decent housing and to be accepted by the community in which they live relates to several conspicuous shifts that are underway. Corporate headquarters are being relocated in outlying areas of metropolitan centers, frequently in suburbs which do not favor renting or selling to Negroes. On the other hand, many State universities that are located in rural areas are developing major urban branches. The question of location in relation to community acceptance of Negroes was considered in the decision of where to locate the atomic accelerator in the Midwest.

It may turn out that one of the more potent factors contributing to opening suburban communities to Negroes is the pressure that will be exerted by managements indicating that their decisions to locate will be determined by communities' receptiveness to all its employees.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

It is a testimony to the resiliency of Negroes that in the face of widespread handicaps and barriers, considerable numbers have been able to become well-educated citizens employed in highly skilled jobs and earning good incomes.

There is no question that during the last quarter-century many of the handicaps and barriers that for so long had blocked the path of Negroes as they sought to improve their economic and social position have been removed. Since the process of lowering the bars of discrimination continues in both the public and the private sector, the only reasonable expectation is that in the normal sequence of events and if the American economy continues to advance and employment remains at a high level, more and more Negroes will succeed in becoming middle class.

However, the fact is that the proportion of Negroes who are middle class is still much smaller than the proportion of whites. Furthermore, an extrapolation of present trends suggests that although this differential may narrow, it is likely to remain substantial for a long time. These two facts give special meaning to the question of whether a strategy can be developed that would help speed the attainment of such status by larger numbers of Negroes. Since more and more white Americans belong to the middle class, it is necessary not only to help Negroes escape from poverty, important as that objective is and will long continue to be, but also to widen the conduits into the middle class for those who are no longer poor.

The quality for which Negroes yearn and the repeated promises that have been made and approved by the Nation's leadership that they will be afforded this opportunity is essentially the opportunity to become like other Americans—members of the middle class. This does not imply that Negroes desire to, or in fact will, live as mirror images of their white neighbors who in turn follow a great many discrete patterns in earning and spending their money. But it does imply that Negroes will have the opportunity to advance up the several ladders of education, employment, income.

The last point to which this analysis is addressed is whether the numbers who advance can be increased and the steps that might contribute to such an end. There is a reciprocal relationship between new knowledge and improved results in the social as in every other arena of human life. If we are concerned with speeding the economic and social mobility of the Negro then we require much more basic information and much more analysis of the principal mechanisms that control the process. We have emphasized the importance of improved data collection, a challenge that is directed in the first instance to the Federal Government. But an equally important challenge has been presented to universities, foundations, business, community organizations as well as to every level of government to explore in depth various facets of the processes of mobility—and this alone can add to our understanding of the leverages for change. Without additional understanding, policy will continue to be hit-or-miss; with additional understanding the directions for action, the selection of targets, the investment of the appropriate resources, all can be improved with corresponding improvement in the result. The shortfall in research capability in the area of race relations should be attacked energetically from many different vantage points; without a substantial expansion in both quantity and quality of research the formulation and implementation of policy will remain handicapped.

The earlier focus on education, employment, and housing suggests the building blocks for an improved strategy. In each of these critically important arenas, government and nongovernmental groups as well as the Negro community itself must seek to identify the barriers that must be removed and the opportunities that must be grasped if the numbers advancing up the scale are to be substantially increased.

With respect to education the number of Negroes who succeed in preparing for preferred occupations is a function of the number who pursue an academic course in high school and who are accepted by and graduate from good or superior colleges. A host of changes are required:

—The graduates of the ghetto elementary and junior high schools must be adequately prepared to pursue an academic course in high school.

—High school students who have the ability to go to college require guidance so that they select and stay on the proper track.

—The rapid expansion of public junior and senior colleges and universities in metropolitan centers with large Negro populations is essential.

—Improved guidance in college is required which will inform Negroes about the new career opportunities open to them and the best ways of preparing for these opportunities.

—The substantial upgrading of Negro colleges which continue to educate and train such a high proportion of all Negroes pursuing higher education must be accomplished.

—An important measure is the establishment and expansion of educational opportunities in larger communities to enable individuals who have interrupted their high school or college courses to reenter the system and have a second chance to acquire a diploma or a degree, or to pursue specialized courses which will assist in their occupational advancement.

—Another is the expansion of public and private programs of student support, particularly at the college and graduate level, so that those without adequate financial resources will not have to devote too much time and energy to earning a living while studying.

Equally important are changes on the *employment* front. Negroes have taken advantage of recent opportunities to enter clerical and professional occupations in the not-for-profit sector of the economy—that is, with governmental agencies and nonprofit institutions. But even here there is much room for improvement especially in the South. But the most important breakthroughs will be in the more prestigious professions, high ranking positions in the corporate world, and in important Negro commercial enterprises. Only with these breakthroughs will the gap between Negro and white begin to narrow substantially. To achieve these ends it is essential that:

—State and local governments substantially increase their hiring and facilitate the promotion of qualified Negroes.

—More educated Negroes seek to enter strong graduate professional programs in science, engineering, business, journalism, architecture; at the same time that more seek to study medicine and law at prestigious schools.

—Government and business continue to remain alert to the overt and covert discrimination that blocks the entrance and advancement of qualified Negroes into many professions and introduce and strengthen programs aimed at removing all such barriers.

—Because of the very small representation of Negroes in the ranks of management, corporations must create and maintain a favorable environment for present and future entrants; at the same time college guidance must be much improved so that many more able young Negroes will be encouraged to undertake the types of education and training which will qualify them for successively better job offers.

With respect to entrepreneurship, Negroes need to be helped to start small businesses so that many of these small businesses will prosper and grow into larger ones. This means that they must have easier access to credit, to premises in preferred neighborhoods, to bidding on contracts, to help from unions as they seek to expand their work force—in the construction, transportation, and other industries where the supply of trained manpower is tightly controlled. This kind of assistance can be facilitated by governmental programs and administrative action; in considerable measure, they require reforms in the policies and programs that have long prevailed in the private and nonprofit sectors of the economy. A substantial expansion of successful Negro entrepreneurship also requires changes in the attitudes and behavior of the public. The white community must be willing to deal with competent Negro businessmen; the Negro businessman must break out of serving only fellow Negroes.

In addition to education and employment, significant changes are called for on the *housing and community* fronts. Among the important changes that demand early action are:

- Further legislative and administrative action by every level of government to facilitate Negroes' gaining full access to all parts of the housing market.
- Support from the community at large and from business interests in particular to speed the accomplishment of this objective.
- Careful design and implementation of all governmental programs aimed at urban renewal, interurban transportation, middle income housing to assure that they contribute to eliminating racial discrimination and segregation.
- Large corporations can exert considerable influence in accomplishing these objectives by insisting that the communities in which they play a

dominant role or in which they contemplate locating provide opportunities for their Negro employees, particularly those in managerial positions, to obtain housing on the same terms as white employees.

- Business, professional, and community leaders should strive to open voluntary organizations to all qualified persons. This is essential if Negro professional and businessmen are not to be permanently handicapped because of their being denied the benefit from the professional help and social contacts that grow out of such membership.

CONCLUSION

This working paper had as its primary objective the raising, not the answering, of important questions. Its major aim has been to focus attention on a critically important facet of contemporary race relations which has been ignored in the public's preoccupation with measures to improve the prospects of the most deprived sector of the Negro population, those living in poverty. Questions about the size of the Negro middle class and the rate at which it has been growing are of critical importance not only because middle class status is the hallmark of full participation in American life, but because the flow of Negroes into the middle class may significantly affect the opportunities open to those lower on the scale. There is at least a presumptive nexus between poor and middle class Negroes just as there is a presumptive nexus between the growth of the Negro middle class and realizing the aims of the Negro revolution for full equality.

The foregoing analyses were devoted to delineating the strategic questions involved in Negro mobility and to suggesting how they might best be answered. But public policy cannot stand suspended while questions are being answered. Action is required while new and better answers are being sought. Hence we ventured to set forth on the basis of existing knowledge a set of strategic considerations which point the direction for corrective action. As the research outlined above is undertaken and completed, clearer directions will emerge as to how progress can be speeded so that more Negroes can participate more fully on a basis of equality with all other citizens.

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