**Chapter 6: African Americans: From Segregation to Modern Institutional Discrimination and Modern Racism**

[Hamlet, J. (1996). Fannie Lou Hamer: The Unquenchable Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement.](http://jbs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/26/5/560?ijkey=b7tEMV8pNqI8E&keytype=ref&siteid=spjbs) *[Journal of Black Studies,](http://jbs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/26/5/560?ijkey=b7tEMV8pNqI8E&keytype=ref&siteid=spjbs)**[26](http://jbs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/26/5/560?ijkey=b7tEMV8pNqI8E&keytype=ref&siteid=spjbs)*[(5), 560-576.](http://jbs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/26/5/560?ijkey=b7tEMV8pNqI8E&keytype=ref&siteid=spjbs)

This article is a brief biography of the life and work of Fannie Lou Hamer – one of the most influential women in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement.

Questions to Consider:

1. As you read this article, think about a few of these questions: How did Hamer become involved in the movement? What inspired her to keep working for equal rights, despite all of the challenges she faced?
2. Were there any similarities or differences between Hamer and King?
3. Why was Hamer's involvement and commitment to civil rights largely unrecognized until her death in 1977?
4. How does Hamer's work continue to impact the current situation for African American women around the country?

[Jones, A. (2006). Race and the "I Have a Dream" Legacy: Exploring Predictors of Positive Civil Rights Attitudes. *Journal of Black Studies,* *37*(2), 193-208.](http://jbs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/37/2/193?ijkey=63vZ.tIF2.wJc&keytype=ref&siteid=spjbs)

In this study, the author looks at the relationship between racial attitudes towards blacks and attitudes towards civil rights.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are some of the other factors that are also related to one's attitude toward civil rights and acceptance of blacks? What are some explanations for negative attitudes toward civil rights and blacks?
2. Also, considering where people in the sample were from, how many people were studied, and how old they were, what are some possible limitations to this study?

[Moore, K. (2008). Class Formations: Competing Forms of Black Middle-Class Identity. *Ethnicities,* *8*(4), 492-517.](http://etn.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/8/4/492?ijkey=ad8xHcT5zObUs&keytype=ref&siteid=spetn)

This article uses the perspective that race and class stratification are interlocking systems, examining the importance of culture in understanding the relationships between a racialized class structure and identity. Thus, the author presents a cogent account of the ways in which class shapes the articulation of black racial identity.

Questions to Consider:

1. Describe the two distinct versions of Black middle-class identity as presented by the author. How does racism shape the structure and meaning of class in the Black community?
2. What does the author mean by ‘black habitus’? What are the specific features of black habitus?
3. What is a qualitative study? What has this author discovered using ethnographic fieldwork that might be masked in a more quantitative methodology?
4. Discuss the author’s and her respondents’ distinctions between “ghetto” and “poor.” How are these concepts related to class position and prospects?

[Eichenlaub, S., Tolnay, S., & Alexander, J. (2010). Moving Out but Not Up: Economic Outcomes in the Great Migration. *American Sociological Review,* *75*(1), 101-125.](http://asr.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/75/1/101?ijkey=hDCFlFxktbOMQ&keytype=ref&siteid=spasr)

Between 1910 and 1970 millions of Black southerners migrated out of the South, intent on garnering better work and life opportunities. This article reviews a study of upward mobility using data from the US Census to compare migrants who left the South with their southern contemporaries who remained. The study found that migrants who left the South did not benefit appreciably in terms of employment status, income, or occupational status. These findings, according to the authors, demand a reconfiguration of the conventional wisdom that suggests migrants, particularly Blacks, found substantial opportunity and prosperity as a result of migration.

Questions to Consider:

1. What were the social, economic, and political factors that caused Southerners to fee the South beginning in the turn of the 20th century? Which of these factors were exclusively experienced by Blacks?
2. What are the four dependent variables selected by the authors to measure the economic and occupational benefit of migration? What are the key independent variable they selected? What other potential variables can you think of that could have been used? What differences in outcomes do you speculate these other variables might have shown?
3. What were the short-term benefits of migration? The long-term benefits?
4. The authors conclude that “raise several questions that can help establish the agenda for future research into this important socio-demographic phenomenon that has had such profound consequences for American society, both South and North” (121). What might some of these questions be?

[Cooke, A. (2011). Black Community, Media, and Intellectual Paranoia-as-Politics. *Journal of Black Studies,* *42*(4), 609-626.](http://jbs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/42/4/609?ijkey=tzlgr2sP33hJs&keytype=ref&siteid=spjbs)

This article begins by discussing a particularly contested moment in Black history: the extreme disparity in federal funding of the Apollo 11 moon launch and federal funding for civil rights issues, citing that “in the early 1960s, despite all the nonviolent protests and other activist measures, nothing in the way of education, employment, living conditions, or law enforcement–community relations altered for Blacks” (611). Looking at literary, psychological, cultural, and scientific/technological perspectives, both historical and contemporary, the author explores the issue of “of the post–civil rights “death” of the utility of appeals for full enfranchisement from the federal government and its subsequent impact on Black community life and cultural production” (610). These events led to the rise of sociocultural paranoia as a cultural and political survival tool among Blacks in America, according to the author.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is ‘agency panic’? How is it related to the kinds of paranoia the author is ascribing to the Black community?
2. What specific conspiracies does the author point to in this article? How compelling do you find those ideas? Does the author adequately explain the root causes of these forms of paranoia?
3. Does this article present any positive possibilities for Black empowerment, through any form – political, social, cultural, or economic?

[Irons, J. (1998). The Shaping of Activist Recruitment and Participation: A Study of Women in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement. *Gender & Society,* *12*(6), 692-709.](http://gas.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/12/6/692?ijkey=nnbRouAxghigg&keytype=ref&siteid=spgas)

This article discusses the ways that gender and race intersected and produced varied experiences in women’s recruitment and participation in the civil rights movement of Mississippi. Using 13 interviews with both African American and white women, the author seeks to illuminate the ways that recruitment and participation were racially structured.

Questions to Consider:

1. What were the 2 primary patterns of recruitment discussed here?
2. Describe the three types of women’s participation that the author distinguishes.
3. Could these patterns be generalized to other locales in the South during the Civil Rights Movement? Could they be generalized to other forms of women’s mobilization, such as the women’s rights movement of the 1970s or the contemporary women’s mobilizations around the issues of pro-choice/pro-life? Why or why not?

[Robinson, G., & Nelson, B. (2008). Pursuing Upward Mobility: African American Professional Women Reflect on their Journey. *Journal of Black Studies,* *40*(6), 1168-1188.](http://jbs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/40/6/1168?ijkey=uMyumCdFg8pO.&keytype=ref&siteid=spjbs)

This article discusses a study conducted to examine the intersections of race, gender, and class as they are experienced by African American women. The authors concentrated on detailing the strategies their informants used to overcome the multiple barriers due to these intersections of social positioning. Their participants pointed to gender as being the major obstacle to upward mobility.

Questions to Consider:

1. The authors have chosen to use the term “African American,” except as noted in the article. What are their reasons for this choice? What other terms could they have used? What do these terms connote that “African American” does not?
2. What was their selection strategy for identifying participants for their study? How many women were selected? What impact could this sample size have on their results?
3. What was the central finding of the study? Do you agree with their analysis?

[Brown, D., & Tylka, T. (2011). Racial Discrimination and Resilience in African American Young Adults: Examining Racial Socialization as a Moderator. *Journal of Black Psychology,* *37*(3), 259-285.](http://jbp.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/37/3/259?ijkey=P2o5dQ0TQRim6&keytype=ref&siteid=spjbp)

This article examines the risks of psychological distress and low levels of well-being among African Americans who experience racial discrimination. The author asks the question of whether racial socialization messages preserved African Americans’ resilience and well-being in the face of discrimination. The author details the results of research among young African American college students to both overall racial socialization messages and also specific messages about race.

Questions to Consider:

1. What does the author mean by racial socialization messages? How often do young people experience these kinds of messages? What are the primary sources?
2. Did your opinion about the impact of these messages change after reading this article?
3. What were the author’s findings about the relationship between racial socialization messages, discrimination, psychological distress and well-being? Were you surprised or were these results what you expected?

[Roscigno, V., Williams, L., & Byron, R. (2012). Workplace Racial Discrimination and Middle Class Vulnerability. *American Behavioral Scientist,* *56*(5), 696-710.](http://abs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/56/5/696?ijkey=fkRlf4OeX/YoY&keytype=ref&siteid=spabs)

The authors have set out to challenge the assumptions that middle class minority workers are protected by their status and thus have a share of significant workplace power. By examining cases of workplace racial discrimination and the vulnerability of middle-class African American workers, they illustrate significant levels of both firing discrimination and day-to-day harassment.

Questions to Consider:

1. What do the authors say should protect middle-class minority workers from discrimination in the workplace? Why do these protections fail?
2. What specific types of discrimination do middle-class African American workers experience? Is this different from other minority workers?
3. What do they mean by “qualitative case immersion”? Is this an effective method to illustrate how discrimination occurs in the workplace? Why or why not?

[Meyers, M. (2004). Crack Mothers in the News: A Narrative of Paternalistic Racism. *Journal of Communication Inquiry,* *28*(3), 194-216.](http://jci.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/28/3/194?ijkey=9fBpVzkt6i.6.&keytype=ref&siteid=spjci)

This article examines the ways in which a media focus on “crack mothers” worked to disenfranchise black mothers from their rights and their children. Focusing on a newspaper series, the authors explore this phenomenon using both critical cultural studies and feminist theory. They argue that race cannot be separated from gender and class, and thus media representations that do so are indeed operating from a paradigm of paternalistic racism.

Questions to Consider:

1. What were the specific narratives present in the newspaper series on “crack mothers”? What was the stated goal of this series?
2. How have both gender and class been downplayed in this series, and what effect does that have on an exploration of race, according to the authors?
3. How can recognizing and making visible the intersectionality of gender, race, and class both reinforce negative stereotypes about African American women (as it did in the newspaper series) and also work to demolish those stereotypes according to the authors?