<CN>Chapter 9</CN>

<CT>Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Disparities in Political Participation and Civic Engagement</CT>

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In the closing decade of the twentieth century, a veritable cottage industry of research bemoaning the decline of civic engagement and political participation in the United States sprang up (Putnam, 2000; Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999). The focus of most studies was on social trust, social capital, and other individual-level factors. The political system was treated as open and even encouraging everyone to participate. Racial and economic inequalities and their structural origins were virtually ignored as factors linked to participation, and thus the search was to find out what was happening in the lives of individuals or in their personal ties or associations that influenced civic engagement and political participation rates.

An intersectional lens reveals the concern over the level of participation in the United States and the overreliance on personal characteristics are ironic, as, for most of U.S. history, the emphasis has been on limiting participation through exclusion of a considerable number of people from the U.S. political community on a group, not individual, basis. Thus property-less, non-Protestant, white men were initially barred from voter participation in many places during the colonial period in the United States (Kernell & Jacobson, 2000; Neuborne & Eisenberg, 1976). The battle to extend political rights to all white men, however, took minuscule effort compared to the battle for rights for other groups. Inclusion of the pan-European population of white men did not require constitutional and statutory change as it did for women, youth, and African Americans (DeSipio, 1996). In contrast, women of all races were forced to struggle a century for suffrage; they (mostly white women) did not get the vote until the Nineteenth

Amendment in 1920 (Flexner, 1973). U.S. youth who were challenging the Vietnam War and supporting civil rights during the 1960s and 1970s were provided the vote almost as a consolation prize in the Twenty-Sixth Amendment, ratified in 1971 (Kernell & Jacobson, 2000).

The struggle for people of color was different. Not only were enslaved Africans not provided the right to assemble and organize, it took a civil war to provide African American men the right to vote—a right soon nullified in the South where most blacks still lived after the short-lived Reconstruction era. For more than fifty years after Reconstruction, African Americans faced poll taxes, literacy requirements, gerrymandering, at-large elections, white primaries, violence, and other devices which denied them the most basic of democratic rights (Grofman, Handley, & Niemi, 1992).

American Indians faced relocations and reservations, Americanization campaigns that sought to destroy their cultures, and a host of other indignities and brutalities. Given assimilationist campaigns forced on the native peoples, it is ironic that the franchise was first denied and then forced upon American Indians. In 1924, they were made citizens in their own land. In actuality, however, American Indians continued to face antidemocratic contrivances to keep them from voting. For example, states with large populations of American Indians, such as Idaho, New Mexico, and Washington, denied them the vote because of specific provisions such as "Indians not taxed." As late as 1937, Colorado claimed American Indians were not yet citizens. Until 1948, Arizona denied American Indians the right to vote on the specious grounds that they were "under guardianship." North Carolina required American Indians to pass literacy tests (Wilkins, 2002, 191).

Asians, also, were barred from participation in democratic life. Indeed, after the infamous decision in People v. Hall, handed down by the California Supreme Court in 1854, "Asiatics"

were not only prohibited from serving on juries but their participation in politics was viewed as "an actual and present danger." Whether Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Indian, Korean, or any of the other nationality groups now lumped under the Asian-Pacific Islander (API) category by the U.S. Census Bureau, Asian Americans were subjected to deep suspicion about their political loyalties; this suspicion led to attempts to exclude Asians, not only from citizenship rights, but from immigration through laws such as the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, the Asiatic Barred Zone in 1917, and the Immigration Act of 1924 (Chang, 2001).

Latinos stand out among people of color in regards to their social construction as an ethnic, not racial, group. For example, Mexicans were legally defined as "white" at the conclusion of the War of 1848. To an extent, then, Latinos are framed as an extension of the conceptualization of European immigrants to the United States, "Yet the pattern of relations that established the initial set of parameters that defined the 'place' of Mexicans in the transformed landscape of the southwest was clearly racially encoded," (Almaguer, 1994, 27) and in turn shaped their modes of access and incorporation into the political sphere. As a result, and although there are national and regional differences among Latinos, the vast majority of Latinos in the United States were both part of a racialized labor force and part of the population excluded from politics through disingenuous schemes such as literacy tests, English-only ballots, and at-large elections seeking to dilute the influence of their voting power. Moreover the differences in the economic plight of many Latinos (especially Mexican Americans) and other immigrants (including many Asian ones) have been ignored.

In sum, throughout most of U.S. history, the concepts of common vision and inclusive democracy were contradicted by policies of exclusion based on race, gender, and ethnicity. For most people of color, the turning point was recent: 1965. In that year, the Voting Rights Act was

passed. It prohibited tests or other devices intended to disenfranchise citizens and it required the provision of bilingual ballots; it also sought to protect people of color against schemes such as at-large elections and other measures intended to dilute the voting power of people of color. This (1965) was also the year federal immigration law was changed to allow entry of significantly more immigrants. As a result, millions more Asians immigrated. In 1965, there were approximately one million Asian Americans in the United States; by the year 2000, that number had increased to more than eleven million (Chang 2001, 2). In short, the U.S. political experience, viewed historically, has been far more concerned with finding means to exclude and discourage many groups from civic engagement and political participation than with promoting inclusion and encouraging engagement and participation. At every level of U.S. government, groups have had unequal access to participation and power within civil society itself. Throughout U.S. history the concept of democracy as an inclusive process has been contradicted by policies of racial exclusion (Gerstle, 2001).

This chapter uses an intersectional approach to examine how well the United States has overcome its dismal exclusionary past. We begin by clarifying our key concepts and synthesizing what is known about current levels of civic and political disparities and their causes. By centering the experiences of people of color, we identify innovations and promising practices for eradicating civic and political disparities among the nation's racial and ethnic groups. Finally we focus on the policy implications that flow from research findings on civic and political disparities.

<2>A Note on Data Limitations</2>

How do rates of political participation and civic engagement vary across racial and ethnic groups? Given the growing diversity of the population, this question is ever more important. Yet

the first point to be made is that existing knowledge remains very limited for answering this question (Leighley, 2001). Studies of engagement and participation depend disproportionately on the national mass survey. However, the small samples of people of color often prohibits subgroup analysis, contributing to the tendency to see all people of color as homogenous. Thus, if mobilizing working-class black Americans, for example, requires a different set of actions than mobilizing middle-class blacks, or if mobilizing Latinos requires different strategies than mobilizing blacks, we can learn little or nothing given the sample size of these groups in most surveys. To be sure, there is a growing number of surveys that oversample people of color, but these remain sporadic and tend to focus on unique issues and/or on one racial or ethnic group at a time, and thereby fail to provide either a means of comparative analysis or a basis for trend studies.

Concomitantly conclusions about factors influencing civic engagement and political participation of people of color have been based primarily on samples of whites, which are assumed to hold for all individuals in the sample regardless of color. To assume the civic and political behavior of all communities of color are driven by the same factors that drive non-Latino whites or to assume that the same factors that drive blacks also drive Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other people of color is suspect given different historical experiences, cultures, current economic situations, and political goals (Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999; Walton, 1985).

Indeed, although current data give us some indication of political and civic disparities, they will remain vague until studies of groups such as Latinos and Asian Americans in particular can be disaggregated. For example, Mexican Americans, the most populous of the Latino national origin groups, vote at a far lower rate than Cuban Americans, for example, when one

controls for socioeconomic factors. As a result, analyses of Latinos that do not disaggregate by national origin fail to account for the differential political participation of Mexican Americans and other Latinos (Uhlaner, 1991; DeSipio, 1996). Similar conclusions can be reached in regards to differences among groups such as Chinese and Japanese and more recent Asian American immigrant groups such as Koreans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, and others. It is patently ironic that in a country that ideally places such a premium on democracy (and political equality as a guarantor of it) that so little has been invested in providing comprehensive databases to monitor and assess participation trends and attitudes toward democracy.

With these empirical caveats in mind, what do we know about political and civic disparities among racial and ethnic groups in the United States?

<1>Synthesis Of Conclusive Research Findings</1>

<2>Clarifications (and Conceptualizations) of Civic Engagement and Political Participation</2>

The following analysis distinguishes between civic engagement and political participation. Civic engagement is defined as informal political and nonpolitical activities engaged in through voluntary organizations such as citizen and community associations and charitable groups. Civic engagement enables individuals, families, and groups to influence issues and factors that affect them and to experience the value of collective action. It should be noted that civic engagement allows people to participate who might otherwise be disconnected or shut out from political participation (for example, noncitizens).

Political participation is defined as formal political activities such as voting, volunteering, working for and contributing to political campaigns, and membership in explicitly political organizations. Political participation falls squarely in the realm of the electoral-representative system and enables individuals, families, and groups as part of an active citizenry to elect public

officials and influence formulation and implementation of public policy solutions to societal problems.

Disparities in civic engagement and in political participation are important for two broad reasons. First, for a genuine democracy to function, it must fairly reflect the will of the people. But how do we know the will of the people if some groups' voices are silenced? Those who participate communicate information to public officials about their concerns and preferences and exert pressure on them to respond. Government is far more likely to confer with the participatory privileged and act in their behalf, even if not at their behest; and policies in most critical areas heavily favor their interests. Thus advantaged groups use government power and preference to deepen still further their advantages. In sum, disparities in political participation compromise the fairness of the political process and the political process, thus compromised, produces public policies that protect its advantaged patrons at the expense of the disadvantaged. Equal political involvement is required for the equal protection of interests in public life (Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 1999, 427).

Second, and relatedly, disparities in civic engagement are especially important in a time when governments at all levels face budget deficits and program cuts. In this context, there is more pressure on communities of color to address socioeconomic problems through their own volunteer activities. Through collective action, groups can begin to recreate their communities and cultivate democratic values. In an age of stark and growing economic inequality, civic engagement, and political action are virtually the only tools disadvantaged groups have for redressing long-standing grievances. To the (substantial) extent that opportunities for individuals are influenced by opportunities for the groups to which they belong, disparities in participation influence disparities among individuals as well as groups.

<2>Political Participation by Race and Ethnicity</2>

For all racial and ethnic groups, voting ranks as the most widespread form of political activity. Yet, despite progress in closing the racial/ethnic participation gap (Frasure & Williams, 2002), voter registration and voter turnout remain unequal by race and Latino origin. Table 9.1 presents the relevant data regarding voter turnout in the 2004 presidential election. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, non-Latino white citizens continued to vote in substantially higher numbers (67 percent) than African Americans (60 percent), Latinos (47 percent), and Asians (44 percent). The bureau reported that turnout rates increased from the 2000 election among whites (by five percentage points) and blacks (by three), but held steady for Latinos and Asians. Voter registration rates demonstrate a similar pattern: in 2004, 75.1 percent of non-Latino whites reported they were registered to vote compared to 68.7 percent of blacks, 67.9 percent of Latinos, and 51.8 percent of Asians. **[Insert Table 9.1 about here]**

As has long been established, three variables (education, age, and residential stability) account for most of the lower aggregate voter turnout of blacks and Latinos (Verba & Nie, 1972; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980; Leighley & Nagler, 1992; Teixeira, 1992; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). For example, for all racial and ethnic groups, the higher the education, the higher the voter participation. Similarly older age cohorts and those with greater residential stability among all groups participated at higher rates. Indeed blacks with lower levels of education actually out-voted their white counterparts and similarly educated Latinos nearly paralleled whites; the same class/race patterns surfaced in regards to residential stability. In fact, it appears that the black and Latino middle classes contribute substantially more to the continuing racial/ethnic gap in voter participation than do the black and Latino working classes. This is demonstrated also in regards to family income and home ownership statistics (U.S. Census

Bureau, 2005, tables 9 and 10). Nonetheless it is clear that for all racial/ethnic groups, the higher the family income, the higher the rate of voting; and home owners are significantly more likely to vote than renters among all racial/ethnic groups. In sum, higher socioeconomic status (SES) generally correlates with higher voter participation.

It should be noted, however, that Asian Americans present a complicated picture with regard to the relationship between SES and voting. Asian Americans are not only relatively affluent compared to other people of color and on some dimensions compared to whites, but also they have the highest level of educational attainment of all racial and ethnic groups; however, in contrast to other groups, Asian Americans have the lowest aggregate levels of voter participation. Thus a growing number of scholars conclude that socioeconomic status, the cornerstone of traditional theories of participation, does not adequately explain patterns of participation among Asians. First, some recent studies either find educational achievement and family income to be of no effect or of less effect on Asians than on whites and other people of color (Lien, 2001; Uhlaner, 1991). Second, most Asian American communities contain large numbers of recent immigrants. Many newer studies (for example, Wong, 2002) find that immigration-related variables such as English-language skills, citizenship status, nativity, immigration generation, and length of stay in the United States may have significant impact on the participation of Asians. Third, the unique status of Asians being simultaneously perceived as nonwhite, foreign, and affluent may shape their group interactions, heighten their consciousness of group identity, and invite targeted mobilization efforts by community elites and organizations (Kim, 1999; Lien, 2000; Uhlaner, 1991; Wong, 2002). Finally, “because adult citizens of Asian descent tend to come from an immigrant background and carry a different socialization experience than their U.S.-born counterparts, their education, skills and other personal

characteristics, traditionally considered as participation assets among the American electorate, may be accrued outside the U.S. system and cannot be directly translated into participation resources" (Lien, Conway, & Wong, 2004, 220). All of these insights help to shed light on the anomaly posed by Asian Americans to the role of SES in voter participation.

Yet it should be noted that U.S. Census Bureau data, based on a far larger sample size than most surveys, pose a challenge to conclusions with regard to the effects of citizenship status and naturalization. The census found that unlike naturalized non-Latino whites and blacks, naturalized Asians, as well as Latinos were actually more likely to report voting in 2004 than native-born Asians and Latinos. Among native Asian citizens, 40.5 percent reported voting while 46.4 percent of naturalized Asian citizens reported voting. Among native Latino citizens, 45.5 percent reported voting while 52.1 percent of naturalized Latino citizens reported voting (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005, table 13). Perhaps the safest conclusion is that consistent with past studies, variables related to SES are independently significant for predicting the voter participation rates within the Asian American population (Lien, Conway, & Wong, 2004). Questions surround how much and through what mediations, not whether, SES factors are closely tied to voting.

There is one group, however, that is clearly, albeit only slightly, more likely to vote than their economically better off counterparts: women compared to men. Since 1976, black women have voted in presidential elections at a higher rate than their male counterparts; and since 1980, non-Latino white women and Latinas have voted at higher rates than their male counterparts. In 2004, Asian women joined this pattern (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005, table 2). In the November 2004 election, women turned out a higher rate (65 percent) than men (62 percent). Black women voted in proportionately higher numbers (63.4 percent) than black men (55.8 percent). A higher proportion of non-Latino white women (68.4 percent) voted than white men (65.9 percent).

Latinas (49.4 percent) voted at a higher rate than Latino men (44.8 percent); and Asian women (46.3 percent) voted at a higher rate than Asian men (42.0 percent). Gender consciousness appears to heighten women's voter participation across racial and ethnic groups (Githens & Prestage, 1977; Conway, 2000; and Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 2001).

With the exception of the gender difference, the best available data indicate that those who vote are also those who participate in most other forms of political activity. At this writing, however, one is limited in the evidence that can be mounted to support this conclusion as there has never been a national survey of the political and civic views and activism of all major racial and ethnic groups (blacks, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Arab Americans as well as whites) conducted at one point in time; and it has been more than a decade since a survey of a sample of blacks, Latinos, and whites with sizeable enough numbers to allow subgroup and genuinely comparative analyses was conducted. That survey, the American Citizen Participation Study conducted in 1989–1990, found that with the exception of a slightly higher percentage of blacks attending community meetings and taking part in protests (a category with few participants of all races and ethnicities), whites participated in all forms of politics at higher rates than blacks and Latinos. They were significantly more likely to be affiliated with political organizations, to contact elected officials, to be members of political boards and commissions, and to contribute money to and/or work for political campaigns.

Surveys, however, tend to be snapshots in time and much has changed in the United States in general and among people of color in particular in the last fifteen years. Yet more recent national surveys that sample people of color in large numbers tend to be focused either on just blacks with a small comparative sample of whites (for example, annual surveys conducted by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies) or samples of single race- and/or ethnic-specific

groups (for example, the National Black Election Study, 1996 . Tate, 1998 {Please add to bib. Done.}; the Latino National Political Survey, 1989–1990, de la Garza et al, 1998 {added Please add to bib.}; the Pilot Study of the National Asian American Political Survey, 2000–2001, Lien, 2004 {added Please add to bib.}; Pew Hispanic Center Survey, 2004a {donea or b?}; and the Latino National Survey, 2006, Fraga et al, 2008 {donePlease add to bib.}). To be sure, these surveys deepen knowledge of differences among people of color and between each group and whites, but for the most part, all reveal that those who are less likely to vote are also less likely to have attended a public meeting or demonstration in the community where they live, contacted an elected official, contributed money to a candidate running for public office, attended a political party meeting or function, or worked as a volunteer or for pay for a political candidate. Extrapolating from these surveys taken at different points of time in the late 1990s through the early years of the twenty-first century, whites continue to out-participate each community of color in all these instances. In short, other kinds of political activism do not seem to diminish the kind of demographic inequalities found at the ballot box. In fact, disparities in most dimensions of political activity are even greater than disparities in voter participation. Not surprisingly, given the influence of economic resources, racial and ethnic disparities in political participation are worst of all when it comes to campaign contributions. In the most expensive presidential campaign in U.S. history, a 2004 study found that 89.1 percent of all campaign contributions of $200 or more came from wealthy white zip codes—despite the fact that people of color composed roughly a third of the nation. Only 2.7 percent of such contributions came from predominantly African American zip codes, 2.2 percent from predominantly Latino zip codes, and 0.6 percent from predominantly Asian zip codes (Color of Money, 2005). To the extent that donors are more important than voters in determining who gets elected, to the extent that

politicians are more likely to listen to the voices of donors, and to the extent that such voices find their positions more likely to be represented in policy debates and outcomes, people of color and the poor in general remain severely underrepresented because of their inability to keep pace with campaign contributions from wealthier, non-Latino white communities. This disparity may explain in part why legislators expend significantly more time in repealing estate taxes and reforming bankruptcy laws than on job creation and minimum wage reform.

<2>Civic Engagement, by Race and Ethnicity</2>

Data on civic engagement in nonpolitical, informal political, and charitable activities generally follow formal political participation patterns. For instance, recent data from surveys of blacks, Latinos, and Asians demonstrate that whites remain substantially more likely to belong to civic associations and to contribute time to charitable work (Pilot Study of the National Asian American Political Survey, 2000–2001, Lien 2004 {donePlease add to bib.}; Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2002; American National Election Study, 2002, Burns et al, 2003 {donePlease add to bib.}; and Pew Hispanic Center Survey, 2004a {donea or b?}). The racial/ethnic gap in civic engagement is apparent in reports of volunteerism in general and contributing time and money to charities in particular. Whites are more likely to report contributing both more time and more money to charities than do people of color.

In addition to racial and ethnic differences in the rate of civic engagement, there are also notable variations in the kinds of organizations in which volunteers participate. Among whites who volunteer, religious, child-focused, or education-related organizations get top priority (American National Election Survey, 2002, Burns et al, 2003 {done Please add.}), followed by civic associations and health organizations. A similar pattern exists for Latino volunteers, although they are significantly more likely to participate in religious and children and education-

related organizations and significantly less likely to participate in civic organizations than their white counterparts (Pew Hispanic Center, 2004a {a or b?}). Asian American volunteers are roughly equally as likely to support religious, civic, and children's and education-related organizations (Lien, Conway, & Wong, 2004). African Americans are a big exception in one regard: those who volunteer are overwhelmingly more likely to participate in religious organizations than other organizations (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2002; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Given the historic role of the black church as a sociopolitical institution in African American communities, this result is perhaps not surprising (Harris, 1999).

Some studies show that disparities in volunteerism based on race and ethnicity are even stronger than those found in voting (Ramakrishnan & Baldassare, 2004). In effect, patterns in broad-based civic engagement do not make up for lower political participation rates. They tend, instead, to reinforce the disparities between those who are actively involved and those who are not. In sum, as the size and proportion of the population composed of communities of color grow, there continues to be a disturbing racial and ethnic disjuncture between those who live in the United States and those who shape its civic life.

As with political participation, SES and related variables such as residential stability, place, and home ownership explain most of the racial and ethnic variation in civic engagement (Markus & Walton, 2002; Keeter, et al., 2002; Leighley, 2001; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995; Bobo & Gilliam, 1990; Guterbock & London, 1983; Olsen, 1972). Succinctly stated: those advantaged in these arenas have greater resources to make their voices heard. People of color tend to be resource-poor. To date, levels of political participation and civic engagement among

the nation's racial and ethnic groups reflect and reproduce socioeconomic inequalities, rather than alleviate them.

<2>What Factors Contribute to Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Disparities?</2>

For the most part, civic and political disparities among the nation's racial and ethnic groups have been attributed to economic inequality, constrictive immigration policy, systemic bias, and mobilization bias. Each of these is briefly discussed below.

<3>Socioeconomic and Place Inequality.</3> More than any other single factor predicting participation in the civic and political realms, education disparities have been identified as the key variable. The fact that education plays a central role in determining occupation, which in turn influences income, means that these three resources are correlated and their cumulative and interactive effects are substantial in influencing political participation and civic engagement (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980; Leighley & Nagler, 1992; Teixeira, 1992; Markus & Walton, 2002; Keeter, et al., 2002; Leighley, 2001; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995, 447; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Bobo & Gilliam, 1990; Guterbock & London, 1983; Olsen, 1972). The longer education disparities by race and ethnicity remain palpable, the longer non-Latino whites remain advantaged in securing occupations that require skills that are transferable to the civic realm (for example, administration, writing, making presentations, contacting elites, and decision making—i.e., skills people gain in professional and managerial jobs), and the longer that non-Latino whites have incomes nearly twice that of Latinos and blacks, the longer political and civic disparities by race and ethnicity are likely.

What has been less studied in regards to participation in the civic and political arenas is wealth. Wealth disparity is far starker than income disparity. In 2002, for example, the median net worth of non-Latino white households was $88,651 but the net worth of Latino and black

households was only $7,932 and $5,988 respectively—or less than one-tenth the wealth of white households (Pew Hispanic Center, 2004b). Data on home ownership (the principal source of wealth for the average American) and voter participation provide an example of the relationship between wealth and political inequality.

There is a strong relationship between the ownership of a home and the net worth of a household; but as a result of more limited access to financial markets, blacks and Latinos are substantially less likely than non-Latino whites to be homeowners. The percentage of non-Latino white households who owned homes in 2002 was 74.3 percent, but the homeownership rates for Latinos and blacks were 47.3 percent and 47.7 percent respectively (Pew Hispanic Center, 2004b). Home ownership is strongly related to racial disparities in political participation. Those who own homes are significantly more likely than those who rent to participate in various types of political and civic activities. For instance, as discussed above, census data indicate that home owners are more likely than renters to vote in every racial and ethnic group. Other research has shown that if all groups shared the same rates of homeownership, racial inequalities in participation would decline considerably for a wide range of activities such as working for political parties, contributing money to political causes and charities, and belonging to civic associations and community groups (Ramakrishnan & Baldassare, 2004). Thus policies that reduce racial disparities in home ownership should have a salutary effect on racial disparities in civic and political participation. The overall implication is that economic inequality acts as a powerful barrier to political equality (APSA, 2004; Tilly, 2003; Fung & Wright, 2003).

Place inequality (suburban sprawl, concentrated poverty in cities, and segregation) amplifies the effects of income and wealth inequality on civic and political participation (Orfield, 2002; Squires, 2002; 2004; Raphael & Stoll, 2002; O'Connor & Bobo, 2001). As a result of the

large and growing amount of place inequality among the poor, middle class, and wealthy (Jargowsky, 2003; Swanstrom, Dreier, & Mollenkopf, 2002), various racial/ethnic groups tend to live in separate and unequal local political jurisdictions (especially municipalities and school districts). Not only does place inequality mean that some have more opportunities and some have fewer opportunities because they live in places that are sharply distinct in terms of tax bases and the quality of public services, but place inequality also makes it easier to isolate people with similar economic and social backgrounds into the same political jurisdictions. The more homogenous political jurisdictions become, the more "safe" districts become, the more predictable elections become, the more levels of political participation decline, especially voting. Concomitantly political parties and activists have fewer incentives to mobilize new groups of voters or develop new issue appeals among people of color. In short, economic segregation has civic effects. Unable to overcome their dire socioeconomic straits or to shape local policies due to fiscal constraints, the poor tend to lose interest in and drop out of politics. Thus place inequality increases economic inequality and decreases civic participation (Oliver, 1999).

<2>Immigration Policy, Naturalization, and Citizenship</2>

As the sizes of the Latino and Asian populations have grown, so has the literature on citizenship and naturalization's effects on participation in the civic and political realms. In particular, some researchers have pointed to the ways in which residency and naturalization requirements tend to alienate immigrant and naturalized citizens—especially from the electoral process. For example, DeSipio concludes that "[n]aturalization of all eligible Latino immigrants and their exercise of the franchise at rates comparable to the current pool of naturalized citizens would add between 50 and 75 percent to the national Latino electorate" (1996, 133). Even just a targeted outreach to naturalize Latinos could add between 400,000 and 1.8 million new Latino

citizens and arguably nearly as many voters (DeSipio, 1996). Moreover it should be emphasized that all immigrants are not equal. Latinos in the aggregate often face socioeconomic and concomitantly naturalization hurdles not faced by Asians in the aggregate or Western and Eastern European white immigrants (Hero, 1992; Jones-Correa, 2001; and de la Garza & DeSipio, 1998). There are also considerable differences among immigrants from particular Latin American and Asian countries (de la Garza & DeSipio, 1998). In sum, contemporary immigrants are a very diverse group and current disparities in a wide range of civic and political activities are linked to this diversity as well as to differences in citizenship status (Lien, Conway, & Wong 2001; Uhlaner, 1991; de la Garza & DeSipio, 1998).

<2>Biases in the Electoral System and Its Practices</2>

Another body of research concentrates on structural features of the U.S. political system that continue to serve as barriers to equalizing participation rates across races and ethnic groups. The most pernicious of these barriers are the loopholes in election laws that permit vote suppression.

Vote suppression results from schemes masquerading as ballot security programs whose actual intent and effect is to discourage or prevent voters in heavily black, Latino, or American Indian voting precincts from casting a ballot (Hayduk, 2002; Davidson, et al., 2004). Vote suppression programs, facilitated, of course, by place inequality, have several significant characteristics. They focus on minority areas exclusively. There is often only the flimsiest evidence that vote fraud is likely to be perpetrated in such areas. In addition to encouraging the presence of sometimes intimidating poll watchers or challengers, who may slow down voting lines and embarrass potential voters by asking them humiliating questions, these programs have sometimes posted people in official-looking uniforms with badges and side arms who question voters about their citizenship or their registration. “In addition, warning signs may be posted near

the polls, or radio ads may be targeted to minority listeners containing dire threats of prison terms for people who are not properly registered—messages that seem designed to put minority voters on the defensive. Sometimes false information about voting qualifications is sent to minority voters through the mail" (Davidson, et al., 2004, 97).

Other barriers related to vote suppression, with significant implications for racial and ethnic disparities in civic and political participation, include exfelon disenfranchisement and wrongful purges. Because people of color make up such a disproportionate number of the exfelon population, the denial of the vote to exfelons has become a subtle method of excluding people of color from the franchise according to some studies. These studies indicate that states with large black populations are much more likely than states with small black populations to disenfranchise exfelons (Uggen & Manza, 2002; Harvey, 1994; Shapiro, 1993). The United States now has 1.75 million people disqualified from voting because of criminal convictions—including 1.4 million Black men who have lost their right to vote, almost 15 percent of the Black male population (Uggen & Manza, 2002). Arguably, at least, barring exfelons from voting is a fundamental contradiction of the principle that once a man has served his punishment, he can rejoin society.

Other researchers have focused on the effects of early registration closing dates, limited hours for voting, and the failure to engage in a wide range of postregistration activities to encourage voting on racial and ethnic disparities in voting. A large body of research shows that the effect of state laws prescribing how, when, and where citizens can become eligible to vote influences levels of participation. The greatest aggregate efforts of more difficult registration laws are on those with the least amount of formal education and/or who are younger. By far the most consequential legal provision is the closing date or registration deadline; allowing citizens

to register shortly before the election or at the polls on election day has been demonstrated to be an effective way to encourage voting. Where registration requirements are minimal or nonexistent, the effect of education is reduced because less educated citizens vote at higher rates while the turnout of the better educated is nearly unchanged (Highton, 1997). Moreover permissive registration arrangements are especially beneficial to younger citizens (Teixeira, 1992, 119; Highton & Wolfinger, 2001).

Postregistration activities also have a disparate effect upon citizen participation. Wolfinger, Highton, & Mullin, 2004 {Highton and Mullin (2004)?}, for example, conclude that postregistration laws (such as extended polling hours, postregistration mailings of sample ballots and polling place location information, and extended polling hours on election day) increase turnout among the registered. Such effects vary widely by education, age, race and ethnicity. A larger impact is observed for Latinos compared to blacks.

They estimate that universal implementation of longer polling hours and more election mailings would increase turnout of black registrants by 3.3 percentage points and Latino registrants by 4.3 points. Overall they project that turnout of the registered would increase by 2.8 percentage points if all states adopted “best practices” postregistration procedures. These are substantial gains from adoption of procedures that are neither risky nor expensive and therefore should attract little overt opposition (Wolfinger, Highton, & Mullin, 2004).

<2>Mobilization Bias</2>

Finally many researchers focus on differential mobilization by race and ethnicity. While SES is a primary determinant of civic and political action, high-status individuals are more likely to participate in part because they are more likely to be asked or recruited to participate. On the

other hand, individuals of lesser social status are forced to rely on the political mobilization of organized community groups more heavily than do individuals of greater social status (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995; Leighley, 2001). Surveys confirm that people of color are disproportionately less likely to be asked to participate by politicians and activists (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). They are especially less likely to be contacted by whites. For example, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) demonstrate how race and ethnicity structure who is asked to participate. Non-Latino whites are far more likely to be asked (56 percent) than either African Americans (40 percent) or Latinos (25 percent). When asked, African Americans are most likely to report being asked to participate by other African Americans, while Latinos are more likely to report being asked by non-Latino whites. Even higher income blacks are only slightly more likely to be asked to participate than lower-income blacks.

<1> Promising Practices</1>

In general, what helps young and/or less affluent Americans participate will help people of color. From the least to most difficult proposals to achieve, insights drawn from both the literature and praxis can be grouped into six categories: personal contacting, community organizing, youth targeting, structural reform, structural electoral reform, fostering more competitive elections, and policy change.

<2>Personal Contacting</2>

Recently a host of field experiments have examined the effects of personal contacting (for example, Gerber & Green, 1999; Green, Michelson & Bedolla, 2007 {Please add to bib. Done.}; Michelson, 2003). These field experiments reveal statistically significant support for the effectiveness of personal contacting for people of color (particularly young persons). Door-to-door or face-to-face interactions have demonstrated their effectiveness in encouraging people of

color to become both more civically and politically involved. Moreover people of the same racial/ethnic group have been shown to be better at contacting those of their same racial/ethnic group (Michelson, 2003). In sum, asking people to participate and giving them a reason to do so results in higher rates of civic and political participation (DeSipio, 1996).

<2>Community Organizing</2>

Past organizing has demonstrated that meeting people "where they are" (that is, focusing on the local issue they already see as important to their quality of life) is the first step in getting people politically involved. Framing and reframing issues in each community's popular vernacular produces maximum benefit. In short, successful mobilizations begin by finding consensus, not creating it. Successful work around a specific issue can then be used to move on to larger, more complex issues. As issues broaden, diverse ethnicities and races and both genders can be attracted to groups, bridging gaps. Through this process, community rooted activities reconnect citizens to engaged, responsible public life, not just on election day but throughout the year.

Community institutions can play a key role in this process. In fact, it has never been more important that they do—given the decline of political parties as mobilizers and the growth of high-tech politics emphasizing money, not voters. The situation is made still more critical by the membership decline of organizations such as labor unions that also historically "mobilized the un-mobilized." Into this vacuum, community institutions and organizations have moved and played a remarkably vital role. For example, there is a convincing body of evidence that African American churches are conduits for political skills, resources, and mobilization. Research evidence shows that religious institutions such as Catholic dioceses and faith-based organizations are also important to Latino and Asian American civic engagement. Work by groups such as the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), one of the most successful community organizing

associations, demonstrates that church-based institutions are key resources for developing social capital across racial and ethnic communities.

Other organizations such as community economic development organizations and other community-based nonprofits and ethnoracial civic associations including social service agencies and legal and voter education, registration, and get-out-the-vote organizations are all playing important roles in mobilization efforts in particular and social capital development in general. Indeed activism in community-based institutions with strong leadership is the most common theme in studies aimed at addressing ways to overcome civic and political disparities (Markus & Walton, 2002). It is noteworthy, however, that although community organizations play a strong role in making up the mobilization deficit left in the wake of parties that now disproportionately focus on activating loyal non-Latino white voters rather than mobilizing new minority voters, they are limited in what they can achieve given these organizations' other priorities, narrow constituencies, and limited resources. The most powerful political institutions such as parties and political elites are the ones with the resources, responsibility, and mandate to expand the circle of inclusion to all Americans.

<2>Electoral Reform</2>

Two types of structural reforms have demonstrated significant capacity to promote political involvement. The first type involves eradication of features of the electoral system that constrain people's ability to choose decision makers; and the second involves creation of new structures, particularly at the community level.

Regarding the import of eradicating structural barriers to equalizing participation, one need look no further than the immediate impact of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. African

American voter turnout rose dramatically from barely one-third in the 1956 presidential election to nearly two-thirds in the 1968 presidential election (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993).

Regarding creation of new community governance structures, what is called “empowered participatory governance” structures have proved effective in a growing number of communities. For example, neighborhood governance councils that develop substantial power over arenas such as policing and public schools; participatory budgeting enabling residents to participate directly in forging city budgets and habitat conservation planning that empowers stakeholders to develop governance arrangements that satisfy the double imperatives of human development and the protection of endangered species have all raised the participation rates of families as well as individuals in public life (Fung & Wright, 2003).

<2>Fostering More Competitive Elections</2>

Even without changes in the electoral system, more competitive elections produce higher voter participation rates. This was perhaps the most obvious lesson of the 2004 presidential election where reported voter turnout rose by 4.3 percentage points (from 59.5 percent to 63.8 percent). Especially when it comes to people of color, candidates on the ballot that produce strong feelings of attachment and/or aversion produce high turnout. This has been demonstrated in national and local elections—for example, when Jesse Jackson was on the ballot for the Democratic presidential nomination; when Harold Washington ran for mayor of Chicago; and, alternatively, when former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke ran for governor of Louisiana. In each of these instances, black voter participation rose significantly (Tate, 1994).

<2>Targeting Youth</2>

Given the disproportionate share of young people in communities of color, efforts specifically targeted to youth have shown promise. Best practices in this area include public policy

consultations with youth where youth opinions on decisions that affect them promote involvement. Including youth in organizational decision making as members of governing boards not only provides exposure to the world of politics but also encourages their participation. Other efforts that have promoted youth involvement include strengthening the civic curricula, providing financial assistance to encourage students to apply scientific knowledge to projects addressing community-wide problems, and providing opportunities for youth to work in the electoral politics arena as canvassers, representatives, and spokespersons.

In 2004, one effort targeted at youth that secured considerable media attention was the formation of groups associated with popular entertainers focused not only on college youth, but also school dropouts and, in states where felons can vote, young people who had been to prison and/or succumbed to the allure of gangs (Sullivan, 2004; Smalley, 2004). Building upon the history of Rock the Vote (RTV), a fifteen-year-old organization founded by members of the recording industry that uses popular culture to spur youth participation, political empowerment was held out as a different path to power, focusing on issues such as linking poor neighborhoods with underachieving schools to low participation in deciding who becomes policymakers. Future research evidence is sorely needed to assess the impact of these efforts to mobilize the youth population before conclusions about their effectiveness can be drawn.

<1>Policy Implications</1>

Given the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, age, and gender in influencing participation rates as well as the interaction of economic and political inequalities, there can be no permanent and fully successful effort to end civic and political disparities without strategies directed toward equalizing opportunities among racial and ethnic groups to share in the nation’s wealth. Ethnic and racial disparities in civic and political action are not likely to disappear over time unless

there is general social and economic progress among today's subjugated groups. There are, however, several policy proposals that could increase civic and political participation rates among people of color. Based on the preceding analysis, seven such recommendations are set forth. Rather than considering the list to be exhaustive, it should be understood as simply a top seven baseline for progress.

<3>Link civic engagement and political participation, and encourage both.</3> Increase and strengthen outreach efforts by civic, community, and political institutions that are targeted toward reducing racial and ethnic disparities in civic engagement and political participation. Create more awareness among low-participating groups about the volunteering opportunities, outreach, and education efforts of community organizations by developing public service announcements (PSAs) for the old (television, radio, and print) and new (Internet and other electronic forms) media. Focus on issue and policy education and advocacy, not just outcomes of electoral campaigns. Identify volunteer opportunities that can be performed with more flexibility (for example, from home or in hours outside of a 9-to-5 workday) and reach out to individuals and families who need flexibility.

To encourage youth participation and send a message that service and politics are not separate and alternative activities, amend AmeriCorps legislation to allow participation in political activities, particularly voter registration, under the same constraints that govern 501(c)3 organizations involved in advocacy work. Facilitate use of federal work-study funding for civic and political service. Develop initiatives and outreach strategies and tactics that capture the diversity among youth, on the basis of both racial and ethnic differences and differences in lifestyle, experiences, and current opportunity structure (for example, programs not just for

students but also for dropouts and youth with experiences in the criminal justice system). Begin political education and service courses at an earlier age, for example, in middle schools. Encourage civic courses to become more relevant to community needs and more focused on democratic life. In general, in designing programs to increase political participation and civic engagement, public and nonprofit groups should consider the unique differences among and within racial and ethnic groups.

<3>Expand and enforce voting rights protections.</3> Reauthorize the Voting Rights Act (VRA) in 2007 and continue to reauthorize it until civic and political disparities by race, gender, and ethnicity disappear. Make tougher rules against vote suppression. Through litigation, if necessary, clarify and liberalize the Voting Rights Act, the National Voter Registration Act (Motor Voter), and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to make them more applicable to "ballot security" intimidation than they currently are. Establish a network of volunteer lawyers as a component of a campaign to be prepared for ballot intimidation (Swirsky, 2002 {Please add to bib. Done.}). Effectively use media and comprehensive voter education so that victims of vote suppression know it when they see it. Encourage the victims of excesses of ballot security programs who have been unlawfully challenged, harassed, denied assistance in voting, or purged from the rolls to bring private damage suits, payable by poll officials. Eliminate or at least alter the ID requirement of HAVA as well as more expansive identification requirements recently passed by some state legislatures, which that have resulted in aggressive poll officials singling out minority voters and interrogating them with humiliating questions. Require all college and universities to set up polling places on campuses and outlaw scare tactics targeting students, such as warnings that voting could affect financial aid, lead to fines or prison sentences, and other voter suppression efforts. Make voter intimidation efforts related to voter identification a felony.

Mandate safeguards for accurately counting votes, including requiring all electronic machines used in voting to produce a voter-verified paper trail. Simplify, clarify, and reform laws across the nation barring exfelons from voting rights.

As a first step, reenfranchise citizens with first-time nonviolent felony convictions who have completed their sentences. Also, closely scrutinize state processes to purge felons from voter rolls that wrongfully remove registered, eligible citizens from the rolls. Fine election officials who conduct wrongful purges. Improve implementation of the ”motor voter law,” by monitoring state compliance with the provision of the law requiring that those utilizing public assistance be asked if they would like to vote, and if so, provided with voter registrations forms and assisted in the completion and submission of the forms. In general, enforce Motor Voter, reauthorize the VRA, and strengthen HAVA.

<3>Adequately reform campaign finance laws.</3> Provide full public financing of elections as an antidote to the inequities of the current finance system in order to make sure that candidates who do not have access to wealthy families and rich special interest donors have a chance to compete in political campaigns and that voters have more choice. By equalizing the campaign finance playing field, candidates and officials should be more likely to listen to the voices of those who have no money to contribute.

<3>Reform the presidential election structure.</3> Only one office is filled through an election of “all the people” in the nation; yet that office is the only federal electoral office left that denies the people the right to directly vote to fill it and that openly violates the principle of “one person, one vote.” Amend the constitution and allow either for election of the president by popular vote or proportional representation in awarding electoral votes. Given that amending the constitution is always an arduous process, accomplishing this change will require bottom up pressure on both

major parties, Congress, the president, and state legislatures. The struggle to achieve this change could be an exercise in recruiting many groups and individuals in collective action in ways that bridge difference.

<3>Reform registration, voting, and postregistration systems in a way that equalizes opportunities for participation.</3> Mandate uniform national voter registration rules and uniform national standards for voting roll purges for all federal elections. Make election day a holiday and/or at least urge the government, the private sector, and the nonprofit sector to encourage people to participate by allowing them time off the job and paid leave to perform their civic duty. Other similar or related reforms include multiday balloting, same-day registration, and keeping the polls open longer. Make polling places more accessible. Provide clear provisional ballot rules that are the same in every state. Develop federal standards to address the removal of physical and cognitive barriers in voting systems. Increase the currently insufficient funding of the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), created by HAVA, whose mandate is to advise states on election standards and distribute federal funding for election reforms to the states. Strengthen the mandate for the EAC to conduct studies focusing on nationwide statistics and methods of identifying, defining, and investigating voter fraud and voter intimidation; recruiting, training, and improving the performance of poll workers; educating voters about registration, voting, operating voting machines, locating polling places, and other aspects of participation. For federal elections, provide funding to the states with federal oversight for effecting postregistration provisions such as mailing sample ballots, information about polling place locations, keeping polls open longer, and other procedures that have demonstrable effects on encouraging participation of subjugated groups.

<3>Reform immigration law.</3> Make naturalization simpler and more accessible. Reinstate noncitizen voting rights as a way of empowering legal residents, increasing their interest in U.S. politics, forging loyalty to the nation, and providing fairness to people who already must submit to all other laws and citizenship requirements.

<3>Fully fund research to improve understanding of racial and ethnic disparities in civic and political participation as well as attitudes toward democratic life.</3> Given the important role government plays in funding research and development and given the paucity of scientific evidence regarding the participation of communities of color, create a new program at the National Science Foundation (NSF) whose mission is to: (1) support research aimed at developing more rigorous databases, indicators, and indices to measure trends and patterns in attitudes toward democracy; (2) study exclusionary barriers as well as civic structures facilitating greater participation; (3) examine levels and types of civic engagement and political participation in diverse communities; and (4) analyze perceptions and realities of what participation produces in terms of national and local results. In a large-scale biennial survey, similar to the Panel Survey of Income Dynamics (PSID), gather data points that identify patterns and trends in civic and political participation. In addition to categories that would be followed across time, continuously reassess about 20 percent of the categories used to study volunteerism and political participation across various groups and new and different ways of engaging diverse populations.

Also provide funding to the U.S. Department of Commerce to provide data on forms of participation in addition to voting in its current population surveys (CPS). Given the large size of the CPS sample (about 50,000 households), it would be possible to do state level analyses as well as subgroup analyses.

<1>Conclusion</1>

The primary focus of this chapter is how to prepare productive, effective citizens among all groups of Americans and thereby strengthen the democratic way of life. The intersectional analysis we have used reveals the persistence of racial, ethnic, and gender disparities, deeply rooted in the very structure of our political systems. This is an immense problem for democracy as government is more likely to confer with those who participate at high rates and act in their behalf. Consequently policies in most critical areas are likely to heavily favor those who participate most rather than serving democracy's egalitarian ideal.

Indeed the very construction of difference and inequality among families, neighborhoods, and races is a concomitant of a range of policy decisions made by public officials and policy-related actions taken in the private and nonprofit sectors. Policies at all levels of government continue to play a fundamental role in creating disadvantaged, resource-poor, or isolated neighborhoods for some individuals, children, families, and communities.

A wide range of changes in social and economic policy arenas that contribute to lower participation rates among people of color are necessary. {I cut this sentence as it is verbatim from the previous paragraph.} From the interstate highway system to home mortgage deductions to zoning decisions of local governments to taxation, tax credits, franchises, charters, banking, trade regulation, and research funding, policies at all levels of government have played an important role in fostering place inequalities. Inequalities nurtured by policy can be altered by policy as well. Similarly, as home ownership and residential stability are intimately related to participation rates, policies that encourage home ownership should have salutary results for political participation. The presence or absence of job-creation incentives, wage policies, and labor-market policies in general are implicated in the mix of why some participate less than

others. Finally national policies aimed at expediting the process of naturalization should help boost the extent to which first-generation immigrants (who are disproportionately Latino or Asian) participate in civic associations. Governmental and nongovernmental actors at the state and local levels could strengthen the association between citizenship acquisition and volunteerism by incorporating civic skills and civic recruitment efforts into courses that help immigrants to pass the naturalization exam.

Considering that politics and policy have played such an apparent role in determining the distribution of wealth in this country, there can be little change in patterns of inequality without policy change. Yet there is a significant complication in this situation, in that it is unlikely that policy reform will occur without significant and persistent pressure from those most negatively affected, as evidenced by higher levels of civic and political engagement within today's currently underrepresented groups. Thus the authentic work of improving outcomes for these groups will never be accomplished without equalizing opportunities for the collective action that lies at the heart of civic engagement and political participation. With sustained attention to the issue of civic engagement and political participation from researchers, foundations, community organizations, and political leaders, we can hope for reductions in racial and ethnic disparities, increase the influence of those currently disengaged from civic life, and realize the democracy we all deserve.

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