The Legacy of Slavery and the Educational Debt owed to Students of Color in Today’s Classrooms *Excerpt*

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“If you stick a knife in my back nine inches and pull it out six inches, that's not progress. If you pull it all the way out, that's not progress. The progress comes from healing the wound that the blow made. They haven't even begun to pull the knife out. They won't even admit the knife is there.” - Malcolm X

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1850</th>
<th>1880-1940</th>
<th>1940-1970</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Great Grandparent – Great Grandparent</td>
<td>Great Grandparent - Grandparent</td>
<td>Grandparent - Parent</td>
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<td><strong>Slavery</strong></td>
<td><strong>Slavery Abolished/Jim Crow</strong></td>
<td><strong>Civil Rights Era</strong></td>
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<td>Criminal Justice/Legal/Political - Blacks had no legal rights. They endured public lynchings, beating and violence without any due process. Those in positions of power told whites “you may be poor but at least you are white” as a strategy of social control and to create an “us versus them” “white is supreme” philosophy. Those in power extended special privileges to poor whites in an effort to drive a wedge between them and black slaves (greater access to Native American lands, ability to police slaves, etc). Slave codes prevented blacks from congregating, marrying, traveling, etc. without their masters' permission. “White” began appearing in statues.</td>
<td>Criminal Justice/Legal/Political - Slavery abolished and replaced by Jim Crow. Segregation in all domains in life. Slavery allowable as punishment for “crime”. Voting prohibited. No political power or influence. During Westward expansion blacks were not allowed to own land, were fined for entering some states and were often forced to leave at gunpoint. Vagrancy laws and other laws defining activities such as “mischief” and “insulting gestures” as crimes were enforced vigorously against blacks. Aggressive and often dishonest enforcement of these laws created an enormous market for convict leasing. Tens of thousands of blacks were arbitrarily arrested during this period and forced to work off their release.</td>
<td>Criminal Justice/Legal/Political - Jim Crow still in place for much of this time period. Voting laws passed but many blacks still unable to vote due intimidation by KKK at polling locations, beatings, etc. 1968 Fair Housing Act passed but discriminatory practices were in place preventing homeownership and housing access. Southern Strategy (SS) utilized to appeal to white racial fears and antagonism to get Nixon elected. He targeted anti-black voters and convinced them that poverty was not caused by structural factors related to race but by the “pathological” black culture (welfare cheats, crime, drug use, poor character, etc.) despite similar crime rates between black and white.</td>
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<td><strong>Economic</strong> - Zero wealth or opportunity made available to blacks.</td>
<td><strong>Economic</strong> - Corrupt Sharecropping in place keeping blacks indebted to whites with no recourse to contest dishonest debt. Theft of black owned land common. Blacks were not allowed union membership. Black Wall Street destroyed in White Terrorist attack.</td>
<td><strong>Economic</strong> - GI Bill Benefits and Social Security access limited or unavailable for POC. SSI not allowed for Domestic &amp; Agricultural Workers. Neighborhood covenants legally preventing blacks from purchasing homes. Blockbusting and predatory lending occurring. Restrictions on black businesses in place. Discrimination in hiring well documented.</td>
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<td><strong>Education</strong> - Slaves not allowed to read or write. Little to no literate blacks.</td>
<td><strong>Education</strong> - 1880 76.2% of blacks were illiterate compared to 21.5% of whites. Segregated libraries and schools were poorly equipped with limited resources. In some states blacks were not offered high school because local governments felt they didn’t need it. During Westward expansion, many blacks were not allowed to go to public school at all.</td>
<td><strong>Education</strong> - Brown vs Board of Education passed but violence and fear prevented many from being able to access white schools and if they did, the mistreatment was often severe. In 1950 12% of blacks were illiterate compared to 3% whites.</td>
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The Compounding Effect of Institutional Racism

Summary

- The evasive strategies of Jim Crow, forced migration and US policies that reinforced unequal treatment placed black people at most risk to this day. The compounding effect of all of these disadvantages is substantial and should be seen as an "educational debt." The direct result of the compounding economic, social and educational inequities that have plagued the US for centuries.

- Economic disadvantages alone have a substantial educational impact on the achievement of all students. Home ownership, household income, employment rates and most importantly, home wealth is an issue for the right generation and a cumulative disadvantage for the next generation.

- The children in our schools are only three to four generations away from profound discrimination and the brutality of slavery. We owe them something different and something better than we are doing for others.

- The compounding effect of educational debt is not equitable. More and different to our moral and ethical obligation.

1. US Census Data
2. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2013
3. National Center for Education Statistics
4. American Council on Education

New Jim Crow/New Racism

Criminal Justice/Legal/Political - Black blocks had aascertained political and social power, money and education in the past. Presently, even when blacks have enough to buy a lawyer, the system is set up to punish them.

- Police force of minority children and adults, peaceful and nonviolent.

- Economic - Extreme net worth/wealth (blacks have 1/8 average net worth as whites). Bias in lending & resulting distribution, blacks show few available properties, given complete reorganization of housing market.


- Education - Misinformation about race impacts biases and lower expectations for black achievement. Lack of access to higher education.

- Limited access to college education.

- American child to have a parent with a college education, disproportionate outcomes in achievement and discipline.