

DR. GALSTER: Good morning, everyone. My name is George Galster. I'm a professor of Urban Affairs in the Department of Geography and Urban Planning here at Wayne State University.

I'd like to suggest this morning that indeed the predictions of the Kerner Commission have come all too true for the Detroit metropolitan area in the last forty years. We have indeed become a society that is separated on the basis of race and class. We are separate and unequal. And I'd like to offer you a powerful but simple vision of why that has occurred.

This is a picture of why we have separate and unequal in Metro Detroit. It's a picture that I call "cumulative causation." It's a system of interlocking social phenomena in which cause and effect become blurred. You can't identify the ultimate cause because causes become effects become causes become effects because everything reinforces itself; and I'd like to suggest in my discussion this morning some evidence to support each one of those four corners of the square that you see in front of you and to briefly talk about how these pieces reinforce each other.

So I'm going to first talk about residential segregation and school segregation, explain then how that erects barriers for the opportunities for blacks to advance socially and economically in this metro region.

I'm then going to explain how these interracial inequalities reinforce the kinds of white prejudices that the representative just spoke about, how in turn these white prejudices lead to two responses: One is flight from black neighbors, and the second is fighting the possibility of black neighbors through various forms of illegal discriminatory forces and that those two responses reinforce segregation, and you can see we're back to where we started in this process of cumulative causation.

So let me begin by talking a little bit about residential and school segregation in Metro Detroit.

Social scientists have an index of segregation that's frequently used. It's called a Dissimilarity Index; and on this scale, if you have a zero, it means there is no segregation whatsoever, and on 100 you have complete segregation where every neighborhood is either 100 percent black or 100 percent white. Where are we in Metro Detroit right now on this scale? We're at 85 -- the highest metro segregation of neighborhoods in the United States.

What this means is the average black person in Metropolitan Detroit lives in a neighborhood that has 85 percent black residents. That's the second highest in the United States.

What does that mean about the city itself? Well, right now, as best as I can estimate, the city of Detroit constitutes 85 percent black residents, only 9 percent white residents. If we look at the entire Metropolitan area, you can see even a greater geographic divide

because you'll see that of all black people living in Metropolitan Detroit, 77 percent of them live within the city limits but only 3 percent of white people in Metro Detroit live within the city limits -- 77 percent versus 3 percent.

What about schools? We can use that same index that I mentioned a moment ago to talk about the segregation of schools throughout Metropolitan Detroit. How do we stand in that regard? Even worse than neighborhoods. Again, by far, No.1 in the United States most segregated schools in our metropolitan area. And, again, if we focus for a moment on the Detroit Public Schools, 93 percent of the students of Detroit Public Schools are black, according to 2005 state statistics; and 77 percent of them come from economically disadvantaged families.

Segregation by race and class. So what? Well, the so what is that the kind of segregation of blacks into the city of Detroit and the city of Detroit school system limits their opportunities for success. It doesn't rule them out. We know many have made it. But it limits their chances for success in a variety of ways.

First of all, the city, despite the efforts of the administration, maintains a weak tax base. It has inferior public services compared to many suburban jurisdictions. I'm a resident of the city of Detroit. I'm sorry, Mr. Adams, but I have to testify that we have inferior public services.

Secondly, as he suggested, we have a higher exposure to environmental hazards, which affects adversely the health of children and black families.

Thirdly, we have a high concentration of poverty in schools, which creates its own educational challenges.

We have reduced access to most of the job growth which, despite the movement of Quicken downtown, is primarily in the Detroit suburbs. We have reduced wealth accumulation via home appreciation. We don't have much appreciation of houses here in the city of Detroit, unfortunately, because of the population loss as well as the inferior public services.

And, last but not least, we have the opportunity for sub-cultural traits, for certain kinds of behaviors and styles of dress to develop that are distinct from the mainstream white America; and although these sub-cultural traits are wrong in themselves, it gives whites a chance to label them as wrong and inferior because they are different.

So now we talk about the next link in this chain, that is, perpetuating the economic inferiority of blacks within the region. Let me give you some statistics about these economic disparities between the races in Metro Detroit. Let me choose just a few of them.

The left panel talks about unemployment rates. For Metro whites the unemployment rates are only 3.3 percent. For blacks it's 12 percent. That was as of 2000. These inequalities remain today.

The poverty rate: White, it's only 5.9 percent; blacks, 24 percent. The median family income for whites, over \$65,000; for blacks, only \$37,000. We could go on and on, but it's very clear that there are these measurable distinctions between blacks and whites in Metro Detroit. But it goes on.

Concentrations of poverty, a key concern of the Kerner Commission 40 years ago. If we look at the neighborhoods that have 40 percent or more poor residents and ask, "Where are these neighborhoods located, and who lives in them?" here's what we find out: If we look at mainly black-occupied neighborhoods, we find 53 of these neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. They hold over 100,000 residents and guess what? They're all located in the city of Detroit. If we look at white-occupied concentrated neighborhoods of poverty, do you know how many we find in Metro Detroit? None.

Let's talk about interracial disparities when we come to school performance. These are percentages of white and black children who meet statewide standards as of 2005. The left-hand panel shows the scores for the Detroit Public Schools, which I've suggested are almost entirely black students.

The other panel shows the statewide averages. So at eighth grade reading scores, only 54 percent of the city of Detroit school children pass at basic standards; 76 percent statewide do so.

As for math, the differential is even greater. Only 33 percent of Detroit Public School children in eighth grade come up to basic math standards; 63 percent statewide do. And as the representative suggested, in ninth grade, these underperformers are very likely to hit the streets and hit the statistics of social problems.

All right. So we have all these various forms of interracial economic and social disparities in Metro Detroit. What next? Well, what next is that these disparities help to reinforce the racial stereotypes that many white people still hold about blacks. Why does it do that? Well, because I've suggested that segregation creates a context which makes it harder for blacks to become well educated, to become healthy, to become employed, to become wealthy and to be able to act and talk white. And all of this together reinforces whites' stereotypes.

Now, what are whites' stereotypes about blacks in Metro Detroit? Well, let's talk about that. Now we're down to this piece of our puzzle -- the lower right-hand corner of our diagram. If we look at whites' prejudices, we have opinion poll evidence from Metro Detroit that suggests the following facts: First of all, a majority of whites think that blacks are less intelligent. Three quarters of whites think that blacks don't speak English as well as they do.

Three quarters of blacks are more likely to prefer living off welfare than whites are. 43 percent of all Metro Detroit whites would not feel comfortable if their neighborhood was even one third black occupied, and 59 percent of whites would not move into a neighborhood that had at least one third black residents.

So given these prejudices, what do whites do? Well, they respond in two ways: They flee diverse situations, or they fight to keep their situation segregated. Now, the flight response, the running away from diversity, can easily be seen graphically, but by looking at a map of Detroit and how that map has changed over time since 1960, the census just before the famous 1967 riots -- and there is a simple color coding of the map of the city of Detroit. The codes are straightforward. The yellow neighborhoods are neighborhoods where whites are in the majority. The green-shaded neighborhoods are neighborhoods where blacks are in the majority, and the other color is a different situation.

This is a 1960 picture of racial segregation of the city of Detroit. Again, yellow are the neighborhoods where whites are the majority.

Please focus your attention on these yellow-coded neighborhoods while I run through the next 40 years in ten seconds. Here's 1970. Here's 1980. Here's 1990.

Here's 2000. The change in demography that you've all picked up are the magenta-shaded areas on the far southwest, which are Latino majority neighborhoods in southwest Detroit.

So now we're talking about the last piece of our puzzle: discrimination. You can run away from diversity, or you can try to maintain segregation through a variety of discriminatory barriers.

The representative talked about the rise of hate groups. In Michigan right now, we're No. 5 in the FBI list of racial hate crimes in the United States. He's not kidding. But there's other forms of discrimination in the housing market that are much more subtle than hate crimes that are nevertheless holding the color line of Metro Detroit.

We have a variety of studies that have used testers, pairs of closely matched black and whites who pose as home seekers in rental and apartment situations and record differences in treatment afforded them. And these studies were last conducted in Metro Detroit systematically in 2000, and what they found was as follows: Blacks were discriminated against in 14 percent of their searches to try to find rental apartments and 17 percent of their searches in their attempts to buy homes. The fight response -- discrimination both subtle and blatant -- is alive and well in Metro Detroit.

So, to summarize, what have I suggested? I've suggested that why we are in the same place as we were 40 years ago is just because of a social process called cumulative causation. It's a process that involves the following elements -- in no particular order because, remember, cause and effect are one and the same.

But if we start with residential segregation, I've suggested that segregation erects barriers which perpetuates blacks' socioeconomic inferiority. In turn, that inferiority reinforces the prejudicial beliefs of many white people. Those prejudicial beliefs in turn motivate a variety of acts of discrimination, both subtle and blatant, that effectively hold the color line. These acts, according to the fight response as well as the acts of white avoidance, the flight response, come back and perpetuate segregations of both schools and our neighborhoods in Metropolitan Detroit.

So I've suggested, then, in conclusion, that Detroit has become the nightmare scenario of the Kerner Commission. Cumulative causation is alive and well, and it has transformed our notion of equal opportunity from a hallowed premise into a hollow promise.

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.