

# Key Issues Confronting the Black Community in Denver, CO



# Key Issues Confronting the Black Community in Denver, CO:

*A Community in Transition*

Edited by

David W. Jackson III

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To the memory of our Black American Holocaust casualties  
Cason Xavier Evans (Son of Charletta Evans), brother, nephew,  
cousin, uncle, and grandson  
(Holocaust Gangs)

And to

David Walter Jackson, Sr./Daudi Oba Agbese I  
(Holocaust Spiritual Education)  
Sandra Jackson/Sandra Agbese (Holocaust Medical Apartheid)  
Renee Jackson/Upya Agbese (Holocaust Medical Apartheid)  
Leverta Jackson/Leverta Agbese (Holocaust Medical Apartheid)  
Clarence Jackson/Clarence Agbese (Holocaust Medical Apartheid)  
Melvin Moore (Holocaust Education)



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## PREFACE

This volume was developed in response to the need to construct a scholarly understanding of the dramatic transformation that Denver's Black community and the surrounding areas have undergone in the last ten years. The manifestations of this transformation include a large influx of population, increased criminality, a more significant incarceration rate, and higher school drop-out rates. While the volume does not examine every aspect of the consequences of the transformation of Denver, it provides enough details on how the changes have created a crisis in the Black community and how the community has responded to this crisis. This volume also seeks to raise awareness and encourages its readers to consider ways that local leadership, businesses, schools, and organizations can plan a course of action to remedy some of the problems that have a paralyzing effect on community growth. As such, this book provides pertinent information to consider as part of an ongoing dialogue that seeks corrective action on distressing issues which are found in the following chapters: (2) *Social Equity in Policing: An Exploration of Four Dimensions*; (3) *Prisoner Reintegration Within the Black Community in Colorado*; (4) *Preschool Suspensions: A Civil Rights Issue*; (5) *Impact of Marijuana Legalization: Special Considerations for Colorado's Black Community*; (6) *Population Growth and the Future of Black America and Latinas/os: Black and Brown Activism in Denver*.

I worked with high school students in Denver, Colorado, on being outspoken and encouraging them to think critically about the Black community's issues and how they can actively work as agents of social change. My dialogue with these youth has enabled me to understand some of their struggles. This book will also serve as a resource for teachers to give important reminders about the need for them to stay focused on maintaining the dialogue that persists throughout the nation related to our fight against a sophisticated design to dominate the masses of its Black and Brown citizens. Furthermore, I was also compelled to act based on my conversations with teachers from several Denver Public Schools concerned about the growing number of students who participated in marijuana usage during the lunch break, a problem that was leading to low-class performance and short attention spans. Thus, the impetus for this text is to answer some important questions, to name a few, for instance: 1. What are some of the health and

legal problems associated with marijuana usage?; 2. How can public policy decision-making bodies and public administrators foster fairer outcomes for historically disenfranchised groups? 3. How do you build coalitions between black and brown people?; 4. What are the causes of disproportionality in African American children?; 5. How are the problems of recidivism and homelessness intertwined? These are some questions explored in this text, and the answers serve as a source of motivation for the people working hard to make life more comfortable for the oppressed people in this country.

The Black community in Denver has undergone many changes in the last ten years. This transformation's manifestations are a large influx of population, increased criminality, larger incarceration rate, and higher school drop-out rates. Some of these issues have been exacerbated through a calculated plan to create chaos and devour the Black and Brown (Latino) people and their communities throughout the nation. Therefore, this text endorses the Black and Brown Lives Matter initiatives and serves as a tool to combat this oppressive system. While the volume has its limitations and cannot examine every aspect of the consequences of the transformation of Denver, it provides enough details on how the changes have created a crisis in the Black community. A group of concerned scholars responded to this crisis as part of their support of the movement for racial justice and freedom in America. This volume also seeks to raise awareness and encourages its readers to join the Black and Brown movements and advocate for its causes by considering ways that local leadership, businesses, schools, and organizations can plan a course of action to resolve some of the problems that persist in the Black and Brown community because of systemic racism. The Black and Brown movement is paramount to the continual battle against the extremists and their organized attempt to undermine the voice of our leadership by disrupting research geared toward exposing the system and its perpetrators.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank the Creator, Jehovah, for Life and giving me the ability to think critically about the world around me. Also, I am indebted to my mother, Mae Ida Blackwell (Mae Malkia Agbese) for her militant perspective which demanded that I fight for the truth and be steadfast about helping our people overcome their struggles with systemic racism. And too, my father, David W. Jackson Jr (Daudi Oba Agbese II), who gave me a lot of important information over the phone about the conditions of Colorado's Black communities. I thank the Almighty for my parents and their loving support. Next, I express my gratitude to my sister, Marquette Jackson (Marquette Agbese), who has fought tirelessly to support Black men in the prison system in Iowa. And deep gratitude goes to my grandmother Beverly Ann Jackson (Beverly Malkia Agbese) for teaching me to read the Holy Bible and respect all things that are sacred. This volume would not have seen the light of day without generous funding from the Office of Sponsored Research Programs at Metropolitan State University (MSU) of Denver. And I want to thank Gwendolyn Mamie, former Executive Director, Office of Sponsored Research and Programs for not hesitating to fund the book because she recognized the need for a publication that could bring scholarly attention to serious issues plaguing Denver's Black Community.

Next, I must mention, the majors and minors in Africana Studies who provided inspiration for this volume. Their constant quest to apply social theories to real life situations in the Black community of Denver stimulated many discussions and heated arguments. The students' enthusiasm to learn and to be actively engaged in grappling with problems of their Black community give hope for building a more positive and bright future for our black youth and their communities going into the next century. Time and time again the Africana Studies majors have proven themselves to be an elite group of students on college campuses across the country. As a scholar and community activist I am grateful for their incredible strength and determination to be agents of change both on and off the campus.

I also owe much gratitude to my mentors, Dr. Pita O. Agbese and Dr. Fredrick Woodard, who were instrumental with helping me to develop my ideas around the book project. Their presence is evident, when considering the topics selected by the scholars on this project; and these educators' self-

sacrificing personalities which continuously work through intellectual discourse to initiate change, epitomizes Dr. Agbese and Dr. Woodard's intellectual thought. Plus, I am thankful for my consultants Dr. Richard B. Turner and Dr. Katherine van Wormer for their quick responses to my emails and inquiries over the phone about my research problems and publishing issues.

Additionally, I want to express my appreciation to the contributors who invested a lot of time preparing their articles for this edited volume. Especially, the faculty at MSU Denver, where serving at a teaching institution is not the focus of their time, however; some carved out the hours to give attention to a matter that is affecting the student body and community. Without reservation, I applaud your tremendous efforts because the challenges you deal with while teaching in the urban environment are demanding, and often, go unnoticed in an educational system that gives limited support to the most vulnerable populations in our society. And I must mention my colleagues in Chicano Studies who contributed a critical chapter that highlights the importance of creating bridges between the Black and Brown people in Denver and our nation. An exceptional, thanks goes out to the women, who contributed some sophisticated scholarship and offered an invaluable role and strong presence to the quality of this volume. A special thank goes to my colleagues, Terri Gentry and Dr. Judith Strathern who volunteered their time to proofread and offer their professional opinions. I have a lot of respect for her knowledge and wisdom on Denver history. In fact, this book would not be complete without their involvement and professional perspective on the core issues. Here I want to thank, Yakubu Agbese, for his role with proofreading which was essential because of his African mindset and candid input on the development of the book.

Finally, I am confident that this piece will serve its purpose which is to shed light on several complicated problems that have generated serious ramifications by compromising the life of our precious youth and damaging the integrity of our families. On the other hand, I am proud to note in this volume, everyone's ideas are focused on a crisis that requires the unification of all people to examine its impact and start a dialogue to give cause for a solution.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

DAVID W. JACKSON III  
(DAUDI OBA AGBESE III)

[Jeremiah 10:23]

In the past ten years, there has not been a scholarly book devoted to analyzing problems in Denver's Black community. This volume fills that information void at a critical time when current research can be useful to lend insight about multiple issues people must overcome in Denver's Black community. Today, there exists a limited selection of picture books, although essential works, that focus on the late 1800's through the 1990's (Stephens and Larson 2001, 2008). Also, it is worth mentioning that some professional articles deal with single topics thoroughly, like issues related to families and women. Still, nothing was found on the Worldcat search engine, Google Scholar, or at the University of Denver libraries relevant to the variety of topics written about in this volume. With the gap in information, it is necessary to approach the pressing problems of Denver's Black community using a nontraditional lens to encourage future studies. The scholarly approach to investigating complex problems is traditionally made by using the linear approach to evaluate them. In this volume, a nonlinear approach grounded in a multidisciplinary lens is applied. This method allows scholars from different disciplines to examine an issue and bring forth their analyses to clarify several problems confronting Denver's Black community and those Black communities in the surrounding area in the 21st century.

Further, this volume and its contribution to the literature are critical because it has opened a new dialogue about some of the problems that cannot be ignored to maintain the community's peace. As a general definition for this volume, a community is a social group with the same economic interests, educational interests, and racial-cultural identity. Not all members reside in the same location. The Black community in Denver has been impacted by gentrification, which has scattered many Black people

geographically to different parts of the city. At the same time, they have retained a racial-cultural identity with shared interests. The original Black community established by Blacks under segregation, which was called the Historic Five Points District, is gradually becoming the home to White investors and their families. The shift has played a significant role in the transition as the Black community's racial composition in the Historic Five Points District has changed dramatically. Although gentrification is not the focus of this study, it is an obvious concern; in part, it is widely understood by the leadership and members of the Black community.

The five studies that comprise this volume in a broader historical context serve as information to understand violent White racial discriminatory activity in one of the five stages of the Black American Holocaust. This is a prelude to understanding Stage 5 of the Black American Holocaust, which is a culmination of stages that include: (stage 1) Enslavement; (stage 2) Black Codes; (stage 3) Segregation; (stage 4) Failed Integration and (stage 5) Semi-Separation. This study is crucial to the fifth stage of the Black American Holocaust because it examines several vital, integral factors. Even though we do not focus on the Black Holocaust as a historical event, it is imperative to understand that the topics detailed in the proceeding chapters, such as policing, prisoner reintegration, preschool suspensions, marijuana, and activism, are critical components of the Black American Holocaust: Stage 5. This book's content deepens our understanding of the ongoing crisis of this American Holocaust in the Black communities in Colorado.

Some of the issues explored in this volume relate to contemporary challenges in the Black community, which connect to subtle matters and require immediate attention. Regrettably, all the issues cannot be thoroughly examined in one volume without having multiple editions. In the future, it is possible that this volume may have a second edition where some of the remaining problems can be investigated. These fundamental issues confronting the community's progress are found in the following chapters: (2) *Social Equity in Policing: An Exploration of Four Dimensions*; (3) *Prisoner Reintegration Within the Black Community in Colorado*; (4) *Preschool Suspensions: A Civil Rights Issue*; (5) *Impact of Marijuana Legalization: Special Considerations for Colorado's Black Community*; and (6) *Population Growth and the Future of Black America and Latinas/os: Black and Brown Activism in Denver*. In this volume, the chapters deal with some of the current issues impacting Denver's Black community while it undergoes a transition. Thus, one of the introductory chapter's principal points emphasizes the need to conduct more research about Denver's Black

community. This study serves as a source of inspiration for scholars in the 21st century.

Compounding the social justice and racial issues facing Denver's Black community is the Coronavirus pandemic. If we consider the Coronavirus COVID-19 effects, more time is required to understand the disease and its real danger. The pandemic is a recent occurrence announced to the public by the Donald Trump Administration on March 13, 2020, in a Proclamation on Declaring a National Emergency. Today, the destructive force of COVID-19 cannot be measured with absolute certainty. Despite the numerous unanswered questions, scholars have commented about its potential impact on the Black community. Many community leaders across the country and scholars have speculated about its impact on Black and Whites' economic gap. Many Black academics have noted that COVID-19 has served White capitalists' interests by increasing unemployment, homelessness, and exacerbating poverty conditions in the Black and Brown communities. The Center for African American Health in Denver provides some pertinent information involving racism and COVID-19. Furthermore, the information on their website gives some relevant data regarding the disproportionate number of cases, specifically, as it relates to Black and Brown people in Denver. The ramifications of COVID-19 have influenced the transition of Denver's Black community and serve as points of notation in this volume. Thus, the volume grapples with issues developed over decades, giving academics enough time to analyze the outcomes.

Questions raised in this volume are troubling and deserve attention to avoid more damage to the future and foundation of Denver's Black community. Literature demonstrates that Black people have effectively organized and can maintain their individual living spaces while experiencing formidable resistance. The resilience of Black people and their community in Denver goes without notice by scholars because the transition has raised many questions about its future. A few of the questions explored in this volume consist of the following: 1. How do you build coalitions between Black and Brown people? 2. What are the causes of disproportionality in African American children? 3. What are some of the health and legal problems associated with marijuana usage? 4. How are the problems of recidivism and homelessness intertwined? 5. How can public policy decision-making bodies and public administrators foster fairer outcomes for historically disenfranchised groups? It is reasonable to be optimistic because the questions investigated, and the answers provided in this volume serve as a first step to seeking a resolution. Thus, Denver's leadership will find some information beneficial as it prepares for the transition, making this source invaluable to a significant population of the city.

Recently, Denver's Black community has been experiencing major tension with the police department and the use of excessive force by officers to apprehend people from the community. This issue has influenced the transition and is a vital issue in Denver. Tensions with police also have been the center of media coverage across the country. Further, this problem is dealt with in chapter two on social equity and policing. The nation's police brutality saga always has been an integral part of America's racial history after the Emancipation Proclamation. Since then, the White power structure developed an organization to monitor free Black men's movements to oppress their very existence. Through this militarized organization called America's police (peace) force, White men are trained in martial art techniques to restrain or kill Black men with the approval of America's criminal justice system. Oppression of the Black and Brown man in America is the hallmark of this country's intentions to control its greatest White supremacy threat. George Floyd, Derrick Scott, Rashard Brooks, and Manuel Ellis are a few names that top the list of Black men whose lives have been prematurely taken away from their families and friends in recent years. Those lives were, unfortunately, taken away by peace officers in unwarranted acts. Police officers have used the word "peace" to shield unscrupulous conduct for almost 150 years and the Black/Brown man has suffered similar deaths under the hold of White supremacy. America's judicial system has participated in these heinous crimes by protecting these peace officers during their trials conducted in this nation's courtrooms. Recently, the world of technology has made it possible to expose horrendous crimes perpetrated by the very people paid to serve our communities by keeping them safe from citizens that transgress the law. It has been difficult for many of the vulnerable populations in America to witness with their own eyes the incredible acts of violence perpetrated by our public servants over the past several months. As upholders of the law, citizens of this country have watched these men abandon their duty to protect and serve. Many officers have fallen and lost credibility with the citizens of this country.

The police department's pervading corruption is illustrated by the injustice centered around the firing of a Black policewoman named Carol Horne in 2006. She was fired for stopping another police officer from choking a Black man, who was being restrained in Buffalo, New York. The Buffalo Police Department argued that this law-abiding officer had placed her peer's life in danger. Most importantly, of note, it was a White police officer, Gregory Kwiatkowski. Adding to the injustice, this loyal and devoted Black woman who served her community as a police officer was terminated approximately a year before receiving her pension. The gravity of the situation has been brought to light as former officer Kwiatkowski was



sentenced to four months in prison for the use of extreme force against four African American teenagers. Additionally, this act of police violence occurred a decade after Mrs. Horne was released from the Buffalo Police Department. Fortunately, her termination is under review after Officer Kwiatkowski's excessive force pattern was revealed to the public. Through the review process, it is anticipated that Horne's heroic efforts will prove to be fruitful. Despite her trials with the Buffalo Police Department, Horne has worked tirelessly as an activist raising awareness about the law's ongoing violence and the need for policy changes.

After a thorough examination of the incident, it is evident the policies behind procedures for apprehending persons during an arrest must be re-evaluated. The action taken by police officer Horne was appropriate, except for a policy in place that prevented her from interfering with the arrest, even though she recognized that the Black man's life was in danger. This incident is critical because it leads us to understand the rationale police officers use to justify their use of excessive force when dealing with Black and Brown people who have died in police custody.

Closer to Denver, in the suburb of Aurora, Colorado, a Black man is at the center of a high-profile case involving suspected police brutality, which forced city officials to review policy and procedures used when making an arrest. Elijah McClain was a 23-year-old Black man who did not have a criminal record and was health-conscious because he struggled with anemia. This disease causes a person to be susceptible to other diseases because of a compromised immune system. The person will also have cold hands and feet because the red blood cells cannot retain oxygen. A person with anemia may also suffer from weakness. Those are the symptoms that McClain dealt with regularly. During the evening of August 24, 2019, McClain was returning home from a convenience store when he was approached by an Aurora police officer, who was responding to a call about a young Black male looking suspicious wearing a black ski mask on a summer night. A scuffle ensued between McClain and the arresting officer, which led to paramedics being called to transport McClain to the hospital. According to *USA Today*, McClain was put in a carotid hold by the police officers; also, the paramedics may have exacerbated the problem by injecting him with a sedative. Unfortunately, several days later, he was removed from life support on August 30, 2019. Compounded by the George Floyd murder in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the Black Lives Matter Movement nationally, community activists in Denver and Aurora organized protests demanding answers in the death of Elijah McClain and police reform. Furthermore, it has become a common complaint by advocates for social justice to question the harmful effects of procedure and policy, as illustrated in the Elijah

McClain Timeline created by *The Denver Post*. The Aurora Police Department must scrutinize current policies that govern policing of its citizens and overturn bad policies and write new policies, which are part of the transition for Denver's Black community and the surrounding areas.

The necessity for overturned policies is an urgent and severe matter now that we understand the historical origins of America's policies and the destructive nature of those policies. America has an embarrassing race history where the development of policies to subjugate its people was admired by the Nazis of Germany and Adolf Hitler's followers. It is shameful to admit that the Nazis studied race law in America and replicated it for their selfish purposes in Germany. Thus, the Nazis of Germany have a great legacy of killing by way of their laws; it has come to light that they applied American laws to ostracize and mutilate a population of people. It is a surprise and disheartening to learn that the leader of the "free" world is not at all free for many Americans. In fact, it is quite disturbing to know that the Nazis were repulsed at the brutality of some of the laws established by Americans and refused to degrade their enemies to that degree. This point is expounded upon by one of the leading scholars of Nazi race law when he states:

Awful it may be to contemplate, but the reality is that the Nazis took a sustained and sometimes even eager interest in the American example in race law. They most certainly were interested in learning from America. In fact, as we shall see, it was the most radical Nazis who pushed most energetically for the exploitation of American models. ... In the early 1930s the Nazis drew on a range of American examples, both federal and state. Their America was not just the South; it was a racist America writ much larger. Moreover, The Ironic truth is that when Nazis rejected the American example, it was sometimes because they thought that American practices were overly harsh of the early 1930s, even radical ones, American race law sometimes looked too racist. ... Nevertheless, Nazi lawyers regarded America, not without reason, as the innovative world leader in the creation of racist law; and while they saw much to deplore, they also saw much to emulate (Whitman, *Hitler's American Model*, 4, 5).

The truth is that America specializes in engineering oppressive laws and policies to maintain control and power over its Black and Brown citizens. Today, not much has changed as 21st-century academics analyze the restrictive and racist programs that have been designed to set back its citizens of color. Although the rhetoric and the terminology have changed, there still is much work to be done to dismantle the intricate nature of systemic racism and the policies that drive the American social system.

A first step toward addressing systemic racism must start with rewriting policies that deal with policing of the Black community. Chapter 2: ***Social Equity in Policing: An Exploration of Four Dimensions***, provides an analysis of social equity in policing, a topic that has received a lot of attention, because of civilians' cell phone recordings of arrests made by police using lethal force, and the footage being circulated in social media and released to the news media. Most of these incidents have involved African Americans being tortured and killed by officers of the law. The police's excessive use of force has resulted in countless high-profile cases that have received media attention nationwide. Despite the negative publicity law enforcement has received, it is evident that they are a tool being used by the power structure and right-wing capitalists to carry out their agenda of total subjugation of Black and Brown people in America. Without a doubt, many good police officers work without foreknowledge of the racially charged systemic issues. Therefore, they unintentionally work to fulfill the plan of our nation's leadership that has gone corrupt.

The problem is two-fold because the literature shows that prisons' privatization compounds the problem of high incarceration rates and subpar operational standards of prison facilities that threaten inmates' safety. The corporation of prisons is a cause for enormous concern because there is a substantial amount of money to be made for investors by locking up our Black and Brown citizens. Prison reform has become a secondary issue that has grown into a substantial for-profit enterprise. Though there was an effort by the federal government to decrease the use of private contracts with prisons according to the [sentencingproject.org](http://sentencingproject.org): "At the federal level, a 2016, Obama Administration policy shift to reduce reliance and ultimately phase out private prison contracts was reversed by Attorney General Jeff Sessions in February 2017." By later, overturning the policy to cut the use of private contracts at the federal level informs us that there is a faction of the government in favor of privatizing prisons despite the overwhelming evidence to support their toxic nature. Unfortunately, there is a shocking statistic that informs us that out of 2.5 million prisoners, 1 million are Black. In effect, nearly half of America's prison population consists of Black people making an irrefutable case for systemic racism and prisons being used as mechanisms to build wealth by incarcerating Black people, according to the Sentencing Project's *Criminal Justice Facts*.

Historically speaking, after the emancipation of enslaved Blacks, our government created the police force with the primary purpose to monitor the newly freed population of Blacks, and often, they were arrested in order to perform cheap labor. Here it's essential to note the police force's historical origins to demonstrate the root cause of systemic racism within

the institution that “serves and protects” the Denver community. Readers must understand that the government played a significant role in maintaining the racial disparities in policing and other facets of our society throughout history. Furthermore, there is considerable evidence in the scholarly records that confirms that government agencies’ participation is mandatory in the fight against police use of lethal force, influencing policy changes, and implementing them. In fact, in the subsequent chapter, the authors urge government agencies to join the movement to solve the problems with policy reform and police brutality of the Black and Brown communities.

Hence, Chapter 2 gives constructive criticism of social equity in policing, which investigates these issues theoretically by focusing on three prominent dimensions that implicate social equity in policing. First, the chapter reviews the literature on how social issues and policing intersect and their effects on minority communities. Second, the importance of administrative culture is discussed. Finally, two suggestions for enhancing social equity in policing are discussed: fostering greater representativeness and improving training practices. This chapter seeks to encourage discussion and debate about the extent and causes of inequity, and how to achieve social equity accountability.

Next, Chapter 3: *Prisoner Reintegration Within the Black Community in Colorado* discusses the issue of reintegration post-incarceration and the obstacles Black men must overcome to make a successful transition into mainstream society. In fact, much of the scholarship argues that the penitentiary system does not reform Black men or provide rigorous programming to prepare them to meet the rapidly changing society’s challenges upon their release. It is apparent that it is used as social apparatus to suppress their role in the Black community as leaders and dismantle their presence as heads of their families. Throughout history, the penal system worked as a tool to subjugate Black men and gradually erode their confidence as strong role models and primary contributors to their families. Today, it is clear that the criminal justice system, in general, operates solely to ostracize the Black man from the American landscape by stripping him of his basic civil and human rights. This ongoing saga can be traced back to the Jim Crow era when Black men were maliciously sought out by officials of the peace force to imprison.

A critical issue raised by this chapter is reintegration, which continues to be a severe problem. The data shows an alarming recidivism rate that has been unmanageable with the meager support systems designed to force Black men back into the prisons. This revolving door is sanctioned by inadequate programming offering decent housing. Often, the prisoners

struggle to identify housing that will accept them because of their criminal background. This problem is compounded by a lack of financial resources and unemployment; employment is essential to qualify as a renter. The cornerstone to survival in modern-day society is possessing a living space that stabilizes an individual giving them a sense of belongingness and independence. Unfortunately, our society's toxic energy contributes to the demise of Black male prisoners, who attempt to reintegrate and cannot, because, in some situations, mental illness is a factor that hinders their efforts. Another problem is that many housing agencies and landlords deny the applications of those struggling to claim a space to reorganize their lives and establish themselves in their community. Often, the converse is true. Faced with rejection, their survival instinct prevails, and they return to their former criminal life, and this negative activity inevitably leads to incarceration. This chapter offers an analysis that helps the reader to understand that men and a growing number of women are, in fact, relegated to a status of second-class citizenship after being released from prison.

Numerous contemporary studies provide insight into understanding how having a criminal background has led to homelessness for men and women released from the prison systems. Unfortunately, the barriers around housing are astronomical, and they are so restrictive that homelessness for many is the only option rather than returning to prison. This analysis shows that the criminal justice system is rigged and serves to bring down Black and Brown people. Thus, the system reflects the expression: "Every system is designed to produce the results that it gets." Still, many elements in the system survive from our nation's embarrassing racist past. The disenfranchisement strategy is a form of social control, which is an old-school tactic that jeopardizes Black men's future. It is evident with the findings supported by the chapter on prisoner reintegration, which serves to confirm the existence of perpetual racial discrimination throughout this country's prisoner reintegration system of which housing is a central concern.

Another topic of concern deals with preschool suspension and, it is explored in Chapter 4: ***Preschool Suspensions: A Civil Rights Issue***. The content within this study embarks on a new dialogue with the age group being preschool kids. This perspective invites new insights that support Black children's elimination in education as soon as they are enrolled in the educational system. Most of the information that pertains to teaching and discrimination begins with fourth- and fifth-grade Black boys. These are pivotal years that have been researched by scholars, who have demonstrated the prison systems target this age group when making projections on building state correctional facilities. A critical point of reference for the

prison to pipeline discourse tracks Black males into the country's rapidly growing state reformatory systems.

Today, we understand through rigorous research that Black students' school suspension is a White resistance strategy against properly educating Black children, and it works to promote the prison pipeline agenda. The extreme measures used to discipline Black students are understood by examining the national statistics, which show a disproportionate number of Black students being expelled in comparison to their White peers. Furthermore, this leads to serious disruptions in learning that undermine the students' efforts to master the course content and perform well on examinations. One of the consequences of expulsion is it leaves Black students with psychological scars that have pierced their confidence. This, too, brings another related severe issue of the achievement gap in which many studies provide mountains of data that show it steadily increasing between Blacks and Whites. The notion of inclusion and multiculturalism's rhetoric have no merit because the current data regarding racial discrimination shows the converse to be true of the nation's educational system. According to an article written by Valerie Strauss, printed in November 2020, in *The Washington Post*, the Obama Administration worked fervently to promote equity and inclusion for Black boys who were victims of an American educational system failing from the profound racial disparities that persisted across the country. The federal data from Obama's administration made a note of the disproportionate numbers of Black boys being suspended from school in comparison to their White counterparts.

Another point of contention is that small-town and suburban White teachers are disconnected from the Black experience and have only exacerbated the problem. Many White teachers enter the classroom with preconceived ideas of Black students and often have low expectations. Despite the genuine effort of many White teachers who have sought out the best strategies for Black students, they still have fallen short. Again, the blame does not fall entirely on the White teacher, but also on the institutions that train them and a curriculum that promotes White supremacy, according to *The School-to-Prison Pipeline Starts in Preschool*. Additionally, inadequate preparation has led to miscommunication when White teachers interact with Black students, which has resulted in inappropriate disciplinary measures and unnecessary suspensions. In effect, White teachers are not appropriately equipped with a level of cultural competency that will enable them to teach Black students; thus, many have stopped educating Black students and started disciplining them. After surveying the data on this critical topic, it is saturated with information on K-12, which makes this

chapter unique because it gives additional findings regarding the origins of the problems beginning in preschool.

In brief, in Chapter 4, the author presents a literature review related to addressing the number of children of color who are disproportionately suspended, expelled, and disciplined in early childhood education (ECE) programs. The history of racial disparities in disciplinary practices, the status of disproportional suspension, and the causes of the overrepresentation of children of color suspended and expelled from ECE programs are also examined. This recent discovery of White resistance is shocking and shows our White counterparts' determination to maintain segregation in the school systems. Thus, the integration efforts are exhausting. To make matters worse, the data shows that it has failed. As a result of the integration failures, it is essential to have racial sensitivity training available to support peaceful coexistence among Black, Brown, and White people in schools.

Teenagers and the legalization of marijuana in Colorado are the focus of Chapter 5: ***Impact of Marijuana Legalization: Special Considerations for Colorado's Black Community***. Voters passed The Colorado Amendment 64 on November 6, 2012, legalizing marijuana effective in January 2014. This amendment has been the focus of much controversy. Therefore, Chapter 5 is important because marijuana is a legal substance available in the community, and even more, it is a major threat to the mental development of Black teenagers. Marijuana usage by African Americans is no secret and has been commonly used, albeit unlawfully, since the middle of the 20th century. It has been used as a safe form of entertainment and casual use with family and friends to relax from the stress created by everyday life. Unfortunately, drugs and alcohol have been used to develop dysfunctional Black communities and other communities of color. Often, deception is used to persuade Black people there is no harm in using certain drugs to sabotage the stability of the community. In fact, critical information is suppressed or falsely presented as part of a calculated plan to stagnate the development and progress of Black people. The historical record clearly shows that America's power structure has used misinformation and propaganda as a strategy to paralyze a race of people.

The passing of the law has benefits for responsible, mature adults and citizens who are undergoing serious medical treatment. When considering the operations of systemic racism, the passing of the marijuana law can lead to a nonproductive path for Black and Brown people. For instance, research shows that long-term use of marijuana by teenagers into adulthood is detrimental to brain development, ultimately compromising intellectual growth because the brain does not fully develop until a person reaches their early twenties. We must pay attention to this data and place it within the

Black experience's historical context in American society. My point is that the nation's laws and policies have been used as standard methods to subjugate the minds and bodies of Black people. On the one hand, this law can create a deep sense of complacency among our youth who engage in something considered safe because the power structure said it is okay. On the other hand, Black teenagers, who are like all other teenagers, are naïve to White supremacy's intricacies and its attempts to suppress Black people. Thus, youth must be adequately educated about the harmful effects of addiction and various brain developmental issues hindering them from being productive citizens of the community. Additionally, data demonstrates that marijuana is no longer being sold in its natural form, and it contains many artificial substances that are incredibly harmful to the body.

Recent data also points out that citations and arrest rates of Black teenagers associated with marijuana have increased while their White counterparts have declined. The long-term consequences of these marijuana offenses can be debilitating as our youth become adults and seek federal resources to support furthering their education beyond high school. Voting and other rights afforded to them as American citizens will also be eliminated because of drug offenses. Our youth do not understand that these kinds of charges will have a drastic impact on their ability to acquire gainful employment and place severe limitations on their financial future. The chapter on marijuana is a critical starting point to learn more about the drug. Hence, people have access to accurate information that will give clarity to our teenage and adult users. The research developed on this matter provides data and information relevant to the Black experience. In this chapter, it is understood that more research must be conducted to give a thorough analysis of the marijuana issue in the Black community in Denver and surrounding areas.

Members of Black and Brown communities have common social and political issues of concern. A few points regarding those concerns are discussed in Chapter 6: ***Population Growth and the Future of Black America and Latinas/os: Black and Brown Activism in Denver***. Historically, we have seen members of the Black and Brown communities across the nation, organize together in hopes of overcoming similar obstacles that impede economic growth and educational aspirations for their families. Many people in the Latino community, including leaders such as Cesar Chavez, Antonio Villaraigosa, and many others, recognize the benefits of building and maintaining alliances central to overcoming racial barriers that disturb the peace of Black and Brown people. They, as well as many Black leaders, strongly encourage the unity of Black and Brown people for the sake of defending themselves against a common oppressor.



There is a rich history of cooperation between these two minority groups that has not gone unnoticed by the White power structure, which continues to exploit the minority communities to enhance their agendas. Meanwhile, there is evidence to suggest they are employing the old strategy of divide and conquer to weaken current alliances and prevent future ones from developing. In addition, media outlets are sending subliminal messages to our impressionable people, the youth, that promote confrontations among the groups, which could serve to devalue our sense of purpose and unity in the future. The media's influence is extremely powerful, a tool used throughout history as another form of social control. It has been instrumental in derailing movements and inciting distrust among our leadership, thus foiling many organized attempts against the system.

Furthermore, Black and Brown people must never become complacent and always remember the treacherous nature of these adversaries, something that cannot be overlooked during a time when they are developing new technology to replace human labor, which, in turn, generates competition in a shrinking job market between Black and Brown people, who only have a few options to provide financial support for their families. This is a critical matter to discuss because there is data that supports evidence indicating growing tensions between the two groups, a potential problem that must be resolved immediately to preserve established coalitions and to build more.

Today, there is a significant income gap between White people and the Black and Brown population that gives credibility to the ongoing manipulation of these two minority groups by their White counterparts. One study provides some startling statistics regarding the financial dilemma experienced by most people in these communities. The report by the Southern Poverty Law Center explains "median net worth for Hispanic households is \$7,932, almost \$2,000 more than the \$5,998 median for Blacks. But when compared to Whites, who, at \$88,651, own more than 10 times either amount – the difference pales into insignificance."

This volume comes at an appropriate time when there is a major influx of Latino immigrants entering the United States to escape extreme violence in Mexico. As part of this study, and by way of written activism, a bridge is built to welcome them into the country with open arms. The artificial boundaries drawn by the so-called "founding fathers" of this nation are insignificant, when considering the fact these are the real indigenous people of this land. Plus, their presence comes, at a point when there is a need to increase our numbers and strengthen our bonds to counteract the power structure's intentions to eliminate the efforts of Black and Brown people to gain justice in a society that systemically deprives its poor people of color of fully exercising their civil rights.

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## CHAPTER 2

# SOCIAL EQUITY IN POLICING: AN EXPLORATION OF FOUR DIMENSIONS

SEAN A. MCCANDLESS

Local governments across the United States increasingly realize that they need to design and implement policies that foster greater social equity, especially concerning policing. Social equity, a pillar of public administration alongside efficiency, effectiveness, and economy, is defined by the National Academy of Public Administration's Standing Panel on Social Equity (2016) as follows:

The fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; the fair, just and equitable distribution of public services and implementation of public policy; the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy.

To Gooden (2015), social equity scholarship has addressed questions concerning how to understand the extent and causes of inequity. Among these questions is how accountability for social equity is achieved, which generally refers to how public policy decision-making bodies and public administrators work to foster fairer outcomes for historically disenfranchised groups. Johnson and Svava (2011) proposed seven strategies that public agencies should use to foster greater accountability for social equity: 1) admit and speak out about social equity problems caused by the public sector; 2) target outreach to particular groups; 3) promote process equity; 4) give fairness the same priority as other issues; 5) measure social equity; 6) give everyone a place at the table, and 7) build partnerships with organizations and communities to address and enhance social equity. These fostering accountability methods are meant to make governments more "answerable" to groups who historically have not received equity in terms of process, access, quality, and outcomes (see Dubnick, 2015; Johnson & Svava, 2011).

*Achieving* accountability for social equity is far more difficult. This is especially true in policing, which has become for many the symbol of inequities in the United States. The statistics are sobering. Minorities—African Americans in particular—are stopped, searched, and arrested in more significant proportions than other members of the population. While many dispute whether racial inequities are systemically present in cases of police shootings of minorities, one reality is evident: there is an enormous trust gap between police and the communities of color they serve.

This chapter explores these issues theoretically by focusing on three prominent dimensions that implicate social equity in policing. First, the chapter reviews the literature on how social issues and policing intersect and how they impact minority communities. Second, the chapter discusses the importance of administrative culture. Concluding the chapter are two recommendations for enhancing social equity in policing, namely fostering greater representativeness, and enhancing training methods.

## **Social Issues, Communities, and Policing**

Mendias and Kehoe (2006) noted several variables affect officer conduct, such as policing standards, community expectations, and political pressures. As such, regions face their own unique policing issues (e.g., crime patterns, drug trafficking, homicides, immigration) that implicate race and could change how administrators respond to public issues (Taylor & McCandless, 2016). Conflict theory, the minority group threat hypothesis, and consensus theory provide a theoretical basis for these claims. According to conflict theory, conflicts over material conditions engender crimes amongst minorities since violence is a means for the marginalized to gain power and resources. According to the minority group threat hypothesis, as the proportion of minorities increases with respect to Whites, White citizens' fear of crimes increases, leading to policing styles that emphasize minority crime control (Witherspoon, 2010). Consensus theory offers yet another explanation. This theory indicates that police operate from notions of equity and that the criminal justice system imposes sanctions on those who break the law, irrespective of demographic factors (MacDonald, 2003). Since all three describe policing actions to some degree, questions arise about how community pressure, especially in tandem with pressures from political elites, influences police behaviors (Taylor & McCandless, 2016).

For instance, some officers, operating under the assumption that minorities are more likely to be dangerous (Witherspoon, 2010), may be more strongly motivated by a desire to socially control minorities than by the desire to serve the public. This assumption helps to justify disparate

treatment at the hands of police between minorities and Whites. Police often assert that they target problems, not people and that aggressive, proactive law enforcement decreases crime and maximizes public safety. For example, Williams and Stahl (2008) studied traffic stop data from 24 police agencies in Kentucky and engaged in focus group interviews with small groups of officers from five agencies. The authors found a correlation between race and traffic stops, and those officers were confident that they “profile problems and not people.” The findings suggest that several factors prior to a stop influence officer decision-making and that influences on officers’ decisions outside of the aggregate stop rates themselves should be the focus of empirical inquiry (p. 221).

Other data suggest that while most officers’ decisions might not be intrinsically racist, their values and perceptions shape their personal experience of how race, neighborhood characteristics, and crime rates interact lead officers to associate all three together. For instance, several studies have found that police, when patrolling high crime neighborhoods, often view minorities as suspicious, leading to more stops of these individuals (Alpert et al., 2005, 2007). Others have noted that the higher rate of stops might be better explained by gruffer, more impersonal policing styles, common among officers in urban locales. These officers likely operate from a worldview that envisions stricter lines between the rules of law and disorder in dangerous communities (Barker, 1999).

For instance, the policing styles differ between wealthy communities (which typically are populated by Whites) and those marked by poverty, unemployment, and low wages (which are typically populated by minorities, especially African Americans). Police tend to be more cautious with more economically advantaged citizens since they likely carry more voice and have a more secure platform to voice concerns with the police (Mastrofski & Ritti, 1992). However, poorer communities tend to have higher crime rates, possibly due to structural inequities that cause some minorities to view crime as a viable way to obtain resources that they could not feasibly obtain otherwise (Anderson, 1999). Scholars have extensively documented how police do not always treat poorer communities equally as well as affluent communities (see Kirby, 2013). More problematically, some departments have engaged in benign neglect of more impoverished communities, have reduced responsiveness, and associate members of particular communities with criminal lifestyles (Taylor & McCandless, 2016).

Further, it is possible that variations in how police enforce laws could be explained by the effects of political mandates, which are essential to understanding how police engage in their work (Mastrofski, 2004). The