Highlights from the Fourth Annual Leadership Development Workshop

The Changing Face of

America

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

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October 20-21, 2000

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Children and Family Fellowship

Helping distressed communities become places that foster strong, capable families is a complex challenge that requires innovation in many areas. One of the key challenges is changing the child welfare, education, mental health, and other public systems charged with serving children and their families. The Annie E. Casey Foundation believes that one essential step toward reforming these child and family services systems — and enabling communities to transform themselves — is fostering the capacity of individuals to lead institutions and systems toward more effective responses to the needs of disadvantaged children and families.

Acting on this conviction, the Casey Foundation created the Children and Family Fellowship, an 11-month leadership development program for mid-career professionals. The Fellowship explicitly strives to increase the pool of leaders with the vision and ability to frame and sustain major system reforms and community capacity-building initiatives that benefit large numbers of children and families. A complement to our existing programs and funding strategies, the Fellowship represents an important investment in the future of the human services field — and in the futures of our most vulnerable children.

The Fellows Network

Following Fellows'"graduation" from the Children and Family Fellowship, the Annie E. Casey Foundation continues to invest in this cadre of leaders through the Casey Fellows Network. This Network seeks to support a growing and diverse group of leaders from a variety of fields and backgrounds, all committed to a similar value system and to improving the outcomes for disadvantaged children and families. The Network provides opportunities for professional collaboration and supports Fellow-to-Fellow relationships that maximize the impact of the Fellowship experience.

The Network gathers all alumni and current Fellows for an annual meeting and conducts ongoing leadership development activities. It also administers a small grants program that funds a variety of Fellow's projects that support the mission of the Foundation. In general, the Network allows Fellows to use one another as resources, to maximize their collective impact, support the current class of Fellows, and offer ongoing expertise to the Fellowship program at the Foundation.

Executive Summary The Changing Face of America

Larry Murray
Chair
Leadership Development Committee
Casey Fellows Network

Brenda Donald
Chair
Casey Fellows Network

The results of the latest Census have begun to reshape popular and political understanding of race and ethnicity in the United States. The decennial survey described a general population growing by 13.2 percent in the 1990s to 281.4 million people, fueled in large part by a surge in births by several minority groups, immigrants and the children of Baby Boomers. The Hispanic or Latino population grew dramatically by 13 million people to 35.3 million, a 58 percent increase. This increase suggests that the number of Latinos and non-Hispanic blacks are now roughly the same, despite a more than 20 percent increase among African Americans during the last decade. Notably, the Asian population grew by nearly 75 percent to almost 12 million and like the Latino and black populations received immigrant influxes from a variety of nations.

From sea to shining sea, America is increasingly multiracial and multicultural. Nearly half of the nation's 100 largest cities are home to more people of color than whites. The growth of minority populations has been greatest in the West and Southwest. However, states and communities in the Midwest and Southeast also saw dramatic increases, particularly in their Latino populations, as many people from Central and South America sought new labor opportunities in the generally booming American economy of the 1990s.

But what does this growing diversity mean, particularly for those of us interested in improving outcomes for vulnerable children and their families? In October 2000, the Casey Fellows Network of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Children and Family Fellowship convened its fourth annual leadership workshop to explore this question. "The Changing Face of America," a two-day meeting, gathered demographers, policymakers and politicians, community activists and academics. Though the hard data of the Census was not yet publicly available, less comprehensive demographic analyses nevertheless described many of the new racial and ethnic realities. Our goal was to try to explore the implications of the changing numbers, to try to understand how the country's shifting racial and ethnic makeup might cause us to rethink policies, practices, programs and indeed, our individual and collective work. In our two days together, we sought not to find solutions to, or even consensus on, these new challenges and opportunities, but to pose questions and begin a conversation that continues today.

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Provocative, insightful presentations and spirited discussions suffused the Changing Face of America workshop. Participants were at turns challenged, frustrated and inspired. To document and share some of the issues and insights offered during this quite remarkable two days, we present this "Highlights" document. In it, we hope to describe some of the salient themes that have continued to resonate with us as we have returned to our work and as the data from the Census has begun to enter the larger political dialogue. We also hope that this document can serve as a conversation starter or re-starter, a kind of intellectual goad to those in the field or in government or in academia to examine the new racial and ethnic realities and to use a new kind of understanding to inform their practice.

The Workshop: A Brief Overview

The Changing Face of America workshop began with a provocative keynote address from Abigail Thernstrom, Ph.D., a Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute. Dr. Thernstrom's presentation was a startling beginning to a meeting devoted to discussing race and ethnicity. In essence, she argued that current racial and ethnic labels are limiting and outdated. Race-based policies, while needed in the past to demolish legal barriers to equality, are no longer helpful and, she said, potentially antithetical to many of the ultimate goals these policies seek to serve. Dr. Thernstrom's talk kicked off a small firestorm of debate, and her views were an invigorating reminder of the broad spectrum of thinking on how the nation should best confront the challenges associated with race and ethnicity.

Following this keynote address, the workshop moved into the first of what would be five substantive panel discussions. **"Power and Politics: People of Color Face Challenges in Gaining, Retaining Political Power" (See pages 6-8)** investigated several of the issues confronting minority communities as they seek to participate more broadly in the political arena. The group discussed the opportunities and challenges of majority minority voting districts, the relatively slow growth of voters in "rapidly growing" groups and the under-acknowledged diversity within racial and ethnic groups, which often masks significant political tensions. The panel also pointed to the "mainstreaming" of minority politicians, that successful political representatives understand and serve their base, but also are able to frame concepts and ideas that appeal to the broader community.

The Work: Cultural Competence and Effective Practice (See pages 9-10) explored how changing demographics are affecting the programs and professional practice of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and others on behalf of vulnerable children and families. A good part of this discussion focused on the issue of "cultural competence," defined broadly by a panelist, James Mason, Ph.D., of Portland State University, as "what we do in the face of diversity." In addition to struggling to understand this concept more clearly, the panel talked about how each community's context and its unique history affect this competence. The panel also identified additional challenges for people working in communities, including inter-group tensions, which slow broader, collective progress, and the reliance of many professionals on so-called risk factors, which, when they fail to account for certain racial or ethnic norms, may point to social pathology where none exists.

One of the clearest messages from the Census data is that race in America is no longer simply about how African Americans and whites interact, that Latino and Asian communities are growing

powerfully and play an increasingly important role in politics, community organizing and community-based programming. The availability of this data, said panelists of **"Race in America: Beyond Black and White" (See pages 11-12),** has been a key driver of public policy for minority communities, and a vehicle for enabling particularly the Latino and Asian communities to be "seen and heard" in many places for the first time. The emergence of these groups, said panelists, places a premium on the development of new multiracial, multiethnic coalitions, efforts that are beginning to happen in certain communities, but remain underdeveloped in others.

Education: Greater Immigration, Diversity Challenge Schools (See pages 13-15) served to ground the workshop's discussion of race in a particular system's context. Here, panelists discussed how America's increasing multiculturalism plays out (often with disturbing results) in the public institution most directly responsible for preparing young people for the future. The conversation centered around school staff, particularly the majority of white teachers and administrators who are too often ill-prepared to respond to students from racial and ethnic groups different from themselves. Confronting this issue will require significantly enriched teacher training, said panelists. This is especially true, given the new teachers needed to replace a large percentage of educators retiring in the next decade. The panel presentations and the discussion that followed also examined a variety of pressures schools face, from a lack of resources to serious economic and social problems that affect their students and communities.

The final session, **Policy: Revising Race-based Public Policies to Reflect a Multicultural Population (See pages 16-18),** took up many of the issues presented in Dr. Thernstrom's opening address. While refusing to take up her call to eschew race-based policies, panelists did point to several current shortcomings of these policies. As the Census for the first time enabled people to choose a wide variety of multiracial categories, panelists said they worried that these choices will make more complex the creation of policies that promote racial equality. And as we as a nation have begun to understand race not as a fixed, essential characteristic, but as something socially constructed, this deeper knowledge is again increasingly disconnected from the policymaking process.

The workshop was brought to a close with a dinner that gathered panelists, Casey Foundation staff, Children and Family Fellows and others. During the meal, Ralph Smith, Vice President of the Foundation, spoke to the group **(See pages 19–20)**. He outlined the significant social and economic legacies of racism, the under-defined notion of "whiteness" that describes normalcy in America, the profound challenges presented by the most recent wave of immigration and the broad political disillusionment with affirmative action. As a result of these and other factors, he said, America may be on the verge of transformative change that goes beyond ideology, culture and politics. He applauded the Fellows Network for examining this issue at this particular point in history. And, importantly, he challenged the Network to continue its intellectual exploration of race, ethnicity and identity, to develop a body of knowledge we all need to accomplish the goal of improving the outcomes for disadvantaged children and families.

Presenter

Abigail Thernstrom, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow
Manhattan Institute

Dr. Abigail Thernstrom led off the leadership workshop by offering a contrarian view of race to the meeting and the Casey Fellows Network more broadly. Indeed, in contrast to the intent of the meeting and the perspectives of many in the audience, she questioned the utility of studying race in America at all. The race "lens," she said, is outdated—formerly useful to break down legal barriers, but now an impediment to addressing contemporary and future social and political challenges. This argument provided a provocative kick-start to the workshop and engendered a wealth of spirited discussion.

Racial Categories: Disturbing and Outmoded

The racial categories we use, asserted Dr. Thernstrom, are "disturbing" and in many ways, arbitrary. "[They are]," she said, "carried over from primitive 19th-century social scientists who viewed people as divided into four distinct races, different from each other as rabbits are from squirrels. In the 19th century, these groups were seen as differing in their innate intellectual potential and their cultural development....Such ideas are only held by the lunatic fringe today, and yet the government of the United States remarkably still uses these antiquated and pernicious categories in compiling statistical information about the American people."

Why, she went on, do we not pay equal attention to other categories, such as religion? "The American public is not equally bombarded with data on the socioeconomic characteristics of Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Moslems and the many denominational subdivisions within those broad categories, and why not? Religious groups in the United States differ, often quite dramatically, in levels of education, income, wealth, SAT scores, unemployment rates, most other socioeconomic measures....Why is religion a private matter, while race and to some extent ethnicity is seen as a public one?"

Past Prejudice Does Not Justify Current Racial Categories

Dr. Thernstrom also sought to debunk the idea that racial and ethnic categories retain meaning because of past discrimination. She said it is "highly questionable" that "racial victimization is hereditary, and that hereditary victimization justifies distinctive treatment by public and private institutions. Socioeconomic progress of members of these groups, it is assumed, depends on group rights."

For example, she cited Japanese and Chinese Americans, who experienced virulent racism in the past, but who now achieve economic success. "By 1990, native-born Japanese Americans had

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median family incomes 47 percent higher than those of whites, and they were 57 percent more likely to have a college degree. Similarly with Chinese Americans...[their] median family incomes in 1990 were 58 percent higher than that of whites." In addition, she pointed out, "More than four out of five Asian-American adults in the U.S. today were born abroad. These...newcomers are recent immigrants; their ancestors experienced no history of racism on U.S. soil." Therefore, she asked, how can we say that they have been "historically oppressed?"

Racial Categories Do Not Reflect Diversity Within Populations

In further discussion of the Asian population, Dr. Thernstrom pointed out that our racial categories are entirely too broad. "Why are Asians even called one group?" she asked. "It is certainly questionable whether Koreans and Japanese feel this strong sense of kinship and solidarity. Does anyone believe that the Japanese and Chinese are natural allies? Would the Vietnamese and Cambodians belong to one lovey-dovey group?...All these groups, classifications and census projections," she concluded, "are a mess."

Let Minorities Step Beyond Their Race

From this perspective, an important component of improving the economic standing of disadvantaged ethnic groups like African Americans and Hispanics is to stop emphasizing race. Let children, said Dr. Thernstrom, choose to emphasize or downplay their ethnic identity as they wish, as did earlier immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th century. "If they think of themselves first and foremost as black or Hispanic kids, then they will see themselves as fungible members of a group destined to go where too many of their peers in the South Bronx and other such dreary neighborhoods end up. If they come to look at themselves simply as unique individuals, free to choose their identity, to emphasize their racial or ethnic group ties as they wish, then they will have an excellent chance at solid academic and behavioral skills." She then expanded her point: "Time-honored, traditional social mobility in America is often the ability to find yourself apart from the group into which you were born."

Racial Data Has Proven Invaluable in Civil Rights Litigation

In the discussion following Dr. Thernstrom's address, a participant asked if it was appropriate to abandon the use of racial data when it has been such an invaluable tool in litigation that has halted many discriminatory practices. Dr. Thernstrom acknowledged that racial data has been useful in the past: "Do I think that race-conscious policies were necessary to bust systems open, whether it was the jury system in Texas or the Birmingham Police Department?...Of course, I do believe in the need to conduct that level of analysis. That is built into the 1964 [Civil Rights] Act; in proven instances of discrimination, race-conscious policies are acceptable. I would call it busting systems open."

Still, Dr. Thernstrom said she does not see the utility of race-conscious policies beyond opening systems. Instead, she asserted, future policies should gradually de-emphasize race in favor of focusing on more relevant distinctions, particularly social class.

Presenters

Milton Morris, Ph.D.
President,
Creative Futures International

Blandina "Bambi" Cardenas, Ph.D.
Director, Hispanic Research Center,
University of Texas, San Antonio

Dolores Briones
County Judge, El Paso County, Texas
(Casey Network Fellow)

Larry Murray moderator
National Center on Addiction and Substance
Abuse at Columbia University
(Casey Network Fellow)

People of color face significant challenges in achieving equitable political representation. Panelists discussed some of these hurdles, including the racial composition of legislative districts, a lack of eligible voters and conflicts within ethnic populations. The session also focused on the responsibilities elected officials have to all of their constituents, not just to the particular ethnic group that forms their base. Indeed, it was the challenge of building effective cross-racial coalitions that spurred some of this session's most provocative dialogue.

Majority Minority Districts

Although "majority minority" districts—districts redrawn to ensure that an area's large minority population will have some automatic representation in local, state or national legislatures—have proven useful, they create two significant problems, said panelists. The first is that such districts, originally created to ensure minorities a

Discussion Highlights:

Moderator Larry Murray kicked off the audience and panel discussion by asking the panelists' opinions on how one goes about getting politicians to care about the issues of disenfranchised people, particularly minority groups. Judge Briones said that the most effective way is to emphasize "the common ground that we share" and point out that "our future depends on our children succeeding." Dr. Morris offered the hope that clever politicians will court disenfranchised voters for future benefit, realizing that "the folks disenfranchised by circumstances today are tomorrow's voters."

One stumbling block to political participation and power, said several audience members, is language. Without English, people have trouble gaining access to social services, voting and community participation. The most important way to address language challenges, particularly among people who speak Spanish, the country's second most spoken language, one audience member said, is to provide aid to recent immigrants so they can acquire the language "skills that they need in order to be fully productive."

A final, interesting discussion topic stemmed from the conversation about conflicts within ethnic groups and the need to build coalitions. One audience member noted that in the future, no one single ethnic group is likely to hold a majority. She called this the "new plurality." Judge Briones pointed out that this expected plurality means the focus of minority leadership needs to change from making sure a certain person of a certain race gets elected to forming coalitions among ethnic groups to build power bases. Dr. Morris agreed, saying that power is unlikely to shift from white Americans directly to another specific population. Instead, he expects that power will be shared among different constituencies, though he predicted that groups might form coalitions along economic, rather than racial lines.

place at the political table, may now be reducing opportunities for minority representation by concentrating the minority's vote in a few districts. "Whereas you now lump the entire black population into one or two districts and create a total ceiling on representation," said Dr. Milton Morris, "if those were more widely dispersed, the opportunities for having a powerful swing vote...would be greater."

The second issue with such districts is that their representatives may have little opposition, creating complacency. Speaking of El Paso, Judge Dolores Briones said, "We have two or three Hispanics who are from almost totally Hispanic districts; they are a shoe-in." There is a great danger, she said, that they will become less aggressive in understanding and representing their constituents' needs. Although eliminating majority minority districts could result in near-term political losses, the panelists said they felt that it might now be time to reconsider the practice.

Lack of Eligible Voters

Some minority communities, although they are growing quickly, are not necessarily gaining large numbers of new voters. This is particularly true of the Hispanic/Latino population. "We should not confuse population growth for growth in electoral strength," said Dr. Morris. "A very high proportion of Hispanics are relative newcomers to the country, and a history of relatively slow naturalization brings fewer of them into the political arena than might be assumed from the overall population size." Because Hispanic/Latino immigration rates are expected to remain high, the community is likely to continue suffering from a disproportionately small (though nevertheless growing) electoral impact.

Diversity Within: Underacknowledged

An additional obstacle weakening the political power of minority groups is that our overly broad racial characterizations mask political complexities within such groups. "We use terms like Hispanics, Asian Americans and African Americans," said Dr. Morris, "and this tends to obscure the important reality that there is a tremendous diversity within these populations." For example, the "black vote" can be fragmented when African Americans and foreign-born blacks, such as Caribbean Americans, set themselves in opposition to each other. Too often, noted Dr. Morris, "there are no bridges built across the gap between foreign-born blacks and native-born blacks."

Dr. Bambi Cardenas, referring to an African-American representative in New York who had faced a tough primary challenge from a Caribbean-American opponent, said, "I suspect that he is still referring to a set of conditions that more closely mirror the conditions with which he went into office. Politics is about a competitive process that is a regeneration of ideas. I think what we need to figure out is how do we create structures that enable intellectual renewal for people over the course of a lifetime of service."

Serving All Ethnic Groups is Critical

The panelists agreed that in order for elected representatives of color to win and keep political office, they need to represent the broader community, not just their own ethnic group. "The way that we get elected," said Judge Briones, "is by mainstreaming ourselves, not by narrowing who we are and staying in our ethnic persona." Dr. Cardenas agreed, although she noted that it is important for a politician to understand the ethnic group that forms his or her core constituency while addressing the issues important to the community as

a whole. "The person who understands his or her base or constituency has added value," she said. "But when you frame concepts and ideas to benefit [that] constituency, it has to be in a perspective that is also true to the broader community."

Historically, most minority leaders have, over time, successfully transformed themselves from ethnic-based leaders to mainstream ones. Dr. Morris offered this hopeful outlook: "Politicians have never failed to step beyond and above their own ethnic vision and their own ethnic constituencies to be American and to address American issues. As a matter of fact, the whole notion of coalition politics in our society has been one of the primary vehicles for moving people across the identifications with which they begin and into the larger political environment."

Presenters

Thomas Morton, M.S.W.
President and CEO,
Child Welfare Institute

Mareasa Isaacs, Ph.D.
Senior Associate,
The Annie E. Casey Foundation

James Mason, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Graduate School of Social Work,
Portland State University

Norma Hatot moderator
Senior Nurse Consultant,
Captain, US Public Health Service Office of
the Surgeon General
(Casey Network Fellow)

America's changing demographics have a direct effect on the Annie E. Casey Foundation's work on behalf of disadvantaged children and families. Echoing other panelists in this session, Dr. Mareasa Isaacs said, "Because the poor have become 'colorized' [i.e., defined primarily as people of color] over the years, this need to wrestle with the issues of race, ethnicity, culture, class, language and power has become more important in effectively doing our work at the Foundation." The Casey Foundation and others, therefore, must understand and work within the racial and cultural realities of the families and neighborhoods they are trying to serve.

One Key Factor: Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is crucial to resolving racial issues in the field, the panelists agreed. Dr. James Mason defined the term broadly in his presentation. "Cultural competence," he said, "talks about what we do in the face of diversity....It goes beyond the cognitive into areas of behavior, primarily practice, policy and the structure of the organization."

In order to gain this understanding of other cultures, said Thomas Morton, you have to understand your own ethnic heritage. "Until you know what screen you're looking at the other context through," he said, "I don't think you can know how you will interpret the other,

Discussion Highlights:

A member of the audience began the discussion with a question about the statistics used in Thomas Morton's presentation on the child welfare system. She asked if he thought that the top three risk factors for poverty—the age, marital status and educational level of the mother—held true across racial and ethnic lines and if they had any bearing on the child welfare system. The question sparked an interesting discussion of statistics and risk factors between Morton and Dr. Mason.

Morton said that such risk factors are oversimplifications. For example, eliminating some of the risk factors doesn't always lift people out of poverty, and a variety of poorly understood factors influence the success or failure of social interventions, including the nature of the person or organization performing the intervention. Dr. Mason pointed out that traditionally, we have studied the failures, the families that have not done well economically. He said he feels that it might be more useful to study the success stories, families that have emerged from poverty and tough social conditions to improve their economic standing, in order to determine what factors grant them resiliency to the usual risk indicators.

because [your ethnic perspective] is so ingrained in your way of thinking, perceiving and believing that it's almost automatic."

As an example of society's tendency to view other cultures through the biased lens of its cultural norms, Morton cited the over-representation of African Americans in the child welfare system. Specifically, he said, Americans of European cultural heritage have a cultural bias against matriarchal, extended families, seen most often in African-American households, and in favor of strong nuclear families. Dr. Mason agreed, saying, "It's inherent in our assessment tools—single parent, female-headed households draw a flag....We need to wonder to what extent resources exist that our paperwork can't even capture, that our assessment teams don't even capture and by virtue of that, begin to see pathology that may or may not exist."

Culture is Contextual

An additional obstacle to becoming culturally competent in our work is that culture differs from area to area, dependent on location and social history. "Cultural competence [is] contextual," explained Dr. Mason. "How cultural competence works with, let's say, African Americans in East Baltimore would be different than in Minneapolis just based on sheer numbers....The social history is also important. Working with the Latino population in Texas is different than working in New York City, for example, or in California....Understanding how a group came to an area is important."

According to Dr. Isaacs, this problem needs to be addressed by the Casey Foundation's onsite teams now working in communities across the country. "Sites need to develop a contextual frame of understanding race, culture, class and power dynamics that is historical and current....If we really want to begin to understand these issues in their particular manifestation in a site, we need to do a historical, structuralized, systemic analysis that...will bring us up to the current day about what race relations [and] institutional racism have looked like in the sites where we're working."

Inter-group Tensions: Barriers to Successful Interventions

Analyzing race relations at a particular site, aside from providing insights into culture, may also serve as an early-warning system for potential divisiveness among minority groups. Dr. Isaacs explained that Casey staff working in communities often face inter-group challenges: "As the Latino population increases, one of the things that site team leaders are running into are greater tensions and power struggles, primarily with African Americans who have traditionally been in the neighborhoods, but with Asian population groups as well."

To make matters worse, within the Foundation itself, people representing certain ethnic groups have had a tendency to fight over, rather than share resources. Dr. Isaacs and her colleagues are trying to change that. "We were all fighting for the little crumbs left on the table. We decided about a year and a half ago that we're not fighting anymore, that we're bringing those strengths to work together…and that we're going to have common principles and values that drive that work."

Dr. Mason agreed that finding common ground, rather than squabbling over limited resources may be the key to the future success of minority groups. "I think we have to learn to...support coalitions, [to] form groups that have a lot in common. What's easy to see is how we're different. What's harder to see are the similarities."

Presenters

Roderick Harrison, Ph.D.
Director, Data Bank Project, Joint Center for
Political and Economic Studies

Father Ken Ducre
Pastor, All Saints Catholic Church,
El Paso, TX

Marcia Choo
Assistant Director of Museum Programs,
The Simon Wiesenthal Center Museum of
Tolerance

Helen Munoz
Senior Associate,
Management Sciences for Development
(Casey Network Fellow)

Frances Kunreuther moderator
Fellow, Hauser Center for Nonprofit
Organizations at Harvard University
(Casey Network Fellow)

Community activists have known for years that the increase in the numbers of Latino, Asian and other ethnic minorities means that the "race" issue is no longer just black and white. During this session, panelists and participants discussed the importance of the new data from the 2000 Census, which has subsequently offered the hard proof of this new multiculturalism as well as hope that non-black, ethnic minorities will begin to have a more powerful voice in discussions about race in America.

Data: A Key Public Policy Driver

Data on populations is a crucial tool for minority advocates fighting to have their issues recognized, said Helen Munoz. "The job of doing any type of work, whether it's in public policy, whether it's in practice or research or any other type of work that we do, becomes impossible if the group that you're advocating for is not being counted.... [Previously] there was absolutely no data gathered on Latinos, so therefore we did not exist."

Finally, that data has been gathered. Results of the 2000 Census demonstrate that non-black ethnic minority populations are growing dramatically. America is now "a society moving beyond black and white," said Dr. Roderick Harrison. "By the end of the next century…blacks and whites together will represent less than half of [the]

Discussion Highlights:

To begin the discussion, Marcia Choo referred to Abigail Thernstrom's keynote speech. Choo agreed with Thernstrom that everyone needs to form an American identity in order to create a language to "truly engage with one another without talking about Latino needs versus Asian-Pacific needs, Korean needs versus Chinese and Japanese needs." Choo, however, said she often feels that society does not allow her to move outside of her Asian identity to "melt into being an American."

Another participant then turned the discussion to public policy and racism. She cited panelist Helen Munoz's presentation, in which Munoz pointed out that public policy is driven by the need to choose between "competing goods," such as funding end-of-life or prenatal care. In light of the social and economic advantages whites continue to enjoy, the speaker worried that increasing funding for improving the lives of predominantly Hispanic children may prove impossible while predominantly white Baby Boomers favor spending limited public funds on end-of-life research and care. She urged the group to address this issue of racism directly or risk undermining efforts to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children.

population. The rest of the population will be beyond black and white, literally, and clearly, a very large component of that is the growth of the Hispanic population...and the Asian population."

Munoz, after years of trying to raise interest in Latino issues, is thrilled that she finally has data to cite. "I am very pleased to now be sitting here and actually seeing graphs that include data on Latinos, and it's breaking that black/white paradigm so that we can see a more complete picture of what this country is looking like," she said.

Hispanic and Asian Communities Have Been Ignored for Years

The experiences of panelists Marcia Choo and Father Ken Ducre confirm that, lacking information on the numbers of Asians and Latinos, respectively, communities have been quick to dismiss their presence.

In Los Angeles, said Choo, race has been consistently viewed as a black/white issue while other minorities have been overlooked. "In 1992 when Los Angeles imploded upon herself...in the major newspapers and the magazine covers would have headlines that would say 'Black Rage' or 'Fire and Fury in the Black Community,'" she observed. "But then how do you interpret the fact that something like 64 percent of the arrestees were Latino, and then Asian/Pacific Islanders are almost always omitted from the discussion?...I read the *Los Angeles Times*, and whenever there are opinion polls about anything, Asians are not included....You would think that they don't exist in the community."

Father Ducre said he has found a similar problem in El Paso, where he works. There, the poor Latino community is nearly invisible to those with political power. In his presentation, Ducre cited just one of many examples of this phenomenon. "I remember almost about 15 years ago," he said, "when we went to Commissioners Court to talk about the reality that outside the incorporated area of El Paso and the county, that there were over 70,000 people that didn't even have running water in their homes, and they didn't even have waste water sewage systems. We were just literally laughed at. They said, 'Well, that's impossible.' [They had] the attitude, well, this is America, how could there be people living like that?"

"Together All of Us Will Have to Build Something New"

Now that the existence of substantial Asian and Latino minorities has been acknowledged, said panelists and participants, representatives of various ethnic groups need to work together to improve racial equality and cooperation. Choo offered a positive example of the utility of negotiation in alleviating interracial conflict within multiethnic neighborhoods. "I went to a place that was picketed because this Korean contractor had won a contract to rebuild a particular building that was burnt out, and he was picketed by...[a black unemployment group]....I called a number of different folks and brought them to the table, and we brokered a deal, and so, we had African Americans working as part of the construction crew with the Korean-American team."

Other panelists nodded their agreement, as Choo continued, "We need to replicate that effort in lots of other ways." Expanding on the theme of cooperation, one panelist said, "I think the challenge for the future is that together all of us will have to build something new, and we don't know what that looks like yet."

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Presenters

Norma Cantu, J.D.
Former Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights,
U.S. Department of Education

Betty Merchant, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Chair, Department of
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies,
University of Texas, San Antonio

Carola Suarez-Orozco, Ph.D.
Co-Director, Harvard Immigration Project,
Senior Research Associate and Lecturer,
Harvard Graduate School of Education

Mike Suntag
Consultant, Technology Integration and
Grants Management,
Connecticut State Board of Education
(Casey Network Fellow)

Brenda Donald moderator
Chief of Staff, DC Child and
Family Services Agency
(Casey Network Fellow)

Education systems around the country, and particularly principals and teachers, said panelists, are ill-prepared for the growing diversity of students in their schools. Much of this session focused on immigrant populations, which present particularly complex challenges to our schools because of their economic, linguistic and ethnic diversity. The result is that schools and educators have a great deal of work to do to respond to the "new calculus" of these changing demographic realities.

Staff Disengagement

The disconnect between principals and teachers and increasingly diverse student populations, said Dr. Betty Merchant, is significant and growing. "Principals," she said, "[do] not provide any kind of leadership to their staff in terms of what to do with the kids when they are in the classroom....They are often totally clueless about how frustrated their teachers are." The result, she noted, is a recognizable, four-phase process of disengagement many educators (and their students) experience.

"In the first phase, *guilt*, teachers are aware of the students in their classrooms that do not understand them, and that they are

Discussion Highlights:

Panelists and audience members spent a good deal of this session's discussion on the causes behind the current dearth of minority teachers and, in fact, a growing shortage of teachers of any ethnicity. Dr. Merchant said she believes that minority candidates are often discouraged at the college level from pursuing teaching because their "accented English" may be considered undesirable by some school districts. In light of the shortage of minority teachers, she said, we should recruit teachers of any ethnicity who are "interested in working with minority populations." She went on to point out that the teaching shortage is liable to grow worse as fear of accountability standards drives people away from the profession.

In the discussion, audience members brought up two additional concerns about public schools: the lack of early childhood education and the threat that school choice movements pose to poor districts. Dr. Cantu reassured the audience that the Head Start program is currently under redesign to ensure that it will receive adequate funding and effectively prepare children for reading. As for school choice, Dr. Suarez-Orozco shared the concern about such programs, which, she said, can result in the re-segregation of school districts: "We have to be worried about this massive flight of people with choices, which is leaving the dregs for the people who are not able to move their children."

not able to reach, for any number of reasons, and they feel bad. Then they become *frustrated* with the lack of help, with the lack of resources."

Teachers, particularly in their 40s and 50s, she said, then become *resentful* of the problematic students because "for the first time in their careers [they] are being faced with students that make them feel totally incompetent." Finally, she said, "The last phase is *complacency*....Teachers say, 'I cannot bear to look in the eyes of the students who make me feel incompetent.' So they stop looking at them....The students become invisible."

Diversity Training is Inadequate

Part of the problem, said Dr. Merchant, is that "we do not have specially designated courses that prepare administrators and help them become more sensitive to the populations they work with." Mike Suntag pointed out that teacher training in this area is minimal as well, often taking place in brief workshops. "That is how in-service training is done with teachers," he said, "one shot, no continuous work, no follow-up, no coaching, no support, no resources to turn to after that initial shot. There is little, if anything, made available if the teacher wants to find out more about a particular subject."

Older Teachers Unable to Adjust

Suntag agreed with Dr. Merchant that older teachers, in particular, have trouble adjusting to new behavior patterns in the classroom. To make matters worse, observed Dr. Merchant, these are the same, mostly white teachers who are mentoring new minority teachers, and these senior teachers are unable to provide advice for dealing with the problems presented by a diverse student body.

Schools Lack Resources

Suntag noted that the problems described by Dr. Merchant are exacerbated by a whole host of social issues and most basically a lack of adequate funding. "In my city of Bridgeport," he said, "the schools are coping with 57 different languages. They are also dealing with the problems of poverty, of crime, of drug and alcohol abuse, of guns…and on and on....Each of these problems comes with a mandate [from the state or local Board of Education], which calls for some response by the schools....[And] usually, these mandates come down without enough funding to make [an adequate response] possible."

Academic Achievement: Worsening (!) from Immigrant Generation to Generation

Counter to prevailing notions, the academic problems immigrant children face do not seem to disappear with each succeeding generation. Dr. Carola Suarez-Orozco reported on the surprising results of several large-scale studies: "[This research] found that across the board, the first generation does better than the second generation, which is doing far better than the third generation. Generally speaking, the assumption is, the longer you are here, the better you do. However, it is not like that....The longer in the U.S., the less engagement." Educators and researchers need more information about the challenges subsequent immigrant generations face so they can develop policies to halt this disturbing trend.

Dr. Suarez-Orozco also pointed to initial, and some even hopeful, "impressions" from her own research, which is following 400 immigrant students from five countries in Boston and San Francisco. For example:

• Immigrant parents and their children are positive about school and see school as one of the reasons they came to this country.

• Counter to expectations, parents are generally comfortable with and supportive of their children's teachers and schools.

Nevertheless, she noted:

• Children are keenly aware of the painful, negative stereotypes they regularly encounter.

• The American conception of an "involved parent" (e.g., showing up at PTA meetings, volunteering at school) is quite different than immigrant parents' views, requiring teachers to adopt more culturally sensitive expectations.

"We have to work together to get a better sense of what is going on," said Dr. Suarez-Orozco, pointing to the variety of challenges immigrant children face today. These include adjusting to school after a traumatic voyage to our country, high-stakes testing that may prevent them from moving to the next grade or graduating and finding financial aid for college with "undocumented" status.

Improving Teacher Quality: Part of the Solution

Dr. Norma Cantu asserted that an important step toward improving education for all children, regardless of race, ethnicity or first language, is improving the quality of the nation's teachers: "What [now former] Secretary [of Education Richard] Riley has called for is a very rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of teachers; support for teachers who need help, and then if that does not work counseling them to find another career." Suntag agreed, pointing out that training of existing teachers is crucial, as are more rigorous entrance exams.

However, weeding out or strengthening poor teachers doesn't address the broader reality of a growing teacher shortage. As one workshop participant said, this shortage makes training even more important: "We have got to figure out ways to support teachers and provide the kind of continuing education that addresses educators' real needs."

Presenters

Sharon Lee, Ph.D.
Professor of Sociology,
Portland State University

C. Matthew Snipp, Ph.D.
Professor of Sociology,
Stanford University

Tricia Rose, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of History and
African-American Studies,
New York University

Craig Levine moderator
Director of Special Projects,
Office of the Chancellor,
New York City Board of Education
(Casey Network Fellow)

The results of the 2000 Census, which show an increasingly multiracial, multiethnic America, have important policy implications. In this session panelists and audience members discussed the inadequacy of our current race-based policies and the obstacles to changing those policies in light of the increased complexity of the country's racial makeup.

Racial Data and Race-Based Policies—Still Necessary

In the past, "the way we tended to look at race is that it was an essential characteristic; it was an inherently biological trait, albeit with social consequences," said Dr. Matthew Snipp. That belief remained the same even after the Civil Rights movement, when our government rewrote public policies in an attempt to undo the legacy

Discussion Highlights:

One topic that emerged during the energetic discussion was one not touched on during the panelists' presentations: the conflicting nature of our immigration policies. Why, asked a participant, do we have "a very large 'army of occupation' along the [Southern] border," when clearly our economy requires a constant supply of new workers? Unfortunately, Dr. Lee responded, there is a certain degree of hypocrisy in our immigration laws. On the one hand, we need people to do "our dirty work," yet "we want to pretend that these people doing the dirty work do not really exist." Therefore, we have an uncomfortable system in which parts of our economy depend on cheap, undocumented labor while we make a show of enforcing our immigration laws.

A significant topic of discussion throughout the session was an attempt to define what exactly "whiteness" means. Several audience members said that as whites, they felt they lacked an ethnicity and culture and weren't certain how they would fit into a multicultural future. Drs. Lee and Rose both disagreed that whites lack culture. Dr. Lee pointed out that as Americans, we all share a certain culture; it's just that Americans of certain ethnic heritages may have "some other cultures that you do not share." Dr. Rose furthered the discussion of white culture, asserting that whites definitely do have a culture; it's just that this culture has the illusion of being invisible, both because it is a mix of many European heritages and because it is the American norm.

At the end of the discussion, audience and panelists delved into the subject of reparations, questioning whether they are helpful and also why they seem more acceptable in certain racial contexts than others. Dr. Snipp pointed out that reparations for Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II as well as American Indian land claims have both been addressed, to some extent. Yet no one wants to touch the issue of reparations for African-American slavery.
Dr. Rose speculated that the difficulty of giving reparations to African Americans is that, unlike Japanese internment, slavery lasted hundreds of years and contributed a vast amount of money to the American economy. Or perhaps, she said, the problem is that no one is certain how to define the injury done to African Americans in monetary terms and that any reparations would be primarily symbolic.

of racism. The perception of race has changed with the advent of multiculturalism. And people, he said, have much more choice in how to present themselves, what ethnic heritages they want to claim.

"As a society, we are rethinking the meaning of race, and we are reaching the conclusion that our racial heritage is a good deal more complicated than we once believed," said Dr. Snipp. "So what we are beginning to increasingly appreciate as a society is that race is understood less as a fixed, immutable biological characteristic and much more as something that is socially constructed." As a result, he added, "we find ourselves at a crucial juncture where our understanding of race, its meaning, its significance, is increasingly disconnected with the concept of race that serves as the underpinning of race-based public policy."

Ethnic and Racial Categories: Complex, Poorly Defined

Unfortunately, the panelists agreed, rewriting public policy to reflect new multiethnic realities is extremely difficult. "If you go through the statistical iterations [on the Census data] you can have more than 100 racial categories," observed Dr. Snipp. "Needless to say, this is causing a great deal of consternation."

Even more worrisome than the vast number of ethnic categories now being counted is the fact that no one is even certain what those categories mean. "Policies are driven by these very complicated, but unarticulated racial identities," said Dr. Tricia Rose. She was particularly concerned that no one has ever defined the category of "white" because "whiteness" is unconsciously held as the standard of American normalcy by which other races and cultures are judged.

"[We need to address] the question of the category of whiteness as part of addressing race and racism, because [race] is about cultural formation," said Dr. Rose. "We know it is not about biology. So now the question becomes, what cultural values are being associated with whiteness?...[There has been an] absence of any real interrogation of how whiteness has been formed, how it exists, how it is been historically constructed, who gets to be in it, what are its constitutive parts [and] what is the investment in it."

Language Barriers: An Important Challenge in Health Care Policy

The experiences of immigrants wrestling with America's health care system exemplify many of the difficulties faced in using public policy to address social inequality. Dr. Sharon Lee said she has found that language barriers prevent immigrants from taking full advantage of the health care system. "Compared with people who spoke English, non- or limited English speakers experienced less and poorer quality healthcare services." This is despite the fact that Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires health care providers and insurers to be responsible for providing interpreter services. "[Patients] were often not informed of their rights to free interpreter services....In fact they were…often told that they must bring their own interpreter to receive services." Dr. Lee's observations reflect the critical importance not only of well-crafted or well-intentioned public policies, but of publicizing and enforcing those policies.

Grappling with the Social Consequences of Race

Despite the inherent difficulties of accurately counting race and crafting policies to encourage equality among all ethnic groups, all three panelists insisted that such an effort is necessary. "We are now counting by race because racial inequalities continue to exist,"

explained Dr. Lee. "So even though we agree that race is a social construction, it is real in terms of its social consequences. So as long as these social consequences continue to differentiate people based on race, we need to be able to document these differences. Racial classifications began as a way of separating people and maintaining white superiority. Today, racial categories are used to try to redress some of these legacies, and until we reach the point when these disparities no longer exist, we still need to count by some kind of racial category.

Closing Address **A Challenge to the Network**

Presenter

Ralph Smith, J.D.
Vice President, Annie E. Casey Foundation

To conclude the Changing Face of America Workshop, Ralph Smith, Vice President of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, referred to opening speaker Abigail Thernstrom's challenge to "the continuing significance, legitimacy and centrality of race-based analysis as a major touchstone for social policy in this country." He observed that Dr. Thernstrom's address to the participants "[is] echoed in a challenge to discern whether changing demographics ought to occasion a radical re-orientation and maybe even re-conceptualization of political strategy and leadership."

Smith noted participants' concerns that much of America's current political leadership "is unable and sometimes unwilling to seek the common ground that would establish the basis for new coalitions, [unable to] understand what various groups need and understand that within the traditional groups, there are now divisions and subdivisions and emerging constituencies whose voices demand to be heard."

Racism: Still Creating Systemic Inequities

This failure to understand changing ethnic dynamics is evidenced by the poor results people of color are obtaining within our social systems, said Smith. "Race, race consciousness and racism are deeply implicated in the disparities we see with respect to children, young adults and families who are caught up in the deep end systems, including child welfare, juvenile justice and the adult criminal justice system. It sounds as if these issues of race, race consciousness and racism explain at least in part the abysmal and enduringly bad performance of African-American and Latino children in the nation's public school systems."

Contributing to the difficulty of combating racial prejudice is that white culture, poorly characterized, unconsciously defines normalcy in American society. "There is this powerful, ever present, enduring, palpable, but sometimes and generally invisible, unspoken sense of whiteness," Smith explained, "whiteness which emerges as the standard against which we are all held and against which we are all measured, which bestows and withholds privileges and penalties, which decides and determines who will get ahead and who will be left behind. The challenge before us is in part to continue the nation-building effort inherent in the Constitutional struggle and to name, confront and unmask the whiteness and make manifest the present premises, presumptions and assumptions that

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is whiteness and to make these unarticulated assumptions reveal their cruelties, as well as their possibilities."

New Immigration: Transforming America's White, European-Based Culture

Racial struggles are not new to the United States, of course. "This is a nation of immigrants," Smith pointed out, "and it has had changing demographics from its outset. Each generation has to struggle with the tendency to pull up the ladder to make sure that those behind [it] can't get in." However, he asserted, despite the similarities with previous immigrant surges, this newest wave of immigrants represents a major challenge to the United States' traditionally Western European heritage and values, transforming us from "the United States of Europe in the western hemisphere" into something fundamentally different.

Adding to this flood of multiculturalism is the fact that many people, disillusioned by decades of lackluster results from affirmative action, are ready to abandon defining racial politics as black versus white. "[This] comes at a time when many of us are saying that that black/white paradigm required too much and gave too little, when we are understanding the extent to which the black/white paradigm afforded our white liberals with opportunities to take the moral high ground within the white community while paying only lip service to issues of equity and liberation. It comes at a time when the black leadership accepted far too little and essentially allowed the situation to continue as long as they remained the special, special child entitled to special favors, and those special favors were not necessarily an end to dependency for people of color."

As a result, said Smith, the United States could be on the verge of major cultural and social change "[These] changing demographics pose a challenge that is more than political. It is more than ideological. It is more than cultural. It is fundamental and potentially transformative, and that is the reason why it is important to look at this issue at this point in time."

The Challenge to the Network: Continue to Explore Race in America

The Casey Fellows Network, said Smith, has an important role to play in furthering the dialogue about the Changing Face of America. "You can contribute the most to the Foundation, not by resisting the generally irresistible temptation to say, 'how do I use this today?'...but [by understanding] that there is a need in this field for a group of people who will constitute themselves as an intellectual community, willing to explore the borders of the frontier, willing to develop new knowledge and in developing new knowledge, then to share that knowledge with the rest of us and let us collectively determine whether, how and to what extent it shapes our action. That, to me, is the excitement of this, of what you've embarked upon. It is the promise of the Fellowship, and it is a challenge worthy of the talents in this room."