

If we agree that discrimination is wrong, what do we do about it?

1. Stop doing it; prevent it from continuing; make it illegal; look for ways to enforce it.
2. Is this enough? No. if part of what is wrong with discrimination is that it harms people (individuals and groups) unjustly, that harm will not disappear even if discrimination stops.

Past discrimination can continue to harm in the present.

Distinguish 3 different things:

- A. Improvement in a disadvantaged group's condition.
- B. Reduction in the gap between a disadvantaged group's condition and an advantaged group's condition (that is, reduction in group inequality)

A and B are different because the disadvantaged group's condition can improve, but the advantaged group's condition can improve more, so the gap between them increases. There is more inequality, even though the disadvantaged group has improved its condition. (The "New Deal" programs described by Oliver and Shapiro are examples of this. All racial groups were helped, but they increased the gap between whites and blacks. Both relative disadvantage and absolute condition are important.

- C. Achievement of equality between groups.

A group's relative and absolute position can be improved without equality being achieved.

What causes group disadvantage and inequality?

1. *Current* discrimination
2. Current effects of *past* discrimination. [article "Cumulative Disadvantage and Racial Discrimination" discusses this]
3. Other factors, e.g. economic changes (in class, we discussed the disappearance of well-paying blue collar manufacturing jobs). These can have "disparate impact" (i.e. differential and unequal impact) on different racial groups, even though the processes involved are not race-targeted.

Oliver/Shapiro's argument:

- A. Historical discrimination by (or enabled by) the national government has contributed to black/white disparity/inequality.
- B. Wealth disparity between black and white is much greater than income disparity (wealth is currently c. 10%, income 77%), and reflects the historical dimension of discrimination better than income.

Examples:

1. Homestead Act of 1866 and land redistribution in Reconstruction era.
2. Housing/suburbanization policy in 1930's-1950's
3. Discrimination in mortgage lending.