

**From Voting Rights to Economic Rights:
Increasing Economic Mobility through Community Development in America's Deep South**

**PubPol 750-009
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Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy

Course Description

Economic mobility in the United States is lowest among people of color and those who live in persistent poverty areas. This course will explore the relationship between community development and economic mobility in America's Deep South, a region comprised of states with the highest proportions of Blacks in the population, and that is home to 1/3 of the nation's persistent poverty counties. Successful strategies for improving economic conditions must take into account the region's intertwined legacy of racial conflict and entrenched poverty. Emphasis will be placed on the role of community development finance as a tool for closing opportunity gaps and creating mobility ladders, particularly among the region's Black population.

Course Objectives

- To examine how socio-economic conditions in the Deep South shape public policy, and the connection between historical efforts to secure Civil Rights and modern day efforts to increase economic mobility
- To understand the financial services environment in the Deep South and its relationship with economic mobility in high poverty areas and communities of color
- To analyze the primary drivers of economic mobility, and related financial service policy issues
- To understand how community development organizations, particularly Community Development Financial Institutions influence public policy to increase economic mobility

About the Instructor

Bill Bynum began his professional career in North Carolina by helping to establish Self-Help, a pioneer in the development finance industry, and later built nationally recognized programs at the NC Rural Economic Development Center. In 1994, Bill moved to Mississippi to become the founding CEO of the Enterprise Corporation of the Delta, and in 1995 organized Hope Community Credit Union. Today, HOPE is a family of organizations (Hope Enterprise Corporation, Hope Credit Union and Hope Policy Institute) that provides financial services; aggregates resources; and engages in advocacy to combat the extent to which factors such as race, gender, birthplace and wealth limit one's ability to prosper. Since 1994, HOPE has generated more than \$2.9 billion in financing and benefitted more than 1.7 million people in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee. Bynum serves on the boards of the [Aspen Institute](#), [Bank of America National Community Advisory Council](#), [NAACP Legal Defense Fund](#), [Prosperity Now](#), [William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation](#), [Parents' Campaign Research and Education Fund](#) and [E Pluribus Unum Advisory Council](#). A recipient of the University of North Carolina Distinguished Alumnus Award, Bynum previously chaired the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Consumer Advisory Board, the Treasury Department's Community Development Advisory Board and served on the [U.S. Partnership on Mobility from Poverty](#).

Guest Speakers

Derrick Johnson serves as President and CEO of the NAACP, a title he has held since October of 2017. President Johnson formerly served as vice chairman of the NAACP National Board of Directors, as well as state president for the Mississippi State Conference NAACP. A longstanding member and leader of the NAACP, Mr. Johnson has helped guide the Association through a period of re-envisioning and reinvigoration. President Johnson is a frequent commentator in the national media, advocating against systemic oppression and prejudice. As State President of the NAACP Mississippi State Conference, Mr. Johnson led critical campaigns for voting rights and equitable education, and as a regional organizer at Southern Echo, he provided legal, technical, and training support for communities across the South. Born in Detroit, Mr. Johnson attended Tougaloo College in Jackson, MS and received his JD from the South Texas College of Law in Houston, TX. He has served as an annual guest lecturer at Harvard Law School, lending his expertise to Professor Lani Guinier's course on social movements, and as an adjunct professor at Tougaloo College.

Nisha Patel is an expert on social and economic mobility and philanthropy with more than two decades of cross-sector experience leading and implementing initiatives to increase economic opportunities for low-income families. She served as Executive Director of the U.S. Partnership on Mobility from Poverty at the Urban Institute. Supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Partnership assembled 24 leading voices to identify ideas for investment to dramatically increase mobility from poverty. Nisha served in the Obama administration as Director of the Office of Family Assistance within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, overseeing a portfolio of federal grants that foster family economic security, including the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. She was previously Deputy Director of Ascend at the Aspen Institute, where she led national efforts to expand two-generation approaches to improve outcomes for children and their parents. Prior to that, she was a Program Officer in the U.S. Program at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and an Adjunct Professor at the George Washington University. Nisha is a graduate of Vanderbilt University and holds an MSW with a concentration in social and economic development from Washington University in St. Louis.

Desiree Hensley is an Associate Professor of Law and Director of the Housing Clinic at the University of Mississippi. Professor Hensley received a B.A. from the University of Oklahoma, pursued graduate work in Near Eastern Studies at Yale, and earned a J.D. from Georgetown. She was a Public Interest Law Scholar while at Georgetown and after graduation served as an Equal Justice Works Fellow for Bread for the City in Washington, D.C., where she provided legal services to low-income tenants with better access to courts. She later practiced real property and estate planning law in D.C. with the Law Offices of Quinn O'Connell. Professor Hensley is currently the director of the Low-Income Housing Clinic, and her teaching and scholarly interests include the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, land tenure and security, and affordable housing policy.

Lisa Mensah is CEO of Opportunity Finance Network (OFN), the nation's leading network of Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs). Mensah joined OFN in March 2017 bringing private and public-sector expertise in using financial tools to improve the economic security of the working poor. In 2014, Mensah was nominated by President Obama and confirmed by the US Senate for the position of Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development. In this role, she managed a loan portfolio of \$215 billion, directing investments in critical infrastructure for rural America. Previously, Mensah was the founding Executive Director of the Initiative on Financial Security at The Aspen Institute where she led an effort to promote savings, homeownership, and retirement policies and products. Mensah began her career in commercial banking at Citibank before joining the Ford Foundation where she was responsible for the country's largest philanthropic grant and loan portfolio of investments in rural America. Mensah holds an M.A. from the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of The Johns Hopkins University and a B.A. from Harvard University.

Karen Leone de Nie is vice president and community affairs officer in the community and economic development (CED) group at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. She is responsible for building partnerships and leading research efforts related to community and economic development issues with the objective of improving the policy environment and facilitating sustainable community development practices. Prior to joining the Atlanta Fed, she was a researcher at Georgia Tech's Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development, which does applied research to help communities achieve sound and equitable development through planning and policy. Leone de Nie also worked for the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan planning organization, focusing on real estate development and environmental resource management. She earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and a master's degree in city and regional planning from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Richard Cordray is a lawyer and politician who was the Democratic nominee for Governor of Ohio in 2018. Previously, Cordray served as the first Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) from 2012 to 2017. Prior to his appointment, Cordray variously served as Ohio's Attorney General, Solicitor General, and Treasurer. In 2008, he received a Financial Services Champion award from the U.S. Small Business Administration and a Government Service Award from NeighborWorks America. Earlier in his career, Cordray was an adjunct professor at the Ohio State University College of Law (1989-2002), served as a State Representative for the 33rd Ohio House District (1991-1993), was the first Solicitor General in Ohio's history (1993-1994), and was a sole practitioner and Of Counsel to Kirkland & Ellis (1995-2007). Cordray is a graduate of Michigan State University, Oxford University, and the University of Chicago Law School. He was Editor-in-Chief of the University of Chicago Law Review and later clerked for U.S. Supreme Court Justices Byron White and Anthony Kennedy.

Class Format and Grading:

The course is a seminar involving lectures, class discussion, guest presentations and case studies on relevant policy topics. Grading is based on:

- **Attendance (5%):** Regular course attendance is required.
- **Participation (15%):** Substantive engagement in class discussions will determine participation grades. Students will summarize and discuss assigned readings.
- **Policy Memo 1 (20%):** Students will write a one-page memo advocating for a policy action that would increase economic mobility. Detailed instructions will be provided in class. (Due February 24)
- **Op-Ed (25%):** Students will write an 800 word Op-Ed advocating for policy action that would mitigate systemic barriers to housing or jobs/entrepreneurship (March 31)
- **Policy Memo 2 (35%):** Students will write a one-page memo advocating for a policy action that would increase economic mobility. Detailed instructions will be provided in class. (Due April 22)

Course Schedule		
Date	Topics	Reading Assignment
Class 1 Jan. 29	<p>From Voting Rights to Economic Rights</p> <p>Welcome & Introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Syllabus and Schedule • What are similarities between the challenges facing Black residents of the 1960's and today? • What are the main differences? • How do the remedies differ? <p>Guest Speaker: Derrick Johnson, NAACP</p>	<p>Robert P. Moses (1964) Speech on Freedom Summer at Stanford University</p> <p>Martin Luther King Jr. (1967) "Where Do We Go From Here?," Address Delivered at the Eleventh Annual SCLC Convention</p> <p>Martin Luther King Jr. (1968) I've Been to the Mountaintop</p>
Class 2 Feb. 5	<p>Economic Conditions in the Deep South</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is economic mobility? • What are the main drivers of economic mobility? • How does economic mobility vary by geography? By race? • What would it take to dramatically increase mobility from poverty? <p>Guest Speaker: Nisha Patel. Washington University, St. Louis</p>	<p>Emily Badger, Claire Cain Miller, Adam Pearce and Kevin Quealy (2018). Extensive Data Shows Punishing Reach of Racism for Black Boys</p> <p>William Bynum, Diana Elliot and Edward Sivak (2018) Opening Mobility Pathways by Closing the Financial the Services Gap (pp 7-14)</p> <p>Supplemental Readings</p> <p>David Ellwood and Nisha Patel (2018) Restoring the American Dream</p> <p>Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, Maggie Jones, and Sonya R. Porter (2018). Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States</p>

<p>Class 3 Feb. 12</p>	<p>Discrimination by Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine and discuss how policy actions limit economic opportunity. • How do the historical conditions described in Jones’ podcast manifest in current economic policy? • What policies have fostered housing discrimination in a community where you have lived or worked? Describe their effects. <p>Guest Speaker: Desiree Hensley, University of Mississippi</p>	<p>Nikole Hannah-Jones, (2019) New York Times Podcast: The Economy That Slavery Built</p> <p>Douglas S. Massey (2015) The Legacy of the 1968 Fair Housing Act</p> <p>Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2018) How Real Estate Segregated America Dissent Magazine</p> <p>Supplemental Readings</p> <p>Vanessa Gregory (2013) Long Division: A blueprint for the failure of low-income housing</p> <p>University of Mississippi School of Law (2019) UM Law Housing Clinic Changes Lives of Eastmoor Circle Residents</p>
<p>Class 4 Feb. 19</p>	<p>Banking Deserts in Communities of Color</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the financial service landscape in the Deep South? In communities of color? • What actions should policymakers take to close financial service gaps in the region? <p>Guest Speaker: Karen Leone de Nie, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta</p>	<p>Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta (2015) Community Reinvestment Act: Geographies and Strategies in the Southeast</p> <p>Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta (2015) Community Reinvestment Act: How much is it worth in the Southeast</p> <p>Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (2020) Federal Reserve Board issues Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on an approach to modernize regulations that implement the Community Reinvestment Act</p> <p>Next City (September 2020) The Fed Wants to Push the Reset Button on Community Reinvestment Regulation Update</p>
<p>Class 5 Feb. 26</p>	<p>Community Development Financial Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are CDFIs? • How do place and race shape CDFIs? • How do CDFIs engage in policy? <p>Guest Speaker: Lisa Mensah, Opportunity Finance Network</p>	<p>Opportunity Finance Network: What is a CDFI?</p> <p>Partners for Rural Transformation (2019) Transforming Persistent Poverty in America: How Community Development Financial Institutions Drive Economic Opportunity (pp 2-4)</p> <p>Jerome H. Powell (February 2019) Encouraging Economic Development in High-Poverty Rural Communities</p> <p>William Bynum, Diane Standaert, Sara Miller (2021) HOPE Comments in Response to Federal Reserve’s Proposed Changes to the Community Reinvestment Act</p> <p>Supplemental Readings</p> <p>John Caskey (October 2013) HOPE: The Evolution of a Community Development Organization (pp 3-10)</p> <p>Kiyadh Burt (2020) Analyzing the CDFI Asset Gap:: Examining Racial Disparities in CDFI Fund Awardees from 2003 to 2017</p>

<p>Class 6 March 12</p>	<p>Opening Mobility Pathways By Closing the Financial Service Gap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the drivers of the racial wealth gap? • What financial service, entrepreneurship and housing policies would most effectively narrow wealth gaps and increase economic mobility? 	<p>Christine Percheski and Christina Gibson-Davis (2020) A Penny on the Dollar: Racial Inequalities in Wealth among Households with Children (Read all sections except Data & Methods)</p> <p>Ingrid Gorman (2016) The Tapestry of Black Business Ownership in America: Untapped Opportunities for Success (pp 4-11, 24-29)</p> <p>Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University (2020) The State of the Nation's Housing 2020 (Executive Summary pp 1-7)</p> <p>William Bynum, Diana Elliot and Edward Sivak (2018) Opening Mobility Pathways by Closing the Financial the Services Gap (Summary)</p>
<p>Class 7 March 19</p>	<p>Don't Waste a Crisis: Disasters, Community Development & Policy: Hurricane Katrina</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were people of color disproportionately affected during Hurricane Katrina? • How did policy decisions shape these outcomes? • How did community development organizations influence Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts? 	<p>Carroll Doherty (2015) Remembering Katrina: Wide racial divide over government's response</p> <p>Aleena McCargo and Michael Neal 2020 How Economic Crises and Sudden Disasters Increase Racial Disparities in Homeownership (pp 1-11)</p> <p>Jackson Free Press (2015) Justice, Hope and Hurricane Katrina</p> <p>New York Times (2014) Don't Repeat the Mistakes of the Katrina Recovery</p> <p>Supplemental Readings Mississippi State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (2006) Envisioning a Better Mississippi</p>
<p>Class 8 March 26</p>	<p>Don't Waste a Crisis: Disasters, Community Development & Policy: The Great Recession & Housing Crisis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the impact of the housing crisis on economic mobility? • How can consumer finance protection policies help increase economic mobility? <p>Guest Speaker: Richard Cordray, Lawyer, Politician</p>	<p>For Discussion: Sarah Burd-Sharps and Rebecca Rasch (2015) Impact of the US Housing Crisis on the Racial Wealth Gap Across Generations</p> <p>Anna Wolfe (2018) As Payday Loans Thrive in Mississippi, Neighboring States Move to Cap High Interest Rates</p> <p>Background Reading: Richard Cordray (2015) Written Testimony Before the House Committee on Financial Services</p> <p>Supplemental Reading: Ed Sivak (2014) Written Testimony Before MS House Committee: Federal Regulation and Access to Small Dollar Credit</p>

<p>Class 9 April 2</p>	<p>Don't Waste a Crisis: Disasters, Community Development & Policy: COVID 19 and the Triple Crisis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What patterns of inequity identified in earlier discussions do you see emerging in America's response to the pandemic? • How have the structure of recovery programs disadvantaged low mobility communities? • What roles are community development organizations playing in addressing disparities in recovery efforts? 	<p>Anneliese Lederer and Sara Oros (2020) Lending Discrimination Within the Paycheck Protection Program</p> <p>Diane Standaert, Sara Miller and Calandra Davis (2020) CDFIs' Indispensable Role in Connecting Small Businesses with PPP Loans in the Deep South</p> <p>Oscar Perry Abello (2020) Alabama's Black Belt Figured Out Zero-Interest Local Government Financing</p> <p>Supplemental Reading: Business Roundtable (2020) Business Roundtable Commits to Break Down Barriers to Economic Opportunity</p> <p>Robert Fairlie (2020) The Impact Of Covid-19 On Small Business Owners</p>
<p>Class 10 April 16</p>	<p>"Inequality Is Not Inevitable"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare opportunity gaps in 2020 to those in 1968. • Is the current policy environment more conducive to increasing economic mobility from poverty? • What policies have been most impactful in increasing economic mobility from poverty, and will best accelerate the rate of progress? • How can CDFIs more effectively influence public policy? 	<p>Calandra Davis (2020) Policy Responses to the Economic Crisis Must Take Racial Disparities and Debt-Related Abuses Into Account</p> <p>Joseph Stiglitz (2014) Inequality Is Not Inevitable</p> <p>Martin Luther King Jr. (1967) "Where Do We Go From Here?," Address Delivered at the Eleventh Annual SCLC Convention</p>

Student Mental Health and Well-Being Resources: The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. We acknowledge that a variety of issues, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, and depression, directly impact students' academic performance. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, counseling and mental health services are available. For help, contact [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) and/or [University Health Service](#) (UHS). This includes the [Ford School embedded CAPS counselor](#).

In a crisis or emergency, students can call the CAPS Counselor on Duty at 734-764-8312 during business hours, or the same number and then press 0 after hours. Click [here](#) for a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus.