Child Poverty at a Racial Cross Roads: Assessing Child Poverty for Children in Mono- and Multiracial Families

Capturing the conditions of children of color has become more complex due to the growing presence of interracial families and the increasingly complicated ways of reflecting racial identity in national surveys. The status of multiracial offspring, and their place in the discussion of racial differences in outcomes, remains unclear even as this group represents an expanding share of American children. This work focuses on child poverty, an economic condition that has wide ranging consequences for child development and disproportionately plagues the lives of children of color. I investigate to what degree multiracial children “stand out” in their likelihood of poverty among all children in a variety of family structural arrangements, as well as how the racial and multi-racial variation in child poverty among those families that are the most vulnerable to poverty—single mothers. Findings show that first, overall, most multiracial groups have poverty or near poverty rates that are in between Whites and their respective minority groups and that some groups, specifically those of Asian heritage, have even lower poverty levels than whites. Second, results from the fully adjusted models show that background characteristics fully explain racial gap in child poverty between certain multiracial groups and non-Hispanic whites whether assessed across various family types or among single mother households.

Big Bad Racists, Subtle Prejudice and Minority Victims: An Agent-Based Model of the Dynamics of Racial Inequality

How many racists does it take to maintain racial inequality? Historical evidence from the Jim Crow era suggests one needs a large number of racist advocates in various social arenas. More recent social scientific research, however, cites a significant decline in racist beliefs that have not been paralleled by declines in racial inequality. Hence, the strong hypothesized connection between racist attitudes and racial inequality was erroneous. Researchers have responded to this change by asserting that racial inequality does not require an abundance of racists, but only a system of biased (i.e., racialized) social institutions — or patterns of interaction — which can maintain racial inequality with a few/no racists. This solution, however, leads one to question how widespread systemic bias must be to maintain racial inequality — a derivative of the initial question. This paper examines these questions regarding how many racists — or biased institutional actors — it takes to create and maintain racial inequality using an agent-based model of a Nash Bargaining game. The results reveal that one needs an enormous amount of discrimination to create and maintain racial inequality. However, when we allow non-discriminating agents (i.e., non-racists) to use the race of competitors in decision making via social learning, the need for discriminatory agents to maintain inequality is reduced to nil.