

# Sociology of Murder: March 2



# Topics Covered Today (*see Blackboard*)



## In-Class Assignment #2 Feedback

### Gang-related homicides:

- *Bangin' in Little Rock* Overview

### Social structure & murder:

- How is poverty related to murder?

## Gun Control Policies

# In-Class Assignment #2



# In-Class Assignment #2



1. ***True or False:*** According to Beegley, **anomie** refers to a lack of cultural values which opens the door to violence.

*81% responded True*

***19% responded False (correct answer)***

## Beegley Reading Study Questions (*syllabus, pg. 7*)



1. Beeghley begins Chapter 4 by discussing a book written by Messner and Rosenfeld, *Crime and the American Dream*. Why are American rates of homicide so high, according to this book?

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*value placed on material success encourages use of illegitimate strategies to obtain*

## Beegley Reading Study Questions (*syllabus, pg. 7*)



3. What is meant by the term, *the American Dream*?

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*All citizens committed to the goal of material success under conditions of open competition*



## Beegley Reading Study Questions (*syllabus, pg. 7*)



3. What is meant by the term, *the American Dream*?

*All citizens committed to the goal of material success under conditions of open competition*

*Economy dominates and affects other social institutions*

## Beegley Reading Study Questions (*syllabus, pg. 7*)



4. Define the concept *anomie*, and explain how it causes crime.

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*Anomie = lack of connection between cultural values and the legitimate means to achieve them*

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*Anomie = lack of connection between cultural values and the legitimate means to achieve them*

*- some will use illegitimate means*

## Beegley Reading Study Questions (*syllabus, pg. 7*)



4. Define the concept *anomie*, and explain how it causes crime.

*Anomie = lack of connection between cultural values and the legitimate means to achieve them*

*- some will use illegitimate means*

*-some will express free-floating anger against others*

## Beegley Reading Study Questions (*syllabus, pg. 7*)



5. To what extent does Beeghley agree with Messner and Rosenfeld's theory of anomie and murder?

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*anomie does not explain high rate of murder*

## Beegley Reading Study Questions (*syllabus, pg. 7*)



5. To what extent does Beeghley agree with Messner and Rosenfeld's theory of anomie and murder?

*anomie does not explain high rate of murder*

*-most homicides are NOT economically motivated*

*-quality of life better in the U.S. than any other country*



## In-Class Assignment #2



2. **A)** In analyzing today's documentary, which cultural or structural factor offers a more convincing explanation of youth involvement in gang-related violence in low-income neighborhoods?

24%	<i>Family</i>
21%	<i>Cultural (unspecified)</i>
17%	<i>Structural (unspecified)</i>
13%	<i>Economic Stratification</i>
10%	<i>Social Institutions (unspecified)</i>
5%	<i>Education</i>

# In-Class Assignment #2



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# Cultural & Structural Concepts (*last week*)



## Culture

**Norms**

**Values**

**Socialization**

## Structure

**Social Institutions**

-family

-economy

-politics

-education

-religion

**Stratification**

# In-Class Assignment #2



2. **B)** How could the factor listed in Part A be addressed or changed in an effort to reduce youth violence?

21%	<i>Education</i>
18%	<i>Emotional Connections</i>
18%	<i>Social Involvement</i>
17%	<i>Parents/Family</i>
9%	<i>Social Structure</i>
6%	<i>Jobs</i>

# Question 2



## Part A

*24% Family*  
*21% Cultural*  
*17% Structural*  
*13% Stratification*  
*10% Social Institutions*  
*5% Education*

## Part B

*21% Education*  
*18% Connections*  
*18% Social Involvement*  
*17% Parents/Family*  
*9% Social Structure*  
*6% Jobs*

# Gang-Related Homicides



# Gang-Related Homicides



**Gang homicides comprise  
a small proportion of juvenile murders.**

# Gang-Related Homicides



**Gang homicides comprise  
a small proportion of juvenile murders.**

**Gang homicides are  
representative of “typical” murder.**



# Gang-Related Homicides



## Characteristics of Perpetrators/Victims

Male

Young

Poor

African-American

# Gang-Related Homicides



## Characteristics of Perpetrators/Victims

Male

Young

Poor

African-American

Live in urban communities

High school dropouts

Prior arrest records

# Gang-Related Homicides



## Characteristics of Gang Homicides

Acquaintance murder

Handguns

Alcohol abuse

# Gang-Related Homicides



## Characteristics of Gang Homicides

Acquaintance murder

Handguns

Alcohol abuse

Drug-related transactions

# *Bangin' in Little Rock Overview*



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## Structural Factors

Lack of legitimate, stable jobs

-monetary benefits of gang activity

# *Bangin' in Little Rock Overview*



## Structural Factors

Lack of legitimate, stable jobs

-monetary benefits of gang activity

Inequality (stratification)

# *Bangin' in Little Rock Overview*



## Structural Factors

Lack of legitimate, stable jobs

-monetary benefits of gang activity

Inequality (stratification)

Gangs as a “substitute” for family



# *Bangin' in Little Rock Overview*



## Structural Factors

***EDUCATION?***

# *Bangin' in Little Rock Overview*



## Cultural Factors

### Attitudes that condone violence

- toughness
- revenge & retribution
- lack of remorse

# *Bangin' in Little Rock Overview*



## Cultural Factors

Attitudes that condone violence

- toughness
- revenge & retribution
- lack of remorse

Fear & paranoia

# *Bangin' in Little Rock Overview*



## Cultural Factors

Attitudes that condone violence

- toughness
- revenge & retribution
- lack of remorse

Fear & paranoia

Violence as a means of problem-solving

# *Bangin' in Little Rock Overview*



## Cultural Factors

Attitudes that condone violence

- toughness
- revenge & retribution
- lack of remorse

Fear & paranoia

Violence as a means of problem-solving

***How is the general public different?***

# *Bangin' in Little Rock Overview*



What has happened since 1993?

1994-2000

gang-related homicide rate dropped

# *Bangin' in Little Rock Overview*



What has happened since 1993?

1994-2000

gang-related homicide rate dropped

*Why?* state & local funding for after-school programs

# *Bangin' in Little Rock Overview*



What has happened since 1993?

2001- now

State & local funding has declined



# *Bangin' in Little Rock Overview*



What has happened since 1993?

2001- now

Gang-motivated homicide rate still low  
*(retaliation drive-by shootings)*

# *Bangin' in Little Rock Overview*



What has happened since 1993?

2001- now

Gang-motivated homicide rate still low  
*(retaliation drive-by shootings)*

Gang-related homicide rate increasing  
*(drug-related)*

# Urban Gang-Related Homicide Trends



**Gangs have existed in cities like L.A., New York, Chicago & Boston for more than a century.**

# Urban Gang-Related Homicide Trends



Gangs have existed in cities like L.A., New York, Chicago & Boston for more than a century.

Movement of gangs into other communities is largely related to the distribution of illicit drugs.

# Urban Gang-Related Homicide Trends



Gangs have existed in cities like L.A., New York, Chicago & Boston for more than a century.

Movement of gangs into other communities is largely related to the distribution of illicit drugs.

crack cocaine → crystal meth

# Urban Gang-Related Homicide Trends



Why is gang violence deadlier today?

# Urban Gang-Related Homicide Trends



Why is gang violence deadlier today?

-culture of violence has remained constant

# Urban Gang-Related Homicide Trends



Why is gang violence deadlier today?

- culture of violence has remained constant
- slow structural changes: education & employment



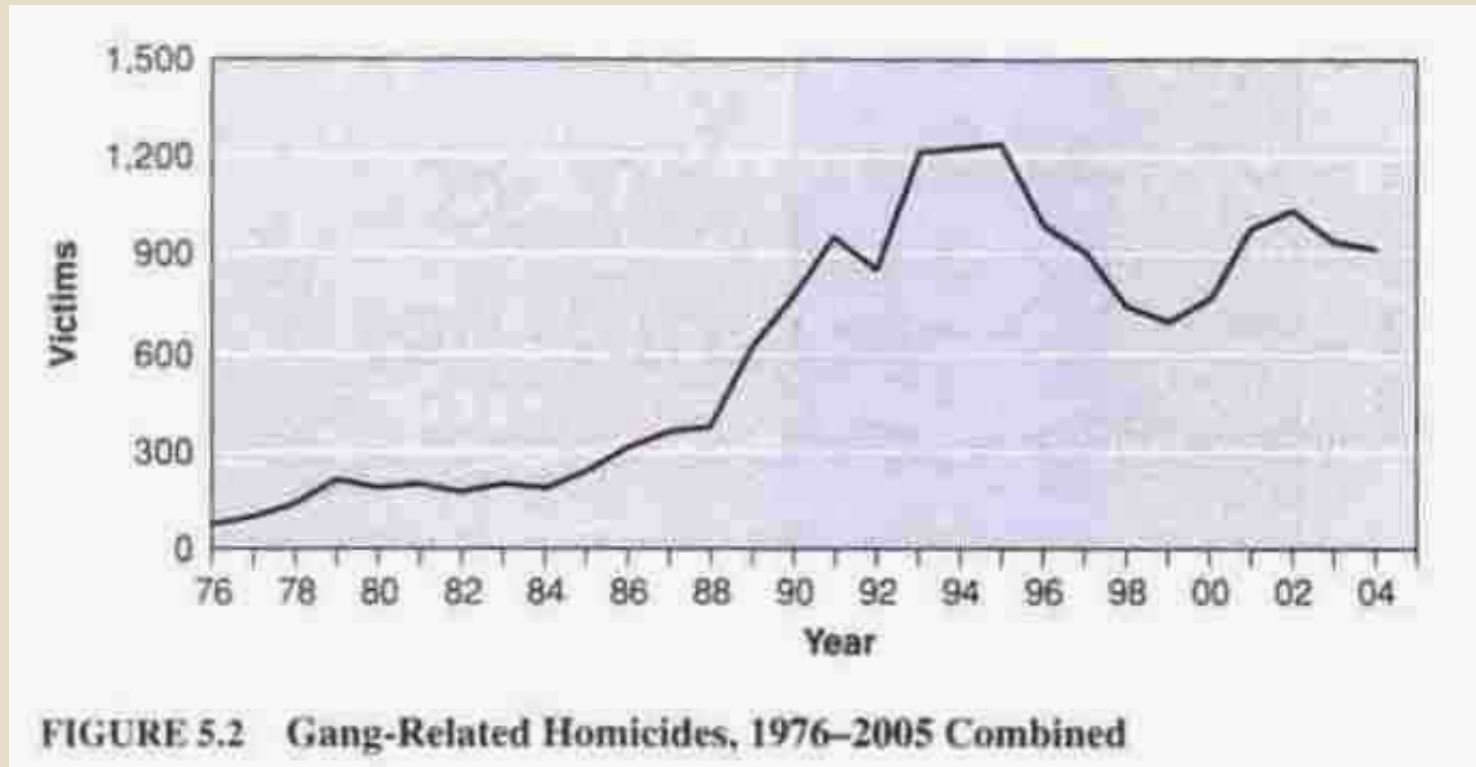
# Urban Gang-Related Homicide Trends



Why is gang violence deadlier today?

- culture of violence has remained constant
- slow structural changes: education & employment
- use of weapons has changed significantly:
  - fist fights → knives → handguns & assault weapons

# Gang-Related Homicides (Fox, pg. 88)



# Gang-Related Homicides (Fox, pg. 88)

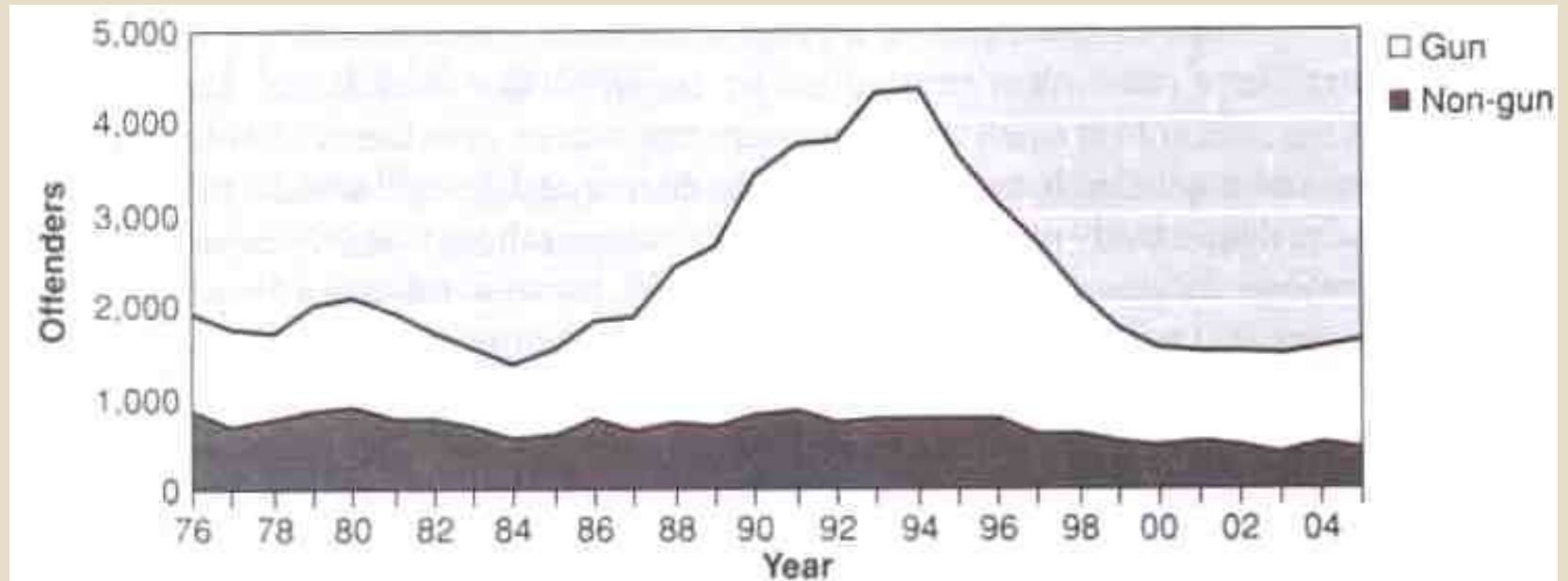


FIGURE 5.3 Teen Homicide Offenders by Weapon, 1976–2005

# How are Poverty & Race Related to Murder?



**SOCIAL STRUCTURE & MURDER**

# How are Poverty & Race Related to Murder?



- 1) How is economic inequality related to murder?
- 2) How are the types of jobs available to people related to murder?
- 3) Is social class or race more important in explaining disparities in murder?

# Poverty Statistics



10% of population lives below the poverty line

42% of single mothers live below poverty line

# Persons in Household	Annual Income
1	\$10,400
2	\$14,000

# How Is Poverty Related to Murder?



Judith & Peter Blau, 1982, “The Cost of Inequality:  
Metropolitan Structure & Violent Crime”

***Where are the poorest  
communities in the United States?***

# How Is Poverty Related to Murder?



***Where are the poorest  
communities in the United States?***

***Rural communities.***



# Rural Poverty



Appalacia =  
1,000 mile long area

65% live below  
poverty line



# Appalachian Children



# How Is Poverty Related to Murder?



***Why do urban communities have higher murder rates than poor rural communities?***

# How Is Poverty Related to Murder?



***Why do urban communities have higher murder rates than poor rural communities?***

*High rates of inequality (stratification).*

# Poverty & Inequality



# Poverty & Inequality



# Urban Poverty



## Poorest Cities in U.S.

**Detroit**

**Buffalo**

**Cincinnati**

**Cleveland**

# Urban Poverty



## Poorest Cities in U.S.

## Detroit

**Detroit**

21% unemployment

Buffalo

35% live below poverty  
line

Cincinnati

Average home worth

Cleveland

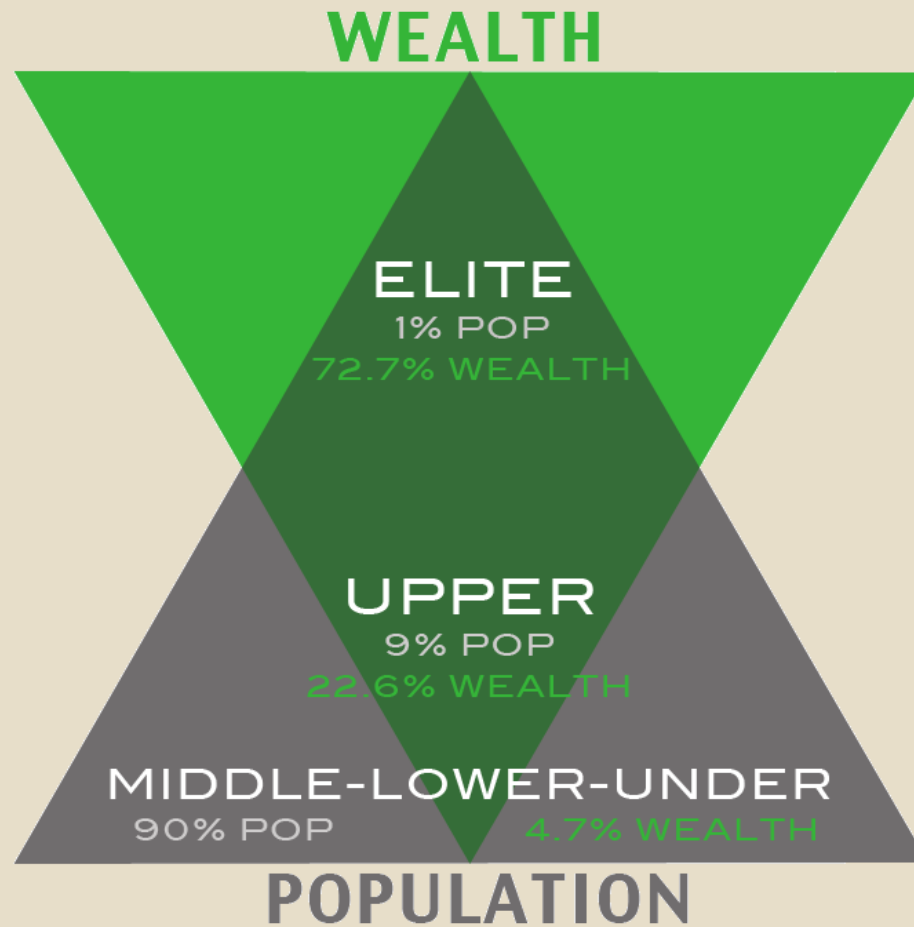
\$18,000



# Detroit Neighborhoods



# Inequality in U.S.: Pyramid of Power



# Two Wealthiest Men in U.S.



**Bill Gates (\$58 billion)**



**Warren Buffet (\$62 billion)**



# Salary Disparities



## Average CEO v. Average Worker

40 years ago:                      \$35 : 1

# Salary Disparities



## Average CEO v. Average Worker

40 years ago:                      \$35 : 1

Today:                                \$450 : 1

# How Is Poverty Related to Murder?



Robert Crutchfield, 1988, “Labor Stratification & Violent Crime”

***How are the types of jobs  
available to people related to murder?***

# Labor Stratification



## Primary Sector

**Skilled labor**

**Salaries**

**Benefits**

**More job security**

# Labor Stratification



## Primary Sector

## Secondary Sector

**Skilled labor**

**Unskilled (Semi-)**

**Salaries**

**Hourly wages**

**Benefits**

**No benefits**

**More job security**

**Less job security**



# Labor Stratification



## Primary Sector



## Secondary Sector



# Labor Stratification



Primary  
Sector  
Jobs



Low  
Murder  
Rates

# Labor Stratification

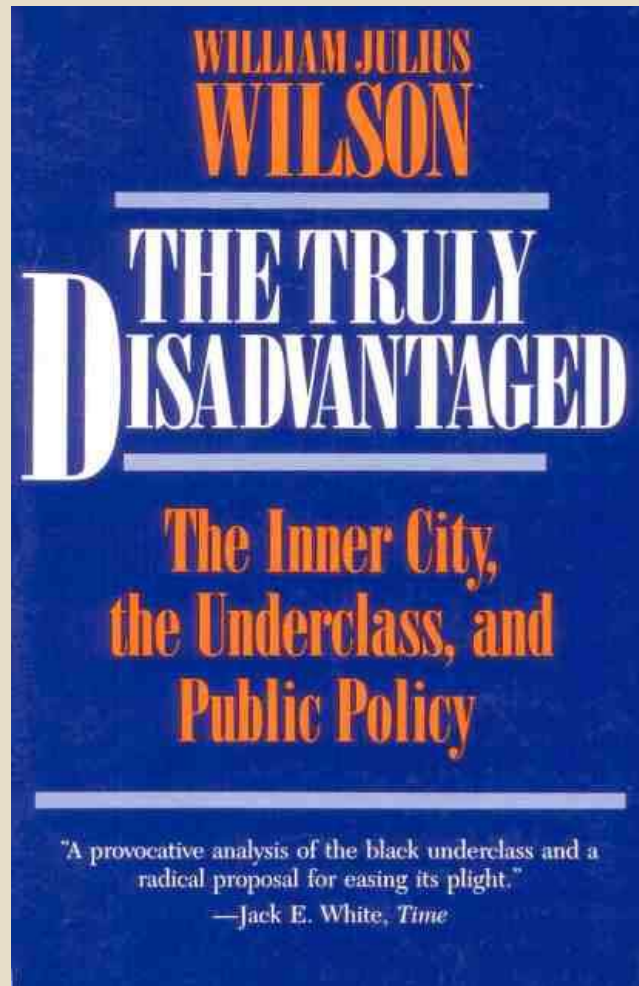


Secondary  
Sector  
Jobs



High  
Murder  
Rates

# *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987)



# How are Poverty & Race Related to Murder?



**IS SOCIAL CLASS OR RACE MORE  
IMPORTANT IN EXPLAINING THE  
HIGH RATE OF HOMICIDE FOR  
AFRICAN-AMERICANS TODAY?**

# South Chicago Housing Projects



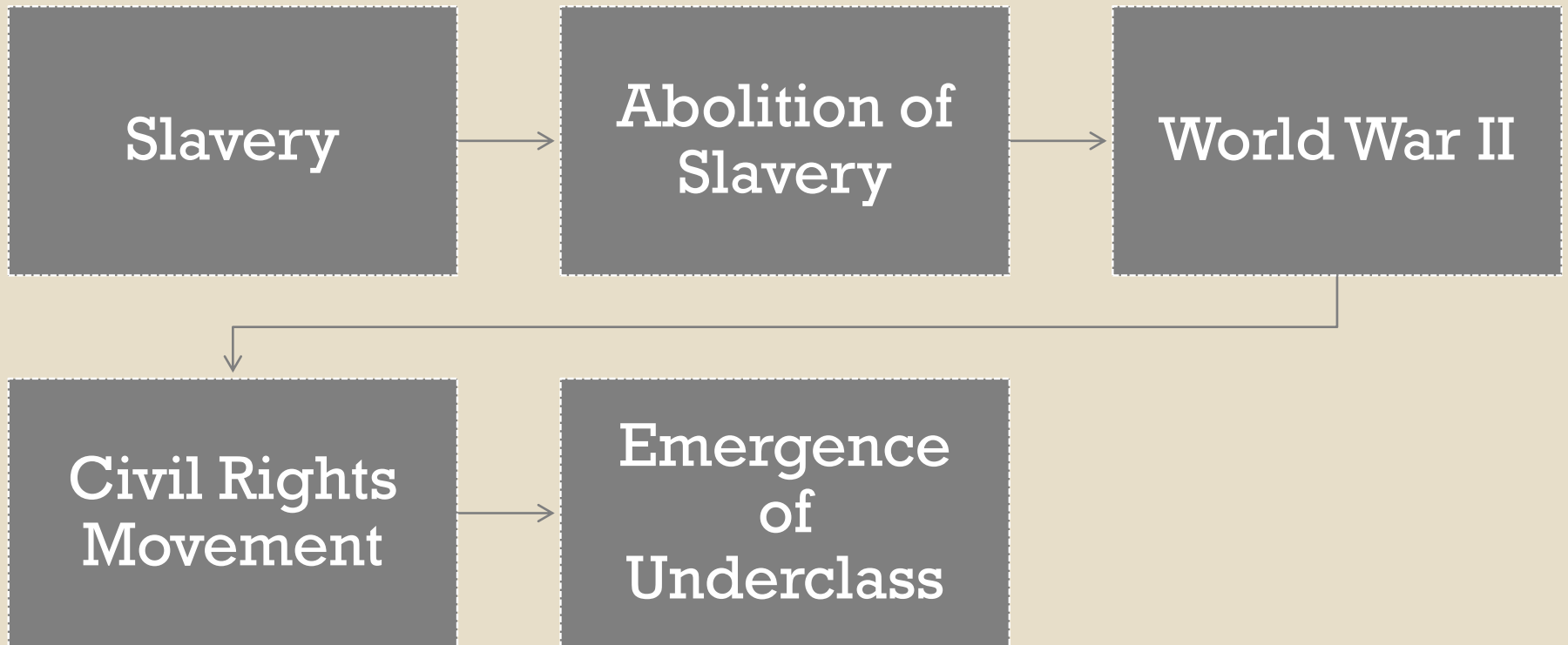
**1% of city's population**

**11% of city's homicides**

**10% of other violent crimes**



# Emergence of the *Black Urban Underclass*



# Slavery thru Abolition (1607 – 1865)



**Race = Social Class**





# World War II (1942 - 45)

Mass migration from rural south to urban north for skilled labor jobs



# Civil Rights Movement (1955 - 75)



## POLITICAL CHANGES:

New opportunities



Upward mobility  
(for some)



# Emergence of *Urban Underclass* (1970s)

## ECONOMIC CHANGES:

Loss of skilled labor



Emergence of **underclass**

&

*the declining  
significance of race*



# African-American Men



**EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT &  
INCARCERATION  
(2006 NATIONAL STUDY)**

# African-American Men



***5 million black men ages 20-39***

**Inner-Cities**

**50% did not finish high school**

# African-American Men



***5 million black men ages 20-39***

**Inner-Cities**

**72% high school dropouts in their 20s were jobless**

# African-American Men



***5 million black men ages 20-39***

## Inner-Cities

**72% high school dropouts in their 20s were jobless**

***- 34% white men in 20s***

***- 19% Hispanic men in 20s***

***- dropout rates as bad or worse but not related to unemployment or crime***

# African-American Men



***5 million black men ages 20-39***

## Inner-Cities

**21% in their 20s who did not attend college were  
incarcerated**



# African-American Men



***5 million black men ages 20-39***

## Inner-Cities

21% in their 20s who did not attend college were incarcerated

By mid-30s, 6 in 10 high school dropouts had spent time in prison

# African-American Men



***5 million black men ages 20-39***

## Inner-Cities

High school dropouts in their late 20s, more are in prison (34%) than are working (30%)

# African-American Men



Incarceration rates climbed steeply during 1980s

- political shift to harsher punishments

- (crack epidemic)

- black men most likely to be arrested

# African-American Men



**Incarceration rates climbed steeply during 1980s**

- political shift to harsher punishments**

- (crack epidemic)**

- black men most likely to be arrested**

**Men with criminal records shunned by employers**

- young black men with clean records suffer by association**

# Concluding Remarks



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**Inequality**, more than *poverty*, is related to murder.

# Concluding Remarks



**Inequality**, more than *poverty*, is related to murder.

**Secondary sector labor jobs**, more than *unemployment*, are related to murder.

# Concluding Remarks



**Inequality**, more than *poverty*, is related to murder.

**Secondary sector labor jobs**, more than *unemployment*, are related to murder.

**Social class**, more than *race*, is related to murder.





# In-Class Assignment #3



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**Work in groups of 2 or 3. Include name & last 4 digits of student ID. USE A FULL SHEET OF PAPER.**

## Beeghley Study Questions 6 & 7

6. What five factors explain the high base rate of homicide in the United States, according to Beeghley?
7. In discussing guns versus other weapons, what does Beeghley mean when he says that “a gun requires less psychological commitment in use?”