

An Historical Narrative of the Educational Trajectory of the Child Raised in State Care

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Abstract

The purpose of this review article is to examine the educational trajectory of foster care alumni regarding the social capital held by their foster parents. This literature review applies special attention to the age group of k-12 because despite educational reform interventions a college readiness gap remains for the foster child. The college journey starts as early as grade school, a time in which remedial limitations may be diagnosed and addressed. Research indicates that 17% of foster children require remedial instruction at the grade school level but fail to be diagnosed as a result of poor agency coordination. As a society we have, by default, consented to the removal of children from their biological homes. The foster home, therefore, is tasked with providing a nurturing setting that is an improvement over the biological home setting from which the child is removed. The foster parent, then, must engage in behavior change that can be observed in the school setting, take corrective action when poor agency coordination occurs, expedite the individual education plan, encourage the foster child and monetize materials of value for the child for the duration that the child remains in placement. We observe that there is a gap in the literature with regard to intelligence from foster care alumni. Further, educational advocacy, by the foster parent, on behalf of the foster child is a prerequisite if foster youth are to meet benchmarks that indicate long-term survival. Foster youth, by default, lack long-term adult support, a barrier to persistence in education. This review examines the literature on what foster alumni reported they experience regarding social capital held by their foster caregivers as it relates to college access.

Keywords

Education Outcomes, Foster Children, Social Capital

1. Introduction

Benjamin Eaton became the first foster child in 1632. It has been a policy since 1562 to protect children from harm. An analysis of several case studies as well as statistical data on earnings of those who hold some post-secondary training illustrates that it is indeed harmful as well as cumbersome, if not wholly impossible, to embark on life's journey without an education. The challenges foster youth face on their education journey and the key barriers that prevent them from obtaining entrée into the higher education paradigm are many. This review focused on the educational trajectory of the foster child who does not benefit from an education advocate in the form of a biological parent in the way that their general population peers do. The foster child is a vulnerable member of society. This literature compilation undergirds a plethora of themes surrounding the historically austere trajectory of this demographic. Indeed, [Fineman \(2008: p. 3\)](#) demonstrated that a hallmark of our version of equality is that it fails to acclimatize or jettison unequal distribution of economic and social well-being adjacent to the demographics within our society. As such, formal equality leaves undisturbed—and may even serve to validate—existing institutional arrangements that serve the privilege of some and galvanize the disadvantages of others. Furthermore, there remains no framework for dismantling power or allocations of existing resources.

In a quest to extrapolate what avenues might improve outcomes for FCA a summary of the issues the foster youth continue to face and the importance of accessibility and equity in education for first generation students, students living in poverty, the foster child, as well as other populations that remain underrepresented in higher education are presented.

It is clear that funding foster care is not an issue. Many people are employed, agencies are funded, and family court justices are appointed to regulate the social problem of foster care. In fact, statistics indicate stakeholders are emboldened to keep foster children safe, not to find them homes ([Craig, 1995: p. 1](#)). Foster children from every age group will never go home. In fact, although the prevailing rhetoric is that the goal of foster care, in every state in the land, is reunification, it is not atypical for a child to remain in care until the age of majority. Government statistics show that the child aged 11 to 15 represents the largest number of foster care recipients ([Mech, 1994: p. 603](#)).

Foster youth suffer not just from the abuse and or neglect that brought them into care, but their entire life trajectories are placed in jeopardy by constant mobility, a hallmark of foster care. In fact, unless a child is adopted their education continues to be unstable and suffer as a consequence of multiple placements. The lack of the protective factor that a long-term caregiver provides in the way that their peers benefit when their biological parents steer and supervise their education is of particular concern for this review. When a child has an unstable placement history, they attend multiple schools and experience further loss of connection of positive adult relationships in the form of educators as well as ne-

cessary peer support that friends provide.

2. The Importance of a Supportive and Knowledgeable Adult

When a child welfare professional perceives that trauma, abuse or neglect has led to suffering in the biological home children are removed. That child then suffers additional pain as a consequence of being ripped from the familiarity of parents and siblings. As such the ability to focus on learning takes a backseat to recovery, constant readjustment, and survival (Maslow, 1943: p. 387). It is imperative that new research reveal when the foster child's learning trajectory is most vulnerable so that foster care agencies might intervene at this crucial time.

All children require support. After being removed from their biological family, foster children require a higher level of assistance. To report the relationship between network disruption and psychological distress Anda et al. (2006) used telephone data surveys to measure the strength of ongoing communication and contact within three domains. Data on the importance of ties to the child's biological family, foster care, and peer networks were studied. It was found that some foster care placements lend themselves to ongoing psychological support and bonding, while repeated disruptions characterized by new placements prove arduous for children to navigate. Strong ties to new or old networks were found to be an advantageous protective factor for psychological outcomes.

It can be assumed that a child who has lost contact with their support network will suffer academically. Very little is known, however, about the educational progress of children in care prior to their emancipation date. Though it is understood that coming into state care carries a substantial risk of educational failure, Abdul-Alim (2016: p. 16), it remains a school and or agency choice to monitor the educational progress of this vulnerable demographic. That agencies and schools are not required to monitor, provide interventions of value, or report to any governing body the educational progress of the child in care is compounded by evidence that the child in care is typically from educationally disadvantaged populations (Jackson, 1994). Biological Parents who lose their children to foster care are typically female, homeless, and unskilled (DiBlasio & Belcher, 1992).

Eleven-year-old children who entered care before age seven were almost two years behind in reading and one year behind in math; as compared to their peers with no foster care experience. It is necessary that the same level of interest that biological parents demonstrate when monitoring the education of their own children be shown to the foster child by the array of agencies (e.g. social workers, judges, teachers, foster parents, psychologists) that have assumed legal and custodial responsibility for them (Jackson, 1994). There appears to be a lack of urgency on the part of the professionals that serve the foster child. Research by Drake and Yadama (1996: p. 182) indicates that in 1993 child protective service workers were 85.1% White, 80.7% female, and that 62.9% held bachelor's degrees; statistics that, possibly, infer a lack of cultural understanding as families typically investigated by child protective services are African-American, Latino,

and Indigenous (Kelly, 2000; Krinsky, 2010; Barth, 1990).

Research on the life trajectory of foster alumni consistently supports the understanding that education is crucial to positive outcomes. When dollars are earmarked for college tuition, trade school, and employment related services as interventions for this demographic, labor market outcomes improve for the child raised in care (Okpych & Courtney, 2014: p. 22).

Despite these initiatives a large gap remains between degree attainment of youth in the general population and youth with foster care experience. We have yet to learn why the gap endures despite yearly upticks in funding, federally and at the state level. Research shows a positive correlation between degree attainment and positive outcomes. Earning the college degree is the single most significant benchmark that impacts every domain associated with this demographic. When foster alumni were interviewed in their late twenties, they reported that school achievement ultimately informed their adult trajectory. Findings by Deary et al. (2005) asserted further evidence of the ways in which education ameliorates lives when their study illustrated a positive correlation between educational achievement and psychological well-being. Those who surpassed specified educational benchmarks that designated them as high achievers were employed at a higher rate, in careers rather than jobs. They owned their own homes, had hobbies that they enjoyed regularly, and reported more life satisfaction than the comparison group that was not designated as educationally high achieving.

Nevertheless, youth with foster care experience earn half of what their peers in the general population earn, experience an unemployment rate 20% higher than the national average, show high rates of high school attrition, homelessness, and criminal justice involvement (Gypen et al., 2017: pp. 77-80).

2.1. Negative Outcomes Associated with the Foster Child When They Emancipate Uneducated

In the 1970s The Department of Health and Human Services began to focus on the foster child in the category that ages out, is never reunified with their biological family, and will not experience adoption (Greeson et al., 2014: pp. 349-350). According to Blome and Steib (2008) a foster child ages out when the state ceases economic and custodial responsibility for that child. Their outcomes are dismaying and although 14% are leaving care each year there is often no plan in place once they emancipate. They are experiencing outcomes commensurate with being ill prepared for life on their own. Additionally, they are expected to be capable of this endeavor 6-10 years before their peers in the general population. Research by Wieland and Nelson (2014: p. 1115) found that in 2012, 53% of adults aged 18 - 24 and 39% of adults aged 18 - 34 returned home to live with parents when facing financial struggles. Batsche & Reader (2012: p. 25) noted that 19% of FCA live on the street, an additional 18% live in homeless shelters, and 24% have unstable housing. Similarly grave statistics were shared by (Krinsky,

2010: p. 330). Findings indicated that within eighteen months of leaving care and aging out of foster care, 54% of young men and 25% of young women have criminal justice involvement that led to incarceration.

Mech (1994: p. 603) showed that foster care is not preparing youth for release from care, which is imminent at 18 or 21 years old, depending on state of residence. In the 1980's several federal laws were passed to benefit youth transitioning to independent living. John H. Chafee, the former governor of Rhode Island, introduced The Independent Living Initiative which spends \$70 million annually to prepare youth 16 years old and older for independence (Cook, 1994: p. 218). The initiative supports education of foster youth through age 23 at \$5,000 a year (Day et al., 2011: p. 2338). Okpych and Courtney (2014: p. 22) draw a positive correlation between earnings across the lifespan and college degree attainment, as well as decreased homelessness, mental health issues, criminal justice involvement, and risky behavior.

Batsche & Reader (2012) compared data obtained from postsecondary first-generation students to that of youth in foster care. Utilizing a nationally recognized program, instituted by the American Council on Education, Know How to Go (KH2Go) provides access to higher education for first generation students. The researchers study the effectiveness of KH2Go among the two demographics. Four themes emerged as unilaterally important to first-generation college students and foster alumni on their journey to earning the college credential. Both demographics faced a dramatic learning curve and were required to navigate the logistics of how to earn money, parent their children, develop study and time management skills, all the while embarking on the journey without traditional streams of support that most of us enjoy. Both groups discussed how perceived limitations of support impacted their ability to succeed in obtaining the post-secondary credential. Retention for both groups was also hampered by finite access to information of value. Both the foster child and the first generation student report little to no understanding of the link between advanced placement high school courses, adequate college preparation test courses, and the importance of the ACT and SAT tests in the college application process (Day et al., 2011), further proof that the trajectories of the two groups are linked.

2.2. The Foster Child Is a Member of Communities That Have Been Systematically Marginalized

The scope of the foster child's similarity to and membership in more than one demographic that has been unable to improve their station in life is a consequence of tethered socioeconomic strata that indicate generational poverty within several groups. The groups: first generation college students, the generational poor, those with criminal justice involvement, suffer a combination and commonality vis a vis a lack of access to information systems that support elevation of their life circumstances and hold little to no social capital. The lack of equitable educational opportunities is systemic, negatively correlates with gene-

rational poverty, and as such, is detrimental to the life trajectory of the child in poverty and by extension, the foster child.

An illustration of inequitable access to educational opportunities can be found in the lack of access to books in school libraries in settings with high concentrations of poverty, Pribesh et al. (2011: p. 144), which is typically where the foster child resides. When examining the school library access gap, it was found that the schools in which most students were from low socioeconomic backgrounds routinely had few library resources. Library resources were characterized by the number of days closed, the presence of an experienced staff member, and the rigorousness of the schedule in which current books were added to the school library collection.

The American Association of School Librarians position statement on the value of library media programs in education states that in the information age, an individual's success and survival is uniquely dependent on their ability to access information (Montiel-Overall, 2007: p. 279). The disparity in characteristics of the school library in affluent neighborhoods and communities of poverty is compelling because generally students in struggling neighborhoods do not have other ways to scaffold their learning in the way that a school library provides. When these resources are precarious within the education setting, customarily, they are nonexistent once the student exits the learning environment. Further, the library is an integral part of mental growth, and the library institution does three things well. Pribesh et al. (2011: p. 144) showed that the school library lends itself as an instrument in closing the access gap by providing information in a way that users can easily disseminate it in a meaningful way, it provides a welcoming setting that is both social and rich in culture, literature, and research. Additionally, libraries have an array of media at their disposal for leisure, instruction, and information gathering that students can utilize independently or easily access a knowledgeable library science professional.

Systemic issues, like the important one described above, are rampant and continue to highly impact communities of color and those where families of low socioeconomic status live. As mentioned previously, the foster child, by default, typically, resides in communities of poverty, high crime, and importantly, despair.

3. Why Outcomes Are Slow to Improve for the Foster Child and Communities of Poverty

Research by Knott and Donovan (2010) has shown that Black, Brown, and the Indigenous American populations experience child welfare involvement at a higher rate than Caucasians. The foster child, then, is a member of communities of color that experience income inequality and, consequently, their lived experience is an additional illustration of inequitable access to educational opportunities.

Economic growth has been slow stateside as well as globally. In fact, economic growth was slower between 1980 and 2014 than from 1960-1980. As such, a

generation has come of age in a slower economy than that of their parents while standards of living mount (Giordono et al., 2019: p. 115). The lowest earners have been denied the ability to create their own economic growth for the preceding four decades. Though economic growth has been stagnant for decades, economic growth is less effective, at any rate, as a tool in raising living standards for the general public when income inequality is immense. In this way, the elite continue to possess the largest share of capital gains (DiTomaso, 1988: p. 242).

Racial discrimination has had generational implications on the African American community since the African American arrived in bondage. Strides have been made and an African American middle class emerged in the 1940s. New Deal legislation eliminated the southern employer's power to pay starvation wages to African American field hands. The establishment of a minimum wage coupled with a trend toward industrialized agriculture started the northern migration of African Americans to industrialized epicenters like Pittsburg, Detroit, and New York City. Subsequently, by 1960, few African American men, only one in seven, still labored the land and almost a quarter were employed in white-collar professions. Another 24% held semi-skilled factory jobs that granted entry into the stable working class while Black women domestics were cut in half. Unfortunately, these gains have slowed. With the most significant economic gains for African Americans occurring between 1965 and 1975 there was virtually no improvement in the wages of Black men relative to White men from 1963 to 1987. In the decades since affirmative action the poverty rate within the Black community remains unchanged. Today nearly 30 percent of Black families exist near poverty (Wolf et al., 2017).

Chapman et al. (2011: p. 10) found that Whites and Blacks are graduating high school at similar rates and are equally likely to attend college. The National Assessment of Educational Progress or NAEP suggests, however, that African American students are alarmingly far behind Whites in math, science, reading, and writing; an indication that they are graduating from schools that perform poorly, academically (Duncan & Murnane, 2011). As such blacks are deemed to be four years behind their white counterparts. This correlates to earning potential in a significant way, with Blacks earning 19 percent less than their similarly educated peers (Alexis, 1998: p. 363). To obtain highly skilled mid-level positions applicants must be able to reason cognitively above a ninth grade reading level. Genesis to the systemic disparities mentioned above, the disintegration of the Black family and the influx of heroin and crack have wreaked havoc on school aged children shifting their focus to survival and away from learning (Delaney-Black et al., 1999: p. 783). The lack of access to resources that support entry into the higher education space places first generation, low SES students, and the foster child at a disadvantage that research shows have generational implications (Allensworth et al., 2014). Providing clarity, Duncan and Murnane (2011) conclude that the foster child is a member, concurrently, of these very groups; an adumbration of what occurs when a family falls through the cracks, is

unskilled at navigating extreme poverty, and or lacks the resilience to persevere in the most difficult times.

Youth raised in foster care experience significant educational delays because of traumatic experiences affecting concentration further complicated by multiple school enrollments whenever their foster care placements are in flux. Conversely, first generation students typically graduate from underperforming schools that fail to prepare them for the rigorous college journey (Day et al., 2011: p. 2339). Though the foster child experiences a litany of issues beyond their control that hinder growth, they are expected to completely care for themselves upon turning 18 or 21, depending on their state of residence. The outcomes for this demographic are dismal and a significant remedy, which has been shown to improve outcomes, is that they earn the post-secondary credential. This study demonstrated that the experiences of first-generation college students echoed the experiences of foster alumni. Both groups report similar barriers to success and resiliency profiles. Researchers recommend that the foster child be targeted for interventions of higher education success in the ways that first generation, African Americans, and women are. As a result of such an intervention KH2Go could engender successful outcomes for foster alumni. Few studies are conducted on roads to success for this demographic and it is necessary that more literature is devoted to studying examples of positive outcomes. The research, in the form of a case study, detailed the journey foster alumni embark on when seeking the college degree. It discussed the difficulties faced by a cohort of 27 and the methods they utilized to cope and overcome obstacles. The phenomenological data disclosed gaps in service and support that must be filled for future foster youth if outcomes are to improve.

The main terms discussed in the article were aging out, resilience, survival, social support, multitasking, and access to information. The KH2Go framework uncovered a unique similarity between the two demographics—neither group could rely on their family members for support. As such, the benefit of a knowledgeable and caring adult proved highly instrumental in overcoming the many hurdles they faced.

The study's procedure involved Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) which is a method where several researchers in various points of their own studies work together to further their work as well as the work of others. Andy Field's SPSS was the statistical data program utilized. A list of 16 codes represented benchmarks of the KH2Go. This method was utilized to appraise the usefulness of the college initiative to youth leaving foster care. Subsequently interviews were conducted and uploaded. KH2Go now provides directives for foster alumni because of this study.

Rogers et al. (2018) showed that children in foster care suffer the shame of their status and that they survive these emotions by guarding their ward of state status. Hiding their status, however, often results in missed opportunities to utilize the full scope of interventions they are entitled to. Future research to as-

sist this demographic might focus on the impact of the stigma, shame, and the embarrassment young people experience when discussing their foster care experience. The cohort reported how difficult it was to obtain help without revealing their history.

An additional barrier to entering college that needs unpacking is that the foster child, typically, lacks access to their financial information. As a ward of the state, a foster child's financial records are not in their possession. Should they have experienced multiple placements in multiple jurisdictions the process of obtaining such data often proves cumbersome. Despite this reality, the federal government's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) requires detailed financial information from every applicant. Those who are unable to provide this information are not considered for federal student aid (Cochrane & Szabo-Kubitz, 2009).

Further, Abdul-Alim (2016: p. 16) reported in his expose on the Education Commission of the United States' report on Strengthening Policies for Foster Youth Postsecondary Degree Attainment, that college administrators, when questioned, did not know the policies that support the higher education of the foster child. An emergent theme of his study was that administrators at the agency he was investigating, whose sole function is to facilitate the higher education journey of this demographic, failed to convey a complete understanding of the financial aid, housing, and book voucher support that the foster youth is entitled to.

Day et al. (2011) unpacks important questions in their article on four-year college retention numbers among youth with foster care experience. They point out the myriad of barriers that this demographic typically encounters. Their article fell short, however, in revealing what phase in their trajectory foster youth develop the deficits that ultimately prevent so many from earning post-secondary credentials. As with other researchers the root of issues foster alumni struggle with are presented. Though researchers did exhaust several plausible contributory factors to these shortcomings, an exact explanation of the impetus for the onset of the failures nor possible solutions are mentioned. The conclusions rely on data from a Michigan State University study and fail to make mention of life experiences of the youth the statistics speak of. In short, the study revisited well documented nationwide statistics of domain deficits, but no contributory phenomenological data on the foster child.

4. Why the Focus Should Be on Safety and Education and Skills Development

In the 1980's several federal laws were passed to benefit youth transitioning to independent living. The Independent Living Initiative spends \$70 million annually to prepare youth 16 years old and up for independence. Another initiative, introduced in 2001, is the Education and Training Voucher initiative which supports education of foster youth through age 23 at \$5000 a year. The financial

initiatives have not diminished the achievement chasm in any way (Wells & Zunz, 2008). Earnings across the lifespan increased because of college degree attainment. Further, a decrease in homelessness, mental health issues, criminal involvement, and risky behavior was observed. Data reported suggests that education does pay (Day et al., 2011; Da Silva et al., 2016). The research did not, however, extrapolate how to motivate youth from unique circumstances to buy into what the research illustrates. It would be useful if agency personnel were driven to engage and invest in the futures of foster youth with the same rigor that they do their own children. At present, it appears that while coordinating agency personnel perform duties as required, they fail to coordinate services that require heavy lifting, perhaps beyond the scope of their employment. Coordination of services potentially leads to longer-lasting positive outcomes for vulnerable children in their care that they have agreed to be the custodial guardian of between the hours of 7 - 3, 8 - 4, or 9 - 5, depending on their contract hours.

Fostering Higher Education is a post-secondary access intervention directed at foster youth. When questioned, youth in foster care report a desire to earn a post-secondary credential which implies they understand its relevance. Despite this understanding, governmental statistics that support these goals are bleak. At present 4% of foster youth who embark on the college journey graduate (Mech, 1994: p. 603). This statistic shows that educational outcomes for the foster child are not improving, and it is imperative that we learn why. In fact, the data attests that government dollars have not advanced educational outcomes for foster youth. Research that studies specific initiatives that examine what education advocates for foster care youth report regarding foster parents' social capital as it relates to college access are useful for the improvement of outcomes.

Fostering Higher Education (FHE) was developed and introduced by Salazar et al. (2016) and funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The team leans on two frameworks that are proven to be impactful on goal attainment, Self-determination theory and the Social

Development Model (SDM). The SDM speaks to the development and adoption of behaviors based on environment (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996). As such they hypothesize that immersion in an educational environment rich in mentoring and positive bonding improves an individual's commitment to higher education. Self Determination Theory (SDT) assumes that people are by nature active, self-motivated, and eager. Further, people want to succeed because success is emotionally pleasing and rewarding (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

The intervening elements of FHE are educational advocacy, substance abuse prevention, and mentoring. The researchers found that practitioners were eager to work with FHE and believed it could benefit their clients. Youth reported that the program's elements were beneficial to their behavior change and may be instrumental in their goal attainment. The researchers were able only to report feedback from practitioners and foster youth. Their intervention appears to have many elements that can positively impact the foster youth paradigm though real

results have yet to be recorded.

Stewart et al. (2014) were the first researchers to embark on a longitudinal study of foster youth outcomes through the age of 30. Their findings elucidate the notion that foster alumni need support well past the age of emancipation. Youth with work experience prior to age 18 fared better at maintaining employment than youth that sought employment after leaving care. Youth with foster care experience showed low rates of employment through age 24 and in the state of North Carolina, through age 30. The study is useful in that it is longitudinal and provides multistate data. Additionally, the researchers used a comparison group, low-income members of the general population, to ascertain which group needed more support into their thirties. Their findings were that both groups continue to rely on governmental support into their thirties.

The impact of an involved, knowledgeable, educated foster parent represents a gap in the literature. Meaning foster parents must be capable of doing more than they are currently expected to do, such as advocating for the education of the vulnerable children in their care. The benefit of educational advocacy was studied by Weinberg et al. (2014). Over a three-year period, a cohort of 32 was monitored. The emerging themes were the additional vulnerability experienced by the foster child when leaving abusive situations, the detrimental effects of poor agency coordination, placement instability, and school curriculums that are not challenging. Educational liaisons are utilized by some jurisdictions to assist foster youth by providing support and advocacy at crucial times, though it can be argued that the foster child exists within a paradigm that is crucial throughout their time in care. The liaison's goal is to improve outcomes for the foster child as an educational intervention.

The researchers hypothesized that outcomes improve for foster children who are assigned an Education Advocate (EA), which a relationship exists between placement instability and school attendance, and that liaisons decrease risk factors for their young clients across domains. While the researchers of this study state that statistical educational data did not improve significantly, every cohort member saw nominal grade point average increases. The researchers report other qualitative improvements that may improve the lives of foster children. Teachers shared that EAs were instrumental in helping them understand changes in their student's behavior, processing and evaluating Individual Education Plans (IEPs), encouraging foster parents to engage in the educational experience of those in their care, and coordinating across agencies to keep kids in one school even when they transition to another foster home.

Through means incorporated by municipal jurisdictions, a New Jim Crow is being observed. Disproportionately people of color have fallen prey to involvement with municipal child services agency, school discipline reports, Stop and Frisk, Broken Windows ordinances, Driving While Black, early incarceration, disparate prosecution, and racial discrimination in criminal justice system. Latinos, African Americans, and Native Americans are more likely to have their

children removed from their care, to have a written record taken in school settings when behavior is at issue, to be stopped on the street by law enforcement, and when they are arrested the charges are usually pressed and the subsequent sentences are higher for similar or more egregious crimes committed by the ruling class (Kelly, 2000).

The New Jim Crow is an ideological positionality that refers to an emerging social acceptance of attitudes that lean towards laws that legally endorse racial discrimination, or Separate but Equal, and were enforced between 1870 and 1965. Jim Crow laws were established to preserve the wealth and standing of the White ruling class or former slave owners by controlling where former slaves and Indians could live, work, eat, and walk, while also disenfranchising these groups by not allowing them to vote on laws that control their sovereignty. The laws essentially promoted a level of slavery or servitude by controlling all means to acquire wealth and build a better life. As such, a holding pattern has prevailed that ensures that some groups never escape poverty. This pattern prevails in several different ways. According to research by (Alexander, 2011: pp. 9-10) there are more African Americans in prison today than were enslaved in 1850; in 2004 more African American men lost the right to vote due to their status as a felon than in 1869 (the year before the ratification of the 15th amendment); and a Black child born today is less likely to be raised in a two-parent household than when slavery was the law of the land.

It is necessary, then, to educate the disenfranchised, the former felon, and the family desperate to escape abject poverty. While education is not a catch-all for every socioeconomic problem, Topper (2019) reasoned that the bachelor's degree, the associate degree, and even vocational training have been shown to impact family economics for generations to come. Kramer and Hurley (1971) hypothesized that poverty and racial prejudices thrive in the urban ghetto and that these conditions result in high incidences of mental retardation, generational incarceration, teen pregnancy, and high mortality rates; situations that render a family ripe for child services involvement.

The African American community descends from people violently kidnapped, their labor stolen against their will, whom, to date, have yet to be made whole. The slave trade and the mass murder of the Indigenous Americans remain two of the most devitalizing crimes against humanity. The African American may not ever catch up to the ruling class and the Indigenous American has seen more decline than recovery (Acs et al., 2018). The argument that the descendants of slaves deserve to be compensated is being widely discussed at present. In lieu of the discussion Black and Brown communities are policed at a higher rate than any other, experience the removal of their children at a higher rate than any other, and graduate high school and college at a rate lower than any other demographic. Research is necessary to understand how progress in education and skills development can be nurtured to end generational foster care and generational poverty for this demographic. Positive outcomes continue to elude this

population. It is important as well that research addresses why foster care administrators are allowed to show little to no progress and continue to be funded by our tax dollars.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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