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**THE UNFINISHED STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE  
IN THE UNITED STATES: A COMPARISON WITH OTHER ADVANCED COUNTRIES**

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## THE UNFINISHED STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE UNITED STATES: A COMPARISON WITH OTHER ADVANCED COUNTRIES

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**World class achievements of America and its allies** . Ever since the United States was founded almost two and a half centuries ago, the nation has struggled for prosperity, peace, freedom, and social justice. It has had remarkable success in achieving prosperity, through many downturns and financial crises, and still has the largest economy in the world. It achieved the highest per capita income of any large, diverse nation in the world. It has also continued to strive to maintain the peace under *Pax Americana*. America and its allies made the sacrifices to soundly defeat the Axis in World War II and to outlast Communism in the decades of the Cold War. It joined with other free peoples in regional wars to stop the spread of communism in Asia and throughout the world.

The model of a free and democratic government spread to Eastern Europe with the fall of the Soviet empire and, with many setbacks, even to some countries in the Middle East which had known nothing but authoritarian government. American aid, both from the government and private sources, has worked over decades since World War II in poor countries to bring them into the mainstream of world prosperity. Free markets have transformed the developing world so that poverty has dropped by half over several decades—by over one billion. In 1981, 44% of the world's population lived in absolute poverty. Now it is close to 10% and falling (Kristof 2016). American experts joined with others in eliminating Smallpox from the world. Literacy has climbed everywhere, as women have become more literate, birth rates have dropped dramatically in all but the most poverty stricken countries of Africa, avoiding a predicted Malthusian disaster of hunger and starvation. These are remarkable achievements.

In the business sphere, American innovations such as computers and the internet, have spread throughout the world. American culture, for good or bad, has penetrated the far corners of the world. Americans have dominated the Nobel Prizes for decades. American universities have educated millions from developing countries. America has opened its gates to over 40 million persons who sought economic improvement, education, and freedom just since World War II. Others felt the pull of jobs and prosperity and were not admitted legally. These immigrants have generally prospered. America, therefore, is a "house of many colors" with 114 million minorities, many of which were born abroad.

America has made great strides in social justice, after many decades of struggle and a tragic civil war. Sweeping civil rights legislation was passed. African Americans and women finally achieved the right to vote. Segregation on public spaces was outlawed. In 40 years, many minorities climbed up the education and employment ladder. An African-American became the President of the United States. Millions of uninsured poor Americans obtained health insurance for the first time under the Affordable Care Act. These are achievements to be proud of.

**Areas of social justice where we fall short.** *But the struggle for social justice is unfinished.* Progress, or lack of it, can be measured by the benchmark of what other advanced industrial nations have achieved. On average, other advanced nations have lower relative poverty rates, lower relative child poverty rates, higher mobility, lower income inequality, longer life expectancy, lower infant mortality, lower rates of preventable deaths, lower traffic fatalities, lower violent crime, lower level of

incarceration, lower cost of higher education to families, less economic residential segregation, and lower number of single parent households.

There are many areas of convergence with other advanced countries: inequality is increasing in both the US and other advanced countries. Divorces have increased in most countries and marriage rates have dropped. Out-of-wedlock births are common among most of these countries and single parent families are increasing. There are also some areas where the US holds an advantage: we dominate international lists of the top universities in the world, our growth has exceeded that of other advanced countries in Europe since the Great Recession and our unemployment is lower.

**Variations among advanced countries.** The comparison benchmark of US social justice problems is the average for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. There is considerable variation among these countries. Bulgaria has a GDP per head of \$19,660 at "purchase power parity", a calculation which takes into account cost of living as well as income. Romanian income level is \$24,780, compared to US at \$59,390. A calculation of poverty using 50% of median income of these countries would show distribution of income, but not absolute poverty. If both countries showed the same relative poverty, this would be totally misleading since the overall income in Romania is so much lower. Typically, the social welfare ranking of the US is somewhere in the middle, with some advanced countries worse off and some better off. The wealthy north and west Europe typically have higher social justice achievements than the US, and Eastern and Southern Europe have lower achievements, higher poverty, and often lower educational levels.

**Some reasons for problems faced.** Many of these problems stem from the very diversity of our nation with 114 million minorities and many more immigrants from less developed countries. Other problems stem, not from government action or inaction, but from world-wide changes in human behavior, such as increased out-of-wedlock births and rising divorce rates. Many of these trends are largely beyond the direct control of the government. But other American problems stem from the simple fact that a large majority of advanced nations have much larger expenditures on social welfare, dramatically reducing poverty and inequality. They also have higher taxes as a percent of the economy. Eduardo Porter, well-known New York Times reporter, and others have argued that more active and compassionate governments have achieved these goals without paying a penalty in slower Growth (Porter 2016). I support this argument in a prior paper (Underhill 2008).

**Reasons for hope.** Although US social justice achievements fall short of the benchmark established by other advanced nations, there have been some remarkable gains in the US in social welfare and a drop in certain types of dysfunctional behavior which gives some hope for the future. These positive trends, as well as problems are cited below in each section. They include minority gains in education, cutting teen birth rates in half, a steady increase in high school completions and test scores, a decrease in number of high school dropouts, a steady increase in college enrollment and graduation, increased longevity by all groups, drop in smoking among teens and adults, reduced number of deaths from HIV/AIDS and heart disease, dramatic drop in violent and other crime, and lower unemployment than in the Euro area. Problems and achievements are covered below.

**Need for an integrated approach.** A distinctive feature of this paper is that it covers a full range of problems and achievements in a wide variety of areas cited below. In understanding poverty, education, housing, and inequality, it is desirable to show how interrelated these problems are. This is a major conclusion of a series of papers I have done on poverty and other social welfare issues over a decade. Nations cannot understand or solve problems that poor students face in schools, for example,

without addressing poverty, racism, the disintegration of the American family, and residential segregation. You have to look at interrelationships and solve problems holistically. Amy Liu, director of the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program, argues that there is a great demand for a holistic view of cities. In order to solve those problems, we must mobilize a wide variety of organizations (Liu 2016). In my series of poverty-related papers I argue for a more integrated approach to reducing low-income and minority unemployment (Underhill 2016), strengthening low-income and minority families (Underhill 2012), reducing youth crime and violence (Underhill 2014), reducing poverty and inequality (Underhill 2010), and reforming the criminal justice system (Underhill 2013). Recommendations for action by experts were covered in these papers and will not be repeated in any detail below.

**World-wide laboratories for social justice.** A basic reason for the comparative approach is we have something to learn from both successes and failures both here and abroad. In trying to address social problems, the basic question is what works and what doesn't work. We should look to our own states and cities as "laboratories for democracy" so that we can build on strengths and avoid problems. We can also learn from experience abroad, particularly from advanced nations which have conditions similar to our own. In some cases, where conditions and politics are different, experience must be translated. Achievements may or may not work here on American soil.

The "value added" of this paper lies in (a) showing the status of US social justice problems and achievements in many aspects of American life and how they are inter-related, and (b) showing success in addressing these problems compared to the benchmark of other advanced nations.

Among the elements of social justice covered in sections below are:

1. National income and wealth and how fairly are they distributed. (p. 4)
2. Poverty. (8)
3. Educational attainment and fair access to education. (11)
4. Economic and job growth. (15)
5. Unemployment and the employment- to-population ratio. (17)
6. Geographic Mobility and segregation. (19)
7. Housing and homelessness. (21)
8. Quality of environment for all. (24)
9. Strength of the family. (26)
10. Adequacy and accessibility of the transportation system. (27)
11. Adequacy and fairness of government and taxes. (29)
12. Adequacy of health care and access to health care systems. (30)
13. Fairness and impact of immigration policy. (32)
14. Crime and Fairness of criminal justice system. (33)
15. Putting the pieces together: what does this all mean? (34)

## **1 . National Income and Wealth and How Fairly They are Distributed.**

### **a. Measuring National Income and Wealth.**

It is not as easy as it seems to measure overall wealth or income, as translated into wealth or income of a typical income. Gross Domestic Product (GPD) per capita is an imperfect measure of income, since it doesn't take into account cost of living and distribution of that income. Nor does it take into account non-cash social welfare transfers or taxes. A better measure is disposable income which

takes into account taxes paid. An even better measure is "purchase power parity", which takes into account relative cost of living, compared to the US.

The latest data on several income measures comes from a special year-end book by *The Economist*. Comparing 18 large advanced countries, the US ranks fourth in GDP per person and in purchase power parity. (See table I in appendix.) This list is selective. It excludes city states such as Luxembourg and small oil rich countries, such as Kuwait. What is interesting about these measures of income is mainstream OECD countries, like France, have considerably lower purchasing power parity than the US (\$43,270 v. \$59,390). Numbers for Italy are even lower (\$38,450). Whatever measure is used, the US has higher income than most of the advanced countries (Economist 2016c).

Level of income alone does not always equate with personal well-being. The International Legatum index for 2015 ranks the one and two nations (Norway and Switzerland) by per capita income as one and two on overall welfare, and the US is down a bit on the list. Canada, Denmark, Switzerland, and Ireland rank higher than the US (Legatum Institute 2015). The US ranks 8<sup>th</sup> on the United Nations Human Development index (UN Development Programme 2014). (See table 1.)

These measures of income are not measures of wealth, individually or as a nation. Wealth is the value of total assets a person owns: pension plans, personal home, bank accounts, land, and stock market investments. None of the regular economic measures show total wealth. This varies so much with the economic contractions and expansions. For example the total value of the Japanese stock market is a fraction of what it was at peak level.

A common measure of income is the national accounts system which is uniform measure of the total value of domestic production during the year. A commonly used measure is the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). By this measure the International Monetary Fund projects the US nominal GDP to be \$18.5 trillion in 2016, followed, in order, by China, Japan, Germany and United Kingdom (Wikipedia e). The GDP of Russia, is only \$1.2 trillion about the same as Australia and Spain, both of which have much lower population (Statistics Times 2016). It is also lower than the GDP of California (Wikipedia j).

To put American individual wealth in perspective, if you have \$2,222 to your name you would be wealthier than half of the world's people. If you own \$744,400 you would count yourself as a member of the global one percent. If you own \$71,000 in assets, you are in the top 10% of the world. Over 100 million people in the US have this net worth. But there are over 20 million Americans whose debt outweighs assets (Economist 2016d).

Not only is American income and wealth high but it is growing compared to Europe since 2012. Before that date, US growth of GDP roughly matched that of the Euro area at 1.6 % per year. But the European per capita GDP dropped dramatically in 2008 and 2009, as it did in the US. But Europe had a second downturn in 2012. The total growth in Europe is well below that of the US since then (Janse 2015). Although the European Union has almost 200 million more people than the US, the IMF estimate of 2016 American income exceeds that of Europe (\$18.5 trillion v. \$17.1 trillion) (Wikipedia 2016c).

Because of inequality, GDP growth is not necessarily translated into growth in individual incomes. Since the Great Recession, the US GDP has grown by 11%, but the typical household has seen their incomes shrink by 2.5% (Berube and Liu 2016). Generally, increased education is correlated with higher incomes. Earnings for those with a bachelor's degree ages 25 to 34 earn \$22,000 more than those who only have a high school degree (NCES 2016). But, since the recession, the shares of black

and Latino adults with post-secondary degrees have risen by nearly three percentage points, but their earnings have dropped by five and two percent, respectively (Berube and Liu 2016).

Historically, increases in productivity are associated with increases in incomes of the typical family. This was true from World War II to 1973. Since then, wages have lagged productivity. Productivity has increased 241% since 1950, but hourly compensation by only 112.5% (EPI 2016b).

#### b. **Inequality and Upward Mobility**

**Income inequality.** The concentration of wealth and income is greater in the US than in other advanced countries. The US has the third highest index of inequality (called the Gini index where the higher numbers show greater inequality) among OECD countries. The Gini index for the US in 2014 was .394. Only Mexico and Chile among these countries have higher Gini ratings. By contrast Norway's rating is only .232 and Finland .255 (OECD 2016b). The OECD measure of "relative poverty" also reflects distribution of income because it is calculated at 50% of median adjusted gross income, not in absolute terms. The share of Americans earning 50% of median adjusted income of the country is second highest in the OECD (17.5%). Only Israel has a higher rate (18.6%). In Finland, there are only a small percent of citizens in this category (6.8%). Measures of absolute poverty are discussed in section 2.

Another way to view inequality in the US and other rich countries is to compare the growth of real average income of the bottom 90%. In Germany and France, this group gained 250% from 1940 to 2013 but only 70% in the US. The share of the population in the top one percent income bracket increased from seven percent in 1975 to less than 10% in 2015 in France and Germany, compared to an increase in the US from the same starting point to 20% in 2015 (Janse 2015).

In recent years, seven of 10 dollars added to the US economy have gone to the top 10%. Those in the top one percent earn \$248,200—about 27 times that of the typical persons in the bottom half, whose annual income equaled \$16,000 (Cohen 2016). Low wage workers have seen a drop of 5% in hourly wages over the past decade (Rieger 2016).

The result of these changes is that top one percent takes home 20% of the income in the US. In the 1970's the top one percent earned "only" 10% of the income. The average income of the bottom 99% is only \$47,476 (EPI 2016a). By contrast, in European countries the top one percent in 2012 typically had four or five percent of the income (European Commission 2016).

Inequality in the US has grown dramatically since the late 70s. By contrast, for a century, (particularly since World War II), income equality had actually increased. From 1880 to 1980, incomes of poorer and richer Americas tended to converge at about two percent a year. Since 1980, inequality of income per person has increased 130% (Economist 2016i).

Many Americans are actually losing ground in inflation adjusted income. One estimate is that the bottom three quartiles of families in the US now have less money than they did in 1990. The only group that gained considerably was the top 10% (Bui 2016). An exception to this trend was 2014: the highest income gains were made for the bottom 10<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> percentiles and the least gains for the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile. At year-end 2016, the Labor Department reported that the hourly earnings rose by 2.2%, the largest increase since the recovery began (Schwartz 2017).

There are also continuing income gaps in the US between the sexes and races. White women's wages have increased by 30% since 1979 and black men's by 12.8%. But hourly median wages of white men and black women have dropped since 1979. The earnings of men in constant dollars in 2015 were \$51,212, slightly less than they were in 1973, a peak year. Earnings of women almost doubled from about \$22,000 annually 1959 to \$40,742 in 2015. The ratio of women's to men's wages increased from 60% to 80%. Gains by women were substantial, but the gap was closed largely because men's earnings were stagnant (US Census 2016). In spite of income gains of women, a majority of the poor were women in 2015: 24 million women v. 19 million men.

The American inequality of earnings is matched by that in Europe, except that women have higher work force participation in Europe than in the US. But on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, women are less likely to be employed than men, spend fewer hours in paid work, earn less and are less likely to hold senior jobs and more likely in lower quality or contingent jobs. A big difference is that the European countries have stronger work-family friendly policies: more subsidized child care, required maternity leave, and easier access to work place by public transit (Gornick and Hegewisch 2015).

Black households also increased their income, from about \$30,000 in 1972 to \$36,898 in 2015. At the same time, income of white non-Hispanic white households increased from about \$51,000 to \$62,950. The ratio of black/non-Hispanic white incomes actually went down during this period from 72% to 58% (US Census 2016). A major reason is that the percent of single-family households grew at a faster pace for blacks than whites.

**Wealth inequality.** While there are great disparities in income in the US, there are even greater disparities of wealth. There is huge wealth inequality in the world. One estimate is the 12 million high net worth individuals (with assets over one million) own \$46.2 trillion in assets. The largest number of these individuals are in North America (3.73 million), followed by Asia Pacific (3.68 million), and Europe (3.41 million) (Wikipedia g). Another estimate shows that the top one percent in the world households owned half of the world's wealth in 2015 (Treanor 2016).

One estimate is that the top one percent of American families had 41.8% of the wealth in 2012, with the top .1% having 22% of the wealth. The bottom 90% had just 22.8% of wealth, equal to the top .1%. The top one percent had twice as much as the bottom 90% (Rieger 2016). Other estimates vary.

There is a vast disparity between black and white wealth. From 1963 to 2013, the median family wealth for white families increased from \$46,160 to \$134,230 and black families from \$2,390 to \$11,030. White families have typically seven times the wealth as blacks. The black families were harder hit by wave of foreclosures in the Great Recession.

**Declining upward mobility.** One of the dramatic changes in American life has been the decline of upward mobility. An enduring feature of the American ideology is that everyone has the opportunity to achieve the American dream. Every generation was supposed to have more education and more income. This is no longer true for many. According to the research by Raj Chetty, only half of Americans born in the 1980's are economically better off than their parents, compared to 90% of those born in the 1940s. An interesting feature about Chetty's data on upward mobility is that a higher percent of lower income people do better than their parents than do higher income people. A key factor in this reduction in upward mobility is our growing inequality. According to a model which assumed that inequality was the same now as in 1980, absolute mobility rates would be 30% higher than they are now (Halikias and Reeves 2016).

Middle class blacks have a particularly difficult time with upward mobility. Black children raised in middle class households in the late 1970's and early 1980's fall out of middle class status at notably larger rates than white children upon reaching adulthood. More than 35% of black children raised in the middle of the income distribution will drop into the bottom 30% as adults (Brown 2016). One reason may be the disintegration of the black family where only 39% of black families with children are two-parent groups. Sixty one percent are single parent households (Proquest 2016 table 67).

### c. **Shrinking Middle Class**

Worthy of separate discussion is the stagnation and decline of the middle class in America because it was the critical issue which caused the white men and women with less than high school educations to vote for a conservative candidate in the recent election. After decades of improved incomes up to the 1970's, the American middle class has stagnant wages. The typical middle class American family earns \$53,657. Adjusted for inflation, this is \$3,700 less than it was in 2007 and \$4,067 less than in 2000 (Murray 2016). The stagnation of growth for middle class families is a key cause of growing income inequality. Middle class earnings are at a 40 year low (Gould, Davis and Kimball 2015).

Among 19 advanced countries, the US is 11<sup>th</sup> in the size of non-elderly middle class, at 70% according to the Luxembourg Income Study Database. Finland, Norway Netherlands, Czech Republic, and Taiwan all had a middle class which was over 80% of the population. At the same time, the size of the lower class in America was larger than ten advanced countries at 17%. It was 10% or less in seven OECD countries (Porter 2016d).

The future prosperity of the middle class during retirement is questionable because of the decline in defined-benefit pension plans in American industry and the fact that many middle class persons approach retirement with few retirement savings. Families in the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile aged 32 to 61 have typically only \$5,000 in retirement funds. Even those in the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile have only \$116,000 in retirement savings (EPI 2016b).

## 2. **Poverty.**

The extent of poverty is a key indicator of social justice in a country. Along with education, it is a critical determinant of children's success in school, a predictor of family stability, a determinant of physical and mental health, predictor of levels of crime and incarceration, and a marker for concentration in poor and high crime areas.

**Comparative levels of poverty.** Historically, most of the world has been poor, with a few countries and individuals in those countries enjoying the vast majority of the fruits of national and international wealth. As late as 1981, 44% of the world's population lived in absolute poverty. With an era of free trade and rapid growth of developing countries, it is closer to 10% and falling. (Kristof 2016a). Over 20 years from 1993 to 2013, the number of poor people fell by one billion. The World Bank deep poverty definition (\$1.90 a day) is lower than that the definition of poverty in developed nations (Economist 2016f). Developing nations continue to grow at rates exceeding that of Europe and North America. World -wide literacy has also increased dramatically.

Using World Bank standards of deep poverty, the US and other advanced nations have low poverty. But even using our much higher poverty threshold, it remains at unacceptable levels in a land of great wealth and opportunity. The US ranks the third highest among OECD countries (after Turkey



and Mexico) using the OECD definition of relative poverty, at 50% of median adjusted income. Using the same definition of relative poverty in 2012, US children tolerated more poverty than 30 of the 35 countries in the OECD (Porter 2016c). Portugal and Greece are listed as having lower relative poverty under this definition. However, when using the US method of computing poverty, the US poverty is considerably lower than Portugal, Greece, Italy, and the United Kingdom. It also has lower absolute poverty than Eastern European countries which have much lower median incomes than the US (OECD 2005). By whatever definition, Northern and Western Europe have lower poverty than the US.

Because the Europeans have a much stronger social safety net and spend much more in income transfers, European families with no workers, as well as single parent households, have much lower relative poverty than in the US (OECD 2011).

**Absolute poverty in the US.** One of problems with showing levels of poverty in the US is that the official definition is inadequate and out of date: (a) it does not take into account differential in cost of living, taxes, tax credits, and non-cash aids (such as food stamps and housing vouchers), (c) it is calculated at three times the cost of an adequate basket of food and does not take into account increasing medical and housing expenses. Using the official definition, poverty dropped from about 22% in 1959 (when we started counting poverty) to 13.5% in 2015.

The Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) corrects for the deficiencies in the official definition. Using the SPM, in 2015 14.3% of the population was poor (45.7million). This was above the 43.5 million calculated by using the official version. Using the SPM, which accounts for government non-cash aid and variation in the cost of living, the poorest groups in American society were youth under 18 (16% poor), female householders (25.9%), those living inside principal cities (17.9%), women (14.9%), renters (24%), those with no public or private health insurance (26%), non-citizens born abroad (26%), and those with a disability (26.5%) (Renwick and Fox 2016).

Family status is a critical determinant of poverty: only 8.9% of married couple families are in poverty compared to 25.9% of female householders. Work status was an even more critical barrier: only 4.7% of those working full time were poor compared to 31.4% of those not working at all. This is significant, since 61% of the poor are not working at all (US Census 2016).

Blacks and Hispanics were particularly hard hit by poverty: in 2015, 23% of blacks and 22.4% of Hispanics were poor compared to 10% of non-Hispanic whites (Renwick and Fox 2016). These are SPM measures. The official poverty measure shows higher levels. Although non-Hispanic whites are 60% of the population in 2015, they constituted only 41% of the poor. Blacks were 13% of the population, they were 23% of the poor. Hispanics were 17.8% of the population, but they were 28% of the poor.

The same individuals are not poor each year. There is considerable movement in and out of poverty. Over a four year period from 2009 to 2012, only 2.7% of the population was living in poverty all 48 months. Yet during this same period, 34.5% of the population had at least one spell of poverty lasting two or more months (US Census 2016). Five percent of white children and 40% of black children will face persistent poverty. Early persistent poverty among children can harm a child's development, lower IQ scores, and reduce later academic achievement. The children who are poor between birth and age two are 30% less likely to graduate from High school than children who become poor later (Ratcliffe and Levine 2016).

Poverty is not evenly distributed in the US. Using the SPM, which takes into account cost of living, the following southern states have more than 16% poor: Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Mexico, and South Carolina. Only three western States have this level of poverty: California (with high Hispanic population), Hawaii, and Nevada. By contrast, the number of states with poverty lower than 10.5% are Kansas, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, and Utah (Renwick and Fox 2016).

**Impact of government aid.** Government aid has had a big impact on reducing poverty, although the official poverty definition vastly underreports this impact. Without Social Security (counted in the official poverty definition because it involves cash), there would be an additional 26 million people in poverty. Refundable tax credits (not counted in the official definition) drop the number by nine million, and food stamps 4.5 million (Renwick and Fox 2016). Overall, government benefits, including tax credits, cut the poverty rate from 26.3% of the population to 14.3% in 2015 (Trisi 2016). Using the SPM, Columbia University calculated that poverty rate dropped by 10% from 1967 to 2014. Poverty for the elderly dropped more dramatically (Trisi and Sherman 2016). It is simply not true that government aid has had no impact on poverty levels, but the official definition does not fully record this impact. Poverty would have dropped faster if family composition had stayed the same, and workforce participation of the poor had remained constant over the past 30 years.

The importance of government aid in reducing the impact of poverty on children as adults can be seen by some long-term studies of those families to who received aid and those who didn't. For every \$3,000 in annual income received from government sources during the critical pre-school years, poor children made additional academic progress equivalent to two months extra schooling. These children earned more as adults and had additional hours of work after the graduated from high school. Children who grew up in families with food stamps were healthier as adults and had a higher high school graduation rate by 18 percentage points (Marr, Cho and Sherman 2016).

A mitigating factor in calculating the number of poor is that poverty based on calculations of consumption is more than half of poverty as defined by income. Why is this? First, there is a tendency to underreport government aid received (Trisi 2016). Also, many poor do not report "underground economy" jobs. Nor do they pay taxes on this work and report it to those who gather statistics. Some estimate that the underground economy is two trillion dollars. In 2013, IRS estimated that there was \$500 billion in taxes lost because of unreported wages (Koba 2013).

**Brief discussion of causal factors.** Explaining the rise and fall of poverty in the US is far beyond the scope of this study and was covered extensively in prior papers (Underhill 2010 and 2014). Poverty scholars have made some important observations. Elise Gould argues that the stagnation of wages for most low-and middle-income households is the root cause of poverty and economic inequality. Had wages grown in proportion to productivity from 1979 to 2013 and the economy was in full employment, the non-elderly poverty rate would be 4.2 percentage points lower (Gould, Davis and Kimball 2015). The disintegration of the American family also has to be a major cause of higher poverty levels, since single mothers are much poorer than married couples. Persons in married-couple families constitute 60% of the population but only 37% of the poor (Renwick and Fox 2016).

Unemployment and non-participation in the workforce have to be a major factor in poverty. I reported above that 61% of the working age poor are not working. Many of these are disabled. Others are mothers taking care of small children. Factors in unemployment and non-participation in the workforce are covered in section five below.

It should be noted that poverty has always been present in American life. Before 1959, we didn't even count it, but analysts say it was much higher before World War II. In fact, it has diminished over time. What is different about American poverty, in contrast with Europe, is that the US has lower taxes and much lower social welfare expenditures than Europe. Pre-transfer and pre-tax poverty in Europe is not much different than in the US. The government role is discussed in section nine below. Another contrast with many advanced nations is that we have over 43 million immigrants and 114 million minorities. (These are overlapping categories.) The blacks and Hispanics constitute a majority of persons in poverty. Countries, like Finland, are much more homogenous.

### **3. Educational Attainment and Fair Access to Education.**

The first issue about education is its overall quality. There are few areas of research that are more polarized among researchers than education. Many conservative writers argue that the American public education system is in crisis. They point to low standings of American students in internationally run competency tests. Their main agenda is expanding charter and private schools. The Gates Foundation and the President Trump nominee for Secretary of Education fall in this category. Both have pushed charter schools. Others, such as Diana Ravitch and the Economic Policy Institute, make a good case that, in general, public schools are strong, but we ought to attack poverty and segregation which hold back low-income and minority students in schools (Ravitch 2010).

A second, but inter-related, issue is fairness and equal access to quality schools by low-income persons and minorities. I cover these issues in more detail in my paper "Over 50 years after Brown v. Board of Education Still Separate and Unequal" (Underhill 2011).

#### **a. Comparative US Educational Attainment.**

I believe that most US public schools are not in crisis, although they face many problems. The real problem is not the overall quality of the public education system, but high poverty and segregation, decline of two-parent families and failure to provide low-income and minority schools with adequate financial support. They say that what happens outside the classroom (family income and education) is more important than what happens in the classroom.

#### **Positive Achievements of American Education.**

Summary of some accomplishments of the American public education system:

- There are different definitions of "graduation" from high school. Using the "adjusted cohort graduation rate" method, the nation has achieved an 82.3% high school graduation rate—a record high. Significant gains have been made by nearly all student groups (Civic Enterprises and Everyone Graduates Center 2016).
- Using a more generous definition of graduation, in 2015 the percent of 25 to 34 year olds who have achieved a high school education was 90%, compared to 83% for the OECD average. This includes those who received a General Equivalency Degree (GED). The percent of American 24 to 34 years old who have a college education was 46% compared to 41% average in the OECD (NCES 2016).
- Fifty- four percent of three- and four-year olds are enrolled in pre-school (NCES 2016).
- High school dropouts have decreased to seven percent. Gains are particularly impressive for black and Hispanic students. From 2000 to 2014, black male students who dropped out of high school and

did not get a high school degree plummeted from 33% to 20% and Hispanics from 46 % to 28%--a reduction in the black white gap(NCES 2015).

- 7.4 million American students were enrolled in college in 1970 and 21.8 million in 2014 (Proquest 2016. Table 247).
- Blacks had a 31 point improvement in math in fourth grade test scores from 1992 to 2013 and 26 point improvement in the eighth grade during this period. Hispanics gained by 29 points in fourth grade and 23 in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Whites made gains, but both black and Hispanic students exceeded those gains, reducing the achievement gap substantially.
- In reading, blacks made gains of 14 points in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 13 in the eighth grade. Hispanics made gains of 10 points in the fourth grade and 15 in the eighth grade, in both cases improving the minority/ white ratio.
- Black males increased their high school graduation from 74.7% in 1980 to 93.5% in 2014, an 18.8% gain—substantially more than the 4.4% gain for white males during this period. Hispanic females gained from a 1980 high school graduation rate of 58.9% to 77.4% in 2014, an 18.9% gain, more than doubling the white female gain (NCES 2015).
- Black male achievement of a bachelor's degree was 10.5% in 1980. It doubled to 20.8% in 2014, a 10.4% gain. White males improved too by a slightly higher amount. Black and Hispanic females improved by 11.4% during this period, but white females increased by 20.7% (NCES 2015).
- A proficient rating in eight grade math for all students increased by 18% from 1990 to 2015. The percent performing in math at basic or above improved from 52% to 71% during this period. At the same time, those performing at "below basic" dropped from 48% to 26%.
- Gains were even greater for the fourth grade. There was a 27% improvement in the percent proficient, a 33% increase for at or above basic and a 33% drop for those below basic.
- There has been a substantial drop in violence in and around schools.
- The number of "dropout factories" (high schools with less than 60% graduation) has dropped from 2,007 in 2002 to 1,146 in 2013, with 1.5 million fewer children attending these failing schools (Civic Enterprises and Everyone Graduates Center 2016).
- Elite universities in the US dominate an internationally prepared list of the world's top 10 and 20 universities.
- Educational spending per student for primary and secondary education in the US has increased and the public student/teacher ratio has dropped from 22 in 1970 to 16 in 2014. The private student/teacher ratio is even lower at 12.
- Internationally and in the US, when taking into account Socio-Economic Status of children, a number of studies have shown that public schools outperform private schools (Economist 2016h).

The main argument made by conservatives for the failure of American public schools has been their comparative performance in international tests. But often when Americans are well down on the list of country scores, scores are counted as "higher" which are not statistically different from American scores. In addition, score of rich city states and cities like Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai are included. They should be excluded from the ranking because they have an elite group of students and are not comparable to an entire country.

Under the parameters of excluding ranking of rich cities and city states, the US has done quite well in many subjects in international rankings:

- In the 2015 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests for science, the performance of US 15 year olds averaged 496, which was not measurably different from the

OECD average of 593. It was lower than 12 whole countries (excluding rich cities and city stages), higher than 19, and not measurably different from 12.

- The US average reading score was 497, lower than 11 full countries, higher than 42, and not much different from 13 systems and the OECD average (Kastberg, Chan and Murray 2016).
- In a prior Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), US fourth graders scored fourth or fifth among full countries in science and math. Eighth graders also scored fourth or fifth in science and math.
- Taking into account comparative student family resources, the US students do comparatively well in reading, but not in math (Carnoy 2015). In an attempt to hold income and other factors constant, the OECD compared actual country scores with predicted ones based on socio-economic status (SES) of students. Taking these factors into account, it concluded that the US was about six points better than predicted (OECD 2010).

### **Problems Faced by American Public Schools.**

At the same time, there are also a large number of problems facing the public school system which give ammunition to its detractors:

- There still is a huge gap in achievement gap between minority (black and Hispanic) students and non-Hispanic white students. 46% of fourth grade white students have reached the proficient level in reading, compared to 18% of black students. 51% of white fourth graders are proficient in math and only 19% of black students (Zernike 2016).
- There is a big discrepancy in the composition of schools by race, income of students' families, and school funding per capita. In Bridgeport, CN, home to many poor and minority students, the high school graduation rate is 63%. In nearby Fairfield, a mostly white suburb where the median income is \$210,000, 94% of the students graduate (Harris and Hussey 2016).
- There is a large difference in school funding per capita in the US, since schools rely heavily on local funding. The tax base of communities varies widely.
- The US has the sixth highest percent of support for primary and secondary schools from regional and local levels of any OECD country. Some 12 countries have more than 60% of contribution to primary and secondary education from the central government. This enables the national government to put more resources into poor schools that need extra help (Schleicher 2016).
- The US average in the 2015 PISA mathematics tests was only 470, lower than more than half of other educational systems (36 of 69) as well as the OECD average. It was higher than 28 countries and not measurably different from five. Six percent of American 15 year olds score at the proficient level of 35 countries. US average math score was 18 points below what it was in 2009 (Kastberg, Chan, Murray 2016).
- International adult reading tests show that American adults match the OECD cohort average, by age group, but US adult "numeracy" (skill with numbers) is considerably below OECD averages for those born from 1988 to 1996 (Rothwell 2016).
- Within the US, because of the great disparity in poverty, numbers of minorities, and differences in-state school spending, there is an enormous test score and high school graduation discrepancy between high performing states (such as Massachusetts) and lower performing states (such as most southern states). In the most educated state, 38% of adults earned BA's, and the least educated, only 17.5% (Galston and Hendickson 2016). Since a highly educated workforce is associated with job growth and prosperity, the states with the most educated populations have more rapid job and economic growth.

- The cost of higher education has grown faster than incomes or the cost of living. College tuition, (net of subsidies) is eleven times higher than in 1980 (Rothwell 2016). The funding of state public colleges from the state budget has dropped dramatically. About 85% of students receive loans or grants. The student debt now stands at \$1.3 trillion (Blair 2016). By contrast, most European colleges are open to all European Union students and the average cost per semester is only \$726, at February 2017 exchange rate (Master Portal 2016)
- Many students are poorly prepared for college. A recent survey of 12<sup>th</sup> graders in math found that only 40% were ready for college work (Rich 2015). Only 50% of students whose families are in the bottom income quintiles attend college (Chang 2015).
- As a result, the completion rate for low-income students who attended college from 1979 to 1982 was only nine percent. For college students from the top income group from 1979 to 1982, the graduation rate was 45%.
- The easier the college entrance requirements, the lower the graduation rates. The more Pell grant students that attend a college, the lower the graduation rate. Only 40% of those enrolled in two year community colleges get a degree in six years. Just 15% of those who enroll in community colleges go on to get a Bachelor of Arts (Reeves and Rodrique 2016).
- Although the US has among the highest per student funding in primary and secondary education, our teachers have the third lowest pay compared to similarly educated persons (Schleicher 2016). This means that highest quality persons often will not choose education for a career in the US. One of the characteristics of top performing school systems internationally (Korea and Finland) is that they are able to attract the most able people as teachers (Ripley 2013). In the United States, there are many higher paying jobs now available to women.
- Union rules in many states make it hard to fire incompetent teachers and, typically, most teachers get consistently high ratings regardless of actually performance. Typically, pay increases are dependent on longevity and education and not excellence in the classroom. These were among the reasons that a judge required Connecticut to rethink its entire school system (Harris and Hussey 2016).
- Although the school readiness gap decreased between blacks and whites, the gap between poor and rich has increased, with increasing inequality of incomes in the US (Reardon, Waldfogel, and Bassock 2016).
- The biggest competitors to public schools are charter schools. Many have been poorly managed and did not produce superior results. Detroit has more charter schools than any city, but New Orleans, and these schools perform no better or worse than the public schools (Zernike 2016). Also, the experience was bad when charter schools expanded in Louisiana after an initial success in New Orleans. However, a 2013 CREDO study reported that charter black students, Hispanic students, English learning students, and others had an advantage over similar students in their public comparison schools (CREDO 2013). This was a more positive evaluation than a previous CREDO study where part of the charter schools performed better than public schools and part worse.
- Many countries in Europe (especially Germany) do a better job with apprenticeships and vocational education than in the US, where vocational education has declined (Newman and Winston 2017).

**b. Are Good Schools Accessible to Low- income and Minority Students?**

The second question relates to access to good public school systems by those left out by American society. The short answer is that the poor and minority students do not get equal access to

good schools. The average black or Hispanic student attends a school in which two thirds of the students are low-income (Cole and Baker 2013). In 1991, black students attended schools that were 34% white; by 2011, it had fallen to 28%. These minority students are in schools with worse teachers, less experienced principals, often less funding, and lower student test scores. Only seven percent of black children are in low-poverty schools compared to 23% of white students and 38% of Asians. Conversely, eight percent of white students are in high poverty schools compared to 45% of blacks.

A causal factor of differential in school access is segregation by both race and social class, both by neighborhood and city. The schools with the highest test score are clustered in higher income neighborhoods. Having good schools increases house prices that keep out lower-income students.

Every year there are more minority students who attend public schools. The National Center for Educational statistics estimated that minorities are 51% of all public school students. In California, with high Hispanic and immigrant population, minority students are 73% of the students (Egalite, Kisida and Winters 2015). This changing mix of students has a big impact on average test scores. Another trend affecting public schools has been increasing number of female-headed households. These households have higher poverty and live in worse neighborhoods. Children without two parents do worse in school and have more behavioral problems. However, a positive trend is that mothers of students today have higher education than they did in prior years.

#### **4. Economic and Job Growth.**

The number one issue in the recent election was job growth. The non-college educated white middle class was angry at both immigrants, who they perceived as competing for jobs, and international trade, which they perceived as undercutting growth in US manufacturing employment.

##### **Statement of the problem**

A key problem is that the growth rate of the GDP per person has averaged just .44 percent per year over the past decade, compared with the historical norm of two percent. At two percent a year growth, incomes double every 35 years (Mankiw 2016). As productivity increases, the growth of the GDP produces a lower incremental growth of jobs. Manufacturing employment has dropped from a peak of around 18 million jobs to about 12.5 (EPI 2016b).

Although the GDP per capita growth is less than it used to be, absolute GDP growth has been impressive since recovery from the Great Recession. In 2010, the GDP was \$14.7 trillion. The International Monetary Fund projection for the end of 2016 was \$18.5 trillion. That would be a growth of \$3.8 trillion during this period, almost three times the total GDP of Russia. In addition, the US economic growth has considerably exceeded that of Europe since 2010 (Economist 2016j) and growth in Japan has essentially been flat for decades. From 2009 to 2014, aggregate growth in Western Europe was only 9.65% compared to 21.6% in North America (Areas and Wen 2015). The US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand created far more jobs than most European countries. France, Italy and some Nordic countries have lagged in job creation. Growth of developing countries has gone down in the past several years, but has exceeded that of the developed world.

In spite of long-term slow down, the US did quite well in job creation since the end of the recession in 2010. Under the Obama administration until December of 2016, some 15 million jobs have been created. The net job growth from the start of the administration was considerably less since it

was stuck with two years of the Great Recession. The drop in jobs was 8.4 million from the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2010. Because of the recession in 2002 and the Great Recession at the end of the George W. Bush Administration, there was a net loss of 2.9 million jobs during the decade from 2000 to 2010. By contrast, the 1990's were booming and the net growth of jobs was 23.4 million, up from 19.9 million in the 1970's and 18.9 million in the 1980's (St. Louis Federal Reserve 2017). (See table 2 in appendix.) Assuming there is no recession in the next four years, the 2010-20 decade could be a comparatively good decade for job creation, even in the absence of new initiatives.

The critical issue for unemployment is not how many jobs have been created, but rather how fast jobs have been created compared to the growth of job seekers. From 1960 to 2016, some 91 million non-farm jobs have been added to the economy. (See Table 2.) During this same period, 138 million people have been added to the population. The urban population grew from 70.1% to 82.9% of the population of the nation. During this time, fertility has dropped from 3.67 per woman to 1.89 (below replacement rate). US yearly growth rate has dropped from 1.7% to about .7% (World Meters 2016). A significant part of that growth is from children of immigrants, as well as minority families.

A key feature of the job growth is the substitution of lower paid service jobs for higher paid manufacturing jobs. At the same time, there remain, at any given time, about six million unfilled jobs many of which are high-tech. Many of the displaced workers from manufacturing are not qualified for these high tech jobs and have to take pay cuts to remain employed. The mismatch between qualifications of workers and needs of jobs is illustrated by the fact that the US now has a near record of 5.8 million job openings at the same time as there are 5.4 million looking for work. Businesses say employers are having a hard time finding qualified workers (Gillespie 2016).

Part of the problem was the discrepancy of growth in different areas of the US. The 500 counties which voted Democratic in the last election had 64% of the GDP and the 2,000 counties which voted for the Republican candidate had only 36% of the GDP (Muro and Liu 2016). Many of the 500 urban counties were in "red states" that were traditionally Republican. A majority of residents of metropolitan areas voted Democratic even in conservative states.

### **Some Causal Factors in Slower Growth**

Much of the public joined with candidate Donald Trump in blaming free trade for the loss of high-paying manufacturing jobs. But there are many economists who believe that automation was a more important cause. An analysis at Ball State University attributed roughly 13% of manufacturing job losses to trade and the rest to enhanced productivity because of automation. Lawrence Katz, an economics professor at Harvard, who has studied labor and technological changes, argues that automation is a much more important factor in manufacturing jobs loss (Miller 2016).

Growth would have been better if state and local governments were not cutting back the number of employees and budgets. From 2008 to 2010, the fiscal impact of government was a positive contribution to national growth. From 2011 to 2015, it was negative. In 2015, it turned positive again (Mochoruk and Sheiner 2015). A good part of the reduced state and local spending was at the expense of maintenance of infrastructure. Government investment in structures and equipment dropped from 2.7% of GDP in 1957 to about .6% in 2015 (Dougherty 2016).



## 5. Unemployment and Employment-to-Population Ratio.

### Statement of the Problem.

There are two primary ways to measure the degree to which a country's population is either working or not working. One is unemployment, the percent of workforce looking for work and unable to find it. The second is the employment-to-population ratio, the percent of the working age population which is working. On rates of unemployment, the US performs quite well in comparison with other advanced nations. Looking at the employment-to-population ratio, the US does less well.

In December of 2016, the US overall unemployment was only 4.7%, a ten year low. There was a differential level of unemployment by race, age and education. During that month, the white unemployment was only 4.3%, black 7.8%, Hispanic 5.9% and Asian only 2.6%. In part, this difference reflects the level of education of these groups, with the Asians the most educated and the Hispanics least educated. Of those with less than high school education, 7.9% were unemployed, with high school only (4.5%), some college (3.8%) and college (2.5%) (New York Times 2017).

By comparison, unemployment has been 10 to 12% in the Euro area. In Japan, it was only three percent, reflecting the fact that Japan is not growing and accepts few immigrants (Economist 2016j). In the Euro area (28 states), there were 21.2 million men and women unemployed in April 2016. Rates were the lowest in Germany and Czech Republic (4.1 to 4.3%), and highest in Greece (24.2%) and Spain (20.1%). Youth unemployment was at the crisis level at 24%. This is not a new phenomenon. In 2000, before the Great Recession, there were 20 million persons unemployed (9.2%) (Europa 2016).

Looking at the percent of those working, the US is weaker. In 2013, the employment-to-population ratio in the US was 67.4%. Seventeen advanced countries had a higher ratio. The ratio in the US in 2000 was 74.1%; then only three countries had a higher ratio (Wikidpedia (I)). There are 5.6 million Americans who are working part time but would like to work full time (New York Times 2017).

Of great concern is the declining workforce participation by US prime age men. From 1969 to 2016, the percent of prime age men working dropped from 94.5% to 85% and by young black men from 76.3% to 53.2%. During the same time, workforce participation by women increased from 47.1% to 72% (Haskins 2017). The drop in workforce participation was greater for those with less education and income. The highest income two thirds of the male population dropped in the work force participation from 95% in 1980 to 92% in 2015, while the bottom third dropped from 80% to 70% (Sawhill, Joo, and Rodrigue 2016). In 2015, only 41.8% of the 24 million Americans over 25 with no high school education were working. As education increases, so does the employment-to-population ratio: high school only (54.1%), some college (63.6%), with BA (72.1%) (US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016). This reflects the fact that there are a sufficient number of jobs at higher skill levels for more educated and higher income workers, but the number of lower skilled jobs have dropped because of automation (Economist 2017).

A grave problem is the low percent of the poor who are working full time. Census data show that 61% of the poor are not working even one week during the year. This varies from year to year, but does not drop a great deal below that. Only 10% to 13% of the poor are working full time year round. Many single mother families had no workers at all in 2015: white (44%), Hispanic (40%) and black (36.9%) (US Census 2016a) (See table 3.) The non-work of the poor is a great source of contention between liberals and conservatives. Many conservatives argue the poor are lazy, don't want to work, and government aid only reduces their incentive to work. Liberals cite the many barriers to work as the

reason for low work effort. Conservatives cite the success of welfare reform in increasing workforce participation by single mothers. They advocate work requirements for housing vouchers and food aid (Haskins 2017).

Liberals argue that improved work participation from welfare reform stemmed, in part, from the fact that the economy was growing at a rapid rate in the last half of the 1990's after welfare reform, and the Earned Income Tax Credit provided a considerable work incentive. They also argue that the negative impact of government aid is overstated. Overall, 90% of government benefits go to people who are elderly, seriously disabled or members of working families, not able bodied working-age Americans who chose not to work (Sherman, Greenstein, and Ruffing 2012).

In the section on income above, I reported that poverty percent based on consumption is much lower than poverty based on reported income. It may be because many poor do not report "off the books" income. This applies to unemployment and non-work participation data too. Many may be working in the informal sector and not reporting that work. (See discussion in section 2 above). Therefore, the percent of the poor who are not working may be overstated.

Analysis of non-working adults indicates that one third are disabled, half are caregivers or students, and six percent are retired. This leaves five percent of the non-workers who are neither disabled, caregivers, students, nor retired (Schanzenbach, Bauer, and Nunn 2016). But only a small number of non-workers cite inability to find a job as the reason for their not working.

Some critical factors in affecting unemployment and non-work are:

- As reported in the previous section, there is a mismatch between the skills required by the jobs which are available and those skills possessed by the unemployed. (See section 4 above.)
- There is a mismatch between where the job growth is occurring and where the unemployed are located. Often the under-employed or unemployed travel to areas where the housing is cheap rather than where the jobs are growing. One reason is that the price of housing is so high in the coastal "hot" job growth areas. In a survey 300 businesses reported lack of affordable housing as a problem for their employees. In New York City, 86% of the firms said housing cost is a barrier to business expansion (Wardrip, Williland and Hague 2011).
- Discrimination in hiring based on race, sex, and age is persistent. In one study, white applicants with criminal records for jobs were given higher number of "call backs" than blacks without criminal records (Emsellen and Zeidenberg 2015).
- There are 70 million in the US with criminal records. Many firms simply will not hire anyone with a criminal record. Many have been convicted not of violent crimes but of drug violations for drugs which are now legal in many states.
- In a survey of welfare recipients, 47% listed transportation as the largest barrier to work (Danziger and others 2000). A study found that 17% of working poor owned no car. Operations, insurance and maintenance costs of a car impose a heavy burden on the poor.
- Women who are parents of children find child care excessively expensive and raising a child often requires time off from work. The Europeans do a much better job than we do in providing family-friendly work supports, often with state supported child care and liberal family leave policies. That is one reason why many other advanced countries have higher work participation for women. The higher rate of female headed households in the US places a higher burden on American women. There are 14 OECD countries which have higher female labor force participation (Cohen 2017).

- There are 15 million disabled persons aged 18 to 64. Of these 4.4 million are poor and only 17% working. There are 7 million adults who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which is means tested programs for the blind, aged and disabled people. There are 8.9 million on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), which is a non-means tested entitlement (Haskins 2017 ). As unemployment rises, requests for disability aid rise. Some argue that this is disincentive to work when recipients have gone through a period of disability and now can work.

High workforce participation is critical to the health of our society. Failure to work or working intermittently by men can reduce likelihood of marriage in the first place and increase the likelihood of divorce. The low workforce participation by black men with lower levels of education has made a big contribution to the disintegration of the black family. In some cities, the number of lower-income black females working exceeds that of black males. The unemployment rate for non-custodial fathers makes it difficult to get child support payments. (For discussion of family see section 9.)

Ron Haskins, one of the leading authorities on poverty, has argued for the benefits of work beyond income. It increases self-sufficiency, economic mobility, and income in retirement. It provides adults with structure, source of status and identity, a means of participating in a collective purpose, and an opportunity for social engagement. Joblessness increases alcohol consumption, family destabilization and incidence of disease. As a result, it reduces life span (Haskins 2017).

## 6. Geographic Mobility and Segregation.

### Statement of the Problem.

**US segregation.** Freedom to follow job openings and better communities is fundamental to a healthy society. Slavery in the US was the ultimate denial of that right. Black adults and their children were bound for life to their masters. Running away was punishable by law. Although slavery was abolished over a century ago, there are still restrictions to mobility. Although it is illegal to discriminate in rental and sales of housing, the practice continues today. "Testers" have found that many real estate agents "steer" minorities to minority areas and are not color blind in accepting qualified clients.

One of the most insidious barriers to both minority low income mobility in residential and community location is exclusionary zoning. Prohibition of higher density housing makes it very difficult for lower- income persons to move into these areas. The result is a high and growing residential segregation by income. Since many black and Hispanic families have lower incomes, this means racial exclusion. We have been more polarized in residential location by income: 34% live in extremely poor or extremely wealthy neighborhoods, up from 15% in prior years. Income inequality grew by 10% from 1998 to 2010, but economic segregation grew by 20% (Reardon, Waldfogel and Bassok 2016).

Progress has been made in residential desegregation, but it still remains high. The average white person lives in a neighborhood with 77% whites, nine percent Hispanics and seven percent blacks. The average black lives in a neighborhood with 45% blacks, 26% whites, and 14% Hispanics. Even higher income blacks live in neighborhoods in which over 40% of their neighbors are black and less than 50% white (Reardon, Townsend and Fox 2015). They also tend to live in lower-income areas.

There is also hyper-segregation at the community and metropolitan level. Primary cities in 58 metropolitan areas were majority- minority in 2010, up from 43 in 2000. Hispanics are now the largest minority in major American cities. Across all major cities in 2010, 41% of residents were white, 26%

Hispanic and 22% black. Minorities constitute 35% of suburban residents, similar to their share of the overall population. The suburbs of Washington DC, Houston, Las Vegas, and San Francisco became majority-minority in the 2000's (Frey 2011). Many of these are immigrants. (See discussion of impact of immigration in section 13 below.) In cities like Chicago, increasing racial integration in schools would be virtually impossible since so much of the city is minority. It is ironic that northern and Midwestern cities are more racially segregated than many southern cities.

On a macro-scale, a positive trend is that the minority groups are less concentrated in the central cities than they used to be. More than half of all minorities in large metropolitan areas now live in the suburbs. In 2010, 51% lived in the suburbs, up from 37% in 1990. But the fastest growing exurban areas are mostly white (Frey 2011). With more minorities in the suburbs, there is still segregation by race and income in those areas.

A particularly difficult problem is the growth of areas of concentrated poverty. In the center cities, the number of distressed neighborhoods (with more than 20% poor) has grown from 5,908 in 2000 to 7,637 in the 2010-2014 period. In the suburbs, they have grown even more: from 2,575 in 2000 to 5,524 in the later period (Liu 2017). Some 13.9 million Americans live in areas of very concentrated poverty, where 40% of residents are poor (Center for American progress 2015). There is relatively little upward mobility out of these areas. Seventy percent of blacks in the nation's poorest areas are children and grandchildren of those who lived in similar neighborhoods 40 years ago (Sharkey 2016).

A contributing factor to segregation of the poor and minorities was public housing which tended to concentrate high density apartments in low-income and minority areas (Bolt 2009). Housing vouchers have decreased segregation by design. However in the largest metro areas, most voucher holders live in a neighborhood with a poverty rate of 24%.

**European practices.** After over 15 years of studying poverty issues here and abroad, I have seen little data on segregation practices in Europe. From time to time, there is an article about the fact that the rich people tend to live in Paris and other big cities and often the poor are in large housing projects in the suburbs. Tammaru, one of the authors of a recent study of economic segregation in major capitals in Europe, confirms that little has been written on the subject ( Tammaru, others 2015). Another co-author said that the main conclusion of their multi-city study was that levels of socio-economic segregation in European capital cities were still quite modest. Segregation levels in cities in America, Africa and parts of East Asia are much higher than in Europe. The second major conclusion was that in the last decade Europe has been slipping, albeit slowly, into growing inequalities and segregation (Marinczak, Musterd, Van Ham, and Tammaru 2015).

One of the reasons for the modest degree of segregation is that European governments have a much more generous safety net and have achieved a much higher degree of equality than in the US. Many cities (such as Rotterdam, Birmingham, Berlin and Frankfurt) have followed a long-term policy of banning further settlement of ethnic minorities in neighborhoods where they were already strongly represented (Bolt 2009). But inequality and segregation are growing (Tammaru, others 2015).

At the same time in Europe, immigrant groups tend to cluster together in insular neighborhoods. In Britain, the Pakistanis cluster; in France, the North African and Caribbean groups (Misra 2014). It is also well known that the Roma (Gypsies) in East Europe have long been subject to discrimination in jobs and housing, living marginal and desperate lives. Particularly polarizing are the

terrorist attacks by Islamic extremists who wish to create disruption. Even in countries which have been hospitable to immigrants, Middle East migrants face heavy citizen opposition.

### **Impact of Segregation.**

I reported in section 4 on education that one of the best documented negative impacts of class and race segregation is that minorities are denied access to the best schools. The average black and Hispanic student attends a school in which two thirds of the students are low income. In 1991, black students attended schools that were 34% white; by 2011 it had fallen to 28%. Only a small percent of white students are in high poverty schools. (See discussion in on education in section 4 above.)

Neighborhood segregation by race and by class is a critical factor in the fact that black youths are the most subject to violent crime in American society and the most incarcerated. Thus, where you live in a city determines whether or not you live in fear. In Chicago, there are many areas with almost no killings. But in the South and West Side where there is a concentration of low-income minorities, crime is on a level of violent countries such as Brazil or Venezuela. In Chicago, which has a higher violent crime rate than New York City, 12% of blacks in the city are in neighborhoods that are 100% black. (See discussion of crime in section 14.)

For several decades, Harvard professor William Julius Wilson has written that a lack of jobs in low-income minority areas is a major factor in black unemployment. Since unemployment is so high in these areas, residents do not have access to job opening information passed on by word of mouth by friends and relatives. Segregation on a macro-scale by community has a big impact on minority unemployment. From 2008 to 2010, 62% of blacks lived in areas with more than 10% unemployment, compared to 39.2% for others (US Department of Labor 2013).

Racially segregated minority neighborhoods have a long history of adversities, such as poverty, joblessness, environmental toxins and inadequate housing (Park and Fessenden 2016).

The negative impact of living in segregated low-income areas is seen on the results of moving to a less segregated area. Raj Chetty, the well-known Stanford economist, has pointed out that when children move at a younger age to lower poverty neighborhoods, they get better schools, have higher graduation rates, and have higher incomes as adults (Chetty, Hendren, and Katz 2014). Studies after the Hurricane Katrina hit in New Orleans showed that black families who moved out of New Orleans had higher incomes than before the move (Gladwell 2015). Boys appear to be more vulnerable to the effects of growing up in high poverty areas. Boys growing up in low income areas of Baltimore will have 27% lower earnings as adults than the national average, but girls only five percent lower. Therefore, moving to better neighborhoods had a more positive impact than on girls (Reeves 2015).

## **7. Housing and Homelessness.**

### **The Housing and Homeless Problem in the US.**

Overall, the quality of the housing stock in the US has improved over the decades: old substandard units have either been torn down or renovated. Only 1.7% of the housing is severely inadequate in the US (US HUD 2014). Sixty four percent of all households have all six appliances and electronic goods: clothes washer, clothes dryer, refrigerator, stove, dishwasher and a landline or cellular

phone. However, only 45% of blacks have a full set of appliances, compared to 71% of white households. Fully 85% of households had no problems with housing repair (Siebens 2013).

The nation has recovered from the Great Recession and foreclosure crisis of 2008-10. Mortgage lending increased by 19% between 2013 and 2014. The share of loans for home purchase made to black families increased from 4.8% to 5.5%, but this is below the percent of blacks in American society. Black families were hit hardest by the foreclosure crisis (Ganesh and Seidman 2016). The increase in housing prices helped reduce the number of homeowners "underwater" (where the loan exceeded the value of the property) from 12.1 million at the end of 2011 to 4.3 million at the end of 2015. More than 9.5 million homes were forfeited through foreclosures, short sales, and deeds-in-lieu of trust foreclosures in the housing crash between 2007 and 2015 (Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard 2016).

One problem with demand for housing stems from the fact that there are fewer married couples. Single persons are less well equipped to buy a home because they have only one income. The percent of those who live alone in the US is 27%, up from five percent in 1920 (Gillies 2016).

The problem with American housing is that there is a mismatch between affordable housing units and the number low-income or poor Americans. The median asking price for rent is \$1,381 a month. This is unaffordable to those earning \$35,000 a year or less. Some of the problems with American housing listed by the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard are as follows:

- In 2014, the number of cost-burdened homeowners (paying more than 30% of their income for housing) was 18.5 million, down 4.5 million since 2008.
- The number of cost burdened renters rose by 3.6 million in 2008 to 21.3 million in 2014. Those with severe cost burdens (paying over 50% of income for rent) rose by 2.1 million to a record of 11.4 million.
- The primary impact of those with high cost burdens is that residents have to cut back on other essentials to support their families.
- The matter is made worse by the fact that, unlike food assistance, housing is not an entitlement. The number receiving food help under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAPs) increases as the number needing food assistance increases. The amount of low-income housing assistance has no relationship to need. There are 18.5 million renters who meet the criteria for federal housing assistance, but only one quarter get this assistance.
- The egregious and unfair element of housing assistance is that the federal assistance benefiting the well-to-do is four times that going to the poor. Government tax benefits for mortgage interest and payment of local property tax amounts to \$95 billion a year. Only one fifth of households benefit from this tax subsidy. In the bottom 40%, only one in 20 benefits (Iselen 2016).
- Because many available affordable housing units are occupied by higher income persons, there were only 57 units of affordable housing for every 100 low-income renters in 2014.
- 710,000 renters have been threatened with eviction in the previous three months.
- Because of the large number of foreclosures in the Great Recession, US homeownership has tumbled to its lowest level in nearly a half century. Homeownership rates for all groups under age 44 are much lower than in 1995. Among the reasons are that many young people are facing the need to pay off the \$1.3 trillion in college debt, many are still living at home, and the age of first marriage is increasing.

- In the second quarter of 2016, homeownership dropped to 61.9%. It steadily declined from a peak of over 69% in 2004 and has been dropping steadily since then (Gopal 2016).
- As homeownership declined, 36% of the households chose to rent in 2015—the largest share since the 1960s. This has caused a reduction in rental vacancies and rents have been rising to 2001 and 2007 levels.
- Decline in number of persons seeking to own a home has reduced the number of new units under construction to a level lower than before the Recession (Joint Center 2016).
- There is a huge disparity of homeownership by race, income and location. While 71% of whites own their home, only 41.2% of blacks and 45% of Hispanics do (CFED Assets and Opportunity Score Card 2016).

Although homeownership has gone down, the value of housing equity (home value minus debt) is the largest asset owned by the bottom 90% of the population. The housing equity for the middle fifth of the population was \$71,000 in 2007. That dropped to \$39,300 in 2010 with the Recession. Since then it has gone up substantially. Stock and retirement account holdings are quite modest for the bottom 90% (Mishel, Bivens, Gould, Shierholz 2012). There is a huge gap between black and white wealth, due to the fact that blacks have lower homeownership.

**Homelessness.** The ultimate casualty of lack of affordable housing, low level of government housing aid and high poverty is homelessness. A report by the national Alliance to End Homelessness indicated that on a single night in January, over 564,000 people were experiencing homelessness in the US—meaning that they were sleeping outside or in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program. From 2014 to 2015, the number of homeless persons decreased in virtually every category: unsheltered persons, families, and chronically homeless persons. The national rate of homelessness dropped to 1.7 per 10,000 people in 2015. Of the 564,000 homeless, 69% are sheltered. Only 15% of the total number of homeless persons is chronically homeless. Federal assistance has dropped this number dramatically (National Alliance to End Homelessness 2016). The number experiencing homelessness at some time during the year is much higher. During the 2013-14 school year, more than 1.36 million students were homeless at some time during the year, an increase from the previous year (Civic Enterprises and Everyone Graduates Center 2016).

Homelessness can have a devastating impact on the schools and the students. Last school year there were 82,504 children in the New York City public school system who were homeless at some time during the year. They were either in shelters, temporarily staying with relatives, or in some makeshift situations. In these situations, it may be impossible to get a good night's sleep, to discipline a child or to do homework (Harris 2016).

### **Housing in Europe and Other Advanced Nations.**

It is difficult to compare housing in the US with Europe because countries are so different and different types of non-comparable housing studies have been done on Europe. However, a few generalizations may be made:

- Because there is a more generous government safety net in Europe, there are fewer relatively poor (50% of median income) in most countries and absolutely poor (applying a single money threshold for poverty) in northern and western Europe. This means that lower income persons are enabled to better meet housing and other needs than in the US which is much less generous on social welfare expenditures.

- The US in 2014 was listed as 41<sup>st</sup> in homeownership at 64.5% (Since then it has dropped.) The former communist countries in Eastern Europe and Russia have homeownership rates exceeding 80% (never achieved by the US), because they privatized government housing. This housing is predominantly apartments, since that was the dominant form of construction in communist countries (Wikipedia f).
- Prosperous Switzerland and Germany both have low homeownership rates (52.5% and 44.5%), although their people have considerable personal wealth (Wikipedia f).
- Table 4 shows that most countries have a higher percent of government subsidized housing. In Austria, it is 20.1%, Netherlands (33%), Sweden (19%) and the UK (18%).
- In spite of generous government social expenditures, 20% of Europeans dedicate more than 40% of their income to housing. No nation has fully managed to provide a solution to the challenge of meeting affordable housing needs (Housing Europe 2016).
- Fewer people in Europe can afford to buy a home and are looking to rent, the same as in the US.
- In Europe, some 50% of young adults 18 to 34 were living with their parents . This is even higher than in the US.
- Public support for assisted housing in the European group of 27 countries has decreased from 1.1% of GDP in 2003 to .8 in 2012 (Housing Europe 2016).
- Many countries have a large cooperative housing movement which provides much affordable housing (Housing Europe 2016)

It is difficult to compare homelessness in Europe with the US or between countries in Europe since countries have different definitions of homelessness. One author asserts that the highest rates for lifetime literal homelessness were found in the US and the lowest in Germany, Italy and Belgium (Toro others 2007). Other studies of the total number of homeless show .1% of the population in Denmark and in Finland, .3% in the Czech Republic, .3% in France and .24% in Germany and .58% in Italy.

## 8. **The Quality of the Environment for All.**

In any assessment of social justice it is important to look at the environment enjoyed by its people—particularly those with lower incomes. Both China and India have made massive progress in economic growth and reduction of poverty in the past three decades. But China is now the number one polluter. Both Beijing and Mumbai have air so polluted that, regardless of wealth, it is difficult for residents to breathe. Lung cancer and respiratory problems have reached epidemic proportions.

The US has made great gains in the past decades in environmental quality:

- Waste water treatment in the US became widespread after the introduction of federal funding in 1948.
- The federal Water Pollution and Control Act of 1948, amended in 1965, established a uniform set of water quality standards and authorized Federal Water Control Administration to set standards where states failed to do so. Water quality has improved considerably, with some exceptions, like Flint Michigan. Billions have been spent on research and construction grants.
- The supply of clean water has been a challenge in California and other arid and semi-arid states with the fluctuation of precipitation. One problem is that US water consumption is more than double that in central Europe (Wikipedia a).
- In 2013, 25% of municipal solid waste was recycled and 13% was combusted with energy recovery (US EPA 2016).



- The US and other advanced countries have made great gains in reducing fuel consumption by establishing national standards. Americans are buying more hybrid and fuel-efficient cars. Fracking has opened up new supplies of oil and gas. For the first time, America has become energy independent.
- The US Environmental Protection Agency has reported that, nationwide, air emissions of every pollutant have decreased between 1990 and 2011. These reductions occurred during a time of nationwide increases in energy use, population, motor vehicle use and GDP.
- As acid rain has declined, many surface waters throughout New England have shown signs of recovery from acidification (US EPA 2016a).
- The American Housing Survey (AHS) shows that a most Americans (67%) give the three top ratings on a 10 point scale as being satisfied with the environment of their neighborhood.
- The survey shows a higher degree of "social capital" and civic participation in American cities. There is high neighborhood participation in Neighborhood Watch, religious organizations, attending meetings about neighborhood problems, volunteering and giving help to one another.
- 43% of those surveyed for the AHS reported open space, parks, woods, farm or ranches within one half block and 89% of occupants reported no vandalized or abandoned buildings within one half block; 92% reported no trash, litter, or junk on streets (US Census 2013).
- There was variation in degree of satisfaction by income, but even the 67% of lowest quartile of income persons reported satisfactory neighborhood conditions (Siebens 2013).
- The US has done a good job in providing parkland for cities: 17 cities have over 10,000 acres of parkland within their boundaries for a total of 1.5 million acres (Trust for Public Lands 2014).
- With the elimination of lead-based paint and lead in gasoline, millions of children have less exposure to lead --damaging to the brain. However, efforts continue to remove lead-based paint from old buildings. Lead buildup remains in the ground in areas near highways.

In general, Europe has also enjoyed considerable improvements in environmental quality. There are five areas where the literature shows important European advantages.

First, a large number of European cities excel in overall quality of life. Mercer Consulting Company listed the top 49 cities in the world. They had the best infrastructure, water availability telephone and mail services, public transportation, and relatively low traffic congestion. Some 27 European cities made this list. Eight countries from Asia and three Canadian cities were included. In spite of its large population and wealth, none of the US cities made the top half. Seven US cities were listed in the bottom half (Mercer Consulting 2016).

A second area of European advantage is in addressing global warming. Although the US took leadership in pushing the global warming pacts, there is considerable American political resistance to taking drastic measures to reduce use of coal and other pollutants contributing to global warming. In 1990, the total carbon dioxide emissions in the European Union (EU) was 4.35 billion metric tons. By 2011, it was 3.79 billion metric tons—a substantial improvement. In the US, emissions increased from 4.99 billion tons to 5.42 billion tons. The level was only exceeded by China (Convery 2014).

Third, Europe and other advanced countries surpass the US in reducing pollution from transportation, as well as gas consumption, because the use of cycling, walking and rapid transit is so much higher than in the US. Automobiles are idle waiting in traffic for a good part of the time. The automobile wastes about 80% of the gas put into it (Driefus 2016). (See section 10 on transportation.)

Fourth, the typical European city is much more compact than most American cities. With higher density, the use of transit, walking and cycling are more feasible and the city has a lower "footprint" on the environment.

Fifth, as shown above, European cities have greater equality of incomes than the US.. This means there is less variation in the quality of neighborhoods that different income groups face.

## 9. **Strength of the Family.**

### **Changes in American Family Structure.**

At first glance, the strength of the family does not seem to fit in any listing of social equity topics. Unlike segregation or restriction of voting rights, changes in family structure are not a direct result of government action or non-action. They result from changes in social norms and individual actions, mostly beyond the control of government. Yet, the decline of two-parent families and rise of single mother households for the past thirty years may have had more impact on poverty levels than any other factor. Its inter-relations with other forces in society should be understood.

The seismic shift that has occurred in US family structure over a long period of time was the decline of the husband-wife household, especially in the black community and for less educated Americans. In 1960, 65.6% of all adult females were married. That dropped to 54% in 2013. In 1960, almost 60% of black adult females were married. By 2014, only 35% were married. The number of adult males nationally who were married dropped from 69% to 57% during this period. Children with two parents at home dropped from 83% in 1960 to 68.5% in 2013. Black children with two parents at home constituted less than 40% of all black families in 2013. Overall, births to unwed mothers increased from 25.6% in 1990 to 40.7% in 2013, although births to teens dropped. Births to unwed black mothers increased from 66.7% in 1990 to 71.8% in 2013. (Footnotes in Table 5 in the appendix.) For educated Americans, the family structure has remained healthy. For those who are college graduates, 69% are still in their first marriage by age 46, compared to only 28% of those who didn't finish high school.

The consequences of these changes have had a massive impact on poverty levels. Single parent families are poorer than married couple families. Only 8.7% of black married couples were poor in 2013 compared to 38% for black single parent families. Single mother families generally have few full-time year round employees: white (11.7%), Hispanic (21.4%) and black (17.2%) (Census 2016a). (See Table 3.) Single men earn less than married men. Married persons are less likely to have strokes, heart disease or depression and they respond better to stress (Luscomb 2016). The children of single parent families do worse in school, are more likely to grow up poor, and be single parents as adults.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to describe the causes of these changes, but it should be noted that decline in blue collar jobs had a strong impact on reduced marriage for lower-income and minority Americans. Women are not interested in marrying a man with limited employment and income prospects. In some inner cities, there are 50 black men with jobs for every 100 black employed women (Economist 2015).

But there are some positive changes occurring in the American family:

- Teen births are down. Last year, 22.3 children were born to every 1,000 girls ages 15 to 19, down by 64% since 1991 when the teen birth rate was 61.8 per 1,000 (USA Today 2016).

- Divorce rates dropped to the lowest level in 35 years, from nearly 23 divorces per 1,000 married women in 1980 to 17 in 2015 (USA Today 2016).
- There has been a dramatic drop in abortion rate from 29.2 per 1000 women in 1980 to 17.7 in 2013. For black women the drop was from 63.9 in 1990 to 44.4 in 2013. (See Table 5.)
- After the election of Donald Trump, women have surged to Planned Parenthood and other clinics where doctors' appointments increased from women who want more effective longer-lasting contraceptives (LARCs) which are 20 times more effective than the pill (Krause and Sawhill 2016). Teen use of contraceptives is also increasing.

### **Comparative Data with other Advanced Countries.**

The following can put the changes in American family in perspective:

- Abortion rates have been declining in rich countries, generally where it is legal. It has been increasing in Latin America where it is generally illegal. Abortion was the preferred means of control in the communist countries. In Germany, the abortion rate is about 9 per 1,000 women. In Catholic Mexico it is 40 per 1,000 (Economist 2016f).
- In 2007, the US had the 9<sup>th</sup> lowest percent of children living with both parents, lower than the OECD average. Conversely, it had the highest rate of children living with one or no parents. But it was below average with cohabitating parents. Many couples in Sweden, for example, are not married but are in long term relationships (OECD 2011a).
- In 2014, the US had the fifth highest marriage rate and fourth highest divorce rate (OECD Social Policy Division 2016).
- Crude divorce rates in Europe rose by 150% between 1965 and 2011.
- Families are small in Europe: two thirds of households consist of one or two persons (Eurostat 2016).
- In 2015, 66% of the American families had no children, slightly below the OECD average of 67%. In France, Germany, Finland, and Japan 77 to 78% of the families had no children.(OECD Social policy Division 2016).
- In 2015, the US population growth rate sank to .7%, making it the lowest growth rate since 1937. But in contrast to Germany, Japan, Italy, and Russia, the US can look forward to population growth for decades to come, but with lower levels of increase (Frey 2016). Japan and other countries will shortly be faced with the problem of fewer working age people supporting a growing elderly population. Birth rates have been dropping all over the world (Kristof 2016).

The US changes in the family are being mirrored in other advanced nations. But the more generous social safety net in Europe mitigates the impact of being a single parent or not having a job.

### **10. Adequacy and Accessibility of the Transportation System.**

Transportation plays a key role in national and personal development. The trans-continental railroad tied the nation together and was a major force in development of the great hinterland. The inter-state highway system was one of the largest construction projects in the world, comparable to the Great Wall of China. It allowed diverse and far-flung cities to be knitted together and reduced the time and cost of moving goods. Yet with our sprawling cities and scattering of jobs and shops often at great distances from residential areas, lower-income persons without cars can face severe limitations on mobility.

The most dramatic difference between the US transportation system and that of other advanced nations is our dominance of cars and trucks, at the expense of rail and transit. By 2010, Americans drove a car for 85% of their daily trips, compared to car trip shares of 50% to 65% in Europe. Thirty percent of trips are under one mile on both sides of the Atlantic. Of those one mile trips Americans drove 70% of the time, while Europeans made 70% of their short trips by bicycle, foot or public transit (Buehler 2014). The US has the highest car ownership in the world: 865 vehicles per 1,000 people.

Public Transport plays a large part of all travel in major cities of the world: Barcelona (26%), Berlin (26%), Madrid (34%), Rome (20%), Toronto (22%), and Vienna (36%). In major cities walking is a high percent of all trips: Barcelona (38%), Berlin (29%), London (30%), and Tokyo (23%). Because it is an American outlier in terms of density, New York City has a high percent of transit use and walking (39%) (Singapore Land Transportation Academy 2011).

One reason for the low transit use is that US cities are much lower density than in other advanced nations. Barcelona has more people than Atlanta, but its area (162 square kilometers) is only a fraction that of Atlanta (2,480 square kilometers). Also, US cities have polycentric location of jobs. This requires the use of buses or private vehicles. A monocentric concentration of jobs in the downtown areas can accommodate high transit or subway use. Houston, Portland, Chicago, and the Washington metropolitan areas have less than 22 people per hectare. Seoul, Shanghai, and Hong Kong have more than 280 persons per hectare (Bertaud and Richardson 2004).

Europeans tend to allow a greater mix of uses in their residential areas, keeping distances shorter. In Germany, a residential zone can include doctors' offices, cafes, and other non-residential uses (Buehler 2014). By contrast, US suburban areas, where most Americans live, have large residential areas with few places of work. The older center cities were much more compact often with residents living above shops. Even when other land uses are close, Americans prefer to drive. A surprising 84% of Americans have a grocery store and drug store within 15 minutes of their homes (US Census 2013).

Another reason for low car usage in Europe is that by the late 1960's many European cities started refocusing their policies to curb car use by promoting walking, cycling, and public transit. European cities have implemented entire networks of bike lanes, separate bicycle tracks, so that cyclists can take a bike to work without danger. Many European countries have very high taxes on motor vehicles and all have very high tax on gasoline. By contrast in the US, gas taxes, tolls and registration fees have covered only 60% to 70% of roadway expenditures. The remainder has been paid using property, income and other taxes not related to transportation (Buehler 2014). Trucking is more heavily subsidized than rails in the US because of the magnificent interstate highway system. As a result, only 10% of the freight is carried by rail, and 60% by truck.

Americans enjoy the mobility and flexibility of personal vehicle use. But high car usage comes at a cost: motorists waste 4.2 billion hours annually commuting. Two thirds of all US oil consumption is due to the transportation sector. Next to a home, cars are our single largest expenditure. In 2015 alone, 28,300 people died and 4.4 million were seriously injured through car crashes (Dreifus 2016).

I reported above in section 5 on unemployment that urban sprawl and the lack of transit access is a huge problem for low- income persons in getting to work. Many cannot afford to purchase and maintain a motor vehicle. Yet most of the poor commute by car. This is a big cost burden for them.

## 11 Adequacy and Fairness of Government.

What different levels of government do or fail to do have a critical impact on social justice. Also important are the fairness of elections and responsiveness of government to the needs of all the people.

**Government revenues and expenditures.** The dominant difference between the US and other advanced countries is that the US has among the lowest taxes a percent of GDP (Porter 2016b). Also, it has the lowest increase in tax revenue among advanced nations from 1960 to 2013. Some countries, such as France and Denmark, have government revenues around 50% of GDP (Porter 2016d). It also has among the lowest social welfare spending. Federal, state and local expenditures for social purposes are just 19% in the US. That is 10% less than in France and 8% less than in Belgium and Denmark (Porter 2016b). This is the prime factor for lower relative poverty in Europe. This has not been at the expense of economic growth. Except since the Great Recession, the growth rate of European countries has been comparable to that of the US, with its relatively low taxes. From 1960 to 2013, many countries with high tax growth have had between two and three percent annual growth in real GDP per capita (Porter 2016). In my paper on how the European countries did a better job in reducing poverty, I show that there is virtually no correlation between level of taxes and economic growth for two time periods (Underhill 2008).

A positive development is that Federal annual deficits have been decreasing from over a trillion dollars during the Great Recession to \$587 billion in 2016 (Chantril 2016). However, cumulative debt has risen to 105% of the GDP (Just Facts 2016). US debt as a percent of GDP exceeded the 84% for the European Union average in 2016. Only five European countries had higher debt (Statistica 2016).

The US spends more money on defense (\$600 billion) than the next six large countries combined. This was an issue in the recent election, with Donald Trump arguing that our allies are not carrying their share of keeping the peace. Countries, like Germany, can have high support for social welfare programs, in part, because they spend relatively little on defense. The US also spends a lot on means-tested programs, which are dominated by medical costs through Medicaid. The US Congressional Budget Office said that the federal government was spending over \$700 billion for means tested programs in 2012 (US CBO). This includes tax credits, like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

**National efforts to compensate for inequalities in fiscal capacity.** Europe also does a better job in fiscal equalization to compensate for the discrepancy of revenue bases and needs of different jurisdictions. Europe spends 4.75% of government expenditures for fiscal equalization (Blochinger, others 2007). There is some redistribution in the US because of regional inequalities. New England has relative low needs and higher fiscal capacity. Southern states have lower fiscal capacity and high needs (Yilmaz, others 2006). It is ironic that the "red states" who vote for the Republican Party are the biggest beneficiary of Federal aid, paying less in taxes than they receive from the Federal government. The "blue states" receive less in federal expenditures than they pay in taxes. It is the Republican Party that argues for smaller government. Money transfers to poorer states do not completely offset differences (Blochinger, others ).

There is also state aid to municipalities to help compensate for local dependence on property tax. But in 2012 only five percent of the \$1.6 trillion in local revenues came from inter-governmental transfers (Proquest, 2016, table 465). The municipalities are strictly limited by states about what taxes

they can use. Only nine percent of US municipalities have the authority to level an income tax (University of Illinois at Chicago 2016).

**Fair representation of disempowered.** A big issue in government is the degree to which government is responsive to the needs of the disempowered low-income and minority persons. Some 20 states have passed legislation which has the practical effect of limiting voting rights of minorities, through such techniques as requiring strict voter identification (Brennan Center for Justice 2016). The NAACP estimates that there are as many of 21 million Americans, or 11% of the entire voting eligible population, that do not have proper government issued photo IDs (Brooks 2017). This could depress voter turnout for the Hispanic population. Hispanics eligible to vote are growing at a million a year. The electoral college system with "winner- take- all" policies of states also discourages voting. Voters in states which typically vote heavily Republican or Democratic are disenfranchised when they do not vote for the dominant party favored in the state. The fact that the Democrats won the popular vote by three million, yet lost the election, shows that the system is flawed (Mann 2016). Federal restraints on state efforts to restrict voting has been impaired by the Supreme Court Decision on *Shelby v. Holder* in which it invalidated the formula which required federal pre-clearance of changes to voting requirements. This formula targets southern states with a history of voting restraints.

An egregious violation of empowerment is gerrymandering. The Congress has only a 19% approval rating, but the public regularly votes for their Congressmen. This is because districts are manipulated to favor incumbent Congressmen. Also discouraging responsiveness to the disempowered is the lobbying system. Some \$2.3 billion was spent on lobbying in 2016. Dependent on the year, there are 20 to 27 lobbyists for every Congressmen (Open Secrets 2016). The poor do not have a lobby.

But there are also some problems with the typical European governmental system which includes many different parties. Voters can target their support for parties representing their special interests. However, this leads to fragmentation and the need to negotiate coalitions. The share of the vote by the winning party in parliamentary elections in Europe has dropped from 38% to only 31% and the number of parties has proliferated. In October 2016, Spain's popular party cobbled together a minority government following ten months of political deadlock. Party coalitions do not last long. The more party diversity there is, the fewer laws that are passed (Economist 2017a).

## 12. **Adequacy and Accessibility to Health Care Systems**

One of the great contradictions in social policy is that the US spends more money on health care than any other country by a wide margin, but Americans do not enjoy the best health outcomes. This led one analyst to conclude that the US health care system is said to deliver poor value for the money; that is, it fails to use the vast sums it spends in a cost-effective fashion. Private insurance companies spend 10 to 20% of their revenues on administration and advertising, while Medicare and the VA spend only about three percent (Brown 2015). We are one of the only advanced nations without universal health care and the effort to fill that gap through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is in the process of being eliminated by a Republican Congress.

Here are some of the problems of the American health care system and US health outcomes:

- Americans have average longevity below the OECD average. The US citizens rank 25<sup>th</sup> among OECD countries in longevity (OECD 2016i).

- The US ranks 30<sup>th</sup> in number of doctors per 100,000 people and highest among 23 countries in being overweight or obese (OECE 2016i).
- US infant mortality is among the highest in the OECD.
- There is a much larger gap between the health of the rich and the poor children in the US than in other OECD countries (OECD 2015a).
- Although we have improved greatly, we have the highest motor vehicle fatality rate of 20 countries and we have improved less than other countries (University of California 2016).
- We have the highest number of persons without health insurance among other advanced nations (Caroll 2016).
- Our fee for service system does not encourage disease prevention (Frist and Rivlin 2015).
- Some 19 million Americans misused prescription drugs last year (Tavernese 2016).
- The health of children is poorer than in other advanced countries (Porter 2016).
- Only 30% of low-income Americans have reported good or very good health, compared to 60% for higher income persons. The gap in reported health between rich and poor has increased over the years (Shanzenbach, Bauer, Mumford and Nunn 2016).
- US men and women with more than 16 years of education have much higher life expectancy than those with less than 12 years. Educated white men lived an average of 14.2 more years than less educated black men. The gap for white and black women was 10.3 years. The gaps have widened over time (Olshansky, others 2012).
- There is a great variation in life expectancy for persons in the bottom income quartile between states (Chetty, Stepner, others 2016).
- Many rural counties in the US have a small number of family doctors and specialists.
- Many Americans face huge personal dental bills because most insurance policies give only modest coverage for dental needs.

There are also some positive trends for American health:

- Because of the Affordable Care Act, the Americans without health insurance dropped from 16% in 1997 to nine percent in 2014 (Anderson 2016).
- There has been a great decline in mortality rates in the US from 1990 to 2010 for every age and sex, except for females ages 20 to 49. The male-female gap is closing.
- There has been a great drop in mortality rates for the poorer people in every category except for females 20 to 49 (Economist 2016d).
- In 1990, there were 21 incidents of HIV/AIDS per 1,000 men; today there are 12.
- There is better health care for mothers, babies, and children than before.
- Crime has dropped, reducing deaths of young men. (See section 14 on crime.)
- There has been a huge drop in smoking by Americans over the past decades, one of the great public health achievements of the century.
- Great progress has been made in reducing teen smoking and consumption of alcohol. Just 9.6% of adolescents ages 12 to 17 reported using alcohol in 2015, down from 16.6% in 2001. About 20% now smoke, down from 32% in 2001 (Tavernese 2016).
- Deaths from heart related diseases have dropped dramatically over the years.

The tragedy is that one of the great breakthroughs in health for the poor in the US is about to be undone with the repeal or weakening of the Affordable Care Act. It remains to be seen what will be put in its place.

### 13. **Fairness of Immigration Policies.**

Some brief coverage of immigration is desirable because it is an important issue raised by the victory of Donald Trump in the US and the exit of Great Britain from the European Union. Many people in Europe are fearful of the millions of refugees who are desperate to enter their borders. The delicate balance is to weigh the impact of immigrants on domestic society with the desperation of millions of people fleeing war, persecution and poverty.

In a book comparing the US and Europe, America comes out on the short end of the comparison for most topics, such as health care. But the two areas where the authors contributing chapters to the book praised American policies was in pensions and in immigration policy (Kelemen 2015). The author of the chapter on immigration concluded that US immigration policy has been far better defined, more consistent and durable than that of Europe. The US immigrants constitute nearly 13% of the population, and only 9.4% of the population of 27 European countries. Most of the inflow to the US were family members. The US had far more undocumented immigrants (11.7 million) than Europe (3.8 million) in 2008(Schain 2015).

Through either legal or illegal means, some 63 million immigrants came to the US in the past decades. Many returned home. About 43 million remain and they have produced some 30 million children. This has made a big impact on the workforce in many cities and on the mix of children in the public schools, which are now majority minority (Barone 2016a). In 2013, the US vastly exceeded any other advanced nation in immigrant flow: 900,000 compared to 480,000 for the next country, Germany. In many European countries the unemployment of foreign born exceeded the unemployment of native born.(OECD 2016j). In the US, foreign born work force participation was higher than that of the natives.

It is beyond the scope of this brief summary to assess all of the positive and negative aspects of immigration, but the following are a few observations by experts:

- Contrary to the fears of Americans and election rhetoric, immigrants have a lower crime rate than native-born Americans. In areas of big cities with high immigrant populations, crime has gone down. Roughly 1.6% of immigrant males between ages 18 and 29 end up incarcerated, compared to 3.3% of native born men of the same age (Brooks 2016).
- There are more Mexicans leaving the US than entering. There was a net outflow from 1999 to 2014 (Brooks 2016).
- A large study undertaken by the National Academy of Science and Engineering concluded that the immigrants did not have a negative impact on American wages, but the first generation cost more in local taxes (Preston 2016).
- David Brooks, New York Times editorial columnist, concludes that the bulk of the evidence shows that immigrants have a hugely positive effect on total American GDP and have little effect on wages (Brooks 2016).
- The influx of immigrants has turned the population tide for many central cities which had been losing population in the last several decades. This has added to their tax base and vitality.
- With the drop of fertility of native born population in the US, immigrants have put us in a more favorable position than Germany, Japan, and Russia in supporting the growing number of elderly. Russia is losing population yearly.
- The education level of Asian immigrants is higher than that of native Americans. Asian Americans have lower crime, more stable families, and higher incomes than natives.



- Mexicans and other Hispanics have a higher percent who have not graduated from college.
- The influx of immigrants from all over the world entering the US public school system have put a strain on the large school systems. English as a Second Language (ESL) students have lower test scores, particular in reading , than native English-speaking students.
- George Borjas, a Harvard labor economist who has studied the impact of immigration, argues that immigrants have a negative impact on wages of lower-income, less skilled workers as well as immigrants who have already arrived (Borjas 2013). This is disputed by others.
- Although immigrants compete with native Americans for jobs, they are very entrepreneurial and create jobs through the enterprises they create and their demand for goods and services.

#### 14. **Crime and the Fairness of the Criminal Justice System.**

There are few problems which differentiate the US from other advanced countries than violent crime and the prison system created to deal with it. There are also few problems which have had more impact on the daily lives of minorities and the poor.

The US firearms homicide rate is five times that of any other high income county . Over 1.4 million American have died by civilian owned guns since 1933, through suicide, murder ,and accidents— more than all of the US casualties in all wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Brady Campaign 1999). Some 30,000 Americans die in shootings each year. No rich country suffers anywhere near that level of gun violence. The US has 4.9 murders per 100,000 people, compared to 1.2 for Canada and one in Britain (Economist 2016b).

At the same time, the US incarcerates 698 out of every 100,000 residents, almost five times the average rate among OECD countries. The number of persons under corrections supervision (prison, parole and probation) has increased from 1.8 million in 1980 to about 6.85 million in 2014 (2.1% of the population). Seventy-seven percent of released prisoners are re-arrested within five years (Schanzenbach, Nunn, and others 2016).

A contributing factor to violence is the high gun ownership in the US. We are a gun-loving country. There are over 300 million guns in the US of which 144 million are handguns. A frequent use of these guns is suicide, which constitute 60% of gun deaths (Barone 2016b).

The impact of crime falls most heavily on black men. FBI data show that blacks who constitute about 13% of the population make up about half of gun homicide victims. Also, most of the known or suspected attackers are black, often acquaintances of the victim. Race is a proxy for poverty, joblessness and other problems that help breed violence. Most of the shootings end up with no arrests (La Franiera, Porat, and Armendariz 2016). More than 260,000 blacks (mostly men) have been killed by guns since 1980, more than those who lost their lives in three wars (Reeves and Holmes 2015). The danger to lives of young black men depends on the neighborhood they live in. Predominantly black neighborhoods suffer crime at five times the rate of white neighborhoods (Policy Development and Research 2016). While blacks are most likely to be victims of violence, they are most likely to be arrested and end up in jail. Blacks and whites sell and use drugs at the same rate, but blacks are 2.7 times more likely to be arrested for drug-related offences. A black man between 18 and 24 without a high school diploma is more than three times more likely to be incarcerated than a non-Hispanic white man of the same age and education (Schanzenbach, Nunn others 2016).

There are many impacts of high crime and incarceration in the US:

- The cost of the correctional systems for government has escalated rapidly from \$20.3 billion in 1982 to \$72 billion in inflation adjusted dollars (Schanzenbach, Nunn, others 2016). This and health care spending tends to reduce funding of higher education and other needs.
- There are many who believe that the higher number in prisons and jails in the US is criminogenic, that is, young men learn more about crime when they are imprisoned because they are surrounded by criminals. They might have gone straight if not for imprisonment.
- There are some 70 million in the US who have criminal records. Having a criminal record is a black mark in getting a job. Some 34% of prime age men outside the workforce had a criminal record (Applebaum 2014).
- Since many states prohibit those with criminal records from voting, this disenfranchises millions of potential voters and alienates them from society. There are six million Americans prohibited from voting because of criminal records (Gurvis 2016).
- The spouses and children of millions of incarcerated parents suffer. There are 2.4 million children who have a parent in prison or jail (Kristof 2016a).
- When prisoners are released, they have lower earnings and higher death rates (Schanzenbach, Nunn, others 2016).

But the news is not all bad:

- Other countries have higher crime rates in other areas than homicides. In comparison with other OECD countries, the US is 8<sup>th</sup> in robbery, 16<sup>th</sup> in assault, 13<sup>th</sup> in burglary (Williams 2012).
- Violent crime has dropped in the US by nearly half between 1995 and 2014, from 684 violent crimes per 100,000 people to 365. The homicide rate dropped by nearly half from 8.2 per 100,000 to 4.5. Other crimes have also dropped (Policy Development and Research 2016).
- With there is a drop in crime, business activity increases (Urban Institute 2016).
- After years of increase, the number of prisoners has dropped modestly (Williams 2016).
- Most violent crime is concentrated in only three percent of the neighborhoods (Policy Development and Research 2016). Most neighborhoods are safe. According to the American Household Survey, 87% of blacks and 89% of those in the lowest income quartile considered their neighborhoods safe (Siebens 2013).
- There has been growing support for reducing punitive sentencing and prison reform, even in conservative states such as Texas.

## **15. Putting the Pieces Together: What Does this all Mean?**

What does this complex comparison of social justice in US with other advanced countries tell us about where we excel and where we fall short? What are the implications for public policy and the future? And how is the transition of power from a liberal to a conservative government likely to affect our search for social justice?

### **Summary of Social Justice Comparisons.**

This paper is not a full comparison of desirability and achievements of the US, compared with other advanced nations. It focuses primarily on the issue of social justice. I point out in the introduction the considerable achievements of our country in the world scene in business, culture, growth of knowledge, innovation, and keeping of the peace.

With regard to social justice, the US still has the lead in GDP and individual income. It also has outpaced Europe in job and economic and job growth since the end of the Great Recession and has achieved lower unemployment. This high income keeps our median family income high, relative to other countries. We have also been more generous in opening doors to immigrants. However, in a whole range of social justice issues, we fall short of what the best advanced countries have achieved.

In each of the areas covered in the paper, there are often both positive achievements and problems:

- The US has added 15 million net new jobs since the end of the Great Recession, more than Europe has added. Unemployment is at a 10-year low at 4.7%, appreciably lower than the European average. However, this masks the fact that we have lower workforce participation than many advanced nations and many working-age persons have dropped out of the workforce.
- The full benefit of our great national wealth has not accrued to the bottom 90% of the population, since most of increases in income since the 1970's have been captured by the top 10%. It holds a higher portion of wealth and income than do the top 10% in other advanced nations. This mal-distribution of resources is not healthy for our society.
- Having 45.7 million poor and over half a million homeless persons should be unacceptable to a rich society. Poverty is higher in the US than in Northern and Western Europe.
- I argue that the whole US public school system is not in crisis and does not fall short of the other advanced countries. However, other nations have been catching up to our achievements on education. We have made considerable strides in improved high school graduation rate, reducing high school dropouts, reducing the gap between minority and majority populations, and improved test scores since 1993. There are also a large number of problems facing our schools which stem largely from our high minority population, segregation, unequal school funding, and lack of access of all Americans to good schools.
- Some experts argue that Europe has lower segregation by income than the US. On the other hand, most European countries do not have such a large number and percent of minorities and persons born abroad.
- Over the decades, the US has reduced the number of substandard housing units. The problem is that millions of Americans are paying more than 30% of their income for rent. There are too few affordable units for the large number of poor persons in our society. Europe has been more generous in providing subsidized housing for those who cannot pay market rates, yet many Europeans are paying more than 40% of their income for housing. The US is well down the list of countries now in terms of homeownership.
- Both Europe and the US have made great strides in environmental protection in the past several decades, but the US has done a worse job than Europe in terms of controlling carbon dioxide emissions contributing to global warming. Also, we make less use of walking, cycling and transit because of our love affair with the automobile. European cities are more compact than ours, reducing the negative "footprint" on the environment.
- Seismic shifts have occurred in the US in increasing the number of single-parent families and out-of-wedlock births over the past decades, although Europe is not far behind us on these negative changes.
- The US government has among the lowest levels of taxation as a percent of GDP among advanced nations and among the lowest level of social expenditures to raise the income of the

poor and reduce inequality. It also spends as much as the next six countries on defense and has among the highest national debt, as a percent of GDP. It has many barriers to registration and voting of minority citizens and has lower voter turnout than in Europe. It spends less on fiscal equalization of rich and poor parts of the country than other advanced countries.

- Both the US and other advanced nations have made great gains in longevity and health, but the US spends more on health care than any other nation and does not enjoy the best health outcomes. Positive trends are the drop in teen births and reducing alcohol consumption.
- The US has been more generous in admitting immigrants for the past 30 years than any other country and is in a much better position to face the declining ratio of workers to the elderly population whom they will have to support.
- The US has, by far, the highest rate of violent crime and incarceration among advanced nations. At the same time, US violent and other crime has dropped dramatically since the 1990s. Many other countries have higher rates of robbery and assaults.

### **Implications for Public Policy and Possible Impact of US Political Changes on Social Justice**

A good part of the European achievement in reducing poverty and inequality stems from the European willingness to tax citizens higher and transfer more of the country's income to those left behind. In the US, since the founding of the Republic, we have placed a higher value on freedom than equality. In the near future, we are not about to embrace the social welfare policies of other advanced nations. Currently, we are going in the opposite direction, seeking to reduce government. Some argue that our relative lack of generosity, compared to Europe, in terms of social welfare spending is offset by our private generosity in donations to charity. Over 55% of American working age population report that they engaged in formal volunteering during the year, compared to the OECD average of 34% (OECD 2015a). In 2015, Americans give a record of \$373 billion to charity and 62 million volunteered at least once (*Time Magazine* 2016). Relatively few of these donations, however, went to the poor. Educational institutions, the arts, and churches were the major beneficiaries.

Some of the proposed actions by the in-coming Republican administration have the potential of contributing to social justice through job creation. Among these is the initiative in building infrastructure. There is an agreement among experts that infrastructure needs are huge and that spending on infrastructure has been neglected. The problem is that the proposed tax cut and the need to reduce deficit spending would constrain the size of the effort.

Experts are more skeptical about the impact of the proposed tax cut on achieving social justice goals. William Gale argues that at the national level, there is virtually no evidence that the broad-based income tax cuts have a positive effect on growth. No researcher validly demonstrates that the 2001 and 2003 George W. Bush tax cuts stimulated growth significantly. We had an anemic recovery after those cuts. Thomas Pickety and others analyzed data from 18 developed countries and found no relationship between how a nation changed its top marginal tax rate and how rapidly it grew between 1960 and 2010. Between 2001 and 2007 six states cut personal income taxes with no discernable impact on economic activity (Gale, Krupkin, and Rueben 2015). Further, the Tax Policy Center found that over 99% of the House Republican tax cuts would go to the top one percent, whose incomes are over \$700,000 and result in \$3 trillion in revenue loss. This loss would have to be made up by cuts in government social welfare expenditures, since no cuts are proposed for defense (Marr 2016). In addition, the abolition of the tax supporting the Affordable Care Act on incomes over \$200,000 would primarily benefit millionaires (Anderson-Gray 2017). These actions would add to the wealth and income disparity between the top 10% and the rest of the population.

The proposed attack on free trade by the new administration may not help restore lost manufacturing jobs which experts say are primarily caused by automation (Miller 2016). (See discussion in Section 4.) Free trade is supported by the business community and, historically, by the Republican Party. It has been partly responsible for the massive drop in poverty in the world and the rapid growth rate of developing countries in the past 30 years. Further, increasing tariffs on countries, such as China, would surely invite retribution against import of American goods.

One of the great gains in accessibility to health care in the US has been the Affordable Care Act. It reduced the number of Americans without health insurance from 16% in 1997 to nine percent in 2014—an historic low (Anderson 2016). The abolition of this historic piece of legislation without a credible and compassionate alternative would set back efforts to achieve social justice in health care.

### **Suggestions for Improving Social Justice.**

This paper includes many examples of how other advanced nations have contributed to social justice. They will not be summarized here. But one set of policies stands out that could be applied in the US without excessive costs: work-family friendly policies, such as subsidized day care, liberal leave policies, and other actions to overcome the barriers to work for women. Many poor women with children do not work because the cost of day care would more than offset the low-paying jobs they may get (Cohen 2017). Women constitute most of the poor, particularly single mothers.

A special edition of the *The Economist* (2017) makes the case for life-long education. Given the rapid progress of automation and the constant threat of job obsolescence, it makes sense for workers to be constantly learning new skills, not in the separate job-training sites, but as part of the workplace. The report cites AT&T with 300,000 employees and a turnover of 50,000 a year. The company provides generous tuition for continuous training. Those who take this training are given rewards and those who don't receive poor ratings (Economist 2017). This approach on the job training and education while working is preferable to attempting to retrain unemployed workers with families. Generally, grants are insufficient for them to train full time and also support their families. I offer a full range of "best practices" for improved manpower training and reducing unemployment in my paper on reducing low-income and minority unemployment (Underhill 2016).

We must continue to fight residential segregation and exclusionary zoning because, as pointed out in Section 3 on education, low-income and minority students are blocked from attending the best schools because housing prices in these areas exclude all but higher income families.

The efforts to reduce inequality in America should continue because the current high degree of inequality of wealth and income is a drag on the economy. Also, relatively low taxes, compared with high expenditures, contribute to the constantly growing national debt—a direction that is unsustainable.

## Social Justice Appendix

**Table 1. Ranking of Selected Major Countries by per Capita Income and Other Factors**

	<b>Income Per cap 2016</b>	<b>disposable income 2014</b>	<b>Legatum index rank 2015</b>	<b>Purchasing Power Parity 2016</b>	<b>Human devel. Index</b>
Switzerland	\$80,831	75,618	2	\$65,650	.930 (2)
Norway	75,513	50,580	1	65,370	.944 (1)
Denmark	53,321	39,228	3	49,170	.923 (4)
Ireland	62,717	35,520	10	70,130	.916 (6)
United States	59,390	39,095	11	59,390	.915 (8)
Australia	51,459	45,360	7	48,880	.935 (2)
UK	37,317	35,520	15	43,812	.907 (14)
Netherlands	45,005	35,224	8	51,530	.922 (5)
Germany	42,281	34,212	14	49,950	.916 (6)
Canada	45,677	33,276	6	46,580	.913 (9)
Japan	39,039	33,384	19	39,280	.891 (20)
France	38,032	33,132	22	43,270	.888 (22)
South Korea	27,830	26,088	28	37,800	.898 (13)
Italy	30,616	25,404	37	38,450	.873 (27)
Spain	27,311	19,620	24	37,950	.876 (26)
Brazil	9,523	9,084	54	15,620	.755 (75)
China	8,438	8,772	52	17,050	.727 (90)
Russia	10,119	8,232	58	25,320	.798 (50)
Bulgaria	7,384	6,027	51	19,660	.783 (59)

**Sources:** (a) Per capita income and purchase power parity (PPP) from *Economist, The World in 2017*. PPP takes into account cost of living. (b) Disposable income refers to income per person after all taxes have been paid. In Nationmaster.com. 2015. "Cost of living. Average Monthly Disposable Salary after tax: Countries compared." (c) Legatum index ranks countries by achievement in the economy, entrepreneurship, governance, education, health, safety and security, personal freedom and social capital. Legatum Institute. 2015. *The Legatum Prosperity index*. (d) The Human Development Index is a UN measure, taking into account longevity, years of schooling, Gross National Income per capita, and Gini index rank, showing degree of equality. United Nations Development Programme. 2015. "Human Development Reports. Table 1 Human Development Index and its Components."

**Table 2. Net Growth of US Non-farm Payrolls (Jobs) from 1960 to 2016 (in millions), by decade and President.**

	<b>beginning</b>	<b>end</b>	<b>net new jobs</b>	<b>presidential term</b>
1960-1970	53.7	70.5	16.8	1961-1969 Kennedy/Johnson . 8 years (15.)
1970-1980	70.5	90.5	19.9	1969-1977. Nixon/Ford . 8 years. (11.1) 1977-81. Jimmy Carter. 4 years .(10.3)
1980-1990	90.5	109.3	18.9	1981-1989 R. Reagan. 8 years. (16) 1989-1993 GHW Bush. 4 years. (1.9)
1990-2000	109.3	132.7	23.4	1993-7 Bill Clinton. 8 years. (23.5 )
2000-2010	132.7	129.8	-2.9	2001-9 George W. Bush. 8 years .(1.2) 2009-2017 Barak Obama 8 years. (11.2)
<u>2010-2016</u>	<u>129.8</u>	<u>144.9</u>	<u>15.2</u>	
1960-2016	53.7	144.9	91.2	
<b>Recession</b>				
2007 to 2010	138.2	129.8	-8.4	George w. Bush-Obama

**Source:** St. Louis Federal Reserve 2017. "Total Non-Farm Payrolls. " (graph with interactive numbers). January 6, Presidential jobs created : Wikipedia." Jobs Created during US presidential terms."

**Table 3. Poor Families, by Family Status under age 65 and Employment by Family Members 2015.**

	<b>White non-Hispanic</b>		<b>Hispanic</b>		<b>black only</b>	
	<b>Married couple</b>	<b>single Mother</b>	<b>married couple</b>	<b>single mother</b>	<b>married couple</b>	<b>single mother</b>
<b>Number (mill)</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>.98</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>.270</b>	<b>1.4</b>
<b>%poor 2013</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>28.4%</b>	<b>14.6%</b>	<b>42.6%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>38.2%</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>36.1</b>
<b>No workers</b>	<b>39.8</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>36.9</b>
<b>Percent poor</b>	<b>31.7</b>	<b>72.2</b>	<b>63.3</b>	<b>86.2</b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>83.3</b>
<b>One worker</b>						
<b>Or more</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>55.6</b>	<b>85.8</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>57.9</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Percent poor</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>27.1</b>
<b>At least one</b>						
<b>Work full time</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>17.2</b>
<b>Percent poor</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>11.2</b>

**SOURCE;** Census Bureau. Current Population Survey 2016. Annual Social and Economic Supplement. Table POV09. Families with householder under age 65 by number of working family members and families below 100% of poverty.

**Table 4. Housing activity in Selected European Countries in 2015.**

	<b>Owner occupied</b>	<b>Private Rental</b>	<b>subsidized Rental</b>	<b>Other (cooperative)</b>
Austria	51.6%	28.3%	20.1%	
Belgium	64.8	27.5	6.5	
Czech. Repub.	55.95	22.4		12.3 (9.4)
Finland	67	16	14	3
France	57.7	21.9	1	3 (7.4)
Germany	45.4	50.4	4.2	
Greece	73.2	21.7		
Ireland	69.7	18.5	10.3	1.5 (10.3)
Italy	67.2	16.3	5.5	11
Netherlands	60	7	33	
Sweden	62	19	19	
UK	64.2	17.6	18.2	

**Source:** Housing Europe. 2016. "The State of Housing In the Union 2015: Informing Policy, Inspiring Innovations."



Table 5: Activity Related to Birth, Marriage, Divorce and Reproduction 1960 to 2013

	1960	1980	1990	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009	2013
<b>1 Legal abortions</b>									
Rate/1000 women	.01	29.2	27.4	21.3`	19.9	19.4	19.6		17.7*
White			21.5	15.0	14.0				12.4*
Black			63.9	54.5	54.8	50.2			44.4*
(Millions)				1.3	1.3	1.2			1.1*
<b>2. birth rate/1000</b>	23.7		16.7	14.4	14.2	14.3			12.3
White	22.7		15.8	13.9	13.7	13.7			12.0
Black	32.1		21.3	17.0	16.8	16.9			14.5
<b>3. marriages/1000</b>	8.5		9.8	8.3	7.4	7.3			6.8
<b>4. Divorces/1000</b>	2.2		4.7	4.1	3.7	3.8			3.3
<b>5. mother only fam.%</b>			24%	26%				25%	23.7%
White	8.7		23	26				25	18.5
Black	22.4		56	55				54	50.5
Hispanic			33	34				32	
<b>6. children w/2 parents</b>									
at home %	83*			69.1%			69.9%	69.8%	68.5%
white				75.3			76	75.8	74.3
black				37.6			37.5	38.1	38.8
Hispanic				65.1			69.7	68.7	65.1
<b>7. mother only fam.</b>									
(millions)	8.5	8.7	10.8	12.6		14.4	14.4	14.4	15.9
w/children		5.4	6.5	7.5		8.6	8.3	8.3	8.6
w/o children		3.2	4.2	5.1		5.8	6.0	6.9	6.8
<b>8. married couple fam.</b>									
(millions)	49.1	52.3		55.3		58.9	58.3	59.1	59.2
w/children		24.9	24.5		25.2	26.1	25.1	25.1	23.8
w/o children		24.1	27.7		30.0	32.7	33.1	33.9	35.3
<b>9. births to teen mothers %</b>			12.8%	11.8%	10.2%	10.4%			8.4
White			10.9	10.6	9.4	9.5			7.8
Black			23.1	19.7	17	17.2			13.7
<b>10. births to unwed mothers%</b>			25.6	33.2	38.5	39.7			40.7
White			16.9	27.0	33.3	34.8			35.7
Black			66.7	68.5	70.2	71.2			71.8
Hispanic			36.7	42.7	49.9	51.3			53

- Abortion data for 2010.

US census *Statistical abstract 2011*. Abortions (Table 99), birth rates (table 80), families in millions (table 59) children in two parent families (table 69), unwed and teen births (table 86). For some 1960 data, Statistical Abstract 1974 "recent trends" abortions for 1960 and 1980 2007 and 2008 from William Robert Johnston 2011. "US abortion rates, 1960 to 2008" \*from Wilson 2002. 2013 from Proquest 2015, tables 66, 69, 94 and 109 and National Vital Statistics System, "Births: Final data for 2013..

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Note: NYT stands for *New York Times*. In this version of the study, URLs are not shown.

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