



Let's Talk About Economic & Racial Justice Series Part II: Income Inequality

ICPJ's 2016 program focus is on racial justice and economic equality. This is the second in a year-long series highlighting concrete policy proposals ICPJ will be proposing address this important issue.

By Ian Robinson, Lecturer and Associate Research Scientist at the University of Michigan, and the President of the Huron Valley Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

In February 2015, six University of Michigan academics released a report on what has been happening regarding poverty and economic inequality in Washtenaw County over the last eight years. What we found was disconcerting, despite the fact that Washtenaw County has the fourth highest per capita

income in the state and is the most knowledge-based county economy in the state, we still experienced a major increase in income inequality. As the graph below shows, the “real” (i.e., taking account of inflation) earnings of those in the bottom 90% of the income distribution fell, while those in the top 10% rose.

Because of this trend, the share of our population not earning enough to meet their “basic needs,” as defined by the United Way in their recent report, also increased: by 2013, 37% of individual workers and 24% of households in our county could not meet their basic needs. County-wide averages hid major differences within Washtenaw County: 59% of households in the City of Ypsilanti failed to meet this threshold, while the figure for York Charter Township was 10%.

The table on this page shows the basic elements of the United Way’s basic needs budget, and what each component costs in Washtenaw County. Note that it does not set aside anything for retirement or college tuition for the kids. The bottom two rows of the table show that a family with two children and two adults required an annual income of

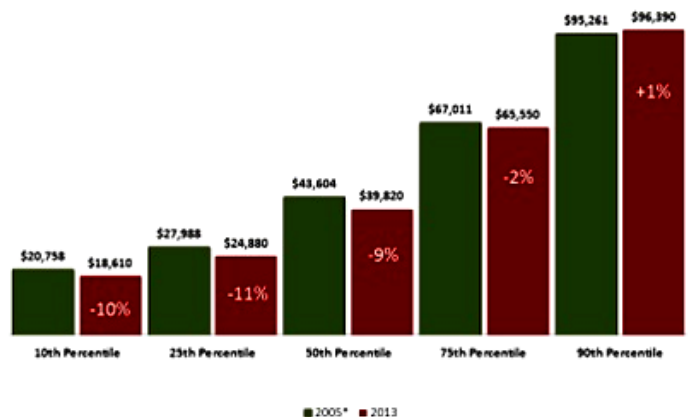
\$60,659 to meet its basic needs. If there is only one adult income earner, such earnings would require a full-time job paying about \$30.33 an hour; if both adults worked, their wages would have to sum to that rate.

The main proximate cause of these trends was that most of the jobs created in these years were low-paying jobs. Our report found that, of the 10 job categories that saw the greatest increase in jobs in our county between 2005-6 and 2012-13, half paid below the basic needs income required for a family of four, even if the rate were doubled to account for two working adults. Moreover, four of those five sub-basic needs jobs saw real wage declines ranging from 5.2% for nursing assistants to 23.9% for team assemblers.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, unless there are major policy changes, future job growth in our county will be even more skewed towards poverty wages: of the 10 projected fastest growing jobs, only one – registered nurses – currently pays full-time employees more than \$32,000 a year. Bottom line: we are drifting apart, and that drift is only going to get worse if we do not change the way we do things.

It’s important to acknowledge that the incidence of poverty wage jobs is not racially neutral. Our report did not break down poverty wage jobs by race, because the Bureau

Change in Real Earnings in Washtenaw County by Percentile, 2005 and 2013.



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Income Inequality Continued

of Labor Statistics survey sample for a single county gets too small to be reliable when you divide it up into racial subgroups. However, most of us know our county – and our state -- well enough to interpret geographical differences in racial as well as class terms. Let's put those household basic needs numbers side by side with racial composition data from the 2010 census:

- York Charter Township: 10% < basic needs; 16% people of color
- City of Ann Arbor: 37% < basic needs; 27% people of color
- City of Ypsilanti: 59% < basic needs; 40% people of color

Clearly race is not the only thing that matters: in all three parts of Washtenaw County – richest, poorest and in between – there are more poor people than there are people of color. But, at the same time, as the share of people of color goes up, so does the percentage of poor people. The most plausible explanation for that pattern is that people of color in our county, as in the rest of the country, are much more likely to have poverty wage jobs than white people, even though there are a lot of white people with poverty wage jobs too.

The determination to fight that pattern motivated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Poor People's Campaign. That campaign brought Dr. King to Memphis on the evening of March 18, 1968, to voice his support for the striking sanitation workers,

seeking union recognition, and a collective agreement from the city government. Speaking to a church and labor meeting of some 15,000 people at Mason Temple,

King said: "Now the problem is not only unemployment. Do you know that most of the poor people in our country are working every day? And they are making wages so low that they cannot begin to function in the mainstream of the economic life of our nation. Those are the facts which must be seen, and it is criminal to have people working on a full-time basis and a full-time job getting part-time income." [from Michael Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road: The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King's Last Campaign*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2007, p. 298]

"Across Michigan, 40 % of households struggle to afford the basic necessities of housing, child care, food, health care, and transportation."

- *United Way*

How United Ways' ALICE Report Basic Needs Budget is Calculated

Household Survival Budget, Washtenaw County		
	SINGLE ADULT	FAMILY (INFANT AND PRE-K)
Housing	\$641	\$874
Child care	\$-	\$1,439
Food	\$196	\$592
Transportation	\$341	\$681
Health care	\$130	\$518
Miscellaneous	\$145	\$460
Taxes	\$142	\$490
Monthly total	\$1,594	\$5,055
ANNUAL TOTAL	\$19,127	\$60,659
Hourly wage	\$9.56	\$30.33

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and state Treasury, and ChildCare Aware, 2012, American Community Survey, 1 year estimate.

Alas, Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis about two weeks after he made these connections, and the facts that he disparaged are worse today than they were we he spoke. History has been moving in the wrong direction since the early 1970s. How do we bend its arc back toward justice? Clearly wages – particularly for those at the bottom of our economy – need to increase substantially.

How does that happen? A strong federal and state commitment to full employment would simultaneously increase the number of individuals with jobs and – because employers would have to compete more vigorously for employees – raise wage rates as well. Another way to lift up

wages is to organize workers into unions that bargain collectively. When individual workers face large employers, there is no equality of bargaining power. Worker organization helps to reduce this

asymmetry, which results in higher wages (i.e., the union wage premium).

Consistent with this analysis, countries with a higher share of their workers in unions have higher wages and lower levels of poverty. For example, in 2013, about 2/3 of Danish workers belonged to unions, as opposed to 1/10 in the U.S. In Denmark, McDonald's workers belong to a union, and the minimum they can be paid, according to the union contract, is the Danish currency equivalent of \$20.70

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Policing: Part 2 continued

as described in the Procedural Justice model, is an excellent expectation, but it can only be followed if we give officers the tools to recognize and mitigate implicit bias.

Understanding Racial Context

In November of 2014, a video went viral of an Oakland County Sheriff's deputy questioning Brandon McKean, a 25-year-old African American man, saying, "You were walking by ... well you were making people nervous," the deputy says in the video McKean recorded, above. "They said you had your hands in your pockets."

The Deputy was responding to a 911 call from a local business. If this incident is indeed a bias-based police stop, the bias that initiated it was that of the business owner. Even if the Oakland County Sheriff's Department had perfect officers, dispatchers, policies, and procedures in terms of dealing with race, biases such as the business owner's will result in racially disparate outcomes.

That's why it's important for law enforcement personnel to **understand the racial context in which they work**. Given the widespread racial bias and racialized inequality, it is just not enough for an officer to check her or his own biases, he or she must be aware of how others' biases affect the situation—and take steps to mitigate that impact.

At a more advanced level this understanding for racial context is a nuanced

understanding of **structural racism**. The Aspen Institute defines structural racism as system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with "whiteness" and disadvantages associated with "color" to endure and adapt over time. (http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/rcc/aspen_structural_racism2.pdf)

Putting the Pieces Together: Ongoing Professional Development

The four elements listed above are a lot, but the understanding is that they are essential for a law enforcement professionals to address the cultural differences among the populations they serve, engage the community with practices that build trust, mitigate the ways their implicit biases might impact their policing, and police in a way that is sensitive to the broader context of racial stratification.

Implementation of these recommendations will require an ongoing investment in the professional development of

law enforcement personnel on an *ongoing* basis, from the police academy curriculum to ongoing training for officers and command staff. Just as police go through ongoing training and practice on firearm use, defensive tactics, etc., it is also important that they receive ongoing professional development related to issues of race and racism (the need for such ongoing training is not limited to law enforcement. It is also important for educators, health care providers, HR personnel, etc.

Local experience with Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) highlights the importance of ongoing commitment. In 2003 and 2004, officers from five area law enforcement agencies underwent extensive CIT training to develop the skills and systems to respond to situations involving mental illness or developmental disorders. Soon after that, though, the departments faced budget constraints, the training was not maintained, and the programs withered. Training on racial

aspects of policing cannot follow the same path; it must be an ongoing commitment of the departments with a consistent training, monitoring, and leadership.

Positive Signs Locally

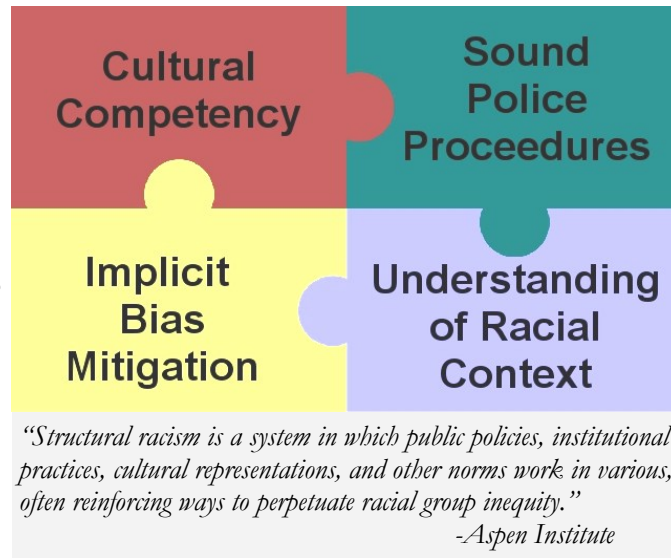
While in some ways it would be nice to have groundbreaking recommendations to share, it is better that we can report that local law enforcement agencies are already at work implementing some of these proposals. The University of Michigan Department of Public Safety officers recently went through cultural competency

training. Sheriff Clayton has discussed procedural justice at public events. Eastern Michigan University Department of Public Safety is bringing in Fair and Impartial Policing for its officers, command staff, and the public.

We applaud these efforts. They show that local law enforcement agencies recognize the importance of addressing race and racial disparities in law enforcement. Moving forward, we hope to see these efforts more widely dispersed and integrated into an ongoing, comprehensive approach to racial justice in policing.

Next Steps

As Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice and the Citizen Advisory Committee finalizes our recommendations we will be rolling out an advocacy campaign to help local law enforcement agencies to commit in implementing our recommendations. While there are many positive signs locally, grassroots action will be needed to ensure that these policies are adopted broadly, comprehensively, and sustained over time. Contact Chuck@icpj.org or 734-663-1870 for details and join us at the Connect & Act Summit on March 6 to learn more. ☺





INTERFAITH COUNCIL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

CONNECT & ACT

BUILDING THE NEW MOVEMENT FOR ECONOMIC AND RACIAL JUSTICE

SUNDAY MARCH 6

1:00-8:00 PM

**VINEYARD CHURCH OF ANN ARBOR
2275 PLATT RD
ANN ARBOR, MI 48104**

FEATURED SPEAKERS



SHANE CLAIBORNE
Founding Partner
The Simple Way



JEANETTE HUEZO
Executive Director
United for a Fair
Economy



DAWUD WALID
Executive
Director Council
on American-
Islamic
Relations, MI

Bringing together emerging and existing social justice leaders to **CONNECT** people across issues, identities, and generations and help people **ACT** in meaningful ways for justice.

TICKET PRICES

(Includes Dinner)

Individual Tickets (before March 4): \$35

At the door: \$40

**Group and Student rates also available*

**FOR MORE EVENT DETAILS
AND TO REGISTER, VISIT:**

CONNECTANDACT.ORG

**Scholarship and volunteer opportunities are available, contact Jane, jane@icpj.org*

WORKSHOP TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Environmental justice
- Inclusive justice
- Mass incarceration
- Income inequality
- Immigration action
- Restorative justice
- Homelessness
- Affordable housing
- Community & grassroots organizing
- Race & gender

Thank you to our sponsors: Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor, Church of the Good Shepherd, Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, Ann Arbor Friends Meeting, NAACP—Ann Arbor Chapter, BGreen Today, Recycle Ann Arbor, Good Design Group, and Zingerman's Community of Businesses.

Interested in being a sponsor? Contact Jane or Chuck at: summit@icpj.org, 734.663.1870

Safely Learning and Safely Talking About Race and Racism Film Series

Sunday February 28, 2:00 PM—*Western Eyes*

WHERE: New location!

**Downtown Branch Ypsilanti District Library
229 W Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti, MI 48197**

Join the ICPJ Racial and Economic Task Force for a viewing of *Western Eyes*.

This documentary presents two Canadian women of Asian descent who are contemplating eyelid surgery. Maria and Sharon, of Philippino and Korean heritage respectively, believe their looks—specifically their eyes—get in the way of how people see them. Layering their stories with pop culture references to beauty icons and supermodels, filmmaker Ann Shin looks at the pain that lies deep behind the desire for plastic surgery.

Shin uses a variety of cinematic tools to reflect shifting perspectives, illustrating the relative nature of beauty. Using the camera to look beyond appearances, Shin captures the pain that almost always lies behind the desire for plastic surgery.



Sunday February 28, 2:00 PM—

What's Race Got To Do With It?

**WHERE: Downtown Branch Ypsilanti District Library
229 W Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti, MI 48197**

View this new documentary film that goes beyond identity politics, celebratory history and interpersonal relations to consider social disparities and their impact on student success in today's post-Civil Rights world. Despite many years

of diversity programs and initiatives, many of our discussions about race remain mired in confusion. Even a casual observer can't help but notice how structural racism is ignored, how multiculturalism is confused with equality, and how many campuses remain hamstrung in their efforts to become more inclusive and welcoming of everyone. Ironically, in responding to surveys, many students claim they already know all they need to know about diversity and they shy away from opportunities to engage in interracial dialogue and understanding.



Latin America Dinner & A Movie Series

Join LATF on the **2nd Tuesday of the month** to share in a delicious dinner and a film pertaining to current Latin American issues.

WHEN: March 8, April 12, May 10

Dinner **6:30 pm**, Movie **7:00 pm**, discussion following

WHERE: First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor, 517 East Washington Street, Ann Arbor

DINNER OPTION:

\$7 Pilar's Tamales Meal -

Includes one Tamale with salsa, organic casamiento, fried plantains, and curtido (veg. option available)

Please RSVP to reserve your meal.

RSVP: icpj-dinner-and-a-movie.eventbrite.com



Tue, Mar 8 @ 7:00 pm—*We Women Warriors*

This film takes place in Colombia, following three brave native women, each from a different tribe, who are caught in the crossfire of Columbia's warfare. The women use non-violent resistance to defend their people's survival, resourcefully leading and creating hope in the midst of conflict and distress. Join us for International Women's Day!

Tue, April 12 @ 7:00 pm—

Earth, Water, Woman

This film tells the inspiring story of a sustainable agroforester community in Trinidad & Tobago West Indies. Led by Akilah, a charismatic Rastafarian woman who settled on the land three decades ago, is bringing health to the once barren land through reforestation and training of community members to be good stewards of the forests and waters.

SPECIAL GUEST: Executive Producer, Diana Fox, will be join us to talk about her work and her experience with the film.

Tue, May 10 @ 7:00 pm—

Abrazos

Abrazos documents the transformational journey of a group of U.S. citizen children who travel 3,000 miles (from Minnesota to Guatemala) to meet their grandparents for the first time. After being separated for nearly two decades, these reunited families are now able to share stories, strengthen traditions, and reconstruct their cultural identity.



One Human Family Campaign

By, Deb Kraus, Vice President of Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice and Bryan Weinert, ICPJ member and President of the Interfaith Round Table of Washtenaw County

The Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice (ICPJ) and Interfaith Round Table (IRT) are jointly sponsoring a banner (and outreach) campaign to counter anti-Muslim and anti-refugee hysteria active in our society at present. The roughly 3 foot x 8 foot banners read “One Human Family: We support refugees and our Muslim neighbors”. We are sending you this letter in the hopes that your congregation will want to be a part of this initiative by displaying a banner at your congregation and by exploring ways your congregation and members can support refugees and inclusion. More campaign information can be found at, www.1humanfamily.org.

As we are all too aware, the world is once again experiencing a massive refugee crisis, mixed with a generalized fear of Islam, in part because of national and world events “sponsored” by radical extremists who use Islam to promote a non-Islamic agenda and in part because of US politicians and media voices who are exploiting this issue and feeding hate and fear.

Religion is already a part of this debate, as public figures have used their faith as an excuse to profile Muslims and exclude refugees. We need to send a strong message to media, elected officials, and the broader community that those who would use faith to oppress and divide us represent fringe voices and not the mainstream of religious communities. We also hope that these explicit displays of solidarity will help to tip the balance toward compassion in the hearts of those who are unsure of which voices to heed.

The goal is to demonstrate that the community’s many traditions and systems of belief favor hospitality over hostility, and love over hate. ICPJ Executive Director, Chuck Warpehoski adds, “We are excited for this chance for congregations to both publicly show their support for inclusion as well as internally look at ways they can take

ICPJ 2016 Annual Meeting

Election of new members of the ICPJ Board of Directors and Board President will take place on

Thursday, March 24, 5:00 PM

in the lounge at Northside Presbyterian/St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 1679 Broadway, Ann Arbor, MI

Anyone who is a current ICPJ member as of March 17, 2015 is eligible to vote.

concrete action to support refugees and the Muslim community.”

Religious teachings are full of directives to welcome strangers, foreigners, and all those who need help. From the Torah (“*the stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.*” *Leviticus 19:34*) to the words of Jesus (“*when I was a stranger you welcomed me.*” *Matthew 25*) to the Quran (“*Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor who is a stranger...verily, God does not love any of those who, full of self-conceit, act in a boastful manner.*” *An-Nisaa’ 4:36*), all major faiths speak to this basic notion.

By prominently placing a banner outside your place of worship and discussing these issues in your sermons, we can publically demonstrate that many stand in solidarity with those being targeted. “One human family” was chosen as the campaign phrase because it emphasizes that when brothers and sisters are in trouble, people of faith will come to their aid. We cannot afford to allow our Muslim brothers and sisters to believe that we, their neighbors, are standing idly by while they are being profiled, targeted and stereotyped. That is not what solidarity is all about. Peaceful, welcoming communities are an important piece of the change we want to see and thus our obligation to create.”

The campaign website includes a list of FAQ’s as a helpful and guiding resource. You also have the two most prominent interfaith organizations in Washtenaw County for any support you may need.

Banners are available for \$100 (add \$10 for delivery outside of Washtenaw County, MI), as well as yard signs with suggested donation of \$5-10. To order online go to, www.1humanfamily.org/take-action/. Please mail cash or check payments to, Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice, 1679 Broadway, Ann Arbor, MI 48105, or call 734-663-1870 to order by phone. ☮





Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice
 1679 Broadway St.
 Ann Arbor, MI 48105

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Thank you for raising over \$45,000 for the 2015 CROP Hunger Walk!

CROP Hunger Walks are community-wide events sponsored by Church World Service and organized by religious groups, businesses, schools and others to raise funds to end hunger in the U.S. and around the world. More than 1,600 walks take place across the U.S. annually.

ICPJ has managed this historic Washtenaw/Ann Arbor 5k walk since 1975 and has raised a total of \$3.3 million. Last year, over 350 individuals walked and raised over \$45,000.

75% of funds raised are granted to Church World Service and their partner agencies. The remaining 25% are granted to various local hunger and poverty relief organizations.

In 2015, \$13,900 was allocated to the following nine local hunger relief organizations in Washtenaw County:

- Avalon Housing
- Breakfast at St. Andrew's
- Community Action Network
- Emmanuel House
- Growing Hope
- Hope Clinic
- Muslim Social Services
- Packard Health
- SOS Community Services

To learn more about these organizations, visit our website at: www.icpj.org/program-areas/hunger/2015-crop-walk-2/.

