

# Sample essay on urban poverty and us education system

[Sociology](#), [Poverty](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [A Look at the Inner City Poverty](#) \n \t
2. [Structural Poverty and the US Education System](#) \n \t
3. [On Income Disparity, Poverty and Education](#) \n \t
4. [Works Cited:](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

According to United Nations report (UNDP 7) on urbanization trends around the world, urban population has surpassed rural population between the years 2000 to 2005 and will continue to do so. The North America is at the top of the list as the most urbanized continent with 82 percent living in cities, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean with 80 percent and Europe with 70 percent (UNDP 1). The report predicted that by 2050 the world will be one-third rural (34 percent of the population) and two-thirds urban (66 percent of the population). Evidently, there is an increasing growth in the gap between rural and urban economics and social sphere. However, inequality is not only found high in urban-rural dichotomy. Ideally, urban centers represent the progressive and developed where technology and commerce are usually concentrated, and where high literacy, accessible education, health care and other social services are usually found (UNDP 3). Yet, cities also represent wider spread of poverty and greater gap of inequality. According to the 2012 and 2013 US population report on poverty, about 15 percent or about 46. 5 million Americans are living in poverty in years 2011, 2012, and 2013. About half of the people in poverty are either

Black Americans (27.6 percent) or Hispanic (25.3 percent), while White and Asian share 9.3 percent and 12 percent of the poverty rate. Another trend in the statistical report shows that 11.8 percent of families are living in poverty, and that families with single parent female householder are most likely to experience poverty than families with two parents or a father as the single parent. Interestingly, 54 percent of the African American families are single-handedly headed by mothers because African American men in the lower percentile are less likely to be able to provide for his family because of lack of education and source of income (Henslin 475). Urban poverty in 2013 is about 14.2 percent, where 11.2 percent of the people living in metropolitan areas but not inside principal cities experience poverty, while the poverty rate in inner cities is 19.1 percent and that they are more likely to live in principal cities than in other metropolitan areas (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, Smith, "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2013" 15).

One important way of overcoming poverty is to be educated. An education helps aid in social mobility and alleviates poverty. A good education equates to acquiring better jobs and subsequently good salaries. Here then lies the dilemma of the education system as the supposed equalizer in the capitalist state. If a good education is defined as education given by the most accomplished teachers through well-defined programs and courses, with the aid of excellent facilities and educational aids, then such education is usually acquired by well-off families who can pay for costly tuition and other fees. In fact, poor households with members who received low education have less than a chance for upward social mobility and are likely to stay or descended lower in the stratification ladder (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, Smith, "Income,

Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2012” 4). If upward social mobility requires quality yet costly education, what must be done?

This study aims to understand the correlation of US educational system and its significant effects on communities and individuals. It will first review inner city poverty statistics along with an analysis of the US Educational System to understand the currents and issues that are pertinent in the study of its correlation. Next, it will try to delineate and examine the negative impacts of the issues presented.

### **A Look at the Inner City Poverty**

It is important to examine the correlation of inner city poverty and the educational system especially in light of economic productivity, racial culture, and national policy deliberation. The talk of poverty and education goes beyond whether or not a family can afford to send their children to school, or if poverty inhibits choice of going to school versus working. It must also tackle the varying degrees of the quality of education and the subsequent funding given to students.

Interestingly, some inner cities are racially segregated, (Macionis and Parrillio 287-288). Inner cities are originally suburbs where small homogenous population of African Americans was concentrated and where metropolitan areas grew around their community. Even before the growth, the originally small community were characterized by middle class families that wished to possess their own house, however over the years population grew but communities did not develop well. It continued to deteriorate as

second-generation African Americans experience poverty, high school drop-out rate, low paying jobs and unstable employment.

Chppale and Teitz presented eight broad hypotheses that attempts to explain causes of inner city poverty, especially among the ' ghetto' population. The first deals with the greater picture of structure changes in the American society that started as the golden era of manufacturing coupled with high demand for work force and high paying jobs for the baby bust generation, and ended with the shift to demands in low paying and questionable working conditions from the service sector and the increasing marginal saturation in the workforce from the baby boom generation in 1970s. This resulted to the inability of some cities to compete n the growing international economy since manufacturing plants favor lower wage countries for production (Chapple and Teitz 37-40). The second hypothesis postulates that inner cities are at the start in the disadvantage because of their human capital deficit that stems from their low productivity. High productive workers generally possess education, skills and work experience (Chapple and Tietz 41) which most inner city residents do not have access to. The third, fourth and fifth hypotheses claim that poverty is also perpetuated by discrimination among gender and race and isolation and alienation of impoverish inner cities residents. According to Bourgois, the unskilled and uneducated racial minorities prefer underground and illegal economic jobs such as the crack economy and prostitution because of its easy money and discrimination is less than in formal working places where avoidance and prejudice is especially rampant (125-135). Discrimination based on gender is especially prominent in the high poverty statistics for

household with single mothers and the disparity between female to male income ratio (Pearce in Sugrue 6) which by 2013 reached 78.3 percent (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2013" 10).

This also stirs the discussion to the fifth hypothesis of spatial mismatch and discrimination resulting to low social mobility (Chapple and Tietz 48). The shift in job opportunities in manufacturing districts to farther commercial business districts causes growth of unemployment because of inaccessible job information, transportation costs and discrimination in housing opportunities for the minorities. The sixth hypothesis shows that if upward social mobility is possible, families that have experience improvement generally wish to move out of the inner city, and into more respectable communities. Hence, the community cannot benefit from the families' growth of income and tax that can potentially help improve community funding (Chapple and Tietz 51). The seventh hypothesis focuses on the inability of poor communities to create jobs for themselves because of lack of funding, entrepreneurship skills, and capital (Chapple and Teitz 53). The last hypothesis has something to do with public policy that proved to be counterproductive for the plight of the inner city minorities such as the failure of public housing projects to diffuse racial segregation.

## **Structural Poverty and the US Education System**

The hypotheses above briefly mentioned poverty as a key inhibitor for quality education offered in inner cities. In truth, many have argued that the gap in education quality across the nation is a result of the unequal and

inadequate funding from the local, federal and state (Hobson 15) which was brought about by structural discrimination in isolated inner city schools. Hobson argues that the unequal allocation of funding in the US education system has widened the gap for quality education, isolating inner city students and subjecting them to poor facilities and poor educational curriculum resulting in lower productivity and perpetual poverty. The funding discrepancy stems primarily from the disparity in local funding gained from property tax (Hobson 15). In actuality, 43.9 percent of the total education budget comes from the local district with 38.4 percent of it coming from property tax, while the state funding accounts for 47.1 percent and federal funding contributes 8.9 percent. In all essence, if a big bulk of the budget comes from the local, and communities that are considerably poor and only accounts for a small amount of aggregated property tax, then funding gaps would really exist between poor and rich districts which have the ability to gather more property tax from their well-off residence (Hobson 17). Problems with this lack of funds are seen in the current status of most inner city schools in terms of the resources available to them. Poor districts fail to give their students the facilities that are required for their learning experience; they also fail to maintain qualified teachers and due to inadequate funding for salaries. That's why qualified and competent teachers often teach at rich school districts where their salaries are given with ease than in poor district schools (Roza in Hobson 12).

These translate greatly to education gaps and achievements among students in both poor and rich district schools (Baker and Coley 9-10; Moore 149). The ETS report on education and poverty correlation shows that family income

greatly affects future child's development in educational achievement and subsequent income (Baker and Coley 9). Proficiency tests to 2 year olds in subjects such as listening comprehension and expressive vocabulary shows that those in the poverty line are less like to do well than those at or above poverty line, while proficiency tests for 4-year-olds in letter recognition and numbers and shape shows that there is a wider gap of proficiency in children in poverty (only 20 percent shows proficiency in letter recognition and 45 percent in numbers and shape) and those at or above poverty (37% percent are proficiency in letter recognition, and 72 percent in numbers and shape) (Baker and Coley 9). Higher education, on the other hand is also seen to be achieved by those in the higher income quartile than those in the low income quartile (Baker and Coley 10).

## **On Income Disparity, Poverty and Education**

As shown by the statistics and analysis in existing literature, poverty discriminates community of African Americans and Hispanics. Poverty and education presents a conundrum for everyone to think about. Which then comes first? Does poor education produce poor families and individuals? Or it may be that poverty perpetuating itself? Kay Ann Taylor suggests poverty and poor education stems from the prevalence of capitalism and corporate ideology. This ideology reinforces segregation and isolation between the White Americans and African American and Hispanics and other ethnic minorities (Taylor 12), where conventions in education curriculum and methods reflect the traditional curriculum created for white male Americans (Taylor 12), and that textbooks and programs have excluded to understand



more of the current racial and gender realities and poverty of the American society (Capra 77).

Aside from the unrelenting chain of poverty, other consequence of poor education, poverty and racial segregation is manifested in racial conflicts inside inner cities. Moore's study on the effects of racial segregation in urban education, he found out that the ethnic divide and conflict between the African Americans and Latinos is created by the need for identity. Negative behaviors and attitudes, 'not being white' through shunning stereotypical white man achievements in school and jobs, children out-of wedlock, employment in crack economy and the likes, represent ethnic minorities' resistance to the white man's discrimination (Ogbu in Moore 151). This segregation created more and more individuals that are stuck among peers that are rebellious, academically incompetent, and undisciplined (Moore 152). All these just to reject the racial isolation impose upon by White Americans. This hostilities plus the prevalence of poverty among these neighborhoods can eventually linked to various crimes experienced in the neighborhood such as theft, crack economy, prostitution and such (Bourgeois 126).

Another issue faced by inner city residents is the public health security. Lead exposure is fairly common among inner city residence (Moore 152). In fact 21 percent of children in poverty ages 1 to 5 are founded to have 2.5 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood (Baker and Coley 19). Nutrition and health care are also major issues in inner city (Moore 153). Nutritious food and good diet are not normally given to poor children, in addition, they are also expose to drugs, smoke and alcohol; hence, affecting their cognitive and

learning ability and contributing to poor health and poor behavior (Moore 153). It is also pertinent to mention the social and health issue of the prevalence of unprotected sexual activity and the threat of AIDS. African American adolescents are at the high risk list of HIV infection and AIDS, and there is a lot to be done such as improve awareness and properly information on sex education. Some social scientists attempt at HIV awareness in inner cities starts with culturally sensitive intervention programs (Wallace, Thompson, Rhodes).

There is still a lot to be done to stop poverty. For one, education still provides the best course of effect poverty reduction and induces development to both the individual and community. However, as was shown early, the educational system, continues to be subjected to human folly and systematic discrepancies. Interestingly, improving the educational system is a great incentive for the American economy. As mentioned above, the level of productivity of the workforce depends partially on educational attainment and accomplishment. Educators must endeavor to create a much cultural responsive educational framework (Zhou 5) while at the same time accounting for economical and cognitive ability so as to build effective and conducive learning atmosphere for inner city schools.

One of the principles of economics states that “ a country’s standard of living depends on its ability to produce” (Manskiw 13). Although America is considered as one of the most productive country in the world, some parts, especially the inner city are still lacking. What better way to promote holistic growth than by promoting holistic quality education regardless of income and race. The same opportunities should be given to everybody, structural

challenges such as prevailing capitalist ideology and racial discrimination must be addressed to lessen poverty and its discrimination to Latinos, African-Americans and other subgroups.

The world is expanding along with its problems and consequences. Urban poverty and poor educational system in the United States is the least of its government's problem. As an industrialized nation, and a major contributor in world development, it must be ready to face a higher scale of racial diversity and poverty along with the much greater gap of unequal wealth and social conditions.

### **Works Cited:**

Baker, Bruce, and Richard Coley. *Poverty and Education: Finding the Way Forward*. Princeton, NJ: N. p., 2013. Print.

Bourgois, Philippe. "Poverty At Work: Office Employment and the Crack Alternative." *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*. New Jersey: Pearsons, 2012. 125-135. Print.

Capra, Theresa. "Poverty and Its Impact on Education: Today and Tomorrow." *Thought & Action* 75-81. Web . < [www. nea.org/assets/docs/HE/TA09PovertyCapra. pdf](http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/TA09PovertyCapra.pdf)>

Chapple, Karen, and Michael Teitz. "The Cause of Inner-City Poverty: Eight Hypotheses in Search of Reality." *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research* 3. 3 (1998): 33-70. Web.

DeNavas-Walt, Carmen, and Bernadette D. Proctor. "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2013." Bernadette D. Proctor, U. S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Reports, P60-249* (2014): n. pag. Web.< [http://www.](http://www.https://assignbuster.com/sample-essay-on-urban-poverty-and-us-education-system/)

huduser.org/periodicals/cityscape/vol3num3/article3.pdf>

DeNavas-Walt, Carmen, Bernadette Proctor, and Jessica Smith. "Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States." U. S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P60-245, (2013): n. pag. Print.

Hobson, Ira. "The Public Education Funding Dilemma." The Journal of the Division of Business & Information Management 17-26. Web.< <https://www.neumann.edu/academics/divisions/business/journal/Review2013/Hobson.pdf>>

Macionis, John, and Vincent Parrillo. Cities and Urban Life. 6th ed. New Jersey: Pearsons, 2013. Print.

Mankiw, Gregory. Principles of Economics. 6th ed. Mason OH: Cengage Learning, 2012. Print.

Moore, James. "Urban Education's Core Challenges: How Racial and Socioeconomic Segregation and Poverty Help Create a Culture of Low Expectations and Achievement in Urban Schools." International Journal of Humanities and Social Science 2. 13 (2012): 149-157. Web.< [http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol\\_2\\_No\\_13\\_July\\_2012/15.pdf](http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_2_No_13_July_2012/15.pdf)>

Surgue, Thomas. "The Impoverished Politics of Poverty." Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities 6. 1 (2013): n. pag. Web.< <http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1115&context=yjlh>>

Taylor, Kay Ann. "Poverty's Multiple Dimensions." Journal of Educational Controversy 4. 1 (2009): 1-20. Web.< <http://cedar.wvu.edu/jec/vol4/iss1/4>>

United Nations Population Division. World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision, Highlights. New York: N. p., 2014. Web.

<https://assignbuster.com/sample-essay-on-urban-poverty-and-us-education-system/>

Wallace, Edward, Michelle Thompson, and Warren Rhodes. "Street Culture: A Hip-Hop HIV- Prevention Program for Minority Adolescents Living in High-Risk Communities." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 1. 16 (2011): 79-83. Web.

Zhou, Molly. "Inner City Teachers and Inner City Education: Factors in Academic Success." *International Journal of Science Commerce and Humanities* 2. 6 (2014): 1-8. Web.