

# STRUCTURAL RACISM and OUR FOOD

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UNDERSTANDING THE  
PROBLEM;  
IDENTIFYING  
SOLUTIONS



The Center for Social Inclusion:  
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# Overview of Presentation

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- About CSI
- About Structural Racism
- Structural arrangements impacting our food
- The larger context
- Implications



# The Center for Social Inclusion

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## WHO WE ARE

- National Policy Advocacy Organization
- Promote opportunity by dismantling structural racism

## WHAT WE DO (Catalyst and a Bridge)

- **Partner** with communities and national organizations
- **Develop** reform ideas through partnerships and applied research
- **Inform** the public
- **Convene** stakeholders
- **Nurture** multiracial alliances
- **Support** advocacy strategies to promote structural reforms



# Common Views on Race and Poverty

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- Racism isn't really a significant problem any longer. It's about class, not race.
  - "While it's certainly true that *rates* of poverty are shockingly high in the African-American community, they do not, in fact, represent a majority, a plurality, or even a quarter of the impoverished." Ezra Klein, American Prospect staff writer
- Solving racial disparities is important, but won't solve big problems, like global warming or the corporate conglomeration of the food system.



# STRUCTURAL RACISM ANALYSIS

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- ***Multiple institutions*** (electoral, education system, health care system, transportation and many others) make up our structural arrangements;
- ***They Interact*** and create incentives and disincentives for one another often in complex and sometimes subtle ways;
- The structural arrangements ***are NOT race, gender, class neutral*** (and these are mutually constructing);
- Impact is ***cumulative*** and have created multi-generational exclusions from opportunities that manifest today.



# What is Structural Racism

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- A lens – an analysis
  - A way to understand what is happening and how race impacts it.
- A tool to develop strategy
  - First steps, bigger strides and boundary crossings.
  - Fixing a problem may require starting on a different problem.



# What Structural Racism Isn't

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- Not an anti-discrimination paradigm
- Not about intentional discrimination
- Not about a single institution  
(although institutional behavior matters in the analysis)

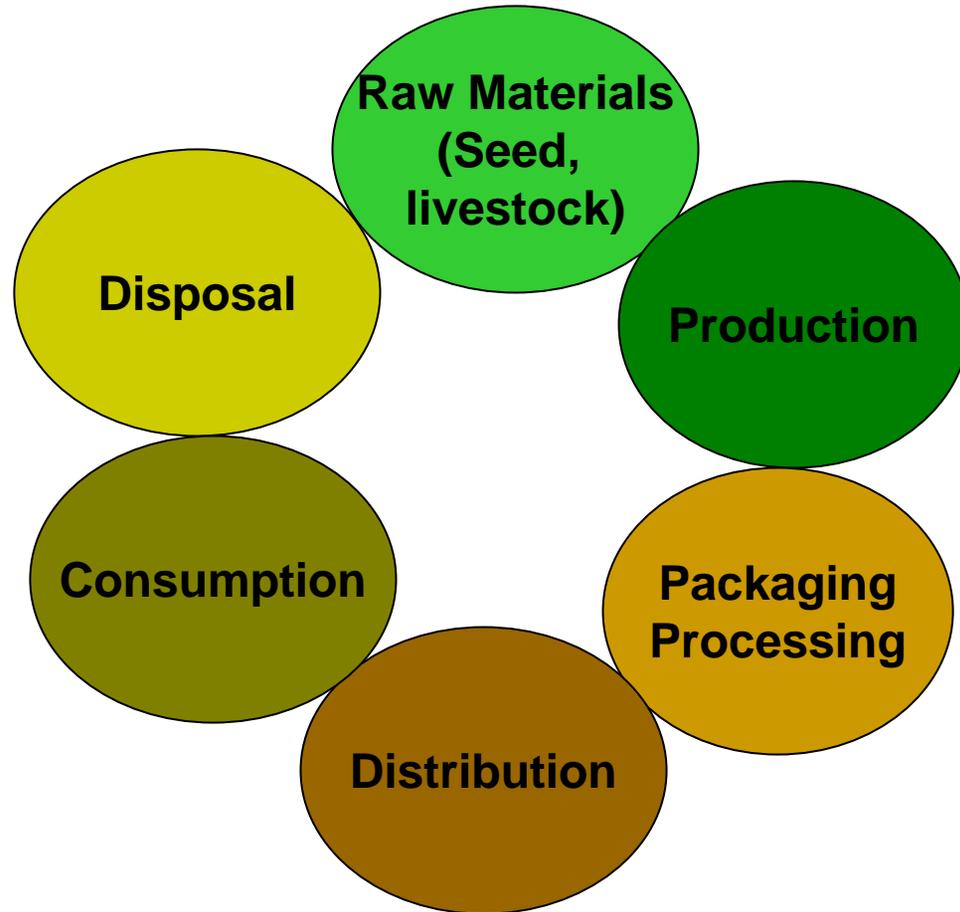


# Why Race Matters

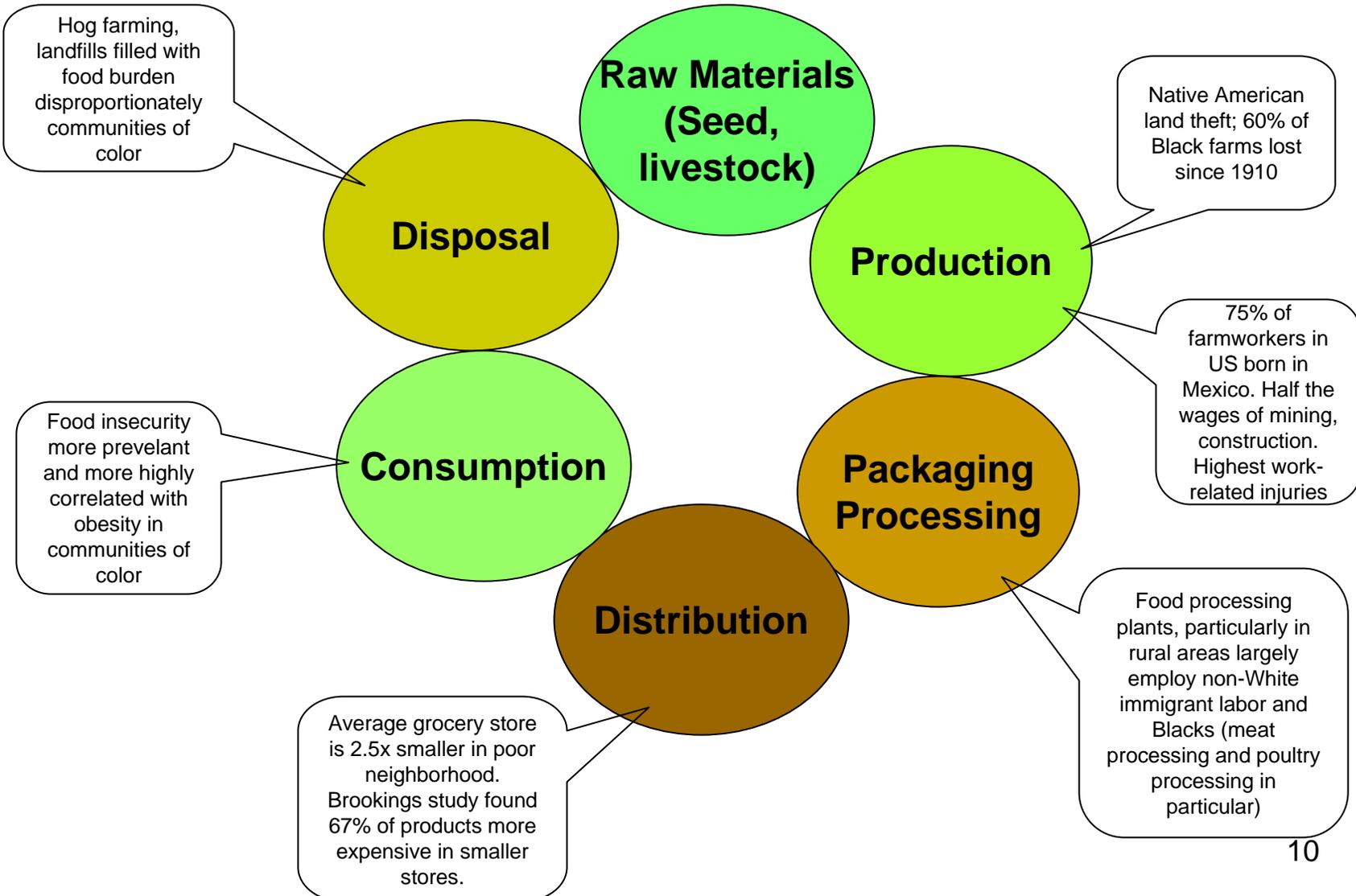
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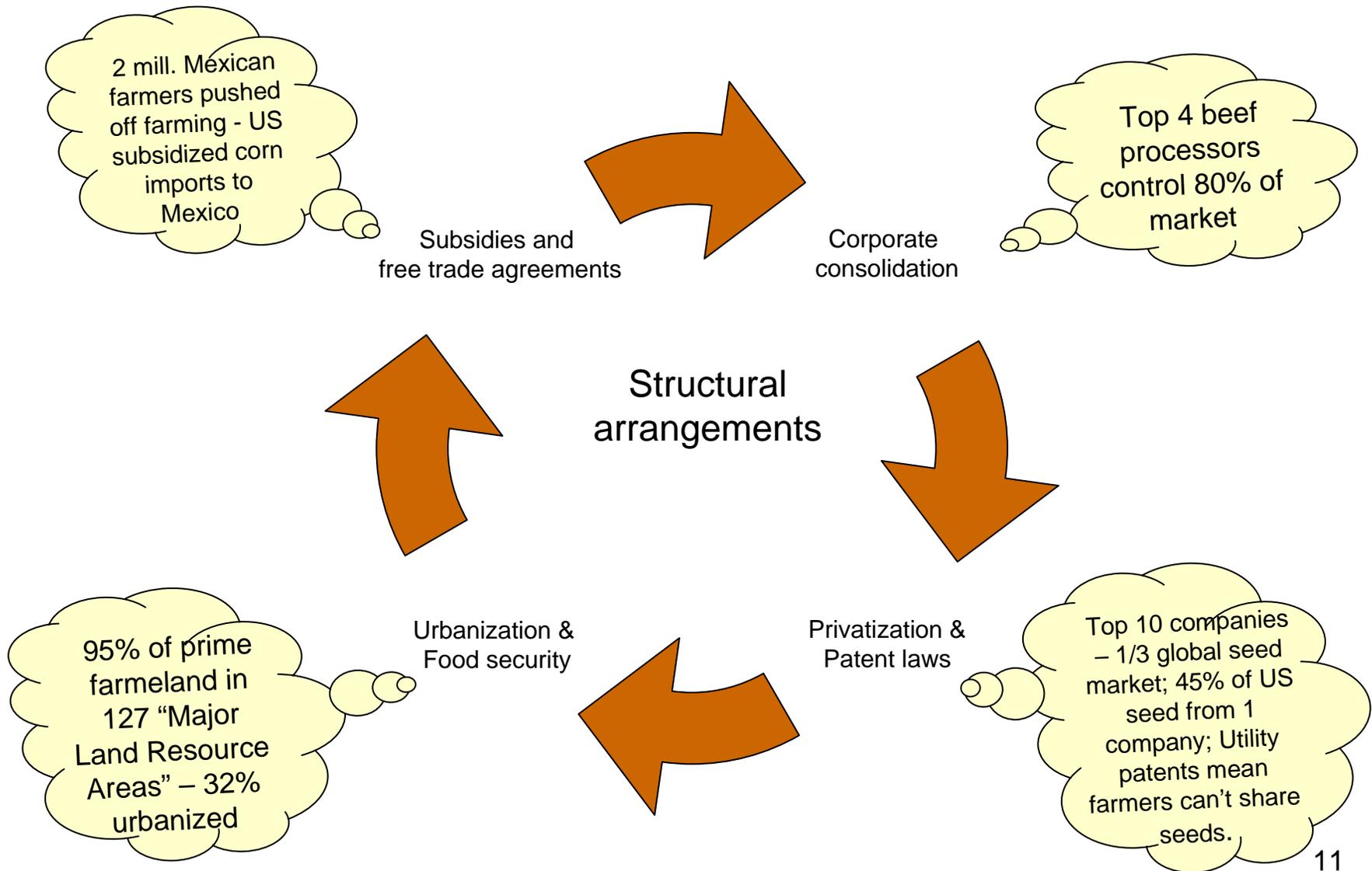
- Race has been one of the drivers of bad structural arrangements that hurt us all.
- Communities of color are miners' canaries. Hit first and hardest.
- Communities of color are pivotal to strategies to transform structures that produce and reproduce poverty because how race is used for bad policy development and demographic shifts.

# FOOD CYCLE



# CALLING OUT RACE



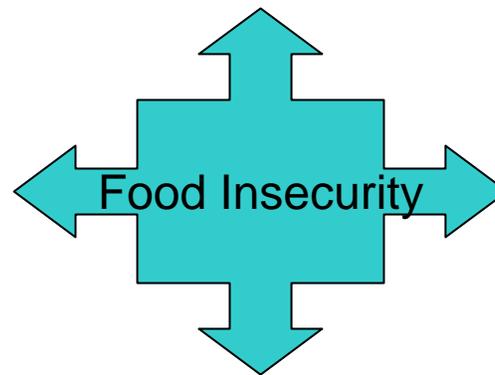


# The Racial Lens

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Immigration and trade policies that harm  
African, Latin and Asian countries

Disinvestment in  
communities of color  
Redlining and incentives  
to flee based on policies  
and suburbanization



Land dispossession  
based on race  
Urbanization policies  
that discriminated

Colonization – justified based on racism.  
Corporate consolidation precursor

# Land Dispossession Based on Race

- In 1823 the Supreme Court ruled that Indians could live on “US” land but could not hold title. The US’ “right of discovery” trumped Native people’s right of “occupancy.”
- By 1871, the federal government ended its practice of signing treaties with Native Americans. Adopted "Indian Homestead Act," -- the Dawes Act. President Theodore Roosevelt described it as "a mighty pulverizing engine to break up the tribal mass."
- By 1932, the sale of “unclaimed” land and allotted land resulted in the loss of two-thirds of the more than 100-million acres Native Americans had held prior to the Dawes Act.
- Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago (1848) ending U.S.-Mexican War and was supposed to protect Hispanic land ownership. Individually owned farms, communally owned *ejidos*—forests, rangeland had been inalienable under Mexican law. U.S. govt. only recognized individual farm ownership. Hispanics lost 90 % of land base.
- Black land ownership, largely southern and linked to Civil War and reconstruction policies. But land loss thanks to fraud, theft, heirs property.

# Cultural Racism and Agriculture

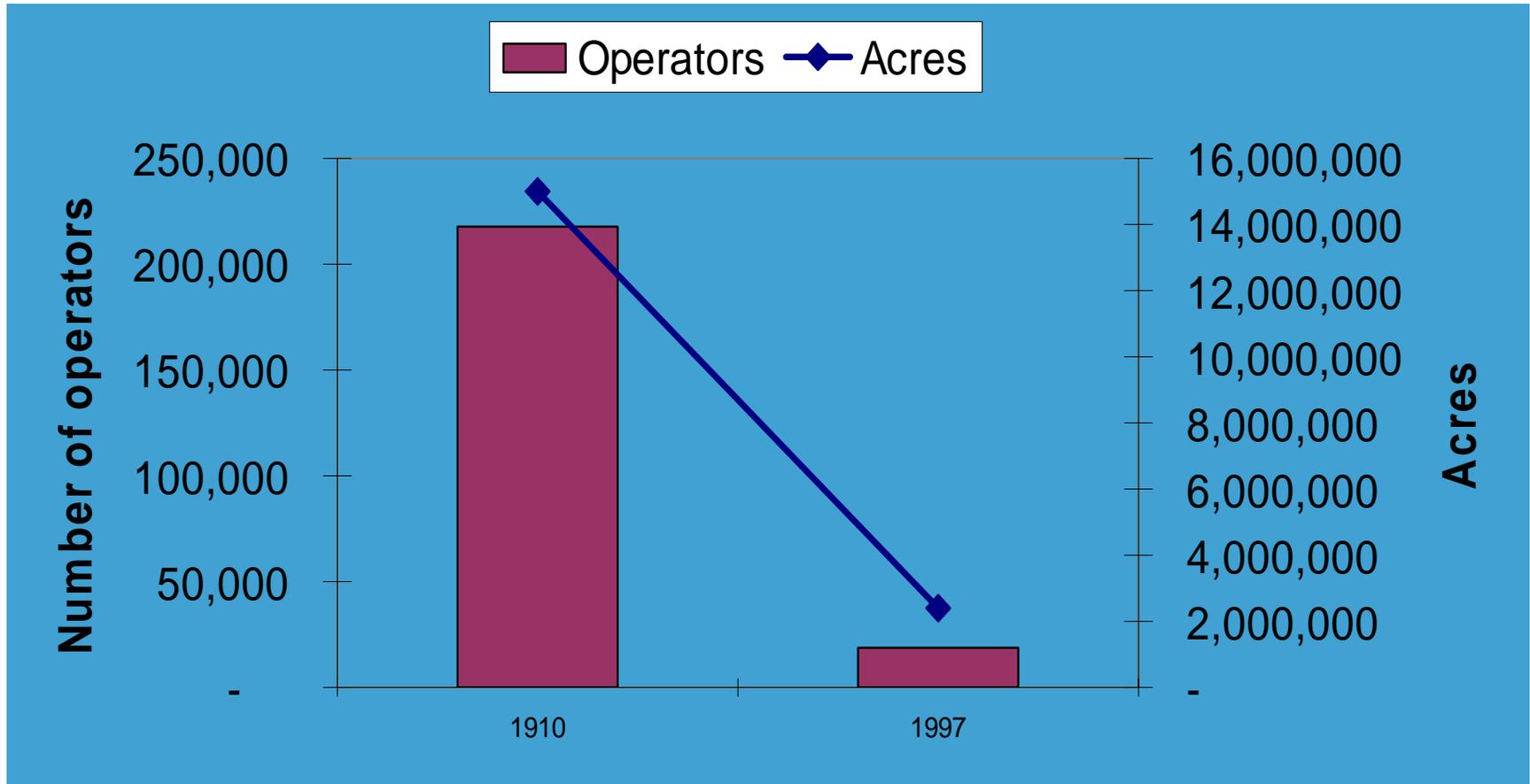
“On the most basic level, the agricultural settlement was universally recognized as the line separating civilization from savagery—the domestication of the "Wild West" and the creation of a "civilized" and "productive" society.”

Ontario, CA and the citrus colony – white, middle class, christian colony that became planning model.

# Urbanization

- In mid-west -- development of large, mechanized farms that pushed small farmers out of business
  - “The displacement of families from agricultural lands also concerned a growing American eugenics movement that debated the effects of migration on the U.S. ‘racial stock.’”  
Matt Garcia, [A World of Its Own](#): Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970

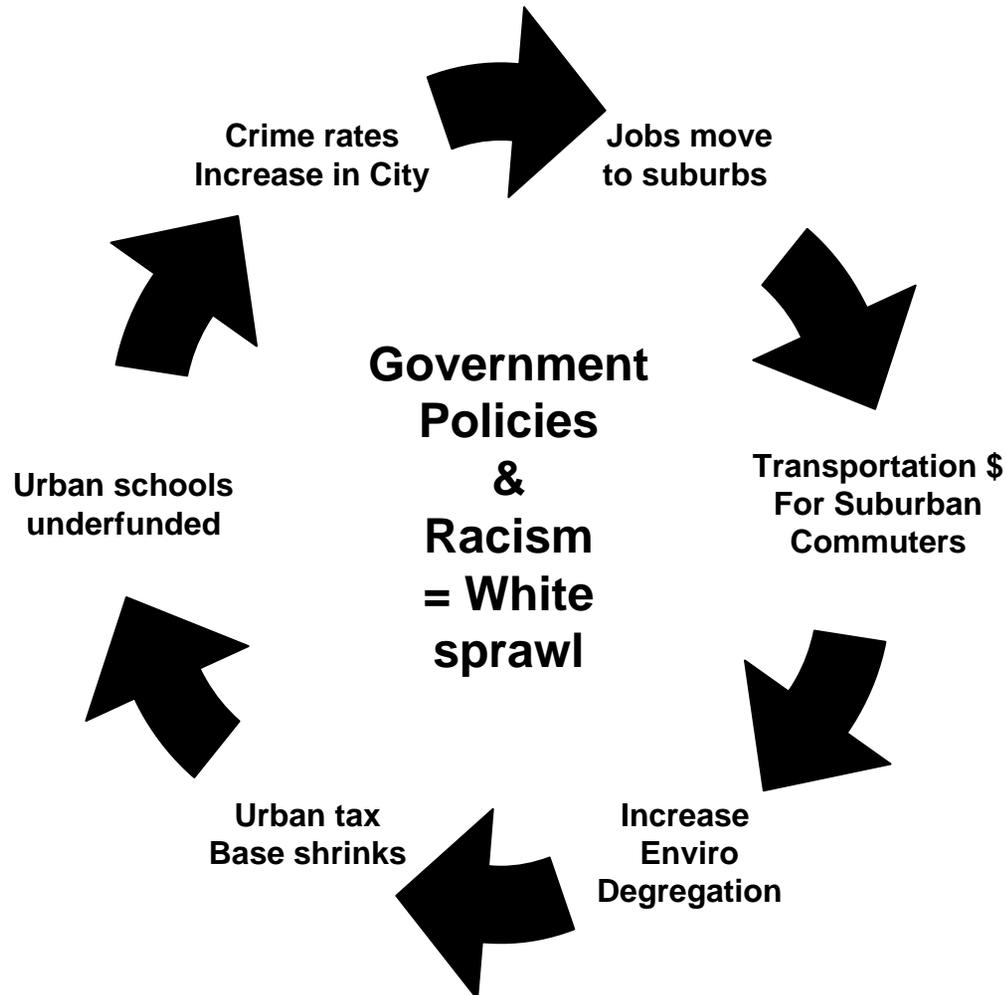
# Black farm land loss in the U.S., 1910-1997



Sills, et. al., **Sustaining Diversity: Limited-resource Forest Landowners in the Southern United States**, powerpoint at <http://www.google.com/search?q=native+american+land+loss&hl=en&rls=HPIB,HPIB:2005->

[15,HPIB:en&start=10&sa=N](http://www.google.com/search?q=native+american+land+loss&hl=en&rls=HPIB,HPIB:2005-15,HPIB:en&start=10&sa=N), Data Source: Census of Agriculture 1997 and preceding years

# Urbanization: Vicious Cycle of Disinvestment and Racial Disparities





# Food System Structure Has Impacted Our Lives Greatly

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- Food marketing labor (assemblers, manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers and eating places) has been growing (13.8 million in 1998; 17% increase from a decade before)
- 4x the number of farm workers.
- 73% of the growth is in “away from home” eating places
- Prepared foods were 12.5% of at-home food expenditures in 1995.

# Race, Gender and Food Jobs

Bureau of Labor Statistics 2007

FOOD SYSTEM OCCUPATIONS	Latino 12.5%	Black 12.3%	Asian 3.6%	Fe-male 50.9%
Food Prep.	23.4%	12.2%	5.3%	61.2%
Graders, sorters, ag. products	50.2%	15.9%	4.3%	64.1%
Butcher, meat, poultry, fish process.	41.1%	13.1%	4%	26.8%
Bakers	24.5%	6.8%	5.7%	54.1%
Ag. Scientists, Engineers	—	—	—	—
Ag. Inspectors	-	-	-	-

# Farm Worker Wage Trends

- The average farm worker makes \$9.06 an hour, compared to \$16.75 for non-farm production workers.
- Real wages for farm workers increased one-half of one percent (.5 percent) a year on average between 2000 and 2006. If there were a shortage, wages would be rising much more rapidly.
- Farm worker earnings have risen more slowly in California and Florida (the states with the most fruit and vegetable production) than in the United States as a whole.
- The average household spends only about \$1 a day on fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Labor costs comprise only 6 percent of the price consumers pay for fresh produce.
- Thus, if farm wages were allowed to rise 40 percent, and if all the costs were passed on to consumers, the cost to the average household would be only about \$8 a year.

# Farmers Lose: The New Sharecropping

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- In 1997, 1/3 of crops and livestock produced under contract
  - Marketing contracts – sets price before commodity is market ready and farmer retains control (fruit & vegetables 40%, dairy 60% of market)
  - Production contracts – contractor controls production (70% of poultry and egg market)
- Consolidation of market means buyer controls terms.
- In 1997, US grown and consumed agricultural prices increased 4.7% in 1996 and farmer's received 4.4% less.

# Food Insecurity

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- 25% of people lived in families that had experienced one or more of the three problems;
- 20% had encountered shortages of food, and the remaining 5% had worried about shortages.
- Nearly 50% of people in low-income families (below 200 percent of the poverty level) experienced some worries about or difficulty affording food, compared to 14% of those in families with higher incomes, a statistically significant difference.

Source: Urban Institute <http://www.urban.org/publications/900859.html>



# Urban Communities of Color Lose

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- The grocery gap:
- The [Center for Food and Justice](#) at the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute found that middle- and upper-income communities in Los Angeles County have twice as many supermarkets per capita as low-income communities; the same study found that predominantly white communities have three times the supermarkets of predominantly black communities, and nearly twice those of predominantly Latino communities.
- A study of several states found that wealthy neighborhoods had over three times as many supermarkets as low-income neighborhoods.
- Large stores sell lower priced goods. Grocery stores in lower income neighborhoods tend to be smaller and more expensive than in income neighborhoods. Food prices sometimes as much as 49 percent higher than those of supermarkets.
- Environmental degradation disproportionately in non-White communities



# QUESTIONS WE MUST ASK

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- Can we address food prices for farmers without addressing wages for workers disproportionately people of color?
  - Raising prices requires raising ability to pay.
- Can we address policy reform without broadening our base of support amongst people of color and blunting the power of symbolic racism or race neutrality?
  - Country will be 50% non-White by 2050.
- Can we address land consumption and environmental degradation without addressing white flight from urban areas?
  - Root causes deeply racialized.

# A lesson from the past. Populism

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- Post Reconstruction reaction to economic inequity.
- Farmers, tenant farmers, sharecroppers, low wage urban workers formed the movement by members of the Farmer's Alliance and Knights of Labor.
- The party's platform included
  - public ownership of railroads and utilities;
  - a graduated income tax;
  - meaningful debtor relief;
  - popular, direct election of President and Senators; a free and fair ballot honestly counted;
  - powerful farm cooperatives;
  - national treasury assistance to farmers at low interest rates;
  - federal public works programs for abolition of national banks; and
  - a working day of eight hours.
- Many of these proposals such as the direct election of senators and the income tax, moved into the political mainstream and be adopted over the next few decades.
- Black Populists in the South helped to launch the party in the region. Uniting with Black Populists became a strategic maneuver to obtain economic reform for White Populists. It ultimately died when White populist leaders broke ranks on racial justice.



# Some Implications: Race Matters

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- Racial Disparities are symptoms of structural arrangements.
  - They tell us something about where to look for what isn't working.
- Alternative food production strategies matter, but without a structural race analysis will not solve structural inequities
- Everyone is harmed by structural racism, but communities of color may be harmed first and/or hardest.
- Food system transformation requires transforming structural racism.



# WHAT THE FOOD SYSTEMS MOVEMENT CAN DO

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- Create a long-term strategy that demands structural transformation of the economy through new access to credit strategies, investment vehicles that create a new political economy
- When evaluating policies always know who benefits and who doesn't
- Alliance building with unlikely suspects who stand to benefit; alliances with Latinos in particular
- Strategies to take race on constructively in the public debate; combat colorblindness
- Capacity-building of community members for vision and policies for communities



ABOUT US

STRUCTURAL RACISM

PROJECTS

PUBLICATIONS

LINKS

MEDIA/UPDATES

## Center for Social Inclusion

The Center for Social Inclusion works to build a fair and just society by dismantling structural racism. We partner with communities of color and other allies to create strategies and build policy reform models to end racial disparity and promote equal opportunity. With our partners we conduct applied research, translate it, teach our communities, inform the public, convene stakeholders, nurture multiracial alliances and support advocacy strategies.

### HURRICANE KATRINA PROJECT UPDATE

**August 18, 2006.** CSI posts its report, *The Race to Rebuild: The Color of Opportunity and the Future of New Orleans*. The report analyzes existing data on the progress of rebuilding New Orleans' communities. It also examines existing rebuilding policies to show that current policies are both insufficient to assist Black New Orleanians to return or rebuild their lives and that White New Orleanians would

TAKE ACTION! >>

#### Events

Building a Fair and Equitable Society Post-Hurricane Katrina  
Convenings on Housing and the Opportunities that Must Come with It  
Baton Rouge, LA, December 5th-6th, 2005

SUPPORT CSI >>

#### Publications/Presentations

"New York City In Crisis: Racial Segregation,