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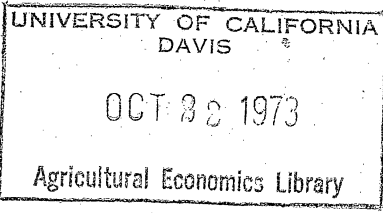
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Income and Occupations of Southern Rural Blacks:
Changes During the 1960's

by

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Afro-Americans

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William Nicholls pointed to progress made in the South in the area of civil rights since the mid-1950's and its effect on the so called "Southern tradition" at last years AAEA meetings [2]. Given recent efforts to break the barriers of racism, progress on social fronts should eventually be reflected in the economic condition of the people. If indeed blacks are being assimilated into the mainstream of society, the economic differences between blacks and whites would be expected to have diminished over time. The purpose of this paper is to explore the economic progress of rural Southern blacks over the decade of the 1960's.

The Black Population

The U.S. black population has increased about 20 percent since 1960 (table 1). The greatest increase took place outside the 14 Southern States included in this analysis (figure 1). The black population in the South increased only 6 percent during the period compared to 39 percent increase outside the South. In 1960, approximately 58 percent of the U.S. blacks resided in the South. Largely because of outmigration, the proportion was reduced to 52 percent by 1970.

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Table 1. Black Population of the United States by Region and Residence,
1960 and 1970

Region and Residence	1960	1970
	----- 1000 Persons -----	
United States-----	18,849	22,550
Urban-----	13,792	18,339
Rural nonfarm-----	3,575	3,764
Rural farm-----	1,482	447
Non-South-----	7,871	10,967
Urban-----	7,437	10,602
Rural nonfarm-----	405	350
Rural farm-----	29	15
South-----	10,978	11,583
Urban-----	6,355	7,737
Rural nonfarm-----	3,170	3,414
Rural farm-----	1,453	432

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, Detailed Characteristics,
PC - Series D, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.,
1960 and 1970.

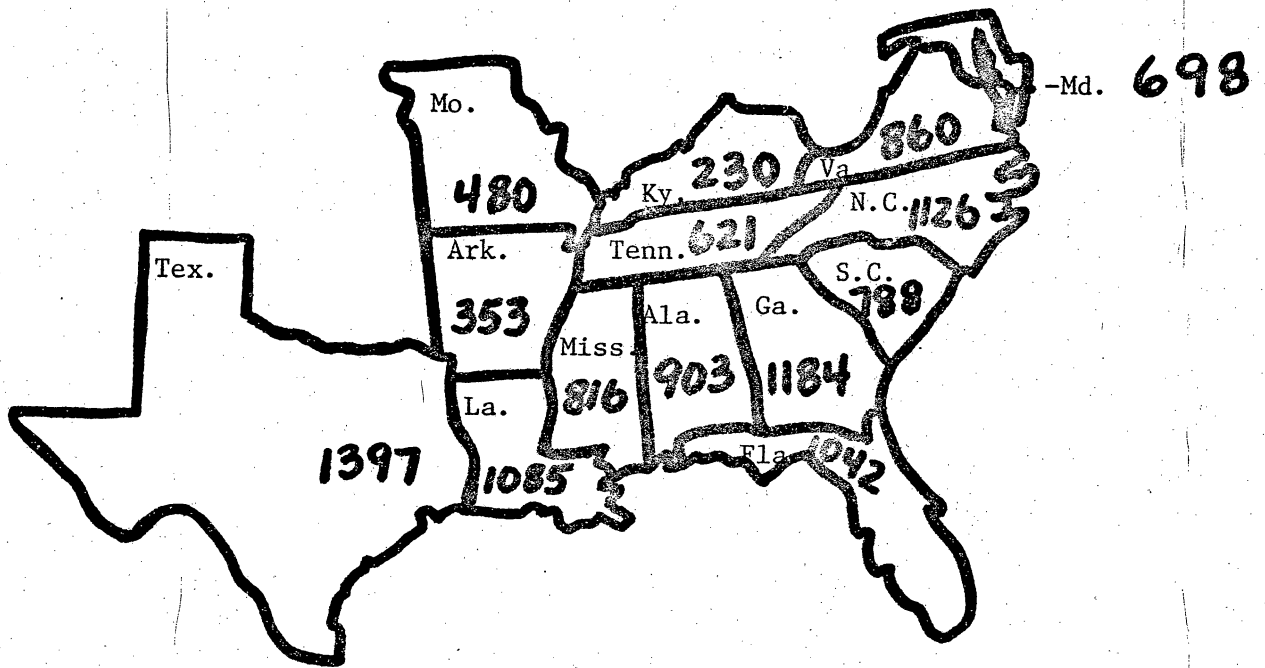


Figure 1: Black Population in Fourteen Southern States, 1970
(1000 Persons)

The majority of the U.S. black population resided in urban areas in 1970, primarily central cities [4]. However, 31 percent of the Southern blacks lived in rural areas and were mainly rural nonfarm residents. Southern rural blacks account for almost 86 percent of the U.S. rural black population.

The Southern rural black population decreased by more than 1 million persons during the decade of the 1960's. The number of Southern rural nonfarm blacks increase only about 1 percent over the period. However, the Southern black farm population decreased almost 72 percent. By 1970, less than 4 percent of Southern blacks lived on farms compared to 13 percent in 1960. Thus, migration from Southern farms accounts for most of the decrease in the Southern rural black population.

Measures of Economic Progress

Changes in the level and sources of money income are the primary indicators of economic progress used in the study. Money incomes includes wages and salaries; farm and nonfarm self employment income; social security or railroad retirement benefits; public assistance; interest; dividends; net property rental income; income from pensions, annuities, and trust funds; royalties; and other cash income. All income data were converted to 1970 constant dollars to observe real income gains.

Median income is the measure of central tendency or level of income used in the analysis. The median is influenced less by extreme values than the mean. The benchmark for evaluation will be the Southern white population. Concentration will be on the ratio of median income of blacks compared to whites, the annual compound rate of growth in median income, and the income gap. The income gap is defined as the difference between median income of whites and blacks.

The income gap is a key indicator of economic progress. If the absolute difference in median income between two groups is decreasing over time, then the relative income position is more nearly alike. If the income of blacks is considerably less than whites, the income of blacks must grow at a higher rate just to maintain the income gap. It is also possible for the ratio of median incomes to increase even though the income gap may be widening. Thus, all three indicators; income gap, rate of growth, and ratio of median incomes; are important when analysing economic progress.

Occupation is an important determinant of income. If blacks are moving out of occupations which typically pay low wages into higher paying jobs, then incomes should improve. In the following, employed persons are grouped into eight basic occupational classes; professionals and managers, sales and clerical workers; craftsmen and foremen; operatives; nonfarm laborers; farmers and farm managers; farm laborers; and service and private household workers. Based on current population survey data [5] for 1969, professionals and managers, and craftsmen and foremen are the highest paying occupations for men while farm and nonfarm laborers receive the least. For women, professional and managers, and craftsmen and foremen pay the highest while farm laborers, and service and private household workers receive least.

Data

The decennial census of population of the U.S. for 1960 and 1970 is the primary data source used in the analysis [2,3]^{2/} For 1960, ethnic breaks for data on income and occupation were nonwhite and white. Nonwhite includes Negroes and other minorities such as the American Indian. Persons

^{2/} The rural farm-nonfarm residences shown in the individual published PC (1)-C census volumes for 1970 are incorrect. The data presented below are from special corrected tabulations obtained from the Bureau of the Census.

of Mexican birth or ancestry who were not definitely Indian or another nonwhite were classified as white. Negroes accounted for approximately 98 percent of the nonwhite population in the South in 1960. Thus, income and occupation information for nonwhites was used as a proxy for the negro population.

Conclusions are based on two observations, 1960 and 1970. Because measures of economic progress are sensitive to the base period selected, results from other studies will be used to supplement the analysis.

Levels and Sources of Income

Levels of Income

Although Southern rural blacks made considerable income gains during the decade of the 1960's, the income gap between blacks and whites widened over the period (Tables 2 and 3). The growth rate in median income of black families exceeded that for whites, however, the growth rate was not large enough to close the income gap. For example, black rural farm family median income increased 8.1 percent annually between 1959 and 1969, 2.6 percentage points faster than for whites. However, to maintain the \$2,170 income gap of 1960, median income of black farm families would have to have grown at 10 percent annually. The actual growth rate was 1.9 percentage points less than the rate needed to maintain the income gap. Thus, the difference in median income between white and black farm families was \$960 more in 1969 than in 1959 (figure 2). The income gap widened even though the ratio between median income of black and white farm families increased from 42 percent in 1959 to 52 percent in 1969. A similar result was obtained for black rural nonfarm families as well as urban families.

The income situation for rural unrelated black individuals^{3/} over the decade was exceedingly poor. Not only did the absolute income gap widen but the ratio of black to white median incomes was also lower in 1969 than in 1959. The annual rate of growth in income for rural black unrelated individuals was less than for

3/ An unrelated individual is a member of a household who is not related to anyone else in the household, or a person living in group quarters who is not an inmate of an institution.

Table 2. Income Levels of Negro and White Families and Unrelated Individuals in the South, 1959 and 1969 ^{1/} (1970 Constant Dollars)

Residence	Year	White		Negro		Income gap	Ratio of Incomes
		Number (1000)	Median Income	Number (1000)	Median Income		
			<u>dollars</u>		<u>dollars</u>	<u>dollars</u>	%
			<u>Families</u>				
Rural farm	1959	1,202	3,770	257	1,600	2,170	42
	1969	763	6,580	85	3,450	3,130	52
Rural nonfarm	1959	3,197	5,500	605	2,400	3,100	44
	1969	4,021	7,890	665	4,200	3,690	53
Urban	1959	6,645	7,780	1,379	3,780	4,000	49
	1969	8,431	10,380	1,665	5,740	4,640	55
			<u>Unrelated Individuals</u>				
Rural farm	1959	102	1,110	31	820	290	74
	1969	91	1,820	14	1,130	690	62
Rural nonfarm	1959	713	1,390	173	1,010	480	68
	1969	816	1,740	187	1,120	620	64
Urban	1959	1,913	2,060	564	1,270	790	62
	1969	3,348	2,630	750	1,730	900	66

^{1/} Statistics for 1959 are for nonwhites which proxy for Negro.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, PC-Series C, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1960 and 1970.

Table 3. Annual Compound Rates of Income Growth for Negro and White Families and Unrelated Individuals in the South, 1959 and 1969. ^{1/} (1970 Constant Dollars)

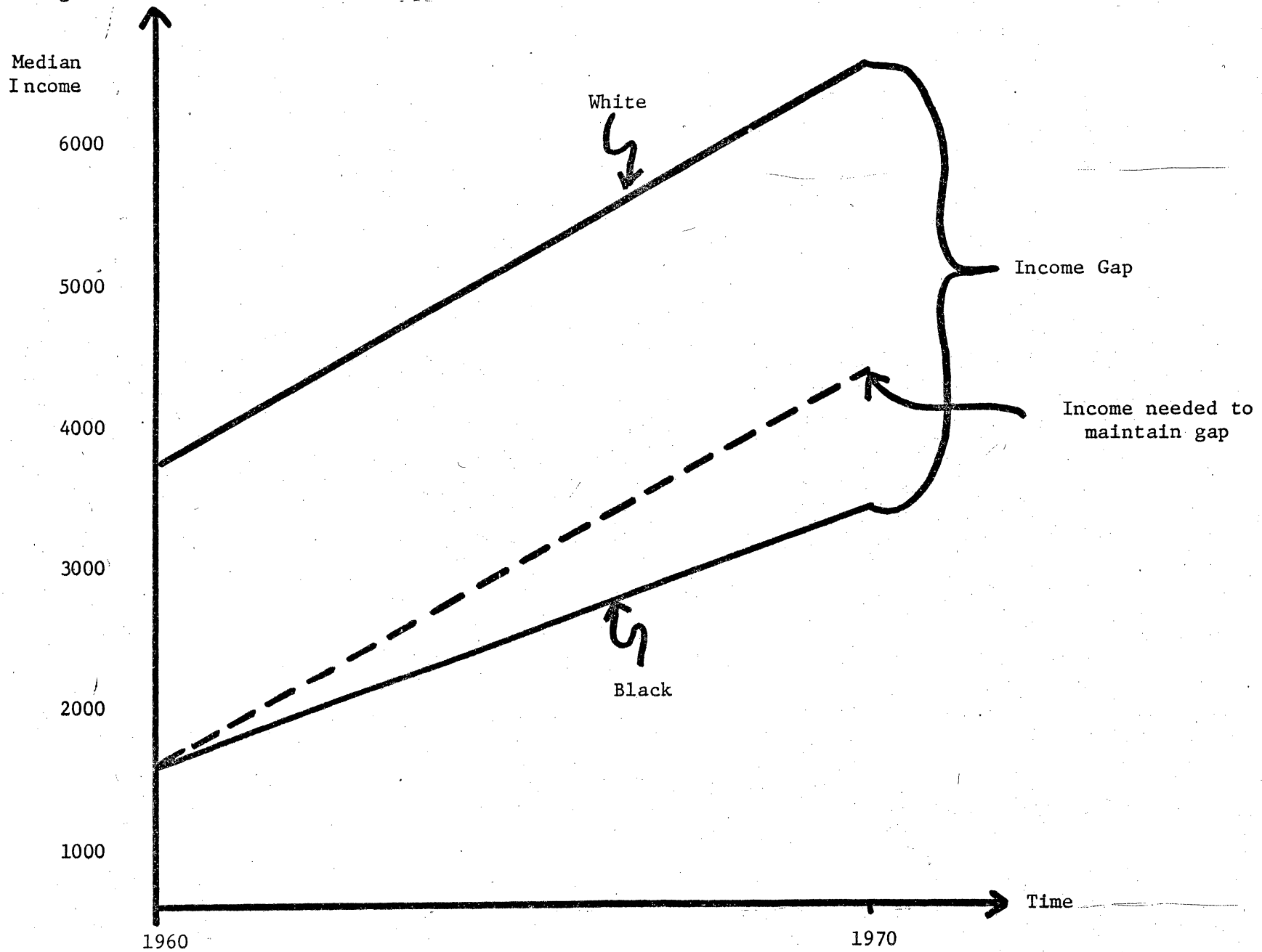
Residence	Actual rate growth		Rate of growth for gap maintenance	Gap deficit rate of growth
	Negro	White		
----- Percent -----				
Families				
Rural-----	8.1	5.5	10.0	1.9
Rural nonfarm-----	5.8	3.7	7.2	1.4
Urban-----	4.3	2.9	5.4	1.1
Unrelated Individuals				
Rural farm-----	3.3	5.1	6.4	3.1
Rural nonfarm-----	1.0	1.6	2.2	1.2
Urban-----	3.1	2.5	3.8	0.7

^{1/} Statistics for 1959 are for nonwhites which proxy for Negro.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, P.C.-Series C, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1960 and 1970.

Figure 2

Income Position of Southern Farm Families, 1959 and 1969



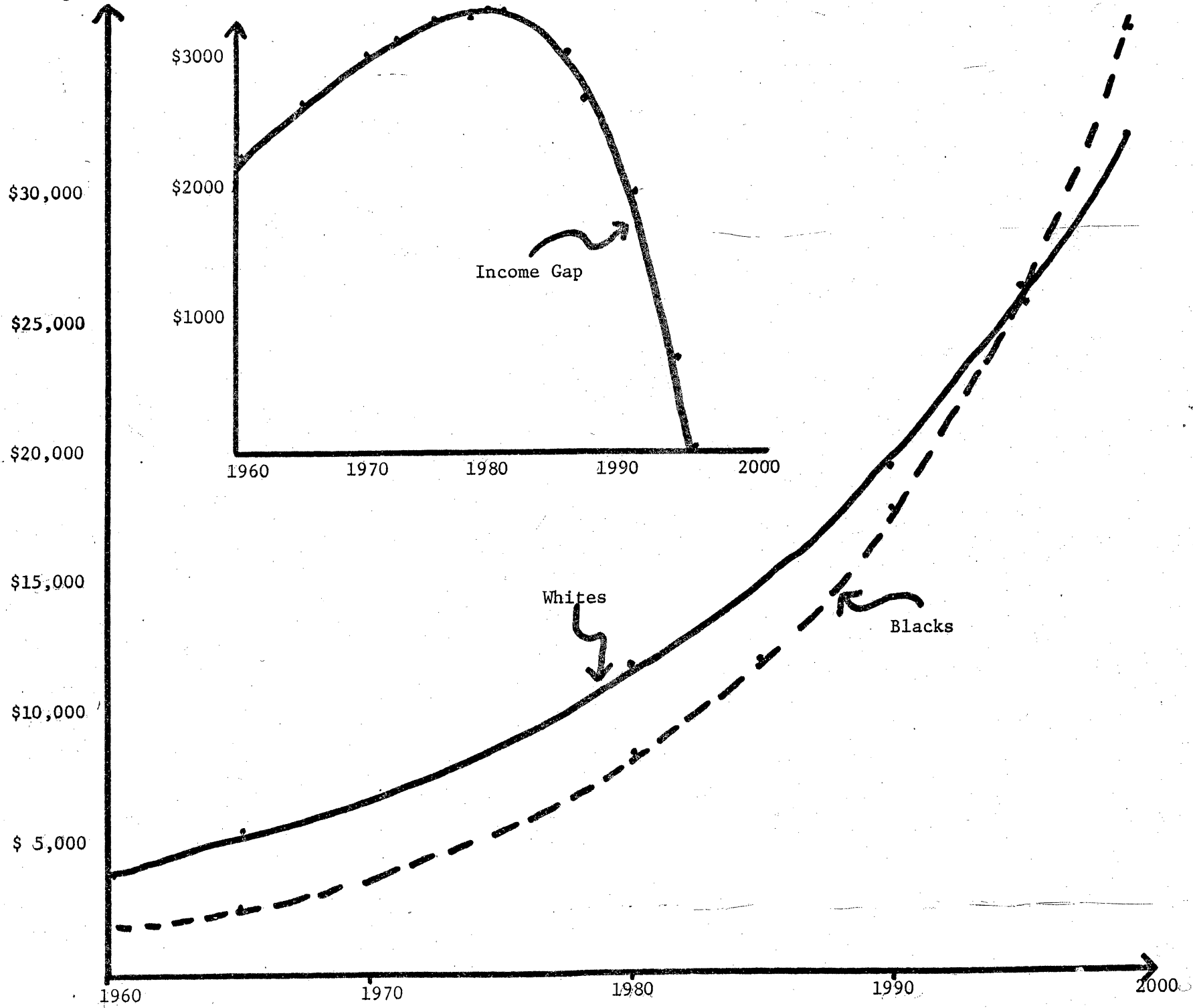
unrelated whites, further evidence of deterioration in income position. Although urban black unrelated individuals made relative income gains, their income gap also widened over the period.

An analysis of data developed by Weitzman [6] also supports the notion that blacks made relative income gains while at the same time the black-white income gap did not close. Weitzman developed constant 1967 dollar income distributions for U.S. white families and families of Negro and other races from Current Population Survey data collected each March by the Bureau of the Census. Weitzman's data cover the period 1947 to 1968. The income gap for two periods was regressed against time to detect significant trends. The regression for 1947 thru 1968 was highly significant and showed the estimated income gap widening by \$63 annually over that period. However, the regression for 1959 thru 1968 was not significant suggesting that a discernible trend was not present in the data. Although Weitzman's data did not show the income gap widening between 1959 and 1968, neither did it show the gap closing.

Has any portion of the black population achieved income parity with whites? Other studies point out that young husband-wife families residing in the North and West in which both partners worked were able to achieve family incomes comparable to whites [4]. The working wife was the key element in achieving parity for this group. In general, the proportion of black families with high incomes is still far below that of whites.

Can the median income of blacks ever equal that of whites if the income gap is currently increasing? As long as the rate of growth in income of blacks exceeds that of whites, parity of income is possible. For example, black rural farm families would have the same median income as whites in 1995 if the past rates of income growth for the respective groups continue into the future (Figure 3). The income gap would continue to increase through the 1970's.

Figure 3. Median income of black and white Southern-rural-farm families-1960 - 2000



However, during the decade of the 1980's, the income gap would decrease finally reaching zero in 1995.^{4/} Similarly Southern rural nonfarm black families would achieve income parity by 2000 and Southern urban black families by 2012.

5/
Sources of Income

Both black and white farm families have become more dependent on wage and salary income for family living during the decade of the 1960's; blacks relying more on that source than whites (table 4). Black farm families are also somewhat more dependent on social security and public assistance income. Although sources of income to rural nonfarm white families have changed only slightly since 1959, blacks are depending more on wages and less on self employment income.

Whites are more likely to have self-employment income than are blacks (table 5). For example, less than 1 in 10 rural nonfarm black families had self-employment income compared to 1 in 5 rural nonfarm white families. Rural black families are 4 times as likely to have public assistance income as whites. This would be expected because U.S. blacks are 3 times as likely to have income at or below the poverty level [4]. In addition, the incidence of poverty is higher in the South among blacks than in other regions.

Occupation Mix

Occupations of rural males

The proportion of rural black males in farm related occupations decreased over the decade of the 1960's while the proportion in operative and craftsmen type jobs increased (table 6). This result is the combined effect of two forces. The first and most important force is the migration of farm blacks to Southern

4/ The compound interest formula is an exponential function. As long as the rates of interest are different, the functions will intersect at some point in time. Eventually the income base for blacks becomes large enough so that incremental income increases exceed those of whites.

5/ Sources of income by race for 1959 are available at the U.S. level only. Published State data show income by source for all families only.

Table 4. Sources of Income for all U.S. Rural Families, 1959, and Southern Rural Families, 1969, by Ethnic Group

Year	Ethnic Group	Sources of Income						
		Wages	Self-employment			Other Income		
		Total	Nonfarm	Farm	Total	Social Security	Public Assistance	Other

----- Percent -----

		Rural Farm							
1959	Nonwhite	52	32			16			
1969	Negro	69	18	3	15	13	7	3	3
1959	White	45	43			12			
1969	White	56	33	7	26	11	4	1	6
		Rural Nonfarm							
1959	Nonwhite	78	7			15			
1969	Negro	85	4	3	1	11	5	4	2
1959	White	80	12			8			
1969	White	78	12	11	1	10	4	1	5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1960, Sources and Structure of Family Income, Subject Report, PC (2), U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1964.

U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1970, General Social and Economic Characteristics, PC-Series C, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1970.

Table 5. Distribution of Families by Source of Income, All U.S. Rural Families, 1959, and Southern Rural Families, 1969, by Ethnic Group.

Year	Ethnic Group	Wages	Percent of families with--						
			Self-employment			Other Income			
			Total	Nonfarm	Farm	Total	Social Security	Public Assistance	Other
----- Percent -----									
Rural Farm									
1959	Nonwhite	64	58			34			
1969	Negro	76		5	43		29	18	11
1959	White	56	72			43			
1969	White	68		12	64		28	4	25
Rural Nonfarm									
1959	Nonwhite	82	15			41			
1969	Negro	84		4	4		25	20	9
1959	White	82	22			45			
1969	White	84		12	5		21	5	22

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1960, Sources and Structure of Family Income, Subject Report PC (2), U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1964.

U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population 1970, General Social and Economic Characteristics, PC-Series C., U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

Table 6. Occupations of Employed Southern Rural Males by Race, 1959 and 1969

Occupation	Rural farm				Rural nonfarm			
	1959		1969		1959		1969	
	Nonwhite	White	Negro	White	Nonwhite	White	Negro	White
	----- Percent -----							
Professionals and Managers--:	0.9	5.8	2.6	9.2	3.0	17.9	4.2	19.2
Sales and Clerical Workers--:	0.5	4.6	1.8	5.9	1.6	11.0	3.2	10.8
Craftsmen and Foremen-----:	2.5	8.9	7.7	14.4	7.7	24.5	14.0	27.5
Operatives-----:	9.5	12.1	18.8	14.4	24.6	26.6	30.0	24.5
Nonfarm laborers-----:	8.4	3.9	11.6	4.6	27.3	7.7	21.9	7.1
Farmers and farm Managers--:	39.3	50.9	23.8	40.1	6.8	4.3	1.9	2.5
Farm laborers-----:	37.1	12.5	27.6	8.5	21.4	4.3	14.7	3.3
Service and private household workers-----:	1.8	1.3	6.1	2.9	7.6	3.7	10.1	5.1
Number, (1000)	288	1,226	77	702	525	2,622	562	3,470

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, PC-Series C, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1960 and 1970.

urban areas or outside the South. The second involves changes among occupations for those who remain in rural areas. Thus by 1969, the occupation mix for black males had changed much more than for their white counterparts. Although whites also left farm occupations, they tended to move into higher paying professional or craftsmen type jobs.

Black males still held a disproportionate share of the low paying occupations in 1969 (table 7). For example, 32 percent of the employed nonfarm laborers in rural areas were black in 1969 although blacks comprised only 13 percent of all employed rural males. This represents some improvement from 1959, however, when 40 percent of the nonfarm laborers were black. There has also been some increase in the proportion of craftsmen and sales jobs held by black males over the period.

Occupations of rural females

The most frequent occupation class for employed black females was the service and household worker group both in 1959 and 1969 (table 8). Within the occupation class, private household work predominated. Over the decade, however, the proportion of employed black women in operative type jobs increased substantially. This represented not only a shift out of service and household work but also a significant decline in farm employment especially for black farm females. The proportion of black females in professional and sales jobs also increased substantially over the period. The shift among occupations noted for blacks did not occur for employed rural white females. The distribution among occupations for white females was almost the same in 1969 as in 1959. White females were most frequently employed in operative, and sales-clerical type jobs.

Employed black rural females also held a disproportionate share of low paying occupations in 1969 particularly farm laborer and service and private household jobs (table 9). Some progress was made in operative jobs where the

Table 7. Percent of Employed Southern Rural Males that are Black by Occupation, 1959 and 1969.

Occupation	1959	1969
	----- Percent -----	
Professionals and Managers---	3	3
Sales and Clerical Workers---	3	4
Craftsmen and foremen-----	6	8
Operatives-----	16	16
Nonfarm laborers-----	40	32
Farmers and farm managers----	17	11
Farm laborers-----	45	37
Service and private household workers-----	29	24
Total employed males-----	18	13

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, PC-Series C., U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1960 and 1970

Table 8. Occupations of Employed Southern Rural Females by Race, 1959 and 1969

Occupation	<u>Rural farm</u>				<u>Rural nonfarm</u>			
	1959		1969		1959		1969	
	Nonwhite	White	Negro	White	Nonwhite	White	Negro	White
	Percent							
Professionals and Managers-----	5.9	15.9	12.6	18.0	7.9	17.0	9.1	16.4
Sales and clerical workers-----	1.1	24.4	6.5	29.1	1.9	33.4	6.4	34.2
Craftsmen and foremen-----	0.2	1.1	1.3	2.4	0.4	1.2	1.2	2.6
Operatives-----	4.3	26.1	23.0	26.2	8.4	29.0	24.1	27.6
Nonfarm laborers-----	0.7	0.5	1.2	1.4	1.1	0.7	2.0	1.5
Farmers and farm managers-----	10.7	9.1	3.5	4.9	1.5	0.5	0.3	0.2
Farm laborers-----	31.8	9.9	8.9	3.3	7.8	1.0	4.6	0.9
Service and household workers--	45.3	13.0	43.0	14.7	71.0	17.2	52.3	16.6
Number (1000)	93	327	35	282	281	1,084	373	1,855

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, PC-Series C, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1960 and 1970.

Table 9. Percent of Employed Southern Rural Females that are Black by Occupation, 1959 and 1969

Occupation	1959	1969
	----- Percent -----	
Professionals and Managers-----	11	10
Sales and Clerical workers-----	1	4
Craftsmen and foremen-----	6	8
Operatives-----	7	14
Nonfarm laborers-----	31	20
Farmers and farm managers-----	29	10
Farm laborers-----	54	44
Service and private household workers-----	51	38
Total employed females	21	16

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, PC - Series C, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1960 and 1970.

proportion of employed black females increased from 7 percent in 1959 to 14 percent in 1969.

One factor which affects the type of job held by an individual is education. There has been a noticeable increase in the attendance among young blacks at colleges and universities [4]. The proportion of blacks completing high school has also increased. Continue improvement in the level of education may well aid blacks in obtaining higher paying professional and craftsmen type jobs.

Concluding Remarks

Income is a key indicator of economic progress in our society. Although most rural Southern blacks made relative income gains during the decade of the 1960's, census data suggests that the income gap between whites and blacks widened over the period. Migration to cities may improve the income position of blacks relative to farm living, but growth in income of Southern urban blacks has not been great enough to close the income gap with urban whites. Southern rural black families fared well compared to black unrelated individuals whose relative and absolute income position deteriorated over the decade.

Both blacks and whites are becoming more dependent on wages and salary income for family living. This is especially true for blacks living on farms.

Some upward occupational mobility occurred, however, Southern rural blacks are still disproportionately represented in low paying occupations. Blacks shed farm related occupations over the decade while the proportion in operative type jobs increased. Much of the decrease in farm employment can be accounted for by migration of blacks from Southern farms to cities. The large proportion of blacks in lower paying jobs helps to explain the income position of the group relative to whites.

Is economic parity with whites possible for Southern rural blacks? Only if the incomes of blacks continue to grow at a faster rate than those of whites will income differences diminish over time. But, progress will be slow, perhaps taking as long as 25 years in the case of black Southern farm families if the relative growth rates that occurred in the 1960's continue into the 1970's and 1980's. To achieve income parity in less time, future growth rates must be even higher for blacks relative to whites.

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