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"THE LOST GENERATION": BLACK YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN DETROIT AND THE FORMATION OF A SEGMENT OF THE MODERN "RESERVE ARMY OF LABOR" 1967-1980

By

Clark Eldridge White

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ABSTRACT

"THE LOST GENERATION": BLACK YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN DETROIT AND THE FORMATION OF A SEGMENT OF THE MODERN "RESERVE ARMY OF LABOR" 1967-1980

By

Clark Eldridge White

The primary purpose of this study was to examine Black youth unemployment in the City of Detroit Michigan between the years 1967 and 1980. These youth comprised a large segment of the modern "reserve army" of labor in Detroit.

Focusing on the historical dynamics of the demand for Black Labor, color stratification and the racial character of the "reserve army" was done to: 1) illustrate the historical role of Black people in the U.S. economy; 2) demonstrate how color stratification has worked to divide the labor force; and 3) to demonstrate how the imposition of racism on the labor process produced a "reserve army of labor" that is stratified on the basis of color.

The methodology for this research included a critical review of the marxist theory of the "reserve army" including a discussion of the marxist conflict paradigm, the process of capital accumulation, the segmentation of the "reserve army", and the role of discrimination and super exploitation within a capitalist society. The primary sources of data came from federal, state and local governmental agencies and a non-profit research institute.

The results of the study indicated that structural changes in the city's racial and industrial character led to the formation and reproduction of a modern reserve army of labor composed primarily of African-American youth.

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Nellie and Carl Eldridge White, my children, Kenya Ife and Tsigie N'Kolo White, and all the disposed children in the African Diaspora.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is a dissertation about the "lost generation" in Detroit: Black unemployed youth who lived in the city between 1967 and 1980. These youth comprised a large segment of the modern "reserve army" of labor in Detroit. This dissertation examines the phenomena of their unemployment as a consequence of the cities economic decline and racial discrimination.

Black youth who lived in Detroit between 1967 and 1980 were subjected to a reality of living in a city that was undergoing a transformation from a thriving industrial metropolis to a situation that amounted to an urban crisis. They came of age when the opportunities for finding meaningful employment were declining. They became a "lost generation" in a rust-belt city that was experiencing a transformation in it's economic structure.

This "lost generation" was faced with the reality of never finding a job on a long-term basis. They became members of a segment of the modern "reserve army" of labor. The Marxist class model explains unemployment and the formation of the "reserve army" as a consequence of capitalism and capitalist accumulation. The "reserve army"

according to Marx is a surplus population composed of three groups: floating, latent and stagnant.

Marx's primary way of analyzing a problem was to use empirical data. In the case of labor, it is necessary to examine the historical development of capitalism as a system and the role of Black people within that system.

The mode of production and patterns of capital accumulation have direct implications for the class character of Black people in the American economy. The history of Black super exploitation is directly related to three distinct historical periods of political economies: slavery, sharecropping and wage labor (Baron: 1971). The patterns of super exploitation under each of these political economies have been influenced by the ideology of institutionalized racism. This has enabled the dominant system to allocate specific roles to Black people that reproduce the majority of them as low-wage workers or a surplus population. Institutionalized forms of racial oppression under the three distinct political economies have made it possible to reproduce inequality along race, color and class lines throughout the history of capitalist development in the United States.

The modern post World War II period (1945-present) has been a time when the number of unemployed Black youth within major metropolitan areas has increased considerably. Historically, there has always been a segment of Black youth in the reserve army since the end of slavery when Blacks were eliminated as skilled workers. For example, Frazier (1949:596) estimated that at the close of the Civil War, 100,000 of the 120,000 artisans in the south were Black. By 1890, the skilled Black worker had virtually been eliminated by Whites as a competitor for skilled jobs. As late as 1940, rising

organized white unionism and racial prejudice were also instrumental in the process of eliminating a large percentage of Black workers from skilled jobs. In the post World War II period, an increasing number of Black youth began to experience unemployment. By the early seventies, their unemployment rates in urban areas had exceeded the average of all other groups.

Data from the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reveals that the rate of unemployment among Black youth doubled between 1954 and 1975 from 16.5 percent to 36.9 percent (U.S. Department of Labor, 1975). For that same time period, the unemployment rate for White teenagers went from 12.1 percent to 17.9 percent. The National Urban League has developed a "hidden unemployment index" and it estimated that over sixty percent of Black teenagers could not find work in 1978 (National Urban League, 1978). Throughout the seventies, the period covered in this study, the rate of unemployment for Black youth in Detroit increased.

The period 1967 to 1980 was chosen because it was a critical time in the urban development of Detroit. This was the period of the post-1967 urban rebellion that resulted in mass destruction of property and loss of life. This post-rebellion period created a situation where the political and economic leaders of the city attempted to institute programs that would improve the quality of life of inner-city residents. This period was also a time when Black political participation increased and resulted in an increase in the number of Black elected officials. This expanded Black political activity also gave rise to a new emphasis on Black economic development. This was also the period of time when the internal class structure of the Black community was starting to

show signs of an expanded and conflicting class division. At one end of the spectrum the Black middle class was expanding while at the same time the Black working and urban proletariat class was also expanding. Detroit was becoming a predominantly Black city with Black political leadership but remained a city where the economic infrastructure of the Black business community was underdeveloped. There were definite changes also in the industrial character of the city marked by declines in the cities main industry, automobile production.

Theoretical Framework: Marxist Conflict Paradigm and the "Reserve Army" Thesis

This study will employ a conflict paradigm. The conflict paradigm implies that there is a direct relationship between inequality and the continuous struggle that takes place in society between competing classes over the supply of resources and the control of the means of production.

Theories of class conflict and class struggle are utilized in the area of social stratification and are based on the theories developed originally by Karl Marx. It was his contention that history was essentially the saga of a protracted class struggle.

According to Marx (1961:630-632), the internal logic of the capitalist economy reproduces unemployment. The surplus population "forms a disposable reserve army that belongs to capital as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at it's own cost". The "reserve army" continues to expand because the means of production transforms surplus value into additional means of production.

Marx assumes that the capitalist system exploits the working class and constantly proletarianizes it; in this instance, Black working class youth in Detroit. The class model explains unemployment and the formation of a surplus population as a consequence of capitalist development.

The conflict paradigm's basic assumption is that capitalism has generated inequality between competing classes. It assumes that the capitalist system exploits and proletarianizes a large segment of the population. This takes place in the process of capitalist accumulation.

Black unemployed youth as a class belong to a segment of the "reserve army". In the seventies, the unemployment situation of Black youth in Detroit grew increasingly worse. During this period, there were several structural changes occurring in the process of capital accumulation and the modes of production, most of which were directly related to the declining automobile industry. Detroit was a key city in the multi-national automobile industry and therefore the declining state of the industry had a direct impact on the employment opportunities for Black youth.

Capital Accumulation and the "Reserve Army"

Unemployment and the reproduction of a surplus population is a consequence of capital accumulation. The first is the transformation of profit into the means of production. The second aspect is the constant expansion of the social relations of capitalism.

According to Hill (1980:46), "the magnitude and the rate of exploitation in a capitalist society is equivalent to the magnitude and rate of surplus value." According to this line of analysis, "surplus value" originates in the historically specific nature of the exchange relationship between the owning and producing classes in a capitalist mode of production.

The "reserve army" is made up of those persons who have been displaced by machinery and new technology or through a process of growth in the labor force that surpasses the employment capacity of increasingly capital intensive industries (Hill, 1980:5). Capitalist employers can also exercise the option of introducing new forms of labor-saving work organizations and machines (robots) which add to the number of workers that are no longer needed. When this occurs, workers are displaced and potential workers are denied job opportunities in the labor forces. This causes the ranks of the "reserve army" to expand.

According to Marx (1961:532):

> If a surplus laboring population is a necessary product of accumulation or of the development of wealth on a capitalist basis, this surplus population becomes, conversely, the level of capitalist mode of production. It forms a disposable industrial reserve army that belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own costs.

The whole form of the movement of modern industry depends, therefore, upon the constant transformation of a part of the laboring population into unemployed or half-employed hands (Marx, 1961:633). The surplus population facilitates accumulation. This is a basic condition for the capitalist mode or production.

When employed, the surplus population is located in labor-intense, low-technology sectors of the economy. When unemployed, they become dependent upon the state apparatus for transfer and subsidy payments in the form of welfare, unemployment insurance and government poverty programs. In essence, the surplus population is a "disposable reserve army" that is venerable and easily exploitable in the labor market.

Marx (1961:637), interprets the creation of the industrial reserve as a structural phenomena.

> Taking them as a whole, the general movement of wages are exclusively regulated by the expansion and contraction of the industrial reserve army, and these again correspond to the periodic changes of the industrial cycle. They are, therefore, not determined by the variations of the absolute number of the working population, but by the varying proportions in which the working class is divided into active and reserve army, by the increase or diminution in the relative amount of the surplus-population, by the extent to which it is now absorbed, now set free.

Capitalism goes through cycles of development that expand and contract. This is the boom and bust economic cycle of development indicative of industrialized capitalist nations. When the economy is in a boom period, the industrial reserve army serves as a device to hold wages in check. When the economy goes into a recession or decline, the industrial reserve army "weighs down the active labor army" (Marx, 1961:639). According to Marx (1961), the "relative surplus population is therefore the pivot upon which the law of demand and supply of labor works. It confines the field of action of this law within the limits absolutely convenient to the activity of exploitation and to the domination of capital." As a result, the potential surplus population includes the entire labor force because any worker has the potential to be employed at one point in time and

unemployed and superfluous at another. The accumulation of capital creates a constantly reproducing reserve of laborers of which a large percentage are expendable.

> The relative mass of the industrial reserve army increases therefore, with the potential energy of wealth. But the greater this reserve army in proportion to the active labor army, the greater is the mass of consolidated surplus population, whose misery is in inverse ratio to its torment of labour. The more extensive, finally, the lazarus-layers of the working class, and the industrial reserve army, the greater is official pauperism (Marx, 1961:664).

Forms of the Industrial Reserve

There are three forms of the "reserve army" that exist as part of the surplus population. These three forms of the "reserve army" include a diverse group of people and can be broken down into the floating, stagnant and latent population.

The *floating* population is found where industries and employment opportunities are concentrated in metropolitan areas. Workers in this category tend to have a limited range of mobility in terms of job selection and therefore they move from job to job. Their mobility is determined by the movement of capital and technology. At some points in time this population is employed while at other periods of low productivity and economic downturns this group belongs to the reserve army. The *floating* industrial reserve is covered by unemployment insurance and sub-pay as a safeguard against rebellion and a recognition that at certain periods it can be activated into the labor force.

The *latent* reserve army is primarily found in agricultural areas but also in the informal economy of cities. This group is composed of workers who engage in seasonal

production. They are activated according to the cycles of various kinds of production work.

The last form of the reserve army is the *stagnant* surplus population, characterized by poverty and constant unemployment. The employment for this segment of the reserve army is irregular, casual, marginal, and part of what Marx called the "sediment". It is a surplus population that forms the bottom of the reserve army and it is composed, to a great extent, of young people who live in the central city of mature industrial cities.

When members of the stagnant segment of the "reserve army" do find work it is usually in the lower-wage section and labor-intense area of the labor market. Hence, the expression "dark skin" equals, "dirty work" takes on a real meaning. Typical "dirty work" jobs include: floor washing, fast-food clerks, fruit and vegetable pickers, material handlers, waitresses, janitors, messengers, waiters, dish washers, mechanic helpers, laborers, parking lot attendants, veterinary assistants, etc. There is also an "underground" economy of illegal criminal activity that provides employment of the youth.

The stagnant elements of the reserve army are a part of the modern lumpenproletariat which is urban based. It should be noted that this modern lumpenproletariat is not essentially the "scum" that Marx refers to in his analysis of this class. This modern lumpenproletariat that exist in the central city is made up in part of urban youth who do have a desire to participate in the labor force but who have been denied the opportunity due to changes in the mode of productions, changes in the urban development of the city, and institutionalized forms of discrimination. Historically, Black youth in urban areas have experienced one of the highest rates of unemployment of

any group in the labor market since the early 1950s, and this consequently has made them members of the reserve army in modern times.

Discrimination, Superexploitation and Racism within a Capitalist Society

The Marxist conflict paradigm, in order to be empirically valid, has to be modified to take into consideration specific tendencies of monopoly capitalism as it is related to the role of Black people. This includes their subjugation and exploitation due to institutionalized forms of racism. Marx, himself, did not take race into consideration in his analysis of capitalism but this analysis of inequality recognizes the role of racism and color stratification in a capitalist society.

There are several basic assumptions that must be included in this analysis. First, it is assumed that the political, economic and cultural subjugation of peoples of African descent is a result of the imposition of imperialism and colonialism in the modern world. In his seminal work *Caste, Class and Race*, Oliver Cox (1948:322) hypothesized that "racial exploitation and race prejudice developed among Europeans with the rise of capitalism and nationalism, and that because of the world-wide ramifications of capitalism, all racial antagonism can be traced to the policies and attitudes of leading capitalist people, the white people of Europe and North America." Racism has developed as an ideology to justify and rationalize the exploitation of peoples of African descent.

It is also assumed that there is a structured pattern of social relations between the dominant society and the African-American community that is reflected in low-income earnings, declining land ownership, increased welfare dependency, low-capital

investments, and lack of capital. The community itself is incapable of being self-sufficient and does not control any significant amount of the productive forces in this society. In terms of the labor market, a large segment of people in the community provide a source of readily available and easily exploitable cheap labor. A significant segment of this labor force can and is employed in labor intensive and technologically backward sectors of the productive process.

The "reserve army" of Black youth that reside in the central city is a direct result of discrimination, superexploitation and racism within a capitalist society. Although Marx did not specially refer to the issue of race within capitalism, the paradigm that is developed in this thesis includes the modern phenomena of discrimination, superexploitation and institutional racism.

Capitalism as a system is the basic cause of the exploitation and oppression of peoples of African descent. As a system, it exploits all members of the working class but the ideology of racism has created a situation where African-Americans are superexploited. Basically, racism within a capitalistic economy serves two functions. One, it creates a situation where color and "race" determines opportunity and mobility. People of color have historically been regulated to jobs that are dirty, low- paying and low-status. They have also been highly represented in the ranks of the unemployed. Secondly, racism divides the working class. White workers have developed a "false consciousness" about their position in the social structure due to the imposition of an ideology of racism. This has led to the maintenance and reproduction of racism as a

prevailing ideology. This has also created serious fragmentation within the working class as a whole.

Discrimination in a capitalist racist society takes place on two levels: individual and institutional. The maintenance of a "color line" in the labor market has facilitated the racial division of access to employment, training, higher wages, legal protection, etc. The superimposition of racism upon technological differentiation, hiring and changes in the mode of production have reproduced a labor force that is still basically racially segregated and a labor force where workers of color are disproportionately represented in low-status occupations or unemployed.

Discrimination in the labor process has meant that a disproportionate number of Blacks have experienced unemployment, especially in times of economic downturns in the economy that have occurred during a series of post World War recessions.

In contemporary Marxist analysis there is a category that conceptualized discrimination and exploitation. The category is superexploitation. Superexploitation is the process of exploitation based not only on class relations but racial distinctions as well. According to Hill (1980:47), there are two types of "superexploitation". The first type occurs when Black workers and White workers perform basically the same type of work, at the same level of skill. Yet, one group (Whites) receives a higher rate of pay. The second type of "superexploitation" occurs when a segment of the labor force is wholly or disproportionately represented in certain job categories, firms or industries in selected localities or regions. This segment is prevented from experiencing upward mobility, or in some cases, horizontal mobility, and produces a higher rate of surplus value than would

be the case if Black and White labor were competing and functioning in the market place as economic equals.

"Superexploitation" has several functions. (1) It reproduces inequality in the labor market between workers based on ascriptive criteria which in this case is primarily "skin color". "Superexploitation" makes it possible for White workers to use their "skin" color privileges to dominate the jobs and occupations which are well-paying, have good benefits, require skills which are highly rewarded, and highly stable. (2) It reproduces a surplus pool of labor available at any time to replenish segments of the work force. In the case of Black workers, this means that the "reserve army" is made up of those workers who when employed usually work in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs.

"Superexploitation" has also had a tendency to racially segregate the labor market into a predominately White skilled group in the monopoly and state sectors and a predominately Black and lesser skilled group that is utilized in all sectors but especially utilized in the competitive sector where low-skilled or unskilled workers are more prevalent.

"Superexploitation" has also created a class of people who perform the service work, the menial task and the most "dirty" work of any group in the society. Darker-skinned workers are exploited to a greater degree than the rest of the working class. The use of color in determining labor market status has been quite significant in the labor market of the United States.

The Demand for Black Labor, Color Stratification and the Racial Character of the "Reserve Army"

A key question to be raised at this point and in the subsequent analysis of the modern "reserve army" pertains to the role of color in the formation of the Black working class within American society. The analysis stresses the primacy of color and class as the fundamental basis for stratification in American society.

The system of color stratification is based on a scale that uses ascribed phenotypical characteristics as a status determinant. In the social distance scale that developed under slavery and that exists until today, darker-skinned peoples are clustered at the bottom positions of the social structure.

Color visibility has set the darker ethnic groups apart from the lighter groups. According to Blackwell (1975:68-69), color stratification also functions to restrict advancement within the opportunity structure and thereby retards upward advancement within the opportunity structure and thereby retards upward mobility in a class system. Peoples of color are set apart from the rest of the members of the larger society and are excluded from full participation in that structure because a system of color stratification develops and is superimposed on the total society. Whenever the color variable enters into the classification scheme, it is almost axiomatic that the more or less a person or a group approximates whiteness, the higher its rank in the larger system (Blackwell, 1975:68).

As a result of color stratification, social relations under monopoly capital become both economically and racially determined. Black and White labor in the U.S. is

segmented in and by the imposition of color stratification. This system has developed historically and its consequences are evident in the disproportionate numbers of Black people who today comprise a significant segment of the reserve army. The following discussion will outline the relationship between the mode of production and racially-determined labor-market segmentation.

Modes of Production and Racial Relations

The modes of production in the American economy have direct implications for determining the class character of the Black community. The formation of classes within the Black community is directly related to the history of Black exploitation and racial oppression under three dominant modes of production which include slavery, peonage and industrial wage labor (Hogan, 1984). The history of Black racial oppression and exploitation in the United States began with slavery and the development of the plantation system as a mode of production (Frazier, 1949; Genovese, 1967; 1968 and 1969; Wilson, 1978). In the phase of primitive accumulation, land was expropriated from Native Americans, labor was expropriated in the form of African slaves, and money from European sources was used to establish a slave-based economy in the U.S. South (Burnham and Wing, 1981:59). The plantation system which utilized Black labor created the economic foundation for the subsequent development of capitalism (DuBois, 1970; Cox, 1948; Williams, 1944, and Beckford, 1972).

As sociologist Oliver Cox (1948:322) has stated, racial exploitation and race prejudice developed among Europeans with the rise of capitalism and nationalism, and

that because of the world-wide ramifications of capitalism, all racial antagonisms can be traced to the policies of the leading capitalist people.

According to Wilson (1978), the polity during slavery enforced and defended the rights of the propertied class and effectively kept Blacks as a group disenfranchised. The racial belief system as part of the dominant mode of production led to the development of a social order that stratified people on the basis of class and their ascribed phenotype (color).

The division of labor under slavery had a definite racial character. The imposition of a color line in social relations meant that Blacks were forced into work which was demanding, low status, labor intense, and without compensation. Color was a key determinant for status in the labor process under slavery. As Cox has noted:

> The concept "bourgeoisie" and "white people" sometime seems to mean the same thing for, with respect to the colored people of the world, it is almost always through a white bourgeoisie that capitalism has been introduced. It is this need to impersonalize whole peoples which introduces into the class struggle the complicating factors known as race problems (Cox, 1948:344).

Between Whites and peoples of color under slavery, there was a rigid color bar. There was also a color code of separation between the slaves which was superimposed in the labor process.

As slavery developed, the lighter-skinned slaves were given a higher social position and better jobs than their darker counterparts. For example, house slaves tended to be lighter and consequently set apart from their darker counterparts. This set them apart as a group from the darker field slaves. Their standard of living, socialization and

role in the society was defined by their color. There was a higher value placed upon White ancestry which resulted in a system of color stratification. This also meant that the skills and social positions acquired by house slaves were beneficial in transforming them into a class of freedmen; thus, these Blacks became the aristocrats of Black slave society, later evolving into a Black petty bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, the darker-skinned field slaves were relegated to the lower status position of agricultural labor and unskilled work, engaging in the most manual and degrading of tasks. Their socialization reinforced the mental attitudes of inferiority. They were the low-status individuals of the slave mode of production. These field slaves evolved as a group who eventually became part of the American urban working class and a segment of the modern "reserve army".

The development of a color pigmentocracy continued into the post-slavery period of sharecropping, peonage and convict leasing. With the destruction of the slave mode of production, the Black sharecropping mode developed. It was a system of labor exploitation based on feudal property relationships. A class structure emerged that included southern landowners, northern and western capitalist, a southern merchant class, newly-freed slaves, and poor Whites. The ex-slaves were part of a new political economy in the south where the basic form of wealth was the material production of sharecropped land. The ex-slaves became a type of agricultural renter and/or peasant. Though legally free, they were tied to a new form of social and economic relationships with a southern merchant class, southern landowners and poor working-class Whites.

Sharecroppers worked under a contract which stipulated an exchange of crops for rent and other essential material commodities. The contracts were sanctioned by law and tended to favor the new landlord and merchant classes who controlled the productive process. The surplus agricultural goods generated by the sharecroppers went to the landlord as rent payment and to the merchant as payments for materials such as clothing, shoes, tools, etc.

The role of the polity was to enforce the new set of social relations that emerged in this period and, therefore; a series of "Jim Crows" laws were developed at the end of Reconstruction. These laws imposed a rigid color bar of segregation in all of the institutional spheres of the society. They were designed to deny the sharecropper and peons equal economic and political clout. This kept them tied to the feudal system of crop renting.

The system of color stratification carried over to the sharecropping and also the post-Reconstruction era. Lighter-skinned former slaves and their descendants who had previously experienced a higher status than their darker-skinned counterparts (Black African ex-slaves, yellow Chinese railroad workers, and "red" native Americans) continued to do so. Because they had better skills and education, they were able to take advantage of a limited number of opportunities which meant in most cases that they left the rural countryside and migrated to urban areas in the south, north, Canada, and in some cases, Europe, to become wage workers and artisans.

The Freedman's Bureau did have some impact on the color pigmentocracy at the close of the Civil War. It provided rehabilitation to the former slaves which meant that a

literate class of darker-skinned Blacks developed. This meant that some of the intra-group status distinction based on color did not disappear but began to erode. An analysis of the phenotype of the Black leadership and petty bourgeoisie class from the 1880s until the present will reveal characteristics of a color aristocracy where lighter-skinned Blacks have attained better jobs, education and opportunities over their darker counterparts.

There was also a rigid system of color stratification that existed between Blacks and Whites. This system of segregation fostered the development of separate societies. Although slavery had been destroyed as a system, the separation of the racial groups was evident in all the institutional aspects of the society including the labor market. Dark-skinned workers performed the majority of the domestic, servile and dirty work.

During the late part of the 19th century there were also other dynamics which affected the role of Blacks under the dominant mode of production. The system of agricultural production was slowly being transformed by mechanized farming, poor agricultural management, and natural disaster. Blacks began migrating into cities of the south and north, and these other peasants became the forerunners of the modern urban proletariat and "reserve army".

The demand for labor tapped into the European peasantry and the Black peasantry of the south. Conforming to the patterns established by the color codes, darker-skinned workers were placed in the lower rung of jobs in the industrial order. Employment opportunities were stratified on the basis of color and ethnicity.

In the twentieth century, the ideology of racism continued to dominate the social relations between Whites and people of color. With the passing of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*

(163 U.S. 537) in 1896, the separation of races in all aspects of life was institutionalized by law. Separate but equal was applied to education and employment. In reality, however, the segregated system produced separate and unequal societies.

The twentieth century began with the expansion of American industrial cities. The roots of the industrial city were based on the factory system. The factory system had existed since the building of the textile industries in New England in the 1830s and 1840s. However, it was not until the early twentieth century that it was firmly established. Under this system of production, former peasants became the wage laborers and "reserve army" who maintained the capitalist-owned machinery that produced goods or formed a labor reserve. According to Gordon (1977:94), the development of the factory system depended upon two main factors: (1) cost minimization and labor discipline; and (2) the availability of a reserve army. The first problem, cost minimization and labor discipline, required the homogenization of the labor process. The craft jobs were eliminated and the nature of the work became semi-skilled and operative. All factory workers were subjected to the same discipline of factory control (Gordon, 1977:94). The "reserve army" was used to help discipline those factory workers who challenged the established rules. In order for employers to maintain the control of workers, they needed a source of reserve labor that could replace the recalcitrants. Gordon (1977) argues that homogenization depended upon a "reserve army" due to the fact that a majority of the surplus workers were unskilled. Therefore, factory work had to be homogenized so the unskilled "reserve army" could be easily brought into the jobs requiring low skills and/or only a slight degree of training. This is what took place in the

industrial cities of the mid-west, south and northeast. The urban centers provided access to reservoirs of surplus labor composed of White ethnic and Black southern migrants.

In Detroit for example, the industrial reserve army was composed of European immigrants, poor Whites and the majority of Blacks. Thomas (1979:56-59) also cites the role of Black southern peasants who became industrial workers in Detroit during the early part of the twentieth century. Within the central city of Detroit, large factories were built which required a larger pool of exploitable labor. At first, the majority of the jobs were staffed by White ethnic immigrants. But with the start of the first world war, the supply of these Europeans diminished. In their place came Black southern peasants who at first had worked as low-status domestics and service workers. Increasingly, however, they were shifted over into industrial jobs. Thomas (1979:57) cites two periods of high Black migration, 1916 to 1917 and 1924 to 1925, with the demand for products produced in Detroit's industrial sector and the decrease in the supply of European labor.

There is evidence to support the thesis that the industrial capitalist of the city recruited Black workers from the south and north for the expressed purpose of meeting the labor shortage. Such organizations as the Detroit Urban League were used to recruit and train Black workers in industry. A leading industrialist of the period, Henry Ford, not only openly recruited Black workers, but in January of 1914 he announced that he would pay all workers five dollars a day (Widick 1972:26). Ford was very paternalistic in his use of Black ministers who served as labor agents for his company. This gave him tremendous influence and control over Black workers during this period.

In terms of the color bar during this period, it appears that a significant percentage of Blacks found work in heavy industry. According to data cited by Geschwender (1977:18), a survey of 20 firms in 1919 found that 11,000 Black workers were employed by Ford at the River Rouge and Highland Park Plants. By 1930, Blacks comprised about 4 percent of the gainful workers in Detroit (25,895 out of 640,474). They made up about 8 percent of the population. However, while Blacks were employed in industrial production, they still tended to be highly represented in those industrial jobs that were the dirtiest, hottest and the most dangerous.

The rigid color bar was modified to some extent, but by and large, a pattern of color stratification prevailed in the industries of Detroit. White workers were able to take advantage of their skin color privilege and were the beneficiaries of the better paying, more stable and skilled jobs. As far as the intra-group color stratification is concerned, there is scant evidence to support the thesis that lighter-skinned Blacks formed any type of aristocracy in the industrial factory system. The color bar at this point primarily existed between Black and White workers.

The depression of the 1930s was a period when production declined. Millions of people were put out of work. The jobs that were formerly held by Black workers were either eliminated or taken over by Whites. Given the nature of racism, Blacks as a group suffered more severely than Whites during this period because they tended to be concentrated at the lower levels of industry, concentrated in enterprises that were sensitive to fluctuations in the business cycle, and victims of the most adverse forms of discrimination in a time of employment scarcity.

The decline of southern agriculture and the increased competition from Whites for any work available forced Blacks into the ranks of the modern "reserve army". According to Ross (1967), the share of jobs held by Blacks in manufacturing, mining and mechanical occupations fell from 1,100,000 in 1930 to 738,000 in 1940. In wholesale and retail trade from 398,000 to 288,000 during that same period. The basis for the formation of a contemporary modern reserve army was laid in the 1930s and was only interrupted once by the demand for labor created during World War II.

The decade of the 1940s brought about some changes in the composition of the Black proletariat. On the one hand, the demand for labor in the armed services and in war-time production increased the demand for Black labor. However, at the end of the war, a cooling-off period occurred and once again Blacks found themselves either underemployed or unemployed. According to Wilson (1978:89), the steady stream of Black migrants was absorbed into the labor market until the late 1940s and early 1950s. It was in the early 1950s that Black unemployment began its slow but steady increase. For Blacks in general, from the middle 1950s until the 1970s, the rate of unemployment increased. For Black youth, a similar situation has developed. As the data in Table 1 indicates, the percentage of Black youth in the U.S. who were unemployed in the 1970s was higher than their White counterparts and also higher than the total percentage. The unemployment rate for White youth peaked during the economic crisis of 1975 when it was 17.9 percent. Black youth unemployment during that same period was 39.5 percent and it reached its peak in 1977 at 41.1 percent. By the end of the decade, White youth unemployment was 15.5 percent, while Black youth unemployment was 38.5 percent.

Table 1 U.S. Unemployment Rate (Percent) Teenagers 16-19)			
	Total	**White**	**Black**
1972	16.2	14.2	35.4
1975	19.9	17.9	39.5
1976	19.0	16.9	39.2
1977	17.8	15.4	41.1
1978	16.4	13.9	38.7
1979	16.1	14.0	36.5
1980	17.8	15.5	38.5
Source: *U.S. Statistical Abstract*, 1984.			

While it is true that Whites compose a section of the urban underclass, it appears that a greater percentage of poverty and unemployment exists among Blacks. This is the reason that the "reserve army" has taken on a racial character in modern times. In his analysis of race and class in American society, William Wilson drew similar conclusions when he wrote:

> The patterns of racial oppression in the past created the huge Black underclass, as the accumulation of disadvantages were passed on from generation to generation, and the technological and economic revolution of advanced industrial society combined to ensure it a permanent status (1978:12).

Wilson's analysis goes on to say that as a result of disinvestment, decentralization, shifts from goods-producing to service-producing industries and changes in the corporate and governmental structure, a segmented labor market has developed and created two distinct groups within Black America. One is an educated and talented group of Blacks that are experiencing job opportunities, and the other is composed of the poorly-trained

Blacks who live in or near poverty and who continue to be reproduced as a urban underclass with limited opportunity.

As a result of changes in the productive process and the lingering manifestations of racism, the group at the bottom of the social structure comprises a significant segment of the "reserve army". They have little income, occupational skills or education. When they do work, it is usually in the low-wage competitive or service sector of the labor market. They are the major welfare recipients and they experience the least amount of upward social mobility in the class structure. In urban areas they are confined to a great extent into the most depressed areas of the central city. Consequently, their role as a group has been that of a superexploited segment of the proletariat. Their presence at the bottom of the class structure gives the "reserve army" its unique racial character.

The Modern Reserve Army and Racism

In the preceding analysis, the role of Black labor was discussed as it has evolved under three different types of political economies in the United States which included slavery, sharecropping and industrial wage labor. In each of these political economies, the dark-skinned worker's function changed from slavery to sharecropping to industrial wage work. The imposition of racism in the labor process has segmented a significant percentage of Blacks and peoples of color in the lowest levels of the class structure. One of the major requirements of the capitalist economy is to have sources of readily available, cheap labor in supply which can be activated to perform certain tasks. The tasks usually involved work that is low status, servile, dangerous, and the least desirable.

During the decade of the 1970s in Detroit, this meant that a significant segment of the central city population performed this role or they did not work at all. These are the class of people who are permanently unemployed and comprise the "lost generation".

In the urban society that emerged in Detroit, racism developed as an ideology and a social fact. It was a phenomena that involved the political, economic and cultural exploitation, and oppression of peoples of color based on social identity that was physically (phenotypically) determined. Black and White were categories that were used to assign people to their position and role in the social structure and labor process.

The socioeconomic matrix of racism in Detroit in the 1970s involved: 1) the confinement of the majority of the Black population to the central city; 2) the utilization of Blacks as wage and surplus labor; 3) intense competition and antagonism between racial groups for jobs, education, residential space, political control, and cultural vitality; 4) the economic decline and transformation of the cities industrially-based economy; and 5) the increase of a surplus population in the central city dependent on transfer payments.

The imposition of race stratified people in the social system on the basis of phenotypical characteristics. Racial divisions were intrinsic to the composition of the floating, latent and stagnant segments of the reserve army. At the bottom of the reserve army is the stagnant segment where you will find the greatest percentage of workers of color including a significant percentage of Black youth.

The floating sector of the reserve army includes those people who are unemployed due to changes in the mode of production and technological advancements which causes labor displacement and shifts in the business cycle. This type of unemployment can be

classified as cyclical, structural and technological. The majority of persons counted each month as unemployed fall into this category.

This category included those workers who move back and forth in the labor market between employment and unemployment. They are "subsidized" on unemployment benefits. Workers in this group tend to be the most active in search of work. In some cases, they are called back to jobs from which they were laid off due to fluctuations in the business cycle. People who are just entering the labor market in search of work are also in this category. A significant segment of workers in the U.S. have been in this category at one time or another. For workers in the monopoly sector of production such as automobile and steel, membership in the "floating" segment of the reserve army is a temporary condition. This is especially true of workers with contracts that have extended sub-pay benefits serving to buffer them from being completely impoverished.

The "floating" segment does have a racial character. First, White workers tend to be located in this section of the labor reserve on a shorter term. Their seniority places them high up on the call-back list when production picks up.

Braverman (1974:384) explains that the category of latent workers in modern times results from them being displaced by what he calls the process of imperialist penetration, which has disrupted the traditional forms of labor and subsistence. He points out that the transformation of the latent reserve has become much more internationalized. In each capitalist country, the state has policies which make the use of foreign workers conform to the need of capital. For example, in the U.S. and Western Europe, a significant percentage of low-skilled, low-status agricultural workers are drawn from

India, Pakistan, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Africa, the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Latin America.

There are also female workers who are a significant part of the new mass occupations, and are being increasingly incorporated into jobs in the labor market that are low-status, menial, poorly-paid, and marginal.

There is also an association between color and submersion into the latent segments of the reserve army. The overwhelming majority of people in this category have ascribed characteristics which force them into subjugated groups. In Michigan, for example, a significant segment of the latent reserve is composed of brown Chicano workers who perform seasonal agricultural work.

The last segment of the reserve army is the stagnant segment. The stagnant's role in the labor force is extremely marginal, if not dormant. This is the segment of the reserve army in modern times that increasingly has become composed of racial minorities in urban areas. They compose a sector of the surplus population that is located at the very base of capitalist society. People of color comprise the overwhelming majority in this category. Members of the stagnant are the permanently unemployed. This category includes those people who have dropped out of the labor force. The social reproduction of this group under conditions determined by monopoly capital was constant throughout the period under investigation.

The "lost generation" of unemployed youth between the ages of 16 to 24 comprise a significant percentage of the stagnant. As the period of industrial wage labor has developed since the middle of the 1950s, the size of this group has enlarged. The

stagnant are most likely to be found in urban areas that are characteristically poor and underdeveloped. The stagnant live in families that exist at or below poverty. In some cases they are members of households where no one is employed. The stagnant are subsidized through a number of social welfare programs. They are also contained in significant numbers in penal and mental institutions. The educational attainment in most cases is a result of poor schooling and institutional rejection. They have sometimes been referred to as the "hard-core" unemployed.

This system of social stratification is a major characteristic of western industrial urban society. There is a high correlation between people of color and their subjugation into the marginal sector of the labor reserve.

Structural Changes in the Central City

In order to better understand how the segments of the reserve army were reproduced during the seventies in Detroit, it is important to conceptualize the overall urban development of the city during the period under investigation.

Structurally, what happened in Detroit during the period under investigation was: 1) a change in the city's racial composition; 2) a decline in the production of automobile and steel production in the monopoly sector of the economy; 3) a displacement of some workers due to automation and robotics; 4) major changes, shifts and declines in employment, manufacturing, retail, wholesale, and service industries.

All of these factors contributed to the increase in unemployment, and poverty which subsequently resulted in the reproduction of a urban population that became increasingly a young, black, urban underclass reserve army labor.

Race, Space and the Central City: The Racial Composition of Detroit

Within the social structure of American cities, the allocation of residential space has been determined by racial discrimination. The urbanization of Blacks in Detroit is a long historical process which illustrates the specific spatial context within which Black/White relationships have taken place. The formation and roots of what was to become a Black northern industrial working class community in Detroit go back to the early 1700's when the majority of Blacks in Detroit were owned as slaves. The spatial dispersion of the slave population in Detroit makes it impossible to identify any real Black community. Although the ordinance of 1787 outlawed slavery in the Northwest Territory, slaves were held in bondage for a number of years after that time (Ewen, 1978). At the turn of the 19th century, relatively few Blacks lived in Detroit. A law in 1827 required "free" Blacks to post a $500 bond as a prerequisite for establishing residence. According to Thomas (1979:56), the first significant number of Blacks began to appear in Detroit between 1830 and 1840. In 1840, there were 193 Blacks in Detroit and by 1850 their numbers had increased to 587 (Thomas, 1979). By 1850, Blacks comprised 2.8 percent of the total Detroit population (Ewen, 1979:110). Between 1850 and 1860 Blacks in-migration had increased the Black population of 3.1 percent of the total. From 1860

until 1910, the Black percentage of the total population declined from 3.1 percent in 1860 to 1.2 percent in 1910.

According to Deskins (1972), at the turn of the century, the principle Black community in Detroit continued to be located on the lower east side (1972:101). With the advent of technological changes in production and transportation, Detroit was being transformed from a pedestrian to a streetcar city which meant that the residents had greater mobility. However, the core of the Black community remained very stable.

For the remainder of the century, the Black population of Detroit steadily increased. By 1940, the Black population numbered 149,119 out of a total population of 1.6 million persons. Blacks composed 9.2 percent of the population and by 1950, Blacks made up 16.2 percent of the population, and by 1960 the Black population was 482,229 or 28.9 percent of the total.

Since the 1967 rebellion, the number of whites living within the central city of Detroit has decreased. The number of Blacks within the central city has continuously increased. The pattern of Black population dispersion has been labeled one of "continuous expansion". According to Sinclair (1972:48), the Black population has expanded out from two central core locations that were the original "black ghettos" of Detroit. These two areas include the "Black Belt" of the lower east side and the near northwest side.

In a study of racial residential segregation, it was shown that between 1960 and 1970 a high level of residential segregation existed in Detroit (Darden, 1979). The number of Whites in the population of Detroit dropped between 1960 and 1970, from

1,182,000 to 838,000. On the other hand, the Black population increased from 482,000 to 660,000. The percentage of Blacks in the central city increased from 28.9 percent to 43.7 percent of the total by 1970. This growth was attributed to natural increase and net in migration. Whites on the other hand had a slower rate of natural increase and a higher rate of net migration to the suburbs and outlying areas.

By the end of the seventies, Blacks had become the majority of the central city population in Detroit. Table 2, reveals that the total population of the central city declined. However, the Black population increased from 660,428 to 758,939 in 1980. For Whites, their population went from 838,877 in 1979 to 413,730 in 1980.

Table 2

Population of the City of Detroit, By Race

Detroit Central City	1970	1980
Total	1,511,482	1,203,339
Black	660,428	758,939
White	838,877	413,730

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1983. Philadelphia Office.

During the 1970's it is evident that there was an out-migration of Whites from the central city. The central city essentially became a territory inhabited by a predominately Black working class. This historical trend of continuous Black urbanization in Detroit in the second half of the twentieth century has resulted in a structural pattern of spatial

inequality which has a distinctive racial character. The territorial space is racially divided and physically separate.

The division of territory along racial lines represents a form of subjugation. This subjugation is facilitated by institutional mechanisms that include racially determined forms of selective economic exchange such as renting, buying, selling, financing, securing, and insuring commercial and private property. The system is also supported by covenants and overall resistance on the part of Whites to share residential space and commercial opportunities. The formation of predominantly Black central city territories is in this case a direct expression of racial subordination.

Automobile and Steel Production

The major industry in Detroit is automobile production. Detroit is a "metal-bending town" with a significant percentage of its work force engaged in industries which pour, stamp and fabricate metals. Although the automobile industry has decentralized into other regions of the United States and the world, Detroit is still the major center for decision making, engineering and machine production.

The level of automobile and steel production is a barometer of one central structural economic characteristic of the city. Automobile production is the dominant economic force in Detroit. The social structure of Detroit has developed within the context of America's industrial-based economy. Since the turn of the century, the factories, laboratories, assembly lines, metal fabricating plants, and design studios have

produced the majority of automobiles sold in the United States. The industry is the economic foundation of the region.

Detroit grew in the early part of the twentieth century because of the expansion of the automobile industry. After World War II, the automobile industry began to decentralize. This meant that the surrounding suburbs of Detroit were brought into the automotive realm that had been located within the central city. The decentralization was facilitated by the use of an elaborate system of highways, new forms of technology and modern factory systems. There were also changes in the patterns of land use from agricultural to industrial.

The new production areas provided employment opportunities primarily to Whites. As the industry left the central city, so did a significant segment of the active work force.

According to the data in Table 3, at the start of the decade, the level of domestic automobile production was 6.5 million units. In 1973, it reached 9.7 million units but the rate went down to 6.7 million units during the 1975 recession. There was some growth from 1975 to 1978 when the rate reached 9.2 million units. However, this was to be the highest level of reduction reached in the decade. By 1980, domestic automobile production was 6.6 million units. This was only a tenth of one percent above the level of what production had been in 1970, at the start of the decade.

Table 3

Automobile Output - Production and Value

Year	New Auto Supply Total (Mil. Units)	Domestic Output Imports (Mil. Units)	Sale of Imports (Mil. Units)	Percent of Total (Imports)
1970	8.6	6.5	2.0	23.7
1972	11.3	8.8	2.5	21.8
1973	12.3	9.7	2.6	21.4
1974	9.6	7.3	2.2	23.4
1975	9.0	6.7	2.3	25.6
1976	10.8	8.5	2.3	21.5
1977	12.1	9.2	2.9	24.0
1978	12.0	9.2	2.8	23.6
1979	10.6	8.2	2.3	22.1
1980	9.0	6.6	2.4	26.7

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, *The National Income and Product Accounts of the United States*, 1929-76 and 1976-79, and *Survey of Current Business*, April 1981.

Because steel is one of the essential elements in all of the aspects of the production of automobiles, its level of production is a good indicator of the economic state of the Detroit economy. According to the data in Table 4, steel production in Detroit was 9.5 million net tons in 1970. This dropped to 9.0 million net tons the following year. By 1973, the rate of production had reached its peak for the decade at 10,944,917 net tons. This rate dropped sharply during the 1975 recession back to the 1971 level of nine million net tons. It continued to climb into 1976 with a total output of 10,387,706 tons. By 1977, the rate had fallen again to roughly 10 million net tons.

Table 4		
Steel Production (Net Tons) Detroit Area		
Year	Production	Index
1970	9,504,438	103.2
1971	9,069,348	98.1
1972	9,380,320	101.2
1973	10,944,917	118.4
1974	10,485,685	113.1
1975	9,025,988	97.1
1976	10,387,706	113.2
1977	10,029,324	109.4
Source: *The Detroit Area Economic Fact Book.* The Detroit Area Economic Forum, 1978, p.9.		

While steel and automobile production both fluctuated, especially during the 1973 and 1976 recession years, steel production increased overall while the automobile industry went through a cycle of tremendous increase and decrease. The level of domestic automobile production was almost the same at the end of the decade as it was at the start.

One of the central arguments in Marxist analysis of capitalism is the role that technology plays in creating a surplus population. According to this idea, the implementation of new machinery and technology which is labor displacing and labor saving creates a surplus population of displaced workers. This reserve army is constantly being produced in direct proportion to the reproduction of surplus value.

The automobile industry in Detroit has increasingly relied upon robotics to do work that requires welding, painting, loading, and unloading (pick and place) routines. On a larger scale, there have also been structural changes which have taken place in the country which have transformed the mode of production. The evolutionary development of new forms of technology, transportation and communication has rendered some types of work obsolete. Increasingly, robots, digital computers and numerically-controlled machines have been introduced into the production process.

According to the data of Table 5, the number of numerically-controlled machines in the United States steadily increased during the 1970's. The development of robotics technology in Michigan was important because of the heavy reliance in the automobile industry on robots and the high priority placed on the development of robotics technology in the seventies and early eighties by the state and private sector.

Table 5	
Growth of Numerically-Controlled Machine Tools in U.S., 1970-1980	
Year	Total Numerically-Controlled Machine Tools
1970	21.1
1971	22.4
1972	24.0
1973	26.7
1974	30.9
1975	34.9
1976	38.8
1977	43.3
1978	49.0
1979	56.2
1980	65.1
Sources: H. Allan Hunt and Timothy L. Hunt, *Human Resource Implication of Robotics, Upjohn Institute: Kalamazoo, Michigan*, 1983, p. 19.	

The automobile industry has historically depended upon and supported the development of new forms of technology which would increase production and profits. Therefore, it has also been a major consumer of labor-saving devices which are automated. The factory system of production has steadily progressed from the belt-driven lines of the early 1920's plants to the ultra modern "hi-tech" production plants of the 1980's.

Surprisingly, the number of robots in use in the United States at the end of the seventies was low. According to Hunt and Hunt (1983:x) the number of robots were between 6,800 and 7,000 in all U.S. factories. They predict that the real significant impact of robotics on job displacement will not take place until the 1990's.

According to the data in Table 6, there was some displacement in the labor market by the end of the decade. The highest level of displacement occurred in painting, followed by welding, machine loading, assembly operatives and others.

Labor displacement within certain sectors of the automobile industry means that there will be fewer jobs. However, it should be pointed out that very few young central-city workers between the ages of 16-19 stand to be put out of work because it is not likely that these young workers would have accumulated enough training or had the opportunity to work at the points of production that were roboticized. It is only possible to speculate if there is any direct relationship between the implementation of robots in production and the number of youth in the central city who are unemployed. The trend in the data concerning the rise of numerically-controlled machines and youth unemployment suggest some direct association. As the number of numerically-controlled machines has increased, so has the number of unemployed youth. However, there was not enough available data to determine the process which took place in Detroit.

Table 6

Displacement Impact of Robots in Michigan by Application, Cumulative 1978 to 1990

	Autos		All other Manufacturing		Total	
Application	1978 Employment Level	Displacement Range (percent)	1978 Employment Level	Displacement Range (percent)	1978 Employment Level	Displacement Range (Percent)
Welding	14,910	15-20	22,694	2-4	37,604	7-10
Assembly	65,764	5-10	50,678	1-2	116,442	3-6
Painting	4,378	29-40	4,387	6-10	8,765	17-25
Machine loading/unloading	42,149	8-14	86,906	2-3	129,055	4-7
All operatives & laborers	206,927	5-9	397,598	1-2	604,525	2-4
All employment	409,506	3-4	769,841	0-1	1,179,347	1-2

Sources: H. Allan Hunt and Timothy L. Hunt, *Human Resource Implication of Robotics*, W. E. Upjohn Institute: Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1983. Employment data based upon unpublished OE data provided by Office of Economic Growth and Employment Projections Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C.

A more detailed breakdown of employment in manufacturing, retail, wholesale, and service industries shows a decline in the number of employees and the number of establishments within the central city. In manufacturing, the number of employees declined from 209,700 in 1967 to 153,300 in 1977. The number of establishments declined from 2,947 in 1967 to 1,954 in 1977. In retailing, the number of employees dropped from 75,329 in 1967 to 48,457 in 1977. The number of establishments dropped from 8,433 in 1967 to 5,142 in 1977. The wholesale sector experienced a decline in the number of employees and establishments. In 1967, the number of employees was 44,753 and, by 1977 that number had dropped to 24,772. The number of wholesale establishments dropped from 3,095 in 1967 to 1,657 in 1977. The number of people

employed in service industries declined from 52,832 to 42,721. The number of establishments declined from 8,815 to 6,468 (see Table 7).

In summary, the data indicates a general pattern of job loss during the 1970's with a steady decline of employment opportunities and jobs within the central city of Detroit. The structure of employment opportunities shifted away from central city to the suburbs. This has meant that the opportunity for employment among central city residents decreased over time. Central city residents were faced with a shrinking job market while at the same time new employment opportunities were opening in surrounding areas. For the majority of central city residents, these jobs were not accessible because of the economics of relocation and institutionalized class and racial discrimination which has prevented Black and poor people from having equal access to opportunities made available by suburban development in the Detroit suburban region.

Table 7		
Employment and Firms in Selected Sectors of Detroit (Central City) 1967-1977		
All Other Manufacturing		
	1967	1977
Number of Employees	209,700	153,000
Number of Establishments	2,974	1,954
Retail		
	1967	1977
Number of Employees	75,329	48,457
Number of Establishments	8,433	5,142
Wholesale		
	1967	1977
Number of Employees	44,753	24,772
Number of Establishments	3,095	1,657
Service		
	1967	1977
Number of Employees	52,832	42,721
Number of Establishments	8,815	6,468
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census of Manufacturing, 1967 and 1977.		

Summary

This chapter has included a discussion of the statement of the research problem, the purpose of the research and the theoretical framework. The goal of the research is to analyze the situation of Black youth unemployment in Detroit as a phenomena associated with the development of a modern "reserve army". The theoretical framework is based on

the Marxist conflict perspective. The perspective attributes the development of youth unemployment to the process of capital accumulation and racial exploitation.

Focusing on the historical dynamics of the demand for Black labor, color stratification and the racial character of the "reserve army" was done to: 1) illustrate the historical role of Black people in the U.S. economy; 2) demonstrate how color stratification has worked to stratify the labor force; and 3) to demonstrate how the imposition of racism on the labor process produced a reserve army of labor that is stratified on the basis of color.

As I have demonstrated, the role of Blacks in the labor force of the U.S. has gone through three historical stages that include slavery, peonage and industrial wage labor. In each of these stages, Blacks and people of color have been permanently relegated to the working class and the reserve army. Change in the mode of production along with the ideology of racism has led to an increasingly polarized population. Racism has created a dual society. In this system, Blacks and peoples of color have been denied equality of opportunity. They have been reproduced as a segment of an ever-expanding surplus population that experience high rates of unemployment.

The reproduction of a surplus population is an essential aspect of capitalist development. In order for capital to realize a margin of profit, it must constantly reproduce a surplus population. In modern times, this has meant that such groups as Black teenagers in urban areas have been socially reproduced by capital to function as a class of cheap and/or stagnant labor.

What happened in Detroit was a complex set of structural changes that led to the economic demise of the central city. The city lost a significant percentage of its population which meant a loss of tax revenue. The city experienced industrial decline, due to plant closings and the general patterns of disinvestment. There was a loss of jobs in manufacturing, retail, wholesale, and service industries. The production of automobiles and steel also slowed down and tended to fluctuate before and after the 1974-1975 recession. There was also some labor displaced by robots and numerically-controlled machines. For investors, the city was not considered an attractive investment which meant less capital was invested into the city's economy.

For the population that remained in Detroit, the level of poverty and unemployment increased. Clearly, Detroit was a declining city with a shrinking tax base and an unhealthy economic climate.

In addition to the structural crisis faced by the city of Detroit, there was institutionalized racism which historically had denied Blacks and other peoples of color in Detroit any equality of opportunity. In a declining economy, those persons who had been discriminated against found themselves in a deteriorating position. Unlike the traditional reserve army that has potential to be activated, the study will show how Black youth in Detroit found it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to participate in the labor market. Because of their age and the length of labor market experience, these youth sometimes found work in service jobs that were low paying, short term, labor intense, dirty, dangerous and in some cases illegal. The majority of these jobs that were not in the major monopoly sector but in the competitive sector where the ratio of physical capital to

workers where productivity tends to be low, and the scale or production is small. The role of Black youth as part of the reserve army in Detroit is an example of how racial minorities in urban areas function under monopoly capital. They constituted the hard-core element of the surplus population that experienced high levels of job insecurity, unemployment, illiteracy, drug and alcohol abuse, violence, and prison. This group is a "lost generation" and represents a major contradiction in the urbanization process under capitalism.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Methodology

This chapter discusses: (1) Site and sample selection, (2) The research questions, (3) The sources of data, (4) The limitations of the study as reflected in the data base, (5) The classification scheme of unemployment; and (6) The problem of empirically verifying the Marxist model of conflict theory.

As was stated in the first chapter, the purpose of this research is to apply the Marxist theory of the "reserve army" to explain one aspect of the reality of the inequality that exist for Black youth in Detroit, as reflected in their labor market status. The procedure followed in carrying out this research included: (1) A review of the Marxist theory of the "reserve army" including a discussion of the (a) conflict paradigm, (b) the process of capital accumulation, (c) the segmentation of the "reserve army"; and (d) the role of discrimination and super exploitation within a capitalist society; (2) The selection procedure of a suitable urban population for the study; (3) The development of specific research questions; (4) Data collection; and (5) An evaluation of the suitability of the theoretical perspective.

Selection of the Research Site and the Research Population

The selection of Detroit as the research site was based on four factors. One, the city of Detroit at the time of the study had a large and significant Black population. During the decade under investigation, the Black population increased to over fifty percent. This population was relatively young, Black and predominately working class. Two, the city had a history of institutionalized racism and class struggle. There was a high degree of structural inequality that existed between the cities Black and White populations in the areas of employment, housing, income, education and poverty. Three, Detroit had been the center of automobile production and was one of the nation's largest metropolitan areas. It was a key industrial region in the world. It's geographical location made it a part of a vast network of industrial towns in the midwest that made up a significant percentage of the production of transportation and transportation-related equipment. According to Sinclair (1972), Detroit had a greater concentration in manufacturing than any other major city in the United States. The majority of the manufacturing was centered in the automobile industry. The city also served as the center of industries which complimented automobile production such as tooling, engineering, machinery and basic parts manufacturing. Four, during the decade under investigation,Black youth unemployment became a major urban problem. During the decade, Black youth made up a significant segment of those people who were being reproduced as a "reserve army" of labor as a result of the decline in the cities' industrial base. The decline of the automobile industry in Detroit had a tremendous impact on the quality of life for the population. As the size of Detroit's Black population increased, so

did the size of it's "reserve army" of labor. Though Blacks in Detroit attained a certain degree of political clout and it's Black middle class enjoyed some degree of economic advancement, the large majority of Black working-class youth in Detroit experienced a life of poverty and unemployment.

Research Questions

1. What were the rates of unemployment in the City of Detroit between 1970 and 1980?

2. Was there a difference, by race, in the rate of unemployment in the city between 1970 and 1980?

3. For members of the "lost generation", Black youth between the ages of 16-24, was there a difference in their rate of unemployment and labor-force participation as compared to their White counterparts?

4. What were the differences between the educational status of youth who were unemployed?

5. What were the differences in the educational status of youth who had dropped out of the labor force?

6. What was the level of poverty in the city between 1970 and 1980?

7. What percentage of families lived below the poverty level during the decade?

8. What was the poverty status of youth in the city between 1970 and 1980?

9. How do the rates of Black youth unemployment compare to the trends that were taking place in the economy of the city of Detroit?

10. What were some of the major characteristics of the modern "reserve army" of labor which emerged in Detroit between 1979 and 1980?

Sources of Data

The type of data used in this study has come from a number of sources. Each research question required a specific type of data. The primary sources consist of data generated by Federal, State and local governmental agencies, as well as a private investors services and a non-profit research institute.

The Primary Sources

Federal Government Documents and Statistics

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Census of the Population, 1970 and 1980.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Census of Manufacturing, 1967 and 1977.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Geographical Profile of Employment and Unemployment, 1970-1980.

U.S. Bureau of Economics Analysis, the National Income and Product Accounts of the United States, 1929-76 and 1976-79, and Survey of Current Business, April 1981.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Historical Statistics for the State and Selected Statistical Area, 1977 and earlier years.

State Data

The majority of the data was collected on a statewide basis and did not include specific data on Detroit's central city. However, these data were surveyed in order to get some idea of the scope and magnitude of the problem in Michigan in general.

Michigan Department Labor. Bureau of Employment and Training. *Youth Unemployment: The Promise of Innovative Manpower Programs.* October 1977.

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Other Primary Sources of Data

Moody's Municipal and Government Manual. Moody's Investors Service, Inc., New York. (1967, 1970, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1980, 1983).

H. Allan Hunt and Timothy L. Hunt. *Human Resource Implications of Robotics,* Kalamazoo, Michigan: The W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 1983.

Michigan Employment Security Commission. Research and Statistics Division. *Annual Planning Report. Fiscal Year 1981. Detroit SMSA.* Detroit Labor Market Analysis Unit, Detroit, 1981.

Michigan Employment Security Commission. Research and Statistics Division. *Annual Planning Information Fiscal Year 1982.* Detroit Labor Market Analysis Unit, Detroit, 1982.

Problems and Limitations

The major problem encountered in this research was the utilization of empirical data to illustrate the "reserve army" concept. Because the bulk of Marxist theory is both abstract and philosophical, it was difficult to translate some of the concepts such as the

mode of production or capital accumulation into quantifiable terms. This has proved to be a major obstacle in the research since its inception.

Out of the struggle to apply the Marxian paradigm, I developed a strategy of practical empiricism. This meant that there were some specific research questions generated that asked questions about Detroit's economy, unemployment and poverty. Since unemployment is a consequence of both economic and racial factors, the research questions were designed to uncover trends in the data that related to the social production of the "lost generation" as a group.

In one sense the methodology is a structuralist analysis of the phenomena. It looks at the creation of the "reserve army" as a consequence of changes that have occurred in the productive process as well as with the changes in racial relations. The research model is based on the assumption that the formation of the "reserve army" and its subsequent reproduction is a direct result of the structural features of monopoly capital.

It also should be pointed out that the data on unemployment varies, due to the way in which it is defined and calculated among various governmental agencies and research groups. Whenever possible, youth refer to those persons 16 to 24 years of age. In some cases, the data is only available for those persons 16 to 19.

The Classification and Calculation of Unemployment

The U.S. Department of Labor calculates unemployment as an unduplicated estimate of area residents who did not earn any wages during the survey week including

the 12th of the month, and who were able, available and actively seeking work during the thirty day period preceding the survey week. Long-term unemployment is based on an observable relationship between the unemployment for a particular race/sex group and unemployed jobless rate which is defined as the number of long-term unemployed divided by the total number of persons in the labor force.

Governmental agencies have also classified several types of unemployment which include: cyclical, seasonal, frictional, structural and technological. *Cyclical unemployment* is the relationship between unemployment and the business cycle; the more prosperous the economy, the lower the unemployment rate.

Seasonal unemployment results from a decrease in demand for labor because of the changing of seasons and is usually found in industries such as agriculture and construction. *Frictional unemployment* is the loss of work that occurs when workers change jobs or locations. This kind of unemployment is not considered serious because it is usually temporary. *Structural unemployment* results from a major industrial change in a region, causing many people to lose their jobs, when there is de-industrialization or a shut down of production. *Technological unemployment* is the displacement of labor that occurs through automation and cybernetics that makes jobs obsolete.

There is some discrepancy in the meaning and validity of these terms and they vary among researchers and agencies. For example, the National Urban League and its affiliates multiply the governmental figures by four whenever they compute an unemployment statistic. Wherever possible, the greatest attempt will be made to use data

that is congruent and compatible, but it should be pointed out that this will not always be possible.

There is an additional category of "discouraged" workers who have given up looking for work and are usually ignored or passed over by surveys and survey pollsters, due to an inadequate methodology and "fear" among surveyors of interviewing young, Black central-city youth. This latter situation is also indicative of the census undercount that occurs in urban areas with significant Black population.

CHAPTER III

BLACK YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

The Reproduction of the "Reserve Army" in Detroit

This chapter will present empirical data that will address specific questions about the existence and persistence of Black youth unemployment and poverty in Detroit during the 1970's. The data presented in this chapter will be used to illustrate the existence of a "lost generation" that comprises a segment of the modern "reserve army" of labor.

As has been argued in the previous chapters, the creation of a young, urban-based unemployed population is the consequence of a historical process of underdevelopment related to changes in the dominant modes of production, migration, institutionalized racism, and structural changes in the urban system.

The "lost generation" experiences a high rate of unemployment and poverty. As a segment of a class within the Black working class, the "lost generation" is highly represented in the stagnant category of the "reserve army". While some members of this stagnant population occasionally find temporary work in the marginal areas of the labor market or in the midst of the underground economy, one of the main characteristics of the stagnant sector is the inability of it's members to find meaningful work on a long term basis. What happened is that the "lost generation" has either dropped out or was pushed

out of the labor market. This results in a situation where they subsist below the poverty level and are highly dependent upon social welfare programs for their survival. They comprise an urban based surplus population.

In order to illustrate their reproduction as a reserve army, data will be presented that will trace the development of their unemployment and poverty. The data will address the specific research questions, conceptualized in Chapter Two where research methodology was discussed.

Unemployment in the City of Detroit 1970-1980

One of the major elements of Detroit's urban crisis was the increase of unemployment during the decade. Unemployment was a problem experienced not only by more mature workers in the automobile industry, unemployment was also a severe problem for the cities youth population, especially those in the Black working-class communities. In the core Black communities of Detroit, there was a segment of youth who stood the chance of never finding a job on a long-term basis.

The first research question addresses the unemployment situation by asking: (1) What were the rates of unemployment in the City of Detroit between 1970 and 1980?

The rate of unemployment in Detroit was higher than the rates at the state and national level. From a low of 6.9 percent in 1973 to a high of 14.5 percent in the mid-seventies (see Table 8). The decade began with the unemployment rate at 8.1 percent in the city compared to 6.7 percent in the state to 4.9 percent nationwide. The rate of unemployment in the city fluctuated between 1970 and 1973, when it reached its lowest

percentage of the decade at 6.9 percent. From 1973 to 1975, there was an increase in unemployment. In 1974, the rate of unemployment was 8.5 percent and by 1975 the rate of unemployment was 14.5 percent. Between 1975 and 1978, the unemployment rate declined to 8.3 percent, however, by 1980 the unemployment rate was 16.6 percent. This rate of unemployment was still higher than the rate for the state and the nation. It is clear from the data, that unemployment was a major problem in the City of Detroit.

Table 8
Unemployment Rates, Detroit City, Michigan and 1970-1980 Annual Averages (Percent)

	Detroit City*	Michigan**	United States**
1970	8.1	6.7	4.8
1971	9.4	7.6	5.9
1972	8.6	7.0	5.6
1973	6.9	5.9	4.9
1974	8.5	7.4	5.6
1975	14.5	12.5	8.5
1976	11.1	9.4	7.7
1977	9.8	8.2	7.0
1978	8.3	6.9	6.0
1979	10.3	7.8	5.8
1980	16.6	12.6	7.1

*Michigan Employment Security Commission Research & Statistics Division.
**U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics
Source: City of Detroit *Annual Planning Information*, Fiscal Year 1982, p.7.

In order to get a more accurate picture of the racial differences in the rate of unemployment, the next research question examines the differences by race in the rates of

unemployment. Historically, the rates of unemployment for Blacks throughout the decade were higher than Whites.

Table 9

Detroit City: Unemployment Rates (Central City) (Percent)

	Unemployed	
	Black	White
1971	14.2	7.5
1972	15.4	7.7
1973	12.1	6.6
1974	N/A	N/A
1975	20.5	14.5
1976	15.0	11.3
1977	15.8	7.9
1978	16.2	6.4
1979	18.0	9.8
*1980	27.2	16.2

Compiled from: U.S. Census *Geographical Profile of and Unemployment* and Bureau of Labor Statistics, Philadelphia Office.

In 1971, the unemployment rate for Blacks was 14.2 percent as compared to 7.5 percent for Whites (see Table 9). In 1972, the rate of unemployment for Blacks was 15.4 percent and for Whites it was 7.7 percent. In 1973, the rate of Black unemployment had declined slightly to 12.1 percent and 6.6 percent for Whites. However, by 1975 the rate of unemployment for Blacks had increased to a high of 20.5 percent. This was the highest level it would reach until 1980 when the rate of unemployment for Blacks reached 27.2

percent as compared to 16.2 percent for Whites. As the evidence demonstrates there was a racial difference in the overall rates of unemployment between Blacks and Whites. Blacks were much more likely to experience higher rates of unemployment. This confirms a trend that has existed in urban America since the mid-1950's. The national Black population has experienced serious and chronic problems in the labor market.

Racial differences in Youth Unemployment

So far it has been demonstrated that the City of Detroit did experience a problem with unemployment. When race was taken into account, it becomes apparent that Black youth experienced unemployment at rates significantly higher than White youth. At this point it is necessary to examine the differences in unemployment as they are experienced by Black and White youth.

Throughout the seventies the rate of unemployment for youth between the ages of 16-24 increased in the state of Michigan. The rate of unemployment was 15.6 percent at the start of the decade. By the middle of the decade, during the 1974-74 recession, the rate of unemployment peaked at 22.3 percent. At the close of the decade, the overall rate had declined to 16.6 percent (see Table 10).

When compared by racial groups, the unemployment rate between Blacks and Whites overall reveals that the rate for Blacks was higher than that of Whites during the seventies. White males and White females had lower rates of unemployment. For teenagers (16-19), White teenagers had lower rates of unemployment in the city than their counterparts.

Table 10

Michigan Unemployment Rate Total (16+) and Youth (16-24) Period 1970-1980 (Percent)

	Total (16+)	Youth (16-24)
	Rate	Rate
1970	6.7	N/A
1971	7.6	15.6
1972	7.0	15.6
1973	5.8	12.9
1974	7.4	15.2
1975	12.5	22.3
1976	9.4	20.8
1977	8.2	15.8
1978	6.9	12.6
1979	7.8	14.3
1980*	9.8	16.6

Source: Youth Employment Clearing House, *Sourcebook of Youth Employment Statistics*, Bureau of Employment and Training, Michigan Department of Labor, January, 1981, p. 21.

As Table 11 reveals, the rate of unemployment for non-White teenagers in Detroit was 41.1 percent in 1970, 46.9 percent in 1975, and 52.1 percent in 1980. For White teens, their rate of unemployment went from 13.0 percent in 1970 to 37.0 percent in 1975, and 21.0 percent by 1980.

Table 11			
Unemployment Rates City of Detroit (Percent)			
	1970	1975	1980
Total Persons	8.2	17.4	23.2
White	6.1	14.5	16.2
Non-White	11.9	20.5	27.2
Males	7.8	19.2	26.8
White	6.5	16.0	18.9
Non-White	10.1	23.1	31.6
Females	8.9	14.5	18.9
White	5.3	11.9	12.4
Non-White	14.6	16.9	22.2
Teenagers (16-19)	23.7	41.9	39.8
White	13.0	37.0	21.0
Non-White	41.1	46.9	52.1
Source: Based on Current Population Statistics (Mimeographed) from Detroit Planning Commission, 1980.			

In comparing the racial composition of the central city of Detroit to the rate of unemployment, several trends emerge. First, the overall rate of unemployment fluctuates during the decade but overall there is an increase over time between 1970 and 1980. There appears to be an association between the city's racial composition and the rates of unemployment such that as the central city's populations becomes increasingly Black, there is also a corresponding increase in the level of unemployment. For youth in Detroit,

the same holds true, if race is taken into account. For example, data provided by the Michigan Employment Security Commission Research and Statistics for the year 1977, revealed that within the Detroit SMSA the unemployment rate for White youth ages 16-19 was 17.3 percent as compared to 53.8 percent for Black youth. In the central city, the same data revealed that the unemployment rate for White teens was 25.0 percent compared to 56.3 percent Black youth. (Michigan Employment Security Commission, 1979:5) It can be seen that among Black central-city youth, unemployment is extremely high.

In November of 1981, the City of Detroit Planning Commission provided data from a special run based on a survey it conducted between 1978 and 1979, of the cities youth population. The survey was a two percent sample of the population. The city was divided into certain areas according to census tracts. The respondents were interviewed once in a one in fifty sample. There were two major age categories, 16-19 and 20-24. Forty-six percent (46 percent) of the respondents were 16 to 19, and 54.0 percent of the respondents were 20-24. White males represented 18.2 percent, 29.7 percent were Black males, 16.9 percent were White females, and 35.2 percent were Black females. In terms of race, 35.1 percent of the sample were White and 64.9 percent were Black. The educational status of the respondents indicated that 41.3 percent of the respondents were in school, 18.0 percent of the respondents were dropouts, and that 40.7 percent of the respondents were high school graduates. In terms of the employment status of the respondents, 34.4 percent were employed full time, 13.3 percent were employed part-time, 16.7 percent were unemployed, and 35.6 percent were not in the labor force.

Table 12			
Youth Unemployment Rates City of Detroit 1978-1979 (Percent)			
16-19			
Blacks		Whites	
Male 47.9	Female 39.8	Male 22.8	Female 9.2
20-24			
Blacks		Whites	
Male 21.7	Female 28.4	Male 9.4	Female 17.4
Source: City of Detroit Planning Commission, Special Run 78-79, 1981.			

The data reveals for youth 16-19 in the survey that the highest rate of unemployment was experienced by Black males at 47.9 percent, followed by Black females at 39.8 percent. White males experienced a 22.8 percent rate of unemployment and White females in this category experienced an unemployment rate of 9.2 percent.

When the data for older youth is examined, Black females show the highest level of unemployment of those in the sample at 28.4 percent. Black males experienced a 21.7 percent rate of unemployment followed by White females at 17.4 percent. White males experienced a rate of 9.4 percent unemployment. Again the data reveals a difference in unemployment by race, however, in this case Black females were the ones who had the highest rate of unemployment of all the groups. This difference by gender suggests for

those in the sample, the experience of unemployment was greater for both Black and White females than their male counterparts. It also demonstrates the White females experienced higher rates than White males who experienced lower rates of unemployment. White females however, experienced lower rates of unemployment in this category than both Black males and females. Which leads to the conclusion that race and sex do make a difference in the rate of unemployment experienced by youth in the city. It is apparent from the data that unemployment is more likely to be experienced by Black youth than their White counterparts.

Another indicator of the role of youth in the labor market is their labor force participation rate. The youth labor force participation rate, is defined as the ratio between the youth labor force and the youth population. According to a study published in 1979 by the Michigan Employment Security Commission, the overall teenage labor force participation rate in Michigan was from 55.5 percent in 1970 to 61.1 percent in 1977 (1979:7). However, the increase among White youth was greater. White youth experienced a 64.5 percent labor force participation rate compared with only a 46.9 percent rate for non-White youth (1979:7). In terms of gender, the difference in labor force participation for young females was 58.5 percent compared to 64.8 percent for young males.

The labor force participation rates for Black and White youth shows some difference. Black youth experienced consistently lower rates than White youth. The gap between these two groups was most pronounced in central city areas. In these areas non-White youth have traditionally found it difficult to find jobs. For example, in the state of

Michigan the lowest participation rates among male teenagers in 1976 were in the central cities city areas. Their participation rate in central cities was 47 percent.

Examining the data at the end of the decade reveals that there are racial and gender differences in the City of Detroit in terms of labor force participation rates.

For youth 16-19 years of age in the central city, the Detroit City Planning Commission survey revealed that White males had the highest rate of labor force participation at 64.2 percent, followed by White females at 54.8 percent. Black males had a labor force participation rate of 52.9 percent followed by White females at 43.4 percent. This confirms the findings at the state level that there are indeed racial differences in the central city in terms of labor force participation rates, if you compare Black and White youth. In this particular case, White youth had higher rates of labor force participation than their Black counterparts. However, White females had higher rates of labor force participation than their Black female counterparts (see Table 13).

Table 13		
Labor Force Participation Rates Detroit, Michigan 1978-1979 (Percent)		
	16 - 19	20 - 25
White Males	64.2	88.2
White Females	54.8	70.2
Black Males	52.9	87.2
Black Females	43.4	60.2
Source: City of Detroit Planning Commission, Special Run 78-79., 1981.		

One noticeable trend in the data reveals that the rate of labor force participation increased for all groups with age. However, the rates of labor force participation did show some differences in terms of race and gender. For older youth 20 to 24, White males had the highest rate of labor force participation at 88.2 percent, followed by Black males at 87.2 percent. White females ranked third in labor force participation at 70.2 percent, while Black females were once again the lowest group at 60.2 percent. Within the older group, Black and White males experienced higher rates of labor force participation.

Some of the fluctuation in the labor force participation of youth can be attributed to an attempt by them to merge schooling and work. As a result of working part-time when school is in session and full-time during the summer months, teenagers go in and come out of the labor market on a frequent basis. This means that teenagers have a higher rate of quitting jobs and temporarily withdrawing from the labor market. This is

also a factor in explaining their unemployment rate. Young workers tend to be less stable in the early stages of their work careers because of their educational status.

Educational attainment is directly correlated with labor market experience in terms of job stability and employment. One explanation of youth unemployment is that youth lack the necessary educational credentials necessary to compete for jobs in the urban labor market that increasingly require higher skill levels. For young workers 16 to 19, this means that most meaningful work required at least a high school diploma and for older youth in addition to the high school diploma, there are some jobs in the labor market which require skills only obtainable through technical and/or professional training. This means that they must successfully complete courses at either a community college, technical school, college or university.

Among the unemployed youth surveyed by the Detroit Planning Commission during the end of the decade 1978 to 1979, a significant percentage of the unemployed between the ages of 16 to 19 were high school dropouts. In terms of racial trends, the data reveals that White youth, both male and female, had significantly higher dropout rates than Black males and females. According to the data, the percentage of the unemployed who had dropped out of school was 56.1 percent for White males and 60.0 percent for White females (see Table 14). For Black males in the same category, 23.6 percent of them were dropouts and 20.6 percent of Black females were dropouts.

It appears from the data that White unemployed youth dropped out of school at a much higher rate than their Black peers. Black youth between the ages of 16 to 19 and who were unemployed tended to remain in school. As the data in Table 14 demonstrates,

the percentage of unemployed Black males in school was 50.3 percent and the percentage of unemployed Black females that were in school was 47.9 percent. For White unemployed youth between the ages of 16 to 19, the percentage of unemployed White males in school was 29.2 percent and the percentage of White females in school was 19.8 percent. These statistics are significant because they indicate that White youth who were unemployed tended to dropout at a very high rate, while their Black unemployed peers remained in school.

Table 14

Educational Status of Unemployed Youth, Age 16-19 City of Detroit, 1978-1979 (Percent)

	In School	Dropouts	H.S. Graduates
White Males	29.2	56.1	14.6
Black Males	50.3	23.6	26.1
White Females	19.8	60.0	20.3
Black Females	47.9	20.6	31.5

Source: City of Detroit Planning Commission, Special Run, 78-79., 1981.

In terms of graduation from high school, the data shows that a higher percentage of unemployed Black males 16 to 19, 26.1 percent of them were high school graduates and 31.5 percent of the unemployed Black females were high school graduates. For White unemployed males, 14.6 percent of them were high school graduates, while 20.3 percent of White unemployed females held high school diplomas. Overall, what the data in Table 14 indicates is that for unemployed youth 16 to 19 years, Black unemployed

youth remained in school or had finished high school. White unemployed youth tended to be school dropouts. Among all unemployed youth Black males and females had higher rates of high school graduation than their white peers. Therefore, among the unemployed youth surveyed, Black unemployed youth either remained in school or acquired a high school diploma, where as unemployed White youth tended to be more likely to drop out of school.

Among the older groups surveyed by the Detroit Planning Commission from 1978-1979, the educational status of older unemployed youth begins to show other significant trends, such as a decline in the percentage of unemployed White youth who are dropouts and an increase in the percentage of unemployed Black youth who are high school graduates (see Table 15).

Table 15

Educational Status of Unemployed Youth, Age 20-24
City of Detroit, 1978-1979 (Percent)

	In School	Dropouts	H.S. Graduates
White Males	30.6	31.8	37.6
Black Males	10.1	36.3	53.6
White Females	11.2	44.7	44.1
Black Females	18.1	28.4	53.5

Source: City of Detroit Planning Commission, Special Run, 78-79., 1981.

The percentage of unemployed White males who were in school was 30.6 percent, for Black females, 18.1 percent, 11.2 percent for White females, and 10.1 percent for Black

males. Unemployed White males had the highest percentage of school enrollment, followed by Black and White females. Black males had the lowest rate of school attendance. In the dropout category, White unemployed females had the highest percentage in the dropout category at 44.7 percent followed by Black males at 36.3 percent. For White males, the percentage was at 31.8 percent followed by Black females at 28.4 percent, compared to the younger group of unemployed between the ages of 16 to 24. White males and females showed a decrease in the dropout category, leading to the conclusion that as they get older Whites tend to remain in school and graduate. For older Blacks in the unemployed category, their in school enrollment declined compared to younger Blacks in the same category. Older Black unemployed youth also showed an increase in the dropout category. However, the data reveals that there were more unemployed Black youth with high school diplomas than White youth (see Table 15). Fifty-three point six (53.6 percent) percent of the Black males and 53.5 percent of the Black females in the sample were unemployed high school graduates compared to 37.6 percent of White males and 44.1 percent of White females. What this means is that Black young adults with high school diplomas experienced a higher rate of unemployment in spite of graduating from high school.

There were some youth surveyed during 1978-79 who had dropped out of the labor force. They were not seeking work and could be considered as members of the surplus population, i.e. (reserve army). What the data reveals is that among the younger group 16-19, the majority of youth who dropped out of the labor market were enrolled in school (see Table 16). The data shows that for White males, Black males and Black

females, 80 percent or more of each group were enrolled in school. For White females the percentage was lower. Only 66.5 percent of them were in school.

Table 16

Youth Not in the Labor Force, Age 16-19
City of Detroit, 1978-1979 (Percent)

	In School	Dropouts	H.S. Graduates
White Males	84.4	7.3	8.4
Black Males	84.3	10.3	5.0
White Females	66.5	17.9	15.7
Black Females	80.2	11.3	8.5

Source: City of Detroit Planning Commission, Special Run, 78-79., 1981.

The tendency for White females was for them to either drop out or complete high school, but not actively seek work. Seventeen point nine percent (17.9 percent) of White females not in the labor force were school dropouts compared to 11.3 percent for Black females, 10.3 percent for Black males, and 7.3 percent for White females. In terms of high school graduates, with the exception of White females, less than 10 percent of White males, Black males and Black females were high school graduates among those not in the labor force.

In the older age group, there was a tendency for those males not in the labor force between the ages of 20 to 24 to be enrolled in school. For White males this meant that 65.4 percent in this category were in school, while 51.6 percent of Black males were in school. The high school graduation percentages were highest among females, Black and

White. For White females, 47.1 percent of those not in the labor force were high school graduates, while 46.8 percent of Black women not in the labor force were high school graduates.

Table 17

Youth Not in the Labor Force, Age 20-24
City of Detroit, 1978-1979 (Percent)

	In School	Dropouts	H.S. Graduates
White Males	65.4	7.9	26.7
Black Males	51.6	20.5	27.9
White Females	14.2	38.7	47.1
Black Females	22.4	30.8	46.8

Source: City of Detroit Planning Commission, Special Run, 78-79., 1981.

These percentages contrast with those in the men in the sample who had much lower percentages of being high school graduates. Twenty-six point seven (26.7) percent of White males and 27.9 percent of Black males not in the labor force were high school graduates. Females tended to be highly represented among those who were not in the labor force and who were dropouts. It appears that for females not in the labor force, 38.7 percent of White females and 30.8 percent of Black females were dropouts. Females not in the labor force, in this particular sample tended to either finish high school dropout. Their in-school attendance was much lower than their male counterparts.

Poverty in Detroit

One of the characteristics of the urban crisis experienced by Detroit's African-American community, during the period under investigation, was poverty. A disproportionate number of Blacks in the central city were living at or below the poverty level. This surplus population represents a "reserve army" of potential labor and contains within it the segment of "lost generation" youth who experienced high rates of unemployment. In this section, there will be a discussion of poverty in Detroit within the context of the following research questions: 1) What was the level of poverty in the city of Detroit between 1970 and 1980? 2) What percentage of families lived below poverty during the decade? 3) What was the poverty status of youth in the city between 1970 and 1980?

One indicator of the potential size of the "reserve army" is the index of poverty. Poverty within the central city of Detroit encompassed all of the appendages which represent a source of labor and consumer (income) dollars. Similar to other American ethnic groups, a significant percentage of African-American first and second generation urban families experienced poverty. At the start of the decade in 1970, 11 percent of families in Detroit lived below the established poverty line. If race is taken into account, 19 percent of Black families lived in poverty compared to 6 percent of White families (see Table 18).

Table 18					
Percentages of Families in Poverty (living below the poverty line) Detroit, 1970, 1976					
Total		Black		White	
1970	1976	1970	1976	1970	1976
11%	15%	19%	22%	6%	7%
Source: City of Detroit Planning Department, Data Coordination Division, Report #425, August, 1979.					

By the middle of the 1970's the level of poverty in the city had increased. In 1976, 15 percent of families living in Detroit lived in poverty. When broken down by race, 22 percent of Black families lived in poverty as compared to 7 percent of White families. Additional data from the 1970 U.S. Census revealed that for the Detroit SMSA, 11.3 percent of all families lived below the poverty level. For Blacks, 18.7 percent lived below the poverty level and 44.3 percent of Black families received some type of public assistance (U.S. Census, 1970).

By the middle of the decade, the level of poverty in Detroit had increased. A survey done in 1976-77 by the Detroit Planning Department, produced a number of percentages concerning poverty. The results of this survey revealed that 15 percent of the population and 18 percent of the households were in poverty. For Black children the rate was slightly higher at 25 percent. For Black households, the rate of poverty was 24 percent. For female headed households the rate was 37 percent (see Table 19).

Table 19	
Percent in Poverty, City of Detroit 1976, 1977	
Population	15%
Families	15%
Children Under 18	21%
Black Children Under 18	25%
Households	18%
Black Households	24%
Female-Headed Households	37%
Single Parent	44%
Households with Public Assistance Income	64%
Source: City of Detroit, Detroit Citizen Survey, 1976-77. Detroit Planning Department (two percent sample households).	

By 1980, 8.3 percent of the families in Detroit (SMSA) lived in poverty. A breakdown by race reveals that 23.5 percent of Black families in the SMSA lived in poverty as compared to 4.6 percent of White families. The percentages for all persons living below poverty was 10.2 percent. For Blacks, this percentage was 35.8 percent as compared to 6.0 percent for Whites (see Table 20).

Table 20			
Poverty Profile of Families and Persons 1980, Detroit (SMSA) (Percent)			
	All	Black	White
Families	8.3	23.5	6.7
Unrelated Individuals	21.5	36.2	16.9
Persons	10.2	35.8	6.0
Source: Derived from Tables 125 and 127. U.S. Census, 1980. *General Social and Economic Characteristics* (Michigan, Part 24), Vol. 1, Chapter C, Section 1.			

For members of the "lost generation", youth between the ages of 16-21 within the central city, the rate of poverty was 24.4 percent (see Table 21). For youth 22-24, the rate of poverty was 20.7 percent. When compared by racial groups, 29.0 percent of black youth 16-21 lived below poverty as compared to 14.2 percent of their White counterparts. For youth 22-24, the racial breakdown revealed that the rate of poverty for Blacks was 25.9 percent as compared to 11.3 percent for White in the same age category. Breakdown by gender of youth in poverty shows that for females between the ages of 16-21, the rate of poverty was 27.5 percent. For White females in the same category the rate is 16.3 percent as compared to 32.3 percent for Black female youth. For women 22-24, the rate of poverty was 25.7 percent. A racial breakdown reveals that the rate of poverty for Black females 22-24 was 31.9 percent compared to 13.4 percent for White females (see Table 21).

Table 21			
Youth in Poverty Detroit 1980, (Central City (Percent)			
	Total	Black	White
Youth			
Total			
16-21	24.4	29.0	14.2
22-24	20.7	25.9	11.3
Female			
16-22	27.5	32.2	16.3
22-24	25.7	31.9	13.4
Source: Derived from U.S. Census, 1980. Detailed Population Characteristics Chapter D., Vol. 1, Part 24, Table 245.			

In summary, it appears that the rate of poverty overall is higher in the central city of Detroit than in the total metropolitan areas. It is also apparent that the rate of poverty increased within the central city as well as the SMSA. However, poverty in the total region appears to be concentrated in the central city. The median income of central city residents is also less than the median income for residents in the surrounding area. A racial analysis of the data reveals that Blacks have a higher rate of poverty in Detroit in both the SMSA as well as the central city. A look at poverty inside the central city among youth also reveals a racial disparity. In every category the percentage of Black youth (16-24) in poverty is higher than that of White youth. Females between the ages of 16-24 have a higher percentage of impoverishment than their ale counterparts. A racial

breakdown among female youth reveals that Black females have much higher rates of poverty than their White counterparts.

Black Youth Unemployment and Urban Transition

How do the rates of Black youth unemployment compare to the trends that were taking place in the economy of the city Detroit?

Using Detroit as a case study has revealed several findings which can be seen as contributing factors to the expansion and reproduction of the "lost generation". Among them are the following:

1. The spatial composition of Detroit was racially determined. During the period under investigation the city was racially segregated by residential space and the city's racial composition changed from majority White to majority Black. The central city due to racial discrimination became a territory inhabited by a predominately Black working class and surplus population. The suburban areas of Detroit became predominately White and inhabited by the White bourgeoisie, the white working class and a small surplus population. As a result, two different areas emerged in the region. One, White and relatively prosperous, the other Black and predominately poor. This a structural pattern of spatial inequality that has distinct racial character.

The territorial divisions of the population based on race is one indication of institutionalized racism that has prevented Blacks from being able to relocate into areas that have greater economic opportunity. This form of racism was facilitated by institutional mechanisms that include racially determined forms of selective economic

exchange in such transactions as renting, buying, selling, financing, insurance and investments. This system was supported by racially determined covenants and the resistance on the part of Whites to the equal participation of Blacks in the acquisition of residential space. Therefore, the ideology of racism under monopoly capitalism in Detroit involved the physical separation of racial groups and led to the formation of all Black central city spatial areas.

2. The rate of youth unemployment increased steadily during the decade. The group that experienced the highest rate of unemployment in the youth category, were those youth in the Black community between the ages of 16 to 24.

3. The production of automobiles and steel, two major Detroit industries, went through periods of decline and fluctuations. Over the ten-year period both industries in the city were effected by the trends associated with deindustrialization and disinvestment. Detroit's economic character was that of a declining industrial city.

4. The quality of Detroit's investment climate remained below average for the entire decade. For investors, Detroit was not a good place to make a profit. Investors were warned that certain protective elements would be questionable over any great length of time.

5. The use of robots and numerically controlled machines started to show signs of worker displacement. The implication of this finding is that certain aspects of the labor process become increasingly controlled by computer and robots that would eventually replace the demand for human labor.

6. There was a loss of jobs in manufacturing, retail, wholesale and service industries. The amount of available jobs was less than the number of people who needed employment. This job loss is another indication of the city's economic decline.

7. The level of poverty increased. The percentage of families living below poverty increased. The poverty status of youth increased. Blacks and higher rates of poverty than the rest of the population.

Summary

With increased unemployment and the inability to find meaningful work, a significant number of Black youth in Detroit became members of an urban based reserve army of labor. These youth constituted a segment of the population of an ethnic group that has historically been oppressed and exploited. They are a surplus population that is vulnerable to downturns in the demand for labor and changes in the macro structure of the city such as changes in the mode of production and declining employment opportunities.

This modern reserve army is: (1) Predominately young and of color; (2) Chronically and long term unemployed; (3) Impoverished and dependent upon the system of social welfare; (4) Highly concentrated in the central city (5) Low in its long term labor force participation; (6) Under-developed in realizing it's full educational opportunity and potential.

What the data has revealed is that there was a high rate of Black youth unemployment in Detroit between 1970-1980. This unemployment became long term and permanent for central city youth. In terms of race, Black youth experienced higher

rates of unemployment than their White counterparts. In terms of gender, females both Black and White experienced slightly higher rates of unemployment. Overall, chronic unemployment among Black youth in the central city was long term and permanent. When race is taken into account, there is a disparity between the level of unemployment experienced by Black as compared to White youth. Black youth experienced a higher rate of unemployment than their White central city peers. Even when education is taken into account, Black youth with high school diplomas experienced higher rates of unemployment than their White peers who are either high school graduates or dropouts.

There was also a tendency for gender to be a factor. Females in general and Black Females in particular experienced higher levels of unemployment according to data taken from a 1978-79 survey by the city of Detroit Planning Commission. This suggests the possibility that among the ranks of the reserve army women are highly represented and perhaps in greater number than their male peers.

In terms of labor force participation rates the data revealed that Black youth had lower rates of labor force participation than their White counterparts. Another finding in the Detroit area data was that Black youth in the central city had low rates of labor force participation. Some of this can be attributed to the fact that young workers tend to work on a part-time or seasonal basis and that they also remain in school.

In terms of school dropouts, the data revealed that among youth 16-19, White youth tended to drop out of school in greater numbers than Black youth. Black youth in the same category remained in school or were high school graduates. Among the older group 20-24, there is a decline in the percentage of unemployed White youth who are

dropouts and an increase in the percentage of unemployed Black youth with high school diplomas than White youth. Despite the fact that they complete high school, Black youth still face a higher probability of being unemployed.

Youth 16-19 who drop completely out of the labor force are usually attending school. With the exception of White females in the samples who were more inclined to be dropouts or who had completed their education. On the older group 20-24, there was a tendency for male youth to remain in school. Females not in the labor force tended to either be dropouts or have completed high school but not entered the labor market.

The data also revealed that poverty increased in the Black community during the decade. The level of poverty for Blacks was greater than it was for Whites in the city of Detroit. The level of poverty increased over the decade corresponding to the increase in unemployment. This created a situation where the reserve army expanded.

Poverty in southeastern Michigan was concentrated in the central city of Detroit. The Black working class community went through a protracted period of economic decline. The level of dependency increased during the decade creating a surplus population that was more dependent upon social welfare programs. What this meant for Black youth 16 to 24 was that their chances of escaping poverty decreased during the decade. They made up a significant element of the city's surplus population.

This chapter has presented empirical data that addressed specific questions about the existence and persistence of a "lost generation" of Black youth who comprise a segment of the modern reserve army of labor. The data on unemployment revealed the following trends: (1) The rate of unemployment increased in the city of Detroit during

the period under investigation. (2) The rate of unemployment for Blacks was higher than for Whites revealing a racial disparity in the distribution of inequality. This confirms the idea that within a capitalist society which contains institutionalized racism, peoples of color tend to be highly represented in the inactive labor reserve. This is indicative of a system of color stratification in the labor markets of western industrial societies. These systems maintain institutionalized racism, and or apartheid. These systems of color segmentation are manifested in the distribution of inequality in the labor market. This leads to a form of social stratification that is structured to maintain distinct categories for people on the basis of color and ethnicity.

The reproduction of large number of Black unemployed youth are central aspects of urban life in advanced capitalist societies. This system is functional because: (1) Poor and unemployed Black youth are a reserve army that can be activated when there is a need for low wage work, (2) It reinforces the idea of White supremacy, (3) It induces a system of labor control where differential wage levels can be set in order to discipline the labor force by inducing workers to accept wages below their real value because of the threat of activating the labor reserve. This also produces feelings of antagonisms between groups differentiated by class, color and ethnicity which enables the ideology of racial supremacy to be continuously perpetuated.

CHAPTER IV

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY

Policy is essentially a plan and course of action formulated to deal with a specific issue or a set of issues. It is developed within the context of social, economic and political realities. The characteristics of a policy affects its implementation and outcome. A policy can be characterized as either distributive, regulatory or redistributive. A distributive policy is designed to give subsidies or transfer payments to individuals or groups. A regulatory policy infers that there are stipulated regulations concerning the practices of individuals and groups. A redistributive policy involved the redistribution of benefits and capital from one group to another. Since the 1930's there have been several plans and courses of action designed to deal with the problem of youth unemployment. Each of these policies has resulted from the government's attempt to provide the youth with a combination of income, education and job training. All of the policies have been distributive. They were designed to give some form of subsidy or transfer payment on a short term basis to unemployed youth. All of the youth employment programs that have been implemented were of short duration and in most cases there was not a definite linkage between the programs and jobs in the real world of work. Instead, the programs were set up as a type of temporary employment agency for the reserve army.

Essential to this analysis of the "lost generation" in the post-rebellion era in Detroit (1967-1980) is an examination of the policies and programs that were implemented to deal with youth unemployment. This will provide some indication of how government designed policy for specifically targeted populations. It will also give some idea of what type of approaches have been used to deal with youth unemployment.

This chapter will discuss the history of youth employment programs, the target populations these programs were designed to serve and also the services they provided. It will give some insight into how government has responded to youth unemployment.

The first part of the chapter will discuss the history of youth employment programs in the United States since the 1930's including the Civilian Conservation Corp., the National Youth Administration, the War on Poverty Programs (Job Corp., Neighborhood Youth Corp.) and the programs established under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. The second section will look at programs in Detroit in the post-rebellion period between 1967 and 1980. In this section there will be a discussion of the strategies developed by private capital to revitalize the economy of the city. The last section will discuss a proposed alternative policy and strategy for youth unemployment. Included in this section will be an overall policy statement, a definition of the situation and some proposals for youth unemployment policy.

The History of Youth Employment Programs

In this section there will be a discussion of the history of youth employment programs that have existed in the United States since the 1930's. It will answer such questions as: (1) What type of programs has the government designed and implemented to deal with youth unemployment? (2) What was the central focus of the policy? (3) Who were the target population? (4) What type of services did these programs provide?

In order to deal with the large number of unemployed youth, the federal government's first specific response to the problem was embodied in the Emergency Conservation Work Act of 1933. (Sherraden, 1980:17). The name was changed in 1937, to the Civilian Conservation Crop. This program lasted until June of 1942. The overall thrust of the policy was to provide young men with jobs in conservation work. The primary focus was on employment. Education and job training were considered secondary in keeping with the dictates of policy makers who felt that the main goal should be to provide youth with a subsidized income. The average time of enrollment was ten months. During the duration of the program the enrollment averaged around 300,000 and at its peak, the program involved 500,000 youth, primarily male. During its nine years of duration the CCC served three million people.

The program was instrumental in providing work experiences on a short term basis. The Roosevelt administration saw the program as a model of work orientation rather than education. However, the CCC did have an educational program which gave corp members the opportunity to develop and improve their literacy skills. The

educational component was under the direction of teachers from the Office of Education. The overall operation of the camps was done Under the direction of the U.S. Army.

Because of the economic conditions of that era, the CCC had a negligible impact on the transition from a stint in the work camps to employment in the world of work. The Corp had a poor record in terms of job placement but it did participate in projects that improved conservation.

The National Youth Administration, as the second major program that was set up in June of 1935. It was established as an agency within the Works Progress Administration (WPA) (Sherraden, 1980:21). The main goal of this program was to provide aid to students in school and work to those youth that were out-of-school. The emphasis in this program was geared more towards education, job training and skills development. The target population included both youth men and women. The in-school program was designed for elementary, high school, college and graduate students. It was the first work study program developed by the government and it subsidized the work of students involved in various educational projects. The out-of-school-program was oriented towards work relief. The projects included construction, conservation, education, clerical work, research and the production of simple commodities. The out-of-school program put less emphasis on education and it stressed employment. During its tenure, the NYA serviced nearly five million youth.

Both the CCC and the NYA ended in the early 1940's with the start of the war effort. The transition from a depressed to a war based economy witnessed the utilization of the reserve army on a mass scale. Unemployed youth were now being called up to

working the military and military related industries. During the period the rate of unemployment declined. The surplus was activated to support the war effort.

There was not another youth employment program at the federal level until Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. Between the end of the war and the early 1960's, there were several attempts to formulate a youth employment program but the attention of policy makers was primarily on the foreign issues as a result of the changes brought about by the ware and the decolonization of the Third World.

Between 1949 and 1959, several members of Congress and resource management agencies proposed the re-establishment of the CCC. In 1958, Senator Hubert Humphrey proposed legislation that would have created a Youth Conservation Corp. (Sherraden: 1980). The bill never passed through Congress although The Democratic party platform in 1960 carried some provisions for the establishment of the YCC. President Kennedy proposed the establishment of a National Services Corp in 1963 but his proposal did not result in a program specifically designed for youth. The closes the government came to establishing a youth employment program in the early 1960's was a series of experimental and demonstration projects designed to examine different educational models in solving unemployment. These projects were made possible under special provisions of the Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA) of 1962. This act was intended to provided employment and job retraining for adult workers in order that they could learn the new technologies and modes of production that were taking place as a result of advances in sciences and engineering. The Vocational Educational Act of 1963 contained

a section that was intended to establish vocational schools in large urban areas but Congress failed to appropriate the necessary funds. (Sherraden: 1980).

While Kennedy and his administration were declaring War on Poverty, there were no specific programs for unemployed youth until the Congress under Johnson passed the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act which led to the creation of the Neighborhood Youth Corp and the Job Corp. (U.S. Dept. of Labor: 1978: Levitan, A. and Johnston B,: 1975). The Neighborhood Youth Corp was targeted as youth between 16 and 21 from poverty backgrounds. The program had an in-school and an out-of-school component. The services provided for in-school youth included part-time employment, work experience and some counseling. The out-of-school component (18-21) provided programs that included skills training, remedial educational, work experience, counseling and health care.

The Job corp program was targeted at school drop-outs between 16 and 21 years of age who came from poverty backgrounds. The services included living in an isolated residential setting where intensive education, skill training, counseling and health care were provided. The Job Corp was a combination of the old CCC model along with educational programs. (Stromsdorfer, 1980:94-95).

There were also some other minor programs that were spun off by the Office of Economic Opportunity such as the New Careers Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the Job Opportunities in the business sector, the Concentrated Employment Program and the Work Incentive Program. The New Careers Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 targeted disadvantaged and out of school youth. The services provided included work experience

in human services fields which included counseling, basic education and related services. The Job Opportunities in the Business Sector targeted the disadvantaged hardcore unemployed and underemployed 18 years of age and over. The services included work orientation, counseling, job related education, minor medical services, day care and on the job training. The Concentrated Employment Program was targeted at disadvantaged males in urban poverty areas. The services included the coordinated delivery of manpower and supportive services. The Work Incentive programs were targeted at youth who were members of families that received some type of public transfer payments. The services provided included job creation, basic education orientation, child care and transportation.

The purpose of the summer youth program (SPEDY) was to provide short term summer jobs to youth 14 to 21 from impoverished backgrounds. The goal was to provide employment and employment training related services. SPEDY served more youth than any program in history of youth work projects. The School to work Transition Program was primarily interested in establishing a linkage between education and employment. The target population included disadvantaged youth. The services provided included classroom instruction which was integrated with work experience; pre-employment counseling in how to behave while employed; and career information development. There was also counseling, guidance and placement assistance.

In 1977, the CETA program was reorganized and expanded. The new programs included the Youth Employment and Training Program (YETP); the Youth Incentive Entitlement Projects (YIEP); the Community Conservation and Improvements Projects

(YCCIP) and the Youth Adult Conservation Corps (YACC) (Stromsdofer: 1980). The overall thrust of these programs was to provide temporary employment, education and training. These programs were designed to test different approaches to the problem of youth unemployment and they incorporated increased coordination between career development, work experience, counseling, education, career development and health care. The focus was on improving the human capital potential of disadvantaged youth. The target populations and specific services varied according to the program. The main target populations included disadvantaged youth both in and out of school.

The Youth employment and Training Program was targeted at in-school and out-of-school youth 16 to 21 who were diagnosed as having the hardest problem finding employment. One of the major thrusts of the program was to provide a link between local boards of education and the area prime sponsors. Policy makers were interested in developing linkages between employment, education and training institutions that were designed to meet the needs of local communities. There, the programs differed by area in terms of the specific skills youth learned. A part of the demonstration acts intent was also to develop a knowledge base for examining the projects. This led to the development of a research institute under the auspices of the National Occupational Information Coordination Committee. f It provided information that helped improve the delivery of youth employment services. A National Longitudinal Survey network was established to analyze the school to work patterns of large samples of disadvantaged youth. There were also three non-profit entities created to assist in the development of a knowledge base. They were the Manpower Demonstration Research Council; the Corporation for

Public/Private Ventures, the Youthwork, Inc. These enabled researchers, planners, consultants federal and local governments to better coordinate some of the CETA activities to see which programs worked and why.

The Youth Community Conservation and Improvement Project was targeted at youth 16 to 19 who were considered "hard core" unemployed. The thrust of the YCCIP program on work projects beneficial to the community. The emphasis was on providing income to disadvantaged youth through work and occasionally awarding academic credit for some types of projects. The work experiences were primarily in the area of weatherization and rehabilitation of low income homes; the removal of barriers to public buildings for handicapped and general conservation projects.

In 1970, the Youth Conservation Corp was started as a summer residential work and education program. Its focus was on conservation work. The target population was broad-based and included youth regardless of their economic status. One of the main criticisms of the program was that money was not being spent proportionately on disadvantaged youth in economically depressed urban areas. The goal of the program was to provide summer jobs, environmental education and increase the environmental knowledge of youth. There was no linkage to jobs in the future nor were there supportive services provided after the summer programs ended. (Employment and training report of the President. Washington, D.D.; U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979).

In 1973, Congress passed the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act as part of President Nixon's "revenue sharing" policy agenda. The basic strategy of the revenue sharing idea was to decentralize the control of federal programs. (Nathan:1977)

The funds were distributed in the form of black grants to local "prime sponsors" who decided on the character and day-to-day operation of the programs. This policy was effective in neutralizing the organizing capacity of grass roots community organization who had direct ties to the Federal government under the Johnson administration. Nixon was interested in solidifying the power of his administration with local and state elected officials who were part of the Republican party.

The CETA programs incorporated the Job Corp, Neighborhood Youth Corp and the Youth Conservation Corp under its umbrella of youth orientated employed and training programs. The summer component was known as the Summer Program for Economically Disadvantaged Youth (SPEDY). A number of experimental projects were also started under the School of Work Transition program (SWTP). (Rist: 1979)

The Youth Adult Conservation Corp. was targeted at youth age 16 through 23 who were out of school. The services provided include training and employment for youth in conservation and environmental projects designed to maintain and improve public parks, forests and recreational areas. This program as jointly funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, Agriculture and the Interior. Education in this program was not emphasized.

The Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects were designed as a series of pilot projects whose purpose was to provide a year round employment for disadvantaged youth. The basic purpose of the program was to examine the idea of whether schooling and work could be provided for youth 16 to 19 on a continuous year round basis. An

emphasis was placed on education in this program and the enrollees were required to stay in school.

Three smaller youth programs were implemented at the end of the 1970's and they included the Governor's Youth Grant, the Title II Vocational Education Act and CETA 1 percent linkage. The Governor's Youth grant was targeted at economically disadvantaged, unemployed or underemployed youth between 16 and 21 years of age. It was designed to give state officials grants that would be used in providing employment in areas of their states where a combination of locational, economic, racial and educational attainment factors were thought to create unemployment problems. The Title II Vocational Educational Act was targeted at economically disadvantaged youth and adults. Its scope was to include people and families in poverty. Its goal was to place people in unsubsidized jobs. The CETA 1 percent linkage project was also targeted at disadvantaged youth programs. The main goals of this project was to coordinate linkage between CETA "prime sponsor", schools, other training programs and institutes that provide youth employment services.

The general goal of all of these programs was to reduce youth unemployment. There have been a number of different approaches taken which rely heavily on improving human capital or potential. The focus tends to be on changing or modifying the behavior and values of youth. Very little of this is linked to changing structural correlations such as changing labor markets, or declining industries. The desired outcome of the majority of these programs: securing unsubsidized employment; improve employability;

completing high school or G.E.D. equivalency programs; and performing community service.

The target populations include the unemployed, economically disadvantaged, and dropouts. The majority of the programs are of short duration for the participants. Only the Job Corp offers a two-year program. The main feature of the program(s) include some type of work experience through the job training; work activity with school related credits; supportive social and medical services; vocational counseling and occupational information. The Job Corp includes those features in addition to providing physical rehabilitation, residential subsistence and recreation.

All of the programs were designed to contain and maintain the surplus population. They were intended to alleviate the worst vestiges of poverty but they were never intended to "mainstream" or provide upward mobility for the masses of poor youth in urban or rural areas. These programs essentially served the purpose of containing and constraining the "reserve army".

Youth Employment Programs in the Post-Rebellion Era in Detroit 1967-1980

It should be pointed out that all of the programs previously discussed were being implemented in Detroit. However, there are a few additional programs that were initiated in Detroit. Therefore, in this section there will be a discussion of some additional programs that were initiated specifically in Detroit. In this section there will be a discussion of some additional local programs that were linked to the city's

"public/private" strategy. There will also be a discussion of the "public/private" corporate strategies that influenced urban policy in Detroit during that period.

The "lost generation" in Detroit had to be subsidized throughout the 1970's and this meant that policy makers had to establish poverty programs targeted at the surplus population of the central city. In Detroit, a number of programs were set up to provide some type of employment subsidy and/or training for unemployed or underemployed youth. None of these programs were designed to restructure the declining economy of the city. Instead these programs were designed to distribute a limited amount of funds through various agencies to supplement the budgets of low income and poor central city residents by providing temporary jobs, education training, counseling, etc.

In the summer of 1967, all hell broke loose in the "motor city". The Black and White community staged one of the largest urban rebellions in modern times. There was severe property damage and loss of life. The rebellion was sparked by an incident near the corner of 12th and Clairmount when the police raided a "blind pig". What started off as an overt police action resulted in the most devastating disturbance in Detroit's history. The rebellion was an indication of resistance on the part of the urban masses to gross economic, political and social inequality. While Detroit had been at various times a working man's paradise, there were signs that it was starting to slowly slip into decline.

For example, the automobile plants in the city were being phased out or moved outside the city limits. This decentralization of production caused employment for many central city residents to be more cyclical and temporary. There were also indications that jobs in manufacturing, retail and wholesale industries were moving away from the central

city to newer industrial parks and mall areas. Major capital investors were more interested in developing the suburban fringe than the urban center. Capital was starting to re-invest in places like Troy, Southfield, Livonia and Dearborn.

The racial climate was extremely polarized. Whites were terrified of the potential for continued Black rebellion and therefore developed strategies that would enable them to flee the central city and contain its predominately Black population. As the data in Chapter I demonstrated, the city underwent a total transformation in its racial composition. "White flight" and "residential segregation" characterized the racial situation in spatial terms. There was also increased police brutality which was epitomized by the undercover STRESS decoy units that in one year killed more civilians per capita than any police force in the nation.

The mayor at the time of the rebellion was Jerome Cavanaugh. Cavanaugh had pushed for an urban policy which included both public and private sector participation. He wanted to establish a Domestic Peach Corp. This never materialized but he was one of the main moving forces behind programs that came out of the Great Society's Office of Economic Opportunity. He was very familiar with the Job Corp, Head Start, Vista and Model Cities programs and made sure that those funds came into Detroit. Cavanaugh had also given lip service to the idea of providing federal aid to cities that were experiencing negative disinvestment. One year before the rebellion broke out "Jerry the Giant Killer" Cavanaugh was elected as president of the National League of Cities.

By some indications the city was making an effort to alleviate problems of urban poverty and youth unemployment. When the rebellion broke out there were a number of

federally funded programs in operation. There were also some locally funded programs such as the Mayor's Committee for Human Resources Development (MCHRD); the Detroit community Action Program and special recreation programs run by the city through the Board of Education and the Parks and Recreation Department.

New Detroit

In the aftermath of the rebellion a committee of public officials, private businessmen and civic leaders formed an organization called New Detroit, Inc. Between 1967 and 1969 New Detroit gave ten million dollars in grants for various programs. Some of New Detroit's immediate objectives in its earliest stages included lobbying efforts in the area of open housing and increased school aid for Detroit public schools. It also sought to improve the hiring and promotion practices of companies whose members were affiliated with New Detroit. This included the Bendix Corporation, Michigan Bell Telephone Company, General Motors Corporation and Detroit Edison. The automobile companies Ford and Chrysler also set up special hiring programs. New Detroit also helped sponsor the development of Black capitalism by awarding seed grants of $100,000 each to the Federation for Self Determination and the Detroit Council of Organizations.

There were also some other efforts to promote Black capitalism through the formation of the Economic Development Corporation of Greater Detroit and the Inner City Business Improvement forum. However, the attempts to promote Black capitalism were small. According to Danton (1980:13) sixty percent of all Black businesses had an annual net income of under $8,000.00 and 57 percent of Black owned businesses were

wiped out by urban renewal. In real dollars the grants extended to Black capitalist ventures were less than one-third of the 14 million dollars Black workers got from ten cent an hour increases in their wages negotiated by the United Auto Workers (Danton 1980:13).

New Detroit was also involved in establishing youth programs through its Education and Employment division. They worked with the Detroit Board of Education to increase youth employment opportunities, career awareness and the learning of job skills.. New Detroit also sponsored the Youth Training and Community Involvement program in conjunction with the Detroit Youth Association, Inner City Sub Center, Operation Get Down, Parkside Tenant Council, North End concerned Citizens Community Council, Semi-Quois, Detroit Street Services and the Community Youth Service Program.

The main thrust of the Youth Training and Community Involvement Program was to deter young people from participating in criminal activity. Its five components included: vocational training; remedial education; recreation and culture; parent-youth relations and police youth relations. The target population was inner city youth. The service provided included vocational training in skills related to minor electronics, clerical work, automotive repair, EKG technician, minor construction, and broadcasting. The program also provided service in the area of job placement, referral programs for advanced training, and job counseling.

Other Local Programs

In addition to the federally funded programs there were a number of local programs that focused on youth and these included: The 7001-Limited Detroit Pre-Employment Training Center and the Pre-Apprenticeship Program of the Trade Union Leadership Council.

7001-Limited was a non-profit youth employment agency whose target population was disadvantaged youth. It was jointly funded by General Motors, Ford Motor Company, Budd Company and the State of Michigan. The services provided included work training a simulated industrial plant. The purpose was to prepare youth to work in heavy industry by giving them pre-employment exposure to working conditions. The trainees were not paid but the services included lunch money, transportation and day care.

The Trade Union Leadership Council sponsored a pre-apprenticeship program that offered training in carpentry, home rehabilitation and mechanical skills. The target population were youth 18 to 27 years of age who met CETA eligibility requirements, passed a physical exam and had tenth grade made skills. The graduates of the program were guaranteed employment in the skilled trades industry.

The Public/Private Strategy

In the aftermath of the 1967 rebellion while groups such as new Detroit were focusing on the city's racial and social problems there were a number of organizations and economic development corporations that were formed with the expressed purpose of revitalizing the economy of Detroit. Their goals were broader than dealing with the problems associated with youth unemployment.

One of these organizations was, Detroit Renaissance, Inc. It was organized in 1970. The leaders of Detroit Renaissance, Inc. included Robert Surdan of the National Bank of Detroit, Henry Ford II and Max Fisher, the financier and fund raiser.

The corporate elite of Detroit realized that in order for them to continue a successful accumulation of wealth, the infra-structure of certain parts of the city had to be restructured. Therefore in 1971, they came up with a 337 million dollar plan that called for the development of a complex of office buildings, hotels, restaurants, boutiques, parks and cultural centers. It would be known as the Renaissance Center. The building site was on the riverfront near the center of the city. The plan was to change the economic character of Detroit from primarily industrial to a mixture of industrial and high-tech service and financial enterprises.

The corporate planners envisioned Detroit becoming a center of high finance, banking, critical decision making, research and development. They saw areas of downtown Detroit as a city of the future. A city dominated by high technology and luxury living.

By the end of the decade some progress was made in the construction of the Renaissance Center. This included office buildings, a luxury hotel and restaurants. According to the annual planning report of the city of Detroit issued in 1981, the Ren-Cen organization received a 4.96 million dollar UDAG grant for Phase III of the Renaissance Center. This money as used as part of a 99.4 million dollar project to focus on building residential facilities.

The city also went into partnership with private capital in a number of revitalization and redevelopment projects. For example, the Detroit Plan for Economic Revitalization was a 2.6 billion dollar plan for social investments that would be conducive to corporate development plans. The plan called for the development of a regional transit system, new measures of police control, manpower retraining, acquisition of riverfront land, cite preparation for developers, the construction of housing and shopping centers. Some of the major cost of these ventures would be paid for by public tax dollars.

The city also sponsored a number of economic development corporations under the auspices of the Overall economic Development Program Committee (Hill, 1984:325). These economic development corporations formed a network of entities responsible for funding some of the major redevelopment plans. They had the power to issue bonds for industrial revenue, tax increments and job development authorities (Hill, 1984). They could also administer and receive federal grants for development. The EDC's were involved in land banking and tax abatement schemes.

In summary, the overall thrust of public/private strategy was to provide a conducive climate for capital reinvestment by restructuring aspects of the central city to accommodate the growing industries of professional services, finance, insurance, banking, research and engineering. This was done with public and private money but it appears that the obvious beneficiaries were the corporations who had gotten the necessary social investments from the city to carry out their plans.

However, it remains to be seen if the city's economy can be revitalized by the efforts of the Renaissance Center group or the economic development corporations. Detroit is tied to and heavily dependent upon heavy industrial manufacturing. As long as the city is experiencing de-industrialization, the economic base for its future is still in question. The corporate strategies of investing in projects such as the Ren-Cen ignored the reality of providing jobs for the vast majority of Detroit's blue collar labor force that was being displaced by changes in the mode of automobile production. The groups that stood to benefit most from the corporate strategies were white-collar technical professional and managerial workers. The remainder of the population could only hope to find low-status, low paying, menial jobs in the future oriented hi-tech and service based economy.

The policies and program designed to deal with youth unemployment and the economic revitalization of Detroit were not successful in reducing Black youth unemployment during the decade of the 1970's. It is clear that with all of the federal, state and local funds and programs that were implemented during the decade, the rates of unemployment and poverty among the city's Black youth population increased instead of decreased. For the youth of Detroit, job programs have only meant employment on a short-term basis. These short-term jobs have only been temporary solutions to a problem that is rooted in the structure of the city's economic base. It should also be pointed out that the majority of the policies and programs designed to meet the employment needs of youth were conceptualized and implemented within a national framework. These national programs failed to provide meaningful employment on a long-term basis for

youth employment programs in the 1970's was there any concrete evidence that the rate of youth unemployment declined because of federal, state and local policies. Instead, the "lost generation" expanded regardless of any of the programs designed to provide employment, education and training.

Therefore, it is obvious that there is and was a need to design alternative strategies and solutions for providing employment opportunities for youth. Included in this next section is an alternative policy agenda and framework for addressing the problem of youth unemployment.

Alternative Strategies and Solutions for Solving the Problems of the "Lost Generation"

It is apparent that the problem of Black youth unemployment in Detroit became increasingly worse during eh 1970's. The situation of Black youth in capitalist America is one indication of the super-exploited position of African-Americans in general. It has been shown that the social reproduction of the stagnant sector of the reserve army is a result of capitalist development and the ideology of racism. This had led to the underdevelopment of the total African-American community. The situation faced by African-Americans is similar in many ways to the conditions of exploited peoples in the Third World societies that were penetrated by Western capitalism and subsequent urbanization.

The people of color who inhabit America's central cities have a historical legacy of being oppressed in three major periods: plantation slavery; peonage/sharecropping; and industrial wage labor. We are now in a period of post industrial wage labor. This is

a period when a significant number of people stand a good chance of never having an adequate income from any type of employment on a long term basis. The conditions for this stagnant sector of the population have not changed. Recent trends indicate that poverty and unemployment have increased. This led to the formation of a stagnant surplus population which is urban based.

These findings indicate that changes in the city's racial and industrial character led to the formation and reproduction of a reserve army. Residential segregation; deindustrialization; a poor investment climate; automation; the loss of jobs in the city; industrial decline and institutionalized racism all contributed to the increase of unemployment and poverty among Black youth in the central city. The "reserve army", especially the latent segment, continued to expand in the 1970's.

The alternative strategies and policies outlined in the following section address the findings of the research questions.

Alternative Strategy and Solution 1: Residential Segregation

Provide for immediate action to eliminate racially discriminatory practices in the allocation of residential space. Enforce the provision of the equal opportunity and civil rights acts that outlaw real estate policies which are discriminatory by:

1. Requiring the collection of racial data on all residential and commercial real estate transactions.

2. Requiring the federal, state and local government to complete a comprehensive analysis of redlining practices.

3. Institute strict regulatory procedures directed at those institutions which perpetuate redlining.

4. Require that all real estate transactions provide an equal opportunity provision for people regardless of race so as to expand the choice relative to residential space.

Alternative Strategy and Solution 2: Full Employment

Provide immediate action to eliminate youth employment. Establish full employment as a high priority by:

1. Providing opportunities for productive employment at decent wages for youth 16 to 24 years of age in the central city who are experiencing a combination of unemployment, and poverty.

2. Establishing the right of every citizen to be guaranteed a job.

3. Supportive legislation and organizations that promote full employment.

4. Providing jobs to rebuild the infrastructure of the central city such as streets, sewers, railroads, etc.

Alternative Strategy and Solution 3: Investment and Reinvestment

Provide immediate action to stop the disinvestment of capital in the inner-city. Require monopoly capitalist to re-investment in the declining areas of the central city by:

1. Making corporations pay a corporate flight tax when they relocate production outside of the central city.

2. Requiring corporations to give advance notice, hold public hearings and make payments in the form of monetary settlements to workers displaced by capital relocation.

3. Require that capital be reinvested in established communities that are economically depressed.

4. Establishing investment plans and priorities that are developed by community organizations, labor unions, and the unemployed.

Alternative Strategy and Solution 4: Robotics and Automation

Encourage the creative use of robotics and automation that would enhance rather than decrease the number of people involved in production work by:

1. Requiring that robots and automation are not used to displace people on a long-term basis.

2. Requiring worker control and input into decisions related to the implementation of robots and automation.

3. Implementing research and development strategies that are productive for human development rather than destructive to human life.

4. Using new technology to improve the quality of labor process without displacing workers.

Alternative Strategy and Solution 5: Poverty

Provide for the immediate elimination of poverty by redirecting the economy away from a system that reproduces a surplus population to an economy that provides all people with an adequate material base by:

1. Establishing a national guaranteed income.

2. Requiring a massive and truly democratic system of income and wealth redistribution.

3. Mobilizing the masses of people into a movement for economic democracy that promotes an alternative economic system.

4. Providing the poor with adequate food, clothing, shelter and health care in the transition process to economic democracy.

Alternative Strategy and Solution 6: Youth Employment

Promote plans and provide for the productive employment and education of central city youth by:

1. Establishing a National Service Corp for youth that requires two years of mandatory service for youth between the ages of 16-24.

2. Improving the planning between the educational sector and the world of work in order to train youth for jobs which are presently available and jobs which will be available in the future.

3. Increasing and expanding the cultural and educational apparatus to invigorate and promote the intellectual and artistic potential of youth by promoting activities which are anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-capitalist.

4. Encouraging the active political participation of youth 16-24 in the grassroots movements for economic democracy through the establishment of youth unemployment councils.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND EPILOGUE

The purpose of this research was to analyze the problem of Black youth unemployment within the context of the theory of the "reserve army". According to that paradigm, the "reserve army" is a necessary aspect of capitalist development. In order for capital to expand, it reproduces a surplus population of people who form a labor reserve.

In Detroit between the years 1967 and 1980, a significant percentage of Black youth comprised segments of the modern reserve army. Their high rate of unemployment was indicative of the role they played in the city's social structure. This "lost generation" steadily increased during the period under investigation. This corresponded with the economic decline of Detroit.

The central question being addressed in this research focused on Detroit's racial and industrial character. They were concerned with such issues as: The amount of residential segregation; changes in the mode of production; the impact of automation on worker displacement; the loss of jobs in the city; the level of poverty; and the rate and percentage of Black youth unemployment.

The major assumption underlying the work was that the structure of capitalism as an economic system constantly exploits and reproduces peoples of color as a working

class and surplus population. It was also assumed that racism as an ideology is an essential element of capitalism and it enables capital to superexploit people on the basis of color as well as class. This means that in a capitalist-racist society, people of color will experience the greatest amount of poverty and unemployment. In the case of Black youth the evidence clearly indicates that this position is correct. Black youth who live in the central core of declining industrial cities such as Detroit are increasingly falling into the ranks of the modern urban based reserve army. The alarming aspect of this phenomenon, is that many of them will become part of a permanent latent reserve army and they will never find productive work on a long-term basis. The consequences of this are obvious. Without meaningful and productive work these youth become vulnerable to illegal and anti-social activities. They also become part of the population that circulates through the criminal justice system.

The existence of a surplus population is one essential element of capitalism. Capital constantly requires a labor reserve and in modern times Black youth have performed such a role. They have been used as a group to perform the menial, marginal and service work of the society. This is similar to the role of other Third World people in industrialized nations who have functioned as an extremely dependent and marginal class.

This analysis expands the classic theory of the "reserve army" in order to accommodate the modern ideological phenomenon of racial oppression. It has demonstrated that the problems facing Black youth can be attributed to structured shifts in the urban economy, racial oppression and economic exploitation.

The theory of the "reserve army" has proven to be applicable in analyzing the role of Detroit's "lost generation". It has explained how a number of structural variables have led to the economic decline of Detroit and the social reproduction of the surplus population. It has also advanced the original theory as developed by Marx to include phenomenon related to racism and color stratification.

The research has demonstrated how the position of Black youth in urban areas in a direct result of a historical process which is rooted in the structure of capitalism. The growth of the "lost generation" in urban America is one aspect of a serious crisis plaguing the American system. The existence of the "lost generation" is an indication of the failure of capitalism and it signals the need for a mass grassroots movement to radically change the system and introduce a new social order that is anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-capitalist. The alternative to the present condition is protracted struggle for social justice and economic democracy.

The Epilogue

This dissertation represents the culmination of a long process of inquiry which has included shorter research reports, book reviews, speeches and media presentations dealing with some aspect of the Black youth unemployment problem. The following interview was done in the City of Detroit during the summer of 1981. It took place in the streets, taverns, recreation centers and other places where the "lost generation" hangs out. It is an excellent summation of my personal perspective on the conditions facing Black youth in capitalist America. The interviewer was NBC correspondent Emery King. The

interview was used as a segment of the NBC documentary "America: Black and White" which was aired September 9, 1981 on national television.

EMERY KING (EK): Clark would you address yourself to the underclass, the so-called poverty cycle and the notion that the system works to keep people mired or creates a permanent underclass system.

CLARK WHITE (CW): First of all, historically, over the time for Black people, especially since the end of slavery, there has been a continuous underclass clement in American society and what has happened or what we've seen at this particular point in history is that we have generations of families who have never experienced life above the poverty level.

EK: Give me an example if you can of how a family or an individual might find himself caught up in that cycle?

CW: Well the classic example is someone for example who didn't finish high school, a person who has very little chance of getting a decent job and getting low wage work. Let's move it one step further, let's say this person gets married and creates a family situation and is unable to provide for his family. This leads him to a situation where the person becomes dependent upon transfer of payments from the welfare state. The cycle begins to

perpetuate itself in another generation with an offspring to come, an offspring that's very dependent on those same institutions and as you and I very well know when you talk about central city areas, the quality of service is poorer than it is in surrounding suburbs.

EK: You always hear the "you pull yourself up by the boots, the bootstraps theory"that if you really pitch in the American system you can work hard and you can get yourself out of that situation.

CW: Right. Well my response to that always is how are you going to pull yourselves up by your bootstraps if you have no boots? It's just as simple as that, so I think that a person may have a desire to work, most people do have the desire to work but at this point in time the economic structure in the City of Detroit provides no jobs--there is in fact an economic crisis, a recession which has created a situation where there is not much work available for people. Jobs in certain industrial cities such as Detroit have left this area and gone to places like Mexico or other areas of the Third World where there are no unions to contend with and labor is much cheaper. So you get these factors which create inner city pockets of poverty.

EK: The National Urban League puts black unemployment, black teenage unemployment as high as 60 percent. We especially see that as you mention in a city like Detroit with the high concentration of the automotive industry here. What are the effects of a situation where you do have few jobs, what happens, what are the alternatives? Where do they turn to?

CW: There are very few alternatives. Let's look at some of the alternatives. I always like to point out when youth have no job-one alternative is the volunteer army. We see a large number of young men both Black and White who are poor and who have very little chance of getting a good job going into the volunteer army. The other warehousing mechanism of this system is the criminal justice system. This nation's prisons contain a large segment of the Black reserve army. From my experience of teaching at Jackson Prison, one of the very first things that dawned upon me the day I went into the prison to teach was the fact that 70 percent of the population there were young black males like myself. The first question I asked myself was, are blacks committing all the crime? So we fill up the nation's prisons or we serve in the volunteer army. A lot of black youth are involved in the drug trade and that's an element of despair. The level of suicide is increasing and so is the number of young men and women who

are confined in mental institutions. This is a situation of marginality where Black youth have become superfluous to the system.

EK: The psychological strain as a result of what you've just described must be tremendous?

CW: It's very tremendous. You can see this in alcohol abuse, you can see it in the level of violence. For example, a few years ago in the City of Detroit they were having problems with the gangs. The gangs were never political. These gangs were acting from a sense of despair. They were very destructive and you see this in their behavior. More Black on Black crime, more assault, more abuse.

EK: Has the problem gotten so unwieldy and so large that society tends to kind of write it off as being an unsolvable problem?

CW: I think it's ignored, but I think of a lot of people stand to benefit from the problem. There's a whole layer of professionals and para-professionals who really are making money from the situation. Now I'm not condemning them for seeking employment in those areas but what I'm saying is that we've made poverty a business.

EK: What about motivation and incentive: What motivation is there for youngsters today?

CW: I think they are motivated but the problem comes in when a youth looks at a situation and says why should I be motivated if there is no payoff? Why should I have incentive if I can't have a job? What are my alternatives? And the alternatives usually are some type of employment in the underground economy or illegal type of work or part-time or extremely low wage work. There is motivation to work. I think that it's some thing we need to drive home. Youth are motivated to work but they need jobs not jail, they are looking for places of employment but there are no jobs.

EK: And in the mean time what sorts of images are they being bombarded with?

CW: Well the images of success that they see are the images of success such as athletes. The images that they see of success are hustlers. The images they see sometimes are professional people. There are so many structural blockages as you and I know to getting into certain types of occupations that the typical central city inner city youth especially if that youth is black has a tremendous amount of hurdles to overcome in terms of getting interested in certain types of occupations and getting the proper amount of training that would get you into a skilled trade or a professional trade with

a significant payoff. So the alternative becomes sports which I think is another cruel myth that's perpetuated on central city young people. As you and I both know very few slots become available each year in professional sports but there are thousands of kids all across the country in the inner city areas that have a dream of making it, making it into professional sports and that's one of the most cruel things I think that can be perpetuated on these young people. Very few make it, very few make it that way.

EK: In your dealings with youth around the City of Detroit and other places for that matter, what have you noticed about their dreams, aspirations and goals? What comes out of them to you in terms of what they have to look forward to? What are they looking forward to?

CW: A lot. You'd be really surprised. These are very creative people we're talking about. Most of them have a dream but they are also so very realistic and it turns as they grow older into despair--but most still have the hope of making it. There's still some hope of asking it but that's the frightening part. I think that time's running out and I don't think we have much longer to witness a situation like the present one. Let's not fool ourselves, the young people we're talking about are very sophisticated and they're getting more sophisticated due to the nature of the society that they

live in. So they look around and they see affluence. They see success and they're not experiencing it. So you begin to get street gangs that commit a lot of crime. You begin to get a rising crime rate. Out of despair you get rising hard drug abuse. You get this acting out when their dream suddenly explodes.

EK: We were talking to a youngster the other day and I asked him the question, "are you ever happy?" and he didn't have anything that made him happy. It seemed almost as if any dreams he had had been taken away already at 16 years of age. Do you find that often in your work?

CW: It's sad and it is a commentary on the state of Black youth in American society and at 16 it should tell us that this young man has given up. He doesn't even see a chance and that's the sad part about it. There have been very few alternative systems or mechanisms established to give him some out, to give him some hope of doing something. . .What about an education? What about a job? Well the school turns him off or the school repels him. He can't make it in school and has no job. In most cases the family situation is bad. Most central city neighborhoods are poor. It's a commentary on the sickness in American society. It's a commentary on what we value in this society and it's obvious to me that we're letting

thousands and thousand of youth go to waste. They are in face a "lost generation" that has very little chance of making it in urban America.

EK: What about the family structure? The family has always been very highly regarded in the black community.

CW: I think at this period in our history, the economy has had a tremendous impact on the family structure so therefore in a city like Detroit with an increase in the rate of unemployment you also have an increase in divorce and family disorganization.

EK: Okay I want to go back to a question I asked earlier which maybe I didn't ask right. I asked you to kind of give me an example of how an individual or a family might find themselves trapped in the poverty cycle. What are the elements that can come into play for a 16-year-old like Terry Murphy that we interviewed who has just dropped out of school and has just lost a job, has no money and his family is on welfare?

CW: Terry Murphy has no job. Let's say Terry Murphy this evening is stopped for loitering. There's a good chance, a very good chance that if you're a black male in this country you will have at least one negative experience with the criminal justice system. Let's go one step further. Let's assume

Terry Murphy is found for loitering and committing some minor offense. He gets into the cycle of being marked in the criminal justice system. This gives him a record. In a lot of situations you can just be in the wrong place at the wrong time. A high percentage of young people become victims in the criminal justice system. A high percentage of young Black people in urban areas become caught up in being contained in juvenile home facilities, in the nation's county jails, in the penitentiaries and in the prisons. This experience marks you for life. A tremendous amount of young creative energy is locked up in our penal institutions and it's a vicious cycle. It goes one step further to the schools. A lot of our schools repel people. You know it bothers me when I drive around the City of Detroit on a school day and I see a large number of young people outside the school. The first question I ask is what's going on in that school that's forcing them outside on the street. There must be something going in terms of their educational process that's repelling young people. It does not necessarily have to be the young people themselves. We move to the other part of that dependency cycle where a lot of families are dependent upon government transfer payments, food-stamps, unemployment pay, and certain other types of benefits that keep you perpetually dependent. This vicious cycle of poverty leads into poor housing and poor health. For this to be the most advanced technological industrial society in the world, we have a record rate of tuberculosis and pneumonia and certain types of other

medical pathologies that exist among the underclass. This just shouldn't exist but it becomes a question of adequate use of the available resources. But we shouldn't focus on the victim because I don't think it's the victims fault. The victim is blameless. We're talking about those structural conditions that create a tremendous amount of inequality in American society.

EK: So where do we focus Clark?

CW: I don't think there is one place. I don't think that you can look at one particular set of circumstances. I think they're all connected. I don't think you can just zero in on one particular situation or one example of one city for that matter. We live in a world system. I look at people in the central city as Third World people, a people of color who have a historical legacy of being exploited. In America, for example, it began for Africans in the plantation era which evolved into the system of peonage and sharecropping which later evolved into the period of industrial wage which has now gone to the point where the use of automation and cybernetics has made some people superfluous. They are not needed anymore. There is not a demand for their labor. There is no longer a greater demand for unskilled labor or semiskilled labor. In cities such as Detroit for example,

you get a lot of people who have been put out of work and have been replaced by robots.

EK: Again that seems like a whole mass of people have been written off?

CW: I think so, I really am convinced at this point, given the situation as it is we will continue to see unemployment increase. We will continue to see more people warehoused, in prisons. I argue that you don't deal with the problem of unemployment by locking people up. You just don't build more prisons and mental institutions. You look at those problems and create jobs. I also argue that in this society we have enough resources and technology to create jobs beyond make-work jobs. I think that the problem that we're facing is one of capitalist economic policy. So we have to look at those policies critically. People who are victims of these particular problems need to take a more active role and become politically involved. One very simple thing that young people can do is register to vote and participate in the political process. They need to influence the political process so they can break the poverty trap.

EK: That was my next question. There are those who say that the problem is not only economical but political in nature and that it needs to be politically

solved. Can you foresee that type of mass political organization of the underclass to the point where it would make a difference?

CW: Well, what has happened in the last ten to fifteen years whenever you've had a mass political organization? In most cases the leaders of these mass political organizations have been removed from the scene. They've also been contained either in the graveyard or prison. We've seen a tremendous amount of money and programs established to move people off of addressing those hard issues, so the alternatives become to buy people off, kill them or lock them up when they begin to organize mass movements. When you talk about mass movement and alternative types of systems you begin to move. You create movements.

EK: You know civil rights advocates are fighting to maintain the Voting Rights Act. In the south even today and in Congress there are moves to eliminate it. We find a city like Detroit for instance where there is a black mayor and there is a black police chief and blacks have assumed some political control here, yet it doesn't seem to be enough to make a difference.

CW: I always like to conceptualize that as blacks coming into control or have what some people have called a "hollow prize". Sure there is black political participation, there is black leadership and it's a very positive

force. But on the other hand Blacks still have not made any impact on the economic structure of this society. In other words we could control a city politically but we do not control the vast majority of wealth in that city. For example there are statistics that I've come across that have shown that less than one tenth of one percent of all stock in the American Stock Exchange is controlled by Black people; less than five percent of all money in savings institutions in this country are controlled by Black people; less than five percent of all farm parity is controlled by blacks. Blacks have been reproduced as a very dependent people who are basically wage-earners that control no significant amount of capital. When people refer to the Black middle class, I always think of a wage-earning petty bourgeoisie comprador class. This is not a class of producers but a class of workers and consumers.

EK: Isn't it true that Blacks don't support their own businesses for the most part?

CW: I don't think that's true. I really don't think that's true. I think that certain types of business historically have catered to Blacks. For example, how many white funeral homes do you know that deal in Black bodies? Barber shops are another good example. There are those traditional services that black people continue to patronize. I think you would have to be more specific and look at those areas of the economy that blacks do and do not

support. I think that by and large blacks tend to support those more traditional types of small businesses.

EK: We look in the papers today and you see want-ads and there's a long list of jobs in the want-ads. You turn on the radio in Detroit and you can hear ads for jobs. If there are jobs available, why are so many people unemployed?

CW: I'm glad you asked that question. People like to cite the fact that they can pick up a Sunday paper and say, "well if people want to work they should go out and get one of these jobs in the ads". Well if you look very closely at those ads basically there are two categories of jobs that are being advertised. f Jobs that require highly skilled educated trained workers or low wage work. Low wage work will always be available in any society. Someone's always going to have to pick up the garbage; someone's always going to have to wash the dishes. Youth of color should be able to look forward to more than dirty work for the rest of their lives. There are two types of workers that are in demand. Workers who are highly educated and that have skills. On the other hand the want-ads will also tell us that there are jobs available for bus boys, dish washers, shampoo girls, fruit and vegetable pickers, cleaning assistants, messengers, parking lot attendants, the car-wash, etc. The point that I'm trying to make is that is

you look at what happens over a time and compare Black and White youth who start off at the same point in low-wage work, eventually over a time, because of certain structural mechanisms, whites can assimilate and move up higher in the occupational structure because of racial discrimination. We also know that certain jobs are passed on among families. Therefore, if you don't have these connections or complexion you're locked in a low-wage marginal work. I think that's a cruel hoax to say that there are jobs available if you want a joy. Yes there are jobs available if you have a skill.

EK: You would probably agree that racism has been the underlying factor in bringing us to this point. Does racism still play a major role in the maintenance of the underclass?

CW: Of course and we would be fooling ourselves if we did not address the question of racism. Racism as a prevailing ideology gives a rationale for the tremendous amount of inequality in American society. This is perpetuated through several mechanisms in our society. The media is a very good example, you get very negative Black images for the most part in media programming. The images that Black kids see are what? Thieves or rapists or killers or the "cool" guy, the pimp. This is put out as the positive image or the image of the rick super star athlete. But you never see people who are leading very productive lives. What you get

from the media is perpetuation of a cruel stereotype. Kids see this and they act it out. Their symbols of success become people who usually deal in some type of pathology or entertainment as opposed to some kind of intellectual development or some kind of highly skilled and marketable trade.

EK: If you have a situation where you--a family has been on welfare for ten, fifteen, twenty years, they are faced with the possibility of their children being on welfare, their children's children being on welfare.

CW: Right.

EK: . . .so we stack generation. . .

CW: Right.

EK: . . .upon generation on welfare. . .

CW: Right.

EK: . . .how does the cycle manifest itself?

CW: It's a cycle. It's a poverty cycle that you can plug into anywhere. It's a cycle that involves income for example. If your income is not at a certain level then you cannot purchase adequate housing. You can't provide for certain types of educational material. You can't even provide for the basic necessities that would move you out of that situation so you're locked into a vicious cycle and you become dependent on school systems that aren't doing an adequate job. The poverty cycle begins to perpetuate itself. It's a very vicious cycle and it's hard to break out of it. In that cycle you just exist or you're contained or in a lot of cases you die. We live hard and we die young. I always like to say that Black kids have the alternatives of shooting basketball, bullets or dope. That's pretty sad. That's a pretty sad commentary and it came home to me in my teaching experiences in Jackson Prison where I've taught young men who have left Detroit as unemployed workers, gone to Vietnam and fought, come home and be faced with two alternatives. They stand in the unemployment line or they end up in the penitentiary.

EK: What about a kid who gets out of the penitentiary, gets a job and he's working. He's making money and he's saving it. Why can't that kid or why can't that person look forward to moving up, to upward mobility?

CW: Well that person is usually stigmatized so that he or she has a very hard time convincing people that they have been "rehabilitated". They deserve a chance. There are thousands of people who don't have that mark or don't have that stigma but still don't have that opportunity. There are no jobs. There are several negative alternatives: for example, I was riding in Detroit the other day and was literally stopped in the middle of the street in Brewester Project. A guy came over to my car and I still haven't figured out what it meant but he said "six nine brother, I got the glow?--and then three other kids ran up and said the same thing. The chances are is that they're selling hard drugs and that's an alternative to working at regular jobs. So people are faced with these kinds of alternatives that destroys the health of communities. We get into a very vicious cycle.

EK: What's the best way out. . .

CW: A best way out?

EK: I guess I'm asking for solutions.

CW: Okay, solutions. That's a good question. First of all I think that certain industries in this country should be nationalized so that they can provide meaningful work. I think that we also need to take a look at present

policies and make some kind of compromise with those policies to get more people involved in jobs that go beyond a ninety day framework. I think another solution would be to employ the technology that exists in society to give people work. I think there's enough work that can be done in this society and it has to be the responsibility not only of the federal government but of the private sector to employ more people in their businesses. I also think that youth themselves need to take more active roles in becoming politically aware and politically organized. The only time Black people in this country have experienced full employment was the period of slavery, and when you think about it, it is a commentary, not only on racism but also a commentary on the economic system.

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