

ALL LAND GRANTS WERE NOT CREATED EQUAL: THE BENEFITS OF WHITE PRIVILEGE

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Much of the discussion about reparations to the descendents of Africans enslaved in America, has focused on (1) the redistribution to blacks that portion of national income which was diverted from blacks to whites due to slavery and post-Emancipation racial discrimination; and (2) restitution for the unpaid labor of enslaved ancestors. Brown (1972) discusses how the legal constraints put on a slaves investment in human capital would not have allowed the first generation of freedmen to achieve equality with whites. He suggests some may consider the payment for unpaid slave wages up to the date of Emancipation and the expectation that blacks would be the equals of the free population the day after Emancipation as double counting. However, those of this school of thought have failed to take into consideration the time necessary for the investment in human capital to mature. Brown explains:

compensatory payment to equalize black and white incomes retroactive to Emancipation would appear to be an equitable means to counteract the handicap placed on the freedmen by: 1) America's refusal to permit them to make a virtually costless investment in themselves; 2) America's refusal to provide the necessary resources to remedy this deficiency following Emancipation; and 3) America's discriminatory treatment of black workers even when their productivity was not inferior to that of whites (p. 43).

Passage of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868 guaranteed equal protection to all persons born or naturalized in the United States. Theoretically, over turning all legally enforceable aspects of the Dred Scott decision in 1857. However for many freemen living in the 19 southern and Border States, the abridgement of privileges or immunities was commonplace including the prohibition of freedmen and whites from attending the same post-secondary institutions in these states. While we believe that separate institutions were illegal, Nabrit (1952) cites the *Roberts v. Boston* in 1849 as the legal case that created the

foundation for the doctrine of “separate but equal” generally credited to the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. Nabrit also notes that the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision disregarded the 1873 Supreme Court decision in *Railroad Company v. Brown*. Nabrit states:

In the *Brown Case* the Court decided that separate accommodations, no matter how identical they might otherwise be, were not equal. The Court in *Plessy* and subsequent cases has disregarded the *Brown Case* and the historical background out of which arose the *Roberts Case*. As a consequence, the Court has in effect placed a judicial limitation on the citizenship of the Negro; and has substituted for equal protection of laws a “separate but substantially equal” protection of the laws; by importing a philosophy of racial separatism properly applicable only to the slave system into the 14th Amendment, which was designed to end the last vestiges of that same slave system (p. 423).

Hence, the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision was to restore rights award nearly 80 years earlier. From Nabrit’s findings establishing separate public post-secondary institutions for blacks and whites between 1859–1873 were legal. Institutions established between 1874–1896 would have been illegal and those established between 1896–1954 legal. However, absent slavery in America, neither these legal cases nor a dual post-secondary education system would have come to fruition.

The impact of America’s refusal to provide equal resources for the investment in human capital by freedmen at the primary and secondary education levels is addressed by Loubert in this volume and is not covered in the discussion that follows. Instead, this article will focus on America’s refusal to provide equal resources for the investment in human capital by freedmen at the post-secondary education level. The analysis that follows is not an exhaustive illustration of how white America has benefited from discriminatory post-secondary education policies. However, the objective is to:

1. Show how discriminatory admissions policies has allowed traditionally white institutions to accumulate assets including a larger student body, endowment, and state funding;
2. Show how the curriculum of traditionally white institutions has provided for generations of whites to pursue careers in lucrative professions such as law, medicine, and engineering;
3. Show how the Carnegie classification of traditionally white institutions has benefited the faculty of these institutions;

- 4 Provide an estimate of the economic benefits whites have received as a result of these injustices.

The analysis above is limited to public institutions with an emphasis on land grants, the flagship for black public institutions.

I. ASSETS: STUDENT ENROLLMENT, PHYSICAL CAPITAL, AND FUNDING

The creation of a dual system restricted the supply of applicants from which black and white institutions could recruit. Since slaves were prohibited from learning to read and write, black institutions would have had a smaller supply of applicants to select students than white institutions. The 1860 census estimates 4 million blacks and 8 million whites residing in the South. Of the 4 million blacks, 90 percent are thought to have been illiterate. Given the larger supply of applicants, white institutions could produce more graduates and generate a larger alumni base to solicit financial support. While the Morrill Acts authorized the creation of land grant institutions, federal grants could not fund the construction of buildings; therefore, the solicitation of financial support was crucial to the existence of the first public land grants.

To protect the rights of blacks, the Second Morrill Act funded “separate but equal” land grants, but mandated a “just an equitable division” of monies appropriated under the act. The secretary of the interior recommended the distribution of funds according to the percentage of black and white students in the state’s public school population; hence, proportionality was an acceptable standard for “just and equitable.” In practice, even states with a large number of blacks did not receive funds sufficient to cover the fixed cost of establishing institution of higher education; therefore, state and private funding were necessary.

The white land grants received funding for resident instruction, military training, cooperative extensions services, experimental stations and research, and rural sociology. By the mid 1930s black public land grants were receiving less than 60 percent of the funding allocated to white public land grants for resident instruction, \$134 per black student compared to \$234 per white student. Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) became a feature of education for young men at white land grants in 1916 and by the 1920s more than 16,000 students were receiving ROTC training funded by \$1 million federal grants. It would be 1942 before West Virginia State University,¹ the first black land grant, would be awarded a ROTC program by the War Department. By the end of World War II, ROTC programs had been awarded to black public institutions in North Carolina and Texas and by 1956 all segregationist states except Arkansas, Georgia and Mississippi had ROTC programs. It would be 1973

before aerospace, military science, or naval science would be established at all black public institutions. The benefit of ROTC programs to white land grants would have been at least \$1 million annually for every year that black land grants did not have comparable ROTC programs. Although 3 out of 4 black males drafted into military duty resided in the segregationist states, only males enrolled at public institutions in North Carolina, Texas or West Virginia would have had access to ROTC training. The benefit to a white student of having a ROTC program was (1) increased leadership on campus and in civilian life and (2) stipends paid to reservist during the year and summer camps.

States also discriminated in allocating funding from the Hatch Act (1887), Smith-Lever Act (1914), and Purnell Act (1925). Trueheart (1979) reports that funding for agricultural experimental stations provided under the Hatch Act were withheld from black land grants for eighty years.² The Hatch Act was initiated with a \$15,000 grant and by 1940 white land grants were receiving \$4 million annually from the Hatch Act. Kujovich (1994a) reports that in 1937 the expenditures by white land grants on cooperative extension services, funded under the Smith-Lever Act, exceeded funding for all activities at black land grants by over \$1.5 million.

Kujovich reports that in 1920 black land grants received 23 percent of the \$1.5 million appropriated in federal funds—\$20,294 per institution which is 30 percent of the average funding allocated to white land grants, but achieved proportionality as recommended. The disparities in state funding are far greater. Black land grants received 12 percent of the more than \$11 million states spent on public higher education—an average of \$77,647 per institution or 14 percent of the average funding allocated to white land grants. Kujovich estimates that in 1928, sixty-six years after the first black public land grant was funded, Alcorn State University-Mississippi, the average black land grant was valued at less than \$700,000 compared to white land grants with values that exceeded \$4.5 million. These disparities are the result of years of unequal funding that also impacted curriculum development.

II. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were times of heated debates about the higher education of Negro. Many southerners felt that the Negro should not be educated in the fine arts, but in the trades with an emphasis on making the Negro “a better servant and laborer.”³ In 1904, Mississippi’s governor closed a state normal school for providing an education that was “ruining our Negroes. They’re demanding equality.”⁴ “Equality” was the commission of the missionary societies that established private institutions for the purpose of educating blacks residing in the South. The curriculum at mission-

ary schools centered around a classical liberal education with an emphasis on literary and professional training for the purpose of developing a “black intelligentsia that would fight for political and civil equality”⁵ Hence, the missionary societies’ ideals of black education were in direct conflict with that of the southerners—often referred to as industrialist.

Black land grants were not only handicapped by the attitude of southerners towards black education, but also by the high percent of illiterate freedmen. Kujovich (1994b) details the hindrance the black land grants faced when he states:

For many years the black public college was little more than a boarding school for primary and secondary students. Persistent discrimination at the lower level meant that as late as 1928 nearly two thirds of the student at the 17 black land grants were elementary and secondary students. The pattern varied from state to state, but few black public colleges took on the primary function of affording higher education to black students until the 1930s.

Creation of a genuine college faculty was deferred for decades, as teachers in black public colleges were called upon to instruct elementary and secondary as well as college students. In the mid-1920s for example, the black land grants in Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia and Maryland each had only one faculty member teaching exclusively at the college level while Mississippi’s black land grant had only three. The institutions could not develop an educational environment appropriate to the college level because “work of subcollegiate grade not only consumed the funds and dominated [their] activities . . . but also too often determined the intellectual tone of the whole institution (p. 67).

Given the burden on the faculty to bring the education level of the black population to the high school level coupled with the funding disparities, an under developed curriculum was inevitable. The National Survey of the Higher Education of the Negroes (1942) produced by the Office of Education, Federal Security Agency found the following:

1. No program of study in architecture, journalism, geology, geography, anthropology, philosophy, accounting, advertising, marketing, banking and finance, manufacturing, or management at any black public college;
2. Limited access to programs of study in psychology (two states), foreign language, sociology, physics (seven states), Georgia and Alabama offered no programs of study in physics, chemistry, biology, political science or government (one state);

3. White land grants had over 10 well-developed engineering specialties and offered all of listed the programs of study not available at their counterparts.

The consequence of these deficiencies at over 30 public black institutions experienced during seven decades of separate but equal higher education was the production of 19 students who later earned doctoral degrees. All of these degrees were earned in the North because as late as 1940 only Virginia, North Carolina, and Texas had graduate programs, granting only masters degrees at the public black institutions. White public colleges in all seventeen states had graduate programs with extensive program offerings—including law, pharmacy, and medicine and twelve states offered doctoral degrees. A black student seeking training be a doctor, lawyer, or engineer at a public Southern institution was denied this opportunity under the separate but equal education era. It would take ten year of legal cases fought by the NAACP to secure the right to a professional education for blacks who wished to be educated in the South.

One advantage to whites as a result of the discriminatory policies is a disproportionate share of the labor markets for professionals, excluding teachers. Analyzing the 1950 census, Kujovich found 60 percent of all black professional were teachers compared to 26 percent for whites. However, exclude graduates from black private colleges and the representation is less than 4 percent, although, blacks were 20 percent of the population. He also reports in the seventeen segregationist states there were 4,600 lawyers and judges, engineers, scientist, physicians and surgeons, dentist, pharmacists, architects, accountants and auditors, surveyors, designers and draftsmen in a black labor force exceeding 3.5 million. Professional blacks amounted to just over 1 percent of the 410,000 professionals in these professions. Again Kujovich estimates using the 1950 census that whites residing in segregationist states were served by physicians and surgeon at the rate of 115 per 100,000, but there were less than 20 of these professionals for every 100,000 blacks. Therefore, another advantage for whites is more access to health care and to professionals that could protect their rights as guaranteed under the constitution. Even in the twenty-first century there still exist disparities in health care and legal services.

III. CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATIONS

The evolution of the curriculum at black land grants has also affected the Carnegie classification. The Carnegie classifications are not intended for pur-

poses of advantage, but to categorize colleges into groups according to type and number of degrees awarded. Out of seventeen black land grants only three, South Carolina State, Tennessee State University, and Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, are in the category doctoral intensive. Jackson State University, a historically black university, is also in this category. The category doctoral intensive refers to institutions that award at least 10 doctoral degrees per year across three or more disciplines, or at least 20 doctoral degrees per year over all. Howard University is the only historically black university in the category doctoral extensive, institutions that award 50 or more doctoral degrees per year across at least 15 disciplines. An unfortunate consequence of the Carnegie classifications is higher salaries at institutions considered doctoral extensive, research I, or doctoral intensive.

The concern over the disparities in salaries between black and white faculty at corresponding institution is not new. Davis (1981) reports that in Florida's public higher education system nearly 90 percent of the black faculty at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) earned between \$13,000–\$15,999 while faculty at all other predominately white universities were in higher ranges. In addition, Davis reports similar discrepancies in South Carolina. In 1977, full professors at South Carolina State College (the black land grant) had average salaries of \$19,356, but full professors at Francis Marion earned on average \$21,975.

According to the Southern Regional Education Board's 2000–2001 salary survey, full professors at FAMU earned \$68,476 compared to \$68,793 earned by full professors at comparable predominately white universities. However, full professors at FAMU earned \$16,352 less than average full professors at the University of Florida, the state's white land grant. Full professors at South Carolina State University earned \$55,235 compared to \$57,482 earned by full professors at Francis Marion University. The difference in average salaries for full professors at South Carolina State University and Clemson, the white land grant, is a staggering \$23,576. The average wage gap between the faculty at black and white land grants is \$20,069 for full professors, \$8,430 for associate professors, \$7,541 for assistant professors and \$245 for instructors. Table 1 has a list of the 2000–2001 average salaries for faculty employed at white and black land grants.

One advantage to whites of the Carnegie classifications is higher faculty salaries. Even when the original mission of the institutions is the same, land grant, the category of the Carnegie classification shows the evolution of the institution's mission, which is dictated by state and federal funding and curriculum development. Too often another advantage afforded by the Carnegie classification is a higher ranking in higher education surveys, and more prestige awarded to faculty, staff, and alumni.

TABLE 1
Faculty Salaries by Rank at Southern and Border State Land Grants

		2000-20001				Professor				Associate				Assistant				Instructor	
State	Institution		Number	Average Salary	Number	Average Salary	Number	Average Salary	Number	Average Salary	Number	Average Salary	Number	Average Salary	Number	Average Salary	Number	Average Salary	
AL	Auburn University		239	\$76,494	248	\$56,269	147	\$47,464	90	\$29,407									
AL	Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical University	HBCU	52	\$61,857	69	\$51,515	104	\$42,133	37	\$33,369									
AR	University of Arkansas Main Campus		158	\$77,380	160	\$58,259	137	\$51,455	64	\$38,130									
AR	University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	HBCU	22	\$52,813	23	\$45,724	27	\$40,742	43	\$32,352									
DE	University of Delaware		358	\$97,063	296	\$67,483	221	\$53,724	84	\$43,159									
DE	Delaware State University	HBCU	27	\$68,737	60	\$57,101	52	\$46,677	7	\$38,304									
FL	University of Florida		497	\$84,828	318	\$60,081	307	\$51,778	2	\$25,500									
FL	Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University	HBCU	86	\$68,476	109	\$57,126	112	\$51,487	31	\$40,941									
GA	University of Georgia		341	\$82,891	322	\$59,847	310	\$51,919	20	\$38,916									
GA	Fort Valley State University	HBCU	14	\$66,083	30	\$51,894	50	\$41,860	10	\$36,018									
KY	University of Kentucky		302	\$82,240	316	\$58,238	179	\$48,440	11	\$33,849									
KY	Kentucky State University	HBCU	22	\$57,550	33	\$50,371	41	\$42,052	1	\$37,000									
LA	Louisiana State University and A & M College		344	\$74,153	222	\$53,277	202	\$47,482	286	\$31,764									
LA	Southern University and A&M College at Baton Rouge	HBCU	116	\$60,553	104	\$48,039	145	\$40,170	65	\$29,975									
MD	University of Maryland College Park		381	\$93,653	293	\$68,288	222	\$64,889	23	\$45,267									
MD	University of Maryland Eastern Shore	HBCU	7	\$67,211	21	\$56,978	43	\$49,321	5	\$42,664									
MS	Mississippi State University		143	\$72,360	145	\$56,773	151	\$49,272	40	\$31,695									
MS	Alcorn State University	HBCU	31	\$55,011	22	\$48,952	43	\$44,780	38	\$30,944									
NC	North Carolina State University		319	\$93,500	277	\$66,241	157	\$58,082	8	\$52,946									
NC	North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University		68	\$69,281	107	\$58,830	78	\$50,261	6	\$38,556									
OK	Oklahoma State University Main Campus	HBCU	214	\$73,124	225	\$55,963	150	\$48,017	4	\$38,088									
OK	Langston University	HBCU	4	\$49,600	20	\$45,141	35	\$48,710	20	\$33,188									
SC	Clemson University		353	\$78,811	198	\$60,023	196	\$50,368	44	\$30,418									
SC	South Carolina State University	HBCU	43	\$55,235	48	\$49,713	67	\$42,461	23	\$33,240									
TN	University of Tennessee, Knoxville		445	\$78,247	295	\$60,104	188	\$47,418	76	\$34,902									
TN	Tennessee State University	HBCU	105	\$62,177	73	\$50,108	100	\$41,519	25	\$35,938									
TX	Texas A & M University		695	\$85,000	380	\$61,144	306	\$56,711	1	\$37,999									
TX	Prairie View A & M University	HBCU	43	\$56,587	62	\$48,214	48	\$42,550	4	\$35,367									
VA	Virginia Tech		333	\$87,287	318	\$64,256	198	\$54,770	88	\$31,946									
VA	Virginia State University	HBCU	32	\$86,466	32	\$51,299	63	\$47,962	17	\$38,648									
WV	West Virginia University		218	\$72,700	190	\$56,018	164	\$43,725	1	\$35,640									
WV	West Virginia State College	HBCU	22	\$72,700	35	\$47,804	50	\$41,418	24	\$34,713									
	Average for White Land Grants			\$83,176		\$60,663		\$52,079		\$34,187									
	Average for HBCU Land Grants			\$63,227		\$52,233		\$44,538		\$33,942									

Source: <http://www.sreb.org/main/EdData/Data1.library/highered/facultyadmin/Salaries01.xls>

IV. CONCLUSION

The government's failure to ensure that all residents of America could invest their human capital through education afford whites advantages in education, employment, and wealth. Some will argue whites that were not living during the "separate but equal" era did not benefit from this unjust system. There are several reasons why such an argument lacks merit.

First, since whites had the right to be literate, when a public higher education system developed in America, they had the minimum basic skills to take advantage of higher education. A parent with a college education has higher earning potential, greater occupational mobility and therefore greater geographical mobility. Therefore current generations of white are less likely to be first generation college students; a group associated with high college dropout rates.

Second, land grants, that served whites were able to provide their students with a college curriculum without the burden of first teaching them the skills of a primary and secondary education or discourse over what was an appropriate education for whites. This allowed students enrolled in the white public institutions to have access to a curriculum that would prepare them to be leaders in politics, medicine, law, engineering, science, and the military. This attributed to the "occupational privilege" given whites or the disproportionate representation whites have in white-collar occupations.

Third, the faculty at white land grants had access to funding for research, Hatch Act, Smith-Lever Act, and Purnell Act. These acts were investments in the professional development of the faculty and would have encouraged the pursuit of a doctoral degree and/or the creation of new knowledge. The benefits to whites can be seen in the Carnegie Classifications, research reputations and the breath of doctoral degrees award by white land grants.

A full account of the benefits the "separate but equal" era, or what should be labeled "white privilege," bestowed on white land grants could not be enumerated in a paper or even a single book. To experience first hand the culmination of "white privilege" in public education, one only needs to compare (1) the facilities at land grants in a given state, (2) curriculums, programs and degrees offered at land grants in a given state, (3) credentials, teaching load, and salaries of the faculty at land grants in a given state. The comparisons completed for this paper has made the author wonder, "how so many could argue that affirmative action policies in education give an unfair advantages to blacks and Hispanics, without an utterance of the unfair advantage "white privilege" has given and still gives whites!"

NOTES

1. West Virginia State University's enrollment is no longer majority black.
2. Kujovich reports that in 1930 West Virginia State University received \$1,800 of the millions of dollars for research provided under the Hatch Act.
3. Kujovich, Gil, "Public Black colleges: The Long History of Unequal Instruction," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, (Spring 1994), Vol. 0, Issue 3, p. 65.
4. W. Trueheart, *The Consequences of Federal and state Resource Allocation and Development Policies for Traditionally Black Land-Grant Instruction 1862–1954* (1979) (Ed.D. thesis, Harvard University, available form University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Michigan), 33.
5. J. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (1988), p. 68.

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