

In this issue of *Focus on Poverty*, we highlight four articles featured in a recent edition of *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Vol. 695, 1) edited by IRP affiliates Timothy Smeeding, Jennifer Romich, and Michael Strain. The editors asked the overarching question “What has happened to the American Working Class since the Great Recession?” and, in turn, examined many facets of the Great Recession to reveal nuanced experiences across demographic groups throughout the extended recovery leading up to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

A central theme of the articles in this issue of *Focus on Poverty* involves disparate effects of the Great Recession and its subsequent rebound, the so-called Long Recovery. We focus on the “working class”—a designation with multiple definitions—and some of the many complex combinations of economic and racialized social status in the United States. In short, while most non-Hispanic white U.S. Americans saw modest to robust economic gains throughout the post-recession recovery, such fortunes were not equally realized by all. Authors highlight important distinctions by race and geography to examine relationships between poverty and well-being in the United States.

A geographic overview of relative advantage and disadvantage across counties nationwide—presented by Vincent Fusaro, H. Luke Shaefer, and Jasmine Simington—evaluates results from the multidimensional Index of Deep Disadvantage. While many areas of the country face relative advantages, those mired in persistent disadvantage were much less likely to experience the otherwise robust benefits of economic expansion following the Great Recession.

Pia Orrenius and Madeline Zavodny compare economic trajectories of foreign-born and U.S.-native Latino populations throughout the recession and recovery periods. As the second largest ethnic/racial group in the United States at 18.7 percent of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020) it is important to understand the social and economic forces leading to—or thwarting—the collective well-being of Hispanic/Latino communities.

Next, Fenaba Addo and William A. (Sandy) Darity, Jr. evaluate household wealth among Black Americans throughout the Great Recession’s recovery period. Persistent racial wealth gaps in the United States highlight the ongoing need to examine economic conditions at a scale more robust than traditional income-based measures.

Randall Akee anchors this issue with a focus on the earnings and employment conditions of Indigenous Peoples in the United States. While there are 574 federally recognized Tribal entities in the United States, each with distinct cultures and traditions, these groups are organized within two broad census cohorts here: American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIAN) and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI). Akee finds that on average, relative to non-Hispanic whites in the same time periods, AIAN populations have significantly lower median earnings and face the highest levels of earnings inequality.

Two “Research to Watch” items round out this issue of *Focus on Poverty* with brief summaries of works-in-progress. Scott Allard of the University of Washington and a visiting scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation will pursue projects examining poverty, mobility, and safety net provision across a full range of geographic contexts. And Columbia University-affiliated researchers Christopher Wimer, Ronald Mincy, and Zachary Parolin will examine panel data regarding income support policies (e.g., SNAP, EITC, TANF) to see how support for families can not only reduce childhood poverty but also lead to greater well-being into adulthood and reduce racial inequalities.

Thank you for reading *Focus on Poverty*. Please send any questions or comments to IRP Director of Communications Judith Siers-Poisson at sierspoisson@wisc.edu.