**AFTERWORD**

**Future Promise—History as a Guide to Navigate Contemporary Policy**

By María T. Colompos-Tohtsonie

As we celebrate the 85th anniversary of the Black History Bulletin, the critical knowledge project of Dr. Woodson and Dr. Bethune, it is salient to link historicaltrauma to future promiseby contextualizing contemporary policies. History has grounded our understanding of our beginnings and has allowed us to move forward toward who our ancestors dreamed of us becoming. In light of reflecting on the sociohistorical and sociocultural aspects of historical trauma, there have been collective efforts in the realm of knowledge building and citizenry constructs through policy implementation.[1] Therefore, the goal of policy production is to recognize how the past has influenced the present and how the present can be used to shape future policies from the traumatic nexus where race, trauma, violence, and white supremacy intersect.

**History as a Guide**

The history of the United States outlines the systemic racial trauma and white supremacy, which has held as the main policy design for federal and state policies. An extensive societal shift within the United States that streamlined racial trauma and white supremacy was the American Eugenics Movement. The policies erected from the American Eugenics Movement throughout the 1900s delineated the relationship between race matters and societal policies that still linger throughout the United States. The external effects of the American Eugenics Movement shaped the public consciousness concerning white supremacy. This was the common belief of people who lived through the American Eugenics Movement, especially in the eyes of White Americans who were keen on establishing policies to hinder the growth of the Black population.

For instance, from 1931-1968, the majority of Black people in the state of California were subjected to wrongful treatments from landlords. The Rumford Fair Housing Act, which was a law passed in 1963, helped ease racial discrimination by property owners and landlords who refused to rent or sell their property to Black customers.[4] Although the law was passed, there were numerous interest groups who collaborated with local and state government officials to ensure that polices were created to impart compliancy of the law. As a result, an increased concentration in utilizing history as a facilitator for change is vital in fortifying future promises within the policy realm.

**Navigating Contemporary Policy**

The synergetic relationship between the public and public administrators relies on the implementation of public policies that are not narrowly defined, ambiguous, or radically subjective. “It takes time, effort, mobilization of many actors, and the expenditure of political resources to keep an item prominent on the agenda.”[5] The main determinant that influences positive race relations for Blacks are challenging the prevailing dominant attitudes by highlighting racial undertones in legacy existing policies. Through initiating research initiatives into legacy policies, civic action campaigns become linked to political agendas of the three levels of government.[6] Moreover, the distinction of a policy actor and political actor within different enclaves shed light on how policy implementation requires technical and citizenry knowledge.

**Future Promise**

Symbolic public policies are instrumental in evaluating the efforts made in fulfilling a political agenda and reinforcing attention to race-relation problems, which are enacted by political and legal agents found in public administration.[7] By understanding the social constructs of meanings and values within social intergovernmental institutions, adaptive sociocultural leaders will be able to effectively articulate acculturated policy initiatives for policy practitioners.[8] The future promise of minimizing the polarization of Black policy agents within intergovernmental matters can be alleviated by cultivating knowledge networks from historical perspectives.

**Notes:**

[1] Robert D. Behn, (2001). *Rethinking Democratic Accountability*. Washington, DC: Brookings

Institution.

[2] Wolfinger, Raymond E., and Fred I. Greenstein. “The Repeal of Fair Housing in California: An Analysis of Referendum Voting.” *The American Political Science Review* 62, no. 3 (1968): 753–69. https://doi.org/10.2307/1953428.

[3] John, Kingdon W. *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies* (2nd ed.). (New York, NY: Pearson, 2010), 104.

[4] David, Rosenbloom, H., and Robert, Kravchuck, S. *Public Administration: Understanding Management, Politics, and Law in the Public Sector*. (7th ed.). (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2008).

[5] Richard, Stillman. *Public Administration: Concepts and Cases*. (9th ed.). (Denver, CO:

Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009).

[6] Montgomery, Van Wart. *Leadership in Public Organizations*. (2nd ed.). (New York: Norton, W. W. & Company, Inc., 2015).

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