

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

WEBINAR

HOW WE RISE: HOW SOCIAL NETWORKS IMPACT ECONOMIC
MOBILITY IN RACINE, SAN FRANCISCO, AND WASHINGTON, DC

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Welcome and Introduction & Presentation of Survey Results

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. BUSETTE: Good afternoon and good morning, everybody. I'm Camille Busette at the Brookings Institution and I wanted to very much welcome you to today's event on how social networks impact economic mobility. I wanted to talk a little bit about why we did this study and then I will go ahead and introduce my fellow panelists and speakers.

Our agenda is basically we'll hear a few remarks from our head researcher. We will also hear a few remarks from our funder at the Gates Foundation. Then we will go over the results of the project and then from there, we will engage in a spirited discussion with our panelists who represent each of the three cities that we studied.

So, let me start from the very beginning. We all know that economic ability, that is the ability for a poor child to move up on the economic ladder past where his or her parents have been is dependent on a number of factors. And when we think about those factors, we usually think about the ability to get a good job, the ability to get a good education, maybe living in a different neighborhood.

One of the things we don't typically study and don't typically think about is how who we know impact our ability to get a good job, to get a good education and to maybe live in a better neighborhood. So, what we decided to do was really try to understand whether our social relationships which we are calling social networks here for today, whether they do impact our ability to access opportunity.

And one of the reasons that we were very interested in doing this is that when we looked around, there was actually very little data on this. And the reason we wanted to get the data was that policymakers when they make choices about which policies to pursue that could perhaps increase economic opportunity for a variety of populations, they do that on the basis of data. And when data isn't missing, they just continue on to the places where data actually exists.

So, it was really important for us to be able to collect the data. And what we wanted to do was we wanted to be able to do a couple of different things in this study. The first was try to compare different areas of the country that have different types of economic mobility profiles. So, we selected Racine, Wisconsin, Washington, D.C. and San Francisco, California, all of which have very different

mobility profiles.

San Francisco has a very high economic mobility profile, Washington, D.C. is in the middle and Racine, Wisconsin is a little bit more representative of cities that have had some delays in economic mobility and economic development more generally. So, what we did was we then recruited people, participants across these three cities who looked like the people who lived there. And asked them through 60 to 90 minute interviews, some very detailed questions about who they reach out to when they are trying to get information about jobs, about education and about housing opportunities.

And then we asked them about the people that they reached out to. So, tell us about the people you reached out to for a job. We wanted to know do they look like you, are they similar in age, are they similar in gender, similar in income. How strong is that relationship and how reciprocal is that relationship?

We collected all that data and we analyzed that to figure out what the differences were in social networks if there were any. And then what were some of the more important factors to focus on as we tried to figure out the mobility picture relative to social relationships in these three cities.

So, what we did was when we did the initial analysis and Jill will talk a little bit more about this. But we decided we're going to really focus on a couple of different factors and she'll describe what those factors are and why we decided on those factors to really better understand economic mobility in these three cities.

So, with that, I am going to turn things over to Kosar. But before I do that, I want to introduce everybody who has joined us here. And so, we'll start with Kosar. Kosar Jahani is a program officer at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Dr. Jill Simmerman who is the deputy director at Econometrica. Dr. Richard Reeves, my colleague here at Brookings is a senior fellow in Economic Studies. Anne Stuhldreher, director of financial justice at the city and county of San Francisco. Tiffany Williams, the chief program officer at Martha's Table and Maurice Horton who is the alderman for the 7th District in Racine.

I also just want to say that we had tremendous cooperation from a variety of partners throughout this study. So, Policy Link in Oakland, California was a great partner of ours. Martha's Table in Washington and Higher Expectations in Racine were phenomenal partners. Helped us recruit folks

and were just so helpful as we tried to put together a questionnaire and also just as we went through this study. So, big thank you to all of you.

So, I wanted to also thank Kosar and the Bill and Melinda Foundation for their tremendous support. They really took a risk, some pretty pioneering research and we are very, very grateful for that. So Kosar, I'm going to turn things over to you.

MS. JAHANI: Thank you, Camille and hi everyone. I'm delighted to be here with you today. I imagine if you're tuned in -- all right, I think I was muted initially so I'm going to start over. Hi everyone, I'm really delighted to be with you here today. I think if you're tuned in here, as Camille mentioned, you're someone who really cares about upward economic mobility in this country and the prospect of every American experiencing that at some point in their lifetime and continuing to experience that.

From my vantage point where we sit as funders, there's a lot of really robust data that has helped shape the narrative around economic mobility in this country. I think all of you are probably familiar with the work that Raj Chetty has done through the opportunity atlas. And what we learned for projects like that and robust analyses like that is place and community really matter when it comes to upward mobility. Both at a macro level and also at very micro levels.

So, you know, the region of the country that you or your children grew up in is super important. But so are neighborhoods, so are zones within neighborhoods and even at the street and block level. So, you start to paint a picture of upward mobility in this country and you realize, there's a lot that we know about places. They're observable characteristics like poverty rates within those places. The level of segregation within schools and those communities.

But as you dig deeper and as Camille hinted, there's a lot that we don't know about how upward mobility works in this country because the data is missing. We know from qualitative and observational studies that social capital and social networks are really important. But we don't have a way of objectively measuring and quantifying them.

So, you end up both with a really good understanding of what's happening and sort of patterns in the country but also a black box when it comes to the unobservable characteristics. And that's why this research was so exciting for us in its methodology.

And as Camille mentioned, being able to quantify and present all the stuff that we all know matters in an objective and rigorous way. And matters the outcomes that we really care about in this case, access to job quality, access to stable housing, access to educational opportunities that really match your life goals and what you're trying to attain in your life.

So, I'm really excited to hand the ball over to Jill Simmerman Lawrence. She's going to talk about how they conducted this research, what it tells us about how we get access to these opportunities and, you know, the benefits of using this type of methodology for studying concepts like social capital and social networks. So Jill, handing it over to you.

DR. LAWRENCE: Thanks so much, Kosar. Sorry about that. So, my name is Jill Simmerman Lawrence. I'm a researcher at Econometrica Inc. And I'm presenting our research process and some of our methodology on behalf of our team.

Our research questions required us to define our participants social networks. And not in terms of who you hang out with or who you video game with but in terms of who do you people go to for help and advice and assistance on economic opportunities such as getting a job. And then we pushed our research even further to determine how these networks differed as the participants differed, as their demographics changed.

So originally, we had planned to do in person interviews in each of our three cities of San Francisco, California, Racine, Wisconsin and Washington, D.C. But due to COVID-19, we had to adjust our interview guide and our process to be 60 to 90 minute telephone and video based interviews. Each participant did receive \$50 through a gift card for participating.

We had the largest recruitment responses through Craigslist advertisements, social media blasts and assistance from individuals in our local communities including our non-profit partners, our community ambassadors and participants that recruited on our behalf. Community ambassadors were really important for recruiting in the Latino communities.

We interviewed a total of 262 people but our final analytic sample is 254 participants. You can see here a little bit about the gender, race, ethnicity and incomes of our final participants.

So, to solicit information on who was in a participant's social network, like Camille referenced, we asked them a series of questions on each of our research topics. Our research topics are

on the left side of the screen with the icons beside them. We started each topic with the question, thinking back to the last time you were seeking advice regarding jobs, how many times or who did you reach out to for advice.

We asked them to name up to five of the people that they reached out to and then we collected demographic information from the participant on each person in their social network. And then we also identified what type of help they received from their network. Maybe they just got advice or maybe they got a down payment on a house, assistance with that kind of thing.

We also asked other contextual questions about the persons community and experience. Such as what are the strengths of your community. And what kind of factors such as age, contribute to challenges you face in life.

We took the participants responses and constructed their social networks. You're seeing an example of a 30 year old Black male's social network for jobs, housing and education. We analyzed each person's social network for their size and for how homogenous or heterogeneous the people in the network are compared to the participant.

This participant reached out to a total of six people and 50% of the network is Black and like the participant, and then 50% is also male like the participant. When we look further into the network, we see that the participant reached out to five people for jobs, those were the little green symbols, two for education, we'll say the pink school icon and one for housing as indicated by the orange house icon.

Once we constructed the social networks for participants, we began looking at our data and our findings through different lenses. We asked, how did these trends in the data change when we grouped participants based on the participants race? What about when we group the findings based on the age of the participant and so on.

We began to see some patterns but really felt like it was not telling the whole story. So, we further evolved our research and took an innovative approach of combining lenses. We asked, how did these trends change when we considered two demographic characteristics for instance, race and gender. And the city specific trends really became more pronounced.

We found that in Washington, D.C. and Racine, Wisconsin, trends were most pronounced when we considered race and gender together. And in San Francisco, trends were most

pronounced when we considered race and income.

So, I find I loved this research and really felt the findings were innovative and fascinating. A few findings are trends that I thought were interesting are that many people really qualified but their social networks did not provide them an unfair advantage. You see a short quote here.

Others indicated that they were self-reliant, preferred to conduct internet research instead of relying on their social networks. These two themes really made me think of the value that American society puts on an individual's ability to pick themselves up by their own bootstraps instead of celebrating the gift of community support.

Finally, this research reinforced some assumptions that I had. White men had the most racially homogenous networks meaning their networks were mainly white. And women generally asked for help from other women where men, especially white men had men and women in their networks. I'm now going to turn it over to Camille and Richard to talk further about our findings.

MS. BUSETTE: Great. Thanks, Jill, for that overview. So, what I wanted to do here is just remind you that what we're asking is how do social networks, how are they related to economic mobility and who do people reach out to for access to jobs, education and housing. Those are the three topic areas.

So, I'm going to just dive into the main findings. So, I think the most important finding as Jill already alluded to was that race turned out to be the most important and consistent differentiator of social networks relative to jobs, education and housing.

Across all three cities, white participants had the most racially homogenous networks relative to jobs, education and housing. In Washington, networks were fairly racially homogenous for all groups except Latina females and were most racially homogenous for white men in Washington, D.C. In Racine, whites had more racially homogenous networks than Blacks with white males having the most racially homogenous networks once again.

Among the three cities, San Francisco stands out as having the least racially homogenous social networks. Although whites in San Francisco are more likely to have the most racially homogenous social networks than are other racial groups. In San Francisco, homogeneity differed by each topic but it was generally lower than what we saw in Washington, D.C. and Racine.

Overall, whites of both incomes, this is again in San Francisco, below \$50,000 and above annually an individual income and Asians with incomes of \$50,000 and greater, had more racially homogenous networks than other groups. Latinos with incomes of \$50,000 and greater had less homogenous networks than other groups though the sample size in our sample was rather small. Richard, I'm going to turn it over to you.

DR. REEVES: Thanks, Camille. Let me add my thanks to all the participants in this study. And also, from one of our colleagues within Brookings, Sarah Nzau who's been a key part of the team bringing all this work together.

A couple of framing points really to underline what's already been said from an economic mobility perspective. I think of social networks as almost like a subterranean factor. Very difficult to see on the surface, very hard for the social scientists to get at, hard to get at through quantitative data. But hugely influential in terms of prospects for economic mobility.

You can think of social networks in some ways of like the top issue of inequality. You know, we know about heart institutions like schools and jobs and so on, they're easy to measures. But it's kind of a tough issue, the connective tissue comes out in many cases is the (inaudible).

And I think what that does is it underlines the point that's being made which is the question of relational equality. And the connection between relational equality or inequality and resource inequality and how one kind of reinforces the other. And I think as Kosar pointed out, even with the best quantitative data in the world, i.e., all of IRS data that Raj and his team have insight, you can only go so far and then in order to go further, you have to really dig in in the way this work does.

So, just picking up on the main findings. I think one of the real standouts for us is that the social networks of Black men are really very truncated with jobs, education and housing. Smaller truncated and very homogenous. And so, this kind of segregation of relationships and networks that are particularly strong for Black men, that's where you see it very strongly. So, Black men will say that's because of access to income, jobs as well as their own race as it in fact is getting in the way of being able to build these networks.

In all the cities that we looked at, people thought of friends, family, colleagues as the kind of key note in network of colleagues especially in job networks. But friends and family accounts for about

half of most people's, the average person's given social network. So again, this community of friends and family being a hugely important part of the story.

And then there's this central question of how these networks are formed. We also asked like how the networks. Where and how are they formed. And what we found that primary form through work and education settings and then to some extent through community activities. Although interestingly in San Francisco, community activities didn't seem to account for a greater share of this network creation of work that we also were able to identify.

But crucially, through the institutions of work and education and that, of course, then has huge relationships to the resources that people are able to gather. And so, again relational inequality are leading to resource inequality which in turn leads to relational inequality. Because if you're excluded from the institutions of where networks, particularly networks that we'll get access to resources (inaudible) then you are excluded from those resources. So, really this (inaudible) resources are kind of two-sided at the same point.

There are some variation of size in the social networks. In the cities, Racine actually had larger size of networks whereas Washington and San Francisco slightly smaller, about five people in latter and six in the former. So, that tells us there is a variation but also, it's going to really matter what those relationships are and how effective they are in moving forward.

Just a couple of points on D.C. specifically and I'll had it back to Camille to pick up with Racine. And D.C. really kind of underlined this point about racial homogeneity but has already been mentioned and especially so for white men. So, it's all very, very, racially homogenous networks in Washington, D.C., especially white men.

In fact, of the people that white men reach out to for support, 97% are white. So, it is very rare for a white man to be getting networks from sources other than who is white. And for whites, actually it's slightly, the larger proportion of the networks were friends. So, you're getting a kind of broader set of kind of weaker social ties but also hugely important. White participants get hugely instituted (inaudible) school and college and work.

And Black men once again having small networks especially around housing in D.C. So, in D.C. specifically, it's important to note that this is where kind of resource and relational inequality

overlap and intersect with each other. 92% of white and Asian students graduate high school in D.C., 64% of Black and 57% for Hispanic.

So, what you're seeing here is those students are not staying in the institutions where the networks are formed. I mean, they're not getting the important educational credential which of the access that leads to other institutions which again will formulate seeing as sort of the circularity both positively and negatively for these institutions. And very low rates of employment for Black residents in D.C. which is both a reflection and a cause of these relational inequality that we see.

And, of course, an obvious point that one has to be made is that D.C. is a highly residentially segregated to (inaudible). But reflects and reinforces the network inequalities that we've been (inaudible). With that, I'll turn it back to Camille.

MS. BUSETTE: Great, thanks Richard. So, continuing on, we want to talk a little bit about Racine and San Francisco. I'll say a few words about the Racine results first. So, what we found in Racine is that white participants in our project had larger job networks than Blacks. Again, we've seen this, you know, we've seen this in other places. We saw this in Washington, D.C.

White respondents were more likely than Black respondents to meet non-family job network members through school. Again, very similar to what we saw in Washington, D.C. White participants met a greater proportion of their education network members at work than Black participants.

Again, underscoring the importance of the educational setting and the employment setting as important places to build these social networks. More Black participants in Racine had service providers such as realtors or city employees in their housing network. And race was a factor, was considered a most challenging factor for 100% of the Black men that we interviewed and only for 14% of white women that we interviewed. So, on two very ends of that scale.

And then we also found that money was a pretty challenging factor for just about everybody at the same rate and we're seeing. Which I think speaks to the general position of Racine and where it finds itself in terms of economic development.

Just to contextualize those results just a little bit more, you know, we know that school and work are very important to forming social networks. This whole climate, however, in Racine generally is not conducive to do that particularly for Black students. So, in 2019, for example, Black students were

six times more likely to be suspended than white students for similar consequences.

We also know that the unemployment rate for Black residents in Racine was 11.6% in 2018 compared to 5.6% for white residents. Roughly double. Again, out of the workforce, not really able to form those relationships in the workplace.

We also know that Black men are disproportionately incarcerated in Racine. Racine county has the second highest incarceration rate for Black residents in the country. Again, another element that will pull particularly Black men out of a number of setting in which you could form social relationships.

Now I'll move on to San Francisco. So, the job network size among our participants in San Francisco tended to be larger for those who had higher incomes. So, that was \$50,000 or more per year and was also higher for Asian respondents. Greater proportions of participants in San Francisco with incomes of higher incomes met their education network members, non-familial education members through work than those who had lower incomes. So, education network for higher income folks was at work, education network for low income folks was not at work.

Respondents with incomes that were at less than \$50,000 were more likely to have service providers such as a social worker or case manager in their housing and that made sense, particularly given the high cost of housing in San Francisco. Community activities were very important for social network formation. More so than in Washington, D.C. or Racine and that was especially true for low income residents in San Francisco.

We also found that Latino's earning less than \$50,000 cited age, race, immigrant status and national origin as challenges to finding opportunities. And so, again, it's pretty clear that low income Latino's had a hard time integrating in San Francisco and their social networks tend to be smaller and also much more stressed. And they tend to encounter far more challenges in finding opportunity than other folks in San Francisco.

I wanted to contextualize those results a bit. You know, San Francisco is a very racially diverse city with sizeable white, Asian and Latino populations. The city does however have some pockets of segregation. The median income in San Francisco, for San Francisco households is \$112,000 but income inequality as measured by the Gini Index is higher than the national average. So, it's a huge, you

know, very wealthy population and then we have a very large kind of very low income population.

And then again, one study found that San Francisco was the most intensely gentrified city in the country from 2013 to 2017 and that has continued up until the COVID moment. So, with that, we are going to move into our panel mode. I'm going to turn things over to Richard.

DR. REEVES: Thanks Camille. Camille is staying onto the panel as well as the other three panelists who Camille introduced earlier. Thank you all so much for joining us. It's interesting that the work of Angela Ruby, one of our colleagues, shows that the middle class has really shrunk in places like San Francisco. So, are seeing a kind of falling out which I think is also, you know, something that we see echoed in (inaudible) here.

So, we are getting some folks that are sort of dealing with many of the issues that are outlined in this report day to day in terms of work you're doing. So, thank you not only for joining us today but also for the work that you're all doing to try to promote economic mobility and justice in the various ways in which you're all doing that.

So, I'm just going to invite each of you to kind of reflect on what you've heard so far from this. What resonates, what you think is missing, what seems to feel right to you and how that interacts with the work that you're already doing to try and kind of create more opportunity and more economic mobility. So Maurice, do you mind kind of kicking us off and giving sense of kind of, you know, what does sound right to you and does it fit with the work you're doing?

MR. HORTON: Thank you guys for having me. It sounds -- I'm glad that, you know, that the data was collected. It sounds right for Racine. We have a lot of issues here that we are working on, I must say that. Just even with our education like some of the study talked about that, you know, Blacks are being suspended more likely than whites for pretty much the same infraction in school.

I worked in the school district here for about 20 years. I was actually doing some mentoring programs and a lot of that is true. And so, we tried to find ways to, you know, go about a mentorship with the youth. Because one thing I think, I won't say the school did not know but, you know, a lot of kids that are coming to the schools come from the inner city. A lot of trauma within those communities and neighborhoods which affect them when they come to school, you know, daily.

And so, even, you know, even as we go as far as gun shots in the neighborhood or

someone's arrested last night two, three in the morning because of a drug raid. And so, a lot of times when they come to school, you know, there are emotional things have happened and we have to start taking a look at that which causes them to act out and more likely be suspended.

DR. REEVES: Yeah, I think that's a really important way of kind of connecting these two issues of how relationships in the community to strengthen networks in their community affect the ability to learn right, in an institution. And actually, individuals don't cooperate like units of human capital for (inaudible) schools and learn, right. They are human beings who are affected by things that are happening around them all the time. That's a great way to kick this off. Great.

Anne, do you want to just weigh in with your thoughts from out there in terms of did this feel right to you with what you're seeing? These inequalities you saw and how does it relate to the work that you're doing?

MS. STUHLREHER: Yeah, sure. Thank you so much for having me. So much in this study resonated with me and it really just made me think more about what we need to be doing more of, you know, in our city. It made me think back to a meeting I was facilitating actually a few months ago.

It was focused on criminal justice reform. We had a lot of city folks, a lot of community folks. And, you know, as we do on a lot of these Zoom calls these days, you know, there was an icebreaker question that I put out there which was what was your first job? And everybody started talking about their first summer job and, you know, mine was I worked, I was a salad bar attendant at a grocery store. And I got that job because my neighbor's stepfather managed the grocery store.

And, you know, people were going around and, you know, this one young man said, you know, he was formally incarcerated and who grew up in Bay View Hunters Point, you know, said gosh like it's so interesting listening to all of you because I didn't have a summer job. Like I didn't know how to get one, no one in my community had one.

And it really made me think about the importance, when our Mayor, London Breed first started, the first thing she announced in her inauguration speech was something called, San Francisco Opportunities for All. And she wanted every high school student in San Francisco to have access to a paid internship or summer job.

And she was reflecting on how when she grew up in San Francisco public housing and

she is a Black woman, her -- she got an internship at a community organization. And just how that, you know, completely opened up her world and she wanted everyone, every young person in our city to have access to that.

It made me think about a program we started many years ago called, Kindergarten to College. To provide a college savings account to every kindergartener in our city and seed it with an initial deposit. We were really moved by research that showed that if a child had some savings set aside, they were much more likely to go to college and we really were looking to do something that would change the odds for young people across our city.

I saw this was one of the recommendations at the end of the report. You know, I could go on and on but again, this just is such a useful resource to think about what we need to do more of in San Francisco to, you know, help foster social and economic mobility.

DR. REEVES: And can I just ask you one question before coming to Tiffany about that savings program particularly. Because that's a great example. I think their research shows that it's the college saver mentality as much as the actual money that changes the outcome. It's the sense that it can also change relationships, you know, if you've got this money that's seeded for you to go to college. Is there any evidence you then interact with different people, that you think differently about your relationships in terms of college?

MS. STUHLREHER: Yeah, that's a really interesting question. I mean, I think there is research that shows that this money is like hope in concrete form and that it even like a very small amount of money it's more just that the money, whatever the amount that there's a little bit, you know, set aside for this purpose.

You know, my colleagues who run this program, you know, spend a lot of time taking kids to banks and credit unions, many of whom have never been to one. You know, making sure, you know, in kindergarten across the state that there are like college banners set up. So that, you know, from day one, everyone really has kind of a college going mentality. And so, we're really just trying to instill that from the beginning.

DR. REEVES: Thank you so much. Tiffany, I'd love to hear your response amidst a comment to sort of say you are the sharp end of many of these problems. Of course, particularly feeling

that perhaps right now and hoping that you and all your colleagues are safe and well given the events that we've seen recently. But with that, any sort of thoughts that you had in terms of how it fits with your experience and the experience of those you're working with and what it might mean for your work?

MS. WILLIAMS: Sure, Richard. Well first, thank you all for inviting me to sit on this panel and thank you for your well wishes. It has been a very interesting time in the D.C. area in the last week. And I will not go down a rabbit hole but it is actually reflective of the very things that we're talking about right now about access to the mobility and what are the variables that contribute to people being able to move forward and not. Both visible barriers and invisible barriers.

But my reflections upon the work that was done and just thinking about Washington, D.C. Similar to my colleagues, there are some similarities. A few things that I think for me that stand out specifically around Washington, D.C., is that for many, many years D.C. was known as the chocolate city because it was a predominantly African American city.

You had African Americans that were leading the government, the school systems. There was a huge wave of economic mobility that happened where the Black middle class that now exists in Prince George's County, Maryland, for example, which is right outside of D.C., in many ways that's how that group was created.

And so, when you look at the demographics of the city now, there have been a lot of shifts in that. And I think that that contributes to some of what we're seeing now around the access and the social networks and how that plays out. And so, whereas D.C., I think, at one point had a lot of people who they consider affectionately in D.C. as native Washingtonians, people who grew up here generationally, now D.C. is very transient where you have people that are coming and going.

And it was reflected in the study but the concentrations now of people who are at the lower end of the economic spectrum are the people who live in Ward 7 and 8. And so, specifically for the work that my organization does that we do at Martha's Table, we are really looking at what are the ways that we can address all of the social determinates of health to move those levers so that people have the access to move themselves and their families forward and to thrive.

And that's really important because quite often, people don't even realize that they're in a situation that is preventing them from thriving. And so, a lot of the work that we've focused on has been

around building those social networks, building people together, connecting people to resources.

To be quite honest, in D.C., helping people to realize that the city is actually a lot bigger than the community that you live in. So, how do you even move outside of your own neighborhood so that you can access resources that are available in the city.

And so, when I think about what's happening in D.C. right now and specifically what's happening in communities that have been disproportionately affected especially now with COVID, it is really how do we help people to access the resources that are available. Because there are quite a number of resources that are in the city and how do we help people to retool.

And so, even when you think about the social networks, the job that you had doesn't exist anymore. So, how do you connect people to those new opportunities to the right people, to the right educational opportunities. Retooling is extremely important as we move forward. How do we help people gain new skills so that actually can access these new opportunities that are going to present themselves as a result of COVID.

And so, for me, I think about certainly acknowledging some of the trauma. I think Maurice talked a little bit about it, just the impact of just living in very difficult situations, acknowledging that but also redirecting attention through access to education, access to training, access to safer environments. So, that people can move themselves and their families forward.

And the last thing that I think that I want to just bring up really quickly is one of the things that I did not see reflected but just given the proximity of where we work in D.C. Is that even though things are very difficult for people, people still have an amazing amount of hope that their lives can turn around. And I think that's always an important thing to acknowledge that yes, people recognize it's very difficult but they do see a brighter day coming.

And so, all of this, all of the work that we're all doing, what's reflected in the report, really to me provides a road map to say that we can help people to be able to move themselves toward economic mobility. That it is absolutely probable and it is absolutely possible by acknowledging the reality that where people are and where people want to move themselves.

DR. REEVES: I love that thought. I'll give Camille an opportunity to reflect and then go around, you know, with some other thoughts. But it's like the mental geography almost the horizons and

the smallness of people's social world that can be created by many of these barriers is really striking to me. Camille and I have done quite a bit of work in Charlotte recently too.

And I had this experience talking to a young Black woman about on the south side of Charlotte about what she felt about downtown, right, the city center was all being revitalized and she's (inaudible) driver. It's two miles away. I mean it's just like me felt like but to her it was like, I don't know, (inaudible). So, the kind of social worlds point, I think, is kind of huge importance.

Just a reminder, if you have questions, you can use the #HowWeRise on Twitter or you can email events@brookings.edu. I'm going to take some audience Q&A in just a moment. But Camille, I wanted to give you the opportunity to weigh on anything you've heard so far. Getting to the last point maybe, about the potential that's kind of the optimism that we see and hope.

MS. BUSETTE: Yeah, no. And I think that's, you know, first of all, Anne and Maurice and Tiffany, thank you so much for your reviews and perspectives here. I also, I think it's actually, I have a couple of thoughts on this. First, is that, you know, when we think about people's horizons and broadening that, either through the Kindergarten through College Program or, you know, telling people that yes, there's actually something beyond Wards 7 and 8 in D.C. The same thing in Racine, it's like your mentors and people are now understanding that there are, you know, particularly they're horizons are larger.

I think what I want to make sure the audience gets from this is that the reason people's horizons tend to be small is actually the result of a lot of policy decisions that were made in the past. So, a great example of this is obviously, you know, housing segregation and we see that across the country. Housing segregation can be a very strong motivating factor for people to not leave their neighborhood. Either because there's very little egress to someplace else or because when they do move out of their neighborhood they are policed and followed and arrested and possibly killed.

So, there are many, many reasons that people have this mentality. Like, you know, this (inaudible) area, this community, this is where I live and I'm not going out of that. And to change that, we actually need to change public policy because that's likely -- that is the direct result of a policy. So, that's number one.

And then number two, about this kind of road map to hopefulness, I love the way Tiffany

put that. But it's about connecting people up in ways that they aren't connected now. And I think all of us bear a responsibility to do that in a variety of different ways. We've all talked about a number of different approaches that I think, you know, have worked, can work. We just need to redouble our efforts and we need to have people who really feel accountable for those results as well. I'm going to stop there, Richard. I think we can take audience questions.

DR. REEVES: Well, let's just, yeah let's do one more quick round, I think but I love that.

MS. BUSETTE: Oh, sorry.

DR. REEVES: But I think this institution, I mean, institutions like Brookings have to take their responsibility too which is why we're doing a lot more than we used to, right. What is our role? Let's take this idea of kind of optimism that's come up a little bit too. And obviously there are many sort of policy proposals that we outline here but Maurice, I'd like to come back to you to just on the sort of solution side. What have you seen or experienced that you feel is most productive in terms of bridging these relational gaps? What do you think is the best way that you've seen or experienced or been involved in in some of the building of social networks?

MR. HORTON: I think for Racine, we start, you know, like right now, we have four or five African American men and females that sit on the common council. Probably the most represented in a long, long time. So, when funding and government funds are brought to the council, we're looking to get people one, employ those that are under employed, unemployed. We also have passed a few ordinances saying that the contractors that come into Racine have to have a 20% goal on every project that's a million dollars or more within the city.

And so, we're looking to get, what we're looking for those contractors to do is not to come into the city and, you know, get all these finances without hiring people of color and women. So, we've really been driving that hard. We also have, the program is called, Erasing Works Program. And so, every contractor, everything that we have going on in the city, the 20% goals are put on it not only that, we are building really, really nice apartments here.

But also, on those apartments, you have to be able -- people have to be able to get into those nice apartments no matter where they live, their income. So, instead of building 200 apartments that's only for those that earn a certain amount of money, low income is also being accepted in those places too which

is really nice.

So, why build them and then you cannot get in them. So, I think Tiffany said something, you know, she kind of woke me up a little bit to a lot of things that she was saying. And I think that with this data, what I'm going to do, I'm going to take this data that you guys put together and kind of drive it home more with policymakers here in the city and with the county and share this. Because we're headed in that direction. I think this is an opportunity for us to say not just talk about it but have some data to support us moving in that direction.

And so, you know, you guys commented the incarceration rate, people being incarcerated disproportionately, especially people of color. You know, I had an opportunity in which I went to prison, I did time, I came out but Tiffany said in being motivated. So now, you know, credibility in this city is that if he can do it, I can do it. So, I share that story everywhere I go.

And so, even in outreach, it's not so much of outreach being done it's who's selling the story and people trusting that hey here's an opportunity for you to get a job. I want you to follow up with me, I'm going to call you. And so, we have to take a look at who's doing the outreach here.

So, I think the city of Racine with a lot of programs that are initiating like financial literacy, the 5.09 Program for those that don't have a high school diploma. Higher Expectations, who did a lot of work with you guys. Combining the two together, I think that we're headed in the right direction.

And with the data, it only supports where we need to be going. Yes, there is a lot of work to be done but I'll say this, it's not that it's not being in consideration that we need to do this. And so, driving it home to policymakers and saying this is something that we need to continue to do here in the city of Racine.

DR. REEVES: Thank you, Maurice. Anne, I'll now throw the same question to you. Because one of the things, I think it would be fair that reducing segregation in housing and educational institutions is necessary but not sufficient to reducing relational inequality. Because as Kosar mentioned, you can replicate those relational gaps at a micro level, right, within high schools, within neighborhoods, within apartment buildings you're seeing this kind of micro segregation too.

So, it looks like a relational inequality can survive even the bringing together of people. What have you seen that works or experiments that works in terms of building these relationships?

MS. STUHLREHER: Yeah. No, I think that's a really important question. And I would love to pick up specifically on something Camille said as well. Which is how policy can drive, you know, people's opportunity. And unfortunately, policy can also inadvertently limit people's horizons and limit people's opportunities.

And in San Francisco in a lot of the work I'm doing right now is focused on fines, fees, tickets, financial penalties and how we have found that unfortunately many of these have an adverse and disproportionate impact on people with low incomes and communities of color. We started the financial justice project really in response to strong community outcry about the heavy toll these things were taking in community and really how they were limiting people's opportunities to jobs and to housing.

So, we heard about how, you know, the fact that were suspending people's drivers licenses when they could not pay their traffic tickets and when they missed traffic court dates. Without a driver's license, it is very hard to get and keep a job. And this was happening to tens of thousands of people in our city.

If someone's car got towed, you know, it was several hundred dollars. A lot of people could not afford to get their car back. It made it very hard to get to work. When people got out of jail, we were handing them a bill to pay for thousands of dollars in fees to cover the cost of their incarceration. You know, we heard from if you had a loved one who was incarcerated in our jails, if you wanted to talk to that person once a day, it would cost hundreds of dollars a month. These things are barriers, you know, there's a way to hold people accountable without putting them in financial distress.

DR. REEVES: Yeah. Some sort of policies and practices that deliberately aim to (inaudible) relationships in that case, right. It's almost like the intent of the punishment is part of it. So, we have some questions coming in.

Tiffany, my proposal was to direct these questions to you but then also invite you to kind of reflect a bit on what you've seen is working. A couple of them are quite similar to what you do. So, two questions. One is what is the role of community events and organizations? Right, how do you create community through events or through planned organizations. I thought of you when I was reading that one.

And another one if anyone is interested in it and Jill has joined the panel too so if you

have questions for her. Is what role for kind of arts and cultural organizations which I (inaudible) views on that too. But Tiffany, what kind of works and what about this discussion of either community organizations and events. Do they work in terms of building sustainable relationships in your experience?

MS. WILLIAMS: So, I actually think that community organizations are actually extremely important in building those social networks. Part of what Maurice talked about is the notion of credibility. And so, until I trust you, you can offer me the moon but if I don't trust you and if I don't have a relationship with you, I'm not going to receive any of the information you have for me even if it is great information for me.

So, I think it's extremely important to have community organizations and community events that bring people together that celebrate the strengths within communities and then connect people to access to be able to access resources and services. So, you had mentioned relational inequality. There are sides to that, right.

So, there's something to be said about having a community where people understand your story and they can relate to your story and they can reinforce and strengthen who you are as a person in a positive way. And also, connect you to other resources that will help you to move along that economic mobility line that we talked so much about.

The other thing I would say too when I think about community organizations and just building community, it's no longer enough for a stand along community organization to do the work in community to create the change that we're talking about. It does require business and philanthropy and the non-profits and the public sector. It involves having government presence.

And one of the things that I think I'm most proud about our organization is that we've made a conscious decision that at the center of all of this, will be the voice of the actual community. And that's something quite often even when we talk about policy and changes and we're going to move this community, we're going to do this, quite often that community voice is left out and/or it's silent.

And I always use the example, you would never come into the community that I personally live in and dictate what would happen in my community without allowing my neighbors and I to give voice to that. And yet for some reason in historically under resourced communities, everyone thinks it's okay to come into those communities and dishonor the strength and the history of those communities.

And so, I think when we think about building community, we want to make sure that all of those voices are at the table working together to certainly effect policy which I think is critically important and to design what the community can be and should be when all of those entities are working together.

DR. REEVES: Yeah, so to do it from the community. This point about trust, I think, Tiffany, is that's really been, I mean, we talk about trust in relationships, you know, right. And so, it's the difference between someone saying oh here's a good opportunity but you don't know who that person is, you don't know if it's a good lead and so the relationships have to be founded on trust and also built on trust and that's how you kind of connect.

There's very good evidence of people who have access to reproductive healthcare, for example, based on their social networks but, you know, a trusted social network. So, you've got to get your reproductive healthcare from someone because you just would (inaudible). There's a difference between information flowing a little bit and trust in a relationship that we have. So, fascinating. Maurice or Anne, anything on these events and organizations? Do they really bridge these relational gaps?

MR. HORTON: Yes. I think what Tiffany said is actually right. We have started with what we call community conversations. And with those community conversations, we have an opportunity to get the community to weigh in on what's going on in the city. And so, it's very, very important and I, you know, I've been a real stickler with that because I think that those who are in the room or at the table sometime put things together without even asking the community is this good for the community.

We just put it together and then we often wonder why did it fail. It failed because we didn't have input from the community. So, we are really, really working hard to get the community involved in everything that we do here because it's really important. You know, you're just building stuff in the community that people have no desire to go to, this is not what's going to get them to their next level. So, community involvement is very important. And so, the community conversations are much needed and even more in the city of Racine.

DR. REEVES: Jill, I want to ask you a question about quality of relationship, building on what Tiffany said about a trusted relationship and what kind of relationship we're talking about. There are various ways of doing network mapping but the way we kind of did it was to start with the person and then

go outwards from them and ask them. So, what does that, tell us about the quality of the relationships they were reporting. How do you think about the internet which is a trusted quality relationship. I mean a (inaudible) relationship as opposed to just somebody you met at the community. You meet somebody at a community conversations event and then that's it, right, are you in a relationship with them? So, talk a bit about this issue of the strength, quality and thickness of the relational tie.

DR. LAWRENCE: Yeah. So, folks talked a lot about the people that were closest to them and a lot of these relationships happened over a long period of time. So, people talked about the people that they met in high school, for instance, particularly in communities where there's not a lot of movement and that those people are still connecting them.

I even today, connected someone to someone that I went to high school with. And so, I think that that depth of relationship was really important and also people talked about working with people that understood their circumstances. We had one individual that was homeless that lived in San Francisco that talked about some resources that she was connected to. And she talked about how the caseworkers kept showing up. They kept showing up for her success and kept showing up to support her even through COVID-19.

So, I think that there is certainly an importance in the depth and the ability to show up and be consistent for folks. We asked them, you know, were there also people that you don't go to or you do not trust their advice. And some people had to think about that question but other people had that answer on the tip of their tongue.

And so, I think that understanding the groups and the organizations that will show up for you over time is really important. And people trusted people that were closer to them. Trusted family members, generally but then trusted organizations as well that were really dynamic in the community.

DR. REEVES: It takes time as someone said that it takes years to build trust and a moment to lose it. And that's worthy aspects of relational building is that it's not going to happen overnight, right. There's not something that happens quickly. And Anne, I just wanted to give you a chance to kind of weigh in on this. As I was struck by Kindergarten to College, that's quite a long time.

And I know that's a (inaudible) of financial intervention but perhaps that's the sort of timeline, you know, we need to be thinking, years in terms of changing these kinds of relational paths. There's not

going to be an intervention that suddenly real (inaudible) like tomorrow or even the next year. Do you agree with that assessment it takes a long time and is that a challenge?

MS. STUHLREHER: I do think it takes a long time and I do think it's a challenge. And I do think that, you know, for us in government, you know, I was just struck by so much that Maurice and Tiffany said. You know, I feel like the most important thing that I can do as a public servant and that we try to do is to listen and to listen to people.

We sit in various community coalitions all the time that are focused on whether it's criminal justice reform, transit justice, neighborhood groups. You know, unless we really are, you know, listening to folks, hearing kind of what the problems are and then it's really my job to turn to our fellow departments in the courts and say, what can we do here? You know, what can we do here that's doable for you to implement and will make a real difference in people's lives.

And, you know, when you talk about arts institutions just one thing I wanted to call out. We started something called San Francisco Museums for All. Because it could be \$100 to take your, you know, spouse and your kids to go see, you know, the Academy of Sciences or the Exploratorium. I know in D.C. your museums are free but that is not the case unfortunately out here.

But now if you show your Medicaid card or your SNAP CalFresh card, you can get in for free. The first summer we did this, 25,000 used these to go to a museum for a first time. These are our cultural treasures. They should be open for everyone. And the museums, you know, they were so enthusiastic about this program because it really changed who was coming through the door and helped create, you know, the kind of diverse experience, you know, that they wanted to. So, these types of approaches and reforms really benefit everyone and we really need to focus more on them.

DR. REEVES: Thank you. Thank you so much. Well, as always, I feel like we're just getting started. But I just want to thank all of you for your joining us for this conversation. And again, I think the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Kosar for their support for this work which is quite an ongoing project to look seriously at these issues. Out of the great prosperity and inclusion initiatives it's led by.

(Inaudible) from the beginning so it's just the beginning. But I did want to thank all of you for coming. I want to thank our audience for attending and for your questions and wish you all the best.

Remain safe and healthy. I hope that the year to come is one of all kinds of improvements but including in our relationships and networks with each other. So, with that, I thank you all for joining us.

MS. BUSETTE: Thank you. Thank you all.

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