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**Review of *More than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*. William Julius Wilson. Reviewed by Marguerite G. Rosenthal.**

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million members, would give clout to drive for the GCCWA. It is true that unionists have sometimes opposed government job programs because they pay too little or they seem to replace union jobs. But things seem to be improving on that front, and the issue needs to be discussed, as does the actual union presence in New Orleans, including whether union apprenticeship programs match the training goals of the GCCWA.

*Frank Stricker, California State University, Dominguez Hills*

William Julius Wilson, *More than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City (Issues of Our Time)*. W. W. Norton and Co., 2009. \$24.95 hardcover, \$15.95 papercover.

The pre-eminent sociologist, William Julius Wilson, has been analyzing and clarifying the causes of impoverished African Americans' marginalization from mainstream American society for over two decades. In this latest work, Wilson extends his project by engaging the conflict between the culture of poverty and structural theories of persistent inequality experienced by those at the bottom of the U.S. socio-economic ladder. And, while he continues to find the primary causes of harsh inequality to be structural in nature—especially the changing economy that leaves unskilled workers behind, but also discriminatory hiring practices, de facto housing segregation, the inferior schools that African American children attend, the lack of transportation and the like—he now gives more credence to cultural explanations. This shift, he bluntly states, “will likely generate controversy” because it is offensive to those social scientists who cringe from any explanation that suggests “blaming the victim.”

In a compact text (155 pages plus extensive notes), Wilson covers a broad range of topics related to the consequences of living in blighted urban neighborhoods characterized by joblessness. Wilson has focused on this singularly important issue before, but he here extends his analysis by incorporating recent research on topics such as subsidies for housing choice, young black men's exceedingly high rates of incarceration (more could have been done here), the greater success that black women have in the new service economy, and

family formation and composition. This last subject has been much written about, beginning with the Moynihan Report of 1965 that Wilson partially rehabilitates. Indeed, Wilson himself has generated a stream of research from his earlier book, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, where he documented that black men's inability consistently to earn sufficient wages to support a family was the most salient factor in marriage-less parenthood. But whereas young poor black women previously reported an expectation to marry after bearing children, they now express caution about and even rejection of marriage because they view their male partners as unreliable, though they continue to value highly the prospects and realities of motherhood. This attitudinal shift is an example of how Wilson integrates structural with cultural analyses of the particular situation of black families: a worsened employment climate for black males, now magnified not only by the disappearance of low-skilled industrial jobs from the inner city but especially by technological innovation (expertise for which is denied them by inadequate schools) and globalization, has resulted in cultural responses that include irresponsible and even predatory sexual behavior by young black men and women's disinclination to trust and marry them.

The lack of trusting relationships also arises in the area of job-seeking. Wilson discusses research that shows that, in comparison to Mexican immigrant workers, black men are distrustful of each other and fail to cooperate in sharing information about jobs, a key way that those with low skills obtain work. This cultural attitude, engendered in part by black men's understanding that they are perceived by employers as unreliable and less capable, combines with structural patterns of employer discrimination to reduce these men's chances of obtaining work.

The topics discussed herein are only a few of the many that Wilson tackles in his comprehensive analysis of recent research in the areas of persistent poverty. Indeed, anyone wanting to catch up on recent research in this arena will gain enormously from reading this cogently and economically written book, and students unfamiliar with the theoretical controversies surrounding structural or/and cultural explanations of persistent poverty will find this work approachable and engaging.

Wilson concludes his book, as he has done previously, by advancing a policy perspective that he frankly states now departs from his previous call for universal rather than targeted programs. Although he doesn't clearly spell out specific approaches, he now states that the problems of impoverished African Americans are so severe that frank discussions about race and poverty are needed to undo the consequences of racial subjugation.

*Marguerite G. Rosenthal, Salem State College (Emerita)*

Olivia Golden, *Reforming Child Welfare*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press, 2009. \$29.50 papercover.

The field of child protection has had a long and problematic history. Despite decades of countless "reforms" at both the federal and state levels, our public child welfare system remains beleaguered and dysfunctional, reeling from crisis to crisis. Within the past 15 years alone, due to child welfare litigation resulting in consent decrees or settlement agreements, public child welfare agencies in the majority of states have been placed temporarily under court supervision or surveillance.

In 2001, Olivia Golden took on the task of heading up the extremely troubled District of Columbia child protection agency. In this book, she describes her experiences and accomplishments in that role. She led the agency out of federal court receivership through "major improvements in the number of adoptions, the timeliness of abuse and neglect investigations, the proportion of children with up-to-date service plans, and the number of young children in family settings, rather than group homes." She and her staff sharply reduced worker case-loads, instituted rigorous new licensing standards for group-care facilities while closing one in the process, and eliminated children's overnight stays in the agency's office building. They closed three emergency shelters, increased the use of kinship foster care, and improved the drastically inadequate computerized information system.

Golden examines two other examples of what she calls success stories of child welfare turnarounds, in Alabama and Utah, where the state child welfare agencies had been under