Beyond Health Disparities: Examining Power Disparities and Industrial Complexes from the Views of Frantz Fanon (Part 1)

by

The Fanon Project

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Abstract: This paper provides a meta-theoretical model for understanding health disparities through an analysis of the military, media, health/medical, prison, academic, development, and economic industrial complexes which function as the warehouses and conduits of *power disparities*. Using the work of Frantz Fanon as method, Africans in America are examined through the ecology of internal colonialism and the violence/terror that it reverberates. The authors propose that the ecology of violence/terror and the internal colony that it creates facilitates *power disparities* through various industrial complexes ultimately impeding the overall health and development of the African community. This interdisciplinary model advances the paradigmatically narrow and individualistic current understanding of social and health disparities of African peoples.

Key Words: Fanon, Power, Disparities, Industrial Complex, African Psychology

"The colonized are caught in the tightly knit web of colonialism."
(Fanon, 1963, p. 15)

The United States is predicated upon permanent disparities and inequities in life expectancy, mortality rates, education gaps, incarceration, economic solvency, and counter-development burdened upon Africans domestically and internationally (Davis, 2006; Marable, 2000; Rodney, 1972). Founded in enslavement, these disparities were facilitated by military conquest, and perpetuated through economic, legal, and social stratification with Africans occupying the lowest echelons of the American caste system. Africans have forcefully served as the cash crop of the United States and the New World (Marx, 1976), a permanent source of free and cheap labor in the plantation and prison systems; a varying source of free and enslaved soldiers for all major wars fought in North America and the European internecine wars; and an endless source of flesh for medical experimentation in prison, plantation, and military sites (Washington, 2006). Entire industries were created to dehumanize and master the control of the African population in the United States for profit and superiority. Put simply, the suppression of African culture and life provides the lifeblood of the United States and their allies. This suppression, violent and repressive, permeates the space in which Africans exist and is experienced as power disparities.

This paper takes on the ambitious task of conceptualizing and expanding the topic of health disparities by examining various industrial complexes that create and are sustained by the *power disparities* they represent. Using Frantz Fanon's (1964; 1967) work as a method, we examine Africans in America as part of an ecology of colonialism and the violence that it engenders. We employ a meta-theoretical, interdisciplinary approach to argue that *power disparities,* a representation of colonial violence, impedes the health and wellness of African people and therefore, must be a key level of analysis and intervention.

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological model is a well known theory within psychology and proposes that the exosystem, the setting in which individuals reside, directly impacts individuals and communities level activity and decision making. For considerations of space, we focus solely on the macrosystemic level the ecological model noting that this level accounts for the overarching influence on the exosystem of such institutions as media, productivity, delivery of goods and services, etc. As Bronfenbrenner notes, "*Macrosystems are conceived and examined not only in structural terms but as carriers of information and ideology that both explicitly and implicitly, endow meaning and motivation to particular agencies, social networks, roles, activities, and their interrelations.*" (italics in text, p. 515). The macrosystemic level therefore is the focus of this paper as most critiques of power discuss macrosystemic levels, but then focus on microsystems and individual perception.

Frantz Fanon as Method

Frantz Fanon, the African Martiniquan psychiatrist, provided a model of colonial ecology that viewed macrosystems (e.g. economies, media, military, education, and development) as purveyors of violence against colonized people. Fanon's work (1967) was Pan-Africanist by virtue of his focus on culture, decolonization, nation-building and independence among African colonized countries (South Africa, Congo, Ghana, etc.) and countries where African internal colonies exist (Columbia, Peru, United States, Martinique, etc). Fanonian scholars understand that prevention and intervention of violence internally and externally to the Africans at home and abroad requires an analysis that addresses culture, power, sovereignty and the experience of colonialism. The model developed herein is viable in its application of the Fanonian method to the conditions of internally colonized Africans in Sudan, Columbia, South Africa, India, Australia, Martinique, England, Iraq, and everywhere that Africans exist in the *Global African Community*.

Power Disparities

Power, conceptualized at multiple levels and in multiple contexts, is integral to health (Fanon, 1967; Fu-Kiau, 1991; Wilson, 1998). Wilson has stated that power is both coercive and influential and is used to control by establishing, maintaining, and sustaining authority and legitimacy. Power is an elusive and illusory concept. As an elusive concept, it can only be seen through the mechanism by which it sustains control; as illusion in that it creates a false sense of health and history. Power portends the ability to define reality (James-Myers, 1998; Nobles, 2006). As such health is an index of power as are education, economics, and military strength. Wilson (1993; 1998) applied Foucault's (1972) concern with the "techniques and tactics of domination" to discuss true power which he defined as "military, economic and otherwise…" (1993; p. 7). In this context, power disparities are the observable and unobservable differences in access, opportunity and participation in decision making and can be measured by the indices of health, education, economics, and prison. Power is never individually based, it is inherently collective. Power codifies its essence within societal institutions. Thus, the discussion of health disparities needs to assess more carefully the function of macrosystems and the through historical and contextual factors that influence and determine power, and subsequently health. In this light, power disparities can be viewed in the historical timeline of the relationships between Africans and non-Africans.

During the periods between the dynastic sovereign rule of ancient Kemet (ca. 4500 B.C.E. to 700 B.C.E.) by various indigenous Africans of present day "countries" Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, and Egypt, the horn of Africa[1] was ruled by Nilotic Civilizations. These periods produced the development of the nations with projects in architecture, education, health, science, and religion under the concept of *Maat* (divine order) (Carruthers, 1995). In contrast, the periods of foreign rule of the Kemetic legacy is captured in the idea of an *intermediary period*.

Intermediary periods that are marked by outside rule were and are characterized by few, if any, national building projects, foreign rule, and general chaos (*isfet*) within society. Foreign rule should be understood as a lack of sovereignty for the nation (Carruthers, 1995). Thus, during periods of non-sovereignty, chaos, or (*isfet*) prevails over divine order, or *Maat* (Ani, 1994; Akoto & Akoto, 1998). Divine order's macrocosm can also be seen in the microcosm as *Kinenga*, the delicate balance of life, as espoused in the Bakongo system within the *Tambukusulu bia N'kîngu mia Zîngu*, the life principles transferring institute (Fu-Kiau, 1991). The ideas of an *intermediary* period are applicable to the current state of colonization that Africans at home and abroad are facing.

Internalized Colonialism

The context in which the Global African Communities find themselves is a problem of internal colonialism (Allen, 2006; Cruse, 2009; Tabb, 1970; Wilson, 1998). Colonialism connotes a power disparity where the colonizer controls the colonized through violence, torture, and terror physically, spatially, militarily, economically, politically, educationally, socially, spiritually, and ultimately, culturally (Akoto & Akoto, 1998; Cruse, 1967, 2009; Fanon, 1963, 1967; Fu-Kiau, 1991; Harrell, 1999; Wilson, 1998). In order to maintain power, colonialism delimits the ecology and controls the perceptual complex of the colonized, distorting culture, which thereby, defines the colonial reality. Fanon (1963) perfectly summarized a definition of colonialism when he said that, "it is the entire conquest of land and people. That is all" (p. 14).

Industrial Complexes

The idea of an industrial complex was quite within Fanon's reach when he noted that the perception of the institutions and occupants of those institutions were all part of the state apparati, although in this case the state is analogous to the colonizing country:

> The colonized perceives the doctor, the schoolteacher, the policeman, the engineer… through the haze of an almost organic confusion. . . The compulsory visit to the *douar* (local clinic) is preceded by the assembling of the population through the agency of the police authorities. The doctor who arrives in this atmosphere of general constraint is never a native doctor but always a doctor belonging to the dominant society and very often to the army. (Fanon, 1963, p. 121)

We believe the application of Fanon's "state apparati" can be illustrated by the following model outlining the transactional relationships of the seven identified industrial complexes (see Figure 1).

The circular presentation connotes the all-encompassing nature of the industrial complexes and the lines between them can be likened to the "tightly knit web of colonialism" centering power disparities equidistant from each industrial complex. The industrial complexes should be viewed as overlapping, though they are depicted as separate. Also, while they are visually illustrated to be of static size and proportion, these swell and grow as these industries change (e.g. increased numbers of imprisoned Africans). Each complex contains within it each of the other industrial complexes as will be discussed. Moreover, each industrial complex is increasingly becoming privatized which results in an inability of the government and/or African people to regulate and monitor the industries, and the consolidation of wealth and power in the hands of fewer corporations. For example, a recent report by the House of Representatives (2007) cites an expansion in private contracting so prolific that: 1) auditors are unable to account for the wasteful spending, and 2) forty cents of every dollar from the government is spent on private contracting.
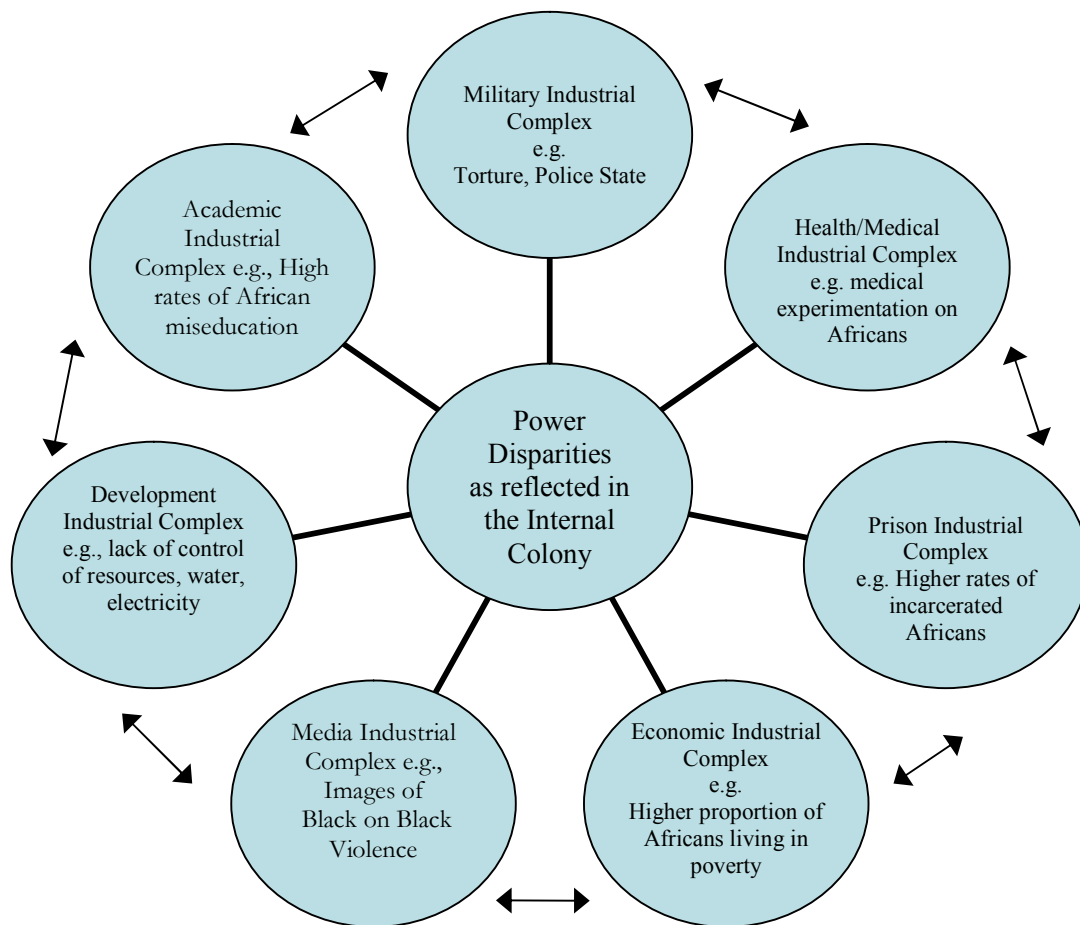
Figure 1:   Maintenance of Power Disparities

In addition, each of the industrial complexes assembles Fanon's notion of death instinct, which describes the act of the colonized behaving according to the dictates of the colonizer. The death instinct is the highest level of colonialism in that it fulfills itself without the direct intervention or control by the colonizing country. Kenney (1912) references it as auto-intoxication in the medical system. Woodson (1933) described it as the controlling of thoughts that result in the "build-a-back-door-when-there-is-none" syndrome. Bulhan (1985) describes it as auto-colonialism. Indeed, once the industrial complexes are in operation, the colonizing process is ingrained into the systems that control the colonized.

Fu-Kiau (2001) provides an African-centered worldview from the *Kikongo* to capture how the industrial complexes create disparity and illness:

> It is the waves/radiations that shake/wave societies, nations, and communities [*i minika/minienie minikunanga bimvuka, zinsi ye makanda*]. In other words, it is the waves/radiations [*i minika/minienie*], which are very often the cause of accidents, sickness…[and] may have a catastrophic impact on that environment. (p.118)

Thus, using the *Kikongo* theory as espoused by esteemed elder Yaa Fu-Kiau, we posit that the industrial complexes send waves/radiations that undermine African people at the individual, familial, and communal levels.

Military Industrial Complex

The military industrial complex (MIC) is described first in order to be consistent with Fanon's 1963 discussion of colonial violence in *The Wretched of the Earth*. It is here that Fanon captures worldwide audiences spanning decades by his provocative description of the colonial ecology of violence descriptive of the separate worlds of the colonized and the colonizer. Poignantly he suggests that the spokesperson for the colonizer in the colonies is the policeman and that the border between the two worlds is "the barracks and the police station" (p. 3). Indeed, the function of the military in the colonies is to remind the colonized to stay within the carefully prescribed boundaries, reinforced by the threat of violence. Inherently, the colony is a militarized conflict zone whose threat -posed by the colonized- must be neutralized for the colonizing country to be effective, a difficult task for a permanently internalized colony. Since the forced removal from the continent of Africa, Africans in America have been an *eternally displaced people* who constitute a constant threat to the security of the United States.

As of 2004, the MIC reached the trillion dollar spending mark globally with the United States accounting for nearly half ($440 billion) (SIPRI, 2004). Dwight D. Eisenhower, the 34th president of the U.S. is credited with the first admonishment by a U.S. president of an unrestrained MIC. Eisenhower's warnings concerned the influential encroachment of the military upon American policy, economics, and ultimately, American life. Early warnings of the MIC as a source of power were also captured by C. Wright Mills (1956). Mills argued that the MIC was superseding the sole power of the government to mitigate spending decisions through an elite group of institutions whose center was difficult to detect. Other scholars have identified the permanent military economy within the US and other imperial powers (Melman, 1997; Nkrumah, 1973).

The MIC is an interlocking, transactional system comprised of state, government, federal, international, academic, corporate, non-profit organizations, non-governmental organizations, lobbyists, think tanks, media outlets, religious missionaries, geared towards dictating domestic and foreign policy in order to: (1) ensure their survival and thriving by usurping the power from the people and directing the majority of governmental funding into the hands of a few; (2) promote instability domestically and internationally; (3) control the governments of other nations through the threat of violence; (4) use warfare in its diverse strategies to prevent the demise of the United States and allies; and (5) colonize land, sea, and space (Brunton, 1988; Caldicott, 2002; Campbell, 2008). As Brunton notes, the MIC functions by: (1) procuring large volumes of defense spending during times of peace through private contractors; (2) creating an "ethos of preparedness for war"; (3) conducting a "revolving door policy" of a "transactional nexus" of top level personnel through different organizations, thereby rendering their center nonlocal; and (4) facilitating state support of strategic industry that facilitates research and development.

It is this last point that is particularly interesting for academicians as the rise in the military academic industrial complex has formed relationships with key research universities in the development of technology that advances the aims of the MIC, (e.g, University of Chicago, California Institute of Technology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, etc.) These collaborations seek to foster the interest of young intellectuals in bomb making (Caldicott, 2002) and historically, have been responsible for numerous collaborations seeking to explore the effects of drugs, and biological and chemical agents on humans for military purposes (e.g, MKULTRA, etc. (Horowitz, 1996; Marks, 1979). Indeed, militarism has consequences on ecological health outcomes leaving its footprint on society through the destruction that the weapons, whether used or unused, have on the environment (Gould, 2007). Bullard (2001) notes that the South, particularly Louisiana, has been a toxic dumping for the military and state entities ground resulting in reduced health for these disempowered communities of African people.

Economic Industrial Complex

"What matters today, the issue which blocks the horizon, is the need for a redistribution of wealth" (Fanon, 1963, p. 55).

Economics, particularly when understood within the context of colonialism, is a mechanism of social ordering, rule and maintenance. Its origins, just as that of money, are found in establishing and continuing relationships of dominance and dependence and as such are no less powerful than firearms. A project based in carrying out the work of Fanon must acknowledge the role of money historically, in contemporary society and within a colonialism or neo-colonialism model/framework. Kwame Nkrumah (1964), like Fanon, extended the Marxist perspective to African colonization by noting that the antecedents of capitalism are feudalism, which in turn, is preceded by enslavement. He identified economics as the key determinant in the social history of Africa (Nkrumah, 1964). Money itself has become the mediating and moderating variable that changed the nature of human relationships by re-ordering how goods and services are procured and wealth is developed (Smith, 1776; Parenti, 2002).

Nkrumah's macro-solution matches the more micro vision of Amos Wilson (1998) who also properly identified the origins and function of wealth. For Wilson the issue was group power where wealth becomes one of several mechanisms for maintaining a relationship based on exploitation. The private wealth (capital) gains of the White elite come as the result of "genocidal murder" and "brutal enslavement," and continue today to be used to maintain that same group's power over others. This, just as Fanon argued, is all protected or backed up by the "physical violence, psychic terrorism and psycho-economic manipulation" (Wilson, 1998, p. 31) which further demonstrates the placement of economics within the array of tactics of maintaining order among those to be conquered. By controlling access to that which is needed to procure sustenance, health, shelter, etc. (money) whereby payment is determined on ordered behavior (income) those in power to a great extent determine that behavior. This prompted Hall (2004) to state that colonialism orders the quality of life in America.

At the nucleus of the various industrial complexes (i.e., education, prison, and military) discussed, herein, economics is the bloodline that connects, energizes, and flows throughout these systems. Economic power is what fuels the social order. Particularly within the colonial relationship, economic inequalities are the primary factor that distinguishes the imperial nation from the dependent colony. Regarding Black America this model which came to some prominence in the 1960s and 1970s:

> … suggests that the relationship between African Americans and the holders of state power in the United States is similar to that which exists between the colonized and the colonial master. Focusing on the spatially separate African American communities of the urban North and the heavy concentrations of African Americans in the southern Black Belt, the colonial model views African Americans as a unit apart, an internal colony, which is systematically exploited by white society. Blacks are viewed as a separate nation that exports cheap labor and imports finished goods from the broader community (Barker, et al, pp. 8-9).

This model, extending from the summarizing statement made by Kwame Ture that "Black visibility is not Black power," recognizes the "neocolonialism" inherent in the positioning of Black figures in apparent places of power or influence while, equally apparently, assuring that these people remain incapable of delivering fundamental changes in the material conditions of these communities. "The real holders of power, neocolonialism asserts, are those who control pivotal economic resources," whether in or "external to the black community" (Barker, et al, p. 9). This would explain the decline or nominal "progress" made by African America since 1968 according to the series of reports from United for a Fair Economy (UFE) despite there being any number of elected Black officials, entertainers, athletes, etc.

This neocolonialism, or reorganization of the fundamental colonialism, manifests in studies, such as that from the Economic Policy Institute (Austin 2008) or the Institute for Southern Studies (2008[2]) each of which demonstrate and refer to African America as being in a "permanent recession" or in the recent study by Malik Russell (2008[3]) on the prison industrial complex in which he describes African America as comprising a "permanent underclass." Similar manifestations of this continued colonialism are described in a series of studies from UFE which describe the backward slide, since 1968, where in terms of unemployment, family income and infant mortality existing racial gaps between Black and White have increased. In other areas where there has been "progress" the current pace would, for instance, require another 581 years for there to be racial parity in per capita income (Muhammad, et al, 2004). It must be noted too that this standard of 1968 is itself low considering its own basis being established relative to an African American past of enslavement, Jim/Jane Crow, etc. This is the proverbial 9 inch knife, once described by Malcolm X, being plunged into one's back then pulled out 6 inches with the perpetrator expecting a sign of gratitude from the victim. These are false standards by which to judge a community's condition but which once accepted mask the existence of such a colonized relationship to national power.

Health/Medical Industrial Complex

While the existence of health disparities along racial lines has received increasing attention over the past two decades, too often the approach to understanding and addressing these so called health disparities focuses on disparities as a product of racial oppression as opposed to an appreciation of health disparities as a technique of racial oppression. Perhaps nowhere is this relational abuse of power more perfectly illustrated than health care and the medical industry complex (HMIC). In documenting the historical and contemporary abuses of Black Americans by the medical establishment, Washington (2006) provides clear evidence to show that health disparities are not a new phenomenon and articulates the manner in which the type of health care afforded Black Americans was in fact intentionally designed to maintain oppression by, and dependence on, Whites. As Williams and Rucker (2000) have noted, the current state of health disparities should not represent a surprise, given the fact that "throughout the history of the United States non-dominant racial groups have, either by law or custom, received inferior treatment in major societal institutions. Medical care is no exception" (p. 76). However, the provision of inferior treatment presents only one of the major determinants of health disparities, the other being the use of violence, deception and intimidation in making available African bodies for use in medical research and to perfect surgical techniques and to assess medication efficacies that ultimately would be utilized only in the service of White American.

An accurate understanding of health disparities would eschew the notion of disparities as being a contemporary phenomenon, and would also challenge the notion of disparities as being largely reflective of socio-economic and educational disadvantage. Such an understanding, or shift in epistemological perspectives, would instead view disparities as part of an intentional and systemic attempt at maintaining racial oppression through neglect and exploitation (Randall, 2002; Outterson, 2005).

Airhihenbuwa and Liburd (2006) have presented a compelling case for the presence of health disparities and have offered strategies for the elimination of these disparities. Much of their research captures the accepted understanding of the various etiological factors that have been identified with the current health disparities phenomenon -- such as lack of adequate income, mistrust of medical institutions, lack of community based resources etc. Yet in order to formulate a remedy, the existence of racism in the health care and medical industries needs to be further explicated.

Within the US, health care has come to represent a commodity, as opposed to a basic human right. In a country that has historically appropriated human rights according to the color of one's skin (Feagin, 2006); it should come as no surprise that the right of health care has also been disproportionately allocated and intentionally withheld from Black Americans (Semmes, 1996). The HMIC reflects a conglomerate of related and disparate institutions, including the medical sciences, health care delivery, and market driven industries such as pharmaceutical companies and medical technology. Other critical components of the HMIC complex include those professional associations who serve as the gatekeepers, restricting and allowing entry of professional personnel. It is well known that such associations as the American Medical Association and the American Nurses Association, for the greater part of their existence, did not allow membership to Black Americans. While over the past 50 years the doors of membership have been open to all racial groups, for Black Americans, membership in predominantly White institutions has not, however, provided an increase in attention to the health needs of Black Americans. In fact, institutions that were devoted to the health of Black Americans have subsequently faltered and in many cases ceased to exist:

> In the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth century, African Americans were completely excluded from medication education in the South and to a lesser degree the North…To meet the African-American need for medical care, between 1882 and 1903 six medical schools or programs were organized in addition to Howard and Meharry. By 1923 all had closed except Howard and Meharry. The others could not survive the cost of raising standards for medical education prescribed by the American Medical Association. (Semmes, 1996, p. 114)

Today the training of Africans in American medical sciences is not limited by legal statue, yet the statistics reflect a significantly disproportionate representation in those professions dedicated to the health and well-being of all Americans, including health care and psychology. According to figures released by the Bureau of Labor, as of 2005 there were 44,000 Black physicians and surgeons out of a total of 633,000 employed physicians and surgeons in the US (7.0 %). As of 2007 Black participation in the American Psychological Association (APA) reflected 1.8% of total membership.

It should be clearly stated at this point that we are not merely advocating an increased presence of Black professionals in White oriented associations as an antidote to those racial disparities that exist in health and wealth. As Fanon would remind us, the "colonial doctor" could be seen as the embodiment of the power disparity with the colonial doctor dispensing medicines and describing the mistrust of the colonized as a form of pathology. The need for a Black presence in medicine and psychology indeed is to (1) ensure of voice of resistance, to (2) practice African liberation by recognizing and advancing culturally informed definitions of illness and health, to (3) advocate and refine African-centered sources of healing and health, and to (4) reject the market driven approach to health care as a commodity and not a right.

Semmes (1996) reminds us that "historically, African-American communities are creations of economic forces that have served the interests of the White elites" (p. 119). An intentional outcome of this distorted relationship, particularly as it relates to the medicalization of health care, is the sense of dependency that has been fostered upon Black Americans. By excluding Blacks from educational opportunities in the health sciences and by delegitimizing those alternative health care practices that reflect an African-centered approach (Semmes, 1996), the ideology of white supremacy has become reinforced with every visit to the "colonial doctor".

Prison Industrial Complex (PIC)

In recent decades, United States jail and prison populations have grown exponentially (Institute of Medicine, 2007; Lynch, 2007; Reese, 2006). In 2000, the U.S. had the world's largest incarceration population and highest rate (Institute of Medicine, 2007). Despite comprising only five percent of the world's population, the U.S. holds a quarter of the world's prisoners. Presently, despite constituting 12% of the U.S. population, African Americans constitute over 50% of the prison population (Bureau of Justice, 2005). Women of color make up two thirds of incarcerated women (Braithwaite, et. al., 2005). Yet, in the 1990s, during an era of presumably economical and technological advancement, the U.S. experienced its fastest growing incarceration rate since chattel enslavement. Sparked by former Democratic president Bill Clinton, whose 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act gave $9.9 billion for prison construction, the rates of imprisonment have increased dramatically since the 1970s (Western, 2005).

People of African ancestry experience incarceration at rates far greater than any other ethnic group in the world (Free, 2003; Reese, 2006). In 2004, an estimated 12.6% of all Black males in their late 20's were in jails or prisons, in comparison to Latinos (3.6%) and Caucasians (1.7%) (Baruti, 2005). The current crisis of African imprisonment in the US has caused some authors to call the prison industrial complex the New Jim Crow (Alexander, 2010).

Prisons played a vital and necessary function in the colonial world. Lynch (2007) contended that early European imperialist powers sentenced criminals to slavery in distanced colonies as a means of manpower and labor resource. These nations were common for exploiting their criminal population in the acquisition of land, resources and power. Later, once the land was conquered, Whites employed a system called *transportation* (Lynch, 2007). Thus, *transportation* provided the option of being deported to a colony for the mistreatment of free labor and services or receiving a severe criminal penalty (usually death). Another known system was workhouse incarceration, which served two main purposes: (a) providing free labor to developing capitalist nations and (b) rehabilitating recalcitrant workers back into the capitalist workforce (Lynch, 2007). These systems introduced and provided the foundations for the United States prison industrial complex. This sentiment is best captured by Lynch (2007, p. 113):

> Under capitalist economic arrangement, the prison *industrial complex* provided several economically necessary conditions: physical control of the surplus *African* population, the potential for the production of goods without labor costs, and rehabilitation and resocialization of the marginalized *African* workers through the use of hard work as part of the penal response [*italics added*].

The continual incarceration of Africans, in the interest and service of Whites, has its origins steeped within the fabric of American history (Baruti, 2005; Free, 2003; Reese, 2006). Since the time of enslavement, Africans were seized and exploited for white profit. Even thereafter, despite the passing of the Thirteenth Amendment, which supposedly ended slavery, Africans were sanctioned to "involuntary servitude" as punishment for "crimes" (Free, 2003). To illustrate, Section 1 of the 13th Amendment of the United States' Constitution states: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

According to data from Tennessee's Main Prison in Nashville, immediately following the Civil War, the incarceration rate for African increased significantly, whereas the rate for whites decreased (see Free, 2003). This trend has persisted throughout the decades, which partially explains the "prison industrial crisis" today. Free (2003, p.41) noted, "once imprisoned, *African* inmates were leased to private vendors as low-cost laborers to become the foundation of lucrative, profit-driven, white-owned businesses" [italics added]. To date, prisons represent a 147 billion dollar per year industry (Reese, 2006).

With the current privatization of prisons, major corporations, such as the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), are recording astronomical profits through the exploitation of African incarceration and subsequent labor. In addition to the prison owners, services and products such as food, clothing, construction companies, medical, transportation, security, and many other white profiteers have and continue to benefit from the incarceration of people of African descent.

In sum, the prison industrial complex is a very deliberate and calculated product of the white power structure in the United States. It reifies the colonial relationship and power disparity between Africans and Whites. Particularly oppressive for Africans in the U.S., the expansion of prison has resulted in the neo-commoditization of Black bodies in a capitalist system with roots in the original commoditization of the African body, labor. Thus, Black incarceration serves a deliberate and specific purpose in sustaining white terror, power, and domination (Wilson, 1990).

Academic Industrial Complex (AIC)

The U.S. educational system functions as an essential component of American colonialism. African scholars have been decrying the colonial nature and failings of the public education system for generations. Yet, recently critics of the American educational system, its failings, and particularly its capitalistic tendencies have labeled this system the *Academic Industrial Complex* (Culliton, 1982; Giroux, 2008, Smith, 2007). The Academic Industrial Complex refers to the intimate connection that exists between the educational system and the private industrial enterprises that fund it and are connected to it. Understanding the AIC as part of neo-colonialism is essential in ascertaining its integral role in maintaining the colonized state of African people.

Education serves a key role in transmitting cultural knowledge across generations and for African people serves to socialize children into the African ethos. Shujaa (1994) notes that education is so culturally integral that "every cultural group must provide for this transmission process or it will cease to exist" (p.15). Shujaa notes a key distinction between education and schooling processes and states that the function of schooling is to protect the politically sanctioned social order. A schooling system can be the conduit of a national sociopolitical agenda. Thus, colonizing the educational system of a group can and does have a culturally devastating effect upon its people.

The development of the AIC and particularly the construction of an educational platform for African children occurred in part through a series of conferences including the Lake Mohonk Conferences (1890-1891) and later a series of Conferences for Education in the South (Butchart, 1994; Hilliard, 1998). The ultimate goal of these conferences was to address the problem of newly "emancipated" Africans.

These conferences were utilized as 'think tanks' for the planned 'miseducation' or schooling of African people through the U.S. educational system. Woodson (1933) discussed the social and political function of the educational system in his germinal work *The Miseducation of the Negro*. The nature of the schooling as well as its sociopolitical location has not changed since Woodson's declarations. Hilliard (2000) declared that many members of the African community perpetuate the deleterious effects of the (white) American schooling industry by assisting in the mental measurement that falsely diagnose African children and by teaching revisionist history that negates the existence and contribution of African people and leaves our children ignorant. There are also numerous members of the African community who are seeking to financially profit by selling privatized services to urban schools that may equally handicap African children.

While Woodson and others have coined the colonial education experiences of Africans as being a 'miseducation' process, others have noted that this is indeed an undercalculation of the vast effects of the (White) imperialist agenda of American schooling. Hilliard (2000) in his excellent book declared that the global African community required an examination of the "intersection of culture and power" because a "global system of power distribution has dictated and continues to dictate the nature of the education and socialization processes. Slavery, colonization, apartheid/segregation and the rationalizing ideology of white supremacy are centuries of old challenges, really aspects of a global hegemonic system" (n.p.).

Indeed, a primary goal of the AIC is the destruction of African culture and the promulgation of White supremacist ideology. Clearly the colonial educational system surpasses the criteria for cultural genocide and Wilson's conceptualization of psychic violence. Interestingly, the United Nations Convention on Genocide (1948) explicitly condemns physical and biological genocide yet makes no mention of cultural genocide except in the forcible transfer of a group's children (Nersessian, 2005). They did note, however that "indoctrinating children into the customs, language, and values of a foreign group was "tantamount to the destruction of the [child's] group, whose future depended on that next generation" (UN, 1948). Wilson (1990) underscores the importance of this in noting that the "ultimate force in the world is the force of the mind. When that force is defeated all is lost" (p.11).

This historical psychic violence remains in the educational system through the chronic pathologizing of African children. African children have been deemed intellectually deficient (or inferior at best) and are diagnosed with acute and chronic cognitive and emotional disorders at alarming, disproportionate rates. The disparate diagnosis rates of Black children with "learning disabilities" and other psychological disorders have been well documented (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2007; Center for Disease Control [CDC], 2005; Hilliard, 2004 to name a few). Black children are more likely than any other students to be in special education programs for children with mental retardation or emotional disturbance and are almost twice as likely as White children to be retained in a grade.

Examination of these disparate rates of diagnosis is important for three primary reasons. First, the cultural bias of the diagnostic nosology as well as the racial biases of diagnosticians brings into question the validity of the actual diagnoses (Abdullah, 2003; Breggin & Breggin, 1997; Caplan & Cosgrove, 2004). Second, the medical industrial complex (e.g., psychology and psychiatry) has been significantly criticized for their financial reliance on the pharmaceutical industry. Increased diagnoses of chronic psychiatric disorders requiring pharmacological treatment is associated with increased profits for the pharmacological industry (Diller, 1996; Olfman, 2006). Lastly, diagnosis with a chronic condition such as Bipolar Disorder and ADHD sets forward possibly a lifetime trajectory that may deter, if not, impede educational opportunities, alters medical care, and necessitates pharmacological treatment. Further, the overplacement of Black children in special education and increased diagnosis of psychological disease has been linked to the school-to-prison pipeline therefore reinforcing the relationships *between* the industrial complexes (CDF, 2008).

Media Industrial Complex

Media are best understood as conduits of ideology or culture that shape consciousness and prescribe behavior to "target populations" (Walters, p. 14). Thus, media can be seen as more than the mechanisms of transmission; media are the actual ideologies, worldviews, and value systems that shape identity and social reality (McQuail, 2000, p. 4). In fact, more than that which disseminates ideology, media products *are* the ideology or worldview of those who create that which they transmit. Based on the current model this ideology, broken into four primary components, consists of a need to turn any and everything into a commodity in a society whose archetypal concept of commodity is inextricably linked to the sale and trade of African body and mind (Marx, 1976) or as Tate (2003) furthered "original commodity-fetish". This reifies the cyclical need to: (a) see Africans as inferior, which justifies their abuse physically, psychologically, requiring ostensibly aid for development; (b) promote Whiteness as superior, which requires the destruction and falsification of African consciousness among targeted Africans, particularly the youth whose historical repository of memories have yet to be filled; and (c) utilize media to control and dominate the desired forms of cultural expression and popularity, thereby providing the parameters for culturally sanctioned thought and behavior, i.e., racial scripting (Harrell, 1999).

As media have been described as culturally sanctioned ideology, symbols and imagery provide the scripts through which thoughts are both conveyed and shaped (Ani, 1994). Indeed, African authors have discussed with deep thought how words and language, as scripts of media, convey speech as an act of divine creation (Ba, 1993) or de/colonialism (Thiong'o, 1986, Ani, 1994; Fu-Kiau, 2001). Colonially, Europeans have banned and co-opted the use of African languages in acts of violence against African cultural expression. Nobles (2006) defined culture as a construct representing the vast structural processes of language, behavior, customs, knowledge, symbols, ideas, and values which provide people with a general design for living and patterns for interpreting reality…" providing the "unwritten grammar of human societies…" (p. 223). Clearly, Nobles is referring to scripts when he uses the phrase "unwritten grammar".

In the colony, media are used as sources of coercive power (Wilson, 1998) waging psychic violence and terror through (European) culture (Fanon, 1967) as an industrial complex of colonialism against (African) culture (Ball & Burroughs). Shifting the intact cultures and cultural personality of African peoples has been the primary ways that media are used to achieve cultural domination as people whose cultural identities remain intact are less easily subdued economically and politically (Cabral, 1973). Thus, colonial culture seeks to perpetuate a fragmented, weakened culture as opposed to the complete decimation of the culture (Fanon, 1967). The insidiousness of this process stems from the colonial desire to make invisible the change in power relationships between the colonized and the colonizer. Mass media make the colonized experience second nature by creating "the mythical portrait of the colonized" (Memmi, 1965, p. 79). Fanon (1963) suggests that it is this static image of the culture of the colonized that renders the cultural institutions "inert" (p. 34), which contradicts the flexibility and fluidity of African culture. By controlling the culturally proscribed interpretations of reality, values, knowledge, language, and behavior, media puts the "press" in "oppression."

Development Industrial Complex

The national bourgeoisie in the underdeveloped countries is not geared to production, invention, creation, or work. All its energy is channeled into intermediary activities. Networking and scheming seem to be its underlying vocation. The national bourgeoisie has the psychology of a businessman, not that of a captain of industry.
-Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

In an underdeveloped country, the imperative duty of an authentic national bourgeoisie is to betray the vocation to which it is destined, to learn from the people, and make available to them the intellectual and technical capital it culled from colonial universities.
-Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

As long as the Man controls the water or electricity coming into your community, it does you no good to control that community.
-H. Rap Brown

Development, like health, can be in and of itself, an index of power (UN Development Program, 2007). Development is a precursor and necessary condition for freedom and necessitates a right to health (Sen, 2000; Meier & Fox, 2008). However, Airhihenbuwa & Liburd (2007) note that the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) voted against using the term development in 1986, "even though scholars were recently urged by CODESRIA leadership to rethink the representation and appropriation of development in Africa rather than total rejecting it (Olukoshi & Nyamnjoh, 2005)." (p. 34)

Our gauge for development is through sovereignty, most importantly collective access and control of natural resources and land ownership, followed by quality of housing and residence, and employment security. Development must not be limited to comparisons of Africans and whites in America (Airhihenbuwa & Liburd, 2006; Airhihenbuwa & Liburd, 2007), but considered in speculative relation to where African health and power would be if not for the continued looting of African wealth by Europeans. The aforementioned areas, following the development story of the US are translated into agriculture, urban planning and housing, and industrial manufacturing, respectively.

Agriculture - The first of these systems to be looked at is agriculture in the US. Land ownership is an economic right – parallel to political rights – that, following the historical development of capitalist free trade in this country and globally, has been inequitably distributed between rich and poor; politically represented and politically disempowered (Lappe, 1998). Land and natural resources will remain to be decisive in a global economic equilibrium as trade of commodities, energy, and food depends on the fruits of land. More basic to that is land's importance in the ensured continuance of life through food, shelter, medicine, and so on (Fu-Kiau, 1991). Since 1920, the number of Black farmers has decreased by an alarming 98% while white farmers decreased by 66% in the same period. "[African Americans] have suffered [these] losses due to public policy, economic pressures, and racial oppression" (Wood and Gilbert, 2000). Subsequent to Emancipation, many African Americans, following the promise of "forty acres and a mule," turned to farming. With the beginning of the agriculture industrial complex in the same period, "negroes became rural peons subordinated to the landed power of Southern Segregation" (Peck, 1968, pg. 211); wealthy White farmers reversed this trend and reclaimed most of the land. Africans in America, "who have been close to the land for most of [their] history," did not have access to the necessary factors that enable a sustained use of the land, namely, capital, credit and machinery (Peck, 1968), and disheartened by the South's reality, eventually migrated to the North in large numbers. Statistics from the United Nations and National Agricultural Statistical Services (2008) show that as of 2002 37% of the United States is farmland owned by Whites, while African Americans own only 0.38% of that size. Currently, the class action law suit Pigford *v.* Glickman, a class action law suit against the US Department of Agriculture, could result in reparations for African American farmers who have been systematically denied loans and suffered incalculable losses of wealth over decades (Chappell, 2008).

Manufacturing Industry - Manufacturing industry is important to the subject of this paper for the following reasons: "industrialization and commercialization" are perceived to be cornerstones of American development; employment and capital accumulation, in the last few decades have been transferred from agriculture to industrialization; this grants unions within industries a decisive political leverage whose effects for African Americans was demonstrated during the Civil Rights movement (Marable, 2000).

Underdevelopment of most Africans in America has meant "chattel slavery, sharecropping, peonage" and most recently "industrial labor at low wages" (Marable, 2000). As farm laborers decreased beginning in the 1920s, more Africans migrated to urban centers (Marable, 2000), and the majority of employed African Americans relied on manufacturing industry as their primary source of income; they were employed as blue-collar workers, performing unskilled or semi-skilled labor. These are the same jobs that more recently have been decreasing in supply as emerging technologies replace laborers and as industries seek cheaper labor outside American borders (Peck, 1968). Although Africans in America have resisted this industrial complex through intense labor union organizing, with peaking organizing levels during the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, they have not withstood the changing economic tides of the country as a whole, namely reduced manufacturing industries within the US. Finally, and going back to the quotes by Fanon and Brown, above, is the Marxian concept of alienation of the producer from that which he/she produces (Bulhan, 1985). Beyond the material gain of the manufacturing industry is the relationship between African Americans and that which we consume and depend on. These insecure development trends capture the development industrial complex within the US for African Americans, and dictate power disparities.

Housing and Urban Planning - According to recent studies (Draut, et. al, 2008), one third of African homeowners, a signifier of middle-class security, are currently under the threat of losing their homes. On the other end of the spectrum, gentrification has taken over many Northeastern cities like Boston, MA, Washington, DC, New York City, NY, and other major urban centers where African Americans primarily live. This is set against a backdrop of widely recognized environmental deprivation of African American neighborhoods in the form of air pollution, mismanaged water systems, and overcrowding. The term "environmental racism" was coined to address disparities in environmentally degraded African American neighborhoods (Schlosberg, 2003, pp. 78-79).

Engineering systems facilitating this development follow the same societal and political landscape of the US: a landscape that depends on oppression and underdevelopment of the many for the development of the few. American development industries, therefore, have increased power disparities to function the way that they do. Development, however, is not just another example of a capitalist industry; the control of land and other natural resources by a community, and how these natural resources are used in defining one's livelihood weigh heavily for the future of that community. What does it mean when these resources are taken outside the control of the overwhelming majority and placed in the hands of a few, under an ideological system and institutions that promote the development and empowerment of those very same few individuals? What happens when you do not control your water, electricity, food, house, or land? Is it possible to claim control of your community and gain sovereignty?

Conclusion

The reversal of the ecology of violence as seen in the industrial complexes according to Fanon would require decolonization from all segments of the internally colonized population and a redistribution of wealth. To Fanon (1963), on his death bed, this required a new vision of humanity, one separate from that of Europe and America: "let us not pay tribute to Europe by creating states, institutions, and societies that draw their inspiration from it" (p. 239). An optimist, he noted: "We can do anything today provided we do not ape Europe, provided we are not obsessed with catching up with Europe" (p. 236). Akin to Fanon, Wilson (1993) proffered a new African consciousness through the overcoming of alienation through the discovery and reclamation of their true identity and consciousness by oppressed Africans. Moreover, he noted that true power required "military, economic and otherwise…" as Fanon suggested that violence was the only way to decolonize toward sovereignty.

Millions of African children are subjected to the colonial conditions of the American "educational" system. The psychic, physical, and structural violence experienced by African children daily clearly has deleterious effects on cultural orientation, academic achievement and learning, and results in a disproportionate number of African children being pathologized and/or incarcerated. The physical health effects are largely unknown, yet one need only understand the social determinants of health to postulate that the inordinate amount of acute and chronic stress experienced by African children likely impacts their overall well-being. Clearly, such colonial conditions are intolerable; immediate intervention is necessary. Toward this end, Wilson prolifically states that "…if [Afrikan people] are to survive and prosper in freedom then, like it or not, Afrikan peoples must come to terms with power" (p. 7). How then do we define and determine health?

Health disparities narrowly confine the actions and remedies to improve health for African people by measuring African people's health with that of Europeans, which ultimately measures the consciousness of the former and latter. Extending Fanon's analysis, this is merely an aping obsession of catching up with Europe. Fanon was more interested in moving forward. From where shall we draw our inspiration to change the power disparities for African people?

Thus, what might a Fanonian approach to the elimination of power disparities in health look like? Perhaps it might start with a refutation of the concept of health disparities and a re-emphasizing of the current status of Black health as a continuing and intentional form of oppression. It might call for the re-education in tools of resistance and for the establishment of sovereignty through the creation of health care focused primarily on the needs of Africans in America. It might focus on educating Africans in America as to the mechanisms that are employed by the White terrorists to maintain forms of oppressions (such as those highlighted in the current article). For example, Ball (2009) has called for an Africana theory of media criticism. It might incorporate aspects of African-centered culture that pertain to health and healing as central aspects of health care for Africans in America (Fu-Kiau, 1991).

It might question health care as a commodity and engage at the community level in a form of socialized care in which the community centers reflect the hub of health and healing. It might honor "cultural mistrust" as a mark of resistance, as opposed to implicating it as a source of disparity. It might call for a psychological disengagement from those practices of consumerism that continues to drain wealth out of Black communities as such maintains a position of servitude to the White economic structure as we see in prison.

The call for African psychologists is to expand the focus of power to include industrial complexes and work towards decolonizing and ensovereignizing the African mind towards the return of the indigenous institutions of power. Moving beyond single field foci and single author representation is also critical. In this respect, we recommend being, doing, and reflecting the work of Frantz Fanon to create safer space for African families to exist.

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Notes

[1] Parenthetically, the horn of Africa is now considered by the West the breeding ground for terrorists and there are efforts afoot to cast Africa's horn as a terror space (see Campbell, 2008, p. 8).

[2] http://southernstudies.org/facingsouth/2008/03/black-america-is-in-permanent-recession.asp.

[3] http://www.voxunion.com/?p=259.