

# Racial disparity remains high

By Stephen Ohlemacher

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WASHINGTON — Decades after the civil-rights movement, racial disparities in income, education and home ownership persist and, by some measurements, are growing.

White households had incomes that were two-thirds higher than blacks and 40-percent higher than Hispanics last year, according to data released today by the Census Bureau.

White adults also were more likely than black and Hispanic adults to have college degrees and to own their own homes. They were less likely to live in poverty.

"Race is so associated with class in the United States that it may not be direct discrimination, but it still matters indirectly," said Dalton Conley, a sociology professor at New York University and the author of "Being Black, Living in the Red."

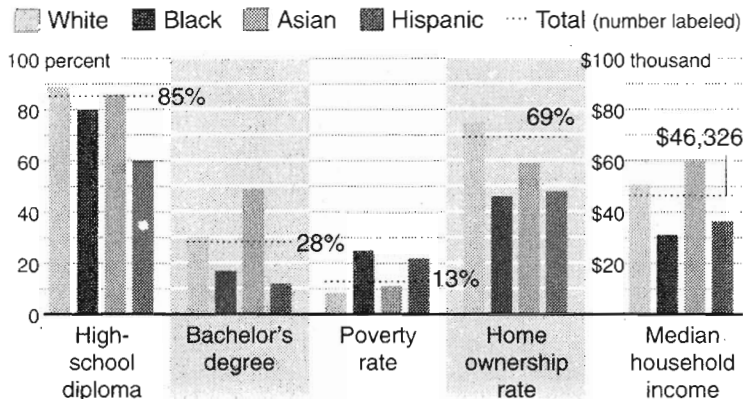
"It doesn't mean it's any less powerful just because it's indirect," he said.

Home ownership grew among white middle-class families after World War II when access to credit and government programs made buying

## Census data shows racial disparities

New census data highlights the disparities in education, income and home ownership between whites, blacks, Asians and Hispanics.

### 2005 American Community Survey data, by race



SOURCE: Census Bureau

AP

houses affordable. Black families were largely left out because of discrimination, and the effects are still being felt today, said Lance Freeman, assistant professor of urban planning at Columbia University and author of "There Goes the 'Hood.'"

Home ownership creates wealth, which enables families to live in good neighborhoods with good schools. It also helps families finance college, which leads to better-paying jobs, perpetuating the cycle,

Freeman said.

"If your parents own their own home, they can leave it to you when they pass on or they can use the equity to help you with a down payment on yours," Freeman said.

Three-fourths of white households owned their homes in 2005, compared with 46 percent of black households and 48 percent of Hispanic households. Home ownership is near an all-time high in the United States, but racial gaps have increased in the past 25 years.

Black families also have been hurt by the decline of manufacturing jobs — the same jobs that helped propel many white families into the middle class after World War II, said Hilary Shelton, director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's Washington office.

Among Hispanics, education, income and home ownership gaps are exacerbated by recent Latin American immigrants. Hispanic immigrants have, on average, lower incomes and education levels than people born in the United States. About 40 percent of U.S. Hispanics are immigrants.

Asian Americans, on average, have higher incomes and education levels than whites. However, they have higher poverty rates and lower home-ownership rates.

The Census Bureau released 2005 racial data on incomes, education levels, home-ownership rates and poverty rates today. The data are from the American Community Survey, the bureau's new annual survey of 3 million households nationwide. The Associated Press compared the figures with census data from 1980, 1990 and 2000.