

Podcast Discussion Guide - Episode 4

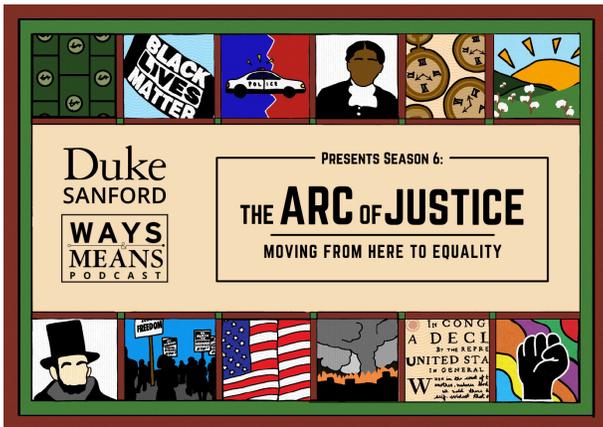
Whitening the Middle Class

The Ways & Means podcast series *The Arc of Justice* is produced in partnership with Duke Professor William A. “Sandy” Darity Jr. and folklorist and arts consultant A. Kirsten Mullen based on their book *From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the 21st Century*. Darity is the Samuel DuBois Cook Distinguished Professor of Public Policy at the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University.

Over six episodes, the podcast series explores how economic opportunities varied between African Americans and white Americans throughout history – describing what could have been different at distinct points in history, and possible transformations that still could be implemented in the future.

This series is produced by the Duke University Sanford School of Public Policy, and the team from the award-winning Ways & Means podcast. The series is hosted by journalist Lindsay Foster Thomas and will be broadcast on North Carolina Public Radio WUNC in 2021. Season 6 (*The Arc of Justice*) of Ways & Means is made possible through support from the Duke Office for Faculty Advancement thanks to funding from The Duke Endowment, and also support from North Carolina Public Radio and the Sanford School. The series is part of Duke's Forever Learning Institute as part of the America Today theme.

We invite you to listen to the episodes, and to use this guide for additional resources and dialogue.



"You've got these people who are coming back to the United States who have these skills, they have experience. They have confidence in their ability to do the work. They have motivation. And doors are being shut in their faces at every turn?"

- A. Kirsten Mullen

Tips as You Listen:

1. Open ears and heart.
2. Get comfortable in your discomfort,
3. Continue to do your own research.
4. Talk about what you have learned with others.

Key Terms to Learn:

G.I. Bill – The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the G.I. Bill, was a law that could have provided a range of benefits for all returning World War II veterans. In fact, the benefits overwhelmingly went to white veterans.

HBCU – Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Resources to Read:

1. [From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the 21st Century](#), William A. Darity Jr. and A. Kirsten Mullen (UNC Press, 2020)
2. [When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America](#), Ira Katznelson (W. W. Norton & Co., 2005)
3. Edward Humes, [How the GI Bill Shunted Blacks Into Vocational Training](#), *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (Autumn 2006, 92- 104)
4. ["A 'Forgotten History' Of How the U.S. Government Segregated America"](#) (NPR, 2017)

Listen to Episode 4: waysandmeansshow.org

Questions to Discuss:

1. What is the impact of the G.I. Bill being enforced locally rather than by the federal government?
2. What are some lasting impacts of housing disparities between African American returning veterans and white returning veterans?
3. How much wealth would you estimate black Americans lost due to their exclusion from developments like Levittowns?
4. What were the consequences of so many returning African American veterans being denied access to higher education?
5. Discuss this quote: "When black people ask for help, now, it's welfare, right, it's this expectation that someone will do something for you. When white folks got the help after World War II, it was something that they earned. The fact of the matter is, everybody earned it, but only white folks got it." (Duke faculty member Adriane Lentz-Smith)

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