generate opportunities for undocumented workers to become permanent legalized immigrants, such as those in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, and not simply temporary-worker programs that often result in higher incidents of employer abuse because employers control work permits and have the power to deny employment and permanent residency opportunities.

SEE ALSO Black Immigration; Borders; Caribbean Immigration; Citizenship; Day Laborers, Latino; Hate Crimes; Immigration Reform (US); Immigration Regulation; Labor Market; Racial Profiling and Biased Policing.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT

In capitalist economies, individuals and families are largely responsible for providing for their own well-being. In all industrialized and many developing economies, most workers do not possess the resources to directly produce the goods and services required to subsist, but rather must obtain the money necessary to purchase those goods by selling their labor services in the market. In addition, the requirement that taxes be paid in government currency means that even those possessing the resources to provide for their own subsistence nevertheless must usually enter
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the labor market to obtain that which is necessary to settle their tax obligations (for colonial Africa, see Forstater 2005).

Unemployment, or the failure to obtain employment that earns a wage or a salary paid in money, thus has a dire impact on the jobless and their families—and their neighborhoods and communities—in societies organized as capitalist. Unemployment is also associated with tremendous social and economic costs for society as a whole. In addition, a variety of forms of underemployment are characteristic of contemporary market economies. The next section addresses issues of defining and measuring different categories of unemployment and underemployment. This will be followed by an overview of the social and economic costs of unemployment and underemployment. Two views of the causes of persistent unemployment and underemployment will then be examined, neoclassical and heterodox. Competing explanations of differentials in employment and unemployment (rates) will then be considered. The last section will address policy.

DEFINING AND MEASURING UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT
Countries differ somewhat in their official definitions of unemployment, but for comparative purposes, institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations use modifications and adjustments that nearly correspond to those used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) in the United States. The BLS calculates the official unemployment rate and other measures of labor-force underutilization from a monthly sample survey (the Current Population Survey, or CPS) of households. Respondents are asked if they are presently working for pay. If they answer “yes,” they are counted as employed and as part of the labor force. If they answer “no,” they are then asked a series of questions to determine if they have been “actively seeking work” in the four weeks prior to the survey and would have been available to start working if they had been offered a job. “Actively seeking work” means contacting an employer directly, having a job interview, contacting an employment agency, sending out resumes or submitting applications, or the equivalent, within the previous four weeks. Those who are not presently working, but have been actively seeking work and could have started a job if one had been offered, are counted as being officially unemployed and as being part of the labor force. The official unemployment rate is calculated by dividing the officially unemployed by the labor force (employed plus the officially unemployed) and multiplying by one hundred to make it a percentage (BLS 1994).

If a person is not presently working and has not been actively seeking work in the previous four weeks, or could not have started a job if one had been offered (for any reason other than temporary illness), that person is not considered to be officially unemployed and is not considered to be part of the labor force. Even if a person says he or she wants and needs to be working, has no other source of income, and had been actively seeking work but gave up four weeks and one day prior to the survey, that person is not counted as being either officially unemployed or part of the labor force, but instead is considered to have left the labor force, and is put in a category called discouraged workers or another category of marginal attachment to the labor force.

Note that when a person is asked if he or she is presently working for pay, no distinction is made between part-time and full-time employment. Some who are working part-time are doing so because they are still in school, are taking care of children or the elderly, or have some other reason. Others who are working part-time are doing so because they could not find full-time employment. These individuals, sometimes referred to as involuntary part-time workers, are considered by the BLS to be part-time “for economic reasons.”

An alternative measure of labor-force underutilization, referred to by Thomas Boston (1988) as the marginalization rate and simply called “U-6” by the BLS, adds discouraged workers (and others with marginal attachment to the labor force) and involuntary part-time workers to the officially unemployed in the numerator of the official unemployment rate, and adds the discouraged (and other marginally attached) workers to the labor force in the denominator. The marginalization rate is normally 1.5 to 2 times the official unemployment rate. Like the official unemployment rate, the marginalization rate for blacks in the United States is 1.5 to 2 times that for whites. For black men, the marginalization rate hit 24.6 percent in 2009 and has been over 25 percent since then, and for black women that rate has been over 20 percent since 2010 (compared to 14.1 percent and 13.5 percent for white men and women, respectively) (see Table 1). As will be seen shortly, this does not include those who are incarcerated, who also are (overwhelmingly) disproportionately young black males.

Underemployment has several definitions. The term is sometimes used to refer to involuntary part-timers, but it is also used to describe those who are overqualified for their jobs (also known as disguised unemployment), those who can only find temporary work, or those whose wages are not high enough to bring them above the official poverty line, even when working full-time. There are a number of other categories of individuals who are not working but who are not counted as being officially
Unemployment and Underemployment


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Note: Figures are rounded off to one place of decimal.

Table 1. Marginalization rates, shown here aggregated by gender and race, measure unemployment and underemployment by accounting for discouraged or marginalized workers and involuntary part-time workers as well as the officially unemployed in the United States. Calculated by the author from unpublished Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data.

unemployed, some who are counted as part of the labor force, and some who are not. These include mothers without adequate or affordable child care; those without transportation; those out of work because of a labor dispute, natural disaster, or long-term illness; and those who are working for a family business without pay. Whether they are considered part of the labor force or not, not counting these individuals as unemployed biases the official unemployment rate down (makes it lower than it would be otherwise). Finally, because of the nature of the survey used to calculate the various indices, the homeless and the phoneless are systematically excluded from the sample, and this further biases the official rate down.

The official unemployment rate refers to the civilian noninstitutional population, which means that it also does not include those active in the armed forces or those in prison or jail. This means that the official unemployment rate can fall when officially unemployed persons join the military or become incarcerated. Studies have demonstrated that the official unemployment rate in the United States during the 1990s economic boom (the “Clinton expansion”) would have been considerably higher if it had been adjusted for the rapid increase in the inmate (prison and jail) population, which had surged to more than two million during the previous two decades (Beckett and Western 1997). During the Vietnam era of the 1960s, some argued that the unemployment rate at that time was reduced by the large number of unemployed persons joining the armed forces. Both the inmate population and the armed forces are disproportionately made up of young, able-bodied, less educated males, especially black men. Katherine Beckett and Bruce Western (1997) found that the official unemployment rate for black males in the United States would have been 18.8 percent rather than the official 11.3 percent rate between 1990 and 1994 if adjusted for those held in prison and jail.

Because of the many unemployed and underemployed persons not counted in the official unemployment rate, economists often use the employment-population ratio and the labor-force participation rate (LFPR) to examine the workings of labor markets. The LFPR is the labor force (employed plus officially unemployed) divided by the population cohort (usually those aged fifteen to sixty-four) multiplied by one hundred to make it a percentage. Subtracting the LFPR from 100 percent provides a measure of those who have left the labor force (discouraged and other marginally attached workers, but also those who may have retired early due to poor job prospects, and other categories of unemployed and underemployed persons mentioned above, with the exception of involuntary part-time and temporary workers, who are counted as employed and as part of the labor force). When calculated as a percentage of the noninstitutional population, the LFPR also excludes the incarcerated population. The employment-population ratio, which measures the
Unemployment and Underemployment

employed as a percentage of their (civilian noninstitutional) population cohort, also gives a rough estimate of all of those who are unemployed and underemployed. From 1979 to 2006, employment rates for black men aged twenty-five to fifty-four (considered “prime” working age) dropped by 21 percentage points for high school dropouts and 10 percentage points for those with a high school degree but no college (Bartik and Houseman 2008).

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC COSTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT

Unemployment and underemployment have tremendous social and economic costs (Piachaud 1997). Unemployment causes permanent losses of potential output of goods and services. The unemployed are faced with financial insecurity, resulting in poverty and indebtedness. Certain kinds of criminal activity are directly related to unemployment. Many studies have linked unemployment to family disruption, suicide, ill health (physical and mental), drug addiction, homelessness, malnutrition, poor prenatal care, school dropouts, racial and ethnic antagonism, and other social problems (Jahoda 1982; Feather 1990). Unemployment also differentially affects certain sectors of the population, so that historically disadvantaged groups, those with less formal education, and youth, for example, can suffer from rates of unemployment two to ten times the overall rate.

Unemployment also can destabilize business expectations, as fears of low demand cool private investment. Related to this, unemployment can lead to technological stagnation (Darity 1999). If, as a number of economists have long argued, high levels of employment stimulate technical innovation, unemployment would be associated with less innovation. Firms with high and stable demand for their products have the resources and the incentive to support going high tech; with high unemployment and thus cheap labor, firms lack the resources and the incentive to retool. It has also been shown that unemployment leads to deterioration in labor skills. All of this suggests that unemployment may lead to lower productivity growth.

Unemployment and underemployment are the direct and indirect cause of many social and economic problems. High unemployment can also lead to political instability: Without employment and its associated income security, citizens may be vulnerable to extremist ideologies, scapegoating, and antidemocratic political movements. Since unemployment is the cause of so much social and human misery, it is of great interest whether capitalist economies tend to create enough jobs to employ every person who needs one or whether unemployment is a normal feature of capitalism, and thus a target for government policy.

ANALYZING UNEMPLOYMENT: NEOCLASSICAL AND HETERODOX APPROACHES

Whereas in (orthodox, mainstream) neoclassical economics, market systems possess an inherent tendency to full employment, in (alternative) heterodox economics, unemployment is seen as a normal feature of capitalist economies. In neoclassical economics, market systems tend to fully utilize all resources, including labor. Perfectly flexible wages, prices, and interest rates constitute the self-adjusting mechanism that will tend to eliminate unemployed resources in the long run. In the neoclassical version of Say’s Law (“supply creates its own demand”), if there is unemployment, wages will fall, stimulating labor demand, and interest rates will adjust to ensure that all savings at the full employment level of output will be invested. There is no involuntary unemployment in the long run, unless there are market imperfections, such as inflexible wages, government interference, or other institutional rigidities (e.g., labor unions, monopolistic industries). For neoclassical economics, if there is unemployment, government should not interfere and should instead let the market correct itself; if there are market imperfections, government may promote conditions under which the self-adjusting mechanism works most smoothly (e.g., deregulation and antitrust legislation).

In the midst of the Great Depression, with the overall official unemployment rate in the United States at 25 percent, John Maynard Keynes demonstrated in The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money (1936) the possibility and the likelihood that market systems do not tend to fully utilize resources, even under competitive conditions, due to insufficient effective (aggregate) demand. Keynes criticized the neoclassical theory of saving and investment for its unacceptable assumptions, arguing that traditional loanable-funds theory holds income constant when looking at savings and abstracts from investor expectations when analyzing investment. If aggregate savings is primarily a function of income, not interest rates, and investment is determined by the expected profitability of investors and lending institutions, then savings does not determine investment through variations in the rate of interest, and the economy does not automatically tend to full employment. Instead, private investment determines savings through changes in income, but there is no reason to expect that the full employment level of investment will always be undertaken. The result is that capitalist economies tend to operate with excess capacity and unemployment and underemployment. It is therefore unlikely for a competitive capitalist economy to provide enough jobs to employ everyone who is ready and willing to work.
But capitalist economies have problems maintaining full employment, even if it could be attained, due to ongoing structural and technological change, such as changes in the supplies of labor and natural resources, labor- and capital-displacing technical change, and changes in the composition of final demand. An economy running at full capacity and full employment would be unable to respond to such changes, and sectoral imbalances in addition to aggregate macroeconomic imbalance are further causes of unemployment. Bottle-necks and rigidities mean that full employment is likely to be inflationary. Structural change will soon result in unemployment as technology displaces workers in one sector and fails to absorb them in another, the formation of real capital fails to keep up with the pace of a growing labor supply, or declining demand in one sector fails to be offset by demand for new products. Heterodox economists such as Luigi Pasinetti (1981) offer structural models that demonstrate the great unlikelihood of capitalist economies maintaining full employment, even if it could be attained.

Insufficient effective demand and ongoing structural change are economic causes of unemployment. But heterodox economists such as Michal Kalecki (1943) noted that there might also be political obstacles to full employment. Since unemployment in Keynes is a negative by-product of capitalism, it is viewed as serving no purpose in the capitalist system and so is clearly undesirable for all. Kalecki and others, however, have highlighted that unemployment may be functional in capitalism, an insight that is drawn from Karl Marx’s analysis of the reserve army of labor.

In Marx, unemployment serves several functions. First, it provides the system with a pool of available labor from which to draw when the pace of accumulation increases. Second, unemployment serves to discipline workers, who may not fear being laid off in an environment of full employment. Third, unemployment holds down wages, since one of the ways in which unemployment disciplines workers is to decrease their bargaining power and thus keep wages from rising. In this view, unemployment is not only a natural by-product of capitalism, it is essential to its smooth operation.

Marx postulated a number of different components of the reserve army of labor. The latent reserve includes those currently outside of the market system, either performing unpaid household labor or eking out a meager subsistence in the periphery of third world economies. The stagnant reserve includes those who are almost never employed, boom or bust. Members of the floating reserve alternate between employment and unemployment, with the ups and downs of the business cycle. Paupers is the term Marx used to identify those who are now often referred to as the *underclass*. Recently, it has been suggested that changes in global capitalism have rendered some of these components no longer functional. And this has resulted in an environment conducive to policies that may promote the elimination of the emerging *surplus population*, with frighteningly racist and genocidal consequences (Darity 1999).

**UNEMPLOYMENT AND RACE**

All countries with multiracial populations suffer from racial disparities in employment and unemployment. This holds for countries that are otherwise quite different economically (Darity and Nembhard 2000). In South Africa, in March 2007, the official unemployment rate for the African population was 36.4 percent for women and 25 percent for men, while for whites it was 4.6 percent for women and 4.1 percent for men (Anthonopoulos 2008). Brazil’s racial employment differentials are not that large, but they are still significant and persistent. It is well-known that in the United States, the black unemployment rate is always double the white rate, regardless of whether the economy is performing well or not.

The neoclassical and heterodox approaches to economics correspond roughly to behavioralist and structuralist paradigms for understanding racial economic inequality, including employment and unemployment (Darity and Myers 1994). Both the neoclassical and behavioralist approaches are individualist, microeconomic frameworks, and both heterodoxy and structuralism are institutionalist and macro in method and scope.

The behavioralist approach draws on two complementary theoretical frameworks to explain racial unemployment and underemployment differentials: the human capital and culture of poverty theories. *Human capital* refers to innate or acquired characteristics that determine labor productivity, such as education, training, work experience, and even “home-life” (socialization). It is well-known that empirical testing of human capital theory has failed to confirm the view that differences in productivity can explain racial earnings inequality, much less employment disparities (Darity 1982). For many, the “unexplained residual” in econometric equations represents discrimination. *Culture of poverty* theory argues that, rather than discrimination, the residual is due to another variable missing from the equations, *culture*. There are cultural differences between members of different racial and ethnic groups, and these differences have economic consequences (Sowell 1983). Some racial or ethnic groups possess values and display behaviors associated with market success, such as thriftiness, hard work, and the ability to defer gratification. “Pathological” values and “dysfunctional” behaviors are then seen as the...
cause of other groups' failure in market contexts. These values and behaviors are also viewed as being reinforced by the wrong incentives provided by the welfare state, such as income support leading to dependency and minimum-wage laws. In some cases, these values and behaviors are viewed as resulting from macrostructural factors, including past discrimination.

The alternative, structuralist framework combines the heterodox approach to the political economy of capitalism with an analysis of institutional racism to explain racial unemployment disparities. The structural approach views the working class and the reserve army of labor as heterogeneous sites of capitalist competition (Williams 1991; Mason 1995). The employed are divided between the high-waged and the low-waged. The unemployed, as we have seen, are divided between the permanently unemployed and the cyclically unemployed. The cyclically unemployed are further divided between the first-fired/last-hired and the last-fired/first-hired. These and other divisions create the basis for intense intraclass competition among workers. Historically, “race” has mediated the allocation of the working class among the low-waged and the high-waged, the unemployed and employed, the permanently unemployed and cyclically unemployed, and the first-fired/last-hired and last-fired/first-hired. Furthermore, this has not been simply the result of divide-and-conquer tactics by capitalists, but rather workers have formed racial and ethnic coalitions to insulate themselves from competition and protect their relatively favored positions and exclude others. By controlling institutions such as unions and apprenticeship programs, for example, white men in the United States were able to prevent women and African Americans from competing with them for certain desirable occupations (Hill 1985). Whites also used informal networks to accomplish the same goals.

POLICY: DIRECT JOB CREATION

The idea of a kind of permanent Works Progress Administration (WPA) has been revived in the form of the job guarantee (Darity 2010). This kind of public service employment must be distinguished from draconian workfare. Nancy Rose suggests that there are positive precedents in the United States in the form of the job guarantee (Darity 2010). This kind of public service employment must be distinguished from draconian workfare. Nancy Rose suggests that there are positive precedents in the United States in the form of the 1945 Full Employment bill and the original Humphrey Hawkins bill (1978) for “a public-sector job creation program” in which the “federal government would be the employer of last resort” (1995, p. 182). She insists that “programs should be universal so that welfare recipients are not singled out and stigmatized” (p. 179). In her view, such a program “would recognize the value of caretaking work in the home and compensate women and men for this work … counter[ing] the generally accepted view that only paid labor is ‘real work’ and reinterpret work in the home as critically important, socially necessary labor” (p. 180).

Joel Handler and Yeheskel Hasenfeld cite additional successful programs as precedents, such as the 1973 Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), the Depression-era Civil Works Administration (CWA), and the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects from 1978 to 1980 (YIEPP; Handler and Hasenfeld 1997, p. 102). The CWA had no means tests and included the same health insurance as that offered to regular federal employees. CETA also provided direct job creation, and although it acquired an unfavorable reputation as a result of a few isolated but highly publicized incidences of abuse and corruption, a careful review of the research on the effectiveness of the program suggests that such a reputation is unwarranted” (p. 103). YIEPP was a hugely successful program that provided “jobs that were of adequate quality and provided meaningful work experiences, not make work. The program was very effective in attracting minority young people and had a dramatic effect on their unemployment rates . . . [and] closed the gap between black and white employment rates” in 11,000 work sites (pp. 104–105). “The project belied the stereotype that minority young people are unmotivated or have unrealistic work expectations. It showed that a major reason for high minority youth unemployment is lack of jobs” (pp. 104–105).

Some public employment programs have been discriminatory, and painstaking efforts must be made to establish a no-tolerance policy regarding discrimination. Racial and gender discrimination in some New Deal programs, including the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the National Recovery Administration (NRA), have been well-documented. This was not “random” prejudice; evidence indicates that exclusionary racist practices were utilized to ensure that African Americans would remain available for undesirable private-sector jobs (Piven and Cloward 1993). Further research is available concerning other pitfalls. Elijah Anderson’s research on youth employment programs in Philadelphia, for example, found that “many programs functioned as little more than stopgap measures to appease, to cool out, to buy off problematic youth, measures that in effect led to their being retained in what amounted to human holding tanks” (1990, p. 214).

Michael K. Brown has raised the important question as to exactly “what constitutes a race-neutral social policy in a racially stratified society” (1999, p. 97). But what this means is that the policies being described here are in no way sufficient by themselves to address the enduring problems of racism.
Present effects of historical discrimination and continuing discrimination mean that affirmative action still has an important role, but as Manning Marable argues, “advocates of affirmative action must carefully link their struggle for social justice with efforts to achieve full employment . . . Affirmative action is not an anti-poverty program, and it was never designed to create full employment” (1997, p. 267). Marable makes the important point that opposition to affirmative action is rooted in “white male fear” that “reflects narrowing economic opportunity” among those who have benefited—relatively or absolutely—from discrimination (p. 265). Moreover:

The interests of people who have traditionally experienced discrimination and the concerns of those who are fearful of losing their jobs are connected. Unless the total number of decent jobs is significantly increased for everybody, millions of white male workers will be inclined to perceive affirmative action as counter to their narrow, material interests. Progressive political initiatives like affirmative action are always more acceptable when the economic pie is expanding. (Marable 1997, p. 267)

A comprehensive program to address the present and past effects of racism would have to include affirmative action and reparations, as well as some type of guaranteed employment policy.

Some experts suggest that if the jobs created through public service employment assurance are to truly serve the community, then community and neighborhood organizations must take the reins and administer the programs to the fullest extent possible, rather than having the federal government involved in the majority of administration. The federal government’s job is to provide the wages and benefits. The initial attempt to employ public service workers must be through registered community service organizations that already exist. In this way, the program will be able to employ individuals with minimal additional bureaucracy, and will in addition supply labor to organizations that provide needed public and social services that enhance the quality of life in that region. Because the federal government pays the wage-benefits package, community service organizations obtain additional workers at no extra cost. Communities will experience an increase in a variety of public services in their region, and this in turn will contribute to an increased quality of life for all members of the community, especially the less well-off. In this scenario, public service employees themselves must also have the opportunity to initiate and develop public and community service projects. John Short has argued that:

We must develop socially useful forms of work, which enhance the creativity and involvement of workers . . . The most rewarding jobs are those which give opportunities for creativity, provide a living wage and have a beneficial effect. People like to do, and like to be seen to be doing, good works. Our cities provide numerous opportunities for congenial employment, from beautifying our cities with gardens to mending footpaths and building playgrounds . . . Real job-creation schemes involve the workers in the goals and strategies of the employment. Let us allow people the dignity of being involved in identifying, as well as doing, useful employment. (Short 1989, p. 127)

Those involved in the early stages of the drafting of the 1946 Employment Act and the 1978 Humphrey-Hawkins bill in the United States witnessed employment guarantees eliminated from the final legislation. More recently, advocates of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), enacted in India in 2005, saw the program limited to one hundred days per year. The Argentine Jefes program, launched in 2002, included only “heads of households,” despite supporters at the highest levels of government. History teaches that successful efforts at utilizing governmental institutions are enhanced by pressures stemming from grassroots activism and popular organization (Rose 1995). Organizing the unemployed, the underemployed, and even the homeless, with employed and unemployed working together, may prove effective (Groff 1997). Neighborhood and community unemployment councils may play important roles in the future, as they have in the past (Ervin 1994).

Unemployment is at the root of many of the economic and social problems of capitalism. Some would argue that, instead of tinkering with capitalism, a new economic system should be sought in which the right to a job as put forward in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) is realized. Perhaps in a postcapitalist society, the employment-money link will be severed and a new mode of social and economic organization will make unemployment extinct and irrelevant. Until such a time, however, there is no good economic reason not to go immediately to full employment with a guaranteed public service job for anyone ready and willing to work. Political obstacles may be more effectively negotiated by complementing policy advocacy with grassroots campaigns at the community level.

SEE ALSO Capitalism; Labor Market; Marxism.

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UNESCO Statements on Race


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UNESCO Statements on Race

The establishment of the United Nations (UN) following World War II led to a surge in declarations, conventions, and organizations aimed at promoting human rights and equality. The legacy of Nazism and the failure of the League of Nations galvanized the UN to formulate two critical postwar documents: the Universal declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the Genocide Convention (1948). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was established in 1945 to “embody a genuine culture of peace.” It was within this international atmosphere that UNESCO, as one of its early public acts, issued a Statement on Race in 1950.

Racism was the essence of Nazism, and the defeat of that regime provided an opportunity to pursue an egalitarian agenda. Despite the defeat of Nazism, racism in the late 1940s remained a powerful ideology. Segregation in the United States was in full force, and southern racism was yet to be challenged politically. UNESCO took up the challenge and established a committee of experts that published the 1950 Statement on Race, which declared that there was no scientific basis or justification for racial bias (The New York Times, July 18, 1950). The publication created a controversy that, in various forms, has lasted ever since. Nevertheless, the publication of the statement marked the emergence of a