

## Social Work Policy Podcast with Lacy Watson: Economics

**Cory Whitfield:** Hello and welcome everyone to Social Policy podcast brought to you from East Tennessee State University's College of Clinical, Rehabilitative and Health Sciences, Department of Social Work. I'm Cory Whitfield MSW Class of 2022 and today we have Eugene Lacey Watson with us to discuss racism and policy. In 2020, Eugene Watson ran for West Virginia's Congressional District, where he fell a little bit short. Economics is always a great topic, especially when it comes to policy. Now, as a social worker, I think I get to see poverty on many different levels, different races, ethnicities, you name it. Some of the conversations that I come across is. You know, people like to discuss, well, hey, I'm white and I'm poor also. So why should you feel like there's a difference between you and I when I'm not privileged because I'm white, I'm poor and you can go down the conversation of having was say there's a difference between black poverty and white poverty. I mean, I think we can look at the data to verify that, but you don't want to invalidate someone else's experience at the same time. So how do we validate the experiences of white Americans who suffer from economic depression? While at the same time highlight disparities of the economic oppression in the African-American community.

**Lacy Watson:** Very, very good. Great question. And I would like to tell you a story that touches on both of those points of interest. And this goes back to the 1968 Black Panther Party in Chicago, Illinois, and this party was led by a gentleman named Fred Hampton and Fred Hampton's progressive policies not only benefited the African-American community, but they also benefited the poor white community and the other ethnic minority communities that existed in Chicago at the time. And what the Black Panther Party illustrated was the strength within our communities to join together in changing number one legislative policy in Chicago, at of time, but also the social conditions that existed or exist within our communities. These monumental efforts made by the party were undermined by false allegations of domestic terrorism, of insubordination to, you know, the Constitution, whatever. And that for me tells me that there's no real difference between poor whites and poor blacks in addressing your question. I feel the same initiatives. And the same objectives could be met now in 2021 with the proper leadership. Therefore, when we speak on the plights of poor African-Americans and poor whites, especially within the Appalachian region, we need to be conscious of the systematic efforts to number one keep us silent as far as our political voices. Number two people as poor as far as our economic liabilities. And number three, keep us divided based on our skin tones or our ethnic backgrounds. So, In summation, I believe there is no difference between poor whites and poor blacks, but through media misrepresentation, the communities are divided and left to pit economic resources, what are left of economic resources against each other. If that answers your question.

**Cory Whitfield:** Absolutely, absolutely.

**Lucy Watson:** And it takes all of us being a part of the conversation in order to alleviate these issues and problems.

**Cory Whitfield:** Absolutely. Well, with that, I would like to thank you, brother Lacey, for this wonderful interview that you did for the social work department and for ETSU. Greatly appreciate it. Well my friend, I hope you have a great weekend and a safe holiday. Yes, sir. Thank you so much for your time, brother.