



RSODE SNS

# Coming Together or Pulling Apart?

Kalamazoo Summit on Racism  
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Race, Class and the Common Good

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Institutionalized Racism, coupled with Rising  
Income Inequality and the Economic  
Marginalization of Working People will  
Perpetuate the Status Quo until We Act with  
Purpose and Knowledge to Change It

Mark Twain said that there  
are Three Kinds of Lies:

Lies,

Damn Lies

and

Statistics

# Most People Interpret Statistics through the Prism of Our Own Experiences

Our interpretations are reinforced by like-minded people in settings that are highly segregated by race and class.

They also are reinforced by the electronic media we use.

Even Truthful Statistics about Racial  
Disparities Are Unlikely to Lead to Meaningful  
Change...without Additional Meaningful  
Communication

Statistics are necessary for realistic understanding  
of problems, but are not sufficient by themselves  
to produce the necessary change.

# Black Kalamazoo Residents in Poverty, 2013

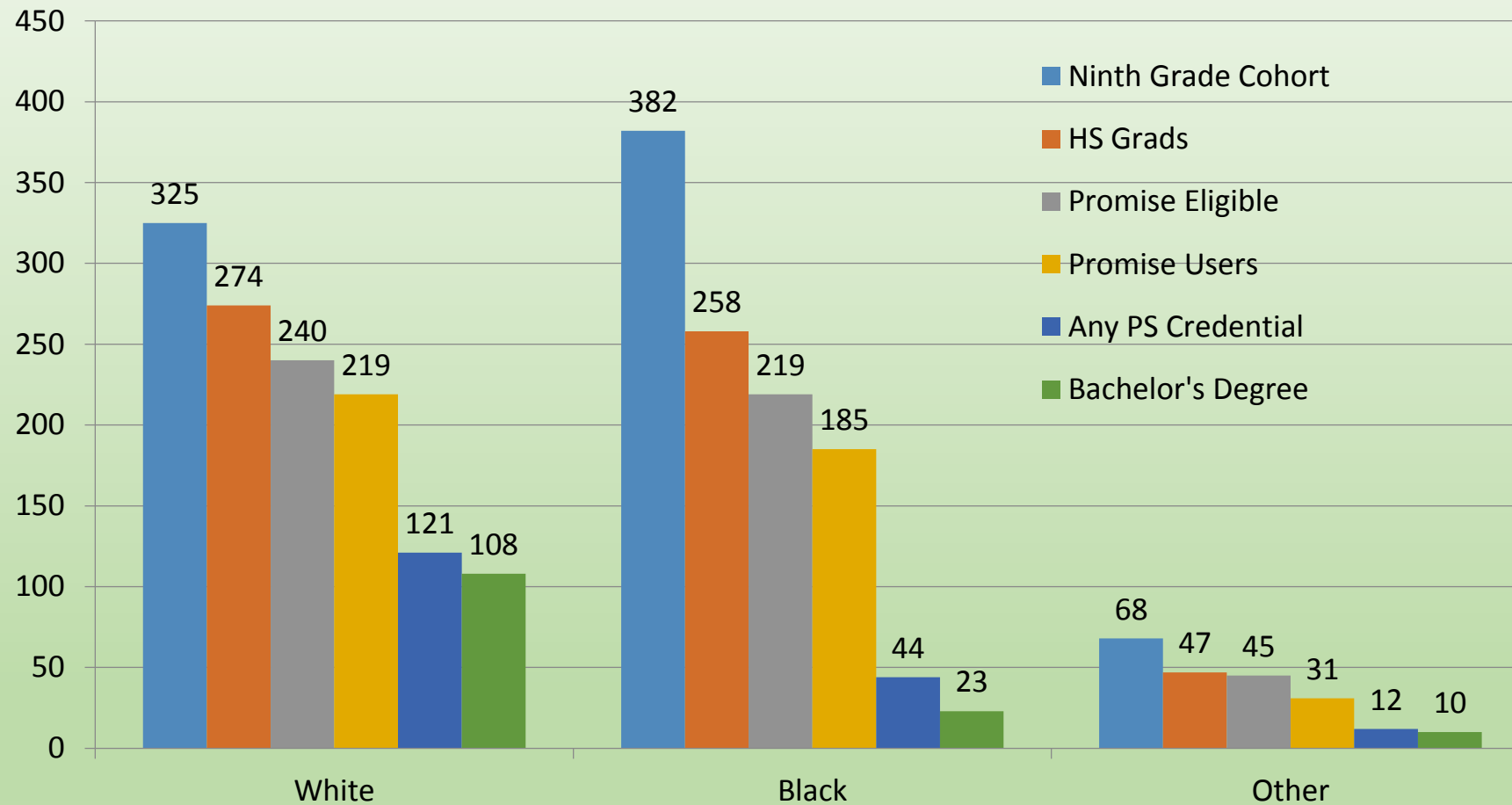
## Black Kalamazoo Residents in Poverty

- 7,126 or 44% of all black residents of Kalamazoo are poor.
- Only 18 cities in the US have a higher black poverty rates

## Black Kalamazoo Youth in Poverty

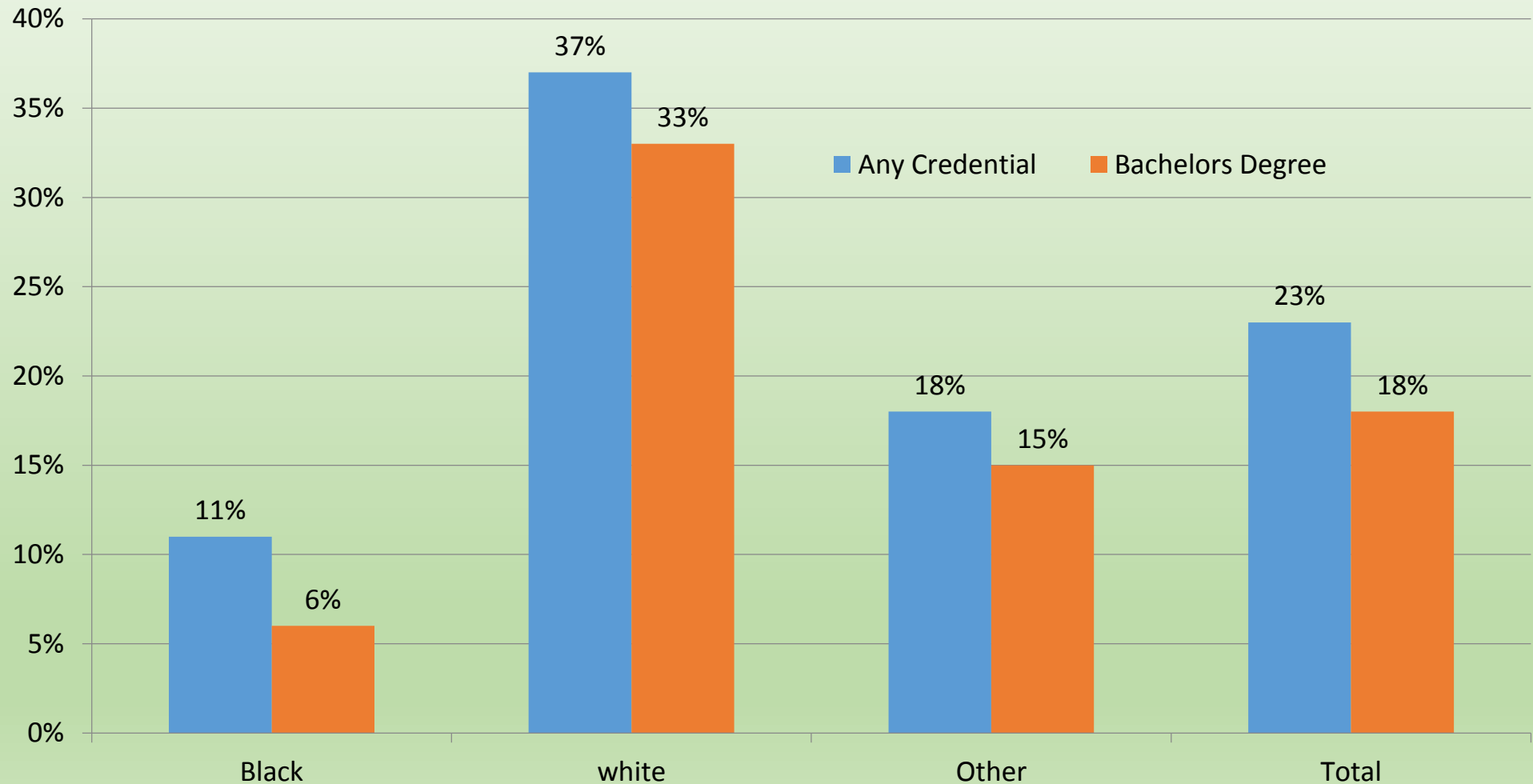
- 2,395 or 57% of black children in Kalamazoo are poor
- Only 33 of 224 US cities with at least 15,000 black residents have higher poverty rates for black children

## Progress of Kalamazoo's Ninth Grade Cohort of the Graduating Class of 2007 to Post-Secondary Degree Attainment After Six Years, by Race



\* The source for the number of students in the ninth grade cohort of the high school graduation class of 2007 is the Michigan Department of Education. The source for all other data is the Kalamazoo Promise.

# Percent of the Ninth Grade Cohort for Kalamazoo's High School Graduation Class of 2007 that Attained a Post-Secondary Degree within Six Years, by Race



Source: Michigan Department of Education and the Kalamazoo Promise



# School to Prison Pipeline?

## Disproportionate Minority Contact

7.4 to 1

- A Black youth in Kalamazoo County (age 10 to 16) is 7.4 times as likely to be arrested than a white youth (2013).

## Kalamazoo County Has Highest Juvenile Arrest Rate of All Urban Counties in Michigan

Arrests per 1,000 Juveniles in Michigan's Urban Counties, 2013



# Three Reasons Statistics Can Seem Misleading

- They are simply false – intentionally or not. Example from the election: “Crime in 2015 is the worst it has ever been.” In fact, it is far lower than in the past.
- Factual statements are made to intentionally mislead: Election example: “ ‘Illegal Mexicans’ (sic) are pouring across our Southern border.” In fact, although some undocumented Mexicans are still coming, more Mexican citizens have been leaving the US than arriving for the past eight years.
- Statistics may seem misleading because they lack sociological context and are interpreted through our “common sense” understandings developed in settings that are segregated by race and class.

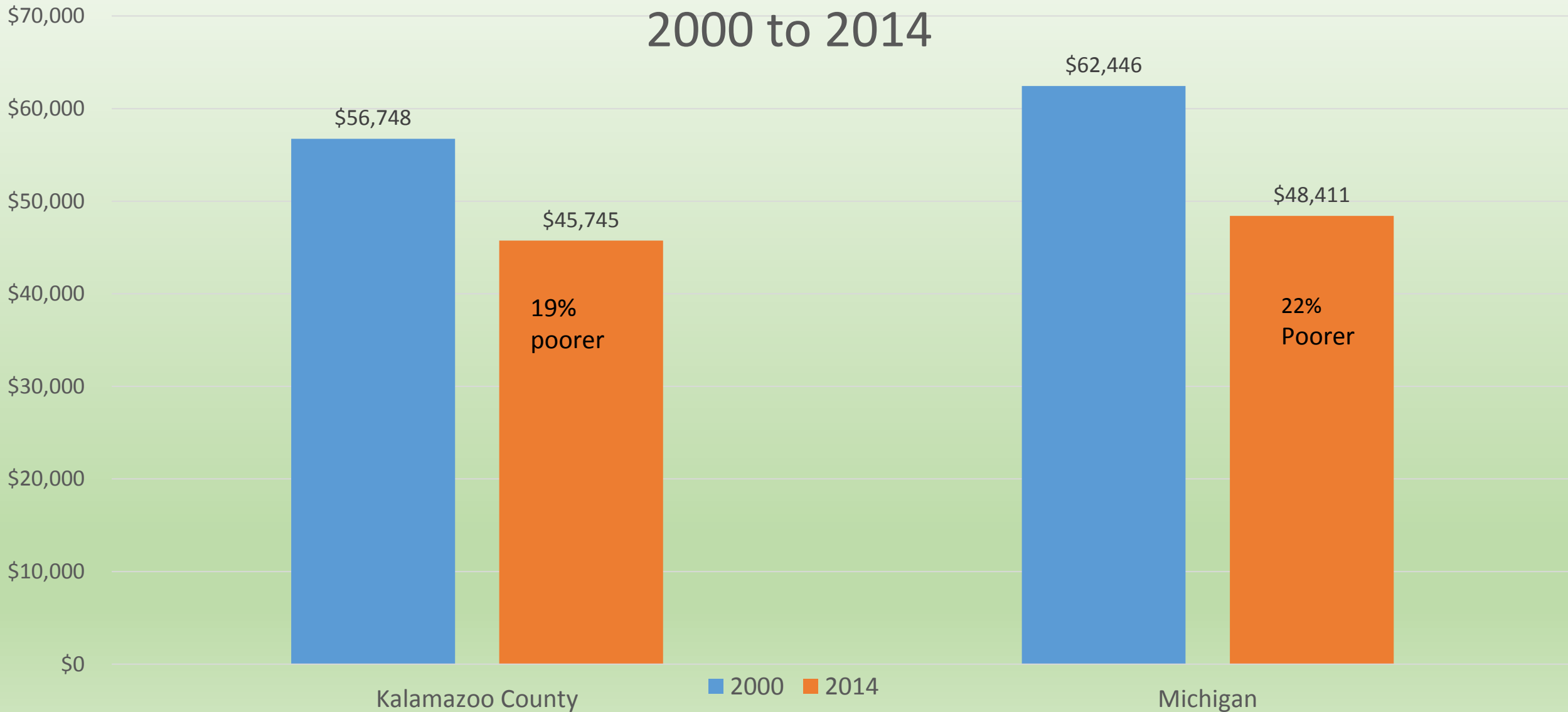
# One Community—Focus of the Walker Institute's Work – an Aspiration, but Not Yet a Reality

- We Must Eliminate Inequality of Opportunity if We Are Truly to Become One Community.
- This requires Both Shared Understandings and Commitment to Address:
  - Implicit Bias
  - Increasingly Overt Bias
  - Institutional Racism
  - Extreme Income Inequality and the Marginalization of Working People, Regardless of Race.

Lots of People of All Backgrounds  
Are Frustrated and Not Getting  
Ahead

Each of Us Needs to Walk a Mile  
in Someone Else's Shoes.

# Change in Median Household Income in Kalamazoo County and State of Michigan 2000 to 2014



# Racial Disparities Are Real, They Are Serious, and There is Little Recent Evidence that Things Are Getting Better

- Alternative Interpretations of what the disparities mean:
  - Black and Hispanic people are mostly responsible for poorer health, poorer education, and higher poverty – ahistorical and racist
  - We should ignore these negative things (disparities) about us, and emphasize the positive. “I won’t let them get me down.”
  - Awareness of disparities leads to community-wide change to eliminate institutional racism and deepening income inequality and economic marginalization

# What We Need to Promote Equity in Our Communities

- Dialogue across Differences Leading to Empathetic Understanding and Shared Commitment to the Common Good of the Communities Where We Live
- Realistic Understanding of the Structural Causes of BOTH Racial Inequality and Economic Marginalization
- Shared Purpose that Transforms People of Diverse Backgrounds into Active Stakeholders to Do What Is Needed to Truly Become One Community of Equal Opportunity for All



# Let's Focus on How We Can Prosper Together

- Everyone Must Be a Stakeholder in the Change Process.
- Kalamazoo's New Foundation for Excellence, along with the Kalamazoo Promise, Provide Needed Resources that Few Other Communities Have.
- Working Together, We Could Actually Make This Happen!

All of Us Do Better When All of Us Do Better