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## Culture, Poverty and Disadvantaged Urban Youth: What Have We Learned?

Orlando Patterson

Friday, October 9, 2015  
3.30 p.m., Room B 002/003

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Invitation

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### Colloquium

Moderated by Ruud Koopmans

Orlando Patterson will present an excerpt from his latest book. *The Cultural Matrix: Understanding Black Youth* (co-edited with Ethan Fosse, Harvard University Press, 2015), which addresses a uniquely American paradox: the socioeconomic crisis, segregation, and social isolation of disadvantaged black youth, on the one hand, and their extraordinary integration and prominence in popular culture on the other. Despite school dropout rates over 40 percent, a third spending time in prison, chronic unemployment, and endemic violence, black youth are among the most vibrant creators of popular culture in the world. They also espouse several deeply-held American values. To understand this conundrum, the authors bring culture back to the forefront of explanation, while avoiding the theoretical errors of earlier culture-of-poverty approaches and the causal timidity and special pleading of more recent ones.

**Orlando Patterson** is John Cowles Professor of Sociology at Harvard University, USA. His academic interests include the culture and practices of freedom; the comparative study of slavery and ethno-racial relations; and the cultural sociology of poverty and underdevelopment with special reference to the Caribbean and African American youth.

**Ruud Koopmans** is director of the research unit Migration, Integration, Transnationalization at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center and Professor of Sociology and Migration Research at the Humboldt University of Berlin.

Please reply by October 7, 2015 to Maike Burda: [maike.burda@wzb.eu](mailto:maike.burda@wzb.eu).